

EVOLUTION OF A BELL BOY

Process Full of the Hardest Kind of Hard Knocks.

DOES MUCH HOPING BEFORE HE FLIES

People Give Him Whatever They Choose and He Has to Take It, Whether He Likes It or Not.

"Front!"

It is the large man with the diplomatic smile and the adroitness of a cat to his feet who speaks. He is the manager of the hotel, and his terse call, apparently addressed to the inkwell brings to the desk, with more or less prominence, a specimen of the genus Bell Hop. Bell Hop is not Latin. Neither is the hop himself. He may be almost anything else, white or black, but he is not Latin, for Latin is ancient and the bell hop is modern—exactly modern.

In the larger hotels of Omaha a total of about fifty bell hops, or more politely, bell boys, are employed. Of these not all are known by name to their employers, and not a dozen have been troubled for any more detailed account of themselves than the name of the last place they worked. In some instances they never really have worked anywhere, and even a reluctance to break themselves in. Such do not last long. Sometimes the recruit has worked but never before in a hotel. The development of such a boy, his initiation into the mysteries of the business and his advancement to a position of such responsibility that he draws a good salary, wears good clothes and smokes good cigars right along is a process more interesting than the evolution of the butterfly from the caterpillar.

When He First Applies.

When a new boy applies at a hotel for a job he is invited to go to the manager, the clerk, the bell captain or the deuce. If it is the latter he generally exits to a corridor, and the manager, if it is either of the former and he happens to apply at the right time he is sized up, given some scriptural admonition to guide his conduct and a uniform which was made for some other boy and which fits him usually like a second-hand bargain. Then he takes his place on the bench reserved for his class in the process of sophistication begins. The manager teaches him his place, the clerks teach him his duties and the older boys teach him to "wind up the elevator with a crank," seem busy when he isn't and smoke cigarettes off watch. Later, from all of them he learns the duty simply to keep access to the work and behavior of the subordinate lads on the bench. Next in line is the position of mail and key clerk, which gives the youth his first chance behind the desk, his first opportunity to assume some dignity and his first experience at talking a guest into believing that he is satisfied with the accommodations whether he is or not. From mail and key clerk the steps upward are few, but long and hard to take. Night clerk, room clerk, manager or assistant, lessee or proprietor.

Record for Tips.

In this latter matter of tips, it is not always the largest house that a boy finds most profitable. In recent years the best known record was in a house of less than 100 rooms, but in which one hustler made in May, 1900, \$48.35. He was a frugal young man and he kept books for himself. Some day he may own the house, or better still, the bar.

From bell boy the usual order of promotion is to bell captain, whose duty is simply to keep access to the work and behavior of the subordinate lads on the bench. Next in line is the position of mail and key clerk, which gives the youth his first chance behind the desk, his first opportunity to assume some dignity and his first experience at talking a guest into believing that he is satisfied with the accommodations whether he is or not.

How rapidly a boy takes these strides depends somewhat on circumstances but largely on the boy himself. If he can stay sober several days a week and stay awake seven nights a week and still look pleasant eternally and always, a clerkship will come. To go higher he must have business ability of no common kind along with his other virtues. Many good clerks there are, but good managers are few and successful proprietors still fewer.

What Some Others Have Done.

Bellboys with ambition find some incentive in the careers of a few who have occupied good positions in Omaha hotel ranks. Rome Miller caught hold of the lower rung of the ladder when he was 13 years old and had a cash capital of considerable less than a dollar. A. S. Lee took his academic course in a stewarding department into which he forced his way on a meat and game wagon. H. B. Peters' long and classic legs were in a ham up and down hotel stairs with a picher of ice water in each hand and eight room numbers in his head long before he ever saw electric lights, elevators, bartenders with boiled shirts and the other distinctions of the history that is modern. Dick Johnson was

Newspaper War Fleet

A Feature of the Spanish-American War.

Edward Marshall, one of the war correspondents who saw active service in Cuba in 1898 and was severely wounded in one of the battles preceding the capture of Santiago, relates in Pearson's Magazine interesting facts about the operations and the cost of the newsgathering fleet in the war. He says in part: "Within a few days after the destruction of the Maine correspondents from all parts of the country were rushed to the scene of the disaster. The news-seeking public demanded every possible item of information regarding the affair, the grave import of which was immediately appreciated. But the Spanish officials soon instituted a censorship so rigorous that very little information percolated through the cable from Havana. To cope with the situation a New York newspaper devised the plan of having its dispatches sent by boat from the Cuban coast to Key West, where they were put upon the wires and sent direct to the newspaper offices. The other papers were not slow to adopt this plan and soon a large fleet of tugs, yachts and small boats were plying between the island and United States territory. This was the beginning of the first fleet of newsgathering vessels ever assembled.

The work of following the movements of the squadrons under command of Acting Rear Admiral Sampson and Commodore Schley, and of attempting to locate the whereabouts of the fleet sent across the Atlantic by the Spanish government, afforded plenty of occupation for all these press boats and for the scores of correspondents that they carried. Manifestly the only way to be absolutely certain of obtaining all the news was to keep track not only of the large fleets, but also of the detached vessels which were sent along the coast for patrol duty, and the newspaper boats had to make daily trips to Key West in order

to put their dispatches upon the cable. To patrol a coast line over 100 miles long of Cuba (the island is over 100 miles long) and to know every event of importance taking place within its limits was a very difficult matter. The plan adopted by most of the press representatives was to follow up the fleet, keeping the flagship in sight until a bombardment or some other event of news importance took place, then to make a dash for Key West, put the dispatches on the wire, and returning, pick up the fleet as soon as possible. This method involved glorious opportunities for "beats." Not only this, but there were often exciting races between the boats to get the wire at Key West.

The cables leaving from that port were always overcrowded during the progress of the war. There was a great amount of government matter to be transmitted and government dispatches invariably took the precedence of all others. With the correspondents it was "first come first served," and the man who got in late, no matter how important his dispatch, was not likely to have it printed in the next day. There were occasions when rival tugs came racing into Key West with their steam gauges registering a dangerous pressure, and some of the correspondents were being as stokers and feeding portions of the woodwork of the vessel into the furnace. There were some exciting episodes among the experiences of the men who carried these dispatches. On some of the boats oil barrels were considered a necessary part of the vessel's outfit, and danger point or no danger point, it was poured freely over the coal burned in the furnaces, the correspondents preferring to take the chances of blowing their boats up rather than risk being "beaten" by some rival news-gatherer. The boats were most of them small, although one editor, finding that he could not get good tugs, on two occasions chartered

veritable ocean steamships and used them as dispatch boats for his newspaper. Of course these ships had little to fear from the weather in the Gulf of Mexico, but the smaller craft frequently encountered real danger in crossing from points of action to far-distant cable stations. Many of the tugs were without decent sleeping accommodations, and the hardships of the newspaper men who manned them were severe. Nor did the weather present the only dangers which the dispatch-boats encountered. I know of one case—that of the New York Sun tugboat Simpson, at Guantanamo—when the boat went into the harbor for news, and came out with anywhere from twenty to thirty holes made by Spanish bullets in its upper works.

A good indication of the amount of money spent by American newspapers during the Spanish-American war might be found in special entries on the books of the New York Herald. For good reasons the Herald kept no deposits of money in any one of the islands of the West Indies except those in the Danish group. As much as \$10,000 was deposited there at a time, to be drawn on by the Herald correspondents, and at one time the Herald owed the Boston Herald company as much as \$20,000, which had been drawn from the Port Antonio office of that company by the Herald correspondents, who had credit with this concern. The New York Journal spent on the war alone an average of \$12,000 a month. At one time one of the Journal's correspondents sent \$27,500 for coal for a dispatch-boat at Cape Haitien.

The story of the battle between the American and Spanish fleets at Santiago cost the New York Herald and the New York World spent almost as much in getting the same news.

WILLIAM M'KINLEY'S DOUBLE

Trials of an Ohio Editor Who Resembled the Late President.

CHASED BY DELEGATIONS OF VOTERS

Tom Merton's Experience with Politicians, Rosters and Camera Fiends Who Mistook Him for Ohio's Favorite Son.

While President McKinley, in Buffalo, was making his strong-willed fight with death there stood in the eager crowd that scanned the bulletin boards in Pittsburg, night after night, a man who in feature, bearing and expression so resembled the stricken president that men who passed that anxious figure started and stared and wondered whether their eyes were not playing tricks on them. The man was Thomas Merton, the editor of a Pittsburg evening newspaper and an old and valued friend of the chief executive of the nation. Mr. Merton, like his famous double, comes from Canton,

WILLIAM M'KINLEY'S DOUBLE

his disappointment, thought hard for a moment, then said: "We'll work this address out together and right now. Let's take these notes and see what can be done with them."

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ly residence when the mischievous station came along. Far up the street he had spied Merton coming down and he halted the standard bearer.

"Going up to Major McKinley's?" "Yes."

"Well, the major ain't at home now," observed Martin. "He's gone out for a walk. But you're in luck," he added, pointing to Merton, "for here he comes now."

Martin dodged behind a wagon. The leader of the delegation spoke a few hurried words to the band, which struck up "Hail to the Chief," and the procession moved.

Merton, unconscious of impending trouble, was brought up with a round turn and found himself surrounded by a crowd of gaily decked county voters. The band swooped a welcome and stopped. Before Merton could start to run the spokesman advanced with a roll of parchment and began an address to Major McKinley. Merton glanced round helplessly and caught sight of Martin, who, by this time, had mounted the top of the wagon and was almost in spasms of joy. Merton turned wrath and stopped the speaker, saying:

"I'm not Mr. McKinley, my good man. You have been imposed on."

The spokesman glared at Merton and blurted out: "Why ain't you Mr. McKinley?"

"This was a hard one. Merton floundered, trying to explain that he was the victim of a joke, but the spokesman would have none of it. He pointed to the life-size picture of McKinley on his banner and asked Merton if he dare deny, in the face of such proof, that he was Mr. McKinley. He grew both angry and loud. He declared that the supposed McKinley was trying to throw down the voters from that end of the state by declining to recognize them. He said the county from which they have now come had always stood by McKinley, but they didn't want to be made sport of in this way.

"Straightening the Tangle. Merton was in a cold sweat by this time. So was Martin. The last thing either of them wanted was to lose votes for Mr. McKinley. So Martin came down from his wagon and between him and Merton the tangle was straightened out, but it was not until the delegation saw Mr. McKinley and Merton together in the picture yard that afternoon that they were completely satisfied.

As long as Merton stayed in Canton he was the victim of encounters of the following sort. He would be approached by a lot of visitors, who would scan him closely before the boldest of them would venture to advance and extend his hand, saying: "I beg your pardon, but you are—"

"No, sir; I am not," Merton would reply wearily. "Is it possible that I am mistaken in—"

"Yes, sir; it is. More than possible. And if you'd be asked that question as many times as I have you'd be pretty sick of it," and away he would go, leaving his interlocutor still doubting. It got so that anyone could put him to ignominious flight by merely approaching him with hand outstretched.

Some years ago Merton went into one of the big Ohio newspapers where a life-size picture of President McKinley was one of the prominent wall fixtures. While he was waiting two people who had evidently not been long in the town came in. They glanced at the picture, then at Merton. One of them came up and, without any preliminary began to talk business. Merton saw that there was some mistake and tried to speak to some one connected with the paper.

"Don't you own this paper?" said the stranger. "No. Sorry to say, I don't," replied Merton.

"Now, what's the use of you telling me that. We've got to have this thing fixed up, and there's no use of you trying to tell lies about it. You're the man that owns the pa-



EDITOR MERTON, PRESIDENT M'KINLEY'S DOUBLE.

Archey, with trembling voice and wabbling chin. "Why don't you dare to ask it?" the maiden said, demurely. "Because I can see 'no' in your eyes." "In both of them?" "Yes."

"Well, don't you—don't you know two negatives are equivalent to an—how dare you, sir! Take your arm from around my waist, instantly!" But he didn't.

O. The editor is a much younger man; but many strange instances of mistakes, in which journalist and statesman were mistaken for each other, have been recorded, and on more than one occasion Mr. Merton has been forced, to his great embarrassment, publicly to impersonate Mr. McKinley.

On Memorial day, 1892, Mr. McKinley, then governor of Ohio, reached Chicago, where he was to make two addresses, one to members of the Grand Army of the Republic, another in the afternoon to the American Mechanics.

Merton was then dramatic critic of a Chicago newspaper, but owing to his personal acquaintance with Mr. McKinley, he was sent to find McKinley and get from him, if possible, advance copies of both his speeches for the day. The McKinleys were stopping at the home of Lafayette Williams, a cousin of the president. Merton reached the house with difficulty, being compelled to work his way through a great crowd that had gathered to catch a glimpse of the man then being spoken of as the next president, passed the police lines and rang the door-bell. Orders had been given that Mr. McKinley should not be disturbed. A colored servant, frowning severely, opened and the crowd gave way to a look of consternation. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. One minute before the servant had seen Governor McKinley at breakfast; but here he seemed to be at the front door.

"Take this card to Governor McKinley," said Merton, chucking to himself over the very serious look on his face. "Dar's Mr. McKinley's twin brother, or his spook, out dar," was the message delivered to the butler with the card by the colored man. The future president promptly received Merton.

Working for a Scoop. "Governor," said Merton, "my paper sent me for copies of your addresses for today. We want to get out extra as soon as you begin speaking, and we will put them in type at once if you will help us."

"I have no addresses prepared," replied Mr. McKinley. "On the way over I jotted down some points, and hope to have an hour before time to go to the meeting in order to get them in better shape."

Merton's face fell. The governor noticed

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| Chiffoniers, Etc. | | Dressers and Bureaus | | Sideboards | |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Former Price | Reduced Price | Former Price | Reduced Price | Former Price | Reduced Price |
| \$7.00 oak Chiffonier | 4.95 | \$16.50 antique Dresser | 11.00 | \$26.00 golden oak Sideboard | 17.50 |
| 9.00 quart oak Chiffonier | 6.00 | 15.00 antique Dresser | 9.75 | 20.00 golden oak Sideboard | 22.50 |
| 18.00 golden oak Chiffonier with mirror | 12.75 | 29.00 polished oak Dresser | 28.50 | 29.50 golden oak Sideboard | 21.00 |
| 20.00 mahogany Chiffonier with mirror | 15.50 | 28.00 mahogany Dresser | 19.75 | 45.00 golden oak Sideboard | 34.00 |
| 25.00 mahogany Chiffonier with mirror | 18.50 | 32.00 mahogany Dresser | 24.50 | 47.00 golden oak Sideboard | 43.50 |
| 30.00 mahogany Chiffonier with mirror | 19.50 | 50.00 mahogany Dresser | 31.00 | 50.00 golden oak Sideboard | 38.00 |
| 40.00 mahogany Chiffonier with mirror | 24.00 | | | 68.00 golden oak Sideboard | 49.00 |
| 38.00 bird's-eye maple Chiffonier with mirror | 28.50 | | | 65.00 Flemish oak Sideboard | 24.50 |

| Couches | | Miscellaneous | |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Former Price | Reduced Price | Former Price | Reduced Price |
| \$26.00 Box Couch | 13.00 | \$30.00 oak Secretary | 17.50 |
| 16.00 Flat Couch | 11.00 | 45.00 mahogany Secretary | 29.50 |
| 25.00 Velours Couch | 18.00 | 17.00 Combination Book Case | 11.75 |
| 27.00 Tapestry Couch | 19.00 | 50.00 oak Book Case | 31.00 |
| 17.00 Bed Couch | 11.00 | 15.00 oak Hall Seat | 8.75 |
| 47.00 Leather Couch | 35.00 | 15.00 oak Hall Rack | 9.75 |
| 57.00 Leather Couch | 42.50 | 7.50 oak Child's Bed | 4.50 |

| China Cases | | Extension Tables | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|
| Former Price | Reduced Price | Former Price | Reduced Price |
| \$16.50 golden oak China Case | 12.75 | \$18.00 golden oak Extension Table | 15.50 |
| 24.00 golden oak China Case | 14.00 | 25.00 golden oak Extension Table | 17.50 |
| 23.00 golden oak China Case | 16.50 | 20.00 golden oak Extension Table | 19.75 |
| 26.50 golden oak China Case | 19.75 | 25.00 golden oak Extension Table | 19.00 |
| 37.50 golden oak China Case | 25.00 | 70.00 golden oak (round) Extension Table | 54.50 |
| 40.00 golden oak China Case | 29.00 | 37.50 Flemish oak (square) Extension Table | 19.75 |
| 50.00 golden oak Crystal Case | 37.50 | | |
| 50.00 Flemish oak China Case | 29.00 | | |

| Buffets | |
|---|---------------|
| Former Price | Reduced Price |
| \$10.00 quartered oak Buffet | 5.00 |
| 20.00 quartered oak Buffet | 15.00 |
| 23.00 quartered oak Buffet | 17.50 |
| 32.00 Combination China Case and Buffet | 23.00 |
| 35.00 quartered oak Buffet | 29.00 |
| 45.00 quartered oak Buffet | 37.50 |

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