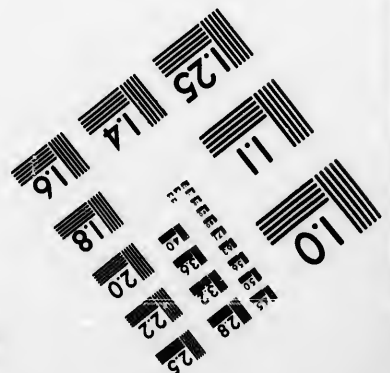
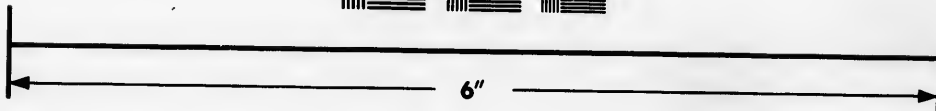
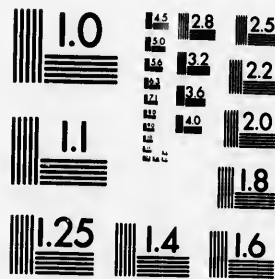


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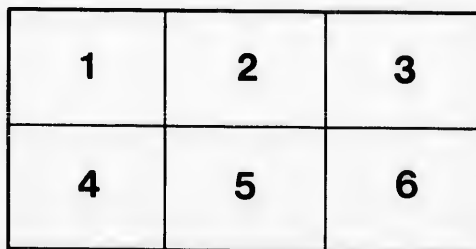
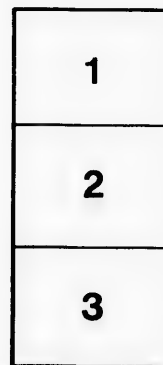
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DRUMMING AS A FINE ART.

Commercial Travellers, their Lives, Habits, Business Principles and Customs on the Road.

- BY -

HENRY A. HORN.

COMPLETE.

TORONTO:
J. ROSS ROBERTSON, 55 KING-ST. WEST, COR. BAY.
1882.

THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR 1881

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DRUMMING AS A FINE ART.

At the first glance this subject does not appear to offer perhaps the most inviting field for the reader's consideration.

It is so much the fashion in these days to descant upon the attributes of humanity, upon the topic possessing æsthetic features of interest, upon social follies, or upon a political Traveller, would hardly appear to possess vitality enough to recommend it.

In fact, I was very much inclined to that opinion myself when I first conceived the idea of investing this topic, with the intention which I shall seek to carry out.

It seemed to me, as it doubtless seems to you, that so practical and matter-of-fact a class of the community as the drummers of the period, did not present exactly a bonanza to the literary miner.

But before I had entered very far upon the consideration of my subject, I discovered I had very much underrated its fertility of resource.

I found that such of the historical facts appertaining to Commercial Travellers as I could unearth by research or evolve by pertinacious interviewing, were not wanting in 'living human purport'; while an investigation of my own experience furnished me with material of quite a romantic, if not even a sensational, character.

And it occurred to me that having finished posting up the books of this great nation for the first century of its business, it would not be inappropriate to render a balance-sheet which should present some at least of operations in and out of trade, of those whom I shall take the liberty of denominating, if you please, the 'Knights Errant of Modern Chivalry.'

For in these days we do not boast of 'dangers by flood and field,' save those—and they are chiefly experienced by your Commercial Traveller—the dangers of the reckless locomotive, and the wild North River steamboat.

We have no longer the tourney—otherwise than as that maudlin combat in the

lists is now represented by the aggressive drummer in his not infrequent meetings with his fellows of opposition firms.

And in all the love and adventure, in the whole-souled and whole-hearted regardlessness of danger and trial, in the tried fidelity to important interests, and, I may add, last but not least, in sacred fealty to his 'Queen of Beauty,' the 'Commercial Traveler' need not shun comparison with all or any of the knights of old, beginning with Don Quixote, and ending with Sir John Falstaff.

Times change, and men change with them, and to-day, instead of mounting barbed steeds, to fright the souls of fearful adversaries'—or even capering 'nimble in a lady's chamber to the lascivious pleasings of the lute'—your modern Knight Errant launches forth into the wide world of trade and commerce with one eye upon his Railway Guide and the other upon his sample chest, and all the wilderness of possible customers—at once the goal of his ambition, and the battle-field whereon to display his prowess.

Men fight their chief battles to-day in the busy marts of the great commercial cities, and along the roads that serve as highways of transportation from the vast fields of supply to the huge markets of demand.

Yet, the war of trade is carried on with weapons as deadly as those with which Cressay and Poitiers were won, or those against whose thunder-riven strength the combined armies of Europe have from time to time contended.

Victims fall by the way-side and perish as miserably as is recorded in the history of the wounded and the dying of Flodden, of Talavera or of Waterloo.

While for the victors there are laurels as prized and as dearly won as ever rested on a champion's head in the amphitheatre at Rome or in the lists of the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold.'

Only it has become the fashion to wage our wars of competition with the weapons

of policy, of shrewdness, and of business tact, and therefore it is, that your Knight Errant Commercial Traveller, though possibly a harmless-looking fellow enough, is the right man in the right place, and can deal more deadly blows and conquer more fields than could ever your armoured warrior with lance in rest and pennon flying—at least in the year of grace 1882. I will give an instance, and it is the only one from my own experience I shall offer: In the spring of 1864 my business led me to a Western city, as the head representative of the 'Novelty Corset Works,' then largely engaged in the manufacture of hoopskirts.

Upon arriving at my hotel I found several fellow-travellers discussing the successes and failures of the day, but all had been equally baffled in the attempt to sell goods on any terms to one of the most prominent merchants in the city. While listening to this case of unchristian-like perversity, I formed the resolution to overcome it, at all hazards.

The announcement of my intention was received with the most derisive laughter, and so little faith shown in my success that when some one suggested as a wager the best supper the city could afford to the assembled company (should fortune favour me), it was unanimously accepted, and 'carried by a large majority.'

I need scarcely add that a share of said supper was to be charged by each C. T. to travelling expenses.

The following morning, encouraged in my work by my friends, who assured me that, as a preliminary attention, this merchant would kick me into the street, I left on my mission in search of a new sensation, and a new customer.

I found said merchant at his office, who evidently recognized my craft at a glance, and commenced his invective in a style peculiar to himself: 'Oh, I see you belong to the negro minstrel troupe just arrived!!' 'Yes, sir,' I replied, 'and I am deputized by the show to ask you to favour our entertainment this evening with your presence. If you will tell me how many tickets you can use, I will go to the office and get them.' He stood silent for a moment, dumbfounded at my impudence!—then the thought suddenly occurred to him that I was 'Giving myself away.' 'There are four in my family,' he said, 'and I will be much obliged if you will send me four tickets.' Assuring him that I would be glad to accommodate him as a leading merchant and one of the prominent men of the city, I left the store, proceeded to the hall, and purchased four

tickets at a cost of four dollars (travelling expenses).

Clipping the corners of these, so that he could see they were complimentary, I hastened back to the store and presented them to him. I took particular pains to impress my man that he would find it extremely difficult to detect me in the troupe, owing to the excellence of my make-up.

A further investment of fifty cents procured for me a gallery ticket to the show—where I presently spied my man in the parquette with his family, which consisted of a feminine heavy-weight, whom I rightly conceived to be his wife, and two young hoodlums, who looked as if they needed only years and muscle to follow in the footsteps of their father in the matter of kicking pertinacious drummers from their various places of business. I established their paternity in my mind at a glance. Watching my man closely during the performance, I found out that he was suffering agonies of doubt as to whether I was the Middleman, or one of the End Men, Bones, or Tambourine. He finally settled down on the decision that the middle man was too large, which left him the painful alternative of bobbing his head from right to left in his attempt at a decision, at the imminent risk of breaking his neck. Those days being prior to the panic, employers were much more liberal than they are at present, and I was not only supplied with a goodly package of samples, but also with a servant to carry it about.

Leaving him outside of the store, on the following morning, I entered and accosted my friend, the 'Convivial investigator of Negro Minstrelsy,' asking him how he liked the show, and whether he recognized me under my negro disguise.

He assured me that he was delighted with the minstrel company, and would no doubt have felt a deep appreciation of my own qualifications, if he had only been able to satisfy himself as to which of the 'Classic nine in burnt cork I was.' He assured me that my make-up was a complete success, and that my heaviest creditor could not have recognized me.

'But, my dear friend,' said I, 'you have not seen the best part of the show yet;' and giving a sign to my porter, he entered with a large black valise (the article became fashionable in that year, you may remember, in connection with hotel burning). Opening this, there escaped from its cavity, like a 'Jumping Jack,' a closely-packed mass of sample hoop-skirts, from the young Misses' (6) to the Matrons' (50).

My merchant saw at once that I had been as quick as he, and instead of his selling

me, I sold him—won my supper, ate it royally, and enrolled on the books of my firm the name of one who became afterwards one of the best customers. The only feeling of disappointment I experienced about the whole matter was, that I was not kicked after all.

This story, which by the way I relate as an actual occurrence, will serve partly as an illustration of 'Drumming as a Fine Art.'

But after all, we can boast an antiquity that goes farther back into time than that which preceded all the conflicts of all the ages before our world.

Why, we are even entitled to have recourse to Scripture itself, for the earliest attitude of commercial travellers before humanity.

We are told that the brethren of Joseph sold him to a company of Midianite merchantmen who were carrying spices and other valuable articles of trade into Egypt, there to exchange them for manufactures and corn.

Now these Midianite merchantmen were the commercial travellers 'of the period,' and if they went out of their way in the matter of barter, and traded for a slave when that particular article of household necessity may not have been on their list, they did no more than the Carthaginian commercial travellers who used to send their caravans as far as the interior of Africa where they bought negroes, and, returning, sold them in the markets of Italy and Greece.

Commercial travellers in those days travelled farther perhaps than they do to-day, but one journey lasted them a year—and to compare the Venetian or Egyptian drummer with his brother of the present day would be about as appropriate as to compare the camel which conveyed him, to the locomotive of our time.

Yet, even in those small beginnings, if we trace them up, we find the advancement of civilization of the arts, the improvement of manners and customs, and the entire progress of each age, were closely combined with that commercial prosperity which was the object of the commercial traveller then, as it is to-day; and is it not an insignificant fact that at the time when Athenian commerce was at its height, and Greece stood upon the first commercial nations of the known world, Athenian genius was most prolific in Philosophy, Poetry, History, Oratory and the Fine Arts?

Thus commerce and culture have ever advanced hand in hand, and side by side, in the progress of civilization, and your mer-

chant princes are to-day, as they were in the times of the Medici—the patrons of the beautiful, the refining and the aesthetic.

Tyre and Palmyra, Babylon, Venice, and Genoa have, in different periods, been flourishing centres of the trade and commerce of the world—sending forth their commercial travellers through different countries and among isolated peoples, yet in no such degree, and certainly with no such results as is the case to-day when Great Britain has her 60,000 commercial travellers and the United States their 120,000. Thus it is, that at the present time we possess in our own country a well-drilled and well-equipped army of business agents, active, enterprising and energetic, engaged in the intelligent prosecution of our vast commercial interests. And if it may possibly seem to the casual observer that in proportion to the extent of our territory, the magnitude of our population and the wide-spreading and multifarious character of our necessities—the number of our commercial travellers does not compare favourably with that of the parent nation, it should be borne in mind that, with us, this institution, like almost every other great and good thing that we have, has but an existence running back into the last half century. And it is but a few years since the commercial drummer was 'invented,' but he is now a well-established institution, and a permanent one, so much so that no well-regulated and business-like house can get along successfully without him, and employers as well as persons of philanthropic motives, and desiring, more and more, every day, of doing something for their welfare, the former recognizing the fact that the better the character of their representatives the better will they succeed in obtaining the confidence and trade of those with whom they have business intercourse.

To the Rev. Mr. Talmage, the sensational preacher of Brooklyn, are we indebted for such exhortations as these to the commercial traveller.

'Now you, the commercial traveller, have received orders from the head man of the firm, you are to start on the long excursion. Well, what is this little package in your valise? Oh! you say, that's a pack of cards. There's certainly no harm in a pack of cards—is there? Instead of answering your question, I will tell you that there are thousands of men with as strong a brain as you have, who have dropped down into the gambler's life and into the gambler's hell. What's that other bundle in the valise? Oh! you say, that's a brandy flask. Well, my commercial traveller, just empty the contents

and fill it with cholera mixture. It's very important to have something that will help you in case of sudden illness. Only one more advice to you and then I will have done with your baggage. Take some good wholesome reading, let it be an historical work or even a work of fiction, or some work that will be of particular advantage in your business. Get a Bible with large type.

'Ready for the trip. Now you are ready to start. You have your valise in your right hand, and your blanket and shawl strapped to your left. Good-bye! May you have a prosperous voyage, large sales and great percentages. Oh! there's one thing I forgot to ask you about. What train are you going to take? Well, you say, I will take the five o'clock Sunday train. I will save a day by that, and I will be by Monday morning in the commercial establishments by the time the merchants get down town. My commercial traveller, you start wrong. Sabbath-breaking pays no better in this world than in the next. If the Sabbath is given for the employer, it is given for the employee. The dollar that you earn on the Sabbath is a red-hot dollar, and if you put it in a bag with 5,000 honest dollars that red-hot dollar will burn a hole through the bag and let out all the 5,000 honest dollars with it. For a few weeks now you will pass half of your time in the railroad train. How are you going to spend it? Don't do as most commercial travellers do, sit reading the same newspaper over and over again, looking listlessly out of the window, or spending three or four hours in the smoking car, the nastiest place in Christendom.

'But you have come now to the end of your railroad travel. You saunter out among the merchants and you begin business. There are two things you must remember: First, that all the trade you get by the practice of treating always damages the house that gets it. Besides, you can't afford to injure yourself for the sake of your employers. Again, I charge you, tell the whole truth about everything you sell. Lying travellers will come after you; don't let their lying competition tempt you to do as much. But it is almost night, and you are getting back now to your hotel. You go back to the hotel. Now comes the nightly tug for the drummer. Tell me where he spends his evenings, and I will tell you where he will spend eternity. There's your room with the books; there's the Young Men's Christian Association; there's the gambling saloon, the theatre, and the house of infamy. The theatre: Do you think the tarrying in that place till eleven o'clock at night will improve your bodily

health or earthly fortunes? No man ever found the path of commercial success or heavenly reward through the American Theatre. Well! you say, If I can't go to the theatre, and can't go to the gambling-saloon, I guess I will go to the house of ill-fame. Halt!! There are other gates of sin through which a man may go and come out, but that gate has a spring-lock which snaps him in forever. He who goes there is damned already. He may seem to be comparatively free for a little while, but he is only in the limits, and Satan's police have their eye on him to bring him in any minute. Oh! commercial traveller, I pray for you to-day. There are two kinds of days when you will specially need divine grace, the one when you have no success—that night you will be tempted to give way to strong drink; the other day will be, when you have had great success, and the devil tells you must go and celebrate that success.'

In Great Britain, on the contrary, the institution of commercial travellers dates back to the guilds and mercantile companies of the tenth century, dates back to the time when these organizations were a power in the land—when they re resented not only vast wealth, marvellous constructive ability, and the highest conceivable standard of integrity, but also a political force, which not all the trades-unions and combinations of the labouring and mechanical classes of the nineteenth century have ever been able to compass.

Upon this secure and deep-laid foundation, the British Nation erect that superb structure which represented for centuries the commercial supremacy of the world. Using the self-same untiring agencies, and building as these others built, we are in a position to-day to boast, that, if we have not already achieved this distinguished and distinguishing result, we may, at the least, claim that it must exist for us in the near future. Panics, political troubles, and financial disturbances may come from time to time to mar or set back the well-conceived projects of a great people, but the force by whose means we are contending to accomplish the noble result which we have in view cannot permanently be deranged or opposed by incidents of this character, however immediately alarming.

And all this brings me back to my subject, 'Drumming as a Fine Art.'

And here I may pause perhaps, in the sequence of my ideas, to expatiate briefly,

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if learnedly, upon the origin, etymology and constructive use of the term 'Drummer.' Now we have heard of men being drummed out of the world (and for all that I know there are some who have been drummed into the world).

I remember something of this musical character, though involving a different instrument, which occurred in the case of the earliest male off-spring of a friend of mine. That child acquired, with its earliest acquisition of this world's goods, the right to inscribe after its name that ancient and honourable and Roman declaration, 'Civis Romanus Sum.' I am a Roman citizen; and on a Christmas morning, and as was customary on Christmas morning in Rome at that time, and is now (so far as I know), the guns of the Castle of St. Angelo welcomed that infant progeny's advent into this world with their vociferous clangor.

It was, however, a mere coincidence; the guns of the St. Angelo did not sound for that especial infant—but the occurrence serves to illustrate my proposition, that musical instruments—for instance, guns—may be used to welcome a man into the world, and if guns why not drums, and if drums why not drummers?

But after all, this illustration can hardly be considered etymological in its character. I have been unable, after patient and persistent research and indefatigable analysis, to discover the exact origin of the application of this term 'Drummer' to a respectable, and as I have taken occasion to show you, a large body of mercantile men. But now—and accepting the name 'Drummer' for what it is really worth—in fact, 'for better or for worse,' let us see how the Commercial Drummer has brought his theory and practice in time to be worthy of the name of a 'Fine Art.'

We have, as I have stated, 60,000 drummers in the United States, located, when at home, principally in the large Eastern cities, but at other times scattered far and wide.

I suppose that the greater part of this audience are constantly in the habit of associating with this class of men. Yet excepting the case of those who are brought into immediate contact with them by their business necessities, I question if any one is aware of the fact of such an acquaintance existing in his or her instance—and this from the almost Masonic secrecy of their movements.

If you are condemned by circumstances over which you have no control, to pass a larger or lesser portion of your lives in one of those melancholy conglomerations of assembled unfortunates known as 'boarding-

houses,' you have probably breakfasted, dined and supped with drummers day in and day out for months, and never suspected it.

You have, to be sure, missed, on occasion, your next neighbour from his accustomed seat, and it may have been without making any grievous demand upon your analytical powers as to the reason of his absence.

Now the fact has been that this next neighbour of yours has come home to his hostelry some evening, packed his trunks and sped away to the railroad depot, and while you are possibly cogitating in a feeble way next morning at breakfast over his absence he is miles off in pursuance of his mysterious avocation. Or, you are accustomed to see your acquaintance of the day in his special seat at a certain table which has even become identified with him in that particular restaurant where you hastily provide yourself at noon with the modest glass of lager and your slice of Dutch sausage.

But one day you take your accustomed seat, and lo! your *vis-a-vis* has gone and you see nothing of him for weeks. When you do see him and you inquire of him his whereabouts during this period of oblivion, he replies:

Oh! I've been down to New Orleans. I have taken a run out to Milwaukee or I have just come back from Chicago, and that is about all you can learn from him on the subject. Now, this secrecy, this apparent mystery of movement, forms one of the elements, through the proper use of which the Drummer has succeeded in making his profession 'A Fine Art.'

But the Commercial traveller's secrecy, in so far as it consists in not communicating his intentions or his movements to the world in general, is still more necessary in his association with those of his own profession and in his own line, for the business of commercial travelling, as I have said before, is a warfare, in which the interests and the objects in view require the most absolute reticence.

It is even said (a calumny, I hope), of commercial travellers, that they are so reticent that they sometimes, as the late lamented Horace Greeley used to say, 'slop over' on the other side, and misdirect, where it would be to the disadvantage of their employer's interests to answer categorically and exactly the many queries which are put to them with malign intention. Such a statement as this will appear certainly to those who are familiar with the class of men I am attempt-

ing to describe—who know their purity of character, their guilelessness and circumspection of behaviour, their simplicity and innocence of the nets and pitfalls of this wicked world—to such as these it will certainly seem, as it does to me, that no language but that of slang could so misrepresent an amiable and deserving association of gentlemen, and the following story may be amusing to some of my readers.

The party of a merchant in New York city was recently struck by a brilliant idea. To impress his drummers with a due sense of his watchfulness and their responsibility, he would have them shadowed by a detective. He did so, and one day called his city drummer into his private room and addressed him with severity something after this fashion:—

'Young man, you left the store at fifteen and a half minutes past four yesterday afternoon. You made a bee-line for Broadway, declining on the way to purchase matches and suspenders, and telling a venerable man who poked an advertising dodger into your diaphragm to go to a place where there is no ice on the sidewalk, and the probabilities always indicate an area of high temperature. You also winked at a stray widow with false teeth. Arrived at Broadway and Thirtieth street, you entered the house of a publican and sinner, had a Scotch whiskey with not too much sugar in it, invited P., the bar-keeper, to take some something himself—an invitation which was firmly but respectfully declined—and had a raw oyster on a fork. Thence proceeded to a billiard-room, and which is known to me, you played four games of billiards, losing three, and being stook for as many rounds of drinks. In addition to this, you had three other nips and a cigar, a Reina Victoria. Lighting this, you proceeded to a restaurant, and after taking a "cocktail," and examining the "High Art" Bar-Room, you dined heartily and expensively on

Blue Point Oysters.
Brunoise a l'Allemande soup.
Filet de Sole au Gratin.
Croquettes de Volaille aux petits pois.
Potatoes a la Parisienne.
Antelope Steak with Currant Jelly.
Flageolets, Choux de Bruxelles.
Pate de Foie Gras.
Tomato Mayonnaise.
Omelette Soufflee a la Vanille.
Biscuit Diplome.
Roquefort Cheese—French Coffee,—

including a bottle of Extra Dry Gold Seal. In payment you gave the cashier a \$20 green-back. A. I. 639,456—if you deem it necessary I can describe the change you received. Thence proceeding to the billiard-room till forty-seven minutes after nine, when you went to a gambling-hell that I might, but need not particularize, where you bucked the tiger. You got a drink (the final one) at a quarter past twelve, a.m., and went home on car 67 of the Broadway line. I do not recite this to censure you, or find fault with you in any way, but merely to show you that I keep a close watch on all my employees. "Honesty is the best policy," that is all.'

The drummer would retire terrified. The other day they got a new city drummer, a quiet and innocent-looking young fellow. His comrades told him about the trials he would have to undergo, whereat he smiled a pensive smile, and said, as Wallace says in the play of 'The Colonel,' cert'n-ly. In a few days, 'the old man' sent for him, and with a respectful wink at the messenger he entered the 'old man's' private office. When the 'old man' had got through our innocent-looking young drummer he replied calmly: 'In the main your information is accurate, though it was bitter and not lemon that I desired the bar-keeper not to put too much of in my third gin cocktail, and my biggest run at billiards was sixteen, not seventeen. These, however, are trifles that I shall not insist upon. Yesterday afternoon at 3.28, you left the store and proceeded direct to So-and-So's gambling hell, where you were braced out of \$2,700 mighty quick. You said, when the ace came up loser for the ninth time, that it beat the devil, and the dealer, who had slipped out two cards, remarked that he had never seen anything like it. At the corner of Ann and Broadway, you received a package of bills—I can tell you the amount, if you like from the contractor of the new store you are putting up. "This is the whack-up of the divy," were his exact words. Then you went home and had dinner. The oyster-soup was slightly burned, as you justly, but somewhat grumblingly observed, and after inventing a lie to your wife, about having to attend a special meeting of the Health Board, for the prevention of the spreading of small-pox in the city, you went to that little widow's.'

'Young man,' said the 'old man' in an awful voice, 'you have been guilty of an act of gross insubordination, not to speak of the lack of honourable feeling manifested in thus playing the spy. Another time I shall not overlook the offence; but out of regard for your widowed mother and your irreproach-

ra Dry Gold Seal. Cashier a \$20 green- you deem it necessary you received. billiard-room till nine, when you what I might, but ere you bucked the (the final one) at a and went home on ne. I do not re- find fault with ely to show you on all my em- best policy," that

re terrified. The city drummer, a young fellow. out the trials he great he smiled a Wallack says in bert-'n-ly. In a sent for him, and the messenger he private office. got through our drummer r. plied information is and not lemon not to put too cktail, and my sixteen, not sev- eral trifles that I rday afternoon and proceeded ng hell, where mighty quick, up loser for the devil, and the out two cards, seen anything on and Broad- of bills—I can like from the you are putting of the divy, you went home up was slightly newhat grum- venting a lie to tend a special , for the pre- all-pox in the widow's.' d man'in an uilty of an act o speak of the fested in thus me I shall not of regard for ir irreproach-

able conduct, I shall forgive you now. What is your salary? "Eighteen hundred dollars, sir." "Toll the cashier to make it three thousand, dating from January 1st, 1882. This is as a token of appreciation of your devotion to our interests and high integrity. This \$500 bill is a slight personal testimonial of regard. If at any time you are a little short of funds, don't hesitate at all about borrowing from me. I take a deep and affectionate interest in your welfare."

The drummer bowed his acknowledgements, and was about to take his leave, when his employer called him back, and said:

"There is of course nothing in it, positively nothing, still you need not mention that little romance about the widow to any one. A joke's a joke." The drummer winked at him respectfully, and withdrew. A word to the wise drummer is sufficient. In fact, it must probably be owned that all is fair in trade competition as in love; and the sharpened intellects that meet in combat in the field of trade, though they may perchance become dimmed in brightness by conflict, do not at least lose anything of their edge.

To inform every questioner as to his exact point of departure and intention in the future, would be for the drummer to expose his employer's interests to attack from remorseless enemies, and in this connection will give a few verses which in a moment of mental aberration, let me hope, were concocted by a drummer who had taken refuge in a small town, to averse his expense account, and who had already thus isolated himself for about a week

Hallo! old fellow! when did you come to town?

Just now, he answers, and assumes a frown— You then some further information seek, Which being gained, you learn he's here a week.

You met another! Oh! why, how do you do?

Where have you come from? I'm from Kalamazoo.

He follows with the query, where have you been?

I've just this moment landed from Racine. These statements are not gospel, you can bet;

He is from Cleveland, and you from Lafayette

You ask a third, where he will spend next day;

He thinks he'll ruralize at Put in Bay.

This seems, of course, to one who knows, adroit— For the next morning's sun sees him in Detroit.

These verses are supposed to have reference to a meeting between two opposition drummers.

As in the movements of commercial travellers, the same result is demanded which was conceived by the great Napoleon to be the only definition of true generalship, that is, success! one must not be too particular as to the weapons with which he achieves the result. The commercial traveller should consider himself the instrument wherewith is to be wrought out the business advantages of his employer. This is in fact the object of his life.

To achieve this no toil should be too arduous, no situation too full of danger. And that the commercial traveller's life is not marked with incidents possessing the elements of discomfort and even danger is a fallacy which too generally prevails among a misinformed and inconsiderate community.

The commercial traveller does not always find himself at home in gorgeous palace hotels, such as I shall now describe:—

This hotel has been built and arranged for the special comfort and convenience of the travelling public.

On arrival each guest will be asked how he likes the situation, and if he says the hotel ought to have been placed nearer the railroad depot the location of the house will be immediately changed.

Corner front rooms, up only one flight, for each guest.

Bath, gas, water closet, hot and cold water, laundry, telegraph, fire alarm, restaurant, bar-room, billiard tables, daily papers, coupe, sewing machine, grand piano, a clergyman and all other modern conveniences in every room.

Meals every minute if desired, and consequently no second table.

English, French, and German dictionaries furnished every guest, to make up such a bill of fare as he may desire, without regard to bill of fare afterward, at the office.

Waiters of every nationality and colour if desired. Every waiter furnished with a libretto, buttonhole bouquets, full dress suits, ball tablets, and his hair parted in the middle.

Every guest will have the best seat in the dining hall and the best waiter in the house.

Any guest not getting his breakfast red-hot, or experiencing a delay of sixteen seconds after giving his order for dinner, will please mention the fact at the manager's

office, and the cooks and waiters will be blown from the mouth of a cannon in front of the hotel at once.

Children will be welcomed with delight, and are requested to bring hop-sticks, and hawkeys to bang the carved rosewood furniture, especially provided for that purpose, and peg-tops to spin on the velvet carpets; they will be allowed to bang on the piano at all hours, fall down stairs, carry away dessert enough for a small family in their pockets at dinner, and make themselves as disagreeable as the fondest mothers can desire.

Washing allowed in rooms; ladies giving an order to 'put me on a flat-iron' will be put on at any hour of the day or night.

A discreet waiter, who belongs to the Masons, Odd Fellows, Sons of Malta, Knights of Pythias, K. O. M.'s, and M. D. R.'s, and who was never known to tell the truth or time of day, has been employed to carry milk punches and hot toddies to the ladies' rooms in the evening.

The office clerk has been carefully selected to please everybody, and can lead in prayer, play draw poker, match worsteds in the village store, shake for the drinks at any hour, day or night, play billiards, is a good waltzer, can dance the German, make a fourth at euchre, amuse the children, repeat the Beecher trial from memory, is a good judge of horses, as a railroad or steamboat reference is far superior to Appleton's or anybody else's guide, will flirt with any young lady, and not mind being cut to death when 'pa comes down,' don't mind being damned any more than the Connecticut River, can room forty people in the best room in the house when the hotel is full, attend to the annunciator and answer questions in Greek, Hebrew, Choctaw, Irish or any other polite language at the same moment without turning a hair.

Dogs allowed in any room in the house, including the w(h)ine room.

Gentlemen can drink, smoke, ohew, swear gamble, tell shady stories, stare at the new arrivals, or indulge in an other innocent amusement common to watering-places, in any part of the hotel.

The landlord will always be happy to hear that some other hotel is 'the best house in the country.'

Special attention given to parties who can give information as to 'how these things are done.'

He cannot always control his particular points of travel. The incidents which in the case of other men modify so greatly, and so distinctly, their business career, can have no influence with him.

Sickness must come to him and death, as these come to other men; but except by either of these afflictions he should be stricken down, they must not turn aside from his duty the commercial traveller. With the bursting of the spring buds as the ground is loosened from the icy bands which have held it for months, and when the freshets are rolling down their vast volumes of water, the great army of commercial travellers sets forth by every means of public transportation and through every route and highway in the land.

The word goes forth, and these, each equipped and armed as is necessary, disregarding whatever ties of affection or trust may seem to bind them and to lead them elsewhere, resume their business relations; and having regard for these only, eschewing all other bonds, enter once more, however unwillingly, upon the travail of the season.

As I have said, sickness and even death may call upon them in the earnest tones of affection, and home influence, to turn aside for only this once from the path of their assigned duty. There are cases, and these not a few, where no such appeal has served to detain them.

There are cases where to have departed from their duty would have been to sacrifice subsistence itself; and this without reflection in any particular upon the employer. Employers or other individuals, or incorporated companies, cannot consider, in the vast aggregate of their business operations, the interests or the wishes of the minor instrumentalities which they employ. The hour comes for the great trade movement of the season as it rolls around to enter upon its accustomed path, and this movement, so important to the interests, not only of the employer, but also of the mass of the community who depend upon its operation and success for all that makes civilization mean anything, this movement must not be prevented by any interruption of its processes or any accident to the progress of this body of trained agents who prosecute the trade enterprises which, while they mean wealth and luxury and all the attributes of fortune on the one hand, on the other may mean bare subsistence itself.

A case illustrating this point in our argument—one of many which my memory furnishes me—will be appropriated at this time.

The incident happened to a young man, a commercial traveller of my acquaintance, who was serving his second year of experience in that profession. He was bold, active, bright and thorough; was ambitious, and was

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a young man, a
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rapidly rising. Success, as is too frequently
the case, had made him venturesome, and he
married. He was attached to a large manu-
facturing company, and when the spring
opened and the time arrived for him to take
his departure for an extended tour through
the Middle and Western States, it found
him stung to the heart with perhaps the
sharpest anguish which the human heart is
capable of experiencing, the sickness nigh
unto death of his newly wedded wife.

The case was critical—of this sickness
his wife might die. To fail to meet the
urgent business necessity of the moment was
to him constructive suicide. His place would
be filled within the hour, and an evil that
might not come to him through death, would
be certain to come through poverty. And
not only this; through the accuracy and
excellence of his services, he held in his
hands the business prosperity of his em-
ployers. To fail them at this time was to
sacrifice them. Thus his conscience and
his self-interest together warred against his
affections.

This was an embarrassment to which I
conceive few would care to be subjected.
His decision marked the character and
stability of the man. Placing far above
all tenderness, however praiseworthy, the
superior claims of justice, first to his
employers and then to himself, he decided
to go.

His wife died within twenty-four hours.

Such occurrences as the one I have just
related to you as illustrating one phase of
the life of a commercial traveller, are by no
means casual or incidental.

Trials and dangers come to this class in a
proportion greater and more frequent than
to almost any other. There are the dangers
which assail all travellers—dangers by land,
and dangers by sea, and these also propor-
tionally greater in the case of commercial
travellers, because of the larger amount of
time passed by them in travelling. It is not
unnatural then that these men should be in
many respects different from their fellows.
Leading a life of exposure, not only to
physical danger, but to corruptions which
besiege all of us more or less in our journey
through this world, the wonder is rather
that so small a number are ever led away
from the strict path of rectitude, which, as a
rule, marks their conduct of the large and
influential affairs placed in their charge.
And if I allude again to their methods in
business dealing, it is neither with any de-
sign of deprecating just criticism, or any in-
tention to withhold from the light of day the
exact facts of the case.

Mercantile business is like a game of

chance, in which the first object is successful
competition with the opponent—and this by
every means in using which the latter can be
baffled and misled, and through these agen-
cies success attained.

Thus, through his peregrinations and
through the education which these afford
him, your true commercial traveller becomes
a veritable citizen of the world. Rubbing
against his fel ow-men in such numerous in-
stances, whatever may be the pre-conceived
ideas concerning the ordinary topics of
thought with which he may set out, these
are through this species of human friction,
presently modified.

In politics, in religion, and in all the main
subjects in which men ordinarily differ,
the commercial traveller is bound by the
necessities of his employment to assimilate
with all. And if he be a Methodist with
Methodists, an Episcopalian with Episcopa-
lians, a Democrat with Democrats, a Repub-
lican with Republicans, Stalwart with Stal-
warts, Half Breed with Half Breeds, local
optionist, Hebrew or Gentile, if he be all
or any of these, as either assumption may
serve his business purposes best, who shall
blame him, since business success is the one
object he has nearest at heart, and to the
successful accomplishment of which he
has devoted all his energies and all his in-
genuity?

In this connection I may not inappropri-
ately ask what constitutes a good salesman?
and cannot answer the question better than
did Mr. John Field, of the firm of Young,
Smyth, Field & Co., of Philadelphia, before
the Young Men's Christian Association, at a
recent meeting. The following were his
words verbatim:

Mr. President—The question submitted to
us this evening is: 'What constitutes a
Good Salesman.'

The mariner, upon whatever sea, knows
that he can always turn to one point in the
heavens and ever find the North Star,

'Whose faithful beams conduct the wander-
ing ship,
Through the wide desert of the pathless
deep.'

So man, in every vocation in life, when
tempest-tossed and tried, must have his polar
star, upon whom he can fix his eye—the un-
changing and changeless God, who has said,
'I will guide thee with mine eye.' Let this
be our standpoint.

Salesman—Sale-and-man. Webster's def-
inition is: One who finds a market for the
goods of another person.

From the time that Jacob sent his sons to

Egypt to buy corn, buying and selling has been recognized by all as a just and lawful calling.

The producer necessitates the distributor, and as long as one man makes plows, another waggons, and another axes, and another cloths, just so long as one man produces grain, and another mines coal, will the distributor, or as we term him, the Merchant, and the Salesman be needed.

Before, Mr. President, entering fully upon the discussion of our theme, in justice to good, honest and capable Salesmen, I am compelled to digress for a moment and expose some of the difficulties as they have to encounter. We might class them under the head of 'The tricks of the trade.'

Why did Mr. A. succeed and Mr. B. fail in such and such a transaction? Mr. B. is a true man, and his prices are right; in fact, his styles are acknowledged to be better than Mr. A.'s. Why then did he fail and Mr. A. succeed? Mr. A. related to your speaker the following, and mark you he did not consider that he was doing anything amiss. Said he, 'I have been trying for a long time to get my make of goods into—', naming a certain house in another city, 'but without success. Finally I hit upon a plan. I learned that the head of the department was re-furnishing his house. I called to see him, referred to what he was doing and said to him: 'See here, my friend, I often visit your city; hotel life is very disagreeable to me; would you allow me to furnish a room in your house where I can stop over a night occasionally?' He at once replied, 'Certainly, certainly.' 'I furnished,' said Mr. A., 'his second storey room elegantly.' I naturally inquired, 'Did you ever occupy it?' 'Oh no,' said he 'but the house ever afterwards had a good stock of my goods.'

Mr. B. never sold that house any goods, and why? A gentleman engaged as salesman in my own house (not with us, nor has not been for years), reported to me that he succeeded in selling a very sharp merchant quite a large bill. I was a little surprised myself, for I knew him to be a very peculiar man. In looking into the matter, I found that all staple, well known goods, were sold absolutely below cost, and other goods of which the buyer was not a critical judge were charged above their market value. Calling the salesman into the office, I said to him, 'Mr. ———, I have always looked upon you as an honest man until today.' His face crimsoned, and he became very angry, and said, 'Sir, do you mean to say that I am a thief?' I replied, 'You sold Mr. So and So?' 'Yes,' said he. 'In the first place, you sold some of our goods below

cost, you cheated us. In the second place you sold him other goods above their market value, you cheated him; in other words, in the day-time you let him have his own way, but in the midnight hour, in the darkness, you had your way.' Mr. F., said he, 'I never saw it in this light before; you are quite right; I will never do so again,' and he never did. He inquired how he should adjust the present difficulty. The answer was, pay what you lost on some of the goods and reduce the other to their market value. These instances are enough to indicate the difficulties which salesmen sometimes experience.

Could we, Mr. President, reduce the proposition to an honest, critical buyer on one side of the counter, and an honest salesman on the other side of it, it would be very greatly simplified. This, however, cannot be, as the man who buys general merchandise, in the very nature of things, cannot be a critical judge of all classes of goods; he must therefore depend greatly upon the one who sells him. What kind of a man then ought this salesman to be?

In the first place, he ought to be a man, strong, vigorous and brave.

If we inquire as to who should be our Lawyers, Physicians or Architects our reply is: men educated and trained to their respective professions; so we say and contend that a salesman ought to be thoroughly drilled and trained to his business, not only as to how to sell his goods, but also as to the value and character of the merchandise which he handles.

In regard to his personal habits and character, many contend that to be successful he must abandon temperate and correct principles. I remonstrated with a once prosperous Market Street merchant in regard to his course in life. He, pointing to his large warehouse, said: 'As long as I am connected with that establishment, I cannot change my course.' Poor fellow, his course brought upon him moral, physical and financial ruin. Now, I know it is earnestly contended, that a man, to be successful, must drink. In an experience of thirty years on the street, I have never known one such to have been finally successful, and I challenge any one in the audience to point out one.

Again, I consider that a salesman should be so evenly balanced that he would never need whip or spur, or bit or bridle. Some men are not successful because they are too fussy,—I know no better word to use,—they are like a horse tortured by flies on a summer day; he switches his tail, gnaws the bit and kicks against the shafts, but never kills a fly; the only thing that he

In the second place above their mark in other words, in have his own way, r, in the darkness, Dr. F., said he, 'I t before; you are r do so again,' and ed how he should lty. The answer some of the goods heir market value, gh to indicate the a sometimes expe-

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alesman should e would never e bridle. Some e they are too e word to use, — l by flies on a is tail, gnaws e shafts, but thing that he

accomplishes, is to work himself up into a sweat, but does no good. A dyspeptic, ill-natured man will not be successful. I was crossing the Atlantic on one occasion; at midnight the ship stopped suddenly; meeting the captain, I inquired the cause; only a hot journal; I lacked oil, and began to moan and creak, wearing itself out and everything that came in contact with it; its fellow journal moved along smoothly, doing its work well because it had plenty of oil. These two journals represent two distinct classes of men, the former unhappy and unsuccessful, the latter happy and successful. The first will drive away customers, the latter will draw them to him.

Again, a salesman must have some enthusiasm, or he will never succeed. That western editor made a good reply to the inquiry, 'What can be done without enthusiasm?' 'Rot,' said he. Still, he should be self-possessed and not too easily excited. A man of this character will always get the advantage over the nervous, excitable man. I have heard these two characters compared to two boilers of the same capacity; put on each a pressure of 500 lbs. to the square inch; one bursts all to pieces, the other remains undisturbed, bearing all the pressure. What is the difference between them? The one is weak, the other is strong.

To be successful he must be a good judge of human nature, or he must have tact. Some one has said that tact is a delicate, subtle gift, almost like a sixth sense, which enables its possessor to grasp a situation, and say and do the best thing in the best manner, at the right moment. It never rushes in too soon, nor arrives on the ground too late; it is never off its guard but ever ready to take advantage of the situation. He needs pre-eminently this gift. He has to meet the cool, calculating German, the iron-clad Scotch and Irishman, the sharp-dealing son of Abraham, the broad-gauge Western man, the genial Southerner, the man with rigid Puritanical principles, and the man with as loose as loose as indefinable principles as Bob Ingersoll. He must be (without sacrificing honour) 'all things to all men, that he may gain the more.'

But you will ask; can a good man be a salesman? Undoubtedly he can! Now I do not mean a man to be so good that a fly will not light on his nose; or so good that he is good for nothing; I do not mean that softish goodness that has no snap, or vim or pluck. If a Christian is but a bootblack, said John Newton, he ought to be the best in the parish. So I believe.

Put down three P's, Politeness, Patience,

Perseverance; add to these energy, invincible determination, self-reliance, civility and generosity; if you have not already done so, marry a good wife; love truth and virtue, love God and your fellow-men, and success is insured.

But with due deference to Mr. Field's remarks, the following anecdote will serve to show that a drummer's labour sometimes goes for naught.

A very persevering Irish drummer, after having displayed a full line of dress goods samples, had handled and rehandled them, had discussed their merits and demerits, until almost half a day had elapsed, was asked by the would-be purchaser if they were fashionable.

'Fashionable!' said he. 'Well, they were when I first showed them to you, but I'll be d—d if I can tell you now!'

The Hebrews, or the sons of Abraham (so called), are, perhaps, more enterprising and industrious a people than any other single class, and have made their mark in the ranks of commercial travellers.

It would, perhaps, not be saying too much to assert that they, more than any other foreign element of our population, have developed business aptitude and succeeded in mercantile pursuits.

I may then properly admit that in the perfectly praiseworthy and legitimate competition which exists between commercial travellers in the same line of business, it is considered right and proper not to let any unnecessary jarring of personal opinion interfere with the object immediately at hand.

The point—and the only point, for the commercial traveller to consider is, how best to sell his employer's goods; and in the prosecution of this simple business operation, he is bound by his bonds to throw aside all minor influences. When we consider the innumerable variety and vast importance of the interests confided to the charge of the commercial traveller, one might well be astonished at their magnitude. There is almost no article, except food, which is not now marketed by these men; and the grand result of this never failing stream of commerce flowing through the country in all directions, in its effect upon great interests, can never be computed.

To illustrate this we have only to consider for a moment how much of the business of transportation owes its existence to this agency. And again, how necessary is the commercial traveller to the hotel-keeper. To withdraw from the hotels and railroad lines

of this country the enormous and never-failing traffic of our 120,000 commercial travellers would be, it appears to me, to inflict a most serious and disastrous blow upon these interests, and this, not to speak of the resultant injury caused by the interference with, if not stoppage of, the trade which is consequent to this species of travel.

Why, I see by the reports, and this is only one out of many equally large instances, that Mr. Bass, the great English brewer, pays the Midland Railway £171,000 sterling per annum for freight. This is only one article of commerce, and over one railroad. The multiplying of illustrations would be needless. A very little reflection will attain the same result. It may also be said, *en passant*, of this same Mr. Bass, so important does he deem the class of commercial travellers to his business interests that he has recently established in London a newspaper devoted entirely to the furtherance of the usefulness of these agents.

Commercial travellers' schools have also been established in England, and at the thirty-fourth anniversary of their foundation Mr. James Hughes, their treasurer, observed that 'the doctrine had been inculcated in certain quarters that commercial firms could do without travellers. He thought they might as well ride a horse without a back-bone; they might, no doubt, but he (Mr. Hughes) contended that it was not for their advantage to dispense with an able body of men to whom many firms in the past had owed this good fortune. Speaking for his own house, he begged to inform them that they could not possibly do without commercial travellers, nor did he believe in the virtue of the trading that did not make use of them.

In the life of the commercial traveller there was neither peace nor rest. There was no end to his work, and he had to look pretty sharp sometimes to make the slightest headway, having frequently to contend with mighty forces. Many of those present had been commercial travellers, and they know how much business houses owed to those who were so engaged.

Bob Burdette in *Hawkeye* says:

'What would I do without "the boys"? How often they have been my friends. I go to a new town. I don't know one hotel from another. I don't know where to go. The man with the samples gets off at the same station. I follow him without a word or a tremour. He calls to the bus driver by name and orders him to "get out of this, now," as soon as we are seated. And when I follow him I am inevitably certain to go to the best house there is in the place. He

shouts at the clerk by name, and fires a joke at the landlord as we go in. He looks over my shoulder as I register after him, and hands me his card with a shout of recognition. He peeps at the register again and watches the clerk assign me to ninety-eight. "Ninety-nothing," he shouts, "who's in fifteen?" The clerk says he is saving fifteen for Judge Dryasdust. "Well, he be blowed," says my cheery friend, "give him the attic and put this gentleman in fifteen." And if the clerk hesitates, he seizes the pen and gives me fifteen himself, and then he calls the porter, orders him to carry up my baggage and put a fire in fifteen, and then in the same breath adds, "What time will you be at supper, Mr. Burdette?" And he waits for me, and seeing that I am a stranger in the town, he sees that I am cared for, and the waiters do not neglect me; he tells me about the town, the people and the business. He is breezy, cheery, sociable, full of new stories, always good-natured; he friaks with cigars and overflows with "thousand-mile tickets;" he knows all the best rooms in all the hotels; he always has a key for the car seats, and turns a seat for himself and his friends without troubling the brakeman, but he will ride on a wood-box or stand outside to accommodate a lady, or he will give his seat to an old man. I know him pretty well. For three years I have been travelling with him, from Colorado to Maine, and I have seen the worst and the best of him, and I know the best far outweighs the worst. I could hardly get along without him, and I am glad he is numerous.'

Not only this, we have also in the United States a Commercial Travellers' association, which has a large membership, which insures each member's life at a far less rate than insurance can be effected in any other company; and in addition to this, each member is entitled to reduced hotel and railroad fares. They have also a journal devoted to their interests, which has a large circulation, called the *Commercial Traveller*, and I present herewith the resume of the mortality table of the Commercial Travellers' association, prepared by Secretary J. Will Page, and brought down to Oct. 1, 1880. It is an interesting study, and speaks for itself:

Amount paid to beneficiaries	\$340,520.70
Amount received from deceased members	5,665.00
Average paid by each deceased member	66.25
Average amount of insurance for each member	21.44

Average annual cost to each member for \$1,000 insurance Amount paid by each member who has paid all assessments since our organization since our organization One Assessment has been paid from the general fund of the Association, amounting to \$3,858.90 J. WILL PAGE, Secretary.

5.30

171.00

JAMES H. EATON, President.

Meanwhile it should not be for a moment imagined that because commercial travellers are expert business men from the necessity of their requirements, that they are not also educated men.

The contrary is the case, and particularly in the matter of languages.

Indeed, that traveller is the most successful—other things being equal—who has at his command the largest number of modern languages, and this is in particular, the feature which has made the Jews—so called—and the Germans so successful; and it was my good fortune in the year 1878 to become acquainted with a 'knight of the grip-sack,' who has at his command six languages, and was deputed by one of the most important business houses in New York to visit Brazil and the Island of Cuba, and his experience in those countries was not only instructive but amusing in its character. He found that the bulk of trade was done principally by English and German representatives, and so great was their desire to ridicule and 'ward off' American Drummers, that no 'tricks of the trade' ever existed which they did not have recourse to prevent as much as should lie in their power the advent of the 'American Drummer.' And to better illustrate one of their *modus operandi*, I will place before my reader a circular which was received by my quondam commercial traveller three days after his arrival in Rio de Janeiro.

Rio de Janeiro, May 24, 1878.

To the recently arrived American representatives:

It may not be generally known that Brazil exports to the United States nearly \$50,000,000 of produce, while the United States exports in return only \$7,000,000, the difference, \$43,000,000, being paid in hard money to the British manufacturers, who send out their second-rate and inferior products to the deluded Brazilian planter. It is evident to the most ordinary American observer that this is not as it should be. The Brazilian is thirsting to buy the products of the United States. The visit of the Emperor in 1878 had this object specially in view, and repre-

sentatives of American houses and manufacturers coming to Brazil, should not fail to call on His Majesty as soon as possible after they have 'settled themselves.' In order to obtain an interview it is only necessary to state that they bring the usual letter of introduction from the mayor of some town where the Emperor was entertained, or simply to state that they are representatives of the great manufacturing or productive interests of America, and whatever the hour or however great the public exigency, His Majesty will always accord an interview without delay. The Emperor rarely gives orders for more than \$100,000 worth of anything at the first interview, but if the matter is adroitly presented he may request the Minister of Agriculture to duplicate the order.

Any 'representative' not provided with the usual letters of introduction to the Emperor, members of the Cabinet, nobility, etc., can be supplied by calling on the American Consul-General.

'Representatives' bringing large quantities of luggage (baggage, cases of samples, etc.), have only to mention that they are 'representatives of, etc.,' and the Conference will immediately frank everything 'right straight through' the custom-house. In nearly all the principal streets the 'representative' will be button-holed, and buyers will persist in giving orders for American manufactures, but he is advised not to entertain any proposition without the cash in hand.

The most dignified course will be to take a room in one of the palaces of the Emperor, and after displaying 'his samples, patiently await the run of custom. The Emperor usually makes his rounds at four o'clock a.m., the ministers of the empire at five o'clock a.m., senators, deputies, etc., at six o'clock a.m., and the ordinary run of buyers come later in the day. It is always best not to let the official visitors exhaust the whole stock, as better prices are usually obtained from the dealers.

The 'representative' need not trouble himself about anything. Dress, manners, habits, language, morals, are of no consequence, the main thing is to be an American, wear a long linen duster, and have something to sell.

The committee do not feel that they have 'filled the bill' without calling attention to the fact that Americans are the favoured people here, and it is only necessary to mention the names of Vanderbilt, Astor, or Gould, to have the interest of the 'representative' exalted to a point he can scarcely control.

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the native, the committee suggest 'grand resources,' 'great fortune,' 'vast extent of territory,' 'unlimited empire,' 'great fraternal feeling,' 'bond of union,' 'healthfulness of climate,' etc., and avoid all allusion to 'yellow fever,' 'nigger as good as a white man,' and crimes against the person.

The 'representative's' strongest hold is to urge the following points:

1. That we make the best and cheapest article in the world.

2. That no nation in the world can compete with us.

3. That attention to foreign markets was not necessary heretofore, as we consumed everything we made; now we make more than we want, hence the first appearance on the foreign stage.

4. That the strongest evidence of the above statement is the fact that we are sending our goods to Canada, New Zealand, China, Japan, Australia, etc.; and, as a clincher,

5. That we are selling our goods in England itself—cannot fill orders fast enough to supply the demand.

'This generally 'fetches them,' and they send right out for their money bags and recklessly turn over untold millions to the 'representative.'

Agricultural implements, particularly plows, are in extravagant demand; reapers and mowing-machines wanted everywhere. As nearly every manufacturer in the United States makes a better shovel than the 'Ames,' and a better axe than the 'Collins,' it is only necessary to show your sample shovels and axes, and they will be taken with avidity. The American 'cut nail' has achieved wonders in Brazil, owing probably to the ductility of the climate.

Parlour stoves and basement heaters have not been sought for with the eagerness to have been expected, but Yankee enterprise will not rest until every house in Brazil is warmed by one or the other.

Americans are particularly requested to note that there is not one American sulky, buggy, Concord waggon, or carriage now used in Brazil. Here is a large field.

In locomotives, cars, lumber, flour, kerosene, lard, the opening is simply unlimited. There is no room in Brazil to build railways than in any country in the world, and some scheme should be devised to make the English furnish the money to complete the railway system of Brazil so that we may sell the plant to these 'bloated capitalists' who now have more than £20,000,000 invested here.

WARNING:—The committee feel it their

duty to warn the 'representative' against those persons who will attempt to discourage his efforts by representing that Brazil is not the El Dorado that it has been painted.

These croakers are disappointed individuals who have spent years in the country without succeeding in accumulating the colossal fortunes that are to be made here. They have yielded to the enervating effects of the climate and the unsound business methods of this part of the world, which they have not had sufficient energy to change, and they are now evidently afraid of the vigorous competition and invincible determination of their younger compatriots. They will doubtless represent that the whole foreign trade of Brazil does not exceed \$100,000,000 annually, when every intelligent American, who has read the newspapers, knows that the United States alone should by rights have a trade of \$150,000,000 annually with Brazil.

N. B.—Americans arriving with no definite plans and limited resources, may expend their energy advantageously on projects for an 'Express Company,' 'Pullman Sleeping and Parlour Cars,' and 'Emigration Bureau,' 'A Great American Hotel,' and last but not least, 'Cemetery Companies.'

By the Committee, { MULBERRY SELLERS,
GEO. F. T. RAIN,
COUNT JOANNES.

Notwithstanding the great field above set forth, my friend, the enterprising drummer from New York, thought he would wake up the Brazilians a bit by advertising his wares upon the pet curiosity of the Rio de Janeiro harbour, the 'Sugar-loaf Mountain.' He therefore had painted in the most conspicuous point of the rock, in large white letters, the trade-mark of his firm. Result: Notice of the fact in all the papers, a summons from the Common Council to appear before them, a rebuke and a fine of \$100, but the advertisement proved to be worth one hundred times the amount, and taught some of the slow-coaches representing England, that if 'Parlour stoves were below par in a temperature of seventy,' Yankee enterprise rested peacefully for a while, at least, upon a 'Rock of Ages.'

Nevertheless, trade has been, and always will be, difficult for America in Brazil, and almost an impossibility: and in regard to its extension in that country, there are great difficulties to overcome, in the fact that the field is already very fully occupied with the fabrics and products of other countries, while one is met at the very threshold by a most vicious system of credits, which has grown up under the most excessive competi-

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tion of foreign importing houses to make sales. Only fancy a system of sales under which five months are considered cash, and the ordinary credit twelve months. I refer now more especially to dry goods. In general merchandize sales are made on shorter credits, say from four to six months, and in this branch of the import trade, cash is frequently obtained under a liberal discount against the usual credit. I should have stated in reference to sales of dry goods, that no legitimately negotiable document passes between buyer and seller, and in many cases interest is stipulated when settlement is deferred beyond twelve months, the sale being then virtually made on open account, with payment at the pleasure of the purchaser.

But not only in languages must the Commercial Traveller be informed. He must keep himself *au courant* with the passing events of the day. He must be able to discuss politics, religion or social science intelligently, with those who claim this use of his time, and this exercise of his attainments—always being particular, of course, not to commit himself to any one side until he is thoroughly convinced whether or not it is, for the time being, the right side. And, again, acuteness and sharpness, to push to an extravagant definition these terms, lead a man to over-reaching.

There cannot be, in fact, a more injurious development in the commercial traveller, either in regard to his own character or to the necessities of his employers, than is comprised in this peculiar species of wickedness. Indeed, it may be set down as a specific rule that a man best considers his employer's interests when he considers also the interests of his buyers.

The man who buys of you and finds himself cheated, will not purchase from you again. Indeed, if he did not cease dealing with the house you represent, it would be surprising. And if the commercial traveller has his duty to consider, employers have theirs; and one very fashionable class of difficulties with which commercial travellers from time to time have to contend, is the trick of underselling on the part of manufacturers and dealers. This system is not only deceitful in itself and injurious to the agent, but it is reflectively destructive to the employer. In fact, the commercial traveller is to the business community what money is to the entire world. He is the circulating medium of communication between those who want and those who have; saving to the buyer frequent and long-continued journeys, bringing to his customer the newest manufactures and the latest importations, with the rapidity of the lightning train, and

the accuracy of the express company, and without the cumbersome practices which belong to the absolute transfer of goods in bulk.

He is the energetic Mercury of the modern mythology, the message-bearing spirit of a commercial Jove—the modern Thunderer. To know him is to know the expression of the nineteenth century (idea,) the man of the time—erect, active, always on the alert, having his wits about him, neatly clad, never out of fashion—for who knows the fashion as he does?—yet never foppish, for he is always a gentleman. To know him is to know the typical American, rubbed down and polished by the best excellences of the freshest European art. This is speaking of course, of the American traveller par excellence. If these have their national claim to the attributes which I have named, the vast progress of trade and commerce in the nineteenth century is accounted for. But above all these attributes there is, one in which, I think, the American Commercial Traveller beats the world—that quality is tact—or the want it.

I will give you an illustration or two.

A young man sufficiently fresh in the profession not to be above asking advice, struck a western town where he was not at first as successful as he thought he ought to be. This was particularly the case with one merchant, the most important in the place. He was reported, and justly, as the deadly enemy of all 'drummers,' and he had been entirely unapproachable hitherto by any commercial traveller who had ever made the attempt.

Our fresh 'young drummer' from the East accordingly, finding several brethren stopping at his hotel, invited them to a council of war, and desired their advice as to how he should proceed with regard to approaching this particularly delicate subject.

Their advice was given, and was to this effect:—'Walk into his store as if you owned it, slap him on the back—say, "How are you, old fellow! How have you been? How are they at home?" Offer him a cigar, and you will not have the slightest difficulty.'

The young man followed their advice to the letter, and when half an hour later he dragged his contused and disfigured frame up to the bar of the hotel, where the advisory committee stood awaiting the result, the eloquence with which he depicted this would have moved you to tears.

'Well, did you sell him?' quietly remarked one of the travellers.
'Sell him!! Thunder! he sold me the

worst specimen of good solid Western shoe-leather I ever sampled in my life.' I give this anecdote as an illustration of tact—or the want of it.

A New England drummer wishing to keep posted as to the condition of the crops, and to ascertain the exact amount of damage done by a recent flood, started out one morning on an interviewing expedition. He was fortunate enough to encounter a farmer at the edge of town, bringing a load of grain into the city. Burning with enthusiasm, the drummer hailed him, and the following colloquy took place:—

- 'How are you, friend?'
 - 'Tired.'
 - 'What's hay now?'
 - 'Same as it always was.'
 - 'What's that?'
 - 'Dried grass.'
 - 'What did you think of the rain?'
 - 'Thought it was damp.'
 - 'Didn't raise anything then, eh?'
 - 'Nothing but an umbrella.'
 - 'What did your neighbours get?'
 - 'Chills and fever.'
 - 'What are you doing now?'
 - 'Getting out here in the sun, and may be missing a chance to sell this hay. Come up here if you want to talk.'
- The drummer scrambled up by the side of his new-made acquaintance, and as they jolted on, he produced his order-book, and continued:
- 'What did the farmers do last spring?'
 - 'Ran everything in the ground, as usual.'
 - 'Did your wheat do anything?'
 - 'Sprouted.'
 - 'Can you raise any tobacco now?'
 - 'Yes; do you want a chew?'
 - 'How are the potatoes?'
 - 'Under the weather somewhat, but able to be out.'

Becoming a little discouraged, the drummer asked timidly:

'Will you bring many beats to the market this year?'

'Got a good load now,' was the rejoinder, as he checked his horses and said, 'You'd better plant, I guess, what I have told you, and see what it'll yield. Here's where you get off.' Remembering that he had an engagement, the baffled drummer after news climbed down the side of the waggon, and thinking that a soft answer turneth away wrath, he calmly said:

'That's nice hay, my friend; where did it come from?'

'Timothy seed,' was the reply.

The drummer grew faint, but he summoned up courage enough to ask,

'What do you think you will get for it?'

'Cash, of course. Get up, Whitey, or else this d——d gorilla will talk us blind in a minute. He asks more questions than a catechism, and before the discouraged drummer could recover from his surprise, the hay-waggon had turned the adjacent corner.

Now it may be that these anecdotes may induce you to look rather irreverently on Commercial Travellers; but you must consider that even the greatest of men have their moments when they unbend from the reserve which always accompanies greatness; and really I think the experience of all who have ever met them will bear me out, when I say that commercial travellers in their leisure moments, are the jolliest set of fellows in the world.

Possessing a fund of anecdotes, having resources which only wide and constant association with men can afford, they take life's chances and changes easily, determined to gain from it every whit of amusement and enjoyment that time, place and opportunity will afford them, but never to the neglect of business. For instance.

One of the 'old style' of Commercial Travellers was Jack Hazzard of New York. Jack was passionately fond of the 'paste-boards,' and would occasionally indulge in a little game with the boys in the basement of the store, when not upon the 'road.' One morning, when thus engaged, the 'old man' was heard approaching, and Jack stuffed his last trick in his pocket, chucked the rest of his pack into an empty case, and the company broke up. The cause of the intrusion was soon explained by Jack receiving an order to start for Philadelphia at once with samples of a new line of goods. Jack flung the samples into a valise, put on a clean paper collar, bought ten cigars for a quarter, and started at once. Arrived in Philadelphia his first call was on an old Quaker house on Broad street. Pulling himself together Jack marched in, and laying a card before the senior partner, who was busily engaged at his desk, said in his most sanctimonious manner,

'That is the party I have the honour to represent.' The old follower of Penn looked carefully at the card, and then, fixing his steady blue eyes on Jack, handed it back, saying, 'If that is the party thee represents, thee will find Philadelphia well stocked with his goods.' Jack cast one horrified look at the card. It was the 'little joker,' on which a fellow clerk had strongly sketched the head and horns of His Satanic Majesty, and the bold salesman, for once discomfited, beat

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a hasty retreat to his hotel.—*Boston Commercial Bulletin.*

There is a hazy idea existing in the minds of a very large proportion of our population, that these drummers form a very obnoxious species of the human animal, being a sort of connecting link somewhere between a life insurance agent, book canvasser, lightning-rod agent or common peddler. But the peddler, poor and humble his station may be, has his trials, and though not treated to the aristocratic boot-leather of the leading commercial houses, gets his share of 'failing,' as will be seen by the following anecdote.

A peddler in Vicksburg had a new and important way of getting at business. When he rapped at a door it was opened but an inch or two, and the woman called out—

'Don't want any thing.'

'Madam,' called the agent, 'you have a sister?'

'Yes,' was the answer, and the door opened a little more.

'And you haven't heard from her lately?'

'No.'

'Then you don't know then that she—'

The woman opened wide the door and excitedly asked—

'What is it? What has happened to her?'

'Then you haven't heard?'

'No! No! I is Lucy dead?'

'Your sister, madam, is not dead, but—'

'But what?' she wildly inquired, as he stepped up beside her.

'Your sister, madam,' he replied, unlocking his valise, 'purchased five boxes of this superb magical blueing of me, and earnestly entreats you to try at least one box, price 15 cents.'

She didn't appreciate his tricks as he passed through the gate; she glanced down at her feet, and then at his coat-tail, and sighed—

'Oh, I wish I weighed a ton.'

It is also unfortunate that there exists in some thickly populated towns in the interior of the country, a class of dead-alive merchants who have imbibed this notion until, with them, it amounts to a conviction. Now, that these ideas render more arduous the labours of the commercial traveller is a melancholy fact. Merchants of this class have to be treated with discretion. They are as wary as a trout, and as difficult to approach as a badger; and the tricks of the trade to which commercial travellers have to resort in dealing with such are numerous and peculiar. It is a mistaken opinion that

drummers seek to engage their customers' confidence by tempting their appetites; that when buyers collect at our metropolitan hotels, they are immediately besieged by a horde of drummers, who occupy their attention during long evenings; that the time is passed in visiting theatres, bar-rooms, and such reprehensible places. Nothing of the sort happens, I can assure you. On the contrary, the Southern or Western stranger is solicitously guided by his city friend into the paths of virtue and rectitude.

Together they meander fraternally through the halls of the public libraries, or glean religious instruction in the prosperous fields of the Young Men's Christian Association.

I have been asked how commercial travellers pass the Sabbath, and like the unanswered conundrum, 'I give it up,' and let my reader judge for himself, after perusing the following:—

THOSE BOLD, BAD DRUMMERS.

About twenty-five travelling men were snowed in at Green Bay during a blockade last winter, and they were pretty lively around the hotel, having quiet fun on Friday and Saturday, and passing away the time the best they could, some playing seven-up, others playing billiards, and others looking on. Some of the truly good people in town thought the boys were pretty tough, and they wore long faces and prayed for the blockade to raise, so the spruce-looking chaps could go away. The boys noticed that occasionally a lantern-jawed fellow would look piously at them, as though afraid he would be contaminated; so Sunday morning they decided to go to church in a body. Seventy-five of them elicked up and marched to Rev. Dr. Morgan's church, where the reverend gent'eman was going to deliver a sermon on temperance. No minister ever had a more attentive audience, or a more intelligent one, and when the collection plate was passed every last one of the travellers shipped in a silver dollar. When the sexton had received the first ten dollars the perspiration stood out on his head as though he had been caught in something. It was getting heavy, something that never occurred before in the history of church collections at the Bay. As he passed by the boys, and dollar after dollar was added to his burden, he felt like he was at a picnic, and when seventy-five dollars had accumulated on the plate, he had to hold it out with both hands, and finally the plate was full, and he had to go and empty it on the table in front of the pulpit, though he was careful to remember where he left off, so he wouldn't go twice to the same drummer. As he poured the shakels

out on the table, as still as he could, every person in the audience almost raised up to look at the pile, and there was a smile on every face, and every eye was turned to the part of the church where sat the seventy-five solemn-looking travelling men, who never wore a smile. The sexton looked up to the minister, who was picking out a hymn, as much as to say, 'Boss we have struck it rich, and I am going back to work the lead some more.' The minister looked at the boys, and then at the sexton, as though saying, 'Verily, I say unto you, I would rather preach to seventy-five Milwaukee and Chicago drummers than to own a brewery. Go, thou, and reap some more trade dollars in thy vineyard!' The sexton went back and commenced where he left off. He had misgivings, thinking maybe some of the boys would glide out in his absence, or think better of the affair and only put in nickels on the second heat, but the first man the sexton held out the platter to planked down his dollar, and all the boys followed suit, not a man 'passed' or 'renigged,' and when the last drummer had been interviewed, the sexton carried the biggest load of silver back to the table that he ever saw. Some of the dollars rolled off on the floor, and he had to put some in his coat pockets, but he got them all, and looked around at the congregation with a smile, and wiped the perspiration off his forehead with a bandanna handkerchief, and winked, as much as to say, 'The first man that speaks disrespectful of a travelling man in my presence will get thumped, and don't you forget it.' The minister rose up in the pulpit, looked at the wealth on the table, and read the hymn, 'A charge to keep I have,' and the whole congregation joined, the travellers swelling the glad anthem as though they belonged to a Painsfore chorus. Then all bowed their heads while the minister, with one eye on the dollars, pronounced the benediction, and the services were over. The travelling men filed out through the smiles of the ladies, and went to the hotel, while half the congregation went forward to the anxious seat 'to view the remains.' It is safe to say that it will be unsafe, in the future, for any person to speak disparagingly of travelling men in Green Bay as long as the memory of that blockade Sunday remains green with the good people there.—*Peck's Sun.*

Drummers, like other men, are susceptible of classification, and after laborious effort and earnest consideration, I have succeeded in dividing them, I think, logically into four classes.

There is first, 'The Aggressive Drummer.' This species compasses his ends by

bully-ragging and bounce. Attacking his victim savagely at the outset, he never leaves him until he has worried him into submission and made a sale almost at the point of the bayonet.

In contrast with him may be placed 'The Persuasive Drummer.' The voice and manner of this one are tuned in the most coaxing and imploring way. He would, as the old Irishman said, 'Whadle the very birds out of the bushes.'

Then there is the 'Friendly Drummer.' To him it is given literally to be everybody's friend. He will shake hands with you, an utter stranger, as if he had known you for weeks. He knows every detail of his customer's domestic relations, can tell how many children he has, and their ages, will inquire confidentially after the health of the 'twins,' and offer him advice on an investment in a second mortgage, the purchase of a horse, or, if he be unmarried, the selection of a wife. I was well acquainted with a gentleman of this description, and he was eminently successful in his profession. His tactics were warlike as his character and also his name. He was a man of 'Blood.' Pointed in his attacks, it is needless to say that when he once got his eye on his customer, it was impossible to swerve his temper or steal a march on him.

The fourth and last class I shall designate 'The incubating Drummer,' who lays the egg of prospective trade in the fall, and hatches out the chicken business in the following spring.

And so I might go on for hours, exhausting your patience and my integrity, in illustrating the many-sided character of the commercial traveller—but this is not so much my object.

I desire rather to place him before you as he really is, the exponent of the business activity of the age. Misconstrued and misunderstood by many who do not appreciate the services which he renders to commerce and society alike, it is only now, and in my humble way, that he finds any one to stand up before the world and proclaim him.

And ladies, if to any, the commercial traveller should look for appreciation, it is to you.

To him you owe it that the circuitous routes of trade have been straightened; that

the difficulties which surround the movement of vast aggregates of manufactures have been simplified; that the remotest settlements of this great country find brought to their doors the evidences of the constructive ability of the world.

To his tireless efforts it is due that the entire industrial community is simply subservient to the wants of every member of society, no matter how far scattered from the great centres of trade.

The shawls and silks and velvets and laces and ribbons and jewels that would lie for months in the depositories of the metropolis and other great cities of the East, find their way, through the medium of the commercial traveller, to those who demand them, thousand of miles distant.

And, after all, if these labours which I have dimly indicated produce fruit, of which you reap the advantage, let it not be for a moment supposed that the commercial traveller does not see before him, lightening his toil and smoothing the roughness from his pathway, a goal which should be in the end a sufficient reward for all his labours.

High in the ambition of every commercial traveller, stands the position of the successful merchant.

As to-day the greatest nation on the face of the globe wield their influence through the medium of that vast energy, Commerce! As to-day, the last hope of Italy, once the fountain head of the arts, exists in her future promise of commercial activity! As to-day, devoted France and conquering Germany alike lay aside their swords, and win nobler laurels than these have gained for them in the peaceful paths of 'commercial activity!'

Inasmuch as these things are, and as all art and all science contend to add strength to this force, and cunning to this brain which directs it, then can there be a more noble ambition, a more worthy impulse to strengthen a man's heart, and to fortify his determination, than the ambition to stand some day, after his probation is over, and his education accomplished, side by side with the men who make 'countries great and nations venerable.'

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THE FOUR-FIFTEEN EXPRESS.

I.

The events which I am about to relate took place between nine and ten years ago. Sebastopol had fallen in the early spring; the peace of Paris had been concluded since March; our commercial relations with the Russian Empire were but recently renewed; and I, returning home after my first northward journey since the war was well pleased with the prospects of spending the month of December under the hospitable and thoroughly English roof of my excellent friend Jonathan Jelf, Esquire, of Dumbleton Manor, Clayborough, East Anglia. Travelling in the interests of a well-known firm in which it is my lot to be a junior partner, I had been called upon to visit not only the capitals of Russia and Poland, but had found it also necessary to pass some weeks among the trading-ports of the Baltic; whence it came that the year was already far spent before I again set foot on English soil, and that, instead of shooting pheasants with him, as I had hoped, in October, I came to be my friend's guest during the more genial Christmas-tide.

My voyage over, and a few days given up to business in Liverpool and London, I hastened down to Clayborough with all the delight of a school-boy whose holidays are at hand. My way lay by the Great East Anglian line as far as Clayborough station, where I was to be met by one of the Dumbleton carriages and conveyed across the remaining nine miles of country. It was a foggy afternoon, singularly warm for the 4th of December, and I had arranged to leave London by the 4-15 express. The early darkness of winter had already closed in; the lamps were lighted in the carriages; a clinging damp mist, dense and indistinct, adhered to the door-handles, and pervaded all the atmosphere; while the gas-lights at the neighbouring bookstand diffused a luminous haze that only served to make the gloom of the terminus more visible. Having arrived some seven minutes before the starting of the train, and by the connivance of the guard,

I taken sole possession of an empty compartment, I lighted my travelling-lamp, made myself particularly snug, and settled down to the undisturbed enjoyment of a book and a cigar. Great, therefore, was my disappointment when, at the last moment, a gentleman came hurrying along the platform, glanced into my carriage, opened the locked door with a private key, and stepped in.

It struck me at the first glance that I had seen him before—a tall, spare man, thin-lipped, light-eyed, with an ungraceful stoop in the shoulders, and scant gray hair worn somewhat long upon the collar. He carried a light water-proof coat, an umbrella, and a large brown japanned deed-box, which last he placed under the seat. This done, he felt carefully in his breast-pocket, as if to make certain of the safety of his purse or pocket-book; laid his umbrella in the netting overhead; spread the water-proof across his knees; and exchanged his hat for a travelling-cap of some Scotch material. By this time the train was moving out of the station, and into the faint gray of the wintry twilight beyond.

I now recognized my companion. I recognized him from the moment when he removed his hat and uncovered the lofty, furrowed, and somewhat narrow brow beneath. I had not him, as I distinctly remembered, some three years before, at the very house for which, in all probability, he was now bound, like myself. His name was Dwerrihouse; he was a lawyer by profession; and, if I was not greatly mistaken, was first cousin to the wife of my host. I knew also that he was a man eminently 'well to do,' both as regarded his professional and private means. The Jelfs entertained him with that sort of observant courtesy which falls to the lot of the rich relation; the children made much of him; and the old butler, albeit somewhat surly to the general, treated him with deference. I thought, observing him by the vague mixture of lamplight and twilight, that Mrs. Jelf's cousin looked all the worse for the three years' wear and tear

which had gone over his head since our last meeting. He was very pale and had a restless light in his eye that I did not remember to have observed before. The anxious lines, too, about his mouth were deepened, and there was a cavernous, hollow look about his cheeks and temples which seemed to speak of sickness or sorrow.

He had glanced at me as he came in, but without any gleam of recognition in his face. Now he glanced again, as I fancied, somewhat doubtfully. When he did so for the third or fourth time, I ventured to address him.

'Mr. John Dwerrihouse, I think?'

'That is my name,' he replied.

'I had the pleasure of meeting you at Dumbleton about three years ago.'

Mr. Dwerrihouse bowed.

'I thought I knew your face,' he said. 'But your name, I regret to say—'

'Langford,—William Langford. I have known Jonathan Jelf since we were boys together at Merchant Taylor's, and I generally spend a few weeks at Dumbleton in the shooting season. I suppose we are bound for the same destination?'

'Not if you are on your way to the manor,' he replied. 'I am travelling upon business,—rather troublesome business, too,—while you, doubtless, have only pleasure in view.'

'Just so. I am in the habit of looking forward to this visit as to the brightest three weeks in all the year.'

'It is a pleasant house,' said Mr. Dwerrihouse.

'The pleasantest I know.'

'And Jelf is thoroughly hospitable.'

'The best and kindest fellow in the world!'

'They have invited me to spend Christmas week with them,' pursued Mr. Dwerrihouse, after a moment's pause.

'And you are coming?'

'I cannot tell. It must depend on the issue of this business which I have in hand. You have heard, perhaps, that we are about to construct a branch line from Blackwater to Stockbridge.'

I explained that I had been for some months away from England, and had therefore heard nothing of the contemplated improvement.

Mr. Dwerrihouse smiled complacently.

'It will be an improvement,' he said; 'a great improvement. Stockbridge is a flourishing town, and needs but a more direct railway communication with the metropolis to become an important centre of commerce. This branch was my own idea. I brought the project before the board, and have my-

self superintended the execution of it up to the present time.'

'You are an East Anglian director, I presume?'

'My interest in the company,' replied Mr. Dwerrihouse, 'is threefold, I am a director; I am a considerable shareholder; and, as head of the firm of Dwerrihouse, Dwerrihouse, and Craik, I am the Company's principal solicitor.'

Loquacious, self-important, full of his pet project, and apparently unable to talk on any other subject, Mr. Dwerrihouse then went on to tell of the opposition he had encountered and the obstacles he had overcome in the cause of the Stockbridge branch. I was entertained with a multitude of local details and local grievances. The rapacity of one squire; the impracticability of another; the indignation of the rector whose glebe was threatened; the culpable indifference of the Stockbridge townspeople, who could not be brought to see that their most vital interests hinged upon a junction with the Great East Anglian line; the spite of the local newspaper; and the unheard-of difficulties attending the common question,—were each and all laid before me with a circumstantiality that possessed the deepest interest for my excellent fellow-traveller, but none whatever for myself. From these, to my despair, he went on to more intricate matters; to the approximate expenses of construction per mile; to the estimates sent in by different contractors; to the probable traffic returns of the new line; to the provisional clauses of the new Act as enumerated in Schedule D of the company's last half-yearly report; and so on, and on, and on, till my head ached, and my attention flagged, and my eyes kept closing in spite of every effort that I made to keep them open. At length I was roused by these words:—

'Seventy-five thousand pounds, cash down.'

'Seventy-five thousand pounds, cash down,' I repeated, in the liveliest tone I could assume. 'That is a heavy sum.'

'A heavy sum to carry here,' replied Mr. Dwerrihouse, pointing significantly to his breast-pocket; 'but a mere fraction of what we shall ultimately have to pay.'

'You do not mean to say that you have seventy-five thousand pounds at this moment upon your person?' I exclaimed.

'My good sir, have I not been telling you so for the last half hour?' said Mr. Dwerrihouse, testily. 'That money has to be paid over at half-past eight o'clock this evening, at the office of Sir Thomas's solicitors, on completion of the deed of sale.'

'But how will you get across by night

from Blackwater to Stockbridge with seventy-five thousand pounds in your pocket?"

'To Stockbridge!' echoed the lawyer. 'I find I have made myself very imperfectly understood. I thought I had explained how the sum only carries us as far as Mallingford,—the first stage, as it were, of our journey,—and how our route from Blackwater to Mallingford lies entirely through Sir Thomas Liddell's property.'

'I beg your pardon,' I stammered. 'I fear my thoughts were wandering. So you only go as far as Mallingford to-night?'

'Precisely. I shall get a conveyance from the "Blackwater Arms." And you?'

'O, Jelf sends a trap to meet me at Clayborough! Can I be the bearer of any message from you?'

'You may say, if you please, Mr. Langford, that I wished I could have been your companion all the way, and that I will come over, if possible, before Christmas.'

'Nothing more?'

Mr. Dwerrhouse smiled grimly. 'Well,' he said, 'you may tell my cousin that she need not burn the hall down in my honour this time, and that I shall be obliged if she will order the blue-room chimney to be swept before I arrive.'

'That sounds tragic. Had you a conflagration on the occasion of your last visit to Dumbleton?'

'Something like it. There had been no fire lighted in my bedroom since the spring, the flue was foul, and the rooks had built in it; so when I went up to dress for dinner, I found the room full of smoke, and the chimney on fire. Are we already at Blackwater?'

The train had gradually come to a pause while Mr. Dwerrhouse was speaking, and, on putting my head out of the window, I could see the station some few hundred yards ahead. There was another train before us blocking the way, and the guard was making use of the delay to collect the Blackwater tickets. I had scarcely ascertained our position, when the ruddy-faced official appeared at our carriage-door.

'Tickets, sir!' said he.

'I am for Clayborough,' I replied, holding out the tiny pink card.

He took it; glanced at it by the light of his little lantern; gave it back; looked, as I fancied, somewhat sharply at my fellow-traveller, and disappeared.

'He did not ask for yours,' I said with some surprise.

'They never do,' replied Mr. Dwerrhouse. 'They all know me, and of course I travel free.'

'Blackwater! Blackwater!' cried the por-

ter, running along the platform beside us, as we glided into the station.

Mr. Dwerrhouse pulled out his deed-box, put his travelling-cap in his pocket, resumed his hat, took down his umbrella and prepared to be gone.

'Many thanks, Mr. Langford, for your society,' he said, with old-fashioned courtesy. 'I wish you good evening.'

'Good evening,' I replied, putting out my hand.

But he either did not see it, or did not choose to see it, and, slightly lifting his hat, stepped out upon the platform. Having done this he moved slowly away, and mingled with the departing crowd.

Leaving forward to watch him out of sight, I trod upon something which proved to be a cigar case. It had fallen, no doubt, from the pocket of his water-proof coat, and was made of dark morocco leather, with a silver monogram on the side. I sprang out of the carriage just as the guard came up to lock me in.

'Is there one minute to spare?' I asked eagerly. 'The gentleman who travelled down with me from town has dropped his cigar-case; he is not yet out of the station!'

'Just a minute and a half, sir,' replied the guard. 'You must be quick.'

'I dashed along the platform as fast as my feet would carry me. It was a large station, and Mr. Dwerrhouse had by this time got more than half way to the farther end.

I, however saw him distinctly, moving slowly with the stream. Then, as I drew nearer, I saw that he had met some friend,—that they were talking as they walked,—that they presently fell back somewhat from the crowd, and stood aside in earnest conversation. I made straight for the spot where they were waiting. There was a vivid gas-jet just above their heads, and the light fell full upon their faces. I saw both distinctly,—the face of Mr. Dwerrhouse and the face of his companion. Running, breathless, eager as I was, getting in the way of porters and passengers, and fearful every instant lest I should see the train going off without me, I yet observed that the new-comer was considerably younger and shorter than the director, that he was sandy-haired, mustachioed, small-featured, and dressed in a close-cut suit of Scotch tweed. I was now within a few yards of them. I ran against a stout gentleman,—I was nearly knocked down by a luggage truck,—I stumbled over a carpet-bag,—I gained the spot just as the driver's whistle warned me to return.

To my utter stupefaction they were no longer there. I had seen them but two seconds before,—and they were gone! I stood still. I looked to right and left. I saw no sign of them in any direction. It was as if the platform had gaped and swallowed them.

'There were two gentlemen standing here a moment ago,' I said to a porter at my elbow; 'which way can they have gone?' 'I saw no gentleman, sir,' replied the man.

The whistle shrilled out again. The guard, far up the platform, held up his arm, and shouted to me to 'Come on!'

'If you're going on by this train, sir,' said the porter, 'you must run for it.'

I did run for it, just gained the carriage as the train began to move, was shoved in by the guard, and left breathless and bewildered, with Mr. Dwerrhouse's cigar-case still in my hand.

It was the strangest disappearance in the world. It was like a transformation trick in a pantomime. They were there one moment,—palpably there, talking with the gas-light full upon their faces; and the next moment they were gone. There was no door near,—no window,—no staircase. It was a mere slip of barren platform, tapostried with big advertisements. Could anything be more mysterious?

It was not worth thinking about; and yet, for my life, I could not help pondering upon it,—pondering, wondering, conjecturing, turning it over and over in my mind and beating my brains for a solution of the enigma. I thought of it all the way from Blackwater to Clayborough. I thought of it all the way from Clayborough to Dumbleton, as I rattled along the smooth highway in a trim dog-cart drawn by a splendid black mare, and driven by the silentest and dapperest of East Anglian grooms.

We did the nine miles in something less than an hour, and pulled up before the lodges just as the church-clock was striking half past seven. A couple of minutes more, and the warm glow of the lighted hall was flooding out upon the gravel, a hearty grasp was on my hand and a clear, jovial voice was bidding me 'Welcome to Dumbleton.'

'And now, my dear fellow,' said my host, when the first greeting was over, 'you have no time to spare. We dine at eight, and there are people coming to meet you; so you must just get the dressing business over as quickly as may be. By the way, you will meet some acquaintances. The Biddulphs are coming, and Prendergast (Prendergast

of the Skirmishers) is staying in the house. Adieu! Mrs. Jelf will be expecting you in the drawing-room.'

I was ushered to my room,—not the blue room, of which Mr. Dwerrhouse had had disagreeable experience, but a pretty little bachelor's chamber, hung with a delicate chintz, and made cheerful by a blazing fire. I unlocked my portmanteau. I tried to be expeditious; but the memory of my railway adventure haunted me. I could not get free of it. I could not shake it off. It impeded me,—it worried me,—it tripped me up,—it caused me to mislay my studs,—to mistie my cravat,—to wrench the buttons of my gloves. Worst of all, it made me so late that the party had all assembled before I reached the drawing-room. I had scarcely paid my respects to Mrs. Jelf, when dinner was announced, and we paired off, some eight or ten couples strong, into the dining-room.

I am not going to describe either the guests or the dinner. All provincial parties bear the strictest family resemblance, and I am not aware that an East Anglian banquet offers any exception to the rule. There was the usual country baronet and his wife; there were the usual country parsons and their wives; there was the sempiternal turkey and haunch of venison. "Vantus vanitatum." There is nothing new under the sun.

I was placed about midway down the table. I had taken one rector's wife down to dinner, and I had another at my left hand. They talked across me, and their talk was babies. It was dreadfully dull. At length there came a pause. The entrees had just been removed, and the turkey had come upon the scene. The conversation had all along been of the languidest, but at this moment it happened to have stagnated altogether. Jelf was carving the turkey. Mrs. Jelf looked as if she was trying to think of something to say. Everybody else was silent. Moved by an unlucky impulse, I thought I would relate my adventure.

'By the way, Jelf,' I began, 'I came down part of the way to-day with a friend of yours.'

'Indeed!' said the master of the feast, slicing scientifically into the breast of the turkey. 'With whom, pray?'

'With one who bade me to tell you that he should, if possible, pay you a visit before Christmas.'

'I cannot think who that could be,' said my friend, smiling.

'It must be Major Thorp,' suggested Mrs. Jelf.

I shook my head.

'It was not Major Thorp,' I replied.

'It was a near relation of your own, Mrs. Jelf.'

'Then I am more puzzled than ever,' replied my hostess. 'Pray, tell me who it was.'

'It was no less a person than your cousin, Mr. John Dwerrihouse.'

Jonathan Jelf laid down his knife and fork. Mrs. Jelf looked at me in a strange, startled way, and said never a word.

'And he desired me to tell you, my dear madam, that you need not take the trouble to burn the hall down in his honour this time; but only to have the chimney of the blue room swept before his arrival.'

Before I had reached the end of my sentence, I became aware of something ominous in the faces of the guests. I felt I had said something which I had better have left unsaid and that for some unexplained reason my words had evoked a general consternation. I sat confounded, not daring to utter another syllable, and for at least two whole minutes there was dead silence round the table. Then Captain Prendergast came to the rescue.

'You have been abroad for some months, have you not, Mr. Langford?' he said, with the desperation of one who flings himself into the breach. 'I heard you had been to Russia. Surely you have something to tell us of the state and temper of the country after the war?'

I was heartily grateful to the gallant Skirmisher for this diversion in my favour. I answered him, I fear, somewhat lamely; but he kept the conversation up, and presently one or two others joined in, and so the difficulty, whatever it might have been, was bridged over. Bridged over but not repaired. A something, an awkwardness, a visible constraint, remained. The guests hitherto had been simply dull; but now they were evidently uncomfortable and embarrassed.

The dessert had scarcely been placed upon the table when the ladies left the room. I seized the opportunity to select a vacant chair next Captain Prendergast.

'In Heaven's name,' I whispered, 'what was the matter just now? What had I said?'

'You mentioned the name of John Dwerrihouse.'

'What of that? I had seen him not two hours before.'

'It is a most astounding circumstance that you should have seen him,' said Captain Prendergast. 'Are you sure it was he?'

'As sure as of my own identity. We were talking all the way between London

and Blackwater. But why does that surprise you?'

'Because,' replied Captain Prendergast, dropping his voice to the lowest whisper, 'because John Dwerrihouse absconded three months ago, with seventy-five thousand pounds of the company's money, and has never been heard of since.'

II.

John Dwerrihouse had absconded three months ago, and I had seen him only a few hours back. John Dwerrihouse had embezzled seventy-five thousand pounds of the company's money, yet told me that he carried that sum upon his person. Were ever facts so strangely incongruous, so difficult to reconcile? How should he have ventured again into the light of day? How dared he show himself along the line? Above all, what had he been doing throughout those mysterious three months of disappearance?

Perplexing questions these. Questions which at once suggested themselves to the minds of all concerned, but which admitted of no easy solution. I could find no reply to them. Captain Prendergast had not even a suggestion to offer. Jonathan Jelf, who seized the first opportunity of drawing me aside and learning all that I had to tell, and was more amazed and bewildered than either of us. He came to my room that night, when all the guests were gone, and we talked the thing over from every point of view without, it must be confessed, arriving at any kind of conclusion.

'I do not ask you,' he said, 'whether you can have mistaken your man. That is impossible.'

'As impossible as that I should mistake some stranger for yourself.'

'It is not a question of looks of voice, but of facts. That he should have alluded to the fire in the blue-room is proof enough of John Dwerrihouse's identity. How did he look?'

'Older, I thought. Considerably older, paler, and more anxious.'

'He has had enough to make him look anxious, anyhow,' said my friend gloomily; 'be he innocent or guilty?'

'I am inclined to believe that he is innocent,' I replied. 'He showed no embarrassment when I addressed him, and no uneasiness when the guard came round. His conversation was open to a fault. I might almost say that he talked too freely of the business he had on hand.'

'That again is strange: for I know no one more reticent on such subject. He actually

told you that he had the seventy-five thousand pounds in his pocket?'

'He did.'

'Humph! My wife has an idea about it, and she may be right—'

'What idea?'

'Well, she fancies,—women are so clever, you know, at putting themselves inside people's motives,—she fancies that he was tempted; that he did actually take the money; and that he has been concealing himself these three months in some wild part of the country—struggling possibly with his conscience all the time, and daring neither to abscond with his booty nor to come back and restore it.'

'But now that he has come back?'

'That is the point. She conceives that he has probably thrown himself upon the company's mercy; made restitution of the money; and, being forgiven, is permitted to carry the business through as if nothing whatever had happened.'

'The last,' I replied, 'is an impossible case. Mrs. Jelf thinks like a generous and delicate-minded woman, but not in the least like a board of railway directors. They would never carry forgiveness so far.'

'I fear not; and yet it is the only conjecture that bears a semblance of likelihood. However, we can run over to Clayborough to-morrow, and see if anything is to be learned. By the way, Prendergast tells me you picked up his cigar-case.'

'I did so, and here it is.'

Jelf took the cigar-case, examined it by the light of the lamp, and said at once that it was beyond doubt Mr. Dwerrhouse's property, and that he remembered to have seen him use it.

'Here, too, in his monogram on the side,' he added. 'A big J transfixing a capital D. He used to carry the same on his note-paper.'

'It offers at all events a proof that I was not dreaming.'

'Ay; but it is time you were asleep and dreaming now. I am ashamed to have kept you up so long. Good-night.'

'Good night, and remember that I am more than ready to go with you to Clayborough, or Blackwater, or London, or anywhere, if I can be of the least service.'

'Thanks; I know you mean it, old friend, and it may be that I shall put you to the test. Once more, good night.'

So we parted for that night, and met again in the breakfast-room at half-past eight next morning. It was a hurried, silent, uncomfortable meal. None of us had slept well, and all were thinking of the same sub-

ject. Mrs. Jelf had evidently been crying; Jelf was impatient to be off; and both Captain Prendergast and myself felt ourselves to be in the painful position of outsiders, who are involuntarily brought into a domestic trouble. Within twenty minutes after we had left the breakfast table the dog-cart was brought round, and my friend and I were on the road to Clayborough.

'Tell you what it is, Langford,' he said, as we sped along between the wintry hedges, 'I do not much fancy to bring up Dwerrhouse's name at Clayborough. All the officials know that he is my wife's relation, and the subject just now is hardly a pleasant one. If you don't much mind, we will take the 11.10 to Blackwater. It's an important station, and we shall stand a far better chance of picking up information there than at Clayborough.'

So we took the 11.10, which happened to be an express, and arriving at Blackwater about a quarter before twelve, proceeded at once to prosecute our inquiry.

We began by asking for the station-master,—a big, blunt, business-like person, who at once avowed that he knew Mr. John Dwerrhouse perfectly well, and that there was no director on the road whom he had seen and spoken to so frequently.

'He used to be down here two or three times a week, about three months ago,' said he, 'when the new line was first set afoot; but since then, you know, gentlemen—'

He paused, significantly.

Jelf flushed scarlet.

'Yes, yes,' he said hurriedly, 'we know all about that. The point now to be ascertained is whether anything has been seen or heard of him lately.'

'Not to my knowledge,' replied the station-master.

'He is not known to have been down the line any time yesterday, for instance?'

The station-master shook his head.

'The East Anglian, sir,' said he, 'is about the last place where he would dare to show himself. Why, there isn't a station-master, there isn't a guard, there isn't a porter, who doesn't know Mr. Dwerrhouse by sight as well as he knows his own face in the looking-glass; or who wouldn't telegraph for the police as soon as he had set eyes on him at any point along the line. Bless you, sir! there's been a standing order out against him ever since the twenty-fifth of September last.'

'And yet,' pursued my friend, 'a gentleman who travelled down yesterday from London to Clayborough by the afternoon express testifies that he saw Mr. Dwerrhouse

in the train, and that Mr. Dwerrihouse alighted at Blackwater station.'

'Quite impossible, sir,' replied the station-master, promptly.

'Why impossible?'

'Because there is no station along the line where he is so well known, or where he would run so great a risk. It would be just running his head into the lion's mouth. He would have been mad to come nigh Blackwater station; and if he had come, he would have been arrested before he left the platform.'

'Can you tell me who took the Blackwater tickets of that train?'

'I can, sir. It was the guard,—Benjamin Somers.'

'And where can I find him?'

'You can find him, sir, by staying here, if you please, till one o'clock. He will be coming through with the up express from Crampton, which stays at Blackwater for ten minutes.'

We waited for the up express beguiling the time as best we could by strolling along the Blackwater road till we came almost to the outskirts of the town, from which the station was distant nearly a couple of miles. By one o'clock we were back again upon the platform, and waiting for the train. It came punctually, and I at once recognized the ruddy-faced guard who has gone down with my train the evening before.

'The gentlemen want to ask you something about Mr. Dwerrihouse, Somers,' said the station-master by way of introduction.

The guard flashed a keen glance from my face to Jelf's, and back again to mine.

'Mr. John Dwerrihouse, the late director?' said he, interrogatively.

'The same,' replied my friend. 'Should you know him if you saw him?'

'Anywhere, sir.'

'Do you know if he was in the 4.15 express yesterday afternoon?'

'He was not, sir.'

'How can you answer so positively?'

'Because I looked into every carriage, and saw every face in that train, and I could take my oath that Mr. Dwerrihouse was not in it. This gentleman was,' he added, turning sharply upon me. 'I don't know that I ever saw him before in my life, but I remember his face perfectly. You nearly missed taking your seat in time, at this station, sir, and you got out at Clayborough.'

'Quite true, guard,' I replied; but do you not also remember the face of the gentleman who travelled down in the same carriage with me as far as here?'

'It was my impression, sir, that you trav-

elled down alone,' said Somers, with a look of some surprise.

'By no means; I had a fellow-traveller as far as Blackwater, and it was in trying to restore him the cigar-case which he had dropped in the carriage that I so nearly let you go on without me.'

'I remember your saying something about a cigar-case, certainly,' replied the guard, 'but—'

'You asked for my ticket just before we entered the station.'

'I did, sir.'

'Then you must have seen him. He sat in the corner next the very door to which you came.'

'No, indeed. I saw no one.'

I looked at Jelf. I began to think the guard was in the ex-director's confidence, and paid for his silence.

'If I had seen another traveller I should have asked for his ticket, sir?'

'I observed that you did not ask for it, but he explained that by saying—' I hesitated. I feared I might be telling too much and so broke off abruptly.

The guard and the station-master exchanged glances. The former looked impatiently at his watch.

'I am obliged to go on in four minutes more, sir,' he said.

'One last question, then,' interposed Jelf, with a sort of desperation. 'If this gentleman's fellow-traveller had been Mr. John Dwerrihouse, and he had been sitting in the corner next the door by which you took the tickets, could you have failed to see and recognize him?'

'No, sir; it would have been quite impossible.'

'And you are certain you did not see him?'

'As I said before, sir, I could take my oath I did not see him. And if it wasn't that I don't like to contradict a gentleman, would say I could also take my oath that this gentleman was quite alone in the carriage the whole way from London to Clayborough. Why, sir,' he added, dropping his voice so as to be inaudible to the station-master, who had been called away to speak to some person close by, 'you expressly asked me to give you a compartment to yourself, and I did so. I locked you in, and you were so good as to give me something for myself.'

'Yes, but Mr. Dwerrihouse had a key of his own.'

'I never saw him sir; I saw no one in that compartment but yourself. Beg pardon, sir, my time's up.'

And with this the ruddy guard touched

his cap and was gone. In another minute the heavy panting of the engine began afresh, and the train glided slowly out of the station.

We looked at each other for some moments in silence. I was the first to speak.

'Mr. Benjamin Somers knows more than he chooses to tell,' I said.

'Humph! do you think so?'

'It must be. He could not have come to the door without seeing him. It's impossible.'

'There is one thing not impossible, my dear fellow.'

'What is that?'

'That you may have fallen asleep, and dreamt the whole thing.'

'Could I dream of a branch line that I had never heard of? Could I dream of a hundred and one business details that had no kind of interest for me? Could I dream of the seventy-five thousand pounds?'

'Perhaps you might have seen or heard some vague account of the affair while you were abroad. It might have made no impression upon you at the time, and might have come back to you in your dreams,—re-called, perhaps, by the mere names of the stations on the line.'

'What about the fire in the chimney of the blue-room,—should I have heard of that during my journey?'

'Well, no; I admit there is a difficulty about that point.'

'And what about the cigar-case?'

'Aye, by Jove! there is that cigar-case. That is a stubborn fact. Well, it's a mysterious affair, and it will need a better detective than myself, I fancy, to clear it up. I suppose we may as well go home.'

III.

A week had not gone by when I received a letter from the Secretary of the East Anglian Railway Company, requesting the favour of my attendance at a special board meeting, not then many days distant. No reasons were alleged, and no apologies offered, for this demand upon my time; but they had heard, it was clear, of my inquiries about the missing director, and had a mind to put me through some sort of official examination upon the subject. Being still a guest at Dumbleton Hall, I had to go up to London for the purpose, and Jonathan Jelf accompanied me. I found the direction of the Great East Anglian line represented by a party of some twelve or fourteen gentlemen seated in solemn conclave round a huge green baize table, in a gloomy board-room, adjoining the London terminus.

Being courteously received by the chairman (who at once began by saying that certain statements of mine respecting Mr. John Dwerrihouse had come to the knowledge of the direction, and that they in consequence desired to confer with me on those points), we were placed at the table, and the inquiry proceeded in due form.

I was first asked if I knew Mr. John Dwerrihouse, how long I had been acquainted with him, and whether I could identify him at sight. I was then asked when I had seen him last. To which I replied, 'On the fourth of this present month, December, eighteen hundred and fifty-six.' Then came the inquiry of where I had seen him on that fourth day of December; to which I replied that I met him in a first-class compartment of the 4.15 down express; that he got in just as the train was leaving the London terminus, and that he alighted at Blackwater station. The chairman then inquired whether I had held any communication with my fellow-traveller; whereupon I related, as nearly as I could remember it, the whole bulk and substance of Mr. John Dwerrihouse's diffuse information respecting the new branch line.

To all this the board listened with profound attention, while the chairman presided and the secretary took notes. I then produced the cigar-case. It was passed from hand to hand, and recognized by all. There was not a man present who did not remember that plain cigar-case with its silver monogram, or to whom it seemed anything else than entirely corroborative of my evidence. When at length I had told all that I had to tell, the chairman whispered something to the secretary; the secretary touched a silver hand-bell; and the guard, Benjamin Somers, was ushered into the room. He was then examined as carefully as myself. He declared that he knew Mr. John Dwerrihouse perfectly well; that he could not be mistaken in him; that he remembered going down with the 4.15 express on the afternoon in question; that he remembered me; and that, there being one or two empty first-class compartments on that special afternoon, he had, in compliance with my request, placed me in a carriage by myself. He was positive that I remained alone in that compartment all the way from London to Clayborough. He was ready to take his oath that Mr. Dwerrihouse was neither in that carriage with me, nor in any compartment of that train. He remembered distinctly to have examined my ticket at Blackwater; was certain that there was no one else at that time in the carriage; could not have failed to observe a second person, if there had been one; had that person been Mr. John Dwerri-

house, should have quietly double-locked the door of the carriage, and have at once given information to the Blackwater station-master. So clear, so decisive, so ready was Somers with his testimony, that the board looked fairly puzzled.

'You hear this person's statement, Mr. Langford,' said the chairman. 'It contradicts yours in every particular. What have you to say in reply?'

'I can only repeat what I said before. I am quite as positive of the truth of my own assertions as Mr. Somers can be of the truth of his.'

'You say that Mr. Dwerrhouse alighted at Blackwater, and that he was in possession of a private key. Are you sure that he had not alighted by means of that key before the guard came round for the tickets?'

'I am quite positive that he did not leave the carriage till the train had fairly entered the station, and the other Blackwater passengers alighted. I even saw that he was met there by a friend.'

'Indeed! Did you see that person distinctly?'

'Quite distinctly.'

'Can you describe his appearance?'

'I think so. He was short and very slight, sandy-haired, with a bushy mustache and beard, and he wore a closely-fitting suit of gray tweed. His age I should take to be about thirty-eight or forty.'

'Did Mr. Dwerrhouse leave the station in this person's company?'

'I cannot tell. I saw them walking together down the platform, and then I saw them standing aside under a gas-jet, talking earnestly. After that I lost sight of them quite suddenly; and just then my train went on, and I with it.'

The chairman and secretary conferred together in an undertone. The directors whispered to each other. One or two looked suspiciously at the guard. I could see that my evidence remained unshaken, and that, like myself, they suspected some complicity between the guard and the defaulter.

'How far did you conduct that 4.15 express on the day in question, Somers?' asked the chairman.

'All through, sir,' replied the guard; 'from London to Crampton.'

'How was it that you were not relieved at Clayborough? I thought there was always a change of guards at Clayborough.'

'There used to be, sir, till the new regulations came in force last midsummer, since when, the guards in charge of express trains go the whole way through.'

The chairman turned to the secretary.

'I think it would be well,' he said, 'if

we had the day-book to refer to upon this point.'

Again the secretary touched the silver hand-bell, and desired the porter in attendance to summons Mr. Raikes. From a word or two dropped by another of the directors, I gathered that Mr. Raikes was one of the under-secretaries.

He came,—a small, slight, sandy-haired, keen-eyed man, with an eager, nervous manner, and a forest of light beard and mustache. He just showed himself at the door of the board-room, and, being requested to bring a certain day-book from a certain shelf in a certain room, bowed and vanished.

He was there but a moment, and the surprise of seeing him was so great and sudden, that it was not till the door had closed upon him that I found voice to speak. He was no sooner gone, however, than I sprang to my feet.

'That person,' I said, 'is the same who met Mr. Dwerrhouse upon the platform at Blackwater!'

There was a general movement of surprise. The chairman looked grave and somewhat agitated.

'Take care, Mr. Langford,' he said, 'take care what you say!'

'I am as positive of his identity as of my own.'

'Do you consider the consequences of your words? Do you consider that you are bringing a charge of the gravest character against one of the company's servants?'

'I am willing to be put upon my oath, if necessary. The man who came to the door a minute since is the same whom I saw talking with Mr. Dwerrhouse on the Blackwater platform. Were he twenty times the company's servant, I could say neither more nor less.'

The chairman turned again to the guard.

'Did you see Mr. Raikes in the train, or on the platform?' he asked.

Somers shook his head.

'I am confident Mr. Raikes was not in the train,' he said; 'and I certainly did not see him on the platform.'

The chairman turned next to the secretary.

'Mr. Raikes is in your office, Mr. Hunter,' he said. 'Can you remember if he was absent on the fourth instant?'

'I do not think he was,' replied the secretary; 'but I am not prepared to speak positively. I have been away most afternoons myself lately, and Mr. Raikes might easily have absented himself if he had been disposed.'

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turned with the day-book under his arm.
'Be pleased to refer, Mr. Raikes,' said the chairman, 'to the entries of the fourth inst-
ant, and see what Benjamin Somers' duties were on that day.'

Mr. Raikes threw open the cumbrous volume, and ran a practised eye and finger down some three or four successive columns of entries. Stopping suddenly at the foot of a page, he then read aloud that Benjamin Somers had on that day conducted the 4.15 express from London to Crampton.

The chairman leaned forward in his seat, looked the under-secretary full in the face, and said, quite sharply and suddenly,—

'Where were you, Mr. Raikes, on the same afternoon?'

'I, sir?'

'You, Mr. Raikes. Where were you on the afternoon and evening of the fourth of the present month?'

'Here, sir,—in Mr. Hunter's office. Where else should I be?'

There was a dash of trepidation in the under-secretary's voice as he said this; but his look of surprise was natural enough.

'We have some reason for believing, Mr. Raikes, that you were absent that afternoon without leave. Was this the case?'

'Certainly not, sir. I have not had a day's holiday since September. Mr. Hunter will bear me out in this.'

Mr. Hunter repeated what he had previously said on the subject, but added that the clerks in the adjoining office would be certain to know. Whereupon the senior clerk, a grave, middle-aged person, in green glasses, was summoned and interrogated.

His testimony cleared the under-secretary at once. He declared that Mr. Raikes had in no instance, to his knowledge, been absent during office hours since his return from his annual holiday in September.

I was confounded. The chairman turned to me with a smile, in which a shade of covert annoyance was scarcely apparent.

'You hear, Mr. Langford,' he said.

'I hear, sir; but my conviction remains unshaken.'

'I fear, Mr. Langford, that your convictions are very insufficiently based,' replied the chairman, with a doubtful cough.

'I fear that you dream dreams, and mistake them for actual occurrences. It is a dangerous habit of mind, and might lead to dangerous results. Mr. Raikes here would have found himself in an unpleasant position, had he not proved so satisfactory an *alibi*.

I was about to reply, but he gave me no time.

'I think, gentlemen,' he went on to say, addressing the board, 'that we should be

wasting time to push this inquiry further. Mr. Langford's evidence would seem to be of an equal value throughout. The testimony of Benjamin Somers disproves his first statement, and the testimony of the last witness disproves his second. I think we may conclude that Mr. Langford fell asleep in the train on the occasion of his journey to Clayborough, and dreamt an unusually vivid and circumstantial dream—of which, however, we have now heard quite enough.'

There are few things more annoying than to find one's positive convictions met with incredulity. I could not help feeling impatient at the turn that affairs had taken. I was not proof against the civil sarcasm of the chairman's manner. Most intolerable of all, however, was the quiet smile lurking about the corners of Benjamin Somers' mouth, and the half-triumphant, half-malicious gleam in the eyes of the under-secretary. The man was evidently puzzled, and somewhat alarmed. His looks seemed furtively to interrogate me. Who was I? What did I want? Why had I come there to do him an ill turn with his employers? What was it to me whether or no he was absent without leave?

Seeing all this, and perhaps more irritated by it than the thing deserved, I begged leave to detain the attention of the board for a moment longer. Jelf plucked me impatiently by the sleeve.

'Better let the thing drop,' he whispered. 'The chairman's right enough. You dream it; and the less said now the better.'

I was not to be silenced, however, in this fashion. I had yet something to say, and I would say it. It was to this effect; that dreams were not usually productive of tangible results, and that I requested to know in what way the chairman conceived I had evolved from my dream so substantial and well-made a delusion as the cigar-case which I had had the honour to place before him at the commencement of our interview.

'The cigar-case, I admit, Mr. Langford,' the chairman replied, 'is a very strong point in your evidence. It is your only strong point, however, and there is just a possibility that we may all be misled by a mere accidental resemblance. Will you permit me to see the case again?'

'It is unlikely,' I said as I handed it to him, 'that any other should bear precisely this monogram, and yet be in all other particulars exactly similar.'

The chairman examined it for a moment in silence, and then passed it to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Hunter turned it over and over, and shook his head.

'This is no mere resemblance,' he said. 'It is John Dwerrhouse's cigar-case to a

certainly. I remember it perfectly. I have seen it a hundred times.'

'I believe I may say the same,' added the chairman. 'Yet how account for the way in which Mr. Langford asserts that it came into his possession?'

'I can only repeat,' I replied, 'that I found it on the floor of the carriage after Mr. Dwerrhouse had alighted. It was in leaning out to look after him that I trod upon it; and it was in running after him for the purpose of restoring it that I saw—or believed I saw—Mr. Raikes standing aside with him in earnest conversation.'

Again I felt Jonathan Jelf plucking at my sleeve.

'Look at Raikes,' he whispered,—'look at Raikes!'

I turned to where the under-secretary had been standing a moment before, and saw him, white as death, with lips trembling and livid, stealing towards the door.

To conceive a sudden, strange, and indefinite suspicion; to fling myself in his way; to take him by the shoulders as if he were a child, and turn his craven face, perforce, towards the board, were with me the work of an instant.

'Look at him!' I exclaimed. 'Look at his face! I ask no better witness to the truth of my words.'

The chairman's brow darkened.

'Mr. Raikes,' he said sternly, 'if you know anything, you had better speak.'

Vainly trying to wrench himself from my grasp, the under-secretary stammered out an incoherent denial.

'Let me go,' he said. 'I know nothing—you have no right to detain me—let me go!'

'Did you or did you not meet Mr. John Dwerrhouse at Blackwater station. The charge brought against you is either true or false. If true, you will do well to throw yourself upon the mercy of the board, and make full confession of all that you know.'

The under-secretary wrung his hands in agony of helpless terror.

'I was away,' he cried. 'I was two hundred miles away at the time! I know nothing about it—I have nothing to confess—I am innocent—I call God to witness I am innocent!'

'Two hundred miles away!' echoed the chairman. 'What do you mean?'

'I was in Devonshire. I had three weeks' leave of absence—I appeal to Mr. Hunter—Mr. Hunter knows I had three weeks' leave of absence! I was in Devonshire all the time—I can prove I was in Devonshire!'

Seeing him so abject, so incoherent, so

wild with apprehension, the directors began to whisper gravely among themselves, while one got quietly up, and called the porter to guard the door.

'What has you being in Devonshire to do with the matter?' said the chairman. 'When were you in Devonshire?'

'Mr. Raikes took his leave in September,' said the secretary; 'about the time when Mr. Dwerrhouse disappeared.'

'I never even heard that he had disappeared till I came back!'

'That must remain to be proved,' said the chairman. 'I shall at once put this matter in the hands of the police. In the meanwhile, Mr. Raikes, being myself a magistrate, and used to deal with these cases, I advise you to offer no resistance, but to confess while confession may yet do you service. As for your accomplice—'

The frightened wretch fell upon his knees.

'I had no accomplice!' he cried. 'Only have mercy upon me,—only spare my life, and I will confess all! I didn't mean to harm him! I didn't mean to hurt a hair of his head. Only have mercy upon me, and let me go!'

The chairman rose in his place, pale and agitated. 'Good heavens!' he exclaimed, 'what horrible mystery is this? What does it mean?'

'As sure as there is a God in heaven,' said Jonathan Jelf, 'it means that murder has been done.'

'No—no—no!' shrieked Raikes, still upon his knees, and covering like a beaten hound. 'Not murder! No jury that ever sat could bring it in murder. I thought I had only stunned him!—I never meant to do more than stun him! Manslaughter—manslaughter—not murder!'

Overcome by the horror of this unexpected revelation, the chairman covered his face with his hand, and for a moment or two remained silent.

'Miserable man,' he said at length, 'you have betrayed yourself.'

'You bade me confess! You urged me to throw myself upon the mercy of the board!'

'You have confessed to a crime which no one suspected you of having committed,' replied the chairman, 'and which this board has no power either to punish or forgive. All that I can do for you is to advise you to submit to the law, to plead guilty, and to conceal nothing. When did you do this deed?'

The guilty man rose to his feet, and leaned heavily against the table. His answer

came reluctantly, like the speech of one dreaming.

'On the twenty-second of September !'

On the twenty-second of September ! I looked in Jonathan Jelf's face, and he in mine. I felt my own paling with a strange sense of wonder and dread. I saw his blanch suddenly, even to his lips.

'Merciful heaven !' he whispered, 'what was it, then, that you saw in the train ?'

What was it that I saw in the train ? That question remains unanswered to this day. I have never been able to reply to it. I only know that it bore the living likeness of the murdered man, whose body had then been lying some ten weeks under a rough pile of branches, and brambles, and rotten leaves, at the bottom of a deserted chalk-pit about half-way between Blackwater and Mallingford. I know that it spoke, and moved, and looked as that man spoke and moved, and looked in life ; that I heard, or seemed to hear, things related which I could never otherwise have learned ; that I was guided, as it were, by that vision on the platform to the identification of the murderer ; and that, a passive instrument myself, I was destined, by means of these mysterious teachings, to bring about the ends of justice. For these things I have never been able to account.

As for that matter of the cigar-case, it proved, on inquiry, that the carriage in which I travelled down that afternoon to Clayborough had not been in use for several weeks, and was in point of fact the same in which poor John Dwerrihouse had performed his last journey. The case had, doubtless, been dropped by him, and had lain unnoticed till I found it.

Upon the details of the murder I have no need to dwell. Those who desire more ample particulars may find them, and the written confession of Augustus Raikes in the files of the Times for 1856. Enough that the under-secretary, knowing the negotiation step by step through all its stages, determined to waylay Mr. Dwerrihouse, rob him of the seventy-five thousand pounds, and escape to America with his booty.

In order to effect these ends he obtained leave of absence a few days before the time

appointed for the payment of the money ; secured his passage across the Atlantic in a steamer advertised to start on the twenty-third ; provided himself with a heavily loaded 'life-preserver,' and went down to Blackwater to await the arrival of his victim. How he met him on the platform with a pretended message from the board ; how he offered to conduct him by a short cut across the fields to Mallingford ; having brought him to a lonely place, he struck him down with the life-preserver, and so killed him ; and how, finding what he had done, he dragged the body to the verge of an out-of-the-way chalk-pit, and there flung it in, and piled it over with branches and brambles—are facts still fresh in the memories of those who, like the connoisseurs in De Quincey's famous essay, regard murder as a fine art. Strangely enough, the murderer, having done his work, was afraid to leave the country. He declared that he had not intended to take the director's life, but only to stun and rob him ; and that finding the blow had killed, he dared not fly for fear of drawing down suspicion upon his own head. As a mere robber he would have been safe in the States, but as a murderer he would inevitably have been pursued, and given up to justice. So he forfeited his passage, returned to the office as usual at the end of his leave, and locked up his ill-gotten thousands till a more convenient opportunity. In the meanwhile he had the satisfaction of finding that Mr. Dwerrihouse was universally believed to have absconded with the money, no one knew whither.

Whether he meant murder or not, however, Mr. Augustus Raikes paid the full penalty of his crime, and was hanged at the Old Bailey in the second week in January, 1857. Those who desire to make his further acquaintance may see him in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's exhibition, in Baker Street. He is there to be found in the midst of a select society of ladies and gentlemen of atrocious memory, dressed in the close-cut tweed suit which he wore on the evening of the murder, and holding in his hand the identical life-preserver with which he committed it.

THE SIGNAL MAN.

'Halloa! Below there!'

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was standing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furling round its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted from what quarter the voice came; but instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about and looked down the line. There was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said, for my life, what. But I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his figure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, and so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset that I had shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all.

'Halloa! Below!'

From looking down the line he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

'Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?'

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question. Just then there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an on-coming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down. When such vapor as rose to my height from this rapid train had passed me and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again, and saw him refurling the flag he had shown me while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled-up flag towards a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him, 'All right!' and made for that point. There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zigzag descending path notched out; which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate. It was made through a clammy stone that became oozier and wetter as I went down. For these reasons I found the way long enough to give me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand to his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and, stepping out upon the level of the railroad and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark, sallow man, with a dark beard, and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way, only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction, terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing and forbidding air. So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, and it had an earthly deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushes through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step, and lifted his hand.

This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said), and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwelcome rarity, I hoped? In me he merely saw a man who had been shut up within narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free, had a newly awakened interest in

these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used, for, besides that I am not happy in opening my conversation, there was something in the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look towards the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me.

That light was part of his charge? Was it not?

He answered in a low voice, 'Don't you know it is?'

The monstrous thought came into my mind, as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since whether there may have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But in making the action, I detected in his eyes some latent fear for me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

'You look at me,' I said, forcing a smile, 'as if you had a dread of me.'

'I was doubtful,' he returned, 'whether I had seen you before.'

'Where?'

He pointed to the red light he had looked at. 'There?' I said.

Intently watchful of me, he replied (but without sound), 'Yes.'

'My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear.'

'I think I may,' he rejoined. 'Yes, I am sure I may.'

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well-chosen words. Had he much to do there? Yes; that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work—manual labour—he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim those lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then, was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here,—if only to know it by sight, and to have formed his own crude ideas of his own pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him when on duty, always to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone

walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Line than under others, and the same held good as to certain hours of the day and night. In bright weather, he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such times listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.

He took me into his box, where there was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial, face and needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well educated, and (I hoped I might say without offence) perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such-wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in work-houses, in the police force, even in that last desperate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less, in any great railway staff. He had been, when young (if I could believe it, sitting in that hut; he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, gone down, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed he said in a quiet manner, with his grave, dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word 'Sir' from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth, as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages, and send replies. Once he had to stand without the door and display a flag as a train passed, and made some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word, I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the circumstances that while he was speaking to me he twice broke off with a fallen colour, turned his face towards the little bell when it did not ring, opened the door of the hut (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp), and looked out towards the red

light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions he came back to the fire which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

Said I, when I rose to leave him, 'You almost made me think that I have met with a contented man.'

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on.)

'I believe I used to be so,' he rejoiced, in the low voice in which he had first spoken; 'but I am troubled, sir, I am troubled.'

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, however, and I took them up quickly.

'With what? What is your trouble?'

'It is very difficult to impart, sir. It is very, very difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you.'

'But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be.'

'I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, sir.'

'I will come at eleven.'

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me. 'I'll show my white light, sir,' he said, in his peculiar low voice, 'till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don't call out! And when you are at the top don't call out!'

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than, 'Very well.'

'And when you come down to-morrow night, don't call out! Let me ask you a parting question. What made you cry, "Halloa! Below there!" to-night?'

'Heaven knows,' said I. 'I cried something to that effect—'

'Not to that effect, sir. Those were the very words. I know them well.'

'Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below.'

'For no other reason?'

'What other reason could I possibly have?'

'You had no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way?'

'No.'

He wished me good-night, and held up his light. I walked by the side of the down line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me), until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got back to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the first notch of the zig-zag next night, as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bottom, with his white light on.

'I have not called out,' I said, when we came close together; 'may I speak now?'

'By all means, sir.'

'Good-night then, and here's my hand.'

'Good-night, sir, and here's mine.'

With that we walked side by side to his box, entered it, closed the door, and sat down by the fire.

'I have made up my mind, sir,' he began, bending forward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but a little above a whisper, 'that you shall not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for some one else yesterday evening. That troubles me.'

'That mistake?'

'No. That some one else.'

'Who is it?'

'I don't know.'

'Like me?'

'I don't know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved. Violently waved. This way.'

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating with the utmost passion and vehemence: 'For God's sake clear the way!'

'One moonlight night,' said the man, 'I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry, "Halloa! Below there!" I looked up, looked from that door, and saw this some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, "Look out! Look out!" And then again, "Halloa! below there! Look out!" I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran towards the figure, calling, "What's wrong? What has happened? Where?" It stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up at it, and had my hand stretched out to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone.'

'Into the tunnel?' said I.

'No. I ran into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I ran out again, faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed both ways, "An alarm has been given. Is anything wrong?" The answer came back, both ways, "All well."

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger

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tracing out my spine, I showed him how
that this figure must be a deception of his
sense of sight, and how that figures, origin-
ating in disease of the delicate nerves that
minister to the functions of the eye, were
known to have often troubled patients,
some of whom had become unconscious of
the nature of their affliction, and had
even proved it by experiments upon
themselves. 'As to an imaginary cry,'
said I, 'do but listen for a moment to the
wind in this unnatural valley while we
speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes
of the telegraph wires !'

That was all very well, he returned, after
we had sat listening for a while, and he
ought to know something of the wind and the
wires, he who had so often passed long
winter nights there, alone and watching.
But he would beg to remark that he had not
finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added
these words, touching my arm :—

'Within six hours after the appearance,
the memorable accident on this line happen-
ed, and within ten hours the dead and
wounded were brought along through the
tunnel over the spot where the figure had
stood.'

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but
I did my best against it. It was not to be
denied, I rejoined, that this was a remark-
able coincidence, calculated deeply to im-
press the mind. But it was unquestionable
that remarkable coincidences did continually
occur, and they must be taken into account
in dealing with such a subject. Though, to
be sure, I must admit, I added (for I thought
I saw that he was going to bring the objec-
tion to bear upon me), men of common sense
did not allow much for coincidences in mak-
ing the ordinary calculations of life.

He again begged to remark that he had
not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being be-
trayed into interruptions.

'This,' he said, again laying his
hand upon my arm, and glancing over his
shoulder with hollow eyes, 'was just a year
ago. Six or seven months passed, and I
had recovered from the surprise and shock,
when one morning, as the day was breaking,
I, standing at that door, looked toward the
red light, and saw the spectre again.' He
stopped, with a fixed look at me.

'Did it cry out ?'

'No. It was silent.'

'Did it wave its arm ?'

'No. It leaned against the shaft of the
light, with both hands before the face. Like
this.'

Once more I followed his action with my

eyes. It was an action of mourning. I
have seen such an attitude in stone figures on
tombs.

'Did you go up to it ?'

'I came in and sat down, partly to col-
lect my thoughts, partly because it had
turned me faint. When I went to the door
again, daylight was above me, and the ghost
was gone.'

'But nothing followed ? Nothing came of
this ?'

He touched me on the arm with his fore-
finger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod
each time.

'That very day, as a train came out of the
tunnel, I noticed at a carriage window on
my side what looked like a confusion of
hands and heads, and something waved. I
saw it just in time to signal the driver,
Stop !'

'He shut off and put his brakes on, but the
train drifted past here a hundred and fifty
yards or more. I ran after it, and as I went
along heard terrible screams and cries. A
beautiful young lady had died instantane-
ously in one of the compartments, and was
brought in here, and laid down on this floor
between us.'

Involuntarily I pushed my chair back, as
I looked from the boards at which he pointed
to himself.

'True, sir. True. Precisely as it hap-
pened, so I tell it you.'

I could think of nothing to say, to any
purpose, and my mouth was very dry. The
wind and the wires took up the story with a
long, lamenting wail.

We resumed. 'Now, sir, mark this, as I
judge how my mind is troubled. The spectre
came back, a week ago. Ever since it has
been there, now and again, by fits and
starts.'

'At the light ?'

'At the Danger-light.'

'What does it seem to do ?'

He repeated, if possible with increased
passion and vehemence, that former gesticu-
lation of 'For God's sake clear the way !'

Then he went on. 'I have no peace or
rest for it. It calls to me, for many min-
utes together, in an agonized manner,
'Below there ! Look out ! Look out !'
It stands waiving to me. It rings my little
bell—'

I caught at that. 'Did it ring your bell
yesterday evening when I was here, and you
went to the door ?'

'Twice.'

'Why, see,' said I, 'how your imagina-
tion misleads you. My eyes were on the
bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and,
if I am a living man, it did not ring at those

times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung in the natural course of physical things by the station communicating with you.

He shook his head. 'I have never made a mistake as to that, yet, sir. I have never confused the spectre's ring with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration in the bell that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I don't wonder that you failed to hear it. But I heard it.'

'And did the spectre seem to be there, when you looked out?'

'It was there.'

'Both times?'

He repeated firmly: 'Both times.'

'Will you come to the door with me, and look for it now?'

He bit his under-lip as though he were somewhat unwilling but arose. I opened the door, and stood on the step while he stood in the doorway. There was the Danger-light. There was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There was the high wet stone walls of the cutting. There was the stars above them.

'Do you see it?' I asked him, taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained; but not very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I had directed them earnestly towards the same point.

'No,' he answered. 'It is not there.'

'Agreed,' said I.

We went in again, shut the door, and resumed our seats. I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the conversation in such a matter-of-course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself placed in the weakest of positions.

'By this time you will fully understand, sir,' he said, 'that what troubles me so dreadfully is the question, What does the spectre mean?'

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

'What is its warning against?' he said, ruminating, with his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them on me. 'What is the danger? Where is the danger? There is danger overhanging somewhere on the Line. Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted the third time, after what has gone before. But surely this is a cruel haunting of me. What can I do?'

He pulled out his handkerchief and wiped the drops from his heated forehead.

'If telegraphed Danger on either side of

me, or on both, I could give no reason for it,' he went on, wiping the palms of his hands. 'I should get into trouble and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work:—Message: "Danger! Take care!" Answer: "What Danger? Where?" Message: "Don't know. But for God's sake take care!" They would displace me. What else could they do?'

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

'When it first stood under the Danger-light,' he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, 'why not tell me where that accident was to happen, if it must happen? Why not tell me how it could be averted, if it could have been averted? When on his second coming it hid its face, why not tell me instead: "She is going to die. Let them keep her at home?" It came, on those two occasions, only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord, help me! A mere poor single-man on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act?'

When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man's sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all questions of reality or unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty must do well, and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupations incidental to his post, as the night advanced, began to make larger demands on his attention; and I left him at two in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he would not hear of it.

That I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that, either.

But what ran most in my thoughts was the consideration, how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I

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had proved the man to be intelligent, vigi-
lant, painstaking, and exact; but how long
might he remain so, in his state of mind?
Thought in a subordinate position, still he
held a most important trust, and would I (for
instance) like to take my own life on the
chances of his continuing to execute it with
precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there
would be something treacherous in my com-
municating what he had told me to his su-
periors in the Company, without first being
plain with himself and proposing a middle
course to him, I ultimately resolved to offer
to accompany him (otherwise keeping his
secret for the present) to the wisest medical
practitioner we could hear of in those parts,
and to take his opinion. A change in his
time of duty would come round next night,
he had apprised me, and he would be off an
hour or two before sunrise, and on again
soon after sunset. I had appointed to return
accordingly.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I
walked out early to enjoy it. The sun was
not yet quite down when I traversed the
field-path near the top of the deep cutting.
I would extend my walk for an hour, I said
to myself, half an hour on and half an hour
back, and it would then be time to go to my
signal-man's box.

Before pursuing my stroll I stepped to the
brink, and mechanically looked down, from
the point from which I had first seen him.
I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon
me, when, close at the mouth of the tunnel,
I saw the appearance of a man, with his left
sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving
his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me
passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw
that this appearance of a man was a
man indeed, and that there was a little
group of other men standing at a distance,
to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the ges-
ture he made. The Danger-light was not yet
lighted. Against its shaft, a little low but
entirely new to me had been made of some
wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked
no bigger than a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something
was wrong, with a flashing self-reproachful
feeling that fatal mischief had come of my leav-
ing the man there, and causing no one to be
sent to overlook or correct what he did—I
descended the notched path with all the
speed I could make.

'What is the matter?' I asked the
men.

'Signal-man killed this morning, sir.'
'Not the man belonging to that box?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Not the man I know?'

'You will recognize him, sir, if you knew
him,' said the man who spoke for the others,
solemnly uncovering his own head and rais-
ing an end of the tarpaulin, 'for his face is
quite right yet.'

'O, how did this happen, how did this
happen?' I asked, turning from one to an-
other as the hut closed in again.

'He was cut down by an engine, sir. No
man in England knew his work better. But
somehow he was not clear of the outer-
rail. It was just at broad day. He had
struck the light, and had the lamp in his
hand. As the engine came out of the tunnel,
his back was towards her, and she cut him
down. That man drove her, and was show-
ing how it happened. Show the gentleman,
Tom.'

The man, who wore a rough, dark dress,
stepped back to his former place at the
mouth of the tunnel.

'Coming round the curve in the tunnel,
sir,' he said, 'I saw him at the end like as
if I saw him down a perspective-glass. There
was no time to check speed, and I knew him
to be very careful. As he didn't seem to
take heed of the whistle, I shut it off when
we were running down upon him, and called
to him as loud as I could call.'

'What did you say?'

'I said, Below there! Look out! Look
out! For God's sake clear the way!'

I started.

'Ah! it was a dreadful time, sir. I never
left off calling to him. I put this arm before
my eyes, not to see, and I waved this arm
to the last; but it was no use.'

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell
on any one of its curious circumstances more
than on any of its other, I may, in closing it,
point out the coincidence that the warning
of the Engine-Driver included, not only the
words which the unfortunate signal-man had
repeated to me as haunting him, but also
the words which I myself—not he—had at-
tached, and that only in my own mind, to
the gesticulation he had imitated.

THE END.

