



It is a beautiful and blessed world we live in, and whilst that life lasts to lose the enjoyment of it is a sin.—Chambers.

When to Lock the Stable

By HOMER CROY

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(Continued from last week)

"THAT'S where they've got a froth factory called Joe's Place, ain't it? Worst booze in the state—one drink and you'll fight your grandmother; two and she can sew you up in a sheet, and while you with a mop handle!"

The figure slid towards Clem: "Got a gim?"

"I guess I don't hear you very well with this racket goin' on. I didn't ketch what you said."

"Got a match?"

"Glad to 'commode,' returned Clem, setting one elbow into the floor like a brace-pole and burrowing a hand into his crumpled up trousers pocket. "It's broke in two, but I susses it'll do the business."

Their fingers fumbled in the dark and in a moment a spitting line of light leaped from a heavy shoe-sole. All was blackness again.

"I mean the brakies. They're gettin' meaner and meaner—on this road and every time they catch a fellow he's got to cough up or they'll shine his block. There's one bull on this line I'm goin' to get, and get good and hard. A pal of mine was ridin' this line when this bull picked him; Rudy coughed up every cent he had and just before he got to the end of the division the bull came again. Rudy told him he'd passed over every red that he had. With that the brakie smashed him in the face with his lantern, and when he came to his knees, kicked him off, jowls over janders, like a wet blanket. I've got his number, and some night when we're goin' good there'll be a sickening thud, and next mornin' some section boss'll find a few stray joints and a loose leg scattered along the right of way. There was nuthin' Rudy wouldn't do for a pal. Once when he was livin' in a sand-house and me sick he climbed in the back window of the station agent's house, locked his wife in the cellar—her hollerin' down brakes—and snatched a plate of soup for me just because I had fever in the head. You'd lose Rudy."

"You mean that a brakeman kicked Mr. Rudy off when the train was runnin' and killed him?"

"I guess that's the way a language professor'd put it. They often kick people off like that?"

"Every night."

Clem edged towards the corner.

"Been on the road long?" boomed a voice out of the blackness.

"No!"

"I thought you hadn't the way you got in with your elbows. What's your line?"

"I don't follow you."

"How do you get the kale?" "Are you an American?"

The man in the darkness laughed, his voice climbing over the rattle of the trucks. "You're all right, bo. I mean, how do you get your cash?"

Clem nervously drew up his hand to his wallet. Plainly the stranger was trying to find if he had any. "I

"I don't know."

Brassy laughed.

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self: "You ain't ever cracked a bank or you'd get me. Say, pardner, why don't you go home? There ain't anything in railroadin'!"

"I couldn't do that," exclaimed Clem quickly. "I ain't got any home any more."

"You ain't got any home and ain't got nowhere," the other took up. "Well then, you just fall in with me. My name's Hagat—Mr. Brassy Hagat—but I've almost forgot the last part myself. I'm in the circus business."

"Oh!" exclaimed Clem with delight. "You don't happen to be an animal trainer, do you—I can't see your clothes!"

"No, that ain't my department. I'm not under the big top. I do missionary work among the hey-rubes. I was a schilliber—stake and chain wagon—for a while, but tapin' stakes ain't no occupation for a gentleman so I cut out to where the big money was. I'm in the optical business—handling the elusive pen, proving that the hand is quicker than the eye. My great call in life is to prove to the tall grass gentles that they can't believe all they see by shifting a well-trained pair on one English walnut to another, and chargin' them for it."

"I don't know's I ever met anybody with that occupation before," returned Clem.

Brassy laughed.

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CHAPTER VII. THE PRODUCTIVE PEA

The sleeping car of the circus was on a siding when Brassy let Clem up and waved him in. An oil lamp with a smoky reflector behind it was clinging to the wall, while on each side of the aisle were rows and rows of seats, one above the other, like great pie shelves.

Brassy went down the aisle slapping the curtains. "Here's an empty one," he called. "ride in it and you'll know when to get up, all right!"

Up and down the car rose gurgles and groans, spurring up and dying away, like sound reapers. Shirts, shirts and rumpled drooped dejectedly on his hoks. Fastening one tired knee over the other Clem unlaced his shoes and climbed on to one of the shelves.

It seemed to him that his ear had scarcely flattened on the pillow before there was a wreck or at least a storm at sea. A wild hammering lifted the car as if some destructive force was trying to pull it to pieces before its occupants could possibly scramble into their clothes. Clem thrust his head out and saw one of the helpers pounding with a heavy stick a sheet of iron fastened to the wall. Then he understood that it was the call to breakfast.

Already boys and men were gathering to see the unlacing, much brighter-eyed than the grumbling circus helpers. The heavier animals had been taken off and the schillibers were unlacing the lighter ones, when Brassy appeared, a cap pulled over his eyes and his cheeks raggeder than ever.

"Mornin'!" he greeted shortly, and jerked his head for Clem to follow.

Brassy tramped down the line of cars in silence, drawing up before the supply car where three fat, sleepy heads were listlessly tugging at rolls of canvas. Brassy laid hold and motioned Clem to a corner. The canvas and stakes were thrown on to truck wagons, and carted to the show grounds.

"Better stick pretty close to me till I speak to the Colonel," said Brassy briefly.

When the stakes were laid out for the dining tent, the boss of the chain and stake gang eyed Clem suspiciously, then asked, "Want to try your hand at the sledge?"

Clem willingly picked up the sledge and taking turn about with a driver soon drove the stake to the notch. The boss nodded with approval.

After the tent was up, cross-gens were driven and the table made, it was not until late that breakfast was ready, the men climbing over the seats and dropping down on the table.

When they were getting ready for the grand, glittering and gorgeous free street parade—quoting from poster-Clem couldn't help noticing that the grand one forthrightly realising as much more peaceably inclined than he had been when the artist painted his portrait on the outside of the wagon showing him standing on a bench one foot high, and a pair of forbidden snarl on his tightly curled lips. To see Rose, queen among pachyderms, obediently pushing her wags about, a tired expression about her eyes, and to see that they wouldn't have a grand, glittering and gorgeous parade this morning, but instead would give the animals a half holiday.

(Continued next week)

The Upward

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WE workers belong army of men and enlisted many ago are been and will be rising, courageous as and time last.

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