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On a certain hot day in August, 18—, the time ball on the Western Union telegraph building, in the city of New York, dropped precisely at noon. Instantly thereafter there was a chorus of steam whistles and then silence. The whistles attracted no particular attention; the silence did. People gradually became conscious of it. They missed something. They stopped and thought about it and looked at one another inquiringly, and, presently the great tide of humanity which is always moving in one way or the other on Broadway ceased its flow; little groups gathered on the street corners and invaded the roadway, just as if some procession were expected to pass.

The great thoroughfare presented an odd appearance. Vehicles there were, as usual, of all sorts—street cars and trams and cabs and coaches—but all were standing still. The drivers were unbiting their horses and leading them away. On the elevated railways the trains had ceased running. Passengers from those which had stopped between stations were alighting and walking along the structure or clambering down from it on ladders. On the river fronts the ferryboats remained in their slips; the busy tugs were moored to their piers. Only a few sailing craft drifted lazily about in the harbor. The silence continued perhaps for half an hour. Then there came a dull rattle, not the muffled din always arising from the city, but that of escaping steam, great clouds of which could be seen rising over the city. In fact, every boiler was blowing off, for, as if by common consent, every escape valve had been lifted and every fire had been banished. At the gas works the furnace doors stood open and the retorts empty. In the telegraph offices the instruments clicked away, but no one heeded them. In the postoffice and at the stations and in the street boxes the letters accumulated, for the mail wagons had no drivers. The machinery in all the factories of New York stood idle. No conveyances moved, and upon every industry a sudden stroke of paralysis had fallen. And this was the cause of it.

Michael McCarthy, vander of "growing shamrock plants," bog, oak ornaments and shillies in Queenstown harbor, having engaged in too prolonged chaffering on board the Teuton, suddenly discovered, at the close of his bargaining, that the green hills of his native land were far away, and that he was at the rate of twenty knots per hour. He arrived in New York on the eve of a close election, and, without knowing exactly why, he

was conveyed from Ellis Island to a naturalization bureau, and there, in a fit way to aid us in settling our tariff and other questions, before the Emerald soil had left his brogans. In order to retain this valuable assistance from the Irish side, Michael as a cobbler—a trade he had once followed in the old country—in the establishment of Mrs. Heinrich Shoefel, in Avenue A, and there he was manfully sticking and hammering away when a visitor, entering the shop, announced himself as a "walking delegate."

This information imparted to Mrs. Shoefel, was not disagreeable, inasmuch as it suggested extensive need of shoe leather, but when she discovered that the visitor said nothing about the purchase of boots, but simply demanded the outcasting of Michael McCarthy for failure to join United Cobblers' union No. 64, she placidly resumed her interrupted occupation of binding one of those colossal carpet slippers, so dear to the heart of the Emerald heart, and ignored him, until the sharp alarm of the shop door brought from the depths of her capacious mind the name of Michael McCarthy.

"Ach—so!" thereupon Mrs. Shoefel was boycotted, and the ban was extended to the merchants who furnished her little supplies. And thus it works backward and forward, already been noted came about, and the industries and the conveyances of the metropolis were brought to a standstill.

Now the most singular about this strike was its remarkably orderly character. There were no indignation meetings, no denunciations of "capital," no breaches of the peace, no mobs; but in place of these accompaniments of the old-fashioned struggle there was simple stagnation. Labor, as such, effaced itself. It announced the new doctrine that its nature antecedent to any capital, but idleness. It would enforce its just demands, not by warfare on capital, but by stopping work. Society might try how it liked being made up entirely of leisure classes.

And society did not like it. Matters were indeed bad when the Harlem part-familias went to work in the evening of the fourth day after the general stoppage began found him calmly smoking a cigarette upon one of the benches in Bryant square.

"I tell you, Smith," remarked this man of destiny to his companion, who was lazily staring up at the stars, "there is only one way out of this trouble. Something has got to happen in this town which will interest everybody so tremendously—that must grip everybody's attention so closely—that when it happens this strike business will be suddenly forgotten."

The person addressed yawned carelessly. In fact, he did not seem particularly impressed by the idea suggested to him, for his answer was irrelevant and unconvincing.

"Say, Julius," said the man who was striking for, "what are you striking for, anyhow?"

"Me? I'm not."

"Can't you get anything to do?"

"Perhaps so—don't know."

"How did you get out of work?"

"My editor bounced me."

"What for?"

"Sent me to interview the Korean ambassadors. Couldn't speak Korean, so I got a man to come along who said he could interpret. Brought back two columns of first-class matter. Next day the ambassadors sent a note to the managing editor that they would be along to dinner at 8, and before he had half got through his head, down they came in the office in two four-horse stages, all rigged up in rainbow clothes. Said I had invited them, and when they found there wasn't any meal there was a row, and diplomatic representations in Washington and the duces to pay. I left."

You might have practiced then what you preach now," laughed Smith, "and given them something else to think about, so that the dinner would be forgotten."

"Couldn't think of anything."

"Well—it isn't so easy, of course. Still, I might have helped you. There's my balloon."

You might have astonished them with it somehow, dare say."

"What sort of a balloon?"

"Oh, one. Kind you go in with it."

"What on earth are you doing with it?"

"Sitting on it—stiff, saving a man \$10 in it and foreclosing the mortgage. Come along, I'm going home."

Smith stretched himself, got upon his feet and walked on. The man called Julius sat thoughtfully, finally he rose, and both men strolled leisurely across the inclosure.

"How did you get it, Smith?" said Julius, finally.

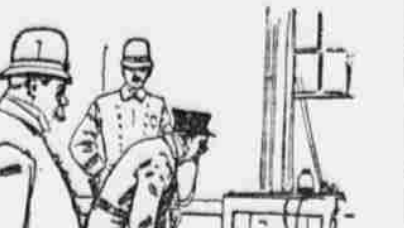
"What? Oh, the balloon? That's quite a story. There was an old chap came to board

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In the house I live in, who was the wildest sort of an inventor. One thing he tried to get up was a telegraph which would send signals, not by electricity, but by an explosive force. He couldn't get any one to go to it, though he spent pretty much all his own money in trying experiments. Finally he bartered for one last great effort, and connected a balloon which he was going to steer like a boat. Maybe he didn't work over it. Borrowed money from everybody he knew to buy silk and cord and things. But he didn't go up. In fact, he went down. They fished him out somewhere in Hell Gate. I took his traps for what he owed me."

Julius asked no further questions and the two walked on in silence, until his companion stopped near the corner of Forty-fourth street and Third avenue.

"See here," he said, "are you walking in your sleep?"

"No," said Julius, slowly. "I was just thinking. Do you know that I think I've got it."

"I think I can end this strike business and in the way I said, if I can have your balloon."

"If you can tell me where you live I'll promise to take you there safely," said Smith boldly.

"I'm in earnest," replied the other soberly. "I should like to go with you to where that balloon is and talk about it."

Julius looked at him, rather keenly this time—perhaps a little suspiciously—and then with a light laugh shrugged his shoulders and led the way to a shabby brick dwelling on the corner of Forty-fourth street and Third avenue. The door which he opened with his latchkey and motioned Julius to enter. The hall had that peculiar combined odor of cabbage and washing soda which characterizes a boarding house of the cheapest class and was pitched dark. Smith led the way upstairs by the flickering light of a match, until the front little room was reached. There they lit their pipes and began talking. Daylight was streaming in at the windows, but there was nothing about the two men to show their loss of sleep. They were sitting on a trunk which had been placed on the floor, and the face to face, with both feet on the floor, as men always do when they talk of important things. The balloon had been hauled off the street and was hanging from the ceiling. An old safe near the window had been cleared of the mass of clothes and odds and ends which covered it, and its doors stood open, revealing the mechanism. A roll of cotton-covered wire had evidently been exhumed from under the bed, and inside the safe had been found what Julius first thought were preserve jars, but which turned out to be the cells of a voltaic battery—dry as to contents, but needing only to be filled with water and acid to make them give a strong current of electricity.

A floor board had been lifted in the middle of the room, just over the place where ran the gas pipe which supplied the fixture to the room below.

At length, Julius arose, and said, emphasizing his words by tapping the rickety table with his finger:

"I have no misunderstanding about this, and I think so far there is none. You will surrender this room tomorrow as it is, and I will hire it. At the agreed time you will come back with me and we will give you the balloon. You will not reveal the part you have taken in this, no matter what may happen. And of whatever is gained I may give you a share."

On the early morning of the eleventh day after the great strike had begun, any one passing through the uptown streets might have seen groups of people at every corner, intently staring at something in the sky. Before noon these groups had increased to crowds, and the numbers of the gazers were reinforced by people at window and people on the housetops, all gazing skyward. The object of their attention was a balloon, which floated gracefully at an elevation of perhaps 500 feet, but was held by a slender wire, which led to somewhere in the vicinity of the Grand Central depot. The balloon bore no sign, and the numbers of the gazers were increased in fact, it was of the dull, brownish hue of the well-varnished silk used in making air ships for actual aeronautic use.

In this the superintendent of police read at 10 a. m. on the 25th.

"Time's up at 1 o'clock tonight," he said, quietly. "The inmates of the house had already been placed under arrest. His now gave orders for the arrest of all of them, and for the vacating of all houses endangered by the balloon."

The weather was warm and sultry. Little air was stirring in the streets, but aloft there were light currents constantly varying in direction. The balloon was now to the east and west, but in the afternoon, would wait it probably in the opposite direction. If the wind were strong, the captive balloon would tatter the people to judge a large area; if light air prevailed, the wire would become more nearly vertical. The safest place was obviously the house in which the wire was secured, because only in the far remote possibility of absolute calm could the balloon remain directly above the fastening point of its cable. The wire might be cut, and the balloon would then drift in any direction.

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"You'll find that there isn't much to laugh about before you get through. This is a murder," said Julius.

"Why?" demanded Julius.

"Why? Do you suppose that a lot of dynamite can be dropped into this crowded city without the destruction of life?" returned the superintendent.

"No; but what is going to drop the dynamite?"

"Can't you read that notice?"

"Certainly; where does it say so?"

"It intimates as much."

"Not to my mind."

"Do you mean to say that that balloon carries an explosive or not?"

"I thought you just said that it did."

"Never mind what I said—does it?"

"I don't know."

"That will do," said the superintendent, stepping to the door. "We shall find other means of dealing with you."

The officer who entered snapped a pair of handcuffs on Julius wrists.

"One moment," said Julius; "what am I arrested for?"

"As an accessory to sending up that balloon laden with a dangerous explosive."

"Which you do not know is there."

"One moment, Mr. Superintendent!" There was a ring in the man's voice which made the officer relax his hold on his arm. "You have omitted to ask one question—and the most important of all. You believe that a great peril threatens. In dealing with it, you merely follow your instinct as a detective to find the perpetrator. There is a more pressing need than that. Will finding him arrest the danger—if not, how is it to be met?"

The superintendent saw the force of the remark and motioned the policeman to wait.

"Can you prevent it?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Nevertheless you didn't send up the balloon without not knowing anything about it?"

"Then why arrest me?"

"Very well. Prevent it and you go free."

Julius turned away contemptuously. Then he said:

"Do you really suppose that that balloon, charged, as you say, with a deadly torpedo, was sent up simply that I might tell you how to avoid its effects in order to get clear of my arrest for not having anything to do with it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this. I can prevent this, and so save, as you believe, immense destruction of life and property. I will do so for \$100,000."

"A blackmailing scheme, then?"

"How so?"

"To send up this balloon and threaten to

murder with it, unless you are paid not to do so."

"I did not send up the balloon. Even the apprehension of its danger is all yours—not mine."

"Your game won't work."

"Your game won't work up. But remember you are arresting me as the perpetrator of this supposed outrage—me, the very person, on your own showing, being able to apply the dynamite to the target, and being willing. Have you read that notice? The hours are flying, and it will soon be too late. And then whose is the responsibility for the dreadful result—yours or mine? Blackmail? Is it so fascinating to physicians who fight the epidemic to ask their pay? Does the sum I ask equal in value the good I may do? When the time comes for public execution, Mr. Superintendent, the people will judge between the man who offers himself as their savior, and you, their servant, who condemn them to this calamity rather than give the just reward for their protection."

And here the conversation ended. Julius was locked up in the nearest police station. Shortly afterward the mayor, having arrived on the scene, entered into earnest consultation with the superintendent. The result was the posting of hand-bills all over the city, and the publication in all the newspapers of a call for suggestions of ways and means to prevent the balloon dropping its load. For any successful plan a reward of \$5,000 was offered.

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Coroner's Inquiry on the Elbe Resumed.

LOWESCROFT, May 1.—The coroner's inquiry into the sinking of the North German Lloyd Elbe on January 30 last, was resumed today. Sharp, the steward of the British steamer Cranley, which ran into and sank the Elbe, testified that he went on deck at 5 o'clock on the morning of the collision and saw on the port side what looked like several logs for firing boats. Then, he continued, he went to the gallery where the fire was burning, and found there the mate and the purser. They all stayed there until the collision occurred.

"Which bugs bother the horses." SIDAIA, Mo., May 1.—Horses at the SIDAIA kilt track are annoyed by a remarkable obstacle to training. Chinch bugs hover over the track in such clouds that horses are continually dodging, and are unable to break their gait. The bugs are seen in the eyes of both the horses and drivers, but the usual remedy has failed. The men in the stables here the trouble is a serious one.

THE OBJECT OF THEIR ATTENTION WAS A BALLOON.

In the small basket which served as a car there was no one but beneath it was suspended an object suspiciously like a large crockery water pitcher.

Now, as the balloon hovering over New York, even if it be only one of the miniature red globes made for children's playthings, is always sure to attract abundant attention, but here was not only a balloon, but a large one, sent aloft for no other purpose than to carry a water pitcher. Nothing better calculated to arouse the always poignant curiosity of the average New Yorker could have been imagined. So the crowds grew larger until nightfall, rendering the balloon invisible, compelled them to disperse.

But next morning, the big globe being still there, the popular interest perceptibly increased and people began to move in masses toward East Forty-fourth street, to some

house in which therefore it was clear that the confining of the balloon led; but just which house it was difficult to determine from the roadway. Numerous inquirers rang the door bells of all the houses in consecutive order, but most of these residences were flats and the parties whose bells were rung were invariably the occupants of the basement floor, answers of an impatient character being returned.

As for the house to which the wire actually led, the abode of Smith—the landlady was too well accustomed to bitter complaints concerning the performance of her former inventive lodger to pay any attention to suggestions or inquiries from her callers; and, in fact, the instant she discovered that the hearing of room was not followed by a sudden slam of the front door constituted her sole response.

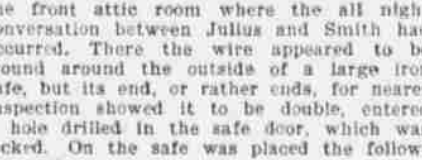
Much while certain reporters, having ferreted out some little information, kept it to themselves until the following startling headlines appeared in an extra of an afternoon paper:

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IS HAPPY, FRUITFUL MARRIAGE.

Every Man Who Would Know the Grand Truths, the Plain Facts, the New Discoveries of Medical Science as Applied to Married Life, Who Would Aton for Past Errors and Avoid Future Pitfalls, Should Secure the Wonderful Little Book Called "Complete Manhood, and How to Attain It."

"Here at last is information from a high medical source that will work wonders with this generation of men."

The book fully describes a method by which to attain full and lasting manly power. A method by which to end all unnatural drains on the system.

ONE ENJOYS

Both the method and results when Syrup of Figs is taken; it is pleasant and refreshing to the taste, and acts gently yet promptly on the Kidneys, Liver and Bowels, cleanses the system effectually, dispels colds, headaches and fevers and cures habitual constipation. Syrup of Figs is the only remedy of its kind ever produced, pleasing to the taste and acceptable to the stomach, prompt in its action and truly beneficial in its effects, prepared only from the most healthy and agreeable substances, its many excellent qualities commend it to all and have made it the most popular remedy known.

Syrup of Figs is for sale in 50 cent bottles by all leading druggists. Any reliable druggist who may not have it on hand will procure it promptly for any one who wishes to try it. Do not accept any substitute.

CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO.
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
LOUISVILLE, KY. NEW YORK, N. E.

OUR DRINKING WATER.

It is filled with impurities. In Every Part of the Land.

New York city on a recent day consumed 77 million gallons of water. At least one million gallons of impurities were contained in this quantity. It is, therefore, not surprising that the question of purity of drinking water has invaded the business office. Rich men who are vexed by slight physical ailments, or who are the victims of nervous troubles, are not slow to discover that there is danger in the water cooler. Many of them have their water boiled and chilled by refrigeration before they will drink it. Others have in their private offices jars of mineral waters. Many bank and railroad presidents are particular about having the water they drink free from poisonous germs. People who do this are not only wise, but are in the right.

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