

The Main Chance

BY Meredith Nicholson

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CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

They spent the day in the saddle riding over the range. The ridiculous character of the Poindexter undertaking could not spoil the real value of the land. There was, Saxton could see, the making here of a great farming property; he felt his old interest in outdoor life quickening as he rode back to the house in the evening.

Snyder cooked supper for both of them, while Saxton repaired a decrepit windmill which had been designed to supply the house with water. He had formed a poor opinion of the caretaker, who had no well-defined duties. There was nothing for any one to do unless the range were again stocked and cattle raising undertaken as a serious business. Saxton was used to rough men and their ways. He had a happy faculty of adapting himself to the conventional capacities of illiterate men, and enjoyed drawing them out and getting their point of view; but Snyder's was not a visage that inspired confidence. He had a great shock of black hair and a scruffy beard. He lacked an eye, and he had a habit of drawing his head around in order to accommodate his remaining orb to any necessity. He did this with an insinuating kind of deliberation that became tiresome in a long interview.

"This place is too fancy to be of much use," the man vouchsafed. "You may find some dude that wants to plant money where another dude has dug the first hole; but I reckon you'll have a hard time catching him. A real cattleman wouldn't care for all this house. It might be made into a stable, but a horse would look ridiculous in here. You might have a corn crib made out of it; or it would do for a hotel if you could get dudes to spend the summer here; but I reckon it's a little hot out here for summer boarders."

"The only real value is in the land," said Saxton. "I'm told there's no better on the river. The house is a handicap or would be so regarded by the kind of men who make money out of cattle. Have you ever tried rounding up the cattle that strayed through the fences? The Poindexter crowd must have branded their last calves about two years ago. Assuming that only a part of them was sold or run off, there ought to be some two-year-olds still loose in this country and they'd be worth finding."

"Yer jokin' I guess. These fellers around here are good fellers, and all that, but I guess they don't give anything back. I guess we ain't got any cattle coming to us."

"How've you been reporting to, Snyder?"

"How's that?"

"Who have you been considering yourself responsible to?"

"Well, Jim Wheaton at the Clark National hired me, and I reckon I'd report to him if I reported to anybody. But if you're going to run this shobang and want to be reported to, I guess I can report to you."

"I want you to report to me," said John, quietly. "In the first place I want the house and the other buildings cleaned out. After that the fences must be put in shape. And then we'll see if we can't find some of our cows. You can't tell; we may open up a real ranch here and go into business."

"Well, if you're the boss I'll do it your way. I got along all right with Wheaton."

Saxton determined to leave for Clark on the following morning, and formulated in his mind the result of his journey and plans for the future of the incongruous combination of properties that had been entrusted to him. He sat for an hour looking out over the moonlit valley. He followed the long sweep of the plain, through which he could see for miles, a bright ribbon of the river. A train of cars rumbled far away, on the iron trail between the two oceans, intensifying the loneliness of the strange house.

"It seem to find only the lonely places," he said aloud.

In the morning he ate the breakfast of coffee, hardback and bacon which Snyder prepared. Snyder rode with him to the river station.

"Give my regards to Mr. Wheaton," he said, as Saxton swung himself into the train. "You'll find me here at the old stand when you come back."

"A queer customer and undoubtedly a bad lot," was Saxton's reflection.

When Saxton had written out the report of his trip he took it to Wheaton, to get his signature before forwarding it to London. He looked upon the cashier as his professor, and wished to avail himself of Wheaton's knowledge of the local conditions affecting the several properties that had now passed to his care. Wheaton unobtrusively wished to be of assistance, and in their discussion of the report, the cashier made many suggestions of value, of which Saxton was glad to avail himself.

"As to the Poindexter place," said Saxton finally. "I've been advertising it for sale in the hope of finding a buyer, but without results. The people at headquarters don't bother about the details of these things, but I can't see why we should maintain a caretaker. There's nothing to take care of. That house is worse than useless. I'm going back in a few days to see if I can't coax home some of the cattle we're entitled to, and then I suppose we may as well dispense with Snyder."

man Snyder came along one day and asked for a job and I sent him out until they thinking he'd keep things in order until the Trust Company sent its own representative here."

"There were times when Wheaton's black eyes contracted curiously, and this was one of the times."

"I don't like discharging a man that you've employed," Saxton replied.

"Oh, that's all right. You can't keep him if he performs no service. Don't trouble about him on my account. How soon are you going back there?"

"Next week some time."

Saxton was not surprised when he returned to the ranch to find that Snyder had made no effort to obey his instructions. He made his visit unexpectedly. He reached the house in the middle of the morning and found the front door bolted and barred on the inside. After much pounding he succeeded in brining Snyder to the door, evidently both surprised and displeased at his interruption.

"Howdy, boss," was the salutation of the frowsy custodian; "I wasn't feeling just right to-day and was takin' a little nap."

"The great hall showed signs of a carousal. The dirt had increased since Saxton's first appearance. Empty bottles that had been doing service as candlesticks stood in their greasy shrouds on the table. Saxton sat down on a keg, which had evidently been recently emptied. He resolved to make quick work of Snyder.

"How many cattle have you rounded up since I was here?" he demanded.

"Well, to tell the truth," began Snyder, "there ain't been much time for doing that since you was here."

"No; I suppose you were busy mending fences and cleaning house. Now you have been drawing forty dollars a month for doing nothing. I'll treat you better than you deserve and give you ten dollars bonus to get out. I believe the poul in the corral belongs to you. We'll let it go at that. Here's your money."

"Well, I guess as Mr. Wheaton hired me, he'd better fire me."

"Yes, I spoke to Mr. Wheaton about you. He understands that you're goin'."

"He does, does he?" Snyder replied with a sneer. "He must have forgot that I had an arrangement with him by the year."

"Well, it's all off," said Saxton, rising. He began throwing open the windows and doors to let in fresh air.

"Well, I guess I'll have to see Mr. Wheaton," Snyder retorted, finding that Saxton was paying no further attention to him. He collected his few belongings, watching in astonishment the violence with which Saxton was gathering up and disposing of rubbish.

"He seems to be more interested in Wheaton than Wheaton is in him," observed Saxton to himself.

Saxton spent a week at Great River. He hired a man to repair fences and put the house in order. He visited several of the large ranch owners and asked them for aid in picking out the scattered remnants of the Poindexter herd. Nearly all of the volunteers to help, with the result that he collected about one hundred cattle and sold them at Great River for cash. He expected to see or hear of Snyder in the town but the fellow had disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

James Wheaton was 35 years old, and was reckoned among the solid business men of Clarkson. He had succeeded far beyond his expectations and was fairly content with the round of the ladder that he had reached. He never talked about himself and as he had no intimate friends it had never been necessary for him to give confidences. His father had been a harness-maker in a little Ohio town; he and his older brother were expected to follow the same business; but the brother grew restless under the threat of enforced apprenticeship and prevailed on James to run away with him. They became tramps and enjoyed themselves roaming through the country, until finally they were caught stealing in a little Illinois village and both were arrested.

James was discharged through the generosity of his brother in taking all the blame on himself; the older boy was sent to a reformatory alone. James then went to Chicago, where he sold newspapers and hauled boots for a year until he found employment as a train boy, with a company operating on various lines running out of Chicago. This gave him a wide acquaintance with Western towns, and incidentally with railroads and railroad men. He grew tired of the road, and obtained at Clarkston a position in the office of Timothy Margrave, the general manager of the Transcontinental, which, he had heard, was a great primary school for ambitious boys.

He attended night school, was assiduous in his duties, and attained in due course the dignity of a desk as which he took the envious of Margrave's callers, indexed the letter books and copied figures under the direction of the chief clerk. After a year, hearing that one of the Clark National Bank's messengers was about to resign, he applied for this place. Margrave recommended him; the local manager of the news agency coached for his integrity, and in due course he won the streets of Clarkson with a long bill-book, the outward and visible sign of his position as messenger. He was steadily promoted in the bank and felt his past receding further and farther behind him.

When, at an important hour of his life, Wheaton was promoted to be paying teller, he was in the receiving teller's cage. He had known that the more desirable position was vacant and had heard his fellow clerks speculating as to the possibility of a promotion from among their number. Thompson, the cashier, had a nephew in the bank; and among the clerks he was thought to have the best chance. They all knew that the directors were in session, and several whose tasks for the day were finished, lingered later than was their wont to see what would happen. Wheaton kept quietly at the board room. It ruzed at last, and Wheaton wiped his pen with a little more than his usual care as he waited for the result of the summons. This was on his twenty-fifth birthday.

"Mr. Wheaton!" The other clerks looked at one another. The question that had been uppermost with all of them for a week past was answered; Thompson's nephew slammed his book shut and carried it into the vault. Wheaton put aside the balance sheet over

which he had been lingering and went into the directors' room. There had been no note of joy among his associates. He knew that he was not popular with them; he was not, in their sense, a good fellow. When they rushed off after hours to the ball games or horse races, he never joined them. When their books did not balance he never volunteered to help them. As for himself, he always balanced, and did not need their help; and they hated him for it. This was his hour of triumph, but he went to his victory without the cheer of his comrades.

Later, when need arose for creating the position of assistant cashier, it was natural that the new desk should be assigned to Wheaton. He was faithful and competent; neither Porter nor Thompson had a son to install in the bank; and, as they said to each other and to their fellow directors, Wheaton had two, distinguished qualifications—he did his work and he kept his mouth shut.

In the course of time Thompson's health broke down and the doctors ordered him away to New Mexico, and again there seemed nothing to do but to promote Wheaton. Thompson wished to sell his stock and resign, but Porter would not have it so; but when, after two years, it was clear that the cashier would never again be fit for continuous service in the bank, Wheaton was duly elected cashier and Thompson was made vice president.

The relations between Porter and Wheaton were strictly of a business character. This was not by intention on Porter's part. He assumed that at some time he or Thompson had known all about Wheaton's antecedents; and after so many years of satisfactory service, during the greater part of which the bank had been protected against Wheaton, as against all the rest of the employees, by a bonding company, he accepted the cashier without any question. Before Evelyn's return he had one day expressed to Wheaton his satisfaction that he would soon have a home again, and Wheaton remarked with civil sympathy that Miss Porter must now be "quite a young lady."

"Oh, yes; you must come up to the house when we get going again," Porter answered.

Wheaton had seen the inside of few houses in Clarkson. He had a recollection of having been sent to Porter's several times, while he was still an errand boy in the bank, to fetch Porter's bag on occasions when the president had been called away unexpectedly. He remembered Evelyn Porter as she used to come as a child and sit in the carriage outside the bank to wait for her father; the Porters stood to him then, and now, for wealth and power.

Baridan had a contempt for Wheaton's intellectual deficiencies, and praise of Wheaton's steadiness and success vexed him as having some sting for himself, but his own amiable impulses got the better of his prejudices, and he showed Wheaton many kindnesses. When the others at The Bachelors nagged Wheaton, it was Baridan who threw himself into the controversy to take Wheaton's part. He took him to call at some of the houses he knew best, and though this was a matter of propriety he knew nevertheless that he preferred Wheaton to the others in the house. Wheaton was not noisy nor pretentious and the others were sometimes both.

Wheaton soon found it easy to do things that he had never thought of doing before. He became known to the florist and haberdasher; there was a little Hamiltonian at a certain liverman's which Warry Baridan drove a good deal, and he had learned from Warry how pleasant it was to drive out to the new country club in a runabout instead of using the street car, which left a margin of plebeian walking at the end of the line. But while he acquired the superficial graces, he did not lose his instinctive thrift; he had never attempted to plunge, even on what his associates at The Bachelors called "sure things," and he was equally incapable of personal extravagances. If he bought flowers he sent them where they would tell in his favor. If he had five dollars to give to the Ice Fund for the poor, he considered that when the newspaper printed his name in its list of acknowledgments, between Timothy Margrave, who gave fifty dollars, and William Porter, who gave twenty-five, he had received an adequate return on his investment.

(To be continued.)

Women and the Stage.

David Belasco was in his best mood at a dinner preceding his vacation—his first vacation in twenty long, hard years. In the course of a learned review of barefoot dancing, problem plays and snufflike outcroppings of stage history, he smiled and said:

"It may be true, as some have claimed, that immoral plays are due to the immoral taste of woman. Yes, that may be true; but, gentlemen, did you ever watch at the theater an elderly, staid, perhaps somewhat unprepossessing wife, brooding over a husband a little younger than herself? These wives, surely, are no supporters of the immoral stage spectacle. Such a wife sat in one of my theaters during the production of a drama. The heroine, a beautiful girl, said at a dramatic moment:

"Merciful heavens, I am unloved!"

"The wife rose hurriedly.

"Come, Clarence," she murmured sternly. "We've had enough of this. I'm not going to have you drinkin' in any Salome dance or disreputable act."

A Business Secret.

Mr. Isaacs—I soils you dot coat at a great sacrifice.

Customer—But you say that of all your goods. How do you make a living?

Mr. Isaacs—Meln freint, I makes a schmal profit on de paper and string—New York Weekly.

He Beat It.

"Where did you steal that mat from?" demanded the policeman as he seized the tramp.

"I didn't steal it," said the tramp.

"A lady up the street gave it to me and told me to beat it."—Judge.

The easiest and safest way to destroy ordinary black gunpowder is to throw it into water, which dissolves the saltpeter.

FARM AND GARDEN

Farm Telephones.

In some parts of the country telephones are becoming very common. It seems that once a telephone is established in the family it is there to stay. Other sections of the country are very much behind the times in this respect, probably because no one has gone ahead with the preliminary arrangements.

A farm telephone is not only a great luxury, but it is fast becoming an absolute necessity. With the addition of more business to the farm every year and the scarcity of labor anything that saves steps is worth money. When you get accustomed to doing business over the telephone you realize its great value.

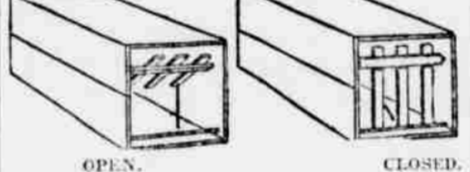
A short time ago I heard a farmer order 100 bushels of seed oats by phone from another farmer about ten miles away. He had seen a sample at the fair last fall and made the negotiations accordingly. The business was transacted in about five minutes while the farmer was sitting at his desk after reading his morning mail left at the box by the rural delivery man. It would have taken him all day to get his mail and drive to the other farmer and buy his seed oats.

But there is a social side to farm life that is fostered by the telephone. It often happens that a woman is left alone for the day and she can easily make arrangements to have a neighbor call and spend the time pleasantly, instead of feeling lonely. Then it is so easy to make social arrangements for evenings or to meet friends as occasion requires.

There are always people in a neighborhood who are public-spirited enough to go ahead with the necessary arrangements to establish a telephone service. Others should encourage them promptly by subscribing to the fund required. Everybody is benefited, because the arrangement is mutual in the neighborhood. — Agricultural Epitomist.

A Trap Nest.

The accompanying plan of trap nest is quite simple and can be made from a box of suitable size. It should be 12 or 14 inches square by 20 or 24



inches long. The slats should be nailed to a crosspiece about one-quarter the distance from the top. A couple of nails are driven through the box and into the crosspiece to swing on. Half way back, on the inside, a narrow piece of board is nailed, back of which the nest is made.

To set the trap simply raise the slats inward from the bottom 8 or 9 inches high and place a small stick under one of the slats. As the hen enters the door is raised off the stick, which falls to the floor. There should be about five slats for a box 12 or 14 inches in width, slats close against inch strip at bottom.

When Vegetables Mature.

The following list will show the gardener how long after planting the various common vegetables will mature their growth and be ready for use:

Bush beans	40 to 65 days
Pole beans	50 to 80 days
Beets	60 to 80 days
Early cabbage	10 to 150 days
Carrots	75 to 100 days
Cauldlowers	75 to 150 days
Celery	120 to 150 days
Sweet corn	80 to 90 days
Cucumbers	60 to 80 days
Eggplants	100 to 140 days
Onion seed	130 to 150 days
Parsnips	90 to 120 days
Parsley	30 to 120 days
Parsnips	125 to 150 days
Peas	40 to 80 days
Peppers	100 to 140 days
White potatoes	80 to 140 days
Pumpkins	100 to 140 days
Radishes	20 to 40 days
Spinach	30 to 60 days
Bush squashes	60 to 80 days
Late squashes	120 to 160 days
Tomatoes	100 to 140 days
Turnips	100 to 140 days

Study Fertilizer.

A few simple fertilizer maxims are so important that they should be fixed in the mind. Per cent is only another way for saying parts in 100. Fertilizers may be direct or indirect in action. The former contains needed plant food, the latter enables the plant to get food from soil or air. Lime is not plant food under common conditions; it corrects a bad condition of soil—sourness—and unlocks soil materials. Sulphate of iron (copperas), sulphate of copper (blue stone), sulphate of magnesia (Epsom salts) and sulphate of lime (gypsum) are among these indirect fertilizers.

To Sharpen a Lawn Mower.

First remove the handle, to get it out of the way. Take a flat file and file the edges of the revolving blades, being careful to file each blade alike, and evenly, so all parts will strike the horizontal or stationary blade evenly and alike at its entire length. File also the horizontal blade, then adjust the revolving blades so they will slightly rub on the horizontal blade.

Hog Cholera.

In the way of treatment the United States Bureau of Animal Industry has discovered a vaccine which saves about 80-odd per cent after cholera appears in a herd, and a larger per cent if vaccinated before the disease is introduced. Time will demonstrate the practicability of this method. The bacteriology department of the Kansas State Agricultural College is also working along these lines, but is not yet ready to announce anything but progress.

When symptoms of cholera appear in a herd, it is wise to dip the whole herd, disinfect their quarters thoroughly, give them a slight change in feed, and add to this about five drops of tincture of prickly ash for each hundred pounds of hog once or twice a day. The old remedy of wood ashes and salt is good in many instances. A little powdered sulphate of copper, dried sulphate of iron or charcoal given daily when the animals are not perfectly healthy frequently does much good. After all, the old adage, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, holds good here.

Saves the Fertilizer.

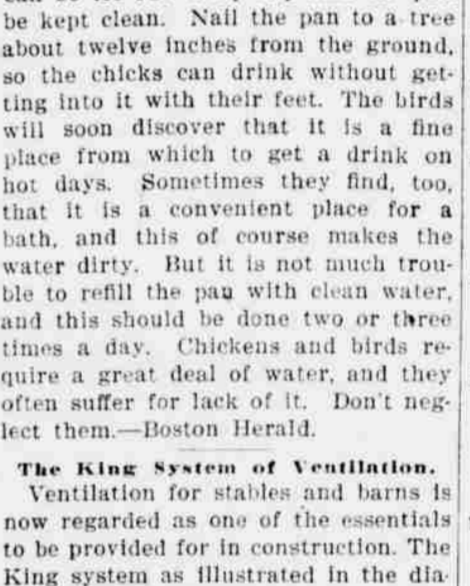
Fertilizer is expensive. By the old method of distributing it there was usually enough wasted to represent a pretty penny. Then came along a Virginia man and invented the hand fertilizer dropper. This device consists of an odd-shaped bucket, running to a point at the bottom and having a small opening there, through which the contents filters. A hinged valve, operated by a rod that leads to the handle of the bucket, controls the flow. The top of the rod is connected to a crossbar, which runs under the handle of the bucket. This bar is in close reach, and when resting on the top of the bucket the valve is open. To close the valve the operator merely extends a finger and lifts the bar, thus shutting off the fertilizer. The valve flares off the bottom, spreading the fertilizer in a broad, fine stream. For small farms, gardens and lawns this device is of great convenience, and is a money-saver.

Water for the Chicks.

Take an ordinary baking pan and have the tinsmith rivet on an "ear" on one side for nailing to a tree. Have him also make a hole in the bottom in one corner, that the water can be let out every day and the pan be kept clean. Nail the pan to a tree about twelve inches from the ground, so the chicks can drink without getting into it with their feet. The birds will soon discover that it is a fine place from which to get a drink on hot days. Sometimes they find, too, that it is a convenient place for a bath, and this of course makes the water dirty. But it is not much trouble to refill the pan with clean water, and this should be done two or three times a day. Chickens and birds require a great deal of water, and they often suffer for lack of it. Don't neglect them.—Boston Herald.

The King System of Ventilation.

Ventilation for stables and barns is now regarded as one of the essentials to be provided for in construction. The King system as illustrated in the dia-



SHOWING THE VENTILATING FLUES.

gram consists of two sets of flues, one set to admit the fresh air, the other to furnish an escape for the vitiated air. The inlet or fresh air flues should be placed not more than ten feet apart and located in the exterior walls of the barn. The outlet may include one or more flues.

As Usual.

He bought a hoe, a rake, a spade, Some little seeds to sow, At last he got the garden made And saw the green things grow.

He worked the rows and beds each day; Each little plant he knew, And as he smiled and sweat away Oh, joy; how fast they grew.

No floods came down to wash things out, No frosts to kill or blight; No neighbor's chickens scratched about; No kine strayed in at night.

Each seed he planted did its best And not a one did rot— No other garden, East or West, Such vegetables begot.

But still this man did not enjoy These vegetables so now, For every night a neighbor's boy Stole what the garden grew.—Pack.

Spraying to Kill Weeds.

Kill weeds by spraying. To make the spraying solution, empty a hundred pound sack of sulphate of iron into a fifty-gallon barrel; fill to the chime with water and stir with a hoe for a few minutes until dissolved. Strain through several thicknesses of cheesecloth tacked over the manhole of the spraying machine. Apply with a powerful spraying machine, producing a real mist, free from drops. Use about fifty gallons to the acre, and spray on a bright, warm day, or on a dark, damp day; it does not matter, so long as rain does not come within eighteen or twenty hours. This spray will not harm grain crops and will kill wild mustard and various other weeds.

Cross Continent Auto Race.

At the same moment that the Pacific Exposition was set in motion the Mayor of New York, by firing a golden revolver on the steps of the City Hall, started five automobiles on a race across the continent to Seattle. The prize offered by M. R. Guggenheim for the winner is a \$2,000 trophy and \$2,000 in cash. The machines entered are two Ford cars, a big Shawmut carrying three experts, an Italian car and an Acme.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1635—Henry Bull, the new colonial governor, arrived in Boston.

1641—Richard Bellingham chosen colonial governor of Massachusetts.

1692—Jamaica devastated by an earthquake and tidal wave.

1709—Paper money first authorized and issued in New York.

1756—A bankruptcy act was passed by the Rhode Island Assembly.

1770—City of Port au Prince, San Domingo, destroyed by an earthquake.

1774—The Connecticut Committee of Correspondence suggested a time and place for a meeting of the Congress. . . . The Boston port bill went into operation.

1776—Richard Henry Lee introduced a resolution into the Congress, declaring that "the United Colonies are and ought to be, free and independent States." . . . British fleet arrived at Charleston, S. C., to begin the campaign in the South.

1785—John Adams, the first American minister to England, presented to the King.

1805—Peace concluded between the United States and Tripoli.

1832—First reform bill became law in England.

1840—The Unicorn, the first steam vessel from England, reached Boston.

1845—Mexico declared war against the United States.

1848—Whig convention at Philadelphia nominated Zachary Taylor for the presidency.

1859—French and Sardinians defeated the Austrians at Magenta.

1861—A "Bank Convention of the Confederate States" met in Atlanta.

1862—Fort Pillow, Tenn., evacuated by Gen. Beauregard.

1864—The Federals were repulsed in a battle near Cold Harbor, Va. . . . Morgan's forces defeated by Gen. Burbridge, near Lexington, Ky.

1866—Dominion Parliament met for the first time in the new buildings at Ottawa.

1872—President Grant signed the Philadelphia Centennial bill. . . . Republican national convention at Philadelphia nominated Grant and Wilson.

1874—House of Representatives passed a bill for the admission of Colorado to the Union.

1875—Charlotte Cushman made her last appearance on any stage at Easton, Pa.

1889—Fire at Seattle destroyed \$5,000,000 worth of property.

1891—Massacre in Hayti by order of Gen. Hippolyte. . . . Chilean insurgent steamer Itata surrendered to American naval vessels.

1892—The "High-Water Mark" monument on Gettysburg battlefield was dedicated.

1893—Destructive floods in Mississippi.

1893—Business portion of Fargo, N. D., destroyed by fire.

1894—Dedication of the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago.

1895—Motion favoring woman suffrage defeated in the Canadian House of Commons.

1898—Lieut. Hobson sunk the Merrimack in the harbor of Santiago de Cuba.

1900—British under Lord Roberts entered Pretoria.

1902—United States Senate passed the Philippine government bill.

1903—Tornado swept over Gainesville, Ga., with loss of many lives. . . . Cruiser Tacoma launched at San Francisco.

1905—Lewis and Clark Expedition opened at Portland, Ore. . . . Norwegian Parliament proclaimed dissolution of the union with Sweden.

1908—President Roosevelt appointed a national commission on the Conservation of National Resources. . . . An explosion on the cruiser Tennessee killed five men. . . . Jury disagreed on the