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A CHANGE OF SCENE.

BY J. HERBERT WELCH.

TAYLOR was Rockton's most distinguished citizen. While the celebrity of a few of his fellow-townsmen reached beyond the county lines, his name was known throughout the land, or at least where newspapers penetrated and libraries flourished. Rockton was proud of Taylor; it had tendered him a dinner which had been one of the chief events of the Rockton social season, and he had worn with ease and grace the laurel wreath which the town's best oratory had placed upon his brow.

Yet life in Rockton had lost its zest for the young man. It was not, to paraphrase classic language, that he liked the town less, but that he disliked the coldness of its fairest daughter more. He and Elsie Matthews had been engaged. There had been a misunderstanding and a returned ring. Elsie had been haughty and had refused to listen to explanations. Clever as Taylor was in smoothing out the tangles in imaginary loves and making all end happily, he had come to the gloomy conclusion that his own very real love affair was a failure. This was the true inwardness of his feeling that he needed a change of scene.

When Wilcox rang the doorbell imperiously one evening shortly after the brief stop at Rockton of the Eastern express, Taylor's delight at greeting his old friend showed very plainly in his face.

"Hello, old man," cried Wilcox with characteristic breeziness, "you're surprised to see me, I suppose. Well, I'm on my way back to New York from Chicago, and I've stopped over a train to shake hands and smoke a pipe with you. How are you nowadays? I've been reading your last story on the train; it's great. I suppose you know that your name's up among the mixed pickle and oatmeal signs in the Chicago street cars? I hope I'm not interfering with the blaze of genius to-night."

From the depths of easy chairs, with clouds of tobacco smoke drifting between them, Taylor and Wilcox talked. The latter informed his friend that the fires of inspiration were burning low.

"I haven't written a line for a month," he said, "but it's time I began. I have an idea for a new story. A young fellow has a falling out with his girl, goes to New York, conquers the town, and comes back in triumph for his bride. Sounds very friv, doesn't it? But it all depends upon the way it's worked up—contrast between village and metropolis, sociological problem of the drift to cities touched upon, and all that sort of thing, you know. But I can't write it."

"Why not?"

"Because I haven't the material. I want to make the young fellow a newspaper reporter, so that he will see a great many phases of city life. But I've never been inside a New York newspaper office in my life."

Wilcox puffed vigorously on his cigar for a moment.

"It's easy, easy," he exclaimed, suddenly, and with enthusiasm. "Duncan, the managing editor of the Globe, is a good friend of mine; besides, the governor has influence with the publisher. They won't suspect that Thomas Taylor, applicant for a job as reporter, is Mr. T. Livingston Taylor, successful novelist. This is a great scheme. Throw your things together, old man, and come along with me on the midnight train. I'd wait till tomorrow if I hadn't promised to see the Harrington girls off to Europe in the morning. But you have time enough. Great Scott, or rather, great Taylor, it was a happy thought of mine to stop off and see you."

Taylor smiled and smoked thoughtfully. "After all, why not?" he meditated. The adventurous element in the suggestion appealed to him. It would be a distraction, in addition to giving him valuable material. As for the suddenness of his departure there was no one to consult—his parents were dead—but Mrs. McMahon, the housekeeper, she had retired, but he would leave her a note.

"I have half a mind to do it," he exclaimed.

"And I have a whole mind that you shall," responded Wilcox quickly, "so we have a mind and half made up

on this. Now pack your things in a hurry."

As Taylor was taking a farewell look around his disheveled room he failed to observe that the note he had left for Mrs. McMahon had, in the flurry of his preparations, been pushed into a half-open drawer among some old papers.

On the second morning afterward the young men were escorted by a boy through a big room with long tables to the little office in the corner. The editor rose and shook hands cordially with Wilcox.

"Please resume your cold editorial manner, Duncan," exclaimed the latter, laughingly, after he had introduced Taylor. "We have come on a business errand. Mr. Taylor wants to be a newspaper man. He's done—some writing. At college, I remember, he was considered bright at it. If you could squeeze him in, I should consider it a favor."

The editor glanced keenly at Taylor. Ever been on a paper?" he asked.

"Never," replied Taylor.

The editor, tapping his desk gently with a pencil, took another look at the young man, his eye resting for an instant on Taylor's clever face.

"Well," he said, after a slight pause, "we are pretty full just now, and we could give you only beginner's pay, but if you want to try it on that basis I guess we can give you a chance."

"Thank you," said Taylor. "Shall I begin now?"

"Why, just as you please," answered Mr. Duncan in a careless manner that caused Wilcox to smile slyly and wink at his friend.

It would be interesting but impractical to recount the new reporter's experiences of the next few days. He learned several things, one of which was that writing "good stuff" at the rate of a thousand words a day was quite a different matter from gathering facts and writing them out at the rate of a thousand words or more an hour. Duncan had it made evident to him that his weakness was his gathering of facts. He accepted in a humble spirit the chidings of the city editor and the unseeing superiority of the "star reporters." He was waiting for his chance.

The city editor strode over to him and laid the damp sheet of a rival afternoon edition in front of him on the table. Huge black letters reached across the page, announcing: "LIVINGSTON TAYLOR HAS DISAPPEARED."

"Mr. Taylor," said the city editor, not noticing that the young man he was addressing was sitting rigid in his chair and staring at the letters blankly, "just read this story of the disappearance of your namesake, the novelist, and go up and see Mr. Wilcox, who knows him, I think. The novelist may be in the city, and if he is, Wilcox may be able to help us locate him. If you should happen to find the disappearing Taylor, get a good interview with him. There may be a beat for us in this."

Taylor seized his hat. He wanted to get out into the open air as quickly as possible. On the steps leading to the street he read the story. It was brief enough. Tucked away under the big headlines were a few sentences to the effect that Mrs. McMahon, the housekeeper of Livingston Taylor, had notified the police of Rockton that the young man had disappeared in the night about two weeks' before, and that she had neither seen nor heard from him since. His departure had evidently been very hurried, as his room had been left in a state of great disorder. That night he had had a caller, a stranger to Mrs. McMahon. Although it was not known that he had an enemy in the world, murder was feared. Taylor laughed. It was painfully evident that Mrs. McMahon has not found his note.

But he wanted to consider this matter sanely. He could not do it here in this teeming thoroughfare, so he entered a cafe and sought out a little stall. His name pursued him. A man at the bar was reading the story. This thing must be stopped. He decided that the first thing to do was to put the fears of Mrs. McMahon and Rock-

ton at rest by telegraphing. What would he do next? He ordered something to aid him in helping to solve this problem. In a moment his course became clear to him. After an interval of an hour and a half—the time he had decided to give himself in running down and interviewing the novelist—he went back to the office, reported to the city editor as briefly as possible that he had found his man, and began to write.

Taylor, the novelist, had evidently been in an expansive mood when he was interviewed by Taylor, the reporter, for his remarks touching upon the sensations of a man who discovers in the newspapers that he has disappeared were very clever and humorous. His talk had a literary flavor unusual in newspaper interviews. After the copy reader had glanced over a few paragraphs of the story he looked across the room at Taylor with the light of appreciation in his eyes. But when he reached the last page he frowned and came over to the young man, with the copy in his hand.

"Mr. Taylor," he said, "this is good stuff, very good stuff, but you'll have to be more specific in your location of the novelist. This is the point of the story, you know. Just 'in the city' won't do? Where did you see him?"

Taylor turned red. He could think of nothing to say. The address of his own boarding house came suddenly into his mind and he hastily mentioned it, justifying himself with the remembrance of his face in the mirror there that morning.

"Now it's all right. It's a very good story," repeated the copy reader reassuringly, jotting down the address.

Taylor did not wait at the office to see how his announcement of the discovery of the lost novelist looked in print, but while he was lingering over his coffee in a French restaurant up town a newsboy offered him the paper. They had given the interview a prominent place; it read very well, he thought.

Afterward, while he was waiting for a car in front of the playhouse a newsboy offered him the paper. Taylor took it hastily. He had caught sight of his ubiquitous name again. It was the night edition that had first printed the story of his disappearance. Its headlines were as assertive as those of the afternoon. They stated with much positiveness:

"TAYLOR HAS NOT BEEN FOUND."

His landlady had waited up for him. "Mr. Taylor," she cried, hurrying out of the back parlor and catching him on the stairs, "I've been having the funnest time this evening. There's been at least a dozen newspaper reporters here asking for Livingston Taylor, the novelist. None of them seemed to believe me at first when I told them I had never seen, much less, boarded him. I told them that you were the only Mr. Taylor I had. They've got you mixed up some way. Funny, wasn't it?"

"Very," answered Taylor from a dry throat. He had listened to the narrative with an expression of mingled amusement and consternation. As he went to bed he wondered what they would have to say to him at the office in the morning.

They had nothing to say. There was an ominous-looking envelope in his letter box. The typewritten note within, signed by Duncan, was very brief. Taylor glanced at it and snartered out, no longer a member of the Globe's staff. He was chagrined, for newspaper work was beginning to fascinate him, but his paramount feeling was one of relief. He now had nothing to conceal. He decided to continue to gather in New York material for his next story. On his way up-town to see Wilcox he drew from his pocket a copy of the Rockton Globe of the day before. He had been getting the paper regularly from a newspaper advertising agency whose door he had passed every morning. Staring him in the face on the front page of the Globe was a long article about his disappearance. He read it with amusement until he reached the last paragraph, which was as follows:

"Miss Elsie Matthews, who was engaged to Mr. Taylor, has been prostrated by the news of his strange disappearance. She is under the doctor's care at her home on Riverside avenue."

"But say, old man," complained Wilcox an hour later, "it's not the square thing for you to rush off like this. I've hardly had a look at you since you've been here. I want to get up a little dinner in your honor."

"All right, Harry," exclaimed Taylor, heartily but hurriedly, "I'll come back

in about a week—I'll let you know the day—and then I'll eat a dozen dinners, but now I've got to say goodby. I wouldn't miss that train for a fortune."

The next day Wilcox called on Duncan. "I'm sorry for his sake that you had to fire young Taylor," he remarked. "However, Livingston Taylor has not disappeared any more than I have. He'll be in town in a day or two. I'm going to give him a dinner, and I want you to be toastmaster, Duncan. You are the best man for that sort of thing I know." Duncan bowed and smiled modestly in acknowledgment of the compliment. He accepted the invitation.

Through partly drawn curtains in a wide doorway could be seen a long table that glistened with china and silver and was gay with flowers. The guests had almost all arrived. Wilcox had by the arm a very well-groomed and alert-looking young man, and was leading him toward another who was younger and slenderer, but equally unusual in appearance.

"Mr. Taylor, I want to present Mr. Duncan, who is to be our toastmaster, and tell us all what a fine writer you are," said Wilcox, grinning.

The two stared hard at each other for an instant as they gripped hands. "We've met before," remarked Duncan dryly.

"I believe we have," replied Taylor, smiling.

When at last Duncan rose to make his speech of presentation he wore a very grave expression. After he had secured the attention of the table he paused, as if sorely troubled how to say what was in his mind. Suddenly, with a quivering finger pointing at Taylor and a voice that seemed to be trembling with indignation, he exclaimed:

"Ladies and gentlemen, that man there, our guest of honor, is a bunco-steerer."

"Good! Good!" cried Bobby Caruthers. There was applause and laughter and the rattling of glasses. Duncan swallowed a lump in his throat and went on. He told of his experience with a green reporter named Taylor. He gave a strong humorous coloring to the story. It was very effectively done, and Duncan sat down amid great applause.

Slowly and smilingly Taylor arose, smoothing down his vest. He called attention to the fact that the executive head of a great newspaper did not know real merit when he saw it; that every day for nearly two weeks at least a hundred dollars' worth of literature had been thrown into the waste basket. Easily and pleasantly Taylor rambled on, touching in a jocular vein upon the primary cause of his disappearance.

"A month ago," he said, "this was a tremendously serious matter to me. Now, you observe, I smile over it. Things have happened in the meantime. As you know, I disappeared. My home paper reported that I had been unseen for two weeks. Excellent paper! It has taught me that sometimes one must be unseen to be appreciated. It will give me great pleasure to send each of you a piece of wedding cake." —New York Times.

Bluejackets' Strange Pets.

At the review before the King at Malta the pet donkey of the Bacchante, we are told, marched in front of the men. A donkey is a rather bulky sort of pet, but probably no more troublesome than the pet deer of the Terrible. The privilege of keeping pets is very much appreciated by bluejackets, who lavish their spare time and some of their spare cash on strange animals. The Centurion (says the Court Circular) once had a monkey that used to eat with a spoon from a plate and drink from a glass, with a dinner napkin tucked under his chin the while. The Caesar had a pet goose some time back. Cats and dogs, of course, are common on board ship. The French warship Marceau had a bantam cock named Boulanger as pet, which crowed whenever the guns were fired. The German Prinz Wilhelm had a gray stork, and the United States Chicago had a pig. Doves, pigeons, blackbirds and peacocks are popular with Italian seamen, and the unfortunate Almirante Oquendo of Spain had a pair of cassowaries as pets.—St. James' Gazette.

A Remarkable Magnet.

A magnet has been made weighing only three and one-half grains which could lift 1560 grains, or 445 times its own weight.

The farmers of Russia own 35,000,000 acres out of 267,000,000 acres.



Comparative test in England of steam turbine and a Sulzer engine showed that below the three-quarter load the reciprocating engine "showed up" best in economy, at three-quarter load the two were equal, and above that the turbine had the advantage.

In an address to the St. Louis Medical Society, some interesting facts about the human heart were brought out. For instance, the mechanical energy expended by the heart in twenty-four hours equals 124 foot tons. A man, seventy years old, would have expended 3,124,800 foot tons of energy in his life, a force sufficient to move a train of fifty loaded cars (twenty tons each) half a mile.

Professor Muthmann, of the Polytechnical Academy of Munich, Bavaria, in a recent lecture before the Chemists' Association, of his city, stated that he had demonstrated that saltpeter can be produced from air by electricity at less than one-fourth its present cost. It has for some time been known to scientists, the professor continued, that nitric acid can be formed by passing high electric currents through moist air between two platinum poles, and suitable apparatus is all that is now needed for the manufacture of nitrates on a large scale.

No white pigments have been found in feathers, and the whiteness of white feathers is ascribed to total reflection of light from their exposed surfaces. Some have supposed the reflection to be from air spaces, or bubbles, in the feather structure, but R. M. Strong, of Haverford College, says that the white effect is mainly dependent, as in the case of snow or horizontal glass, upon the small size of the structural elements. These have a large number of surfaces so placed for any position of the eye that there is a maximum reflection to the eye, and almost no absorption by the unpigmented feather surface.

A Scottish power scheme of great interest is that which has been recently approved by the British Parliament, and which will soon be under way. It is proposed to generate electricity in the vicinity of the coal mines, and to transmit it to the city of Glasgow and industrial establishments along the Clyde in the neighborhood of that city. Three generating plants will be established, located at Yoker, Motherwell and Crookston, and the ultimate capacity of this trio will be 25,000 horse power. The two first mentioned will be built at once, but the initial installation will be only about half of the total contemplated.

A Norse Hat Saga.

A felt hat blew off a tourist's head last year as he was leaning out of a railway train window, in Sweden. Of the man himself nothing further is known, but the felt hat has become famous all over the north of Europe. An employe of the line picked up the hat where it lay, and, being an honest man, he tried high and low to find its owner. Finally, all local efforts failing, he ticketed it and sent to the next station, to be claimed by the owner. No such person appeared, and the hat was sent on from station to station, an additional ticket being stuck on each time it set out. Thus it has run through the whole of Sweden and Norway, has been at Upsala and Trondhjem, at Christiania and Goteborg and Malmo, has been sent on to Zealand and Finland, and is now being sent through the north of Germany, covered with labels inside and out. And if it is no longer a fit headgear it is at all events a remarkable monument of northern honesty and perseverance.—Westminster Gazette.

Oil Engines For Palestine.

The demand for oil engines in Palestine is steadily increasing. Last year ninety-four were imported. They are chiefly used for irrigating the orange gardens. Quite a number of oil engines are also used in flour mills. The majority of the engines imported into the Holy Land are of from three to four horse-power. They come chiefly from Germany.

It has been decided by the London School Board to appoint six oculists, at a total cost of \$4865, for one year, to examine the eyes of the scholars.