

NEVER MIND!

Never mind if it hails or snows—
Never mind how the storm-wind blows;
Just what's best for you, God—He knows;
Why should you weep and sigh?
Never mind when a world of woes
Beats you down, with a thousand woes;
Just what's best for you, God—He knows;
Over you bends His sky!
Never mind when the black night throws
Darkness over your life's last rose,
Dead in its loveliness! God still knows;
Why should you sit and weep?
Never mind! there is sweet repose
With the dying day—at the twilight's close,
And unto the valley—the one God knows—
Angels your steps shall keep!

—[Atlanta Constitution.]

THE EARLIER BIRD

BY CHARLES D. WILLARD.

There were four men in the smoking compartment of a Pullman, in an overland train heading westward. They talked of California—of its gold and the '49ers, of its fruits, of its mountain scenery and of the hospitality of the people. When the latter subject was reached, one of the travelers fetched a sigh so long and deep that it instantly attracted the notice of the others, and they asked him its cause. He returned no answer, then one of them demanded to know whether he had ever experienced the famous hospitality of the Californians, and to this question he made the following strange reply: "Yes, by proxy." Thereupon the others, burning with curiosity, besought him to make himself understood. This he did in the following tale:

My first visit to the Golden State took place a number of years ago, when I was an inexperienced young man of about twenty-five. My home was in Cleveland, where my family had resided for many years. A trip to California, in those days, was looked upon as a great undertaking, and I began to talk it over with my numerous friends and relatives several weeks before I set out. Presently I made a remarkable discovery. It was that every one of these friends and relatives had some acquaintance on the Pacific Coast, who would rejoice at the opportunity to welcome me afforded by a letter of introduction.

Now, as I understand a letter of introduction, it is a sort of a sight-draft, friendship being the consideration, drawn by your friend on the stranger, which you are empowered to collect—if you can. Your success depends upon several things; your friend's credit with the stranger, for one; the stranger's general solvency—that is, his capacity for friendship—for another, and his opinion of you as a collector, for a third. The whole transaction seems to me loose and irregular, and the risk falls entirely on the unfortunate bearer of the letter, who usually takes the thing on its face value.

At first, I tried by various evasions to get out of accepting these letters. But it would not work. People seemed to think that they were conferring some enormous favor on me, which, with the natural modesty of youth, I was seeking to decline. The more I held off the greater was their zeal in my behalf, and in several instances, I am confident, it resulted in my having letters forced upon me which would otherwise have been forgotten. What could I do? Nobody ever heard of such a thing as declining a letter of introduction—it would be equivalent to saying: "I don't want to meet your friend; he may be good enough for you, but I have no use for him." So I accepted all that were offered and concealed my true sentiments under an expansive mass of gratitude.

At last, when I was ready to start, the bundle of letters had grown so large that it positively frightened me. Indeed, at times I was half resolved to abandon the trip, solely on account of the premonition of evil that swept over me whenever I contemplated that awful heap. But I had now gone too far to back out, and, depositing the letters in one corner of my trunk, I took my departure. There was a crowd at the station to see me off, and the last thing I heard, as the train started, was a general cry of:

"Be sure and present my letter to—"

Of course the request was superfluous—like most things said at partings—for the reason that I had already solemnly promised each one that I would deliver his letter.

In the quiet solitude of the first day's ride, I had nothing to do but think, and the bundle of letters provided me with subject matter. They constituted a problem whose vexatious conditions drove me half distract.

If I failed to deliver them—or to make at least an honest effort in behalf of each—I should break my promise to a number of people whose good opinion I held in high esteem. It would never do for me to deliberately admit on my return, that I had scorned to make acquaintance with their friends, or that I had been insensitive to their kindness in giving me the letters. On the other hand, I doubted whether I could manufacture excuse delicate enough to go around. Having been trained to truth from my boyhood, I lacked the imaginative power which is needed for artistic mendacity. In fact, I was likely to find myself in the same embarrassing situation that is said to have overcome the Father of his Country: I could not tell a lie—that would get me out of the scrape.

So I finally settled it in my own mind that I must present all the letters.

Then the other horn of the dilemma began to gore me. Here were a lot of people who knew nothing of me, nor of them. I was expected to hunt them up, at a great expense of time and trouble, and deliver to them a letter apiece all around, after the fashion of a conscientious and impartial mailman. But that was not all. These letters practically involved a demand, on my part, for attentions, based on je-ne-sais-quoi relationship between the sender and the recipient. Being a very young man, I was somewhat sensitive on the score of snubs, and I saw them looming up in unlimited numbers throughout the whole situation.

The Boston experience was liable to be repeated on a magnificent scale.

The second day out I became acquainted with several of my fellow-passengers. One of them, a bright young New Yorker, by the name of Yelverton, seemed to take a special fancy to me, and we put in several hours conversing together. He had visited the coast before, and although only a few years my senior, was evidently a man who had had a good deal of experience in the world. Naturally, after our acquaintance had progressed to a certain stage, I talked of the subject uppermost in my mind, and told him all about the letters.

I had hoped that he would say something that would prove reassuring; on the contrary, he aggravated my woe.

"Why, my dear fellow," he said, "if you are going to undertake to deliver those epistles, you have my sympathy. Just now the very words of introduction are to the average Californian, like a red rag to a bull. They are a hospitable people, but their good nature has been so grossly imposed upon by the hordes of imposters and mountebanks that has poured in since the building of the railroad, that it is no longer easy for a stranger to get into their good graces.

The letter-of-introduction device has been worked until it is threadbare, and the man who offers to present one risks an immediate arrest from the police, or even severer treatment at the hands of the vigilance committee."

"You frighten me," I said; "however, as my letters are all genuine, and bear the names of many of the most prominent people of Cleveland, I hardly expect to meet with difficulties of that sort."

"Probably not," said Yelverton; "but you may expect to be rather coldly treated."

"Well, blast the letters!" I exclaimed, angrily; "I can see they are going to destroy half the pleasure of my visit to the coast."

My annoyance seemed to afford Yelverton no small amusement, and he recurred several times to the subject after I had allowed it to drop.

It was a part of my plan to stop over in Denver about a week to visit some friends. Yelverton, also, made a brief stay in that place, and we occupied adjoining apartments in the same hotel. Once, when he happened to be in my room, I had occasion to look for something in my trunk, and I came upon the hated bundle of letters.

"Here are those infernal documents," I remarked, tossing the bundle over to the table near where he stood. He picked it up, felt of its thickness, and then gave a sardonic laugh.

"You are certainly in for it, my boy," he said, and put the letters back on the table amid a pile of newspapers and magazines.

Before his departure, which took place the next day, Yelverton made me promise that I would telegraph him when I left Denver, so that he might meet me on my arrival at the coast. I promised it unhesitatingly, for I was satisfied that his friendship would bring opportunities not to be slighted.

Various circumstances which I need not detail lengthened my stay in Denver from a week to nearly a month, and in the course of that time I quite forgot about the letters of introduction. When I was ready to depart, however, I thought of them with a sudden and intense pang of discomfort.

I telephoned to Yelverton, and proceeded to pack my trunk. Just as I was about to turn the key, it suddenly occurred to me that I had not noticed the bundle of letters in its customary place in the corner of the till. I opened the trunk and investigated.

The letters were not to be found, either in the till or elsewhere. Then I remembered that shortly after my arrival at the hotel I had taken them out to show to Yelverton, and had put them on the table. However, and that I might as well confess, for they were not there now.

I made a thorough search of the room; the letters had plainly disappeared.

I went immediately to the clerk and told my story. He sent for the head chambermaid.

"Who takes care of Mr. Bonworthy's room?" he asked.

"Maggie," answered the head chambermaid; "but Clara had that room when he first came."

"I have lost a package of letters," said I.

The two exchanged significant glances.

"Do you think they were stolen?" I asked; "no one could have any possible object—"

"Oh, no," said the clerk. Then he asked me if the letters were valuable.

"No, no," I said; "not exactly."

"Well, I'll tell you," said the clerk, evidently much relieved: "we had that girl Clara go, because she had a reckless way of burning up things that she found lying around in the rooms. If you have made a thorough search and you are sure the letters are not there, the chances are they are destroyed."

I found it difficult to repress my joy at this intelligence. It is to be doubted if the clerk and head chambermaid ever succeeded in explaining my strange conduct, in actually refusing to make a row when one was quite justifiable. I hastened back to the room and executed a fresh search so as to satisfy my conscience. When I was absolutely convinced that the letters were gone, I danced about the room in a transport of glee. The awful incubus which had been weighing down my spirits was suddenly removed, and I breathed again.

"What a blockhead I am," I said to myself; "why did it never occur to me to destroy the letters and claim, on my return, that they had been lost?"

Chance had supplied the excuse which imagination had been unable to conjure up. I continued my journey, light-hearted as a prisoner who has just secured his freedom.

Yelverton had advised me to stop over at Sacramento—one of the historic cities of the state—and visit the capitol and other points of interest. I adopted the suggestion. The train got into Sacramento in the morning, and I was driven right to a hotel.

I wrote my name on the register, and asked for a room for one day. The clerk whirled the book around, glanced at the name, and said:

"All right, Mr. Bon—why are you Mr. Bonworthy? Elliot Bonworthy of Cleveland?"

"Well," I said, with some dignity, "what did you imagine I wrote that name for—amusement?"

His tone and manner surprised and annoyed me. It was evident, however, that my cool answer had disconcerted him, for his hand shook as he penciled the number of the room after my name, and his voice trembled when he called up the bell boy.

Ten minutes later, just as I was completing a hasty toilet, there was a knock at my door, and, in answer to a "come in," the clerk entered, followed by a tall, military-looking man. When the door was closed, the clerk motioned his hand toward me, and nodded.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Do I understand," said the military man, "that you acknowledge your name to be Elliot Bonworthy?"

"Of course I do," I answered somewhat angrily.

"Well, I like this nerve," said the military man to the clerk, and the clerk grinned at me.

"Say," continued the military man, "have you any friends in this town?"

"No," I said; "I had some letters of introduction to several—"

The clerk gave a loud, derisive laugh.

"That settles it, Bill," he said to his companion; "you had better run him in. You can take him down to the city on the afternoon train."

"What does all this mean?" I exclaimed.

Bill produced a paper from his pocket. "It means that you are under arrest," said he, "on a charge of obtaining money under false pretenses. We know all about your letter-of-introduction scheme; it may have worked all right in San Francisco, but it doesn't go here. Now, just come along quietly, and there won't be any trouble; otherwise—"

I glanced at the warrant. There was my name, "Elliot Bonworthy," as plain as print. I don't need to remark that I was astonished and frightened. I had heard of men being mistaken for criminals and put to the necessity of proving their own identity, but here was I arrested under my own name, in a place where I had supposed myself unknown. What could I do—or say? I asked a few questions, and learned that the crime that was charged had been committed in the city of San Francisco a week or two before. Of course, I could prove an alibi at the trial—but, in the meantime, what was to be done to keep out of jail?

I accompanied Bill "quietly," as he had suggested—bill the sheriff's office, and we waited until the next train left for San Francisco.

The fruit is one of the largest and most remarkable of palms. It is a native of and only found on a small group of islands called the Seychelles. These form an archipelago in almost the middle of the Indian Ocean, consisting of about eighty islands. Seychelles are the home of the so-called sea coconut or Maldivian double cocoanut—the coco-de-mer. It is the fruit of a peculiar and remarkably fine species of the palm tribe, indigenous to and only found on certain small islands of the group, and nowhere else in the world. Botanists give it the name Lodoicea Seychellamum.

The fruit is a large double, oblong, kidney-shaped nut, covered with a thin husk. After the removal of this the fruit has the appearance of two oblong nuts firmly joined together for over half their length, and which often weigh from thirty to forty pounds.

They are borne in bunches, each consisting of nine or ten nuts, so that a bunch will often weigh 400 pounds.

It takes ten years to ripen its fruit, the albumen of which is similar in appearance and lines the inner surface of the nut, but, unlike that of the common coconut, is too hard and horny to serve as food. The shell is converted into many useful and ornamental articles by the island natives. But the most important part is the leaves, which are made into hats and leathern.

Others object that the Democratic party was not charged with the duty of passing an income-tax law, and never declared in favor of it. But it was charged with the duty of reducing taxes on the consumption of the people and of meeting the expenses of the Government. It cannot do this without imposing new taxes. A new emergency has arisen. A deficiency has occurred under the McKinley law. Shall it be met by new taxes or higher taxes on the necessities of life, or on the luxuries, vices, and indulgences of the people? The Democrats in Congress chose the latter alternative. And if that is not Democratic, nothing is Democratic.—New York World.

No Alarm in Minnesota.

We commend to the attention of our Republican friends who persist in ignoring the facts with respect to the condition of the iron-ore industry and no care being taken to extend new plantations, in 1884 the leading botanists in England petitioned the Government for protection against this wasteful destruction, for fear that it would go escape it?

Does not the boss not grasp the fact that it is to be a national tax? The Democrats of the Cotton Exchange say that it is "inquisitorial in its character," and that it "can be justified by no less a necessity than war requirements." It is more inquisitorial than the tariff law, under which trunks, handbags, and persons are searched, or than the internal-revenue law, which takes possession of a distiller's property and holds it under lock and key until the taxes are paid? Does not the pension bill of \$10,000,000 a year, more than \$10,000,000 of which is the growth of the last four years of peace, justify a war tax? Must all the war and peace requirements be met by taxes on the necessities of the people?

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