

THE LAZY BRAIN.

The house had been very quiet for an hour and a half. In deference to Fred Gates, working on his final English thesis, the noisy twins had been banished to a neighbor's, the grocery boy and the butcher's boy had been headed off at the gate, and the whole establishment, figuratively speaking, had held its breath. Now Fred had emerged from his seclusion.

"Well, did you get the thesis finished?" asked his Uncle John.

"No, I didn't," Fred admitted miserably. "I just couldn't seem to think clearly; something kept interrupting my ideas."

"O Fred," mourned his mother contritely, "perhaps it was my sweeping, but I did try to be quiet!"

"Humph!" snorted Uncle John. "Fred, I know what's wrong with you — mental laziness."

"Why, John Hazzard!" exclaimed Fred's mother indignantly.

"You don't understand, uncle," Fred protested.

"Oh, don't I? Young man, I'm going to show you something. I think I heard you declare the other day that if you could write an editorial as polished and logical as one of those by Grant Smith in the *Globe*, you'd die happy."

"You certainly did. He's my ideal of a writer."

"All right, then, come along with me."

Fred was thrilled to discover they were going to visit the editorial offices of the *Globe*. "I know Grant Smith," his uncle informed him, "and I'm going to show him to you at work."

Fred found his ideal of a writer seated, not in cloistered seclusion, as he had expected, but in one corner of a very large room well filled with men, clacking typewriting machines, and jingling telephones. From the floor above, where the forms of the afternoon edition were being made up, came the sound of pounding, and through the half-opened windows drifted the roar of traffic from the street below.

In the midst of all that ordered confusion Fred's hero sat at a typewriter, picking at the keys slowly, and pausing from time to time to gaze with unseeing eyes at the wall before him.

Fred was horror-struck when his uncle smote the writer familiarly on the shoulder; but Grant Smith scarcely turned his head, regarded his

friendly assailant with bare recognition, and waved his hand vaguely toward a vacant chair.

As Fred watched, a messenger boy blundered noisily upon the worker and was waved away. Presently an office boy called the writer to the telephone, from which he returned in a moment as if in a daze, and resumed his writing without hesitation. Then a fellow worker strolled over and demanded a match. The writer did not hear him. With a sly wink at Fred, the intruder proceeded to pick Grant Smith's pockets of matches, and bore them off unnoticed by his victim.

A quarter of an hour later Grant Smith's task was done. He summoned a copy boy to carry away his manuscript, and turned with a surprised cry. "By George," he exclaimed, grasping Fred's uncle by the hand, "when did you come in?"

As the visitors strolled away from the *Globe* office, Uncle John listened for some time to Fred's enthusiastic praise of Grant Smith. "I don't see how he does it!" Fred marveled. "How can he write in that madhouse?"

"Simple enough. Grant Smith has trained his brain to work for him. You can do the same thing; so can any man, but few do."

"This morning, in quiet seclusion, you couldn't think out your thesis. That was not because anyone interrupted you, but because your brain, like the brains of thousands of untrained workers, was playing hookey, and you hadn't the will to keep it at its task. The man who can make his brain obey him, and who can keep his thoughts on the job until his work is done, can succeed not only in writing, but at any task he chooses."

"But how do you start?" Fred demanded.

"How did you win the quarter-mile last year?"

"I made up my mind to do it, and began training every day."

"Exactly. Your brain is just another set of muscles. Why not train them?"—*Youths' Companion*.

The capture by the Austrians, of Mount Lovcen (pronounced Lof-tsen), on January 10, was immediately followed by the capture of Cetinje (Tset-teen-ye), the capital of Montenegro, which is but six miles distant, and with that the conquest of Montenegro was virtually complete. The importance of the victory is in that it brings a large part of the eastern coast of the Adriatic for the time being under Austrian rule. Austrian and Bulgarian forces are invading Albania, where a few Italian, Albanian, Montenegrin and Serbian troops will defend the principal towns on the coast. King Nicholas of Montenegro is now in France.