

Mr. Dooley on the Pursuit of Riches

F. P. Dunne

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Dear me, I wisht I had money," said Mr. Hennessy.

"So do I," said Mr. Dooley. "I need it."

"Ye wudden't get it fr'm me," said Mr. Hennessy.

"If I didn't," said Mr. Dooley, "'twud be because I was poor or tired. But what d'ye want money fr? Supposin' I lost me head an' handed over all me accumulatted wealth? What wud ye do with that gr-reat fortune? Befure ye had spint half iv it, ye'd be so sick ye'd come to me an' hand me back th' remainin' eighteen dollars.

"A man has more fun wishin' fr th' things he hasn't got thin injyin' th' things he has got. Life, Hinnissy, is like a Pullman dinin' car: a fine bill iv fare, but nawthin' to eat. Ye go in fresh an' hungry, tuck ye'er napkin in ye'er collar, an' square away at th' list iv groceries that th' black man hands ye. What'll ye have first? Ye think ye'd like to be famous an' ye ordher a dish iv fame an' bid th' waither make it good an' hot. He's gone an age, an' whin he comes back ye'er appytite is departed. Ye taste th' ordher an' says ye: 'Why, it's cold an' full iv broken glass.' 'Tbat's th' way we always sarve Fame on this car,' says th' coon. 'Don't ye think ye'd like money fr th' sicond coorse? Mither Rockyfellar over there has had forty-two helpin's,' says he. 'It don't seem to agree with him,' says ye, 'but ye may bring me some,' ye say. Away he goes an' stays till ye're bald an' ye'er teeth fall out, an' ye set dhrummin' on th' table an' lookin' out at th' scenery. By an' by he comes back with ye'er ordher, but jus' as he's goin' to hand it to ye, Rockyfellar grabs th' plate. 'What kind iv a car is this?' says ye. 'Don't I get annything to eat? Can't ye give me a little happiness?' 'I wudden't ricommend th' happiness,' says th' waither. 'It's canned an' it kilt th' las' man that thried it.' 'Well, gracious,' says ye, 'I've got to have something. Give me a little good health an' I'll thry to make a meal out iv that.' 'Sorry, sir,' says th' black man, 'but we're all out iv good health. Besides,' he says, 'takin' ye gintly by th' ar-rm, 'we're goin' into th' deepo an' ye'll have to get out,' he says.

"An' there ye ar-re. Ye'll niver get money onless ye fix th' waither an' grab th' dishes away fr'm th' other passengers. An' ye won't do that. So ye'll niver be rich. No poor man iver will be. Wan iv th' sstrangest things about life is that th' poor who need th' money th' most ar-re th' very wans that niver have it. A poor man is a poor man an' a rich man is a rich man. Ye're ayether born poor or rich. It don't make anny diffrence whether or not ye have money to begin with. If ye're born to be rich, ye'll be rich, an' if ye're born to be poor, ye'll be poor. Th' buttons on ye'er vest tell th' story. Rich man, poor man, beggar man, rich man, or wurruds to that effect. I always find that I have ayether two buttons or six.

"A poor man is a man that rayfuses to cash in. Ye don't get annything fr nawthin', an' to gather in a millyon iv thim beautiful lithographs iv Salmon P. Chase, ye have to go down ivry day with something undher ye'er ar-rm to th' great pawnshop. Whin Hogan wants four dollars be takes th' clock down to Moses. Whin Rockyfellar wants tin millyon, he puts up his peace iv mind or his health or something akelly valyable. If Hogan wud hock his priceless habit iv sleepin' late in th' mornin' he wud be able to tell th' time iv day whin be got up without goin' to th' corner dhrug store.

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"Look at McMullin. He's rowlin' in it. It bulges his pocket an' inflates his conversation. Whin he looks at me, I always feel that he's wondhrin' how much I'd bring at a forced sale. Well, McMullin an' I had th' same start, about forty yards behind scratch an' Vanderbilt to beat. They always put th' best man in anny race behind th' line. Befure McMullin gets through he'll pass Vanderbilt, carry away th' tape on his shorldhers, an' run two or three times around th' thrack. But me an' him started th' same way. Th' on'y difference was that he wud cash in an' I wudden't. Th' on'y thing I iver ixpected to get money on was me dhream iv avarice. I always had that. I cud dhream iv money as hard as anny mam ye iver see an' can still. But I niver thought iv wurrukin' fr it. I've always looked on it as dishon'able to wurruk fr money. I wurruk fr exercise an' I get what th' lawyers call an honoraryium be dilutin' th' spirits. Th' on'y way I iver expict to make a cint is to have it left to me be a rich relation, an' I'm th' pluthycrat iv me fam'ly, or to stub me toe on a gambler's roll or stop a runaway horse fr Pierpont Morgan. An' th' horse mustn't be runnin' too fast. He must be jus' goin' to stop, on'y Morgan don't know it, havin' fainted. Whin he comes to, he finds me at th' bridle, modestly waitin' fr him to weep on me bosom. But as fr scramblin' down town arly in th' mornin' an' buyin' chattel morgedges, I niver thought iv it. I get up at siven o'clock. I wudden't get up at a quarther to siven fr all th' money I dhream about. I have a lot iv things ar-round here I cud cash in if I cared fr money. I have th' priceless gift iv laziness. It's made me what I am, an' that's th' very first thing ivry rich man cashes in. Th' millyonaires ye r-read about thryin' to give th' rest iv th' wurruld a good time be runnin' over thim in autymobills all started with a large stock iv indolence which they cashed in. Now, whin they cud enjoy it, they can't buy it back. Thin I have me good health. Ye can always get money on that. An' I have me frinds; I rayfuse to cash thim in, I don't know that I cud get much on thim, but if I wanted to be a millyonaire, I'd tuck you an' Hogan an' Donahue undher me ar-rm an' carry ye down to Mose.

"McMullin did cash. He had no more laziness thin me, but he cashed it in befure he was twinty-wan. He cashed in his good health, a large stock iv fam'ly ties, th' affliction if his wife, th' comforts iv home, an' wan frind afther another. Wanst in a while, late in life, he'd thry to redeem a pledge, but he niver cud. They wasn't annything in th' wurruld that McMullin wudden't change fr th' roly-boly. He cashed in his vote, his pathreetism, his rellijon, his rilitives, an' fin'lly his hair. Ye heerd about him, didn't ye? He's lost ivry hair on his head. They ain't a spear iv vigation left on him. He's as arid as th' desert iv Sahara. His head looks like an iceberg in th' moonlight. He was in here th' other day, bewailin' his fate. 'It's a gr-reat misfortune,' says he. 'What did ye get fr it?' says I. 'That's th' throuble,' says he. 'Well, don't complain,' says I. 'Think what ye save in barber's bills,' I says, an' he wint away lookin' much cheered up.

"No, Hinnessy, you an' I, me frind, was not cut out be Provydence to be millyonaires. If ye had nawthin' but money, ye'd have nawthin' but money. Ye can't ate it, sleep it, dhrink it, or carry it away with ye. Ye've got a lot iv things that McMullin hasn't got. Annybody that goes down to Mose's won't see ye'er peace iv mind hangin' in th' window as an unredeemed pledge. An' annyhow, if ye're really in search iv a fortune, perhaps I cud help ye. Wud a dollar an' a half be anny use to ye?"

"Life is full iv disappointments," said Mr. Hennessy.

"It is," said Mr. Dooley, "if ye feel that way. It's thru that a good many have thried it an' none have come back fr a post-gradjate coorse. But still it ain't so bad as a career fr a young man. Ye niver get what ye ordher, but it's pretty good if ye'er appytite ain't keen an' ye care fr th' scenery."
