

SEVEN SENTENCE SERMONS.

To love abundantly is to live abundantly.—Drummond.

There is nothing so kindly as kind. And nothing so royal as truth.—Aron.

Not what we give, but what we share. For the gift without the giver is bare; Who gives himself with his alms feeds three, Himself, his hungry neighbor and me.—Lowell.

We have no liberty to choose whether we will serve or no; all the liberty we have is to choose our master.—Sunderland.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.—Isa. 40: 31.

Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong? Or others, that we are not always strong? That we should ever weak or heartless be. Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer. And joy and strength and courage are with Thee.—R. C. French, D. D.

A wise man has well reminded us that in any controversy the instant we feel angry we have already ceased striving for truth, and have begun striving for ourselves.—Carlyle.

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TORCHY AND SHORTY STORIES

By SEWELL FORD

NICKY AND THE SETTING HEN

Honest, the first time I got on this party with the steady gray eyes and the power face was that he must be dead from the neck up. Or else he'd gone into a trance and couldn't get out.

"Nice looking young chap, too. Oh, say thirty or better. I don't know as he'd qualify as a perfect male, but he has good lines and the kind of profile that had most of the study type stretch their necks. But there's no more expression on that map of his than there would be to a bar of soap. Just a blank. And yet after a second glance you wondered.

You see, I'd happened to drift out into the general office, in time to hear him ask Vincent, the fair-haired guardian of the brass gate, if Mr. Robert is in. And when Vincent told him he didn't make no move to go, but stands there starchy through the wall out into Broadway. Looks like he might be one of Mr. Robert's club friends, so I steps up and asks if there's anything a perfectly good private sec. can do for him. He wakes up enough to shake his head.

"Any message?" says I.

Another shake. "Then maybe you'll leave your card?" says I.

Yes, he's willing to do that, and hands it over.

"Oh!" says I. "Why didn't you say so? Mr. Nickerson, Wells, eh? Why, you're the one who's going to handle that ore transportation deal for the Corporation, ain't you?"

"I was, but I'm not," says the chap.

"Not?" says I, gasping.

"Can't take it on," says he. "Tell Ellis will you?"

"Not much," says I. "Guess you'll have to hand that to him yourself, Mr. Wells. He'll be here any minute. Right this way?"

And a swell time I had keeping him entertained in the private office for half an hour. Not that he's restless or idiosyncratic, but when you get a party who only stares bored at a spot about ten feet behind the back of your head and answers most of your questions by blinking his eyes, it's kind of gets on your nerves. Still I couldn't let him get away. Why Mr. Robert had been prospecting for months to find the right man for that transportation middle and when he finally got hold of this Nicky Wells he goes around grinning for three days.

Seems Nicky had built up quite a rep. by some work he did over in France on an engineer's job. Ran some supply trucks where nobody thought they could be led, bridged a river in a night under fire, and pulled a lot of stuff like that. I don't know just what. Anyway, they pinned all sorts of medals on him for it, made him a colonel, and when it was all over turned him loose as casual as any back private. That's the army of commerce, eh?" says I.

"How do you size up Nicky's plea of not guilty?"

"Oh, at the way he didn't see the other woman, that's all," says Mr. Robert. "But until he explains why he went where she was, when—"

"Maybe he would if he had a show," says I. "If you could plot out a get-together session for 'em somehow—"

"Exactly!" says Mr. Robert, slapping his knee. "Thank you Torchy. It shall be done. Get Mrs. Ellis on the long distance, will you?"

He's a quick performer, Mr. Robert, when he's got his program mapped out. Before getting time that afternoon he's got it all fixed up.

"Tomorrow night," says he, Nicky understands that we're having a dinner party out at the house. Betty'll be there. You and Vee are to be the party."

"A lot of help I'll be," says I. "But I expect I can fill a chair."

When you get a private sec. that can double as open face clothes, though, you've picked a winner. That's why I figure so heavy on the Corrugated pay roll. But say, when I find myself planted next to Bubbling Betty at the table I begin to suspect that I've been mis-tat for the part.

She's some smart dresser, on and off, Betty is. Her idea of a perfectly good dinner gown is to make it as simple as possible. All she needs is a skirt or so of glass beads and a little pink tulle and there she is. There's more or less of her too. And she looks like Nevada Barr stood for the last word in bare. I hadn't seen Betty costumed for the dinner room then. And I expect the blush roses in the flower bowl had nothing on my ears when it came to a vivid color scheme.

By that time, of course, she and Nicky had recovered from the shock of finding themselves with their feet under the same table and they've settled down to being as civilly polite to each other. It's "Mr. Wells" and "Miss Burke" with them, Nicky with

his eyes on his plate and Betty throwing him furtive glances that should have chilled his soup. And the next thing I know she's cursed to me and is cutting loose with her whole bag of tricks. Talked about being vamped! Say, inside of three minutes there she had me dizzy in the head. With them sparkling, red-hot eyes of hers so near I didn't know whether I was buttermilk or a roll or spreadin' it on my thumb.

"Do you know," says she, "I simply adore red hair—your kind."

"Maybe that's why I picked out this particular shade," says I.

"Tut-tut!" says she, tappin' me on the arm. "That's the kind you get it to wave so cunningly in front!"

"Don't give it away," says I. "But I do demonstrate it at a male beauty

everybody up there has a hen on, judge, or one just coming off."

"Oh, I see!" says Mr. Robert. "An' had any of the young men succeeded with it, in producing something with—or a kick to it?"

According to their tale, they had. Says I. "Seems they tried it out in Boston after the Harvard-Yale game. A bunch got together in some hotel room and opened a jug one of 'em had brought along in case Harvard should win, and after that 1913 score—well, I expect they'd have celebrated on something 'even if it was no more than lemon extract or Jamaica ginger."

"How about that, Nicky?" asks Mr. Robert, who's a Yale man.

"Quite possible," says Nicky, who for the first time seems to have his

ard guy who wasn't much used to doing anything of the sort, but he was so much charmed up over seeing in team win that he got 'em lead him to it. They say he shut his eyes and let four fingers in a water glass wrinkle down without stopping to taste it. From then on he was a different man. He forgot all about being a Delta Kappa, whatever that is; forgot that he had an aunt who still lived on Beacon Street; forgot most everything except that the birds were singing 'Johnny Harvard' and that Chester was a great man. He climbed on a table and insisted on making a speech about it. You know how that home brew stuff works sometimes?"

"I've been told that it has a certain potency," says Mr. Robert, winking at Nicky.

"Anyway," I goes on, seem' that Nicky was well interested, "it seems to be his tongue loose. He gets eloquent about the poor old Ellis who had to stand around and watch the snake dance without lettin' out a yip. Then he has a bright idea, which he proceeds to state. Maybe they don't know anything about the glorious product of the settin' hen down in New Haven. And who needs it more at such a time as this? Ought to have some of 'em up there and lighten these loads of gloom. Act of charity. Gotta be done. If nobody else'll do it, he will. Go out into highways and byways."

"And he does. Half an hour later he shows up at the home brew headquarters with an Ellis that he's captured on the way to the South station. He's a solemn-faced, drifted party who don't seem to catch what it's all about and balks when he sees the bunch. But he's dragged in and introduced to Chester 'Beak the Hittite'."

"I beg pardon?" asks Nicky.

"I'm only giving you what I heard," says I. "Chester Beak might have been his right name, or it might not, and the Hittite part was some of his josh. I take it. Anyway, Chester was dealt a generous shot from the jug, followin' which he was one of them. Him and the Harvard guy got real chummy, and the other fellow sampled the home brew the more they thought of each other. They discovered they'd both served in the same division on the other side and had spent last Thanksgiving only a few miles from each other. It was real touchin'.

When last seen they were driftin' up Tremont Street arm in arm singin' 'Madelon', 'Boola-Boola', 'Harvardians' and other appropriate melodies."

"Just like the good old days, eh, Nicky?" suggests Mr. Robert.

But Nicky only shakes his head. You say they were not seen again?"



Then take me out to him will you? she asks.

"What them?"

"Well," says I, "there was one Har-

"What?"

"What do you think of this new near-beat?" she demands.

"Why," says I, "it strikes me the bird who named it was a poor judge of distance." Which almost causes Betty to swallow an olive pit.

"You're empty delightful!" says she. "Why haven't we met before?"

"Maybe they didn't think it was safe," says I. "They might be right, at that."

"Naughty, naughty!" says she. "But go on. Tell me a funny story while the fish is being served."

"I'd do better servin' the fish," says I. "Pooh!" says she. "I don't believe it. Come!"

"How do you know I'm primed?" says I.

"I can tell by your eyes," says she. "There's a twinkle in them."

"S-s-s-h!" says I. "Belladonna. Be-ides, I always forget the good ones I read in the comic section."

"Please!" insists Betty. "Everyone else is being so stupid. And you're supposed to entertain me, you know."

"Well," says I, "I did hear kind of a rich one while I was waitin' at the club for Mr. Robert today, only I don't know as you'd care to hear it."

"Listen, everybody!" announces Betty vivacious. "Torchy is going to tell a story."

Course, that gets me pinned up like the candle shades and I shakes my head vigorously.

"Hear, hear!" says Mr. Robert.

"Oh, do!" adds Mrs. Ellis.

As for Vee, she looks across at me doubtful. "I hope it isn't that one about a Mr. Cohen who played poker all night," says she.

"Wrong guess," says I. "The one I overheard at Mr. Robert's club while a bunch of young sports were comparin' notes on settin' hens."

"How do you mean, settin' hens?" asks Mr. Robert.

"It's the favorite indoor sport up in New England now, I understand," says I. "It's the pie-belt way of taking the sting out of the prohibition amendment. You know, building something with a kick to it. I didn't get the details, but they used corn-meal, sugar, water, raisins and the good old yeast cake and let it set in a cask for twenty-one days. Neerly

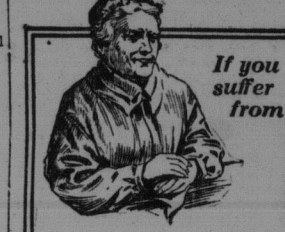
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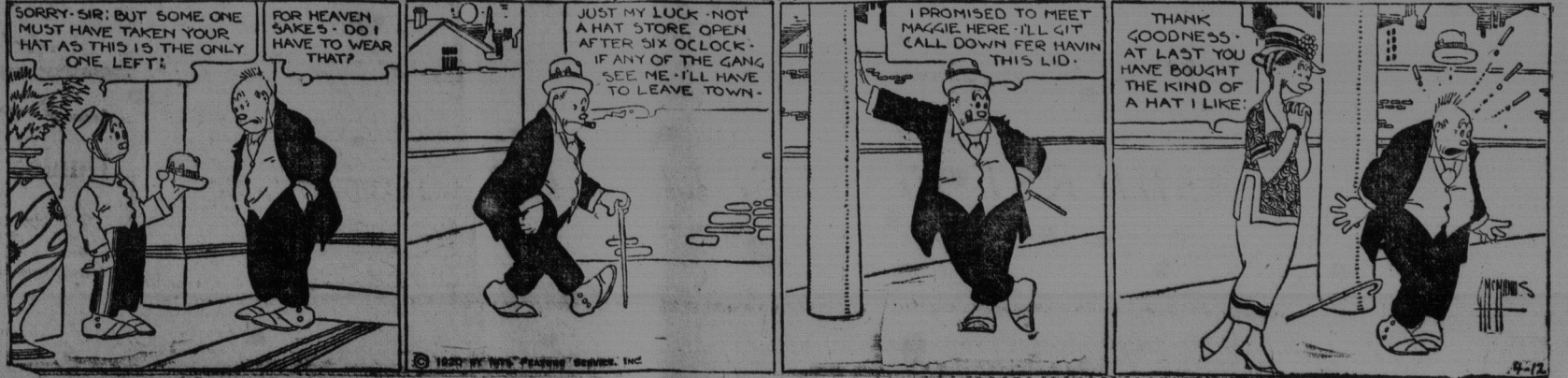
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