

THE POSTMASTER

"No work at *all?*" he says, surprised. "Not a hand's turn? Goin' to be a gentleman of leisure, hey?"

"Nigh as I can, with my trainin'. The 'leisure' part'll be all right, anyway."

He shook his head and laughed again.

"I think I see you," says he. "Cap'n, you've been too busy all your life even to get married, and —"

"Humph!" I cut in. "Most married men I've met have been a good deal busier than ever I was. And a good deal more worried when business was dull. No, sir-ee! 'twa'n't that that kept me from gettin' married. I've been figgerin' on the day when I could go home and settle down. If I'd had a wife all these years I'd have been figgerin' on bein' able to settle up. I ain't goin' to Ostable to get married."

"I'll bet you do, just the same," says he. "And I'll bet you somethin' else: I'll bet a new hat, the best one I can buy, that inside of a year you'll be head over heels in some sort of hard work. It may not be seafarin', but it'll be somethin' to keep you busy. You're too good a man to rust in the scrap heap. Come! I'll bet the hat. What do you say?"

"Take you," says I, quick. "And if you want to risk another on my marryin', I'll take that, too."