

Gentlemen's Night at the Rummage Sale

(As related by "Bub".)

It all happened on Trader's Day, where every store and place of business at Monotony was closed and even "Tommy Banana" and "Billy Boothblack" has shut up shop, in order that the town-folks might enjoy their annual holiday with family ?. But men "haven't the time", usually, to do anything that other people play for them. Men and boys don't have to, you know, not unless Ma puts her foot right down. And on this particular occasion, our Ma and the rest of the ?, were too busy getting themselves and the girl-kids ready for the family picnics, and family excursions and family rackets of every description, to notice that one after another, every man in Monotony found that he "hadn't the time" to join in the family festivities.

The outing that got the most bids, was the "Family Excursion to our popular Place of Resort" at the ? overall cost of 23 cents for the round trip. Dr. Peters planned that one himself, just on purpose; - for he said he never knew a woman yet, who could resist the great and glorious opportunity of making 2 cents on a quarter, or one who ever felt the need of sharing a bargain with her men-folks! And you had just better believe there are no wheels in his head, for everything turned out exactly how the Doctor planned, and the way the female population trailed out of town that morning was a caution! And when Miss Aurelia announced that the ?-man was ?, they shipped out faster than ever, and by 10 o'clock Dad 'n' me and the rest of the men were left alone in our glory.

Of course I am talking about those of us who live in the middle part of Monotony, for ? of us are the low lauders, and soutte of us are the uplauders, and though were are very polite in our town, and never speak of these people as the lower class, of the upper class, but only just as "that class", still we never think of them as being real Monotonians, and they did not take any part to speak of, in the exodus from town that morning, - which accounts for some of the things that happened afterward.

Dr. Peters likes to tease Miss Aurelia about the "confines of the Great Divide" whenever he thinks she is trying to ignore anyone who isn't in "our class." Miss Aurelia is the Doctors sister, and keeps house for him in the big red brick mansion on the hill. She wears white curls and a ?-glass reads the Transcript, and is a Victorian, whatever that may be. Going to Europe is cheap as dirt with her-, and she bosses all the women in town, because she's the biggest lioness we've got, though she is hard pushed sometimes by the great Ms. Maunnaduke Montgomery, who has just built a 79.387 dollar cottage on the shores of Monotomy Mill Pond and peacocks accordingly.

That isn't my word; I saw it in a book and swipe I mean caught one- ? it all, you now what I mean. Dad says there are some words a gentleman never uses, and I don't wonder if is ? ? works for ? to make a fellow understand what they are talking about, sometimes. Now we boys never have a ? of trouble that way.

You may wonder before I get through, how I know as much about this Rummage Sale I am going to tell you about, seeing that I am only just "Bub". But you see its this was, Dad 'n'

me have been chums ever since I was knee high to a grasshopper, and Dad is the Editor of the “Monotony Monotone” and what Dad ‘n’ me and that paper don’t know, isn’t work a Hannah’o(?) cooky. And Doctor Peters is our most intimate friend! Then, too Ma says I am the only boy she ever saw who could be in forty places at once, and if you don’t believe I am all eyes and ears, just you ask Aunt Jule!

But say, now, Dad is just the loss man and come to think of it, Ma, she’s the loss too, though not exactly, no, not just exactly the same way. But Dad, -oh, Dad’s all right, though I had to knock Joe Hildebrand down, the other day, cause his Aunt’s sisters cousin or somebody said the Editor of the Monotone was a ? man, and its nothing in the world but a few ? poxes that got left on his right side cheek, in the days of his youth, and that I didn’t think anybody knew about, but just Dad ‘n’ me! But that was a fine knockdown, I can tell you, and I guess that old Hildebrand woman won’t say such things again very soon! I am glad it wasn’t one of Joe’s grandmothers, though, for that is the one thing I have always envied in that boy, his pile and piles of grandmothers. Why I guess he had as many as 14 one spell, but the fearful old one, she died, and he lost 2 or 3 others in ways unknown, and not I believe there are only five left. But that is 5 to the good anyway and I haven’t got one! Not a live one, that is, though Ma always says, as she gazes on her Ma’s crayon portraiture in the red ? frame over the mantelpiece, that her influence still lives, unseen, though felt. This is generally after Ma and Dad have had some scrapping over things I don’t always just understand, and then Dad will oftentimes cast a meditative eye (only one) upward at the picture, and say, with that slow, sweet, smile of his “You don’t know what you missed, Bub, you don’t know what you missed!”

But you are waiting to hear about the Rummage Sale- We knew all about them in Monotomy, where we had had them ragingly, all summer. First the ? ? ?, (of which Miss Aurelia is Sachess- and Ma one of the Vice Sagamesses) hole one, and made a sum of money that would certainly make your hair stand on end should you know it. Then there “Ups and A Coming Associates”, and the “Yum-the-cheeks Guide” and the “Lily League” united and held a big Rummage. And lastly the Sisters of Sapphire(?), which organization is ruled over by the great Ms. Montgomery, in the office of “Very ? Sweets” held one, which required 4 columns of the Monotony ?stone, to do its ? justice.

What the men of Monotomy had endured from these united efforts would fill a volume! The garments of every description as well as all kinds and sorts of head gear they had been obliged to part with, and that they had often inadvertently and unsuspectingly bought back again, the precious belongings of ever imaginable kind that had been missed one after another, the heirlooms that had vanished forever, or worst yet, appeared exasperatingly in somebody else’s house, the dollars they had had to put out, for ever dime the women-folks had pulled in, all the things and many, many more, I need not now repeat. You are familiar with them, you have all, like the old charade, met- a- fore.

But the women had turned at last, like-wise the tables, and we men of Monotomy felt that our time had come.

The M.N.O.'s (that is the "Monotony Night Owls") needed money; as did the "Regal Tympanum Z of YX" so did the "Nephews of Nickodemus", so did many another male organizations in good and regular standing in the community, and what easier and better way of getting is than by holding a Rummage Sale all our own.

What women can do, men must. And what joy, for once to be able to follow in the footsteps of our illustrious predecessors! (Say, part of this is Dad, and part of me, but it doesn't make any matter cause Dad 'n' me is one.)

We knew all the necessary steps to take; we knew all the ?, and the open ?, and to our cost, we knew most of all, that any and every old thing would do, as well as any and every new thing. And there was still another element of ? in our sale, and that was, that Dr. Peters insisted that this time the collection of materials should not be confined within the limits of the Great Divide, while the distribution was almost wholly outside. So, a cordial invitation was extended to "that class" to cooperate, which invitation was cheerfully ? with, and the result was simply stupendous. Both the uplanders and the lowlanders appointed a fore-gentlemen and a fore-lady to take charge of things, and they cooperated nobly with our men-folks. The fore-lady in particular was of great service to us, as this was one of the times when women were scarce.

But after all, they were none too scarce to suit us, we could do work of this sort so much better without them, just as they are always saying they can work round in the kitchen so much better if the men and boys will only clear out, and give them some room.

But I haven't told you yet where we held our Rummage Sale. That was another of Doctor Peters bright ideas. We couldn't think for the longest time, where we could find a suitable place; -where all of a sudden, Doc. threw back his dear old head, and ran his fingers through his dear old haggly mane, and gave one of his dear old hearty laughs, and said "How would the Evangelical Presbyterian House ? do?" And we all said "The Very Thing".

There they stood, all ready for our use, in a long, long now 23 of them, backs of the old First Evangelical Presbyterian Meeting house. And after Doctor Peters and Dad, with wistful arguments, and ? laborings, had overcome old Rev. Dr. Hampton's doubts, as to how far the sanctity of the sanctuary extended? The saves of the edifice itself, and as to whether the ? of Presbyterian would consider that he had unworthily ? ? with won- communication if he gave his consent, and had convinced him that neither the name nor the nature of horse-sheds had ever entered into any part of the Westminster home session of Faith,- then, every man and boy of us set to work with a will, and all went metty as a marriage bell. All the "underground railroads" and "grapevine telegraphs", every telephone line and electric and steam cars, horses, mules, and messenger boys were kept running red hot that day. Carriages and carts flew in all directions; carpenters and upholsterers, and ? worked cheek by jowl; one energetic and efficient electrician ? Beudedilke?, with his assistants worked like lightening, with lighting, and when night came and the words "Rummage Sale One Night Only" gleamed out in electric globes over the horse sheds- with one letter over each door, it was a mighty pretty sight I can tell you. When the same words were repeated in blazing light in front of the church- so that every Fathers daughter of all those returning women couldn't help seeing it as they came back to town. And by the way, best they

should spend all their money before coming home, and knowing full well that they would draw their last cent from the Bank before they would miss a Rummage Sale, the Doctor arranged that all the Banks in Monotony should be kept open that night. And right he was again, for every one of them did a ? business all the evening, and the money poured from the coffers in the Banks to the coffers in the horse sheds until after midnight. Oh but you should have seen the beautiful booths when all was completed and all the returns were in; and how they had pouring in, to be sure from every direction; loads and loads and loads of everything that every man could lay his hands on. The walls were hung with shawls and ? curtains and ?, table covers and rugs, tidies and laces and ribbons (all the dangling things that men hate), and all sorts of fancy draperies, and mighty nice one's too, for the women of Monotomy have excellent taste, and are very proud of nice things, so of course the men had an excellent field for their operations. And the tables in every one of the 23 booths were just loaded and crowded and hammed and pressed down and sunning over. And my! But you would have been surprised if you could have seen how nobly "that class" responded to the call, and how successfully they had rummaged. You never would have believed that they would have as many, many, many things that they were perfectly willing to let us have. And of course we were only too glad to get them all, for had we not heard over and over that every little helped, and that any old thing cracked, burnt, broken, twisted, warped, frizzled, grayed, spotted, mildewed, or dirty, would do.

Of course it took lots of hard work to get the tables arranged in good shape, but there were lots of willing hands to do it, from motives many and various, and there were very few squealers in the whole lot of us, and one good example seemed to inspire another, and so the good work went on. Doctor and Dad'n' me and the rest of the men, would keep thinking of something more we could get, and going back home to rummage again. And after Dan Goodman brought in his wife's eyeglasses that he thinks she sees too well in, why Mr. Matthews went back home and got his wife's false teeth that he was tired of seeing sitting around in a tumbler. She had gone of that morning in such a hurry, (after she heard about that ? fellow) that she forgot to put 'em in, and he kind of thought he might never get such a good chance again to dispose of them at a fair profit. Deacon Kneeland brought Mary Jane's false front(?), and second best ? and all of Susand Lufinas(?) curling tongs and hairpins, and that didn't seem hardly fair, for the girls never took either of his wigs to their rummage sales, neither the smooth brown one, or the curly gray mixed one. Ian Itebbins brought a lot of oil paintings that his sister did at boarding school, and that he was tired of seeing trotted out on show, and Dr. Powell, the young dentist who has just brought his bride home from Philadelphia, came lugging over a great stack of elegant underwear, that he was sure his wife would be glad to get rid of, as he had heard her say that she didn't know why she ever spent so much time over those as they were too nice for use and ?, as she didn't know that she should ever wear them. I can't tell you how many men brought little tables that they were tired of knocking over, and little ? that they were tired of kicking into, and little cups and saucers that they were tired of almost smashing, little ? present claiming cases that they were tired of looking ? about. Nobody had to make excuses for bringing things, got everybody had some real good reasons. But he all had to laugh when Moses Q. Yibbetts came in, with his wife's Poll Parrot under his coat. Moses Q. had been often ehard to say, that this beast of a bird was the plague of his life, but he never dared to tell his wife so, for she was so proud of having taught the parrot to say "Where was Moses when____" but she never

could get it to say any more, and it would repeat that “when”- “when”- “when”- “when”- when” – with a rising and falling inflection that really drove Moses Q. wild, especially when yhe happened to come in late, with a ? seed in hist mouth and a stray chip or two in hist pocket, so Docotor said. Well, Moses Q. had pulled out that birds tail feathers, and dipped it’s red wing tips in bluing,a nd made them a lovely purple, and you never would have known it for the same bird.

But I can tell you, I was struck all of a ?, when I saw Dad coming with a big picture in his arms, wrapped up in Ma’s best silk crazy quilt. He looked so queer, half fiendish and half ?, like I had never seen him look before. And when he uncovered the picture, and I saw a Turkish looking man, embellished with fierce mustaches and whiskers, and a smoking cap, I wondered still more, until all of a sudden that red plush frame looked mighty natural, and then I knew why Dad looked so kind of triumphant and yet so sheepish, with goodness and severity in his countenance all mixed up. Well, Dad is a master hand with his pencil, as well as his pen, and she looked very well indeed, considering, and never took part again in any of our little family discussions.

About this time Joe and I happened to think how we could do the Doctor a good turn, to pay for all he was doing for other people. He loved Miss Aurelia dearly, but he didn’t love Miss Aurelia’s great white Augora cat “Benji Dear.” I hadn’t forgotten his look of disgust, once when he pulled a long, silky, straight, white hair out of his ?, and said he was sick of eating and drinking and wearing cat hairs, which “Benji Dear” shed copiously and continuously. Me and Joey hadn’t seen pictures of French poodles for nothing, and we fixed up “Benji Dear” in a jiffy so that his own mother wouldn’t have known him, with a beautiful fueffy ruff around his neck, and a lovely little feuffy fringes around each of the four legs of him, and there was nothing left of his tail, but the wave on the tip! And me and joe had enough fur left over to stuff a sofa pillow, though we hadn’t seemed to find the right time just yet, to take it out from it’s hiding place. I may as well say right here, that after the sale, nobody seemed to know who bought “Benji Dear.” But I have no doubt he brought a good price, being so fancy like and fixed up.

But I am taking up all the time that ever was, and there is very little left in which to tell you how delighted the women were when they got back to Montony about dark or thereabouts and found a Rummage Sale going on right in our midst. The gas and electric lights didn’t work very well in the houses that night, thanks to a little timely attention, so the women were all glad to sling the little kinds into their trucks as quickly as possible and get down town again to the Rummage Sale, before somebody else got a better bargain.

They all came, every last one of them Miss Aurelia, arriving first, and Mrs. Maunaduke Montgoumery’s ? Harvard ? giving her a close second. (end of page 17)

Dad’s scheme of the Turk, had given the men another idea, and they were all rigged out and ?, with shawls and silk handkerchiefs and lamp petticoats and chiffon-ears and what not, until you would have thought a whole army of Turks had been ? into Monotony. Some had shaved of their whiskers and some had put more on, and, as we had nothing but ? lanterns inside the booths the dim religious light shed by these luminaries and the Evangelistic Presbyterian Meeting House, was just what we wanted. And me and Joe and the other boys were on hand to

run in and out under the counters, and give the ? to each particular man when his particular woman was seen approaching; and all they had to do, was to squat, till the ? was over. But you've all been to Rummage Sales and you know all about the jamming and pushing, and crowding, and elbowing, and bargaining, and quarreling that went on. But the buying and selling also went on through it all, and everything went off like ? cakes; and when the clock in the Methodist steeple struck 12, everything had been disposed of at good prices and the M.N.O's and the Regal ? Z of YX" and the "Nephews of ?" and all the other good and regularly standing societies, even the Lodge of Emerald Uncles were made happy for the sum that each received after a fair division, far exceeded their ? expectations. Now you mustn't expect me to tell you anything about the next day. Many things happened, "the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the would itself could not contain the looks that should be written".

But if you would like to get some ideas of how things were, in Monotony the day after the great Rummage Sale, just read about how the water came down at Lodore(?) in 163 different ways. I tried to learn that ? over, when Ma and I had a disciplining time, but there was no staying quality about it, so I have forgotten most of the verbs except a few in the first part, and at the very last; but perhaps these may keep you a little in your imaginings.

Stricking and raging,

As if a war waging,

Rising and Leaping,

Sinking and Creeping,

Swelling and sweeping,

Showering and springing,

Flying and feigning,

Writing and wringing,

Eddying and whisking

Shouting and frisking

Turning and twisting

? and around

Under endless rebounding,

Suiting and fighting,

Confounding, astounding,

Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound,

And so it goes on until the 163 different ways and winds up like this.

And so never ending, but always descending
Sounds and motions forever and ever are blending,
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,
And this was the water courses down at Lodore.
And as also _____ but I discretely draw a veil!

Just one little incident I must relate before closing. At about 12.49 on that eventful night, Moses Q. was awakened from his peaceful and innocent slumber by Mrs. Moses, who had just returned from the Rummage Sale, all hoity-toity, and brimming over with delight, at the climax and ? of the many bargains she had made that night. "Wake up Moses Q." quote she "I want to tell you about the fascinating purchase I made at the Sale, just to please you. The loveliest parrot you ever saw, except "Our Polly", with beautiful purple wings, and a dear little short tail, and eyes just exactly like "Our Polly's". He doesn't seem to want to talk now, but I think perhaps we can teach this one to say the whole of our motto, and "Our Polly" will be so pleased to have a mate!"

Moses Q. turned wearily on his pillow, quietly murmuring something unintelligible and unpronounceable, and then ? and quiet, settled temporarily down over the ? remains of the once peaceful precinct of Monotony.