

GAME OF BORROWING

By EMILY JOHNSON.

When Platchett first moved into the Pleasantville neighborhood the men all thought him a remarkably likable fellow. As many of the women as managed to get a look at the family's furniture decided that the Platchetts did not possess any too much of this world's goods. These furnishings were plain and somewhat scanty, accord to Pleasantville standards. But one and all voted the Platchetts desirable neighbors.

Platchett made friends readily. He was usually smiling, was a great story teller and never failed to laugh at any story told by another. He was, indeed, a good listener—he would sit and listen as if his life depended upon it. Mrs. Platchett was in these things a fair match for her husband, and the little Platchetts seemed to pattern their behavior similarly.

The first morning that Platchett joined the other male members of the suburban colony for the ride to town in the smoker of the 8:15 he searched his pockets in full view of everybody in the car. Then, with a frank smile, he accepted a match from Penderby. He held the match in his hand and put the other hand into his breast pocket with full confidence—only to draw it out again empty.

"I came away without a single smoke!" he declared. "What do you think of that?"

Penderby was sympathetic. He pressed a cigar upon his new neighbor, a cigar of that variety known as the Penderby choice, three costing 50 cents. The borrower smiled again, lit the cigar, and seemed well pleased. And he did not bother to return the smoke the next morning, nor on the morning following.

Soon the Platchetts became acquainted with every family in Pleasantville, and then the game began in earnest.

The front door bell, or maybe the side door bell, or even the back door bell of some one of the houses in the suburb would ring persistently. A trip to the door would disclose one of the little Platchetts standing there ready to deliver his or her message as soon as the door was opened. "Please, ma'am," was invariably followed by a request that the neighbor lead mamma this or papa that or both parents the other thing. It went from bad to worse, and when the Platchetts had been in the house a month—lacking just one day—the neighbors decided to rebel.

The men were responsible for the idea, even as they were responsible for the meeting at which the plan was formed.

Next day, after the male population of Pleasantville had gone to its various offices, it was discovered that Platchett had not caught it 8:15. The women of the suburb knew later in the that he had not gone to town at all, but before they knew this the plan had been put in operation.

Early in the morning an ancient, woolly headed servitor of the Penderbys arrived at the Platchett residence. He carried a portable vacuum cleaner, and he made polite explanation. "Marse Penderby done say yo' is to use dis yah today," he said, "an' he sent it over so's yo' wouldn't have to come after it."

Before Uncle Eben was out of sight the half grown Turman boy came up the steps with a talking machine in his arms. "Ma said she'd save you a trip," he pouted, "and it's time you was usin' it again." He turned and was gone.

As the Turman boy went out of the front gate little Bobby Jarson, from the brick house down the street, trudged up the front walk with a basket filled with neatly tied and labeled packages. These were marked "cup of sugar," "pinch of tea," "olive oil for salad dressing," "vinegar you forgot to order" and "flour to do till the grocer's boy gets here." He set the basket down, pointed to it with a gesture evidently rehearsed and went away.

As Bobby Jarson vanished Mrs. Marley, the next-door neighbor, called in person. "I'm going to my sister's to spend the day," she began, "and I thought I'd just come over before I left and tell you that you can have the surrey and old Dick this afternoon. So you won't have to run out to a telephone for them, you know." She turned and marched down the steps, looking back not at all.

Mrs. Platchett moved the various objects inside the house and shut the door. She was smiling and when she called Platchett he smiled as usual.

When the men came from town that evening they ate suppers and made their way to Penderby's for the meeting. They wanted more news than they had been able to get.

Marley, the next-door neighbor, had gone to his wife's sister's for dinner, and it was late when he arrived. "Well," he commenced, "I don't so much mind their using old Dick and the surrey to haul all that crowd to their new home—five good miles it is to Farville, too—but I do think it was rubbing it in to haul their household furnishings, a bit at a time, in the same vehicle.

"And I'll tell you something else," went on Marley. "If I were you fellows I wouldn't go out to their new place with any idea of recovering what you kindly loaned them, because Platchett's liable to borrow your carriage and make you walk home."—Chicago Daily News.

Sometimes an old man doesn't use glasses; he drank from a bottle.

MAN WHO DRIFTED ON

By GEORGE PATTILIO.

While we dawdled in the shade cast by the wagon, the Bantys told us their history. It was that of restless wanderers who constitute a never-ceasing caravan from as far east as Louisiana, wending westward and north through Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. They find a virgin country, break it, and nature heaps her bounties in their laps. Then comes a bad year, and they have made no provision; or the spirit of the rover, that will not die, wakes once more; again their wagons take their whining way through the wilderness.

Surely the goal will prove fabulously rich; always that hope—it never burns out. The memory of starvation cannot dim; hardships and distance do but fan it; it fires their souls as the lure of gold tempts prospectors. And on their heels comes the plodding farmer, who goes patiently to work to wrest a living out of the claims they have abandoned, and wakes, some morning, to find that civilization is knocking at his door and he is rich.

Banty had tried raising maize close to the nations. No; the climate did not agree with him and his wife.

"I liked it, Ed," she protested. "But it wasn't doing you no good, Goldie," he said. "I could see that easy."

He had nothing to say against the climate. It was good enough climate, but its effects were far from satisfactory. In consequence, they had disposed of their acres to migrate to the Panhandle. All that was years ago.

"That land is selling at \$20 an acre now," I observed.

"Twenty dollars. I swan! Do you hear that, girl? This gen'tman says they're paying \$20 an acre for that plains land," said Banty, his eyes glittering. "And we done sold ours for \$3. If we'd only waited!"

"Yes," his wife sighed; "it's too bad. And we done lost that \$1,900 in New Mexico, you recollect, Ed?"

Indeed, he did. Banty wagged his head over the inscrutable ways of the jade Fortune, and murmured, "Well, well. Who'd have thought it?"

This was a worn-out tale to us, one of little meaning. Nesters came and nesters went. If they did not go soon enough we sometimes furnished the impetus; for, of course, the southwest was intended by the Creator to be a cow country, and it is an iniquity that agriculturists should win it for corn and cotton and other mainstays of life.

Banty had fenced a quarter section near El Capitan mountains, and with this as a base of operations, had put his nestegg in sheep. But the sheep had dived over a cliff on a night of rocking storm, and there was none to prove what, or who, propelled them. Much good it would have done him could he have proved it. So once more he had gathered his scant belongings into a wagon to set out for that promised land.

"This is the last time; yes, sir," cried Banty, in his excited cracked tones. "Where we're going now they say it's a regular Garden of Eden, like what the Good Book tells about. All you have for to do is to stir the ground some and you've got a crop. Six cuttings of alfalfa in a year; yes, sir."

"And don't forget how calm and peaceful it all is, Ed," Goldie spoke up. "Don't you mind how Brother Ducey said they were all so friendly? He said no man's hand was lifted against his neighbor, Brother Ducey did."

"Huh-huh," Dave grunted. He had given the recital his most earnest attention, and now he shook his head reprovingly.

"That's just the way it is every time—the way you done. It's what I've been telling these boys here for ten years," he declared. "Birds of a feather gather no moss."

"What's that you say, Mr. Dave?" "A rolling stone gathers no feathers," Dave corrected sternly. "You all know what I mean."—McClure's Magazine.

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Behindhand.

Uncle Ezra—You don't seems to take to Eph Hoskins' cousin that's visiting here.

Uncle Eben—Nope. He's too old fashioned. He won't fight about anything up-to-date. He wants to argue about Andy Johnson's impeachment, and I want to argue the Tilden-Hayes scrap.—Puck.

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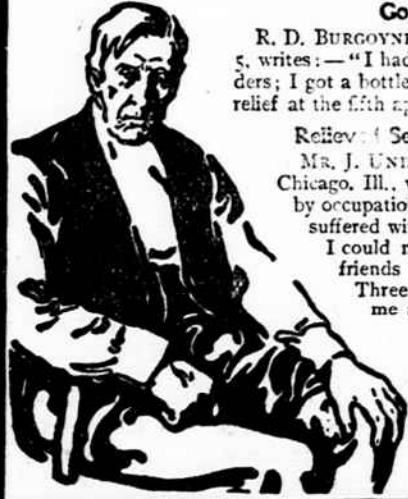
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