

## SUGAR FOR NAETHING

LAST Saturday, Betty and me were oot getting oor provisions, and, in gaun alang a street in the Sooth Side, Betty grippit me by the arm, and, pointing tae a shop window, says :

“Guid keep us, Jeems, d’ye see that? Sugar for naething !”

“Eh, what’s that?” I says, getting oot my specs. “That’s extraor’nar ; trade must be dull atweel when

they've tae gie awa' the goods for naething. My certy, it's a new gemm this. Puir bodies! hoo can they afford a' that gas and a big rent? Betty," I cries, "ye ken I've never grudged tae pay a fair price for onything I buy; but when folk offer ye a thing for naething, I wid be staunin' in my ain licht if I didna tak' it. Gie me the basket, and I'll go in and get eight pun', and, after I coom oot, ye can slip in and get another eight pun'; it'll no' look sae greedy like. Jist wait a wee." And in I goes.

"I'll tak' eight pun' o' that sugar!"

"Certainly, sir."

And in a jiffey I got the sugar in a paper poke, and, putting it in the basket, I shut doon the lid and says, "I'm sure I'm very much obleeged tae ye tae be sae kind tae me—me, a perfect stranger. I really canna fin' words tae express my thanks. Sugar's no vera dear, but it's aye something; it maun be a sair loss tae you. Hooever, I must jist thank ye," and, wi' that, I made tae coom oot.

"Hey," cries the lad at the back o' the counter, "ye've forgot the tea! There's twa pun' o' tea goes along wi' that!"

"Lod save us, tea!—tea, did ye say? Betty," I cries, "it's no only sugar they're gieing awa', but tea. Great criftens, this bates a'! Tea! Certainly I'll tak' the tea," and I held up the lid o' the basket, and he popped in a package o' tea, a' ready made up. I thocht it wis vera fortunate I had seen the shop before the unemployed got word o' it, or they wid hae haen it a' rookit oot afore I got near't.

"Is there naethin' else—coffee or onything?" I says.

"No!" he says, "it's just the tea and sugar go thegither."

"Weel, I'm share we ocht tae be thankfu' for that same; altho' if there wis a bit pun' o' coffee, I wadna object. Weel, guid day tae ye! guid day!" and I

cam' oot. Lod, he jumpit ower the counter, and grippit me at the door, and shook me, and says—

“The money, sir!”

“Money!” says I, perfectly dumbfounded, “ye never said there wis ony money; but it's no ower late yet! Hoo much dae ye gie? Ye're a perfect angel in thae bad times. I hope the money's no spurious.”

“Ye've tae gie me the money.”

“Me!” I says. “Money for what?”

“For the tea.”

“Did ye no say it went alang wi' the sugar?”

“Certainly.”

“And didna ye say ye gied the sugar for naethin'?”

“Yes.”

“And what's the money for then?”

“For the tea,” he says, getting angry.

“Noo, look here; noo, look here,” I says, pulling him intae a close oot o' the crood, “let us understaun' each other. Noo, just listen! Betty, haud the basket a wee! Tae begin at the beginning, did ye no' say ye gied sugar for naethin'?”

“We do.”

“Weel, so faur, so good; ye gied me my sugar for naethin', and, when I wis coming oot, ye cried after me that ye gied tea alang wi' the sugar.”

“But ye're tae pay for the tea.”

“Tut, tut! will I hae tae begin again? Noo, look here, and pay attention! We'll tak' it backwards this time! Are ye listenin'? Didna ye ca' me back when I was gaun oot weel enough pleased wi' the sugar, and no askin' for tea—didna ye cry me back and said ye gied tea alang wi' the sugar?”

“I did.”

“Weel, and hadna ye gien me the sugar for naething?”

“I had.”

“Weel, and what hae ye tae say for yersel’, eh? It’s no the worth o’t, min’ ye; but I’m no a man tae be made a fule o’; hooever, there’s my card—ye can summon me, but I’m thinking ye’ll get the warst o’t. No, no, I wisna born yesterday. I thocht there wis some juckry-pockry aboot it. Come awa, Betty, here’s oor caur”; and the policeman threatened tae tak’ him up for obstructing the pavement, and we cam’ awa’.

He thocht he wis cute, but he found oot there wis some gey lang-heided folk in the coal trade as weel as in the tea trade.

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