

lived at the Sign of the Wooden Leg was now to find a happy haven at the Sign of the Glad Hand.

But what happened? I stumbled over a bound volume of the Civil Service Act and Amendments There-to when entering the messengers' room and, when, at last, I was admitted to the presence of the Commissioners, I found the floor so highly polished that on all the walls I seemed to see, not the cheery texts I have told you of, but a staring legend:

Let him that Thinketh he Standeth Take Heed lest he Fall.

I advanced to the dais, however. I will call it a dais still, for the sake of that dream's sake, although the daises of my previous acquaintance were not supplied by Loose Leaf, Limited. Driving the spike at the end of my right leg into the bird's-eye maple of the floor, I lifted up my voice in supplication. I made known my needs, my wants and my wishes. One of the Commissioners pressed a button. Immediately, but it seemed years I may say for emotional effect, a clerk entered who was ordered to bring box *Wab* to *Wek* from the card cabinet.

"Webster, P. J., Webster, Thomas, Weeks, Wefferman, here we are — Wegg! Wegg, Silas, date of birth so and so, entered service eighteen hundred and so and so, salary at appointment so and so, conduct, ability and religion so and so."

And so and so. The euphonious phrase repeated so often above is not introduced by me to conceal the facts of my life from the public. I report the Commissioner literally. He had an evident desire to keep me in ignorance of the awful truth concerning myself.

"Yes, Mr. Wegg," he continued, "your name is entered in its proper alphabetical position in our card index, and the information requisite for the efficient maintenance of the card filing system will be obtained in your case, as in all other cases, promptly

and without prejudice. Good day."

That was my introduction to the Commission. I went away from the Trafalgar building, if not satisfied, at least relieved, humming to myself with the semi-complacent humility of a believer in the doctrine of election, who has no doubt of the answer to his question, "Is my name written there in the book white and fair?" I mentally substituted card index for book, for poetry cannot stand before modern improvements.

They had my name and address, and I determined to send them my telephone number as soon as I could afford to have a telephone. In the meantime I sat down and wrote a comparatively full story of my life, comprising some three hundred pages of closely printed type, and sent it in to the Commission. With all my desire to advance my own interests, I may say that I was actuated as much by the wish that the card filing system should not prove a failure as by self interest in informing the Commission about my past achievements.

As far as my advancement was concerned, there was nothing doing however. I do not know what benefit the card index received from my contribution of historical knowledge. But I had two strings to my bow, or two arrows rather. I had shot one shaft into the Past, an arrow winged with the goose-feather of history. My other arrow I intended to shoot into the Future, and it was to be winged with the peacock plume of prophecy. I sat me down and wrote to the Commissioners about what I could do if I were given the chance. My first plea had been built on what Browning calls "absolutely truth, fanciless fact." I determined to be guided by his theory and prove that "fancy with fact is just one fact the more." I gave them facts with a flourish to them. Did they bite? Excuse me, did the arrow hit the mark?

Friends, the printer has a way of clipping my articles to fit his procrustean bed of available room for