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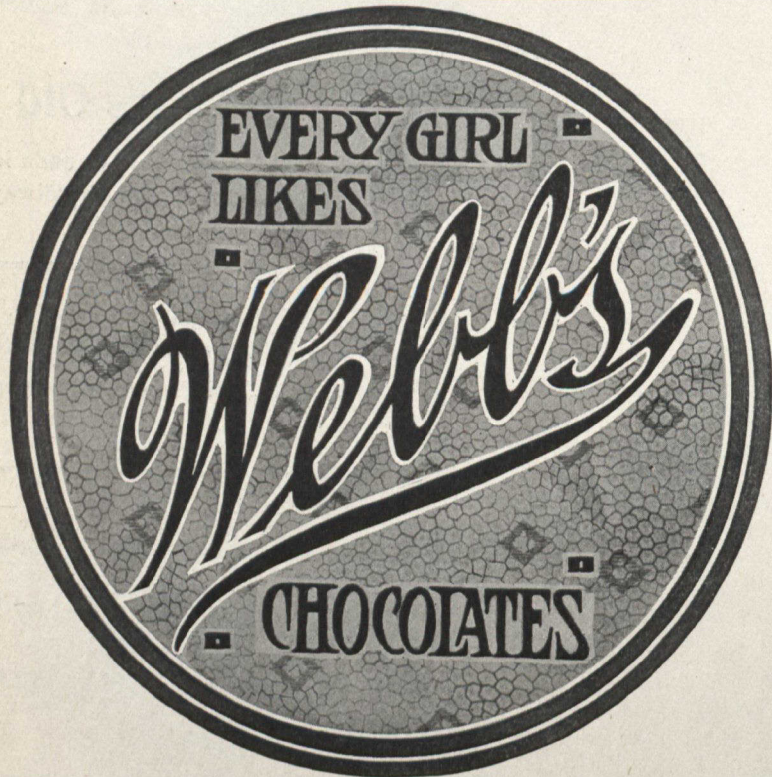
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THE HUMAN SIDE

By ARCHIE P. McKISHNIE

MISPLACED BENEVOLENCE.

LIFE'S incidents have their funny side. Sometimes you have to look for them, at other times they force themselves upon you.

I was seated beside a rather benevolent-looking old gentleman, on a Bathurst car the other morning, when at a certain street, a woman with a child in her arms, came hurriedly into the car in search of the conductor.

She was very much agitated, as well she might be, poor soul, for it seems she had left her purse containing all the money she had in the world, on the seat of this same car a short time previous.

When the conductor told her kindly and gently that no purse had been picked up to his knowledge, tears came into the woman's eyes and she made to leave the car.

A young man dressed in the garb of a labourer, who had entered just behind her and who had listened to the conversation, stopped her as she was passing out.

"I'm sorry for you, missus," he said. "Here's a dollar, maybe it'll help some."

The woman smiled her thanks and passed out. I doubt if there was one man on that car but would have been glad to shake hands with that labourer and who, if the truth were known, did not feel a little ashamed of himself for not proffering the woman assistance also.

The old gentleman beside me crossed over and sat down by the hero.

"That was a kind and considerate act of yours, young man," he said, beaming above his glasses. "And as I believe I'm in a position to stand a little charity better than you are perhaps, you won't feel it amiss if I give you back that dollar. Fact is I'd feel better if you took it; here you are."

The young man grinned foolishly, hesitated a little, then took the dollar and put it in his pocket.

We mentally applauded the old man's generous action, at the same time that act of the young man's in accepting the old man's money, pinched a little.

We should liked to have seen him wave man and dollar aside. Instead he thanked the old man and pocketed the dollar. Then he picked up his dinner-pail and prepared to leave the car.

"You don't happen to know the name of this unfortunate woman, I suppose, sir?" asked the old man, rubbing his hands together.

"Oh, yes, I know her well," answered the labourer. "Her name's Smith and she does my washin'. I owed her two bucks fer last week. This dollar you gave me 'll jest square my account with her. Thank you, sir. Good mornin'."

THE TWO JOHNS.

I HAVE known them both a long time. When first I met them they were together and the many and many times I have met them since, they have always been together.

The older John in a little, frail man with the softest white hair and the happiest blue eyes I ever saw.

The younger John is a big, broad-shouldered man with a sprinkling of white in his hair and eyes very much like the older John's except in colour, for they are grey like another pair of eyes that are only a memory to the two now.

I have spent many happy hours

with this pair, walking, driving, and seated before the wide, old-fashioned fireplace of their cozy home.

Here with our pipes alight, the younger John and I would listen to the stories the older John told; stories of his early life, when with his axe he had helped wipe the timber from a portion of Western Ontario and founded the first settlement there.

There, in the half glow, one could almost fancy they saw that great stretch of wooded country, with its little clearing on a deep, still creek, and its wide, reedy bay in the foreground, as the old man depicted the wild beauty of it all.

The father loves to relate the story of those olden, golden days and the son loves to sit near, drinking in his every word just as though he had not heard the story many times before. For myself, I only know that to be near these two is a pleasure and a privilege granted to but few.

The two Johns go out but seldom now and the chats before the fireplace are becoming shorter and more broken, night by night. There must soon be a break in the golden chain and the comrades will part at the cross-roads.

I cannot think it will be different from other partings I have witnessed between them, when at a late hour the story, or the game of chess being finished, the old man would say:

"Time you was in bed, John; good-night."

And John would smile at me and get up and kiss the old John on the forehead, as had been his habit from childhood, and say "Good-night, Daddy."

Then he would steal away.

THE FLITTING.

THE other evening at sunset, I stood upon the end of the wharf gazing across the bay.

Slowly twilight settled a misty shadow upon the waters and the one long arrow of light which rested upon them drew back reluctantly before oncoming night and faded in the western horizon.

Straight in its track a bunch of blue-winged teal came speeding, wild, frantic, free things, guided by instinct toward the wide marsh-lands far westward; their old home and nesting-grounds.

The two newly arrived immigrants who had stood silent beside me, looked at each other as the wild ducks whistled past. Then the older of the two spoke:

"They be goin' 'ome, lad," he said wistfully.

"Aye," sighed his companion, "they be goin' 'ome."

Silence for a time; then—

"They be most like 'appy fer th' goin', Tom."

"Aye, Jack, and why shouldn't 'em be 'appy, a-goin' 'ome?"

Then they passed away through the shadow, leaving me with this thought in my mind:

Gladly the wild fowl skim the darkened foam

At set of sun;

Swiftly to far-off marsh, to nest and home,

The day is done;

God grant that to our souls, at night may steal

The joy and freedom that His wild birds feel.