

THE MAN AT THE DESK.

The Man at the Desk has a patient look
As he writes and writes in his open book,
And he bends his back to the task before
Like a galley-slave to his hand-rubbed oar.
Columns of figures he marshals by,
Piled up declamations high
Which seem to sing to his well-ruled brain
His long monotonous life refrain:—
"Debit, credit, voucher, pay,—
Discount, balance, day by day;
Carried forward, interest, dues,—
So the monotonous river runs."

The Man at the Desk with the patient look
Has followed the rule of the copy-book:—
"Early to bed and early to rise,"
Yet he's neither healthy, wealthy, nor wise.
Honest, industrious, sober, chained
To his office cell, he has long remained
Dead of ambition, busy of pen,
Adding up figures for other men.

"Debit, credit, remit, amount,
Carried forward, close account;
Daybooks, draftbooks, interest, dues,—
So the monotonous river runs."
The Man at the Desk with the patient look
Has written his life in the open book,
Has charged up Youth with a small amount,
And crossed off Love as a closed account.
Yet bright are the tears in his faded eye
As the column of figures marches by,
Black of ink and with mourning brave,
Like a last parade to a yawning grave.
"Debit, credit," the bugles play,
"Discounts, balance, voucher, pay,
Carried forward, interest, dues,—
So the monotonous river runs."
—Wallace Irwin in Success Magazine.

The First Quarrel

Wilson forsook bachelorhood last September. In the seven months that have elapsed he has become in all outward appearances like unto all other married men, and he can even go to market and order a Sunday dinner without betraying the uncertainty that clutches at his heart. Fifteen years from now he will be no more of a benedict than he is at this moment, for taking his place as the head of a family seemed to be the most natural thing in the world for him.

Since last Thursday night he has been on the outs with his wife, the last of the connubial experiences through which he has to pass. The misunderstanding came about in the simplest way imaginable, but Wilson made the initial mistake of not explaining immediately and then made the second by asserting his right to consider himself very much abused. His wife, on her part, believes that she was grossly treated and she is still the least bit inclined to think that it is not so certain she was not more seriously deceived. In the midst of the sorely strained relations that exist Wilson continues to declare that she is acting "just like a woman," while Mrs. Wilson is deliberating over going back to her parents. What both of them need is the advice of a sensible friend but that friend has not yet arrived on the scene and the two are resting on their arms. The fact that both of them have confided in friends who are anything but sensible makes the opening of actual hostilities possible at any moment, which is deplorable, for if they come the consequences will almost certainly be fatal.

Wilson had an opportunity last week to go in on a business venture that will mean a great deal to him in a financial way. He purposely refrained from telling his wife of it so that she might surprise her with the complete story of the effect as well as the cause. He closed the bargain on the Thursday night of the rupture, and that is the chief reason for his present attitude.

He came home that afternoon rather earlier than usual and dressed for dinner with unusual care. He was in high spirits during the meal and his wife thought afterward with wholly erroneous conclusions of the way in which he had arrayed himself and of the attention he had paid her before he left the house. At the time she was rejoiced because of them, but she did not realize then the "depths of perfidy" of which man is capable. Shortly after dinner, while the happy young couple were sitting in the library, there came a ring of the telephone. Mrs. Wilson answered it and was a bit disturbed when a pleasant, feminine voice asked for her husband. She listened more closely than she might under other circumstances when Wilson answered and she was puzzled extremely when she heard him say:
"At the Esplanade, you say? All right, I'll be there in half an hour."
There was a note of jubilation in his voice, and that looked suspicious, indeed, when Wilson hurried into his topcoat and kissed his wife good-bye, adding by way of explanation only a statement that he had an engagement that might keep him out until later than usual. Of course, the pleasant, feminine voice belonged to an ex-

change operator, and the engagement was with regard to the business that he could not tell his wife of at that time, but Mrs. Wilson did not know this.

The poor little woman allowed herself to get into an unfortunate state of mind during the long hours that followed. She told herself over and over that Harry had had some reason for acting the way he did, but every time she told herself so the memory of her husband's unexplained departure was recalled. In spite of herself she could not dissociate the two, and though they did have a vital relation it was not of the kind at all that she imagined.

It was nearly 3 o'clock the next morning when Wilson slipped quietly into the house. He felt like singing, but he tiptoed upstairs and into his room like a thief, lest he should awake his wife. She, with straining ears, noted all this and charged it up against him, while Wilson prepared for bed and went to sleep like a school boy. For the wife, however, there was no such thing as sleep, and the very fact that her husband did not speak to her seemed the final proof of all that she suspected. It did not occur to her that she had lain still and that she must have appeared to be slumbering soundly.

At the breakfast table Mrs. Wilson showed the effects of her unhappy vigil. Her husband was his usual self and, manlike, he did not notice anything peculiarly out of the way in her. Finally, when she could bear the suspense no longer, she broke the silence by asking:
"Where were you last night?"

Wilson looked up in surprise at the challenge in her voice, as he answered good-humoredly enough:
"Didn't I tell you I had an engagement? You heard the telephone call I got, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," replied the wife, with a catch in her voice, "and that's just what I want to know about. The call was from a woman?"

"From a woman—Good heavens, Bess, you don't—Why, you must be crazy! What nonsense is this, anyhow!" he concluded sternly.

Five stormy minutes later he slammed the front door behind him, raging because his wife, in her complete ignorance, did not understand, while she, with her face pillowed in her arms, sobbed and believed the worst—Pittsburg Times.

A Bride in a Hurry.

Every summer, when the coast of Labrador is fairly free, and vessels can approach that foggy and forbidding country, the Bishop of Newfoundland makes a trip as far north as the ice permits. He finds much to do in giving comfort and counsel, christening the infants that have been born during the winter, preaching funeral sermons, and uniting the betrothed, who wait his arrival at the fishing-stations.

Landing at the Seal Islands not long ago, he found an assemblage clad in its level best at the house of the "king," or leading factor; for the king, having buried four wives, had resolved to take a fifth, and he had gathered the neighbors to witness his joy in the acquisition.
There are not many neighbors in Labrador but there were enough in this instance to fill both rooms of his house. When the bishop had been warmed and welcomed, and was prepared to speak the words that would fill the Seal Islands with rejoicing, he discovered that the union was impossible because the bride and groom were too nearly related.

"The church forbids this match," he declared and great was the sensation. The bride sank down in tears of mortification and temper, and the groom scratched his head in bewilderment. Something had to be done, and quickly, for it might be a year before a clergyman appeared on that coast again.

"Oh, well, there's plenty of others," said the king, brightening as he surveyed his guests. He turned to a woman in the company and asked "Will you have me, Lizzie?"
"Not for a gift!" exclaimed the guest, indignantly.
"Will you have me, Jane?"
"Not if you were the last man on the Labrador."
"How for you, Moggart?"
"Never!"

The king looked ruefully over the wedding party, and spying the cook at the far side of the room, marched over to her resolutely, seized her by the arm, saying, "Come along, Sue, you'll do!" dragged her, none too willing, before the bishop, and so they were married.

The Worm Turned.

A village doctor whose most troublesome patient was an elderly woman practically on the free list, received a sound raving from her one day for not coming when summoned the night before.

"You can go to see your other patients at night," said she. "Why can't you come when I send for you? Ain't my money as good as other people's?"
"I do not know, madam," was the reply, "I never saw any of it."—Lippincott's.

Cingalese medical books of the sixth century are stated by Sir Henry A. Blake, Governor of Ceylon, to have described 67 varieties of mosquitoes and 424 kinds of malaria fever caused by mosquitoes.

The pay of the Russian private soldier has been increased more than 100 per cent., that is to say, from \$1.35 to \$3 a year.

POSTAL SAVINGS BANKS.

GREAT BRITAIN'S ADMIRABLE AND EXTENSIVE SYSTEM.

Develops Nation's Thrift—Money Deposited at One Office May Be Withdrawn at Any Other in the Kingdom With But Little Formality.
Great Britain's Post Office Savings Banks, which rose in 1855, had for their purpose the fostering and encouragement of thrift among the poorer classes by furnishing a government depository that would be within reach of all, and that would offer perfect security for the largest as well as the smallest sum. Two hundred million pounds sterling or \$1,000,000,000, today represent the amount invested in these public institutions of Great Britain and Ireland.

The disastrous failure of several banks in the middle of the nineteenth century stirred up public indignation, and the Post Office Savings Banks was the solution of a persistent problem that worried poor and rich alike. These hundred offices represented the start, and on the first day 435 people of the working class deposited in all one thousand pounds.

From the beginning the success of the institution was assured because the government saw the importance of extending the system to villages and sparsely settled districts. Primarily the advantage to the masses as a whole lay in the fact that the Post Office Savings Banks gave any person the power of making a deposit or taking out money in any part of the country in which he might happen to be at the time without reference to the place where his account was originally opened.

The success of the governmental venture induced the authorities to encourage the working classes to make provision for their old age and for the support of their families. As far back as 1864 an act was passed to afford facilities for the purchase of small governmental annuities and for assuring payments of money on death. Great Britain opened the Naval Savings Bank as a Post Office department in 1871, for the benefit of the sailors on board its warships. It was well patronized from the start.

Penny banks followed, and school banks came as a matter of course, finding the children eager to start an account in their own names.

Today there are 14,262 post office savings banks in the United Kingdom, with 9,403,852 depositors, and a sum of 146,135,157 pounds to the credit of the department. Taking the population of Great Britain and Ireland at 40,000,000, it proves that one person in every 4 1/2 has deposits, and that the average amount per person is fifteen pounds, ten shillings and ten pence. Every class is represented among the depositors; and the fisherman often elicits the clerk at the post office.

The advantage to the public: First, the absolute security from loss; second, the convenience of making deposits; third, the ease of repayment, which is not affected by change of residence; fourth, safety against persuasion and fraud; fifth, the prevention of poverty by the development of thrift; sixth, the ready means where no other banks exist, of a safe deposit; seventh, the education of the young and untrained to the knowledge of the use and management of money; eighth, the tendency to discourage reckless and speculative expenditures.

The advantages to the country itself group themselves under seven headings: First, the people receive the profits as interest on their savings when these are used as a public investment; second, the country's wealth is kept growing within itself; third, by the wide distribution of these savings, money can promptly reach points needing it suddenly from local causes; fourth, in remote places stringency from too limited banking facilities is prevented or lessened; fifth, the laboring people feel a direct personal interest in the stability of the country; sixth, sectionalism among the less intelligent classes is lessened by continual and close touch with a common financial institution; seventh, by special investment the people's savings may be made the foundation of securities for financial institutions, or loans for municipal improvements, or special national undertakings.

Italy, Holland and all the colonies of the British Empire now have these banks.

A NEW ISTHMIAN RAILROAD.

Mexico to Shorten the Route Many Miles.

Mexico is about to take a twelve-hundred-mile "kink" out of the line of international commerce which has been using the Panama route. At the same time it will give the American trans-continental railroads a tremendous shock by opening a new short route from the Atlantic to the Pacific which they cannot control. By the end of the year the new railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is to be opened to interoceanic traffic on a large scale. The railroad has been completed for some time and is in operation for local traffic. It is only awaiting the completion of its terminal ports to begin handling ocean freight. These ports though they will not be fully completed in less than two or three years, will soon be sufficiently advanced to be used by vessels of any size.

The railroad, being six hundred miles north of the Panama Railroad, is that distance nearer the natural line of the world's east and west commerce. It will bring New York and North Atlantic ports twelve hundred miles, and New Orleans and Gulf

ports fourteen hundred miles, nearer to San Francisco, Japan and China. The sailing time from New York to Coatzacoalcas, the Atlantic terminal port, will be six or seven days, two days less than to Colon, the Atlantic Port of the Panama railroad. Cargo from a vessel landing at Coatzacoalcas, say of 10,000 tons, can be aboard another vessel in the harbor of Salina Cruz, in four or five days. In an emergency the trans-shipment could be accomplished in thirty-six hours. The same freight could not be transferred across the Isthmus of Panama in less than three weeks, possibly longer. At Salina Cruz, the Pacific port, the vessel is two days nearer San Francisco than it would be at Panama. This serves to illustrate what the new route means in saving time.—World's Work.

OUT IN OKLAHOMA.

Wide Land Under Vast Skies Where Flowers Tempt and Tornadoes Threaten.

Oklahoma is beautiful, with a beauty all its own. Here and there, in fissures between the swells, brooks run, red like wounds, or clear and gypsey. Above them cottonwoods bend.

But, for the most part, says Harper's Bazaar, the land curves, trembling, to a treeless horizon. The plains are never still. They move as constantly as rippling water.

In the unbroken country shin oaks, mingled with buffalo grass, shakos and rustles under the thousand handed urgency of the wind. Shin oaks are baby oak trees, as high as your shin, burned off every year by the prairie fires, and thus never attaining full growth. Their leaves dance gossamerly all the time, playing with the sunshine or the shadows.

It is a hurrying sky, a restless sky, pling its clouds in strange masses; spitting out rainstorms; thundering in the east while yet it smiles in the west; shot with lightning; hazed by dust storms; vast—unbelievably vast! Every one watches it, as sailors watch at sea; for every now and then its endless changes pile up the dread cyclone funnel, and no one, on pain of his life, must miss that warning.

The resemblance to the ocean grows upon one as one looks. The little houses pitch about on the great swells, helpless and unstable as boats. Others, dug into the earth, venturing only a few feet above ground, show like loaded schooners stripped of sails, setting deep in green water. And the houses are as far apart as boats out at sea.

Shinney and grass are set thick with the most beautiful wild flowers. The sensitive rose, its stem guarded by fine little pricklers to prevent handling, shrinks at a blow, but if left undisturbed, creeps along the ground and holds out lilac colored soft balls full of rosy fragrance. Like a permanent morning-glory is the bloom of the sturdy man-in-the-ground, a small plant with a big root almost like a man's body. Some of the people call it deadman.

Dearest of all to the Oklahoma woman the pink daisy snake root bows a frequent and friendly head. Through the hard days now passing many a family escaped starvation because of the presence of this valuable herb. Women and children dug it all through the long blowing days, selling the roots for 50 cents a pound to wholesale pharmacies.

Snake root is said to contain the most powerful known antidote to various poisons and to be especially noticeable in that, unlike most antidotes, it is not a poison in itself. The supply is continually insufficient for the demand, and as nobody is cultivating the plant the discrepancy is likely to grow greater.

Snake root may soon be as rare as buffalo. Yet, by commercial jugglery, no sooner had the business of digging the roots begun to be systematized than the price was forced down to 10 cents a pound, and now a woman has to be badly in need before she will hunt snake root.

TAKING OXYGEN FROM AIR.

Interesting Experiments Witnessed by French Savants.

Consul Brunot of St. Etienne writes that a group of savants of the Academie des Sciences, Paris, very recently paid a visit to a factory at Boulogne-sur-Mer to witness the manufacture for industrial purposes of enormous quantities of oxygen and nitrogen, extracted in a liquid state from the atmospheric air. The Consul says:

"Georges Claude, the inventor of the interesting process, furnished the explanations. As the liquid oxygen flowed out from the generator it was of a bluish hue, while the nitrogen was colorless. Several experiments were made for the visitors to prove the importance of having an abundant supply of oxygen at one's disposal; a forge set up in the grounds showed the wonderful effects of the gas. The fire which had almost died out was immediately rendered incandescent by a current of hydroxide from the blowpipe. A bar of iron was brought to a red heat and then melted like lead. Two pieces of iron were welded in a few minutes by the aid of a powerful flame from the blowpipe. Much costly and tedious riveting will be no longer necessary; iron will be welded against iron, copper against copper, etc. The doctors already foresee the possible treatment with liquid air of certain affections of microbial origin, such as osteomyelitis, anthrax and the malignant disease of the skin termed lupus."—Washington Post.

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SOUTHERN MEXICAN WOMEN.

The women in Southern Mexico are more prudent and economical than the men, and in the absence of savings banks they invest their surplus in gold coins and wear them as ornaments. They insist, however, upon having American gold, usually \$1 and \$5 pieces, which are sent out from Vera Cruz to the country merchants. It is said that this custom originated in the time of the California gold excitement, when large numbers of forty-niners crossed the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, paying their way in gold and scattering it lavishly among the natives. The women claimed the coins and used them for ornaments. Almost every woman you see in the market place has a string of American gold dollars or \$5 gold pieces around her neck, and one woman in the town of Tehuantepec, we were told, wears \$5000 worth of such ornaments when she goes to a ball, chiefly in chains which she wears in her hair and around her neck and waist; and yet, with this burden of wealth, she always goes barefooted.

All the women of the working class are barefooted, and they have small, perfectly shaped feet. At their affairs they dance in bare feet as gracefully as an American woman with high French heels. Perhaps the bright colors of their costumes makes them look more cheerful than they would appear if they wore the black shawls that are so common among the women in the northern part of the Republic. A baile, or ball, is given on every feast day and national holiday, and such occasions occur with surprising frequency. One of the railway contractors was complaining to me that the feast days average about three a week. But whenever they come there is always a ball, and in the city of Tehuantepec the people dance in the market house.

The benches are taken out, the pillars are decorated with mirrors and fancy calicoes, the women put on their brightest costumes and their chains of golden coins and dance barefooted upon the stone floor. The men wear leather sandals.—Washington Star.

Senator Wolcott's Wit.

The late Senator Wolcott, of Colorado, who was an ardent Republican campaigner, was delivering a stump speech in a red-hot Democratic community of the South. He had a large audience, the white people occupying the "pit" and the negroes the gallery. During his speech he became a little too ardent to suit his Democratic hearers and after making an unusually telling point for the Republican side, one Southern listener gave out an impulsive "Rats!" Wolcott stopped short and quietly surveyed the sea of colored faces in the gallery as though looking for aid. Finally he singled out one, and beckoning with his finger he said: "Will the waiter please come down and take the Chinaman's order?"

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