

engers were on their way toward the point where the Seekonk bridge had stood—on their way to death, and he was determined to win in that race with death or die in the attempt.

There was a strong wind in his favor, and inside of two minutes he was covering a mile in considerably less time than three minutes. Strange thoughts entered his mind as he flew on and on; thoughts that had no place there at that time, of that he was certain, but they came, nevertheless.

Through an opening in the hills, he caught a glimpse of the headlight of Number 204, and it encouraged him, for it was a trifle behind him, showing that his speed was greater than that of the express.

Suddenly a long, black stretch of water appeared before him, less than thirty feet away. Beyond was the undulating ice. He had reached the spot where the Winuchus Ice Company had been poling their ice, but the channel looked wider, much wider than that which he had seen a day or two previous.

He was determined to make the leap of his life, and, springing high in the air, carried forward by his tremendous momentum and the high wind that favored him especially at that minute, he cleared the channel.

Two employees of the ice company were busily engaged endeavoring to save the last of the ice cakes which had been cut, and they were close at hand when Weaver made the leap. They knew not who the daring skater was, but they knew that the leap was one worth recording, and with their poles they measured the width of the channel as best they could. The distance computed proved to be no less than twenty-two feet—twelve feet wider than the channel Weaver had been dared to leap.

The headlight of 204 flashed from time to time, and the fireman, opening the door to the firebox, sent its streaming light heavenward. But the flashes were falling farther and farther to the rear, and Tom Weaver knew his was to be a winning race, unless some accident befell him.

He was not within a half-mile of the spot where the bridge had spanned the river. Straight for that point he made, veering somewhat to the right as he approached, in order to make a landing, for he could hear the rush of the waters, and he knew that each instant the ice was weakening about the ruined piers.

Reaching the shore, Tom scrambled up the bank without stopping to get his skates off, unbuckling the strap that secured the lantern and turning the wick up higher as he clumsily gained the level of the track. He tore his clothes and scratched his hands and face as he struggled through the barbed-wire fence that guarded the railway, but these were trifles that he knew not of at the time.

Suddenly round a curve in the railway shot 204, and the next instant there was a sound of escaping steam and the grinding of brakes. Tom Weaver had won the race.

The first of the following month, Tom was assigned to a more important station on the railway, and naturally there was an increased salary attached to the position, but it is extremely doubtful if he is ever called upon to do more important work than he did that night when he raced with Number 204.

Follow Directions.

(Belle V. Chisholm.)

Fred was going to a party at the home of one of his companions, and as it was to be a grand affair he made his toilet with even more care than usual.

When he was through he ran downstairs and into the library, where his big brother Ben was writing, and asked, 'Will I do? Is my hair all right?'

'Y-e-s,' answered Ben, slowly, as he ran his eyes critically over him from the head downward. 'You look tiptop—all but your shoes. What in the world have you been doing to them? Blacking them with stove polish, or have you wiped the chimney with them?'

'Neither! I polished them with Edna's "Excelsior Paste," the best in the market—and if my shoes are not as bright as silver dollars, it is Edna's fault, not mine, for she told me to use it because it gave a splendid shine;' and then as he glanced ruefully at the blotched shoes, he added, angrily, 'I half believe it was a trick put up on me. I never saw such shoes.'

'You couldn't have used it right if it did not prove satisfactory, because it worked like a charm for me,' retorted Edna, indignantly.

'Well, just look at my shoes,' returned Fred, 'they are ruined.'

'Perhaps you did not follow directions,' suggested Ben. 'Suppose you go back and examine into that matter.'

'I know there were no directions,' muttered Fred, but he obeyed, reluctantly, certain he had done all that was necessary to make a good job. 'There's not a thing on the bottle, only, "Use sponge in applying the paste,"' he grumbled, but when he turned the bottle down he saw in big letters on the other side, 'Follow Directions,' and the directions said plainly, 'After applying brush briskly for five minutes and then polish with a soft cloth until the shoes shine like a mirror.'

'Strange I did not see that before,' said Fred, as he rubbed and polished the unsightly shoes until they fairly glistened.

'Hello! that looks more like it,' exclaimed Ben, as Fred came back, looking conscious of the improvement. 'You followed directions to the advantage of your understanding, surely.'

'And upstanding, too, perhaps,' returned Fred, good-naturedly.

'What do you mean?' asked Ben. 'I'll explain when I have more time,' replied Fred, tapping his forehead significantly. 'In short, I think I have solved the problem of my school failures; but more again. Good-bye!' and he hurried out to join some of his young friends on their way to the party.

'I wonder if he has,' said Ben, glancing after his retreating form and then dismissing the subject from his mind he returned to his writing and forgot the incident.

But Fred did not. He was very sensitive over his recent failures in examinations—not the first by any means—but he had honestly done his best, or thought he was doing his best in his preliminary work, and his failure had been so pronounced that he had almost given up hopes of ever mastering his lessons. Heretofore he had blamed his treacherous memory for all this trouble, but now he had a suspicion that he was not building his education on a firm foundation. He had always hated

rules and regulations and had 'followed directions' just far enough to get through the daily recitations, and this accounted for the lowering of his grades when it came to examination tests. He did not understand the principles thoroughly, hence—his failures.

'I am going to "follow directions" after this,' he said to himself, when school opened again, and he kept his word by beginning right at first, and thoroughly mastering every principle before he left it. If his labor had ended here, it would not have been so hard, but he could not make rapid progress without going back to lay a good foundation upon which to build, consequently he had many hard hours of toil over the directions of back lessons that he had failed to follow.

'It isn't easy to "follow directions" so far behind,' he said to Ben one night when he came to him for some explanation—some point that he could not master even by 'following directions.'

'It's just like building a house from the roof downward,' remarked Ben. 'I should think the masons would find it a pretty stiff job to put the foundation under a heavy house after it had been built.'

'I guess that is about what I have been trying to do all these years,' mused Fred, looking very sober.

'It's well you found it out when you did,' said Ben. 'You can go back and undo the wrong by doing it over in the right way now.'

'It will never be as well done as if I had begun at the right end,' insisted Fred. However, I am glad that I got into Edna's paste wrong end first, for if I had not I'd never have found out about "following directions," and would have kept on failing all my life.'

Not Wanted.

A blustering young man arrived at a hotel in the West, and he saw a man on the sidewalk whom he supposed to be a laborer, and in a rough way, as no man has a right to address a laborer, said to him, 'Carry this trunk upstairs.' The man carried the trunk upstairs and came down, and then the young man gave him a quarter of a dollar which was clipped, and instead of being twenty-five cents it was worth only twenty cents. Then the young man gave his card to the laborer and said, 'You take this up to Governor Grimes; I want to see him.' 'Ah,' said the laborer, 'I am Governor Grimes.' 'Oh,' said the young man, 'you—I—excuse me.' Then the Governor said: 'I was much impressed by the letter you wrote me asking for a certain office in my gift, and I had made up my mind you should have it; but a young man who will cheat a laborer out of five cents would swindle the Government of the State if he got his hands on it. I don't want you. Good morning, sir.'

—Talmage.

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