

# The Main Chance

BY Meredith Nicholson

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## CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

John turned out the light, and while they waited for the elevator to come up for them Worry jingled the coins and keys in his pockets before he blurted: "I say, John, I'm an underbred, low person, and am not worthy to be called your friend, and you may hate me all you like, but one thing I'd like to know. Did she say anything about me when you passed us this afternoon—make any comment or anything? You know I despise myself for asking, but—"

Saxton laughed quietly.

"Yes, she did; but I don't know that I ought to tell you. It was really encouraging. She said, 'Miss Margrave has a lot of style; don't you think so?'"

"Is that all?" demanded Raridan, stepping into the car.

"That's all. It wasn't very much; but it was the way she said it; and as she said it she brushed a fly from the horse with the whip, and she did it very carefully."

In the corridor below they met Wheaton coming out of the side door of the bank. He had been at work, he said. Raridan asked him to go with them to the club for a game of billiards, but he pleaded weariness and said he was going to bed.

The three men walked up Varney street together. They were men of widely different antecedents and qualities. Circumstances, in themselves natural and harmless, had brought them together. The lives of all three were to be influenced by the weakness of one, and one woman's life was to be profoundly affected by contact with all of them. It is not ordained for us to know whether those we touch hands with, and even break bread with, from day to day, are to bring us good or evil. The electric light reveals nothing in the sly's book which was not disclosed by starlight and rusklight.

Wheaton left them at the club door and went on to The Bachelors, which was only a step farther up the street.

"How do you like Wheaton by this time?" asked Raridan, as they entered the club.

"I hardly know how to answer that," Saxton answered. "He's treated me well enough. It seems to me I'm always trying to find some reason for not liking him, but I can't put my hand on anything tangible."

"That's the way I feel," said Raridan, hanging up his coat in the billiard room. "He's rigid, some way. There's no let-go in him. I guess the law allows us to dislike some people just on general principles, and Jim likes himself so well that you aid I don't matter."

## CHAPTER IX.

After the interim of quiet that Lent always brings in Clarkson, the spring came swiftly. There was a renewal of social activities which ran from dances and teas into outdoor gatherings. Evelyn had enjoyed to the full her experience at home. She had plunged into the frivolities of the town with a zest that was a trifle emphasized through her wish to escape any charge of being pedantic or literary. She was glad that she had gone to college, but she did not wish this fact of her life to be the haunting ghost of her days; and by the end of the winter she felt that she had pretty effectually laid it.

In June Mr. Porter began discussing summer plans with Evelyn. He eliminated himself from them; he could not get away, he said. But there was Grant to be considered. The boy was at school in New Hampshire, and Evelyn protested that it was not wise to subject him to the intense heat of a Clarkson summer. The first hot wave sent Porter to bed with a trifling illness, and his doctor took the opportunity to look him over and tell him that it was imperative for him to rest. Thompson came home from Arizona to spend the summer. He and Wheaton were certainly equal to the care of the bank, so they urged Porter, and he finally yielded. Evelyn found a hotel on the Massachusetts North Shore which sounded well in the circulars, and her father agreed to it. When they reached Orchard Lane he liked it better than he had expected. Every night he sat down with cipher telegrams, and constructed from Thompson's statistics the day's business in the bank. He received daily from New York the closing quotations on the shares he was interested in, and as he walked the long hotel verandas he effected a transmigration of spirit which put him back in his swivel chair in the Clarkson National.

In August Worry Raridan appeared suddenly and threw himself into the gaieties of the place for a fortnight. Mr. Porter asked him to sit at their table and marveled at the way Evelyn snubbed him, even to the extent of running away for three days with some friends who had a yacht and who carried her to Newport for a dance. During her absence Worry made all the other girls about the place happy; they were sure that "that Miss Porter" was treating him shabbily, and their hearts went out to him. Worry sulked when Evelyn returned and they had an interview between dances at a Saturday night hop.

He sought for recognition as a lover; she had not praised the efforts he had been making to win her approval by diligence at his office; he took care to call her attention to his changed habits.

"But, Evelyn, I am doing differently. I know that I wasted myself for years so that I'm a kind of joke and every body laughs about me. But I want to

know—I want to feel that I'm doing it for you! Don't you know that would help me and steady me? Won't you let it be for you?" He came close to her and stood with his arms folded, but she drew away from him with a despairing gesture.

"Oh, Worry," she cried, wearily, "you poor, foolish boy! Don't you know that you must do all things for yourself?"

"Yes," he returned eagerly. "I know that; I understand perfectly; but if you'd only let me feel that you wanted it—"

"I want you to succeed, but you will never do it for any one, if you don't do it for yourself."

He went home by an early train next morning to receive Saxton's consolation and to turn again to his law books. Margrave, on behalf of the Transcontinental, had offered to compromise the case of the poor widow whose clothes lined had been interfered with; but Raridan rejected this tender. He needed something on which to vent his mad spirits, and he gave his thought to devising means of transferring the widow's cause to the federal court. The removal of causes from State to federal courts was, Worry frequently said, one of the best things he did.

Porter's vacation was not altogether wasted. As he lounged about and philosophized to the Bostonians on Western business conditions, his restless mind took hold of a new project. It was suggested to him by the inquiries of a Boston banker, who owned a considerable amount of Clarkson Traction bonds and stock which he was anxious to sell. Porter gave a discouraging account of the company, whose history he knew thoroughly. The Traction Company had been organized in the boom days and its stock had been inflated in keeping with the prevailing spirit of the time. It was first equipped with the cable system in deference to the Clarkson hills, but later the company made the introduction of the trolley an excuse for a reorganization of its finances with an even more generous inflation. The panic then descended, it wrought a diminution of revenue; the company was unable to make the repairs which constantly became necessary, and the local management fell into the hands of a series of corrupt directors.

There had been much litigation, and some of the Eastern bondholders had threatened a receivership; but the local stockholders made plausible excuses for the default of interest when approached amicably, and when menaced grew insolent and promised trouble if an attempt were made to deprive them of power. A secretary and a treasurer under one administration had connived to appropriate a large share of the daily cash receipts, and before they left the office they destroyed or concealed the books and records of the company. The effect of this was to create a mystery as to the distribution of the bonds and the stock. When Porter came home from his summer vacation, the newspapers were demanding that steps be taken to declare the Traction franchise forfeit. But the franchise had been renewed lately and had twenty years to run. This extension had been procured by the element in control, and the foreign bondholders, hiding their time, were glad to avail themselves of the political skill of the local officers.

Porter had been casually asked by his Boston friend whether there was any local market for the stock or bonds; and he had answered that there was not; that the holders of shares in Clarkson kept what they had because they could no longer sell to one another and that they were only waiting for the larger outside bondholders and shareholders to assert themselves. Porter had ridden down to Boston with his brother banker and when they parted it was with an understanding that the Bostonian was to collect for Porter the Clarkson Traction securities that were held by New England banks, a considerable amount, Porter knew; and he went home with a well-formed plan of buying the control of the company. Times were improving and he had faith in Clarkson's future; he did not believe in it so noisily as Timothy Margrave did; but he knew the resources of the tributary country, and he had, what all successful business men must have, an alert imagination.

It was not necessary for Porter to disclose the fact of his purchases to the officers of the Traction Company, whom he knew to be corrupt and vicious; the transfer of ownership on the company's books made no difference, as the original stock books had been destroyed—a fact which had become public property through a legal effort to levy on the holdings of a shareholder in the interest of a creditor. Moreover, if he could help it, Porter never told any one about anything he did. He even had several dummies in whose names he frequently held securities and real estate. One of these was Peckham, a clerk in the office of Fenton, Porter's lawyer.

## CHAPTER X.

Wheaton had not long been an officer of the bank before he began to be aware that there was considerable mystery about Porter's outside transactions. Porter occasionally perused with much interest several small memorandum books which he kept carefully locked in his desk. The president often wrote letters with his own hand and copied them himself after bank hours, in a private letter-book. Wheaton was naturally curious as to what these outside interests might be. It had piqued him to find that while he was cashier of the bank he was not consulted in its larger transactions; and that of Porter's personal affairs he knew nothing.

One afternoon shortly after Porter's return from the East, Wheaton, who was waiting for some letters to sign, picked up a bundle of checks from the desk of one of the individual bookkeepers. They were Porter's personal checks which had that day been paid and were now being charged to his private account. Wheaton turned them over mechanically; it was not very long since he had been an individual bookkeeper himself; he had entered innumerable checks bearing Porter's name without giving them a thought. As the slips of paper passed through his fingers, he accounted for them in one way or another and put them back on the desk, face down, as a man always does who has been trained as a bank clerk. The last of them he held and studied. It was a check made payable to Peckham, Fenton's clerk. The amount was \$9,999.00—too large to be accounted for as a payment for services; for Peckham

was an elderly failure at the law who ran errands to the courts for Fenton and sometimes took charge of small collection matters for the bank.

A few days later, in the course of business, he asked Porter what disposition he should make of an application for a loan from a country customer. Porter rang for the past correspondence with their client, and threw several letters to Wheaton for his information. Wheaton read them and called the stenographer to dictate the answer which Porter had indicated should be made. He held the client's last letter in his hand, and in concluding turned it over into the wire basket which stood on his desk. As it fell face downwards his eye caught some figures on the back, and he picked it up thinking that they might relate to the letter. The memorandum was in Porter's large, uneven hand and read:

303  
33  
909  
909  
9999

The result of the multiplication was identical with the amount of Peckham's check. Again the figures held his attention. Local securities were quoted daily in the newspapers, and he examined the list for that day. There was no quotation of thirty-three on anything; the nearest approach was Clarkson Traction Company at thirty-three. The check which had interested him had been dated three days before, and he looked back to the quotation list for that date. Traction was given at thirty-three. Wheaton was pleased by the discovery; it was a fair assumption that Porter was buying shares of Clarkson Traction; he would hardly be buying foreign securities through Peckham. The stock had advanced two points since it had been purchased, and this, too, was interesting. Clearly, Porter knew what he was about—he had a reputation for knowing; and if Clarkson Traction was a good thing for the president to pick up quietly, why was it not a good thing for the cashier? He waited a day; Traction went to thirty-six. Then he called after banking hours at the office of a real estate dealer who also dealt in local stocks and bonds on a small scale. He chose this man because he was not a customer of the bank, and had never had any transactions with the bank or with Porter, so far as Wheaton knew. His name was Burton, and he welcomed Wheaton cordially. He was alone in his office, and after an interchange of courtesies, Wheaton came directly to the point of his errand.

"Some friends of mine in the country own a small amount of Traction stock; they've written me to find out what its prospects are. Of course in the bank we know in a general way about it, but I suppose you handle such things and I want to get good advice for my friends."

"Well, the truth is," said Burton, flattered by this appeal, "the bottom was pretty well gone out of it, but it's sprucing up a little just now. If the charter's knocked out it is only worth so much a pound as old paper; but if the right people get hold of it the newspapers will let up, and there's a big thing in it. How much do your friends own?"

"I don't know exactly," said Wheaton, evenly; "I think not a great deal. Who are buying just now? I notice that it has been advancing for several days. Some one seems to be forcing up the price."

"Nobody in particular, that is, nobody that I know of. I asked Billy Barnes, the secretary, the other day what was going on. He must know who the certificates are made out to; but he winked and gave me the laugh. You know Barnes. He don't cough up very easy; and he looks wise when he doesn't know anything."

"No," Barnes has the reputation of being pretty close-mouthed," replied Wheaton.

"If your friends want to sell, bring in the shares and I'll see what I can do with them," said Burton. "The outsiders are sure to act soon. This spurt right now may have nothing back of it. The town's full of gossip about the company and it ought to send the price down. Your friend Porter's a smooth one. He was in once, a long time ago, but he knew when to get out all right." Wheaton laughed with Burton at this tribute to Porter's sagacity, but he laughed discreetly. He did not forget that he was a bank officer and dignity was an essential in the business, as he understood it.

(To be continued.)

### Cause for Grief.

Tall Actor—Ah, Rudolfs, why that sad expression?  
Short Actor—I cannot help it, my lord. I die in the first act.  
Tall Actor—Oh, it might be worse.  
Short Actor—It couldn't be. There is a real chicken dinner in the second act.

### A Plea for the Verities.

"Do you resent the caricatures they publish of corporation kings?"  
"No," answered Mr. Dustin Stax; "only I wish they would be a little more consistent, and not make us look like jolly fat men, when most of us are fighting dyspepsia."—Washington Star.

### Our Beters.

The Customer—I say, d'ye know you half poisoned me with those beastly mushrooms I had here last week?  
A Mysterious Whisper—Then you owe me sixpence, 'Erbert. I told yer so.—The Sketch.

### Digging Holes.

"Not all the digging up for garden it done in the back yard."  
"No. One has to dig up considerably at the seed and hardware stores."—Kansas City Times.

### True Affection.

He—And you don't dislike me cause I'm poor, do you, Sadie?  
She—Why, Eddie, I couldn't love you any more if your father owned a candy store.

Consumers of meat in New York city are paying about 11 per cent more for their food than they did one year ago.

## UNITED STATES SENATE COST IS \$1,859,000

Expenditures for Last Year Include Nearly Every Article in Large Department Store.

## ARMY IS CARRIED ON PAY ROLL

Supplies, Repairs, Furniture, Salaries, Mileage and Other Things Eat Up Nation's Cash.

Washington correspondence:

It cost the United States \$1,859,189.77 to maintain the senate and senatorial dignity last year, and included in the list of expenditures are every item which goes to make up the stock of a complete department store.

Lithia water and alcohol, vaseline and quinine, bicycles, liver tablets, horses, hair tonic, typewriters, towels and mahogany furniture are only a few of the items which are paid for out of the ample fund provided for the senate.

There is a salary list which is only exceeded by a few of the multimillion-dollar corporations. Pages, messengers, police, clerks, private secretaries and other minor officials make up an army of retainers who draw good money from the government.

Repairs of all kinds, the librarians, the senate stable, stationery, mileage, expenses of junketing committees and many other things draw from the senate bank balance in the course of a year.

### \$19,500 for Each Senator.

The entire expense averaged \$19,500 to each senator, and will be larger this year when the increased salary is figured in.

The senate's pin money pays for all the telegrams senators send and the replies. It supplies ice without stint; one month's bill, that for December, having been \$248.58. It provides apollinaris, white rock and other special waters.

The miscellany fund buys typewriters and bicycles, horses, wagons, and, maybe, an auto or two, although none are found listed in the classified accounts. No senator was ever seen upon a bicycle. There are bicycle messengers, however, and the senate, being a big-hearted institution, gives the necessary machine.

From Jan. 1 to 31, 1903, Ida Bambley received \$122.10 for washing and ironing 407 dozen towels for the senate. In the same month A. L. Ford got \$79.50 for washing and ironing 206 dozen towels. During the same thirty-one days Edith A. Washington profited to the sum of \$66.60 for washing and ironing 222 dozen towels.

### Pays for Funerals.

At the death of a senator the senate bears all the expense of the funeral, sends a committee to attend and provides a handsome floral testimonial. All of which swells the expenses of the "greatest legislative body in the world." In 1903 this source of outgo proved unusually large, because there were eight deaths in the year.

The cost of a funeral to the senate runs in the vicinity of \$5,000. One bill totaled in this wise:

Washington undertaker, embalming, casket, carriages, hearse, removing and packing flowers, etc.	\$ 722.50
One floral wreath	50.00
Undertaker at home town, hearse, carriages, transportation of flowers, twelve pairs of gloves, use and transportation of chairs	286.15
Expenses of B. W. Layton, who managed the funeral arrangements for the senate	80.40
Special train, tickets of party back to their homes, private Pullmans, commissary	3,176.43
Reimbursement of Senator Frazier	25.75
Total	\$4,341.23

The "use and transportation of chairs to and from church," above noted, cost \$129.

When a senate committee decides that its quarters need refitting it makes a thoroughly good job of it. The case of the committee on inter-oceanic canals forms a good sample.

### Mahogany Costs Money.

Two sixty-inch mahogany, roll-top desks cost \$264. Two smaller mahogany typewriter desks were secured at \$98. Fourteen mahogany armchairs came at \$215. Two ditto revolving desk chairs cost \$34.30. One mahogany bookcase is billed at \$370. A mahogany file case was obtained for \$160. A committee table took \$230 out of the contingent fund. Such other items as mahogany typewriter chairs, two window seats, one mahogany and leatherette screen and more file cases brought the total to \$1,856.90.

These were bought in 1907. Since that time the new senate office building has been opened. It is provided with new furnishings throughout.

## WONDERS OF WIRELESS.

Lights House with Electricity, but Doesn't Use Wires.

Lighting by electricity without the use of wires was successfully accomplished by Dr. Frederick H. Millener at the Electrical Exposition at the Omaha Auditorium. The doctor is with the Union Pacific as experimental electrician and is working on a cab wireless signal for the control of trains.

One year ago in the Union Pacific shops in Omaha Dr. Millener constructed an electric truck to travel about the yards by wireless. This truck is started by wireless and goes four speeds ahead and four speeds back without any power other than the wireless. By an apparatus somewhat similar to that used with the truck the switch at the Omaha Auditorium is opened and closed.

The lighting of the Auditorium is something that is beyond the power of any person to explain. Through the courtesy of Colonel Glassford at Port Omaha the wireless apparatus there is put in operation. Then at the Auditorium, six miles away, by an instrument constructed by Dr. Millener, the electric waves are gathered, brought into the Auditorium, where after the electric power from the lighting plant has been cut out they pass to the switchboard and out over the wires and through the hundreds of lamps.

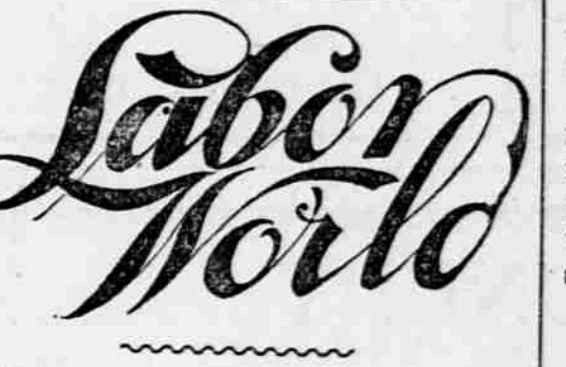
## WIVES WANTED.

Homes in the Northwest Awaiting 2,000 of Them.

There are fully 2,000 healthy and fairly well-to-do young bachelors in the inland empire, taking in parts of eastern Washington and Oregon, northern Idaho, western Montana and southwestern British Columbia. They want wives. That is, if they can find the right ones. All of them are good-hearted, kind, affectionate and capable of real love. They say so in letters to Levi Grant Monroe, secretary of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, who became interested in the movement when Rev. D. D. Vaughn of Chicago announced that more than 200 girls belonging to his congregation would marry "honest men who can make clean money."

While Mr. Monroe has no desire to figure as Cupid's messenger, he will, however, forward the bachelors' letters to Rev. Dr. Vaughn at Chicago, in the hope that the girls may find their ideal men, as described in responses to the Chicago minister's circulars. Mr. Monroe said this is not to be taken to mean that girls in cities and towns in eastern, middle western, southern and Pacific Coast States or any part of Canada are barred.

"Nothing of the kind," he added. "The bachelors are here; there are 2,000 of them, and they want wives."



Naples (Italy) bakers are on strike and bread famine is imminent.

Under the law of France, passed in 1881, trade unions have the right to strike if they register as labor organizations.

The attempts of the French government to compel the elementary teachers to withdraw from the trades councils has failed.

The Scottish Coal Mine Owners' Association has lodged with the Miners' Federation a claim for a reduction in wages of 12 1/2 per cent.

Winnipeg (Manitoba) electric street railway offers an increase of 1 per cent an hour to employees who have been twenty-five years in their service.

A new union of drug mixers and makers has been organized in Minneapolis, Minn., and will receive a charter from the American Federation of Labor.

The eight-hour work day assessment of the bookbinders' union has been reduced to 1 1/2 per cent for men working at the trade, and abolished as to the bindery women.

A dispute is threatening in the cabinet-making and joinery trade in Westphalia and Rhineland, Germany, where the Employers' Association is trying to enforce a 5 per cent reduction.

In Hungary there is an estimated trade union membership of 139,000, or 28 per cent of all the working people. Austria has nearly 500,000, or 18 per cent, while Italy, with its immense population, contains only 200,000, or 6 per cent.

As regards wages, they are on the average 75 per cent as high as in France, as in England and 83 per cent as high in Germany as in England, while the hours of work are 17 per cent longer in France and 10 per cent longer in Germany.

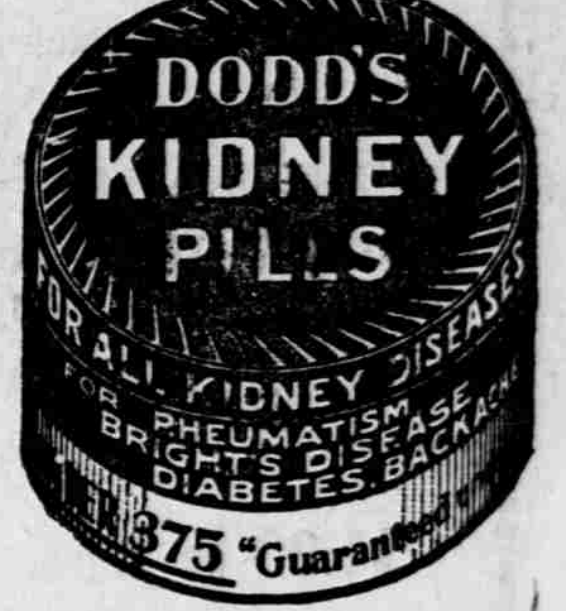
The referendum vote taken in the Plumbers' Union on the proposition to pay a funeral benefit to a member on the death of his wife was defeated, not receiving the required two-thirds vote.

Structural iron workers employed in and around Salt Lake City, Utah, have struck for an advance from \$4 to \$4.50 a day. They assert that the wage scale in Salt Lake City is lower than that in any other part of the country.

## Classified.

"What kind of people are they—red or common?"  
"Well, I'll tell you. They had a wedding anniversary last week, and he gave her a crayon portrait of himself, and she gave him a mustache cup."—Cleveland Leader.

**Trials of a Chaperon.**  
Miss Mayne (on vacation)—O, auntie, it's such a luxury to have nothing to do but just loll in a hammock with my precious Shelley or even the "Vicar of Wakefield!"  
Elderly Relative—Child, if I hear of any more such scandalous doings I shall write to your mother.—Chicago Tribune.



## FASHION HINTS



Organdies and lawns are shown in such pretty robe designs, both simple and elaborate. The one sketched here is quite plain, and just the thing for morning wear. Belt and sash are of the material. The waist is finished with "German Val", of a good strong pattern that stands "tubbing" well.

### A Real Scare.

"Being a manager," said the sagacious observer, "you escape all the terrors of stage fright."  
"Yes," answered the theater promoter; "my portion of the entertainment is to watch the receipts and expenditures. And I want to tell you that box office fright is worse than stage fright."—Washington Star.

### Satisfactory.

Smith—I used to have a great deal of trouble with my teeth, so I finally had them all extracted and an artificial set put in.  
Jones—And are they satisfactory?  
Smith—You bet they are! Why, I can almost eat with them.

### Seemed to Awaken Memories.

Tommy—Paw, what is the three card monte?  
Mr. Tucker—It's the most diabolical, infernal swindle that ever anybody ever—er—O, it's some sort of gambling game with cards, I believe, Tommy.—Chicago Tribune.

### WON'T MIX.

**Bad Food and Good Health Won't Mix.**  
The human stomach stands much abuse, but it won't return good health if you give it bad food.  
If you feed right you will feel right, for proper food and a good mind is the sure road to health.

"A year ago I became much alarmed about my health, for I began to suffer after each meal no matter how little I ate," says a Denver woman.

"I lost my appetite and the very thought of food grew distasteful, with the result that I was not nourished and got weak and thin.

"My home cares were very heavy, for beside a large family of my own I have also to look out for an aged mother. There was no one to shoulder my household burdens, and some-what might I must bear them, and this thought nearly drove me frantic when I realized that my health was breaking down.

"I read an article in the paper about some one with trouble just like mine being cured on Grape-Nuts food and acting on this suggestion I gave Grape-Nuts a trial. The first dish of this delicious food proved that I had struck the right thing.

"My uncomfortable feelings in stomach and brain disappeared as if by magic and in an incredibly short space of time I was again myself. Since then I have gained 12 pounds in weight through a summer of hard work and realize I am a very different woman, all due to the splendid food, Grape-Nuts."

"There's a Reason." Trial will prove. Read the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.  
Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.