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The Boy And The Prodigal

(W R Rose in Cleveland Plain Dealer)

The man was standing by the door of the village post office. He had come in by the stage that brought the mail. He was a young man with a bright eye and a pleasant smile. He smiled now at a boy who had slowly edged up to him.

"Hullo," he said.

"Hullo," the boy responded with much gravity.

"Fifteen?" queried the stranger.

"Most fourteen," the boy replied.

"Big for your age. Live near here?"

"Bout half a mile. Live with my grandmother Peasley. My folks are out West. Ma ain't well."

The stranger nodded sympathetically. And he looked the boy over. He was a clean boy and a neat boy. His trousers and coat were old, but carefully brushed, darned, and his shoes were whole and clean.

"Wonder if your grandmother would like to take a boarder for a week or two?"

The boys blue eyes sparkled.

"I dunno that she wouldnt," he answered.

"We've got a spare room with a dandy bed in it and grandm's makes bully pancakes."

The stranger smiled again.

"Fine recommendations," he said. "If your time isn't otherwise engaged I'd be glad to have you guide me to your grandmothers home."

The stranger picked up his bag.

"Sure," said the boy. "I've got the time. I haven't anything to do 'cept a little weedin' and splittin' wood. School don't begin for a week yet."

Then, he said, "perhaps I could get you to show me the best places to fish."

"I'll show you the best places I know," replied the boy. "There ain't any of 'em much good now. Ben Tolliver says they're pretty well fished out."

They were walking side by side along the main street of the little village. The boy walked with his head in the air and his hands thrust deep in his jacket pockets. It was quite evident that he appreciated his intimacy with the easy young stranger.

"Pretty quiet place," said the newcomer.

"Is it?" said the boy. "It's the only place I ever lived in. It just seems natural to me."

The stranger laughed.

"Some day I hope you will have a chance to make comparisons," he said. "When I say the place is quiet, I mean that nothing startling ever happens here."

"I dunno 'bout that," said the boy. "Bing ham's barn burned last spring and Toby Jackson fell in the dam on th' Fourth of July, and John Sawyer—he owns the big house up there on the hill—gave the boys a new horse cart, and there was a church fare in the brick church, and a circus showed over to Brownville."

The stranger laughed.

"A round of excitement," he said.

The boy gravely nodded.

"They're puttin' in a new bell in the school house," he went on, "and she's a hummer! An' las' June old Ezra Dawson, he wa' mos' ninety, died, as Judge Atwater's son came home from College, but he didn't stay long. Mart Edwards says he heard he went to Noo York. Didn't see nothin' of him there, did you?"

"No," the stranger laughed; "I'm afraid I missed him."

"Humpty Safford says he was a howlin' dude—that's because of his clothes, you know, but Cliff Gordon says he seen him drivin a horse car down to Coney Island. Cliff's been round a good deal an' everybody think's he's an awful liar."

Again the stranger laughed.

"Yes, an' right after Jim Atwater went away, Jed Kenton came back. He's the prodigal son, you know."

"Is he?"

"That's what Bruce Jones called him. They was talking 'bout it at St Brainerd's store when I was waitin' for some merlasses, Bruce said he was the feller Parson Gibson told about so many times. Mebby you've heard the story? It's in the Good Book."

"Yes, said the stranger, "I've heard it. It's a beautiful story."

"There ain't anything beautiful about Jed Kenton," said the boy. "They're all a pretty tough lot, them Kentons. See that old red house on the hill, just beyond th' kollow?"

"Yes."

"That's where they live. Jed runned away when he was 'bout as old me, an' he never showed up agsin until las' July."

The stranger no longer smiled.

"Ever see this prodigal?" he casually asked.

"Yes," the boy replied, "He won't come down town, but just hunts and fishes. I saw him once up on the six mile creek an' he chased me away. Said he'd skin me if I came round scarin' the fish again."

"Big man?" said the stranger indifferently.

"Bout as tall as you."

"Easy stepper?"

"Nope. Kind o' lame."

The stranger seemed to hesitate.

"Rather pale and good looking?"

The boy laughed.

"I guess th' prodigal you seen wasn't much like this one. Jed Kenton's face is red, an' his hair is stiff, an' his eyes are little, an' when his hats' off you see a white scar across his forehead."

The stranger fell to whistling softly, and he was still whistling when the two reached the cottage of the boys grandmother.

The owner was on the porch, a clear eyed capable woman of sixty, who studied the stranger's appearance as he preferred, his request.

"I have taken a fancy to your grandson, madam," he added, and I would like to engage his services as a guide and companion. He knows where the best fishing can be found, and I feel quite sure I can make him useful. I will pay him \$3 a week, if that is satisfactory, and the money for both board and the boy is ready for you in advance."

The woman smiled.

"You have a very forceful way," she said, "and I don't see how I can refuse you. Come in and look at the room and see if it will suit you. As for the boy, he's a good boy, but I'm afraid you'll find it isn't worth all that money. Anyway, I'll take care of it for him. This way, sir."

"My name is Robeat Brett, madam."

"I am Mrs Martha Sterrett, sir."

"An I am Artie Howard, ladies and gentlemen," said the boy. At which they all laughed and the stranger put his bag down in the sweet smelling spare room and his stay in the Sterrett cottage commenced.

(To be Continued.)

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DEATH NOT FINAL

LONDON, Oct. 22—"There is no real end ing to anything in the universe, nor was there any beginning," said Sir Oliver Lodge in the course of an address on the subject of re-incarnation this week. He added:

"The death of the body does not convey any assurance of the soul's death. Every physical analogy is against such a superficial notion in nature. We never see things being ginned or coming to an end. Change is what we see, not origin or termination."

"Death is a change indeed—a sort of emigration, a wrenching away of the old familiar scenes, a solemn, portentous fact. But it is not annihilation."

"No thoughtful person can believe that he is destined to drop head foremost into vacant nothing and cease to be. Existence is itself a great adventure—a series of them. Some lead placid lives, seek to avoid adventure, but none can altogether escape, none can escape the great adventure—death."

There are three adventures in life birth death and marriage, and comparatively few escape all three."

Sir Oliver's message was that there is some great truth in the idea of pre-existence—nor an obvious truth and one easily formulated but a truth difficult of expression and not to be identified with reincarnation. Persons living now might not have been individuals before, but they were chips or fragments of a great master mind, of spirit and light. He did not mean to say only that they were parts of the Deity. He meant something more detailed than that. The idea of angels was treated as fanciful and imaginative. It might be not altogether fanciful. Facts indicated that we were not really lonely in our struggle, that our destiny was not left haphazard and that there was no such thing as "laissez faire" in the highly organized universe.

The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything. —Theodore Roosevelt.

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CLARKE & JOHNSTON.

The Methodists claim to have the mission farthest south in the world, maintaining for years a mission in Punta Arenas, Straits of Magellan, and now comes a letter from District Superintendent Gehard J Schilling, who is evangelizing upon one of the "top shelves" of the globe—Bolivia. A missionary of seventeen years' experience, he is opening up new stations in the interior of Bolivia, attending at the same time to an English, a German and a Spanish church in LaPaz, the capital of the republic. He says in part: "Along the steep slopes the natives cultivate coca, coffee and cacao. These people are extremely ignorant. A man came to the town of Coroico to sell five baskets of cacao at six dollars each. Said the buyer, 'I take them. Six times five dollars are thirty dollars, and forth with he intended to pay pay him. But the Indian did not agree with him as to the result of five times six. He thought it ought to be more. So—and this was to me a lesson in patience—the obliging merchant took gratis of corn and made six heaps of five grains each. Then he put two heaps together and the Indian agreed as to the sum of ten. Having repeated the operation three times, the surprised vendor acknowledged the sum total to be three times ten, even thirty. This manifest proof of the merchant's honesty made the Indian buy articles from him in return."

Cooking Hints

When a recipe calls for cream, if this is not available, much the same results may be achieved by doubling the quantity of butter required.

Too much salt in the gravy may be remedied by putting a pinch of brown sugar in it. This does not hurt the gravy in the least.

When basting roast beef a tablespoonful of brown sugar or of ordinary granulated sugar added to the gravy will improve the color and flavor.

In thickening cream soups allow a table spoonful each of butter and flour to every quart of soup.

Stews, soups and boiled meats should never have salt added to them until after they are cooked. If put in at first it toughens the fiber of the meat and takes out the juices.

When using the whites of eggs only in the preparation of a dish, slide the yolks into a bowl of cold water, without breaking them. They will then keep for several days and may be used in cooking as well as if they had just come from freshly broken shells.

Artificial Honey

What is said to be, if carefully made an almost perfect imitation of strained honey, in made as follows: Boil 2 lbs of white sugar, half a pint of water, and half a teaspoonful of powdered sugar together for three minutes after it began to boil. Do not stir after the sugar is dissolved. Add three drops of oil of rose and three drops oil of peppermint to one gill of alcohol. Work this well and add half a teaspoonful to the boiling syrup. Turn out to cool.

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Find Oasis Amid Wilds Of Alaska

TACOMA, Wash, Nov. 6.—Like an oasis in the desert, is a fertile spot discovered in the wilderness of the Koyuk River, Norton Sound, Northern Alaska, by a party of athletes, including C. J. McIntyre, basket ball player of national fame; Robert Brown long distance runner and winner of Nome Dog Races; Otto Steiner, football player, and Roy Stump. Mr McIntyre, who arrived here yesterday, says the tract will make the fortunes of himself and associates.

A dozen or more hot springs spout constantly, the ground is never covered with snow, berries and wild fruit grow in profusion and the rivers teem with fish. There is an abundance of caribou and grizzly bear ducks, snipe and pheasant, Wild geese are plentiful during the summer, being replaced in winter by swarms of ptarmigan.

Mr McIntyre planted vegetables last spring and obtained a crop to last his comrades through the coming winter. Near by were creeks from which the party made a good clean up of gold with meagre facilities.

The Spanish government is alarmed over the anti-military campaign of the Socialists, who are said to be carrying their propaganda into the barracks with the purpose of inciting the soldiers to revolt. It is asserted that the Socialists are aided secretly by the Republicans.—World Wide