

The Roanoke Beacon.

\$1.00 a Year, in Advance.

"FOR GOD, FOR COUNTRY, AND FOR TRUTH."

Single Copy, 5 Cents.

VOL. XIV.

PLYMOUTH, N. C., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1903.

NO. 36.

THE FLOWER.

There is a flower we cannot find,
Whose home is on a high,
Some mountain peak of soul or mind
Above our veiled sight.

Though yearning fancy pictures it,
In day-dreams brief and bright,
Where countless rays of glory flit
And nourish it with light.

Our eyes the vision cannot hold,
So beautiful and fleet,
The petals of perpetual gold,
The perfume heavenly sweet.

And thus we know the wondrous flower,
By dust of earth unstained,
Was born in some celestial hour
And called The Unattained.
—William H. Hayne, in the Independent.

Confessions of a Sewing Machine Agent.

By HOLMAN F. DAY.

The Exciting Adventure of
One Young Man in
Learning the
Trade.

TO me, a clerk in a country store and postoffice, almost any sort of change was a welcome one. The monotony of the slup-slop of the molasses-hogshead's bung was accentuated by the tedium of the everlasting gab of the old men who sat behind the stove. There were also the never-ceasing complaints at the wicket by the patrons whose mail averaged a postal-card and a medicine-circular a week. I wanted to be out and away.

From the outside the job of a sewing-machine agent looked like a fairly pleasant one. The agents that drove our way rode in handsomely painted wagons, and the harness was pretty well nicked up. I questioned one of these agents one day. He told me that for folks who liked that kind of a business it would be just the kind of business they would like. But that didn't discourage me. The general agent of a sewing-machine company came along that way to collect some old snags of bills, and I hired with him. Father and brother helped me by "going on" a bond of one thousand dollars. The company fitted me out with a sample machine, horse and team, and put me with another agent to learn the business.

A man who couldn't learn the business with that fellow wouldn't be able to learn anything. It seems strange that I never have heard from or about him in late years. A star of his luminosity ought to be shining above the business horizon with an effulgence to be seen of all men.

First of all, he taught me how to sew plain, but especially how to use the "attachments."

"That's what catches the women-folks every time," said he; "the attachments. They'll never use them in a dog's age, but they must have them. You would think, to hear the women talk, that they were buying the machine so as to tuck and ruffle and hem and furbelaw. So you must give them all the tricks of the machine. And you must also sew the baby's old shoe, and run a cigar-box cover through under the tread, and take a few stitches in a tin can, not necessarily because tin cans are to be fashionable articles of apparel next season, but because it is a guarantee of good faith. And it also gives the agent an opportunity to talk. Never stop talking. Keep your vocal treadle going."

Well, after a few days of instruction, Carter—that was his name—took me out for a canvassing trip. He picked one side of the street in the village where we landed, and I took the other side. That was so I could watch him and see how he did it. He directed me to keep my eye on him. He told me he had been selling sewing-machines ever since he was big enough to lug one of the old-fashioned hand-crank ones into a country sitting-room.

Therefore, like a dutiful pupil, I stood on the other side of the street and watched him. Carter yanked briskly on the door-bell knob, and it grated out yawkingly. I always was imaginative. The sound of that bell-attachment made me waver in my mind that an ugly woman lived in that house. But Carter seemed vallant enough. He braced back his shoulders, lugged at the lapels of his coat, pulled out an advertising-card, cleared his throat and waited. The woman of the house rattled at the key inside, and then opened the door. She had one of those square heads with little

wispy fringes of hair bobbing on her forehead.

"Good-afternoon, madam," said Carter, speaking clearly so that I might hear him. "This is lovely weather for this time of year. Here is my card. I have had a letter from my people in New York asking me to call and see you. I would like to explain our sewing-machine."

The woman slammed the door in his face, and both of us heard the bolt of the lock go "click." She didn't say a word. Carter looked at the door a moment, and then turned around and looked at me. I laughed. I could feel the red go up over my face at the same time, because I was embarrassed for his sake. But Carter only grimaced. He grinned over at me as though he were enjoying it. I wondered how he could have the heart to be chipper.

"Business woman, isn't she?" he remarked, cheerfully. "Guess, I'll be obliged to sell her a machine now, anyway."

He walked right around to the back door, and I sidled down the sidewalk so as to keep my eye on him. There was no bell at the back door, so he rapped good and hard. The woman yanked the door open, and said something short. Then she tried to shut the door, but Carter stuck his toe in. He was smiling very sweetly. He had one of the most innocent and winning smiles you ever saw.

"My dear madam," he said, "you must have misunderstood me a moment ago, but I'm sure a woman of your standing in the community would not be rude to a gentleman. I assure you I did not ask you for a piece of cold pumpkin-pie. It may have sounded as though I said that, but believe me, that was not the idea at all."

The woman started to say something, but Carter didn't give her the opportunity.

"I pray you don't—don't apologize, madam," he cried. "It's all right. Ladies do frequently think I am asking for cold pie. Perfectly natural mistake, I assure you. You will note that when I smile I have a real coaxing mouth for pie."

Carter gave the woman one of his sweetest efforts in the smile line.

"But I mustn't bother you by talking about pie," he continued. "You understand I'm really here on business. You know there are different kinds of business. I would prefer to be running a New York department store, and have my customers come to me, but in the stress of present circumstances I am obliged to go to my customers. I do not enjoy transacting business on the door-step, for the neighbors are very inquisitive in all places. It is ridiculous what stories the neighbors will start sometimes. Once I was kept talking on the door-step for some time, and it got reported around the place that the So-and-sos were hard up financially, for an agent of a collecting firm had been at their place, and a real wrangle occurred on the door-step. I very much prefer to do all my talking in the house." Again did Carter lavish his radiant smile. His manner was so ingratiating and his quiet waggishness so won upon her that she relaxed her hold on the door. He took off his hat, and saying "By your leave" he went in. As the door closed I could hear him start in on his sewing-machine "oration."

I walked slowly along, pondering that in all probability the woman would annihilate him as soon as she got him cornered in the sitting-room.

I couldn't understand the gall of a man who could do the thing that Carter had just maneuvered. I looked back once or twice, half expecting Carter to come flying out through one of the windows. But whatever the tragedy that was occurring within, the outside walls gave no sign.

Carter had told me that when he was safely inside the house I was to go and do likewise. "Just follow my hand," was what he said.

Really, I had half a mind to jump the whole business right then and there. I couldn't picture myself bracing through such an ordeal as Carter had just faced so valiantly. I saw a woman sitting in the window of the first house on my way. I hurried past that house, as I didn't have the heart to walk up the steps. But setting my teeth, I went to the front door of the next house, and rang the bell. I tried to get a smile on my face as I had seen Carter do. I am rather sour-visaged. I was twisting my face around for the proper expression, when the door was suddenly flung open, and there stood the woman of the house. By the manner in which my face was working she must have concluded I had St. Vitus' dance. She looked frightened. I was so embarrassed that my usually sour countenance must have seemed demoniac. I had been thinking of Carter's speech to the other woman, trying to remember how funny it had sounded. I hoped to bring up a smile in that way. Now, in my excitement, I blurted out, "Ah, good-morning, madam; this is a lovely afternoon. You may think by my looks that I want a sewing-machine to eat, but I assure you I have called merely to sell you some pie. I—that is—"

Well, you ought to have seen that woman look at me. I could tell from her eye that she thought I lived in a padded cell at home. But I kept myself from falling off the steps, and before the woman had time to escape, I blundered out the whole story—how I had been watching Carter down the street, and how I had mixed up what he had said to the other woman. It tickled her. She was a brisk little woman, with a snappy way of speaking, and she invited me right in, and wanted me to tell the story over to some women who were calling. I made a real hit.

Before the laugh died out the woman confided that it was queer I should come along that day, for she had been thinking about getting a new machine. Oh, didn't I talk to that woman then! If I could sell a machine, wouldn't I crow over Carter, the old ringer. When I had talked her around to the point where she said she would look at the machine, I concluded that I had struck the one proper vocation of my life. I hustled out, ran down to the hotel, and drove our team up to the woman's door. I unloaded the machine, and ten minutes later had made arrangements to leave it three weeks on trial. The woman said she knew well enough she would like it, and would keep it.

Then I treated myself to a cigar, and waited at the hotel for Carter to show up. I walked to meet him with my hat on one side.

"Well, I sold her a machine," said he, running his fingers around inside his collar, and then wiping his brow.

"What? Not that royal Asiatic tiger?" I cried.

"To that same rampageous female," he replied, with immense satisfaction. "We'll drive up and deliver it."

"Well, I've been doing some business on my own hook," I said. "I sold the machine we brought with us, and I have delivered it."

"Cash or installment?" Carter asked, looking at me in some astonishment.

"Well, the whole trade isn't exactly clenched," I admitted, "but it's the same thing. She has taken it for three weeks on trial, and says she'll probably keep it."

"Who?"

"Mrs. Peter Scott—lives up nearly opposite your woman."

First Carter sat down and laughed, then he made some remarks that were extremely ungentlemanly. I didn't like such talk, and I told him as much.

"You blamed fool," he shouted, "that woman has worked every sewing-machine agent who has come along—when he has been gullible enough. It's her old trick. She will never buy a sewing-machine, for she doesn't need one. She does her sewing each season on the machines that the fool agents leave there on trial. Now you go right up and take back that machine. She'll claw you down in good shape, but it will teach you to look out for the snides after this. You'll find as a general rule that the really good cus-

tomers always cut up rough at the start-off. Now bustle right up and get that machine."

I refused to go, but Carter insisted. I said I'd throw up my job, but Carter reminded me of some of the items in my bond. So there was no help for it, and I set off up the street.

I found the woman hard at work at the machine. She was making the most of the golden moments. I suppose Carter, with his tact and knowledge of the business, could have eased the machine away without the riot that I precipitated. Carter told me afterward that he could have provided me with half a dozen little tricks that experienced agents play to get machines away from suspicious parties, but he wanted me to be dressed down in good shape. He said it was the only way to learn the sewing-machine-business. I learned right there in ten minutes with that woman more facts of a personal nature than some young men find out in a college course. When I discovered that I was no good in joint debate, I simply dared fate and picked up the machine. Did you ever see a king-bird tackle a crow, and chase the big fellow down across the sky? Well, that was it! She buzzed around me, and cuffed my ears all the way to the front gate. It was extremely amusing for the neighbors and for Carter, who stood looking on.

In the years since then I have tackled cross husbands, made collections under the guns, raced rival agents, steeled my heart and taken machines away from the poor and the wretched, forced by grim orders from headquarters, but under no circumstances have I ever felt so wholly like passing in my resignation as I did when I staggered out to the wagon with that hornet in petticoats giving me things that are not served at five o'clock teas. Why did I stay in the business? Well, I belonged to the State militia, and the first principle of soldiering is never to resign under fire.—Woman's Home Companion.

TROLLEY AND FARM.

The Quickening of the Ways of Western Rural Life.

No great war or political change ever worked nearly so great a revolution for the betterment of the people and the quickening of their ways of life as is now being wrought throughout the Middle West by the trolley systems that are spinning their webs in every direction. Within the cities the change is already old, and we have forgotten how things were when we formerly depended on the mule cars for such little transportation as we had with in the city. Such a thing as pleasure riding on the street cars was then unknown, and the pleasures of the parks were available to those alone that could afford horses and carriages. Moreover, the quickening of life that came with rapid transit and the general broadening out to larger areas and more comfortable living come to be an old story in the city.

But in the smaller towns, where the trolley is new and the closer connection with the larger and busier centres of life has but recently come, the changes are just now working, and it is interesting to observe their outward phases. Ride out over any line through a section where, a couple of years ago, there were old, unpainted houses and tumble-down fences, and you will see a sprucing up in the way of new paint and new buildings and general tidiness that is astonishing. And all the little old towns that were formerly sleeping in the summer sun seem to have been galvanized into new life. The cross roads store has been wiped out, but wherever the town was large enough to have taken firm root as a community it has taken on new life. The boys can live at home and work in the city, instead of deserting the village to live in a city boarding house, and the "folks" to find a way of making money off their poultry and "garden truck" that was formerly impossible. They love to spend the money in brightening up the old home, trimming the hedges and lawns, and making it look as if somebody lived there.

No human prejudice ever disappeared so quickly as has that of the merchant of the smaller town, who imagined that the trolley was going to take away his business. He is now clamoring for all the trolley lines he can get.—Indianapolis Journal.

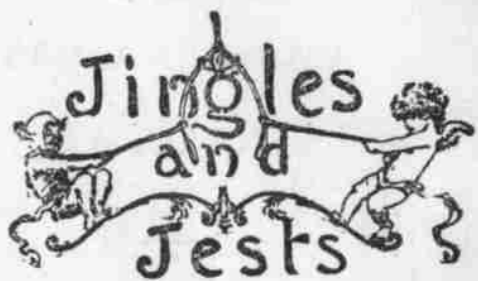
It is said that a single grain of gold, after having been converted into gold leaf, will cover forty-six inches.

Anthracite coal underlying a tract of over 1000 acres has been discovered in Vancouver Island, B. C.

SUNSHINE AND SHADDER.

If it wasn't fer our trials,
Would our blessin's be complete?
Ef it wasn't fer the shadders,
Would the sun shine out so sweet?
The rose of rarest beauty
Often has the sharpest thorn,—
The man that said that told the
Gospel truth, ez sure's you're born!

The crops 'ud come up missin'
Ef we never had no rain,
We'd never know life's sweetness
Ef it wa'n't fer death 'n' pain.
When yer walkin' in the sunshine,
Some un else is in the night,
Sunshine allus will make shadders;
Shadders makes the sunshine bright.



"How late do you usually sleep on Sunday morning?" "Well, it all depends." "Depends on what?" "On the length of the sermon."—Philadelphia Press.

His praises everyb' y sings,
He is esteemed in many lands.
He has a way of saying things
That no one really understands.
—Washington Star.

Wife—"I wish we had a nice large country place, where I could give a lawn party." Husband—"Just for the pleasure of inviting some of your friends, eh?" Wife—"Well, yes; and the pleasure of not inviting some."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Wife—"I dreamed last night that I was in a store that was just full of the loveliest bonnets, and—" Husband (hastily)—"But that was only a dream, my dear." Wife—"I knew that before I woke up, because you bought me one."—Philadelphia Press.

"Mr. Nozzleton," she said, "if you try to hug and kiss me again, I shall call papa." "Where is your father?" he asked. "He's in the Yellowstone Park and will be beyond mail or telegraphic communication for three weeks."—Chicago Record-Herald.

"Our front fence wants painting badly," said the head of the matrimonial combine. "I'll take a day off next week and paint it myself." "Well," rejoined the other portion of the outfit, "I'm sure no one is capable of painting it worse."—Portland Express.

"Blessings often come disguised."
Said the man with troubles harrying.
"Poverty, though never prized,
Often keeps a man from marrying."
—Philadelphia Record.

"I should think you would be ambitious for political distinction." "No," answered Mr. Cumrox. "I don't care for it. My daughter has studied painting, and her pictures of me are funny enough without calling in the aid of any professional cartoonist."—Washington Star.

"How inconsistent you are!" exclaimed the tomcat, dodging the professor's bootjack. "What? How?" gasped the startled professor. "Why," said the cat, "you teach poetry and literature and all that during the day, and yet here you are trying to discourage my mew."—Philadelphia Ledger.

"One Government insists on pulling me one way," said the Sultan, gloomily, "and the next is tugging in the opposite direction." The eminent counsellor bowed his head as an indorsement of the opinion. "Well, what I want to know is this: What am I in this Turkey—the wishbone?"—Washington Star.

"Agatha," said her mother, "I don't like to hear a daughter of mine tell even a conventional lie. You know you can't bear Aunt Becky, and yet when she came the other day you said, 'Auntie, how glad I am to see you!' " "That wasn't a lie, mamma," answered Agatha. "That was an exclamation."—Chicago Tribune.

The Instructive Butler.
All the guests, with one exception, at a recent gathering of a portion of Washington sweldom were quietly amused because of an embarrassing occurrence in connection with which the exception mentioned figured as the victim. The exception was a lady well equipped with "airs." Ice-cream had been served, when she requested of the butler, in tones rather loud: "Please let me have a spoon."

"Beg pardon, mum," replied the butler, in voice dignified but equally as loud, "but we are using forks, not spoons, for ices this season."

The other guests made believe they hadn't heard, but they had, and some of them repeated the remarks.—Washington Star.