sign outside," he'd faltered then; "if you could let me have a room."

"You have references?" Mrs. Tilney had demanded.

The little man shook his head. Mrs. Tilney was about to shut the door when abruptly he threw out both his hands. The gesture was as timid as a girl's.

"I am from the country," he appealed. "I've come a great ways. I am very tired."

Then he smiled up at her, and somehow, by the wan wistfulness of his look, the sharp, distrustful woman had been placated.

"Oh, well," she grumbled and, standing aside, she waved for him to enter.

It had taken Mrs. Tilney weeks, not to say months, to grasp the real nature of her queer, retiring guest. Summer went, the autumn drew on. A new flock of winter "steadies" replaced summer's birds of passage, and she wondered when he, too, would be gone. But Mr. Mapleson showed no disposition to depart. There were, in fact, signs that he meant to remain indefinitely. At any rate, on entering his room one morning Mrs. Tilney found upon the wall three cheap little color prints, each neatly framed in fumed oak. Also in a cigar box and tomato can on the window sill Mr. Mapleson had laid out for himself the beginnings of a window garden. A geranium and a Chinese bulb comprised the horticultural display.

However, it was not until Thanksgiving Day, some weeks later, that Mrs. Tilney's suspicions of her guest were effectively set at rest. The circumstance arose over the departure, somewhat abrupt, of one of the other boarders, a Mr. Agramonte. The gentleman, the manager of a vaudeville booking agency, having let his board bill run three weeks, decamped abruptly in the middle of the night. This was the day before Thanksgiving. At noon then of the fête day in question Mr. Mapleson appeared suddenly at Mrs. Tilney's kitchen door. In his arms he bore a small potted plant. The plant was in full bloom and Mr. Mapleson was beaming shyly.

"I have brought you a flower," he said.

"Me?" had gasped Mrs. Tilney.

"Yes, it's a begonia," Mr. Mapleson was saying, when to his wonder, his alarm as well, Mrs. Tilney emitted a laugh, or rather it was a croak, then burst abruptly into tears, the first in years.

Never, never before, as she protested, had one of her boarders shown her such consideration. At the thought Mrs. Tilney wept anew.

However, to proceed: It was exactly one month after this that Barbara Wynne, the ward of Mrs. Tilney, had come there to the boarding house. The day, like the day of Mr. Mapleson's advent, was one to be remembered. A raw wind from the eastward had risen with the morning, and well on in the afternoon rain began. Presently, as if to show what a December storm really can do in New York, it settled itself into a soaking downpour—a flood that changed before long to cutting sleet, then to wet snow.

Toward night Mrs. Tilney's upstairs girl entered the kitchen where Mrs. Tilney waged diurnal warfare with her cook.

"There's a lady in the parlor, mum," she announced.

The term was too often vulgarly misused in Mrs. Tilney's cosmos to excite anticipation.

"A lady? How do you know?" demanded Mrs. Tilney.

"Sure, mum," replied the girl with convincing frankness, "she do look different f'm yer boarders!"

It proved, moreover, to be the truth. Upstairs in the parlor Mrs. Tilney found a slender, wan-faced woman, to whose dripping skirts clung an equally rain-soaked child; and that they were persons of distinction not even their appearance could dispute. The visitor's voice, when she spoke, was low. It rang like the undertone of a bell.

"I am looking for rooms—a room," she corrected.

A shudder accompanied the words, and with a gesture of uncontrollable languor she held her hands to the coals glowing on the hearth.

The landlady debated. Transients of this sort were as little to her liking as they were rare. However, after some misgivings she showed her visitor the one vacancy. It was a top-floor bedroom just down the hall from Mr. Mapleson's. Board included, the rent would be sixteen dollars.

"Thanks," said the visitor. "I'll have my trunk sent in at once."

Her tone Mrs. Tilney had thought hasty, overeager. Before the landlady, however, could utter that shibboleth of her calling, "You have references?" the child spoke. Clinging to her mother's skirts, she had been staring at Mrs. Tilney. "Babbie Wynne's hungry," she said.

With a start and a swift contraction of her mouth the mother leaned down to her.

"Hush! Yes, dear, in just a little while now!"

Mrs. Tilney did not ask to have her pay in advance. A certitude, subconscious but still confident, told her the visitor hadn't it. And to turn that woman and her child outdoors on a night like this needed more courage than Mrs. Tilney had.

"Can we stay, mother?" asked the child earnestly.

There Mrs. Tilney had grimly interposed.

"You're married, ain't you?" she demanded with a directness as designed as it was blunt.

A startled look leaped into the visitor's eyes. Then with a quiet dignity she slipped off her glove, displaying on her finger a narrow gold band.

"I am a widow," she said.

Mrs. Tilney had asked no more.

"While you get your trunk," she directed, "you leave that child with me. To-night's no night for her to be traipsing the street! I'll see she has her supper too. What's she eat?" (Continued on Page 28)

COMMUTATION: $9.17

By Sinclair Lewis

ILLUSTRATED BY W. B. KING

MR. WHITTIER J. SMALL wasn't popular, either at Crosshampton Harbor, where he haughtily had a restricted suburban residence, or at Woodley & Duncan's, where he was office manager. Yet neither was he disagreeable enough to be notorious. Wait! That wasn't his fault; he was as mean-minded as he knew how to be; but he hadn't much imagination. He was able to annoy his neighbors and the office force only by the ordinary old-fashioned methods which everyone knows and doesn't mind.

He did all he could. He would talk about efficiency to a five-dollar-a-week addressing girl; and in the mind of Mr. Small efficiency had nothing to do with increasing profits or saving time. It meant making clerks unhappy. He crawked at the girls whenever they stopped to take a drink of water and interrupted the work they should have loved so well, such as copying a form letter six hundred times or hunting hours for a letter that was on Mr. Small's desk all the while. He had the generous habit of discovering at four-fifty-five almost every day that there was some work which simply had to be done that evening—if it was quite convenient could Miss Rosenbaum stay and finish it?

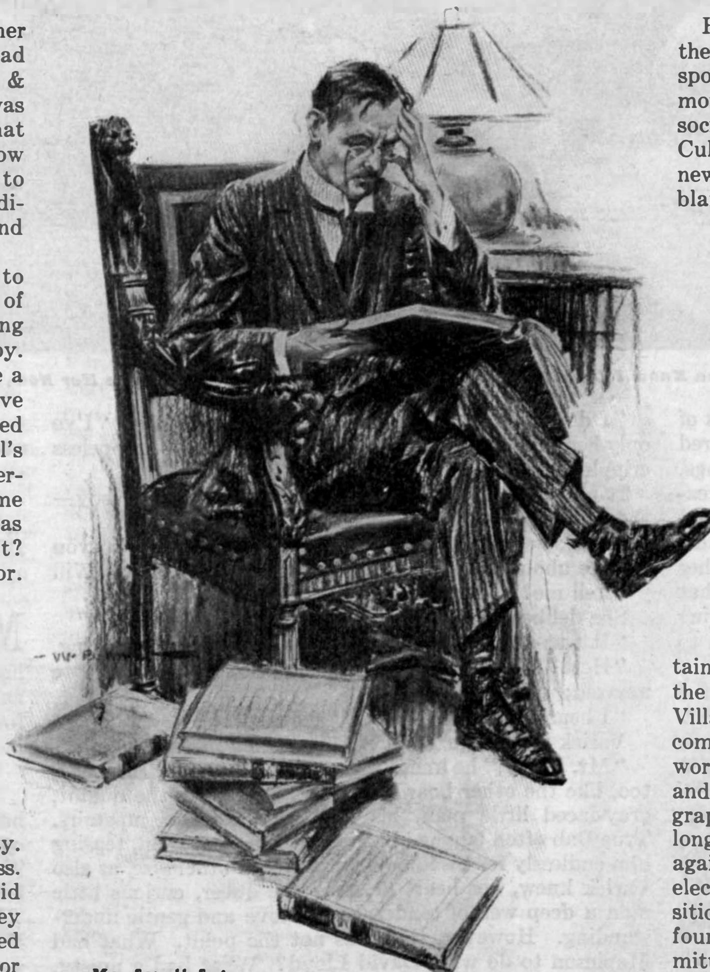
He also did his modest best at Crosshampton Harbor. He kept a guinea hen that gave an imitation of a sawmill at three, five and six-thirty A. M. daily. But the poor man never became famous as a professional irritator until that glorious combat of which the suburbs still speak on stormy nights, when families gather round the hot-air register and father tells his real opinion of the neighbors.

The curious thing about Mr. Whittier J. Small—if it was the poet Whittier his parents meant when they christened him, then they must have been thinking of Snow-Bound—was that he had a passion for popularity. He didn't know that he was mean. He resented meanness. He spoke as feelingly of other people's howling dogs as did they of his guinea hen. Or, take his office girls: Why did they try to put things over on his trusting kindness? He thirsted for local fame. He wanted to be asked to join the Harbor Yacht Club. He wanted people to call him up in the evening and invite him to come over for a game of five hundred. His life was one of rectitude and baths. He read the proper newspaper and wore the proper clothes. He spoke harshly of sports shirts and hats with puggrees; he never offended people by such eccentricities. He wore pyjamas and smoked ten-cent cigars, and hated office boys who snapped their fingers. He was a normal and solid citizen.

Yet Crosshampton Harbor was far less interested in him than in the iceman, who, if courted and flattered and asked about his offspring's educational progress, could sometimes be persuaded to bring the ice before the meat spoiled.

If you have ever come into the city on the seven-fifty-four you have undoubtedly seen Mr. Small—only you probably did not notice him. He was neither meek and meeching nor tall and pompous. He was neither young nor old, bearded nor clean-shaved. Even other commuters remarked that he looked like a commuter. Everyone who was introduced to him said confusedly: "I think we've met before." He wore clothes—oh, clothes of a gray that was rather brown, and he had a mustache—you could never remember whether it was brown or black, or colored like hairbrush bristles. His face was medium looking. He was medium sized. He was medium.

Except in meanness. Whittier J. Small had potentialities of meanness that had never been discovered.



Mr. Small Sat in an Easy-Chair and Acquired Culture by the Page

He had recently moved away from Cosmos Villas because the benighted people paid no attention to him. They had spoken to him pleasantly, and even borrowed his lawn mower, at Cosmos Villas; but he had never met with any social recognition except election to the Matthew Arnold Culture Circle at a time when the circle had to get some new members or go under. For this lack of recognition he blamed Mrs. Small—a worthy woman who was always to be found in the parlor, gently sighing and knitting something that never got beyond the stage of resembling an earmuff. But mostly he blamed Cosmos Villas itself, and after five years he decided to move to Crosshampton Harbor.

Mr. Small started out brilliantly in Crosshampton Harbor—or the Harbor, as its inhabitants called it in their jolly fashion. Mr. Litchfeld, the real-estate man who leased him a house, was such a breezy, lovable chap. He assured Mr. Small that the Harbor needed just such a substantial citizen and would make him welcome to their neighborly social life; so Mr. Small applied for membership in the Harbor Yacht Club. The membership committee once invited him to a club smoker and once called on him. He gave them cigars and homemade root beer that he guaranteed equal to vintage champagne for exhilaration and cod-liver oil for benefit. He entertained them in the sunniest manner with stories about the unfriendliness of his former neighbors in Cosmos Villas, and the cleverness of his two children, and the incompetence of his wife, and the inefficiency of the girls who worked under him and the chief who worked over him, and the complete undesirability of a mysterious phonograph that disturbed his slumber—the phonograph belonged to one of the committee. He pressed them to call again, and spent several days in expecting not only to be elected to the club but to run for commodore on an opposition ticket. He rehearsed an inauguration speech. After four weeks he received a courteous note from the committee informing him that the club membership list was full for the year and that they must regretfully request him to go to the devil!

Mr. Small was not hurt. He spoke of plots. There were those on the membership committee, he said, who were afraid to admit a man who would be so formidable a rival in club politics. He said it a great many times to his wife, who listened patiently and replied, "Yes, Whittier; that's so!" in a voice like that of a toy terrier with influenza.

Then it was that Mr. Small remembered with wistful unhappiness the evenings he had spent at the Cosmos Villas Matthew Arnold Culture Circle, getting all sorts of thrilling encyclopedia information about Java and fish glue, and carburetors and Henry VIII, and Felicia Hemans and the technic of writing essays. He decided to show his

lavish public spirit and start in this pitiable Crosshampton Harbor another Matthew Arnold Culture Circle.

On the street he met Mr. Litchfeld, the real-estate man, who promised to herd his acquaintances to Mr. Small's the coming Thursday for the formation of a Culture Circle.

An amazing epidemic of assorted ills struck Crosshampton Harbor that week. Some Harborites had colds and some had headaches, and some were just sick; so only six people gathered at Mr. Small's residence on Thursday evening. Mr. Small's residence wasn't really a residence. It was simply a house; about as houselike a house as ever was first carpentered and then architected. It had a low turret and a couple of bay windows precariously pasted on one side. It was made of shingles and clapboards and rubblestone and scrollwork in patterns like the lace paper in a candy box. Even the chimneys had little tin inverted pants. The exterior hinted of furnace heat and semi-hardwood floors and one servant. A swing couch, a perambulator and a doormat, strangely lettered EMOCLEW, bedecked the porch.

In the parlor Mr. Small frequently sat in a red-plush easy-chair with dragon-carved arms and acquired culture by the page. Most of the culture he dug from a set of books two feet and seven inches in combined width, containing nine books of selections from Persian poetry, three books of Greek orations, one of Early Victorian geology, and one of the history of Spanish literature. There were fifty-six hundred and thirty-two pages in the set; and by reading—as he incredibly did—two pages every evening, Mr. Small would be a gentleman of learning in seven years and two hundred and sixty-one days.

In this refined abode, facing the determined volumes, the six applicants for wisdom gathered. There were Mr. Litchfeld, his wife, his daughter with the repressed teeth, his stenographer, and two unclaimed ladies with riprapped false fronts. Mrs. Small deprecatingly joined them.

Mr. Small stood before them—that's all he did at first—just stood before them like a district attorney, or Billy Sunday, or General Joffre reviewing troops. When he had awed them to such perfect silence that they wanted to yelp and run, he began:

"To show you how interesting and valuable Mrs. Small and I found the Matthew Arnold Culture Circle at Cosmos Villas, I will read you a paper on the Humor of Mark Twain which I read at the circle. I trust you will find it worth some serious attention."

It was obvious that he hoped no one would take his composition on humor lightly. They didn't. He paused to permit them to express pleased gratification, which they did not express, and announced:

"Now we will proceed to the adoption of a constitution and a program, and finally to the election of officers. The following is the constitution."

He had the constitution already made out. Possibly the Harbor never realized it, but he was a wonder at constitutions. He could easily have created a Mexican constitution that would have united all parties; though what the parties would have done to him after they had united the historian does not presume to know. When he was but a studious lad of eighteen he had drafted the whole of the constitution for the Young Men's Friendly Society of Ogden Center.

The Culture Circle constitution provided for every contingency and invented a number of new contingencies for which to provide.

No member of the circle was to have a single evening free for anything but culture. When they weren't preparing papers they would be reading up for debates or watching the Trend of Affairs as revealed in Current Events, which last seemed to be a study of the tariff schedules on phosphates plus chess news and a close examination of the census returns from Peru. The constitution sounded like Mr. Small's office rules.

The program was still more definitive. There were to be sixteen meetings for the remainder of the year: three evenings were to be devoted to Persian poetry, two to Greek orations, one to geology, one to the history of Spanish literature, and the rest to short-story writing, movie-scenario writing, American industries, and a grand finale with an amateur play by the least intelligible Swedish dramatist who could be discovered.

Mr. Small astounded them by promising to let them try to elect officers all by themselves. Incredulously, as though he might withdraw the privilege at any moment, they distributed ballots to one another while Mr. Small sat in a corner and looked pleased with himself.

"No; I Won't Show My Ticket! Go On! Put Me Off! I Dare You To!"

As president of the C. H. M. A. C. C. he would be a prominent figure in the most select sets of the Harbor. Dear old Harbor! Here, at last, they did appreciate him as the middle-class lowbrows of Cosmos Villas had never done. . . . The real-estate man's stenographer was whispering violently to the others—except Mrs. Small. In response they grinned and filled out their ballots.

Mr. Small collected the ragged slips that were to elevate him to fame. For an instant he held them in his fat white hand—a hand like veal—and beamed on the friends and neighbors who were forcing this honor on him. Then he counted the vote. His smile skidded and turned turtle. Hastily:

"Eight present and voting. For president—Mr. Litchfeld, six; Mr. Small, two. Vice president—Mrs. Litchfeld, six; Mr. Litchfeld, two. Secretary and treasurer—Miss Zenia Litchfeld, eight votes—unanimous. Constitution and program adopted unanimously."

Mr. Small stopped. Triumph overspread his face.

"We shall, therefore, meet here each Thursday evening and carry on the program as arranged. Miss Litchfeld, you will please read us a paper on Omar Khayyam a week from to-night, and Mr. Litchfeld will give us the week's Current Events. Motion t' 'journ 'n order."

He glared at the real-estate man. He was challenging Mr. Litchfeld to reverse this order, whether or not he had by some election fraud obtained the presidency. Mr. Small resembled a motion picture of the Honest Young Reformer Defying the Boss. Evidently he impressed Mr. Litchfeld, who rose and said:

"Move t' 'journ. . . . We've had a vurry, vurry pleasan' evenin', Brother Small. Come, my dear; we must be going."

Mr. Litchfeld stopped to give Mr. Small a chance to surprise them with refreshments, as one who from afar scents the chocolate wafers; but Mr. Small had no desire to surprise them, either with refreshments or with anything else. Refreshments were all very well, but they didn't bring him any four per cent in the savings bank. Besides, what had he got out of it the time he'd simply crammed the Harbor Club membership committee with the choicest of refreshments? No, no! This evening, he had decided, should be devoted to culture, pure and unrefreshed.

So he said nothing but "S' sorry y'ave go"; while Mrs. Small echoed, "Sorry y'ave go!" And Mr. Litchfeld and Mrs. Litchfeld and Miss Zenia Litchfeld and Mr. Litchfeld's stenographer and Mr. Litchfeld's two maiden-lady neighbors chorused: "Sush pleasan' even'!" and filed abjectly into the entrance hall.

After all, Mr. Small grimly decided, as he lay awake and worried—while Mrs. Small made indelicate sounds of slumber—he had shown that fool Litchfeld just who was really running the Culture Circle; and when Mr. Litchfeld resigned we'd see what we'd see! Then, as President Small of the C. H. M. A. C. C. at last, he would come into his rightful rank.

The two maiden ladies separately telephoned their tearful but resolute regrets at being unable to attend the next meeting of the Culture Circle; but Mr. Litchfeld's flock didn't take so much trouble—they merely did not come. There were no more meetings of the circle.

Mr. Whittier J. Small sank into a social position in the Harbor which resembled that of a highly respected caterpillar in an extensive forest. He could not understand it. He blamed the girls at his office for having worried their good, kind manager. He blamed Mrs. Small for not having cultivated the right people. He blamed Mr. Litchfeld for not having introduced him to the right people. He blamed the right people for being right. But he never blamed Mr. Whittier J. Small.

He sat whole evenings through, paying no attention to his wife's jerky efforts to entertain him and trying to ascertain why the Harbor did not value a man of his caliber. He gave it up.

He was left with but one acquaintance in the Harbor—Mr. Percy Weather, a neighbor who was also a social error, and who gratefully shared Mr. Small's seat in the smoker of the commuters' train and listened to his discourses on politics, baseball, shoes, the disgraceful way in which modern parents bring up their children, and Mrs. Small's incurable vice of not always having dinner at seven P. M. on the dot. Mr. Weather was not, like Mr. Small, a man you thought you had met before. He was a man you could never remember having met.

Mr. Small and he became as companionable as a sophomore and a pipe. To everybody he met Mr. Small defiantly piped:

"Percy Weather is a fine fellow, sir—a fine fellow! It's a pity this fool town hasn't got enough sense to appreciate a fine, quiet, sensible fellow like him, when some fellows —— Now take that fellow Litchfeld—he's always blowing his own horn. Percy Weather isn't that kind, let me tell you! . . ." Though to Mrs. Small he sometimes remarked that, while Weather wasn't a bad sort, it was a pity the man didn't have a little backbone. He, Whittier J. Small, would never have climbed to office managership if he hadn't ever shown any more gumption than Percy Weather.

"Yes, Whittier, that's so!" said Mrs. Small in a manner which betrayed the fact that she was thinking of the maid's indecent treatment of the white sauce.

Then —— At a time when peace and social inactivity seemed to brood on the land, the world turned upside down, to the enormous astonishment of any number of people.

Splendid was the beginning of the Great Commutation Ticket Row! It flashed into full-armed magnificence. The railroad changed the seven-fifty-four from an express to a local. To Crosshampton Harbor, whose whole religion and philosophy were the seven-fifty-four, the heavens were darkened. Committees of Crosshampton Harborites and overdressed contingents from Crosshampton Gardens and East Northwest went to protest to the general manager, the general traffic manager, the general passenger agent, the division superintendent, the auditor, the auditor's office boy, the gateman at the city station, the bootblack-stand proprietor, and Mike Kolowski, who swept the city station steps—all of whom assured the committees that they would see what could be done—and then did not do it.

The seven minutes' increase in the trip was not the only grievance. Now that the train stopped at several stations

between Westborough Junction and the city, the passengers had to show their commutations twice—once when the tickets were punched and once between the junction and the city. The tumult and the shouting rose. What! Dared the railroad demand that twice on one trip they reach into their waistcoat pockets and hoist the weighty tickets a full inch in air?

The task would take them ten seconds at least. So the commuters spent ten minutes daily for each man in arguing with the conductor. The favorite termination of the argument was to shout:

"No; I won't show my ticket! And, what's more, you can't put me off the train neither. Go ahead; try it—try to put me off! Maybe you think I won't sue the railroad!"

Meantime everybody knew perfectly well that the conductors had no power to put them off; and day after day the more valiant souls, the free and adventurous spirits who played tennis at the Harbor Club, defied the trainmen.

The conductor on the seven-fifty-four who collected the tickets in the forward two cars was old Barton, twenty-three years in the service, large and kindly, with the diplomacy of a fashionable physician and the memory of a club hallman and a mustache like a white-fox muff. He never lost his temper; he discussed the question patiently; and he spent in peaceful gardening the five-day lay-offs the office was known to impose on him when he did not insist that the passengers reëxhibit their tickets. Conductor Barton was accustomed to simultaneous abuse by passengers who believed he owned and mismanaged the railroad, and superintendents who believed he owned and mismanaged the passengers.

Like the other Harborites, Whittier J. Small was accustomed to cheating the railroad when he could. He rather enjoyed slipping his commutation ticket to Percy Weather when Percy had left his own at home in that other suit; and he expected return courtesies. Therefore, he felt a peculiarly sacred wrath at the railroad and was granted his inspiration.

The morning of the inspiration seemed outwardly like any other morning. Mr. Small had finished his paper, including the obituaries and personal ads, and was conversing agreeably with Mr. Weather, Mr. Small himself doing most of the talking part of the conversing. Said he:

"Well, sir—funny thing this morning! I always take just one cuppa coffee—say, Weather, have you tried this new brand they're advertising in the cars?—but somehow this morning I said to my wife: 'Emma,' I said, 'it's funny but I feel just like taking another cuppa coffee this morning,' I said; and she said to me: 'Why,' she said, 'you don't ever take but one!' You know it takes a woman to not understand a business man; she can't understand that if he's going to go on slaving and wearing himself out providing luxuries for her he's gotta have what he wants when he wants it. And then, here's these old hens—they wouldn't do it if they were married—all running round and wanting the vote! Let me tell you there wouldn't be any of all this industrial unrest and wars and things if it wasn't for all this suffrage and them destructive theories. A woman's place is in t' home, and she ought to stay there and look out for my comfort; and when I want another cuppa coffee she ought to have another cuppa coffee ready for me.

"Yes, sir; it was funny! I just felt like I wanted another cuppa coffee and I told her so; and, you know, before she could get it for me—she hasn't no—more—sense of managing a kitchen, just like all the rest of these women; if I ran my office that way Lord knows what'd happen!—and before I could get just one more cuppa coffee it was seven-fifty! And you know I always allow four minutes to catch my train from the front gate, and maybe even from the big box elder—you know the one—right in front of the next place to mine, and I had to hurry so that —— Oh, say, speaking of the place next to mine, will you kindly tell me one single, solitary reason why that confounded snobbish bunch down there at the Harbor Club should try and keep my boy off their beach when——"

"No, sir; I won't show my ticket!"

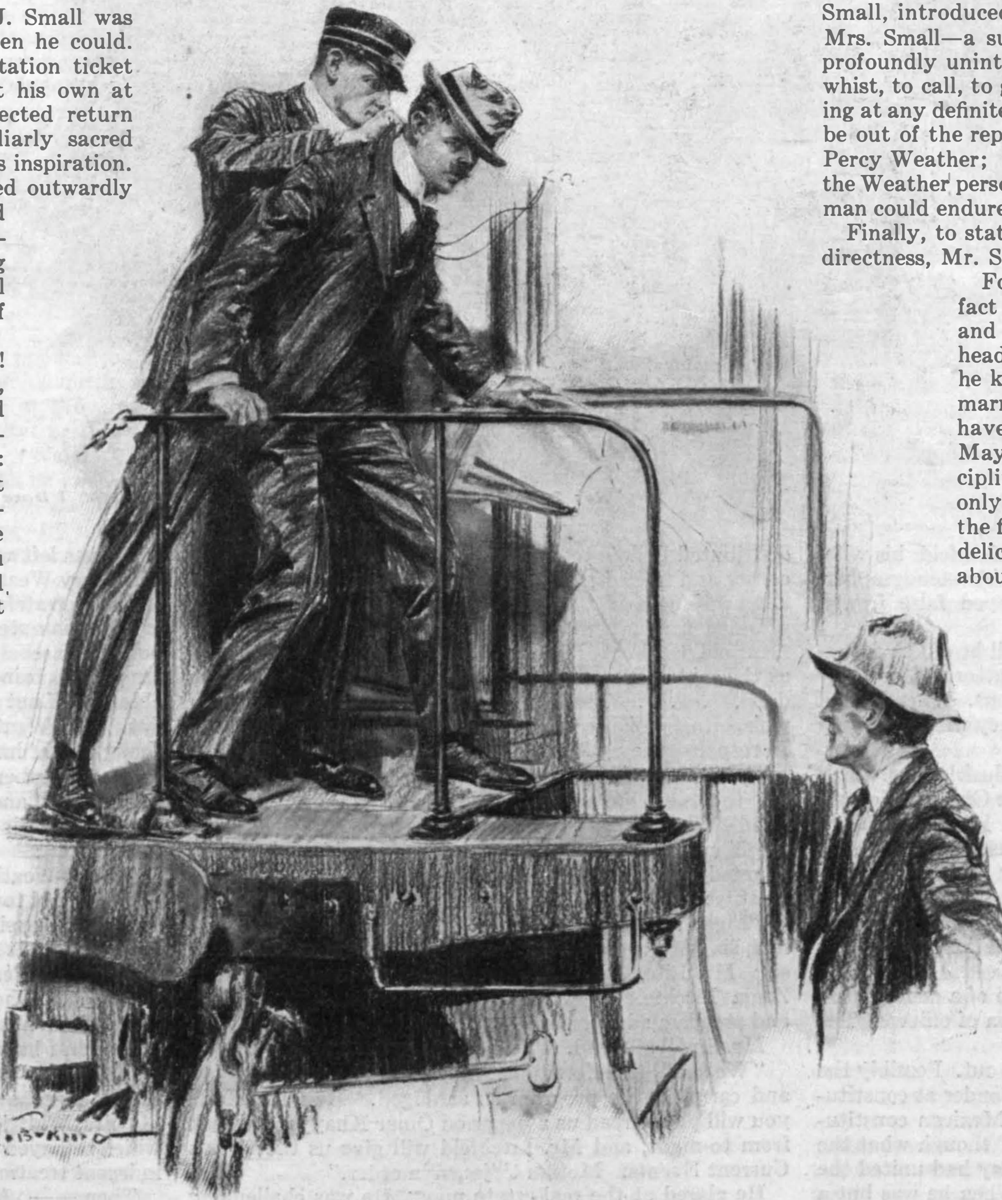
The voice came from the seat across from them. It was the mighty commodore of the Harbor Yacht Club speaking, and beside him sat the equally mighty vice president of the Crosshampton Club, who knew personally a man that had once played McLoughlin. They were defying Conductor Barton; they wouldn't show their tickets a second time—no, not if they were hanged, drawn, quartered, eighthed and put off the train! The conductor sighed and passed on to Mr. Small and Mr. Weather.

Then exploded the inspiration that was to make of Mr. Whittier J. Small a man not like other men, but one to sit in high places and converse with the great. He turned his head slowly from Mr. Weather and to the conductor he shouted in a heroic voice:

"No; I won't show my ticket! Go on! Put me off! I dare you to! I guess you fellows just want to see how much the passengers will stand and now you're finding out."

His voice carried through the car and he had invented a new argument. He had the tremorous joy of hearing three men echo: "Guess you fellows want to see how much the passengers will stand!" Percy Weather was beginning to congratulate him in that stammering bleat which now, for the first time, irritated Mr. Small. Mr. Small paid no attention to Percy. He swung round and boldly entered into discourse with the man in the seat behind him. He was aware that the man behind him was none other than Cornelius Berry, of the ancient Berry family, a man so accepted by smart society that he had once spent a week-end at Narragansett Pier—where the tide rises only seventeen minutes later than at Newport. Mr. Small had fondly dreamed of a day when he should know Mr. Berry; when Mr. Berry should address him on the station platform, "Good morning, Mr. Small!"—like that, politely. Here he was, talking to him, a comrade in resistance to oppression.

Heretofore a railroad had been to Mr. Small an insignificant means of getting to the office in time to catch that



"Here, Billy, Pinch This Guy for Disturbing the Peace!"

cheeky young man, the salesclerk, coming in late. Now he studied affectionately every detail of travel, from the air brakes to the bobbing heads as the crowd surged upstairs in the city station.

He was at the Harbor station early next morning, and as the train came in he leaped aboard and got a seat as far forward as possible in the first smoking car. From that strategic position he defied Conductor Barton even more loudly than on the preceding morning and unmasked the phrases on which he had been working for an hour:

"You know perfectly well you can't do anything. Say, what do you think you are? Do you think we want to argue with you clear into the city? Maybe you think we haven't any papers to read! Now get it over quick!"

All down the car echoes rose: "Think you're paid to argue with the passengers?" "Get 't over quick!"

This morning it was Cornelius Berry, young Squire Berry, who first addressed Mr. Small as they debouched on the platform at the city station. He commended Mr. Small on his stand for righteousness and civic purity. With Mr. Berry was the commodore, smiling in the best manner of the Harbor Club.

"Makes me tired to have those scoundrels take up a business man's time," said Mr. Small. "I suppose that conductor thinks I haven't got a paper. I don't want to be hard on him, Mr. Berry, but let me tell you if I was a conductor I'd be a little respectful to my betters. But I suppose it turns his head to associate with us."

"Indeed you're right, Mr. Small. Hope shall see 'gain soon. *Good* morning, Mr. Small!"

"Good *morning*, Mr. Small!" said the commodore—both in the heartiest manner.

It was of this that Mr. Small had dreamed—prophetically. This was the polished sort of social amenity for which he could never depend on his jellyfish of a wife. He, Mr. Small, had to look out for it as he did for everything else. He felt so victorious that he rebuked the salesclerk with extra piousness that morning, and gave him advice about How a Young Man Should Succeed. The salesclerk was a stubborn young man and, as usual, he answered impudently; but Mr. Small, the friend of Cornelius Berry, treated him with contempt.

From that morning the social gates were open for our hero. Daily he led his faithful, fearless band of thirty or forty in defying Conductor Barton—who never answered back and thus proved that Mr. Small had roused him to some sense of shame. All sorts of people spoke to Mr. Small, introduced themselves, asked after the health of Mrs. Small—a subject in which they had hitherto been profoundly uninterested—invited the Smalls to sit in at whist, to call, to go motoring—not, perhaps, to go motoring at any definite time, but just as soon as the car should be out of the repair shop. He no longer had to sit with Percy Weather; which was as well, for he perceived that the Weather person was of a flabby dullness that no gentleman could endure.

Finally, to state an epochal fact with plain and honest directness, Mr. Small was elected to the Harbor Club.

For almost a week he was so proud of the fact that three of the girls in his office resigned and the salesclerk threatened to punch his head; at which Mr. Small merely smiled, for he knew that the salesclerk was going to be married, come Fourth of July, and then he'd have the young upstart where he wanted him. Maybe he'd not be so flippant about office discipline once he had a wife to support! It was only with the chief himself, Mr. Woodley, of the firm, that Mr. Small spoke in a little and delicate voice. To his wife he discoursed about social conventions from six-forty-nine to eleven-twenty-three without a break one evening.

Yet by the end of the week Mr. Small was dissatisfied. He began to realize that a man of his personality was buried in the second-rate grubbiness of the Harbor Club. He ought to belong to the Crosshampton Club, where there were golf links and a bar—where a gentleman could meet the right set. His time was valuable; he was not one to waste it with the wrong set. As well foozle it with—oh, for example, with that rim of a zero called Percy Weather.

The sets in Crosshampton Harbor are of a subtlety. There is the Harbor Club set, consisting of an undertaker who wears suspenders, a fuzzy-faced lawyer, the real-estate person named Litchfeld, the chief plumber in town, and a collection of easy-going commuters and town merchants who play five hundred until midnight every Saturday and attend the smaller wooden churches on Sunday. In the Crosshampton Club there are two sets, distinct but both good—the set that attends the stone church, and the set that never attends church but spends every Sunday morning in recovering from a swell Saturday evening dance. There is a town-merchant set that does not belong to clubs, and a social-uplift set, and a literary set, and the Old Inhabitant set whose families date back to 1700, long since which date, apparently, most of our families have been self-generated.

Now that he belonged to the Harbor Club, Mr. Small had an opportunity to study the real social structure of the town. He saw clearly that his was a nature too fine for any but the stone-church and Old Inhabitant sets. He redoubled his efforts at dismaying Conductor Barton. He spoke to the conductor with what he believed to be the manner of an old English squire—and in the next car

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RETIRING FROM FAIRVIEW

IF A STRANGER should come into the Fairview neighborhood inquiring for the most eminent mossback in the countryside, I suppose that Abner Dunham would be pointed out to him. I am Abner Dunham. None of the neighbors would call me a mossback to my face, but the pointing out would be done all the same. My old neighbor, John Ackerman, for instance, would drive out to the farm, and presenting the stranger to me would say: "Abner, here's a gentleman from Chicago who wants to meet you."

I don't consider myself a mossback. My motto is:

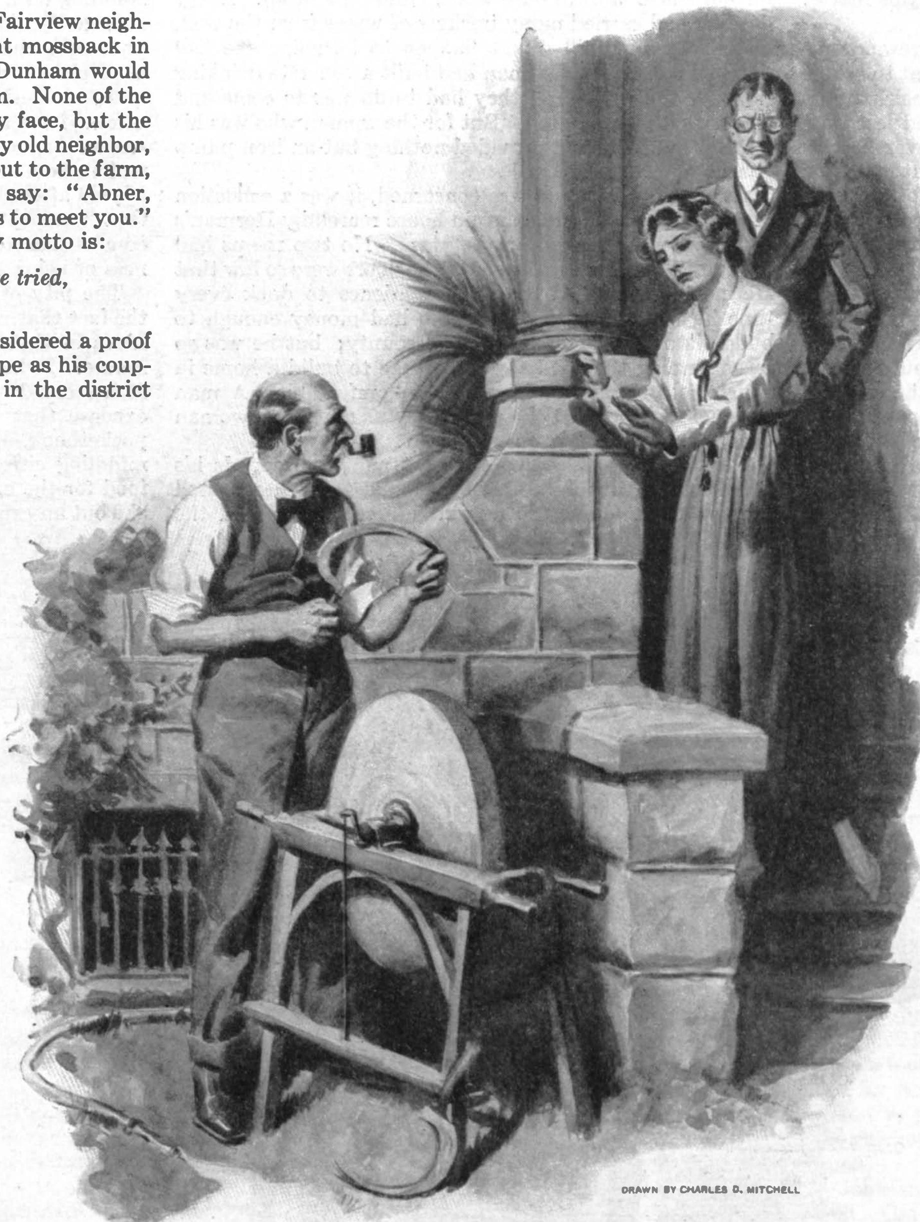
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

And I recognize the fact that it may be considered a proof of mossbackism that I quote Alexander Pope as his couplets appeared in the old reader I studied in the district school—and from memory. And yet it is a good motto. I was not the first, by any means, to try that new mode of locomotion, the automobile; neither the last to cast aside the horse and buggy. And yet it was that very automobile episode that fastened on me the copper-riveted title of the neighborhood mossback.

It was this way: I waited several years, so that others might invest in the experimental cars of the era of trying things out, and then I bought a good car. I waited until I had sold a consignment of three carloads of fat steers and had the cash, and then I took the car home with me. I suppose if I had mortgaged the farm, or gone without a silo, or put off the building of the big barn for the sake of the car, I should have won the name of being an up-to-date feller; but I didn't. I bought the car for cash, and I soon began to like running it; but after a man has been driving horses, and good horses, too, for thirty years every day of his life, he has acquired certain nervous reflexes which go with scooting through the country, and with me one of those reflexes was the use of the whip. I didn't feel as if I were driving unless I had a whip within reach. It marred the enjoyment I was entitled to from a pretty heavy investment, and so I had a whip socket put on the dash of the car and carried a whip in it.

I was the butt of a good deal of good-natured fun, and my family objected to the whip. When our picture appeared in a Chicago paper in the big touring car with a whip in the socket, at about the time my youngest son came home from the agricultural college, the whip was taken off the equipage. I had got so I could get along without it pretty comfortably anyhow. People didn't understand why I did it; but my reason for the whip was a good one, quite personal to myself. In proving me to be a mossback, however, that whip affair is always the first bit of evidence introduced, marked Exhibit A and made a part of the record. I don't care.

Exhibit B is the fact that, though I have a section of good land and plenty of money with which I could build a home in the county seat and live on my rent and interest, I still refuse to retire from the farm and the Fairview neighborhood. I have good reasons for that eccentric course too.



The Hiss of That Stone Was Music to John's Ears, But It Had No Charm for His Oldest Daughter

Pioneer Days on the Prairie

JOHN ACKERMAN'S father and mine drove into the country together in 1857, and John and I were boys together. Herman Lutz's father was a Hanoverian immigrant who arrived with Herman and the rest of the Lutzes—so far as they had arrived on the scene—a few years later. Herman wore wooden shoes to school, and once John and I, finding that we couldn't lick Herman, outran him. Whereupon he threw his wooden shoes at us. We put stones in them and sunk them in the swimming hole at the bend of the little brook which ran so clear and pure through the prairie grass then, and is such an uninteresting ditch with mud banks now, with black corn ground on both sides. So, you see, we knew each other pretty well. And Frank and Bill Raymond and Al McAllister moved in; and then quite suddenly, as it seems in looking back at it, the rest of the neighborhood filled in with the development of the country, until we could no longer drive kittering-ways across the prairie to town, but had to follow the section lines to keep off the crops, first a part of the way and finally all the time. That marked the period when the country was "settled up."

Nobody in those days had any thought of going to town to live and becoming "retired farmers." We expected to be farmers all our lives. That's what we had come West for. We could have moved to town back East.

And now that the Fairview neighborhood has been so radically changed by the process of the best and most substantial families in it ceasing to be farmers and becoming "retired" farmers, I think it may be worth your while to look over the whole case and see whether I am right, or John Ackerman and Herman Lutz's folks—and the McAllisters and the Raymonds, and the Smiths, Browns, Joneses and Robinsons of Pleasant Valley District, and Lincoln Center and Pious Ridge, and all the other rural communities of which I have any knowledge.

We all worked hard before we got above farming, and were proud of how much we could do. I guess it's always that way in a new country—the very newness of it seems to put energy into people. It may be it's because only the strongest and most venturesome are willing to be pioneers, but I believe that when any man gets up against raw nature, out where he can make nobody hear when he calls for help, he's going to show the best there is in him—or the worst—and will probably find a good deal in himself of one kind or another that he didn't know was there. And I don't believe it brought out the worst as a rule. I am of a generation skilled

To pitch new states as Old-World men pitch tents.

They have turned out in my time to be good states, full of the spirit which will one of these days make of all this nation a greater New England—full of her mentality without her narrowness, and gifted with the Southern talent for graciousness and gallantry, and the breadth of mind and freedom from political and economic superstitions of the frontier.

We boys stayed on the newly established farms as a matter of course. We had always expected to do so. Somehow cities didn't attract country boys then as they do now. Perhaps it was because they were farther away, or harder to reach, or our disposition to drift had not yet been developed.

We even had our farm songs, in which the beauties of farm life were tunefully set forth. I remember one, of which our girls used to sing the refrain, which ran: "So a farmer's wife I'll be, I'll be, I'll be!" And another in which it was declared: "One of these country lasses is worth a score of your city girls." And I'll state this right here: we shall never again have a healthy rural life until we have back again the feeling that it is the best life, and that the farm people are the best people. I wish we could have that feeling back again, and the crude, rude old songs, instead of I Want You, My Baby, I Do! or Stay Down Where You Belong. I want people to stay up where they belong instead. But then, as I have said, I am the classic mossback of our county.

If the boys of those days went away anywhere it was farther West, where land was cheaper and opportunities seemed bigger. But for most of us the place that we had selected for a home seemed about as good as anything else and a good deal handier, and we acted accordingly.

How the Women Worked

HERMAN LUTZ, for instance, married young, as most of our German immigrants did, and for a number of years his wife worked with him in the field. While the children were young Herman hired a girl to take care of them, and Mrs. Lutz kept on doing a man's work. She said she'd rather do that than the housework, and, considering the home, I really can't blame her. Besides, if she had kept in the house they'd have had to hire a man, and hired girls were cheaper than hired men. When the children were big enough they took their mother's place in the field and she took the hired girl's place in the house. Nobody thought less of her for this field work—that is, nobody in her circle of friends. Among us Yankees the German habit of working women in the fields was the sure mark of the "Old Countryman." We didn't even allow our women to milk the cows. The McAllisters were Hoosiers, and among them the women "pailed" the cows as a matter of course. Old Ebenezer McAllister used to say that among the Injuns the women did all the work, among the Hoosiers it was equally divided, and among the Yankees the men did it all. Thus we were originally divided into racial and sectional groups in the Fairview settlement and were not yet knit into a people. Now we have all become one—Lutzes, McAllisters and Ackermans have become one people.

None of them milk cows any more or work in the field. The acres that once knew them know them no more except as rack-renting landlords. They have become Typical Americans, with the pavements instead of the furrows under their feet. And I think a part of this exodus of the farmers from the farms may be accounted for by Herman Lutz's domestic economy—for it certainly was economy, and in a way domestic. Herman certainly got more work done at less expense than any of his neighbors, but, as my wife used to say, his establishment was a factory, not a family. The daughter, who was third in the order of arrival, came nearer doing a man's work than any girl ought to. Herman used to say she was the only one who could drop corn straight enough so it could be plowed both ways when it came up. That was before people had begun to use the wire check-rower planters very much, and still laid off the ground with plank markers, and dropped the corn by pulling a lever as the horses pulled the planter across the marks. Kate could drop a field of corn as pretty as a checkerboard; but I guess Herman would have gladly plowed out every other hill in his fields if he'd known what a mistake he was making with his children. When I married my wife I told her that if the time should come when we couldn't make a living without her working in the field we'd starve together. We're both alive to-day, and I believe you'd call us pretty well fed. Neither of my girls ever worked in the field either. They've wanted to try it, but the idea never appealed to me. I believe in division of labor on the farm, and I'm just mossback enough to think that women's work is round the house.

My wife picked up that last sheet and read it. "Much you know about it," says she. "Many a day when I've