

Shake Well Before Using

EDITOR'S NOTE—We have arranged with one of the best story writers in Canada for several stories of the inside of Financial and Commercial Life in Canada. They will be real good stories, and at the same time will stimulate the imagination and show how the game might be played whether or nor exact details are followed. This story is the beginning and deals with the patent medicine evil. The next story will follow soon and is worth watching for.

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All the way down in the elevator Gibbs' big honest wind-tanned face was thoughtful. During the weary round of job-hunting that had filled the week he had been in many offices, so many that he had lost count of them, and always with the same result. From picking and choosing he had gradually reached a frame of mind where he would be glad of a place however humble. He was learning that Chicago "between seasons" was not exactly a Western Canadian harvest-field clamoring for help. Why, back there at home—

Gibbs' long jaw set determinedly. There was no use drawing comparisons at this stage of the game. He couldn't go back there—not till he had shown his father that there were other places than the farm and other things than wheat. His father's advice had been sound and sane, as it always was; he knew that now. But he wouldn't go back without something to show for it—not after that fool row.

From a dusty cell of memory there emerged to reinforce the decision a certain remark of one Nap Wiggins, whom he had met last year at the Winnipeg Industrial Exposition—a lanky, likeable worthy who had been "spicling" for a sideshow on the Midway, a gentleman in a checked suit and a brown vest who talked as one having authority. Said Nap: "Yuh rubes up here don't know what y're missin'! Y'r think-tanks is got too many leaks in 'em to be good fer nothin' but farmin' or yuh'd beat it fer Chicago an' git in on a clean-up somewheres. Me fer little ol' Chi!"

Nevertheless, at the street entrance to the building Gibbs spread his remaining coins across his big palm and eyed them with a large measure of skepticism. There were two quarters, one dime and three nickels!

"Darn it, I eat for another twenty-four hours anyway!" he soliloquized. "And a great many of the world's events have happened in less time than that." With which cheerful review of the situation he drifted out into the eddies of the crowded thoroughfare.

And bumped right into Mr. Nap Wiggins himself with such force that the gentleman's silk hat was knocked off and in his frantic twist to catch it he dropped his cane and a pair of particularly yellow gloves.

"Can't yuh look where y're goin', yuh big mutt! Yuh—Well, fer the love o' Mike!"

The sudden change in his expression made Gibbs laugh heartily as they shook hands.

"How are yuh, Ol' Hayseed? Gee, I'm glad to see yuh! How's everythin' back on the ol' Manitoba farm?"

"Number 1 Hard," laughed Gibbs. "Look as if yuh'd been threshing forty to the acre yourself, Nap," and he allowed his gaze to dwell upon the long-tailed afternoon coat with the silk lapels.

"Some class, eh?" grinned Mr. Wiggins with modesty. "These here glad rags is got them I was wearin' at the Winnipeg Fair backed clean off the map, uh? Gee! but I'm glad to see yuh again, kid. Say, pipe the sparkler, will yuh?" and he jerked a thumb at his scarf-pin. "Real goods—cost me two hundred plunks cold.

Fact. An' say, how 'bout this?" He reached into a hip pocket and pulled out a roll of greenbacks the size of which made Gibbs' eyes widen.

"Why, what—what business are you in now? Undertaker?"

"No chance! No dead ones fer our's. Even if we does foller 'em right up to the brink o' the grave, y'understand, our line aint travellin' no further'n that. We crowds in all we kin, y'understand, an' the closter we gits to the cemetery the harder we works. Mebbe we kills a few an' mebbe we saves a few; we gits 'em goin' an' comin', believe me, but we aint no undertakers at that. Corpseum non desirabus," and Mr. Wiggins swung his cane and grinned aimably.

"Great Scott, Wiggins!" gasped Gibbs in amazement. "Are you serious? What the mischief kind of work is it? You talk like a funeral!"

"Faster'n that, kid. Oh, faster'n that! Great graft. We works fer the emancipation o' stricken mankind, y'understand. We deals in the saccharine syrup an' the succulent pill. We demonstrates the tonic stimulation an' the nerve-buildin' nutrition o' colored water in the cure o' all diseases as is subject to the influence o' psychological conditions an' the ebullition o' mental hallucination. D'yuh git me? No more dinky little side-shows at the Winni-

"Hardly as bad as that," smiled Gibbs. His face sobered quickly.

"Well now, you just turn right 'round an' beat it back there—fast," advised Mr. Wiggins emphatically. "If what yuh told me 'bout that farm o' yours was on the level, y'aint got no business lookin' fer a job in Chicago. Why say, kid," he added eagerly, "d'yuh know what I'm goin' to do with this here?" He slapped the roll of bills in his pocket. "Sink it, that's what—sink it in a farm up there myself. I been savin' fer it ever since I got back here. Why say, I knows a guy made f' thousand cold on one deal up there las' month—one deal! He made a bunch o' coin off his crop besides an' paid fer his land out o' the profits. Am I goin' to git in on it? Am I? Just watch y'r Uncle Dudley! I'm beatin' it out o' this burg so fast one o' these here days that the wind'll shave me so close I won't need to go to a barber fer a week after I hit my farm! Say, on the level now, kid, don't that 'my farm' sound all to the good?"

"It sure does," cried Gibbs heartily. "If you mean that, Nap,—about going up there for good—congratulations. It's the greatest country on God's earth! It breeds men. It—it—" He stopped in confusion at the stare with which Mr. Wiggins was regarding him, and let his

"Cinch!" he chuckled. "You'n me'll be lookin' after the newspapers in the country towns. We takes little jaunts out into the country, y'understand. We drops in on one o' these yap editors an' blows him to a fifteen-center, lands him fer a bunch o' space in the child o' his brain at next to nothin' at all—an' blows out again with his John Henry sewed solid to our pink contract form. Some contract, believe me!" and Mr. Wiggins indulged in laughter. "I can't help it, Gibbs, an' yuh'll have to join in yerself when yuh see the way them suckers falls fer it. They just eats it up, y'understand, 'cause we sends 'em the ads. electrotyped so't they don't have to do no type-settin'. Our ads helps fill up the paper, y'understand, an' we can't be expected to pay much fer the privilege o' savin' the paper real money, can we?" Mr. Wiggins drummed on his white vest with four fingers and nodded in approval of his own argument.

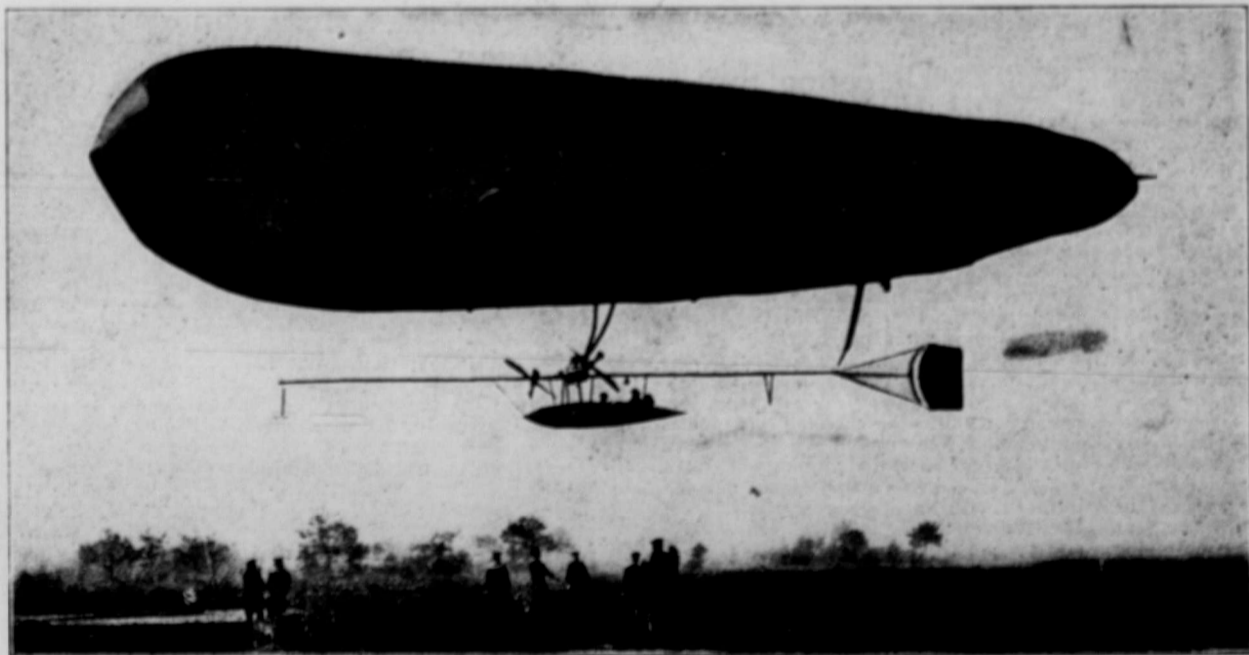
"Taint on'y the little fellas," he continued. "We gits the big ones just as easy on'y we pays a little more fer it. I never could figger out where it paid the paper, though. Why say, there's big family journals an' magazines—'family' ones, y'understand—runnin' copy that I wouldn't let git as fur as my garbage can if I had a home with daughters in it an' I aint no prude at that, Gibbs. These papers is got good stuff in 'em, mind yuh,—Sunday school lessons an' highfalutin' ed'torials 'bout moral livin' an' all the rest o' it. An' right 'longside that kind c' dope they runs pitchers o' peaches in clingstone clo'es as aint hidin' their shape so's yuh kin notice it an' pitcherso' big husky men that aint dressed no better'n Moses was when the light went out! There's pitchers o' cancers an' swellin's an' pimples an' warts an' cons coughin' their heads off till yuh wonder how'n blazes the papers'll stand fer it! "I'm handin' it to yuh straight now, Gibbs; the papers is got theirselves to blame fer it. There's patent medicines an' patent medicines, y'understand; some's mostly bum whisky an' dope an' some's colored water—a few's got some merit. But when I knows one outfit as sells their dope to the niggers down south by stickin' a near nood on the label, it gits my goat!" and Wiggins slapped the table angrily.

"I aint workin' fer no firm like that, y'understand. We're a colored water outfit; we sticks to gentian root an' Tincture Cardamon Co., aqua ad. Yuh could feed the Doc's pills to the cow an' bring up the baby on the pink milk 'thout givin' the kid colic. If I thought Bill Smith'd stand fer this here other thing I'm tellin' yuh 'bout—" "Who's Bill Smith?" asked Gibbs in bewilderment, glancing again at the card Wiggins had handed him.

"Bill? Why, he's the Doc. Oh, I see," laughed Mr. Wiggins. "Smitty got the 'y' an' the 'e' an' the 'Doctor' when he started up in the business; he got the 'Lorenzo' yuh see on the card there—got that off a lemon wrapper. Sounds more professional, y'understand."

"And you expect me to join you in this kind of thing, Nap?"

"Now back up, kid. Back up!"



BRITAIN'S FASTEST AIRSHIP

The above picture is a reproduction of a photograph taken at the recent launching of the new naval airship, "Baby," at Farnborough. This ship subsequently attained such remarkable speed as to make her the fastest dirigible in Great Britain.

peg Fair fer yours truly. N. Wiggins, Esquire, has moved over into the Mazuma Orchard where the round plunkeros grows on the simoleon trees. I'm advertisin' man fer a patent medicine firm, y'understand. Say, light up an' we'll kick in somewheres where we kin sit down an' visit."

Secretly amused at the grand air with which Mr. Wiggins proffered his silver-mounted cigar-case, Gibbs followed as the other led the way to the nearest rathskeller.

"Now what the Sam Hill you doin' in Chicago?" inquired the buoyant Mr. Wiggins with some curiosity when they were seated in a secluded corner. "Beatin' the market or just rubberin'?"

"I'm looking for work, Nap. Know where I can get a job?"

"Know where yuh kin git a—Aw g'wan, yuh're kiddin', aintcha?" He stared blankly; for he had gone to a school where the reading of faces is one of the principal studies. "Why, what's happened up there? Canada gone bust?"

glance rove over the marble-topped tables with the uncomfortable feeling that he was several kinds of a fool. It was a moment or two before he realized that Wiggins was leaning toward him, talking earnestly.

"That aint none o' my business, y'understand," he was saying. "My business is to see yuh git located where yuh kin grab off some real coin. An' do I know where? Well say, kid, ask me, ask me! My card."

"Smythe Medical Company," read Gibbs aloud. "'Doctor Lorenzo Smythe, President'—"

"That's the guy—Smitty'll fix you up on my say-so right off the bat," declared Mr. Wiggins confidently. "I's talkin' to'm yesterday 'bout needin' an assistant on my end o' it."

"That's good of you, Nap," said Gibbs sincerely. "And what is the work like—on your end of it?" he inquired with interest.

Mr. Wiggins leaned back in his chair and blew a column of cigar smoke towards the ceiling.