

many of whom secretly admired and liked Mark, gathered about with horrified yet fascinated eyes. Nero was about to give them his faded Roman nerves a fresh fillip.

As for Mark, he struggled impotently against his bonds. A black roughly quelled his writhings.

"It's a long, long way to Tipperary," said he to himself. "I'm going back home!"

He fastened his eyes upon the great crystal lens of Nero, which he had left in his golden platter on the citrus-wood table.

"I'm in New York; the year is 1915," he

repeated, while the giant black held him fast and another turned the key in the metal box.

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VIII.

THE kneadings and proddings continued. It seemed to Mark as if a million needles were being driven into his body. Languidly he opened his eyes and gazed into the pallid face of Oscar Swenson of Swenson's Turkish Baths, whose muscles had been developed in the rubbing-room.

"You bane come to?" Oscar smiled.

"Where you get it, such a bad one?"

Mark Forrest closed his eyes wearily.

"In Rome," said he.

"Rome!" exclaimed Oscar. "Now, if you say Utica or Syracuse, I feel not surprise. But Rome! I never know they bane even have a barroom in Rome!"

Two hours later Mark Forrest ambled down Sixth avenue with much on his mind. The least of his troubles was the new sample line of the Novelty Neckwear Company. Presently he stared curiously at the weather-worn sign of "Professor Balthazar, Crystal Gazer." Across the street he beheld a florist's shop and bought a huge bunch of Roman lilies.

Then, of course, he went into the pas-

ticceria. The pretty Italian girl was there, fortunately without custom. With a courage formerly foreign to him, Mark presented the lilies to her.

"Oh!" she cried. "You have been a stranger! And now you come with Roman lilies. For so long I have not seen them!"

She smiled, and again Mark noted her perfect teeth, and the dimple.

"Tell me, please," he said, "what is your name?"

"My name?" She smiled at him again.

"My name is Simonetta."

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FOUR DOLLARS A WEEK

(Continued from Page 5)

He was the first down in the morning. He was the youngest child and the youngest employe who had ever been trusted with a key to the outer door. He worked like a soldier. He loved his work. He did a man's toil and then looked about for more—and found it—and did it—and did it better than it had ever been done before.

And all the while he was cheerful and occupied and enthusiastically interested. He invented a new and a better system for keeping count of the incoming rolls of cloth and the outgoing consignments to the cutters, which saved time and money. He assumed, not arrogantly, but authoritatively, direction and colonelcy over branches of the routine surrounding his department. He had personality and push. He made his circle larger. He carried conviction. He was a natural born success in commerce.

He didn't look down on the tired, listless boy who wrote the tickets. He didn't have much time for him. But he did him a fine turn by stopping five minutes at his table one day and discovering that 50 per cent of the ticket work could be shortened by ordering a few rubber stamps.

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When the young failure was sick for a day or two the wildfire boy did his work. And it was a revelation. For that day or two the ticket writing department took on a blaze of energy and an importance it had never been dreamed to enfold. And the day's job was done in about an hour, in addition to all his other work, and the tickets were written as they had never been written—in beautiful figures, absolutely accurate, legible, clean, prompt.

Then he went on a two weeks' vacation and the ticket boy did his work while he was gone. And never had there been as much trouble in a year with the "piece goods" as there was in those two weeks. The figures never tallied. Pieces of cloth recorded as in stock were nowhere. Bolts of cloth scheduled out and credited as dismembered by the knife, vivisectioned into Sunday suits for the country trade, stood insolently on their bottom-ends and said: "Cut up, are we? Well, we don't feel that way."

And when the eat-'em-up stock boy came back he found everybody verging on dementia tailorino and his beloved department edgewise. He cast a not unsympathetic, but entirely pitying, smile on the confused young bookworm, rolled up his sleeves, buzzed and whirled and spun about and, in two hours, had his stock as spick and span and regular and balanced as it had been before he went away.

"There's some boy," said the foreman of the cutters. "Gold and dynamite, that youngster. He'll own a factory some day or I'll eat my knife. He's got pep and horse-sense and his eyes open. Watch him walk—can that kid travel? He don't hit the floor at all. Say—he's bossing me already. And the funny part of it is he tells me right."

And, as the film placards say, so it went on.

Four years went on like that.

At the end of that time the Ty Cobb of the plant was manager of the stockroom, assistant buyer of all the cloth, buttons, linings, tapes, hooks and eyes and thread, was drawing \$18 a week, had a roltop desk, wore patent leather shoes and was engaged to the niece of the boss.

The other lad was—what do you suppose? He was still writing tickets; and no better than before. And he was still drawing \$4 a week and biting his lip in silence as the foreman of the cutters pelted him with anathemas and called down the wrath of the God of Broadcloth upon his book-stuffed head.

And the long-suffering boy, who had grown pale and tall and morose, who had forgotten what free week day daylight looked like, who still read literature late into the tired nights and who had never known what it was to have 50 cents for his own, resigned.

His father had found a position for himself which paid enough to support his whole family. And the no-good boy, who had grown to be a disappointed old man, was told that he might now return to school and take up his life where he had resigned it—where he had broken off the thread to write pasteboard tickets and hear himself reviled by a coarse workman for four years—1,400 working days—for \$4 a week—\$800.

Everybody in the factory wished him well when he left. Every one agreed that school was a good place for the overgrown child. Every one agreed that any place was better for him than a place where there was serious and important work to be done.

The rising boy who was now superintending the stockroom shook him by the hand heartily. He wasn't a bad sort at all. He knew his superiority and made no effort to hide either it or the fact that he knew it. But he wasn't cocky over it. He was merely wonderfully assured of himself.

So he gave the departing brother some crisp, sage, sane advice about industry and bucking the line, advised him to become an undertaker or a barber or a school-teacher, and hurried back to feel of some new beaver that had just come up the freight elevator.

And the boy, with no regrets and almost with a fear that it wasn't really true, walked out and went home.

Next day he was bewildered when he felt the pressure dissipated. The sodden, sickening drill was over. He didn't have to rise by 6, take his bundle of luncheon in a paper bag and ride with laborers and yawning shop girls and white-faced counter snappers in foul, packed cars to the smelly, smoky wholesale region, to take up the endless hours of muggy toil that began with punching a galling time-clock and ended with the searching of his book by the timekeeper to see that he hadn't concealed a stolen yard of sleeve-lining in it.

He went to school instead.

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There he found other boys and girls. They were merry and mischievous and young and free. They knew nothing of factories, nothing of tickets and cutters and weird institutions like timekeepers and foremen.

They started the day easily. They got to school in time to hear the big bell ring cheerily for the opening of classes. Polite and dignified tutors greeted them genially and talked to them of the mysteries of geometry, the beauties of rhetoric, the secrets of science, the intricacies of Latin constructions, the wonders of history.

Some four years older than his class fellows, our boy absorbed more readily

than the others. Besides, he had learned much from his readings. Furthermore, he was hungrily eager. Every moment was a honeyed joy, doubly so for what it was and for what it was not. So he became the foremost scholar of his class. He leaped a grade here and another there, he doubled his studies and overtook pupils several years ahead, and when he was graduated he had made up two of the fruitless, useless, driven, exiled years that he had served in the black hole of cloth cutters.

♦ ♦ ♦

Not only had he won the credits and the diploma in shorter time and with more brilliant honors than had ever been known in that school before, but he was proclaimed a marvel; he was promulgated a prodigy; he was prophesied the career of a genius.

Nobody in the factory kept track of him through the two school years. Now and then he met one of the hands and told him briefly that he was still at his studies. But in the same school was a grandson of the foreman of cutters, and he told at home with envy and respect of the brilliant work which our young uncaged bird was achieving.

"Don't tell me about that loafer," his grandfather used to say, as he sat in a rocker, a pipe between his jaws and his stocking feet propped against the radiator. "Maybe he is good at Latin. I guess that's what he wrote most of them tickets in—nobody couldn't read them."

Our boy was now nearly 20. A college career was out of the question. He had already cost more than his father's purse could weather. So he had to find work.

But now he sought work of more congenial nature. He found it in a newspaper office, the editorial room. Fancy not that a reporter's work, especially a young and new reporter's work, is all romance and big words and fine excitement and fame. But it is nothing like the stockroom of a clothing factory, either.

And here, strangely, no one complained that he was lacking in energy or fire or resourcefulness or even in accuracy. He struck that newspaper office like a meteor. He brought to it vim and talent and skill and foresight and an appetite for work and a natural inventiveness and a ready flow of words and a refined and rarely matured viewpoint on daily life that sent thrills up the nerves of withered editors.

They couldn't believe it. Again and again they sent him against the phalanxes of the difficult, the trying, the impossible. He stormed them, he leaped them. In a year he was the most efficient "getter" and at the same time the most telling writer on the sheet. His salary hurdled the accustomed barriers.

He reported great national and international conventions and events of historic importance. He wrote poetry for the feature pages and comedy for the comic section. He became a subeditor. He grew into the city editor's post before he was 23. He tired of desk work and became a critic, then a special writer, then an editorialist, then a star correspondent who touched nothing but the high spots of the world's affairs.

And then he wrote a play—a play about a factory, with all the pathos of poverty and the fallacies of fictional freedom.

The play hit that town like he had hit that newspaper office. In one day word seemed to spread to every corner of the

community of millions that it was a classic "hit," a smashing success.

Every newspaper wrote of him. His photograph, his biography, his antecedents even, became matters of public attention and general curiosity.

He was 20 now. He was the hero of the literary circles and the lion of those soirees and functions that he chose to attend out of the many that were sent at him. Men went home and woke their sleepy wives to boast that they had shaken his hand.

His royalties came in in waves. His income was \$1,000 a week, with more and more in prospect. He had two automobiles and a secretary and was called by name by the head waiters.

The author stood near the theater at the height of the gratifying run. A taxi drew to the curb and a man and a woman alighted. The man wore evening clothes of perfect pattern. The author glanced at the trim of the coat and recognized it as No. 377. The man in it had been the boy of phenomenal promise in the almost forgotten factory.

The man dropped his wife's arm with a jolt when he saw the author. He walked over and extended his hand. The author took it with joy, for the fellow had been an amiable and decent chap long ago, when the author had been an anemic failure, a crawling disappointment, a weed in an alley-patch cultivating commercial vegetables for market.

"It's the first night I could get away," said the man. "We're busy over to the factory. You know, I'm general manager now—four thou' a year."

"Good," said the author. "I'm proud you are and I'm glad you are. I bet you're the best manager that plant ever had. And you'll own it yet."

"Thanks," said the manager. "Who am I you should be proud of me? You're a great man now. The whole town is talking about you. When I tell people I knew you years ago they laugh in my face. When I heard you wrote this big hit I made up my mind to see it. I admit I never believed in the old days you had that kind of stuff in you."

"The shop wasn't conducive to it," said the author with a smile.

"No, you were a long ways from home there."

"Oh, by the way," said the author, "is the foreman of cutters still alive?"

"Sure," said the manager. "And still on the job."

"Here," said the author, writing on a card, "give him this—it's a pass for two. I want him to see the play."

"He's seen it," said the manager. "He was here the opening night—in the gallery."

"What did he think of it?" asked the author, rather eagerly.

"Swore you never wrote it—said you couldn't even write tickets."

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Adam at the Front

Here is a true story from Paris. A batch of conscripts were to be examined by the army doctor. The latter, after seeing that everything was ready in the room, called out to the soldier attendant:

"Send in the first man."

The attendant shouted: "Adam!" And in walked a man whose name it was, and who happened to be the first on the list.