

THE FREE LANCE.

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PERKINS' ASSIGNMENT.

"Here, Perkins, look this up!" Perkins picked up the message his chief threw on the table and read: "White South American Chief in Chicago. Get story."

Such an assignment just suited Perkins. The more vague the clew the better. Without a word he set out; but a round of all the principal hotels failed to give him any trace.

"How am I to find this man among two million people?" he asked the chief when he returned.

"Oh, you'll get him somewhere," was the reply. "You might catch him at the Fair, though I'd like the stuff in time for to-morrow's issue."

"At the Fair!" gasped Perkins, "great scott, man! there were eight hundred thousand people there yesterday." A multitude of expletives mingled in the conversation, but with "the man has to be found! If you can't do it, who can?" ringing in his ears, Perkins set out.

To hunt for the man would be absurd, so Perkins took his station in the "Temple of Beauty" on the Midway, and waited. His only hope was to tackle every man he found talking with the South American beauties in a foreign language.

"What foolishness! I might have to stay here a week before he comes around. But no danger! The chief will have something 'very pressing' when I get back, and this piece of royalty will fall into some other reporter's clutches."

Perkins busied himself writing a paragraph about the place and making a sketch or two, but he had scarcely been waiting an hour when he saw a strikingly beautiful woman talking with the Chilean lady. With her was a tall, powerfully built man, and after a few more words the strange couple moved away.