

'Mom, I believe I'll go in the morning. Can't go clear through, I know, but I'll get three or four hours to look round Albany; and that's a pretty big place, too.'

He seemed to be waking up to his opportunities at last; and the mother's air castles gleamed fair in the early sunrise when he drove away the next morning. As for Leander, he fairly reveled in delight. He whistled as he drove along the country road, and he bought his ticket with the air of one who has all the pleasures of earth before him. It would never have occurred to him to plan such an expedition, but having been pushed into it, he enjoyed it to the utmost. The train, its passengers, and the panorama outside furnished so many objects of interest that he was sorry when the first short stage of his journey ended—or would have been, if the sights and sounds of the city had not immediately absorbed him.

A man near the station was selling a 'lightning cure for rheumatism,' and Leander stopped on the outer edge of the crowd to watch and listen. Several of those who tried the remedy praised its effects, and the boy was interested.

'Did it really help you?' he asked a man near him.

'Made me feel a sight better,' declared the patient. 'Why, I hain't been able to stretch out my arm this way for months. I don't say how long it'll last, but it's worth something to be limbered up for a little while.'

'That's what Grandma ought to have,' Leander decided, and cheerfully exchanging a dollar for a bottle, he disposed the precious package in his pocket and walked on. What wonderful things these crowded streets held. He congratulated himself many times, that morning, on his wisdom in taking the early train and having those hours to spend by the way. The shop windows attracted him. He stopped before a dry-goods store and gazed admiringly at a lay figure.

'Mom's always wantin' a nice black dress, and wouldn't one like that suit her to a lot?'

He intended to take something home for each one, anyway, he reasoned, and why not, buy the gift for his mother here where he had found just what she would like? He entered, and with the aid of a kind clerk made a very judicious selection, but the array of goods was so bewildering that he determined to make his purchases for Nell and little Jennie also while he had such valuable aid, and so two bright dress patterns were added to the black one. They cost more than he had expected.

'But they're nice,' he assured himself with a nod of satisfaction. 'Anyway my ticket's bought to New York, and I don't see what I'll want of such a lot of money after I get there.'

He did not know where to have his parcels delivered, and as his arms were getting too full of bundles for comfortable sight-seeing, he concluded to walk back to the depot, deposit them, and refresh himself with a lunch. Then he started happily on his way again in an opposite direction. A bookstore enticed him. The very book that Jimmy wanted was in the window, but it did not remain there long. Wouldn't Jim's eyes sparkle when he saw it? Leander's sparkled in anticipation as he tucked the new parcel under his arm.

Only a little over an hour left now before he must take the train. What a good time he had had! If New York proved half as delightful as Albany he was sure the journey would be worth all it had cost. He visited the State House—that, indeed, had

been his objective point of interest in coming to the capital—but as he reached the street again after wandering through the corridors he found that he had lost his bearings. A dray loaded with farm implements stood near the sidewalk, and possibly it was the familiar appearance of the load that made the boy select the driver as one of whom to ask direction.

'Depot? Why, I'm going right back there now,' answered the drayman. 'Jump on and I'll take you along.'

Leander had walked until he was ready to enjoy the rest of a ride, and besides he found it pleasant to have some one of whom he could ask questions. He made the most of his opportunity and paid little heed to where he was going until his companion drew up before a large building with a 'Here we are.'

'Why, this isn't the place!' said Leander, looking about him in amazement. 'I want to take the train for New York.'

'Oh, that's what you meant? Well, you see this is the Agricultural Depot—the driver whisked his whiplash toward a gilded sign. 'It's the establishment I haul for—biggest thing of the kind in the state. I take it—so when you walks up to my dray and asks for the "depot," I s'posed you meant the one I come from. You can go straight to the other in five minutes by taking the street car that runs past here. 'Tain't time for your train, though.'

The boy assured himself by his father's old silver watch borrowed for the journey that his informant was right, and then he plunged into the wonder of the great building. Well, he could understand how some of those modern appliances would improve upon the work of the rusty old-time implements at home.

'And father's been wanting some of them so long,' he muttered to himself. 'If it doesn't seem a shame to fool away a lot of money in New York when he can't afford such things!'

One hundred dollars, or what was left of it, would not go very far in such purchases, but Leander knew enough of farm work and the home needs to make it accomplish its utmost. He gave careful directions for the early sending of his treasures and then hurried out to take his car with exactly fifty cents left in his pocket.

'I'll never do to go that way,' he reasoned. 'Uncle Leander'd think I'd come to sponge sure enough. If I hadn't bought my ticket—but I guess I can sell it.'

At eight o'clock that evening the Bent household was aroused from its usual quiet by the sound of a vehicle rolling into the yard.

'That's Joe Glegg bringing home the rig,' said Mrs. Bent, starting to her feet. 'You'll have to put up the horse, Father, and do be sure and ask Joe if Leander's got off all right.'

But before this programme could be carried out there was a familiar 'Hello' from the porch, and Leander's face, half happy, half abashed, appeared in the doorway.

'Leander Lemuel Bent! What on earth are you doing here?' exclaimed his mother.

'I—I didn't have money to go no farther than Albany,' answered Leander, sheepishly. 'Fact is, I bought a few things and then—Mom, don't look so disappointed!' he burst out. 'There's quite a lot of bundles out in the waggon, and I've had a glorious time. New York couldn't be anything more than Albany, only a little bigger, and a fellow doesn't want to swallow everything at once.'

The contents of the packages were ample consolation to everybody but the mother;

and the father's face, as he and his boy talked together, was something good to see. Even Mrs. Bent, as she smoothed out the long-coveted dress pattern, only repeated in constantly softening accents her belief that Leander would be just Leander to the end of the chapter.

The next morning the paper brought from town held a startling item. Among its New York news was an announcement of the business failure of the wealthy Leander Bent.

'Now, ain't I glad I didn't waste my money going to see him, and getting there just when I wouldn't have been wanted?' questioned Leander, in self-congratulation.

But as he thought of it again while he was working in the field that morning he began to pity Uncle Leander. The boy had never bestowed much thought upon his prosperous great-uncle; he had been little more to him than the illustrious example which graced 'Mom's' lectures on ambition and perseverance. But now the picture of reverses after such long success appealed to the warm-hearted nephew. He felt a growing inclination to express his sympathy, and so he did what he had never done before—wrote the old gentleman a letter. It was short, stiff, and very unsatisfactory to the writer, but it brought a reply that was prompt and surprising:

'Dear Nephew: The newspaper mixed matters, as usual—the item referred to Leander Brent instead of Leander Bent. I am happy to say that I am still solvent, though I should not be if I had managed my affairs after any such wild fashion as the other man seems to have done. Your letter, which I believe is the first I have ever received from you, reminds me that you are my namesake. It strikes me that you must be a rather peculiar specimen of humanity to acknowledge the relationship only at a point where most people would be ready to drop it. I shall be down in your part of the state in a week or two, and hope to see you and get better acquainted.'

Mother Bent was radiant. Could anything be more auspicious than this?

As for Leander, his views, if they might be so considered, were expressed only in the single interjection:

'Huh!'

A Hasty Judgment.

(By Hattie Lummis.)

'She looks like an embodied opportunity for missionary work,' said Lee to herself.

Lee was a pretty girl, vivacious, energetic, and with a natural grace of manner that won her ready admission to all hearts.

Lee's new neighbor, Lucy Beech, was as unlike her as possible; a plain girl, painfully shy, and with a hesitating way of saying the most commonplace things. 'Dull and heavy,' had been Lee's estimate of her when they first met. But Lee had a whole-souled sympathy for unattractive people, and there was more than her usual kindly cordiality in her manner as she asked Lucy to attend the young people's meeting that evening. Lucy blushed with pleasure at the invitation so winningly given, and promised to come. For several weeks she had occupied the same corner, always giving her testimony timidly, and in a voice so low as to be almost inaudible. Then she ceased coming, and Lee noticed her absence with a sense of responsibility which was one of her most admirable traits.

'She hasn't any stability, I suppose,' she said to herself, as she considered her neighbor's early defection, and wondered how she could best be reached. 'These half-alive