RAILROAD FARES IN EUROPE

Lower Rates Secured by the Adoption of the Zone System.

HOW IT WORKS IN AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

The Result of Years of Agitation—The Idea Considered with Reference to America by a Prominent Economist.

The adoption of what is called "the zone system" of railroad tariffication by the state railways of Hungary and Austria is attracting universal attention in Europe, and beginning to arouse much interest in the United States.

The subject has long been agitated abroad. In 1843 William Gait made a vigorous movement for lower fares in England, and since 1869 leading political economists of France, Austria and other countries have been demanding radical reforms. Theodore Hertzka, a distinguished Austrian publicist, began in 1883, a systematic movement which ended in the final adoption of his ideas by two European countries.

Prof. Edmund J. James of the University of Pennsylvania, contributes to the current number of the "Quarterly Journal of Economics" a brilliant and exhaustive article on the subject, from which the following extracts are made:

HUNGARY ADOPTS THE ZONE SYSTEM.

The first management to take a positive step in the direction of a change was the state railway office of Hungary. I have not been able to learn the whole history of the movement within railway circles in Hungary which ultimately led to such a radical experiment as that finally determined upon. It is probable that the course of popular and scientific discussion had considerable to do with it. The chief cause, however, is undoubtedly to be sought in that circumstance which has been the occasion of nearly all great experiments in railway matters; namely, necessity. The condition of the state roads was far from satisfactory, and the condition of the passenger traffic was the least satisfactory element in the case. The total traffic was small, the cost of service, consequently, very high, and the rates charged enormous, considering all the circumstances. The lowest rate for a single ticket was one cent per kilometre for a long-distance through ticket, third class; i. e., nearly two cents per mile. The rate for first class was nearly four cents.

At such prohibitive rates it is plain that no very large traffic could be developed in a country like Hungary, where the great middle class is by no means well-to-do and the poorer class is very poor, and where, moreover, the population is not dense, comparatively speaking, and large cities are few in number. To how small an extent the railroads were utilized by the people is shown by the fact that while Germany had five passengers per head of the population, Hungary had only one. The average length of trips in Hungary was sixty-one kilometres, while in Germany it was only twenty-eight kilometres—a fact which shows that the local traffic in Hungary was unusually small, prevented of course in its growth by the prohibitive rates in force. Various attempts had been made to encourage the growth of passenger traffic by the introduction of reduced rates in the form of return, excursion, commutation and mileage tickets, and the like, but, although the traffic responded immediately, the rate of increase was not such as to show that the hoped for growth in revenue would result at any near date. The government, therefore, determined upon a radical change in working out the details of the system, and laid down certain broad principles to be observed.

One of the prime objects was the encouragement of long-distance traffic, and more especially the traffic to and from the capital city, Buda-Pest. In this point the government was actuated not merely by railroad considerations, though these, too, were in favor of such a policy, but also by social and industrial motives. Buda-Pest is not only the capital city, but it is the metropolis in wealth, industry, population, and political influence of the whole state. A policy which would secure the actual visiting of this center by large numbers of the people from the most distant parts of the kingdom could not but result in securing a greater homogeneity in the population, and hasten that fusion of the various elements which is in the interest of all higher development in Hungary.

To attain this end, it was necessary to adopt a system of tariffication which would eliminate as far as possible the element of distance. This would be achieved by making a long distance rate relatively so low as to encourage this class of traffic. To secure a large traffic, it would also be necessary to make a rate which should be not only relatively, but absolutely low,—a rate so low as to be within the reach of large classes of the population. To prevent an undue burdening of local traffic, it would also be necessary to reduce local rates to a point far below what they had been before, to make a rate which should be within the reach of everybody. Under the old system the peasant who had ten miles to go could far better afford to walk than to pay the rate demanded. Under the new system the rates must be so low that even the day laborer would use the trains from station to station. The new system must also be a very simple one, in which a great saving in administrative supervision and in manipulation of tickets and the like could be made.

As a result of all these considerations the authorities worked out a new system of tarification which seemed to them likely to incorporate these features. The general plan adopted had already received the name of zone-method in the discussions which had occurred, from the time of 1870 if not earlier. As this name was also adopted by the government of Hungary the system has become known throughout the world as the zone-tariff system.

The zone-tariff system is not, philosophically speaking, fundamentally different from the mileage system in use in this country, except so far as a difference of degree may constitute a difference in kind. The system in use in this country is that under which the mile is adopted as the unit of distance. For this unit a normal rate is fixed and the price of a ticket is ascertained by multiplying the rate per mile by the number of miles traveled, fractions of a mile being disregarded or considered as a mile in fixing the price of a ticket. In the continent the kilometre is usually adopted as the unit of calculation. A foot might be taken as the normal unit, or two miles, or ten miles, or any other number. It is evident that the exact unit taken will depend ordinarily, or has at least ordinarily depended, on the unit of distance most commonly used in describing journeys of hours or days.

Now, the zone tariff system is simply a system in which the unit of distance is a much larger unit than the kilometre or the mile. This will appear more clearly when the Austrian zone tariff is considered. It is plain, however, in the Hungarian system also, though it is there subject to important modifications. For each unit of distance (or zone) or fraction thereof, from any station a fare of 10 cents is exacted. Thus the fare for one unit and the fraction of another is 20 cents; for two units and the fraction of another, 30 cents; for three units and a fraction of another, 40 cents; and so on up to the eleventh unit, when a sum of 20 cents is charged for each unit or fraction thereof: with this important modification, that the thirteenth unit includes all stations beyond the completed twelfth unit. Now, the unit of distance which is taken as the basis of all tariffs is, generally speaking, fifteen kilometres, or nine and three-tenths English miles. As the fare charge, therefore, is 10 cents, the fare for nine times that distance and any fraction thereof would be $1; that is, one could ride ninety-three miles for $1, but would also have to pay the same sum if he rode only eighty-four miles. Just so under a strict mileage system one would pay, at 3 cents a mile, on 6 cents if he rode 10,560 feet, but would also have to pay the same sum if he rode only 5,281 feet.

This simple system is modified in several ways in the Hungarian method. Thus the first unit of distance is twenty-five kilometres (15.525 miles); i. e., the fare from any given point to any station not more than 15½ miles distant is 10 cents, but all units after the first up to the eleventh are 15 kilometres, or 9.3 miles. The eleventh and twelfth are each 25 kilometres, and the thirteenth unit includes all stations beyond the close of the twelfth. For the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth units 20 cents each is charged, making the maximum fare to any station within the kingdom from any other one $1.60.

The last provision, however, is subject to one very important modification; namely, if the traveler's route lies through Buda-Pest, he must buy a ticket first to that place and then another from there to the station he wishes to reach. This may under some circumstances double the fare which he would otherwise have to pay for a journey of equal distance. Buda-Pest is practically a limit, therefore, for the application of the system, having the same effect as a boundary line of Hungary itself.

It is plain from what precedes that the rates of fare are much lower under the new system than they were under the old. In no case beyond the first zone do they exceed 1½ cents per mile, and for the immensely greater number of cases they are less than 1 cent per mile. For the stations beyond 140 miles the rate per mile decreases with the distance, falling, on the lowest trip which can be made from, $1.60 to 30-100 of a cent. This is the rate to Kronstadt, distant from Buda-Pest 454 miles.

The great reductions are best seen by comparing absolute rates under the old and new systems. The old rate to Kronstadt was $8.80; the new rate is $1.60—a reduction of 82 per cent. This is, of course, the extreme reduction. But the reduction to a station 248 miles away is 66 per cent, to a station 168 miles away over 50 per cent. The average reduction on local rates is about 40 per cent on the basis of railway estimates. Besides these rates which represent the price paid for a single-trip ticket by any one who chooses to buy, there are also commutation tickets which afford still cheaper rates. Thus from Buda-Pest to Maglod, fourteen miles, one can get a book containing sixty tickets for $3.24, a little less than 5½ cents per trip. These books are transferable, and the owner may use them for persons accompanying him. To Aszod, thirty-three miles distant, a similar book can be obtained for $9.60, or 16 cents a trip.

AUSTRIA FOLLOWS HUNGARY'S LEAD.

In turning from the Hungarian to the Austrian experiment, one is struck both by the similiarity and differences. They are both zone-systems, both involve a great reduction in rates over the old systems, and both are very simple in the general plan as well as in the details. The differences will appear more clearly after a discussion of the Austrian system.

There is a sort of permanent rivalry between the Austrian provinces and Hungary in all matters pertaining to industry as well as politics. When the Hungarian management adopted the zone-system, the public in Austria criticised the Austrian railroads for their slowness and seeming neglect of public interest. The management of the Austrian roads has been, therefore, somewhat on the defensive.

The new system went into operation in Austria on June 16, 1890. The basis of rates is very simple. The lowest monetary unit of the country (the kreutzer) combined with the shortest long distance unit of measurement (the kilometre) is made the unit of calculation. The fundamental rate of calculation is one kreutzer per kilometre, the kreutzer being four mills and the kilometre .621 mile. This is equal to a rate of 6½ mills per mile. The price for second class is double and for first class treble this sum. These rates are increased 50 per cent for express trains. The privilege of free baggage is abolished.

If the kilometre were made the basis of computing the price of tickets, this system would not differ essentially from the old system in use. But in determining the fare the unit of distance is not 1, but 10 kilometres for all distances under 50 kilometres, 15 kilometres for all distances between 50 and 80 kilometres, 20 kilometres from 80 to 100, and 50 kilometres for all distances over 100 kilometres. Thus the fare for the first unit of distance—i. e., 10 kilometres—is 10 kreutzers; i. e., ten times the normal rate fixed upon as the unit of calculation. For the second unit the fare is 10 kreutzers additional and so on up to the sixth, where for the sixth and seventh the unit is 15 kilometres and the additional price is 15 kreutzers. The eighth unit has 20 kilometres, and the additional price is 20 kreutzers. The ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth units have each 25 kilometres, and the additional price is 25 kreutzers; while after that each unit has 50 kilometres, and the additional price is 50 kreutzers.

The distance up to 200 kilometres is thus divided into twelve units or zones, and there are as many zones after that as there are stretches of 50 kilometres each or fractions thereof. Tickets are sold by zones at the rate of

I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.
10,	20,	30,	40,	50,	65,	80,
VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.	XII.	XIII.	XIV.
100,	125,	150,	175,	200,	250,	300,
XV.	XVI.					
350,	400,					

etc., kreutzers for the corresponding zones—the number of kreutzers representing also the number of kilometres included up to the end of the respective zone.

It will be seen that the system is very simple. The tickets contain the number of the zone, the name of the station of departure, and also the name of the last station, on all the lines of the system, in the particular zone to which the ticket entitles the holder to transportation. In arranging the zones, the whole group of railroads in Austria to which this method applies is considered as one system or road. Tables showing the actual distribution of stations among the zones are posted in all the stations so that the traveler can see at a glance for what zone he must take a ticket. The variety of tickets is very small compared with the old plan. The system is still further simplified by the fact that two third class tickets may be presented in lieu of one second class, and three third class in lieu of one first class. This enables small stations to get along with one kind of tickets—a great advantage from the point of administration.

It is plain from the above statement that the Austrian system differs in some important respects from the Hungarian. In the first place, it does not favor long distance traffic to such an extent as the latter. As seen above, one may ride in Hungary 731 kilometres for 400 kreutzers. It costs 750 kreutzers to ride that distance in Austria. On the other hand, it never costs more than that in Austria; while in Hungary, if half the route lie on one side of Buda-Pest and the other half on the other, it would cost 800 kreutzers for the same distance. The regular rates in Austria for distances up to 225 kilometres are cheaper than in Hungary. A ticket for 210 kilometres in Austria costs 250 kreutzers; in Hungary, 350; for 110 kilometres in Austria, 125; in Hungary, 175; for 75 kilometres in Austria, 80; in Hungary, 125. The differences between the prices for the first zone are slightly in favor of Hungary. If one wishes to go, say 24 kilometres, the cost in Austria would be 30, and in Hungary 25 kreutzers. The local traffic tickets in Hungary and the general commutation tickets in Austria reduce the rates for short trips very considerably below the zone rates. The smaller units adopted by Austria in the new zones are a favor to local traffic, which is, perhaps, not exceeded by the excellent local traffic tickets in Hungary.

The charge for baggage in Austria is also determined according to a different principle from that in Hungary. A uniform charge of 2-10 kreutzer per kilometre is made for each ten kilograms of baggage. This makes small trunks for short distances cheaper than in Hungary, and large trunks for long distances dearer. Thus a trunk weighing 30 kilograms would cost in Hungary 50 kreutzers for 75 kilometres; in Austria it would cost only 30 kreutzers. On the other hand, a trunk weighing 150 kilograms would cost 400 kreutzers in Hungary for 731 kilometres, while in Austria it would cost 1,193 kreutzers, or five times as much. If we take the average length of a trip in Hungary under the old system, 61 kilometres, as a basis of comparison and 50 kilograms as the average amount of baggage carried, the difference would appear to be as follows: In Hungary the fare for ticket, including the charge for baggage, would be 150 kreutzers; in Austria it would be 150. Taking the average trip in Austria, 37 kilometres, as the basis, the rate would be: In Hungary, 75 kreutzers; in Austria, 77.

WITH REFERENCE TO AMERICAN ROADS.

Before closing, it may be worth while to consider briefly what bearing all this movement in Europe has on our own railway problems. As said above, our system of railway fares is constructed on the same principle as that of most European states. It is based on the mileage method. A rate is fixed per mile, and the fare is determined by multiplying the number of miles to be traveled into the rate per mile. The system is modified in many ways by the application of limited, commutation, excursion, package, return, company, servant, 1,000-mile tickets, and so on, but the principle remains the same.

This method can certainly not be justified from the standpoint of "cost of service," since the costs of transportation do not increase in proportion to the mileage. It does not cost a railroad twice as much to carry a passenger two miles as one. It cannot be justified on account of the value of service to the traveler. The value of a trip to him who has to make it depends on the person to be seen, the business to be done, the place to be visited, and not on the number of miles to be covered in getting there. Indeed, one may say that the longer the journey, the less valuable the service, since it wastes the time of the one who must make it. Certainly, thousands of journeys are made nowadays which would not be made if we had not the railroads; and equally certain is it that thousands and thousands of journeys which it does not now pay to make would be made if the railways were faster and the fare cheaper.

The present system has not given us cheap fares as shown above. It has not led to what may be called a general use of the railway. The United States can show only about six passengers per head of the population. When one considers that in this return are included all the commutation ticket passengers, one sees how little use the great mass of the people make of the railway.

It has not led to a reasonable utilization of train facilities. According to the last report of the interstate commerce commission the average number of passengers per train in this country during the last year was only 42. The average number of passenger cars per train is three and one-half; i. e., for two hundred seats there are only 42 passengers. The railroad could carry three times as many passengers on the average, without any increase in investment or operating expenses. The 3 cents a mile demanded of the occasional passenger is an exorbitant price, considering the means at the disposal of the average person for railroad riding. Mr. Atkinson states that the average product of the people of the United States is only 40 cents per day; i. e., it would take the whole average daily product of a family of five to travel thirteen miles on the railway. With $2 per day as the average product of such a family, there is evidently little left for railroad riding at 3 cents a mile, after all the necessary expenses are paid.

There are two points in the development of every business where the profits of the business would be the same, namely, the point of relatively small business and high profits on each transaction, and that of large business and small profit on each transaction. There is no reason in the nature of business why a man having reached the former should go to the latter. But there is a great reason, from the point of view of public interest, why he should do so. Our general economic theory takes for granted that competition will force business along this line. Even if this be true, generally, every one would acknowledge certain exceptions to it. All would agree that it would not be true in the absence of competition. The railroads are, of course, for nine-tenths of their traffic absolutely without competitors. It is necessary, then, for the public to interfere, and compel the railroads to advance along the line whither they would be driven by competitors. Speaking generally, one may say of American as of European roads, they give slow service and costly service, when they ought to give fast service and cheap service. What system should be adopted to reach this end railroad engineers should determine. The public should insist that the end be reached.

HONEY FOR THE LADIES.

Flirting is a penal offense in Japan.

It is a curious fact that all the girls who lead in Wellesley college are blondes.

A New York spinster proposed marriage to a doctor of that city, and the man of pills had her arrested.

Green appears to be the coming color and already a great deal of it is seen made up into very stylish dresses.

For evening dresses feather trimmings appear to be in general use for balls, and white and very light furs will also be much seen.

Henri Labouchere declares that American women do not, as a rule, dress well; they only dress expensively, and are the slaves of milliners.

Muffs are seen everywhere. And good, large, sensible, useful looking muffs, too. The birds have had to contribute heavily to the fashion.

A woman living on Cape Cod reckons in her life work as a housekeeper the making of 4,000 loaves of bread and 14,000 doughnuts. She took care of a family of three and took in washing at the same time.

In Germany 5,500,000 women earn their living by industrial pursuits; in England, 4,000,000; in France, 3,750,000; in Austro-Hungary, about the same, and in this country, including all occupations, over 2,700,000.

Mrs. William Morris, wife of the London artist, poet and socialist, is said to be the most beautiful woman in the world. She goes out but little and is rarely seen by the multitude who visit her husband. The interior of the house is particularly attractive on account of the many portraits of herself painted by Rossetti.

Something that commends itself is the English purse glove for shopping and morning wear. In palm of the left hand glove is placed a little purse, fastened by a silver frame, which opens easily and closes firmly. Small as it looks, this purse holds $80 in gold quite easily, and without the least inconvenience to the wearer.

The latest London fad at small dances is for the hostess to have provided a plentiful supply of hot milk and seltzer, with which to regale her guests upon the eve of departure, to guard against cold on the homeward drive. The milk, having been heated almost to the boiling point, is poured into a long glass, into which a heaping tablespoonful of sugar is lightly stirred and a small quantity of seltzer is frothed from a siphon.

Ball gowns are once more made long. Velvets, soft bengalines, rich brocades, and crepe de chine are worn by married women; chiffon, thin crepe and occasionally tulle, by girls. Bodices and skirts are often made in one. Basques are surrounded by a bouillonne and a frill of flowers. Bodices are full and drawn in at the waist on cords or held in by a corselet belt of cloth or gold. Skirts are made simple, with a ruche at the front, and there is no possible doubt that paniers are to be the mode of the immediate future.

Lady Londonderry, wife of the ex-lord lieutenant of Ireland, is counted one of the handsomest women in England, although her face lacks animation or expression. She was before her marriage Lady Theresa Talbot and is the eldest daughter of the earl of Shrewsbury. Her two sisters are also well known beauties. The marchioness is a great favorite of the prince of Wales and he and other members of the royal family are often entertained at Winyard hall, the marquis' family seat in South Durham.

Buttons are once more beginning to assert themselves on outdoor jackets, and fortunate is the woman who has treasured up old rare sets of them. The Princess of Wales has a penchant for artistic buttons, and has the finest collection of jeweled gold, silver and carved buttons in the world, including a set consisting of crimson carbuncles set in oxidized silver, recently presented by her sister, the empress of Russia. The Empress Eugenie has a set of beautiful red pearl carved buttons that graced her colored riding habits in the days of the empire.

Some very delicate freezing may be done, and is being done right along, by skillful letter-writers. Omit your address from the politest and most formal note you can write and the intelligent recipient will understand that he or she has outlived the welcome of your hospitality. Cut the engraved address from the letterhead and the cut becomes an insult. Another indication of social paralysis is the omission of all subscription phrases, even the stereotyped, "Yours, truly," while to write a note and omit the signature altogether is "the unkindest cut of all."

A correspondent calls attention to the fact that Mrs. Harrison has made a fresh departure in the social code of the white house. Last year she decreed that at state receptions the receiving party should march down stairs in matrimonial couples; each cabinet officer escorted his own wife instead of some other cabinet officer's wife. This year she has decreed that at state dinners she shall be escorted to dinner immediately after the president and the lady he takes out, instead of going out, as other hostesses do, after all their guests. At this rate things will soon be so fixed that a man will be unable to get away from his wife at all.

The prettiest toilet tables now have tops of plate glass with beveled edges. Such make a very showy background for all the glittering impediments with which the woman of fashion likes to litter her dressing room. This mirror effect is a popular one. Frequently a mirror is let in at the end of a hall in modern houses, producing very handsomely the delusion of a vista of pretty rooms. Off from their dressing rooms, some women who carry the operation of gowning themselves to the verge of art, have had built, small closet-like rooms, lined on every side with the finest reflecting glass, and lighted from above by electricity. Into this inclosing mirror, made steps after the last lock of hair has been arranged and the last fold of the gown adjusted, trusting to its many-sided views for accurate criticism.

HUNTING FOR HANS PETERSON.

The Experience of a Bee Reporter After "A Good Story."

SOME GOOD NEWS THAT CAME TOO LATE.

A Search Through the City on a Stormy Night for an Heir to an Unclaimed Fortune.

When I reported at the office at 7 o'clock it was with the hope that the assignments might be few on the book for that night. I wished that a few regular meetings, the usual run of hotel rotundas and the police station might make up the night's work for the entire reportorial force.

Some of the reporters were fortunate in finding opposite their names single assignments of indoor work, but I found the following note from the city editor: "Find Hans Peterson and write a good story about him. See clipping on your hook."

The clipping which I found on my desk was from a Chicago paper, and read as follows:

"Mr. Henry Atwell, an attorney who has an office in the Hale building, received a letter from his correspondent in Stockholm about three weeks ago, stating that a wealthy Swede named Peter Hansen had died leaving a fortune of about $90,000 to there nephews. Two of the beneficiaries have been found in Philadelphia, but the third and oldest of the family drifted west some years ago, and is believed by the brothers in Philadelphia that he located in Chicago in the tailoring busines. Mr. Atwell has made careful inquiry concerning this man, whose name is Hans Peterson, and is convinced that he has traced him to Omaha, but as yet no definite word from him has been received. He is about sixty years old and is quite deaf.'

I had to find, through the rain and the mud and the darkness, an old man whose name appeared in the city directory twenty-seven times in as many locations, scattered over the city, and I had just six hours in which to find him and "write a good story about him."

Carefully selecting the only thirteen Hans Petersons among whom could possibly be the man I wanted to find I jotted down their addresses. Selecting the four most likely to be my man I decided to call on them first. The one who appeared to my mind's eye as the most likely of them all lived, so the directory said, on Corby street near the Missouri Pacific tracks.

I took a Sherman avenue motor and went whirling away on my errand of joy to break the news of sudden and unexpected fortune, of future comfort and happiness to a poor, old deaf tailor named Hans Peterson.

But I didn't break the news to anybody on lower Corby street. I stumbled over heaps of curbstone and broken sidewalk. I fell into gutters and holes and half-finished sewers. I broke two gates off their hinges in a mad rush to get out of the reach of ferocious dogs. I broke my temper in several places and broke the skin on my nose when I ran against a clothes-line. I broke everything but good news down in that part of the city. Mr. Hans Peterson had lived there six months before, the gentleman said at the last place I called, but he had moved away. He wasn't the man I wanted, anyway, for he was only about forty and wasn't deaf.

The next man on my list lived on Sixth street, several blocks south of Pierce. I took the broncho motor that runs on the Ninth and Pacific street line and arrived at the end of that route at 9:45.

It proved to be an easy matter to find the house I was searching for in this instance, however, as compared with the experience on Corby street. A brisk rap on the door of the neat, home-like cottage was answered by a woman's voice saying: "Who's there?"

"A reporter for THE BEE."

"What do you want?"

"I wish to see Mr. Hans Peterson."

"He is not at home; he is in Chicago."

"Will you tell me, please, in what business Mr. Peterson is engaged?"

"He is a tailor."

"A tailor!" I repeated, with a thrill of triumph. "The very man I am after. He has gone to Chicago to see Atwell, the lawyer," thought I, as I recovered myself for another question, hoping that I might induce the lady to open the door that I might witness her joyful surprise when I told her about the fortune that awaited them.

In answer to my request the door was opened and I saw that the fair-haired lady to whom I had been talking was very much frightened, so I said mildly:

"You will please excuse this peculiar visit at this hour of the night, but I am looking for a Mr. Hans Peterson, who formerly lived in Stockholm and who has two brothers living in Philadelphia. His uncle has died leaving him $90,000."

"My husband never lived in Stockholm and I don't think he has any brothers living in Philadelphia," said the lady, hesitatingly.

"The man I am looking for is about sixty years old and he is quite deaf," I continued, still hoping that I had the right track.

"He is not my husband," the lady said promptly, and a little indignantly. "My husband is not so old as that and he is not deaf."

A few more questions—the answer to each sending my hopes lower and lower in the scale of anticipation—satisfied me that the Mr. Hans Peterson I wished to find did not live at that place so I found my way back to the mule motor.

It was 10:30 o'clock when I took the South Omaha motor train for Vinton street to find Hans Peterson No. 3. The gentleman lived, according to the directory, about two blocks south of Vinton on Nineteenth street. After an experience somewhat similar to that I had on Corby street, I succeeded in finding the house in which Mr. Hans Peterson lived. It was a small cottage and stood back from the street or road about twenty yards. As I approached the house a huge Newfoundland dog sprang out from a low shed and barred my way. Some exceedingly intricate maneuvers that would have done credit to the soldiers at the front ended in a cessation of hostilities after I had been driven from the yard. While deliberating as to the best method of procedure I heard a footstep, and turning I met a man coming down the road carrying a large bundle of merchandise.

I asked for Hans Peterson.

"That's my name," said the gentleman, coming closer and peering into my face.

"Did you ever live in Stockholm?"

"Yes, sir. I was born there."

"Have you some brothers in Philadelphia?"

"No, sir. I have only one brother and he lives in Chicago."

I then explained to Mr. Peterson my errand, and when I had finished he said: "I know the man you are after. He lives down near the Castellar school, or did live there last spring. His house is about one block west of the school."

Now, I felt that I had a clue. I was on the right track and I hastened back to the Vinton street motor line and boarded the first train that went north. When the car had gone about three blocks and turned on Sixteenth street it suddenly came to a stop. No one got on or off and the lights went out. The current had failed, and I realized that the train was dead.

"How long will you wait here?" I asked the conductor.

"Until the current is turned on."

"And when will that be?"

"Don't know."

I got out and started down Sixteenth on foot. When I had traveled three-quarters of a mile, and was turning from Sixteenth street upon Castellar I looked back and saw the train I had abandoned coming at great speed down the hill about two blocks behind me. That is the usual luck of a reporter when in a hurry.

I soon passed the Castellar school and called at a house where the people had not yet retired for the night. The young man who answered my knock at the door said that Hans Peterson had, several months previous, lived in a small hut in that block, but he had moved away and he did not know where he had gone. At several other places I received the same information. Continued disappointment seemed inevitable and that "good story about him" seemed to be drifting rapidly away. As I stood on the corner meditating upon what I should do the wind and the drizzling rain seemed to mock my efforts. I was just about to start for another house to make further inquiry when I heard a couple of footmen coming along the walk. They were boys about fourteen years old. As they drew near I heard one say: "But wasn't the old duffer deaf, though? Couldn't hardly hear it thunder, I don't b'lieve."

"He was deafer'n old man Peterson, wasn't he!" said the second speaker, and the words fell upon my ears as welcomely as the notes of the dinner horn upon a hungry hired man.

"Good evening boys," I said, as the two approached. "Could you tell me where old man Peterson, the deaf tailor lives?"

"You bet I can," responded the smaller one. "He lives over near Sheeley station, about a mile from here."

"And could you take me to the place?"

"Yes, I could for good, hard mun," said the youthful guide, coming at once to the business part of the proposition.

"How much will you take to show me the way to his house?"

"Half a dollar," said the boy.

"It's a bargain," said I, and a moment later we were trudging westward over the roughest, darkest road within the city limits of Omaha. Most of the way we were obliged to travel in the middle of the unpaved streets, over hills and across ravines, through mud half a foot deep. After a jaunt of half an hour we came to a little, new cottage in an open space back from the street.

"I guess the old man ain't gone to bed yet," said the boy as we approached the house, for there was a light in the window.

"He seems to have company," I suggested as we drew near and could see several men inside the small front room. A rap on the door brought a ready response by a middle-aged man, evidently a Swede, who greeted us in a low tone of voice, and then asked us to step in.

"Does Mr. Hans Peterson, the tailor, live here?" I inquired, not wishing to waste any time.

"This is where he used to live," said the man at the door, "but—but he died today."

I entered the room and viewed the remains. The appearance of the corpse indicated that he had reached about the age of sixty years. I inquired into the history of the deceased, and one of the men seemed to know him quite intimately. He convinced me in a moment that the corpse which lay before me was that the man I was seeking. I disclose the object of my call, and gave the astonished friends the address of the Chicago attorney who first gave out the important information.

Fortune, like the laggard she sometimes proves to be, had come too late to comfort Hans Peterson, the deaf tailor. Upon his cold and pulseless ears the information I had sought so eagerly to impart fell like a fervent supplication upon the head of a pagan god. No light of sudden joy shone in the eyes forever closed to this world. No smile of unexpected happiness wrought pictures of delight upon the care-worn face. Hans Peterson was rich, but his wealth was not in coin of an earthly realm.

At 1:30 that night I laid the story about Hans Peterson upon the city editor's desk.

G.