

## The Other Man's Town

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Charles Dorian

**B**ECAUSE he was first in a fight, ahead in all the school sports and champion speller, he was called Cock-o'-the-walk Percy. They said of him that he was born to lead, and careers were mapped out for him in all spheres where the calcium burned brightest. Percy was a specialist in vim. The quiet, methodical, plodding school mouse was to him the apotheosis of decay. For the benefit of such as they Percy had some stunts in mental and physical development to be marvelled at. One of these was Thomas Cumford and he strove to emulate Percival Laurance not in the slightest degree.

Not that Thomas was nowhere in sports or study. He was, in fact, the equal of Percy, but what he accomplished was done quietly, and while nobody said he was born to lead, it was conceded that he was a pretty smart fellow. He would probably be a college professor or a writer of some sort.

Most of Percy's schoolmates knew several years later that he was mayor of the progressive town of Maybridge but few of them knew that Thomas was mayor of the classic town of Stonecope.

Percy dropped off at Stonecope one day on his way home from a convention. He wished to congratulate his old school-fellow on his achievement. He could scarcely believe it, but then it was a dead town, which probably would have elected the undertaker if Thomas had not been around looking for a job!

It seemed he made a mistake by starting to boast about the advances Maybridge was making in the industrial world and then to comment upon Stonecope thus:

"Yours is one of those beautiful towns that stand out like a new monument in a cemetery. It may be that we pay more attention to keeping alive in Maybridge but the fact is we are miles ahead of Stonecope in business activity and general up-to-dateness. You have lovely buildings, clean streets and all that but there is a hush to the place that suggests something solemn—as if business had knocked off for the day to go to a funeral."

"We do things quietly, to be sure," replied Cumford, smiling, "but there's no mistaking the fact that we do them. The difference between Stonecope and Maybridge, if you will have a comparison, is the way in which the early bird goes after the worm. It is all in the kind of bird. One, so eager and ravenous takes no time to wash its face. Stonecope prefers to take its bath before breakfast. In many respects Stonecope is more up-to-date than Maybridge."

"Nonsense!" repudiated Percival Laurance. "The very air of Maybridge is vibrant with the urge of the alert. Why, you haven't even a street car line here!"

"We haven't considered it necessary. We have a perfect telephone system and a central quick delivery service. No store employs its own delivery wagon. The Central Transportation Co., with fast motor trucks and cyclecars have specified routes and call at all the business houses for parcels. Then we have a five-cent jitney service which is much quieter than street cars. Many people have saved car fare so long that they now own their own automobiles. We have a statute against noise. That may be considered contrary to progress but we don't think so. We have no loud industries and no black smoke. I understand Maybridge gets its sustenance from the smelters close by?"

"Oh, yes. It is mining that has put Maybridge on the map," replied Percival, loftily.

"And of course that means the sulphur smoke nuisance," said Thomas, quietly. "It is too bad you have not succeeded in legislating down that drawback. I don't see how you can possibly grow anything."

"We do grow things. That is one of the ways in which Maybridge is marvelous—the things we do against great odds. The sulphur nuisance has been somewhat minimized and we are going in for parks and street beautification."

"That is fine. I'd like to see Maybridge, now, and again in a year from now to measure your advancement. You know, you are telling me about a wonderful town and it really may not have progressed at all—just grow'd up, like Topsy, with the usual amount of turveyism that looks like progress."

"Come to Maybridge, by all means," invited Laurance. "And if you can find any lack of up-to-dateness, I'll donate to your town anything that will start a new movement for progress."

"Well, now, that's a nice offer," said Thomas, with a pleasant laugh. "But, I do not see that we need any new move-

ment in that line. Tell you what we do need, though. We should have a sixty-foot flag pole and a twenty-foot flag in Victory Park. We are planning a big celebration for the great allied victory that is coming."

"Not a bad idea. I'll donate the flag, the pole and all the trappings if you can show me wherein Maybridge is not a real, live, up-to-date town."

"I accept," said Thomas, offering his hand.

"Let me know the day, Tom, and I'll give you a royal time," said Laurance.

"No, thank you. I'll go unannounced and as an ordinary visitor. I want that flag and pole!" smiled Tom.

Maybridge lies one hundred miles almost due north of Stonecope. It was a cold day in early spring when Thomas

Cumford arrived. His train was twenty-minutes late arriving and Tom considered this a good omen. Of course it was no fault of Maybridge that the train was not up to date but there was something for which Maybridge was to blame. The train bulletin board was marked "On time!" Tom stood glaring at it while hotel porters buzzed around him. The board was dated "19th," while it was actually the twentieth!

"One of the little things our friend the mayor overlooks when he thinks of progress in large terms," he said, half-aloud.

"Beg pardon, sir?" intruded the raucous voice of one of the porters. "Hotel Maybridge—autobus around the corner, sir."

Seated in the bus he made a note in



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