

Seasoned Timber

By Dorothy Canfield

It was late, and the neglected work on Mr. Hulme's desk cried aloud. He called his mind to him, hiked on its everyday harness, and cracked his whip. Throwing his calloused shoulders into the collar, it tugged away at what there was to do, beginning with the familiar, short and uncomplicated statement of resources—126 students at \$60 tuition, \$11,250; income from the \$60,000 endowment which used to be steadily \$3,000 now shrunk to \$2,300 and still shrinking—total income \$13,550. The more or less fixed salaries were set down, tentatively—Principal, \$2,100. Dryden, who taught Manual Training and Agriculture \$1,600. The new teacher for Physics and Chemistry, \$1,000. Bowen, just out of Yale, evidently a clever ambitious fellow, would never stay on for that after he had acquired a year or so of the professional experience without which he could not get a position in a more prosperous school. Mr. Hulme's pencil hung in the air an instant as he considered Bowen. There was something about him—an aura, that was—perhaps it was no more than the normal to-be-expected cocksureness of the recent college graduate, outfitted with the latest thing in ideas. The uplifted pencil dropped to the paper again and ran agilely ahead into the smaller salaries—French and Latin, \$900; Domestic Science—account-keeping and typewriting—poor old Miss Benson—the janitor—the piano tuner (one tuning \$2.50).

He worked till midnight, when his mind dropped in its tracks, and he hung up his whip and went to bed. As he undressed mechanically, his mind was darkened with its usual foreboding conviction that this year the Academy budget simply could not be balanced. His mind, always jealous of mere vitality, soured this assurance by suggesting that it was no more than a hope that old Mr. Wheaton, the one rich trustee, might, after having made himself sufficiently disagreeable, cover the deficit with a cheque. Timothy was too tired to lie awake cursing all over again the day that Clifford voters had made Mr. Wheaton a Trustee.

To be continued

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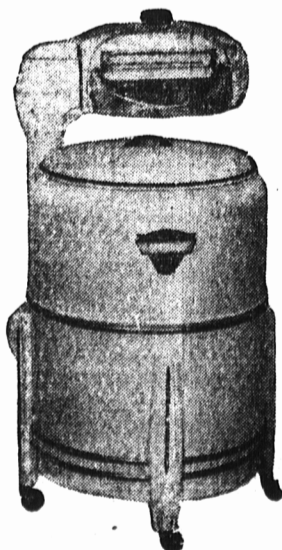
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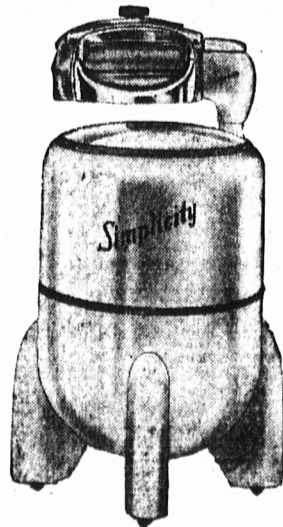
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