

TRUE TO HIS TRUST.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

Many of the readers of this narrative will easily recall to mind the late Mr. Abel Symington. For almost fifty years no face and figure were better known upon the streets of this great city than his; and his daily life, his kind, winning demeanor, and his frequent charities, caused his name always to be spoken with respect and esteem. At the time of which I am about to write he was in his sixtieth year. His form was still erect and his step elastic. His face was a perfect index of the excellence of his character and the greatness of his heart, as well as of the vigorous intellect of the accomplished man of business. I do not wish to overdraw this picture, but I must finish it with the remark that was often made by his friends and admirers—that Mr. Symington came as near being a perfect character as was permitted to humanity.

Perhaps I am partial; but that is natural. He was my benefactor; to his kindness is due all that I have become in life. Left a penniless orphan, my home at the age of eight was in a charitable institution of which he was a director. Something—I shall never know what—attracted his attention to me, among the two hundred inmates, upon one of his frequent visits. His inquiries about me were soon followed by my transfer to his own house. I believe I was not adopted, in the formal sense in which the word is used. I still retained my own name, Lambert Wade; but I was never made to feel that I was dependent upon his bounty. His wife had died some years before, leaving an infant daughter, Mildred, who was six years younger than myself. A maiden sister had the care of his house, and we four, with the servants, made the household. Later on, another member was added to it, who will presently be introduced.

Time had passed until I was seventeen years old. I had attended the graded schools, graduating in the academic department with some honor. The winter following found me fully installed in Mr. Symington's office as his clerk and assistant. He carried on a large real estate and loan business, which it was said his great capacity had doubled within the last fifteen years. Aside from the skilled part of the work, there were large ledgers to keep, letters to write, and much clerical labor to do. All this he had usually attended to himself, for the reason that he could not find a clerk who exactly suited him. Many were tried, and after a trial were kindly dismissed. It seemed to me at this time that he was too exacting in this matter; but a better insight into his ways led me to a different opinion. Next after honorable dealing and industry (as he told me with his own lips, one day), his great success in business was due to care and precision in all its methods, and he could not bear a slovenly or careless assistant. If I needed the hint, it was certainly not thrown away upon me. Aided by my strong desire to be of service to him, and with a natural liking for the work, I speedily mastered all its minor details; and it was a high gratification to me to find that all this part of the business was soon handed over to me, and that I was largely relieving Mr. Symington by the steadiness with which I kept my desk. My reflections as to how I could be of greater service led me at this time to make a request of him; which he immediately granted. In explanation of this, a few words about the arrangement of the building in which the office was situated become necessary.

It was a small brick, two-story structure, which had been built by Mr. Symington more than thirty years before, and used by him for his business ever since. The whole of the first-story was occupied by the outer and inner offices. From the inner office a stairway ascended to a small room, which, as I had been informed, Mr. Symington had used for his lodging before his marriage. It was now put to no use. From this room, without any intervening hall or passage, there was a door opening into a store-room, which occupied the rest of the upper story. It was half filled with the disused carpets, chairs, matting, and stove-pipe which had from time to time been brought up here from the office. My plan was to have the vacant chamber in the rear simply furnished for my use, so that I could sleep there instead of at the house.

About the first of June of that year Walter Brand came to visit Mr. Symington. I had never heard of him before, and now learned that he was the son of an elder sister who lived in a distant city. Walter was a very dashing, stylish young man of nineteen, who wore the most fashionable clothes, and seemed intent only on having what he called "a good time." No one who saw him could help admiring his upright figure, his regular features, bright eyes, and curly, black hair, and his hearty laugh, which had an infection of mirth in it. Two persons who were more unlike externally than plain Lambert Wade and handsome Walter Brand, it would be impossible to find. I felt attracted by his appearance, and made efforts to gain his friendship. To my surprise and mortification, he repelled all of them. His conversation with me when we met, as of course we did several times each day, was of the briefest; and more than once he gave me a decided snub. His treatment pained me, but I bore it without remark. I was not at a loss to account for it. His looks and manner showed me plainer than words could have told it, that he was angered to find another person occupying so confidential and trusted relation to his uncle as I did.

Three weeks had passed since the arrival of this visitor when I became aware of a change in the usual demeanor of Mr. Symington. He was as punctual and industrious as ever at the office; but his face was often troubled, he appeared more thoughtful, and he talked less with me in the intervals of business. Being very little at the house now save at meal times, I had not a fair opportunity to judge if his nephew was connected with his uneasiness; but I certainly suspected it. My suspicions were entirely correct. About half-past five one afternoon, as I was writing at my desk in the outer office, and while Mr. Symington was reading the newspaper in the inner room, Walter came in, and in a tone which was almost abrupt enough to be rude, asked for his uncle. I merely pointed with my pen to the private office, and went on with my work.

I could not see either of them; indeed, my eyes were not raised from the large pages where I was making my entries, and their words came to me distinctly.

"Uncle, please let me have fifty dollars."

"Why, Walter! You asked me for as much as that, and got it, only a few days ago."

"Yes, but—well, you were young years

self once, uncle, and you know that a young fellow can't have any fun in a big city like this without money."

"I must speak plainly to you, Walter. Your conduct has pained me more than I can tell. You have kept such late hours that my duty to you compelled me to have you watched; and the report brought to me, about the places you have frequented and the company you have kept, has shocked and distressed me. My dear nephew, for your own sake—for the sake of your parents—for my sake—you must stop this at once."

"It seems to me you are making a great deal out of a little, uncle. I'm no worse than other fellows. We only amuse ourselves in our own way, and don't harm any one."

"Is it possible, Walter, that you have become so hardened as this talk would show? And here—see this letter! You told me that this was your college-vacation; but here the president informs me that you have been suspended for gross misconduct."

Walter laughed loudly. "Now, really, uncle, I did not mean you should know that; but after all, what of it? Most of the boys have these little larks, and they are none the worse of it."

"You don't seem to appreciate the evil you have done. Not only have you disgraced yourself, but you have lied about it to me."

"O, don't feel so bad about it, Uncle Abel! Just let me have the fifty, and I'll straighten up and be as good as you want me to. Only a few wild oats, you know."

"Misguided boy! I would do anything to save you from your evil courses; but I will not furnish you the means to follow them. And I warn you—"

"Then you won't give me the money?"

"I will give you twenty times the amount to benefit you; but I will not—"

"O hang your moralizing!"

The nephew rushed abruptly away through the outer office. Involuntarily I looked up as he passed me, and received a glance—such a look! Hate and rage had transformed his face into the likeness of a demon. In a moment Mr. Symington came out and took several turns across the room.

"Lambert," he said—and I thought his voice trembled a little—"I have seen that you are not the kind of boy that needs continual approval to stimulate him to do his duty; and that discovery has gratified me as much as to know that you are faithful and industrious. My boy, you know I am not much given to open praise; but this once, at least, I will speak of you and to you as you deserve. I am more than pleased with you; I am proud of you. You have done exceedingly well."

His censure could not have brought the tears to my eyes as quickly as did these unexpected words. I tried to thank him, but my voice was choked, and I could only look what I felt.

The clock struck six, and we went together into the rear office to close the great safe. For several weeks past he had daily given me the combination with which he closed and opened it, explaining that in case of accident to him it would be convenient, perhaps necessary, for me to have it. His habit was to whisper the new combination to me; I would whisper it over to him to insure accuracy, and then I would watch the indicator on the safe door while he was turning the knob. All this was done on this evening, as usual. When four hours later I went to bed, various emotions kept me awake till midnight. Surprise at the discovery of Walter's depravity was mingled with sympathy for his uncle, but deep satisfaction on account of the commendation I had received was uppermost in my thoughts.

The sleep that at last came was rudely broken. A glare of light full in my eyes awakened me. As I sat upright in bed a pistol was held close to my forehead, and an unknown voice said:

"Silence—not a cry—or you're a dead boy!"

And then, after an interval just long enough to allow me to comprehend the whole dreadful meaning of the scene, "Get up and come below, without noise. You've got to open the safe for us."

The instant that was permitted me to look showed me two masked men standing by my bed, one holding a dark lantern, the other the pistol. Like a flash the purpose of their visit, and its consequences, were before me. Quite often the safe contained considerable amounts of money; not often as much as ten thousand dollars, which I knew Mr. Symington had placed there about four o'clock of the previous afternoon, having been too late for the bank. And now it was through me that he was to be despoiled of this great sum; I was to be the agent, though the unwilling one, in the plunder of him whom I loved better than all else on earth! My resolution was taken on the instant. I would seem to comply, and gain time for escape. Let me not be misunderstood; I certainly had not courage or coolness beyond the average of boys of seventeen, and the cold muzzle of the pistol at my head made me shudder all over. But my heart was filled with devotion to my patron; and seeming to feel his kind hand on my shoulder, I think I would have died before opening the safe for those men.

"Don't hurt me," I said, putting my feet on the floor. "I'll show you."

"Well, now, if you ain't a sensible young feller," said the man with the pistol. "Follow the chap with the light."

The stairs were in the corner near the head of the bed, and a few paces brought us to them. I did not know whether the man behind me was still holding the pistol to my head; I hoped that my words and manner had thrown him off his guard. As the man in front held up his lantern to show us the way I struck it from his hand with a sudden blow. It rolled down the stairway, and we were in darkness. Daring past the ruffian behind me, my night-dress brushing him, I gained the lumber-room, my knowledge of its exact location enabling me to lay my hand quickly upon the latch. I heard a curse and the snap of the pistol; the cartridge missed fire. With frantic haste I slammed the door between me and the burglars, and shot the bolt. Then I sank to the floor, weak and trembling. But I knew that I was safe; I could clamber over the old furniture, get to the front windows, break out the glass if they could not be raised, and sound an alarm that would bring help long before the robbers could break down the door—even if they dared to risk the noise. All this doubtless occurred to them, for they did not make the trial. With my ear to the floor I heard their muttered talk, with now and then an oath from the man with the pistol that sounded like the suppressed growl of a wild beast. Then I heard their feet on the stairs, and a few minutes later on the pavement outside.

I would not yet take the risk of returning to my chamber, for the departure

of the men might be only a stratagem to draw me back into their clutches. Wrapping myself up in the old carpets, I lay down and waited, sleepless, for daylight. So painfully slow it seemed in coming! but it came at last. Still, I would not venture out. I waited another hour; waited, until I heard the continual rattle of carts and wagons, and the tread of early passers. Then I went back to my room, put on my clothes, bathed my head, which was throbbing with the reaction of the strain I had endured, and went downstairs. Doors and windows were securely fastened; by whatever means the burglars had entered, they had not left a trace of their attempt behind. I opened the front door, and looked out. Walter Brand sat upon the stone step. He looked up and showed me his face, wild and haggard, and his eyes bloodshot.

"Let me come in," he said. "I want to speak to you."

He followed me into the private office and sat down. I stood before him, waiting for him to speak.

"I haven't treated you well, Lambert," he said.

"I'm glad that you know it," was my reply, "but it is a small matter. You have injured another more deeply."

He looked anxiously in my face; he must have seen there detection, discovery, condemnation!

"How did you find it out?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.

"It was very simple. On one of the fingers of the hand from which I struck the dark lantern I saw the large seal-ring, with the blue onyx stone, that you wear."

"It is all over with me, then," he said. "I have suffered the torments of the doomed since that hour! I hoped you did not know; I shook off that ruffian, and walked the streets, with my conscience smiting me at every step, promising God that if this last horrible sin did not find me out, I would repent and reform. But it is not to be so. Go for an officer; I have not strength to escape, if I wished to. Send me to the penitentiary; I deserve it."

"If you truly mean what you have just said, Walter, I shall not go for a policeman."

He looked up again.

"You don't mean that, Lambert. You can't forgive what I have done?"

"I can and will; but that is the least part of it. You must go to your uncle and tell him all. I will go with you."

"No, no! not that; not now. I can't give him such a blow; I can't look him in the face and confess that I yielded to the temptation of such dreadful wickedness and ingratitude. O, if he knew—if he knew! For God's sake, Lambert, don't tell him!"

"Go home, then, and begin a new life."

He shook his head sadly.

"I dare not. My father is a stern man, so different from Uncle Abel. I cannot meet him after my disgrace at college."

"There is another chance for you. Cut loose from your evil companions; go where you are not known; keep to your good resolutions, work hard, and all will be well."

His eyes were downcast; he seemed humiliated to the dust as he told me the obstacle to this course. A very brief struggle decided me. I went up to my chamber, and returning, placed fifty dollars in his hand. It was half of my little savings.

"You are welcome to it, Walter—and may God help you to be a man! Your secret is safe with me; your uncle will never know it till you choose to tell him."

The tears rolled down his face; he threw his arms around my neck and sobbed upon my shoulder. Then he hastened from the office and the city; and for ten years I did not see him again.

My mind was not wholly at rest in regard to the concealment from his uncle of the events of that morning, which I had promised Walter. In fact, it was a serious burden to me for weeks. The path of duty did not seem plain, and I passed more than one sleepless night over it. In the end, knowing Mr. Symington as I did, I persuaded myself that he, in my place, would do as I was doing. For nine years his example had been before me, and it abounded in forgiveness of the erring, in the lifting up and strengthening of those who had fallen. He was my pattern as well as my patron, and in observing his life I had really wished to learn the luxury of doing good.

It was not long after the disappearance of Walter that letters began to reach us from him. In a far Western city he had commenced his new life, and was manfully struggling with hardship and toil. Soon, he was writing cheerfully of new friends and brighter prospects; still later, of substantial success, and in time our hearts were gladdened by the news of his wealth and civic honors. Ten years bring chances to everybody; and when Walter, his wife and boy made us their long-promised visit, they found that I had become Mr. Symington's son-in-law, and was in principal charge of the business. It was not until the day before this visit ended that the memorable scene occurred which will fitly close this narrative. I was sitting with the ladies after dinner, with little Lambert Brand upon my knee, when Mr. Symington opened the library door and called me in, closing it after me. Walter sat by the window; and when he turned his thoughtful, expressive face to me, I knew at once what had happened.

"Walter has been telling me," said my father-in-law, "a very strange story of something that occurred at the office ten years ago. You see that it has astonished me; I certainly never suspected the truth. My dear Lambert, it makes me prouder of you than ever! Not often do bravery and mercy, a stout heart and a forgiving one, go together as they did that morning. You were not only faithful to your trust under the most trying circumstances, but after it had been well kept, you showed a charity and a moderation toward your enemy that portend of the true spirit of Christ."

Once more Walter's arm was round my neck; and his words shall end the story. "He did more than that, sir. He saved me."

Too Economical.

Adelbert—We are engaged to be married, you know, Ethel?

Ethel—Yes, I know.

"And with the full consent of your parents."

"Yes."

"Then, why will you not allow me to place my arm around your waist?"

"I suppose it is the economic teachings of my father, Adelbert."

"What has that got to do with it, Ethel?"

"He said I must never allow anything to go to waist."—*Texas Siftings.*

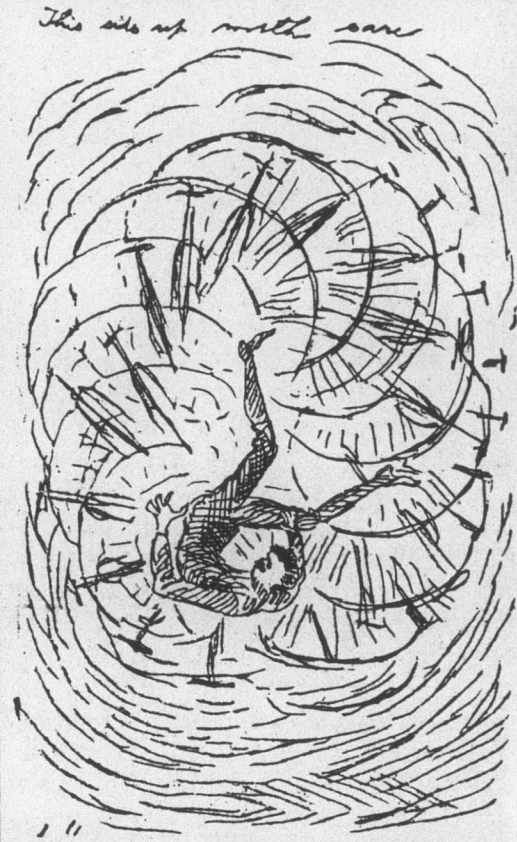
My Experience With a Bicycle.



If there was any one of my various accomplishments that, in my younger days, I was proud of, it was my horseback riding; and, when the wild, swift-gliding bicycle, with its fiery, untamed smile and curved spinal column, came prancing into civilization, I resolved at once to purchase it and ride proudly down Main street. Alas! for the sanguinity of mankind, and other Americans! I wrote this letter with my arm in a sling and a piece of bicycle in my back.

I am not as proud as I was yesterday; neither am I as pretty. There is a sort of unnatural feeling about my frame, as though my spinal column had broken ranks, and each vertebra had crowded out between different ribs. There is also a broad expanse of raw scalp in the neighborhood of the occipital bone, and the parietals have acquired several new styles of sutures; and my nose temporarily reclines in the shade of my ear. A man may be a good judge of horseflesh, and yet know but very little concerning the disposition and everyday habits of the bicycle. He may even understand the construction and action of the mule, and yet he will find more gentle surprises to the square inch in a full-grown and active bicycle than he ever heard of in his natural life. That has been my experience. Two weeks ago I purchased an iron-gray bicycle, about seventeen hands high, and had it led around to my stable. It was a stylish, highbred thing, with a proud mien and close-cropped tail. For a while I allowed it to browse about on the lawn last night; then I commenced making overtures toward it. For a time it repelled my advances and appeared shy and girlish, but gradually becoming accustomed to my style of management, it leaned familiarly against me, and allowed me to pick up its hind wheel, and look at its teeth, and, finally, as a last token of confidence and esteem, it laid its head on my shoulder, and in a sweet, confiding way, snickered in my ear.

Then, with the grace and abandon of a wild broncho trainer, I led it out on the avenue and prepared to mount the subdued racer. My wife was standing in the doorway, with a sort of doubtful smile upon her face, and, telling her that I would not be gone long, as I only intended to ride a mile or two that I might get in trim to win the prize to-day, I started on a trot alongside the bicycle. I did this to make the creature feel more acquainted, and to show it that I intended to be gentle with it and not jab my heels into its ribs, and belt it over the head, and yell like a Comanche after scalps. After trotting along in this manner for a rod or two, I put my foot in the stirrup and swung into the saddle. This sudden movement probably surprised it, for it looked reproachfully at me as though I had trifled with its confidence. It evidently thought we were out for a little play spell, and were billed to trot around the square together, as a team. For a moment it continued its course, and I proudly gathered up the reins; then a dreamy, troubled look came into its eyes, and, concluding that I had been hornswoggled into buying a bicycle that was subject to fits, I dismounted. My usual style of dismounting is to strike the ground feet first, this time I varied the programme and introduced several new and strictly original features. It is a terrible thing to witness a full-grown bicycle in the agonizing throes of a seventeen-by-twenty-nine fit. There is something novel and awe-inspiring about it to the man who is blindly endeavoring to grope his way out from under a frisky bicycle. When you are aboard the bicycle there are only two wheels, but when the thing playfully sits straddle of your neck, there seem to be fourteen wheels and eleven dozen handles with nickel-plated points. I changed my mind about entering my name in the racing lists to-day, and have concluded that it is



better to go by degrees. And as the hours go fleeting by, I sit in my easy chair, with my spring overcoat wrapped about my night foot, while a blue-bottle fills himself with gore from the place where the back of my head used to be, and tells me, between bits, that I am not as smart as I thought I was.

BOB FORD.

Even the Second-hand Were Too Dear.

"I reckon we'll have to give up the idea of putting pictures in our parlor, Miranda," remarked Jeremiah Turnipseed, as he threw the bridle under the table. "Why?" asked Miranda. "Too dear. Why, I priced one at the city, to-day, and the dealer sez, sez he: 'That's an old master; its price is \$5,000.' 'Why, sez I, 'looks like a second-hand pictur.' 'Yes, it is,' sez he. 'Then, thinks I, if a second-hand pictur costs that much, it's no use, to price a new un. So, Miranda, I reckon we'll have to hang up a few mottoes, 'God Bless Our Home,' and the like, and let the pictures go.'—*Pittsburg Commercial.*

OTTAWA, Ont., wants commercial union with the United States.

HUMOR.

WHAT is better than a promising young man? A paying one.

An appropriate name for an engineer on a cable car would be Agrippa.

English sparrows make tough pies—sort of gutter-percher, as it were.

An ape has a short tail—one example in nature of a hasty conclusion.

David killed Goliath by means of a sling. Men are often knocked out yet by a gin-sling.

The latest style of hand-organ has only one stop. It begins in the morning and stops at night.

It is said that the reason a girl loves a sewing machine so much is because there is a feller in it.

PRETZEL'S WEEKLY: Der ear-marks of a yackass dond could deach der sendimends uf his hind foots.

POMEROY'S DEMOCRAT: The best kind of parlor magic is that which converts gloom into sunshine.

SOMEONE says the major portion of the Confederate armies were officers. Of course they were. They are in every other army.

"JOHNNY," said a fond mother to her boy, "which would you rather do, speak French or Spanish?" "I would rather," said Johnny, rubbing his waistband and looking expressively at the table, "I would rather talk Turkey."—*Texas Siftings.*

"Now, JOHNNY," said the patient teacher, "put away that pocket-knife and pay attention to what I am saying. If you had an apple which you wished to divide with your little sister, how much would you give her?" "I'd give her the core," said Johnny.—*Harper's Bazar.*

LITTLE DOT—"What does Mr. Nice-fellow go to your house so often for?" Little Dick—"He wants to marry Nell." "Is he engaged?" "No." "Did he say he wanted to marry her?" "No." "Then how do you know he does?" "O! He acts so like a fool."—*Omaha World.*

THERE was an unusually large attendance at the various churches last Sunday. The ladies all had new bonnets and new dresses, you know, and the dear creatures couldn't stay away. It is awfully hard to serve the Lord in an old hat.—*C. V. Walls, in Newman Independent.*

"I AM so pleased!" said Clara to her little friend. "Last Saturday they gave me such a beautiful doll for a birthday present." "Ah! you still play with dolls. I don't; I am too big now." "And what have you done with yours?" "I have locked it in the cupboard. It will do for my children." "But suppose you have no children?" "Then it will go to my grandchildren."

A CONUNDRUM.
"Conundrum! Guess it if you can, And tell me, John, the answer, Whence a clumsy printer man Is like an honest dancer."
"I have it, Jane!" "You haven't, though, I'd make a dozen bets."
"One of them sets the forms, you know; The other forms the sets."
"Sharp answer, dear, but not the one Wrought by my mental caper— One of them pays the piper, John; The other pies the paper."—*Printers' Circular.*

"WHEN the other train struck," explained the fireman to the President of a Dakota railroad, "it disabled both the engineer's arms, but he got hold of the whistle rope with his teeth before he died and hung on, and she howled till we cut our way to him, pried open his jaw, and removed his body." "Er—well—yes," replied the President, "but I don't exactly see what good that did." "Why, we were inside the city limits, and it was early on Sunday morning. There's an ordinance against locomotives whistling, you know." "Certainly, I see the point. He was a brave and faithful man, and I'll see that his family is taken care of, just for this one heroic act if for nothing else."—*Dakota Bell.*

ELEVATOR accidents are common, and are often traced directly to the victim himself. It frequently happens that four or five men get on a freight elevator and start up to their work. Skylarking and scuffling is going on as a matter of course, and when a man reaches the landing at the floor whereon he works, he is very apt to give his neighbor a punch in the ribs or knock his hat down over his eyes, and then make a jump for the landing without taking the trouble to stop the elevator. If a foot slips, or the man stumbles, there is every chance for an accident. Perhaps it is a broken ankle, or a dislocated shoulder, but sometimes it is death. There is great danger from such actions while the elevator is ascending, but there is still more danger while the elevator is going down. Then a misstep when leaping out of the car may cause a person to be caught between the landing and bottom of the car, when a horribly mangled body is almost surely the result. In the mill, how often a man runs the risk of getting caught in a belt, rather than put himself to a little extra trouble and be perfectly safe. Long familiarity with the dangerous belt had perhaps given a sense of security to the victim, and before he is aware he is torn or killed.

A Child's Idea.

"Mamma," said a little girl whose name was Gertrude Matilda, "I hope when the Lord wants me He'll call me by my pretty name."

Her mother remarked that the name would not make any difference to the Lord.

"No," was the reply, "I s'pose not, and whichever name it is I s'pose I'll have to answer."—*Detroit Free Press.*

WE stand serene at sunny points in life; and to them who smile at seeing us glad say nothing of the interval of storms.