

Sam the Grafter

Continued from page three.

now. Why don't they run her out?

Because she is engaged in a good work explained the stenographer. It is charity. She does not prey upon the public for her personal gain. Oh, I am sorry for you, Sammie. I just begged him not to send that letter. I told him you were nothing more than a young commercial eagle, trying your wings in our office. He said that was all right—he had fixed you to fly and you could fly and you could sharpen your claws on someone else.

I don't believe he has 53 cents, said Sam, disgustedly.

I think he has it, philosophized the stenographer. The trouble is, he wants to keep it.

It's mighty little business getting a boy's job, Sam insisted. All for fifty three cents.

Yes, but you do not know, perhaps, what that amount of money represents to him. He is married and he may have to account for the discrepancy in his trial balance. Or, there may be no meat at his Sunday dinner because he will have paid you the price of it. I do not say, mind, that he will have to eat a vegetable dinner; but I do say, that he will be the best he can do in the absence of meat.

Sam looked sorry. Can't you fix it up with him? I know you're my friend. It's his own fault, anyhow. He took his chance just like anybody else. Some fellows got bigger numbers than he did and never said a word.

I shouldn't think they would if they were any worse fooled than he was. But I dare say nothing. He is very set and stubborn when opportunity allows. He might turn on me and throw me out of employment. You couldn't expect me to risk \$175 a month to speak a good word for you, now, could you?

'You don't get no \$175 a month,' said Sam.

'Perhaps not, but the principle is the same. I'd get it quick enough if the company would pay it. The point is, my salary is all I have in return for my time at this desk. Take away my salary and I would needs go elsewhere. However, the chief clerk will return Monday. I suggest you lay your grievance before him.'

'I don't want to get no more people mixed up in this business,' said Sam. 'I'm getting enough of it, myself.'

The acting chief clerk met Sam in the hall the first of the following week. 'Did you get your fifty-three cents?' he asked. 'I'd thank you for a receipt for it.'

'I'd thank you for the fifty-three cents,' and Sam's eyes bleazed.

'Do you mean to say the chief clerk didn't give you fifty three cents from me?' 'He didn't,' Sam maintained.

'Step into the office, Sam. This thing might as well be straightened now as never. 'Did I not,' he asked the chief clerk, 'leave fifty three cents with you this morning?'

'You did,' said the chief clerk.

'Did you give it to Sam?'

'I did,' said the chief clerk.

'Oh h h h,' gasped Sam. 'That is the biggest—now, think a minute; didn't you give it to some other boy?'

'Didn't you see me give it to him?' the chief clerk asked the stenographer.

'I heard you mention the fifty three cents,' said the stenographer, 'I didn't notice what you did with it. You didn't leave it on the desk.'

'Convicted!' cried the accuser, pointing the finger of scorn at Sam.

Sam looked into the adamant faces of his audience and weakened.

'You must have given it to some other boy,' he protested. 'I swear—'

'On your sacred honor?' put in the acting chief clerk, maliciously.

'I shall leave the room if you are going to swear,' said the stenographer.

'I don't want you to think I aint honest—'

Sam's voice trembled and hushed. Then he fled. Later, he sent a note to the chief clerk requesting that he state in writing from whom he received and to whom he delivered, fifty three cents, giving names of witnesses. The chief clerk did not respond. Sam came in to see about it.

'Oh, go off,' said the chief clerk. 'Can't you take a jolly?'

'Here's your fifty three cents,' spoke the acting chief clerk from the adjoining office. 'I think you've earned it and I've my money's worth. Come, kiss me, Sammie.'

DEBT DUE EVERY CHILD.

Plea for Broad Playgrounds—They Contribute Toward Good Citizenship.

'The child is father of the man,' sang Wordsworth, and 'the boy without a playground is the father of the man without a job.'

More playgrounds and playgrounds

that are playgrounds, not a mere fag end of a corner lot, are advocated for all the public schools of Boston by Rev. Mr. Kidner and other members of the Civic league associated with him, and this motto heads their efforts which call urgently for more landscape and skyscape, and less fire escape.

'There should be playgrounds with every school,' said the distinguished rector last night in speaking of this successful work of his in which he and his associates which wrought such great benefit to the school children of this day and generation.

'The playgrounds on Columbus ave. show what has been done there can be done at every school in the city if the city will only provide the grounds.'

'Our contention is, said he, enthusiastically, that play should be a part of the curriculum. School teachers should have oversight of the play as of the regular studies. We should have big grounds with every school, and the grounds kept open all the year.'

Playrooms in the basements of the schools are good, playgrounds on the roof are good, but better would it be to have these real playgrounds.

'Our idea is that the school buildings should be open evenings and all the day, as well as in the morning and afternoons. With baths in the basement and gymnastic equipment, boys would be drawn in from the streets, and a great good would be done these children of the street.'

'Too often the buildings themselves are closed, and the yard gates fastened, and when a boy dares to enter the yard the janitor regards him as a trespasser and warns him away.'

'The city is pretty well covered with playgrounds now except in ward 9, but there ought to be more grounds with every school. Grounds should have been provided for long ago, before the land values had risen. The Common is in part responsible for this. People are forgetting that Boston is growing and that boys and girls do not want to travel three miles to reach the common.'

'Then there's more grass on the common than playground. On the Common playgrounds there are, however, games by day and by night. Some of our football boys practiced in the basement and played by electric light in the evening on the common. Different schools have formed rival teams in friendly contests, and today the Sherman schools holds in proud position a silver cup won in the inter-school athletics. This shows what a playground will do.'

'The games, the opportunity for which these playgrounds afford, are great teachers in themselves. Football is the great game with the boys, and what does it teach—self control, and co-operation with his fellows, the subordination of his own interest to that of the team. All the games teach fortitude and courage, and it is an encouraging fact that our hockey and foot ball teams ignored to a great extent race lines.'

'Crowds attend these contests and the spirit of emulation is aroused to a happy degree. Fifty of our foot ball boys were sent to see the Harvard-Indian game. Our instructors have given supervision, and this is what the city should give also. Teachers and supervision are necessary for in promoting games they prevent the big boys from breaking up the sports.'

'The Columbus ave. playgrounds—they have been a great thing, remarkable, and show beyond the shadow of a doubt what can be accomplished at every school in the city. There are track athletics in the spring, games in the summer, foot ball and hockey in the fall, skating, ice hockey and toboggan in winter. There is a vegetable corner in summer, and there many boys and girls have become nature lovers from observing the plants.'

'And since these playgrounds were opened,' emphasized Rev. Mr. Kidner, as he spoke with great pride, 'there has been a great uplift wrought in the neighborhood. There have been less complaints to the police and to citizens generally than before. It's just this. The boys find a wholesome outlet for their surplus energy and animal spirits which any live manly boy should

have. The roughest boys of the section have been brought under perfect discipline.'

'The boys get endless fun on these playgrounds, and get their minds off the muck of the streets. The average boy in the crowded sections hangs around the corner. Too often when they do play in the street in the absence of any playgrounds, a policeman orders them away and confiscates their sleds if they are sliding, and takes them to the station if they are playing ball. I have bailed out two boys myself who were arrested for nothing more than playing ball.'

'If there is no playground where the children may use up their surplus energy in a wholesome and vigorous way, then their minds take another bent and they fall to stealing things, stealing lead pipe, robbing a fruit cart, banding into regular highwaymen and actually holding up people, or sometimes tying a weight to a rat and watching its struggles. With a playground, the energy, instead of being used in these expedients, is turned into wholesome channels.'

'Rich people are sending their boys to the boarding schools more and more, and the increase in these boarding schools is explained solely because these schools have fields where the boys can play, with trained men as instructors in their games. For the poorer boys the need for play room is precisely the same, and the only possible way of meeting it is through the extension of our playgrounds.'

'We are only too eager to look after the work, if the city will but provide the grounds. As in the boarding schools there should be trained instructors to arouse the interest of the boys. Our schools should be model schools, that is, with playgrounds, if anywhere, especially in the poorer neighborhood, where the people have no one to speak to them, there is all the more reason why we should give them what they need. We are now making efforts to secure ample playgrounds for the new school to be built in the very heart of the West End, probably on Greene St. It is to accommodate 1000

pupils, and according to the English standard there should be at least 30,000 square feet of playground, and by good rights 40,000 sq. ft. A building erected now may serve for 100 yrs., and now's the time to have the grounds with it.'

'People used to come to Boston to see the schools which were models for the country. But today no one comes here.' We have to go west to Iowa for model schools, which have playgrounds. Boston is behind the times, though the action of the city government for years in building too few school houses, and providing no grounds with those built.

'The present school house commission is capable and intelligent, but its appropriation is limited.'

Serenading Mazie.

'My experience among the poor of the tenements,' said the young doctor of the Settlement House, 'more and more convinces me that there is a true poverty, which shrinks from making itself known, and has to be sought; and a poverty which flaunts itself and thrives at the expense of truthfulness and self-respect.'

'The self-respecting poor suffer in silence, or when need presses hardest they borrow from each other. When conditions look up a little, they repay the favor.'

'This spirit of helpfulness is revealed in other ways, too. They are quick to feel and to show sympathy in sickness or misfortune. I saw something this afternoon which illustrates this.'

'I was on my way to a patient in Brown's Court, and had turned into it when I heard music. A small boy sat on the lowest step of an entrance to a house in the court, playing 'rag-time' music on a harmonica. In front of him were four or five other youngsters, boy and girls both, dancing to the music.'

'They did not seem to me to be dancing rather for some particular purpose. As they danced they kept looking up toward the window in the second story of the opposite house, and at the end of the dance one of the girls called some one in the window, whom I couldn't see from where I stood.'

'You like that, Mazie?'

'Oh, it's just fine,' came an excited girl's voice in reply, 'an' Chimmy plays elegant!'

'Chimmy' smiled and was going to begin again when my approach broke in on the entertainment. He looked up with a friendly grin. We had often met before.

'Having an open-air rehearsal, Jimmy?' asked.

'I dunno 'bout that,' he answered. 'Mazie's just back from the hospital,—had her leg took off,—an' we're a given her a—'

'He stopped to recall the word he wanted, and then asked:

'What is it dey call it when de ban plays de night after 'lection et de feller's house what's winned out?'

'Serenade,' I suggested.

'Sure! Dat's it—ser'nade, We're a givin' her a ser'nade 'cause we're glad she's home, and we want her to feel good and his eyes sought the window sympathetically. I looked, too, and saw a young girl seated in a pillow-propped chair. Behind her, leaning affectionately upon the back of the chair, stood Mazie's mother. Their faces were beaming happily, and it was plain that both of them were 'feeling good.'

Dog Days Deferred.

An Albany man who was visiting New York thought he needed a bulldog at his country place at Lake Bomoseen, Vermont and his wife and daughter admitted that he did. Unfortunately the three could not agree in a choice, so finally, says the Evening Sun, the father bought three dogs the selection of each from three different dealers.

At Albany he had the three dogs shipped to Lake Bomoseen, then changed his plans about going back there and took his family home. A few days later he received the following letter from the stableman at Lake Bomoseen:

'Dear Sir: Your three bulldogs arrived all right last night on the same train. I locked them up together last night in a box stall.'

'Yours truly, J. Jackson.'

'P. S.—We have only one box stall.'

'P. S.—You will have to buy some more dogs.'

Hicks—There's a friend of mine, a hustling young Italian, who is thinking of opening a high class restaurant in Chicago, making a speciality of Italian dishes.

Wicks—I'm afraid it won't be a 'go.' It's almost impossible to eat spaghetti with a knife.

A—Why didn't you congratulate Lorimer on his marriage.

B—I couldn't conscientiously do that; I don't know his wife.

A—Well, then, you might have wished her joy.

B—I couldn't reasonably do that, for I do know Lorimer!

