

MARCH

Mud and slush and sleet and snow,
That is March.
Icy walks where'er you go,
That is March.
When the sky o'erhead is gray,
When the winds begin to play,
And the willow cats are gay,
That is March.

Robins on the lawn once more,
That is March.
Neighbors' hens around the door,
That is March.
When the snowdrop lifts its head,
Wakes the crocus from its bed,
And we think that winter's fled,
That is March.

Edna L. Campbell, Age Sixteen.
Ovid, Michigan.

Aunt Thirza's Cap

All the Tammerleys admitted that Great-Aunt Thirza had an admirable and forceful character—although she was, they usually added, a little difficult. Her grand-niece Isabel expressed the feeling of the family when she declared warmly: "Aunt Thirza is an old tramp! She'd shed her last drop of blood for any of us. We appreciate her, too, if we do growl once in a while. Why, there isn't anything we aren't glad to do for her—except the things she asks us to."

That was exactly the trouble. For any spontaneously volunteered service or attention, Aunt Thirza was always grateful. But the things she asked any one to do for her, nobody could ever do exactly right. Therefore, when Isabel was commissioned to buy her a lace cap, "nice, but simple and suitable for everyday afternoon wear," her smile was acquiescent, but anxious.

The cap she selected was admired, but nevertheless Aunt Thirza pointed out several reasons why it would not do. Isabel exchanged it for her twice. At the prospect of a third trip to the lace department she balked, and left Marjorie to return it, and get the money back. But Marjorie, in turn, would not buy another cap at another store; she said that was fairly up to Louise, who compromised on buying the lace to make up herself.

After three attempts—of which Aunt Thirza declared the first looked positively coquettish, the second suggested one of those white hens with topknots, and the third had something just a little wrong about it somehow, although she could not say what—Louise retired from the field to make over the lace into a collar and jabot for her own use. Cousin Jane then gallantly entered the breach. But Aunt Thirza declined her services.

"You mean well, Jane, and you are competent in the purchase of underwear and serviceable outer garments," she proclaimed, "but for the selection of the finer trifles of a lady's toilet—no, Jane, your taste and mine do not agree. I will not trouble you uselessly. Perhaps Olivia will attend to the matter."

Olivia, however, had no time to do more than procure samples of lace and patterns of caps, before fleeing to the mountains. Aunt Thirza then telephoned to Agatha; but Agatha cleverly reminded her that Rosina, who was abroad, would soon be coming home, and might be asked to bring a cap with her; such things were so much more tasteful and inexpensive over there. Rosina was written to, and on her return triumphantly produced the cap. It was exquisite; it was also a good bargain; it was undeniably becoming, and it called forth a chorus of praise, in which Aunt Thirza herself gratefully joined.

A week later, however, Rosina's telephone rang, and Aunt Thirza's voice inquired:

"Are you going down-town to-day? I wonder if you could do a little commission for me? It's a cap. That one you brought is so handsome that I've decided to save it for best—oh, yes, my dear. I know it's simple, but it has such an air—and so I'll need another for every day. Nonsense, Rosina! You were so successful before, I'm sure you'll find the very thing I want without any trouble."

"But, Aunt Thirza—" began Rosina, in dismay.

"You know just what I like, child; I won't waste your time talking," said the voice, serenely; and Aunt Thirza rang off.

The beautiful best cap lies unworn in a sandal-wood box in Aunt Thirza's upper drawer, and the Tammerley girls, in weary

relays, are still wrestling with the problem of her second-best.

"Such a simple commission to execute," Aunt Thirza remarks, incisively, to Cousin Jane, at intervals. "It really does seem, Jane, that these consecutive failures indicate a lamentable incompetence in the rising generation. And the cap I am wearing—Jane, it is darned—actually darned!"

The Secret

A few years ago, in a city where politics had always been corrupt, a man was elected mayor who had come up from grinding poverty, through many trials, to that place of high honor and responsibility. He was elected on a platform of reform and clean city government, but that fact did not give the "grafters" much concern. Other mayors had been elected on the

same platform, but in the end the grafters had always got what they wanted in the way of special privileges. It had been a little harder with some men than with others, but there had been some way of reaching every one of them.

So they approached the new mayor with confidence; tactfully, and with carefully veiled suggestions. He quietly ignored everything of the kind. Gradually they became more open in their offers. They plied him with every offer they could think of—they pleaded, they cajoled, they threatened. He still resisted every effort to corrupt him, and held steadfastly to his fight against graft and dishonesty in every form.

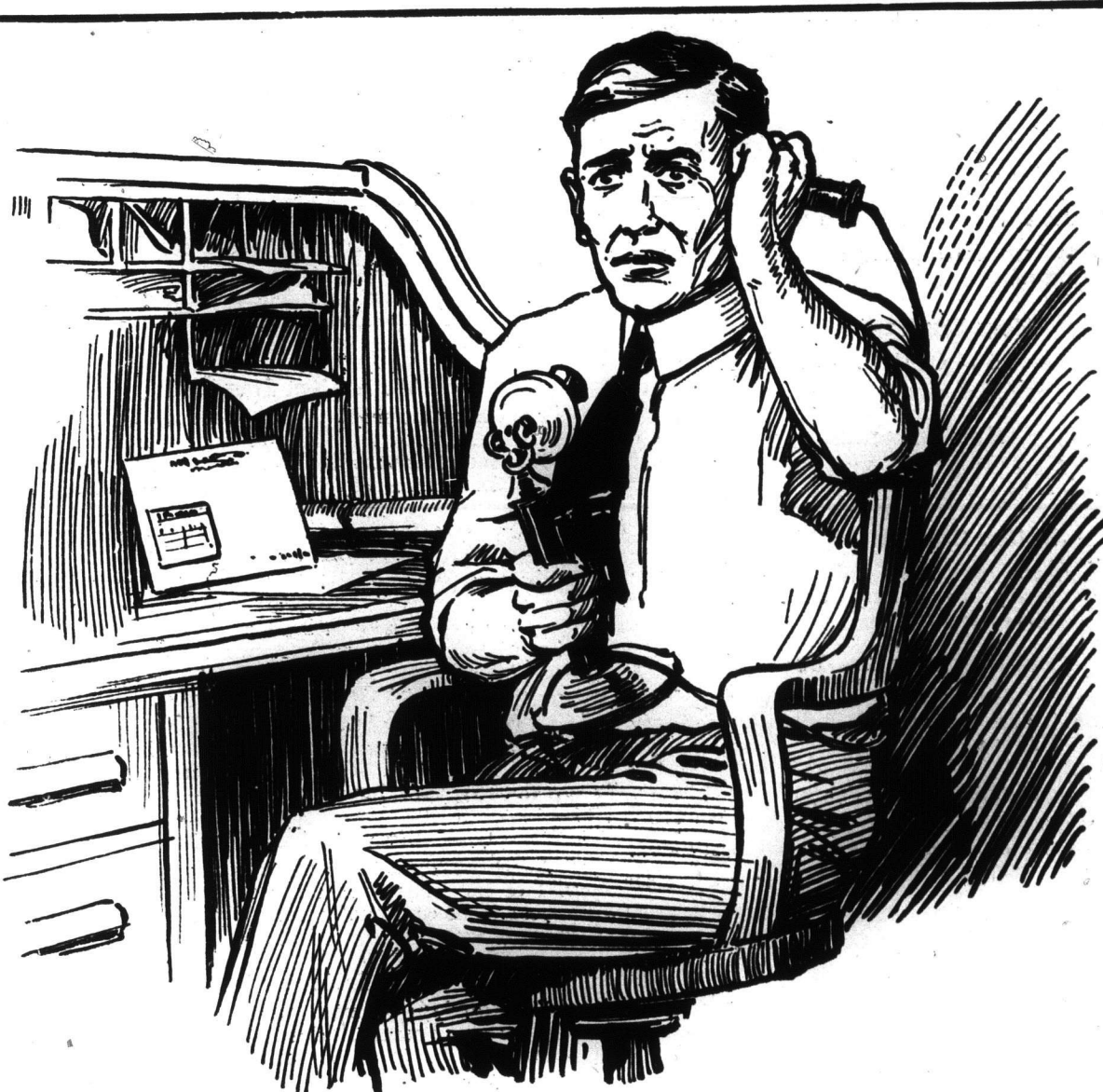
In despair some of the plotters went to the mayor's cousin, who was a saloon-keeper in the same city. "What's the matter?" they asked him. "Why can't we handle John? What's his secret?"

"You'll have to ask him," replied the cousin. "I don't know it. I can't get any nearer to him than you can."

Then they went to the mayor himself. "What are you holding out for?" they asked. "What more do you want? What's your secret?"

The mayor let them talk for a time. Then he said, quietly, "Gentlemen, you have asked for my secret. I'll tell you what it is. I pray. I confess my sins daily, and I try to have a little less to confess each time. Now go about your business and walk straight. You will get no favors from me."

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