

## SLEEP

Oh! what a wonderful word that is! Can you do it? That is, drop off into a good sound refreshing sleep? If you are unable to, there is something wrong with your nervous system. It is a danger signal. Nervous prostration, melancholia, nervous dyspepsia are only a few of the serious maladies that are liable to develop.

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Where there is a tendency to constipation, you will find Dr. Miles' Nervine Pills effective in keeping the bowels open.

## Out of the Frying Pan

By JOHN B. OXFORD

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"There's never any tellin' how far your nerve will carry you until you get into a tight place and give it a good try."

Leary—goodness only knows what his name may have been originally!—tilted his stein and took a deep draft before he continued.

"Take my own case, for instance."

"'Twas this way," Leary went on, when the replenished steins were set before us. "There was a dinky little county fair back in a town among the hills, three years ago this fall, and as there didn't seem to be nothin' doin' just about then, I packed up a wheel of fortune—one of them kind with a concealed brake on it—and hiked it to the hills. When I hit the town I found I'd got the field pretty much to myself, for the only other thing in the way of educational entertainments was two broken-down thimble-riggers and a one-horse ring-'em-on outfit."

"First thing when I struck the grounds I fell in with a bewhiskered limb of the law who was floatin' round dazed-like, with a big nickel 'chief-of-police' star on his coat-front."

"Fine weather," says I, off'r'in' him a cigar.

"Uncommon," says he, bitin' off a third of it and lightin' the wrong end.

"I've brought up a little show," says I. "It's entertainin', harmless and educational. I s'pose there's no objection to my setting up over by the fence?"

"Well—er—" says he, his little eyes narrowin' in a try at bein' shrewd that was funny.

"How much?" says I, comin' to the point at once.

"I s'pose I ought to have about twenty-five," says he. "That's what the other gents give me."

"Sure," says I, passin' out the stuff. "It's a pleasure to do business with such an intelligent man."

"And off he goes, puffed up to near the bustin' point."

"I opened up business next door to the thimble-riggers, and in ten minutes I owned the crowd. Those other outfits was bit by a drought immediately. Would y' believe it, most of the yaps hadn't never seen a wheel of fortune before, and after the first four or five of 'em had won somethin' like fifty, the rest fairly fell over one another tryin' to get a chance to have a whirl at it."

"In an hour I took in a cool four hundred. Then a yap who'd lost twenty dollars in one fling set up a yell of 'Robber!' and 'Skin!' The crowd took it up and began to shove in close, lookin' ugly. I tried my best to pacify 'em, but it wasn't no use."

"Right in the middle of the trouble the chief of police come pushin' through the crowd."

"What's wrong here?" says he, lookin' like a villain in a melodrama with a bad attack of stage-fright.

"He's got our money with a skin game!" yells one sucker.

"This here wheel is crooked!" sings out another.

"His Whiskers lays a hand on my shoulder."

"See here," he says, throwin' out his chest most virtuous-like, "we can't have nothin' of this kind goin' on here. You come with me!" an' he leads me toward the gate. I kept mum till the crowd'd all trailed off and we was alone; then I turned on him.

"Look here," I says, "where do I fit? D'y'er think I coughed up to have you buttin' in?"

"That crowd was gettin' ugly," says he, sort of apologetic.

"Oh, stow it!" says I. "I'll look out for myself. I got to make my expenses, ain't I?"

"Well, what do you want to do?" says he.

"I'll tell you," I says, droppin' an eyelid at him. "I'll make it up on the 'dip.'" What's the matter with my weedin' out a few leathers, just to get enough to get home on?"

"He springs his wise look on me again."

"I'll have to have another twenty-five for that," says he.

"Sure, cull," says I.

"And if there is any trouble, I ain't responsible for none of the consequences," he goes on. "They pretty near killed a feller that got caught pickin' pockets up here last year. If there's any trouble, you'll have to look out for yourself."

"That's all right," says I. "It's time enough to worry when the trouble is here." And I chuckled to myself, for those yaps sure did look easy.

"It was about four o'clock when the crowd and that jay cop between 'em broke up my game, and at five a balloon ascension and a parachute drop was goin' to take place. Already the

balloon was tied and was awaitin' to

and fro, lazy-like, in an enclosure.

"Just as I squeezed near the ropes a man shouted at the top of his voice that, owing to the extreme velocity of the wind the balloon ascension and parachute jump of the world-renowned Professor Angelone would have to be postponed until the followin' afternoon at four sharp."

"While the crowd was growlin' its disapproval, my right hand was liftin' the leather from the inside pocket of a sober-lookin' old codger beside me. It would have been a neat little job if some one behind hadn't butted against me and rammed my hand into the old cove's ribs. He looked down quick and saw his leather leavin' his pocket, with my right hand attached to it.

"He grabbed me by the collar and squealed 'Thief! Pickpocket!' so loud you could have heard him a mile.

"I broke away from him, and slippin' the leather into my own pocket, tried to butt through the crowd to the rope. I s'pose it was one of them times people call psychological moments. You see, the crowd was sore 'cause the balloon ascension had fized, and just the minute it was sorest I makes a mess of my little dip act, which gives the push a good excuse to get rid of their spite on me.

"Say, when they closed on me, yellin' and cussin', with the old buck screamin' 'Stop thief!' just behind me, they didn't look so dead easy as they had an hour before when I first contemplated workin' the dip on them."

"It was up to me to do a hurried fade away. I tripped up one man, and gave two others the straight arm. Then I jumped the rope and made for that restless balloon, with the pack yelpin' close at my heels. An' as I ran, a crazy scheme flashed into my mind and I whipped out my knife and opened the biggest blade.

"Honest, to this day I don't know how I had the nerve to do it, but when I reached the balloon I jumped onto the trapeze-bar, which was swingin' low, and with one slash of the knife I cut the moorin' rope.

"Something gave me a fierce yank upward.

"Then I looked down.

"Holy smoke! The fair ground, the crowd, and the whole earth was droppin' away from me so fast my heart stood still. I didn't look down again, but put all my effort in a desperate attempt to stick to the bar. It whipped about, and swayed and twisted, while that crazy old balloon laid over in a fashion that made me shut my eyes and bite my lips until I could taste blood.

"I don't know how long this lasted. It seemed ages. But by and by we must have risen higher, for the balloon righted itself and sailed along easy and gentle as could be.

"After a long time I screwed up my courage and looked down. Miles and miles below me was the little old earth, lookin' like a kid's toy village laid out on a table. Then the sun went down and it grew cold.

"When I looked down next I could see the toy village comin' up, and I knew we was sinkin'. I honestly b'lieve I'd 'a' known how to get that parachute loose I'd done it an' taken my chances then an' there. As it was, I could only hold on with shakin' knees and chatterin' teeth, and hope the earth wouldn't biff me too hard when it got up to us.

"It grew dark fast now, and we must have sunk into a layer of wind again, for the balloon began to switch about in scandalous fashion. Talk about your buckin' broncos! I felt as if I could take my chances with any of 'em after that. We went lower still, until we was just clearin' the tops of the trees. All at once I noticed on the spread-bar above my head a coil of rope and a dinky little grappin' anchor. Five times I tried before I had the nerve to reach with one hand and loosen that coil of rope.

"When finally I did get it loose and drop the anchor we was tearin' along above a stretch of pine woods, and just as I let go the anchor we came upon a clearin' all lighted up with gasoline torches. All around was rows of benches with a lot of people on them, listenin' to a tall man who was wavin' his arms and bellowin' a hymn. Say, I'd never been to a camp meetin' in my life, but I knew one soon's I spotted it.

"I let out a yell as the anchor caught beneath the rear seat, ripped it up, and spilled three good sisters into a promiscuous heap. The hymn stopped sudden. There was yell and hawls. Then that meetin' scattered's it if cyclone had struck it.

"Everybody seemed to lose his head 'cept the tall man, and he made one dive for the anchor rope and hung on for dear life.

"Keep hold!" I yelled. "Keep hold! Don't let me loose!"

"And that old psalm-singer was dead-gone. He got hoisted up, banged into trees, dragged through underbrush, but still he hung on, yellin' to the others to come and help him, and callin' 'em all sorts of variations on white-livered and chicken-hearted.

"Well, after a bit some fifteen or twenty of 'em got hold of the rope,

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with him and arranged to pay me down to earth.

"Say, I couldn't believe it was true when I found solid ground beneath me once more. I was near crazy with joy. I was laughin' and gaspin' all at once, and between times I was chappin' the tall cove on the back, and tellin' him what a dead-game sport he was. Then I pulled out my roll—my last dollar of it.

"Has the collection been sent?" says I. "Because if it hasn't, I want to put this in for me."

"You should 'a' seen them eyes stick out! There was somethin' like five hundred in the wad. I was 'a' after that, all right."

"But by and by I edged down enough to find out the way to the nearest railway station, and there they were settin' down to the camp-meetin' business again. I managed to sneak off through the woods."

"When at last I hit the road I look out the wallet I'd lifted from the old chap back at the fair ground. It was good and fat, and I was glad as I struck a match to see what was in it. And say, what do you think was in it? A bunch of receipted tax bills, two tin-types and one of those big, old-fashioned copper cents with a hole in it. Not another thing, I swear."

"If there had been, I wouldn't 'a' been lame for a month from ridin' home on the hummers."

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