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WHOLESALE ONLY.

HOW I MADE MY FIRST GOLDEN SOVERIGN.

TWENTY years ago I was a lad going to school in a little Yorkshire village. The incident that I am about to write happened on Christmas eve. Our family consisted of grandfather, grandmother, aunt, a little cousin and myself. We two lads slept together. That night our aunt paid a visit to an old neighbor who was supposed to be dying. He lived on a farm about two miles away from our own farm, and it was about 10 o'clock when she returned home. For those days almost every woman wore a Paisley shawl. My aunt's shawl was fastened with a large oval brooch; I think it was an opal stone covered with forget-me-nots; the brooch being an old family heirloom. The names of the eldest daughters in the family were engraved on the back. It had passed through four generations, and, consequently, was very highly prized. After aunt came into the house I jumped on her knee, and listened to the conversation about her visit. She afterwards went upstairs to take off her shawl and bonnet, and soon returned with the startling information that the brooch was lost. Candles were lighted, and a general search was made—without success. She remembered distinctly putting it in her shawl when leaving, consequently it must have been lost between the two farms. We boys were sent up to where the farm hands slept and told them about the loss of the brooch, and also to tell them that whoever found it would receive a golden sovereign. There was an old man

living in a thatched cottage near us who had a pretty young donkey for which he wanted a sovereign. My heart was set on buying that donkey but I had never been able to "raise the wind." You may imagine how excited and anxious I was to find the brooch, earn the sovereign, and become the proud possessor of the donkey. I said to my cousin, "Now, Jimmy, if you wake before I do be sure and call me." But this he refused to do, saying in his Yorkshire dialect: "Thou mun waken theesel fur ah weecant; ah'm gannin after't brooch afore dayleet." We laid awake talking over the lost brooch a long time; we discussed the different places that she would be likely to have dropped it. She came across the fields part of the way home; there was a footpath and at the end of each field there was a stile to climb over. We were quite sure the brooch would be found at one of these stiles. There was also several small water dykes or ditches to cross. We two boys knew every foot of ground as we were over it almost daily looking after sheep or other things connected with the farm. This matter of buying the donkey seems trivial now; but to a little nine-year-old boy, with twopenny a week for pocket money, it was a gigantic affair. Well, at last we fell asleep. The next thing I remember was seeing my aunt climbing over a stile, or rail, by the side of a pond at the corner of different pasture fields. It was so arranged that the cattle could get to the pond, but could not pass from one field to another. I saw her drop the brooch, proceed on her way, leaving the brooch on the sand. I do not know how long I slept, but when I awoke Jimmy was fast asleep. The moon was shining brightly—was I

really awake, or was it a dream? I sat up and nipped my arm. I was certainly awake. Then I thought of the sovereign, and the donkey, and that decided me. I crept out at the foot of the bed, carried my clothes down to the kitchen, where the fire on the big open hearth was yet smouldering. The terrier and the sheep dog were laid by the fireplace. They began to growl, but I spoke to them and they kept quiet. When dressed I took the two dogs, also a foxhound that was chained up outside, and off I went along the road and down the fields. The dogs enjoyed the run, but I was afraid of my own shadow. I did not stop until I reached the scene of my dream, and there lay the brooch sparkling on the sand. I ran back home; my heart went pit-a-pat; I could almost hear it beat. I chained up the hound, took the dogs into the kitchen, undressed, and crept back to bed, putting the brooch under my pillow. When I awoke it was broad daylight, and I was alone. When I went down stairs, I heard the village boys singing at the door: "We wish you a merry Christmas, a happy New Year, a pocket full o' money, a cellar full o' beer, good fat pigs to serve you all next year; please to give us a Christmas box." The man and Jimmy were away searching for the brooch. Old grandfather said: "Thoo's nae good; it's the early bird that catches the worm and finds the brooch." Then I told my dream, at which they were greatly amused; but when I told about my midnight run across the fields and produced the brooch, to say they were puzzled and amazed is to express it mildly. However, I got the sovereign, bought the donkey, and that indeed was a merry Christmas day.

TOM SWALWELL.