

The New York Daily Bulletin

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UP from the banks of Kentucky River, Gray Knob rose rugged and unsmooth. Two lone cabins stood upon the clearing on its summit, stood and gazed at each other in fair weather and foul, as if determined to stare each other out of countenance. The larger cabin was evidently getting the advantage of it; it stood forth clean, firm, and aggressive, while the smaller one leaned shifty against the hillside, apparently indifferent as to what supported it, the fenders on the dilapidated sill as important as a post in the buttresses of a beam.

In these dwellings lived the Skittles, Mrs. Skittles in the self-respecting cabin, and Mr. Skittles in the shittles one, and between them lay fifty feet of hillside and an embow of silence.

One blustery day Mrs. Skittles was carrying on a vigorous cleaning campaign; she charged down the middle of the kitchen floor with her broom, then made a left oblique, and a right oblique, coming to a position of rest at the cabin door. She was large and imposing, with a figure that had made no concessions to forty years of hard work. She was a veteran in the army of labor, but not from the ranks; Mrs. Skittles had ever been in command. Her communications to the world were still issued in the form of orders, and she marched through life on schedule time, wanting to court-martial all who failed to follow instructions.

In her small encampment upon the clearing, there was but one deserter. Two years ago Mr. Skittles had found the martial life too strenuous, and, failing in his duties, had been condemned to solitary confinement in the cabin adjoining that of his superior officer. For a living he stripped tobacco, for a diversion he chewed it. He still accepted his ration daily, in a tin bucket, which was carried to him from the mess-room by one of the little Skittles, in return for which he was expected to render obedience to Mrs. Skittles, who, though no word was spoken, used a code of signals at once coercive and harassing.

As she stood at the door of the cabin, she shaded her eyes with her hand and looked up the river. "It must be getting on to twelve o'clock," she said; "I heard the little Sunday school bell ring since breakfast. Rhoda Ray," she called over her shoulder, "have you seen the children come home from the village?"

Rhoda Ray, long and lank, emerged from the bedroom. She had drab skin and weak little drab eyes that looked patiently out from under a mop of drab hair. Her calico dress was cut at the exact waist to display to the best advantage a pair of knobby knees. Her mother's question seemed to strike her dumb with confusion, so that her lips were sealed; it was a marked characteristic of Rhoda Ray that she never spoke her mind, though it was possible to keep it open. After a moment's hesitation she stammered:

"I seen 'em comin' 'bout a hour ago."

Mrs. Skittles threw her head angrily. "No use sayin' no more, Rhoda Ray, I know where they are at."

Throwing a shawl about her shoulders she stalked across the strip of land that divided the two cabins. Before she reached the door she heard shrieks of merriment from within, which served as the signal for her to enter. On the threshold she paused, an averaging dither about to descend upon the unconscious savorers.

The interior of the room presented an aspect of startling contrast. In the corner was an unmade cot, covered by an old piece of rag carpet, while beside it stood an imposing self-rubbed, upholstered in crimson plush. On the plain wooden walls hung two multicolored chromes, resplendent in wide gold frames, while beneath them stood a stove decrepit with age and general debility.

Mrs. Skittles viewed these objects with increasing ire. For Mr. Skittles, be it known, was a chronic victim of the installment plan, and his utter inability to withstand the allurements of traveling agents had been the rock upon which their conjugal felicity had been wrecked.

As she stood there wrathfully recalling the past, five ecstatic shrieks recalled the presence of the deal table, in the centre of the room, five noisy little Skittles were clinging and laughing, and crowding one another, while from under the table, Mr. Skittles, with his coat tied over his head, made frantic grabs at stray legs and arms, emitting dreadful growls and snarling with ferocious intensity.

Suddenly there was a pause. The bear subsided. Mrs. Skittles slid to the floor and slipped past his mother, while Lottie, Susan and Eddie Jo helped the three-year-old tumbled down from the table. Only Jimmie was left, sitting cross-legged in the recesses of the table, fastened into immovability by his mother's fixed glare.

"Jimmie," exclaimed Mrs. Skittles in awful tones, "you tell yer paw to come right out from under that fool table."

Mrs. Skittles obediently repeated the message, and Mr. Skittles clambered forth with as much dignity as his enveloped head and the obstructing table legs would permit. He was a small, slight man, with slanting shoulders, from which his arms dangled in a perpetual state of relaxation. His straggling beard but half concealed the weak mouth where a vacillating smile was ever on the point of breaking

through. But if his mouth smiled his eyes belied it, for a more pathetic pair of appealing eyes were never raised to an irate master. He stood now hunched and disheveled, as guilty as the children at being caught in mischief.

"Presty goin' on," sniffed Mrs. Skittles to the ceiling. "Here I be, hustlin' round from sun up to the steamboat whistle, an' you onary children, widd of betta' down yonder strippin' tobacco, a fooler's name here. Clear out everyone of you 'cept Jimmie; she ken stay and clean up this here pigsty. Whereupon, slowly directing her searchlight from the ceiling, Mr. Skittles, she pointed with a long and rigid finger to the unmade bed, to the soiled dishes in the corner, coming to an awful and accusing halt at Mr. Skittles' stooping feet. Then, with a snort of indignation, she becked herself out of the doorway, the children scattering before her like leaves before a whirlwind.

Mr. Skittles, left alone with the plump Jimmie, cautiously closed the door, and sank dejectedly into the plush rocker. Black fresh reprimand from Mrs. Skittles added to his burden of contrition, for, real as he had been in other duties, he had never faltered in loyal allegiance to his leader.

Jimmie let himself down from the table and, going to him, put her arms about his neck. "Don't you care," she said recklessly; "I love you heap better than I do paw."

This blasphemy roused Mr. Skittles to protest: "Oh, no you don't, Jimmie; yer paw's a wonderful woman. I never was good enough for her; her family all said so when we was married. She deserved to get a first-class husband widd of me."

"I love you best," insisted Jimmie, hugging his head to her breast.

He patted her cheek tenderly and drew her down in the chair beside him. She snuggled up close and, holding tight to his hand, tried to direct his thoughts to a more pleasant subject.

"Ain't you got any secrets to tell me today?" she asked slyly.

Mr. Skittles's face underwent a transformation. The look of dejection gave way to one of sudden interest.

"Well, if I ain't clean forgot to tell you!" he exclaimed.

Jimmie clasped her hands in delight. "Cross my heart and body, make a big ring and a spot in the middle, I won't tell!"

"Well," said Mr. Skittles, peering anxiously around the side of the chair to see that the door was secure, and sinking his voice to a whisper, "I'm making a new investment."

"Is it a melon?"

"No," said Mr. Skittles, pursing up his lips with some show of importance, "I can't say it's a melon, Jimmie. I was a-changin' between a melon, an' a widdin' case, as you know. But this here is a new offer; it's a patent an' a combination."

"What is it?" insisted Jimmie, gaining time and courage.

"It's a widdin' article that a melon; it kin be used in the field and in the house, to fetch and carry in the day time and to set on at night." Mr. Skittles counted off these attractions on Jimmie's fat fingers.

"A bucket?" asked Jimmie incredulously.

"No, mamam!" said Mr. Skittles; "it's a guarantee patent seat-chair an' wheelbarrow."

"But the easy chair, Jimmie! It sorter feels up inside like an' looks jes' like a natural chair, then you turn a peg an' the 'us' thing you know there's a patent wheelbarrow, easy runnin' light as a feather, an' strong as—anythin'."

"Where's it at?"

Mr. Skittles again surveyed the closed door and winked significantly at the woodshed.

Jimmie was silent a moment, wrestling with a new thought. "Well, Pa," she asked, "have you got through payin' for the clock?"

Mr. Skittles's face fell. "Well, no, I ain't quite, he confessed. "But that's a-changin' another company. It ain't the same thing at all; this here is a new concern, twenty cents a week till you pay up."

"Will they take it going to be punkin' or apple, Ma?"

"Oh, no. This here is a good, honest, concern. The agent said so."

This doubt being removed, Jimmie began to take a lively interest in the wheelbarrow, and Mr. Skittles, encouraged by her sympathy, drew largely upon his imagination in recounting the marvelous possibilities of his new investment. When the dinner bell called from the other cabin, Jimmie refused reluctantly. "I expect you better spread up yer bed, an' empty out yer wash pan," she advised; "it's awful smelly here."

"That's right," said Mr. Skittles, approvingly; "I'll jes' do that very thing, Jimmie!" he called, as she slipped on her apron and went to the door to see that the door was closed.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Skittles, having with great dispatch cleaned and brushed and fed each little Skittles, ordered them into the corner of the kitchen with positive instructions that they were not to come beyond a certain crack in the floor. There was an air of unusual importance about Mrs. Skittles this afternoon. She marched back and forth to the pantry, measuring flour and lard and making frequent references to a much-dumbed cookbook.

Only once did the group in the corner venture an inquiry: "Is it going to be punkin' or apple, Ma?"

"I ain't a-sayin'," said Mrs. Skittles loftily; "it never did bring a pie no lick to talk about it before-hand." She rolled the dough with a firm hand, pinching it and speaking it with the skill of one practiced in these arts.

"I know," whispered Eddie Jo; "it's sweet potato."

Mrs. Skittles kneaded and measured and stirred in absorbed silence. "Rhoda Ray," she presently demanded, "reach me that three allspice on the corner of the shelf. The can this way."

Rhoda Ray, glad to be ordered on the scene of action, looked on while her mother liberally sprinkled the contents through the mixture.

"You're took the blue ribbon at the pie social last year, didn't it, Ma?" she asked in a conciliatory tone.

"Yes, it was," said Mrs. Skittles, approvingly; "I'll jes' do that very thing, Jimmie!" he called, as she slipped on her apron and went to the door to see that the door was closed.

"Four years," said Mrs. Skittles, "apple, lemon, mince, an' punkin'."

"What's a-goin' with you tonight?" Rhoda Ray was emboldened to inquire.

Mrs. Skittles held herself erect and spoke with emphasis: "Every single one of you includin' Teddie, yer paw, Mr. Jenkins Skittles, ain't a person to be trusted with a blind kitten."

This announcement, that the entire family was to be allowed to engage in the festivities of the pie social in a few hours, threw the light brigade into riotous disorder. Sudden joy is as demoralizing as sudden grief, but Mrs. Skittles did not believe in anticipation.

That evening about dusk, she charged down the hill with her little company. Carried before her, carefully enveloped in napkins, was the sweet potato pie, upon which rested the responsibility of sustaining her reputation as the best cook in the county. Behind her came the little Skittles, rejoicing in the unusual combination of Sunday clothes and week-day manners.

Mr. Skittles, sitting on the top rail of the fence, with his feet hooked under the lower, surveyed the procession with surprise. He waited until Mrs. Skittles was well in advance, then he plucked at Rhoda Ray's dress.

"Say," he whispered with excited interest, "where are you all goin' at?"

Mr. Skittles, laughing and weakly protesting, bled it, but Sally Woodruff is a blushing mighty pink over there in the corner. What! Twenty-five? Going, going, gone! at twenty-five cents to Mr. Zack Wilson. Here's your number and you can send your partner and eat your pie."

Zack, with pleased embarrassment, turned confidently to Sally, only to find that old Mrs. Duffy had his number. The company laughed uproariously while Zack shared his pie with his stout companion, the cocoon turning to sawdust under Sally's scolding glances.

In the midst of the uproar a head was thrust in at the door. It was a shaggy head, and the ragged body that followed it was out of keeping with the gala attire of the rest of the company. But a chorus of welcoming shouts arose nevertheless.

"Hello, Jenk Skittles! Where did you come from?"

"Did you blow down from your roof, Jenk?"

"Come right along in and get in the game."

Mr. Skittles, smiling apologetically and trying to smooth down his flying locks, edged forward. A hurried glance had failed to reveal Mrs. Skittles, sitting bolt upright in solemn state at the far end of the room.

"Did one on a pie Jenk!" cried some one in the crowd. "Put up a good one, Jim, and we'll make him buy it."

Mr. Skittles, laughing and weakly protesting,

briskly, and soon the fun was on once more at high tide.

But the light had failed for Mr. Skittles. He twisted his legs nervously about the legs of the chair, apparently seeking to gain strength therefrom, as he cast pained glances in every direction. Presently his eyes fell on the pie still clasped in his hands. A new question presented itself, a question of such overwhelming significance that it caused him to groan in spirit. Should he eat the pie? Years of experience had taught him that no greater fault could be offered him, whether half than to fail to appreciate her cooking. With this past knowledge he felt it incumbent upon him to eat the pie, though his spirit was crushed and his appetite languid. So bravely did he desire to ingratiate himself with Mrs. Skittles and to prove his utter contrition for having broken in upon her evening's pleasure, that he ate also after a slice with heroic fortitude. Fortunately Eddie Jo and Jimmie came to his assistance, and by the end of the evening the truth of the maxim that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," had been amply verified, and Mrs. Skittles could find no ground for complaint.

But the first link in the chain of disaster having been forged, others followed swiftly. On the hallward march Eddie Jo was taken violently ill. Mr. Skittles carried him nearly to the clearing, when he was seized with an indisposition himself. Mrs. Skittles, oversteering them, ordered a halt. She glanced at the other children slyly.

"Well," she said, shortly, "Rhoda Ray, I s'pose you've got the headache, and Bud the headache, and somebody else the headache! A person would think it was Sunday morning!"

The children, stoutly disclaiming these ailments, all except Jimmie and Eddie Jo—day pleaded guilty to them all. Mrs. Skittles, never one to encourage ailments, took the limp and dejected Jimmie by the hand and, leaving Mr. Skittles to bring the little boy, hurried on to the cabin.

Mr. Skittles, a few moments later, obediently deposited his burden on the doorstep, and slipped away. To his surprise his knees began to wobble, and before he knew it he too, was repeating on Mrs. Skittles's front steps. That woeful person, bustling about within, was becoming seriously alarmed about Jimmie. The child was alternating between paroxysms of pain and heavy stupor, and nothing could arouse her.

"Oh! the mustard, quick!" called her mother to Rhoda Ray, who had just clumped over the concrete forms in the doorway.

Rhoda Ray, with an unsuccessful effort to collect her chronically scattered wits, took a tin can from the end of the shelf.

"This here is the allspice," chattered Mrs. Skittles; "ain't you got more mustard? She stopped short and sniffed the can suspiciously. "Why this ain't spic at all!"

"It's mustard," urged Rhoda Ray feebly.

"It ain't!" cried Mrs. Skittles in piercing tones; "it's insect powder, and I put it in the pie!"

A scene of utter confusion followed, with Eddie Jo wailing his anguish in piercing screams, and poor Jimmie lying limp and unconscious on the bed. "She's gittin' worse all the time!" wailed Mrs. Skittles, rubbing the child's hands and arms and trying in vain to rouse her. "Somebody go for the doctor, quick! But she'd be gone, gettin' there, it's a half hour to get there and a half hour back. Lord help me! Lord help me, what must I do?"

As if in answer to her prayer an impatient knock appeared in the doorway. Mr. Skittles, white of cheek and wild of eye, holding feebly to the case, addressed the caller.

"I'll get her to the doctor," he said, earnestly; "git it, wrapped up, an' I'll take her."

He vanished from the doorway only to appear a moment later with the guarantee patent combination easy chair and wheelbarrow. Mrs. Skittles stopped not to question; she knew too well the importance of a doctor. She laid the heavy, unconscious child in the wheelbarrow, roughly pushing aside the unsteady hands that tried to help her. Then, with an anxious shake of the head, and never a glance at the blanched face opposite, she hastened back to attend to the less desperate case within.

Mr. Skittles, gathering up his load, started bravely forth into the night. The deadly nausea that had overcome him gave place to excruciating pain, but he pushed forward with straining muscles and anxious eyes. The narrow path down the mountain side ascended abruptly at times; the thick trees overhead shut out the starlight, and underfoot a tangle of grasses and vines caught his feet as he hurried along. Heads of perspiration stood out on his forehead, and his hands and feet grew numb. Presently he sank to his knees, then to the ground.

"Jimmie!" he called, piteously; "Jimmie yer ain't dead yet, ar ye? Yer paw's tryin' to get you there, Jimmie! Don't you hear me? His weak, inefficient hands fumbled about until they found her, when she staggered to his feet. "My God, she's agittin' cold!" he cried, as she stumbled forward again.

The trees seemed to be dancing around him in a great circle that would not let him through, the lights in the village moved farther and farther away as he approached. When he reached the turnpike he fell again, his face in the dust and his hands clutching at the rocks. For a while he lay so, then the pain made him remember.

"O God!" he prayed, "don't pay no mind, but jest help me get Jimmie to the doctor's. He stumbled to his feet, but he could not move his burden. In despair he sank upon his knees and burst into violent weeping.

"Poor little girl," he cried, his trembling arms across the child; "pa's tryin' to help you, but he never could help nobody. He never was no good, but he'll try agin'—he'll try." Pitching and lurching he staggered forward; sight and hearing left him; one thought only remained.

At the doctor's door the strange equipage halted. Mr. Skittles began his story, but he never finished it.

At daybreak when Mrs. Skittles hurried to the village, she found Jimmie out of danger, but lying in the darkened office was the slight form of Mr. Skittles. For hours she beat over him, desperately striving with the doctor to bring back consciousness. Her husband, hovering on the borderland of eternity assumed a strange dignity and importance.

At noon he stirred. "Jenk," she said to her most commanding tone, "spak to me this mornin'."

And Jenk spoke.



"Is it going to be punkin' or apple, Ma?"

SOME Y. M. C. A. PLANS

Older Boys' Conference is to Be Begun Tomorrow

The older boys of the Y. M. C. A. will hold their annual conference beginning tomorrow evening in the association rooms. The conference will continue until Sunday.

The general theme of the conference will be "A bigger and better boy." Besides the local boys there will be speakers from outside points and some of the local ministers will take part in the proceedings. The first meeting will take place tomorrow evening at 7:30 o'clock. The program will include addresses by

A. W. Robb, Arthur M. Green and H. J. Smith, besides reports from the various branches of the work. The remainder of the program for the week follows:

Thursday, 7:30 p. m.—Addresses: The Group System and Its Relation to Bible Study, D. D. Milligan, secretary for boys; The Street Boy and How the Association Can Help Him, G. Eldon Merritt; Scoutmaster, John G. McKinnon.

Friday, 7:30 p. m.—Banquet, H. H. Pickens presiding; talk on Modern Camp Methods and a Policy for St. John, by H. A. Lordly; Boys, D. D. Milligan.

Saturday afternoon will be taken up with an outing to Renforth, leaving the city at 1:15 and returning at 5:30.

Two addresses, one Special Work for Our Boys' Division, by H. A. Lordly, and another, Power of Leadership in Older Boys, by John G. McKinnon.

be the chief part of the evening programs. On Sunday morning there will be a special service at 9:45 addressed by Rev. J. A. MacKeigan, pastor of St. David's church, on the subject of Christian Athletics.

At 11 o'clock there will be a conference service in German street Baptist church, when Rev. F. S. Porter will preach on "Jesus the Complement of Human Life."

There will be a mass meeting for men and women in the congregational church at 4 o'clock Sunday afternoon. John J. Bradford will speak on "The Responsibility of the Community Towards Its Coming Citizens."

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WRECK OF BORDEN SHIP ON TRADE AND NAVY ROCKS

Winnipeg, Sept. 9.—Senator Lavergne, who reached here today on his return east from the forestry convention at Victoria (B. C.), said that he and his companions would support a Canadian navy built in

Canada, but at the disposal of the empire when needed for imperial defence. He prophesied that the Borden ship would be wrecked on the trade and navy rocks, and said that within a few years the three prairie provinces would be lined up for reciprocity. Accompanying the senator were Hon. Jules Allard and Gustave Fische, chief of the forestry service.

THE REASON

Two young employees of a florist, who are supposed to be working in the rear of the establishment while the proprietor of the business looks after things in the front were recently startled by the appearance of the "old man" while they were engaged in a game of pitch-and-toss. The proprietor was justly indignant. "How is it," he demanded, "that I hardly ever find you fellows at work when I come out?"

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are just the right medicine for the children. When they are constipated—when their kidneys are out of order—when over-indulgence in sweet favorite food gives them indigestion—Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills will quickly and surely put them right. Purely vegetable, they neither sicken, weaken or grip, like harsh purgatives. Guard your children's health by always keeping a box of Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills in the house. They keep the children healthy.

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