

The City of Numbered Days

Grislow gave it up at that and went back to the original contention.

"We're dodging the main issue," he said. "What is the active principle of your 'sevens'—or haven't you figured it out?"

"Change," was the prompt rejoinder; "always something different—radically different."

"And what started you off into the memory woods, particularly, to-night?"

"A small recurrence of the coincidences. It began with that hopelessly unreliable little clock that Anson persists in carrying around with him wherever he goes. While you were up on the hill cutting your spruce tips Anson pulled out and said he was going to unpack his camp kit. He went over to his tent and lighted up, and a few minutes afterward I heard the clock strike—seven. I looked at my watch and saw that it lacked a few minutes of eight, and the inference was that Anson had set the clock wrong, as he commonly does. Just as I was comfortably forgetting the significant reminder the clock went off again, striking slowly, as if the mechanism were nearly run down."

"Another seven?" queried Grislow, growing interested in spite of a keen desire to lapse into ridicule again.