

Ain't.

By Albert M. Clusley

"That little package is worth fifty thousand dollars. You might as well know that at the start."

"That's a lot of money," gasped the boy, who was only twenty.

"It will mean a lot to us if it gets away from you," said the New York member of the firm.

A nervous chill passed over the boy. It confused him.

"I'll die first," he blurted.

The man laughed. "Don't die, Burton," said the manager in a low tone. "This is a test of your efficiency."

When he had prepared for the night he tied the package with a strong cord securely to his waist. Curling over it in his berth he slept fitfully. People rubbing against the curtain startled him so that he was wide awake.

Once he dreamed. Mr. Collins, the Chicago manager, was meeting him at the station. He opened the bag for the package of jewels. It was gone. When he finally awoke—it seemed years—the reaction from apprehension to relief, as he felt the package under him, was almost worth the nightmare.

Finally he was conscious of the dreaded hand touching him. With a jump he grabbed the wrist of the porter who was prodding him. "Seben o'clock, suh."

As he neared Chicago that night he studied the photograph of the manager, Mr. Collins, who was to meet him. Burton had never seen him. He was smooth-faced, had quite a large Roman nose and was nearly bald.

Walking down the platform toward the gate where many people were gathered to meet arrivals, he looked earnestly among the faces for the duplicate of the picture. Soon he spied a man who seemed to answer the description.

The man was peering from behind a group, his head twisting this way and that, as he sought to get a look at every face. He gave Burton the same keen examination, but his eyes turned toward others.

Studying him again, Burton decided that the man was Mr. Collins. Passing through the lane of people and around behind him, he pulled his sleeve. "Mr. Collins?"

The man turned his head impatiently and, half looking, blurted: "Huh?"

"I am Mr. Burton."

Almost savagely the stranger whirled about, exclaiming: "Well, what of it?" His voice was heavy and rough.

"I have the package from Brown & Berkley."

Immediately the man became attentive. He took hold of the boy's arm just above the elbow and stared at him.

"How much of it is there?" he said.

"Don't you know?" said the boy. "Are you Mr. Collins?"

With a grim smile the man answered: "Yes, I'm Collins."

"Show me your card, please."

"Oh, that's all right, boy; I'm Mr. Collins."

"Then show me your card!"

Reaching into his pocket he produced one of the firm cards, "Brown & Berkley, Jewelers, New York and Chicago," with the name "Mr. Collins" in the lower corner.

Putting his arm through the boy's he moved across the station. Let's go. We'll take a cab."

"No one tried to hold me up," Burton said jokingly, as they were stepping into the carriage.

"Of course not," said the man. "There ain't no particular danger."

Ain't! The Chicago manager, and using bad grammar? A creepy feeling like paralysis, sole over the lad. He thought rapidly. Of course it was possible that the Chicago manager might be illiterate, but what if—

The man chatted familiarly about business. The boy sat up straight, his heels raised from the floor like a sprinter on his mark; he clutched the bag resting on his knees.

If he only had that picture at hand. He'd like to take another good look. The thought of the picture reminded him of something. The man was lounging back in the corner of his seat, well in the shadow.

"Excuse me," said Burton, "is that hat of yours a Stetson? I am interested in good looking hats. May I look at that one you have on?"

"Oh, if you want to." Taking it off with an indulgent air, the man held it out to him.

The fellow was not bald.

Burton felt that he was in the hands of a clever crook. He must

escape. He planned it rapidly. Waiting until the cab was passing through a well-lighted street, he grasped the handle of the bag with his right hand, moved forward in his seat slightly so that he could reach the door catch with his left hand. There was a tug, a scuffing noise, a leap into the street, a shout, "Stop! Thief!" A passing cab nearly ran him down. "Police!" he yelled and ran blindly for the sidewalk where throngs were passing.

Suddenly the boy went down, struck from somewhere. He clutched the bag. He felt the weight of human bodies thrown upon him. "Police!" he grunted muffledly. "Yes. The police 'a' get ye," said a voice.

Burton was yanked to his feet. A big policeman held him. He shoved the bag into the officer's arms.

Twenty minutes later a group, consisting of Burton, the officer and the stranger, stood before the desk sergeant at police headquarters. The stranger was explaining:

"I tested the boy at the station

to see if he was smart enough to demand identification. He was, but it never occurred to me that he might become suspicious of me. He had a picture taken before I began wearing a wig. In the cab he found that I was not bald and tried to escape, believing me a thief. And I thought then that he was crooked."

He put out his hand.

"Burton, I'm sorry. I was to blame and you were smarter than I. You're all right boy, blessed if you ain't."

—In Boy's Life.

THE OLDEST TREE IN AMERICA

The oldest tree in North America is a cypress in Mexico, which is 5,000 years old.

It takes 37 people with outstretched arms to reach around it. Its weight is not clearly known, but as the Mexicans say, "It takes two looks to see the top." It is about 200 feet high.

—Lone Scout, Chester Bittinger.

Richest Indians**In the World**

The Osages are the richest Indians in the world. Every Osage Indian, man, woman, and child, draws over four thousand dollars a year from the Government.

This money comes from the royalty on oil leases owned by the Government and rented out to oil companies who wish to drill for oil. By "royalty" is meant the revenue taken from all the oil that the wells produce. In most cases this rate is 6 percent, and sometimes 8 percent.

The average family of Indians, say five, would receive over twenty thousand dollars a year. The Osages are very extravagant with the money they receive, and they always spend it all. Almost every family of them owns a big six cylinder car which they keep going all the time.

The Sad Tale of Squirrelum Squmps

A nice little fellow was Squirrelum Squmps, So christened because he made squirrelly jumps; The folks came to watch him in groups and in clumps. Do stunts in silk stockings and dainty tan pumps. One day in the forest (and here this tale slumps) He saw real squirrel antics, and down in the dumps He went, and no more for the gawks and the gumps He capered, but sickened and died of the mumps. Never more will he stir his slim, frolicsome stumps.

—Brooklyn Eagle Junior.

RIGHT OF THE BAT

"O'Brien, Oi hov wan for yez. If a man is born in Lapland, lives in Finland, an' dies in Poland, phwat is he?"

That alsy. A car-r-pse."—Boston Transcript.

The Hickville County Breeze

"The Official Wind-Jammer of the Community"

ALL THE VILLAGE GOSSIP BY CHARLES MAC LEONHARDT

FROG TOWN NOTES

Sil Limberwurst is back on his old job at the Elite Livery Stable. He was a chamber maid.

Lemmy Pashby asked his sweetheart for her hand the other day and was rejected by the girl's father. When he asked on what



grounds he was forbidden the girl's father said, anywhere within a mile of the house were the grounds.

Lashby Tubblesky is the most absent minded man in the village is the latest reports. Jake was smoking a cigar the other day and got up from his chair to stir the fire; he laid the cigar down beside the cat, which was sleeping upon the table nearby. Just as soon as Jake got properly seated again, the cat began to yell—and as he was a rather nervous person asked his wife for goodness sakes stop that cat from yelling, and his wife told him maybe he would stop yelling if he could take the cat's tail out of his mouth and pick up the cigar instead.

BEANVIEW NOTES

Our soup will be beanless from this time on, said Ez Ebbs proprietor of the Ebbs Hashery today. The patrons say it has been beanless for some time, also hopeless.

Miss Bedelia Grigsby who sang at the Ka-Doots theatre, "Break the News to Mother," by request, has also stopped singing in the manner.

Pete Simmins has such a short time lunch at noon times, that his wife meets him at the door with a bowl of soup and a squirt gun.

The only time Luke Zarrow stutters is when he talks.

On account of the shortage of grass, there will be no grasshoppers this year.

Mrs. Clarabelle Toodles passed through the village today, and she claimed she had been looking for her husband for the past two years. Old maid Spivins said she was lucky, as she had been looking for a husband for twenty-five years and hadn't found him yet.

Squire Perkins has a little pet pig he calls ink, because it is continually running out of the pen.

LET'S SMILE AGAIN

Said the pretty girl
To her sweetheart, son,
For goodness sakes
Don't call me a Hun.

HICKSVILLE NEWS

Uncle Cal Zarrow has a dog that beats any dog that ever lived for intelligence. When Cal starts quail hunting the dog will begin to look through the fields for the birds; in squirrel season he takes the dog out and with its intelligence runs around and looks in all the trees. But when Cal wants to go fishing, why the dog runs for the garden as fast as it can and begins to dig for fishing worms.

Mrs. Maris Corntassel recently got married, and it was out of her line to buy fish, and she went to the grocery, asked, how did the fish come. The grocer told her, in various sizes. She studied for a moment and told him to give her a pair of sevens, as that was the size of gloves she wore.

Mrs. Ezra Zarrow has a new hired girl, and she gets three dollars a week with the use of the organ.

Speaking of fakirs, Squire Phinn is a Moose, an Elk, an Eagle, a tax ferret, and a night owl.

Miss Lilly Belle has not decided whether she will spend her money on her feet or her head this year.

Spike Lumpus misjudged a skill the other day, and is confined to his home.

Judge Perkins tried a dozen eggs for his breakfast this morning and found them guilty.

THE RUMBLE IN THE CHIMNEY

"Nobody kin tell what de rumble in de chimbly means, unless it's dem what knows," said Brother Williams—"dem what ain't got no fire ter warm by; an' not nuff kiver ter keep de col' out; an' nuffin' tall ter ax a blessin', an' nowhars to go, kase dey ain't nuffin' ter go for—an' ef dey went, dey'd be no use comin' back! Dey is de only folks dat kin come nigh ter tellin' what de rumble in de chimbly means, we'en de Col' Win's konkin' at de do' an' shakin' de stuffin' out de winders! But howsomever, an' in de meantime, thank de good Lawd fer what I done had, an' don't let win' an' weather stan' in de way of de good intentions er Providence 'tords de long-sufferin' righteous!"

Prompt Settlement Asked

One day while taking dinner at the home of Izzie Levinski's home, the father made a remark to their son: "When I die son, I am going to leave you all my money." And the son promptly spoke up and replied, "Say, pop I'll throw off five percent for prompt cash."

It's Different Now.

My love once called me honied names,
But now she's rather chatty;
Instead of "petty" now it's
"James,"
And sometimes only "fatty."

"We Don't Miss a Thing at Our Village"**LONESOME LOOT NEWS**

The village butcher has a new sign in his business saying: "I butcher myself every Saturday."

During a cyclone at Bean Ridge last Wednesday the tin roof was blown from Eli Ebbs barn. Eli had his automobile in the shed nearby and it was damaged so bad he had to box it up and send to the factory for repairs. At the same time Eli boxed up the tin roof to send to the junk man, and the orders got mixed in shipment, the tin went to the auto factory and the auto to the junk dealer. A few days later Eli received a letter from the auto factory telling him they had received cars in all kinds of conditions, but his was the worst they had ever received and according to their guarantee a new car would be sent at once.

Josie Corntassel bought a new car and she has became so popular it was necessary for her to turn her wrist watch back a couple hours.

Our Main Street clothing store announces their suits wear like iron—and we do not doubt that they will begin to look rusty in a short while.

OUR WANT ADS

For Rent—A furnished apartment suitable for young lady with folding doors.

Lost—Near town a half skin jacket belonging to a young lady trimmed with red flannel.

Sign in barber shop—"During alterations, patrons will be shaved in the back."

Wanted—Good fertile sauerkraut seed.

To Exchange—Two passenger porch swing for a lawn mower. Our grass needs the once over.

WE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Mrs. Ebbs—Why is it that everytime a fellow kisses a girl, she closes her eyes?—Bertie.

Send me your photograph and I probably can give you the required information.

Unusual Complaints

"I've just been discharged," said the shot gun gloomily.

"I'm going on strike," said the clock with a decision.

"I'm all tired," said the auto standing at the gate.

"I haven't a stitch to wear," said the sewing machine as it kept on running.

The bell tolled (told) so much it was ashamed of itself.

The only thing that really was enjoying itself was the garden hose playing upon the lawn.