PART ONE

By the end of October, with the dispersal of that foliage which has served all summer long as a pleasant screen for whatever small privacy may exist between American neighbors, we begin to get our autumn high tides of gossip. At this season of the year, in our towns of moderate size and ambition, where apartment houses have not yet condensed and at the same time sequestered the population, one may secure visual command of back yard beyond back yard, both up and down the street; especially if one takes the trouble to sit for an hour or so, daily, upon the top of a high board fence at about the middle of a block.

Of course an adult who followed such a course would be thought peculiar; no doubt he would be subject to undesirable comment, and presently might be called upon to parry severe if, indeed, not hostile inquiries; but boys are considered so inexplicable that they have gathered for themselves any privileges denied their parents and elders; and a boy can do such a thing as this to his full content, without anybody's thinking about it at all. So it was that Herbert Illingsworth Atwater, Jr., aged thirteen and a few months, sat for a considerable time upon such a fence, after school hours, every afternoon of the last week in October; and only one person particularly observed him or was stimulated to any mental activity by his procedure. Even at that, this person was affected only because she was Herbert's relative, and of an age sympathetic to his—and of a sex antipathetic.

In spite of the fact that Herbert Illingsworth Atwater, Jr., thus seriously disporting himself on his father's back fence, attracted only this audience of one (and she hostile at a rather distant window) his behavior really should have been considered piquantly interesting by anybody. After climbing to the top of the fence he would produce from interior pockets a small memorandum book and a pencil; seldom putting these implements to immediate use. His expression was gravely alert, his manner more than businesslike; yet nobody could have failed to comprehend that he was enjoying himself, especially when his attitude became tense—as at times it certainly did. Then he would rise, balancing himself at adroit ease, his feet aligned one before the other on the inner rail, a foot below the top of the boards, and with eyes dramatically shielded beneath a scoutish palm, he would gaze sternly in the direction of some object or motion which had attracted his attention; and then, having

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satisfied himself of something or other, he would sit again and decisively enter a note in his memorandum book.

He was not always alone; he was frequently joined by a friend, male, and, though shorter than Herbert, quite as old; and this companion was inspired, it seemed, by motives precisely similar to those from which sprang Herbert's own actions. Like Herbert, he would sit upon the top of the high fence, usually at a little distance from him; like Herbert he would rise at intervals, for the better study of something this side of the horizon; then, also concluding like Herbert, he would sit again and write firmly in a little notebook. And seldom in the history of the world have any sessions been invested by the participants with so intentional an appearance of importance.

That was what most injured their lone observer at the somewhat distant back window, upstairs at her own place of residence; she found their importance almost impossible to bear without screaming. Her provocation was great; the important importance of Herbert and his friend, impressively maneuvering upon their fence, was so extreme as to be all too plainly visible across four intervening broad back yards; in fact, there was almost reason to suspect that the two performers were aware of their audience and even of her goaded condition; and that they sometimes deliberately increased the outrageousness of their importance because they knew she was watching them. And upon the Saturday of that week, when the notebook writers were upon the fence at intervals throughout the afternoon, Florence Atwater's fascinated indignation became vocal.

"Vile things!" she said.

Her mother, sewing beside another window of the room, looked up inquiringly.

"What are, Florence?"

"Cousin Herbert and that nasty little Henry Rooter."

"Are you watching them again?" her mother asked.

"Yes, I am," said Florence, tartly. "Not because I care to, but merely to amuse myself at their expense."

Mrs. Atwater murmured deprecatingly, "Couldn't you find some other way to amuse yourself, Florence?"

"I don't call this amusement," the inconsistent girl responded, not without chagrin. "Think I'd spend all my days starin' at Herbert Illingsworth Atwater, Junior, and that nasty little Henry Rooter, and call it amusement?"

"Then why do you do it?"

"Why do I do what, mama?" Florence inquired as if in despair of Mrs. Atwater's ever learning to put things clearly.

"Why do you 'spend all your days' watching them? You don't seem able to keep away from the window, and it appears to make you irritable. I should think if they wouldn't let you play with them you'd be too proud—"

"Oh, good heavens, mama!"

"Don't use expressions like that, Florence, please."

"Well," said Florence, "I got to use some expression when you accuse me of wantin' to 'play' with those two vile things! My goodness mercy, mama, I don't want to 'play' with 'em! I'm more than four years old, I guess; though you don't ever seem willing to give me credit for it. I don't haf to 'play' all the time, mama; and, anyway, Herbert and that nasty little Henry Rooter aren't playing, either."

"Aren't they?" Mrs. Atwater inquired. "I thought the other day you said you wanted them to let you play at being a newspaper reporter, or editor, or something like that, with them, and they were rude and told you to go away. Wasn't that it?"

Florence sighed. "No, mama, it cert'nly wasn't."

"They weren't rude to you?"

"Yes, they cert'nly were!"

"Well, then—"

"Mama, can't you understand?" Florence turned from the window to beseech Mrs. Atwater's concentration upon the matter. "It isn't 'playing!' I didn't want to 'play' being a reporter; they ain't 'playing'—"

"Aren't playing, Florence."

"Yes'm. They're not. Herbert's got a real printing press; Uncle Joseph gave it to him. It's a real one, mama, can't you understand?"

"I'll try," said Mrs. Atwater. "You mustn't get so excited about it, Florence."

"I'm not!" Florence turned vehemently. "I guess it'd take more than those two vile things and their old printin' press to get me excited! I don't care what they do; it's far less than nothing to me! All I wish is they'd fall off the fence and break their vile ole necks!"

With this manifestation of impersonal calmness, she turned again to the window; but her mother protested. "Do find something else to amuse you, Florence; and quit watching those foolish boys; you mustn't let them upset you so by their playing."

Florence moaned. "They don't 'upset' me, mama! They have no effect on me by the slightest degree! And I told you, mama, they're not 'playing.'"

"Then what are they doing?"

"Well, they're having a newspaper. They 'got the printing press and an office in Herbert's ole stable, and everything. They got somebody to give 'em some ole banisters and a railing from a house that was tore down somewheres, and then they got it stuck up in the stable loft, so it runs across with a kind of a gate in the middle of these banisters, and on one side is the printing press, and the other side they got a desk from that nasty little Henry Rooter's mother's attic; and a table and some chairs, and a map on the wall; and that's their newspaper office. They go out and look for what's the news, and write it down in ink; and then they go through the gate to the other side of the railing where the printing press is, and print it for their newspaper."

"But what do they do on the fence so much?"

"That's where they go to watch what the news is," Florence explained moresely. "They think they're so grand, sittin' up there, pokin' around. They go other places, too; and they ask people. That's all they said I could be!" Here the lady's bitterness became strongly intensified. "They said, maybe I could be one o' the ones they asked if I knew anything, sometimes, if they happen to think of it! I just respectfly told 'em I'd decline to wipe my oldest shoes on 'em to save their lives!"

Mrs. Atwater sighed. "You mustn't use such expressions, Florence."

"I don't see why not," the daughter objected. "They're a lot more refined than the expressions they used on me!"

"Then I'm very glad you didn't play with them."

But at this, Florence once more gave way to final despair. "Mama, you just can't see through anything! I've said anyhow fifty times they ain't—aren't playing! They're getting up a real newspaper, and people buy it, and everything. They have been all over this part of town and got every aunt and uncle they have, besides their own fathers and mothers, and some people in the neighborhood, and Kitty Silver and two or three other colored people besides, that work for families they know. They're going to charge twenty-five cents a year, collect-in-advance because they want the money first; and even papa gave 'em a quarter last night; he told me so."

"How often do they publish their paper, Florence?" Mrs. Atwater inquired somewhat absently, having resumed her sewing.

"Every week; and they're goin' to have the first one a week from today."

"What do they call it?"

"The North End Daily Oriole. It's the silliest name I ever heard for a newspaper; and I told 'em so. I told 'em what I thought of it, I guess!"

"Was that the reason?" Mrs. Atwater asked.

"Was it what reason, mama?"

"Was it the reason they wouldn't let you be a reporter with them?"

"Pooh!" Florence exclaimed airily. "I didn't want anything to do with their ole paper. But anyway I didn't make fun o' their callin' it the North End Daily Oriole till after they said I couldn't be in it. Then I did, you bet!"

"Florence, don't say—"

"Mama, I got to say somep'm! Well, I told 'em I wouldn't be in their ole paper if they begged me on their bented knees; and I said if they begged me a thousand years I wouldn't be in any paper with such a crazy name; and I wouldn't tell 'em any news if I knew the President of the United States had the scarlet fever! I just politely informed 'em they could say what they liked if they was dying; I declined so much as wipe the oldest shoes I got on 'em!"

"But why wouldn't they let you be on the paper?" her mother insisted.

Upon this Florence became analytical. "Just so's they could act so important!" And she addded, as a consequence: "They ought to be arrested."

(To Be Continued)

Is Last Chance for Disabled "Vets" to Get Claims Settled

Disabled service men who will have an opportunity to place their claims directly with officials of the Veterans' bureau when the "clean-up" squad visits Alliance are advised to bring abundant proof either of disability, the need for additional compensation or for re-education to headquarters in the basement of the library building on September 5 and 6.

A joint meeting of the executive committees of the American Legion and the Red Cross was held at the office of Dr. Minor Morris, commander of Alliance post of the Legion, last Friday evening, at which time arrangements were made to care for the "clean-up" squad of federal war risk officers, who will be in Alliance September 5 and 6. The work of the squad was explained by Thomas Temple, representative of central division headquarters of the Red Cross, at Chicago. It was decided that the Red Cross would furnish the funds and the Legion organize for the meeting. At Grand Island and other points in the state, hundreds of claims were filed, and a large corps of stenographers was necessary. At Alliance the rush is not expected to be so large, but there will be fifteen stenographers on duty and if the number of claimants warrants, the Red Cross canteen committee will be called into action to feed the ex-soldier visitors.

FIVE MEN FINED IN CITY'S POLICE COURT

Police Judge Berry Friday afternoon found Oscar Reed, Ray Trabert, John Bayer, Tom Gray and Elver Bullock guilty of a charge of disorderly conduct, and assessed fines of $50 apiece. The men have filed $200 appeal bond each and will carry the case to the district court. They were charged with making noise on the street early in the morning. A second charge of intoxication against Ray Trabert was dismissed by the police judge for lack of evidence.

Elenor Wheeler of Ashby was in the city on business Monday.

ROAD MEETING LAST FRIDAY SET NEW MARK

(Continued from page 1)

Then followed the one incident that showed there was some feeling on the part of the delegates that all was not well. The trouble started with the Sidney delegation, which contained, among others, W. B. ("Paddy") Miles. Mr. Miles rose to his feet and addressed the chairman. He made some facetious reference to the story of Jonah and the whale, and intimated that Mr. Rhein had swallowed the whale, and hinted that the chairman, in accepting offices in both the G-P-C and North Star associations, had tackled a pretty big job. Mr. Rhein, while not explaining that the presidency of the North Star association had been forced upon him at Sidney, after he had thrice rejected the crown, came back at the Sidney speaker with some remarks as to the fact that Sidney had not shown any too much interest at the first meeting of the series. Mr. Miles made a peaceful response, but within a few minutes another Sidney man took the floor, Mr. McIntosh.

Pledged Alliance's Support

Mr. McIntosh, through a motion that he put, disclosed the fact that some of the visitors doubted the sincerity of Alliance and rather questioned whether this city was as neutral as she had insisted she was. At the Bridgeport meeting, a week previous, some of the men from that city had pointed out that it was a North Star meeting, and wanted to know why it was that any other route's claims should be considered. At that time, the chairman had been questioned by the delegates in such a way as to bring out the fact that this doubt existed.

According to some of the delegates, Bridgeport, Sidney and other towns along the North Star route came to Alliance prepared to get definite assurance from Alliance that this city in fact wanted the Bridgeport route, and was prepared to help put it through. Some of them declared that they believed a few of the Alliance men were actually working for the Broadwater route. Unless they got this assurance, some of the visitors declared, they intended to ask for the resignation of the chairman. However, the fact was made so plain by President Rhein and others that Alliance was sincere in its neutrality, and was not intending to doublecross any of the towns, that this step was forgotten.

Nevertheless, Mr. McIntosh in a resolution outlined the North Star route as proposed through Nebraska, naming the towns through which it is to pass, and this resolution was passed with a whoop. The war was over, with the exception of a parting shot at Chairman Rhein by Paddy Miles.

The meeting adjourned, and the delegates were taken to the Country club for the rest of the afternoon. In the evening they were given tickets for the movies, and the Elks club was thrown open for their entertainment until the various trains left.

Misses Margaret and Carroll Wagar returned to their home at Edgar, Neb., Sunday evening.

Mrs. J. E. Henneberry and sister-in-law, Miss H. Henneberry, and aunt, Miss K. S. Young, both of Chicago, both of Chicago, returned Sunday night from Deadwood, S. D., Misses Young and Henneberry going on to Yellowstone park. J. E. Henneberry is still in the Black Hills.