



Whether Common or Not

By Will M. Maupin.

Investigation

For a long time it had been rumored that Mr. Public Official was so crooked he could sleep behind a corkscrew. There was a well defined suspicion that certain corporations organized to hand lemons to the public had been snuggling up to Mr. Public Official like kittens to hot bricks.

Mr. Humble Clerk, who had inadvertently admitted that all was not as it should be in the department, was amputated from his job with a swiftness that would make a flash of lightning look like it was tied to a post. In the meantime several corporations under suspicion of having as much influence with Mr. Public Official as a Small Boy has over his Yellow Pup, were insisting that all was well, and that Mr. Public Official would, had he lived several centuries ago, put an end to old Diogenes' search for an honest man.

But somehow or other the general public still felt that the best it was getting was the worst of it, and it asked for something more than heated atmosphere.

Finally Mr. Public Official deemed it wise to do something more than pose as a model for Persecuted Innocence, so he struck another attitude and declared that if there was anything on earth he wanted more than a rigid investigation he had not yet met up with it.

Immediately thereafter Mr. Public Official had several conferences with influential lawmakers, and soon the public was notified that decision had been reached to investigate through a special committee appointed for the purpose.

This tickled the public almost as much as a rattle tickles a baby, there not being a great deal of difference between the public and a baby when it comes down to a matter of attracting its attention away from the point at issue.

Being a Public Official it was only natural that the committee should be made up of senators and congressmen, an equal number of each being selected.

This looked to be almost as fair and square as the average monte or shell game practiced by the Abbreviated Circuses in the rural communities, but not so. The monte and shell game gents sometimes let the Other Fellow win a penny or two, just for appearances.

And so the committee was appointed.

Senator Smallditch, representing the Allied Water Power Monopoly; Senator Fieldrows, representing the Consolidated Coal Land Grabbers; Senator DeChance, representing the Amalgamated Timber Taking Corporation; Congressman Fauney, representing the Insidious Irrigation Interests; Congressman Soldall, representing the Meddlesome Mineral Lands Company, and several other congressmen who only represented a few farmers and small business men, were appointed on the committee.

Of course the announcement of the committee's personnel was not so framed as to include the interests of the committee, and as a result the general public did not realize that their chance of beating the frame-up was almost as good as the chance the sheep had with the butcher. The committee met and proceeded with its investigations, sometimes with the doors of the committee room wide open, such time being when the proper witnesses were being exam-

ined; but more often the doors were closed as tightly as the river and harbor bill against a congressman who refuses to be good and let a few putrid items go through without yelling for the board of health.

The investigating committee found it necessary to hold sessions at St. Augustine, Fla., during the winter months, and at Newport, Saratoga and in the Adirondacks during the summer months, and in due time it was ready with its report.

The report was exhaustive as well as exhausting, and it showed beyond a doubt that Mr. Public Official was so white that talcum powder would make a black smudge on his brow, while the Underlings who had cast reflections upon him possessed characters so black that charcoal would write white upon them.

Immediately the Great Newspapers that were owned by the same men who owned the interests owning the senators and congressmen composing the majority of the committee took it up and demonstrated that Mr. Public Official was a much abused individual.

Whereupon the public, having played the monte and shell games until it was exhausted, realized that it was in the wrong, humbly apologized to Mr. Public Official, cast glances of scorn at those who had attacked him, and then rolled over and went to sleep again.

We are convinced that there is a moral concealed somewhere in this narrative, but after due reflection we have come to the conclusion that the work and worry of digging it out would not be warranted by the probable results.

Agreed

According to President Taft the postal deficit was \$17,000,000. "This deficit," says the president, "is due to the insufficient revenue from second-class matter and the expense of the rural free delivery system."

"The president is correct," says the railroad magnate who receives from the government 800 per cent more per pound for hauling the mails than he charges for hauling express.

"The president is correct," says the manager of the express company, who draws a dividend of 300 per cent on his stock, and would draw more if the periodical postage rate were higher.

"The president is correct," says the government official whose department sends millions of pounds of matter through the mails free of charge.

So far as we have heard, however, these are about the only people who agree with the president's findings.

Isn't It Awful, Mabel?

The successful manufacturer was wrathful in the extreme. The very idea of a legislature attempting to tell him how he should conduct his business!

"It's just this way," he remarked. "The legislature actually had the effrontery to enact a law prohibiting the employment of women in factories more than ten hours in any one day."

Being somewhat in favor of that kind of legislation we naturally asked him what there was wrong about that.

"Why, it is a cruel injustice to the women," he replied. "I have a great many in my employ who can not earn enough wages in ten hours to provide them with food and cloth-

ing. I am so interested in their welfare that I am glad to let them work twelve and fourteen hours a day in order that they may be sure of having sufficient food and comfortable clothing. If they are limited to ten hours a day they must inevitably suffer."

We longed to ask him why he didn't pay enough wage for ten hours' work to enable the women employees to live comfortably, but we were restrained by the fear that he would think us one of those pestiferous labor agitators.

The Man "Higher Up!"

Did it ever strike you as peculiar that the man "higher up" seldom gets caught?

A year or two ago they investigated the insurance frauds, and enough corruption was unearthed to make an offal factory smell like attar of roses. Somebody profited to the extent of millions by those frauds, but the man "higher up" wasn't touched; the men who pocketed the stolen millions went free, and if we remember rightly the only fellow cinched by the law was a salaried clerk.

The sugar trust profited to the extent of millions by doctored weights. Who got the money? The men "higher up," but to date the only ones punished were the hired men—the men who obeyed orders and drew pennies in wage while their employers pocketed thousands as "profits."

What's the use of trying to reform things as long as the men responsible for the abuses go scott free, and the men punished are merely the tools?

The man "higher up" is the man to get. Until he is made to suffer the punishment the abuses will continue.

Thoughtful

The messenger rushed into the private office of the mining magnate pale with fear and gasping for breath.

"What's the matter?" growled the magnate.

"There has been an explosion of fire damp in No. 3 shaft!" gasped the messenger.

"What's the damage?"

"Twenty-seven miners entombed, and with them five of the mine mules."

"My goodness!" exclaimed the magnate, aroused to action. "Rush out and organize a relief party. Mules have gone up at least twelve dollars a head since we bought that last consignment."

Brain Leaks

Still holding out?

A reasonable lie: "Fresh Country Eggs."

Good service does not mean servility.

Dirty dollars will not cleanse politics.

Sometimes a man's best asset is his ignorance.

What we most want is not always what we most need.

Opportunity is a good knocker, but there are others.

The "good fellow" foolishness has ruined many a good fellow.

Of course there is room at the top, but there is a great need of good men at the bottom.

Those who fight the devil with fire ought to first provide themselves with asbestos suits.

Perhaps the increased pace of living has something to do with the increased cost of living.

When we measure a man with our own yardstick we need not be surprised if he appears short.

Every time we try to eat a cold storage egg we wonder why some one hasn't discovered a way to store up last summer's sunshine and heat.

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