

# Pearson's Paper

(Formerly The Fool-Killer)

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## Pearson's Paper

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James Larkin Pearson - - - Editor  
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### INSTRUCTIONS

When you send in clubs it is not necessary to write long letters. A correct list of names and addresses, with money order or check to cover same, is enough. It is best to use my printed order blanks, a supply of which will be sent on request.

If you have something important to say, condense it all you can and write it on a separate sheet of paper. Remember I am very busy, and it takes lots of time to read long letters, to say nothing of answering them. I would like to write personal letters to all of you friends every little bit, but it is impossible.

If you fail to get the paper within a reasonable time, let me know, but do it in a friendly way. Don't kick and raise a fuss, for I am doing the very best I can.

JAMES LARKIN PEARSON  
Boomer, - - - North Carolina.

### MY LETTER TO YOU

Well, here we are at another "parting of the ways." This is a world of continual changes, and everything that mortal man can engage in must come to an end some time. So this is to announce that our old friend "The Fool-Killer," is dead and gone. It lived a good deal longer than I had any idea it would live when I started it thirteen years ago. Its journey through this troublesome world has been a life-and-death struggle from beginning to end. I am sure that no other paper ever did exist and live for any length of time under quite such trying conditions. Its life has many times hung by a thread, and a mighty weak thread, at that. The first time I gave it up to die was in 1914, just after the war started. But it didn't die. It didn't even miss an issue. Not then. It has missed a number of issues from first to last. At least once a year since 1914 I have fully made up my mind to let it die. But in spite of all I could do to help it shuffle off, it just wouldn't die. Just about the time I ordered its coffin and picked out a place to dig its grave, it would suddenly open its eyes and say, "Hello, Pearson, I ain't dead yet.

Please bring me a ton of paper and a bucket of ink. I'm hungry as a bear." And that always settled it. I couldn't resist such an appeal, and therefore The Fool-Killer kept right on living.

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I want to make it plain right here that the trouble hasn't been lack of income or lack of interest among the readers. The people have just been crazy over The Fool-Killer since the day it started, and they have been more loyal to it than I could have dared to hope. The trouble has been with me. It has been very difficult—almost impossible—for me to do my part. Sickness has been against me. My backwoods location has been against me. And all the conditions surrounding me have conspired to make it more and more difficult for me to do my part in getting it out. Consequently it was not to be expected that the people would rally to its support to any great extent when it was not being attended to properly at this end of the line. But in spite of all my personal failures and short-comings, the readers and friends that I found all over the country have stood by the little sheet in a most loyal and faithful manner. If I could only have done my part here at this end of the line I am sure The Fool-Killer might have reached a million circulation.

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But for the reasons stated, The Fool-Killer has just dragged along from year to year until I have become entirely disgusted with it. I wanted it to amount to something, or else give up and die, one or the other, and it did not seem to have any notion of doing either. So here at the beginning of 1923 I have decided to just put it out of its misery for good, and let something better take its place. As I said, I have become very tired of the name. It doesn't appeal to me as it once did. That name used to seem very appropriate for the kind of stuff I wrote. I selected the name in the first place because it seemed to fit my style better than any other name I could think of. But that was away back in ancient times—in 1910. During these thirteen years that have come and gone since The Fool-Killer was born, my mental processes have been going through a gradual change. There were times when I feared it was injuring my mind—destroying my taste for the more refined things in life and litera-

ture. Such a result would seem very natural. But now as I look back over it all I see that the very reverse has happened. I discover that my esthetic tastes, instead of being lowered, have been immeasurably heightened and refined. Somehow there has come to me very gradually a new standard of values, and I am better able to appreciate the really worth-while things in life and literature and every other field of human activity. In other words, my experience with The Fool-Killer has learned me how to think and reason about things.

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There is more than one way in which The Fool-Killer has helped to bring about this result. First and foremost, it gave me enough money to surround myself with the best literature. I had always hungered for good books and magazines, but had never had money to get such things. But when The Fool-Killer began to be a success (and it certainly did prosper for awhile) I was able to at least partially satisfy my hunger for books and literature. I began to buy books rather freely and subscribed for several good magazines and papers. But I didn't buy as many books then as I might have bought, and that is one of my great regrets today. Books were cheap then. A dollar of book-money would go twice as far then as it will go now. And I want to kick myself every time I think of the book bargains I failed to grab while they were in reach. However, the books I did buy were well selected—the classics, history, essays, biography, poetry, and some good fiction. Books of real solid worth they were, for the most part, and I have lived among these books for so many years that they have become a part of my life. Something of the culture they hold has penetrated through my rough exterior and made me a finer-grained and cleaner and better man than I was thirteen years ago.

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When I started The Fool-Killer thirteen years ago I had no other object in view except to tickle the folks with my fool gab and perhaps make enough money to buy some bread and milk. That was all. I had no particular creed nor ism that I wanted to root for. It was just a case of rooting for myself—"root, hog, or die."

But I had to read and study a good deal in order to write

even my fool stuff, all of which tended to broaden and educate me. Being naturally of a studious and inquiring mind, I found myself picking up information and training of many sorts that hadn't so much as entered into my calculations at first.

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The upshot of it all is that the paper that has made me what I am has made me too critical to longer endure the crudity and coarseness of The Fool-Killer. That's why I now consign it to the limbo of things that were, and start this new year with another name—just simply "Pearson's Paper." I am doing that in order to identify the paper with myself, to make it as much as possible the vehicle of my own personality, my changed and refined personality, if you please. My name is now sufficiently known all over the United States to enable it to stand on its own merits, so to speak. So it is to be just "Pearson's Paper" from now on, and it will be just a record of my thinking from month to month. Heretofore I have not been able to make it an honest reflection of my thought, for the reason that I was under the constant strain of trying to be a monkey or a clown. I was trying to keep up my reputation for being "funny." But now the "fun" can go to Halifax if it wants to. When a man acts the monkey for thirteen years he surely has earned the right to quit being a monkey and try to be a man the rest of his days. That's the way I look at it now. Fun is all right in its place, but enough of anything is enough, and I don't find it as easy to keep in the funny, frivolous mood as I used to.

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This is a sort of introduction to the new paper, but I can't give you any exact outline of what the future issues will be. It may be possible that I will take up one important subject each month and devote practically the entire paper that issue to the one subject. That was the plan on which Elbert Hubbard conducted his "Little Journeys." He would make a trip, either in fact or in imagination, to the home of some noted person, and then he would write a sketch of that noted person, devoting each separate issue to one subject only. It proved to be a good plan, and Hubbard's "Little Journeys" have taken their place in the permanent literature of the age.