

Signor Marconi Described

"Why, he looks just like anybody," said a little girl who was standing about the reception room of the Hoffman House to see Marconi. And so he does.

The night before he had arrived carrying his own valise just like anybody. Few people recognized him.

The next day wherever he went the herald fame preceded him. Wherever he walked he heard the echo, "That's Marconi, the great inventor."

With the words sounding in his ears he came diffidently hanging his head into the little reception room of the Hoffman House.

He is of medium height, but he appears smaller. He is only twenty-seven, but he seems even younger. The impression is due probably to his diffident manner, his excessive bluntness and his frail frame.

The little girl was studying him, and so was I and so were a dozen others standing about the doors.

He had discarded the fur-trimmed coat in which he had arrived the night before. He was in a short, almost shabby sack coat of a light brown check, with unnoticeable dark trousers. His blue cravat was a ready-made four-in-hand. It was therefore straight and set quite in the middle of his standing collar. He wore only a single bit of jewelry that showed, and that because there was necessity for it. He had on a light linked gold chain.

There was absolutely nothing to distinguish him until he took off his derby hat. Then at once he ceased to look just like anybody.

His head is so high above the ears and eyebrows that it gives him the distinction one accords to thinkers. At the same time it is not the observant, bulging brow of the inventor. All the height seems to be directly in front, with a marked slope toward the back. Behind the ears it is a flat head, the head of a man who eats to live, not one who lives to eat. The neck is small and delicate, the destructive qualities are non-apparent.

His hair is cut conventionally, worn short and parted at the side, his mustache is small and unobtrusive, so blond that it appears like mere down. His chin recedes a bit weakly. His nose, big and sensitive, somewhat atones for it, but the real strength of his face is hidden till he takes his hat off.

His long, dome-shaped head, with its close crop of light brown hair, belongs to the man of brains, to the absent-minded man who has the power of absorbing himself in a room full of people. Marconi would never be distracted by observing too much.

"I've only about five minutes," he murmured, twirling his brown derby. Then he sat down, looking as though he wouldn't mind being interviewed if it could only be done by wireless telegraphy.

His feet tapped the carpet uneasily, one long, slender hand rustled a newspaper nervously while the other clung to the derby.

Five minutes!

I took a desperate plunge.

"How do you like being famous?" I asked.

His deep-set blue eyes looked out through the door so eagerly that I hastened to put the question in another form.

"Do you like being famous?" I asked.

In a soft, low voice that has a caressing quality, with slow, deliberate gravity that belies his nervous nature, he said, "Yes, I like it."

The most human smile in the world crossed the great inventor's features. It spread a hundred wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, it shut out their vivid blue for just an instant, closing them completely, but it gave a hint of how he may have fascinated femininity.

With another question I sent him back to his childhood on his father's estate at Griffiore, near Bologna, in Italy.

"I always knew I would be famous," he said quite frankly, rolling his r's with a suggestion of his foreign birth. "I knew perfectly well I should succeed, so I was prepared for fame. I used to dream of it."

"Tell me how you began."

Signor Marconi paused and swallowed. He twirled his hat and folded his paper. His head sank down into his standing collar, his eyes wandered far out into the hall.

"Was it on your father's estate?"

"Yes," he answered, "yes."

A pause. "How old were you?"

"About twenty."

Another pause.

Mr. Marconi would never be a success in a drawing-room, at an afternoon tea, for instance, but then he probably doesn't want to be.

"Do you ever go to teas?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, somewhat haltingly, yet gravely and musically, "not often, because I haven't time. You see, inventions are absorbing; quite so. That's the reason I don't like being interviewed," he volunteered, "because I haven't time. Yet I enjoy the fame."

"How did you begin?" I asked again.

"Well—" This time Marconi hesitated, but he told me. "It was," he said, "on my father's estate. As a boy I had always followed up scientific discoveries. I was on the track of everything new. I was a thorough boy. I liked to shoot and hunt. I like these things now. I'd amuse myself with them now if I had time. I'd read of all sorts of things. Yes, I would, and I'd enjoy them; but I haven't time."

If I am giving the impression that Signor Marconi became all of a sudden discursive, it is an incorrect one. He seemed merely not to know just how to talk about himself. I helped him, and we went back to his childhood. It seemed an easy jump from his appearance.

"I had been graduated from the Bologna University," he said, "when I became interested in Hertz's experiments. You see, I was always interested in chemistry. The chemistry of electricity naturally followed. Once upon a time I invented steam engines. I was interested in them once," he said, and again he smiled, this time with a sort of contempt, as though the steam engine were really not worth considering.

"But I was always interested in wireless telegraphy. That is, it seems to me now I was. It was after hearing about Hertz I erected poles on my father's estate and experimented, and succeeded finally in sending messages from one pole to another, a distance of two miles."

"I don't know that my family always believed in me. Still, I was never discouraged. I always knew I should be famous some day."

"I had, I must say, an advantage over most inventors, because I was not poor. I could work and wait. If I had been poor? Well, I don't believe I should have invented. I am not at all sure I should have stuck at it."

"You wouldn't have starved for wireless telegraphy?"

"Oh, no, never, never. I have too good a digestion."

"Have you ever been so absorbed in your inventions as to forget to eat?" I asked with some anxiety.

"I think never," answered the chevalier, with extreme diffidence. "You see, my stomach always seems to cry out at the proper time, and I obey the call."

He seemed to regret that he ate regularly, and he hastened to atone for it. "I often stay up till all hours of the night, though," he added.

"And I don't seem to mind it if I am interested in anything."

"I think one reason why I always knew I should succeed was that I never seemed to mind failure much. Really, when I failed I used to be quite as well satisfied. You see, if I had tried the thing, whatever it was, faithfully and it did not work, I could dismiss that possibility and go to something else."

Suddenly Signor Marconi seemed to become conscious that he was talking to me. I knew it by the rustling of his paper, by the restless crossing and recrossing of his feet. He looked out into the hall, his eyes miles above my head.

There is absolutely nothing of the poseur about this famous Italian Signor unless it be in his abstracted manner, which suggests almost too marked an indifference to his companion. Now that he has become famous this abstraction will be pardoned as an eccentricity. In a lesser man it might be called an impertinence.

"What do you care for besides inventions?" I asked gently.

Marconi continued to rustle his paper, and with one slender white hand he stretched out for his hat.

"You said you liked music—" I ventured.

"Oh, tremendously," he answered. "I am very fond of music, all music. And I love many things, the sea for instance, the sea where I can rest. Not now because wireless telegraphy will follow me. Wherever I am there must be experiments."

"But I am never seasick."

"When I settle down I shall live in England and hunt and fish. Oh, I am not only an inventor, I—"

Marconi paused again and looked about the room as though he were seeking a suggestion from its walls.

"Do you care for pictures?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Do you paint?"

"No."

"Are you the first inventor in your family?"

"Yes, the first of my family," he said, with his rare smile. "Like Napoleon, the first."

He had begun to finger his linked chain. He had dropped his paper and was holding his hat. The five minutes were over long since. He showed frankly that he was conscious of it. He had talked against time. He had done so well that I really believe if Signor Marconi had plenty of time he might become a success even at afternoon teas.

EMMA KAUFMAN.

Brands It a Disgrace.

London, Feb. 4.—Commenting on the reception Saturday last of the wives and the children of the members of the diplomatic corps at Peking by the Dowager Empress, the Emperor and the Empress, the Globe wrathfully remarks that it was humiliating to every European and American and expresses indignation at the fact that the ministers "permitted their wives and children to be degraded by bowing to the infamous woman and receiving decorations from her bloodstained hands," adding:

"The necklace the Dowager Empress placed on Madame Conger should have been spurned as the gift of murderers chargeable with torture and death of American Christian women. The ladies were not primarily to blame, but an unpardonable fault rests with the diplomats who allowed the cruel indignity. The ladies will be represented as having performed kow tow to the usurping tyrant and a day of regret will assuredly come."

Airship Burned.

New York, Feb. 4.—Fire at Denmead, Hampshire, has destroyed Buchanan's airship, which was built to rival the airship of M. Santos-Dumont, according to a dispatch from London to the Journal and American. The fire broke out in a shed in which Buchanan's flyer was housed. Tramps charged with starting the blaze have been arrested.

Tour of the Creeks.

Dr. J. N. E. Brown, territorial secretary, accompanied by Mrs. Brown, left this morning for a short tour of the creeks, extending as far as Gold Run. They will be absent four or five days.

REFUND IS DEMANDED

Double Exemption Given Was an Error.

Statements Regarding Olson and Sheppard are Corrected and Facts Told.

In the issue of the Nugget of February 12 was an account of a ruling having been made by the department of the interior whereby M. E. Olson and J. W. Sheppard were barred from ever holding mining property in the Yukon territory until certain royalty said to be due the government by them had been paid. The article in question contained several statements misleading which in justice to Messrs. Olson and Sheppard it is desired to rectify. Their claim, No. 2 Monte Cristo gulch, was not accused of fraud in reference to the royalty due. The facts in the case are these: At the time the royalty was collected the officer performing that function in some manner inexplicable allowed Olson and Sheppard two exemptions; whereas they were entitled to but one, and making a difference in the royalty of \$500. The error was not discovered until some time later when it was learned the beneficiaries of the government's generosity had sold their claim and departed for the outside. Upon the matter being reported to the department it was held that it would be unjust to compel the innocent purchasers to pay the sum due as royalty when such error was the fault only of the collector, but it was decided that a refund of \$500 should be demanded of Olson and Sheppard before they would be allowed to hold any more claims. Both the parties are now on the outside but are expecting to return upon the opening of navigation. A little bill for \$500 will doubtless prove a surprise party to them should either one or the other attempt to record a claim upon their return.

Option on Telegraph Lines.

In view of the promised introduction of a number of private bills in congress looking to government control of the telegraph. The Electrical World points out the fact that all existing telegraph companies have filed with the postmaster general agreements to sell their lines to the United States at a price to be fixed by arbitrators. This curious condition of matters results from an act of congress of July 24, 1886, which made it compulsory for the telegraph companies to file such papers, in consideration of the grant of right of way over post roads and through government lands and under or across navigable waters. It is specified that one of the arbitrators is to be appointed by the postmaster general, one by the telegraph company, and these two are to select another. Another feature of these same agreements is the requirement to transmit government messages at rates to be fixed annually by the postmaster general.

Cold Light Arc Lamp.

The employment of the light of the electric arc lamp in the treatment of certain skin diseases, in which the light acts as a germicide, is no longer of doubtful efficacy. A Danish physician, Dr. Bang, has recently devised a lamp for treatment of this kind which he claims is far more efficient than the type heretofore employed. In the ordinary arc lamp the carbons are heated to some 3,000 degrees. In Dr. Bang's lamp the carbons are made hollow and a current of water made to flow through them continuously while the lamp is in operation. The effect is that almost the whole of the energy of the electric current is removed to the light arc between the two carbons, while the latter are maintained so cool that they can be touched with the fingers without danger while the lamp is burning. It is asserted that the cold light is able to kill bacteria in one-eighteenth the time required with the light of the ordinary arc lamp.

For Sale.

THREE-QUARTER interest on lower half left limit hillside, 27 Gold Run, at a bargain. Apply R. N. Robertson, Log Cabin Hotel, South Dawson.

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SOCIETIES.
THE REGULAR COMMUNION of the Yukon Lodge, No. 79, A. F. & M. will be held at Masonic Hall, 2nd Street, monthly, Thursday, 2nd of each month, at 8:00 P. M. J. A. DONALD, Secy.

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