

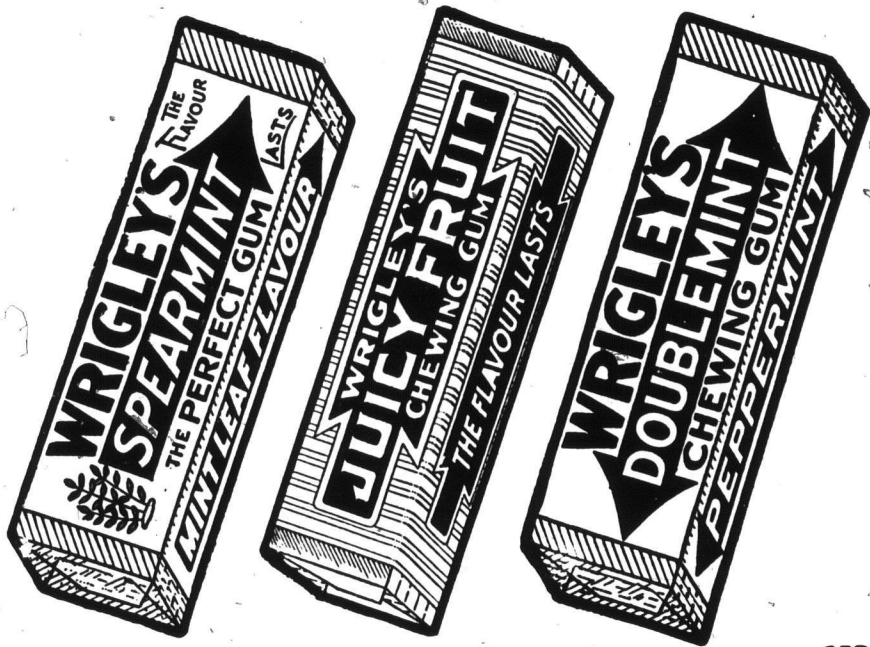
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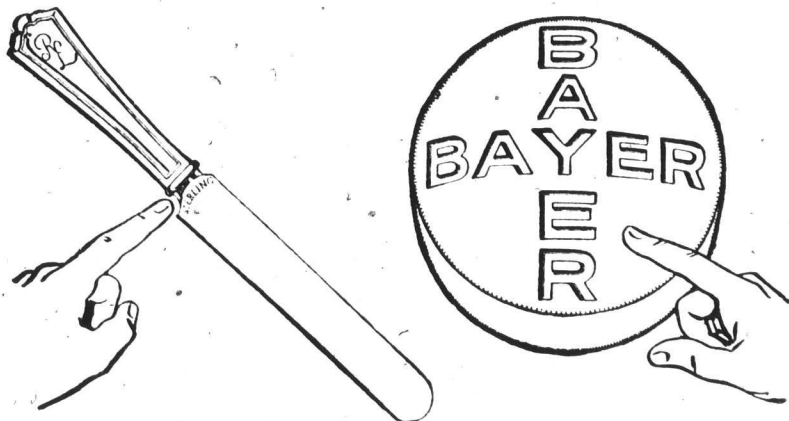
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A Good Name

"A Good Name is Rather to be Chosen than Great Riches"

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Theodora Hyton

YOU'D better come back along with me now," said Silas Guildford to his nephew as they left the cemetery. Mark said nothing; he walked beside his uncle unable to realize for the present at least anything that had happened around him. The overwhelming grief and loss seemed to have stunned him.

His father and mother had gone out a few evenings before in their car and there had been an accident. His father was picked up dead, and his mother had never regained consciousness, but had died in a few hours. How the next few days had passed he never knew. His father's brother, Silas Guildford, had taken control of everything, and had told him that there would be very little left when his father's business was wound up, and that he would give him a job in his store.

Mark had stared at him in a dazed manner and answered: "Father wished me to be a doctor."

"Fiddlesticks!" his uncle had answered. "I have no money to waste on such ideas. That was one of your mother's notions; she always did think herself a sight better than us folks, but as I told you there will be precious little coming to you, not enough to keep you in boots, but I dare say you can help a bit at the store and run errands for your keep."

To a studious boy of sixteen, who had been brought up to look forward to a professional career, it was no easy thing to give up all his ideas and hopes for a position of errand boy at a store, but it is a merciful thing that sudden and overwhelming trouble sometimes so stuns us that for the time we are unable to realize all that it means, and by the time that realization comes there comes gradually with it the strength to bear and endure. To Mark in the first agony of his sorrow it seemed of small importance what became of him. Who was there now to take any interest in his success or failure? Everything had been swept from him at one blow. He had spent the days before the funeral at a kindly neighbor's, and now he was to go to his new home. His uncle lived in a small neighboring town, and he had never been there since he was a little boy, too small to remember anything of the visit. The two families had nothing in common, and Mark's father, Dermot Guildford, had been a very different man from his brother Silas. He had married a doctor's daughter, and it had been her great wish that Mark should follow his grandfather's profession.

Silas Guildford did not talk much with his nephew during the journey home. He was not at all pleased with the prospect of having to provide for the boy, though if he had been honest enough to own it he knew Mark would be very useful to him in the store. Neither he nor his wife had wished to have the boy, and so Mark was not likely to receive a warm welcome at his new home.

Aunt Martha met them at the door. "So this is Mark, is it?" she said, looking him up and down. "Takes after his mother," she added with a sniff, as much as to say it was a regrettable misfortune. "Well, come on in, supper's waiting, and I've left Kate to mind the store."

Mark never knew how he got through that supper. For one thing he was thankful: his uncle and aunt took no notice of him whatever. At last it was over and his aunt told him to follow her up to his room. "You needn't come into the store this evening," said his Uncle. "But to-morrow you'll have to try and make yourself useful; I'm not going to keep you here for nothing."

Mark did not answer. He followed his aunt upstairs to a small attic at the top of the house. The sole articles of furniture were a low camp bed and a broken backed chair, and under the window was his suit case and the box of books he had packed before he left.

"I don't know what you've got in that box," said his aunt, "but Kate and I could hardly get it upstairs."

"Oh, it's my books," said Mark. "I'm sorry you bothered to carry it up."

"Books, humph!" replied his aunt. "You won't want 'em here; there'll be plenty to keep you amused in the store."

Mark felt tired and dusty after his journey. He turned to his aunt who was just leaving the room. "Can I have a wash?" he asked.

"You'll find a basin and towel in the kitchen," she said. "I suppose you've been used to all sorts of fine things at home, but I'm not going to carry water up and downstairs for anybody."

Mark followed her downstairs and when he returned to his room he knelt down and began to unstrap his suit case. "I'm glad I've got a place to myself anyhow," he thought, "though it's not much to look at." The first thing he took out of his suit case was the Bible his mother had given him a few months before on his sixteenth birthday. His eyes filled with tears, the first tears he had shed that day as he opened it and turned to the fly leaf. There was the dear familiar writing: "To my son Mark from his loving mother" ran the inscription, and underneath she had written, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."

"A good name." It was a well-known verse to Mark, but somehow it had never struck him as it did at this moment. Here he was alone, poor, and friendless, for he felt that he could not look upon his uncle and aunt with their cold, unsympathetic manner as friends, and yet he had one thing left—his good name. For his father's and his mother's sake he would strive to keep that, no matter what hard blows life should deal him. It was with this resolution that he lay down on the hard, little bed and, worn out with all the emotions of the day, he fell asleep, and for a time forgot his troubles.

"Now then, you good-for-nothing lout, hurry up, there." His uncle's voice sounded loud and angry at the top of the cellar stairs. It was just a week since the day of the funeral, and what a week it had been! Mark had honestly done his best though the work had been most unengaging and tiring. Not a moment's rest did he get through each long day, and this perhaps was a good thing for him, for he had little time to brood over his troubles. But hard as he might work, appreciation and thanks there were none. He was now busy filling sacks of potatoes, and he smiled grimly to himself in the dimly-lit cellar. "Good-for-nothing lout," he murmured; "one could hardly call that a good name." It seems I have lost what I thought was my one possession. It was like that all the time; hard words and fault finding. "The boy's not worth his salt," his uncle said to his aunt many times a day, and it was some time before Mark found out that he was taking the place of an assistant who had left a few days before he had arrived. His uncle had told him that he could pay him nothing until he was worth it; he should have his keep and must be thankful for that, and so not even to his wife would Mr. Guildford own that the boy was of any use.

Mark had been at his new occupation for about three weeks when, to his intense surprise, his uncle handed him a letter, addressed in a handwriting that reminded him of his mother's. "For me?" he asked, so surprised that he seemed unable to open it. "Looks like it," said his uncle gruffly. "Mark Guildford, that's your name, isn't it?" Mark cut open the letter and read:

Glenorme Ranch,

Vancouver Island, B.C.

Dear Mark: I think you will have heard your mother speak of her little sister Bessie. I am that sister, your Aunt Bessie. It is a long time since I heard from your mother, and I was

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