DEDUCTIVE EVIDENCE

By W. Gregan.

THE hour was two. To be accurate, it must have been a few minutes afterwards, for I distinctly remember hearing the clock of St. Dunstan's strike as we turned out of Erlington square. We had talked ourselves into silence, the quiet, meditative silence of a good cigar and the consciousness of a summer night. The stars were a brushing of light over a sky never quite dark. They flickered languidly, as though even to the cool heaven the heat of Landon had risen. It was this sudden silence that led us into the curious tragedy I am about to relate.

I have said we turned out of Erlington square. Now, our direct way was through St. Anne's street, where our chambers were situated, but by some singleness of thought we chose the turning that runs, a dark, unlighted gully, alongside the miniature churchyard of St. Dunstan's. It leads eventually into Buxton square, through a street of terraced houses with melancholy stripe of gardens, and Buxton square is at least seven minutes out of our way.

This narrow gully of a pathway is almost a tunnel. Big, bushy, luxuriant cypress trees, battened on generations of forgotten sleepers, hang over it on one side, and on the other are elms standing in the unkempt garden of Kenway house. We walked quietly. To understand fully how silent was our coming I may add that on our boots were the rubber discs that grant immunity from slipping.

We had traversed this pathway for some 30 yards when I heard a gurgling strangled cry, and the sound of running feet. It startled me, as the flushing of a partridge under one's feet will. I stopped involuntarily. My friend, however, pushed on quickly. Following, I heard him stumble. Then came the sound of a match being scratched on the wall. My faculties were rather abnormally acute that night; I presume the quiet of the night, and the sultriness of the air, indicative of an electric state influenced me. I heard the spluttering scratch on the rough wall three times before the sudden leap of light. I saw my friend bending over a body.

"Horton, look for a policeman," said my friend, coolly. "There will be one on point duty near the lamp on the west corner of Buxton square. This man is either dead or near it."

I ran quickly on my quest. When I left Partens was fumbling among the clothes of the inert bundle at his feet. In Buxton square I found a constable calmly investigating the stars.

"Come quickly," I said. "There is a man dead or dying in the pathway by St. Dunstan's church."

"You, Mr. Horton?" he exclaimed. Then he raced back alongside me, his heavy boots waking all the echoes of the sleepy square and street. We plunged down the narrow channel.

"A light here, constable, please," cried my friend. The constable turned the white light of his lantern on the scene.

Partens, in evening dress, with his light overcoat open, was bending over the body of a clean-shaven man. He had loosened the man's clothing.

"He is dead," he said, "but the body is quite warm. Help me to turn him over."

I stood by helplessly while the two busied themselves with the body.

"I thought so," said Partens; "he has been stabbed in the left side by a sharp instrument. See, here is the cut in the coat. There is very little blood—the instrument must have penetrated the heart."

Partens spoke with his habitual coolness. I think there is absolutely nothing that would quicken his pulse. To him the world is a purveyor of more or less interesting problems. To them he devotes his life. It is as though some vampire had sucked from him all the emotions, all the blood, all the irresponsible springs of humanity.

The constable blew his whistle solemnly, and then made a cursory examination of the prone heap. It was a matter of business with him. The proceedings struck me with a sudden nausea, and I leant against the wall.

"No trace of identity," said the constable.

"Very little," agreed Partens. "Beyond the fact that he was a servant, an upper servant, in a good family, and has been out of a berth for a while; there seems nothing to distinguish him. By the way, I am right in my surmise. The murder was committed quite recently—in fact, must have been perpetrated as we were in Erlington square, Horton."

"You are guessing a lot, Mr. Partens," said the constable.

"Oh, no, not guessing." Partens answered, not in the least angered at the rather impertinent tones of the constable. "I found out that. His watch, an excellent one, has stopped at two minutes to 2. The blow which killed him stopped it. The man was neat and methodical—that pocketbook you took out, constable, was very well preserved and neatly mended, and it must be 10 years old by the calendar stamped on it—and would not have let a watch run down."

"Yes, I see, that," said the constable, grudgingly.

At that moment a sergeant came upon the scene. He also made his examination, and then dispatched the constable for an ambulance. The constable was quite certain that no one had passed between 1 o'clock and the time I had called him. The murderer, whoever he was, had a choice of many roads, so that that statement in no way upset the theory of murder accepted by all of us.

In a little while a hand ambulance was brought, and the passive body, slowly stiffening with rigor mortis, was laid on it.

"Go home, Horton," said Partens, "and wait for me in my room. I am going to the police station, but I should like to talk over this affair with you afterwards."

We occupy chambers in St. Anne's street. Partens has a suite on the first floor, and I have a similar set over him. The caretaker, a colorless widow, looks after our rooms. I let myself in with a latchkey, and entered the big sitting-room, in which Partens had accumulated a variety of curiosities and books dealing with the common chemistry of the universe and similar subjects. Throwing myself into the big upholstered armchair, I, full of the startling events of the night, fell, naturally musing upon my extraordinary friend.

I use the word "extraordinary" with the fullest sense of its wideness. Emil Partens is a man difficult of definition. Falling back on a paradox—and there is nothing so illuminative as a paradox—I think "a practical abstraction" suggests my idea. Abstraction because the common emotions of our humanity touched him not at all; practical because the effect was everything to him, and the cause only the hidden spring. I fear I am not clear. Shall I put it in a concrete form? I am perfectly sure that, notwithstanding a companionship of eight years, no event that could happen to me would cause him the slightest emotion or even interest, unless it were flavored with some essence of mystery. And, yet, his companionship was stimulating. I never met a man whose reasoning was clearer and more analytical, or whose knowledge of certain unfamiliar sciences, and what I may term the common matters of every day life, was more encyclopaedic. He had taken a medical degree, as well as a scientific one; but was possessed of ample means. He made no attempt to achieve material success. Eight years ago we had drifted together. At that time I was going the western circuit, but shortly afterward a legacy permitted me to court a shy chamber practice with no fear of starvation.

At a quarter past 3 Partens entered. He came in with his usual quietness, crossed over to the mantelpiece in silence, chose with his customary deliberations a cigar from an open box, slowly struck a light, and then sat down, one foot tucked under him on the big divan.

"It is curious, Horton, that we should have been discussing only last night at the club the disappearance of Lady Wilton's famous black pearl. If you will remember, I then confessed to an interest in the case. Jewels have always had a fascination for me that humanity does not possess. If one may be pardoned a little metaphysical speculation I should suggest that jewels are the gods which rule the destinies of human beings. I am pagan enough to sympathize with the heathen worship of gods, not of the idol per se, but of the jewels which surround him, and which one may take as symbolical of the spirit or essence radiating from the gods. Jewels rule the world."

"The criminal world," Partens declared cynically, "fear and the absence of a jewel sufficiently valuable keep some portion of us honest."

I laughed. His rather wild theories, propounded with consideration and seriousness, I regard in the light of a ponderous humor.

"But what has the missing black pearl to do with the startling adventure of tonight?" I inquired.

I was on fire to know the result of his journey to the police station. The recent events were stamped too deeply on my memory to permit of any interest in his vague speculative theorizing. The dark alley, the white light of the lantern, the prone, passive, inert body—these were tangible matters of potent interest.

"It has everything to do with it," was the astounding reply.

"Lady Wilton's missing black pearl?" I ejaculated.

"That is the second time you have made an inaccurate remark. The black pearl is not missing."

"You have found it?"

"Exactly."

"But where?" I cried in astonishment.

"Inside the lining on the left shoulder of the dead man's jacket."

"Then he was the thief?"

Partens looked at me with a smile.

"You share the same felicity for jumping at conclusions that is so characteristic a feature of the police force. The apparently obvious is not always the true solution. That is why these little mysteries are so interesting."

"Tell me all about it," I said, settling into my chair.

"You were with me, Horton," Partens commenced, pulling luxuriously at his cigar, "when the thing happened; you were with me when I told the constable the few matters I discovered in my cursory examination."

"That the dead man was a servant, and had been out of work for some time? I do not see how you arrived at that."

"My dear Horton, that was mere child's play. The man was obviously of a low social standing—his finger nails, the presence of a silver watch, the poor quality of his linen, established that. But he was wearing a suit of excellent cut and good material.

"HORTON, LOOK FOR A POLICEMAN."

There is something in the hang of a West End cut jacket quite unmistakable. It was clear that it was a suit of his master's. That he had been out of a berth some time I gathered from the state of his boots. A butler or valet does very little walking, and his were worn into holes in the soles."

"He might have purchased the clothes at a second-hand place," I suggested.

"I think not, Horton," my friend answered. "The suit was a country one—rough tweeds—much too hot for this weather. His hands showed no signs of manual work, and if he had been an inferior clerk he would have bought clothes more suitable. Such a man as he was—a quiet, methodical man, past middle age—would be the last person to buy such a suit, which, even second, would have cost more than a ready-made one of black or dark gray."

"Yes, I see the force of your reasoning there," I admitted.

"I accompanied the police to the station. They were very busy for some time, but their discoveries amounted to very little. It is quite wonderful how very little they can discover when they really exert themselves. The police surgeon pronounced him dead, and they took an inventory of his clothes and belongings. Very meager were the latter, poor chap. Some keys, a few cuttings of vacant positions as butler from today's—or, rather, yesterday's papers, four-and-seven pence in silver and copper in a leather purse, and the watch and chain. Curiously enough, there was no mark on either linen, hat or clothes, except the initials 'W. S.,' which were vague enough. I took up the jacket to see whether there was any tailor's name. There was not. But a brief examination gave me the clue to the dead man's identity.

I sat up in astonishment. It has always been to me a source of amazement that my friend should so easily read mysteries baffling to the police, who are daily educated by experience in the detection of clues.

"The police had not seen it?" I demanded.

"Of course not, Horton. Did you ever know them to discover anything except by rule of thumb? Underneath the left shoulder the seam had been resewn, the lining being brown as well as the tweed itself; the original stitches were brown also. The resewing had been done in black and rather hurriedly—or, shall I say, clumsily? There was no reason at all for this; it was not at all probable that the seam had given, and, of course, if the coat had been altered at any time it was inconceivable to suspect the tailors of such bad workmanship. I ripped the stitching. Inside the padding I found the big black pearl belonging to Lady Wilton."

"Who was the dead man?" I inquired.

Emil Partens smiled lazily, and, rising slowly, mixed a tumbler of whiskey and soda.

"Really, Horton, you are rather dense. As you know, Sir George Wilton's right shoulder is a little high. His tailor, who is an artist in his way, does his best to rectify this mistake of nature. The left shoulder in all his coats has an undue amount of padding. The black pearl is found in a padded left shoulder. The dead owner of the jacket has the initials 'W. S.' on his handkerchief. It is not a great feat of intelligence to arrive at the conclusion that the dead man is William Smith, late butler to 'Sir George.'

"By Jove, no," I cried, quite excited. "The man's name slipped my memory."

"Ah, a bad habit, that, Horton. You should not forget such an important point."

"Of course," I continued, "the man was suspected and discharged. They were right after all. I remember thinking that Sir George had been hasty and unjust. There was no direct evidence, if you remember, Partens?"

"I remember. Shall I run over the case? Your memory does not seem at all clear. Six months ago Lady Wilton missed her big black pearl. It had been taken out of the safe in Sir George's dressing-room by Sir George and left on the table whilst he changed into his evening dress. The butler, William Smith, came to the door and asked Sir George to see the state of a case of wine just then received. Sir George went downstairs and was with Smith some 10 minutes. He then returned with Smith to compare an invoice from the wine merchant with the delivery note. He believed the invoice to be in the pocket of a tweed suit he had worn in the morning. The room is oddly shaped, inasmuch as it is two parallelograms at right angles. A curtain could be drawn at the junction, cutting the room into two. The inner one contained a camp bedstead and a small writing table. There were relics of the Jezreel campaign, when, if you recollect Sir George was the chief of staff. Sir George used the writing table frequently. He went there then to look for the invoice, leaving Smith in the outer hall of the room, and screened from observation. In that outer room was the black pearl. Sir George looked for the invoice among the papers of his writing table, and it was not in the pocket of his tweed jacket. In the inner room was his valet busied in inserting studs and putting out evening clothes. Sir George came back to Smith, told him of his inability to find the invoice, and then, suddenly, said in one of those absurd fits of generosity: 'You'd better have that tweed suit, Smith. Shan't wear it again.' Smith left, carrying the suit. Ten minutes afterward Sir George missed the black pearl. It had been lying on the dressing table in the outer half of the room; he distinctly remembered taking it out of the safe. It was gone. The house was alarmed, the police called in. The rest, of course, is familiar to you. Sir George has told the story in your hearing ten times to my knowledge, Horton. The greatest evils of life have their alleviations, and Sir George, in losing a valuable jewel, has gained a topic of conversation not entirely banal or absolutely boring."

I laughed. Sir George, with his incessant military shop, was nearly intolerable to Partens. Sir George's private opinion of Partens is not printable in decorous columns. Naturally both men were glacially courteous to each other.

"Yes," I said, "I know the rest. Suspicion fell upon Smith. He was searched, his effects were searched, the ingenuity of the police was taxed to connect him with the theft; but they failed. The valet was also searched, with no results. Two painters at work in the corridor could swear to his not having left the room. Smith was dismissed.

"Exactly. Now the black pearl—which, by the way, was in the shape of a pendant—comes to light sewed in the left shoulder of Sir George's own tweed jacket."

"A clever hiding place," I said. "Smith must have been an adroit thief."

"Um," replied Partens. "You have all the quickness of the professional detective, Horton, at arriving at a conclusion.

I was pleased at his praise, if disquieted somewhat by a peculiar smile which twisted his thin lips. However, with a man whose habitual attitude is, not to put too fine a point on it, exceedingly patronizing, one may forgive a certain acidity in the forced recognition of mental quickness in another. For a man of brilliant intellect Partens is too intolerant of average intelligence in another.

"The question now is, who murdered William Smith?" I continued.

"Exactly," Partens acquiesced. "The police have not yet formulated a theory. No doubt in time they will do so. I have always found them exceedingly prolific of theories, Horton."

"You, of course, surrendered the black pearl."

"Of course. The discovery will be a feather in the cap of some incapable inspector. By the way, Horton, the hour is late and I must be up early this morning. I shall go to Muswell Hill quite early."

"Muswell Hill—why?" I demanded.

"There is a street called Gonder's Row. At No. 14 lives Mrs. William Smith. I wish to see her."

"But she will know nothing of the murderer. And, in any case, it is painfully soon. Think, Partens, yesterday her husband was well. She at least believed in his honesty. Today her husband is murdered, and by his death convicted of theft from a generous master."

"Sentiment is out of place in criminology, Horton," Partens yawned. "Today is Friday. Arrange with Sir George for a meeting on Saturday at 9 o'clock at his house, will you?"

"With Sir George?" I echoed.

"Precisely. He is concerned more or less. You might be present if you have nothing better to do. It may interest you to learn the end of this affair."

I went to bed to lie awake for two restless hours, wondering what Partens meant. That he would fulfill what he had tacitly promised I had little doubt; but how he had discovered the murderer of William Smith was beyond my powers of guessing.

The next morning at a late breakfast I learned that Partens had left his chambers at 7 o'clock. Mrs. Perkins, the caretaker, setting before me a dish of bacon and eggs, informed me of that. Her colorless apathy was somewhat changed. She regarded me with a nervous admiration I had never before enjoyed. She went far as the door, carrying the empty tray, and then paused. Then she spoke in her habitual hoarse tones, which she attributed to asthma, and which I suspected were due to gin.

"You're in the papers this mornin', sir," she said, with ill-concealed pride. "In that horrible murder case. It seems as 'ow you an' Mistur Partens discovered the deceased an' called the perlice. Some folk 'as all the luck. Ere've I bin trapsin an' trapsin' about all my born days, and never sin no more'n a fit or a run hover. I shall never go dahn that laine now without a shudder. It seos the deceased was hall 'uddled up, sir. Give'd you a start, sir, I should sye. Shall I give you a drop o' brandy in your tea, sir?"

"No, think you, Mrs. Perkins," I said, unfolding my morning paper.

"Ow, very well, 'sir," she said in a disappointed voice. I heard her presently on the doorstep underneath my window entertaining a few friends by slowly spelling out a halfpenny paper. In my mind's eye I could see her jerking an accusatory thumb at my windows.

Emil Partens did not return that day. The newspapers were very eulogistic of the police, and it was apparent even from their cautious paragraphs that my opinion was indorsed by the authorities. They regarded the mystery of the black pearl as finished.

I saw Sir George at the club at lunch and gave him Partens' message.

"Certainly, Horton," he agreed. "I owe him the black pearl. My wife is overjoyed. She has some feminine superstition about the luck of the Wiltons going with it. I want to know what luck we've ever had? There's Snippy Hotgrave, my junior in the service by five years, and they gave him his step and retired him under the age clause. The war office, Horton, is run by a lot of blind old women. Saturday, eh? Come and take pot luck with us in Berkley street, eh? Partens may keep out of the way until then, and the cooking here is villainous. I'm going to write to the committee."

"Yes, I'll come," I answered.

"Seven-thirty, then. Excuse me; there's Brown. I want to know why they don't get rid of the club cook."

Colonel Sir George Wilton, bart, stormed off to dismay and perplex the mildest-mannered man who ever served on a clubhouse committee.

The Saturday dinner in Berkley street was excellent, and Lady Wilton wore the big black pearl, and told me stories of the luck it had brought her—mostly, I remember, in connection with wonderful feminine fripperies that outshone all other female competition. Precisely at 9 a ring came at the bell. Sir George and I were smoking in his little den, which has a window like an alert eye keeping watch on Berkley street. As the hour approached I admit that my excitement made me restless, and my restlessness in turn affected Sir George. When that modest ring sounded through the house we both sprang to our feet and rushed to the window. It was a small windaw, and Sir George's head is hard. I saw nothing but stars blazing in the generally somber street. Sir George spoke. "There are two at the door," he cried. "One is certainly Partens, the other looks like a coachman out of livery."

We heard the door opened, and, presently, Partens and a stolid, thick-set looking man in sober habiliments, which certainly suggested the subdued horainess of a family coachman, were ushered in.

"My friend, Mr. Wilson," said Partens, casually. Mr. Wilson bowed awkwardly. Then, suddenly, he grew alert, and stole behind the door. It was opened after a respectful knock, and Sir George's valet entered, a tall, slim, quiet-looking man with a melancholy face.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said.

"No, Altwood, no; a mistake."

"I took the liberty of sending for him," said my astounding friend, Partens, quite coolly. "Mr. Wilson wanted to see him.

Altwood wheeled round to confront Mr. Wilson, who, advancing towards him, laid a broad, stumpy hand on his shoulder.

"I arrest you, Thomas Altwood, for the murder of William Smith," he said, and then slid into the stereotyped warning about spoken words.

Altwood gave a gasp, every vestige of color deserted his cheeks, his eyes bulged, and his jaw dropped.

A lurking four-wheeler pulled up at the door at a signal from Partens, two constables jumped out, and Altwood was half carried to it and driven off.

"What does this mean?" cried Sir George, when this sudden dramatic episode was concluded.

"May I beg a cigar? Thanks," answered Partens, lifelessly. "I suppose Horton told you how I discovered the black pearl?"

"Yes, certainly. But what made Altwood murder Smith. That beats me. Two criminals in my house. By jove, it is infamous."

"There was only one criminal," Partens said.

"But they have arrested Altwood. Ah, I see. The police stopped suddenly, realizing the gravity of the case."

"No, they have not bungled. I arranged the arrest."

"Then," said the colonel, very slowly, as befitted the astonishing solution forced upon him, "then William Smith—"

"Was innocent," completed Partens', "yes."

"But in his jacket you found the black pearl." The astonishment in Sir George's voice was excessive. For my part I began to realize the exact meaning of Partens' smile when I had jumped to the conclusion that the murdered man was the thief. He had known even then.

"Yes. That of course, told me that Smith was not the thief."

Partens smoked on quietly for a moment, evidently pleased at our astonishment. "The loss is six months old. If Smith was aware of the existence of the black pearl in his jacket he would not have been there. He would have vanished quietly to the continent and disposed of the jewel. Directly I found the pearl I knew that the murderer had been aware of its hiding place. An examination showed a slight cut on the shoulder of the jacket. If we had not disturbed him he would have gone off with the pearl."

"It is incredible," exclaimed Sir George. "I would have trusted Altwood with anything. He came to me with an excellent character."

"Opportunity is the parent of crime," said Partens. "Shall I reconstruct the scene? You were long enough away with Smith to permit Altwood to sew the pearl in the jacket. He was unable to go out of the room because of the painters. The fact would have been ominous when the pearl was missed. You had promised the suit to him—the padding on the shoulder was a safe hiding place. You came in and gave the suit to Smith. It was a sudden whim. Altwood remonstrated with you immediately afterwards, and you swore at him."

"Gad, Partens, how do you know all this?" cried Sir George, his eyebrows lifted nearly into his bushy hair.

"It was the probable course of events," answered Partens coolly, and Sir George said something under his breath. "The thing that puzzled me was Altwood's delay and the reason why he did not buy the jacket from Smith. When I left you, Horton, it was to discover these facts. I found with little trouble that Altwood fell ill with rheumatic fever soon after Smith's dismissal. Mrs. Smith told me that her husband and Altwood were always unfriendly. Altwood demanded the suit from Smith, on the ground that it was promised to him, and was abusive when Smith refused to part with it. After that, when Altwood offered to purchase, Smith, who was an obstinate man, refused. Of course, Altwood did not care to purchase through the party for fear his secret should be known."

"This story is quite remarkable, Partens," I said; "but will this deductive evidence hang Altwood?"

"I suppose the average British jury, with the extraordinary lack of apprehension which appears to be their most distinguished attribute, would refuse to convict upon it. But in the wound of the dead man was the tip of a knife. It had been sharpened to extreme thinness, and must have broken on a rib. This afternoon we searched Altwood's bedroom, armed with a warrant. In it, hidden in a trunk, was a newly-cleansed clasp knife. The case was missing. Ours will fit exactly. That I think, will be sufficient evidence, even for a British jury."

"But if it had not been for your suspicion of Altwood, the clue of the knife tip would have been useless," I said.

"There was no suspicion," said Partens calmly. "I was quite sure."

Sir George Wilton, I am glad to add, granted an annuity to Mrs. William Smith.

PROMISING LADDERS FOR WILLING CLIMBERS--Continued From the First Page *of* This Section

also, a sense of fealty to any system that gave him the chance to climb, however slowly. He had turned in to "help out" hundreds of times previously from sheer good will and loyalty, just as he had helped out the station agent who rewarded him with the liberty of the telegraph key.

He was in the position of the boy who goes fishing and fishes all the time, everywhere. It was not chance that, when he helped out the stockyard superintendent, the all-powerful chief of the road should learn of it dramatically. It was inevitable that, sooner or later, improved opportunities should proffer larger rewards.

"I made a note of Brown, then and there," Mr. Potter said, when he told the story afterward. "But he never needed pushing. He furnished the motive power himself."

By January, 1880, Brown was chief train dispatcher of his road; another year and he was trainmaster, three years, and he was assistant superintendent; in 1887, superintendent. After that, general managerships and vice-presidencies fell to him, for he was recognized everywhere as that most desirable official, the railroad man who knew the game from the ground up. This is the man who, today, is the practical head of the Vanderbilt system. And this is what he has to say about the young man's chances now:

"For every boy, and for every man, who belongs to the rank and file of labor, the opportunity today is more than 20 times greater than it was. The man who knows that best is the man who has worked his way up. He knows it from his own intimate, personal experience. But if he didn't, simple arithmetic would prove it.

"We stand now in the midst of a well-nigh impeasurable growth in the volume of work which the nation absolutely must accomplish. There has been an enormous expansion of our railroads, of our manufactures, of new developments in mechanism.

"Somebody must do the work, and somebody must do it more efficiently than all the rest. The only limit that is upon any man today is the limit fixed by his willingness and his ability."

Then followed a truly noteworthy statement, coming, as it did, from the lips of the man who is right hand of the most powerful industrial dynasty in America, if a family's perpetuation of its power in any American field may be deemed dynastic:

"Let it be understood that, in the United States, it is the working man who, having begun at the bottom, ends in the important posts at the top of our railroads and our great industrial enterprises. The day of favoritism and of 'family influence' has departed. I believe that plain 'sticking to it' is a good rule for every working man who is earnest in his ambition. I believe, too, it may not be for his best welfare for any worker to set for himself, as some have suggested, a definite goal."

If Mr. Brown had desired to point his moral and adorn the tale, he might have followed up his estimate of the chances a man has nowadays by referring to another railroad man, who began almost in the same year with him, and quite as humbly—William H. Truesdale, president of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad. And he might have asked, pertinently:

"How would you like to score a failure for every advancement which you have achieved in your chosen calling?"

That, for long years, was the disheartening story of the famous Truesdale. First came the slow, hard plugging of a lad who had secured a mean job on a modest line—freight house clerk on the old Rockford, Rock Island & St. Louis road. For 14 years he worked as hard as he knew how, always in minor jobs, until he became an assistant to the president of the little Minneapolis & St. Louis railroad.

That looked pretty good, and it would have been pretty good on a big, healthy road. But the Minneapolis & St. Louis wasn't that sort of a road.

In four years he became president himself. That looked better, and it would have been on another road. On the Minneapolis & St. Louis it led to a railroad insolvency four years later. But Truesdale was the only man they had who owned the brains and the grit to tackle the insolvency, so he was made receiver. It had been a kind of uphill-downhill advancement for years.

In four years more the railroad world knew how to distinguish between a man and his railroad. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific discerned in him the stuff general managers are made of, and secured him. He was known throughout the country as a man who had learned railway economy in a painful school.

The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western happened to have a mighty urgent use for such an economist. It had been sprouting a deficit instead of dividends. So the directors sent for him as an expert in economy.

It took only a single year for that cruelly drilled product of a western receivership to start on its way. The normal surplus of a valuable but abused road. His opportunity had not come to him on the level, he found it in a hole. Such a climber would naturally consider a fair start as an unmixed good; and so he does. Here is what he says about opportunities:

"There has never been such an opportunity for a man to climb as there is today. This country has made great strides industrially. Men of executive ability are needed in far more places than the country ever held before.

"The nation, now as at no previous period, needs men who can do things. The men it especially wants are those who, in hand-to-hand contact, have learned the various phases of any industry's activities. The country doesn't require theorists; efficient, practical men are the need of the age.

"The most valuable official is he who has had the experience of the little things in his business. The prizes awaiting men of that practical, accomplishing type are greater than any the history of the country can show."

James J. Hill used to work as a day laborer on the docks at St. Paul. So he knows, too. He says:

"Men who can accomplish—good men, endowed with initiative and energy—are in greater demand than they ever were before. It is only the merest fraction of the best operating officials in the railroad world here who have failed to rise from the ranks, coming along the straight, hard road, with very few short cuts to preferment.

"The armies of American industry are increasing constantly in number; it is not inevitable that the country should require proportionately more captains, colonels and generals?

"You don't have to possess a college education to get there. Knowledge, however acquired, is valuable, yet not indispensable. The untaught can always learn. More than anything else, the measure of a man's determination to apply what he knows means the difference between his success and his failure. Nobody need worry about the opportunities. They are more numerous than ever—positively immeasurable in this day and generation."

It is remarkable that every phase of the nation's activity, intellectual as well as material, has held out the same proportion of chances for advancement—the ladders innumerable that are waiting to be climbed. The explanation is the obvious one, which all these leaders of industry emphasize; plainly that the country is growing, and as no other country in the world's history has ever grown.

If the railroads have grown, it is because the population and the things the population produces have grown. No population, like this one, ever produced wheat and corn and simply consumed wheat and corn. It has always transmuted its wheat and corn into infinite variety of other necessaries and luxuries, from pork to poems.

If the nation can point with pride—or horror—at its pork barons, every large city now has its local butchers who are earning profits bigger than those very barons did a generation ago. Nearly every large city has its great bakers, as it has its great butchers; and, if it hasn't, it has all the greater opening for some unknown baker to rise to greatness.

The very candlestick maker, in the midst of this vast and spreading development, has emerged from the desuetude into which his trade was plunged by the advent of gas long, long years ago; and great fortunes are being founded today upon artistic candelabra, such as were beyond the most ambitious dreams of the candlestick maker in the halcyon days when he was classed with the butcher and the baker, among the indispensables.

From among the stenographers—a promising calling for men, and much neglected—comes a Cortelyou, who knew that shorthand ought to be the shortest cut to boss, because the stenographer needs only brains, in addition to his typewriter, to be private secretary; and the private secretary needs only brains to become assistant boss.

From the sweat of the steel plants comes a Schwab, helped by an early accident to the boss' notice, yet only one of the line of youths especially chosen by the pioneer among those who learned to appraise energy, Andrew Carnegie.

Out of the woods, whither he went because he loved the trees, comes a Pinchot, to direct the reforestration of the whole land, a task which, when he set about learning it for the sheer love of it, nobody else knew existed—and the task which, now, means the salvation of the United States.

If Theodore P. Shonts began as the water boy on a construction train, the society in which his expected grandson will move has been portrayed to corresponding fame and very satisfactory profit by recently arrived novelists.

A presidential presidence, harshly taught by experience of a fleabite war as to the imperious need for generals who are neither so old that they have to be propped up nor so heavy that they to be carried, may shrewdly provide against future emergencies by pushing the promotion of a man young enough to be worth a hoot when the hooting arrives, in the person of a Major General Wood or a Funston.

Even in that inglorious branch of the army, the engineers, where the last graduate dates back a century to the advent of Napoleon, the rectenancy or the petulance of famous civilians may abandon the prize of Panama to the silent, unglorious efficiency of a soldier like Colonel Gotwaels, the man who, simply carrying out orders as a regular army man, is binding the world together, and is asking neither praise nor recompense beyond the ordinary wages of his job.

Thus far, he has won neither from press, public nor government. But there are some years still for him to hustle in that silent, dirt-driving way of his. If the nation should neglect him, the huge corporations will be ready to offer him one of the innumerable posts among the "generals" of industry to whom James J. Hill refers.

John Mitchell cannot possibly be the last man to come up out of the grimy mines, while the untold deposits of lignite are still to work, and the millions of tons of culm are awaiting the brain that shall make them useful. The Wright brothers are, necessarily, but the first of a long line of conquerors of the air—merely the Fultons of the atmosphere, whose triumphs are the guarantee of fortune to the Cunards and others of the future. America is already filling up with its emulators of Sir Thimas Lipton in groceries, and every town offers its opportunity to a "merchant prince."

There are plenty of ladders. Help yourself.

In the Heart of the Hills.

Oh, fain would I hide in the heart of the hills,
Away from the roar and rattle of trade!
Oh, fain would I rest where the rivulet spills
Its silvery wave in a fairy cascade!
Where apples are ripe and where maples are red,
And gossamer webs of the spider are spread,
I'm fain to recline, with the sward for a bed,
In the heart of the hills!

Oh, fain would I fly to the heart of the hills,
Where proudly the flags of the fall are unfurled,
Oh, fain would I dwell 'mid the splendor that fills
The landscape afar to the rim of the world!
For now when the heat of the summer is fled,
When apples are ripe and when maples are red,
There's balm for the bosom, there's rest for the head,
In the heart of the hills!

—Denis A. McCarthy.

The sons of Governor McCord of Arizona, and Commodore Kitson of St. Paul, are earning their living as laborers in Everett, Wash. Young Kitson's part of his father's estate was $2,000,000.

CHARACTER CREDENTIALS
By John Anderson Jayne

JUST the other evening there appeared in the Leader an advertisement that read as follows: "Wanted—a young man between 17 and 18 to learn a wholesale business. Apply between 9 and 10, No. 1948 ——; bring recommendations."

At 8:30 Friday morning there were a number of applicants in the hallway of the building waiting to confer with Mr. Blank relative to the position. At 9 o'clock there were about 20 young men, some of them as fine looking as one could find in a 10 days' journey, others of them the exact opposite.

One by one these young men were received into the office of Mr. Blank, who personally met each of them and gave them the following list of questions which they were to answer:

What is your full name?
What is your age?
Where were you born?
Are your father and mother living?
By whom were you last employed?
Why did you leave your last place of employment?
Do you attend church, if so, what?
Have you had experience in this line of business?
Do you regard yourself as absolutely honest?
Tell something of your habits.
Give the names of three people to whom we can refer.

A pretty stiff list of questions, you say. Yes, a pretty stiff list. But Mr. Blank knew the kind of a young man he wanted, and he wanted the kind of a young man he wanted. At length all of the waiting young men had been received, and each of them had been told that if they were needed they would receive notification inside of 48 hours.

Then began the work of examination of the papers with the questions and answers thereon. Out of the 20 received, filed and examined, 14 were cast immediately aside for lack of neatness in preparation, bad spelling and inability to grasp the general situation.

Of the remaining six, two were retained in the office as genuine literary curiosities in the way of grammar, rhetoric and general appearance. Then letters were sent out relative to the remaining four, or telephone calls made, then the four young men were asked to call at a very early hour on the second day following. Of the four thus summoned, one failed to respond, one came with eyes well blacked and marks of a night's carousal showing in his face, the third came with unbrushed clothes, dirty finger nails and unblacked shoes, though he came from a good home in the East End, while the fourth was the only one whose face and hands were clean, whose nrves were so steady that he could write without wavering, look his prospective employer in the face without faltering, and whose general appearance showed that he believed in caring for the engine of his life and took good care of its roundhouse; that is, the clothes that protected his engine. This young man was given the position. Since then it has been learned by his employer that the young man had been tramping the streets looking for work for a considerable time; that he had worked for his board and room in a restaurant and lodging-house on Fourth avenue, but had kept himself strictly clean through all of his experience, so that when the opportunity offered his letters of recommendation, personal appearance, handwriting and air of general intelligence strictly coincided. Neither one contradicted the statements of the other.

It's too early in the business experience of this young man to state with any degree of exactness the kind of a business man he will make. He may find that Mr. Blank and he cannot harmonize. That the business is distasteful; that he can do better in other lines. But it is dollars to doughnuts that this young man will make a notable success in his life, wherever he goes, for he carries the credentials of a sterling character right with him.

His credentials are these: A good, clean, well-cared-for, unabused body. An eye that looks a man squarely in the face; penmanship, that is plain and legible; face, hands and shoes clean. Language that is chaste, spelling that is faultless. It is possible, of course, that a man may have all of these credentials and be a bad man, for "a man may smile and be a villain still." Yet the majority of business men will take a chance on the clean young man rather than the unclean.

It pays a young man to keep himself attractive and neat. There is a way of presenting one's own personality so that it is a man's best credentials. Opportunities are not so plentiful just now that a young man can afford to neglect anything that will advance his possibilities up into the line of probabilities, and, from that up to actualities, where he has privilege of showing the kind of stuff of which he is made.