

## A Penny Saved

Do you know that if you  
<sup>squinted</sup> ~~put~~ away five bucks, when  
<sup>at compound interest</sup>

George Washington was a boy  
<sup>you would</sup>

Today be richer than Aristotle

Onassis? ~~Even true facts~~

Do you further know

that if ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> spent the time <sup>in</sup> working  
<sup>regularly</sup> ~~that you do not~~ <sup>waste</sup> to reading <sup>the</sup> <sup>little</sup> <sup>homilies</sup>

~~little~~ <sup>homilies</sup> ~~park papers~~ like the <sup>alone</sup>  
<sup>you</sup> ~~you~~ would be? - - - ?

Anyway, I am a publisher  
for bargains & savings of all  
kinds and I want to tell <sup>of</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>latest</sup> <sup>one</sup>



Page 7, 5th line: I think you should  
change "while" to "because"

Page 11---How about adding something like:  
even though for some reason or other it  
didn't look quite like the original.



1st  
11/22/68

# A Penny Saved

MISTER FIXIT ~~WASSET~~

All of us have <sup>our little</sup> spasms of frugality, just of course, as all of us like bargains, and I am no exception. In fact I am something like the lady who will detour her Caddy twenty miles to save a dime on a box of soap chips. I <sup>she</sup> says, <sup>blooming</sup> "I saved the dime, all right, but

all frequently spend a dollar doing it. That to mention the <sup>accompanying</sup> frustration and <sup>general</sup> exasperation take the time last summer I found that bargain redwood picnic table with the <sup>pretty</sup> <sup>melancholy</sup> benches.

Of <sup>my</sup> <sup>way</sup> <sup>fishing</sup> <sup>one</sup> <sup>moon</sup> <sup>coming</sup> <sup>home</sup> <sup>from</sup> <sup>fishing</sup> I <sup>had</sup> <sup>stopped</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>Heath's</sup> <sup>Hardware</sup> <sup>just</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>look</sup> <sup>around</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>there</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>was</sup>.

"This wouldn't that be pretty cut at my fishing shack, I mused, so we could sit outside by an open fire and eat and watch the rising <sup>sun</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>birds</sup> on <sup>cloudy</sup> <sup>days</sup>." I looked closer. "Reduced to 24.95" the tag said, and I was hooked.

"Can I help you?" the man said.

"Well, <sup>I</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>looking</sup> <sup>for</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>thinking</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>getting</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>cut</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>size</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>shack</sup>," maybe you could help me.

a hand <sup>getting</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>cut</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>size</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>shack</sup>.

"How," the man said. "Do you have a trailer?"

"Not with me." <sup>figure</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>anyway</sup>

"How <sup>do</sup> <sup>would</sup> <sup>you</sup> <sup>take</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>away</sup>?"

"Tash it on the roof," I said, <sup>very</sup> <sup>responsible</sup>.

"But <sup>it</sup> <sup>might</sup> <sup>fall</sup> <sup>off</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>top</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>it</sup>,"

"I <sup>got</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>cut</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>size</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>shack</sup>."

"<sup>How</sup> <sup>do</sup> <sup>you</sup> <sup>take</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>away</sup>?" the man <sup>said</sup> <sup>again</sup>. "Maybe you're better <sup>off</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>take</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>bit</sup>." <sup>You</sup> <sup>could</sup>

"What's a bit?"

"The <sup>new</sup> <sup>deal</sup> <sup>unassembled</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>still</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>box</sup> <sup>carton</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>came</sup> <sup>in</sup>. <sup>You</sup> <sup>could</sup> <sup>easily</sup> <sup>put</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>inside</sup> <sup>your</sup> <sup>shack</sup>. <sup>Saves</sup> <sup>time</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>money</sup>."

"How," I said, <sup>warily</sup>, "sure it was my term." "I'm not very handy assembling things."

Accompanying the shopping. I detoured back and arranged it.







that astigmatic

punches,

plogged by

I do know that

Now I do not <sup>wisely</sup> imply that the man at  
Heath's deliberately deceived me, but as the afternoon  
wore on and I kept slugging away, I ~~started~~ gradually  
collecting every tool on the premises: hammers, pliers,  
wrenches, this, that, even a bit and auger to  
re-drill some of the <sup>those</sup> pre-cut holes that had gotten  
my old eagle <sup>to</sup> eye, Inspector 171.

away.  
resembled a  
weary

Just before <sup>off</sup> sundown the trout started  
rising but I fought temptation and kept ~~on~~ toiling  
The sun sank, but still I toiled <sup>onward</sup> ~~and~~ just before  
dark I sunk <sup>down</sup> ~~on~~ something ~~that~~ that ~~looked~~  
like a redwood bench. Since darkness was falling  
I stashed my tools, had me a drink, and ~~went~~ my  
way home ~~at~~ <sup>merely</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>It is enough to say that</sup> evening of the third  
day

Now it is tempting to give ~~me~~ a blow by  
blow of the recreation of my bargain picnic table,  
but since life is short (and I do not get paid by  
the word) I'll cut it short. Three days later I  
had the whole <sup>dream</sup> thing assembled. Moreover I had  
enough redwood sticks left over to start a fine  
dedicatory fire. So I lit my fire, and fired a  
hundred of bourbon ~~and~~ sat at my bargain picnic  
table, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> looked out over the pond and <sup>reminded</sup> ~~reminded~~ my  
Memphis. <sup>and confirmed the survival of Yankee</sup>

Optimistic

Here I served two ~~hunks~~ <sup>hunks</sup>, but three  
previous days of fishing, ~~and~~ <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~learned~~ <sup>all</sup> about  
hardware salesmen and ~~bits~~.

wisdom.  
Moreover  
I had  
learned

→ do-it-yourself bits. That ~~offer~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~  
bargain: ~~it~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~never~~ <sup>had</sup> ~~do~~ But <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>best</sup> ~~deal~~ <sup>suggest</sup> bargain of all  
was this: I ~~learned~~ <sup>had</sup> never to do it again.



X

It had been a great three days.

I had not only saved two books --  
a plummy snail is a penny <sup>and all that --</sup> earned -- but I  
new had <sup>me at</sup> a fine, outdoor dining <sup>bargain</sup> <sup>a lovely handsome</sup> <sup>front</sup> salon.

True, I had missed three <sup>precious</sup> days <sup>of fishing</sup> during the  
height of the summer fly hatches -- for  
which, I would <sup>rather than for</sup> <sup>any</sup> <sup>amount</sup> have spurned a hundred books  
a day, had anybody offered ~~it~~ it. But money  
isn't everything, <sup>and</sup> I always say <sup>and</sup> I <sup>also</sup> <sup>provided</sup>

~~that~~ that good old Yankee ingenuity wasn't ~~quite~~  
<sup>quite</sup> <sup>quite</sup> dead. I'd learned something else at ~~the~~ bargain.  
I would <sup>never</sup> <sup>trust</sup> <sup>hardware</sup> <sup>store</sup> <sup>saloon</sup> <sup>rates</sup>  
and <sup>never</sup> <sup>again</sup> get caught with a bit at  
any price.

After all I did for the thing together

Two things, in fact. They were!



1st T  
Nov, 24, 68

7

when it comes to bargain

A PENNY SAVED

All of us have our little spasms of frugality,  
 of course, just as all of us like bargains, and I am no  
 exception. In fact I am something like the lady who will  
 detour her Caddy twenty miles to save a dime on a box of  
 soap chips — she saves the blooming dime, all right, but  
 frequently spends at least a dollar doing it. Not to  
 mention all the accompanying frustration, exasperation and  
 general anguish that frequently accompanies these sashays  
 into thrift.

Take the time last summer I found that bargain redwood  
 picnic table with the pretty matching benches.

experience

periodic

at any price,

are pushovers for any kind of bargain

those students of higher economics

then Caddys and through three red lights

flaked — they

or a day in jail

memorable

little

that lovely day

lovely — stunning



and ~~or~~ drink ~~or~~ simply

to go,

↓  
simply

lovely

I was  
 on my way fishing that noon I had stopped off at that treasure house  
 of bargains, Heath's Hardware, just to look around. There it was, table  
 and benches, all assembled and waiting to receive its  
 first dedications gob of spilt mustard. I stepped back with rapturously  
 and surveyed it. Wouldn't that be pretty out at my  
 fishing shack, I mused, so we could sit outside by an  
 open fire and eat ~~and~~ watch the rising trout, ~~on lovely~~  
~~days~~. I looked closer. ~~Reduced~~ "Reduced to 24.95"

the tag said, and I was hooked.



It's a lot easier to handle and you could

✓

*picnic table*

*original factory*

"The very same deal unassembled and still in the carton,  
~~it came in.~~ You could easily <sup>stuck</sup> carry it <sup>in</sup> inside your jeep.

Also Save time and money."

"My, my,"

*weakening, already.*

*fighting temptation and avarice.*

"Um," I said <sup>warily,</sup> since it was <sup>my</sup> turn. "I'm not  
<sup>at</sup> very handy assembling things."

"All it takes is a screwdriver," he said suavely, and  
*being a little resourceful himself,*

then ~~he~~ delivered the clincher. "Moreover it's two bucks

cheaper if you take the kit and do it yourself."

*helplessly, → suddenly*

"I'll take it," I said, <sup>helplessly</sup> overcome by a <sup>sudden</sup> *resistless*

wave of ~~excitement~~ *bargainitis.*



7

So I ~~took~~ <sup>the man</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>paid</sup> ~~kit~~ <sup>for my bargain</sup> and ~~raced~~ <sup>suddenly</sup> for camp and ~~clawed~~ <sup>sudden</sup> open  
the carton--and out poured ~~an~~ <sup>avalanche</sup> of nuts, bolts  
and screws. Rallying from ~~all~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ <sup>avalanche of</sup> sudden abundance I  
shook ~~some~~ <sup>the carton</sup> more and out tumbled a jumbled ~~flock~~ <sup>assortment of variously shaped</sup> of assorted  
redwood sticks. Pinned to one of these sticks I found ~~a~~ <sup>printed</sup> ~~mysterious~~ <sup>note</sup> note  
~~was~~ <sup>communication</sup> ~~note~~ <sup>entitled "Simple Directions for Assembly"</sup> from Inspector 171 ~~which~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~written~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>happily</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>document,</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~journal~~ <sup>journal</sup>  
I really should have saved that ~~note~~ <sup>note</sup> but during the days  
of chaos that followed I guess I must have swallowed it.  
~~"Directions for Assembly," I swear, were the only intelligible~~  
~~words on it.~~

The only intelligible words, I may add, were the few words of communication.



A

only to learn that

"Take countersunk crosspiece A and wed it to leg-brace B with 2-inch female bolt," was one of the ~~cryptic~~ <sup>baffling</sup> messages

faintly incestuous ~~messages~~ I seem to ~~remember~~ <sup>recall</sup>. So brandishing my

screwdriver <sup>attempts</sup>

tried to conduct the wedding ceremony ~~but~~ the service had to be

~~was~~ delayed until I discovered that ~~was~~ <sup>it is</sup> impossible to ~~wed~~ marry

~~tighten~~ a nut to a bolt with a screwdriver, despite what

the man had said.



7

Just before sundown the trout started <sup>gayly</sup> rising but  
 I fought <sup>warded</sup> off temptation and kept <sup>still</sup> ~~beating~~ <sup>fighting the good fight:</sup> away. The sun  
 sank, but still I <sup>slugged</sup> ~~toiled~~ away <sup>then</sup> and just before dusk I  
 sank down <sup>both</sup> ~~exhausted~~ <sup>and listening</sup> on something that resembled a  
 redwood bench. <sup>Since</sup> ~~darkness~~ <sup>and fatigue were</sup> was <sup>overcoming me, so</sup> falling I stashed  
 my tools, had me a <sup>cup of bourbon</sup> ~~drink~~, and wended my weary way home.

presently

CUP



I not only had my <sup>bargain</sup> picnic table, <sup>on which I'd</sup> and had

Here I saved two bucks, lost three precious days of fishing, and confirmed the survival of Yankee ingenuity. Moreover I had learned all about optimistic hardware salesmen and do-it-yourself ~~fix~~ kits. But perhaps my biggest bargain of all ~~of~~ was this: I had learned never to do it again.

precious bargain

It had been a great <sup>process</sup> three days.

Here I ~~not only~~ neatly saved two bucks (or over sixty-six cents <sup>per</sup> day, if one wants to get picky), ~~about it~~, but had learned some <sup>lessons</sup> that mere money <sup>couldn't</sup> buy. True I had missed three precious days of trout fishing during the height of the summer fly hatches, but ~~during~~ <sup>in the</sup> process I had also learned that Yankee ingenuity wasn't yet quite dead -- after all I HAD put the damned thing together. What else had I learned? One,

never to trust a hardware store salesman and, two, ~~never~~ <sup>again to</sup> ~~ever~~ get caught with a bit at any price.

<sup>delicately</sup> And <sup>as I</sup> <sup>sat</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>my</sup> <sup>picnic</sup> <sup>table,</sup> <sup>swaying</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>balancing,</sup> I <sup>like</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>unusually</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>perhaps</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>biggest</sup> <sup>bargain</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>all.</sup>



Best column you've written--at  
least this critic thinks so.

Laughed out loud at your having  
enough sticks left over to start a  
fire.







→ or that, having <sup>himself only recently</sup> survived assembling the one in the store,  
he did not want to go through THAT again. But

X

Now I do not wish to imply that the man <sup>from</sup> at Heath's Hardware had

deliberately deceived me. <sup>I do know that</sup> as the afternoon wore

on and I kept doggedly slugging away I ~~do know that~~

I gradually collected <sup>a remarkable assortment of tools:</sup> every tool on the premises:

CLAMPS →

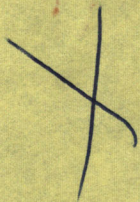
hammer, pliers, wrenches, punches, this, that, even

<sup>brace and</sup> a bit ~~and~~ auger to re-drill some of those faulty pre-cut

holes that had gotten by <sup>carelessly</sup> that <sup>old</sup> astigmatic <sup>old</sup> eagle eye <sup>of old</sup>

Inspector 171.





Bright and early the next morning -- but no.

However tempting

account

arduous

that

^

Now it is tempting to give a blow by ~~his~~ blow of ~~my~~ recreation of ~~as~~ picnic table, but since life is ~~short~~ fleeting

(and I do not get paid by the word) I'll mercifully

quit

cut it short. It is enough to say that on ~~the~~ the

^

evening of the third day I had the whole damn thing

that my

made the disconcerting discovery ~~of a unique dividend~~ assembled. Moreover I had enough redwood sticks left

rather disconcerting bargain

gratefully

shrugged and

over to start a fine dedicatory fire. So I lit my fire

and

and, teetering triumphantly,

fixed a bumper of bourbon, sat at my bargain picnic

reviewed

table, and looked out over the pond and received my

blessings.

It was more than I bargained for --



11/28/68

2 final  
+ letters

f

No. 51.

A PENNY SAVED

All of us experience our little spasms of frugality,  
of course, just as all of us are periodic pushovers for  
bargains at any price and I am no exception. In fact

~~when it comes to~~ <sup>with</sup> bargains I am something like those <sup>advanced</sup> ~~lady~~

lady

students of ~~the~~ <sup>advanced</sup> higher economics who will detour their

Caddys twenty miles ~~through~~ through three red lights to save

a dime on a box of soap flakes--they save the blooming

dime, all right, but <sup>often</sup> ~~frequently~~ spend at least a dollar ~~and several hours~~

~~on a day in jail~~ <sup>on board at the station house</sup> doing it. Not to mention all the ~~accompanying~~

frustration

and general anguish that frequently accompany

these little sashays into ~~trix~~ thrift. Take the ~~memorable~~

day last summer I found that <sup>handsome</sup> ~~stunning~~ bargain redwood

picnic table with the <sup>pair of handsome</sup> ~~pretty~~ matching benches.



11/30/68

6

suddenly

secluded nook

I was on my way trout fishing that noon and had stopped off at a rambling country hardware store just to look around. Bargains lurked everywhere and so many items were reduced one wondered why they ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> ever marked them up ~~in the first place~~. As I prowled I prided myself on my sales resistance. And then in a dark ~~corner~~ I collided with my lovely redwood picnic table and matching benches. I ~~had~~ remembered the old adage about pride preceding a fall...

Just about there  
vaguely

There it stood, sturdy and handsome, <sup>Testing,</sup> all assembled and ready to go, all but panting to receive its first dedicatory gob of spilt mustard. I stepped back. I sat on one of the benches and <sup>discreetly</sup> wriggled my fanny but the bench never moved. "Rock of Gibraltar," I murmured. I arose and stepped back with rapturously folded hands the better to admire my pretty pet. Wouldn't it be just the thing to have out at my fishing shack, I mused, so we fishermen could occasionally dine outside or simply sit and beat mosquitoes and watch the trout rising in the <sup>old beaver</sup> pond? I put on my glasses and looked closer. "Reduced to 24.95" the tag said, and I was hooked.

SAGELY →



~~at a distance~~ <sup>already</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>sapped,</sup>

6

"Can I help you?" the ~~man~~ <sup>friendly</sup> said.

<sup>hardware store man sidled up and</sup>

"Well," I allowed, "maybe you could lend me a hand <sup>lugging</sup> ~~getting~~

it out to the jeep."

"Hm," the man said. "Do you have a trailer?"

"Not with me. <sup>out</sup> A little awkward to take <sup>(fishing, you know)</sup>

"Hm..."

"How do you figure to tote it away?"

"Lash it <sup>to</sup> <sup>car</sup> the roof," I said, ever resourceful.

"But it might fall off <sup>or anyway</sup> ~~and anyway~~ mar both it and the

top of your jeep."

"I got rope and <sup>an old</sup> <sup>quickly</sup> <sup>blanket," I countered.</sup> <sup>thoughtfully.</sup>

"Hm..." the man again said, <sup>thinking</sup> "Maybe you'd be better off <sup>taking</sup>

~~to take~~ the kit."

"Kit?" I said, <sup>warily,</sup> <sup>already</sup> <sup>scenting</sup> <sup>trouble ahead.</sup>

"What's a kit?"



6

"The very same picnic table deal unassembled and still in the original factory carton. It's a lot easier to handle and you could stash it in your jeep. ~~Also save time and money.~~"

*4* ~~"My, my," I said, weakening, already fighting temptation~~  
*and aaaaa* ~~"I'm not very handy at assembling things,"~~  
*I confessed, I sound firmly fighting back. "Have trouble trying → my shoe."*

"All it takes is a screwdriver," he said suavely, and then, being a little resourceful himself, delivered the *final* clincher. *Also* ~~"Moreover~~ it's two bucks cheaper if you take the kit and do it yourself. *A kid could assemble it."*

"I'll take it," I said helplessly, suddenly overcome by a resistless wave of bargainitis.



6

So I paid the man for my bargain kit and exultantly  
raced for camp and clawed open the carton—and out  
poured a sudden shower of nuts, bolts and screws.

~~picnic table~~

at least a pint  
of mixed

several quarts of  
washers.

Rallying from this avalanche of ~~abundance~~  
some more and out tumbled a jumbled assortment of redwood  
sticks. ~~Pinned~~ to ~~one~~ one of these sticks I found a

goodies

Stapled

printed note from Inspector 171 entitled "Simple Directions  
for Assembly"—the only intelligible words, I ~~may add~~,

soon learned,

in the whole mysterious ~~communication~~. Now I suppose

document.

I really should have saved ~~that~~ his baffling ~~document~~, but

his

communication,

during the ~~days~~ ~~of~~ ~~chaos~~ that followed I ~~guess~~ I must have  
swallowed it.

chaotic

strip



t

The weather had suddenly turned hot so I peeled off  
my shirt and hit the water pail and found a screwdriver

*thus armed for combat,* <sup>me</sup> *Once I* and gallantly returned to the fray. *A* again tried to

decipher the cryptogram from Inspector 171, but <sup>still</sup> *Again*  
no dice. <sup>and</sup> *Since I've lost the note,* <sup>has vanished, and I</sup> *and never rightly*

knew what was in it anyway, I'll sort of have to make

it up ~~off~~ *Always from memory.*



+

*holy wedlock had*

*sister*

"Take countersunk crosspiece A and wed it to leg-brace

B with 2-inch female bolt," was one of the faintly

incestuous messages I seem to recall. So, <sup>*piously*</sup> brandishing

<sup>*piously*</sup> my screwdriver, I tried to conduct the wedding ceremony--

only to learn that ~~she service had~~ to be delayed while

I discovered ~~that~~ it is next to impossible <sup>*permanently to*</sup> marry a

<sup>*nut*</sup> nut to a bolt with a mere screwdriver, despite what the ~~hardware~~

man had said.



11/30/68

subtle

increasingly obvious

7

Now I do not ~~wish to~~ imply that the man from the hardware store ~~was~~ ~~had~~ deliberately ~~dece~~ deceived me or that his <sup>passion</sup> for selling me a bit had anything faintly to do with the <sup>fact that</sup>, having doubtless himself only recently survived assembling the one in the store, he was not about to go through THAT again. But I do know that as the afternoon wore on and I kept doggedly slugging away I gradually assembled a remarkable assortment of tools: three new screwdrivers, two hammers, various pliers, wrenches, wood clamps, rasps, reamers, <sup>and</sup> punches -- even a brace and bit to ~~re~~ re-drill some of those faulty pre-cut holes that had gotten by that astigmatic old eagle eye, Inspector 171. And as I toiled away, I sang a ~~tuneless~~ little ditty to sustain myself -- something about <sup>(cotton pickin' easy it was for</sup> ~~how~~ a mere <sup>a picnic table</sup> chit of a child to ~~assemble it~~, tra la, la la...

Tom's book  
~~Apprenticeship~~  
 1

I sang a tuneless repetitious little ditty to sustain myself -- something about how cotton pickin' easy it was for a <sup>mere</sup> ~~bedraggled~~ chit of a child to assemble a bit, tra la, la la...



+

Just before sundown the trout started gayly rising  
but I warded off temptation and ~~still~~ kept ~~ix~~ fighting  
the good fight. The sun presently sank, but still I

*but the fish*

slugged away. Then just before dusk, accompanied  
considerable trepidation, I sank ~~down~~ exhausted on

*down*

something that ~~resembled~~ resembled a redwood bench.

~~the one~~ in the store; for one thing it ~~rocked~~.

*somehow it did  
seem  
quite  
like that*

Darkness and fatigue were swiftly overcoming me, so I

~~stashed~~ my tools, and ~~had~~ ~~me~~ a ~~cup~~ of bourbon, and wended  
headed

my ~~weary~~ way home.

*behave like the one*



X

~~and~~  
 Bright and early the next morning -- but  
 no, enough is enough; however tempting it is to  
 give a blow by blow account of <sup>the</sup> ~~my~~ recreation  
 of that ~~enchanted~~ <sup>magical</sup> picnic table, after all life  
 is fleeting and I do not get paid by the word, so  
 I'll mercifully cut it short. On the evening of the  
 third day I had the whole damned thing assembled.  
 In fact I <sup>also</sup> made the momentarily disconcerting  
 discovery that my bargain was more than I'd bargained  
 for -- I <sup>found</sup> had enough redwood sticks left over to  
 start a fine dedicatory fire. Then I philosophically  
 concluded <sup>that</sup> this was a unique dividend generously <sup>granted</sup> ~~given~~  
 provided by old lion-hearted Inspector 171. So I  
 lit my fire and fired a bumper of bourbon and,  
 teetering triumphantly, crouched <sup>at</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~my~~ bargain  
 picnic table and toasted <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ trout and Inspector 171 ~~with~~  
 and ~~the~~ ~~best~~ ~~of~~ ~~my~~ ~~drinks~~, meanwhile reviewing  
 and soberly reviewed  
 my blessings.



X

It had been a great three days. Here I not only had  
my ~~buying~~ picnic table <sup>and at the same time</sup> on which I'd neatly saved two bucks

(or over sixty-six cents a day, if one wants to get picky),

but in the process ~~I~~ had learned <sup>several</sup> ~~some precious~~ <sup>memorable</sup> lessons ~~that~~

~~more~~ money <sup>can't</sup> ~~couldn't~~ buy. True I had missed three precious

days of trout fishing during the height of the summer fly

hatches, but <sup>meanwhile I'd</sup> ~~I had~~ learned that Yankee ingenuity

wasn't yet quite dead <sup>at</sup> after all I HAD put the ~~damned~~ <sup>after a fashion</sup> thing

together, <sup>hadn't I?</sup> ~~that is~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~that is~~ <sup>after a fashion, that is.</sup>



+

In fact ever since then,

other lessons

What ~~else~~ had I learned? One, never ~~to~~ trust a  
hardware store salesman and, two, never again ~~to~~ get  
caught with a kit at any price. ~~As~~ as I ~~since~~ perched  
uneasily at my picnic table, ~~at luncheon~~ delicately swaying and  
balancing, I like ~~wistfully~~ <sup>often</sup> to reflect that this latter  
lesson was ~~perhaps~~ <sup>maybe</sup> the biggest bargain of all ~~of kits give me fits.~~

that kits give me fits.



Written by:  
John D. Voelker  
Deer Lake Road  
Ishpeming, Michigan  
No. 51

A PENNY SAVED

by

Robert Traver

All of us experience our little spasms of frugality, of course, just as all of us are periodic pushovers for bargains at any price--and I am no exception. In fact when it comes to bargains I am something like those lady students of advanced economics who will detour their Caddys twenty miles through three red lights to save a dime on a box of soap flakes--they save the blooming dime, all right, but often spend at least a dollar doing it. Not to mention all the frustration and general anguish that frequently accompany these little sashays into thrift. Take the day last summer I found that handsome bargain redwood picnic table with the pair of matching benches.

I was on my way trout fishing that noon and had stopped off at a rambling country hardware store just to look around. Bargains lurked everywhere and so many items were reduced one wondered why they ever marked them up. As I prowled I prided myself on my sales resistance. And then suddenly in a secluded nook I collided with my lovely redwood picnic table and matching benches. Just about then I ~~vaguely~~ remembered the old adage about pride preceding a fall...

There it stood, sturdy and handsome, all assembled and ready to go, all but panting to receive its first dedicatory gob of spilt mustard. Testing, I sat on ~~one~~ one of the benches and discreetly wriggled my fanny but the bench never moved. "Rock of Gibraltar," I ~~sagely~~ murmured. I arose and stepped back with



rapturously folded hands the better to admire my ~~pretty~~ pet. Wouldn't it be just the thing to have out at my fishing shack, I mused, so we fishermen could occasionally dine outside or simply sit and bat mosquitoes and watch the trout rising in the old beaver pond? I put on my glasses and looked closer: "Reduced to 24.95" the tag said, and I was hooked.

"Can I help?" the friendly hardware store man sidled up and said.

"Well," I allowed, "maybe you could lend me a hand lugging it out to the jeep."

"Hm," the man said. "Do you have a trailer?"

"Not with me. A little awkward to take out fishing, you know."

"Hm... How do you figure to tote it away?"

"Lash it to the car roof," I said, ever resourceful.

"But it might fall off or anyway mar both it and the top of your jeep."

"I got rope and an old blanket," I ~~quickly~~ countered.

"Hm..." the man again said, blinking thoughtfully. "Maybe you'd be better off taking the kit."

"Kit?" I said warily, scenting trouble ahead. "What's a kit?"

"The very same picnic table deal unassembled and still in the original factory carton. It's a lot easier to handle and you could stash it in your jeep."

"I'm not very handy at putting things together," I confessed, gamely fighting back. "Have trouble tying my shoes."

"All it takes is a screwdriver," he said suavely, and then, being a little resourceful himself, delivered the final clincher.



"Also it's two bucks cheaper if you take the kit and do it yourself. A child could assemble it."

"I'll take it," I said, suddenly overcome by a resistless wave of bargainitis.

So I paid the man for my bargain kit and exultantly raced for camp and clawed open the carton--and out poured a sudden shower of nuts, bolts and screws. Also at least a pint of mixed washers. Rallying from this avalanche of goodies I shook the carton some more and out tumbled a jumbled assortment of redwood sticks. Stapled to one of these sticks I found a printed note from Inspector 171 entitled "Simple Directions for Assembly"--the only intelligible words, I soon learned, in the whole mysterious document. Now I suppose I really should have saved his baffling communication, but during the chaotic days that followed I guess I must have swallowed it.

The weather had suddenly turned hot so I peeled off my shirt and hit the water pail and found me a screwdriver and, thus armed for combat, gallantly returned to the fray. Once again I tried to decipher the cryptogram from Inspector 171, but again no dice. And since the note has vanished, and I never rightly knew what was in it anyway, I'll sort of have to make it up ~~from memory~~.

"Take countersunk crosspiece A and wed it to sister leg-brace B with 2-inch female bolt," was one of the faintly incestuous messages I seem to recall. So, piously brandishing my screwdriver, I tried to conduct the wedding ceremony--only to learn that holy wedlock had to be delayed while I discovered it is next to impossible ~~permanently~~ to marry a nut to a bolt with a mere screwdriver, despite what the man had said.



Now I do not imply that the man from the hardware store deliberately deceived me or that his subtle passion for selling me a kit had anything faintly to do with the increasingly obvious fact that, having doubtless himself only recently survived assembling the one in the store, he was not about to go through THAT again. But I do know that as the afternoon wore on and I kept doggedly slugging away I gradually assembled a remarkable assortment of tools: three more screwdrivers, two hammers, various pliers, wrenches, wood clamps, rasps, reamers and punches—even a brace and bit to re-drill some of those faulty pre-cut holes that had gotten by that astigmatic old eagle eye, Inspector 171. And as I toiled away I sang a tuneless repetitious little ditty to sustain myself—something about how cotton pickin' easy it was for a mere chit of a child to assemble a kit, tra la, la la...

Just before sundown the trout started gayly rising but I warded off temptation and kept fighting the good fight. The sun presently sank, but still I slugged away. Then just before dusk I sank down exhausted on something that resembled a redwood bench—although somehow it did not behave like the one in the store; for one thing it rocked. Darkness and fatigue were swiftly overcoming me, so I stashed my tools and had me a cup of bourbon and headed home.

Bright and early the next morning—but no, enough is enough; however tempting it is to give a blow by blow account of the recreation of my picnic table, after all life is fleeting and I <sup>moreover</sup> do not get paid by the word, so I'll mercifully cut it short. On the evening of the third day I had the whole damned thing assembled.



I also made the momentarily disconcerting discovery that my bargain was more than I'd bargained for—I found I had enough redwood sticks left over to start a fine dedicatory fire. Then I philosophically concluded that this was a unique dividend generously provided by old lion-hearted Inspector 171 himself. So I lit my fire and fixed a bumper of bourbon and, teetering triumphantly, crouched at my ~~bargain~~ picnic table and toasted ~~it~~ the trout and Inspector 171 and ~~soberly~~ <sup>and</sup> reviewed my blessings.

It had been a great three days. Here I not only had my picnic table and at the same time neatly saved two bucks (or over sixty-six cents a day, if one wants to get picky), but in the process had learned several memorable lessons money can't buy. True I had missed three precious days of trout fishing during the height of the summer fly hatches, but meanwhile I'd learned that <sup>good old</sup> Yankee ingenuity wasn't yet quite dead. After all I HAD put the <sup>dammed</sup> thing together, hadn't I?

What other lessons had I learned? One, never trust a hardware store salesman and, two, never again get caught with a kit at any price. In fact ever since then, as I perch ~~precisely~~ <sup>uneasily</sup> at my picnic table at eventide, ~~delicately~~ <sup>delicately</sup> swaying and balancing, I reflect that this latter lesson was the biggest bargain of all: that ~~all~~ kits give me fits.



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