

Professor F. E. Clements, the state botanist of Minnesota, has attracted attention by his estimate in a recent bulletin that the annual waste of mushrooms in the United States equals in value the entire agricultural product of the country, says the Manchester Union. It is easy for an enthusiast in any line of thought or endeavor to lose the sense of proportion, and it may perhaps be taken for granted that Professor Clements has permitted himself to be carried away by the contemplation of the waste of a natural food product which is more or less abundant everywhere and which has an unquestioned food value. Beginning with early summer and continuing until late fall, the production of mushrooms in woods, pastures and waste places is something enormous, and a large proportion of them are not only edible, but nourishing in so far as they are not made use of—and a small proportion of them is ever gathered—of course, represent a loss of possible food supply, but some account must be taken of the cost of collecting and distributing them to consumers, as well as of the danger from some species which are harmful and of at least two which may be classed as deadly. These are easily distinguished, to be sure, by any one who has made a study of the mushroom tribe, but until Americans, as a rule, are much more familiar with the subject than at present, a great proportion of the edible varieties will continue to go to waste.

Based calculations on the estimate that the number of American tourists in Europe in a season is 350,000, and that the average individual expenditure by these tourists is \$750, some one has easily figured that about \$225,000,000 of American money is spent abroad in the course of a season; and this does not include the cost of steamship tickets. Bankers who handle the letters of credit for wealthy American tourists are quoted to the effect that \$3,000 is a fair average for the value of these letters, says the Manchester Union. Among tourists of the wealthy class, says the report, it is common to place from \$25,000 to \$75,000 in the hands of the bankers, and, as a rule, fully two-thirds of the amount is drawn. Possibly the major premise of this main proposition has been overdrawn; possibly the minor premise; possibly both—and possibly neither. In any event, it must be admitted that \$225,000,000 is a tremendous sum of American money to be taken to Europe and left there in a single season.

An appeal for American-made rubber tires is made by the United States consuls in Germany, who say that a rich market is being overlooked by the people at home. These advance agents of trade point out that in some of the cities on the high road of tourist travel there are for sale but two makes of automobile tires, and those of French and German brands. The use of the bicycle as a means of transportation is reported on the increase, and, as if to add to the field for exploitation, many of the smaller cities are just beginning to awake to the advantage of rubber tires as a part of the fitting of general vehicles.

An ungallant New Jersey farmer dressed up his scarecrows in hobble skirts and basket hats, and declares that the crows are too panic-stricken by the fashionable frights to come near his fields. Many men will think more of the intelligence of birds after this display of the crows' antipathy to hobble skirts.

A Chicago teamster has been sentenced to one year in the penitentiary for stabbing a horse to death because the animal would not stand quietly beside a hitching post. No doubt he deserved what he got, but if he had merely killed a man he might be out on small bail.

Since the means of identification by finger and thumb marks, New Jersey burglars are wearing gloves. It is a pity more commendable ambitions are not equally quick to take up-to-date advantage of all the resources of the age.

A Connecticut woman has been cured by a surgical operation of her mania for playing the piano. Demands for similar operations will probably now come pouring in from all parts of the United States.

Blue paint, we are told, will drive away flies. If red paint would do the same a good many of our citizens would be willing to give up their sleep and make the town immune.

Fifteen Philadelphia bakers have been arrested for dyeing their pies. Yet anyone who has tried to eat a Philadelphia pie will realize the necessity for dyeing them.

It is never too late to learn. The papers tell us that a New Yorker, ninety-five years old, has just learned to smoke.

The man who cut off his nose to spite his face is outlived by the Brooklynite who killed himself to cure a toothache.

All dogs that walk abroad in the hot months should be adorned with a nose.

THE SWAG OF THE TROPIC DAWN

By Bernard Meer

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FIVE days a week Bostwick, the banker, sat in his high-backed office, through the glass door of which he could survey at a glance the long line of the bank's outfitting, the fretted, tessellated ceiling, with its glittering mosaic domes, and the massy pillars of onyx, that chilled and frightened the common person who, by any accident, happened to find his way into the plutonic precincts of the bank itself.

Bostwick lived up town in one of the handsomest houses in New York. He sported a line of touring cars, for which he had paid the usual \$14,500 per car, any one of which, even without the use of its honker, was sufficient to make the average man feel low and contemptible in his own opinion. He contributed lavishly to the campaign funds of both parties, and was just a trifle bothered whenever the president of the United States would say anything strong enough to attract the attention of the public at large. He sometimes would condescend to utter a few words on the business situation to the National Commercial Drummers' association, or to some other equally important organization, and his thoughts on such occasions were carefully considered by all the business interests in all parts of the country, and were cable to London, Paris, and Berlin to be carefully considered there.

When Bostwick took his annual little jaunt to Europe he paid for his cabin accommodations a price that would buy a suburban home for one of his clerks; tossed to the head steward a hundred-dollar bill, and flung to the other servants on the boat a fat bundle of fives to divide among themselves.

Bostwick was as solid with all the ministers of all the denominations as the Apostle Paul himself; perhaps a little more so; and when he went to church on Sabbath his refined susceptibilities were never assailed by anything he did not care to hear. His name was always well up in the lists of those who gave to religion or to charity, and he took an active interest in all forward movements that aimed at the thorough reform of corrupt political life, and at the swift and signal punishment or the prompt expiation of crime.

In the course of several years of this kind of existence Bostwick had formulated for himself an estimate of his own position in the world, in which he figured himself as one of the pillars of the social fabric and one of the necessary organs of the nation's industrial vitality. The fundamentals on which this estimate were based were these: He had financed some of the biggest tunnels in existence; he was the controlling hand in a score of street railroad systems in as many American towns; he was a partner in nearly everything that had been paying twenty per cent. on the par value of the stock before it was watered; and when he wanted to know how many were the companies, corporations, concerns, and coalitions in which he was one of the big chiefs, he had to send for his personal bookkeeper to supply him with the facts.

And yet, do you know, I never particularly cared for Bostwick, not even before Longwood told me that story about the Tropic Dawn, when Bostwick had tried to squeeze him in the panic of 1907, and came very near running Longwood over on the rocks, when a little money and a little time would have floated him out clear and fair into safe and open water.

Considering that he was a pillar of the social fabric, Bostwick had the queerest face you ever saw. His eyes were set so close together that he had to have the frame of his eyes-glasses built on a special mold. His ears were large and stood well out from the side of his head, and one of them was a good bit lower than the other. His face below the nose was so long that you would just naturally look at it in wonder; and if you drew a line through the point where the middle of his mouth ought to be, you would find that the mouth was about twenty-five per cent. too far on the left side of the diagram.

Before the panic of 1907 Bostwick was known in business as the "friend of the little fellows." Merchants and manufacturers whose myriad traveling men radiated from New York like the light of the vernal sun had learned to depend upon Bostwick as they depended upon the regularly recurrent sequence of the spring and the fall trade. Did Bostwick agree to give you cash at discount on the notes you brought in from your customers up to say a hundred thousand or more, he would smile on one side of his face and let you double the amount—if you found yourself doing a business greater than your capital safely warranted. Did you need a little money for a proposition that figured out a quick return, although a little risky for a really conservative and moss-backed old timer, Bostwick would take your notes for it and let you have the cash. Did you fall for a million, Bostwick would take you over, set you up on your feet, and let you have enough coin to begin your life anew.

Therefore, I say, Bostwick was the hero of not the demigods of the "little fellows" whose payrolls did not run up higher than forty or fifty thousand a week, and who, in their own confidential opinion, formed the backbone and the stomach of the country's manufactures and trade.

Now Longwood, whose printing and binding plant had been cleaning up its seven per cent. for a matter of twenty years, since Longwood had bought into it to become finally its sole proprietor, was one of the first of the little fellows for whom Bostwick telephoned in the early days of the panic and informed, with a winking look in his close-set eyes and a vicious frown on his slanting forehead,

to Bostwick was not precisely the story he told me. Longwood was a business man who had a knack of getting prices which his heaviest competitors would not even dream of asking, and I fancy that he kept his business wits about him on that important day—the most important day since his mother gave him birth. But you will never be able to understand how the game was spread between them until you have learned what Longwood did in San Francisco twenty years before; for it was then that he came by the money that gave him his little start—I mean after he lost his job in Boston and went out to the coast with all his belongings converted into ready money.

To Longwood's fancy San Francisco, while he still had money, was a Garden of Eden in which men had been placed for the sole purpose of seizing with both hands the pleasures of the world and the flesh. When the ozone poured in from the ocean, and the crystalline weather cordialed his brain and his spinal cord, the shacks of which Market street was built were turned by the sun into palaces of mere joy. The restaurants, with their lights and linen, were, for him, the supping rooms of kings. The painted women who clustered in the streets of evenings were the dainty princesses of a fairy realm. The houses on the hill tops were transformed into the buoyant dwellings of glad and airy gods. But Longwood was not aware that he was thinking in these extravagant terms. His education had never been carried beyond the grammar school. And yet he had been able to do so, that is the way he would have phrased it—while his money lasted.

When his money was all gone he began to realize that the geographical position of San Francisco had been chosen for the quick accomplishment of one or the other of two specific things: Suicide or seafaring. And when Longwood, indorsing the second alternative, started to walk to the water front in search of a job as a sailor before the mast, he was clothed in the raiment of a tramp.

On the whole, he seemed to be glad of it, anyway. Printing and binding—up to that time—had not been for him the golden purse of Fortunatus. He knew the business well; knew it in its practical and theoretical phases; the printing part, the binding part, the finance. But nothing as doing in



"TELL THE FIVE THAT THE BARGAIN WAS BROKEN AND THE PENALTY PAID."

San Francisco in that line, and so far as Longwood was concerned, nothing was doing in San Francisco in any line at all. If you made an exception of suicide and seafaring.

And even at that, as he neared the water front, it became questionable with Longwood whether suicide would not be preferable to seafaring—all things weighed. Two months of pawing and selling had picked him clean of his clothes and of every other thing of value he had; and a similar term on the bad whisky and Spanish free lunch they were offering at the Slovenian homes for the friendless near the water front had mottled his face and imparted to his eye the alertness and permanent anticipation you see on the visage of the man sitting on the San Francisco pier, who had danced him on her knees, kissed him and sang to him; and now he was hustled and shoveled about not because he was counted as worth the shoveling, but merely because he seemed to be in somebody's way.

What an accommodating town, to be sure! In the days of his preternatural joy the lustrous weather touched him with its wand of gold and quickened the streams of his blood. In the time of his adversity the rain fell on him day after day, as if the ocean had been transplanted to the sky and was vainly endeavoring to get back.

Seafaring? Yes. To be kicked by the mate, actually kicked, to say nothing of falling from the top of a mast some day to find your home in the bounding deep. He was trying to use himself to the thought when he felt a touch on the shoulder and heard a voice in his ear.

"Did you sign with the Tropic Dawn?"

He was a man you would never have loved for his open and sunny countenance, having on the contrary the general aspect of a walrus dipping and now-seated on its wave-washed log throne. He had not questioned Longwood with his eyes, but gazed with a stupid stare—stupid and cunning—while waiting for the answer. Into the thick mist and sifting rain that were blowing in on a soft breeze from the bay, the style of his dress, whatever it may have been, was hidden by his glittering rain coat; and his sailor's helmet conspired with the coat to obliterate all traces of a neck.

"Why do you ask? Have you got a job?"

He motioned to Longwood with his fat body rather than with his head, and waddled swiftly away along the water front, never turning to see whether he were followed or not, and never drawing a breath, and never seeing into a barroom called the Cove of Rest, half filled with men who were comforted themselves with

quart phizzes of st-m beer and with pale whisky sold by the measure as an encouragement to the trade. On he went to the back door, which he pushed open with his foot, and then on down the steps that led to the cellar.

At sight of the black pit below Longwood paused, forgetting for the moment that his negligence outfit was the union card of his perfect safety; but down he followed on the heels of his guide until he was stopped by the bulk of him where he was standing in the darkness knocking softly.

"When a door opened Longwood could see a light so thickly shrouded in tobacco smoke that it seemed to be a mile away. It came from a coal-oil lamp that swung from the ceiling over a table about which three good men were sitting with glasses and liquor for all; and as Longwood pushed past his companion and into the room, the man who had opened the door for him banged it shut, turned the key, seated himself at the table, and looked around at his friend's.

"Five!" he said, filling himself a drink and pointing to a chair. "Set down and get busy with the booze."

There was a false front on the whole affair; an appearance of ease and good fellowship that covered over the fluttering heart of canker and expectation. It was the dismal phantom of conversational politeness such as you see at the race track when the horses are coming through the stretch and the bettors are propping themselves up with the broken reeds of hope. Longwood drank and waited. The door-opener led the way.

"Men," he said, "I have drank good liquor in every latitude and close to never any longitude in the world, but this here liquor is the best liquor I ever tasted."

He spoke of the liquor, but he was not thinking of it.

"This here is good liquor," added another of them, not sipping it and not thinking of it, "but it ain't the finest of the fine by a long ways. It ain't got the taste that mo-queer has got. Mo-queer is the Chin-Chin champagne, and I once drank it in Canton, but it'll put you to sleep for four days if you snuff up enough of it at a sitting."

"I was gruff work—this polite conversation—gritty and unprofitable for plain blunt men accustomed to the alternatives of speaking their minds or remaining dumb like the beasts.

"The door-opener was nearest to him, and when the two removed themselves a few feet from the circle and their heads together, Longwood felt his hand slipping away from him, although it was a blessing that a neither of them had the voice of a baby, and that Longwood had all his life been fortunate for his over-careless sense of hearing. He could make out in the challenge of the stranger the single word, "sign;" and in the response of the door-opener the two words "ask" and "job;" and it occurred to him then that the caprice of the hideous hazard was playing directly into his hands.

"Could this be the challenge and the nimble password that had caused the walrus man to pilot him into this black diverticulum of danger? A challenge and a response that had been thrust upon him, by accident for better or worse?"

Did you sign with the Tropic Dawn? Why do you ask? Have you got a job?"

He would try the issue in any event, while commending his soul to its maker. Try it he did and make good. But the game was not yet begun.

"I will state it right and fair," continued the stranger, resuming his lecturerial attitude at the back of the chair. "Right and fair. We are to place the profits on the table and count them out, share and share alike, in five shares, and no man is to lay his hands on any part of them until they are all counted and divided so that each can see that no man is getting more than his share and no man less. If any man lays his hands on them before the count is made he is to suffer the penalty agreed on by the principals in the speculation, for I take it for granted that I am doing business with men who have power to act."

He thrust one of his hands into the front of the storm coat, drew out a wallet of leather as big as a hat, and placed it on the table.

"I may say," he added, as if it were a bare afterthought, "that the total amount of the profits was a hundred thousand dollars."

The words were not uttered when the door-opener jumped up, kicked his chair behind him, and clapped his left hand on the wallet.

"You're a liar, mister!" he roared.

"You're a thiefing liar of the eternal first! It wasn't no hundred thousand, it wasn't! It wasn't no such thing! If you want to know how much it was for a betting proposition, it was two hundred thousand, and not a centime less! Ain't I right, men?"

Their knives were at the stranger's throat like a semi-circular collar of glittering spikes, the points directed inward. He looked them round and smiled at them as you smile at children that are angry at something they do not understand.

"If I had a baseball bat I would beat you with it," he calmly chided with an indulgent little laugh. "Do you think that I don't know how to count money? Take down your knives and let us get to work and count the money!"

They all fell back, but nobody seemed to have observed what was done at first, between the door-opener and the stranger. What they saw and heard a moment afterwards was the door-opener's knife singing past the head of the stranger, and the stranger's head tipping like a shuttle from one side to the other, while the hammer of the forty-eight which the stranger was holding point-blank at the door-opener's heart was so deftly "fanned" by the palm of the stranger's right hand that the three shots sounded almost like one. As he backed to the door of the thick and pungent haze, he gently addressed himself to the four men before him.

"Tell the Five," he said, "that the bargain was broken and the penalty paid."

And the door hid him from sight. They were looking at the wallet on the table.

"Men," suggested the weather man, "it's my heartfelt motion that we count this here goods and divide it fair and square into four equal parts, which'll make a quarter of a part extra for each man, and let the big five do the double-entry bookkeeping on it if it suits their fancy. I never see a cleaner job in my life."

They counted it a split into three quarters of twenty-five thousand. Neat and nice goods it was—all in

clean new slips of yellow which told the bearer that there were deposited in the treasury of the United States so-and-so-many dollars in gold, to all of which this document certified, but as Longwood, with his own share in the pocket of his coat, was about to pass toward the door, his eye fell on a queer thing that lay on the chair of the stranger.

"What's this?"

The weather man took it, inspected it, and gave the table a tremendous volar slap.

"What do you think of that?" he cried. "Did you ever see the like of that? Hold me boys! Hold me careful, or I'll die with strangulation from laughing. He took it off as clean as a whistle! As clean as if he was the visiting doctor at the hospital."

But what did Longwood do, after he had broken his first fifty for a complete now outfit, and his second for the east out of Oakland, and later, after he had bought into the printing and binding plant, which was then a small affair of its kind, but an affair that promised well if handled under careful management?

Longwood naturally worried.

Of evenings when he would go home and lay aside the business card he would figure for hours on the problem of the five, and the Tropic Dawn, and the man with the forty-eight. What was the Tropic Dawn? A ship, no doubt, that had been worked for the old game—although there were objections to that theory too. Still, if it were assumed that it were a ship, with a consignment of specie, or something like that, and a substitution of the goods, with the big five scuttling her at sea and getting away on a boat, and the lecture fellow doing the dirty work for the consignors, with a payment for marine insurance, and so on. But he was never satisfied with that ingenious explanation.

Longwood grew fat and prosperous, and one day after he had acquired complete control of the plant, for he could have a little holiday for himself without danger of being robbed by his partner, he took a trip to San Francisco and put up at the Palace hotel. You must understand that the Tropic Dawn had become for him a problem that cried out for clearance, but he would never trust the business to any mere erring human agency. He would look into it with his own eyes; and the first night he was in San Francisco he took it up with the clerk of the hotel.

"What was that business about the Tropic Dawn?"

He put the question as a bold chance.

"The Tropic Dawn? Don't you know about the Tropic Dawn? She was blown to silvers as she was passing the presidio on her way from stream to sea. Blown to silvers. Some of them said it was her boilers, and some of them said it was nitro-glycerine. Whichever it was, she was blown to silvers as she was going from stream to sea."

Longwood thoughtfully made his way to a chair by the log fire in the lobby.

Blown to silvers with nitro-glycerine?

It was a fine problem—to let alone!

But that was how Longwood—figuring what was coming to him if he compounded the interest on his own share of the swag that Bostwick had kept back from him—agreed with Bostwick that he would settle for a reasonable amount of stock in the bank and an unlimited line of discount on his paper.

New Scheme to Water Flowers.

One of the most effective window demonstrators now entertaining gapping New Yorkers moves not, speaks not and draws no salary, but interests the crowd. The exhibition takes place in a florist's window. It consists of a huge tin pail of water standing on a table about four feet from the floor. Hanging over the edge of the pail are strips of muslin varying in width from one to three inches. These muslin strips are firmly anchored on one end inside the pail by means of weights, while the other end rests on flower pots which are arranged in a circle around the table.

"We are giving this demonstration," the florist said, "to show people how to water their plants when they shut up their apartment and go away for four or five days at a time. The water soaks slowly through the muslin into the earth and keeps it at a uniform moisture. The width of the muslin strips varies with the size of the flower pots. A pail of this size will supply all of these flowers for a week."

—New York Sun.

Business Women Organize.

Mrs. Robert A. Woods presided at the recent gathering of business women in Boston at which the first step was taken toward forming a permanent organization. With the exception of a few women lawyers all the women attending this meeting occupy executive places in the business world of Boston. Addresses were made by Miss Bertha Slennon, Mrs. Mary A. Moran, Mrs. Alice Parker Lesser, Miss Alice Grady, Miss Mary A. Mahan and Miss Josephine Brourian. A committee to investigate and report on further plans was appointed and a meeting called for this month, when a permanent organization will be made, probably under the name of the Down Town club.

Sanitation is Salvation.

Disease germs are invisible, it is true, but they hide shelter and breeding places in dirt, which is easy to see. If cleanliness is made the rule of life innumerable seeds of possible illness and death will be washed away without opportunity to do their destructive work. Sanitation is the salvation of many lives. It is science applied to the conquest of death, within the allotted normal span of human existence. But plain, ordinary, old-fashioned cleanliness goes far to accomplish the same purpose and do the same service for mankind.

Her Meteoric Flight.

Post (at luncheon)—I wonder what our new cook will be like?

Mrs. Post—Oh, John! She left this morning.—Harper's Bazar.