

could tell whether he was getting properly-galvanized wire and I have been assured that some of the later wire has been merely painted. This insufficient galvanizing disappears in a few years, and whenever I drive along the road I see fences that are red with rust and beginning to break. In cases of this kind a man does not find out that he has been cheated until years after he has made the purchase. The knowledge comes to him gradually and he doesn't have a chance to work up such an explosion of temper as I did about the roundheaded bolts.

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I could go on enumerating cases of this kind for hours, but what's the use? I merely wish to call attention to the injustice that we have to put up with. This injustice is accentuated by the fact that if a farmer tries to sell his products in the same way he is liable to get into trouble. Since our association started to pack apples two inspectors have called to see that our fruit is properly graded. Practically everything that is sold from the farm can be tested or examined as to its quality, but I have not heard that there are any inspectors whose business it is to see that the timber put in implements is what it should be, or that wire fences are properly galvanized. As far as the farmer is concerned, his buying seems to be done under the old Roman law, "Let the Purchaser Beware." We would have less reason to object to this if some of the other Roman laws were also revived. Through all the ages people have had the safeguard of competition and the manufacturer or merchant who sold inferior articles would soon be put out of business by his rivals who took the trouble to serve their customers properly. We are now denied that safeguard by the fact that in almost every line of business there is a neat little merger whose purpose is to do away with competition and give the manufacturers a monopoly in their field. Having a monopoly they can serve their customers with cheaply-made articles being secure in the knowledge that those who are cheated cannot go to a rival for better service. Monopolies of this kind did not flourish in Rome, at least not at all periods. Under several of the Emperors, if it could be proven that a man had established a monopoly of this kind he was promptly banished or beheaded. If that excellent custom were revived we would doubtless get better service in many things. Manufacturers would be more careful to deal with the public, if they were in danger of finding themselves:

"Solemnly sitting in the dull, dark dock,
Of a pestilential prison, under lifelong lock,
Awaiting the sensation of the short, sharp shock
Of a cheap and chipper chopper on a big black block."

What of the People?

The impeachment and removal from office of Governor Sulzer, of New York State, for making a false statement of his election campaign receipts and expenses, perjury, practising deceit and fraud, and using threats and menaces in order to suppress evidence against him, has been the subject of varied comment by leading newspapers. Its most ominous aspects, however, seem to have been lost sight of, and the light-hearted way in which a lot of people in the State condone his turpitude and even nominate him as a State Assemblyman bodes ill for the future. According to one leading journal, the serious point is that he was overthrown by "Tammany," the Democratic political machine of New York City, because he would not do its bidding. A more serious reflection is the questions that must arise in the minds of men of rectitude, and, indeed, the toiling masses, including the rank and file of farmers in the State. Whence all the immense sums ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars recklessly handed over to him by "friends" and supporters? For what purposes was all this money to be used? Is it conceivable that all was for "legitimate" purposes? Arnold Bennet, the British author, and a keen observer after his tour of the United States, described as "business alertness" the outstanding American trait. Were these lavish donations simply out of good will? Or was it "business alertness"? Were they not returnable in offices and patronage and other legislative or executive concessions whereby the donors would recoup themselves with enormously compounded interest? Who finally foots the bill? Will the people not stop long enough to think how came these men to have such sums to lavish in securing an election? What powers had been conferred or would be sought to levy upon the people for "favors received"? For the privilege of being corrupted are people willing thus to have the shackles fastened upon them? Little wonder that mutterings of discontent are heard breaking through the halo of millionaire prosperity, and that national measures affording promise of relief make irresistible progress despite the concerted efforts of the "Big Interests." In New York State,

Tammany may be a worse power than Sulzer. It is a time for the people who are exploited to do some thinking.

Collars, Celluloid and Linen.

Jerry Scott and I were started off to school together as youngsters. Our fathers worked adjoining farms.

At school I was usually a little ahead of Jerry in reading and spelling, but he beat me in arithmetic. We played pull-away together, fought—and stuck together.

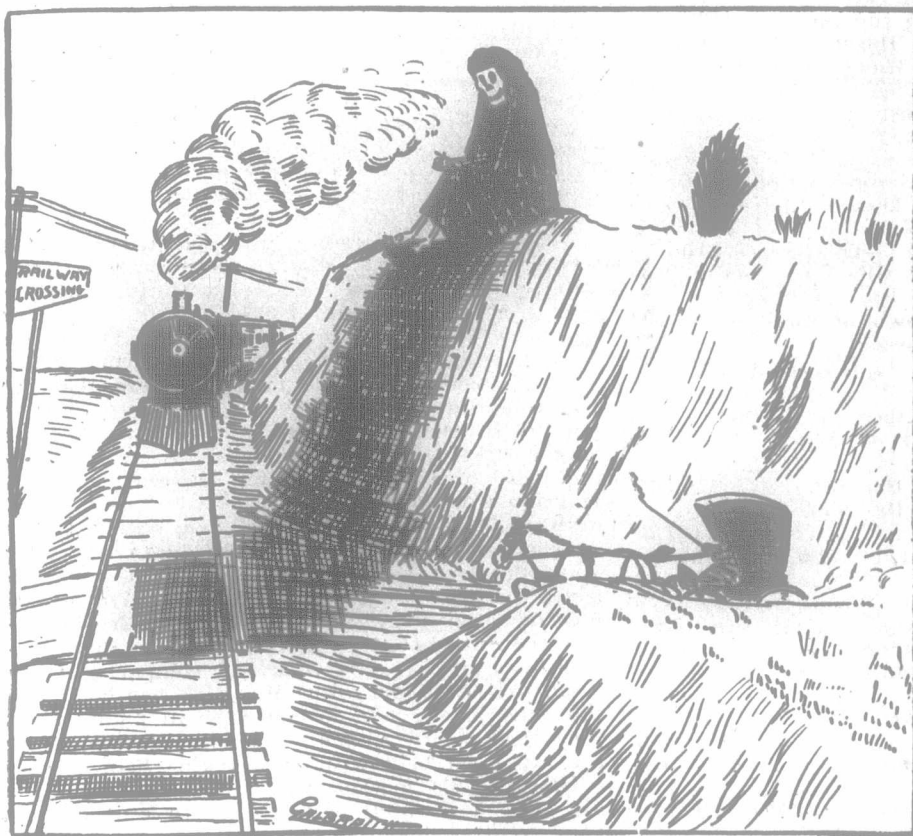
The time came when my father moved to town. The parting between Jerry and me was not very heartbreaking, all things considered, since we had planned to visit back and forth.

Our visits were more back than forth, however, because of the objection Jerry's father had to town life.

As we grew up, my country friend and I saw each other at intervals—intervals that steadily grew longer. We were always quite the same with each other, though I sometimes thought that Jerry felt uneasy when I, in company with a town girl, stopped him on the street to chat.

In time I began to mentally criticize details of Jerry's dress. He had a fancy for wide stripes in his trousers that did not appeal to me, and his shoes were usually too big. But what I objected to most was his celluloid collar, not only because it was in danger of being ignited by the sun, but because of the gloss it possessed—and the tendency to turn yellow.

The day I hinted to Jerry that linen collars were in better taste than those he wore, marked the beginning of our separation. We did not talk five minutes over the matter—in fact Jerry changed the subject very suddenly—but I know now that the few words I then spoke were the introduction to an order of Fate that should cut us apart.



The Level Crossing.

Of course, we still saw something of each other. When Jerry came to town he usually looked me up, and when I wanted a holiday in the country I went to Scott's.

A certain Indian-summer day on the Scott farm, I shall never forget. Jerry and I were sitting on a wagon tongue in the barnyard chatting. Harvest straw was littered over the gangway, and the barn doors stood open hospitably to the fowl that strutted around. The haze of autumn rested like a golden mist over the fields that sloped down westward from where we sat, and the faint odor of a far-off bush fire floated to us on the still air.

I remember that I was conscious of a certain harmony in our surroundings. Jerry, without a collar and clad in working clothes, perfectly harmonized with that environment; but I seemed to be out of place. My polished shoes and my linen collar vexed me.

"Jerry," I said, broaching the subject I had come to surprise him with, "I'm leaving school and entering a bank."

He looked astonished for a moment, then unconsciously sighed.

"I just thought you'd be doing something like that," he said at length.

"Why?" I asked.

"I don't know," he replied, "unless it's your get-up."

I had my own conception of his meaning,

which I now believe was wrong, and did not ask him to explain.

"Will they be moving you away?" he wondered.

"Sometime, I expect," said I; "but I'll always want to come back and see you all."

"Maybe," said Jerry doubtfully.

After entering a bank I found myself devoting more and more thought and time to the matter of my personal appearance. If a new shape made itself manifest in shoes or ties I had to buy that shape. I also bought shape for my shoulders, which had always been too narrow to look well. This is not important, except as it affected my actions toward Jerry. In proportion as my own appearance improved (in my own mind and that of certain ladies), Jerry's boots grew larger, it seemed; his stripes wider, and his collar glossier and more metal-like.

One day my country friend came into the bank and asked for a loan. The manager left him in the front office and came out to me, to get a recommendation as to Jerry's character. I recommended it, but in an ostensibly disinterested sort of way, and pretended to be obviously busy until our rather seedy-looking customer had left the office. Jerry must have noticed that I managed not to see him in front of the teller's wicket; at any rate he never came in the office again while I was there. Previously, he had called occasionally to have money changed and to say hello.

In the course of a year I was moved away from my home town. I found myself a part of the best society in each town where I worked—while there; but after leaving, I always experienced a peculiarly blank sensation, which I might describe as similar to the dissatisfaction of dream-quenched hunger or thirst. I met many people, presumably the "best," but when I left each town I seemed to go away rather empty-handed. I had squandered what little salary I

might have saved, and in return for it had certain recollections, or otherwise. These might have been worth the price paid, had I been the heir of a prosperous line of ancestors whose wealth I could fall back on; but as it was, all I possessed was the faculty for doing certain unfruitful and uncertain technical work. I was dependent upon my own special resources; and these were of a character to make them dependent upon the opportunity for their existence. If that should cease to come, I would be rendered almost useless.

But I never thought of these things in the gay days of my young clerical life. I drifted along, from town to town and from excitement to excitement, worrying not about chances that would, had I seriously considered them, have seemed highly

improbable.

Nevertheless, in spite of my misdirected optimism, a misfortune happened to me. I lost my position through a series of misunderstandings. The day I realized that my chances for a situation such as I was capable of filling were spoiled, I thought of Jerry and his farm. For a week, while out of work, as I walked through city parks where the leaves were falling, I thought of that day Jerry and I had sat on the wagon-tongue together, watching the fowl feed and the hazy sun set over stubble fields!

In time, of course, I secured another position—in fact, other positions. But none of them were anything to boast of; they did not make me a success.

Although I have always been a hard worker, I never have been and am not yet independent of my job. I must go through the same grind day after day, the year around, with not even the consolation of knowing that I shall always hold my position.

I still wear a linen collar, of course; but the last time I saw Jerry he had one too. And so had his son a linen collar. The two of them came to see me and invited me up to visit their farm.

"We'll give you a good time, Jim, and a rest," said Jerry, gripping my hand as though it were a fork-handle.

"I know that," I said, "but, Jerry, there's