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A Bunch for the Lawyers



I WAS my privilege to hear several entertaining lawyers exchanging experiences a few evenings ago. One whose hair is liberally streaked with gray delivered himself of this:

“You all know the one of my clients who is closer than the bark on a gum tree. He had a son that sowed wild oats as fast as both hands would permit. The old gentleman was greatly troubled and made me the recipient of his troubles. One morning he came in with a dry chuckle was his nearest approach to a laugh.

“‘That boy beats me,’ he began with a brave attempt to keep his face straight. ‘Last night he came home in a coupe and I sat in the library waiting for him. I told him to sit down and then turned out the electric light.

“‘What's that for, dad?’ he inquired.

“‘Just a lesson in economy. You came home in a carriage. I walked home. You apparently know nothing about saving. I gave you an object lesson by turning off the light because we can talk just as well in the dark.’

“While I was delivering a strong bit of parental advice he kept up a shuffling and rustling noise that annoyed me until I asked what in creation he was doing?

“‘Only taking off my clothes, dad. I can hear just as well without them, and it saves wear.’

“Yet the young blade came thru all right.”

A railroad attorney took the next whirl:

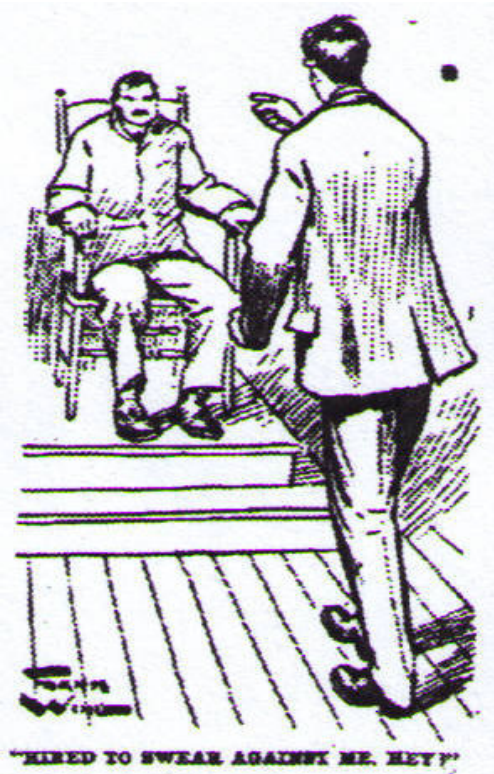
“We had a bright fellow arrested on the charge of swindling our company by the use of a forged voucher. He put up the defense that it had come to him in payment of a debt, and there was an indorsement to give color to his claim. We were convinced that only his penmanship appeared on the document. The name of the man to whom it had been ostensibly issued was spurious, but our task was to prove that the defendant was not an innocent party to the entire transaction. There was joy in our office one day when a man in working clothes called, asked for a private conference and told how he had been laying carpet in a room where the defendant had prepared the entire voucher as it was presented to the treasurer and paid. He had watched the tearing up of one paper after another and then took a look at the one left on the table when the forger had gone into the hall to talk with a caller.

“You may wager we nailed that witness, sending him out of town to live at a hotel and draw wages until, his testimony was to be taken in court. When the time came the forger was his own lawyer. No gambler ever had an expression that told less. He never cross-examined a person while we were putting, in our circumstantial evidence. We made our star witness as dramatic as possible, but not even a flush came to the face of the accused. After the damning evidence was in the forger took part with absolute nonchalance.

“‘Where are you working?’

“‘Nowhere.’

“‘Where have you been living the last six months?’



“The answer was a true statement.

““Who paid the bills?”

“Again the truth was told.

““Hired to swear against me, hey?”

“With that he closed his case, refusing to call any witnesses and claiming that he wanted no better defense than had been offered by our side.

“The railroad was beaten out of its boots, for the last word from the ‘carpetlayer’ was that he had never seen the forger before. When the leading corporation lawyer of the firm was asked to institute perjury proceedings

he came within an ace of apoplexy.

““We have been made fools of,’ he shouted. ‘That crook skinned us alive. He sent that witness, who must be a pal. Drop the thing like a hot potato instead of trying to advertise ourselves as gudgeons.’

Then a third lawyer let go of a story that I knew to be true. It was brought off down at Fort Wayne, Ind.

The attorney for the plaintiff was a whooper for fair. A third of the horses within two blocks ran away because of his yelling. To reduce temperature and give greater freedom of action he tore off coat, vest, collar, necktie and cuffs as he worked to a climax. He boiled at every pore, and lamented that he did not have more pores. He had beaten everything that Indiana had ever seen in the line of theoretical gymnastics, and that means much.

Taking care of the other side was a little red-headed Irishman, with a keen sense of humor and a daring disposition. He stood up with a

dignity becoming his profession. He addressed the court and jury with the profoundest respect. Then he tore off his outer-clothing with the celerity of a lightning-change artist, did a double hand-spring and announced that his case was submitted. It was the acme of physical sarcasm, the jury understood and he won, hands down.

---David M. Carey, in Detroit Journal. ▀

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