

THE DUMB MAN AND THE FLAG

(By Charles A. Bonifas.)

Even "Beany" Swan did not dare make faces at the dumb man when he came into town.

With the other children, "Beany" watched him from a distance as he went his rounds selling wood, and followed him to the grocery store when his wagon was empty, dragged by a horrid and unholly fascination.

The same dreadful power held "Beany" at the grocery window to watch the dumb man as he told with his swift fingers his few wants to Mr. McCann, the grocer. It was only when the transaction was over and the dumb man started out with his parcels that "Beany" joined the breathless, admiring group across the street.

When the creaking wagon was disappearing around the first clump of trees up the gulch, "Beany's" natural boldness returned. He leaped down in the middle of the road, kicking up his bare heels in rude defiance and heartfelt relief, and called loudly:

"Dummy, old red-headed dummy, has to sell wood, woody, woody."

Even this discreet challenge won for him many plaudits from his band of followers and admirers, who joined faintly in the hallooing after all possible danger had passed.

Whenever the dumb man came into town the word was circulated with surprising rapidity among the children. He was more to be feared than gypsies, "Beany" said. An Indian was more merciful than the dumb man. He was addicted to strange practices and had strange powers, such as being able to see the wind and talk by signs with any animal in the wood. Also he could hear when the moon was right and then he turned into a wolf.

All these and many other strange things he could do, "Beany" knew he could. And thus it was that "Beany's" defiant actions behind the dumb man's back won him honor and respect.

But "Beany" did not tell of his own awful dreams when always the dummy man, having heard each rabid word, came and stood by his bed and talked in dreadful signs, until "Beany" had to go and live in the woods with him and chop and split wood for him forever.

To the grown-up part of Placer the dumb man was only Old Jennings, the wood hauler, a little, stooped, wiry man—who had come there before the Utes quitted the Vasquez Valley for all time. That was about all Placer knew of the dumb man or cared. He came to town when some one needed wood, the grocer sending him word, and Placer let him along. There was little enough in the world out beyond the giant hills that barred the village from the outside, or back in the mountains, that did interest Placer.

The world had forgotten it and Placer turned its back on the world. It sat down behind its hills and let the great outside look out for itself.

Placer had reached that point in the downward grade of a mining camp when absolute annihilation faced it. The town no longer held mass meetings when the sensational and vernal outside press said that the town was dead as a gold-producing camp. It had even ceased to brag of its glory, or predict a great future, or send out stories of vastly rich strikes.

Placer was dying once flowed rich and heavy through its arteries and veins had thinned to a trickle. Its very approach from the outside was a melancholy reflection of its great dead past.

The stage road that connected it with Thompson's, a snug, self-centred and fairly prosperous village at the mouth of the canon, led down, down, down through miles of tottering, staggering sluice boxes and flumes. It was down these that the life-blood of Placer had flowed at one time.

Just at the head of the creek, where the canon fell, as if exhausted, into a green valley, and the Roaring Fork came in, the hardy miners of the first generation had built Placer. Along the creek had been many villages, Spanish Bar, Gravel Bar, Nugget, Wilson's Creek, Chicago Creek, Missouri Flat—all these fell that Placer might thrive. Only the top-up creek bed, high gravel dunes, deep pits and deserted cabins with here and there a "gopher-hole" in the side of the steep hills, showed where the Titans had once lived and hoped. All these villages had died for Placer, as Rome was built on many lesser cities, for the hills above Placer opened their veins when the creek sands ceased to give up their golden grain, and gold flowed in abundance, nay, even as a flood. Four-story brick houses, blocks rose on cabin sites in a year—Placer terraced its hillsides for the villas of multi-millionaires, as much champagne flowed by night as the now dirty and insignificant Vasquez flowed in a day, and Placer went wicked wild. The collapse came with depth, litigation and armed wars preceding. Veins grew low grade that were valued by the pound, and then "pinched out." Placer was "pocketed," the experts said. The crest of the tide passed over Placer, down the steep, rocky, dusty stage road that led to the outside. It left only sad dregs in the town. Champagne ceased to flow, and it cleared up, flowed broadly and merrily again, and the town receded.

Through it all, somehow, the dumb man lived without becoming richer or poorer. He hauled wood. No excitement, even when poor men as he became millionaires over night, seemed to reach him. He passed through Placer's orle of prosperity unscathed. There even came a time when Placer ceased to furnish bread enough to keep the dumb man busy, and he found it necessary to find more custom elsewhere. He began to haul wood to other small distant towns, and was seen less frequently, though he still kept his little cabin on the hill.

Placer had fallen so low that its one time enemies did not make note even of this decrease in its business. They let it alone, to live as best it could in its short, cool summers and long, dreary winters. When the Spanish War excitement broke out Placer manifested some in-

terest. Nothing less could have stirred it. For weeks the thunders of the press of the outside world had been faintly echoed by the weekly paper of Thompson's. When the news came that war has actually been declared all the male portion of Placer gathered at the grocery store, which was also the post office, and listened listlessly while the grocer read the account of it.

A company of volunteers had been formed at Thompson's weeks before, and every night the streets of that city echoed to the martial tread of as fine a company of young men as the state could gather, the account stated, and there were applications from young men to make up half a dozen more companies. Thompson's alone, the account continued, could furnish a regiment if it was Washington needed it.

Placer—felt the sting, but gave no sign. Its young men had drifted away long ago when the last big mine closed. It could number scarcely fifty in all. And could hardly show a flag even to prove its patriotism.

A week or so later the dumb man came to town. He received the news from the grocery man without comment, but hurried away to his cabin.

A few days later Placer awoke to wonder.

On the highest point of the great hill in front of the town, on a bluff overlooking the stream and looking down the canon, was a great flag, rolling and snapping in the cool, brisk breeze. Not less wonderful than the flag was the great mast from which it waved, straight and clean, a hundred feet in the air, gleaming softly white. The men went up to see it at closer range, but "Beany" Swan and Jimmie McCann met them half way coming back.

"Gee! It's the biggest flag you ever saw," said "Beany," "and the pole is just a spruce tree, all the limbs cut off, and the flag goes up and down on a rope an' tackle."

It was true. The flag had a vast spread, and when the breeze let it glide through its white fingers a moment and rest against the mast it hung fully twenty feet from the top. It had been heavy work, the making of that flag-staff. Whoever had done it had worked with a skill that called forth the admiration of the men of Placer. Not a fleck of bark had been left upon the smooth surface. The limbs had been snubbed off cleanly and the lower ones gleamed from the sure, hard blows of the axe. It must have taken days of hard work. The men couldn't understand how it had been accomplished, until their knowledge, until McCann spoke. Then they saw. The tree, the straightest young giant on the bluff, had been trimmed first from the top down and barked at the same time. A number of trees protected it from sight of the town. Then all the trees around it had been felled, sawed through, and hauled away, leaving a little open park facing down the canon. The trees on the edge had been lopped down. These now hung over the side, a great green mattress. The view was clear and the world might see Placer's patriotism from afar. Behind rose the erove of rich spruce. Placer accented its gift with humble hearts and bowed heads.

"Bet I know who did it," said "Beany," "hardly knowing whether it was to be taken as a piece of malicious mischief or an honorable thing."

"It was old Dummy Jennings," I saw him up here two days ago." And the men accepted this explanation without question. They looked upon it as one of the dumb man's eccentricities, a beautiful one for Placer, and he was entitled to, at any rate. It was government land, part of a timber reserve, and could be put to no better use.

Every morning thereafter the dumb man lifted the flag to its place to greet the rising sun, and as the wind lifted it, caressing it as gently as his own fingers, and shook out its folds, the old man saw in it that which made his heart beat fast and tears fill his eyes. Fold after fold, it flowed out upon the wind. The deep red stripes were as files of men marching away.

Thus had he seen them go by years and years before, as a boy. His father was among them then, marching to the big road to see them pass, his father riding at the head of the column of big, stalwart men. And something like a hand clutched at his throat. He saw the sticks beating upon the drums and the men with the rifles at their lips. He could hear no sound of it all, but the meaning had taken hold upon him. He had went for days after the army went away and none but his mother had understood. She knew, and her heart yearned for him.

And then the morning he had first seen that flag. He had been sent away to his aunt's for a week to forget his hurt. His grandfather had raised a great pole against the side of the house. The flag lay in a heap near by, a glorious heap of red and blue and white. He himself had raised the flag just as it did now. And his mother had told him that every day he should raise the flag, every day until his father should come riding back. That was the way he should serve the army; though he could never go to the front himself, she would write to Daddy and tell him, and he would be very proud.

The day the news came, he had known it from afar. He had gone away that morning to stay all day. He stopped on the hill-top above the pasture to look for the flag. Something was wrong. It was waving motionless at half-mast. He knew, and howing his head, went upon the post's neck while the gentle creature turned and rubbed its nose against his foot.

The flag was draped over his father's coffin and he had never had the heart to raise it again. It lay in the trunk with the torn and frayed uniform, the rusty sabre standing sentinel against the attic wall. And then when sheer grief, I come, a chill awful spectre, and sat at the hearthstone to claim his mother, she had had the uniform, the sword and flag brought down into her room. She kissed them one by one, her pale hand too weak to lift even a fold of the flag she had loved in sewing. He had put the flag away after that in a chest with the uniform and sword. He had never had the heart to look at them again until the call again had gone forth.

And now he loved to think that day by day it told the world, all that came that way, of the old heart, in the poverty-stricken little mountain town that had no men to grieve. When he went to the city in response

to a letter a month later "Beany" Swan was given the right to raise and lower the flag. He had somehow overcome his fear of the dumb man. His mother had praised him before the boy, calling him "Mr." Jennings. "Beany" learned that the terrible creature he dreaded was a poor, old, lonely man with a heart of more worth than all the gold that ever the hills had yielded Placer. "Beany" would not have had his mother know his heinous behavior toward the old man for anything. He resolved to lick the first boy who called him "dummy" again.

The next morning he had gone early to the flag-staff and waited for him to come with the flag. He had nodded to "Beany" kindly and had let him help raise the flag. Thereafter "Beany" was always on hand to raise and lower the flag, for patriotism and desire to fight his country's enemies was the consuming desire that moved all his acts by day and troubled him at night.

It lacked only a few days of Decoration Day when the old man returned. The troops had gone. He had seen them, as in the days before, march away. This time of browned, weary faces, lines of slender, square-shouldered boys they seemed to him, swaggering young blades, but the youthfulness of their faces touched his heart. Wave upon wave they flowed down the street, the bands gleaming in the sunlight. The women waved their handkerchiefs and cried unto them a moment later. Then came the artillery, the lean, squat, deadly guns drawn by the nervous, sinewy horses, their harness loose upon them, their men riding them loosely, and others riding upon the ammunition boxes, their hands folded as men one time rode to their death on the gallows.

Such was the parade, and the old man's heart leapt. "Think how his own father led that column of stalwart men, and cried with the women who saw the other, bitter side of war." He brought home with him something to gladden the heart of any boy at that time, but more particularly that of "Beany" Swan at this time, to wit: a suit of soldier brown—a khaki uniform, leggings and all complete.

"Beany's" heart stood still when, meeting the old man at the flag-pole that morning, he handed him a box.

"Beany" went behind the old man's cabin and put them on then and there. Before that Placer had never celebrated Decoration Day. There were no graves of dead heroes to decorate, no host of veterans to keep the day for comrades lost on unknown battlefields.

But this day the blood of their fathers, cooled by the lapse of many years and totally new scenes sprang up again with all the waving of flags, of many moving troops, and would be denied no longer.

The day broke calm and clear, the earth seemed holding its breath while the great sun came out of his battlements and strongholds among the eastern peaks. There was no sound save the steady roaring of the Vasquez, swollen by recent heavy rains, and the melting snows, for summer, as it does in the higher mountains, falls with a sudden eagle-like swoop.

"Beany" could hear the magpies calling in the dense woods near Baldy, and the plaintive whistle of the camp-robin near the old man's cabin. "Beany" was glad of the chance to sit down and rest awhile before the old man should come.

The air was strangely heavy and oppressive, and "Beany" felt, too, that the greatest day of his life was at hand. All the preceding afternoon he had been out on the hills gathering wild flowers—he had a tub full of them at home, culminating from the aspen thickets, violets and shooting stars from the river flats; anemones, funny, fustian-jacketed little fellows, found hidden on the bare, rocky hillsides; Indian pinks from the pine-clad hills and trailing clematis vines. He was also to aid his friend, Mr. Jennings, in carrying the flag, for in honor of the day they were to take down the flag and fasten it to a great staff. He was going to carry part of the flag and relieve Mr. Jennings of part of the weight. He had thought it all out. He would drape part of it over his shoulder as a military cloak, carrying his flowers in his left hand. They were going to form for the procession in front of the church. All the men, and women in town would be there. "Beany" swelled with pride when he thought how proud his mother and sisters would be.

The principal of the school was going to deliver an address, and the preacher, a travelling minister, would make another. Then, after a prayer, all would go to the river and there strew the flowers upon the river for the heroes. A long, long way from any battle-ground or any of the graves of the country's sacred dead, but maybe the flowers would find the last resting place of some heroes, maybe an old scout or Indian fighter whose death or life no historian would ever draw. At least that is what the schoolmaster had told them. "Beany" started to find the dumb man at his side. Together they sent "Old Glory" up to greet the sun, and then lowered it in honor of the

A PETTED PRINCE.

Little Alexis, the infant son of the Empress of Russia, is indeed a petted prince. He is the most be-gifted child in existence, but by the irony of Fate, many of the most valuable presents sent him are entirely outside his infant's comprehension. For example, the King of the Belgians lately sent by one of his messengers a silver model of a stable, with ten beautifully fashioned horses, stablemen and carriages complete. Shortly after his visit to Reval a number of noblemen presented the heir with a model battleship four feet long.

Little Alexis is now a fat and healthy infant, weighing considerably over the normal. His eyes are gradually growing darker, his hair is becoming much thicker. Already the back of his head is as well covered as that of many a child of two months, and, in addition, he boasts an adorable little curl on the top of his head.

The Tsaritsa is determined that nothing recording her son's birth and progress shall be forgotten. In one album leading articles are collected from all the papers of the world congratulating Russia upon having an heir, while in another are kept interesting newspaper cuttings relating to the child's life.

One of her Majesty's secretaries is engaged nearly all day studying new literature on the subject of baby-rearing published in every part of the world. Many of these books come from America, Germany, England and France. A short summary is prepared of any new theory of dieting or treatment, and these the Empress reads, making notes in her own handwriting of any point which interests her.

Alexandre Fedorovna has a special album for keeping snashots, and sketches of her son. The little one has already been photographed by his mother no fewer than twenty times, and has been the subject of

dead. Then they bundled it up very carefully and tenderly, and between them carried it and the flag-staff to the church. It was still very early, and "Beany," who had been too excited to think of eating, suddenly remembered his breakfast and the cows. He speiled it out to the dumb man, who understood in a moment. It was wonderful, "Beany" thought, as he ran home, how much the dumb man understood. "Beany" was back with the flowers long before any one else had come. He had divided them into two great bunches, one for himself and one for his friend.

Finally the crowd began to gather and file into the church. "Beany" was the last to enter, having guarded the flag until the last moment. He did not remember much what was said, even the words of his teacher falling on him often unheard.

He noted it was getting dark outside and he feared it might rain before the procession could be carried out. By screwing about in his seat he could see that the top of Old Baldy was hid in a smoky veil and clouds of mist were driving down its slopes, and farther over on the big range the lightning was flashing back and forth through the dark, clouds, like men fighting with bayonets. Finally it was all over, however, and they were out in the warm sweet-scented open air again.

The sun came out faintly and the procession headed by the dumb man bearing the flag, followed by "Beany" bearing part of it, moved off toward the river.

"Beany" and the dumb man led out on the foot-bridge, a swaying, shaking little thing, built of spider web-like wires, and then paused, holding the flag aloft, while the procession dispersed to strew its flowers.

"Beany" strewed his flowers at once, and the swollen stream took them away in a moment, while the dumb man let his fall one at a time, and seemed lost in deep thought. Then the child went to gather more.

He knew where there were a bank of the top of the river a few hundred yards, violets and shooting-stars, his favorites.

The others had scattered along the road that skirted the creek, leaving the dumb man standing alone on the bridge, when suddenly there broke upon the stillness of the placid May day a sound that made those who listened tremble. It was a deep roar, steadily and swiftly increasing in volume and strength—a cloud-burst flood. They fled up the banks of the stream out of danger. There was heard the sound of a child's voice screaming alarm, and around the bend appeared "Beany," waving his arms, and running at the top of his speed.

Scarcely a dozen steps behind him the flood came, like a great monster, pushing a jumble of logs, great stones and debris in front.

The dumb man heard no word at all, nor did he notice the sudden precipitate flight of the others. "Beany" saw him and screamed at the top of his voice, forgetting that a seal had been put upon his ears.

The flood was but a step behind the child when he reached the bridge, but even then he might have saved himself if he had turned to the road. Instead he sprang upon the bridge and seized the dumb man by the arm, grabbing the flag with the other.

The horror-stricken people on the bank saw the logs catch the bridge and lift it back and forth, goring the slender thing like a maddened bull. It raised, held a moment on the crest of the flood, which went on roaring up to the top of the bank in an instant. They saw the dumb man put his arm about the child and the flag cover them both. Then the bridge wires snapped with a whine, the two stood a moment in the roaring flood, and then disappeared.

The waters receded as suddenly as they had come, and only the steady roaring of the Vasquez was heard between the hills. They found them side by side in a thicket of willow bushes at the side of the valley. In the child's hands violets were still clasped. In the man's hands was the flagstaff, and the great flag was wrapped about them both.

It keeps the Muscles Pliant.—Men given to muscular sports and exercises and those who suffer muscular pains from bicycle riding will find Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil something worth trying. As a lubricant it will keep the muscles pliant and free from pains which often follow constant use of them, without softening them or impairing their strength. For bruises, sprains and contusions it is without a peer.

WM. A. LEE & SON, General Agents, 14 Victoria Street, Toronto. Phones—Main 592 & Main 5098. Residence Phone—Park 667.

EXCELSIOR LIFE Insurance Company, Head Office—TORONTO. Some Salient Features from Report of 1904.

Table with 2 columns: Feature and Amount. Includes Insurance in force (\$7,646,798.35), Increase 24 per cent. (\$1,474,192.85), New Insurance issued (\$2,238,157.00), Cash Income, Premiums, Interest, etc. (\$283,346.51), Total Expense, Payments to Policy-holders, etc. (\$166,931.19), Interest Revenue alone more than pays Death Claims, etc.

Agents Wanted. E. MARSHALL, Secretary. DAVID FASKEN, President.

numberless sketches and kindly caricatures. A minor official of the Court has just been dismissed for attempting to purloin one of the Empress' own sketches. He had been offered, it appeared, a large bribe by an enterprising American newspaper proprietor, who wished to "get a scoop" by reproducing the Imperial picture.

THE WESTERN ASSURANCE COMPANY

INCORPORATED 1851. FIRE and MARINE. HEAD OFFICE—TORONTO, ONT. CAPITAL \$2,000,000.

Assets \$3,545,000. Annual Income \$3,678,000. Losses paid since organization 37,000,000.

DIRECTORS: Hon. GEO. A. COX, President; J. J. KENNY, Vice-President and Managing Director; Geo. R. R. Cockburn, Hon. S. C. Wood, Geo. McMurrich, Esq., H. N. Bail, Esq., W. R. Brock, Esq., J. K. Osborne, E. K. Wood, C. C. Foster, Secretary.

WM. A. LEE & SON, General Agents, 14 VICTORIA STREET. Phone—Office Main 592 & Main 5098. Phone—Residence Park 667.

THE York County Loan and Savings Company

Plans suitable for those desiring to own their homes instead of continuing to pay rent. Literature free. Head Office—243 Roncesvalles Toronto. JOSEPH PHILLIPS, Pres.

ROYAL INSURANCE CO. OF ENGLAND

ASSETS \$62,000,000. DOLLARS. C. Mc. L. STINSON, Local Manager. WM. A. LEE & SON, General Agents, 14 Victoria Street, Toronto. Phones—Main 592 & Main 5098. Residence Phone—Park 667.

ATLAS ASSURANCE CO., LIMITED

LONDON, ENGLAND. ESTABLISHED 1806. CAPITAL \$11,000,000. TORONTO BRANCH, 24 Toronto St. A. WARING GILES, Local Manager. WM. A. LEE & SON, General Agents, 14 Victoria Street, Toronto. Tels.—Main 592 and Main 5098. Residence Tel.—Park 667.

EXCELSIOR LIFE Insurance Company

Head Office—TORONTO. Some Salient Features from Report of 1904. Insurance in force \$7,646,798.35. Increase 24 per cent. \$1,474,192.85. New Insurance issued \$2,238,157.00. Increase 26 per cent. \$609,958.75. Cash Income, Premiums, Interest, etc. \$283,346.51. Increase 26 per cent. \$57,566.09. Total Expense, Payments to Policy-holders, etc. \$166,931.19. Interest Revenue alone more than pays Death Claims, etc. \$38,517.00. Rate per 1,000 means Insurance in force 5.56 per cent. Average annual Death Rate 14 yrs. 2 1/2 mos. 3.54 per 1000. The lowest rate on record for any Company of same age. Reserve (being in excess of Govt. standard) \$744,074.49. Increase 23 per cent. \$139,726.12. Total Assets for Policy-holders security, bal., \$1,253,216.05. \$1.67 for every dollar of liability, including Reserve. Net Surplus on Policy-holders' Account \$84,141.56. Reserves for seven years on Him. table. Interest earned on mean Net Assets, 6.33 per cent.

TRADE MARKS DESIGNS COPYRIGHTS &c.

Anyone sending a sketch and description may quickly ascertain our opinion free whether an invention is probably patentable. Communications strictly confidential. Handbooks on Patents sent free. For agents for securing patents, Patents taken through MUNN & CO. receive special notice, without charge, in the Scientific American.

MUNN & CO. 361 Broadway, New York

B. CAIRNS, Rubber Stamps, Metal Stamps, Seals, Dies, Stencils.

EMPRESS HOTEL. Corner of Yonge and Gould Streets TORONTO. TERMS: \$1.50 PER DAY. Single Rooms from the Union Station Every Third Night.

DAY & FERGUSON, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

Office—Land Security Chambers, Victoria Street, Toronto.

H EARN & SLATTERY, BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES, Etc.

Proctors in Admiralty. Offices: Canada Life Building, 46 King Street West, Toronto, Ont. Office Phone Main 1000. T. FRANK SLATTERY, Residence, 25 Simcoe St., Res. Phone Main 876. EDWARD J. HEARN, Residence, 21 Grange Ave., Res. Phone 1028.

LATCHFORD, McDOUGALL & DALY, BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

Supreme Court and Parliamentary Agents, OTTAWA, ONT. F. R. Latchford K.C., J. Lora McDougall, Edward J. Daly.

LEE & O'DONOGHUE, BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES, Etc.

Dineen Bldg., Yonge and Temperance Sts. Toronto, Ont. Offices—Boltun, Ont. Phone Main 1983. Res. Phone Main 2078. W. T. J. Lee, B.C.L., John G. O'Donoghue, B.A., B.L.S., J. W. O'Connor, Res. Phone North 458.

UNWIN, MURPHY & ESTEN, C. J. MURPHY, H. L. ESTEN, ONTARIO LAND SURVEYORS, Etc.

Surveys, Plans and Descriptions of Property, Disputed Boundaries Adjusted, Timber Lines and Mining Claims Located. Office: Corner Richmond and Bay Sts., Toronto. Telephone Main 1356.

McCABE & CO. UNDERTAKERS

222 Queen E. and 649 Queen W. Tel. M. 2838. Tel. M. 1406.

F. ROSAR UNDERTAKER

240 King St. East, Toronto. Telephone Main 1024.

ALEX. MILLARD UNDERTAKER & EMBALMER

Telephone 679 359 YONGE ST. TORONTO.

MEMORIALS GRANITE and MARBLE MONUMENTS

Most Artistic Design in the City. PRICES REASONABLE. WORK THE VERY BEST. McINTOSH-GULLETT CO., Limited. Phone N. 1249. 1119 Yonge St. TORONTO.

E. M' CORMACK, MERCHANT TAILOR

27 COLBORNE STREET, Opposite King, Edward Hotel.