

BACK NUMBERS

BY HOPKINS MOORHOUSE

COPLEY, the night-man, swore softly under his breath as he went through the "flimsy" that had accumulated over Saturday. Copley down the river in a canoe of a Saturday night and Copley lazily rolling over for another snooze of a Sunday morning was a man who gloated over the fact that Sunday papers were tabooed in Canada; but Copley at his desk of a Sunday evening, picking up the loose ends of the world's news, was a different individual. The stroke of his blue pencil as he "marked" the paper for the foreman of the composing-room was heavy with irritation.

"Fat" McGregor, the sporting editor, who laboured under a perpetual grouch of malignant type, came in, hooked his umbrella on a nail alongside his desk, and grunting his customary surly "G'night," was answered in kind. Even old Tom Jeffreys, who had been on the staff for twenty years, and whose one pathetic weakness was his inability to recognise his declining usefulness—even he was cut short in the middle of another "anecdote" and left to nervously adjust his glasses and in mild surprise put away his little package of bread and cheese in the bottom drawer. A noisy group of printers scuffled up the alleyway. Out in the street beyond the sidewalks were filled with well-dressed people on their way to church.

That was the way things were the night "Cherry" Rutherford first drifted into the *Recorder* office. It was not exactly the psychological mo-

ment to ask for a job; but that was what he was after. Copley brusquely referred him to the managing-editor, who might be in soon, might be late, or might not come down at all, as happened to suit him.

"Cherry" sat down to wait.

"Tidy Teddy," the *Recorder's* "cub" reporter, who prided himself on his "keen observation," looked the new-comer over with a critical eye and noted that he was neatly dressed, was "husky" enough to put up a hot "scrap," that his cheeks were cherry-red with health, and incidentally, when he took off his hat, that he was bald on top, except for a few emaciated hairs that alone remained to tell of what once had been.

The *Recorder's* managing-editor was a new man, sufficiently aggressive and with enough individuality to wear his hat on one side of his head without knowing it wasn't on straight. He believed in doing things, and, if necessary, taking chances. Five minutes of looking into "Cherry's" big, soft eyes and listening to "Cherry's" soft Southern accent, and they came out to Copley.

"Here's a young man, Mr. Copley, who's looking for a place in which to settle down, and thinks this town will just about suit him. Trouble heretofore, too much wandering around. Wants to get married this fall. You might see what you can do for him."

And because Copley wasn't in a very good humour, he sent him out