

# Friendships and Enmities

Anyhow—"They were  
Both of them  
Perfect Gentlemen"

Mr. J. R. Robertson sold his pony to his friend of twenty years' standing, Mr. G. W. Barnes. It is better, if it can be avoided, not to sell a pony to an old friend. Within a fortnight the two men had quarrelled, did not speak to one another, and gave no sign of recognition when they met.

Mr. Robertson and Mr. Barnes were travelling together to the City, as was their custom, when Robertson observed that he was thinking of selling his pony.

"Nothing wrong with him, is there?"

"Not that I know of. I've had him three years, and he's never been sick or sorry for a day. The fact of the case is that since I bought the car Annie finds the governess-car too slow for her. So the beggar's just eating his head off, and I have to take the gardener's boy off his proper job to exercise him."

"Half a minutes, James. How'd he do for Tom? It's time the boy had his first riding-lessons."

"I should think he'd do very well. He's carried children before. He's

not quick, and he's rather lazy, and he must be eleven years old by now, but he's as quiet as a sheep and as safe as a church. If I had children of my own I'd trust him with them."

"Well, that's good enough. What do you want for him?"

"I gave sixteen for him, but that was three years ago. I'll ask you ten pounds."

"Right." Barnes took two five-pound notes from his pocket book and handed them over. "I'll send for the pony to-night. It's Tom's birthday to-morrow and that pony's just the present he'll like."

So the pony was delivered to Mr. Barnes, together with such provender as remained, the latter as a free gift, Mr. Robertson being a generous man.

By BARRY PAIN



George William Barnes was pleased. Lucy, wife of the afore-said, declared that the pony looked a beauty—which, by the way, it did not. Tom Barnes, eldest of their three sons, spent most of the day in telling other boys that he had got a real pony of his own, and the rest of the time in hand-feeding the pony. And the pony, having been given in one day one pound and a half of the best lump sugar and five large carrots, in addition to the usual rations, through us the world was a brighter place than it had at one time supposed.

James Robert Robertson was also satisfied. Annie, his wife, said that he was really wonderful. (She often said that, but he did not get tired of it.) It was only at breakfast-time that he had decided to sell the pony, and in an hour he had done it. And that was always the way with him—nobody was ever as quick as he was. Annie was ten years younger than her husband and adored him. But possibly her next remark shows that she was capable of leading up to things.

"Now there will be plenty of room for that little two-seater, darling. I mean, if you decide to get it."

"Yes, my dear, but room isn't money. I got ten for the pony—perhaps I might have asked a little more, but in dealing with an old friend one doesn't haggle. I know my brother Bill wants the cart and harness and will give me what he calls a fair price for them, and I suppose he must have them; but his ideas of a fair price are not always mine. That doesn't take one very far towards the price of a good two-seater, and it's got to be good if you're going to drive it yourself."

"Yes, dearest, but think of the economy. Think of the saving in petrol. Our big car's a glutton for petrol—Tilling says so. Then if I drive it myself, that gives Tilling more time for the garden, and it wouldn't take him nearly as long to clean the little car."

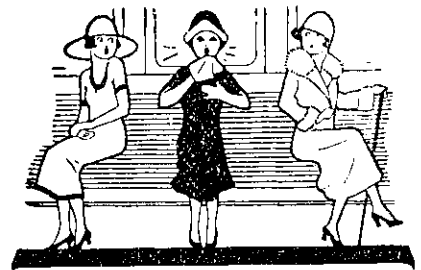
"Look here," said James, smiling. "If I get the car will you give me a kiss for it?"

"No," said Annie shyly. "I don't sell kisses. But I'll give you all the kisses I've got, just for sheer love of you, always, even if you never give me anything."

An instalment on account followed. It would appear that Mrs. Robertson knew how to talk. At

any rate, three days later she was driving the two-seater.

And then the storm broke which wrecked the old-established friendship between James Robert Robertson and George William Barnes.



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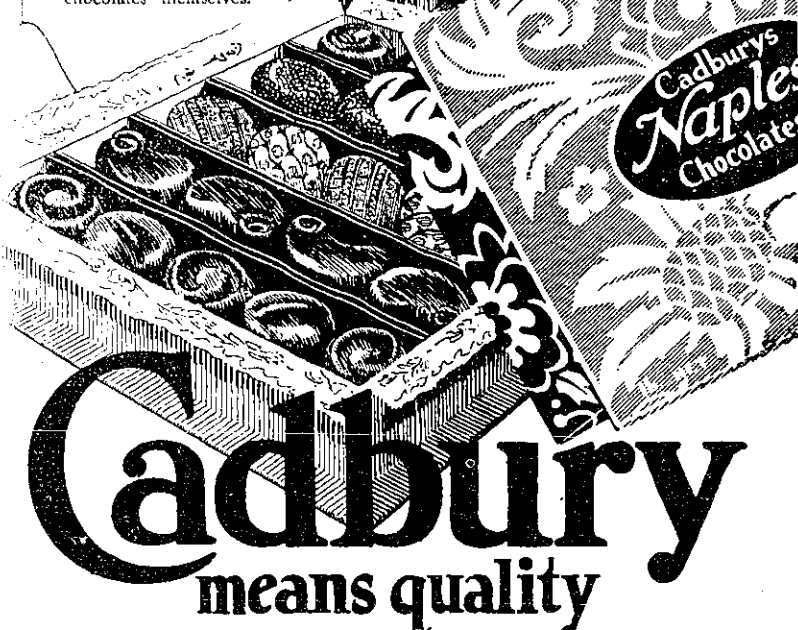
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