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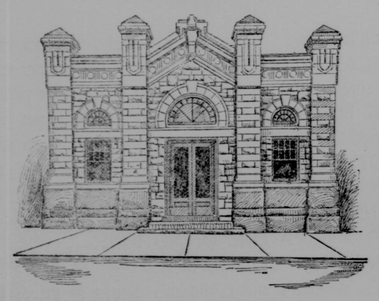
The Peoples National Bank

Denton, Maryland



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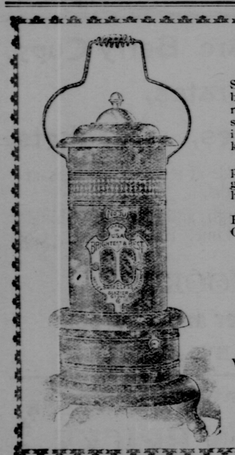

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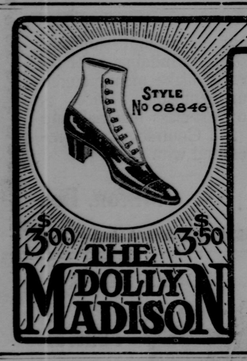

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12-30-6m] W. W. DUKES, Concord, Maryland.

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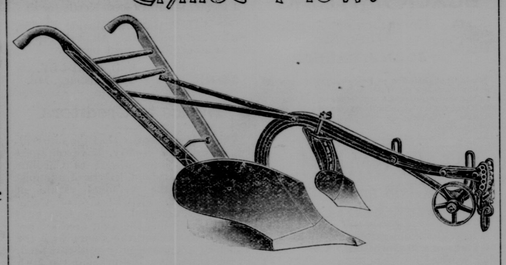
The South Bend Chilled Plow.



SOUTH BEND and OLIVER CASTINGS.

THE NUTTLE HARDWARE CO., Denton, Md.

A Patroness of Genius

By HOWARD FIELDING

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MRS. CULVER is a widow, young and fair and very rich. Her ways have been ways of pleasantness throughout the whole span of her years, and she is today the happiest creature that exists under the blue arch of heaven. Even a trifling malady of the heart with which she is afflicted may be counted as a blessing, not only to herself, but to her physician and to me. It spices her life with a delightful though wholly imaginary uncertainty. She is capable of a delicious melancholy and reads the works of the gentler philosophers with a profit and joy which might otherwise be denied to her. And besides she takes a lively pleasure in changing her will about once in three months, with the help of my legal advice. Upon such occasions the enumeration of her various properties gives her a childish gratification wholly unmercenary, a liberal fee is mine, and when I meet her doctor we never fail to shake hands upon the excellent state of Mrs. Culver's health and upon the cheering prospect that her generosity may still be an amelioration of our lives in this hard world years hence when we are old.

Mrs. Culver is a discoverer of genius, chiefly in the fields of music and poetry, and has helped many worthy young persons, with only a moderate sprinkling of mere schemers and spongers. Every new object of her favor inspires her with a fresh desire to attack the impossible problem of establishing a permanent charity for the needy children of Apollo, and (only upon paper, of course) I have squandered millions for her in this way. A natural delicacy restrains her from immediate benefactions of any great magnitude, and so she adds a codicil to her voluminous will and nearly always revises her general scheme of charity at the same time.

Upon a certain day I had an appointment to call upon Mrs. Culver at 3 in the afternoon, and I looked forward to the usual agreeable interview.

When I entered her house I was aware of music, very good music, as I am compelled to admit. Some one was playing upon the piano in the smaller drawing room upon my right. I guessed at once that the performer must be a young Dane named Nils Kronold, whose genius had recently been brought to Mrs. Culver's attention.

The butler informed Mrs. Culver of my presence, and she came to the reception room, where we exchanged a few words. I learned that she had encountered Mr. Kronold in one of the big stores and had brought him home in her carriage. If I cared to hear him play she would take me into the drawing room, but if time pressed with me she would dismiss him and give her attention to business.

MR. KRONOLD SEEMED OBLIVIOUS OF OUR COMING.

Meanwhile the talented Dane continued to discourse most excellent music, and although my conversation with Mrs. Culver occupied more minutes than the brief summary of it might seem to indicate, Mr. Kronold did not cease to play. The sound was always in my ears, although not constantly attended, yet I am sure that if it had been interrupted beyond the natural small pauses of the musical score I should instantly have been aware of the fact and should not have failed to remember it afterward.

I have said, however, that I did not give a steady hearing to the sweet strains that were wafted across to us. The reason was twofold—first, I preferred the voice of my hostess to any other music, and, second, I had observed something which, though it had no especial significance at the moment, excited my curiosity and tended to deflect my attention. Behind Mrs. Culver there was a mirror, and it gave me a view of the part of the hall and of the entrance of the room where Mr. Kronold was. A heavy curtain was hung across that door. I saw the butler—a lean, dark, anxious man, whose name is Derby—draw the curtain aside and enter. I saw him presently emerge, and it seemed to me that his demeanor was not ordinary It was furtive, tense and nervously indecisive.

There was a chair in a corner of the hall, and he sat down in it and got up again in an unnatural way, as if his action had been part of a mild nightmare. I saw his right hand hovering around the breast pocket of his coat, and I knew that that pocket held unusual contents. Finally he glanced toward the door of the reception room, caught a glimpse, I suppose, of my observing eyes in the mirror, and immediately his distress increased.

"By all means," said I in response to a renewed suggestion by my hostess, "I should be very much pleased to meet Mr. Kronold."

Upon this we crossed to the drawing room, the butler holding the curtain for our convenience and entering after us in response to a sign from his mistress, who doubtless required some small service of him, though what it was she could not remember, for the excitement of the next few minutes obliterated the matter from her mind.

Mr. Kronold seemed oblivious of our coming. His back was toward us; his eyes were intent upon the score, for it appeared that he was playing something new to his repertory, a purchase of that afternoon. This circumstance may account for the fact that he was giving his third rendition of it when we entered. I remembered having heard those chords while the butler was admitting me to the house and again while Mrs. Culver and I were talking in the reception room.

I think that Mrs. Culver was about to make a gesture to me, indicating that we should wait in silence for the conclusion of the piece, but a sudden shock of surprise arrested her. Following the direction of her glance, I saw a plain table, which stood in the center of the room, seemingly an addition to the ordinary furniture, and now littered with a great number of unframed engravings, upon the midst of which there lay a lady's hand bag. The mouth of the bag was open and gaped at us pathetically like a dying fish.

"Where is my money?" said Mrs. Culver in a strained and whispering tone, and I could have fancied that she addressed the question to the empty bag and that the inanimate creature's open mouth replied in the popular phrase of the day, "You can search me."

The gifted Kronold wheeled about upon the piano stool and sprang to his feet.

"Why, Mrs. Culver," he cried; "surely it's not possible"—

I interrupted him by suddenly addressing Derby, the butler, who was about to withdraw from the scene.

"Don't go," said I, and then to Mrs. Culver: "Pardon me. I think it is important that Derby should remain. I saw him enter this room and leave it, and since then he has not been out of my sight. So if anything is missing he has a perfect opportunity to prove his innocence immediately. In justice to him I could not see him lose this chance by absenting himself at this juncture."

Derby's distress was extreme and ludicrously obvious. In my mind there was no doubt at all that the missing money was in the man's breast pocket.

"What was the sum?" I asked Mrs. Culver. "And in what form was it?"

"Not quite $10,000," she replied. "There were nine $1,000 bills," and she gave me the whimsical, womanly reasons which had led her to close her account with a certain bank and take the sum in cash.

"And you carried so much money in that bag?" said I. "It was a risk."

"Ah, but this is not an ordinary bag," said she, and, taking it from the table, she closed it and gave it to me. "Let me see you open it."

I was unable to do so, for there was a secret spring most ingeniously devised.

"This is the way," said she, taking it from me, and in a moment she had replaced it upon the table open.

"Are you sure the money was there when you left this room?" I asked.

"Positive," she answered. "And, besides, the bag was closed. Somebody must have opened it."

"Yes," said Kronold. "I distinctly remember that it lay upon the table, closed, when I sat down to the piano a few moments ago."

"I don't remember where I put it," said Mrs. Culver, "but," she added, with decision, "I know that it was shut."

"It lay like this," said Kronold, and he put the bag upon a corner of the table, not in the middle, as it had lain when my attention was first drawn to it. "And now," he continued, "there have been only two persons in this room, myself and this servant. In this matter I will claim no advantage over him. His honor may be as precious to him as mine is to me. So this is what must be done." And he proceeded to empty his pockets.

"But you were at the piano all the time," protested Mrs. Culver. "Aside from the absurdity of the idea that you would do such a thing, you really couldn't, you know."

She turned to me for confirmation, and I had no choice but to support the argument. It was a perfect certainty that Kronold had played continuously for some time preceding Mrs. Culver's leaving the room. Nevertheless I yielded to the musician's plea and helped him search himself. He did not have the money.

Then Derby stepped forward, his hand in his breast pocket, and, with most moving evidences of shame and contrition, he produced a letter addressed to Mrs. Culver and bearing the return stamp of a well known employment agency. He had given her the letter when she came in with Kronold and had seen her put it upon the table in the drawing room. Some days before he had incurred the lady's displeasure, and he feared this communication dealt with the question of his successor, so he had so far debased himself at the behest of natural curiosity as to go in and get the letter, intending to read it in the hall and return it to its place before Mrs. Culver should miss it.

"But I didn't take the money," he declared, with tears in his eyes.

And, if he had taken it, what in the name of all mystery had he done with it? He could not have hidden it in the hall, because my eyes were on him, and he had been nowhere else except in the drawing room itself, and there not more than one minute, as I could testify. Moreover, if Mrs. Culver had left the bag closed, how could Derby have known that the money was in it?

Kronold knew, for Mrs. Culver had told him, but the lady had opened the bag after entering the room and had seen the money in it. Therefore if Kronold had taken it it must still be in the room. But the table was at least fifteen feet distant from the piano, and my own ears bore witness that Kronold had played all the time that he was alone.

"WHERE IS KRONOLD?" I DEMANDED.

Mrs. Culver evidently believed that Derby had hidden the money in the room, and she began a search. Derby meanwhile was leaning against the wall, a figure of wood. Kronold took me aside. He had the bag in his hands, and he covertly showed me a small moist stain upon it.

"That looks to me like blood," said he. "Do you observe that Derby has a scratch across two of his fingers?"

"Yes," I answered, "but it doesn't seem to be bleeding."

"I saw him wiping it with his handkerchief," said he. "Now, if this stain is blood that shows that the fellow is lying, for he said that he did not touch the bag. It's only a step to the Children's hospital, and one of the doctors over there could tell me in a jiffy whether it's blood or not. Then we'd have Derby in a noose."

At this moment Mrs. Culver in her search approached the piano, and I saw a spasm of uncontrollable nervous terror sweep over Kronold's face. A great illumination dawned upon my mind—the money was in the piano! Mrs. Culver had not remembered just where she had put down the bag. She must have put it on the piano and not on the table. Kronold had opened it with one hand, while pounding the keys with the other, had taken out the money and then had cleverly tossed the bag to the table.

I may as well say at once that my deductions—except as to the hiding place of the money—were absolutely accurate. That is precisely the way in which the robbery was committed. Subsequent investigations proved Kronold to be a beast of prey, with a long record on the other side of the Atlantic. He was, besides, as clever as a conjurer and one to whom the trick of the bag's lock was simple as A B C.

At that moment I had an inspiration to save Mrs. Culver a shock. A painful scene was inevitable, but it would better involve no one except the thief and myself.

"Mr. Kronold has made a brilliant suggestion," said I, addressing the lady. "It will necessitate our going out together for a few minutes. May I ask you to remain in this room, keep Derby here and admit no one else?"

Mrs. Culver assented without question, and Kronold and I left the room. The musician seemed glad of my company, and as I stepped out from Mrs. Culver's portal into the glare of the western sun my mind was busy with the riddle of the man's demeanor. The next instant I was alone. The heavy door was shut, and Kronold was upon the other side of it.

It may have been ten seconds before I had the wit to use my knuckles and the bell. Derby admitted me, wondering.

"Where is Kronold?" I demanded.

The butler stared and stammered.

"I—I supposed he went out with you, sir."

This, however, was a grievous error. Mr. Kronold went out of that house by way of a basement door and thence to the street at the rear.

And now I come to the richest part of the joke—the money went with him. It had been in his pocket up to the moment when he stood by the table showing how the bag had lain. Then the clever rascal put it into the bag and snapped the lock and immediately entered upon the farce of the search of his own garments. The plunder was hidden in the very receptacle from which it had been stolen, and the thief so carried it from the scene of his remarkable crime. The stain upon the bag he made with his own wetted finger. These facts he confessed when he was caught upon an ocean steamer at the moment of her sailing on the following day.

HOW TO STUDY PROPERLY.

Books Should Be Well Chosen and Read Carefully, Not Devoured.

Study is like a dinner. The viands must be well chosen and eaten slowly, not devoured, then well turned over in the mental stomach for awhile until with ease and comfort they are perfectly digested and furnish nutriment to the brain. Most students study without thought, which is like eating without digesting. Others read merely as a fad and soon forget all they may have learned.

The most satisfactory method of study is the digestive. It is the thorough one—the one that gives strength to the brain. Take the subject you are studying. Read a few lines or a few pages, as the case may be, then put the book down and think on what you have read. Turn it about in your mind from every standpoint. Do not accept it immediately. Argue for and against it in your mind. In other words, masticate it. You need not be at your leisure to do this. Do it in your walks, in your idle moments, at any time. When you have satisfied yourself on the subject go on with a little more in the same way. In a short time you will find yourself more a thorough student than if you had read all at a sitting. The best educated man in the end is the man who learns slowly, but surely.

The surest pleasures lie within the circle of useful occupation. Mere pleasure, sought outside of usefulness, is fraught with poison.—Beecher.

WORK OF THE WORMS

THEIR IMPORTANT PART IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

Objects of Antiquity That Have Been Preserved by Them—Some of the Peculiarities of the Senses of the Earthworms.

The common earthworm, despised by man and heedlessly trodden underfoot, fulfills a part in nature that would seem incredible but for the facts revealed by the patient and long continued researches of Darwin. "Worms," says Darwin, "have played a more important part in the history of the world than most persons would at first suppose." Let us follow Darwin and see how this apparently insignificant creature has changed the face of nature. We will first consider the habits and mode of life of the earthworm. As every one knows, the worms live in burrows in the superficial layer of the ground. They can live anywhere in a layer of earth, provided it retains moisture, dry air being fatal to them. They can, on the other hand, exist submerged in water for several months. They live chiefly in the superficial mold less than a foot below the surface, but in long continued dry weather and in very cold seasons they may burrow to a depth of eight feet. The burrows are lined by a thin layer of earth, voided by the worms, and end in small chambers in which they can turn around.

The burrows are formed partly by pushing away the earth, but chiefly by the earth being swallowed. Large quantities of earth are swallowed by the worms for the sake of the decomposing vegetable matter contained in it, on which they feed. The earth thus swallowed is voided in spiral heaps, forming the worm castings. In this case the worm obtains food and at the same time excavates its burrows.

In addition to the food thus obtained half decayed leaves are dragged into the burrows, mainly for food, but also to plug the mouths of the burrows for the sake of protection. Worms are also fond of meat, especially fat. They will also eat the dead bodies of their relatives. They are nocturnal in habit, remaining, as a rule, in the burrows during the day and coming out to feed at night.

The earthworm has no eyes, but is affected by strong light if exposed to it for some time. It has no sense of hearing, but is sensitive to the vibrations of sound. The whole body is sensitive to touch. There appears to be some sense of smell, but this is limited to certain articles of food, which are discovered by the worm when buried in earth, in preference to other bodies not relished. The worm appears to have some degree of intelligence from the way in which it draws the leaves into its burrows, always judging which is the best end to draw them in by. This is remarkable in so lowly organized an animal, being a degree of intelligence not possessed by many animals of more complex organization. For instance, the ant can often be seen dragging objects along traversely instead of taking them the easiest way.

As we have seen, vast quantities of earth are continually being passed through the bodies of worms and voided on the surface as castings. When it is stated that the number of worms in an acre of ordinary land suitable for them to live in is 53,000 we can imagine the great effect which they must have on the soil.

They are, in fact, continually plowing the land. At one part of the alimentary canal of the worm is a gizzard, or hard muscular organ, capable of grinding food into fine particles. It is this gizzard which is the main factor in triturating the soil, and it is aided by small stones swallowed with the earth, which act as millstones.

In consequence of the immense amount of earth continually being brought to the surface by worms it is not difficult to understand how objects, such as stones, rocks, etc., lying on the surface will in course of time become gradually buried in the ground. Owing to the burial of stones and other objects by the action of worms ancient monuments, portions of Roman villas and other objects of antiquity have been preserved. These have been gradually buried by the worms and so preserved from the destructive effect of rain and wind. Many Roman remains were studied by Darwin and traces of the action of worms found, to which action their preservation was mainly due. The sinking of the foundations of old buildings is due to the action of worms, and no building is safe from this unless the foundations are laid lower than the level at which the worms can work—namely, about eight feet below the surface.

Another useful effect produced by worms is the preparation of the soil for the growth of seedlings. By their agency the soil is periodically sifted and exposed to the air and in this way is able to retain moisture and absorb soluble substances of use for the nutrition of plants.

Dr. Johnson's Kiss.

On the eve of leaving London for Canada Mrs. Brooke, who wrote "The History of Emily Montague," the first novel written in Canada, gave a farewell party. Hannah More, Johnson and Boswell being in the company. Dr. Johnson was obliged to leave early and apparently departed after wishing his hostess health and happiness. Shortly after a servant whispered to Mrs. Brooke that a gentleman was waiting below to speak to her. Running downstairs, the fair novelist found the venerable lexicographer. "Madam," said he ponderously, "I sent for you downstairs that I might kiss you, which I did not choose to do before so much company."

Napoleon's Poison.

A curious detail of Napoleon Bonaparte's costume was the religious care with which he kept hung around his neck the little leather envelope, shaped like a heart, which contained poison that was to liberate him in case of irretrievable reverses of fortune. This poison was prepared after a recipe that Cabanais had given to Corvisart, and after the year 1808 the emperor never undertook a campaign without having his little packet of poison.