

A COMBINATION AFFAIR.

At 12 o'clock John Jennings laid down his pen, got down from his high stool, and went quietly toward the office of Mr. Campion, the new manager. He knocked timidly at the door. "Come in!" shouted Campion. "Oh, it's you, Jennings?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Jennings, looking at Campion with courage born of desperation. "Mr. Campion, I want to ask if the firm couldn't let me have a little more than a hundred after this month. I've been here 20 years, sir, and it's eight years since I had my last increase."

"You see, sir," said Jennings, "my wife has been ordered away for two or three months and—and it's pretty hard to keep things going on \$25 a week."

"Sit down, Jennings," said Campion. He found what he meant to say unaccountably difficult, and for that reason he began to bluster. "Jennings, I have been thinking about you for some time," he said. "We can't raise you. In fact, it was my intention to ask you to resign at the end of the month."

Jennings, struck dumb by the blow only looked appealingly at Campion. "You'll have to go at the end of the month," said Campion. "We'll give you a month's salary ahead. And no doubt you'll fall into another position very soon—one more suited to you than this."

Utterly crushed, Jennings crept back to his stool. His mind whirled chaos seemed to have opened beneath his feet. To lose his position, after 20 years' service, at forty-three! What could he do? It was the most terrible thing that had ever happened to him.

He said nothing to his wife. Mary and he never discussed office affairs.

The days flew by. Jennings had barely a week at the office where he had spent the better part of his working years. And as he sat on his stool thoughts came into his mind that he had never known before.

The safe in Campion's office was an old one. On Saturday nights it contained never less than five or six thousand dollars, which came in during the afternoon, after banking hours. It would be the simplest matter to slip the key of Campion's office from its hook in the night watchman's little office, open the safe with the old combination, and retire with his booty. The idea became an obsession and he resolved to put it into execution on the last Saturday of the month.

Everything favored his plan. Campion had gone away into the country. At six o'clock Jennings went out among the other bookkeepers and clerks, but, as soon as the last had departed, he turned and made his way back, secreting himself in a corner of the stenographers' room, where half-blind old Sykes would never see him.

Midnight arrived before he crept out toward the watchman's office. The key to Campion's room hung by the door. Old Sykes would sit, dreaming of the past, behind a half-partition of wood, for hours at a time. In his stockinged feet Jennings crept up, abstracted the key and fled.

He put on his boots again and crept cautiously toward Campion's office. He thought he heard a slight noise within, and hesitated, but it was not repeated, and, cautiously turning the key in the door, Jennings entered.

A man in a black mask was kneeling in front of the safe, counting a pile of bills.

At the sight Jennings' scheme of theft was all forgotten. He remembered only his long service with the firm, his watch-dog trust and obedience. And this burglar was about to victimize them.

With a shout Jennings leaped at the fellow, who, taken off his guard, staggered back under the other man's impetus. Then, seeing that Jennings was unarmed, he sprang at him in turn, wielding a formidable iron jimmy, with which he must have pried open the window that gave on the interior yard.

Jennings evaded the blow and caught the fellow's arm. They wrestled to and fro, Jennings calling for help loudly. His strength was outclassed by that of the other, for 20 years of office work does not make for muscularity. He knew that once he lost his hold on the burglar's arm the jimmy would descend.

The burglar fought in silence, but in desperation, too. Jennings heard the quick tramp of old Sykes' feet outside. He put forth all his strength to throw the other to the floor. But he lost his grasp and the jimmy, raised, descended with fearful force upon his skull.

The last thing Jennings remembered was seeing Sykes at the door, a pistol in his hand. The last thing he heard was the discharge of the weapon.

When he opened his eyes, to find himself in his bed at home, and his wife beside him, Jennings' first thought was of the affray.

"They got him?" he demanded feebly.

A tall man rose from the other side of the bed. Jennings, to his amazement, discovered that it was Rothway, the president.

"Yes, we got the sound 'ol, thanks to you, Jennings," he said. "We're going to put you in his place."

"In prison?" gasped Jennings with sinking heart.

"No, no, my boy," said Rothway, beaming. "In his office, of course. Didn't you know the man you caught was Campion?"

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Long Enough Already.

A rather fussy man traveling from New York to Philadelphia had been much annoyed by his opposite companion, a tall, lanky fellow whose bony knees troubled him not a little. There was a stop of several minutes at Trenton and the tall traveler rose from his seat, and said with a yawn: "I guess I'll get out and stretch my legs a bit." "Good gracious!" exclaimed the other, "don't do that unless you are prepared to pay double fare, or to take a compartment all to yourself."

Various Views of the Snow.

The farmer calls the snow the poor man's fertilizer. It keeps the ground warm and puts dollars—prospectively—in his vacant pockets. It is much esteemed by artists, who use almost every color except white when they set out to paint it. Their favorite tints for this purpose are pink, purple and a slaty blue. It seems to be the chief business of artists to inform us courtously but firmly, that our eyes are liars.—Exchange.

Airtight Rubber Cork.

A stopper for bottles that is especially valuable for travelers consists of a solid rubber cork that goes down into the neck of the bottle, and a circular collar of soft rubber rising from the top of the cork. When the cork is driven home this collar is turned down over and outside the neck, which it makes water-tight and airtight. The solid cork and the flexible collar are all in one piece.

Workman's Asset.

A workman owes it to himself and his family to take care of himself. His labor is his only asset in business. When injured, he is for the time being a bankrupt. If killed, his family may be left destitute and his children deprived of an education and forced to seek employment before their maturity. This philosophy is found in a bulletin of the Chicago bureau of safety.

Why Paper Affords Warmth.

The value of paper as a protector from cold is due, of course, to its being such a poor conductor of heat, a quality which increases rapidly as layer is added to layer. The best kind, for this purpose, is fortunately that which is most abundant—the one kind that can be had for the asking, or even for the taking.

Judge Wouldn't Stand for It.

An ignorant justice of the peace in Florida was called on to decide a case. Counsel for both sides made their long and eloquent speeches after all the facts had been elicited from the witnesses. "Prisonah discha'ged," said the magistrate. "The hull accusation is done been based on a dinged technicality."

Good Reason to Be Pleased.

Jones—"What a puffball Burison's got to be since he bought that farm upstate! Why, every day the grinning nut comes to the office wearing a raw potato for a watch charm." Smith—"Yes; he explained about that potato to me. It was his share of last year's crop."—Magazine of Fun.

To Wash Windows.

To wash windows quickly: Take a chamois skin, dipped in warm water, to wash windows. Then wring the same chamois skin dry as possible, and after wiping the window again you will have a finely polished glass, without the use of numerous cloths to do the work.

Incentive to Better Work.

Emerson says: "Every day is a doomsday." If we realized this, we would take each day and try its worth as it came to us. Then we would do better work tomorrow.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

New Use for Matches.

When the finger is stained with ink and you have no sand soap in the house, just take a match, moisten it slightly and rub over the discolored parts. The stains will soon disappear.

How Insects Regulate Speed.

Motion pictures of insects in flight show that they regulate their speed by changing the inclination of their wings rather than by altering the rapidity of their motion.

New York Led in Economy.

Although New York lies entirely outside of the coal-producing area, it was the first state in which were built by-product ovens, which save the gas, tar, and ammonia.

To Get All Juice From the Lemon.

If you will try holding the lemons in hot water a few minutes before cutting, for making lemonade, they will yield double the juice they would otherwise.

Afternoon Farmer.

An afternoon farmer is an English expression for one who puts off his work until the last moment.

Formation of Character.

No great characters are formed in this world without suffering and self-denial.—Matthew Henry.

Your Opportunity.

Persons suffering from chronic forms of disease are invited to consult Dr. Pierce, by letter, free of charge. Dr. Pierce of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., is surrounded by nearly a score of assistant physicians who have treated with their aid hundreds of thousands of chronic cases of disease with a record of ninety-eight per cent. of cures. Almost all the cases treated at the Invalids' Hotel are extreme cases. Many times people write who have been given up by several physicians and all their friends as incurable. These people are almost always cured by Dr. Pierce's treatment and advice. If you are sick write to Dr. Pierce, Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y. All correspondence is absolutely private and confidential. Write without fear and without fee.

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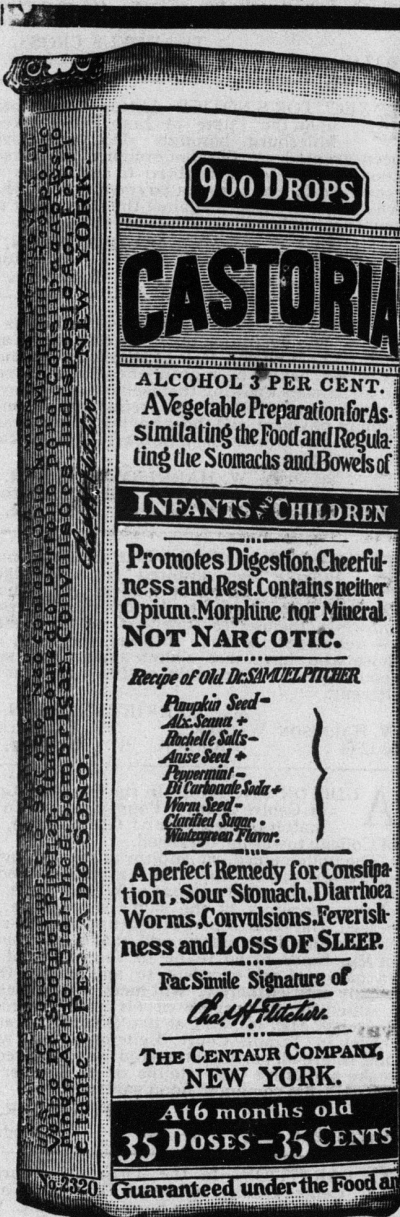
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