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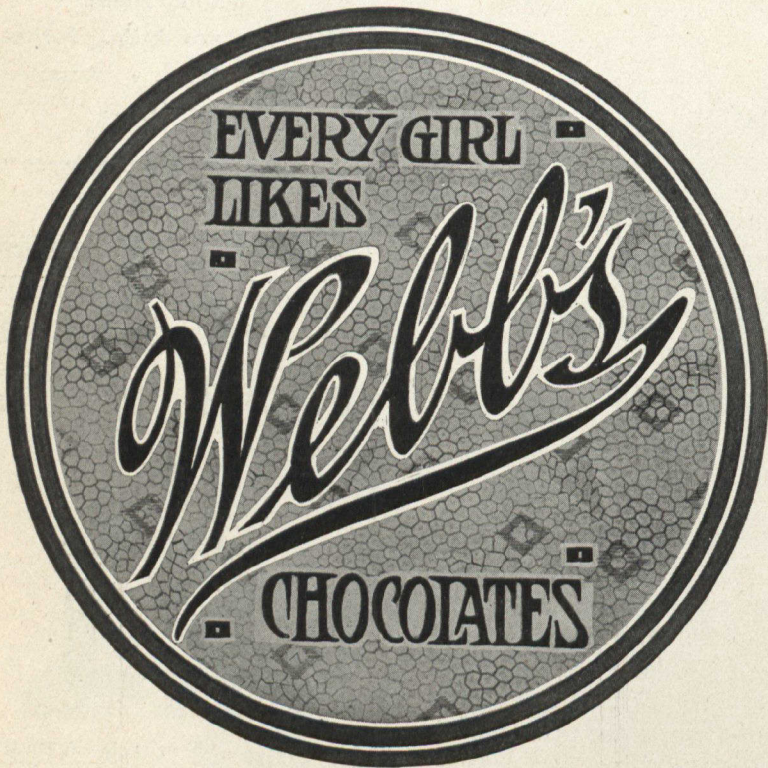
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THE HUMAN SIDE

By ARCHIE P. MCKISHNIE

EASY.

"IT'S all right to be generous," said the big man, "that is, if you know how to be. Take me now, every time I obey the impulse to do good, I generally get the worst of it. Just the other afternoon, that cold, wet afternoon it was, as I stood waiting for a car, a little girl of about eight years of age came up to me and told me she was lost. Lost dogs and lost children always make for me, somehow. I found that the little girl lived about three miles from where we stood; luckily she knew her street and number. I told her not to cry and I would put her on a car and the 'Con' would do the rest. She said that if I'd kindly point out the way to her, she'd walk. Said she didn't have a car ticket. Think of it! That little child walking three miles through that cold rain, and her with hardly enough clothes on her to make one of you men a neck-scarf. I handed her a car ticket and do you know the dear little thing insisted, young as she was, on my giving her my address so that she might return it to me. Of course to humour her, I did it, and when I came to myself she was gone. As I stood hopefully awaiting that warm glow said to succeed a generous action, a boy came up and said his mother was dying and if I would please lend him the price of a car-fare, he would see I received her dying blessing. Incidentally he promised to return me the five cents if I would give him my address. I spoke a few words of sympathy and gave the lad ten cents. I felt pretty sure of the glow now. But just as it was beginning to tingle my veins, I saw the boy make across the street and join a little tow-headed girl. I rubbed my eyes. Yes, there was no mistaking her. It was the little girl who was lost. They passed away together down street and I stood sadly contemplating what I had done, or rather the way in which I had been done. Any man hates to think he's easy, when he knows he is and can't help being. So when a tall, red-headed fellow came up and told me a pitiful tale about his wife having been cut in two by something or another and he wanted enough money to get back to his sad fireside, I grabbed him by the neck and proceeded to clean the sidewalk with him.

"We were arrested for disorderly conduct. The judge told me I was a most inhuman being. I said I was too human and he fined me \$10 and costs."

"And the red-headed fellow?"

"Same, but I paid his fine. You see, he was the father of that little girl."

* * *

ON THE OLD CREEK.

OLD man Steel hobbled out to the drive-shed, through the early morning sunshine. "Bill, oh Bill!" he called lustily.

A jovial-faced man protruded his head from the shed door.

"Yes, daddy," he answered.

"I want you an' th' boys to take old Betsey down offin th' rafters an' calk her up. Then take her over t' th' crick an' put her in th' water. I want it done right away, d'ye hear?"

A grin spread across the face in the doorway.

"Well, of all things," chuckled Bill. "Put that old boat in the water after her hanging high and dry for nigh fifteen years. I wonder what's got into dad."

The old man limped over to the shed. "Me an' your uncle Tom are goin' fishin' to-morrow," he said.

"Uncle Tom! Why, daddy, he's in Europe, ain't he?"

The old man shoved a yellow slip of paper in his son's hand. "Read this 'ere telegram," he laughed.

Tom's grin distended as he spread out the paper and read:

"Montreal, June 14th.

"To Old Bill Steel,

"Talbotville.

"Coming home for a fish Thursday night. Have old Betsey and a can of bait ready.

"Brother Tom."

"Eh?" laughed Daddy Steel, "how's that? Now you boys get right t' work fixin' that ole boat up. I musn't forget t' get some new lines this arternoon. Say, Bill, ain't seen anything of th' spade, have you?"

Like a string of pearls on green plush, the creek lay. On either side the tall rushes swayed before the caress of soft south wind. Beyond the rushes, a fringe of great beech and maple trees stood, a high wall of dark green blending with the paler green of the marsh grass.

The whole place was pregnant with life. On the rush-tops red-winged blackbirds bent and swayed and teetered and trilled to nesting mates in the rush-clumps. A wood duck swam along a musk-rat run, her family of six downy balls in her wake. Now and again, from away across the marsh-lands, came the contented quack of nesting black and gray ducks.

Around the creek's bend there swam slowly an old, dun-coloured boat. In her stern, an old, white-haired man sat, dipping a paddle noiselessly. Another old man stood in her prow, a long bamboo fishing-pole in his hands.

Every now and again the long pole would bend and the line cut the water with a swishing sound. And when the black bass was landed safely, there would be much excited talk and laughter between the two aged men.

"Big feller, that, Bill."

"Yep. Not nigh the size of that 'un we caught in Teal Bay that time, though."

"Nope, you don't get many like that feller, I tell you, he—hello! another strike, Tom. Here, you'd best take the pole an' land this chap. My ole wrist's about whipped."

And so on, as down the old creek the two old men in an old boat passed. Twenty long years lay behind them. They were boys again; boys away back on the old playground, with Betsey, the flat-bottom boat.

THE DUET.

THE high soprano notes rang out
With penetrating tone,
A little solo first to sing
A dozen bars alone!

And soon the second voice began
A sad and plaintive song:
Pianissimo at first—and then
Crescendo all along!

Two voices next together rang
In accents clear and shrill,
And both of them *fortissimo*.
And more *crescendo* still!

Ah! none can faithfully describe,
For words would fail to tell,
What pow'r and passion came at last
In one long, thrilling yell!

Then mother rushed towards the
stair,

Her upward way to take,
And called aloud: "Where are you,
Nurse?"

The twins are both awake!"

—Constance M. Lowe.