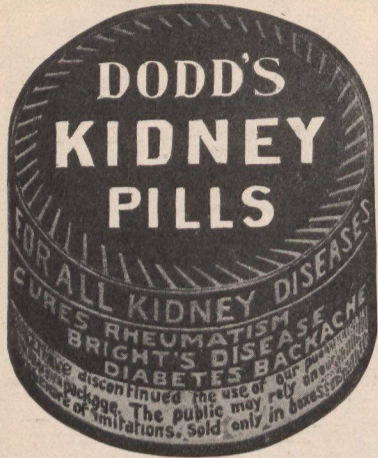


THE HUMAN SIDE

By ARCHIE P. MCKISHNIE



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NIGHT ON THE BAY.

MAY passed out in a galaxy of crimson-gold and purple. A long, wide path of glory lay straight across the waters of the bay, and in that path the tall reeds stood up like slender, golden wands.

With the fading of the last gleam of crimson in the west, the path narrowed and drew back, and baby night-winds awoke to pile up a long, white fringe of cloud, that floated and swung high above, like a hammock for dawning stars. Through its wide meshes glided the faint, cold star-beams like ghosts of day's dead glories.

High in air, a flock of wild geese passed on whistling wings; a long procession following dead day. Then the winds, across the darkened waters, leaped to wilder life and swayed the rushes to a swishing song. From the far shore came the wail of a lonely loon.

* * *

THE MAGNETISM OF THE "POLLS."

OLD Deacon Draper was resting beneath a tree in the field, when along came Trustee Hawkins, driving an ancient sorrel mare attached to a buckboard.

"Goin' to be hot," he called, pulling up.

"Goin' to be a scorcher," agreed the Deacon, climbing up on the fence. "What's new, Jim?"

"Nuthin', 'cept the Grits are goin' to give the Tories an awful whippin' to-day, and that ain't news 'cause everybody knows it," chuckled Hawkins, flecking a fly off the old mare's back with a stub of a whip.

The Deacon laughed too and climbing down from the fence limped across to the buckboard.

"Jim," he said, laying a hand on the other's knee, "you know that ain't right. The Conservative party's in to stay and we are goin' to have prosperity."

"Poor Deacon," sighed his friend, "poor, misguided Deacon."

"Voted yet, Jim?" asked the Deacon.

"Nop; have you?"

"Politics have become corrupt," said the Deacon sternly and evasively.

"Corrupt's the word, brother. For my part, I ain't carin' whether I vote or not."

"Me either, Jim, and what, say I, is the use of two old chaps like me and you, drivin' through the heat to town, jest to poll a vote apiece? Why, Jim, I'd only kill your vote and you'd kill mine. We'd both be as far ahead if we stayed to home."

"I declare now, but you're right, Deacon," nodded Trustee Hawkins. "What do you say if we stay home and tend to things while the boys are away votin', then?"

"I'm agreeable to that, Jim," declared the Deacon, and the two old men sealed the agreement with a hand-shake.

Morning passed, and the dinner-horn sounded.

Throughout the meal, the Deacon was strangely silent. After dinner he went back to the wheat-field to pull mustard. He saw his two sons drive down the lane and take the road to the village.

"I've done it every year fer nigh fifty years till this year," thought the Deacon. "Seems odd I'm not votin' to-day."

Along about the middle of the afternoon, the Deacon walked slowly across towards the house.

"I jest thought that maybe the boys had forgot to take the list of things

you made out, Ma," he said, poking his head into the cook-shed.

"No, Pa, Bob took it," came the response, and the Deacon walked toward the stable, his hope vanquished.

As he passed the implement shed, his eye fell upon the tall oil-jug, beneath the binder. He walked over and picked it up. He shook it. Then, with a satisfied expression on his wrinkled face, he carried it into the barn and put it in the box of the old buggy.

Next, he harnessed old Bess and hitched her to the buggy. As he drove past the house, his wife came out and looked at him in wonderment.

"I find we're clean out of machine-ile, Ma," he called guiltily, "and I'm jest goin' after some."

The Deacon touched Bess with the whip, and as they clattered through the gate and up the road, he chuckled: "Tain't likely we'll be needin' ile fer some six weeks yet, but it's jest as well to keep a supply on hand."

The main road led directly past Brother Hawkins' place, but the Deacon remembering that there was a field in Dolson's farm he wished to see, turned down the side road. It was a little farther to town this way, but he did want so to see that field. As he turned off the side road to the main road again, an old sorrel mare, hitched to a buckboard, rounded the opposite corner. The two rigs slipped into the main road side by side.

"Why, Deacon!" cried Brother Hawkins wonderingly.

"Purty hot, Jim," grinned the Deacon. "Somebody sick at your place?"

"Thought I better show old Mol here to the vet'," explained Brother Hawkins, buckling his lines. "All your own folks well, Deacon?" he asked anxiously.

"Jim," grinned the Deacon, "suppose we call that agreement of ourn off, eh?"

"Seems like it's the only thing to do, Deacon," chuckled the other. "Bet I beat you to the polls."

* * *

TO-DAY.

Forget those Yesterdays along the way,

Leave them behind with all their joys and sorrows;

Souls that are strong to meet the world's To-morrows

Are those that make the best of its To-day.

* * *

SUNSET ON THE HILLS.

Sunset on the hills—sunset on the hills,

When the drifting, shifting glory The restful valley fills;

And the breezes join the sunset song, Of drowsy, tinkling rills.

Twixt the night and day—twixt the night and day,

Angels reach with loving hands To draw our cares away;

Dies the woodland chorus, And the lights upon the bay.

* * *

CALLED BACK.

He left the blue hills and the swaying trees,

And in the city sought Earth's fairest things;

There, beauty beckoned him, with rainbow wings,

And Life beat time to subtle melodies.

But in the grey of life again he turned To those far hills, where pine-trees swayed a song,

And found a joy—not of the city throng—

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