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The Trouble Listener

By R. RAY BAKER

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He stood at the park entrance, a dark-haired, fashionably garbed man of slender build, and allowed his cane to swing repeatedly against the wall that embraced the terrace. Beneath a small, dignified mustache his lips twitched nervously, and his black eyes, set in a pale, almost emaciated face, roamed restlessly over the throng that was enjoying a late afternoon siesta.

From his position at the gate he could see two old men smoking corn-cob pipes contentedly, chatting aimlessly as they rested on a bench, against which a pair of crutches leaned. Nearby was a languid young woman with yellow hair shielded by a red parasol, gazing dreamily into space and now and then calling methodically: "Edward, come here." to a bare-legged youngster romping, heedless of her admonitions, on the lawn in the vicinity of "keep off" sign.

A grimy laborer, clamping his jaws placidly on plug and carrying a dented dinner pail, his shoulders hunched forward and his feet dragging after him, slouched into the park and paused near the entrance, where the wind had separated an abandoned newspaper into its several folios and scattered them over the grass.

The laborer glanced furtively about, stepped gingerly on the lawn, and a moment later moved out of sight along the walk, whistling listlessly no tune in particular, the newspaper folded compactly and protruding from a coat pocket.

Two girls passed near the observer with the cane. One was chewing vigorously on gum, punctuating her remarks with frequent smacks of the lips. The other evidently had been weeping, for there were traces of tears in her eyes and she carried a wilted handkerchief.

"I'd tell 'im where tuh get off at," snapped the gum chewer. "Don't let 'im put anything like that over on yuh. The idear dockin' yuh a whole dollar jes 'cause yuh busted one measly 17' fift-cent vase. Well, goody, I gotta hurry home 'n' get fed."

She hurried off through the park, while the other girl walked on down the street, soaking up more salt water with the tiny lace-fringed square of linen. All this ceased abruptly at the next corner, where she was joined by a young man and a ripple of laughter floated back.

The man with the cane smiled somewhat grimly and adjusted the stick on his arm. "The inhabitants of this old world certainly do have their troubles," he sighed, and as he turned he collided with a tall, thin, blond young woman clad in pink.

"Pardon," he murmured, and then as he recognized her: "Oh, hello, Evelyn. This is a surprise. What are you doing that you can't see where you're going? Studying astronomy?"

Evelyn smiled sadly and took him by the arm. "You're just the man I need," she asserted. "I'm in awful trouble—and it's all on account of my no-good husband, Joe. I wish I'd married you. Come in the park and I'll tell you all about it, and maybe you can advise me."

With an air of resignation he allowed himself to be piloted along the park walk. They were just in time to see and hear the amiable discussion of the two old men with corn-cob pipes break up in an angry, sputtering argument over the effect of the peace treaty on the map of Europe, or the high cost of living, or the batting percentage of the major league catchers.

As the man and the girl passed the young woman with the yellow hair, the youngster who had been romping on the lawn came running up to her, splitting the air with shrieks. The young woman manifested great annoyance, stopped gazing at distant nothings, seized the bare-legged child by the arms and dumped him unceremoniously on the bench beside her.

"Now, what's the matter?" she demanded angrily. "Can't I have a minute's peace? What are you roaring about?"

"I bit my finger," he wailed, and let loose another torrent of tears. "Shut up!" she commanded, and gave him a slap across the face. He became silent immediately, except for some half-suppressed sniffles, evidently through fear. She looked up as Evelyn and her escort were passing and nodded.

"Oh! How do you do, Mrs. Benjamin," she said. "Did you ever see such a kid? I don't have a second of comfort. I wish he'd never been born. He's driving me crazy."

"She thinks she's having troubles,"

said Evelyn to her companion, as they went down the walk. "But her troubles are nothing compared to mine. Wait till I tell you. Come over to this bench."

As they were being seated she remarked: "Where have you been the last three years? I heard you went West. And you look so pale. You must have been sick."

He nodded but did not vouchsafe a reply, simply moistening his dry lips with his tongue.

"I heard you were engaged to marry out there," she rattled on. "Well, I got married soon after you left; and we lived so happily till—"

Tears came to her eyes and a choking sob halted her conversation. She blew her nose and resumed:

"Ain't it queer, to see people like Mrs. Haines back there fretting and worrying about that little boy and thinking she's in misery, while here I am with something real to worry about. Oh, Joe, it's awful, that's what it is! Who would have thought two years ago—Oh, that husband of mine is a brute! Do you know what he's been doing? Well, he—has been going out with another woman, that's what!"

She broke down completely and the man placed a sympathetic hand on her shoulder.

"Don't feel so badly," he advised. "It can't be helped. Men sometimes do those things. Anyhow, it isn't as bad as it—"

She looked up and said almost savagely: "Oh, it ain't? That's all right for you to say, Joe Carson—you who never had a care in your life, and loaded down with cash, too. I can't tell you how I'm suffering because of Walter's actions."

"You see, Walter never comes home to lunch; but I phoned his office at noon yesterday to see about some things for dinner, and the office girl told me he went out to eat with some woman. It made me furious, but I didn't say a word to Walter. I called again just a little while ago and the girl told me the same thing. So I came out to take a walk and decide whether to get a divorce or just leave him. That woman must be terrible—one of those vampires."

Another flood of tears broke forth and Carson looked about uneasily, hesitating to speak lest he say the wrong thing again.

The languid young woman and the bare-legged boy who was such a trial were passing. The youngster was laughing up at his mother as they tripped along, his hand in hers.

Evelyn looked after them and remarked sneeringly: "Well, Mrs. Haines has got over her spell and the kid's finger ain't bothering him now. Ain't that the limit?"

She did not observe a middle-aged man and an elderly lady with gray hair who were sauntering through the park until they were close to the bench.

"Evelyn!" exclaimed the man in astonishment as he and his companion halted. "Why, how do you happen to be here?"

Evelyn leaped to her feet in surprise and confusion. However, in an instant she had regained her composure and was all smiles.

"Mrs. Wilcox," said the man, "allow me to introduce my wife. Evelyn, you remember me speaking about the buyer for the Clayborn millinery—our best customers. Well, this is she."

Evelyn beamed on Mrs. Wilcox. "So pleased to meet you," she said warmly. "My husband has often spoken of you. Can't you come up to the house for dinner tonight? Oh, by the way—Mrs. Wilcox and Walter, dear—meet Mr. Carson, an old friend I happened to meet while getting some fresh air and sunshine."

Carson acknowledged the introduction and presently excused himself. Slowly he walked out of the park, swinging his cane, and entered the hotel across the street. He noticed in passing that the two old men again were smoking in peace.

"Troubles, troubles," he soliloquized. "Everybody has them, and yet eventually they seem to work out all right. But mine—there's no chance."

He nodded to the clerk, who handed him a telegram. With nervous fingers Carson tore open the envelope. "Come home, Joe," it read. "Parker confessed to embezzlement. You are cleared. I'm ready for the wedding."

Carson looked out the window at the hurrying crowds, which he did not see. "The world's just about all right," he murmured. "Dear girl, she stuck to me through it all."

Small but Potent.—Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are small, but they are effective in action. Their fine qualities as a corrector of stomach troubles are known to thousands and they are in constant demand everywhere by those who know what a safe and simple remedy they are. They need no introduction to those acquainted with them, but to those who may not know them, they are presented as the best preparation on the market for disorders of the stomach.

CHARM OF COZY SUN PARLOR

Fresh Air and Sunshine Room Popular With All—Furnishing is Chief Difficulty.

There is something contagious about the desire to have sun parlors. It seems to sweep over the whole community at once. The big house on the hill with its many wings and gables acquires one—or rather one of the wings is transformed by means of many additional windows into a sun parlor. Then some of the snug houses on the avenue acquire them.

The new little cottages that are just being built in the new section blossom forth with a giddy showing of window glass where a decade or even two years ago they would have had a "front porch." And the people that mortgaged the house to buy their car are mortgaging it again to add a sun parlor to it. Not that they are such devotees to sunshine or that the doctor has suggested that they have more of it in their lives, but, well, it doesn't seem as if they could keep up appearances without a sun parlor.

But for every sun parlor there is the important question of how it is going to be furnished, what sort of curtains it will have. Now, sun parlors are seldom the only sitting or living room in the house and it is quite a mistake to treat them as such. Remember that all those windows were put there so that sun could come in, and to swathe them with a multiplicity of curtains is really foolish. When you want to breathe behind many curtains go into another room.

Moreover, the windows in any sun parlor ought to be often open, and for this reason you should not drape those windows with starched or perishable curtains that will be hurt by the moisture. Many persons have roller shades for the windows, but that is really a mistake. One indefatigable housewife even had green shades added so that they could be pulled down when the sun shone bright, so as not to fade the chintz covers to the wicker chairs.

USEFUL ITEMS

Milk jugs require careful washing if the milk is to keep sweet. The best plan is to scald the jugs with boiling water, then fill them with cold water and add a teaspoonful of salt. Leave the salt water in for about ten minutes before emptying it. In this way you are sure that the jug is perfectly clean and the milk not likely to turn sour.

To make cut glass shine put a little ammonia in the water in which it is rinsed.

A simple way to remove inkstains from linen is to soak it as soon as the ink is spilled in milk. As soon as the milk becomes discolored, change it and repeat if necessary. Wash first in warm water without soap, then in the usual way.

Rust and iron mold stains will generally yield to a treatment of lemon juice. The stain should be soaked in the juice for at least 24 hours. The stained piece should be laid on a plate and the juice squeezed over it; then put the piece of lemon on the top of the stain and leave it. Wash first without soap, then in the usual way.

Tapestry-covered furniture may be cleaned by rubbing well with hot bran, then with a clean cloth.

Sweater Knit Blouse. The sweater-knit blouse makes its appearance in a hip band model, with long waist striped and wide belt flaps.

Shuck Protection for Corn. Most corn growers fail to realize that by improving the shuck covering on their corn by selection they may reduce the amount of damage done to the grain. Growers generally consider nothing but the ears and kernels when selecting seed. In weevil-infested sections in particular, variation in the damage of ears is frequently observed, but if the matter is considered the cause is usually attributed to variation in the hardness of the grain. Weevils attack corn of all degrees of hardness, and their progress in consuming the hard corn is only slower than that in the soft. Some observers have concluded that since weevils are able to eat the hardest corn, they would also cut their way through the most resistant shucks in order to feed upon the grain, if sufficiently urged by hunger. Others have observed that ear-worms may cut holes through a large percentage of the protecting shucks and that weevils will enter through these holes, and they have concluded from this that shuck covering cannot be made a practicable means of protection. Then, too, there is a sentiment on the part of some against a large amount of shuck.

Benefit of Shade Trees. It doesn't cost much to plant trees, yet they add a great deal to any property. The New Jersey Forester says the shade trees of New Jersey are worth \$20,000,000. Still, there are not nearly enough trees even in New Jersey.

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