

Uncle Walt

The Depot Loafers

THE RAILWAY station in our town is seedy, commonplace and plain; yet scores of people rustle down and gather there to meet each train. The waiting room is bleak and bare, a place of never-ending din; yet fifty loafers gather there each day to see the train come in. The station agent's life is sad; the loafers made it grim and gray; they drive the poor man nearly mad, for they are always in the way. The passengers can only sob as they their townward way begin, for they must struggle through the mob that's there to see the train come in. The men who have their work to do are hindered in a hundred ways; in vain they weep and cry out "Shoo!" they can't disperse the loafing jays. These loafers always are the same; they toil not, neither do they spin; they have no other end or aim, than just to see the train come in. I've traveled east, I've traveled west, and every station in the land appears to have its loaferfest, its lazy, idle, useless band; I know the station loafer well; he has red stubble on his chin; he has an ancient, fishlike smell; he lives to see the train come in. Oh, Osler, get your chloroform, and fill your glass syringe again, and come and try to make things warm for those who bother busy men! For loafers, standing in the way, when standing is a yellow sin! For those who gather, day by day, to see a one-horse train come in!