

The Initiation Ceremony

A New and Unwelcome Member Is Admitted to the In-or-Ins

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

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But George did. It is difficult to imagine how cause and effect could be more closely and patiently related. Inevitably, George did come poking around. How was he to refrain when daily, up and down the neighborhood, the brothers strutted with mystic and important airs, when they whispered together and uttered words of strange import in his presence? Thus did they defeat their own object. They desired to keep George at a distance, yet they could not refrain from posing before him. They wished to impress upon him the fact that he was an outsider, and they succeeded in rousing his desire to be an insider, a desire which soon became a determination. For few were the days until he not only knew of the shack but had actually paid it a visit. That was upon a morning when the other boys were in school, George having found himself indisposed until about ten o'clock, when he was able to take nourishment and subsequently to interest himself in this rather private errand. He climbed the Williams' alley fence, and having made a modest investigation of the exterior of the shack, which was padlocked, retired without having disturbed anything except his own peace of mind. His curiosity, merely piqued before, now became ravenous and painful. It was not allayed by the mystic manners of the members or by the unnecessary emphasis they laid upon their coldness toward himself; and when a committee informed him darkly that there were "secret orders" to prevent his coming within "a hundred and sixteen feet"—such was Penrod's arbitrary language—of the Williams' yard, "in any direction," George could bear it no longer, but entered his own house, and, in burning words, laid the case before a woman higher up. Here the responsibility for things is directly traceable to grown people. Within that hour, Mrs. Bassett sat in Mrs. Williams' library to address her hostess upon the subject of George's grievance.

"Of course, it isn't Sam's fault," she said, concluding her interpretation of the affair. "George likes Sam, and didn't blame him at all. No; we both felt that Sam would always be a polite, nice boy—George used those very words—but Penrod seems to have a very bad influence. George felt that Sam would want him to come and play in the shack if Penrod didn't make Sam do everything he wants. What hurt George most is that it's Sam's shack, and he felt for another boy to come and tell him that he mustn't even go near it—well, of course, it was very trying. And he's very much hurt with little Maurice Levy, too. He said that he was glad to have him for a member of their little club if it weren't for Maurice—and I think he spoke of Roddy Bitts, too."

The fact that the two remaining members were colored was omitted from this discourse—which leads to the deduction that George had not mentioned it.

"George said all the other boys liked him very much," Mrs. Bassett continued, "and that he felt it his duty to join the club, because most of them were so anxious to have him, and he is sure he would have a good influence over them. He really did speak of it in quite a touching way, Mrs. Williams. Of course, we mothers mustn't brag of our sons too much, but George really isn't like other boys. He is so sensitive, you can't think how this little affair has hurt him, and I felt that it might even make him ill. You see, I had to respect his reason for wanting to join the club. And if I am his mother—I must say that it seems noble to want to join not really for his own sake but for the good he felt his influence would have over the other boys. Don't you think so, Mrs. Williams?"

Mrs. Williams said that she did, indeed. And the result of this interview was another, which took place between Sam and his father that evening. For Mrs. Williams, after talking to Sam herself, felt that the matter needed a man to deal with it. The man did it man-fashion.

"You either invite George Bassett to play in the shack all he wants to," said the man, "or the shack comes down."

"But, papa—"

"Take your choice. I'm not going to have neighborhood quarrels over such—"

"But, papa—"

"That's enough! You said yourself you haven't anything against George."

"You said you didn't like him, but you couldn't tell why. You couldn't state a single instance of bad behavior against him. You couldn't mention anything he ever did which wasn't what a gentleman should have done. It's no use, I tell you. Either you invite George to play in the shack as much as he likes next Saturday, or the shack comes down."

"But, papa—"

"I'm not going to talk any more about it. If you want the shack pulled down and hauled away, you and your friends continue to fantasize this inoffensive little boy the way you have

been. If you want to keep it, be polite and invite him in."

"But—"

"That's all, I said!"

Sam was crushed.

Next day he communicated the bitter substance of the edict to the other members, and gloom became unanimous. So serious an aspect did the affair present that it was felt necessary to call a special meeting of the order after school. The entire membership was in attendance; the door was closed, the window covered with a board, and the candle lighted. Then all of the brothers—except one—began to express their sorrowful apprehensions. The whole thing was spoiled, they agreed, if George Bassett had to be taken in. On the other hand, if they didn't take him in, "there wouldn't be anything left." The one brother who failed to express any opinion was little Verman. He was otherwise occupied.

Verman had been the official paddler during the initiations of Roddy Bitts and Maurice Levy; his work had been conscientious, and it seemed to be taken by consent that he was to continue in office. An old shingle from the woodshed roof had been used for the exercise of his function in the cases of Roddy and Maurice, but this afternoon he had brought with him a new one, which he had picked up somewhere. It was broader and thicker than the old one, and during the melancholy prophesies of his fellows, he whittled the lesser end of it to the likeness of a handle. Thus engaged, he bore no appearance of despondency; on the contrary, his eyes, shining brightly in the candlelight, indicated that eager thoughts possessed him, while from time to time the sound of a chuckle issued from his simple African throat. Gradually the other brothers began to notice his preoccupation, and one by one they fell silent, regarding him thoughtfully. Slowly the darkness of their countenances lifted a little; something happier and brighter began to glimmer from each boyish face. All eyes remained fascinated upon Verman.

"Well, anyway," said Penrod, in a tone that was almost cheerful, "this is only Tuesday. You got pretty near all week to fix up the 'nishment for Saturday."

And Saturday brought sunshine to make the occasion more tolerable for both candidate and the society. Mrs. Williams, going to the window to watch Sam, when he left the house after lunch, marked with pleasure that his look and manner were sprightly as he skipped down the walk to the front gate. There he paused and yodeled for a time. An answering yodel came presently; Penrod Schofield appeared, and by his side walked George Bassett. George was always neat, but Mrs. Williams noticed that he exhibited unusual gloss and polish today. As for his expression, it was a shade too complacent under the circumstances, though, for that matter, perfect tact avoids an air of triumph under any circumstances. Mrs. Williams was pleased to observe that Sam and Penrod betrayed no resentment whatever; they seemed to have accepted defeat in a good spirit and to be inclined to make the best of George. Indeed, they appeared to be genuinely excited about him—it was evident that their cordiality was eager and wholehearted.

The three boys conferred for a few moments; then Sam disappeared round the house and returned, waving his hand and nodding. Upon that, Penrod took George's left arm, Sam took his right, and the three marched off to the backyard in a companionable way which made Mrs. Williams feel that it had been an excellent thing to interfere a little in George's interest.

Experiencing the benevolent warmth that comes of assisting in a good action, she ascended to an apartment upstairs, and, for a couple of hours, employed herself with needle and thread in sartorial repairs on behalf of her husband and Sam. Then she was interrupted by the advent of a colored serving-maid.

"Miz Williams, I reckon the house goin' fall down!" said this pessimist, arriving out of breath. "That 's'ort o' Mist' Sam's suttently tryin' to pull the roof down on ow haid!"

"The roof?" Mrs. Williams inquired mildly. "They aren't in the attic, are they?"

"No'm; they in the cellar, but they reachin' for the roof! I nev' did hear no such a rumpus an' squawkin' an' squawlin' an' fallin' an' whoopin' an' whackin' an' bangin'! They troop down by the outside cellah do', ne'en bangin'—they bus' loose, an' been goin' on ev' since, wuss'n Bedlam! Ef they anything down cellah ain' broke by this time, it can't be only jes' the foundashun, an' I bet that ain't goin' stop 'em, but I'm 'fraid to. Hones, Miz Williams, I'm 'fraid o' my life go down there, all that Bedlam goin' on. I thought I come see what you say."

Mrs. Williams laughed. "We'll have to stand a little noise in the house sometimes, Fanny, when there are boys. They're just playing, and a lot of noise is usually a pretty safe sign."

"Yes'm," said Fanny. "It's yo' house, Miz Williams, not mine. You want 'em, tear it down, I'm willin'." She departed, and Mrs. Williams continued to sew. The days were growing short, and at five o'clock she was obliged to put the work aside, as her eyes did not permit her to continue it by artificial light. Descending to the lower floor, she found the house silent, and when she opened the front door to see if the evening paper had come, she beheld Sam, Penrod and Maurice Levy standing near the gate engaged in quiet conversation. Penrod and Maurice departed while she was looking for the paper, and Sam came thoughtfully up the walk.

"Well, Sam," she said, "it wasn't such a bad thing, after all, to show a little politeness to George Bassett, was it?"

Sam gave her a noncommittal look—expression of every kind had been wiped from his countenance. He presented a blank surface.

"No'm," he said meekly. "Everything was just a little pleasanter because you'd been friendly, wasn't it?"

"Yes'm."

"Has George gone home?"

"Yes'm."

"I hear you made enough noise in the cellar—Did George have a good time?"

"Ma'am?"

"Did George Bassett have a good time?"

"Well—Sam now had the air of a person trying to remember details with absolute accuracy—"well, he didn't say he did, and he didn't say he didn't."

"Did he thank the boys?"

"No'm."

"Didn't he even thank you?"

"No'm."

"Why, that's queer," she said. "He's always so polite. He seemed to be having a good time, didn't he, Sam?"

"Ma'am?"

"Didn't George seem to be enjoying himself?"

This question, apparently so simple, was not answered with promptness. Sam looked at his mother in a puzzled way, and then found it necessary to

rub each of his shins in turn with the palm of his right hand. "I stumbled," he said, apologetically. "I tumbled on the cellar steps."

"Did you hurt yourself?" she asked quickly.

"No'm; but I guess maybe I better rub some arnica—"

"I'll get it," she said. "Come up to your father's bathroom, Sam. Does it hurt much?"

"No'm," he answered truthfully, "it hardly hurts at all."

And having followed her to the bathroom, he insisted, with unusual gentleness, that he be left to apply the arnica to the alleged injuries himself. He was so persuasive that she yielded, and descended to the library, where she found her husband once more at home after his day's work.

"Well?" he said. "Did George show up, and were they decent to him?"

"Oh, yes; it's all right. Sam and Penrod were good as gold. I saw them being actually cordial to him."

"That's well," said Mr. Williams, settling into a chair with his paper. "I was a little apprehensive, but I suppose I was mistaken. I walked home, and just now, as I passed Mrs. Bassett's, I saw Doctor Venny's car in front, and that barber from the corner shop on Second street was going in the door. I couldn't think what a widow would need a barber and a doctor for—especially at the same time. I couldn't think what George'd need such a combination for, either, and then I got afraid that maybe—"

Mrs. Williams laughed. "Oh, no; it hasn't anything to do with his having been over there. I'm sure they were very nice to him."

"Well, I'm glad of that."

"Yes, indeed—" Mrs. Williams be-

gan, when Fanny appeared, summoning her to the telephone.

It is pathetically true that Mrs. Williams went to the telephone humming a little song. She was detained at the instrument not more than five minutes; then she made a plunging return into the library, a blanched and stricken woman. She made strange, sinister gestures at her husband.

He sprang up, miserably prophetic. "Mrs. Bassett?"

"Go to the telephone," Mrs. Williams said hoarsely. "She wants to talk to you, too. She can't talk much—she's hysterical. She says they lured George into the cellar and had him beaten by negroes! That's not all—"

Mr. Williams was already on his way.

"You find Sam?" he commanded, over his shoulder.

Mrs. Williams stepped into the front hall.

"Sam!" she called, addressing the upper reaches of the stairway. "Sam!"

Not even echo answered.

"Sam!"

A faint clearing of somebody's throat was heard behind her, a sound so modest and unobtrusive it was no more than just audible, and, turning, the mother beheld her son sitting upon the floor in the shadow of the stairs and gazing meditatively at the nark.

His manner indicated that he wished to produce the impression that he had been sitting there, in this somewhat unusual place and occupation, for a considerable time, but without overhearing anything that went on in the library, so close by.

"Sam," she cried, "what have you done?"

"Well—I guess my legs are all right," he said, gently. "I got the arnica on, so probably they won't hurt any more."

"Stand up!" she said.

"Ma'am?"

"March into the library!"

Sam marched—slowly. In fact, no funeral march has been composed in a time so slow as to suit this march of Sam's. One might have suspected that he was in a state of apprehen-

"Well, he didn't exactly go in the cellar," said Sam reluctantly.

"Well, how did he get in the cellar, then?"

"He—he fell in," said Sam.

"How did he fall in?"

"Well, the door was open, and—well, he kept walkin' round there, and he hollered at him to keep away, but just then he kind of—well, the first I noticed was I couldn't see him, and so we went and looked down the steps, and he was sitting down there on the bottom step and kind of shouting, and—"

"See here!" Mr. Williams interrupted. "You're going to make a clean breast of this whole affair and take the consequences. You're going to tell it and tell it all. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then tell me how George Bassett fell down the cellar steps—and tell me quick!"

"He—he was bl'ndfolded."

"Aha! Now we're getting at it. You begin at the beginning and tell me just what you did to him from the time he got here. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm goin' to," Sam protested. "We never hurt him at all. He wasn't even hurt when he fell down cellar. There's a lot of mud down there, because the cellar door leaks, and—"

"Sam!" Mr. Williams' tone was deadly. "Did you hear me tell you to begin at the beginning?"

Sam made an effort and was able to obey.

"Well, we had everything ready for the 'nishment before lunch," he said. "We wanted it all to be nice, because you said we had to have him, papa, and after lunch Penrod went to guard him—that's a new part in the ritual—and he brought him over, and we took him out to the shack and blindfolded him, and—well, he got kind of mad because we wanted him to lay down on his stummock and be tied up, and he said he wouldn't, because the floor was a little bit wet in there and he could feel it sort of squishy under his shoes, and he said his mother didn't want him ever to get dirty, and he just wouldn't do it; and we all kept telling him he had to, or else how would there be any 'nishment; and he kept gettin' madder, and said he wanted to have the 'nishment outdoors where it wasn't wet, and he wasn't goin' to lay down on his stummock, anyway."

Sam paused for wind, then got under way again: "Well, some of the boys were tryin' to get him to lay down on his stummock, and he kind of fell up against the door and it came open and he ran out in the yard. He was tryin' to get the blindfold off his eyes, but he couldn't, because it was a towel in a pretty hard knot; and he went tearin' all around the backyard, and we didn't chase him, or anything. All we did was just watch him—and that's when he fell in the cellar. Well, it didn't hurt him any, but he was madder than what he would have been if he'd just had sense enough to lay down in the shack. Well, so we thought, long as he was down in the cellar anyway, we might as well have the rest of the 'nishment down there. So we brought the things down and—'nished him—and that's all. That's every bit we did to him."

"Yes," said Mr. Williams sardonically; "I see. What were the details of the initiation?"

"Sir?"

"I want to know what else you did to him? What was the initiation?"

"It's—its secret," Sam murmured piteously.

"Not any longer, I assure you! The society's a thing of the past, and you'll find your friend Penrod's parents agree with me in that. Mrs. Bassett had already telephoned them when she called us up. You go on with your story!"

Sam sighed deeply, and yet it may have been a consolation to know that his present misery was not altogether without its counterpart. Through the falling dusk his spirit may have crossed the intervening distance to catch a glimpse of his friend suffering simultaneously and standing within the same period. And if Sam's spirit did thus behold Penrod in jeopardy, it was a true vision.

"Go on!" said Mr. Williams.

"Well, there wasn't any fire in the furnace because it's too warm yet, and we weren't goin' to do anything'd hurt him, so we put him in there—"

"In the furnace?"

"It was cold," protested Sam. "There hadn't been any fire there since last spring. Course we told him there was fire in it. We had to do that," he continued earnestly, "because that was part of the 'nishment. We only kept him in it a little while and kind of hammered on the outside a little, and then we took him out and got him to lay down on his stummock, because he was all muddy anyway, where he fell down the cellar; and how could it matter to anybody that he had any sense at all? Well, then we had the ritual, and—why, the teeny little paddlin' he got wouldn't hurt a flea! It was that little colored boy lives in the alley did it—he isn't anywars near half George's size—but George got mad and said he didn't want any ole nigger to paddle him. That's what he said, and it was his own foolishness, because Verman won't let anybody call him 'nigger, and if George was goin' to call him that, he ought to had sense enough not to do it when he was layin' down that way and Verman all ready to be the paddler. And he needn't of been so mad at the rest of us, either, because it took us about twenty minutes to get the paddle away from Verman after that, and we had to lock Verman up in the laundry room and not let him out till it was all over. Well, and then

Mr. Williams entered at one door as his son crossed the threshold of the other, and this encounter was a piteous sight. After one glance at his father's face, Sam turned desperately, as if to flee outright. But Mrs. Williams stood in the doorway behind him.

"You come here!" And the father's voice was as terrible as his face. "What did you do to George Bassett?"

"Nothin'," Sam gulped; "nothin' at all."

"What?"

"We just—we just 'nished him."

Mr. Williams turned abruptly, walked to the fireplace, and there turned again, facing the wretched Sam.

"That's all you did?"

"Yes, sir."

"George Bassett's mother has just told me over the telephone," said Mr. Williams deliberately, "that you and Penrod Schofield and Roderick Bitts and Maurice Levy lured George into the cellar and had him beaten by negroes!"

At this, Sam was able to hold up his head a little and to summon a rather feeble indignation.

"It ain't so," he declared. "We didn't any such thing lower him into the cellar. We weren't goin' near the cellar with him. We never thought of goin' down cellar. He went down there himself, first."

"So! I suppose he was running away from you poor thing! Tryin' to escape from you," said Sam doggedly.

"He wasn't chasin' him—or anything at all."

"Then why did he go in the cellar?"

things were kind of spoiled anyway; so we didn't do but just a little more—and that's all."

"Go on! What was the 'just a little more'?"

"Well—we got him to swallow a little teeny bit of asafidity that Penrod

ashed to have to wear in a bag around his neck. It wasn't enough to even make a person sneeze—it wasn't much more'n a half a spoonful—it wasn't hardly a quarter of a spoonful—"

"Ha!" said Mr. Williams. "That accounts for the doctor. What else?"

"Well—we had some paint left over from our flag, and we put a little teeny bit of it on his hair and—"

"Ha!" said Mr. Williams. "That accounts for the barber. What else?"

"That's all," said Sam, swallowing. "Then he got mad and went home."

Mr. Williams walked to the door, and sternly motioned to the culprit to precede him through it. But just before the pair passed from her sight, Mrs. Williams gave way to an uncontrollable impulse.

"Sam," she asked, "what does 'In-Or-In' stand for?"

"The unfortunate boy had begun to smile.

"It—it means—Innapent Order of Infadelay," he moaned—and plodded onward to his doom.

Not his alone; at that very moment Master Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Jr., was suffering also, consequent upon telephoning on the part of Mrs. Bassett, though Roderick's punishment was administered less on the ground of George's troubles and more on that of Roddy's having affiliated with an order consisting so largely of Herman and Verman. As for Maurice Levy, he was no whit less unhappy. He fared as ill.

Simultaneously, two ex-members of the In-or-In were finding their lot fortunate. Something had prompted them to linger in the alley in the vicinity of the shack, and it was to this fated edifice that Mr. Williams, with demonic justice, brought Sam for the deed he had in mind.

Herman and Verman listened—awestricken—to what went on within the shack. Then, before it was over, they crept away and down the alley toward their own home. This was directly across the alley from the Schofield's stable, and they were horrified at the sounds which issued from the interior of the stable storeroom. It was the St. Bartholomew's Eve of that neighborhood.

"Man, man!" said Herman, shaking his head. "Glad I ain't no white boy!"

Verman seemed gloomily to assent.

A Hindrance.

An army officer who served in the Spanish war tells of a New York regiment, many of whose members were recruited on the East side. They were spilling for a fight, and it became necessary to post guards to preserve order.

A big husky Bowery recruit, of pugilistic proportions, was put on duty outside and given special orders to see that quiet reigned, and above all things, if trouble came his way, not to lose possession of his rifle.

Soon a general row began, growing in proportions as the minutes passed. The soldier walked his post nervously, without interrupting, until the corporal of the guard appeared on the scene with re-enforcements.

"Why didn't you stop this row?" demanded the corporal.

The sentry balanced his rifle on his shoulder, raised his arm to the correct boxing position, and replied: "Shore, phwat could I do wid dis gun in me hands?"—Harper's.

Causes of Winds.

Winds are produced by a disturbance of the equilibrium in some part of the atmosphere; a disturbance always resulting from a difference in temperature between adjacent sections. Thus, if the temperature of a certain extent of ground becomes higher, the air in contact with it becomes heated, it expands and goes towards the colder or higher regions of the atmosphere; thence it flows, producing winds which blow from hot to cold countries. But at the same time the equilibrium is destroyed at the surface of the earth, for the pressure on the colder adjacent parts is greater than on that which has been heated, and hence a current will be produced with a velocity dependent on the difference between these pressures; thus two distinct winds will be produced—an upper one setting outwards from the heated region, and a lower one setting inwards towards it.

One Thing at a Time.

Perhaps because you have so many goals you wish to reach you are far away from any of them, observes an efficiency expert.

You are dividing your forces. You must have one real objective point if you would win success—the success which is worth winning.

It is quite impossible to have one major subject which you study and aim to excel in, and then fritter away part of your time on others.

Certain arts and studies are allied, 'tis true.

Then select one and study it thoroughly and well.

Concentrated thought, study and action in one direction will accomplish great things.

But a snattering of all and finish of nothing is time wasted.

Choose wisely; then go to it, one thing at a time.

Mutual Understanding.

"How are you getting on with your French lessons?"

"First rate. I'm getting so I know what I'm talking about almost as well as the teacher."

New Minister From Roumania to America



Dr. Constantin Angelesco, recently appointed Roumanian minister to the United States, has arrived in Washington to take up his duties. He proposes to make an effort to bring the United States and his own nation into closer relations, now that they are both in the war.

BRITISH ON MEAT RATION

LONDON, Feb. 11.—Barn Rhondia, the food controller, has issued a meat-rationing order which gives each civilian approximately one pound of meat weekly.

NON-PARTISAN BODY INDORSED BY LEAGUE FARMERS AND LABOR

Decision to perfect the Oregon branch organization of the Non-Partisan League was reached Saturday by an executive committee appointed recently at a conference of members of the grange, Farmers' union and State Federation of Labor. Details will be worked out and a program will be outlined for announcement in a formal statement.

Those in attendance at the committee meeting were: J. D. Brown, president of the Farmers' union; J. A. Smith, Farmers' union; C. E. Spence master, and M. M. Burmer, delegate of the state grange; E. J. Stack and C. M. Ryerson of the State Federation of Labor; Cole McKenna of the Artisans and Professor Hector McPherson of Oregon Agricultural college.

LEPERS AID RED CROSS

HONOLULU, T. H., Feb. 11.—Stirred by their own plight to help war sufferers, hundreds of men, women and children in the leper settlement on Molokai have raised \$248 for the Red Cross, it was announced here today.

REAL ESTATE

Enice G. Sargent, widow to Lars Leknas, all of lots 45 and 46, block 3, White City Park; \$10.

Leo Rath and Laura Rath to Will Widmer, SW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of section 23, Willamette Meridian, township 2 south, range 4 east, containing 40 acres; \$10.

L. O. Skov and Anna E. Skov, to Jos. T. and Arthur P. Anderson, 56.74 acres section 8, township 4 south, range 1 east, Willamette Meridian; \$4000.

Isaac Lowell Bristow and Amy Bristow, to W. F. and Elbert L. Bristow, an