

PAGES

MISSING

THE CIVILIAN

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No. 7

A Job or a Career.

The name "office seeker" is applied practically to only one class of seekers for office—those who desire places of emolument in the public service. There is something enterprising.

To try to qualify oneself for employment by a railway company, by a business house or by a professional firm is regarded as being in itself honorable, and, when the quest is pursued with diligence the seeker for an engagement is commended by public opinion for his enterprise and perseverance. But when a man seeks public employment it seems to be assumed that he desires only a safe retreat from the hurly-burly of active life, and when he succeeds in gaining the office he seeks he is spoken of not as having earned the reward of industry and ability but of having enjoyed far more luck than should be monopolized by one man. He is spoken of not as having entered upon a career but as having been given a permanent and easy job. This, of course is not the way all people regard each and every government appointment, but the very term of "office seeker" and the opprobrium that it expresses prove that there exists exactly the feeling here indicated.

But he must be a very unimpressible and unimaginative person who, being appointed to a position in the public service, regards himself only as the holder of an office. As a matter of fact he has only placed his foot on the first rung of a ladder of achievement the top whereof reaches wholly beyond his vision. He has not secured a job; he has entered upon a career.

Unfortunately, the public service and those who are engaged in it are not governed by opinion formed in the service itself as by this vicious outside opinion, which persists in regarding the person ambitious for a public place as an "office seeker" and the successful office seeker as only the holder of a government job. Like master, like man, and so the sentiment of the people in this matter is reflected in the Parliament that represents the people, and is inflicted—that is the only way to speak of it—upon the civil service.

The growing complexity of governmental business is helping to change the point of view from which the people regard those who engage in that business. If mails are irregular, if people are poisoned with bad food, if the country is overrun with noxious weeds or insect pests, the people concerned are forced to realize that there is a failure on the part of some public servants to perform the duty they are paid to perform. The essential unreasonableness of expecting mere "office seekers" or the mere holders of government jobs to cope with the problems of practical government in a social system as complex as ours cannot but suggest itself to people who do any thinking at all. And, as to the others, they are jolted out of their indifference and inattention by the fact that it is a sheer natural impossibility to get good work out of incapable or essentially dishonest people—you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

It is because lesson after lesson of this practical kind has been taught the people of Canada that we are now

getting the benefit of laws and administrations designed to encourage the good civil servant and get rid of the bad one. In fact, the idea that the civil service is a career and not a job is slowly making its way through the convolutions of the public brain. "A light in darkness: let it grow."

* * *

And it is growing. As a most welcome and refreshing sign of the times when public opinion shall have reached the fundamental sanity that will permit it to react on conditions in the civil service we reprint the following editorial of July 20 from the *Toronto News* under the heading: "The Civil Service."

"To the average mind the words civil service bring two pictures — one of a well dressed personage faring up Elgin street, Ottawa, towards a Castle of Indolence, or faring from the Castle to the Rideau Club; the other, of a Customs outlander stopping to gossip with a friend before attending to customers. In like manner the word Government is visualized as an amorphous something, dwelling in Gothic splendor, and handing out jobs to supporters.

"This latter actively accounts for our latent impressions of the civil service. We have been accustomed to believe that a government job is the solution of that ancient problem: How can I live without working? So we who pretend to be industrious have grown contemptuous of the service — in an unthinking way — and have bent our noses to the grindstone in the spirit of thankfulness. We have to work. We do work, and thus acquire merit in our own souls at a cheap rate. Feeling self-laudatory, we are a bit lofty in spirit concerning yeggmen, tramps, and civil servants. We almost feel like including the latter class of national pensioners in our prayers 'for infants and young children.'

"The party system of filling government offices has degraded the civil

ment offices has degraded the civil service in the eyes of the people. False ideas are prevalent. It is not true that the existence of a government employee is a halcyon time-passing. Indeed it is utterly the reverse of true. From the Auditor-General down the work is toilsome and long. There is enough and more than enough to occupy the keenest mind and the most alert observation. And it is not to be denied that intelligent and industrious men are meeting these problems daily, solving them by the application of good horse sense, and getting out of the solution the satisfaction that good work induces. Some times we meet civil servants mourning over their lot, and airing a perpetual "grouch." These are the lazy ones—expectant of no work and finding a great deal. But it must be said that they form a negligible minority. Yet many of us have allowed this minority to sit for a photograph of the service.

"Consider the expansion of Canada, its extent, the vast deal that must be done to improve our ports, to provide transportation, to light our waterways, to stimulate agriculture, to erect public buildings, to meet the needs of new settlers, to advertise our resources, to conserve our wealth, to police the West. The Ministers of the Crown do no detail work—or almost none—yet they are swamped with correspondence on mere matters of policy. Think of the task of a Deputy Minister, how he must organize, and learn, and investigate; how he must command an intimate knowledge of administrative and financial detail far more involved than that of the largest of private corporations! And on down through the Chief Clerks in charge of sub-departments to the stenographer—all must work swiftly and accurately if they are to emerge triumphant at the end of the day.

"Why should politics count in the appointment and promotion of these men? Is there anything more stupid?

True, the Inside service has been established on a business basis under the supervision of a non-partizan board. But the Outside service is on the old foundation—and it is insecure.

The government should lose no time in sweeping away the obsolete system of patronage as applied to civil servants."

Superannuation Embroglio in the United States.

Message from the President Transmitting a Report of the Commission on Economy and Efficiency on the Subject of Retirement. A Bad Case of Muddle.

The above is found on the title page of Document No. 732 of the 62nd Congress, second session. This document, containing over 600 pages, some of it finely printed, includes many statistical tables and the results of calculations relative to cost, etc. The President's message covers four pages; the portion to which the members of the efficiency commission have subscribed their names covers 54 pages; and the remainder of the document is taken up with reports made by Mr. H. D. Brown on the developments, etc., of superannuation schemes throughout the world especially with reference to Great Britain, New Zealand and New South Wales. Mr. Brown's reports entitled "Civil Service Retirement in Great Britain and in New Zealand" (Document 290, 61st Congress second session) and his "Savings and Annuity Plan proposed for the Retirement of Superannuated Civil Service Employees" (Document 745 61st Congress third session) were both reviewed in *The Civilian* of Sept. 8th, 1911. It was then pointed out that the chief value of these reports consisted in the gathering together in a concise and interesting form of the history of superannuation schemes in Great Britain and in New Zealand, while the "proposed scheme," that is the "savings and annuity" scheme was condemned from practically every point of view. In *The Civilian* of April 5, 1912, a letter from Mr. Wm.

Manly of London to Mr. Geo. T. Morgan, United States Mint, Phil., Pa., under date Nov. 28, 1911, was reprinted in which Mr. Manly states as follows:

"You ask me to make a statement of my views on pensions for employees in the civil service, and state that I have been quoted in favour of a compulsory savings-bank plan.

"I have had a very large practice in pension-funds finance, have been consulted by the British government, municipal corporations, many of the great railway companies and banks, as well as large commercial firms, and have written very largely on the subject; but I can not understand how any words of mine could be construed as being favourable to the savings bank principle. I consider it to be the worst scheme ever proposed as I shall presently show. . . ."

It may be stated that Mr. Manly is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, authority of any age on superannuation schemes. In view of this fact it is somewhat amusing to note the assurance with which the document now under review makes its appearance. The plan recommended by the Commission is in all essentials the plan recommended by Mr. Brown. The scheme is much the same as our Retirement Fund, only worse in-as-much as the deductions may be higher; in event of retirement between ages 60 and 70 the savings are returned in 10 equal in-

stalments and not otherwise; and in case of retirement at age 70 an annuity for life must be accepted, the balance of the accumulated amount unpaid at death to be returned to one's estate. The Commission take up some 50 odd pages replete with closely reasoned absurdities and amateurish efforts to establish fallacious conclusions chief of which is that the savings-bank scheme will prove the cure-all of every evil which afflicts the service. It is really difficult to discuss the document with the respect which is its due considering the high source from which it emanated. There is practically nothing in the Commission's discussion of the matter nor in their recommendations which does not also appear in one form or another in Mr. Brown's report. In fact the Commission appears to have drawn its inspiration from the same sources, if indeed the pen which wrote their report was not dipped in the same well. It is not possible to discuss their findings in the space available and it would be futile to do so, for there is perhaps not one soundly reasoned conclusion in all their recommendations. As an illustration of the subtlety of argument which may be found the following may be noted: "The Commission believes that by limiting the deduction which may be made from the salary of an employee to 8%, the objection as to the amount of the deductions will, in the main, be removed. Certainly, if the salaries of any of the government's employees are so low that the saving of 8% of such salaries would work a hardship on any considerable number of employees, it is beyond argument that such salaries should be increased."

Apparently they have not heard of the last straw which broke the camel's back nor of the camel either; nor have they taken into account the fact that many civil servants, thrown on their own resources, have already pledged all their surplus earnings in insurance

premiums and in the purchase of annuities to provide for their own old age and for their dependents after they are gone. Yet these thrifty ones may be required to suffer a deduction of the small amount of 8%. Elsewhere however the Commission state: "The per cent. of deduction has been limited to 8% of salary because the Commission believes that any greater deduction would be very burdensome to many employees." This compares strongly with the preceding statement.

Mr. Brown finds that most superannuation schemes contain defects of one kind and another and that they do not always fully accomplish the results expected from them or which they should be expected to accomplish. For these defects he knows of no remedy and consequently concludes that there is none. Then, as the only alternative, he throws overboard the good and the bad of all known schemes and puts forward as the only real solution a scheme which will (1) prevent good men from entering the service, (2) induce the best men to leave, especially before age 60, and (3) will be of no assistance in getting rid of the inefficient. There are other objections to the scheme but as it has no one redeeming feature it would be vain to state them. Now this is the "dope" which the Commission have swallowed, partly digested and handed out.

Great stress is laid on the scheme from the point of view of equity. A definition of equity is however nowhere given; but it would appear to be considered as a matter of dollars and cents and compound interest at 4%. It is tacitly assumed that if the balance of an employee's savings is paid over to his estate after his death he has been equitably dealt with even if his death were hastened for want of his own earnings which stated as a Hibernicism he cannot use till he dies. This is certainly a new idea in equity. From this point of view it would be quite equitable

to pay an employee, say, every two or three years, provided he were allowed compound interest at 4% on his earnings. Is it not possible that other factors have a bearing on the case besides dollars and cents and compound interest at 4%.

It is difficult to see of what use the document can be to anyone, apart from the historical review of superannuation which it contains. But for this feature, placed in the hand of the expert it would soon find its way to the waste-paper basket and in the hands of those unfamiliar with the question it will serve merely to becloud the whole issue. It is to be regretted that the civil servants of the United States have had this stumbling-block placed before them at a time when they would otherwise be in a fair way of getting something really calculated to meet their needs. It is the more to be regretted in that a post card addressed to the government of Canada by those responsible for the proposal would have assured them how utterly inadequate and unworkable it all is.

ONCE AGAIN—COST OF LIVING.

By *Observer*.

The "index number" worked out on the basis of wholesale prices by the Department of Labour is at a higher point than ever before. In other words, those who know tell us that the prices of commodities are at the highest level ever reached in the history of Canada. It is some slight satisfaction to the salaried man, and also to the salaried man's wife, to know that the increasing difficulty with which some pennies are squeezed out of the monthly check to put into the savings bank is not due, wholly at any rate, to extravagance or incapacity to manage the domestic finances. But while that satisfaction is genuine, it lasts only a short time. The fact that it grows harder every month to meet even the most neces-

sary expenses, makes an aching void in the pocket-book and a yearning at the heart for which index figures or any other figures are but poor medicine.

If there is any way to keep down this cost of living, it is sincerely to be hoped that our wise men will show us that way.

Unfortunately, keeping down the cost of living is not the only answer to the problem. In fact, that is not the answer that appeals to most people, wise or simple. The other way of answering is to raise the income to equal the necessary increase of outgo. There is a simplicity in the theory of this method which appeals to many minds. To cut one's coat according to one's cloth involves thinking, planning, arranging. It is a thousand times easier simply to take more cloth.

There are sure to be demands in the civil service for increases of salary. And, as the problem is one common to all, it is very likely that those demands will be general. The claim for consideration is a just one, for the civil service is certainly not responsible for the increase of prices and the effect of that rise is to cut down salaries, a thing never contemplated by either party to the bargain when salaries were arranged.

But the salary question was settled for the inside service at least for a time by the increase of 1908. The advantage of settling it was that it left all concerned free to consider even more fundamental questions of the status and future of the civil service. Should the crying necessities of the mere problem of living precipitate an agitation for a further increase, it is to be hoped that attention will not be so fixed upon that question as to exclude consideration of the others. In fact, if the matter is wisely dealt with, the salary and cost of living questions may be made to help rather than hinder the settlement of such questions as promotion, superannuation, and others, which have long been under consideration.

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Ottawa, July 26, 1912

A LIVING WAGE.

Undoubtedly the question of increased salary scales for the civil service is upon us with full force. Even the Inside service, which received an enhanced classification scheme and a lump-sum cost of living advance in 1908, is harassed and bewildered by the persistent upward trend of household expenses which has caused the effects of the relief of four years ago to vanish long since into thin air. The government is facing the problem of a complete reorganization of civil service legislation involved in the extension of the "merit" system over the Outside service. The opportunity should be taken to scale up the whole level of salaries in some way commensurate with the economic conditions that have come upon us—apparently not only to stay but to intensify.

UPPER AND LOWER.

Says the British *Civilian*:

"From the tone of his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, it is apparent that Lord Haldane strongly believes in the advantages bestowed by a wide and liberal education upon occupants of the higher administrative posts. In his opinion the work done by the lower-grade men was admirable in many cases, thorough, conscientious, as good as it could be, but to a great extent limited by lack of imagination and by a tendency to adhere too closely to rule.

"Lord Haldane not having passed through the lower ranks of the service will never know how much that undeniable fault is the result of the very system he is inclined to support.

"If he had had that experience he would have discovered to what extent thinking for oneself is penalised in the lower and larger divisions, and how much the uniformity and lack of imaginativeness is impressed on the workers by the routine nature of their duties. It is largely a matter of scope. Any thinking man with leisure could devise a hundred plans for governing a country, but only a genius could find two methods of boiling an egg."

Personals.

Mr. J. Simpson, railway mail clerk, Niagara Falls and London R. P. O., has been assigned to assist Supt. Mercer at London.

Messrs. D. J. McLean, Lou Johnston, Cheyne and Ollerhead, all veteran mail clerks, have been appointed to lay out rural free delivery routes in London district.

A Bigoted Socialist. — One who would not use a capital letter when writing his own name.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed under this heading.

Private Secretaries Again.

To the Editors of *The Civilian*:

I read the letter contributed by your correspondent, "Clericus," in *The Civilian* of 31st May last, on the subject of Ministers' Private Secretaries.

Permit me to inform him that my letter was written for the purpose of drawing the attention of all members of the civil service to the position of a Minister's Private Secretary in a government Department, and to his work and duties during the time that he may be occupying the position.

When writing my letter, I took it for granted that the leading and influential men of both political parties were willing to eradicate and to abolish from the civil service system political patronage and influence as they have prevailed in all the government departments since 1st of July, 1867.

The Minister does not pretend to maintain a personal supervision over every branch of his Department, and his Private Secretary is not employed as a clerk in any branch of the Department.

Within the past sixty-one years, or since the 1st May, 1851, there have been Deputy Ministers, Secretaries, Accountants and Chief Clerks who entered the civil service as junior clerks, at the bottom of the ladder, and rose to the highest positions in the service by hard work, long service and merit.

I spent over forty years in the service of a government Department, and I had every opportunity to study the civil service system, and to observe the various characters and types of men to be found throughout the civil service. I have often been a chip drifting along in the ebb and flow of the human tide passing in and out of several government buildings. What I do not know about appointments,

promotions, hard work and poor pay, drones, incompetents and toppers, I have yet to learn from dead books!

I never had the pleasure of tasting the rare and refreshing fruit, a political plum.

As I stated in my previous letter, it is my humble opinion, and in the true interests of the civil service, that when a Cabinet Minister leaves his Department either by transfer to another Department, or by resignation from the government, or by defeat of the government, then his Private Secretary should retire from the Department with him, and not be pitchforked over the heads of all officials and senior clerks in the Department, some of whom may have been in the service of the Department before he was born.

If the Minister appointed his Private Secretary as a permanent clerk in the Department, the appointment should not check or block the advancement or promotion of any official or clerk who may possess the qualification and merits of long service and having a better claim for promotion than the Private Secretary.

If a Cabinet Minister had a second Private Secretary, I am of the opinion that he should be selected from the permanent clerks of the Department, and he should have an allowance in addition to his salary—not an increase of salary—because of his position as a confidential clerk to the Minister. While he would be acting as a Private Secretary he would receive his annual increase of salary, and be eligible for promotion in the Department as he would be if he had not been selected by the Minister.

AN OLD TIMER.

Marriages.

CONNOLLY — KENNEDY — On Tuesday, June 4, 1912, at St. Patrick's Church, by the Rev. M. J. Whelan, Esther, eldest daughter of the late John Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy, to Peter J. Connolly, of the Dept. of Trade and Commerce.

At the Sign of the Wooden Leg.

Opportunity and Importunity.

Last fortnight we considered the Secret of Success. Although the Editor,—or perhaps it was the advertising manager,—proclaimed on the cover of *The Civilian* that Silas Wegg was about to reveal this great secret to the public, I had neither the intention nor the ability to do it, and have felt rather cheap over my performance in view of the barker's spiel in front of the tent. He invited you to come inside and behold the long-lost and newly-discovered Hidden Hand of Fate. And there was nothing to see but a wooden leg! Given the foot of Hercules one can reconstruct the frame of the departed hero, but even I am not vain enough to believe that a system of philosophy can be deduced from the substitute limb of a street-corner literary gent. The spirit may be willing but the flesh is absent.

Yet, for my part, I am no fakir. My leg is a genuinely wooden limb and not made of compressed paper. I give it now and then a coat of shellac, it is true, but I assure you that I do not do this in the hope of hiding its ligneous nature or making it more attractive to my friends. Some may sigh for a touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still, but no one, as far as I know, ever sighed for a touch of a varnished leg or for an unvarnished leg, however sound it might be.

And what has this to do, says Mr. Captious Critic, with the title at the head of this column? Only this, that my present remarks are in continuation of last fortnight's sermon, and I have wished to make all due apologies for the Editor's announcement of my last appearance before entering the pulpit again.

We found no sufficient answer to the question, "What is the secret of success?" and we investigated some

of the insufficient answers given to the question. Two of these insufficient answers were, Luck and Patience. A friend has suggested to me that if we substituted Opportunity for Luck, and Importunity for Patience, we should find answers to our question, the secret of success being, as it were, of the nature of a quadratic equation with two roots. It remains to be seen whether these roots are rational or not.

The two answers are easily distinguishable from each other. Opportunity is objective, while Importunity is subjective, and that definition covers a multitude of fallacies. Opportunity is an occasional knocker (*vide* Popular Proverbs) while Importunity is an habitual knocker. Opportunity is the chance to be at bat, with a weak pitcher in the box; Importunity is the batsman himself, and a batsman, moreover, who sticks to the plate even after three strikes have been declared on him. Opportunity may be neglected, but it will not be by Importunity. Importunity neglects nothing, except it be the duty of saying "if you please" before it takes a man's purse from him.

These, then, are the two roots of the equation which we could not solve at our last meeting? Are you satisfied with the solution? I know what my friend who offered the solution will say. He will say that I have made a travesty of it. Opportunity to him is Fate, and Importunity is bucking against Fate; nor does he consider himself inconsistent in his accepting both as solutions of the question any more than Macbeth was thus acquire merit in our own souls inconsistent in trusting in the three witches and then, when he discovered the double meaning of their prophecies, challenging Fate itself to come into the list with him. Nor would I, for one, charge him with inconstancy, for all men are like Macbeth in this regard. We may regard Destiny as an iron road and ourselves as engines that cannot depart from



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the track, but we are ready to alter the figure and make ourselves into automobiles or aeroplanes if Destiny at any point on the map is not up to specifications. My friend, for instance, quotes with approval the lines written by Burroughs,—

“Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor call for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
Lo, I am in the hands of Fate,
And what is mine shall come to me”;

but, let things go wrong with him for a day, he faces the facts and says with Henley,—

“It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.”

But, allowing him all this wide range in the definition of his terms,—and surely we will not fight over words when the truth is near at hand,—has he revealed to us the secret of success? His idea of the matter, as he presented it to me, was that Opportunity was useless without Opportunity, and *vice versa*, but that the two working together could not fail. The trouble is that he has not told us how to be successful; he has merely defined success. To come back to our mathematical figure, he has not solved an equation for us, but stated an identity. “One plus two equals three,” says he in effect, and we learned that from our mothers before we went to the kindergarten.

The problem is, therefore, put in another form for us; that is all. As now set forth it is, How can we be aware of opportunity? Of course, if we accept the dictum of Popular Proverbs, we can recognize it by its knocking. But, if we are still to stand or fall by P.P., we must keep awake for twenty-four hours a day, for Opportunity is supposed to knock but once at each man’s door. Some say, however, that one knocking is a minimum, and others go so far as to claim that Opportunity knocks at each and every man’s door at about six o’clock every morning. Perhaps they mean

the milkman. I am not in a position to speak on this point.

My own idea is that Opportunity never knocks. If he has a message for you he comes and sits on your doorstep until you come out, and it all depends on your temper whether you get his message or not. If you are bright and cheerful you will stop to ask the loafer, for such he often looks, what you can do for him, and then you will find out what he can do for you. But, if you are choleric of a morning, and ask him gruffly what he is doing on your premises, he will dodge round the corner before you know it and you may never realize who it was you scared away. Again, if you are calculating and cunning with him, thinking to get your lawn mowed,—him, the messenger from the court of Success to run a lawn-mower! — you will find him a tartar who will give you a saucy answer and probably spit on your steps.

More often Opportunity, when he comes, calls himself Duty. It is harder to be agreeable to Duty than to the mischievous Puck whom we might find on the doorstep. I suppose it is hard to be agreeable to Duty because Duty is so often disagreeable to us. I wonder, though, if we have stumbled at last on the secret of success. It is a fearsome thought that we cannot be successful without doing the square thing. Yet, with some qualification of the meaning of the word “success,” so that it would not mean dollars and diplomas and decorations altogether, it might be well if we sometimes put the thing to the test of experience. Perhaps,—and here I will leave you to your meditations, — Tennyson was right, when speaking of the path of Duty as shown in the life of the Duke of Wellington, he wrote,—

“He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle
bursting
Into glossy purples, which outreddden
All voluptuous garden-roses.”

The Miss-adventures of Jimmy Carew.

(From the Log of Harold Brooks.)

By G. R.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Letter from Bessie Moore.

"There!" said Jimmy, in a tone of mingled conviction and chagrin, as he held the precious package close to the lamp. "That Paul Pry in petticoats has done it, sure enough!"

"Done what?" I inquired.

"Why, opened my letter—and read it, of course!" He sniffed at the sealed side of the envelope. "Wintergreen—paste—barely dry!" he sputtered, Alfred Jinglewise. "The whole envelope's still damp from the steaming she gave it. And how she rubbed this flap down, when she sealed it again! Look at the marks of her thumbnail!"

"It may have been Miss Moore's thumbnail, mayn't it?" I suggested mildly.

"Rot! The maker of this envelope didn't use paste, scented with wintergreen, on the flap. He used mucilage."

"And pretty poor mucilage, as far as my experience with cheap stationery goes," I said combatively. "Isn't it likely that Miss Moore used a paste-pot in the hotel office here to seal the envelope more firmly than she found the poor mucilage would?"

Jimmy made no reply, for he was regarding the superscription with an ardent lamp. He was thinking, perhaps, of the slim, firm hand that had touched the paper as it penned his name; and thinking, too, perhaps, of that other feminine but desecrating hand that had detained the precious missive so long. Then with a sigh of anticipation he ran a penknife blade through the cover and drew the letter carefully out. There were, it seemed to me, ever so many pages of the fair Bessie's penmanship, and the inner ones of the first sheet were sealed at the top corners. Jimmy's gaze, which had grown more tender as he opened his letter, grew hard again. He broke the sealed corners apart, examined them with the hawk-like eye of a Holmes, and said:

"Paste again! And this proves what I said just now. That Patterson prig monkeyed with the paste before she put the letter back in its envelope. She probably found the paste dried up, and in mixing it got some on her prying fingers. Then, in putting the letter into the envelope, she put some of the telltale paste *here* and sealed the envelope with such vicious good and *bad* will that these corners had to stick, too!" Having thus got his sleuthonian theories off his chest, he sat down with his priceless epistle, and from the shelter of the *Snorer*

I eyed him as his gaze, shifting from line to line, literally ate up the baker's dozen of closely written pages penned by Bessie Moore.

"I suppose I might just as well have read it out," he said at length, with a sigh that I didn't know just how to catalogue. Whether he was disappointed that there wasn't more lovelornness in the letter, I didn't just know; but he looked pretty satisfied, anyway, as he turned back like a toper to his tippie to page one. Love himself can read between the lines pretty well, I guess, even if he is blind.

"Just as well," I said, in reply to his remark. "Being in love, you would have to tell somebody, you know, even if you are a man."

"Don't flatter yourself!" he retorted, "just because I'm going to honour you by letting you hear a womanly letter penned by a sweet girl. Listen, and stop rustling that wretched rag!" He coughed in a sententious and preliminary way, as I laid the offending *Snorer* aside, and then he read in a deep-voiced, dramatic way:

"My Dear Mr. Carew:

"Truth is always best in the end, and I assure you that it is not at the sacrifice of any false pride that I write on behalf of Mamma and myself to make amends now, if possible, since we have been so sadly in the wrong. You asked me this morning to be frank with you; and in spite of what my frankness then conveyed you were kind and generous, too. Let me be frank now; and if you can, be kind and generous still.

"You had left the hotel at Rome this morning but a little while when Mr. Potts came up and spoke to me. I was still on the veranda. He said he had something to say which I should know. I said nothing, and taking silence for consent, I suppose, he went on. I will tell you what he said as nearly as possible in his own words:

"Last evening, Miss Moore, Mr. Carew returned to the hotel after you had given him his congé, and asked me if I would take a turn with him up the street, as he had something rather important to say. I didn't want to have anything to do with the fellow in the way of hearing his confidences, you know, Miss Moore, but I was rather anxious to give him a taste of my—er—muscle, you know, if I could do it in a quiet way, to pay him out for his insolence to me when I had the misfortune to—er—upset his canoe. So I went along with him up the street. No

doubt you and your mother saw us from the balcony, and I daresay thought it strange that I should appear so chummy with the chap; but I knew I could explain later. I turned into a lane, just the sort of quiet place where I could give him his medicine, you know, and asked him what he had to say, telling him to be sharp about it. He said he was in a deuce of a mess with *Bessie Moore* (imagine his cheek, Miss Moore!) over that wretched locket, and he hoped I would help him out of the hole. Then he showed me the face in the locket, and as well as I could make out in the moonlight it was the face of a handsome enough sort of woman, of the cheap variety hall type, don't you know. You'll see scores of 'em in London, in the Musical Halls, you know. Carew said of course that he hadn't really found the locket, but would I, like a good chap, take it and tell *Bessie* that I had seen the original of the miniature at Johnnie's Falls and had offered to try to find the owner for him. I was thunderstruck by the fellow's cheek at first, and then I told him to put up his hands, although I was tempted to smash him without giving him a chance, as he deserved simply for the liberty he took with your name. He struck out at me then, but I stepped aside and knocked him down. Perhaps you noticed my mark on him this morning, Miss Moore. To my surprise — for I really thought he had some pluck in him, you know — Carew got up and ran away like a kicked cur. I chased him until we reached the garden party, where he was cunning and clever enough to stay, mixing up with everybody, and knowing very well that I was aching to thrash him thoroughly but that I couldn't lay a hand on him there without making a scene. And at last the fellow managed to sneak away, when I hadn't my eye on him, and got back, gladly enough, I daresay, to the hotel.'

"Well, Mr. Potts had run on very glibly, and I had listened without a word of interruption, at first perplexed, then amazed and amused, but at last indignant that he should think me credulous enough to believe his absurdly patent fiction of his own prowess at your expense. He evidently did not know that I had heard of the morning's chase, but if I had referred to it he would doubtless very readily have simply reversed the order of it; and I had an instinctive feeling that he had employed the simple Falstaffian method in his story of the preceding events in all its details,—a very simple, ingenious and inexpensive recipe for being a hero. Just as Mr. Potts concluded his story Mamma drove up. She seemed quite perturbed, and at once asked after you and Mr. Brooks. I said you had both gone, and she said: 'We have been deep-

ly in the wrong, my dear. I stopped at the hotel at Johnnie's Falls and saw an advertisement of the locket written by Mr. Carew. He found it there.' Mr. Potts overheard Mamma, and said: 'Yes, Mr. Carew went to Johnnie's Falls this morning and wrote the advertisement to make his story about finding it wash white, you know.' Whatever else we may think of Mr. Potts, his mendacity and its ingenuity are sheerly wonderful. I turned on him and told him not to dare to speak to me again; and he rushed away in a rage. Mamma and I then drove over to Athens to intercept you. We have lunched here, but although it is several hours since you left Rome nothing has been seen of you by anyone here.

* * *

"Later. Mamma and I drove back to Rome, very much disappointed at not having seen you. Just before the *Fairy Queen* came in two men and a girl reached the hotel. The girl was Miss Ivy Green, of whom you know. They had found Mr. Potts' Panama straw hat (which seems to be as well known as its wearer in and about Rome), in the lake, near Blood Rock. And while Mamma and I were wondering what could have happened, we got another shock. A big young man drove up to the hotel. Miss Green exclaimed quite rapturously: 'Why, Char—Mr. Stevens!' And then Mamma and I understood. At first glance he looked absurdly, marvellously, like you. He is quite as tall and broad—a trifle stouter, I think—and his features are like yours. He is very tanned, and his teeth are white, and he certainly has a 'big, breezy laugh.' But there the likeness ends, though he wore a double-breasted blue suit like yours and a dark, peaked yachting cap. He had a very small dark moustache, but other differences were soon obvious. Miss Green's delight at seeing Mr. Stevens was equally apparent, and they drove off together to the *Queen*, of which I understand this Mr. Stevens is the new purser; so that Mamma and I shall probably have the qualified pleasure of seeing more of him on Saturday, when we leave Rome by the boat for home. Mamma and I at once drove to Athens again, although we more than half expected to hear you had passed through; but we learn that you have not yet been seen.

* * *

"We are rather worried, because we understood you were anxious to get to the canoe meet, and yet we cannot believe that anything could have happened to you. I asked Gigs, when we got back to Rome from our first visit here to-day, what he thought of your non-arrival here, and he said that nothing could happen to you that he could think of.

* * *

"A very bad storm is coming up, and as Mamma is getting nervous we will have to return to Rome. We do hope you will be careful, if you are still in Bellamy Lake, and avoid the storm, which I am sure is going to be quite severe.

"Please telephone or write us before you leave Athens, so that we may know that you have reached here safely, and that our foolish misjudgment of you as well as of Mr. Brooks is freely forgiven. Mamma joins in warmly wishing you both a safe arrival at the meet and all possible success in the race for the Cup.

Most sincerely yours,
Bessie Moore."

"There!" said the rapturous James, shamelessly kissing the Athenian House stationery, in spite of the assumed fact that it had been last caressed by the hand of the 'acting boss.' "Isn't she noble and white? I hope Miss Patterson's brazen cheek is blistered with remorse," he added, as he strode across the room in his heroic pyjamas and put the priceless epistle in the left inside breast pocket of his double-breasted blue. "I would have liked to see her face when she came to the description of the new purser of the *Fairy Queen*! And now, Brooksie—" and he punched 'Brooksie' irrelevantly in the ribs—"I've just got a little letter to write, and then to bed, and up and away for the Trophy Cup!"

It was just like talking of going around the corner of the hotel and picking up gold pieces without a soul in sight, for him to speak of paddling twenty long miles in a morning and then winning a high-class racing event in the afternoon. But he was Sunny Jim again. That letter from Bessie had transformed him and put the trolley of his disposition back on the wire for keeps. And I knew what was tickling him, too: the fact that while Bessie has asked *him* to 'telephone or write,' *she* hadn't wanted to just phone *him*, but had just driven over to Rome *twice* because she had wanted to *see him*, and wasn't going to be satisfied with anything else, either; yes, and wanted him to *know* it, because she hadn't added any foolish fibs about having tried to phone Athens instead of driving over, but that the phone was out of order, and all that. No, *sir!*

So he sat down to write his 'little' letter, with the air of a man to whom the performance of miracles, such as paddling all morning and then winning big races in the afternoon, was a matter of course.

"Of course, I could phone in the morning," he soliloquized, addressing his pen, "only we'll have to make an early start, and I couldn't think of calling her at that hour, even if the local phone station were open then, which it won't be." Then he came out of his dream and addressed me. "There's the half-mile tandem double-blade,

Brooks," he said, as he tried a nib on his thumb-nail, "and the upset, hurry-skurry and gunwale races, besides the tilting tournament and the Trophy Cup. We ought to bag most of 'em!" He laid down the pen and prospectively ran his supple fingers over the long, smooth muscles of his splendid arm.

"It's very well," I groused, "for an Argonaut like you to figure on paddling to Gannanock in a morning, and right after tackling a bunch of races in swift company. But I don't strip at a hundred and eighty-five pounds of muscle and bone and brawn, and my cruising canoe isn't a brand-new cedar one. Why not take the Stop-and-Carry-One train to Gannanock tomorrow morning and get to the meet *fresh*, with a fighting chance to win?" My canoe was a sixteen-foot red-painted basswood, five years old, and about as fast as a man's wife dresses when you're late for a good show.

"Once in an Alice-blue moon," Jimmy said, "that railroad funeral makes Gannanock not more than two or three days late in a thirty-five mile run from Brickville."

"Yes," I said, "she stops to pick up eggs."

He ignored the obvious personality. "But you're right about your tub," he said, "she does handicap you as against mine." Then he got an heroic idea, and he felt his muscle again. It inspired him, and he became Jason and Hercules rolled into one. "I'll paddle to Gannanock in your old red basswood draft horse of a cruiser, and *you* shall ride in my cedar thoroughbred, *Laura*. And *then* only Rule Ten will stand between."

Then he seized his pen, with the air of a Togo who has settled the plan of action, and I picked up the *Snorer* again to resume perusal of the fate of Harold Vane and Gladys de Vere. The rustle of the paper disturbed the Mississippi of his mighty thought and set it running in another channel. He laid down the pen.

"It's deuced awkward about that locket, isn't it?" he said. "It's rough on the chap who lost it that I should have lost it again!"

"It *will* be awkward, for you," I said, "if he has got wind in any way of your having found it. And he's at the canoe meet, isn't he? So you'll meet *him*."

"Well, it's lost, and that just puts it where it was before I found it," he remarked sophistically. "I suppose somebody did take it out of the pocket of the olive-greens if they fell out of the window. Though of course I may have lost it in the scrap with Potts on Blood Rock, or up Frazer's Creek later on, or still later when I changed out of the olive-greens in the boathouse here. I'll have a look there first thing in the morning to make sure, and if I don't find it I'll put up an ad in the office here and offer a reward for

its return. It will be awkward for me, as you suggest, but I'll find the chap who lost it, anyway, and give him the facts. "Truth is always best in the end," he concluded sententiously, quoting the first line from Bessie Moore. And with that he turned, glowing, to the composition of his love letter. Nothing could worry him long now, and his pen ripped merrily away with the epistolary stenographic speed of that of a villain in a melodrama inditing the hero's doom. And I turned in, with a fading view of an enamored Hercules in pyjamas scrawling little lucubratory tendernesses to a girl who, no doubt, was thinking or dreaming of him in Rome, straight miles away across the moonlit fields.

CHAPTER XIX.

Farewell to Athens.

"Me for the races!"

It was Jimmy, ready for the matutinal dip, and big and radiant, who waked me again, while Old Sol winked at me through a window from over the harvest horizon. It was Thursday morning—Thor's Day—the day of things-to-be-did, of endurance and muscle and skill.

"I feel fit to wallop the field!" said Thor, striding about, and flicking a towel at my unprotected hide to expedite the execution of my temporary toilet. "It's only just turned five o'clock, and King's weather come up with the sun. I've ordered breakfast so that we may be under way by seven and leave this godless hamlet behind. The only thing I do leave behind with dubiety as to its ultimate fate," Jimmy added, tapping a rather bulky note envelope, sealed with wax, that lay on a bureau, "is this." "This" was self-evidently the Strephonian post-midnight epistle to Chloe. "The post office doesn't open till nine o'clock," Jimmy went on, "and the postmaster is an old curmudgeon who turns out to be the father of the photographer's wife, the stout party addicted to gin of last evening's episode. So of course he gave me the deuce when I knocked him up just now, and I wasn't going to leave my letter there, for the Sky-blue Wrapper to open and read this time. And if I were to put it in the drop of the office of this hotel," he continued, shoving the package into a pocket as we left the room, "that nameless female, called by courtesy Miss Patterson, would pinch it, and it would never reach its destination after she had read it. If she couldn't swallow the homeopathic doses of my opinion of her I unloaded last night, she'd take convulsions over what I've written her down. I've hunted this blessed boat-house and my canoe," he concluded, "but reached the depository of our craft, "but can't find that locket. Of course, I don't trust a soul in this village. They're all

degenerate Athenians; and I believe that locket was prigged out of the pocket of the olive-greens at the hotel."

"It would easily enough slip out of a pocket, being round and smooth," I said. "Besides, the specific gravity of gold——"

The resounding splash of Jimmy's plunge off the float drowned my remark, and the lusty roar of satisfaction he gave on rising midway in the stream shook all the Athenian window-sashes in their frames.

"It isn't going to create any specific gravity in me!" he announced, as he sat on the edge of the float, and splashed his shapely legs in the clear running water. "I suppose there'll be a challenge to fight a duel, or an action for damages, when the chap who lost that locket in the first place learns that I've lost it again. I'll get a description from the cook of the boy who brought my olive-green panties in. She'll fake one, anyway, I suppose. And I'll pay the Dutch constable to try to hunt him up. And I'll put an ad up in the hotel office, offering a reward. And there isn't anything more I can do," Jimmy added, as he stood up for another plunge, "except hope and pray that the locket may turn up, or that the owner will be patient until it does."

Jimmy interviewed the cook, and with a description which he said was cooked up and that would have applied to ninety-nine boys out of a hundred in a village, he started Hans, properly primed, on the sleuthonian path of rigid inquiry. Hans remarked, with a shake of his big head, that between the Potts case of the previous evening and the trouble over the letter then, and the missing locket, things had never been as busy in his line in Athens since he took office. "Grimes vos gedding more vorse yet alretty," he gurgled gutturally, as he marked the first urchin afar from his own, and steered a cunningly circuitous course.

Then, ere we went to breakfast, Jimmy wrote his "lost" ad, offering in the terms of the *Snorer's* paragraph a "handsome reward," which he said cheerfully the original loser, being the owner, would have to pay anyway in the end. The "ad" complete, Jimmy applied to the clerk for paste. Mr. Bangs hunted behind the desk, scratched an ear, hesitated, then called the freckled boy, who was just coming on duty with barely opened eyes.

"Flight yourself up and ask Miss Patterson to give you the paste," he said. "I remember now she took it last night for something or other."

The boy departed, yawning, and in the course of time returned with the pot. Jimmy, with a grin, sniffed it, and with a triumphant "I told you so," applied the paste to the "ad" sheet and stuck it up on the outside wall by the main door.

"There's just one thing more I'd like this morning," he said, throwing down his

napkin and sitting back from an heroic meal, "and that is to kodak the 'acting boss.' I've got Algernon Potts for my Rogues' Gallery, and I need her to make a pair. It would break her limestone heart to see me snapping her. But I'll concede she's a general. She has the girl who runs the telephone station under her influence, and the chap who runs the key at the Stop-and-Carry-One Station here under her thumb. I tried both those avenues of communication with Rome this morning, and found them blocked. The girl is Miss Patterson's guest and bedfellow, and the telegraph operator has 'gone fishing,' and the station locked up tight. I'd have liked to get Giggs himself on the key at Rome to give him some more combinations of that Morse 'D,' Dedicated to Miss A. Patterson."

We returned to the office to settle, and Jimmy inquired suavely enough after the 'acting boss.'

"She was down right after you went into the dining-room," said Mr. Bangs, "and she seemed kind of flustered about that pot of paste. It seems the boy went up and took it on his own hook out of her sittin' room, not wanting to wake her, and she was awake all the time in the next room. She wanted to know what it was wanted for, and when I said it was Mr. Carew asked for it, she looked a little upset, I thought, and asked if Mr. Carew made any remarks. But I didn't think it was going to do any good tellin' her what you said, and the boy knew enough this time to keep his trap shut. I told her what you wanted it for, and she said 'O, indeed!' and went outside and peeled your ad off. It hadn't got fairly started to stick, I guess. And, anyway, that paste's pretty stale. She said you hadn't no right to go bill-sticking up the front of her house that way without asking her."

"Where is Miss Patterson now?" said Jimmy, breathing hard.

"Well, she's gone driving back over the bridge to the boss's farm for eggs. She took Miss Kalls, the telephone girl, with her. She said—Miss Patterson, I mean—that eggs guaranteed strictly fresh was getting scarce now, since canoeing men started to own the place, and you could count on them being store eggs most of the time."

"We had the strictly fresh-laid variety for breakfast all right," Jimmy said.

"Yes, and I went out last night, after the way you cut up and used me, and got them myself, so you could have your breakfast balanced right," said Mr. Bangs, with a warm note of reproach. "The cook told me it wouldn't seem like getting breakfast for you without eggs."

"Well, Fred, I think you're a pretty good chap!" said Jimmy, laughing; and Mr. Bangs smiled. "And if you'll do one thing more for me it will wipe out the way I've been served by your 'acting boss.'"

my produced his epistolary budget of the preceding night's inditement. "I want you to take personal charge of this, Fred. Don't let it out of your keeping. Don't let Miss Patterson know you have it. Hand it yourself to the driver of Giggs' stage when he comes over this morning from Rome, and tell him to hand it personally and without delay to Miss Moore. And I want you to accept and wear this in memory of our meeting and as a token of my regard." And Jimmy took a handsome topaz scarf-pin from his tie and stuck it in Mr. Bangs' own; then handed a half-dollar to the freckled boy to close his mouth, which had been as wide open as his ears.

Mr. Bangs was visibly affected. I had observed from the first that big, athletic, clean-cut Jimmy had made a hit with him.

"I'll do it all right!" he said with the fervor of a Roundhead taking an oath to wipe up all England with Charles the First. He stowed the precious package into an inner pocket, and then removed and regarded the pin with the unconcealed and ingenuous delight of a child. "She ain't used you quite right—Miss Patterson, I mean. She wasn't so sore, though, on another canoeing man that went through here last week. He stayed a day, sporting around with her. She drove him over to the farm, and he took her out for a boat ride in his canoe. They got pretty thick for one day. He was a big man, too. Weatherbee, his name was. It's in the register here. Well, so long, Mr. Carew. Good-bye, Mr. Brooks. Here, Freckles, get wise to your job. Take the gentlemen's grips down. So long! And, say! When you're goin' through Red Horse, keep a lookout for the hot bunch that's comin' up. Say, there's an American beauty—a reg'lar rose—with that crowd that knocks anything I ever see for looks. They call her the Duchess of Downeast. You want to have a look at her. She's a dream! But don't look too long. She was up her for a day, dressed to beat Four Queens, and she had all the sports rubbering their heads off. A Frenchy named Joe Plante who was rowin' for the bunch told me her specialty was good-looking, dark men about your size, Mr. Carew; and I guess he was right. A fellow named Gannon, a lawyer of Gannanock, was paired off with her the day they was up here. Say, you want to lamp that dame, Mr. Brooks. Some class, bul-leive me! Miss Patterson didn't cotton to her much, though. She's a blonde—the Duchess, I mean. And her hair—well, so long!"

"I'll set the pace for you!" said Jimmy, as he spread his olive-green trousers to dry over the forward decking of my old red-painted cruiser, in which he paddled out as pre-arranged, while I pushed into the shining stream in his 'cedar thoroughbred Laura.' Then suddenly Jimmy dropped his

paddle, stooped, and in a moment had his camera on his knee.

The old, low Athenian bridge, with its wide stone arches, lay just ahead. And over it was passing an open buggy, the horse at a walk. Two young women were leaning forward from the buggy, their gaze bent on Jim; rubbering, as you may say. Suddenly, realizing his aim and act, just below them, less than a dozen feet away, the one who was driving made a grimace, leaned back and whipped up her nag to a sudden trot. But her celerity was too late. Jimmy gave a loud, indecent laugh of triumph as the buggy sped on. He had snapped Miss Aggie Patterson, and scored the last trick and the "rubber," he said.

(To be continued.)

CIVIL SERVICE BASEBALL LEAGUE.

By Onlooker.

The Civil Service Baseball League, which was looked upon at the beginning of the season as more or less of an experiment in proving a grand success. Under the guiding hand of Pres. H. R. Sims it promises to become as successful as the City League in other years. The teams are very evenly matched; so evenly indeed, that it would take a modern Moses to pick a winner. At the time of writing Printing Bureau leads with Census a close second. All the teams are bunched however and are changing positions every day. The most sensational and well-played games were the Post Office-Immigration game which the former won by 5 to 3; and the Census-Customs clash in which the former were victorious.

Notes.

Gilbert of the Militia won the hat offered by J. Sims & Company for the first home run.

The Printing Bureau has a fine bunch of athletes on the team. They ought to win. Gerard, Snelling, etc. The names look familiar to followers of sport.

Vic Gilbert of the Customs is a

star second baseman, and McCann can play baseball—well, not quite as well as football. Guy Boyce would do well if they gave him a paddle to bat with.

Manager Boyle's Census team is weak at bat but Scott is the best pitcher in the league. Ask Bradley of the West Block?

Hobart, the Post Office first baseman should be playing major league ball, instead of wasting his time in the Civil Service. Iveson and Penwick are also good.

In Tobin the West Block has a star backstop. On the field, at bat and on bases, he's always there with the goods.

With Joe Laflamme, Lortie and others in line the Immigration should do well. They are heavy batters, but a little "shaky" in their fielding.

The Survey with Seety. Heyward doing the bulk of their twirling have been playing in hard luck. Wait till they strike their stride; someone will be sorry.

Sam Hughes "Irregulars" from the Woods building, have like the Immigration a hard batting team, when they meet the bill for balls is tremendous.

Percy Lesseur's team from the Transcontinental contains a lot of fine material such as M. Kilt, Casey, Disney and others. Each man of the team can play any position so their manager says.

The teams are very evenly matched and the standing of the league to date is as follows:—

	Won	Lost
Printing Bureau	3	..
Census	4	2
Post Office	2	2
Immigration	4	1
Topo. Survey	2	4
Militia	1	2
Transcontinental	3	3
West Block	1	2
Customs and Forestry . .	1	5



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“On the Trail of the Red Letter.”

The following very interesting narrative, descriptive of the wonderful machinery of the modern Post Office, is reprinted by courtesy of the N. Y. Outlook.—Though the scene is laid in the Republic, the facts apply equally to Canada

What is easier than to communicate with a friend by mail—whether he live at the other end of the city, the other end of the state, the other end of the country, or the other end of the world? You drop a letter in a handy mail-box, and forget it; and in due season (if your friend is a good correspondent) the reply is handed to you at your own front door. The process is so familiar that it seems ridiculous to talk about it. But what happens between the time when you post the letter and the moment when your friend receives it? How does the Post-Office go about it to take your letter (which you must remember is only one of a million or so mailed the same day at thousands of different places all over the country to be carried to other thousands of places equally scattered) and carry it swiftly and unerringly to its destination? We all of us use the mails as habitually and as unthinkingly as we eat or sleep. But how many of us realize that when we mail a letter we set in motion vast and intricate machinery whose operations constitute one of the miracles of the modern age? The city letter-carrier or the rural carrier we know, the mail wagon we have seen, mail trains have flashed by us as we waited at stations. But what do we know of the high-pressure work of the railway mail clerk, of pneumatic tubes, of machines canceling thirty thousand stamps an hour, of the endless process of “separation”?

Some months ago it was proposed that I should make some study of the postal service, to give an idea of what this machinery is and how it works. It occurred to me that it

would be an interesting thing to mail a letter in New York, addressed to a little place in the Middle West, for instance, and to stay with that letter myself until it was finally delivered at its destination. The officials of the Post-Office Department were pleased with the idea, and did everything in their power to make this unusual trip a success. The letter was put in a red envelope for better identification. From the moment that I started it in New York until it was handed to the person to whom it was addressed in Mount Hope, Wisconsin, it did not move a foot (except, for obvious reasons, when it was going through the pneumatic tube in the city) without my being with it. Here begins the story of that journey on the trail of the Red Letter.

The Red Letter is Mailed.

In the early evening of an April day I slipped a letter into the slot of the mailing chute on the seventh floor of a New York office building. In an instant it had flashed past the strip of glass front between the slot and the floor, and a couple of seconds later the ear of the imagination could hear it drop into the mass of letters in the box at the bottom. From the moment when my fingers released their hold, no power on earth (except myself, if I were minded to untangle a portentous mass of red tape) might prevent, divert, or retard the progress of that letter to its destination, provided only it were properly addressed, the postage were sufficiently paid, and no matter which by law is unmailable were enclosed in it. Not even the Government itself could do anything to that letter but expedite its journey and

deliver it at the earliest possible moment into the hands of the person to whom it was addressed.

It was an ordinary letter, simply addressed to Mr. Jay F. Morse, R. D. No. 1, Mt. Hope, Wisconsin. But it had an extraordinary mission. Its blood-red envelope was the clue that, like Ariadne's silken thread, was to lead me through the labyrinth of the postal service, a 1,000-mile journey from New York to Mount Hope, from the mail-chute of a metropolitan sky-scraper to the rural post-box of a Wisconsin farmer.

The Red Letter is Collected.

At the foot of the chute, as I drop down the elevator, is waiting Mr. Gardner, an amiable and quietly effective Chief Clerk of the Railway Mail Service, who is to be my guide and companion on the first stage of this Red-Letter journey—the thousand-mile flight to Chicago. For this journey, usual and routine as it is for a letter, whatever the color of its envelope, is for me, for a human being traveling like a letter, quite—so the wise ones of the postal service assure me—without precedent. Therefore the Department has prepared every mile of the way—not for the letter, which need follow only the regular course to be delivered swiftly and safely, but for me—as painstakingly as ever the retainers of an Indian prince laid a dāk with frequent relays of fresh horseflesh for the despatch of a fateful messenger or the journey of the potentate himself.

To us, waiting in the lobby of our sky-scraper, enters the familiar gray-uniformed figure, his dumpy gray satchel over his shoulder. Businesslike, he unlocks the door in the bronze receptacle of the chute, takes out the letters in handfuls, stuffs them into his satchel, clashes to the door, and is off. We fall into step beside him, Mr. Gardner explaining the while that we are not highwaymen, but followers of a scarlet clue. Through the thinning crowd of

homing workers on the street we follow the collector to the last few boxes of his round and enter with him the door of the Madison Square Station of the Post-Office. On a long table heaped with other letters he empties his satchel and slips away to other duties.

In the Post Office.

The broad room in the building which is dominated by the white shaft of the Metropolitan tower is a busy place at that hour. At the end of the long tables a pair of electric canceling-machines chatter away over their task of canceling stamps and post-marking letters to the tune of sixty thousand an hour between them. In a far corner the pneumatic tubes record the passing minutes by a hoarse bark and a metallic clatter every fifteen seconds precisely, as a carrier, looking not unlike a big gun cartridge, loaded with letters arrives from up town or down. Save for the chatter of the cancelers and the punctuations of the big tubes in the corner, the room is quiet with the hush of intense application, of high-pressure work; for the United States mail must go forward in a steady, rapid flow, and there must be no lost motion to slow up the speed. Trains depart on the minute, and every letter that comes in must be despatched by the first train to leave thereafter.

The Red Letter is to take the regular course, and by the gleam of its envelope we follow its progress through the mill, which grinds away remorselessly. Beside the long table, stacked high with mail from the collectors' satchels, several clerks are "facing up" the letters. Under their raking fingers the chaotic piles compact themselves into an orderly column of letters, all facing one way and marching steadily down the table to the stammering cancelers. All the "long letters," which must be canceled and distributed separately, and the "fat stock," too obese to pass the narrow jaws of the canceler, are weeded out. In a moment

the thin red edge which holds out attention in the column reaches the hand of the feeder at the end of the table and a scarlet flash marks its passage through the machine.

As we stand fascinated by the insatiable appetite of the nervous little demon of steel and nickel and electric energy, the superintendent of the station chants the praises of invention. "Thirty thousand an hour that little fellow can do. Of course we don't keep it fed up to that speed every minute. But," as he reads a dial and hunts out some figures from a record book, "this machine has eaten up seventy-two thousand since two o'clock, that one over there has gobbled another eighty-two thousand, and the third one there eighty-four thousand. A pretty fair record that for a mere sub-station. In the old days it would have kept at least sixteen men pounding away with the old hand stampers to keep ahead of that bunch of work." We ejaculate a tribute to man's ingenuity, and turn to follow the scarlet thread.

The Separation Case.

The "separation case," the next step on our road, is the nucleus of the postal service. The process of getting mail from sender to addressee is composed of two main parts — transportation and separation. Obviously, if I, in New York, am to send a letter to you, in Kankakee, it must be carried from me to you by various agencies—collector, pneumatic tube, railway, wagon, letter-carrier. But, what is not so obvious till the matter is studied a little, if the transportation is to be done as swiftly as possible, the letter must be "sparated" at almost every step of its journey. For our letter is only one of millions; it is only a drop in a swollen stream flowing steadily from big postal centers to big postal centers, continually fed by tributaries along its course, and continually giving off branches to water the adjacent country. So our single letter must go to the separa-

tion case time and again as it is carried along with the stream. We shall see how this vital process works as we follow the Red Letter trail.

The case, on the ledge of which the Red Letter is waiting among a thousand white ones, is the "primary separation case." It is composed of square pigeonholes, and looks like a section of the wall of letter-boxes in small post-offices, except that the open ends of the boxes are towards us. Each pigeonhole bears a label, or the remnants of one, for the clerks soon become so expert that they know the boxes as a man knows the pockets in his clothes. There is a box for each State and one for each of a dozen big cities, which have so much mail sent from this station that it pays to make up a "direct package." But most of the letters in this primary separation are "made up" by States. The process of primary separation is a simple one, but it requires a quick eye, a good memory, and perfect co-ordination between eye and hand; for speed is indispensable—the United States mail must not be delayed.

The clerk gathers a bunch of letters in his hand, glances at the top one, and without a waver sticks it into its proper pigeonhole, giving it a characteristic little flick at the last instant that sends it to the back of the box. Like a high-speed machine he works—except that that glance of the eye introduces the element which puts the gulf between the machine and man—reeling off forty to the minute with hardly a variation. Soon one box, more popular than the others, is full. He takes out the letters, puts a manila "facing slip," bearing the name of the State, the date, and his own initials, on top.

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and with a couple of brisk turns ties up the package and drops it on the ledge before him. Soon the hour approaches when a "despatch" is to be made—that is, when the last mail that is to go by a certain train must be sent out through the pneumatic tubes. So he proceeds to "tie out" his case, or rather those pigeonholes in it which have letters that go over the route of this particular train. As the packages are tied up they are carried over to the pneumatic tubes, stuffed into the carriers, and shot away underground to the postal station at the railway depot.

The Red Letter Disappears

In due course, as we watch, the Red Letter is flicked into the Wisconsin box, and in a few minutes the box is tied out and the package with a dozen others dumped upon the tray by the pneumatic tubes. Our package is put into a carrier, the cover snapped to, and cabalistic chalk-marks inscribed thereon, that we may know it again. The carrier is stood in a corner till work shall come from us at the Grand Central Station to send it forward. For here the regular course must be modified a trifle; the pneumatic tube is wonderfully efficient, but a little small in diameter to carry a man, though a cat has gone through it without losing many of her lives. So the carrier waits while we—the followers of the clue—take the prosaic Subway to the Grand Central.

It Appears Again

At another set of the barking and sighing mouths of the pneumatic tubes we take our stand to wait for the carrier. We watch the black cart-ridges come slipping out of one mouth across the oily table, to be seized, opened, and dumped of their contents, or dropped into another open mouth to go on their way to the Pennsylvania Station, as the chalk-marks command. Astonishingly soon after the telephone tells us that the carrier has started from

Madison Square a mile away, it slides from the tube before us. In an instant our package, Red Letter on top, has become one in an almost continuous line, flying through the air into a square orifice marked "North and West." Five seconds later it rides in a box on wheels across the floor.

The space about the pneumatic tubes at the Grand Central is a nexus of incoming and outgoing lines of letter mail. The tubes pour in their steady streams from the General Post-Office and the scattered stations up and down the city; on a broad table at one side are being emptied pouches from arriving trains; down from overhead slope the belt-conveyors bringing processions of letter packages from the distribution cases across the room and from the city division on a lower floor. The letter packages massed by these converging currents at this point are sorted by the eager fingers of clerks working at high pressure, and sent flying away again over their appointed routes—through the tubes to Brooklyn, General Post-Office, Pennsylvania Depot, and city stations; up on the endless belts for distribution cases and city divisions; into the gaping mouths of giant pigeonholes marked "East," "West and North," "City Rack," "Pitts. and South," and so on. From the outlets at the other end of these big sloping pigeonholes the letter bundles are tumbled at intervals, continually shortening as train time approaches, into wheeled boxes and hurried across the floor to the pouching-racks.

The Red Letter package has flashed into its pigeonhole "West and North," slid out and been rolled across the floor to the pouching-rack—an iron framework from which hang a score of canvas pouches with square-stretched mouths—and dropped into the pouch marked "N. Y. and Chi., No. 2—Train 35." These cabalistic abbreviations indicate to the initiated that this pouch is to go

out over the New York and Chicago Railway Post-Office line on Train No. 35, and that it is to be opened on the second section of the journey. R. P. O. lines, it should be noted, are named not at all after the railways they run over but according to the points between which the clerks on them work. The Red Letter is all but ready to enter upon the second stage of its journey, and we, observer and guide, to transfer our attention from one great branch of the postal service, the post-office proper, to a second, the Railway Mail Service. It only remained for the pouch to be "locked out," thrown upon a truck, trundled across into the railway station, weighed, shot down an elevator to the lower level, and heaved with a succession of other pouches into the bright oblong of light which marks a doorway in the side of the long black bulk of Mail Train No. 35.

Number 35

As the pouch, to which we have tied a red tag, disappears into the car, it is nearly nine-thirty. The conductor, conning his watch, walks the length of the train, the last truck-loads of pouches come at a run down the platform to the proper cars, the last pouches are piled aboard, and, prompt to the second, 35 rolls out, carrying tons of mail matter to be spread out fanwise over the country and beyond, from Alaska to New Orleans, from New England to the Far East.

(To be continued. The next installment will give a close view of the Railway Mail Clerk in action.)

Not What He Meant.

Algy: "I find that motoring agrees with me much better than horse riding."

Genevieve: "Well, you look much better in a motor-car than you do on horse-back!"

* * *

A Genius Disguiser.

"Who is that young woman—the one that continually bubbles over with gaiety and giggles at everything?" "She is a poetess. In deeply melancholy verse she is thought to have few equals!"

* * *

"According to his Folly."

Jones came up to town one morning with a bruised and swollen forehead. His friend Briggs showed considerable curiosity as to the cause of the injury. "How did it happen, old man?" he asked. "Collided with the hat-rack last night," said Jones shortly. "Accidentally?" asked Briggs. "No, Briggs!" replied Jones sweetly. "I have every reason to suspect that it attacked me purposefully!"

* * *

"Uncle! Uncle!"

Mr. Nat Goodwin, the well-known American actor, was once the victim of an amusing incident in the theatre. In one of his parts he had to come on the stage with a coat over his arm and call out loudly, "Uncle, uncle!" According to the book, he should have received no reply, but one night one of the "gods" answered him with, "All right; I'm coming in a minute! How much do you want on the coat?"

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