

The Boy With the U.S. Census eBook

The Boy With the U.S. Census

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THE BOY WITH THE U.S. CENSUS

CHAPTER I

A BLOOD FEUD IN OLD KENTUCKY

"Uncle Eli," said Hamilton suddenly, "since I'm going to be a census-taker, I think I'd like to apply for this district."

The old Kentucky mountaineer, who had been steadily working his way through the weekly paper, lowered it so that he could look over the top of the page, and eyed the boy steadfastly.

"What for?" he queried.

"I think I could do it better than almost anybody else in this section," was the ready, if not modest, reply.

"Wa'al, perhaps yo' might," the other assented and took up the paper again. Hamilton waited. He had spent but little time in the mountains but he had learned the value of allowing topics to develop slowly, even though his host was better informed than most of the people in the region. Although not an actual relative, Hamilton always called him "Uncle" because he had fought with distinguished honor in the regiment that Hamilton's father commanded during the Civil War, and the two men ever since had been friends.

"I don't quite see why any one sh'd elect to take a hand in any such doin's unless he has to," the Kentuckian resumed, after a pause; "that census business seems kind of inquisitive some way to me."

"But it seems to me that it's the right kind of 'inquisitive.'"

"I reckon I hadn't thought o' there bein' more'n one kind of inquisitiveness," the mountaineer said, with a smile, "but if you say so, I s'pose it's all right."

"But don't you think the questions are easy enough?" asked the boy.

"They may be easy, but thar's no denyin' that some of 'em are mighty unpleasant to answer."

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"But if they are necessary?"

"Thar's a-plenty o' folks hyeh in the mount'ns that yo' c'n never make see how knowin' their private affairs does the gov'nment any good."

"But you don't feel that way, Uncle Eli, surely?"

"Wa'al, I don' know. Settin' here talkin' about it, I know it's all right, an' I'm willin' to tell all I know. But I jes' feel as sure as c'n be, that befo' the census-taker gets through hyeh, I'm goin' to be heated up clar through."

"But why?" queried the lad again. "The questions are plain enough, and there was practically no trouble at the last census. I think it's a fine thing, and every one ought to be glad to help. And it's so important, too!"

"Important!" protested the old man. "Did yo' ever see any one that ever sat down an' read those tables an' tables o' figures?"

"Not for fun, perhaps," the boy admitted. "But it isn't done for the sake of getting interesting reading matter; it's because those figures really are necessary. Why there's hardly a thing that you can think of that the census isn't at the back of."

"I don't see how that is. They don't ask about a man's politics, I notice," the mountaineer remarked.

"No," answered Hamilton promptly, "but the number of members a State sends to Congress depends on the figures of the population that the census-takers gather, and the only claim that any legislator has to his seat is based on their information."

"I suppose you'd say the same about schools, too."

"Of course," the boy answered.

"But I hear the Census Bureau this year wants all sorts of information about the crops an' the number of pigs kept an' all that sort o' stuff."

"Don't you think the food of all the people of the United States is important enough, Uncle Eli? And then the railroads, too,—they depend on the figures about the crops and all sorts of other things which go as freight."

"You seem to know a lot about it," the mountaineer said, looking thoughtfully at the boy.

"I ought to," Hamilton said, "because I'm going to be an assistant special agent in the Census of Manufactures right away. I applied last October and took the exam a couple of weeks before coming here on this visit."

“What makes yo’ so cocksure that you’ve passed the examination?” he was asked.

“I didn’t find it so hard,” Hamilton replied, “figures have always been easy for me, and when my brother was studying for that chartered accountant business I learned a lot from him.”

“Your dad, he was a great hand fo’ figures, so I s’pose yo’ come by it naturally enough. An’ you’re jes’ sure you’ve passed?”

“I haven’t heard one way or the other,” said Hamilton, “but I’m pretty sure.”

“Wa’al, thar’s no use sayin’ anythin’ if you’re all sot, but it’s the business of the gov’nment, an’ I’d let them do it.”

“But I’m hoping to work right with the government all the time, Uncle Eli,” the boy explained “either with the Census Bureau or the Bureau of Statistics or some work like that. And anyway, if it’s the government’s business, I’m an American and it’s my business.”

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"Yo' have the right spirit, boy," the old man said, "an' I like to see it, but you're huntin' trouble sure's you're born. S'posin' yo' asked the questions of some ol' sorehead that wouldn' answer?"

"He'd have to answer," replied Hamilton stoutly, "there's a law to make him."

"I don't believe that law's used much," hazarded the old man.

"It isn't," Hamilton found himself forced to admit. "I believe there were not very many arrests all over the country last census. But the law's there, just the same."

"It wouldn' be a law on the Ridge," the mountaineer said, "an' I don' believe it would do yo' any good anywhar else. On the mount'ns, I know, courtesy is a whole lot bigger word than constitution. Up hyeh, we follow the law when we're made to, follow an idee backed up by a rifle-barrel because we have to, but there's not many men hyeh that won' do anythin' yo' ask if yo' jes' ask the right way."

"But there are always some that give trouble," Hamilton protested, trying to defend his position.

The old Kentuckian slowly shook his head from side to side.

"If yo' don' win out by courtesy," he said, "it's jes' because yo' haven' been courteous enough, because yo' haven' taken yo' man jes' right. Thar isn't any such thing as bein' too gracious. An' anyway, a census-taker with any other idee up hyeh would be runnin' chances right along."

"You mean they would shoot him up?" asked Hamilton.

"I think if he threatened some folks up hyeh an' in the gullies thar might be trouble."

"But the fact that he represented the government would insure him from harm, I should think."

"I don't think much of that insurance idee," the old man said. "I can't remember that it helped the revenue men sech a great deal. The only insurance I ever had was a quick ear, an' even now, I c'n hear a twig snap near a quarter of a mile away. An' that used to be good insurance in the ol' days when, if yo' weren't gunnin' for somebody, thar was somebody gunnin' fo' you."

"But there's no one 'gunning' for you now, is there, Uncle Eli?" asked the boy amusedly.

"I haven't b'n lookin' out especially," the Kentuckian responded, with an answering slow smile, "an' I reckon sometimes that I might jes' as well leave the ol' rifle in the house when I go out."

"But you never do," put in Hamilton quickly.

"I reckon that's jes' a feelin'," rejoined the mountaineer, "jes' one o' these habits that yo' hate to give up. I'd sort o' be lost without it now, after all these years. Thar's no one to worry about, anyway, savin' Jake Howkle, an' I don' believe he's hankerin' for blood-lettin'."

"Jake? Oh, never," Hamilton replied with assurance; "why, he's only about my age."

"That's only partly why," the old man said, "not only because he's your age, but because he's b'n at school. Shootin' an' schoolin' don' seem to hit it off. I reckon thar would have b'n a sight less trouble in the mount'ns if thar had b'n mo' schools."

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"There are plenty of schools in the mountains now, aren't there?" asked Hamilton. "It must be very different here, Uncle Eli, from what it was when you were a boy."

"Thar has been quite a change, an' the change is comin' faster now. But thar's still a lot o' folk who a'nt altered a bit sence the war. You city people call us slow-movin' up hyeh, an' as long as thar's any o' the ol' spirit abroad thar's a chance o' trouble. If yo' really are goin' in for this census-takin', I'd keep clar o' the mount'ns."

"You really would?" queried the boy thoughtfully.

"An' what's more," continued his Uncle, "I would jes' as soon that yo' didn' have anythin' to do with it near hyeh. I don' want to see any little differences between families, such as census-takin' is likely to provoke."

[Illustration: *Taking the census in old Kentucky*: Typical conditions of an enumerator's work in the mountain districts. (Courtesy of Art Manufacturing Co., Amelia, O.)]

"Why, Uncle Eli!" cried Hamilton in amazement, "you talk as though the days of the feuds were not over."

"Are yo' sure they're all over?" the Kentuckian said.

"I had supposed so," the boy replied. "I thought the Kentucky 'killings' had stopped ten or fifteen years ago."

"It's a little queer yo' sh'd bring that up today," the old man said, "for I was jes' readin' in the paper some figures on that very thing. Yo' like figures, this will jes' suit you. Where was it now?" he continued, rustling the paper; then, a moment later, "Oh, yes, I have it."

"During the terms of the last three Kentucky governors," he read, "'over thirteen hundred criminals have been pardoned, five hundred of them being for murder or manslaughter.' It says fu'ther on," the old man added, "that pardonin' is jes' as frequent now as it ever was. I don' believe it is, myself, but if thar is such a lot o' pardonin' goin' on for shootin', thar must have been a powerful lot o' shootin'."

"But that's for all the State," objected the boy, "not for the mountains only. That must be for crimes in the cities and all sorts of things. You can't make the feuds responsible for those."

"Not altogether," the mountaineer agreed, "the real ol'-time feud is peterin' out, an' it's mainly due to the schoolin'. The young folks ain't ready fo' revenge now, an' that sort o' swings the women around. An' up hyeh in the mount'ns, same as everywhar else, I reckon, the idees o' the women make a pile o' difference."

“But I should have thought the women would always have been against the feuds,” said Hamilton.

“Yo’d think so, but they weren’t. They helped to keep up the grudges a whole lot.”

“Aunt Ab hasn’t changed much,” volunteered the lad.

“She hasn’t for a fact. Ab is powerful sot. She holds the grudge against the Howkles in the ol’ style. But the feelin’ is dyin’ out fast, an’ soon it’ll be like history,—only jes’ read of in books.”

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"What I never could see," remarked Hamilton, "was what started it all. It isn't as if the people in the mountains had come from some part of the world where vendettas and that sort of thing had been going on for generations. There must have been some kind of reason for it in this section of the country. Feuds don't spring up just for nothing."

"Thar was a while once we had a powerful clever talker up hyeh," the Kentuckian answered, "actin' as schoolmaster for a few weeks. I reckon he'd offered to substitute jes' to get a chance to see for himself what life in the mount'ns was like. He was writin' a book about it. We got right frien'ly, an' he knew he was always welcome hyeh, an' one day I asked him jes' that question. It was shortly befo' he lef' an' I wanted to know what he thought about us all up hyeh."

The mountaineer leaned back in his chair and chuckled with evident enjoyment of the recollection.

"I jes' put the question to him," he said, "in the mildes' way, an' he started right in to talk. Thar was no stoppin' him, an' I couldn' remember one-half o' what he said. But I reckon he had it about right."

"How did he explain the feuds, Uncle Eli?" asked the boy.

"Wa'al," said the mountaineer, with a short laugh, "he begun by sayin' we were savages."

"Savages?"

"Not jes' with war-paint an' tomahawk, yo' understan'," continued the old man, enjoying the boy's astonishment, "but uncivilized an' wild. Thar an't any finer stock in the world, he said, than the mount'neers o' the Ridge, clar down to Tennessee, an' he said, too, that they were o' the good old English breed, not foreigners like are comin' in now."

"That's right enough," Hamilton agreed, "and, what's more, they were gentlemen of good birth, most of them; there was not much of the peasant in the early colonists."

"So this author chap said. But he explained that was the very reason they got so wild."

"I don't see that," objected Hamilton, "and I certainly don't see where the 'savage' idea comes in."

"Wa'al, he said that when you slid down from a high place it was harder to climb back than if the fall had b'n small. An' that's why it's so hard for those who have gone down, —they can see the depth o' the fall."

Hamilton, who was of an argumentative turn of mind, would have protested at this, but the old mountaineer proceeded.

“When the pioneers settled in the mount’ns they kind o’ stuck. Those that went on, down into the Blue Grass region, went boomin’ right ahead, but those that stayed in the mount’ns had no chance.”

“I don’t see why not?” objected the boy.

“They were jes’ cut off from everywhar. We are to-day, for that matter. When a place gets settled, an’ starts to try an’ raise somethin’ to sell, the product has got to be taken to market. But thar was no railroad up in the mount’ns. Children were easy to raise, an’ a population grew up in a hurry, but the land was too poor for good farmin’, the roads were too bad for takin’ corn to market, an’ thar was no way o’ gettin’ to a town.”

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"You are pretty well cut off," said Hamilton.

"We were more so then," the mountaineer said. "An' so, while all the country 'round was advancin' up in the mount'ns, fifty years ago, we were livin' jes' like pioneers. An' some, not bein' able to keep up the strain, fell back."

"So it really isn't the fault of the mountaineers at all," cried the boy, "but because they were sort of marooned."

"It was unfortunate," replied the old man, "but it really was our own fault. If the mount'n country was worth developin', we should have developed it; if not, we should have left."

"I've often wondered why you didn't, Uncle Eli," said Hamilton.

"Yo' must remember," the Kentuckian said, "that the mount'neers are a most independent lot. They want to be independent, an' up hyeh, every man is his own master. But, thar bein' no available market if they did work hard, what was the use o' workin'? Some o' them, 'specially down in the gullies, got lazy an' shif'less. But they hung on all the harder to the idees o' the old times,—honor an' hospitality."

"I've always understood," said Hamilton, "that there was more hospitality to be found up here in the mountains than in almost any place on the globe."

"As yo' said," the old man continued, "we're jes' like a crew o' shipwrecked sailors marooned on an island without a boat, without any means o' gettin' away. If some o' the families high up in the gullies are ignorant, it's because they've had no schoolin', not because they haven' got the makin's o' good citizens; if they're a bit careless about religion, it's because they've had no churchin', an' if they don' pay much heed to law, it's because the law has never done much for them. The ocean o' progress," went on the mountaineer, with a flourish, "has rolled all 'roun' the mount'ns, but of all the fleets o' commerce in all these years, thar has not been one to send out a boat to help the marooned mount'neer."

"Didn't they ever try to get help?" queried the boy.

"We're not askin' help," the Kentuckian said, "thar's no whinin' on the mount'ns. I jes' tell yo' that when the time comes for the mount'neers o' Kentucky an' Virginia an' Tennessee an' Carolina to get a fair chance, they'll show yo' as fine a race o' men an' women as the Stars an' Stripes flies over."

"They are mighty fine right now, I think," the boy said.

"They have their good points," the Kentuckian agreed; "thar's nothin' sneakin' in the men up hyeh, an' thar an't any lengths to which a man won't go, to do what he thinks is the squar thing. You've heard about the Beaupoints?"

“No,” the boy answered, “what was that?”

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"It was jes' an incident in one o' these feuds that you were talkin' of, an' I'm goin' to tell yo' about it, to show yo' what a mount'neer's idee o' honor is like. Thar was a family livin' on the other side o' the Ridge, not a great ways from hyeh, by the name o' Calvern, an' in some way or other—I never heard the rights of it—they took to shootin' up the Beaupoints every chance that come along. One day Dandie Beaupoint found a little girl that had hurt herself, an' he picked her up in his arms an' was carryin' her home when one o' the Calvern boys shot him in his tracks. One o' the Beaupoint brothers was away at the time, but the others felt that the Calverns hadn't b'n playin' fair, an' they reckoned to lay them all out. They did, too, all but one, an', although they had a chance to nail him, they let him alone."

"Why was he let off?" queried Hamilton.

"I reckon it was because he had a young wife an' a little child," the old man answered. "Now Jim Beaupoint, the one that had been away, he come home after a while, an' hadn't happened to hear about the wipin' out o' the Calverns. On his way home, he had to pass the Calvern place, an' so he made a wide cast aroun' the hill to keep out o' sight, when suddenly, up a gully, he saw this Hez Calvern standin' there with his rifle on his arm, an', quick as he could move, Jim grabbed his gun an' fired. It was a long shot an' a sure one."

"Was it—" the boy began, but the old man waved the interruption aside and proceeded.

"Reloadin' his rifle, Jim Beaupoint rode slowly to whar Hez Calvern was lyin', when suddenly, from a clump o' bushes close by, there come a rifle shot, an' the rider got the bullet in his chest. Befo' fallin' from the saddle, however, the young fellow fired at the bushes from which smoke was driftin', an' a shrill scream told him that the sharpshooter was a woman."

"Some one who had been with Hez Calvern?" asked Hamilton.

"His wife. Well, although Jim was mortally hurt an' sufferin'—as the tracks showed afterwards—he tried to drag himself to the bushes in order to help the woman who had shot him an' who he had shot unknowin'; but he was too badly hurt, an' he died twenty yards from the place whar he fell."

"Was the woman dead, too?" asked Hamilton.

"No, but terrible badly hurt. What I was wantin' to tell yo', though, was the result of all this. Wa'al, the Beaupoints took the woman to their home an' nursed her night an' day for five long years. She was helpless, only for her tongue, an' she lashed an' abused them till the day she died, an' never once, in all those years, did any one o' the Beaupoints reproach her in return."



“And the youngster?”

“They took the boy, too, an’ reared him the bes’ they knew how, jes’ the same as one o’ their own. One o’ the Beaupoint boys went an’ lived on the Calvern place, an’ worked it, —worked it fair an’ squar’, an’ put aside every cent that come out o’ the farm. For thirteen years the Beaupoints looked after the farm an’ reared the boy. On the day he was fourteen year old, Jed Beaupoint—that was the father—called the lad, told him the whole story, give him a new rifle an’ a powder horn, an’ handed over the little bag o’ coin that represented thirteen years o’ work on the Calvern holdin’.”

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"There certainly couldn't be anything squarer than that!" exclaimed Hamilton. "And he gave the boy the farm, too?"

"Every inch of it. Jed Beaupoint was a squar' man, cl'ar through. An' he said to the boy—he tol' me the story himself—'Johnny Calvern, thar's yo' farm an' yo' rifle. Now, if yo're willin', I'll see that thar's no trouble until yo're twenty-one, an' then yo' c'n go huntin' revenge if yo've a mind to, or, if you're willin', we'll call the trouble off now, an' thar won't be any need o' rakin' it up again.'"

"He made it up on the spot, of course?" questioned Hamilton.

The Kentuckian shook his head.

"He did not," he replied. "The boy thought a minute or two an' then said he'd wait until he was grown up, an' let him know then."

"Although he had been brought up by the Beaupoints!" exclaimed the boy in surprise. "But surely it never came up again."

"Well, not exac'ly. When Johnny Calvern was about nineteen he got married, an' a few days befo' the time when he would be twenty-one, he rode up to the Beaupoint place, an' tol' the ol' man that he was willin' to let the feud rest another ten years, because of his wife an' little baby, but that he would be ready to resume shootin' at that time."

"But he had no real grudge against the Beaupoints had he, Uncle Eli? They had always been kind to him, you said."

"Not a bit o' grudge," the mountaineer answered, "they were good friends. An' I reckon it wasn't Johnny that wanted the trouble to begin again, but thar's always a lot o' hotheads pryin' into other folks' business. However, ol' Jed Beaupoint didn't mind; he agreed to another ten years' truce, an' all went on peacefully as befo'. Durin' those ten years, however, Johnny's wife died, an' he got married again, this time to the sister o' a wanderin' preacher, a girl who had once lived in cities, an' she soon showed him that the ol' feud business must be forgotten. But it is a mite unusual, even hyeh, to farm a man's land an' bring up his child fo' thirteen years, an' then give him everythin' yo' can with the privilege o' shootin' yo' at sight for all the favors done."

"It doesn't sound a bit like the usual feud story," said Hamilton, "one always thinks of those as being cold-blooded and cruel."

"Thar an't a mite o' intentional cruelty in them; it's jes' that life is held cheap. Most o' them begun over some small thing like an election."

"There were quite a number of them, Uncle Eli, weren't there?"

“One ran into the other so easily that one feud would often look like half a dozen, an’ trouble would be goin’ on in various places. But there were really seven of them, all big ones.”

[Illustration: *Kentucky mountaineer family*. In the heart of the feud district, where the rifle is never out of reach. (*Courtesy of the Spirit of Missions.*)]

“What were they, Uncle Eli?”

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“Wa’al, thar was the McCoy-Hatfield feud in Pike County, that started over the ownership o’ two plain razorback hogs, but afterwards got very bitter, owin’ to the friendship o’ one o’ the McCoy girls with the son o’ Bad Anse Hatfield. Then thar was the Howard-Turner feud in Harlan County. An’ then—”

“What started the Howard-Turner feud?” interrupted the boy.

“That was over a game o’ cards. One o’ the Howards had been winnin’, an’ Jim Turner, with a pistol, forced him to give back the money he had won. That affair raged a long time. The Logan-Tolliver feud in Rowan County was over an election fo’ sheriff. The Logans elected their candidate, an’ so the Tollivers killed one o’ the Logans at the polls and wounded three others.”

“That’s expressing dissatisfaction with an election with some spirit,” Hamilton remarked.

“Then thar was the French-Eversole feud in Perry County,” continued the Kentuckian, reminiscently. “Ol’ Joe Eversole was a merchant in a town called Hazard, an’ he helped Fulton French to start a little store. In time French almos’ drove Eversole out o’ business. That was a strange fight, because neither French nor Eversole ever got into the shootin’,—indeed they remained frien’ly even when their supporters were most bitter.”

“Who carried on the feud, then?” asked Hamilton in surprise, “if the principals didn’t?”

“Wa’al, I guess the worst was a minister, the Rev. Bill Gambrill. Ho ran the French side an’ kep’ the trouble stirred up all the time.”

“I think I’ve heard of the Turner war, too,” said the boy. “Was that the same as the Howard-Turner fighting?”

“All of them were mixed up in each other’s feuds in that Turner family,” the Kentuckian replied, “but the ‘Turner War’ or the ‘Hell’s Half-Acre’ feud was in Bell County, an’ it started over some question o’ water rights in Yellow Creek. It was a sayin’ down in Bell County that it couldn’t rain often enough to keep Hell’s Half-Acre free from stains o’ blood.”

“It is a fearful record, Uncle Eli, when you put them together that way,” the boy said.

“An’ I haven’t even mentioned the worst o’ them, the Hargis-Cockrill feud in Breathitt County. That lasted for generations, an’ started over some election for a county judge. I don’ know that any one rightly remembers the time when Breathitt County wasn’t the scene of some such goin’s on.”

“But they are all over now, aren’t they?”



“I was jes’ goin’ to tell yo’. They’re all over but one, an’ that one is sometimes called the Baker-Howard or the Garrard-White feud, for all four families were mixed up in it. Not so very long ago I was talkin’ to the widow o’ one o’ the men slain in that fightin’, an’ sayin’ to her how good it was that the feelin’ had all died out, an’ she said—thar was a lot of us thar at the time—I have twelve sons. Each day I tell them who shot their father. I’m not goin’ to die till one o’ them shoots him.’ I’m reckonin’ to hear o’ trouble in Clay County mos’ any time, but I really think that is the last o’ them.”

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"What started that?"

"An argument over a twenty-five dollar note," was the response. "But you don't want to think these were the real causes; they were usually jes' firebrands that made things worse. Most o' these hyeh feuds date back to enmities made in the Civil War an' in moonshinin'."

"But why the war?" asked Hamilton. "I thought nearly all the mountaineers in Kentucky fought for the North—I know you were with Lee, of course, but I thought that was exceptional."

"None o' them fought for the No'th!" exclaimed the old Confederate soldier indignantly.

"Why, Uncle Eli!" said Hamilton, in surprise, "I was sure that most of them went into the Union army."

"So they did, boy, so they did, but those who did it thought they were fightin' for the nation, not for the No'th. An' the slavery question didn' matter much hyeh. Don' yo' let any one tell yo' that the Union army was made up o' abolitionists, because it wasn't. It was made up o' bigger men than that. It was made up o' patriots. I thought them wrong then,—I do yet; but thar ain't no denyin' that they were fightin' for what they thought was right."

"But why did you join the South, Uncle Eli?" asked the boy. "I can understand father doing it, because he was a South Carolinian."

"I was workin' fo' peace," the mountaineer rejoined "When No'th and South was talkin' war, Kentucky, as yo' will remember havin' read, decided to remain neutral, an' organized the State Guards to preserve that neutrality. I was willin' to let well enough alone, but when the No'th come down an' tried to force the State Guards to join their cause, I went with the rest to Dixie. I don' believe," added the old man solemnly, "that thar ever was a war like that befo', where every man on both sides fought for a principle, an' where there was no selfish motive anywhere."

"The Howkles were with the Federals, weren't they?" prompted Hamilton, fearing lest the old man should drift into war reminiscences, when he wanted to hear about feuds.

"Ol' Isaac Howkle was," the mountaineer replied "an' that was how the little trouble we had begun. At least, it had a good deal to do with it. Isaac an' I had never got along, an' jes' befo' the war, we had some words about the Kentucky State Guards. But I wasn't bearin' any grudge, an' I never supposed Isaac was. However, in a skirmish near Cumberland Gap, I saw that he was jes' achin' to get me, an' the way he tried was jes' about the meanes' thing I ever heard o' any one doin' on the Ridge."

"How was it, do tell me?" pleaded Hamilton, his eyes shining with interest.

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"Howkle was with Woford's cavalry, an' I was under 'Fightin' Zollicoffer, as they called him," the old man began. "Thar had been a little skirmish,—one o' these that never get into the dispatches that don' do any good, but after which thar's always good men lef' lyin' on the ground. We had driven 'em back a bit, an' I was comin' in when I saw a lad—he didn't look more'n about fifteen—lyin' in a heap an' groanin'. Knowin' a drink would do him more good than an'thin' else, I reached for my canteen, an' stooped down. Jes' about then, a horseman dashed out o' the scrub an', almos' befo' I could think o' what was comin', he struck at me with his sabre."

"When you were giving drink to a wounded soldier!" cried Hamilton indignantly. "What a cowardly trick!"

"It was ol' Isaac Howkle," nodded his uncle, "an' I s'pose he reckoned this was a chance to get even on the ol' grudge. But I rolled over on the grass jes' out o' reach o' his stroke, an' he missed. I grabbed my rifle an' blazed at him as soon as I could get on my feet, but he had reached the shelter of the trees again an' I missed him."

"That's about the meanest thing I ever heard," said the boy.

"So I thought," the Kentuckian answered, "an' so the poor lad seemed to think too. I saw he was tryin' to speak, an' I put my ear close to his lips, thinkin' he might have some message he wanted to give. But, tryin' to look in the direction where Howkle had gone, he whispered, 'Don't blame the Union.' He was thinkin' more o' the credit o' his side than of his own sufferin's."

"That was grit," said Hamilton approvingly. "Did he die, Uncle Eli?"

"Not a bit of it. We got him back into our lines an' he was exchanged, I believe. Anyway, I know he was livin' after the war, fo' I saw his name once on a list o' veterans. But most o' the boys were like that—mostly young, too—an' men o' the stripe of Isaac Howkle were very few."

"But you got him in the end, didn't you?"

The old mountaineer looked intently at the boy's excited face.

"I didn't," he said, "an' I don' rightly know that it's good for yo' to be hearin' all these things. Yo' might hold it against Jake Howkle."

"That I wouldn't," protested Hamilton. "Jake isn't to blame for his father's meanness."

"That's the right way to talk," the old soldier agreed. "Wa'al, if yo' feel that way about it, I reckon thar's no harm in my tellin' yo' the rest of it, now that I've got started. When the war was all over an' I got back hyeh, I remembered what had happened, an' I sent word to Isaac Howkle that I didn' trust him, an' after what he had done I was reckonin' that he

was waitin' his chance to get me, an' that he'd better keep his own side o' the mountain."

"But, Uncle Eli," said the boy, "that didn't make a feud surely; that was only a warning."

"I wasn't reckonin' to start a feud at all," said the old man thoughtfully, "an' it really never was one. It was jes' a personal difference between Isaac Howkle an' me. Thar was lots o' times that I could have picked off either o' his two brothers, but I was jes' guardin' myself against Isaac."

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"But you said he got there first!" said the boy. "Did he shoot some one in your family?"

"Wa'al, yes, he did," the mountaineer admitted "Yo' never knew the one. He was my brother-in-law,—Ab's younges' sister's first husband. He had been married jes' two months, an' was only a hundred yards from this house when Isaac shot him."

"How did you know for sure that it was Howkle who had done the shooting?" asked Hamilton.

"We didn't know for sure, at first. A week or two after, a boy from the Wilshes' place come up with a message sayin' that Isaac Howkle had tol' him to say that he'd get the ol' man nex' time."

"I shouldn't have thought a boy would have had the nerve to bring such a message," said Hamilton thoughtfully. "Wouldn't bringing word like that look like taking sides, and wouldn't it bring his own family into the trouble!"

The old man shook his head in instant denial.

"Po' white trash from the gullies," he said, "no, they don't count one way or the other."

"What happened after you got that message?" asked the boy.

"Nothin' much, for a while, though I was snoopin' aroun' the mount'ns consid'erable. I met the brothers sev'ral times, an' I know they could have had me. But I had nothin' against them, nor they me, an' so it was jes' left to Isaac an' me. Once I found him over near our pasture, but he saw me an' got into cover. At last I found him in the open near our house again, an' in easy range."

"Did you fire right away?" asked Hamilton excitedly.

"I didn't shoot. I got a lead on him, sure, but I jes' couldn't shoot without warnin' him. It seemed kind o' mean to shoot him unawares, an' as I didn't want to take an unfair advantage, I shouted to him. It was pretty far off to be heard, but I could see that he recognized me. I was only waitin' long enough to let him get his gun to his shoulder when some one fired jes' behin' me. Howkle's bullet went through my arm, but he dropped in his tracks. He thought I had shot him but my gun was never fired off."

"Who was it that fired, Uncle Eli!"

"The brother o' the young fellow he had shot befo'."

"Was he dead?" asked the boy.

“Wa’al,” said the mountaineer, a little grimly, “I didn’ go down to see an’ wait aroun’ ’till all his friends gathered. But I reckon he was dead when they found him later.”

“And the brothers?”

“They never came into the story at all. I’m jes’ mentionin’ this to yo’ to show yo’ that thar’s reason in my advisin’ yo’ to keep clar o’ this district. If you’re reckonin’ on doin’ census work, yo’ go somewhar that you’re not known to any one. Thar’s trouble enough even for a stranger in the mount’ns, an’ a stranger would find it easier than any one else.”

“Why is that, Uncle Eli?” asked the boy.

“In the first place, yo’ can’t show discourtesy to a stranger, an’ yo’ know that if he doesn’ do things jes’ the way yo’ like to have ’em done, it’s because he doesn’ know, an’ so he’s not to blame. I like your spirit about the census, Hamilton,” the old mountaineer continued, “an’ if yo’ can give the gov’nment any service, I reckon yo’d better try, but leave the mount’n districts either to popular favorites or to a stranger.”

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CHAPTER II

RESCUING A LOST RACE

That same evening, as it chanced, one of the younger Wilsh boys came up to the house on an errand from a neighbor, and Hamilton, remembering that the messenger's father had been a go-between in the feud story he had been hearing, noted the lad with interest. Indeed, his appearance was striking enough in itself, with his drooping form, his extreme paleness, and his look of exhaustion.

"How far is it from the Burtons, Uncle Eli?" asked Hamilton.

"Eight miles," was the reply.

Hamilton stared at the mountain boy. Judging from his looks he was not strong enough to walk a hundred yards, yet he had just come eight miles, and evidently was intending to walk back home that evening. Then Hamilton remembered that this lad was one of the "poor whites" of whom he had read so much, and he strolled toward the messenger who was sitting listlessly on one of the steps.

"Howdy!" said the newcomer in a tired voice.

Hamilton answered his greeting, and, after a few disjointed sentences, said:

"You look tired. It must be a long walk from the Burtons."

"Jes' tol'able," the boy answered. "I'm not so tired. You f'm the city?" he queried a few minutes later, evidently noting the difference between Hamilton's appearance and that of the boys in the neighborhood.

"Yes, New York," answered Hamilton.

But the stranger did not show any further curiosity and Hamilton was puzzled to account for his general listlessness. He thought perhaps it might be that the boy was unusually dull and so he asked:

"Are you still going to school?"

A negative shake of the head was the only reply.

"Why not? Isn't there a school near where you live?"

"Close handy, 'bout five miles," was the reply.

"Then why don't you go there?" questioned Hamilton further.



“Teacheh’s gone.”

“Funny time for holidays,” the city boy remarked.

“Not gone fo’ holidays.”

“Oh, I see,” said Hamilton, “you mean he’s gone for good. But aren’t you going to have another one?”

“Dunno if he’s gone for good,” the mountain boy answered.

Hamilton stared in bewilderment.

“Cunjer got him,” the other continued.

But this did not explain things any better.

“Cunjer?” repeated Hamilton. “You mean magic?”

The mountain boy nodded.

“Yes, cunjer,” he affirmed.

“You’re fooling, aren’t you?” said Hamilton questioningly, “you can’t mean it. I never heard of ‘cunjer’ as a real thing. There’s lots about it in books, of course, but those are fairy tales and things of that sort.”

“An’ yo’ never saw a cunjer?”

“Of course not.”

“Reckon they don’ know as much in cities as they think they do,” the youngster retorted.

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"Just what do you mean by 'cunjer'?" asked Hamilton, knowing that it would be useless to argue the conditions of a modern city with a boy who had never seen one.

"Bein' able to put a cunjer on, so's the one yo' cunjer has got to do anythin' yo' want."

"Sort of hypnotism business," commented the older boy.

"Dunno' what yo' call it in the city. Up hyeh in the mount'ns we call it cunjer, an' thar's some slick ones hyeh, too."

"But how did the teacher get mixed up in it?" queried Hamilton. "It doesn't sound like the sort of thing you'd expect to find a schoolmaster doing."

"He wasn't doin' it, it was again' him," the mountain boy explained. "The folks hyeh suspicioned as he was tippin' o' the revenoo men."

"Who did? Moonshiners?"

"Easy on that word, Hamilton," suddenly broke in the old Kentuckian, who had overheard part of the conversation, "thar's plenty up hyeh that don' like it."

"All right, Uncle Eli, I'll remember," the boy answered; then, turning to his companion, he continued "You were saying that some of the people in the mountains thought the schoolmaster was giving information to the revenue men."

"Some said he was. I don' believe it myself, an' most of us boys didn' believe it, but then the teacheh was allers mighty good to us."

"Did the revenue officers come up here!"

The mountain lad nodded his head.

"Often," he said, "an' when they come to the stills they seemed to know ev'rythin' an' ev'rybody. An' then some one tol' that it could be proved on the teacheh. It never was, but thar was a plenty o' people who believed the story. I didn't, but then the teacheh was allers good to me."

"But what did the revenue men have to do with the 'cunjering'?" asked Hamilton, desiring to keep his informant to the point.

"They didn't, it was the men on the Ridge."

"Do you know how it happened?"

"I know all about it," the lad answered, with a slightly less listless air, "for I was in school that mornin'. For a week or more we boys had seen ol' Blacky Baldwin sort o' snoopin' aroun' near the school, but as we allers crossed our fingers an' said nothin' so long as he was in hearin', we weren't afraid."

"What did you do that for?"

The younger boy looked at the city-bred lad with an evident pity for his ignorance.

[Illustration: *Moonshining*. Revenue officers hot on the trail. (*Brown Bros.*)]

[Illustration: *Moonshining*. Revenue officers hot on the trail; the fire is burning, the still working, and the moonshiner's coat hangs on a tree. (*Brown Bros.*)]

"So's he couldn't cunjer us, O' course," he said. "Don' yo' even know that? Ol' Blacky Baldwin is a first-class cunjer, an' any one o' them can cunjer you with the words he hears yo' sayin'."

"But if this 'cunjer-fellow' was hanging around the school," suggested Hamilton, "why didn't you tell the master?"

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"An' get Blacky down on us? You-all can bet we kep' quiet an' didn' even talk about Blacky to each other. Wa'al, that went on for a week or two. Then, one mornin', while we was all in school, a big storm come up, thunder an' lightnin' an' all. Suddenly, jes' after a clap o' thunder that sounded almos' as if it had hit the schoolhouse Ol' Blacky Baldwin walked through the door an' up to the teacheh's table. He was carryin a twisted thing in his hand, like a ram's horn, an' I knew it was his cunjerin' horn, although I hadn't even seen it befo'."

"What did the master say when he came in?"

"Nary a word. It was awful dark an' the thunder was rumbling aroun' among the hills. I took one look at Ol' Blacky Baldwin's face, an' then hid my eyes. I reckon the others did the same."

"Why?"

"His face was all shiny with a queer green light, sendin' up smoke, like ol' dead wood does sometimes after a rain."

"Phosphorus evidently," muttered Hamilton to himself, but he did not want to interrupt the lad now that he had started, and therefore did not discuss the point.

"He walked right up to the teacheh's table," continued the younger boy, "an' he pointed the horn at him, accordin' to one o' the boys who says he was peepin' through his fingers. I wasn't lookin', I wasn't takin' any chances. And then we all heard him say to the teacheh:

"'You air goin' to have a fall an' be killed. You air goin' to have a fear o' fallin' all your days, an' you air goin' to be drove to places where you're like to fall. By night you air goin' to dream o' fallin', an', wakin' an' sleepin', the fear is laid upon you.'"

"And that was all?"

"That was all," the mountain boy replied. "After a bit, I looked up and Ol' Blacky Baldwin was gone; the teacheh looked peaked an' seemed kind o' skeered, but he didn't say anythin'."

"Well, it was a little scary," said Hamilton. "I don't wonder it shook him up."

"That was only the beginnin'," the storyteller went on. "About half an hour after that, one o' the boys dropped his slate pencil on the floor an' it broke, so he asked the teacheh for a new one. The slates 'n' pencils was kep' on a shelf over the teacheh's chair, an' he got on the chair to reach one down. We was all watchin' him, when suddintly he give a groan an' his eyes rolled back so's we couldn't see nothin' but the whites; his face got all

pale, an' his lips sort o' blue; he reeled an' was jes' goin' to fall when he sort o' made a grab at the shelf an' hung on as though he was fallin' off a cliff.

"Two of the bigger boys, thinkin' he had a stroke or somethin', went up an' spoke, but he didn't answer, jes' hung on to that shelf. Standin' on the chair as he was, of course the boys couldn' make him let go, an' they couldn' make him hear or understan' a mite. So they pulled up a bench and one of 'em climbed up an' forced his hand open. Jes' like a flash Teacheh grabbed him so hard that he yelled."

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"Just with one hand?" Hamilton queried.

"One hand. Wa'al, they pretty soon made Teacheh let go the other hand, an' helped him down fr'm the chair an' sat him down in it. As soon as his feet touched the floor, he let go the feller's shoulder an' sort o' lay back in his chair. He sat there for a bit an' then he leaned forward, put his hands on the desk, an' stared right in front of him, jes' as if we wa'n't there at all.

"I thought I was fallin',' he said gruffly.

"We waited a while for him to begin agin, but he jes' sit there, lookin' straight in front of him, an' repeatin' ev'ry minute or two: 'I thought I was fallin'! I thought I was fallin'!'"

Hamilton shivered a little, for the mountain boy told the story as though he were living through the scene again.

"I don't wonder you got scared," he said. "Did he come to?"

"Not right then," the boy answered. "We waited a while an' then some of the fellers got up an' went out sof'ly. I went, too, an' the teacheh never even seemed to see us go."

"Didn't you think he had gone crazy?"

"We all knew it was cunjerin'," the lad rejoined "an' when we got outside the door thar was Ol' Blacky Baldwin waitin', lookin' jes' the same as usual. As I come by, he said, jes' as smooth, 'School's out early to-day, boys.' But I don't think any of us answered him. I know I didn't. I jes' took and run as hard as I knew how. An' when I got to the top o' the hill an' looked back, an' saw Blacky goin' into the schoolhouse again, I couldn' get home fast enough."

"Was that what broke up the school?"

"Not right away," the other replied. "Thar was some that never come nigh the place agin, but befo' two weeks most of us was back. Teacheh allers seemed diff'rent; ev'ry once in a while, one of us would see him walkin' on the edge of a cliff, or fin' him dizzily hangin' on to somethin' for fear o' fallin'."

"How long did that go on?" queried Hamilton.

"Bout a month, I reckon. An' Teacheh was in trouble more'n more all the time, because folks wouldn' have him boardin' 'roun', same's he'd allers done."

"Why not?"



“Wa’al, he’d wake up in the night screamin’, ‘I’m fallin’, I’m fallin’,’ and no one wanted to have a ha’nted teacher in the house. An’ Blacky Baldwin, he jes’ hung aroun’ the school, and we-all would see him every day, mutterin’ an’ laughin’ to himself. Then, suddintly, Teacheh disappeared, an’ though we hunted fo’ him everywhar, he wasn’ found. We-all reckoned he had fallen somewhars, but I’ve thought sence that p’r’aps he jes’ went away, goin’ back to the city, and leavin’ no tracks so’s to make Ol’ Blacky Baldwin believe he’d be’n killed.”

“That sounds likely enough,” Hamilton said. “But even if he did get away, I don’t believe that he’d want to come back.”

“I reckon not,” the mountain boy agreed. “Anyway, the school’s shut up now.”

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"How about the revenue men?" asked Hamilton.

"They haven't be'n here sence Teacheh went away," was the reply. "An' I reckon they're not wanted."

The boy stopped short as the old mountaineer came over to where he was squatting and gave him a long answer to the message he had brought. The old man read it to him from a sheet of paper on which he had penciled it roughly. Bill Wilsh listened in a dreamy way, and Hamilton wondered at his seeming carelessness. The old man read it twice, then, rising to his feet, the boy repeated it word for word and without so much as a nod to Hamilton, slouched off in a long, lazy stride that looked like loafing, but which, as Hamilton afterwards found out, covered the ground rapidly.

"Do you suppose he'll remember all that, Uncle Eli?" asked Hamilton in surprise.

"He? Oh, yes," the mountaineer replied, "word for word, syllable for syllable—that is, fo' to-day."

"He must have a good memory," the boy exclaimed "I'm sure I couldn't."

"But he'll forget every word by to-morrow," the other continued, "almost forget that he was hyeh to-day at all. That's why they're so hard to teach, those po' whites, what they learn doesn't stick. I heard him tellin' yo' about the disappearance o' the last teacheh."

"Yes, he was putting it down to 'cunjering.' Is there much of that sort of idea in the mountains?"

"None among the mount'neers proper," replied the old man. "Some o' the po' whites down in the gullies talk about it, but thar's mo' difference between the folks in the gullies an' on the Ridge th'n there is between the mount'ns an' the Blue Grass. They are different, an' they look different, too."

"Bill Wilsh certainly does," agreed Hamilton, "but I thought at first it was because he was tired out with a long walk after a day's work."

The Kentuckian shook his head.

"They're all that way," he said. "They jes' look all beaten out as if they hadn't any life left in them at all. I reckon the most o' them have hookworm, too, an' they just look fit to drop."

"Hookworm, Uncle Eli? What is that?" asked the boy.

"It's a queer kind o' disease," the old man answered, "that comes from goin' barefoot. There's a kind o' grub in the soil, and it works its way in. It's only jes' recently that it's

be'n found out that the po' whites are peaked and backward because they're sick, and now they know a cure fo' it, why hookworm is being driven right out o' the South."

"Was there so much of it?"

"Puttin' an end to it will make useful American citizens out o' thousands o' poor critters that never knew what ailed them."

"But where did the 'poor whites' come from, Uncle Eli? What made them that way?"

"Whar they come from I jes' don' rightly know. I reckon I saw more o' them when I was down in Georgia, but the Florida 'crackers' are still worse off. Thar's not so many in the mount'ns an' those that are here live 'way up in the gullies. The sure 'nough po' whites, or 'Crackers' as they call them, belong to the pine belt, between the mount'ns an' the swamps o' the coast."

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"Why are they called 'Crackers'?"

"I don' know, unless because they live on cracked corn and razor-back hog. It an't so easy to say how they begun. Thar's a lot o' French names, an' thar's a tradition that two shiploads o' Huguenots were wrecked off Georgia in the early days an' foun' their way inland, settlin' down without anythin' to start with, an' not knowin' for a generation or two whar any settlements could be foun'. An' thar's a lot o' folks that have just drifted down, down,—livin' jes' like the 'Crackers' an' often taken to be the same. An' the slavery system made it worse because thar was no middle white class—either rich or po', thar was nothin' between,—that is, down in that part o' the country. But yo' mus' remember that thar has been a great change in the last twenty years, an' that the children o' 'Cracker' families are doin' jes' as well as anybody in the South."

"How is that, Uncle Eli?"

"Wa'al, in the days befo' the war, the po' whites were jes' trash. The planters wouldn' have 'em, because the slaves did all the work; they wouldn' work themselves, an' they didn' own slaves. So they were worse off than the negroes an' even the black race looked down on 'em. But the war waked them up."

"They all fought for the South, didn't they?"

"Mos'ly all. They were food fo' powder, but I always reckoned they hindered more'n they helped. For the 'Cracker,' however, the war meant everythin'. It placed him side by side with the Southern gentleman, it strengthened the color line, an' jes' enough o' them made good to show the others thar was a chance fo' them, too."

"Then they started in to improve right after the war, did they?"

The Kentuckian shook his head negatively.

"No," he said, "at first they were far worse off than befo' because the Freedman's Bureau an' the carpet-baggers made trouble right an' lef'. The No'th had a fine chance, but the carpet-baggers were jes' blind to everythin' excep' the negro, an' the po' white was jes' as shabbily treated by the No'th as he had be'n by the South. Now that everybody is seein' that yo' can't make a negro jes' the same as a white man by givin' him a vote, thar's a chance fo' the po' white. I reckon the 'Cracker' as a 'Cracker' is goin' to be extinct pretty soon, an' the South is goin' to be proud o' the stock it once despised. Atlanta is the fastes' growin' city in the South, an' Atlanta is jes' full o' men whose folks weren't much more'n 'Crackers.' The po' white, in a few years, is goin' to be only a memory like the backwoodsman o' the time o' Dan'l Boone."

"That promises well for the South," said Hamilton.



“The boom o’ the South is jes’ beginnin’,” the old man said, “an’ if you’re goin’ to do census work this next year, yo’ jes’ watch the figures an’ see whar the old South comes in. It’s a pity you’re goin’ back to Wash’n’ton to-morrow, as I think yo’ ought to see more o’ this country befo’ yo’ go.”

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"I'd like to, ever so much, Uncle Eli," the boy answered, as he got up from the step and started for the big loft where he slept with the mountaineer's two sons, "but, even if I don't get a chance, I've learned a lot from you about the folk on the mountains and about the South generally."

The mountaineer nodded a good-night as the boy disappeared.

"Now thar," he said to his wife, who had been knitting stockings during the latter part of the conversation, and occasionally interjecting a word, "thar is a boy that is really achin' to know things. I wish Rube and Eph were more like him."

"Nothin' but hounds an' vittles worries them," the woman replied sharply, "but they an't none like city boys, an' I'd ruther have 'em the way they air than to come pesterin' with questions like Hamilton does you. I don't set any sort o' stock in it, an' I don't encourage him in sech nonsense."

The big Kentuckian smiled, and filled his corn-cob leisurely as he turned the talk to other things.

Early the next morning, Hamilton and the oldest of the two boys started on their fourteen-mile ride to the station, where the lad was to take an afternoon train for Washington. They had gone about three miles, when they came upon Bill Wilsh sitting on the stump of a tree by the roadside.

"I reckoned you-all would come along this way," he said, "an' I've be'n thinkin' more'n more 'bout Teacheh havin' likely gone to the city, an' not bein' dead after all. Yo' goin' to the city now?"

[Illustration: *Bill Wilsh's home in the gully. (Courtesy of Doubleday, Page & Co.)*]

[Illustration: *Bill Wilsh in the school. (Courtesy of Doubleday, Page & Co.)*]

"I'm going to Washington, Bill," Hamilton answered.

"Is that the city?"

"It's one of them."

"Do yo' s'pose that'd be the city Teacheh went to?"

"I couldn't say, Bill," the lad replied, "there's no way of knowing, but it's likely enough."

"I was thinkin'—" the mountain boy began then he broke off suddenly. "I'm mighty partial to whittlin'," he continued irrelevantly.

"The best ever," interjected Hamilton's companion. "Yo' ought to have shown him some of your work, Bill."

"I was allers hopin' Teacheh would come back," said the boy in his listless, passionless way, "an' he seemed so fond o' the school that I whittled a piece to give him when he showed up agin. But now I reckon he an't a-goin' to come back. Does you-all reckon he'll come back from the city?"

Hamilton looked down at the lad, and wanted to cheer him up, but he could not see what would be likely to bring the schoolmaster back, and so he answered:

"I'm afraid not, Bill. But he might, you know."

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"I reckon not. But I'd like him to know he a'nt fo'gotten in the mount'ns. I want yo' to tell him that thar a'nt be'n a week sence he went away that I an't be'n down to the school an' swep' the floor an' seen that his books was in the place he liked to have 'em be. I wouldn't want him to come back from his wanderin', if he still is wanderin', an' think he was fo'gotten. It an't much, I know, to sweep a floor," he added, looking up to Hamilton, "but yo' tell him an' he'll understan'. It's about all that I kin do. He'll understan' if yo' tell him."

Neither of the other boys spoke, and after a moment the mountain lad went on:

"An' when yo' see him, give him this, an' tell him it comes from Bill, his 'tryin' scholar.' He used to call me that because, although I wasn't learnin' much, I was always tryin'. An' yo' can tell him I'm tryin' still."

Reaching his hand into the bosom of his ragged shirt the boy pulled out a slab of wood four inches square. It was carved as a bas-relief, showing the schoolhouse in the foreground in high relief, with the wooded hills beyond.

"That's great!" exclaimed Hamilton. "I don't believe I ever saw better carving than that anywhere."

A momentary gleam of pleasure flashed into the boy's dull eyes, but he went on again in the same lifeless voice.

"Thar's the schoolhouse jes' as it was when he was here last, but it's never looked the same to me sence. I want yo' to give this to him an' show him, if yo' will, that I whittled it with the door open, jes' to show him we're lookin' for him back."

"But supposing I shouldn't meet him in the city?" queried Hamilton gently. "Washington is a large place and there are many other cities."

"I reckon you-all have mo' chance o' findin' him thar than I have hyeh. I reckon he an't goin' to come back hyeh, an' then he'd never know that we an't fo'gotten him, an' he'd think we was ungrateful. But yo'll try an' find him?"

Hamilton was conscious of a lump in his throat at the simple faithfulness of the mountain boy, and he said gently:

"Very well, Bill, if you feel that way about it, of course I'll try. But you haven't told me his name as yet."

"I was thinkin' o' that," the boy answered. Then he took from his pocket a home-made gum-wood case, and opening it, took out a small piece of paper and handed it to Hamilton.

“Be keerful of it,” he said, “that paper tears mighty easy.”

Hamilton smoothed the paper out on the palm of his hand, and looked at it carefully. It was a “copy,” merely of pothooks, done in lead pencil, the strokes wavering and of differing slopes, and the whole so smudged as scarcely to be recognizable. But, down in the corner, written in ink, in a firm, bold hand, were the words, “Very Good, Gregory Sinclair.”

Hamilton copied the name into his notebook and, refolding the paper as carefully as possible in the same folds, he handed it to the barefooted boy standing on the road beside his horse’s head.

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"Did you-all read it?" he asked.

"Yes," said Hamilton.

"Did you-all see that he said 'Very Good'?"

"'Very Good' was what was written," agreed Hamilton, thinking of the wavering and smudged pothooks.

"I c'n do better now," the boy said quietly, "an' I've been tryin' jes' as hard as though Teacheh was in yonder schoolhouse. But thar's no one to write 'Very Good' on 'em any mo', an' I reckon thar an't goin' to be. But I'm trustin' that you'll fin' him an' you'll tell him that he an't fo'gotten."

Without a word of farewell, the boy struck into the woods and was lost to sight. The two lads started on their way, but they had not ridden a hundred yards when they heard a hail; looking back, they saw the mountain boy standing on a point of the ridge; and echoing down to them came the lonely cry:

"Fin' him, an' tell him he an't fo'gotten."

CHAPTER III

A MANUFACTORY OF RIFLES

Settling himself comfortably in the train for his long journey to the capital, one of the first things that Hamilton did was to take from his pocket the little carving that had been given him by the mountain lad and put it away carefully in his grip. Examining it closely as he did so, the boy was astonished to note the fineness of the work, and he realized that it must have taken Bill Wilsh all the spare moments of a long winter to finish it. The work was all the more surprising, Hamilton thought, since it had been done just with a single tool, a common pocketknife, and was yet as fine and delicate as though carved with a set of costly tools. He made up his mind to buy a set and send them to Bill Wilsh with the first pay that he got from his Census Bureau work.

Seated across the aisle from him was another lad about his own age, with whom Hamilton rather wanted to make acquaintance, but the opportunity did not arrive until the first meal, when, by chance, they found themselves on opposite sides of one of the small tables in the dining car. The usual courtesies of the table led to conversation, in the course of which Hamilton's companion dropped the word "census" in a manner which showed his familiarity with the progress of the work of preparation.

"Are you interested in the census?" asked Hamilton promptly.

“Rather,” the other replied. “I’m going to work in the Bureau. As a matter of fact, I’m just going to Washington to get my appointment now.”

“You are!” exclaimed Hamilton. “Why, that’s exactly what I’m doing. It’s queer we should meet this way.”

“Are you going as an assistant special agent, too?” his new friend asked.

“I’m going to start in that way,” the boy replied

“How do you mean ‘start’?” the other queried. “I understand that work on the manufactures will last three or four months, and by that time all the other census-taking will be over.”

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"I'm going to try to get some of the population work as well," Hamilton explained. "I think it will be even more fun than the manufactures end, and I heard that they're going to put on a few population enumerators from those who have been on the manufactures work, admitting them without an exam. I think the population census gathering will be fine."

The other boy shook his head.

"I don't think I'd want it," he said, "at least not in a city, and I'm going to do the manufacturing work, of course, in a city."

"Where are you going to be?" asked Hamilton.

"I took the exam in 'Frisco," the older boy replied; "that's my home town, and I expect to work out there."

"That's quite a walk from here!" exclaimed Hamilton.

"I had to come to Washington," the boy answered "and so my people wanted me to go and see my sister down in Florida. She married a fellow who's busy reclaiming some swamp land down there, and he promised me a try at alligator hunting."

"That sounds prime," suggested Hamilton, "and I should think that in that reclamation work there would be lots of chance for it. It would be worth watching, too, just to see how they got at that work. I should think they would find themselves up against a pretty stiff job, engineering down in those swamps. And then there must be barrels of snakes, too?"

[Illustration: *Alligator-catching*. The sport at its best; tackling a fair sized reptile with bare hands. (Courtesy of *Outing Magazine*.)]

"Water moccasins and copper-heads mostly," said his friend cheerfully, "but you soon get so used to them that you don't mind them. It's very seldom that you ever hear of any one being bitten by a snake. They all seem more anxious to get out of your way than you out of theirs."

"And you're anxious enough, too!" remarked Hamilton.

"That's pretty good security, don't you think?" queried the older boy with a laugh. "When both sides want to get away, there's not much chance of a meeting."

"But how about the alligators?"

“That was real good sport,” the other rejoined. “But I kept down to the smaller chaps most of the time. I don’t suppose there’s really very much danger, even in the big fellows, as long as you know just how to handle them.”

“I don’t think I’m particularly keen about handling them,” answered Hamilton. “I shouldn’t think the big ones would want more than about one bite to put you out of business.”

“That’s all right,” the older boy admitted, “but what’s the use of giving one that chance? Anyway, so I learned down there, it’s not so much the bite that the hunters are afraid of as the stroke of the tail. It doesn’t take such a big alligator to break your leg like a pipestem with a sweep of that long, scaly tail of his.”

“But how do they catch them?”

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"With a noose, when they're sunning themselves. An alligator lies on a bank, half in and half out of the water, most of the time, with his eyes shut. Sometimes he really is asleep, and sometimes he isn't. That's where the fun comes in. Of course, if you can get the boat right up to where he is, close enough to slip the noose over his jaws, you've got him all right. There's a knob on the snout that keeps the noose from slipping off, and he sort of strangles when you tow him through the water. But if you can't get there with the boat you have to go it on foot."

"You mean you have to get out of the boat and walk right up to his jaws?"

"Yes, just that."

"It doesn't sound particularly good to me," Hamilton remarked.

"It isn't nearly as bad as it sounds," the other replied. "As long as you don't make too much noise, and keep out of reach of his tail, you're all right. If you slip up, you want to jump out of the way about as lively as you know how. But he'll never come after you, or mighty seldom. If you get a slip-knot over his snout, and can throw a half-hitch over his tail, why, the biggest of them is easy enough to handle."

"But what are they caught for?"

"There's quite a steady sale. The big fellows are sometimes sold alive to parks and aquariums and circuses, but most of them are killed and the whole skins dressed and used for hanging on the walls of dens, like trophies. The real market is for the skins of the little fellows, which are made up into all sorts of alligator leather bags. Most of that stuff is imitation, but still quite a lot of it is real. It's plenty of fun catching the little 'gators, because even the smallest of them can give you quite a nip and a reptile three feet long is a handful. I did well enough out of it, because in addition to the sport I had, my brother-in-law let me have the skins of all those I caught myself. Some people, too, want to have baby ones as pets, but I don't think I'd want to have them around, myself, after they grew to any size," he added, as the boys rose and went back to the Pullman.

By the time the train had reached Washington the two had become thoroughly friendly, and Hamilton liked his new acquaintance so much that he would gladly have seen more of him than merely as a traveling companion. But as the other lad was going out to San Francisco, there was no likelihood of their being thrown together at all. Indeed, on his arrival, Hamilton found that he had been assigned to an Eastern city, so he had to bid his new-made friend "Good-by."

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The exterior of the Census Bureau building was a disappointment to Hamilton, by reason of its unimposing appearance. Indeed, it was altogether too small for the purposes of the census, and during the rush of the decennial work, there were departments of the census scattered through various other buildings, adding no little inconvenience to the work. Accustomed to the New York structures, towering tens of stories into the air, the two-story red brick building of the census looked small to Hamilton, though comfortable and pleasant to work in. It was deceiving in its size, however, for the floor space was big and not much broken, and there seemed to be plenty of room. But it was not until the boy returned after his population work some months later, that he saw this building as the center of unparalleled activity.

[Illustration: *The census building*. Where Hamilton learned the immense importance of this great function of the government. (*Walden Fawcett*.)]

"I understand," said the chief of the manufacturing division to him, "that you are desirous of coming to the Census Bureau as one of the permanent force, not just for the decennial period only?"

"Yes, Mr. Clan," was the boy's reply, "that is, if the Bureau is willing."

"That will depend entirely on the work you do. I didn't see your papers personally, but I understand you received a high rating, and that you have had a good deal to do with figures.—That is, for a youngster," he added, noting the youthfulness of the lad standing before him.

"Yes, sir, I have," answered Hamilton.

"What made you think of taking this work up?" was the next question.

"Because I like it, sir."

The divisional chief leaned back in his chair, put his fingers together in characteristic attitude, and smiled.

"Eh," he said, "you are sure you will like the work?"

"Quite, sir," said Hamilton in his decided way. "I looked it all over, and I know."

"You will be less sure of the future when you are older," the Scotchman said, "but if you 'know,' there's nothing more to be said. I'm going to put you under the care of Mr. Burns, and he will instruct you further in the work."

"But, Mr. Clan—" began the boy.

"Well?"

“Where am I going, sir?”

“New Haven, Connecticut—a good town, and one that will give you plenty of work. You’d better start for there to-night. I hope you will like it as much as you expect.”

“Thank you, sir,” Hamilton replied, seeing that his superior deemed the interview at an end. “I’ll do the very best I can.”

On arriving in New Haven the following day, Hamilton made his way to the local Census Office opened by his new leader. He found Mr. Burns to be a typical statistician, to whom figures had a meaning beyond themselves, but to whom little was of value unless it could be expressed in figures. Hamilton introduced himself briefly.

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"You're Noble," the other said abruptly. "When will you be ready to begin?"

"Any time," answered Hamilton. "Right after lunch, sir, if you want me to make a start."

"There's a portfolio," the census agent answered, "take it along and you can begin just as soon as you're ready."

"What instructions have you to give me, sir?" asked Hamilton.

"I save eleven and a half per cent of the time given to instructions by writing them. You'll find a copy in there," he said, pointing to the portfolio.

"Very well, sir," the boy replied, "I'll go ahead, and if I find anything I don't understand, shall I come and ask you?"

"Telephone!" the census agent said. "Quicker to 'phone even if only in the next room. Average conversation, six minutes; average telephone conversation, two minutes; average value of my time for six minutes, eighteen cents; average cost of 'phone for two minutes, one cent; direct saving to me seventeen cents, not counting time of your traveling to come and talk. No! Telephone!"

"All right, sir," Hamilton answered, "I'll 'phone," and realizing that his new chief had the question of the valuation of time down to a fine point, he hurried away.

On reaching the hotel he examined his portfolio with a great deal of curiosity. The schedules were familiar, for one of the features of the examination he had taken had been the filling out of such a census schedule from financial statements of a group of factories. The written instructions, however, were thoroughly characteristic of the man, and percentage figures were scattered around like punctuation marks. But the explanations were clear as crystal, none the less, and gave no opportunity even for telephoning.

An old New England center, and a college town, New Haven proved a most interesting field in which to work. By far the larger number of people with whom the boy came in contact were of old American stock and gave him every assistance possible.

"The census-taker?" one old man said, when Hamilton called. "Come right in the office and sit down. Now tell me what I can do for you," and when the boy mentioned the principal items of the schedule, the manufacturer spent a good hour working over the books with his office force to get out the figures desired. When Hamilton thanked him, he replied:

"I'm an American, Mr. Noble, and one of the stones they moved from the old churchyard of the Old Center Church and that bore the date 1681 was the tombstone of my direct ancestor. I think you'll find most of the New England stock proud of the United States

and only too glad to do anything they can to help the government in its census or anything else for the good of the country.”

“I’m sure of it,” the boy said heartily, “but there’s mighty few of that old type left. There’s not ten per cent of the people in the country now that are real bred-in-the-bone Americans.”

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"It is a pity," the old man said, shaking his head, "and the worst of it is that even that ten per cent lives principally in the country. It's the cities that influence the progress of the nation. We talk about making these foreigners over into our idea of what Americans should be, and we forget that all the time they are influencing us to become the kind of Americans they think we ought to be."

"I guess that's true," the boy said, "because in New York, where my folks live, the old New Yorkers seem entirely strange and out-of-place in the dash and glitter."

"Of course," the New Englander replied. "The real Americans are plain, solid people; it's the Jewish strain in New York that has brought about the display of wealth, and to the large number of Southern Europeans are due the colors, the lights, the music, the public dining, and all the rest of it. It may be the American of to-day, but it isn't what Americanism meant a few years ago."

"A good deal of New York life does seem foreign in a kind of way," said Hamilton, "and I'm glad," he added, as he closed his portfolio, "that the Census Bureau put me at work in one of the old-fashioned towns first."

As the boy went on in his work he came to find how thoroughly the spirit of Yale was felt in the town. Almost all the leading business men were Yale graduates, and instead of displaying the "town and gown" hostility of some university places, New Haven was inordinately proud of its college. Of course, even in such a town, there was quite a proportion of foreign-born manufacturers but the boy found that the Jewish establishments were even easier to tabulate than those owned by Americans, the Hebrew understanding of the details of business being so thorough.

"That's not so very detailed!" one of these remarked to Hamilton when the boy had come to the end of his list of questions.

"It's a relief to hear somebody say that," answered the young census-taker with a laugh, "because I hear a dozen times a day the complaint that no one could be expected to know as much about a business as these schedules require."

It was not to be expected that the work would proceed without an occasional hitch, and Hamilton had one such with a firm of Italian marble-cutters in which the bookkeeping had been of so curious a character that it was next to impossible to get out the kind of figures the government wanted. Another was in a small Chinese place, where they made little trinkets to sell to tourists in the "Chinatown" districts of the larger cities, representing them to be imported articles of value. Another was with a small place run by two brothers, Persians, making fringes and tassels for fraternal order badges and matters of that kind. It was interesting to the lad, for he had the chance to see the works in a number of cases, and he learned a lot about the way many queer things were made.

But Hamilton's hopes were set on visiting one especial manufacturing plant in New Haven, and he had determined to ask that he be allowed to go over it before he left the town. This was the great sporting gun works. Hamilton was passionately fond of sport, and had owned a Winchester ever since he was twelve years old. Indeed, he had read up on guns a good deal, and it was one of his hobbies.

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His delight was great, therefore, when at the end of a long day, after he had turned in his schedule to his chief, the latter said:

"Noble, your work is good. Johnson is faster. Up to last night he had turned in one, decimal five-two per cent more establishments than you, but your proportion of capital invested is larger, showing that the works you went to took more time. Your schedules are better. This takes a little over one-fifth more of my own time than I had figured at first. I was going to do the Winchester works myself. I think you can do it. You had better go ahead. It's complicated, but they'll help you all they can. There's not much time left."

"Very well, Mr. Burns," said Hamilton decisively with the characteristic raising and lowering of his eyebrows, "I'll get all there is, all right."

The next morning, about ten o'clock, Hamilton presented himself at the general offices of the company on the outskirts of the town, about a mile from the college. He asked to see the business manager, and was granted an interview.

"Mr. Arverne," said the boy, "I called with regard to securing the figures for the census of nineteen hundred and ten."

"But you are not the special agent surely?" said the manager, looking at him sharply.

"No, sir," the boy answered, "Mr. Burns is the special agent, and I am one of his assistants."

"I should have thought Mr. Burns would have come himself," the man said; "you are young for this work, aren't you?"

Hamilton flushed at this reference to his boyish appearance, but he answered steadily: "Yes, sir, I believe I am younger than most of the assistant special agents, but I have had a good deal to do with figures."

"Burns is a good man," the manager continued. "If the government has men of that stamp all over the country, the statistics will be invaluable. You know Mr. Burns?" he added suddenly.

"Only just since this work began, Mr. Arverne," the boy replied.

"Queer chap. I don't believe he eats a bit of food or drinks a glass of water without mentally figuring the nutritious percentage in the food, and the effect of his drink upon the water supply of the world."

Hamilton laughed.

“He is a little that way, sir,” he said.

“A little!” the manager exclaimed. “But to return to the point. You didn’t tell me why Mr. Burns didn’t come himself.”

“He said that the office work was piling up, sir,” answered the boy, “and—if you don’t mind my saying so, Mr. Arverne—he spoke of it as an opportunity for me, since it was the largest plant in the city and my schedules had been the most complete of those turned in to him.”

The manager eyed the boy keenly.

“Mr. Burns doesn’t make many mistakes,” he said, after a moment, “and if he has confidence in you, he knows what he is talking about. This is a country of young men anyway, and it seems to be getting younger all the time. Where is the schedule?”

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Hamilton handed him the paper and sat back, waiting. Several minutes passed, while the manager went over the questions item by item.

"Yes," he said at last, "I think our books can answer every question there without difficulty. We keep very complete books. I am not so sure, Mr. Noble," he continued, "that I can give you those figures immediately in just exactly that form."

"In what points do your books differ?" asked Hamilton quietly.

"Not in any essentials, but in a few minor points," the manager replied. "For example, you want to know here the exact number of employees on our pay roll on December 15th. Now I could have the pay roll department—we keep it as an entirely separate department here—turn up instantly the payments for the week in which that date occurs, but in order to separate that one day from the week, reference will have to be made to the Employment Bureau to find out what workers left, and how many were added, and the day of the week on which each of these left or began work in that week, and to add or to deduct such sums from the weekly pay roll."

"That difficulty has come up several times," said Hamilton, "because not many people pay their employees by the day. But in nine cases out of ten, an average for that week is usually struck, figuring in some cases by the days and in others by the hours. I suppose you noticed that the schedule itself states that what is sought is 'a normal day'?"

"I saw that," was the reply, "but it seems to me that when possible it is better to have all the details carried out to the full. However, even that is not the most serious difficulty of these questions."

"No," said Hamilton, "that one hasn't given much trouble. The hitch usually comes just at the point you're looking at now—the cost of materials."

"That's just exactly it. Our non-productive departments consume a great deal of material, mill-supplies and fuels, but if we include those with all the rest of it, our figures will not show a right proportion."

"What do you mean by your non-productive departments?" asked the boy. "That seems rather a curious phrase."

"Those in which the work done is not directly a part of the making of guns or ammunition. For example, we have a large force of draughtsmen working on new models of rifles and mechanisms and on machinery to enable us to make the new types. We make all the machinery that we use, right here in the plant. We make our own tools, too, so that there is a great deal of designing."

"Those are not non-productive," commented Hamilton.

“We call them so,” was the reply.

“I don’t think the Census Bureau considers them as such,” said Hamilton, feeling rather proud of this opportunity to explain some of the workings of the Bureau; “it seems to me more satisfactory to consider that these works not only manufacture guns, rifles, and ammunition, but also machinery and tools.”

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"But those are for our own use!" objected the manager.

"Yes, of course, I see that," said the boy. "But even if you do use them yourselves, you make them yourselves. If you leave them out in the schedule it would make the figures all wrong."

"How would it?"

"Well, the schedule wouldn't show anything paid out for machinery, and you've got to have machinery, and you'd seem to be paying wages, without getting anything for it. It seems to me that even if you do use the machinery yourselves you really sell it to yourselves, only at cost price or at whatever figure you name."

"I suppose in a sense we do," said the business manager, "but that seems a very roundabout way of getting at it."

"I don't think it is," Hamilton replied. "If you bought the machinery you would have to pay the manufacturer his profit. Instead of that you make the profit yourselves. The value, of course, should also be carried to the capital account."

"Well," the older man said, "I'm willing to put it down either way, and in that light these departments might be called productive, although not directly productive. You seem to have figured this sort of business out pretty well for a youngster," he added.

"I suppose that's natural," Hamilton answered, "because I've been doing nothing else for the past two weeks."

"Then how about advertising," the manager suggested; "perhaps you can tell me where that is usually listed? As part of the sales force?"

"No, sir," was the prompt reply; "it is reported as a miscellaneous expense."

"Very well," the official said, "if you come back at four o'clock this afternoon I will have the schedule ready for you." Then, seeing that the boy hesitated, he said, "Did you want it before then?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Arverne, thank you," the boy answered "that wasn't what I had in mind at all. I was wondering whether, if I came back at three o'clock, I would be allowed to see something of the works. In quite a number of places I have been shown through the plant, sometimes because I had to get figures from managers of different departments, sometimes because I had a few minutes to spare while a clerk was filling up the schedule. But I've always been so interested in guns, and especially in Winchesters, that I really should like to find out how they're made."

The business manager shook his head dubiously.

"We very rarely show any one over the plant," he said, "because there is very little to be gained by it. And in any case, there are some portions of the works where visitors are never allowed, such as ammunition rooms where there are quantities of powder about, and similar places."

"I'd like to be able to say that there was a desire on the part of the Census Bureau for a report," said Hamilton, "but honestly I haven't the right to say so. I'm only asking as a favor. At the same time I have seen special reports on selected industries issued by the Bureau, and possibly my information might chance to be of value to the special agent who was getting it up."

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"Come back at two o'clock, then," said the manager. "One of the members of the Board, Mr. Nebett, is here to-day, and if he has no objection I'll try to find some one to show you round."

Promptly at the appointed hour, Hamilton handed his card to the doorman, who showed him into a waiting-room. In a few minutes the door opened, and a keen-looking, well-set-up man appeared who came forward and held out his hand.

"I've been hearing about you from Mr. Arverne," he said, "and he tells me that you want to look over the works."

"Mr. Nebett?" queried the boy, and in response to an affirmative nod, he continued, "Yes, sir, I'm very anxious to see part of it at any rate. I can see that it's a huge place, but gun-making must be so interesting that I'd like to see how it's done."

"I think Mr. Arverne said something to me about your writing up a special report, a summary or something of that kind."

"That was just a suggestion, Mr. Nebett," the boy replied. "I told Mr. Arverne that the Census Bureau did issue special bulletins on selected industries, and that perhaps I might have an opportunity to make use of some information. But that's a personal idea of mine only, because most of those bulletins are written by experts in the Bureau."

"Well," was the reply, "I don't see that it can do us any harm, anyway, and if you are so interested you can come along with me. I like to go through the works every once in so often, and perhaps I can tell you more about these things than any other man in the place, because I get a chance to see it as a whole."

"If you would," began the boy.

"Come along, then," said the official, without further parley, and he led the way out of the general offices and across the street to the first of a huge group of buildings. Walking through the yard the two came presently to a long structure running alongside the railroad sidings. "This," Hamilton was informed, "is just the storeroom for raw material as it comes off the cars."

He turned half round as though to leave the building, but Hamilton stopped him with a question.

"Steel, principally?" he asked.

"Steel."

"What kind of steel?" persisted Hamilton.

“Oh, different kinds.”

“Why different kinds?” continued the boy, working his eyebrows, as was his habit when in earnest. “For different kinds of guns?”

“Yes,” answered the older man, evidently deciding that he would have to go into the matter thoroughly with Hamilton, and passing on into the storehouse. “We get mostly three kinds of steel, nickel steel, carbon steel, and soft steel, with a small proportion of other forms. We do that for the very reason you mentioned, that they are used for different kinds of work. Nickel steel we do not use for the cheaper grades of guns, because it is so much harder, and costs so much more to work. Indeed, very few gun-makers use nickel steel for barrels at all, but we do on all our high-grade work.”

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"I notice," Hamilton said, "that all the steel here is stored in bars and rods. Do you buy it that way, or have you a rolling mill in connection with the plant?"

"Buy it," the other said immediately. "You can't run a rolling mill at a profit except on a large scale, and, anyway, this is too far from the source of supply. We get our copper in ingots, but not our steel."

"I notice," the boy continued, fingering a long ticket attached to a bundle of steel rods by a wire, "that you say here, 'Do not disturb until report from laboratory is received.'"

"Certainly," said the other, "every order as it comes in is tested. We have two laboratories, a physical and a chemical, and not a scrap of material is used until it is found to be fully up to the specifications. There's no guesswork there, but the most rigid scientific tests. That keeps any poor material from slipping through."

"Now," he continued, "I'll show you what happens to those bars."

He led the way to a small building where the bars were cut into certain recognized lengths for the men at the drop forges to handle.

"This forging shop," the manufacturer said, entering it as he spoke, "is where most of the metal parts of the gun are first roughly shaped, and this man is working on part of a cartridge ejector. Watch him now," he went on, following the action of the workman; "he takes a piece of steel out of the furnace behind him, lays it on the die, touches a lever, and the big drop-hammer comes down,—once, twice. He turns it over, brings the drop-hammer down again, once, twice, and the piece is shaped. It has rough edges all round, of course, and so he takes it, while it is still glowing red, to a more exact die, and brings the drop-hammer down once, and turns it over, then brings down the hammer again once. Now the shape is almost perfect but for that fringe of metal all round. He picks it up, puts it on that die on this next machine close by his hand, touches a lever, and a knife, exactly the shape of the die comes down, crunch! shaving off the iron clean all round, and there is your forging done, and all with the one heating. Of course it isn't finished off, but you can see for yourself that the rough work is done, and all in the space of a few moments."

Hamilton found it hard to tear himself away, for while the principle was the same, all the different forges were turning out different parts, and it was a fascination to the boy to see those glowing lumps of steel come out of the furnace and with the few strokes of the drop-hammer, fall a few seconds later, the shaped part of a rifle. Some of the machines were making receivers for the stock, the largest piece of metal, and other small parts like the trigger or the hammer, while still others were preparing the barrels of the gun for drilling.

“It is not likely to occur to you,” said his guide, “that it would not do to let all those various parts cool off by chance. For example, in winter they would cool more rapidly than in summer, and those near the door more quickly than those in the inner part of the forging house. That would make them of varying hardness. So, in order to make sure that they shall be the same, all those pieces you have seen being made are annealed.”

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"How is the annealing done?" asked Hamilton.

"That is simple enough," was the reply. "All that has to be done is to heat them again all to the same degree of heat, then let the oven cool at a certain rate. Here are the annealing ovens."

"This is certainly a hot place," said the boy, as he stepped into the next building. "Whew! I wonder any one stays in here."

"No one does," his conductor answered. "We have this arranged so that all the furnaces are filled in the morning, when they are cold, and there are pyrometers to tell when the right heat is reached. All the ovens, you see, are managed by these switches near the door. Look here—"

He slipped one of the switches into place, and the pyrometer needle swung around and pointed to the degree of heat in the oven which it was supposed to register.

"What are those little clocks for?"

"One for each oven," Mr. Nebett answered; "the keeper of the furnaces sets them when an oven is up to the required heat. Then, you see, it is easy to tell when they have been cooling long enough."

"I should think," said Hamilton, "that making the barrel was the most important part of a gun, because, after all, that is the only part a bullet touches, and it must have to be exact. I've often thought of that, how the tiniest difference at the mouth of the barrel would at a thousand yards range cause it to be away off the mark."

"It does have to be exact," his guide answered, "but that is a matter of care rather than of difficulty. In this next building we bore the rifle-barrels, just a simple boring process, as you see, but there are all sorts of precautions taken to insure absolute steadiness. As soon as a barrel is taken from the boring machine it is put through a test, to determine whether it is correct in size to the one-half of one-thousandth of an inch in diameter. If it is not as exact as that, it is set aside. That is only the first of a long series of tests, too. You would be surprised at the number of barrels that are rejected from the time of the first selection until the gun is completed. Here, for example, is perhaps the most sensational one."

He led the boy to a small building, standing by itself in the middle of the yard, heavily built, and looking almost like a log cabin of the old type, made of great timbers. It was just a bit of a place, divided into two parts by a heavy timber wall.

"What in the wide world is this for?" asked the boy.



"I'll show you in a minute, I think we're just in time," the official said, as he led the way in. Hamilton followed him into the inner chamber. A long row of gun barrels was the first thing the boy noticed, the barrels all lying in slots. A gray-haired man was filling a heavy charge of powder behind each one. The guns were pointing into a bank of sand.

"If you notice," said his guide, "you'll see that a little device, like the old percussion cap is right by each of those charges of powder. Are you all ready, Jim?" he queried, as the old man straightened up.

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"Yes, Mr. Nebett," was the reply.

"All right," the other said, "we'll go into the room." He pointed out to Hamilton, as they passed from one part of this little building to the other, that each of these percussion caps was attached to a wire which ran through the wall to the little room into which they were going.

"Look out, Mr. Nebett," said the old man, after he had closed and fastened the heavy door, "and you, young sir, don't be frightened," and he pulled the wire hanging overhead.

There was a terrific explosion and a roar, and though Hamilton had been half expecting it, he jumped. Then he laughed.

"I guess I did jump, after all," he said. "What was that for?"

"To test the strength of the barrels," said his friend, as the old workman slid back the heavy door. "There, you see," he added, "one of them did burst." He pointed to one of the gun barrels rent at the side. "Once in a while," he continued, "they just go up in pieces, and if you look at the walls and the ceiling you'll see any number of bits of metal driven in deeply."

"But he seemed to be putting in an awfully heavy charge," said the boy.

"We do that in order to be sure that we shall not expend a great deal of labor on a barrel which in the end would fail to pass inspection, and also to safeguard against accident," the other explained. "We do use a very heavy charge because our guns sell all over the world, and in some countries—England, for instance—the test is extremely severe. It's a costly process, as it spoils a lot of barrels, but it is better to lose material than to put out a piece of work which might not be trustworthy."

Hamilton looked around the proof-room carefully. Certainly it seemed to have gone through the wars. From the thick wood huge gashes had been rent, and the entire interior was jagged and splintered.

"How much of a charge do you put to each barrel?" he asked; and when the formula was given him for each of the different styles of rifle, the boy whistled in amazement.

"I should think that any barrels that stood that test could stand anything afterwards," he said admiringly.

"Well, they do," the other said. "It's very seldom that you hear of a first-class gun exploding. I don't recall a case of one of ours for years and years. And even if by some chance flaw they did, the good ones, being nickel steel, would just make a hole in the barrel,—not fly to pieces. But, as a matter of fact, any barrel that has been through that

‘proof-room’ will have been subjected to the greatest strain it will ever have to undergo, for there is no cartridge made that would have one-half the power in proportion to the size of the barrel.”

From the proof-room Hamilton’s guide led him through different parts of the works, where various machines were employed in preparing and finishing the rough forgings he had seen made and annealed. Thus, for example, in a receiver for a gun stock, one machine worked a bevel edge on it, another bored it to the size of the gun barrel, accurate to the thousandth part of an inch, another pierced the tiny screw holes, and yet other machines made even the minute screw, done, as was explained to Hamilton, so that the threads in each should fit with absolute exactness.

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"But do you really mean to say," queried Hamilton in surprise, "that every one of these fifty or more parts of each gun is inspected and tested?"

The official led him to a number of long rows of tables.

"Here," he said, "are girls doing nothing else all day long. Here is a testing die for a part of the ejector of one of our 1911 models. You see that there are two spaces for all of them. It must fit into this one, it must not fit into that, which is a thousandth of an inch smaller. If too big, you see it won't fit into either, if too small, it would fit into the one where it ought not. Every tiny piece is gauged on all its sides and in every hole and at all points with this double gauge system."

"That doesn't leave much for guesswork," said Hamilton. "But there is something that's been puzzling me."

"What is that?" asked his guide.

"I've always heard a lot about gun-metal," Hamilton answered, "and yet all the way through, these parts have been nothing but steel. And all the guns I ever saw had that bluish look, as gun-metal has. For example, my watch is what they call gun-metal," and he took it from his pocket and showed the back of it.

"Gun-metal," said the other, "is an alloy of copper and tin and once was used almost exclusively for cannon and big guns generally. But you're right about all guns having a bluish tinge. That is all steel, but it is treated by a process called coloring or bluing. I'll show you—both the old way and the new."

Going down the stairs and crossing the yard, he took Hamilton into a small building where there were a couple of open charcoal furnaces, in which the charcoal was intensely hot, but not hot enough to catch fire. The pieces of finished steel were buried in this charcoal, and every few minutes the men in charge would draw them out, wipe them over with a bunch of oiled waste, and thrust them back into the fire. It was about the dirtiest, blackest, grimeiest work the boy had ever seen.

"That is the old way," Hamilton was told, "and although it is handwork instead of machine work it is not a bit better in its results than the new way. The modern system, besides, is much simpler and cleaner."

In the next building was a row of charcoal ovens, revolving in such a way that the parts to be blued were alternately covered and released from the superheated charcoal, the effect of the greasing also being done at every automatic revolution. Each furnace door bore an asbestos clock.

“What are those clocks for?” asked Hamilton. “The same as those others, I suppose, so that the man in charge can put in a number of certain parts of a gun and leave them in for a regular length of time at a certain heat, and pull them out all done?”

“Just that,” was the reply. “The only gain in the old style is that each part being handled separately, if there is ever so little difference in the metal, the bluer can give it a shorter or a longer time, whereas the machine treats all alike.”

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"Then when the gun is assembled, all the work is done?" queried Hamilton, who was becoming a little tired from his long tramp through the works and among the furnace-heated shops.

"No," said the other. "That wouldn't do at all. A gun has not only got to shoot, but it has got to shoot straight."

"But how in the world," said Hamilton, "can you tell whether a gun will shoot straight or not?"

"One of the most important ways," said his informant, "is to let an expert look through the barrel. One of our best men, for example, has done nothing else all his life; his father before him was a barrel-sighter and his son has just entered the works. He does it this way—here, you try," and he handed a barrel to Hamilton. "Rest the barrel in this crotch," he continued, "and look at the window. You see there is a piece of ground glass with a thin black line running across it. Point the barrel so that it is aimed just below that line, and if you get it right, you will see a reflection of that line running lengthways up the barrel."

[Illustration: *Making gun-sights true*. Marksmen firing new-made rifles and adjusting the sights until every weapon carries perfectly. (Courtesy of Winchester Repeating Arms Co.)]

Hamilton put the barrel up and looked and looked, but for a minute or two he could not get the direction, then he caught the line. But the reflection in the barrel was confusing, and it seemed to him that he saw several lines.

"It's awfully hard just to get that straight," the boy said, "and it's dazzling, too."

"That man you saw there," answered his guide, as they moved away, "can tell almost to the width of a thread of a spider's web if a barrel is straight. Here, too, is another barrel test going on. You see this man is pushing a soft lead slug which fits the barrel snugly through the barrel by means of a brass rod. It takes a certain amount of pressure to push the lead slug through the barrel. Such slight variations in diameter of the bore as one-tenth of a thousandth can be readily detected, for if the barrel is smaller at any point than where it entered, the slug will stick, and if it is the least bit larger at any point, the slug will slide through too easily. Men accustomed to this class of work can readily detect an increase or decrease in diameter of one ten-thousandth part of an inch."

"You certainly have it down fine, Mr. Nebett," Hamilton commented.

"We try to," responded his guide. "Then when the barrel experts have had their turn, the gun is assembled and goes to the action men."

"Who are they?" asked the boy.

“They test the trigger pull, the cartridge ejection, the fall of the hammer, the filling of the magazine, and all such points. They have two sets of dummies, such as were used for testing the parts. One must fit, the other not, and so any fault in the mechanism is detected. The same with ejection,—we must be sure that a cartridge will not stick. Then after that—”

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"Still more tests!"

"Didn't I tell you that we had to be sure that a gun could be made not only to shoot but to shoot straight? Our crack shots get the guns next."

"What do they do?" asked the boy, "fire at targets?"

"Yes. But first a man, incased in an armored barricade, shoots a few extra heavy cartridges in each rifle, in order to make sure that no weakness has been caused by the various processes through which all the parts have passed. Then he turns it over to the crack shots. They fire half a dozen shots at a target, then look at the target through a telescope. Those men know that they can hit the bull's eye every time, so that if the shots are wide of the mark, either there is a defect in the gun or the sights are not true. In nine cases out of ten it is the fault of the sights, and they file them true."

"Then really every gun has been fired before being sold?"

"We turn out about sixteen hundred guns a day, and each one has been fired several times."

"Shotguns, too?"

"The same standard of accuracy is needed in those. It is just as important that a shotgun should throw a certain percentage of its shot within a certain radius as it is that a rifle bullet should go straight. Down in this little room," he continued, "a man stands all day shooting down this gallery, forty yards range, and each target is brought back and measured. In a circle with a fifteen-inch radius a boy counts the numbers of holes made in the paper by the tiny shot. There should be 300. If there are 290 the gun is passed, but if less it is rejected. Sometimes you get very queer shot patterns without knowing why."

"Do all shotguns throw as evenly as that?"

"All good ones should. It is astonishing to see how regularly the 'scatter' of a barrel will work out. Every barrel, of course, is stamped with the number of shots it has put into the fifteen-inch circle."

"And you make cartridges, too, don't you?" Hamilton asked.

"That's one of the largest branches of our business," his guide replied, "but there's not very much in that to show you, except of course the making of the metal caps, and this is simply the punching of circular pieces of copper or brass, turning up the edges, or 'cupping' them, as it is called, drawing them to length, inserting the primer pocket and heading—the filling is done in a building perpetually closed to visitors. We think too much of our visitors," he added with a smile, "to risk blowing them up. I don't suppose

really, that there would be any danger,—we have not had an accident for years,—but it's a business in which accident is only prevented by extreme care, and we believe in being thorough."

Chatting pleasantly, Mr. Nebett showed Hamilton through the various general offices, the payroll department, and the draughting and designing room, and finally returned to the business manager's office, where they found the schedule awaiting him, filled out in almost every detail. A few spaces had been left blank until the boy's return, some trifling explanation being readily answered by him.

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[Illustration: "A BULL'S-EYE EVERY TIME!" The expert looking through telescope at target which he has fired at with new guns to test their accuracy. (*Courtesy of Winchester Repeating Arms Co.*)]

"I must thank you ever so much," said the boy, turning to the director of the company who had taken so much trouble in showing him around, "it has been one of the most interesting afternoons I have had in all my life. I feel quite as though I had been witnessing the equipping of the world's armies on the eve of a great war."

"That would be all right," said the business manager, "if we were making military rifles, but ninety-five per cent of our work is for sporting purposes."

"But how about your cartridges?"

"There, perhaps," Mr. Nebett said, "The Hague tribunal would look askance at us."

Hamilton had his portfolio under his arm, but at the door he turned.

"How many cartridges do you put out?" he asked.

"Six million a day," was the reply.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOY LEADER OF A CRUSADE

So long as Hamilton's work dealt with the larger manufactories of the district he encountered comparatively little trouble, as he knew enough of the desires of the Census Bureau to be able to help those business men whose books did not specifically divide receipts, expenses, and so forth in the same order as the government required. Indeed, he made several very pleasant acquaintanceships during the weeks in New Haven, and it was not until he was "checking up," going to all the small places that had not been listed, that he really found himself in difficulties. He anticipated trouble with the dressmakers, and consequently his delight was great when he learned that this had been omitted from the census since 1904 because it is a "neighborhood industry." But the milliners proved just as bad.

In the first place, Hamilton could not work up any enthusiasm over a millinery establishment, and although he had definite instructions that each one was to be considered as a factory and entered upon the schedules as one, he thought such an idea was stretching the point a little far. Fortunately he had covered a large number of them during the first weeks of the work, visiting the places in the early morning and in the evening when the offices of the larger factories were closed. His worst clash occurred at almost the very last one to which he went.

It was a little after five o'clock, just as it was beginning to get dark, that Hamilton, having ascertained from the Business Telephone Directory the address of a milliner not down on his lists, who did work for wholesale as well as retail trade, went up the steps of a really handsome house, and rang the bell. He did so reluctantly, for there was no plate on the door, and he did not wish to annoy strangers. But the address seemed straight enough.

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The door was opened by a becaped maid, and Hamilton was shown into a handsomely furnished drawing room. On a table in the corner, the boy caught sight of a pile of fashion magazines, and he was sure that he was on the right track. After a few moments' delay, a richly dressed little Frenchwoman bustled in. She seemed surprised to see the boy, and halted on the threshold. Hamilton rose.

"I understand, Madame," he said, "that you are an 'exclusive' milliner?"

The woman looked bewildered.

"You make hats?" Hamilton continued, perceiving at a glance that the woman was foreign-born.

"Is it a hatter zat you want?" she asked.

"No, no," the boy replied, "I just want to know if you are a milliner?"

The Frenchwoman, not at all enlightened by this explanation, answered:

"I do not make ze hats; I design zem, and ze ozzers make zem."

"Oh, I thought you were the proprietor," said Hamilton; "then you don't own this place!"

"I am ze proprietor, but I do not own ze house," she said; "I pay ze rent. But why you ask? I pay my rent!"

"Oh, of course," answered Hamilton, "but that has nothing to do with it. I did not wish to trouble you that way. I come from the census, and wanted to make sure that this was the place I was looking for."

"What is zat—ze census?"

"That is the way the government finds out about all the people in the country," explained Hamilton, "their names and how old they are, what they work at and how many people they employ, the wages they pay or are paid, and all sorts of things."

The Frenchwoman's eyes had been getting bigger and rounder at every sentence, and when Hamilton had finished, she said with an air of regretful surprise:

"An' they tol' me zere was no police spy in America!"

"There isn't, so far as I know," the boy answered.

"But you—"

"I'm not a police spy," the boy said, a little nettled at being misunderstood.

“No? Zen zat is all ze more strange. In my country zose are ze questions ze gendarmes ask. An’ if you are not policeman, why do you wear badge?” she queried, pointing to the little census shield on Hamilton’s coat.

“That has nothing to do with the police,” the boy insisted, “that’s a census badge. Madame,” he added, “do I look like a policeman?”

The Frenchwoman, remembering the military appearance of the gendarmes of her native land and the burly make-up of the American policeman, shook her head.

“Perhaps you are disguise’?” she said, with a smile.

“No, I’m not disguised,” Hamilton responded, “and the badge is just to show that I have the right to ask you these questions.”

“I do not know anyzing at all about it,” the milliner objected, “but if you say you have ze right!” she shrugged her shoulders and sat down.

Hamilton promptly picked up his portfolio, opened it on his knee, and began to put some of the queries required. He got along well enough while the formal questions about name, address, nature of work, and so forth were in hand, but the question about the number of hours worked during the year made the woman most indignant.

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"What is ze good of a question like zat?" she asked. "What does it matter if ze girls work all ze night to finish ze hat for ze gr-rand occasion, ze wedding, ze garden party? When zey work more, zey get more pay!"

"Of course," said Hamilton diplomatically, "with such a number of society people as you deal with that must happen very often."

It was a successful move. The Frenchwoman beamed on him.

"In ze season, yes, perhaps twenty or thirty evenings, but even zen ze girl go home by twelve o'clock."

Hamilton smiled to himself as he did a little figuring and filled up the schedule to show the prevailing practice followed in the establishment during the year. He was a little dubious about asking the questions concerning the wages paid, but he found no trouble.

"In your kind of work," he said, "I suppose the girls get good wages."

"Ze very best," the woman answered, and Hamilton found that this was true. Indeed, so anxious was she to impress on him how much better were the wages paid by her than those in other establishments that the boy secured a large amount of unexpected valuable information. But he came to a dead stop on the question of raw material used during the year. For the material used in wholesale work the figures were easily secured, but the retail trade was another matter. This the milliner really could not give, for, as she pointed out, most of the few especial customers she had, brought the materials to her to be made up, and she had no means of knowing what had been paid for them. Nor would she even try to make an estimate.

"But I must know," said Hamilton, in despair. "See for yourself,—here it says that every factory must state the total cost of all material used during the year and the value of the products."

"Factory!" the milliner jumped to her feet. "What you say—a factory! Zis establishment a factory! And me, one of ze designers of ze great Maison Chic in Paris! Zis is insult!"

For a moment Hamilton was amazed at the tempest he had so suddenly evoked; then he tried to pacify the woman.

"That's just a general word," he said, "and it is used for every place where things are made."

"No, no, no," she cried, "I know bezzer zan zat. A factory has chimney, high, high, and smoke, an' nasty smells, an' machines. I have seen zem!"

“That’s one kind of factory,” answered the boy, “but it is only one kind. But if you like we won’t use the word at all.”

This time, however, Hamilton’s persuasions were of no avail. The milliner had taken offense at the word “factory,” and not another word could the boy get out of her on any subject; the deadlock had become absolute when the door opened and the maid showed in a young girl, evidently a customer. The proprietress immediately greeted her in voluble French, recounting as nearly as Hamilton could judge from her gestures her sorrows and trials at the boy’s hands.

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As soon as there was a lull, Hamilton said to the newcomer:

"I beg your pardon, but since you seem to know French, would you mind explaining to Madame what the census is? She seems to think I am a police spy, or something."

"Oh, the census!" the girl exclaimed. "I could not make out what it was all about. I thought it must be some question of taxes."

"No," Hamilton explained, "it is the Census of Manufactures, and millinery places have to be counted. I got along all right, and have finished my schedule but for one thing, and that I cannot get hold of. If you would just ask her the cost of the materials in the hats she made last year, I'll be through and then I won't be delaying you."

But not even the girl's fluent French could bring any light on this subject, and laughingly she had to admit to the boy that her success had been no greater than his own.

"I'll tell you," said Hamilton; "I've got an idea how we could get at it."

"How?" asked the girl interestedly, for having taken a part in it, she was American enough to be unwilling to give up; "what have you to suggest—what is your plan?"

"You are one of Madame's customers?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, whatever kind of books are kept here, there must be some sort of ledger, so that your bills can go to you every month."

The girl made a little grimace.

"The bills certainly come," she assured him.

"Well, then," said Hamilton triumphantly, "if we can find out from Madame what proportion of all her trade your account is, and if you can make a guess as to what the material you have brought her cost you, we shall come pretty close to being able to make an estimate on the cost of goods of all her customers."

"That's an excellent scheme," the girl said. "I don't know that I can give very exact figures, but you want just a rough idea?"

"I'd like it exact, of course," the boy answered, "but since that doesn't seem easy to get, the next best thing is a close estimate."

With this device in mind, very few minutes elapsed before the required information was secured, a rough guess made at the result, and the schedule finally filled out. As

Hamilton rose to go, the girl said laughingly: "I think I should at least receive 'honorable mention' in the dispatches as a census-taker, the same as soldiers do in war."

"Very well," said Hamilton, smiling in return, "I'll bear it in mind," and thanking her heartily, he went on his way, greatly relieved that the difficulty was over.

In a piece of extra territory that Mr. Burns had assigned to the boy, there were several factories in which there had been some difficulty in securing properly filled schedules, partly because much of the work was done on the night shift. Because of this, Hamilton had got in touch with some of these factories—they were principally glass works—on the night side first. He frequently found it necessary to work thus in the evenings, especially after this added work, which was given him because the district proved too large for the agent having it in charge.

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Little by little he worked these down until but one remained, owned by Germans, where the boy experienced great difficulty in securing any sort of attention. The night superintendent, however, was ready to help, and Hamilton went to him constantly in the endeavor to have the schedule for that factory filled. This was the easier, as the night superintendent in question had recently been promoted to that position from head bookkeeper.

One night, waiting for the superintendent to work out these figures, he sauntered through the works. A phrase from Edwin Markham's "The Hoe-Man in the Making" kept ringing through his head. It ran as follows—"It is in the glass-factory perhaps, that the child is pushed most hopelessly under the blind hammer of greed," and the boy wondered whether this especial works was one of those which the poet-author had visited. Owing to the number of times Hamilton had been forced to go to this factory, two or three of the men had come to know him by sight, and they nodded now as he passed through. Noticing a boy that looked even younger than himself,—for unconsciously his eye was seeking that of which he was thinking,—he turned to one of the men who had nodded to him, and said casually, and with an air of surprise:

"Why, that chap there doesn't look any older than me!"

"I don't suppose he is so very old," the man replied, "sixteen, maybe."

"Seems a shame to have to start in so young," Hamilton went on, with an assumed air of carelessness, "and I suppose he's been here some years."

"Probably about four or five," was the reply.

"You know," continued Hamilton, in a conversational tone, "I should think it would be hard for a boy to start in working like that, and at night especially."

The man paused in his work an instant, and looked at the lad, passing his hand over his forehead as he did so.

"I was just ten years old when I began," he said. "I'm only thirty now. I look fifty, don't I?"

"You certainly look over thirty," Hamilton admitted.

"Oh, I look fifty all right, I know that, and I'm as nearly played out as a man of fifty. And it's all due to work when I was a youngster. Every year that a boy is put to hard physical work before he is sixteen is equal to five years taken off his life."

"I wonder that any employer does it, and that any State permits it," said Hamilton.

“There’s not as much of it in Connecticut as in other States, although the figures show that it is growing here,” was the reply. “But you talk as though you had been having a session with ‘the crusader,’” the workman continued.

“Who’s the crusader?” asked Hamilton.

“Haven’t you seen him, then? With your ideas, you ought to get along well together. And,” he added, more seriously, “‘the crusader’ will be heard of yet.”

“Why?”

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"He's a boy who started at work in this place when he was only seven years old," the workman answered. "He's been here eight years now, and he's an odd genius. He taught himself to read and write, but he doesn't read anything except about labor conditions all over the world, and he knows all there is to know, I guess, about this business of children working. All the labor union people and the socialists know 'the crusader,' young as he is, and they send him, free, nearly every book and paper that's published."

[Illustration: YOUNG BOYS FROM THE PIT. A group of workers in a coal mine during dinner-time. Many even younger work on the night shift. (*Courtesy of the Ridgway co.*)]

"But why do you call him 'the crusader'?" asked Hamilton.

"Because he has some crusade idea on the brain,—thinks he can start a revolution or something that will put a stop to child labor, and he talks all the time of getting ready for this 'crusade' as he calls it. But everybody likes him just the same, and he's a good worker—when he's not talking."

"Which is he?" asked Hamilton. "I'd like to talk to him, if I might."

"No reason why you shouldn't," the other answered "he's kept busy of course, but there are minutes in which he can talk, and 'the crusader' is given special favors, anyway. That's the boy, 'carrying in' over there."

Hamilton looked with interest at the boy thus pointed out. He would have been noticeable, even without the knowledge of his peculiar position, but with it, his difference from his fellows became most marked. Hamilton had a couple of large apples in his pocket, and he thought this might be a good opening. Taking one of them out of his pocket, he started to eat it, and sauntered leisurely over to where the boy was working. He watched him for a minute or two; then, when the boy looked up, he said casually:

"Have an apple?"

Almost wolfishly the work-boy took the fruit from Hamilton and commenced to devour it. It was clear either that he was hungry or that such a luxury as an apple seldom fell to his lot. A few sentences passed, and then Hamilton asked:

"How long have you been in the factory here?"

"Eight years," 'the crusader' replied.

"You must have been just a youngster when you first came, then?"

"Seven years old," was the answer, "and small at that!"

“It’s a shame to let little children work like that, I think,” said Hamilton, wondering whether this would have the effect of rousing the other, “it must do them harm.”

But even though expecting some fiery retort, Hamilton was unprepared for the transformation in the lad. A moment before he had been a stooped childish figure with an old and weary face, carrying trays of hot glass from furnace to bench and bench to furnace, but at the word he turned. The air of weariness fell from him, his back straightened, life and passion flamed into his eyes, and despite the grime and sordidness of his surroundings, despite the rags in which he was clothed, under the dull glow of the furnaces and the flickering violet play of a distant arc light he seemed the bearer of some high message as his boyish treble, rich in the tones of a familiar despair, rang through the factory.

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"The land is filled with the voice o' cryin'," he began, "an' no one seems to hear. Tens o' thousands o' children cry themselves to sleep every night, knowin' that the mornin' only brings another day o' misery. Think of a little boy or girl o' ten years old, sufferin' already so much that hope is gone, an' tired enough to die! There are twenty-five thousand children less than ten years old in the fact'ries of America."

"Perhaps the people who could help don't know about it," suggested Hamilton.

"They know," the other continued, "but they don't care. They stop their ears to the cryin' o' the children an' talk about America as the land of opportunity. It is the land of opportunity—opportunity for the children to starve, opportunity to suffer, opportunity to die wretched an' to be glad to die. There's no country in the world where children are tortured as they are in the fact'ries of the United States."

"Oh, surely it can't be as bad as that," protested Hamilton.

The objection only increased the "crusader's" vehemence.

"There don't any children have to work anywhere as they do here," he fairly shouted, "here where they rob the cradle for workers, where the little voices become sad and bitter 'most as soon as they can lisp, where the brightness o' childhood fades out before its time, an' where its only world is the mill, the shop, an' the fact'ry. Their tiny bones unset, they make them stand in one position all day long until you hear the children moanin' hour after hour, moanin' and no one hears, or hearin', cares.

"They send missionaries to China," cried the lad further, "but there's no child labor there; they try to reform the 'unspeakable Turk' but there's no atrocity upon the children there; they call the heathen lost, though in the worst an' wildes' tribes the children have a home an' lovin', if savage care; Russia cries shame on what goes on in our fact'ries here, an' even an Indian chief that they were showin' the sights of our great cities to, when asked what had surprised him most, answered, 'Little—children—workin'.'"

"You mean it is peculiar to America? That there is really more of it here than in Europe?" asked Hamilton incredulously.

"More? There's none there like there is here. An' it's gettin' worse all the time, worse this year than last year, worse last year than ten years ago. 'Child-labor,' somebody says, 'has about it no halo of antiquity. It is a thing of yesterday, a sudden toadstool in the infernal garden.' It is all our own," he laughed harshly, "let us be proud of it."

"How many children did you say?" asked Hamilton tersely, staggered and shocked by this statement of the facts of the case.

"Enough to sink the land in shame," the speaker declared. "There were a trifle over a hundred thousand children between the ages of six and fourteen workin' in the fact'ries

of America last year. The figures showed that over half of 'em were workin' more'n eight hours a day, that a large percentage were workin' twelve to sixteen hours, an' twenty-two thousand of 'em are at night work."

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As he said the last words, the “crusader” hurried away in response to a call from one of the men. He resumed his carrying in of the red-hot bottles from the benches where the men had been molding them, to the annealing oven, and for a time Hamilton watched him. The work was a fearful strain. Sitting where he was, Hamilton could see all the way to the annealing oven. Counting the number of steps the “crusader” had to take, Hamilton found the distance to be about one hundred feet, and watching another boy, who was working regularly, not intermittently as was the city lad’s new acquaintance, he found that seventy-two trips an hour were made, making the distance covered in eight hours nearly twenty-two miles.

The red-hot bottles were carried in asbestos shovels, and these had to be kept fairly straight, imposing a terrific strain upon the back. In addition to this, the boys were compelled to face the furnace each time they came back, passing from the heat of the melting oven, in front of a draughty open door, to the heat of the annealing oven.

In order to keep up with the work, the boys had to run, for it could not be done at a walk, and thus were alternately greatly overheated and chilled with icy draughts.

Seeing that the “crusader” would be busy for a while, but wanting to take the matter up with him further, Hamilton strolled over to where the glass-blowers were working. This particular factory was turning out cheap glass bottles, and there was little of the fascination that exists in factories where high-grade glass is made into many curious shapes and blown with great skill into marvelous thinness. In the middle of the room was a large round furnace containing a number of small doors not quite four feet from the ground, and a glass-blower was stationed before each of these. With long iron blowpipes these men, by giving the blowpipe a little twirl as they thrust it into the semi-molten metal, drew out on the end of it a small mass of glass, of about the consistency of nearly melted sealing wax, and holding this mass on the end of the blowpipe by keeping it in motion, they blew it into balls and rolled the ball of soft, red-hot glass on their rolling boards. Then they lifted the blowpipe and blew again, sharp and hard, forcing the soft glass to its proper form. The now cooling glass was broken from the end of the blowpipe with a sharp, snapping sound, and the blowpipe was plunged in the furnace again for another bottle. The whole had taken but a few seconds.

“Why do they have so many boys around these places?” queried Hamilton of the workman he had been watching.

“Have to, they say,” the glass-blower replied, “cheap bottles mean cheap labor. No one ever expects to pay anything for a bottle—that is thrown in with everything liquid you buy. The manufacturer’s got to make his little profit somewhere an’ in a cheap bottle he makes it by employin’ young boys cheap an’ workin’ ’em till they drop.”

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"Is it done this way everywhere?"

The workman shook his head.

"No need to do it even here," he said. "It takes money, though, to put in an endless belt to carry the bottles to the annealin' oven. The big fact'ries mostly have 'em, but there are plenty o' places like this in small towns where everythin' is done on a cheap scale, an' a boy's labor is about the cheapes' thing in the United States—unless it's a girl's."

Seeing that the glass-blower was being delayed in his task, Hamilton sauntered away, and went back to the place where the "crusader" worked. The latter broke out again as soon as he saw the boy coming.

"I've been talkin' to you about children workin'," he said, "but you haven't thought of babies bein' made to work?"

"Babies!"

"Of four an' five years old."

"But they couldn't do any real work!" exclaimed Hamilton.

"Do you know what one factory owner in the South said, not knowin' he was talkin' to a member o' the child-labor commission? He said 'A kid three year old can soon learn to straighten out tobacco leaves for wrappers, and a little worker of four is good help in stripping.'"

"In a cigar factory?"

"Of course,—an' the children find it so hard to keep up that they are taught to chew snuff—as a stimulant—before they are six year old. Jane Addams, writin' o' the torture chambers they call cotton mills in parts o' the South, said she saw on the night shift, with her teeth all blackened and decayed from excessive snuff chewin', a little girl o' five year old, busily and clumsily tyin' threads in coarse muslin, an' answerin' a question she said she had been there every night throughout the hot summer excep' two, when 'her legs and back wouldn't let her get up.' An' what do you suppose the fact'ry owner did—send a physician? No, he docked her the two days' wages for the time she'd been away ill, an' another day's fine as a punishment."

"That's brutal!" cried Hamilton. "Didn't the parents protest?"

"The parents? That's where the mill-owners have their strongest help. They threaten to discharge the parents if the children don't work an' work hard, and they force the father or mother into whippin' the child to compel it to stay at the loom. The whole country went to war once over the question of a negro havin' to work under compulsion,—or at

least, that had quite a bit to do with the war,—but you can enslave white children, you can starve 'em, you can shut 'em up in rooms without air, you can surround 'em with dangerous machinery, you can force 'em to be whipped, you can snatch 'em from their cradles in their homes, you can snap your fingers at the schools, an' you can fill churchyards with a worse Massacre o' the Innocents than history ever tells about, an' the men and women of America don't care."

[Illustration: "I 'AIN'T SEEN DAYLIGHT FOR TWO YEARS." Trapper boy working a twelve-hour day below ground, often too tired to go up in the cage at the end of the day and sleeping on the ground beside the track. (*Courtesy of the Ridgway Co.*)]

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"Oh, yes, they do," again protested Hamilton. "It must be that they don't know."

"How can they help but know? There are a few that have heard what Spargo calls 'The Bitter Cry of the Children,' but those few are very few, an' the misery an' shame goes on, gettin' worse with ev'ry year."

"What's going to be done?"

"The children will have to rescue the children," the boy cried. "If men's hearts are cold and women's hearts are asleep, at least the boys can hear. There's no power like a boy's, an' a boy will do anythin' that's big and brave and worth the doin'. In a year from now I'm goin' to start a crusade, like the Children's Crusade in hist'ry, an' march to every mill an' fact'ry in the United States where a child is workin', and make the owner sign a paper pledgin' himself not to employ a child again. Give me an army of American boys an' I'll sweep the country like a flight o' locusts."

"But who would join?"

"Every boy worth his salt. S'pose I came to you an' said 'In that mill at the end o' your street, little children are bein' slaved and driven to death because no one has the nerve to say what they think. We'll rescue those children. Join us, we're five hundred strong! Would you go along?"

"Guess I'd have to join," the boy agreed, "but you'd get into all sorts of trouble."

"Can I get into a worse trouble than any o' those babies have?" the other asked indignantly. "What right have I to go on, even as I do, knowin' how they are sufferin'. I don't care about trouble, I've had nothin' else all my life. But if by gettin' into trouble myself, I could get even one hollow-eyed shadow of a child to run about and play like other folks, I'd be willin' to take anythin' that come after. I don't see that carryin' bottles is goin' to help the world much, but if I can carry hope an' health to some little boy or girl, I'm goin' to do it. How, I don't know. But I ain't goin' to die without bein' able to remember some poor child that's better off because lived."

"What can I do to help?" asked Hamilton eagerly and aggressively, as though he expected instant marching orders to some distant factory.

"You can do somethin',—every boy can do somethin'. If nothin' else, you can help to wake a sleepin' an' selfish nation. If the cryin' o' the children has ever rung in your ears, it'll never stop till you're doin' somethin' to help. Do you think I could dream every day, as I do, o' that 'spectral army of pygmy people sucked in from the hills to dance beside the crazing wheel' and not do somethin'?"

"But—"



“Could I hear trampin’ round me day an’ night, the laggin’ step of a ‘gaunt goblin army that outwatches the sun by day an’ the stars by night, an’ work an’ sleep in peace? An’ there’s one thing more to say, an’ then I must go,—that there’s a stain o’ shame ‘pon the honor of America that’ll never be wiped away until child labor is put down!”

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Thoughtful and subdued in spirit, Hamilton strolled back to the night superintendent's office, where he found the figures done at last and the completed schedule awaiting him. He gratefully accepted the offer of a cup of coffee, from some which had just been sent in, and sat down beside the desk.

"I've been talking with the 'crusader,'" he remarked.

The night superintendent looked up interestedly.

"What do you think of him?" he asked, a little sharply, Hamilton thought.

"I think there's no question about his being sincere," the boy answered, "but I can hardly believe that the figures he gives and the facts he talks about are true."

"They're true enough, I'm sorry to say," said the older man, sighing, "but the 'crusader' usually isn't fair to the South. He blames the South for the cotton mill horrors, when, as a matter of fact, a very large proportion of the mills in which the worst conditions were found are owned by New England capitalists. I'm a New Englander by birth myself, 'naughty-two' at Yale, but I'm able to see the mistakes of the North just the same."

"I've always been taught that the North was more or less mixed up in it," answered Hamilton. "It was shown to me a long time ago that the slavery in the South wasn't started by the plantation owners. There were no Southern vessels in the slave trade, they were all New England skippers and New England bottoms. The shame of the slave traffic belongs originally to the North."

"And now a large share of the child labor, too," the other agreed. "But you've got to remember that it was the easy shiftlessness of the South that made such conditions possible. I guess the blame is about even."

"But is nothing being done on this child-labor business?" asked Hamilton. "I tried to find that out from the 'crusader' but he didn't answer."

"Yes," said the superintendent heartily, "a great deal is being done. The Bureau of the Census has been of immense service, and other bureaus of the Department of Commerce and Labor are working on it, largely through information gathered for them by the census. Then there have been thorough Congressional investigations, and the States are being checked up hard to insure that factory inspection shall be real, not nominal. Don't let the 'crusader' persuade you that everybody is asleep and that nothing is being done; the government is doing a good deal, although the country as a whole is unaware of it."

"Yet it is increasing?"

“In spite of all that is done to prevent it, it is increasing,” the other said quietly, “that is the sad part. If it could be thought of as a passing thing, it would be bad enough, but to know that every month hundreds of children die from enforced labor and that greater numbers fill their places, is a sad reflection on the industrial life of to-day.”

“Well, as the South progresses, that will probably take care of itself, won’t it?” queried the boy.

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The superintendent looked at him curiously.

"I think you told me last evening that you were a New York boy," he said.

"Yes, Mr. Wharton," answered Hamilton.

"I suppose you consider New York a fairly progressive city?"

"Greatest on earth!" affirmed the boy in true Gotham style.

"Yet that same progressive city," the older man declared, "is the headquarters of several forms of industry in which large percentages of the workers are children under fourteen years of age."

"What kinds of business can those be?" asked Hamilton in surprise.

"Making ostrich plumes and artificial flowers. It's not factory labor, of course, but that doesn't alter the point that at least half the output of artificial flowers is made by the cramped fingers of children, generally after school and far into the night. They are not officially reported, of course, but less than twenty per cent is done by men. The disgraceful fact that the New York schools are so crowded that many of them can only give 'half-time' to the children and consequently teach them in two sections is a great help to the sweat-shop managers. But every city has its own share of this child labor in the homes, although in some of the smaller places, civic associations and municipalities have taken the matter in hand with considerable success. Even that is but a drop in the ocean."

"Your 'crusader' will have to lead his crusade then, it seems," the boy suggested.

"Poor lad!" sighed the superintendent.

"Why?" asked Hamilton.

"He will never lead that crusade," the older man replied pensively.

"Why not?"

The man tapped his chest significantly.

"He is incurably ill," he said, "partly glass-blowers' disease from breathing the particles of glass dust. Men don't mind it so much, but it is fatal to children when the lungs are not yet strong. We keep the 'crusader' here in order to help him as much as we can, although he gives a lot of trouble in the works with his revolutionary theories. I haven't the heart to send him away; he couldn't get other work, and being all alone in the world, he might starve."

“You mean—”

“That he will not live six months. That army of boys of which he speaks so often will never go on the march, the banners he has designed for it will wave over no other battalions than those he has seen in dreams, and the drums will sound the final ‘taps’ for him before they roll for the advance. And in that sleep, the cries of the children shall all be happy ones.”

[Illustration: EIGHT YEARS OLD AND “TIRED OF WORKING.” Boy in Southern cotton mill who has been employed “two summers and a winter before that.”]

CHAPTER V

“DON’T DEPORT MY OLD MOTHER!”

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The “crusader’s” talk on the child-labor question set Hamilton’s mind working, and as soon as he got back to Washington and was busy tabulating the manufacturing statistics which had been gathered and sent in, he tried to learn something about the employment of children. He chanced to meet one of the photographers who had been with the Congressional commission, and the tales this man told were even more detailed. Hamilton found that the figures quoted had not been overstated, and he determined that just as soon as he grew old enough he would do all he could toward correcting this abuse.

But Hamilton found the actual statistical work not a little tedious, although it was work which usually he enjoyed, and this sense of the time dragging was largely due to the fact that the boy had not heard a word about his being considered in line for the population work. It was therefore a considerable relief to him when Mr. Burns said to him suddenly one morning:

“So you’re going over to the population side, I hear?”

“Am I? I didn’t know,” Hamilton replied. “I had wanted to go, but not hearing anything about it, I was afraid the plan had been shelved.”

“The Director told me this morning that you were going to be transferred.”

“The Director himself?”

“Yes. I had a talk with him about the figures for the manufactures of the New England States, and we happened to mention you; he knew your name, so I told him that your schedules had averaged six and a third per cent better than those of any one else in that section. So he said, ‘That reminds me, I had almost forgotten that I had decided to put Noble on the population work. I’ll see that arrangements for that transfer are made,’ and he scribbled something on a pad.”

“That was awfully kind of you, Mr. Burns,” said Hamilton, “to mention me to the Director in that way.”

The statistician looked at him curiously.

“I wasn’t dealing in kindness,” he said dryly, “I was dealing in percentages. If that turned out well for you, it is yourself you have to thank, not me. I merely stated the figures, and they read in your favor.”

The boy laughed outright.

“I believe, Mr. Burns,” he said, “that you would more easily forgive a man who attacked you personally than one who gave you an incorrect list of figures.”

"Certainly I would," the statistician replied. "I could hit back in the first case, but in the second who can tell how far I might be led astray!"

"Well," the boy answered, "I'm glad at any rate that my figures tallied up all right."

"I don't want to seem inquisitive," said the older man, "but when did you get in the population examination?"

"There was some talk of my being accepted without going through the exam," said Hamilton, "because of the fact that I was doing census work of a more difficult character already, but I thought I would rather feel that everything had been done in the usual manner. I took the exam at New Haven, one afternoon."

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"But are you going to do the population work there?"

"No, Mr. Burns," the boy explained. "The Director wrote to me that I would be allowed to send in a formal application in the regular way through the supervisor of the enumeration district to which I had asked to be assigned. The supervisor of that district had said beforehand that he would be willing to appoint me, as the section was so sparse that enough qualified enumerators were hard to get."

"Well, where are you going, then?"

"I don't know, for sure yet, of course," the boy explained, "whether everything will go through as planned, but if so, I shall be going to Kentucky."

"In the mountains where you had been visiting?"

"Oh, no," the boy answered, "in another part of the State entirely,—down toward the black belt of Kentucky."

"Kentucky isn't a black belt State," his friend objected.

"No, Mr. Burns, but there are parts where the negroes are tolerably thickly settled. The supervisor is a friend of my older brother, and he says that is an interesting part of the country."

"But can a Board of Examiners in one district look over the papers for the supervisor of another district?"

"No, sir," explained the boy, "but they can allow the examination to be taken before them and have the papers sent to the supervisor of the other district. It was a little irregular, I suppose, but the Director knew all about it and it was for the good of the census, he thought, as he had been told there were not enough enumerators in the district to which I hoped to go."

"Well," the statistician replied, "if you're headed for Kentucky I should think you'd like to see your folks before going."

"I had planned to go up on Saturday afternoon," Hamilton said. "I can get to New York by evening and spend Saturday night and all day Sunday there, catching the midnight train back. It brings me in early enough for office hours."

"And this is Friday," said the other thoughtfully. "I'll tell you what to do. I can arrange for you to be off Saturday morning; it is only a half day, and you can catch the first train out after business hours to-day."

"That would be bully!"

"I estimate," the statistician said, rapidly dotting down some figures on a pad, "that the fractions of overtime you have worked recently, cumulatively considered, enable me to do that fairly, so that you've earned it."

"That's fine," said Hamilton, "for the family is going to Europe for the summer, and I shouldn't see any of them at all unless I ran up to New York now."

The older man nodded his confirmation of the suggested arrangement, and returned to his figures. During the noon hour Hamilton hurriedly packed a grip, and was back at the office without a minute lost, for he found a train leaving at a most advantageous hour, and by calling a taxi he was just able to catch it.

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At breakfast the following morning, the conversation turned upon immigration, and Hamilton read in a newspaper the statement that two large liners were in New York harbor and would dock that morning, that each carried a record passenger list of immigrants, and that Ellis Island was making preparations for a busy day.

"I've never seen Ellis Island," the boy announced "Father, do you know if visitors are allowed over there?"

"I'm fairly sure of it," his father replied, "but in any case there ought to be no trouble for you, since the Bureau of the Census is a part of the Department of Commerce and Labor, just as is the Bureau of Immigration."

"I think I'd like to go."

"I think you ought to go," his father said. "Taking up the population business, you ought to try to get hold of all the information you can, ahead of time. I have been there several times, on business, and it is a most interesting place."

Accordingly, the eleven o'clock boat from the Barge Office, New York,—a pier near Castle Garden, the historic immigration station,—carried Hamilton to the famous Ellis Island. Preferring his request, the lad speedily found himself in the presence of the Commissioner. He stated his wants briefly.

"Mr. Commissioner," he said, "I'm an assistant agent of the Census Bureau in Washington, and I'm just going to my station as an enumerator for the population. I have two days in New York and I'd like to learn how things are done on the Island here. May I have a pass?"

The Commissioner answered briefly.

"Read this," he said, taking a sheaf of manuscript out of the drawer of his desk, "and here's a short review for the use of visitors, and I'll send you in to the Chief Clerk to get a pass, and if there's anything more you want, let me know." He touched a bell. "Show this gentleman to Mr. Tuckman, and let him be given a special pass," he said,—and Hamilton was ushered out promptly, thinking as he went that this was evidently one place where time was not wasted.

The Chief Clerk was equally ready to assist the lad, and armed with his special pass he started round the building, finding himself practically free of the island. Hamilton possessed the capacity of making friends readily, and with his alert manner and direct appeal, he usually secured attention. Walking sharply through the place he soon found himself down in what was called the Information Division. For the moment one of the clerks was not busy, and Hamilton, stepping up to him, began to ply him with questions.

A tall young fellow, who was standing nearby, listened for a few moments, then turned to Hamilton.

“See here,” he said, “you can’t learn much about Ellis Island just by asking questions, you’ve got to go around and see for yourself.”

“That’s just what I propose doing,” Hamilton answered, “but I thought it wouldn’t be such a bad plan to get an idea of things first, and then I should understand what I saw. There’s not much use in watching things unless you understand just what’s going on. I have some knowledge of it, of course, because the Commissioner gave me some reading matter to look over, and I’ve got a special pass, so that I want to make the best use of it.”

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"Suppose you come along with me, then," said his new acquaintance, who was none other than the Chief of the Information Division, "and I'll show you round myself as far as I can spare the time. It so happens that there are a lot of scattering things I want to look after through the building to-day, and if you don't mind my leaving you alone, once in a while, I'll take you through systematically. Where do you want to begin?"

"Right at the very start," rejoined Hamilton "I always think the beginning is the most important part, and I'd hate to lose any of it."

"All right," said his conductor good-humoredly; "if you want it all, you shall have it. I notice, too," he said, as they walked along the hall and out of the door to the well-kept lawns that stretch between the main building and the sea wall, "that you're in good time, for there's a barge just pulling in."

"The barge is from one of the liners that came in this morning, I suppose?" queried the lad.

"Yes, one of the Hamburg boats," his guide replied.

"Are those barges run by the immigration authorities?"

"No," was the answer, "those are owned or managed by the steamboat companies. They bring all the steerage passengers who can't show that they are citizens, and all the cabin passengers who are being detained."

"Cabin passengers," echoed Hamilton in surprise; "I didn't think any cabin passengers came to Ellis Island. All second cabin, I suppose?"

"Not a bit of it," answered the immigration official; "there's quite a sprinkling of first-class passengers as well. Why, during a period of three months recently, nearly three thousand cabin passengers were detained on the island here, and I suppose twenty per cent of them had come over in the first-class saloon."

"But why should any first-class passengers be stopped and shipped to Ellis Island?" queried the boy. "I don't understand. I thought Ellis Island was to keep out people who were paupers, or diseased, or were undesirable citizens!"

[Illustration: THE BIGGEST LINER IN THE WORLD COMING IN. Ocean steamship with thousands of immigrants on board entering New York harbor; the Statue of Liberty in the distance. (*Brown Bros.*)]

"That's just exactly what it is for," the other replied, "but the United States government doesn't think that having money enough to pay for a first-class passage makes every man a desirable citizen! A first-class berth is no insurance against an incurable disease,

for example, and there's nothing to prevent a criminal from coming over in the first cabin." He laughed. "Most of them do, I think," he said.

"It really never appealed to me just that way," the boy remarked; "I supposed always that first-class passengers went right through if they passed quarantine."

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"That would mix things up," the older man said. "Why, in that case we should have all the mentally deficient, all the paupers, and all the freaks landing here in shoals. Any group of friends, or any government, for that matter, would find it cheap and easy to dump all the public charges of Europe on our shores for the price of a first-class ticket. Oh, no, that would never do. Once in a while, you hear passengers on the big liners complaining of the inquiries made before they land, but it's got to be done. You can see for yourself what would happen if we didn't."

"But if they bring plenty of money, they would not become public charges."

"No, and we can't exclude them on that ground. But money, for example, has nothing to do with crime or anarchism or things of that sort. I tell you, there's a big slice of our work done before ever a vessel reaches her dock at a New York pier. Of course, problems do come up nearly every day, such as circus freaks, for instance."

"You mean the living skeleton, the tattooed lady, the fat baby, the giant, and so forth?" asked Hamilton.

"Exactly. Are those people to be considered desirable citizens, or not? There is no question as to their inability to make a living by any customary kind of work, but on the other hand it is very difficult to prove that they could not get good money at a sideshow. If, however, they are able to show that they have been engaged in Europe by an American circus manager, they can come under the alien contract labor law."

"Then this string of people," said Hamilton, pointing to those who had just been unloaded from the barge, "may be from all classes of the ship."

"They might be," his guide replied, "but the chances are that they are all steerage. Cabin passengers that are detained usually come on the last boat, with the inspector. We have quarters here with a little more privacy for them, and they are kept together. But now watch this line. Suppose we go this way," and stepping over a low iron railing, the official, followed by Hamilton, walked briskly up beside the line. A few yards from the door of the building, this line of people passed into a long barred lane. At the entrance of this stood an inspector who checked off the large ticket each immigrant had pinned on him to show his identity, in order to prevent confusion further on. Passing before the inspector at brief but regularly measured intervals, the immigrants walked one by one up this barred lane to where it made a right angle.

"There's the first inspecting doctor," said Hamilton's conductor, pointing to a man standing just at the angle and watching carefully each immigrant as he walked up. After a moment Hamilton turned to his companion in surprise:

"But he isn't doing anything!" he said.

“Doctor,” said the chief of the division, with a laugh, “I am afraid we shall have to investigate this matter. Here is a lad who says that you’re doing nothing. He’s watched you for a couple of minutes and you haven’t made a move.”

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Hamilton began to protest, but the big doctor only laughed in reply, without taking his eyes, however, from the procession of figures which one by one walked up to him and made the turn round the angle.

"If he'll wait a minute or two more," he said, "perhaps I'll have a chance to do something, and save my reputation."

There was a pause; then the doctor continued:

"I think there's something doing now; watch this man coming up."

"He seems to limp just the merest trifle, that's all I can see," the boy replied.

"Bone disease of some kind, or maybe joint," the doctor said, "tuberculous hip, like as not," and as the man passed by he leaned forward and chalked a big "B" on the shoulder of his coat. "'B' for Bones," the doctor explained to Hamilton.

"What will happen to him?" asked the boy of the immigration official.

"Because of that mark?"

"Yes, sir."

"It simply means that he will be held for 'special inquiry.' He may be all right, but before he is passed, he will have to be examined physically—a thorough physical examination, I mean. Now here, you see, is another doctor."

Eight or ten yards further on stood another man, all in white as the first had been, who took up the inspection where the judge of bone malformations had left off. A sunken chest, he explained to Hamilton, a hectic flush, a pinched nostril, an evident difficulty in breathing, a certain carriage of the head, a blueness of the lips, certain types of pallor, all these and a number of little points which experience had shown to be symptoms of organic disease his trained eye could detect at a glance, and he, too, every few minutes, stooped forward and chalked upon the coat of the man or the blouse of the woman, as the case might be, a letter which told of a suspected disease.

"I suppose I ought not to say anything," said Hamilton, "but that looks a little 'hit-or-miss' to me. It's hard on an immigrant to be detained on the basis of a medical examination that barely takes ten seconds."

"If that were all," said the official, smiling, "it surely would be a hardship. But you don't quite get the point. All these passengers really are detained, and this arrangement is only a way to render the detention shorter by letting those go through unchecked who do not need further examination. This is not to delay the suspects, but to cause less trouble to the others. Here, however is where most of them get stopped."

He pointed to another doctor, standing close to the last, who examined the eyes quickly and deftly (principally for a chronic and contagious disease called "trachoma"), scrupulously cleansing fingers and instrument between each immigrant.

Passing the eye doctors the immigrants came to an inspector who stood at a place where a large grating was built midway in the passage, dividing it into two parts. All those who had been marked by any of the doctors, and, in the cases of families, all those in the party of any one so marked, passed up the right hand passage which led to the Special Inquiry; the others were guided to the left hand side of the grating, which led directly into the main primary inspection room.

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"Do you suppose they understand anything of the meaning of that division," asked Hamilton, "why some go on this side and some on the other!"

"They don't at all," was the reply. "You will notice that there are no signs up, and that no attempt is made—at this point—to talk to the immigrant or to try to make him understand anything. Then, too, since all the members of a family or party are kept together, there is no reason why they should make a disturbance. They simply go where they are sent. If we separated the families, sending some on one side and some on the other, then there would be trouble!"

"That's true," said Hamilton, "in many cases they couldn't read the signs, and they don't know at all what the doctors' marks mean."

"Exactly, and once past the inspector, there is no getting out or coming back, for the two passages lead directly into two series of rooms from which there is no outlet except in a given direction."

"But the others who are all right,—where do they go?" asked the boy.

"They're not safe yet," his conductor answered "They have only passed a preliminary looking over. All that this first group of doctors does, remember, is to detect the questionable or to pass the obviously unquestionable—whichever way you like to put it, and thus avoid delay in the primary inspection room."

"Which group are we going to see first?"

"Those who have been passed," was the reply, "because most of them will go right out, and you can follow that more easily."

Going up the stairs, Hamilton found himself in an immense room all divided up into little lanes by bars and gratings. Each of these lanes bore a large number suspended over its entrance, corresponding to the number of one of the manifest sheets of the vessel, and likewise to the number pinned on the clothing of every immigrant while he was still on the vessel, when his name was tallied with the manifest sheet.

"I see the reason of those numbers they have pinned on them now," said Hamilton, "it's all the same principle, to avoid talk and questioning."

"Certainly," his friend said, "and if you look a little closely, you will see that in addition to the big number on the card that is pinned on, there is also a smaller number."

"I had noticed that," Hamilton answered, "and I was going to ask you what it was for."

"That is the number of the name on the manifest sheet," the other replied. "Thus, for example if Giordano Bruno is the tenth name on the seventh manifest sheet, this man at

the top of the stairs will guide him into aisle number seven. Then, when his turn comes and he has moved up to the desk at the end of the line, the inspector doesn't have to waste time questioning him, and finding the place on the manifest sheet. He looks at the number, runs his finger down to the tenth name, and has him at once."

"It's a great system," said Hamilton admiringly.

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"Why you're right at the start of it," said the official with a laugh; "wait till you get further on, if you want to find system."

"Here I see, too, the questioning begins," remarked Hamilton.

"Yes, some of the inspectors at the desk know several languages, and they are assisted by interpreters when necessary. They hold a responsible position, because they can decide to let an alien land. You see they ask the immigrant the same questions that are on the manifest sheet. If the answers tally all the way through, if the man understands and gives an apparently straight story, if he has a sufficiency of funds to keep him until he has a chance to get work, and especially if he has already a railroad ticket to friends at some inland point, he is given a blue ticket and allowed to pass directly through to the right into the railroad waiting rooms."

"But if he hasn't?"

"Then he goes down this passage which leads again to the special inquiry rooms where you saw the others going. He is given a different colored ticket, in accordance with the expected objection. You see, the inspector does not attempt to pass upon the merits of the case. He just affirms that the passenger has not made his title clear. Just as before, the aim is to enable the desirable immigrant to land as quickly and easily as possible. Supposing there were no crowd, an immigrant could land on the wharf, be looked over by the doctors, pass through the primary inspection, answer all questions, and be in the railroad waiting rooms ready for his train in less than four minutes. That's not much of a hardship!"

"It certainly isn't," Hamilton agreed. "And I notice that most of them seem entitled to land."

"That varies a great deal," his guide said. "I think it averages about ninety per cent. In a few ships, especially those handling little of the Continental traffic, those held for special inquiry drop as low as five per cent, while for the vessels bringing immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, the proportion held will rise to nearly one-third of the entire passenger list."

"All right," said Hamilton in a satisfied tone, "I guess I have that straight. But I notice there is a third stream of people. One, you say, is going to the railroad waiting rooms, one down to special inquiry, but how about the third?"

"That's the 'temporary detention' group. I'll take you there in a minute, but let us finish up with the man who is to be admitted. Here is the railroad waiting room."

A few feet further on Hamilton found an immense room, like a railroad ticket office, where tickets could be bought for any railroad or steamship route to any point in the

United States or Canada. A money-changing booth was in the place, where foreign money could be turned into United States currency at the exact quotation for the day, even down to the fractions of a cent.

“Why are they pinning on more tickets?” asked Hamilton. “I thought when they took off the tickets upstairs that would be the end of it.”

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"That also is to make it easier for them," the other said. "Most of these people are poor, and we try to make traveling as cheap for them as possible. Nearly all the railroads run one train each day that carries special cars for the immigrant service. They give, accordingly, a cheaper rate to the government. Supposing, for example, that the regular number of the Lehigh Valley train was always numbered '9,' then every man who purchased a ticket for a point on the Lehigh Valley would be given the ticket '9.' Then, when the boat that was taking the passengers for Lehigh Valley points left Ellis Island, all the 9's would be gathered together and no one would be left behind."

"Nothing seems to have been forgotten," said Hamilton, "even food, for I see there's a big counter over there."

"That's quite a thing, too," the other said. "A man can get two days' food, six meals, for a dollar, or a little over sixteen cents a meal."

"And what in the wide world can he buy for that price?" exclaimed the boy.

"Here's a sample of the contents of one box," the other said; "read it, it tells you what there is. 'Four loaves of bread, two pounds of cooked beans, twelve ounces of sausage, one can of beef, one can of sardines, six ham sandwiches, three pies, and four oranges.' I'm sure you wouldn't starve on that."

"No," said Hamilton, "I think I could get along if I ate it all. But why is it that most of the immigrants here are men? Have the women been lost in the shuffle?"

The immigration official laughed.

"They're not lost," he said, "most of the women pass through the 'temporary detention' rooms. We're going to visit there now. Of course there are some women who will be able to take the train directly, but we try to see that they go with some one, or that their being met is assured. The tickets pinned on them are not given until an inspector has seen their railroad tickets, and they do not land in New York streets at all. A boat takes each group to the railroad pier, and they are escorted to the train by an inspector, who places them in charge of the conductor who is responsible for their arrival at their destination. Nearly all go West or South and start from the Jersey side. It is an entirely different matter with women and children who want to land in New York City. In every case they are detained until called for by some relative. And that relative has to prove to us that he really is the relative in question."

"How do they meet?"

"I'll show you right now. In this room," he continued, entering another large waiting room, "are all the people 'temporarily detained.' Most of them will be released shortly. If

you listen you can hear just how it is done, because that clerk who has just come in has a list.”

As he spoke a young fellow stepped forward and read a list of nine names. Seven of the nine were in the room and came to the front, the clerk ticking off their names on the sheet.

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"Can we go on?" asked Hamilton. "I would like to see just how this works!"

"All right," responded his guide, smiling at the boy's eagerness, "go ahead."

As they reached the next room, Hamilton saw the clerk ushering the seven immigrants behind a grating. Outside the grate was a narrow open space and then a desk. On the farther side of the desk the friends of the seven in question were waiting. There was one lad, just about his own age, among the friends, and Hamilton waited curiously to see whom he was to meet. Among the immigrants was a sweet-faced old Frenchwoman, and Hamilton hoped that she might be the lad's relative. As it chanced, this boy was the first to come up.

[Illustration: IMMIGRATION STATION, ELLIS ISLAND. The greatest center of racial activity in the world, where a million aliens yearly pass through to American citizenship. (Courtesy of U.S. Immigration Station, Ellis Island.)]

"For whom are you calling?" he was asked.

The young lad answered clearly and promptly, and the clerk nodded approvingly as the questions proceeded.

"You say you have an older brother," the clerk said, "and the two of you are able to keep your grandmother?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," was the reply.

"You are young to have come. Why didn't your brother come instead?"

"He has been a waiter in a French hotel," answered the boy, "and has not learned much English. He asked me to come."

A few short, sharp queries established the relationship without question and the boy was released from the desk. The door in the grating was opened, and to Hamilton's delight it was the old Frenchwoman who came out. After a most affectionate greeting, they went off together, the boy coming back to thank the clerk profusely, with true French courtesy.

"I suppose all that is necessary," said Hamilton "but I'll admit I don't see why. No one would be likely to call for some one else's grandmother!"

"We want to be sure that women who land here are really with their own people," said the official, evading a more direct statement, "and sometimes if the chief of the 'temporary detention' work is not satisfied, the immigrant is sent back to 'special inquiry.'"

“How long are they detained?”

“Nearly all go out the same day. A few, however, have to telegraph for their friends to meet them, and we look after that on their behalf. They are never temporarily detained over five days, except in the case where a child has been held in quarantine and some member of the family has to remain until the patient is released in order to take charge of him. That covers, you see, all those who come here except the 'special inquiry' cases.”

“May I see those?” asked Hamilton.

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"That's not so easy," his friend replied, "and you wouldn't get much out of it. They are handled, one by one, in Courts of Special Inquiry, each court consisting of three inspectors, an interpreter, and a stenographer, while doctors are always on call. Special Inquiry, remember, does not mean that there is any reason for excluding the immigrant, merely that his inclusion is not self-evident. In most cases, answers to a few questions settle all difficulties, and the decisions to exclude are rare. In doubtful cases, a Court of Special Inquiry takes great pains to investigate the whole condition closely. When a decision to exclude is reached, the immigrant is given an opportunity to 'appeal' to the Commissioner, and these appeals vary from fifteen to seventy a day. Further appeals may be taken in rare cases."

"And when all appeals are lost?"

"Then the immigrant must be deported at the expense of the steamship company that brought him."

"What are the usual grounds for deportation?" asked Hamilton.

"Principally persons of unsound mind, insane, diseased, paupers likely to become a public charge, criminals, anarchists, contract laborers, and those who by physical defect are unable to make a living."

"It seems to me that you go to a great deal of trouble here," Hamilton said, "and it must be a big expense keeping and looking after such a mob of people."

"We don't pay for their keep," the official answered; "we make the steamship companies do that. They are expected to bring desirable, not undesirable immigrants here, and if they bring people whom we cannot accept, they must take the consequences and bear the expense of deporting them. Our deporting division looks after that, and it is one of the hardest parts of our work. We've a pathetic case there now."

"You mean that Bridget Mahoney case," said an inspector, who had just stepped up. "I beg your pardon for interrupting, but I was just going to ask you to come and see about that case. There are some new developments."

"I'll go right in," said Hamilton's guide interestedly. "I think you might come along, too," he added, turning to the boy.

"Who is Bridget Mahoney?" Hamilton asked. "That's a good old Irish name."

"And she's a good old Irish soul," the other answered. "She landed here about three weeks ago, fully expecting her son to meet her, but during the five days when she was in temporary detention he failed to show up."

“But why didn’t you telegraph to the son?” asked Hamilton, who was beginning to feel as though he knew all the ropes.

“We couldn’t find his right address.”

“Was he a traveling man?”

“It wasn’t that. The woman said she knew he lived in a town called Johnson, or Johnston, or something like that, but she didn’t know in what State. Now there are nearly forty post-offices with that name in America, and we sent telegrams or letters to every one of these. But we never received a definite reply.”

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"Well, if she's all right, as you say she is," said Hamilton, "why can't she land and wait until her son is reached?"

"Bridget's over seventy," the chief replied, "and not very strong; she'd be a public charge, sure."

"And yet she's all right?"

"Oh, perfectly," he said as soon as they reached the building.

"We got this telegram yesterday and I took it to your office this morning," the newcomer answered, "to talk it over with you, but you weren't there."

The chief of the Information Division glanced at the telegram and then turned it over to Hamilton.

"Read that," he said. "That's the way it came, without signature or anything."

Hamilton read it eagerly, and as soon as he had finished, "that's from Bridget Mahoney's son," he announced, with as absolute assurance as though it had been signed.

The deportation official looked up in surprise, but Hamilton's guide made a hasty explanatory introduction.

"We should like to be as sure as you are," said the deportation chief, "although I think we all rather hope it is from him. But you see it isn't dated Johnstown or anything like that, and it isn't signed. Just simply the words:

"—Don't—deport—my—old—mother."

"If you notice," he continued, "it comes from away out West, and it might apply to any one of thousands of cases. 'My Old Mother' might have been deported weeks ago."

"But this is yesterday's wire," Hamilton's friend interjected, "you said there were new developments in the case."

"There are," Farrell replied, drawing another telegram out of his pocket. "This one came this morning, and it's just about as intelligent as the one you have. Notice, though, that it's dated from Chicago early yesterday evening."

"What does it say?" burst out Hamilton, too eager to wait until it was read.

"It's very short," was the answer, "it just reads:

"—Hold—Mother—"

“Unsigned?”

“Unsigned, just as before.”

“It must be from the same person,” Hamilton suggested.

“I think there’s little doubt of that,” the deportation chief agreed.

“Whoever sent it must be traveling fast,” the boy remarked, “that last one was from Montana.”

“I’ve been doing my best to persuade myself that I have the right to keep Bridget longer. Twice I’ve begged an extra stay from the Commissioner, and he’s been willing to consent, but he thinks she’s got to go back now. There’s really no valid reason that I can give against it.”

As they walked toward the desk in the departing division, one of the clerks called the chief. He came back a moment or two later with a telegram in his hand.

“A third one,” he said, “it must have come while I was out at lunch. The same person wrote all three, for this is almost the same as the first; it reads:

“—Don’t—deport&m
dash;my—old—Mother—I—have—plenty—to—support—her—”

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"Where's it dated from?" asked the boy.

"I hadn't noticed," the deportation chief replied. "Oh, yes, why it's from Albany!"

"That's pretty near here!" Hamilton said excitedly. "Oh, Mr. Farrell, what time was that sent?"

"Quarter to twelve."

"Whoever sent it ought to be here by now! Mr. Farrell, I'm just as sure as can be that is from Bridget Mahoney's son."

"If it is, he may reach here in time," the other answered, "but it will mean a great deal of trouble, because the boat sails early in the morning long before the office here is open, and the deported aliens go on board to-night. Indeed they are going now—if they haven't gone."

"And Bridget with them?"

"Yes, I'm sorry to say Bridget is with them." He strolled to the window. "No," he continued, "they haven't gone yet, but they will in a few minutes."

"Could I see her before she goes?"

"What for?"

"Just to cheer her up a bit," pleaded the boy.

The two men looked at each other, and Hamilton's new acquaintance nodded.

"You won't say anything about these telegrams," the chief warned him.

"No—very well," said Hamilton, "but it seems a shame that she doesn't know."

The three passed through the door to the yard beside the lawns, and there Hamilton encountered one of the most desolate groups he had ever seen, sitting and standing in all attitudes of dejection. Among them was a little old lady with snow-white hair, walking with a stick, but clear-eyed and brisk-looking.

"You're Mrs. Mahoney?" the boy asked.

"I'm Bridget Mahoney, young masther," the old Irishwoman answered, "at your service, sorr."

"I hear you haven't found your son yet," Hamilton said; "did you write to him before you left the old country?"

"I did, dear, but I intoirely disremember what I did wid the letther. I know I intinded to give it to Mickey O'Murry, but I'll niver tell ye whether I did give it to him, an' if I did, there's no knowin' av he posted it. 'Tis a difficult thing to remember, this letther-postin' and maybe he forgot."

"But what did you write on the envelope? Can't you remember what you wrote?"

"'Tis I that am the poor hand for writin', young masther, but there was no schoolin' when I was a gurrl such as there is now. Jim, that's me son, he makes shift to read me writin', but he always sinds me a written envelope to put me answer in so that the postman can read it. An' so I niver learnt the address. I thought, av course, he'd be here. But he isn't, dear, an' so I must thravel all the weary way home again."

"But you don't sail till morning," said Hamilton, as cheerfully as he could, "and maybe he'll come by then. I have a feeling, Mrs. Mahoney, that he's just surely going to come."

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"I'm not thinkin' it," the old woman said bravely, "but I take it kindly, young masther, that ye should thry an' make the goin' easy. But it isn't easy, 'tis a hard returnin'. An' me so proud that me son should send for his ould mother. 'Tis a great country this America, but it's too big. I'd niver 'ave lost me Jim in the ould country. I see they're callin' us, an' I wish ye an ould woman's blessin', young masther, for your cheerin' me at the last."

With a certain dignity, the old woman turned away and shook hands with all the officials, with whom she had become a favorite during the three weeks of her stay. Hamilton just ached to be able to do something, to tell the Commissioner of the later telegrams, to appeal to the department, to make some wild effort, but the actuality of the group for deportation slowly making their way to the barge showed him the folly of any such ideas. He roused himself, just as the friendly official who had been his guide turned round with outstretched hand.

"I think you have seen it all now," he said, "and as the boat from New York is just pulling in, you'll have plenty of time to board her."

Hamilton thanked his conductor warmly, and with a final look at the group about to be deported, the last few stragglers of whom were making their way toward the barge, he started along the wharf in the direction of the New York boat. He was on the opposite side of the ship and had to walk round, but, as his friend had said, there was plenty of time. He had a good view of the boat as she landed.

The minute the bow touched the quay, before the mooring chains were on, a middle-aged man who had been standing in the front of the boat, leaped the light chain that runs waist high across the bow, and started on a dead run up the bridge to the shore. One of the inspectors tried to stop him, but he cried, as he went past:

"I'm going to the Commissioner's office. Don't stop me. I'm in a hurry."

Hamilton could just hear him, and it struck the boy as unnecessary for the man to say he was in a hurry, for he showed it clearly enough. But just before the runner reached him a sudden thought flashed into the boy's mind.

"Are you Jim Mahoney?" he called, just as the man swept by.

"Yes," answered the other, scarcely slackening speed and passing him.

Hamilton wheeled on the instant, and caught up to him in a few steps, for the other man was older, not in training, and getting out of breath.

"You'll do it, don't worry," the boy said, as he overtook him, running along beside him. "I was talking to your mother a few minutes ago and she was all right. But she was just starting for the steamer then. There's not a second to lose."

“What shall I do?” puffed the other.

“Go in there, by that door marked ‘Information.’ Tell them who you are and they’ll fix things up in a hurry. Then go up and see the Commissioner. I’ll go on and tell them at the boat.”

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Then, seeing that the man hesitated, he shouted:

“Go in there,” and nudged him in the direction of the door.

As the man turned, Hamilton settled himself down to run. In a second he was at the landing. The tender had just cast off her ropes and was moving out.

“Bridget,” he cried, and his voice rang high and clear above the dripping of the water from the cable, the creaking of the wheel as it swung round, and the churning of the screw. “Bridget, Bridget Mahoney, Jim’s here!”

The captain came to the window of the pilot house and called back:

“What’s that?”

“Bridget!” he shouted again. “Bridget Mahoney’s Jim’s here!”

There was a pause, the captain not seeming to understand the situation, but a cheer went up from the deportation officials on board and from some of the tender’s crew who knew; and the cry ran along the decks:

“Bridget, Bridget Mahoney! Jim’s here!”

[Illustration: WHERE THE WORKERS COME FROM. Family of German immigrants, passing through Ellis Island on their way to the Middle West. (*Courtesy of U.S. Immigration Station, Ellis Island.*)]

CHAPTER VI

THE NEGRO CENSUS FROM THE SADDLE

Leaving New York the next day after his visit to the Immigration Station on Ellis Island, Hamilton stayed only a few hours in Washington to receive final instructions before proceeding to the southwestern part of Kentucky where his work as a population census-taker was to begin.

At the appointed place he found the supervisor awaiting him.

“I suppose you know,” remarked his brother’s friend, shaking hands, “that I’ve given you a fairly well scattered district to cover. You said you wanted to get a chance to see Kentucky as it really is, and this, together with your mountain experience, ought to give you variety enough.”

“They told me in Washington that it was largely a negro district?” the boy said questioningly.

“It is about as much of a black district as any in Kentucky,” was the reply, “but it isn’t solid black by any means. Therein lies its interest. The negroes are of all varieties, from old-time slaves who have never left the plantation on which they were piccaninnies during the war, to progressive negroes owning fair-sized tracts of land, most of them still living in the one-room shacks that you see all over the country, but a few having bought what used to be the ‘big house’ in antebellum days.”

“That’s just exactly what I was after,” Hamilton said with delight. “How do I cover it, sir? In the saddle?”

“You can drive, if you want to,” the supervisor replied, “and if it wasn’t for the agricultural schedules, I think it would be easier to do the work from a buggy. But with the field work to consider, and in a district as scattered as yours is, the saddle might work out better.”

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"I had been thinking of that," Hamilton said, "if a farmer was on the other side of a plowed patch, I'd have no way of getting to him in a buggy except by tying the horse and walking, while in the saddle I could easily take short cuts. And I imagine, in a countryside such as you say this is, I'll probably need to see every one on the place in order to get anything like accurate figures."

"It's not at all unlikely," the supervisor rejoined. "Well, I thought you would be needing a horse, and I've been looking round for one for some time. I think I have the very one you will want. I told the owner to hold back sale until you had a chance to look at her."

"Then the quicker I see the owner, the better?" suggested the boy.

"I think I had better go with you," the supervisor said, "and then they won't try any over-clever work. Horse-dealing isn't always the most guileless business, you know."

"So I've understood," Hamilton said, "and I really don't know enough to judge the fine points of a horse."

"I was born and bred in the Blue Grass," his friend remarked, "and so I've been around horses pretty much all my days. The census work is quite a change from that."

"I hope you didn't have any bother over my coming in this somewhat irregular way?" asked Hamilton, remembering what Mr. Burns had said to him in Washington.

The supervisor laughed.

"Nothing serious," he said, "but there were several people who tried to cut you out,—one of them especially. There were three applicants for this district, and the one who was most resentful about an outsider coming in wouldn't have been appointed under any circumstances. Indeed, the best of the three undertook to describe the other two. His letter was a wonder," he added, picking up one of the files; "I think I saved it.—Yes, here it is. Read it, while I get ready to go out with you," and he handed the letter to Hamilton.

The letter was as follows in every detail:

"MR. ——

"Dr. Sir I made out the Blank for a Job taking Census was a going to make it & when I Got to the Postoffice there was such an a ray of aplicants I concluded not to do so

"in the first Place there is two of these aplicants are Habichual Drunkards one Professor A—— the other Mr. P—— A—— was born in Canaday & has NO Interest here Except to be Suported by his wife & the Publick & has had his Last School to Teach in this

Town. he is so Imoral People will not Tollerate him any Longer the Wrighter has seen him on a Saturday SO Drunk he would Fall against People he met if that is the Kind of Man you are looking For I don't want a Job I can get along without

"I will send in my application Just the Same

"Mr. P—— is Not fare behind and is Dealer in Coal & Feed & his Father has to take Cair of the Business for him.

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"Dont concider him for a moment Mr

"as to my self this is the Firste time I ever aske for Publick
Buisness & I am an Indipendent Belever of mans Privlages & always
lived in this County

"you have this Information Without feer of any of above statements
Being Denide

"I remain Resptfully

"-----"

Hamilton laughed as he returned the letter to the supervisor, who had just come back with his hat and gloves as the boy finished reading the epistle.

"I don't think I need have been afraid of any of those three as rivals," he said, "that is, if our friend is right. His information, however, may not be any more correct than his spelling."

"It's exaggerated, of course," the supervisor answered, "that's easy to see, but setting aside the question of jealousy there's a good deal of truth in what he says. Selecting and teaching enumerators was no light job, let me tell you. You take seventy-five to a hundred absolutely green hands, who have never done anything like it before, and it is a hard proposition to make them understand. When you have to try and teach them in a few weeks just how to do what is really difficult to do well, you have a heavy task on your hands."

"You didn't appoint any colored enumerators, I suppose?" Hamilton questioned.

"No," the supervisor answered decidedly. "My judgment was against it to start with and I couldn't see that any of my districts warranted it. It may be different in counties where the proportion of colored population runs as high as eighty and ninety per cent, but there are none like that in Kentucky."

"Just in Georgia and Mississippi?"

"Alabama, South Carolina, and Arkansas have a few scattering 'black' counties too," the supervisor answered, "for I wrote to several places about this very colored enumerator question. I found the supervisors over those districts about evenly divided for and against. I have been able to get suitable men all through, I think, though I might have had difficulty in securing a good appointee for your district."

"It's pretty wild out there evidently," Hamilton said anticipatorily.

"Not so much wild as isolated. Kentucky is scarcely a railroad center, you know. Out of twenty-one counties in my district, fourteen possess neither railroad, telegraph, nor telephone connection with the rest of the world at all."

Hamilton whistled softly.

"I hadn't realized that there was any part of Kentucky as isolated as that," he said, "even in the mountains. But I'm glad, just the same, because these isolated communities are much more fun than the places where everybody seems to be cut out by the same pattern."

"You'll find all the variety you want," the supervisor remarked, as he turned into a big stable building, "and you'll need four legs more beside your own two." He led the way to a stall near the far end of the building, and brought out the little mare of which he had been speaking.

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"What a beauty!" exclaimed the boy.

The supervisor laughed.

"That's no way to buy a horse," he said, turning to the stableman; "it's a good thing I arranged the price before he came, or you'd have tacked on another twenty dollars."

"Easy, and more than that," said the owner, with a grin.

"Well, Noble," said his friend, "I don't hear yon raising any objections."

"I haven't any," the boy replied promptly. "And the price is what you said to me?" he queried, turning to the supervisor.

"Yes, that stands," his friend replied.

"All right, then," said Hamilton, "I'll take her."

The supervisor pulled out his pocketbook.

"I had an idea," he said, "that you were just boy enough to want the mare when you saw her and to want her right away. I made out a check for the amount, and you can make one out to me when you get ready," and he handed the slip to the boy.

Hamilton started to thank him, but the supervisor cut him short.

"If you'll come to the office this afternoon," he said, "the clerk will give you the schedules and papers all ready made out for your district. Here's a typewritten copy of the lectures I've been giving to the enumerators, and while I don't suppose you really need to, you had better read it over and return it to me when you're through with it. Now I'm going to leave you here with this gentleman," he added, nodding to the owner of the horse, "and you can arrange with him about getting a saddle and so forth for the mare. Drop in at the office in the morning as you start out and I'll make sure that nothing has been forgotten. See you later," and with a nod to Hamilton, he stepped out of the stable.

To the boy the afternoon fairly seemed to fly, there were so many things to do; and it was not until just before closing hours that he reached the office and secured his portfolio. He had a brief chat with the clerk, and went back to his hotel to study carefully the map of his district and the route suggested, and to make sure that he thoroughly understood the population and agricultural schedules he would have to use. They were different in form, of course, from the manufacturing schedules which the boy knew by heart, but the essential principles were the same, and Hamilton found that in half an hour's time he saw plain sailing.

“It’s a mighty good thing I had that manufacturing work,” he said half aloud, “or I’d find this pretty tricky. I should think it would be hard for any one not at all used to it.”

By supper time—they kept to old-fashioned ways in the little hotel—Hamilton felt himself perfectly sure of his ground on the work, and he went to bed early, knowing he had a long ride and a hard day before him.

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The following morning, an early breakfast over, Hamilton started on the journey to his enumeration district, stopping at the office for a moment's chat with his friend the supervisor, and receiving his good-luck wishes before he went. The mare was a delight, being well-paced, and the horseman from whom Hamilton had bought the animal had taken a great deal of pains to get him a saddle tree that fitted him, so that the boy enjoyed every minute of the ride. He reached the first point in his district about one o'clock, and after a hasty dinner started to work. The place was a tiny village, containing about forty houses.

The population work, as Hamilton had expected, proved to be comparatively simple, and the first house he visited was a fair sample of the greater number of those he tabulated all through the month. As a typical example it impressed itself upon his memory. He began next door to the house where he had eaten dinner. The natural privacy of a home was quite different from the public nature of a factory, and Hamilton felt a little strange as he walked up to the door and knocked.

"Good-morning," he said, as soon as the door was opened, "I'm the census-taker and I called for the paper that was sent for you to fill in."

"Yo' mean dat ar big sheet o' paper, jes' noth'n but quest'ns?" answered the young negro woman, who appeared at the door.

"That's it," the boy answered, "is it all filled out and ready?"

"Lawdy, no! Why, it would take me fo' eveh to do all that writin'. Ah'm no school-teacheh. An' besides, that's fo' fahmers. An' yo' have anotheh jes' like it!" she continued, noting the portfolio the boy carried. "Ah jes' know I can't eveh tell yo' all dose things."

"This is different," Hamilton pointed out. "Those other questions are about farms, just as you say, but these are all about your own family."

"Yes, sah, yes, sah. Ah tol' mah husban' so when we were talkin' about that yar farm business. The paper in the town gave a list o' questions, an' Ah thought Ah would get mah Steve to help me get ready so's Ah sh'd be able to answer yo' rightly when yo' come aroun', but he jes' said he was too tiehed to do anythin', an' dat ar census list is the confusin'est thing Ah eveh saw. Ah thought Ah ought to do somethin', an' so Ah jes' took a big sheet o' wrappin' paper an' started to write the answers to the quest'ns on that, thinkin' some o' the neighbors' children would copy it on the sheet fo' me. But, I tell yo', sah, that befo' I was half way through tellin' what the newspaper said we had to tell, I was so mixed up that I was writin' mahself down as mah own daughter and provin' that the baby was twice divo'ced."

"Then you really haven't got anything ready at all," said Hamilton.

“Nothin’, sah.”

“Then I’ll just have to ask you the questions, and put the answers down myself,” the boy said cheerfully. “We might as well start right now.”

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"Won't yo' come in, sah?" the woman suggested. "Yo'll need a table, an' pens an' ink."

"I have a fountain pen," the lad answered, "but it would be easier writing on a table. I guess I will come in. Now," he continued, as soon as he was seated, "has this house a number?"

"Yas, sah," the woman replied, "seventeen, High Street."

"And this is the first family I've seen, and the first house," said Hamilton, entering a "1" in both columns. "Now for the head of the family. I think you said something about your husband?"

"Yas, sah, Steve, he's my husban'. We done been married six years."

"You say his name is Stephen? What is his other name?"

"Lawson, sah."

"He's colored, I suppose."

"Yas, sah, he's quite dark complected."

"And you're his first wife?" queried the boy, as he wrote "Lawson, Stephen," in the name column, the word "Head" in the relation column, and the letter "B" for black, under the color or race column.

"Ah reckon Ah'm his first wife," the woman replied, "he was jes' twenty-one when Ah married him."

"And you've been married six years," the boy went on, entering Stephen Lawson's age as 27, the number of years married as "6," and "M. 1," to show that he was married, and married only once. "But you look like a girl still," he added, "you must have been married very young."

"Ah was jes' sixteen," she answered; "we was married on mah birthday."

"And your name is—?"

"Lily, sah."

"Any other name?"

"Mariamne, sah."

For a moment or two Hamilton wrote busily, filling in “Lily M.,” “Wife,” “F” for female, “Mu” for mulatto, “22” for present age, “M. 1” for first marriage, and “6” for the number of years in wedlock.

“You have children?”

“One li'l boy, sah, but he's deaf an' dumb. An' so quick an' clever, sah, in other ways, yo' wouldn' believe!”

“That's hard luck,” said Hamilton kindly, “but they do such wonderful things to help them now, you know. And he can learn a lot by reading.”

“Yas, sah, it's hard enough. But we're glad he ain't blind.”

“And what is his name?”

“Edward Habberton, sah, an' he's jes' fo' years old, near five.”

Hamilton entered the name of the little deaf and dumb boy, whom he could see sitting in an inner room, and noted down in the schedule his age, his color, and the nature of his affliction.

“Now, Lily,” he continued, “were you both born in Kentucky?”

“No, sah,” she replied, “none of us, savin' little Eddie. I'm f'om Delaware, an' mah Steve, he's f'om Maryland, where my mother come f'om.”

“Wait a bit,” said Hamilton, holding up his hand to stop her, “let me get this straight. Stephen Lawson is from Maryland, you said, you're from Delaware, and the boy was born in this State. Is that right?”

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"Yas, sah."

"And you said your mother came from Maryland but I suppose since you're from Delaware your father was from Delaware also."

"Yes, sah," the woman answered, "he done live in Wilmin'ton all his life."

So Hamilton put down the birthplaces of the wife's parents and in the same fashion those of the husband, while the filling in of the columns for the parents of the child was simply a matter of copying.

"There's no need to find out about your naturalization then," he went on, "of course you're both Americans. And you both speak English," and he entered this also on the language column.

"What does your husband work at?" was the boy's next query.

"He's a gardener, sah."

"Odd jobs?"

"Oh, no, sah, in the big nu'sery here."

"On regular wages, then?"

"Yas, sah, nine dollahs a week."

"I don't have to put down how much he earns," the boy explained, "only to state whether he is paying wages, or being paid wages, or working on his own account.—But you must find it hard to get along on nine a week."

"Ah make mo 'n he does," the woman explained.

"You do? How?"

"Washin', sah. An' Ah take a lot o' fine washin', laces an' things like that, which the ladies want jes' as carefully done! Ah make as high as twelve an' sometimes fifteen dollahs a week."

"That helps a lot," said Hamilton, as he noted down the facts that the woman was a laundress, and that she worked on her own account, typified by the letters "O.A." in the wage column.

"You both read and write—or, wait a bit, I think you said you couldn't write, and that you have to get the neighbors' children to help you."

"Ah can read pretty well," the woman replied, "but Ah never had enough schoolin' to write much; mah mother was ill all the time, an' Ah had to stay home. But Steve, he writes beautiful, an' he makes out all mah bills an' things like that."

"I think there's only one question more," the boy said, delighted to find that after all, even in the house of a negro laundress who did not know how to write, the information could be so easily secured. After jotting down a "Yes" and a "No" respectively for Husband and Wife in the columns for literacy, he continued, "And that question is, whether this house is owned by you or whether you rent it."

"We're only rentin' it, sah. Steve wants to buy it an' put a mo'gage on, but Ah don't know anythin' about mo'gages an' Ah won't buy until Ah can pay the whole price right down. Don' yo' think Ah'm right?"

"Well, Lily," answered the lad, as he folded up his portfolio and prepared to go to the next house, "it would hardly do for one of Uncle Sam's census men to come between a husband and a wife on the question of their buying of their own home, would it?"

"Ah reckon not, sah. Is that all, sah?"

"Yes, Lily, that's all, and I'm very much obliged."

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"It wasn't so awful bad," said the woman, with a sigh of relief.

"It's easy enough to answer census questions when you want to make it easy and tell a straight story," Hamilton replied, "but you see what trouble it would be for me with some one who wasn't willing to talk, and how hard it would be for any one to make up a story as he went along, and find it tally at every point in all the later questions."

"Well, sah," she called, in reply, as the lad passed out, "Ah jes' hope yo' don' fin' a single one like that in this hyar whole village."

"I hope not, Lily. Good-morning," he rejoined and turned toward the next house.

The enumeration of the rest of the village went on rapidly. By working quickly Hamilton was able to complete the numbering of the village by nightfall, and he so stated on his daily report card, which he mailed to the supervisor that evening.

The following morning he started off on his little mare, and struck something new and puzzling at every holding he touched. The agricultural schedule fairly made his head swim. It had certain difficulties which the manufacturing schedule did not have, because, although the latter contained more detailed information and required a more accurate statement, still all manufacturers kept books. For the details needed in the agricultural statistics no books had been kept; the negro farmer seldom or never knew how many chickens he had, and the wild guesses that would be made as to value of animals and land nearly turned the boy's hair gray. Some of the white farmers were every bit as careless, one man valuing his horses at \$200 apiece and the next at \$50; one man estimating his land at \$150 an acre and the next at \$10.

A typical case was that of Patrick Meacham. Hamilton secured the facts for his population schedule with comparatively little trouble from the Meacham household, although he had to listen to a great deal of unnecessary family history. There was no great difficulty, moreover, in finding out that the farm consisted of 80 acres owned and 10 rented, but a snag of the first magnitude was encountered on the question as to how much of it was improved.

"Sure, 'tis all improved," the farmer said; "it was in horrible shape whin I bought it."

"I don't mean improved that way," Hamilton objected, "what I want to know is how much of it is good for pasture, is prepared for crops, and so forth."

"Sure, it's all good for somethin'," the Irishman answered; "what for should I buy it if it wasn't good for anythin'?"

"Have you a wood-lot?" asked Hamilton, deciding to try and get at the question in another way.

“I have a wood-lot. But I built a good strong fence around it, since I came here,—ye don’t mean to tell me that doesn’t improve it? If ye lived here, ye’d know better.”

“That’s all right, Mr. Meacham, it makes it better all right, but it isn’t counted in as ‘improved land.’ I’ll put it down specially though. There’s ten acres of it, you said.”

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"And there's ten acres of swamp land that ye couldn't improve unless ye built it on piles," the farmer said.

"I'll have to refer that to the Reclamation Service, I guess," the boy answered, "anyhow for the time we'll just call it 'unimproved' and let it go at that."

The next few questions passed off without a hitch, but an inquiry concerning the number of animals born on the place during the year was like opening the flood-gates of a dam. If Meacham had been as good a farmer as a yarn-spinner there would have been no question as to his success, for he had some story to tell about every yearling on the place, and they were inimitably told. It was with great reluctance that Hamilton found himself obliged to head off the man's eloquence and make him stick to hard facts. An inquiry as to the number of eggs sold was somewhat of a puzzle, but the farmer's wife knew the amount of the "trade" she had received at the grocery store in the nearest town in return for eggs, and at an average sale price of nine cents a dozen, this was easily computed. She was also the authority on the amount of butter made and sold, and on the garden truck.

The business man of the house was a twelve-year-old boy. Not far away, a neighbor had forty acres in clover and some fruit trees, and knowing the value of bees for pollinating the fruit, he was glad to have this boy keep six hives near the orchard and field. A good share of the honey had gone to the neighbor, and the family themselves had used all they wanted, but still the boy's profit for what he had sold amounted to sixty dollars. He was keen to have Hamilton enter him on the schedule as an independent apiarist on his own account, but Hamilton pointed out to him that a \$250 farm was the smallest one allowed to be listed.

This low limit was almost reached the next day when Hamilton found himself on a peanut farm for the first time. He had always known that peanuts, unlike all other "nuts," grew underground but he had made the common mistake of supposing them to grow on the roots of the peanut plant like the tubers of a potato, instead of really being a true nut, developing from a flower the elongation of the lower portion of which reaches to the ground. The farm was run by an orphaned colored girl nineteen years old and her four younger brothers.

[Illustration: ON A PEANUT FARM. Caesar and his sister at work when Hamilton came to take the census.]

"Jes' as soon as the young-uns gits big enough," she said to Hamilton, when discussing the statistics of her little holding, "we're goin' to buy a big patch o' peanut land. Ah'd like to grow peanuts every year, but these hyar gov'nment papers say yo' shouldn't. They say once in every fo' years is enough fo' peanuts, but Ah'm goin' to try it every other year."

“Aren’t they a very troublesome crop?”

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“‘Bout the same as potatoes, Ah reckon. But they pay a good price fo’ picked peanuts, an’ Ah can get these boys hyar to do the pickin’. In one o’ the papers Ah saw up to Colonel ‘Gerius’ place the other day, one the gov’nment puts out, thar’s a list showin’ this country has to send to foreign countries fo’ twelve million bushels o’ peanuts every year. Ah’m goin’ to try raisin’ a real big crop, and Dicky hyar,” she added, pointing to the oldest boy, “thinks jes’ as I do about it.”

Hamilton was distinctly impressed with the evidence that this young negro girl and her younger brothers not only knew enough about the peanut business to be able to make it pay, but that they were reading the government bulletins.

“I didn’t know,” he said hastily, “that you people—” and he stopped suddenly, realizing the ungracious ending to his sentence.

“You mean us colored folks,—you didn’t think we troubled ’bout such things? Yas, sah, we don’ have all the advantages o’ white folks but we’re improvin’ right along. Colonel ‘Gerius jes’ does all he can, an’ he gets us gov’nment seeds an’ papers, an’ advises every one fo’ miles aroun’. Yas, sah, we’re gettin’ on. If yo’ have to go to Bullertown, sah, yo’ll fin’ as nice a li’l place as thar is f’om one end o’ the United States cla’r to the other, an’ thar’s not one white person in it.”

“Bullertown?” queried Hamilton in surprise. “I’m glad to hear it, for that’s the next place on my map.”

“We’re all proud of it hyar, sah, an’ it ’pears to me, Bullertown owes jes’ everythin’ to the folks at the Big House and to Mistah Ephraim Jones. Yo’ll see Mistah Jones, sah, an’ I’d take it kindly if yo’ll remember me to him.”

“All right, Delia, I will,” said Hamilton. “Let’s see, I did get all the figures, didn’t I?”

“Yo’ said yo’ had them all, sah,” was the reply.

“Good enough. Well, I guess I’ll go along. I’ll not forget your message. Good-by—” and the boy set his horse on a canter down the narrow road. Throughout the rest of the day the census-gathering was of similar character, and it was drawing toward dark when the boy saw before him a well-ordered array of houses which he felt sure must be Bullertown. Asking his way to the hotel from the first darky that he met, he was answered most courteously.

“Thar’s no hotel hyar, sah,” the negro said, “but Mr. Ephraim Jones entertains the visitin’ strangehs, sah, an’ if yo’ go right on to that big yaller house an’ ask fo’ Mr. Jones, sah, Ah jes’ knows yo’ll be right welcome.”

Hamilton felt diffident about quartering himself upon a perfect stranger in this way, but it seemed to be the custom of the place, and since there was no hotel, there seemed

nothing else to do, and he rode on to the gate. Tethering his mare to a tie-post in front of the house he started up the walk, carrying his portfolio, so that in the event of any mistake he might be able to make it appear that he had merely come to take the census. But before he reached the door it was opened by a wrinkled and old, but dignified darky.

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"Walk in, sah, walk right in," he said. "Ah'll sen' one o' the boys to look after yo' horse. Tom!" he called, "yo' take the gen'leman's horse to the stable, rub him down with a wisp, an' give him some hay. In half an hour water him, an' give him a feed o' oats."

"I'm obliged to you," said Hamilton, "for taking all this trouble, but perhaps I had better explain who I am."

"That's jes' as yo' like, sah."

"Well," said Hamilton, "I'm the census-taker for this district, and I was looking for a hotel where I could stay the night and begin work in the morning. A man I met on the street told me that this town had no hotel and suggested that if I came to you, I might be advised where to go."

"We have no hotel in Bullertown, sah," the old negro preacher answered, "but the gen'lemen that come hyar do me the honor us'ally, sah, of bein' my guests. Ah have a guest-room, sah, jes' 'sclusively fo' gen'lemen who are not people of color."

Hamilton found himself flushing at the consciousness that this very thought had been in his mind, and in order to cover any possible signs that might have appeared in his expression, he answered hastily:

"Oh, that's all right,—it wouldn't have mattered."

The old preacher looked at him quietly and a little reproachfully and said:

"If you don' jes' mean things like that, young sah, don' say them. We know. We find, sah, that it is mos' desirable for every one concerned. If yo' like, sah, an' if yo're ready, Ah'll show yo' to yo'r room."

[Illustration: IN AN ALL-NEGRO TOWN. Residents of Bullertown on the day that the census was taken. (*Brown Bros.*)]

[Illustration: IN AN ALL-NEGRO TOWN. Residents of Bullertown on the day that the census was taken. (*Brown Bros.*)]

Hamilton could not help contrasting this reception with that which he would have received in any town not entirely a negro community, and he expressed this feeling to his host as they went up the stairs.

"It is entirely different hyar, sah," the latter said, "yo' see we are isolated, an' a guest is rare. Then this community is a syndicate an' is not run like a town. Thar's no quest'n hyar, sah, about colored and white people bein' the same,—we know they're different. An' we believe, sah, that it is in preservin' the color line, not in tryin' to hide it, that the

future good of our race lies. An' so thar's not a foot o' land in Bullertown owned by any other than people o' color, an' not a white person lives hyar."

"You own all the land, then?"

"The syndicate does, yes, sah."

"Then you must have some wealthy men among you?"

"No, sah, not one. The town was begun, sah, by the kindness of Colonel Egerius."

"Colonel—he was, that is, he is—" began Hamilton, stammering.

"He is not a negro, sah," the old man answered finishing the boy's embarrassed sentence for him with entire self-possession. "Colonel Egerius, sah, was a plantation owner, befo' the war. Ah was one o' his slaves, an' mos' o' the people in Bullertown are the children o' those born in the plantation quarters."

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"And he started the town?"

"Yas, sah, in a way. He fought with Lee, sah, an' my brother was his body-servant all through the war. When Lee surrendered, the Colonel came back to the old plantation. Some of the slaves had gone, but thar was quite a few left still. He called us to the big house an' tol' us to stay by the ol' place an' he would pay us wages. Some—Ah was not one o' them, though Ah see now they were right,—said the quarters were not fit to live in."

"But I thought you said Colonel Egerius was a kind master? How could that be if the quarters were so bad?"

"No, sah," he said, "Ah should never call the old massa kind, he was fair an' ready to help a willin' worker. But his slaves was his slaves an' they had no rights. Thar wasn't any whippin' or any o' that sort o' thing, but it was work all day, f'om befo' daylight till after dark, an' we lived jes' anyhow."

"How came he to start the town, then?" queried Hamilton. "Your description of him doesn't sound as though he were a man who would do much for you."

"It was jes' because o' that, Ah think, that he did, sah. He was just, sah. He said that while we were slaves we should be treated as slaves. Now that the negro was not a slave any mo', thar was no reason to make him live like one. He used to say the South was now pledged to help the nation instead o' the Confederacy, an' while he did not agree, he would live up to that pledge."

"That seems as fair as anything could be."

"Yas, sah, but it was easier to say that than to do it. Thar was no money in the place, the slaves hadn' had wages, an' yo' can't build houses without money, an' money was scarce after the war."

"How in the wide world did you manage it?" asked Hamilton.

"As Ah was sayin', sah, it was Colonel Egerius' doin'. He got a surveyor from the town an' hunted over the plantation to fin' the best site fo' a village,—the surveyor's name was Buller."

"That's where the town got its name, then?"

"Yas, sah, Ah jes' wanted it called Egerius, but the Colonel wouldn't hear of it. Then all o' the ol' slaves that wanted to stay by the place got together, an' the Colonel showed us how to make a sort o' syndicate. Then he sol' us the land jes' as low as it could be made, payment to be in labor on the plantation, so in a few years' work every man who

wanted to stay reg'lar on the job got title to his lan' an' his house, an' took wages afteh that."

"That was a wise move," said the boy after a moment's thought. "He sold his land at a fair price, got the money back that he put into buildings, established a regular supply of labor for his plantation, and at the same time fixed it all right for you."

"Yas, sah," the old negro answered, "an' now every man in the town either owns his house or is buyin' one f'om the syndicate, an' we have bought up all the surveyed property f'om the Colonel. Now, sah," continued the preacher, "if yo' will excuse me, Ah will see that yo'r supper is got ready. Hyar, sah," he added, opening the door into a small room, "is yo'r sittin' room, an' yo'r supper will be served hyar."

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As much surprised as gratified at the excellent arrangements for his comfort, Hamilton refreshed himself after his dusty ride, and was as hungry as a wolf when supper arrived. A little darky girl, black as the ace of spades, waited at table, and in conversation Hamilton learned that she was the adopted daughter of the eldest son of the negro preacher, the son being a professor in one of the negro colleges. After supper Hamilton asked to see his host in order that he might secure the details of the family for the census, and thus make use of a disengaged evening.

"So your son is Professor of English at the University," said Hamilton, as, with all the details secured, he closed the census portfolio. "Do, you think the negro ought only to learn a few things, or do you think he ought to be taught just the same as in the regular universities?"

"Thar should be one good university," said the old preacher, "with very difficult admission examinations. It would be a good thing fo' colored lawyers an' doctors, an' if the standard were high—higher even than in white colleges—these men would get standin' fo' themselves an' give standin' to the colored race. But, even then, I'd have them keep away f'om the other lawyers an' doctors."

"You're strong on that color line, Ephraim," the boy remarked. "Surely you don't believe in 'Jim Crow' cars and all that sort of thing?"

"As long as thar is prejudice, Ah do," was the unexpected answer, "an' thar's no place fo' the negro in the city. He can't beat the white man, an' thar's no chance o' his securin' a monopoly o' any trade. Thar's nothin' fo' him in the city savin' jes' labor an' bein' a servant, a porter, or somethin' o' that kind."

"You don't see many negro laborers in Northern cities," the boy remarked, "they're mostly elevator runners and in positions of that kind."

"It is in the No'th that trouble lies," the old man said, "the South has settled hers."

"How do you make that out?" cried the boy. "You say the South has settled the race question? I thought it was the biggest issue there was, down here and in the Gulf States."

The old negro preacher shook his head.

"Farmin' an' cotton raisin' has settled it. Did yo' know that mo' than two-fifths, or nearly half the cotton raised in the United States was grown by negroes ownin' their own land? An' the cotton crop of America's one of her biggest sources o' wealth. Those that don' own the land lease it on a share basis known as the metayer system, but more'n more o' them are owners every year."

"I hadn't really thought of the negroes as owning land at all," said Hamilton thoughtfully.

“A stretch o’ land three times as big as the British Isles, or equal to the New England States is owned by the colored race,” was the reply, “makin’ in the United States a negro country larger than plenty o’ kingdoms.”

“And is that land worth much?”

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"Oveh half a billion dollahs, sah, Ah was told at the last census, an' it's worth a lot mo' now."

"But," said Hamilton, "the negro doesn't seem able to make use of it. Even if he does own the land and is making money, he still goes on living in a shiftless way. One would hardly believe the kind of shacks I've seen in the last couple of days."

"Ah'm ashamed to say you're right, sah," the old negro answered, "Ah reckon one-third of all the negroes in the South still live in one-roomed cabins, cookin', eatin', and sleepin' in the same room, men, women, an' children all together. But they're improvin' right along."

"They ought," said the boy, "if they're working on cotton, because, I've been told, that is always a cash crop. But why does every one leave the cotton crop to the negro. It isn't a hard crop to raise, is it?"

"Thar's no one else c'n do it but the negro, sah," the preacher answered. "It's the hardes' kin' of work, an' it has to be done in summer, an' thar's no shade in a cotton fiel'. Right from the sowin' until the las' boll is picked, cotton needs tendin', an' yo' don' have much cool weather down hyar."

"You sow cotton something like corn, don't you?" asked the boy, who had never seen a cotton plantation and wanted to know something about it.

"Yas, sah, jes' about the same way, only it has to be hilled higher an' hoed more'n corn. An' weeds jes' spring up in the cotton fiel's oveh night. The pickin', too, is jes' killin' work. Yo' see a cotton plant doesn' grow mo'n about fo' feet high an' thar's always a lot of it that's shorter. The bolls hang low, sometimes, an' yo've got to go pickin', pickin', stoopin' halfway oveh an' the hot sun beatin' down on yo' neck an' back. Since the war the planters have tried all sorts o' labor, but thar's no white man that c'n pick cotton, they get blindin' headaches an' fall sick. I reckon their skulls are too thin or maybe it's jes' because they're not black, seem' that it's harder fo' a mulatto th'n a full-blood negro."

[Illustration: "'WAY DOWN YONDER IN DE COTTON FIEL'." Typical picking scene. Working under a blazing sun and a haze of heat, without any shade in sight. (*Brown Bros.*)]

"You would make all the negroes cotton planters?"

"Ah'd have all the cotton crop in the hands o' the negroes, sah," the old man answered, "an' the trade schools would provide fo' all the workers in towns in the cotton district, an' in solid negro towns thar'd be room fo' all the colored doctors an' lawyers an' preachers."

"I see your idea," said Hamilton. "You would just make the cotton section solid negro. Would you try and be independent of the whites?"

"No, sah," the other answered decidedly. "It's jes' those No'thern niggehs that are talkin' that way all the time. Thar's a lot o' talk up No'th, but down hyar an' furtheh South, whar the mos' o' the colored people are, they're willin' enough to be let alone. Thar's a lot o' talk about a race war, an' it might come some time, but not likely fo' a good many hundred years, an' somethin will come up to settle it befo' then. But Ah'm reckoning sah, that yo'll be wantin' to make war unless Ah let yo' go to bed. Thar's a bell, sah, if yo' want anythin'."

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"I wonder," said Hamilton half aloud, as the door closed behind his host, "if that isn't a whole lot more likely to be true than the alarmist stories you read in magazines."

The following morning, after Hamilton had almost finished covering one side of the street in collecting the census statistics, he heard the trot of horses' hoofs, and looking up, saw a tall, stern-visaged soldierly-looking gentleman, with iron-gray hair, riding a powerful iron-gray horse. Beside him rode a young fellow, evidently his son. Both reined up when they saw Hamilton. Seeing that he was expected to introduce himself, he stepped forward.

"My name is Hamilton Noble," he said; "I'm the census enumerator for this district. I presume you are Colonel Egerius?"

"Yes, Mr. Noble," the old Confederate leader replied. "Ephraim sent me word that you were here, and I received a letter a week ago from the supervisor, whom I have known for some time, telling me that you were a friend of his. I wanted to bid you welcome, sir, and to express the hope that we shall have the pleasure of seeing you at dinner with us to-night."

Hamilton bowed.

"I shall enjoy coming, Colonel Egerius," he said. "At what hour?"

"Six-thirty," the Colonel replied, "we keep early hours in the country. By the way," he added, "have you heard anything of this peonage business here this morning?"

"No, sir," the boy answered, "I started out with my schedules bright and early."

"I purpose to hold an inquiry after lunch," the planter continued. "You are lunching at Ephraim's of course?"

"Yes, Colonel Egerius," the boy answered.

"Very well," was the reply, "we will lunch together if you have no objection. Since I heard of your expected arrival I have been looking forward to your visit. Now that you are here, sir, we must make the most of you. Allow me to present my son Percy."

Hamilton made a suitable reply, and consulting his watch found that it was almost lunch time.

"I will join you in half an hour, Colonel Egerius," he said, "and shall look forward to the evening with great pleasure."

"You play a good knife and fork, I trust," said the old gentleman, smiling, as he gathered up the reins.

“Almost good enough to do justice even to Southern hospitality,” answered Hamilton with a smile. The old soldier nodded approvingly. “Remember now,” he said, as he rode away, “we’ll hold you to your word.”

At lunch Hamilton took occasion to remark on the well-being of Bullertown.

“I was surprised,” he said, “to find a village so well managed and looked after, and all by negroes.”

“There’s nothing surprising in that,” the Colonel answered. “How could they do anything different? I have shown them every step they were to take; all that they had to do was to continue.”

“You mean they couldn’t have done it by themselves?”

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"The negro never has done anything by himself," the old Confederate replied. "He has lived as far back as time goes in one of the most fertile and well-watered countries of the world,—Africa—and he never had enough initiative to rise out of tribal conditions."

"But he seems to be doing all right now," suggested Hamilton. "I hear the negro is getting to own quite a share of the cotton crop."

"He has not done so well as appearances would show," the soldier replied; "he has learned a few—only a few—of the tricks of modern civilization, and those only outwardly. The few cases of leadership such as that of Booker T. Washington, for instance, are due to the white strain, not the negro."

"I thought Booker T. Washington was a pure negro!" exclaimed Hamilton.

"He is not," was the emphatic reply. "In his own writings he states that his father was a white man. His mother was a negress. He gets his brains from his father and his color from his mother."

"Do you think that the negroes will ever marry enough with the white to become all white?"

"Not now," the Southerner answered. "It is a crime in many States and punishable with imprisonment."

"Then what's going to be done?"

"I'm unreconstructed yet," the old Colonel said grimly. "I think still the negroes were better off as slaves. They're always going to be slaves, anyway, whether in name or not. And as for their relation to the cotton crop. You say they are succeeding in it. Perhaps. But did they learn the uses of cotton, did they develop machinery to clean and spin it, or devices for weaving? Was it negroes who worked out the best means of cultivating the cotton or experimented on the nature of the most fertile soils? Not a bit of it. They simply grow cotton the way the white folks showed them."

"But they seem to be getting a big share of it!"

"I see you've been talking to Ephraim. What good would it do the negroes if they owned every foot of the cotton land? They would still have to depend on the man that buys the crop, and the cotton exchange wouldn't be run for the benefit of the negro. In slavery days, too, there was some one to take an interest in the negro and help him. Now he's got to do it for himself, and he can't do anything but go on in the same old groove."

"You think it was better in the old days?"



"In some ways for the negro, yes. But it was harder for the people of the South. There was always trouble of some kind in the slave quarters. Before the war you had to support all the old, the sick, the children, and the poor workers. Under present conditions you hire just whom you want. The cost is about even, and the responsibility is less. Now," he added, lunch being over, "if you've finished we'll go and see what this peonage business is. Ephraim," he called, "is that man here?"

"Yas, sah," answered the old negro. "He's hyar."

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"Bring him in, then."

In a minute or two the old darky returned, bringing with him a gaunt, emaciated negro, who cringed as he entered the room. He was followed by a brisk, young mulatto.

"If yo' please, Massa," said the old preacher, dropping unconsciously into the familiar form of address, "this is Peter, young Peter's father."

"I've seen him before," the Colonel said abruptly "Peter, were you on this plantation?"

"Yas, Massa."

"What's the matter with him, Ephraim?" queried the old soldier. "He looks to me as though he hadn't had enough to eat."

"It isn't only that, Massa," said the negro, "he's been whipped 'most to death."

"Whipped!" cried Hamilton, startled. Then, remembering suddenly that the matter was not his concern, he flushed and turned to the Colonel.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "I forgot."

The old soldier, who had been a stern disciplinarian in his time, had drawn himself up indignantly at the boy's interruption, but his immediate apology caused the old gentleman to see that it was just a flash of boyish indignation, so he merely turned and said:

"Let him tell his story."

"Ah was born hyar durin' the war," the negro began. "Ah c'n jes' remember Missis, an' Ah've often heard mah mother cry when we was livin' in Atlanta an' trouble come, 'If only Ah could go to Missis.'"

"Get to your story, boy," said the Colonel, "I haven't time to waste."

"Ah was brought up in Atlanta, Georgia, an' times was always hard. Six years ago Ah hired out to a lumber man in Florida. Thar were sixty of us hired together. The pay was good. The day we come, we were put into a group o' huts with a stockade 'roun', an' men with rifles guarded us night an' day. Ah reckon thirty men was shot tryin' to escape durin' the years I was thar."

"Thirty?"

"Yas, sah, leastways I know of five, an' heard o' the rest."

“Talk about what you know, not what you’ve heard,” admonished the old soldier. “Go on.”

“It was killin’ work. We had to be in the woods by daylight an’ stay thar until it was too dark to see. Thar was trouble enough at first but the worst come later. About three years ago a lot mo’ huts was put up an’ the stockade was made bigger. We thought things would be easier as the new men would get all the knockin’ about. Nex’ week the new crowd came,—they were convic’s hired for the job.”

“Excuse my interrupting, Colonel Egerius,” asked the lad, “but can that be true? Does any State hire out its convicts to forced labor?”

“Some do,” was the reply, “and Florida is one of them. Go on, boy.”

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"Floggin's started in when the convicts come, an' thar was no difference made between us an' them. We were supposed to be paid, but our pay was always in tickets to the comp'ny store, an' they charged double prices for everythin'. They never gave us a cent o' money. A lot of us got together an' decided to escape, but when it come to doin' it, only three would go. One got away entirely, one was shot, an' Ah was caught. They took me to the stockade an' whipped me 'mos' to death, three days runnin'. The third day Ah was so near dead that they didn't tie me up, an' when, hours later, Ah did stagger to mah feet, they jes' pointed to the fields whar the hands was workin'. Ah heard one o' the guards say, 'He won't go far,' an' Ah hid in the woods, Ah don' know how long, jes' livin' on berries, an' at las' Ah got away. Ah knew Ah would be safe in Kentucky."

The Colonel looked at the man closely.

"I believe you've been a bad nigger," he said, "and I wouldn't believe any more of your story than I had to. But it's easy enough to see that you have been abused, and that you need help right now. I'll give you a chance. Peter, your father is staying with you?"

"Yas, sah."

"Ephraim," the Colonel said, turning to the old preacher, "put this man on the payroll as a field hand, beginning from to-morrow, but don't send him to the field for a couple of weeks. Behave yourself," he added, turning to the peonage victim, "and you'll be all right here."

The negro thanked him profusely, and went out, his wretched frame showing up miserably in the strong sunlight as he passed by the window of the dining room.

"But that's worse than any slavery I ever heard of," burst out Hamilton indignantly.

"Peonage?" answered the old veteran. "Oh, yes, much worse."

"And it still goes on?"

"There were several hundred stockades in operation last year," was the reply, "and that's a fair sample of their work."

[Illustration: HOW MOST OF THE NEGROES LIVE. Type of shack usually seen in Southern States, though the owners are not always in poor circumstances.]

CHAPTER VII

HOBOS ON THE TRAMP

Although he realized that his lines had fallen in pleasant places for the enumeration work, it was not without a certain sense of satisfaction that Hamilton entered up what was marked on the map as the last house, and started for the supervisor's office. He was a day ahead of time, and was congratulating himself on his success in having covered the entire district in the appointed time. In order to make his record as good as possible the lad thought he would get an early start and be in the supervisor's office before noon, thus emphasizing his punctuality. Accordingly it was but a little after seven o'clock when he was in the saddle and on the road.

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Knowing from experience that the highway made quite a circuit to reach a little group of three houses, which he had already enumerated, Hamilton struck out across country, using a little footpath through some woods. At that early hour of the morning he was not expecting to meet any one, and it was a great surprise to him when he heard voices. A moment later he reached a small clump of trees, and came right upon three men, one with a tea-pot in his hand, standing up and leaning a little forward as though ready to show aggressiveness to any intruder, the other two on the ground, one sitting, and one lying half asleep on some boughs carelessly thrown down. As Hamilton was still in his enumeration district and felt that here were some people who might not have been registered, he pulled up.

"Morning, boys!" he said ingratiatingly.

"Howdy!" the impromptu cook replied, and waited for the boy to go on.

"I'm the census-taker for this district," the boy continued, "and I knew this was a short cut across the fields; but I didn't know I should find you here."

"Inform the gentleman, Bill," spoke the traveler who was lying down, "that we were equally unaware of the unexpected pleasure of this meeting but that we would have been better prepared to meet him had he sent a courier to announce his coming."

"You heard him," the first speaker supplemented jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

"I heard him all right," answered Hamilton, dropping immediately into the spirit of the thing, "but tell him that I was unaware that he had left his town residence for this convenient and airy country house."

"As I live, an intelligent reply!" was the response in tones of surprise, and the speaker sat up on his rough couch.

To Hamilton the situation was a little difficult. There would be no trouble in merely exchanging a few greetings and then passing along on his journey, but the boy was above all things conscientious, and he could not forget that these men were probably not entered upon the books of the census, and that now, on the very last day of census-taking, they were in his district. And he knew well enough, that if he broached the question it would not be favorably received. However he thought he saw a way out.

"If you have a pannikin of tea to spare," he said, "I'd enjoy it."

"If you like to put up with what we've got, join us an' welcome," the tall tramp said.

"All right," Hamilton answered, "I will."

“Permit me to do the honours!” said the second tramp. “This is ‘Hatchet’ Ben Barclay, the gentleman sitting down is ‘Jolly’ Joe Smith—not because of his humor but because of his powers of persuasion, and I am Harry Downe, very much at your service.”

“Better known as the ‘Windy Duke,’” interjected the tea-maker, who had by this time returned to his task of preparing breakfast, and was busy frying slices of ham on a piece of stick over the hot wood coals.

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"I'm Hamilton Noble," the boy answered in return, "and I've just got through taking the census for this district. I've got all the names in here," he added, tapping his portfolio, "and now I'm going to the supervisor's office to turn in my reports."

"I am afraid your census will be incomplete," said 'Windy,' "for, so far as I am aware, the rolls of the United States will be lacking the names and distinction of this gallant little company."

"Haven't you been listed?" asked Hamilton, glad that the subject should have seemed to come up in so natural a way and mentally congratulating himself on the success of his device to secure the friendship of the crowd.

"Nary a list," said 'Hatchet Ben,' "the rustlers of the Ringling Circus told us that they had been enumerated four times, once for every week they played, an' that not a blessed one of the census men would believe they had been taken before; but they cut us out entire."

"Well, I guess I had better take you right now," said Hamilton. "I've room on the census sheet for a few more names."

"You can count me out," said 'Hatchet Ben,' "I'm not lookin' for that kind of fame."

"Don't you think it's fair to the country to let it know who you are?"

"What's the census to me?" the other said defiantly. "I calc'late a country that doesn't give a fellow a livin' doesn't care much about his name."

"But you're getting a living, just the same," answered Hamilton, "and you're an American, anyhow, aren't you?"

"New York State," the tramp replied.

"And you?" asked Hamilton, turning to the orator of the party.

"I'm an Oxford man," answered the 'Windy Duke,' "classical tripos—if you know what that means."

"I do," answered Hamilton, "but why—" and he stopped.

"You were going to ask me why I prefer to wander afield rather than be 'cribbed and confined' within narrow walls. I am but one of many, an educated man without any knowledge of how to use his learning. Do you care for Greek? There are some clever scenes from Aristophanes that I can give you, or if you have a taste for satire I yield second place to none in my interpretation of Juvenal. On the pre-Cadmean alphabets I am—in my humble way—quite an authority. But these magnificent talents," he added

with a self-depreciatory smile, “do not enable me to run a business as successfully as a Greek fruit peddler or a Russian Jew vender of old clothes.”

“You could teach,” suggested Hamilton.

“Only my friends,” replied the scholar. “To teach requires pedagogy and numerous devices for improving the youthful mind. I do not greatly admire the youthful mind and it bores me. I am informed that I also bore it. Hence I prefer rather to wander than to teach. I do not claim originality in this role; there have been ‘scholar gypsies’ before this. The phrase sounds better than ‘educated hobo,’ but the meaning is the same.”

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"And you?" queried Hamilton of the third speaker.

"Plain American," the other said simply, "born and raised in Ohio. Not a Yankee, not a Westerner, not a Southerner,—nothin', jest plain Middle-West American."

"Well," suggested Hamilton, "I think you chaps ought to let me put you down in the schedule here. We need white men in this country badly enough in all conscience, and we might as well make the strongest showing we can. Two Americans and an Englishman will help the average just that much. Part of the 'white man's burden,'" he added with a laugh.

"If you put it that way," said 'Hatchet Ben,' "I calc'late after all I'm elected for one. Anything I can do to put down, even on paper, these foreigners that live on nothin' and drive a decent man out of a job, I'll do. I'm down on this jabberin' mob from the south o' Europe bein' dumped down here by the hundred thousand every year, an' you can take that straight from me."

"It's a little curious," said Hamilton, noting down the facts as they came up in conversation, not wanting to work directly upon the schedule for fear of rebuffs, "that two of you should be Americans and one an Englishman. Somehow, one always thinks of an American as making good, not tramping it."

"Nearly all hoboos are Americans," 'Hatchet Ben' explained, "there's a few English, and a few Swedes. Lots of races in this country you never meet on the road."

"Trampdom," said 'Windy,' "is a most exclusive circle. For example, you never saw a Jew hobo, did you?"

"No," Hamilton said. "Never."

"And you're never likely to," 'Hatchet Ben' interjected, "there's no money in it, not unless it is organized and run on a percentage basis. There are a few French Canadians, but no real Frenchmen on the road, and the Dagoes never take to it."

"I wonder why?" Hamilton queried.

"I purpose writing a monograph upon the subject of the nationality of the Hobo Empire," the 'Windy Duke' broke in, "and therein I shall enlarge upon my theory that the life of a tramp requires more independence and more address than any profession I know. I find that usually those who adopt this unromantic gypsy career are the men who will not drop to the level of the horde below them and who consequently take to the life of the road in protest against the usage of an ill-arranged social state. That, for example, is the condition of my two friends here."

“Would you mind my asking what made you take to the road?” said Hamilton, turning to the first speaker.

“Not at all,” ‘Hatchet Ben’ replied. “It’s a very usual story. I’m a steel worker by trade, an’ when I was workin’ I was reckoned among the best in the plant.”

“What did you quit it for?” asked Hamilton.

“Slovaks,” the man answered. “Every year or two the Pittsburg operators would get together an’ pretty soon gangs of foreigners would start comin’ to the West. They seemed to know where to come, an’ started work the mornin’ after they got there, without even seein’ the boss.”

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"But that could hardly be, I should think," said Hamilton; "that would be importing contract labor and they would be stopped at Ellis Island."

"Not much fear of that," the steel worker answered "the operators keep men in Europe just trainin' the foreigners what to say. These men come over in the steerage with the immigrants, advance them, if necessary, the amount of money to enable them to land, buy their railroad tickets at this end, an' all the rest of it."

"Dangerous business if they got caught at it!"

"They're paid to take chances," the other replied. "Then, when these foreigners come, they know nothin' about the scale of wages in America only that the pay is so much larger than anythin' they can get in their own country, an' they live even here in so cheap a way that no matter what wages they receive they can put money aside every week. The boss doesn't see any use in payin' them at a high rate, when they work just as well for small, an' down goes the wages."

"But they get a poorer grade of labor that way," objected Hamilton, "I shouldn't think that would pay."

"They make up for it by increasin' the power of machinery, by givin' a man less and less to learn and more and more of some simple thing to do."

"In a way that ought to be good, too," the boy persisted, "for the more a machine does, the bigger wages the man who runs it gets."

"I'm not a machinist," the tramp replied, "an' even if I were I should be in competition with the Swedes all along the line. Bein' just a steel worker, I stood for one reduction in wages because they promised to give me a better job. But this supposed better job was just bossin' a gang of these foreigners, an' they got after me because I took every chance I got to talk 'union' to these men, showin' them how they could just as easily get more pay than they were bein' given. That didn't suit the company at all, so I was fired, an' they put me on the black list."

"And you couldn't get any more work there at all?"

"Not there, or at any place in the district. Or, for that matter, in any place in the United States unless I gave a false name. Steel workin' is my trade, an' I don't know any other; the men that run that trade in the United States refuse to let me work at it; very well, then, if the country won't let me earn my livin' by working for it, it'll have to give me a livin' without. But I'd go to work to-morrow, if I had the chance."

"Not me," began 'Jolly Joe,' as soon as the tall tramp had finished, "I'd sooner be a hobo th'n anythin' else I know. In the first place, I'm not like 'Hatchet Ben,' I don't like work an' I don't do any unless I have to, an' then besides, there's more exercise for my talents in

this business. If you think it isn't a trick to rustle grub for three hungry men, just you try it. An' while I've been on the road for nearly six years, I've never had a dog set on me yet."

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"How do you mean?" asked the boy.

"There's always grub on a farm if you know the right way to go about getting it," was the reply "and there's very few places I ever go away from without some bread or a hunk of ham or a pie. Lots of chickens get lost, too, an' you find them wanderin' about in the woods, belongin' to nobody, an' there's plenty of nests that hens lay astray that the farmers never could find. If you watch the bees closely, there's nearly always some swarm that's got away an' made a nest in a dead tree. The trouble is that most people are too busy to lie still all day an' watch, an' those that aren't busy don't know."

"But you don't rustle tea that way," said Hamilton, touching the tin pannikin with his knuckle.

"'Windy' looks after that."

"I am not without some small means," explained the 'Windy Duke,' "but my income would not permit my living in any sufficiently attractive city in a manner suitable to my desires. By adopting this vagrant life, however, I am able to relinquish a part of my very moderate annuity to my sister, and still retain sufficient to share up with my fellow-adventurers when times are hard or 'Jolly's' persuasive tongue is not quite up to the mark."

"But you didn't tell me," said Hamilton, turning to 'Jolly Joe,' "why you started going on the road. You said you didn't like work, but where had you tried it?"

"I'll make the story short," was the reply. "I'm a railroad section hand, an' was lookin' to be made a foreman on a section near New York. I had a pile of friends among the men just above me, and I believe I would have worked up pretty rapidly."

"You would be president of the road by now, 'Jolly,'" put in the 'Duke.'

"I'd be goin' up, anyhow," the other replied. "But one day an order came along from headquarters changin' the make-up of the gangs, an' next week I found myself the only American on an Italian gang, under an Italian foreman. All of us were shifted around the same way. The foreman knew a little English—not much—an' he tried to give me orders in mixed English an' Italian. I told him I wouldn't do anythin' I wasn't told to do in straight American, an' when he started in jabberin' and abusin' me with every bad name he'd heard since he landed, why, I gave him a hammerin'. So, just as 'Hatchet Ben' here was driven out by Slovaks, it was a gang of Italians that gave me my throw-down. I tell you America's all right for everybody but the American He doesn't stand a show."

"That sounds hard for the American working-man," the boy said, "but there must be a lot of them working somewhere, they're not all tramping it."

“The back-country farmer is an American nearly every time,” ‘Hatchet Ben’ replied, “the foreigners don’t get so far away from the cities and towns. I don’t know why.”

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"I think I know the reason of that," volunteered Hamilton. "I heard some census men talking about it, and one of them had spent a long time in Italy. He said that while it was true plenty of the peasants worked in the fields, they usually lived together in villages and went to the fields in the morning. Then the farms are very small,—our average-sized farm here would make five or six of them,—and so the village idea can't be made to work in this country, and the Italians won't stand for being separated from the nearest neighbor by a mile or two."

"I can quite understand that," the Englishman said thoughtfully; "it would be far less pleasant living in this care-free fashion of ours if one were doing it alone."

"It may be rather pleasant," Hamilton admitted slipping back into his pocket the necessary details for the schedule which he had secured from the three men while breakfast was being prepared, "but I think a day or two of it would be enough for me, and I certainly wouldn't like your end of it, 'Jolly'!"

"Well," the other replied, as Hamilton strolled over to his mare and lightly swung himself in the saddle, "if I hadn't done some rustlin' yesterday you would have gone without breakfast this mornin' or at least, without this kind of breakfast."

"And mighty good it was," the boy replied, "I don't know when I've enjoyed a meal so much. I'm ever so much obliged, boys. Good-by."

The incident gave Hamilton plenty to think about on the rest of the ride to town, and he found himself genuinely sorry not to have a chance to see more of the three. He could not help admitting to himself that under proper conditions they would be just as fine citizens of the country as any one could be, and the phrase "Nearly all hoboos are Americans" kept running in his head.

He reached the supervisor's office just as a young fellow, but little older than Hamilton himself was stepping out. He noticed Hamilton's portfolio and said, a little mischievously, the boy thought:

"How many, if I may ask?"

"Twenty-two hundred and six," answered Hamilton, rightly supposing the question to refer to the number of people he had enumerated.

The other threw up his hands.

"I pass," he said, "you beat me by nearly a hundred," and he laughed and went on, while Hamilton continued on his way to the supervisor's office. The boy exchanged greetings with his friend, who said:

"I heard you talking with that young chap who just left, when you were coming into the office. Do you know him at all?"

"Not in the least," replied Hamilton, and he quoted the brief conversation.

"There's quite a story about that case," the supervisor said, settling himself back in his chair, "and though I'm as busy as an angry hornet I'll stop just long enough to tell you. When I was picking the enumerators for the Gullyville district—that's away at the other end of the section from where you were—I found an unusual number of applicants. At the examination, however, there were two who stood head and shoulders above the rest. One was the principal of a village school, and another was the chap you saw. His name is Wurtzi, and he gave his occupation as a student and his age as nineteen."

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"I didn't think he looked even as old as that," commented Hamilton.

"Yes, he's nineteen. As I was saying, the choice seemed to lie between these two. Wurtzi's paper was a few points better than the other, indeed I think it was one of the best tests turned in to me from any center. On the other hand, the schoolmaster was a graduate of one of the large colleges, had lived most of his life here and in the mountain districts of the State, was prominent in church affairs, and knew everybody. That was why, when I sent the papers to Washington, I recommended him for appointment instead of the boy, of whom I knew nothing except that his examination paper was slightly the better of the two."

"Yet the boy got the job!"

"He did," the supervisor answered. "The government rejected my recommendation, and I got a letter from the Director stating that Wurtzi should be appointed on his showing rather than the other unless I knew something against him."

"I suppose that was fairer," Hamilton said thoughtfully, "but I thought that matters of that kind were left to the discretion of the supervisor."

"Generally they were, but still there were reversals in a good many cases," was the reply. "But from everything that I've heard, suggestions from Washington seem to have had the knack of being just about exactly the right thing. They certainly were in this case. I sent the lad his commission at once, of course."

"What did the master have to say?" asked Hamilton.

"I'm coming to that," the supervisor replied. "Two or three days later he came into my office."

"I understand Wurtzi has secured the enumerator's job?" he said.

"Yes," I answered, "it was a pretty close thing between you so I sent the papers to Washington to decide, and the Director ruled that the other was more satisfactory." The schoolmaster laughed and sat down.

"I don't know whether I ought to be angry or pleased," he said; "it all depends on how you look at it whether it can be considered as a compliment or an affront."

"I just stared at him."

"I don't follow you in the least," I said. He laughed.

"Of course you didn't know that Wurtzi was one of the boys in my school," he replied, "and more than that, he is the poorest boy in the school. He lives about three miles out

of the village, and the only way in which he could secure his father's permission to allow him to come to school was that he should turn over to him the trifling sum we pay for janitor work."

"Pretty good stuff in the boy to want to learn under those conditions," commented Hamilton.

"He wanted to educate himself, and his mother was very ambitious. She is Polish, evidently of the better class—and, as you know, the Poles are one of the most intellectual races of the world—and the boy gets his brains from her. The school-master told me that two years ago the boy could neither read nor write his own name, and yet, within that time he had learned to rival his teacher in a fair contest! And during those two years he had been walking barefoot three miles to school, getting there by daybreak, making the fire, sweeping the floor, cleaning the windows, and then settling down to prepare his morning lessons before the opening of school.

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"I told Sinclair," the supervisor continued, "that I thought he ought to be ten times prouder of the success of his pupil than of the merits of an examination paper, because it took a higher degree of ability to teach well than merely to answer a set of test questions, and the boy must have been wonderfully well taught to achieve so much. He agreed with me, of course, but I could see that it irked him a little just the same. He volunteered, however, to assist his pupil as much as he could."

"That was very decent of him, I think," Hamilton said, "lots of men would have borne a grudge. But did you say his name was Sinclair?"

"Yes," the supervisor answered, "Gregory Sinclair. Why?"

"And you said he had been in the mountains?"

"Quite a good deal."

"Then that must be Bill Wilsh's teacher," exclaimed Hamilton, and he told the supervisor the story of the "cunjier," the whittled schoolhouse and the "trying" scholar. "I've got the carving still," he concluded, "and as you probably will see Mr. Sinclair again soon, I wonder if you would give it to him for me. Don't forget to tell him that the door was made to appear open, to show him that he was expected back."

"Of course, I shall be glad to give it to him," the supervisor answered, "and from what I know of Sinclair, I feel sure he will go back, though probably only in the holidays and for a visit. Where is this carving?"

"At the hotel, sir," the boy answered, "I'll bring it over this afternoon. I'm sorry not to have had the chance of seeing him myself, he must be a fine chap."

"He is," the supervisor agreed, "and he showed the stuff he was made of in connection with this poor lad in his school. I happen to know that he really put in a lot of time helping Wurtzi in order that he might make good."

"You said the boy was Polish?"

"Polish, of the stock that's making another country out of the deserted districts of New England. Land that has been abandoned by the Americans the Poles are making productive. That's where the real wealth of the future is coming in—from the people who will work the ground without exhausting it as reckless landowners formerly have done all through this country. Many a farm has had its soil so robbed of nourishment that its fertility will take years and years to return. These European peasants, however, are so used to making much of a small plot that they are redeeming the ground. You know, I'm one of those that believe in all the immigration possible, and I've never forgotten one of Broughton Brandenburg's sayings about it."

"What was that?" asked the boy.

"That 'it is always the most ignorant immigrant that makes the best citizen.'"

"I certainly don't see that," Hamilton replied.

"He absorbs Americanism more quickly," the other explained. "For example, there's no class hatred idea to be fought down, no anarchistic tendencies, no desire to turn liberty into license. The ignorant immigrant comes to work, he gets a job immediately, he finds that there is good pay and steady employment for a man who does work. There's not one in ten thousand of that kind that does not prosper from the day he lands. But you'll hear all sorts of ideas and suggestions in Washington. When do you go?"

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"I'm leaving to-night, sir," the boy answered. "I thought it might please the Bureau if I were there a day ahead of time."

"They'll be willing enough," the supervisor answered "I imagine every added helper is of value now, with all these schedules piling in. I'll drop a note to the Director to-night, telling him of your work; your schedules are in good shape, and I think you've done very well to cover your district in the time. I wish you all sorts of luck, and write to me once in a while from Washington so that I can hear what you're doing and how you're getting along."

Hamilton thanked the supervisor heartily, and after a word or two of farewell returned to the house of a friend where he was to dine before starting on the night train for Washington. Immediately on reaching there he went directly to the Census Bureau, sent in his card, and the Director's secretary, a keen young fellow, came out to see him.

"I think I've heard Mr. Burns speak about you, Mr. Noble," he said, looking at the card he held in his hand. "The Director is very busy right now, but he said when you came you were to go down to Mr. Cullern; I'd take you there myself but I'm needed here."

"Well, there's really no necessity, Mr. Russet," the boy replied, "tell me where it is and I'll find my way."

But the other beckoned to an attendant.

"Show this gentleman to Mr. Cullern," he said. Then, turning with a smile to the boy, he said, "You'll be all right, I guess."

Hamilton thanked him, and the secretary hurried back through the swinging half length door to the inner office. Following the messenger, Hamilton found himself on the main floor with hundreds of machines clicking on every side of him. The chief of the floor looked at the card, turned it over, read what had been penciled on the back, and said promptly:

"I think I'll start you on one of the punching machines."

"Very well, sir," the boy answered, "I want to learn everything I can."

"I have a vacant machine," the other continued, "one of the men is away on sick leave. If you want to begin right away you can start this afternoon. Here," he said, picking up a pamphlet from a pile which lay on a table near by, "is a list of instructions."

"I'm quite ready to start now," Hamilton declared.

"Your machine is over here, then," his new superior said, leading the way to a far corner of the room. "You had better try to find out as much as you can from the instructions,

and one of the foremen will be 'round to tell you more about the working of it a little later."

"All right, sir," the boy replied, sitting down at the machine, "I think I can get on to it without much trouble."

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The keyboard was entirely strange to Hamilton. It looked not unlike that of a big typewriter, or resembled even more closely a linotype keyboard, only it was divided off into sections each one of which was brightly colored, giving the arrangement of the keys quite a gay effect. The instructions were very clear, and with the machine in front of him the boy quickly saw its principles. He was so deeply sunk in the book that he did not notice the coming of the sub-section foreman, who looked down at the boy for a moment or two with an amused smile. Presently he coughed, and Hamilton looked up suddenly to see him standing there.

"I beg your pardon," asked the boy, "were you speaking?"

"No," said the newcomer, "but I was going to before long. You seem to be just eating up that book."

"Mr. Cullern said he thought you would be here before very long," said Hamilton, rightly guessing that this must be the foreman, "and I thought the more I knew about it before you came, the better it would be all 'round."

"Do you know anything about census work?" was the next question.

"Yes, sir," the boy answered, "I was an assistant special agent on the manufactures division, and I only left my population district the day before yesterday."

"I thought it likely that you had been doing enumeration work," the foreman answered, "coming in to-day, just when that end of the work closes, but I didn't know, of course, you had been doing manufactures. I wonder why they sent you to this department; I should have supposed that you would be editing schedules."

"I hope to go on the Census Bureau force permanently," the boy explained, "and I was anxious to have a chance to learn all the various parts of the work by doing them myself. Judging from this book, it doesn't seem hard."

"Let me hear what you know about it."

Hamilton closed the book.

"I think I have it fairly straight," he said. "These first four columns on the card I have nothing to do with, so far as I can make out; is that right?"

"Yes," the older man replied, "that is looked after in another way. The district and State and all that sort of thing go in that section, and that is arranged by what we call a gang-punch."

"I don't know how that works," the boy said, "this list of instructions to the punching clerk doesn't say anything about it."

“It doesn’t need to,” his informant answered, “for the simple reason that the punching clerk has nothing to do with it. But I’ll tell you if you want to know. There are about seventy thousand enumeration districts in the United States, and all we have to do is to set the gang-punch to the number of the district.”

“But there are not seventy thousand divisions on the card or anything like it,” the boy cried, “all told there are only forty-eight places in those four columns.”

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"That works by the permutation of numbers," was the reply. "You can arrange two numbers in only two ways, but you can arrange three figures in six ways, four in twenty-four ways, five in one hundred and twenty ways, six in seven hundred and twenty, seven in over five thousand ways; ten would give you over three and a half million ways of changing them around—and you can see for yourself where forty-eight would land you. The actual address, street, and house number, and everything else we get by reference to the schedule."

"That's enough!" cried Hamilton. "I can see now. It would take a sheet of paper a city block long merely to write down the figures."

"If you wrote down end to end all the possible relations that forty-eight figures could be put into you'd need a lifetime to write them down. Why, just with an alphabet of twenty-four letters, Leibnitz the great mathematician, calculated that over six hundred septillions of easily pronounceable words, none over three syllables long, could be arranged. We have room enough to arrange any trifling little matter like seventy or eighty million addresses, although, in truth, the gang-punch merely provides the district and section of district, and the schedule would give the rest if we had any need to refer to it."

"I see," said Hamilton, "and I suppose a number is put on the card which corresponds with every district number on the schedule. Then I come in on all the rest of the card."

"Yes, every other hole is punched by the clerk."

"But this machine doesn't seem to punch," the boy objected; "I put in a canceled card just now and tried it, but when I put the key down, nothing happened, the key just stayed down."

"It's not supposed to punch until the whole card is ready," the other explained. "You depress into position the various keys you want until all the records needed for this one card are ready. Then you can glance over your keyboard, comparing what might be called your map of depressed keys with the line of the schedule you are copying. If one is wrong, you can release that one and put down the correct one in its place, the card being as yet untouched. You see, each field or division of the card corresponds with a differently colored section of the keyboard, and this makes it easy to insure accuracy in reading from the schedule."

"But how is the punching done, then?" queried Hamilton.

"You press the bar," the foreman explained, "and that throws in the motor attached to the punching mechanism, which brings the entire die and card up against the end of the punches which have been depressed by the operator, including, of course, the gang-punch, and these perforate the card. It is then immediately withdrawn, and drops

automatically into either the 'male' or the 'female' compartments of the machine, the location of the hole tilting the slide that determines on which side the punched card shall fall."

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“So that really the sorting into sexes is done by the one and the same operation as the punching of the card,” the boy remarked; “I see now. That’s a first-class idea.”

“It saves a great deal of work,” the older man said. “Then, too, with the same group of motions a new card has been fed from the holder and is in place for punching. At the same time, the schedule, which is held in rigid alignment, has been turned just exactly the right amount to bring the next line in the direct vision of the operator. Thus he never has to stop and think whether he has done a line or not and never skips a line because of an error of eyesight.”

“I can understand that now,” the boy answered “Now let me see whether I really can do the rest of the card. In what you call the third column—though it is really the fifth—I punch either ‘Hd’ for the Head of the Family, ‘Wf’ for Wife, ‘S’ or ‘D’ for Son or Daughter, and ‘Ot’ for Other?”

“That’s right.”

“Then, further down the same line, ‘M’ is Male and ‘F’ is Female. That’s easy enough. In the next section down, but still in the same line is ‘W’ for White, ‘Mu’ for Mulatto, ‘B’ for Black, ‘Ch’ for Chinese, ‘Jp’ for Japanese, and ‘In’ for Indian.”

“Go ahead,” the foreman said, “you’re not likely to go wrong as yet.”

“The age seems clear, too,” said Hamilton, “you punch the five-year period nearest to the age and then add on. For instance, the way it looks to me is that if a fellow was sixteen, you would first punch the ‘15’ and then the ‘1’ in that little cornerwise bit at the bottom of the next section. But I don’t see what the ‘5’ is for.”

[Illustration: FACSIMILE OF PUNCHED CENSUS CARD. Example of record made for every person in the United States, this card being the actual record of the author.]

“That’s for babies in the sixth division of the first year, or from nine to eleven months old; the first division means under one month, and the rest either one, two, or three months apiece.”

“I see it all now,” exclaimed the boy, “you have to punch two holes for age for every person. For a boy of ten, you would have to punch the ‘0’ as well as the ‘10,’ I suppose, to make sure he isn’t older and the extra years forgotten.”

“That’s the reason exactly.”

“The meaning of the section next to the age is easy, too,” Hamilton continued. “‘S’ for Single, ‘M’ for Married, ‘Wd’ for Widowed, ‘D’ for Divorced, ‘Un’ for unknown, any one could guess. But this ‘Mother Tongue’ business has me going.”

“I thought it would,” was the reply. “But it’s not so hard if you remember a few things, particularly that the language of a country is not always spoken by the greatest number of its inhabitants. Now the mother tongue of Wales is Welsh, but a large proportion of the people do not speak Welsh. Thus an English-speaking Welshman’s card would be punched ‘OL,’ meaning Other Language, or the language next in importance to the mother language of the country.”

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"On that basis," said Hamilton, "if the second most important language of Denmark is German a card that was punched 'Den' for the country would have to be punched 'OL' if the person whose census was registered had spoken German as his native tongue, but 'LC' if he had spoken Danish, which is the native tongue of the country. But I should think there would be some cases that would not come under that rule."

"There are—a few," the foreman replied, "but the way in which those are to be punched will be noted on the schedule by the schedule editors."

"Some schedules need a good deal of editing, I suppose," exclaimed Hamilton thoughtfully.

"You may be sure of that," the other answered. "If you think for a moment how impossible it would be to have all the supervisors and enumerators work exactly in the same style, you can see how necessary it must be for some group of persons to go over them to make them all uniform. Besides which, there are a lot of obvious mistakes that the editors remedy before the card is punched ready for tabulation. But go on with your explanation, so that I can see if you really do understand it."

"The parent columns run the same way, of course," Hamilton continued, "'U.S.' meaning any one born in the United States, and 'Un.' cases in which the parentage is unknown. Then 'NP' means native-born parents, and 'FP' foreign-born parents. Further on, 'Na' means Naturalized, 'Al' stands for Alien, 'Pa' that first papers have been taken out, and 'Un' unknown. Down the column, 'En' seems to mean that the foreign-born can speak English, 'Ot' that he can only speak some tongue other than English. The year of immigration, of course, is obvious. But this occupation, I can't make head or tail of!"

"That you have to learn," the instructor said. "There is a printed list here for reference that contains the principal kinds of employment in the United States and classifies them. In a very little while you will find that you can remember the numbers which signify the more common of these and you will need to refer to the list but seldom. All occupation returns not contained in the printed list will be classified and punched later by a special force of clerks. Holes punched for those out of work and the number of weeks unemployed are all easy. At the top of the last column, too, 'Emp' means Employer, 'W' Wage Earner, while 'OA' means working on his or her own account, and 'Un' is for Unemployed."

"All right, sir," Hamilton replied, "I think I can do it now. I should find it harder, though, if I hadn't been writing all those things just exactly as they are here on population schedules for the last month."

"It makes an astonishing difference," the experienced man agreed, "you know the why and wherefore of everything. Now you had better take this old test schedule and I will give you fifty blank cards, and we will see how they come out."

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Through the rest of the afternoon, Hamilton worked steadily over this set of cards, not only doing the work, but getting the principles of the whole thing thoroughly in his mind, and, as he had said to the sub-section chief, knowing just the manner in which the schedules had been made up helped him to an extraordinary degree. He was well pleased, therefore, when he came down to work the following morning, to find at his machine a real schedule, not the test that he had been working on the afternoon before; the exact number of cards required for his schedule all ready in the hopper of the machine, and it was pointed out to him that error was not permissible and that he must account for every card.

“Why is that?” asked Hamilton, “what difference would a card or two make?”

“It isn’t the cards, it’s the numbering,” the other explained. “Don’t you remember that each card was numbered, and so, if one card is wrong it would throw all the succeeding numbers out? Besides, you never have a chance to see whether a card is right or not, because after you have touched the lever and the card is punched it slides into its own compartment. You have all the chance you want to look over your arrangement of depressed keys before the card is punched, but none after.”

Before a week had passed by, Hamilton was so thoroughly at home with the machine that the work seemed to him to become more or less mechanical, and his interest in it began to wane. As—under government regulations—he left work early, he sauntered over several times to the verification department to become familiar with the work of the machine used there. There was a fascination to the boy in this machine, for it seemed almost to possess human intelligence in its results, and he was curious to know the principle on which it worked. Generally every one quit at half-past four o’clock, just as he did, but sometimes a man would work a few minutes longer to finish a batch of cards, and the boy would go to watch him.

When he was over there one day, after hours, Hamilton saw Mr. Cullern on the floor.

“Still looking for information?” questioned the older man, with a smile.

“Yes, sir,” answered the boy, “I’ve been watching this machine and I’ve spoken to one or two of the operators about the principle of it, but they none of them seem to know. They knew how to run it, and that was about all.”

“The principle is simple enough,” the chief replied, “but it would be a bit hard to understand the combination unless you had the clew. Then it is all as clear as day, although the machine itself is a little complicated. You noticed, of course, that the operator lays a card on this plate which is full of holes, and you probably noticed that these holes correspond with the points on the card, and that the way in which the card is fed into the machine insures that the holes shall coincide exactly.”

“That I saw,” Hamilton answered, “and I could see, of course, that this was one of the most important parts of the machine, and that upon it a good deal of the exactness of the work depended.”

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[Illustration: TABULATING MACHINE. Mechanism whereby the punched cards are verified and every error prevented, and which also tabulates and numbers all records taken. (*Courtesy of the Bureau of the Census.*)]

"It does," the other replied. "Now if you look into those holes in the plate you can see a little cup of bright metal under each hole. What do you suppose that is?"

"I'm not sure, of course," the boy responded, "but it looks very much like quicksilver."

"That's exactly what it is, quicksilver, or mercury. Now mercury, you ought to know, can transmit an electric current, so that if an electrically charged pin comes down into the cup of mercury, the cup itself being attached to an electric current, a circuit is formed."

"Now I'm beginning to see," the boy said, "but what is the idea of the cup of mercury; could not the pin just as well touch on a metal plate?"

"It could, of course, but a piece of dust between would prevent contact, the pins would wear away quickly, and the plate would get worn, whereas, by the pin just dropping into the mercury there is no friction and no fear of a missed contact."

"The pins are in that square box at the end of the long arm which comes down every time a card is put on the plate, aren't they, Mr. Cullern?" asked Hamilton.

"Yes, and if there is no card there and the pins in the square box are started down, they are automatically stopped before they reach the mercury so as not to make a contact on every point. Also if a card were there without any holes punched, none of the pins would reach the mercury and no contact would be made."

"But with a punched census card," interrupted the boy, eager to show that he understood, "the pins go through the holes in the cards and do not go through where no holes are punched, so that somehow the number of holes in the card is registered. But still, there's so much difference in the cards that I don't see how this machine can verify them, can tell which are right and which wrong!"

"There is variety enough," answered the chief, "for of the hundred million cards punched, no two are exactly the same, they could not be."

"Couldn't it happen perhaps that two people of the same age should do the same work, be both married and so forth?" asked the boy interestedly.

"They would have to live in the same district, they would have to be employed the same way, they would have both to be married and have the same number of children and a whole lot more things, and even then—the cards would be different for they would represent different numbers on the schedule on which their names were registered. No, there are not two cards in the entire series punched alike."

“Then I don’t see how in the wide world this machine can tell which cards are right among millions so entirely different from each other.”

“They don’t verify by finding the cards that are right,” was the answer, “but by picking out the cards that are wrong.”

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"What's the difference?"

"There is a wide difference. You can see that it would be easy enough to arrange that machine so that if a wrong combination of contacts were made the bell would not ring. Such wiring might be highly complex, but you see the idea is simple. For a right group of contacts, all the wires are satisfied, as it were, and the bell rings; for an error, one wire, cut in on by a wrong wire, breaks the contact, and the bell does not ring."

"But what do you mean by a wrong grouping?" asked the boy.

"You ought to be able to guess that," the chief said reproachfully. "For instance if a card is punched 'Wf' for Wife and also is punched 'Male' that card is sure to be wrong, and if 'Emp' for employer is punched on the same card as an age punch showing the person to be a three-year-old youngster, the card is wrong. There are twenty-three different possibilities of error which are checked by this verification machine, and for any one of these twenty-three reasons a card is thrown out."

"For example if 'Na' for naturalized is punched on the same card as 'N' for native-born, and things of that sort, I suppose?" the boy questioned.

"And many others of similar character," the older man agreed.

"But how about insufficiently punched cards?" queried Hamilton. "I can see that it would be easy to arrange the wires so as to catch really bad inconsistencies, but supposing a figure were only left out, there would be no contact made to show the error."

"Except in the age column," was the reply, "there is supposed to be a punch in every field and only one. Any field which does not have a contact from every card registers its disapproval by throwing out that card."

"And what happens to the rejected cards?" asked Hamilton, with interest.

"A checker-up compares them with the original schedules, and if incorrectly punched, punches a new card, if only insufficiently punched, punches the missing place. But the number of cards found wrong does not reach a high percentage."

"You know I've been thinking," Hamilton said thoughtfully, "that while I suppose it is all right getting all those holes punched in a card, and so forth, I should think it would be fearfully hard to handle the card afterwards. All these little holes look so much alike."

"To the eye, perhaps," the chief said, "but you must remember that these cards are never sorted by eyesight. And you must remember that the sorting process is done by machinery all the way along, just as the verifying and the tabulating is handled in a purely mechanical fashion. You remember that each card was punched with a gang-punch?"

“Of course,” the boy said, “that was to specify the district.”

“We keep all those together from the time they are punched till after we are through with the verifying, so that all the cards of a certain enumeration district, and of every section in that district, are kept together in a separate box.”

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"My word," Hamilton exclaimed, "what a storage you must have!"

"You ought to go down and see it some time," the other said. "It's big enough, with every State and every county and every district in the country having its own place, and every little village in that district right where it belongs in a box of its own, under that State, county, and district. I'm telling you this just to show you that we don't have to sort the cards for location at all, and that in itself saves us a lot of labor and time."

"And they were sorted into sexes on the punching machine, I remember," Hamilton remarked.

"Yes, and that prevents another handling of every card, you see," the chief went on, "so that without any further special division, every card is divided by village, district, county, and State, as well as sex, when it leaves the punching machine. From there it comes to the tabulating machine—which is just the same as the verification, only instead of the electrical connections being made through relays only, they are sometimes made direct to counters."

"Just how, Mr. Cullern?" the boy asked.

"Well," the other continued, "when the pin, passing through the hole in the card, drops into the little cup of mercury it closes a current passing through an electro-magnet controlling a counter or a dial corresponding with each possible item of information on the card, and for each contact made to each dial, an added unit is registered. The tabulating process is completed by an automatic recording and printing system, somewhat along the stock ticker plan, connected with each dial. When desired, touching an electric button will cause every dial to print automatically the number recorded on a ribbon of paper."

"That is before sorting?"

"Or after. Cards may be tabulated along a lot of different lines. And the sorting device depends again upon another machine, operated by the same principle."

The chief led the boy to another portion of the floor.

"This sorter," he said, "can be set for thirteen different compartments. In determining the country of birth, for example, at any given point on the card, an electrically charged brush finds the hole punched and directs the card in between two of those finely divided wire levels, where a traveling carrier picks it up and runs it along to the point where the wires stop, the top wire extending to the furthest compartment. As the card falls, it is tilted into place against the pile of preceding cards, an automatic receiver holding them together, the operator clearing away the pile from each division as it becomes full. As you can see, that feed knife moves so rapidly and the endless band fingers carry the

cards out of the way in such a hurry that they move along in a steady stream. We have only twenty of these machines and they handle all the cards.”

“It’s hard to believe,” said Hamilton wonderingly, “that these machines don’t think.”

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"We're just building one in here," the supervisor replied, leading the way into a little partitioned-off section of the room, "that has an uncanny ingenuity. This machine feeds itself with cards, verifies and tabulates at an incredible speed. It took some time to perfect all the adjustments, but it is running finely now, and it will simplify the work of the next census amazingly, just as the machines you saw have made the old hand punching machines of former times seem very cumbersome. But this one," he added, "is a gem."

[Illustration: PIN-BOX AND MERCURY CUPS. Details of mechanism which almost magically detects mistakes in any census card. (*Courtesy of the Bureau of the Census.*)]

"It's a little like magic, it seems to me," said Hamilton, "to think of every person in this whole country being registered on a card with a lot of little holes in it, and practically the whole history on it. It certainly is queer."

"There is something mysterious in it," the chief answered with a laugh. "One feels as though all the secrets of the United States were boxed up and in the storage vaults of the building. But the magician is the Director. He is the man whose spells have woven this web of organization, whose skill and knowledge have unlocked commercial secrets, and whose perception has always seen the essential fact."

"It's great work to have a share in," the boy declared enthusiastically.

"To make us all feel that," his superior replied "is the chiefest spell of the Director of the Census."

CHAPTER VIII

THE CENSUS HEROES OF THE FROZEN NORTH

"This is surely one blazing day," said Hamilton one day early in June, as after the noon hour, he settled back at his work on the punching machine.

"We'll cool you off all right," responded the foreman, who was coming up at the moment and heard the boy's remark, "for I understand they're looking for editors on the Alaskan schedules. A big batch of them has just arrived and I happen to know that your name has been recommended. Mr. Cullern asked me to send you to him just as soon as you came in."

"I should like that above all things," Hamilton replied, "partly because I've always been interested in Alaska, and also because this work has got a little monotonous. I hadn't thought of the Alaskan census," he continued, "and that's strange too; I should think census-taking up in that country must have been full of excitement and adventure."

“Probably it was,” responded his friend, “but you won’t find any thrilling yarns on the schedules; they’ll be just like any other schedules, I should imagine, only that the occupations will be of a different variety. But you had better go along and see the chief.”

Hamilton went gladly, thinking that no matter how formal the schedules might be that dealt with Alaska they could not help but show to some extent the character of the conditions in which they had been secured and the difficulties attaching to work in that isolated land.

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"How would you like to try your hand at the editing of the Alaska schedules, Noble?" asked the chief of the division when the boy appeared before him a few moments later.

"Very much indeed, Mr. Cullern," Hamilton replied.

"I understand that you have shown a great deal of interest in your work while you have been here," the chief said, "and when I was asked yesterday if I had any one to recommend I thought of you at once. Having had experience in the manufactures end, as well as in the population, ought to help you a good deal in the work. You were a special agent in the manufactures, were you not?"

"Yes, sir," the boy answered, "but I don't think any of the places to which I went resembled in any way the conditions in Alaska."

"Probably not," the chief said dryly, "New England isn't usually considered in that light. But the underlying principles are the same, of course, all the way through. Well, if you want to try it, here is your chance."

"Very well, sir," Hamilton answered promptly. "I shall be glad to take it up."

The boy waited a moment, but as there seemed nothing more to be said, he walked back to his machine, to straighten up before leaving.

"As soon as you're through with that schedule," the foreman in charge of the sub-section told him, "let me know, and then you can go to Mr. Barnes, who is in charge of the Alaskan schedules."

"I've nearly finished," answered the boy, "I'll be done in a quarter of an hour anyway."

Accordingly, a little later, Hamilton found his way to another part of the building, where he met his new superior, a small, alert, nervous, quick-spoken man, who, as Hamilton afterwards found out, had the capacity of working at lightning speed, and then stopping and wanting to talk at intervals. He said very little when Hamilton first came to him, merely handing him a number of schedules to edit.

Hamilton watched him furtively several times and noted the amazing rapidity of his work. Secretly he knew he could not attain that speed, but he thought he had better make as good a showing as he could, and so he, too, buckled to the job for all he was worth. When the boy had done two or three schedules, each containing fifty names, Mr. Barnes reached out for those that had been edited and went through them closely. He made one or two corrections.

"That's not half bad, Noble," he said suddenly, "but I can see from one or two little things you let go by that you are not entirely familiar with that country. I'll tell you more about it later, but in the meantime you had better look over some of the reports the supervisors

have sent in; they give you an insight into what those enumerators out there had to go through in order to secure anything like complete schedules. Here in one from the Fourth District, for example, there is a graphic description of the work which I think you ought to enjoy. It's good writing, too."

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"My enumeration work was in Kentucky," said Hamilton, "so I haven't much line on the conditions in the North. But I've always enjoyed books and stories about Alaska, and I'd like to read the report."

"It will give you the atmosphere," said Barnes, "listen to this paragraph, for example: 'The work was performed during the severest winter known in this part of Alaska by the oldest settlers there. There did not appear to be a man who did not have a pride in his work, an anxiety to create a record for traveling time, a desire to enumerate all the people in the district assigned to him, and to have to his credit less loss of time because of weather than any of the other agents.'"

"I guess," said Hamilton, "that supervisor had those enumerators just breaking their necks to beat out the other agents, and he worked on their pride to get up their speed."

"That the service lost none of its men from freezing to death, and that every man returned safely, is a matter for congratulation and of good fortune, from the fact that there were in this part of Alaska more deaths from the weather this winter than all preceding years in total; cases in which those who met such deaths did not begin to go through the sacrifice and privation that these agents of the service did."

"Makes you proud to have been an enumerator, doesn't it?" asked the boy. "But it always seems difficult to realize hardship unless you have been there."

"I spent a winter in Alaska," said Barnes emphatically, "and I can feel the thrill of it in every line. He knows what he's writing of, too, this man. Hear how he describes it: 'All the men in the service,'" he continued, "'covered hundreds of miles over the ice and snow, in weather ranging from 30 to 70 degrees below zero, the average temperature probably being about 40 below. Because of the absolute lack of beaten trails—I wonder," he broke off, "if any one who hasn't been there can grasp what it means!"

Hamilton waited.

"No beaten trail," Barnes said reminiscently, "means where stunted willows emphasize by their starved and shivering appearance the nearness of the timber; where the snow-drifts, each with its little feather of drifting snow sheering from its crest, are heaped high; where the snow underfoot is unbroken; where under snow-filled skies a wind studded with needle-sharp ice crystals blows a perfect gale; where the lonely and frozen desolation is peopled only by the haunting shape of fear that next morning a wan and feeble sun may find you staggering still blindly on, hopelessly lost, or fallen beside a drift where the winter's snows must melt before your fate is known."

He stopped abruptly and went on with his schedule. Hamilton worked on in silence. Presently, as though there had been no pause, Barnes resumed his quotation from the supervisor's report:

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“Because of the absolute lack of beaten trails, and the fact that the snow lies so loosely on the ground like so much salt, no matter what its depth may be, it was necessary through all their work to snow-shoe ahead of the dog-teams. When one considers their isolation,—often traveling for days without other shelter than a tent and fur robes—it can be understood what sacrifices some of these men made to visit far-away prospectors’ cabins and claims. However, no man who travels in this part of the country ever considers that there is any hardship, unless there is loss of life, and they take their work stoically and good-naturedly, though they drop in their tracks at the end of the day.”

He tossed over the report to Hamilton.

“Look it over,” he said. “I tell you there’s some stirring stuff in that, and just the bald reports of the enumerators’ trips leave the stories of explorers in the shade.”

The boy took up the report as he was bidden, and read it with avidity. Presently, upon a boyish exclamation, the other spoke:

“What’s that one you’ve struck?”

“It’s the enumerator from the district of Chandler,” answered Hamilton.

“Go ahead and read it aloud,” Barnes said, “I can go on with these schedules just as well while you do.”

“At no time after he left Fairbanks,” read the boy, “did the thermometer get above 30 degrees below zero. His long journey away from a base of supplies made it impossible for him to carry a sufficient supply of grub, and he was obliged to live off the country, killing moose, mountain sheep, and other fresh meat. He froze portions of his face several times, and on one occasion dropped into six feet of open water, nearly losing his life in consequence.”

“That would be fearful,” said Barnes, “unless he could pitch camp right there, put up a tent, build a fire, and change into dry clothing.”

“There seems to have been mighty little wood for that up there,” Hamilton remarked, “because, speaking of this same enumerator, the supervisor says, further on, ‘In crossing the Arctic Range and in returning he traveled above timber line eighteen hours in both directions, which, in a country where fire is a necessity, can be understood is a very considerable sacrifice. He traveled in many places where a white man had never been before, and as there are no beaten trails or government roads in the district anywhere, he was obliged, everywhere, to snow-shoe ahead of his team to beat down a trail.’”

“Did you ever snow-shoe?” asked Barnes abruptly.

“Once,” answered Hamilton, “when I went to Canada to visit some cousins; they had a snow-shoe tramp and insisted on my coming along. But I was stiff for a week.”

“Well,” said the editor, “when you try to break trail and have to keep ahead of a dog-team coming along at a fair clip, it’s just about the hardest kind of work there is.”

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"They all seem to have had their own troubles," said Hamilton, who had been glancing down the pages of the report: "here's the next chap, who got caught in a blizzard while accompanying the mail carrier, and if it hadn't been for the fact that the people of the nearest settlement knew that the mail carrier was expected on that day and sent out a rescue party to search for him, neither of the two men would ever have been found, and the census would have lost a man."

"That was up in the Tanana region, wasn't it?" queried Barnes, but without looking up from his work.

"Yes," answered the boy, "and from all accounts that must be a wild part of the country. Speaking of that same enumerator, the supervisor says: 'That this agent survived the work during the stormy period and came back alive was the wonder of the older inhabitants of the country. No less than four times this man was found by other travelers in an exhausted condition, not far from complete collapse, and assisted to a stopping place. He lost three dogs, and suffered terribly himself from frost-bite. In the same district, during the same time, eight persons were frozen to death, six men and two women.' There's quite a story here, too, telling how he himself rescued a couple of trappers in the last stages of hunger, exposure, and exhaustion."

"It's fearful to think of," the other commented; "just imagine those agonizing journeys in the teeth of an Arctic wind, traveling over hundreds of miles of trackless wilderness to get less than one-tenth as many people as a city enumerator would find in one block!"

"But why do it in winter?" asked Hamilton. "It's hot up there in summer, I've heard, and driving in the warm weather is pleasant enough; there's no hardship in that!"

"You can't drive where there are no roads, and you can't ride where there are no horses. Then the time available is short."

"Why is it so short?"

"You haven't a railroad going to every point in Alaska," Barnes pointed out, "there's usually a trip of several hundred miles before you get to the place from which to start. And when are you going to make that journey?"

"In the spring," Hamilton said, "as soon as it gets mild."

"I reckon you don't know much about Alaska," the older man remarked. "When the snow thaws, the creeks overflow, and the rivers become raging torrents. You can't ride, and if you walk, how are you going to cross a swollen river, filled with pieces of ice the size of this room? Those Alaska rivers are huge bodies of water, many of them, and there are no bridges."

"How about boats?"

“You mean traveling on those ice-filled rivers? It couldn’t be done.”

“But as soon as the ice goes out?”

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"That's pretty well into June, to start with, and then you would have to pole up against the current all the way, and the currents of most of the rivers are very swift. Did you ever pole a boat up against a swift mountain river?—I thought not. Suppose, by very hard work, you could make two or three miles an hour up stream,—at that rate how long would it take you to go up to the highest settlement? And then you would have to go all the way down again and ascend the next stream; and even then more than half the settlements would be on streams and creeks you could not get to with boats because of falls, of rapids, of long portages, and things of that kind."

"I guess they couldn't use a boat," said Hamilton, "but still I don't see why they couldn't ride!"

"Ride what? Dogs? Or reindeer? I suppose you mean to take a horse up there?"

"That's what I was thinking of," Hamilton admitted.

"How would you get him up there? Take him in a dog-sled the preceding winter? You know a horse couldn't travel on the snow like a dog-team. And if you did get him up to the starting point during the winter, on what would you feed him? Dried salmon? That's all there is, and while it makes good enough dog-feed, a horse isn't built that way. There's no hay-cutting section up there, and your horse would starve to death before you had a chance to ride him. And even supposing that you could keep him alive,—I don't believe you could ride him over the tundra swamps; there is no horse made that could keep his footing on those marshy tussocks."

"I see you're right," said Hamilton, "I hadn't thought of all that."

The older man continued: "There are horses in the towns of southern Alaska, because, you know, there is one narrow strip that runs a long way south, and there the weather is not severe. But the north is another matter entirely. The pay that you would have to offer in order to lure the men away from the gold-diggings would be enormous. No, it had to be a winter job, and in the Geography section—where I was last year—it took us all our time to estimate satisfactory enumeration districts for Alaska."

[Illustration: OVER THE TRACKLESS SNOW WITH DOG-TEAM. Census agents in Alaska starting on perilous journeys in the most severe winter ever known in sub-Arctic regions. (*Courtesy of the Bureau of the Census.*)]

"The Geography section?" queried Hamilton in surprise. "I hadn't heard of that. What is that part of the census work for?"

"To map out the enumeration districts," his superior explained. "That is a most important part of the work. You remember that the enumeration district was supposed to provide exactly a month's work for each man?"

“Yes,” Hamilton answered, “I know I had to hustle in order to get mine done in the month.”

“Supposing,” said the other, “that all the people that were on your schedule had lived in villages close together, would it have taken you as long to do?”

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"Of course not," Hamilton replied, "I could have done it in half the time. What delayed things was riding from farm to farm, and they were scattered all over the countryside."

"Exactly," Barnes continued, "but I suppose you never stopped to think that the number of people in each district and the nature of the ground to be covered both had to be considered. Then allowance had to be made for the enumeration of those not readily accessible, and for such natural obstacles as unbridged rivers; all these had to be mapped out and gone over by the Census Bureau before the sections were assigned."

"No," the boy replied, "I never really stopped to think who it was that made up all those districts. And, now you come to speak of it, I don't see how it could have been done without being on the ground."

"Yet it is evident," the other said, "that it must have been done. It wouldn't be fair to tell a man to finish a district that represented seven or eight weeks' work, nor to promise a month's work to a man and then give him a district that had only two or three weeks' employment. You couldn't alter the districts afterwards, either, as everything had to be prepared in Washington for enumeration and tabulation by the original districts as mapped out."

"You mean," said Hamilton, "that every square mile of territory in the United States, the number of people on it, the kind of land it was, the roads and trails, the distance from the nearest town, the rivers, and the location of bridges across them, and all that sort of thing had to be worked out in advance?"

"Every acre," was the reply, "and the worst of it was that there was very little to go by. The lists for the last Decennial Census were only of use in the Eastern districts, for in the West large towns had grown up that were mere villages then. Whole sections of territory which were uninhabited ten years ago are thick with farms today and the 'Great American Desert' of a few years ago is becoming, under irrigation, the 'Great American Garden.'"

"The Survey maps helped, I should think," said Hamilton. "I have a friend, Roger Doughty, on the Geological Survey, and he told me all about the making of the Topographic maps."

"They helped, of course, but even with those it was hard to work out some of the queerly shaped districts. The supervisors helped us greatly after the larger districts had been planned, but the Geography division had to keep in touch with every detail until the entire country was divided into proportionately equal sections.

"And you had to do that for Alaska, as well!"

“As far as we could. Of course it was difficult to determine routes of travel there, and to a large extent that had to be left to the supervisors, but they merely revised our original districting. It took a lot of figuring in Alaska because of the tremendous travel difficulties there and the thousands of miles of territory still unsurveyed.”

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"I had never realized the need of all that preparatory work," the boy admitted.

"There's a great deal of the work that has to be done in the years before the census and in the years after," he was informed, "and the Bureau is kept just as busy as it can be, all the while. The Decennial Census, although it is the biggest part of the census work, is only one of its many branches, and then there are always other matters being looked after, like the Quinquennial Census of Manufactures, and such numberings as those of the Religious Bodies and the Marriage and Divorce Statistics of a few years ago."

"I understood the Bureau had regular work all the year round?" Hamilton said.

"Indeed it has. All the births and deaths that are registered are tabulated here, and a number of tables of vital statistics are worked out which are of immense value to doctors not only in the United States but all over the world. Then, as I think you know, we have for years made a special study of cotton crop conditions, and there is a bulletin published at stated intervals showing the state of the cotton industry in the United States. Then there is all the statistical work on cities of over 30,000 inhabitants, and there is scarcely a question which has reference to the population or the manufacturing interests of the country that is not referred sooner or later to the Bureau of the Census."

"You work with the Forest Service, too, I believe," said Hamilton. "Wilbur Loyle, a forest ranger whom I knew very well, showed me some figures that the Bureau had prepared."

"Only in the collection and publication of statistics of forest products," said Barnes, rising and changing his office coat,—for the conversation had run on long after office hours,—“owing to their co-operation the task is not cumbersome; questions of information or special statistics asked for by Congress or by the executive departments take up a great deal of time when added to an already extensive routine work."

Editing the schedules of the population of Alaska, just as Hamilton had expected, proved to be of the most intense interest, since, despite the closest desire on the part of the enumerators to confine themselves strictly to official facts, the wildness of the frontier life would creep in. An example of this was the listing of an Eskimo girl on the schedule as having "Sun" and "Sea" for her parents with an explanatory note to the effect that she had been found as a tiny girl upon a heap of sea moss on the beach. Another was when an enumerator wrote on his schedule under 'language spoken,' "Some pesky lingo; I know most of their talk, but this was too much for me and the hut was too strong to stay in long."

Such comments made it easy to create a picture of the semi-savagery of the fur-clad fishers on the shores of the Arctic Sea.

Another schedule, one which interested the boy greatly, was that in which the age of an Indian was described as “200 snows.” To try to get this worked out to the probably true age of 80 or 90 years evidently had been quite a task. The enumerator wrote:

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"This Indian ain't 200 years old. He says he's 200 snows, but I can't quite figure it out. He says he was 20 snows when he got first woman, kept her 4 snows, then she go away! He complained that 'he had no women 4 suns and catch no women 4 snows.' He 'got more woman, keep her 5 snows, then she eat cold (frozen to death). Got no woman 20 snows, she good woman.' He could not give any clue about his children only that 'his chickens 30 to 45 snows!' They reckon here only from what they can remember, so this buck is probably counting from about ten years old. That would make him thirty when he first got a wife, thirty-four when she died, thirty-eight when he got his next wife, and forty-three when she died. Counting his oldest child at 45 this would make him about seventy-five. Where the '200 snows' comes in, I don't see."

[Illustration: THE CENSUS IN THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. Enumerator on a schooner skirting the icy shores of the glacier-fed waters of the Behring Sea. (*Courtesy of the Bureau of the Census.*)]

A great treat to the boy came, however, when one of the enumerators from the Second District of Alaska, who had been summoned East in the spring on business concerning some property with which he was associated, and had come as soon as the break-up permitted travel, dropped into the Census Bureau. He made himself known to the Director, and the latter, always ready to show attention and being really proud of the Census Bureau staff, arranged to have him shown around the building. The Alaskan was a small fellow, hard as nails, given to stretches of silence, but with a ready, infectious laugh and the ability to tell a good yarn after he got started. Presently, just before quitting time, he reached the desk where Barnes and Hamilton were editing schedules.

"This ought to interest you," said the Bureau official who was showing him around, "these men are just going over the Alaskan schedules before sending them to the machines to be punched and tabulated."

Looking interested, the man bent forward and, with a muttered word of apology, picked up the schedule on which Hamilton was working at the time. "This must be one o' mine!" he said, with an air of surprise.

"But that is marked, 'Copy'!" said Hamilton "I was just wondering where the original was."

"I'm willin' to gamble quite a stack, son," was the surprising reply, "that you'd have been wonderin' a whole lot more if the original had come down to you."

"Why, how's that?"



“Well, I reckon I c’n handle dogs better’n I can a pen,” he said, “an’ when you come to try an’ write one o’ these schedules on scraps o’ dried skin you c’n count it sure’s shootin’ there’s some decipherin’ got to be done.”

Barnes looked at the official who was showing the Alaskan ’round the building, and knowing him very well, he said to the visitor, “Spin us the yarn; I’ve been up there and I’d like to hear it myself, and I know the lad is just wild to hear it.”

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"I want to be a part of that audience, too," said the official, with a smile.

"I don't want to hold up the job!" the visitor suggested hesitatingly.

"Go ahead," his conductor answered. "Here we are all waiting, and it's nearly half-past four anyway."

"Well, then, it was up in the Noatak Pass—" he was beginning, when Hamilton stopped him.

"I don't want to interrupt, right at the start," he said, "but where is that pass?"

"I should have told you," said the miner goodhumoredly, "it's the pass between the Endicott an' the Baird ranges, at the extreme northern end of the Rockies. I hated to go through it, an' I wouldn't have, most times, not unless there was a mighty big pull to get me over there, but I had promised to count every one in my district, an' so, of course, there was nothin' else to do but go, even though I knew there was no one on the other side but a bunch of Eskimos. Well, we were halfway up the pass when the Indian guide stopped the dogs an' listened. It was just about noon an' the travelin' was good, so that, wantin' to make time, I got good an' mad at the stop. Knowin' my Indian, I kep' quiet just the same, always bein' willin' to bet on an Indian bein' right on the trail. First off, I could notice nothin', then, when I threw back my parka hood I could hear a boomin' in the air as though some one was beatin' a gong, miles and miles away. It was so steady a sound that after you had once heard it for a while you wouldn't notice it, an' you would have to listen again real hard to see if it was still goin' on."

"Like distant thunder?" queried Hamilton.

"Not a bit. It was high, like a gong, an' it wasn't any too good to hear. The dogs knew it, too, for though we had been stopped nearly five minutes none of them had started to fight."

"Do dogs fight every time they stop?"

"Just about. They try to, anyway. In the traces, of course, they can't do much but snap an' snarl, but that they're always doin'. This time, however, all save one or two of them stood upright sniffin' uneasily.

"Wind?" I asked the Indian.

"Heap wind!" he answered. 'Go back?'

"Now you may lay ten to one that when an Indian is the first to suggest goin' back, trouble with a big 'T' is right handy. I reckon that was the first time I ever did hear an Indian propose goin' back. 'Why go back, Billy?' I asked.

“‘Heap wind,’ he repeated, ‘old trail easy.’ He pointed ahead, ‘No trail!’”

“He meant, I suppose,” Hamilton interjected, “that if you doubled on your tracks the trail would have been broken before, and it would be easy going.”

“That’s the bull’s-eye, and if a storm did come up we’d have a trail to follow and not get lost.”

“Did you go back?”

“I did not. I figured that while we were about a day’s journey to a settlement either way, we were perhaps an hour nearer where we were goin’ than where we had come from, an’ that perhaps the storm would hold off long enough for us to make it. Those storms last for days, sometimes, an’ we’d have the trip to make anyway, even if we did go back. Besides, I didn’t want to lose the time. ‘No, Billy,’ I called to the Siwash, ‘go on!’

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"I was sorry the minute I said it, because I knew the Siwash thought me wrong, although, bein' an Indian, of course he never showed a sign. He started up the dogs without a word. I knew he thought it reckless and dangerous, but tortures wouldn't have made him say so. In half an hour's time, I began to be sure he was right."

"Did the storm strike as soon as that?" asked the boy.

"No. If it had, I think I should have gone back. But at the end of that half-hour, we topped a rise that gave a view of the country ahead an' showed it to be broken an' bad travelin'. I shouldn't have liked the look of it at any time, but with a storm brewin' an' the Indian wantin' to go back, it sure did look ugly. But the faint roarin' of the distant storm sounded no louder, the sky was no heavier, the air no colder, the wind no higher,—an' I built my hopes upon a delay in its comin', an' plunged on. We were makin' good time; the dogs were keepin' up a fast lick, an' the Indian ahead, workin' to break the trail, was movin' like a streak. I sure never did see an Indian travel the speed he did. I was behind, pushin' the sled, an' I had to put out all there was in me. An hour went by, an' I was just beginnin' to think that we would be able to cover the greater part of the distance, when a huge white shape rose from the snow near by, passed in front of the sledge, and disappeared. I've been scared once in my life. This was that once."

"What was it?" asked Hamilton breathlessly.

"I watched," the Alaskan continued, "an' presently about a hundred yards away, an' a little to the right of the sled, the snow began to move. I couldn't feel a breath of wind. But the snow seemed to writhe an' stir as though some monster from the Arctic night was wakin' from his winter sleep, an' a wisp of snow hurled upwards; then, with a heave the snow crust broke an' fell apart an' a column of snow shot up like a geyser swirlin' into a pillar a hundred feet high.

"A moment it stood; then swayed over an' begun to move slowly at first, but gatherin' speed every second, noiselessly, save for a sound like the indrawin' of a breath and a faint crackin' as the hard snow crust shivered into atoms where it struck. Aimlessly, yet seemin' to have a hidden purpose as though wreathin' the figures of some Boreal dance, it come near us and fell back; moved away an' threatened again; then swept upon us till its icy breathin' gripped our throats, an' our hearts stood still.

"An' in the silence, one dog whined.

"Behind the sled there stirred the snow anew, an' in a moment or two another column threw itself at the sky, and behind us an' around, other of these columns rose an' moved like spectral dancers under the slate-green clouds of the snow-filled sky. No wind, no sound but the lone leader of the team howlin' in utter fear."

"A dancing blizzard!" said Barnes, in an awed tone, under his breath.

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"If there had been anythin' to do, it would have been easier," the Alaskan continued, "but to move was not more dangerous than to stay still. In answer to a sign, the Indian started up the dogs again, an' we went on, though the road ahead looked like the ice-forest of a disordered dream. Presently, without a moment's warnin' one of the huge snow pillars came rushin' straight at us, an' I braced myself by the sledge to hold to it if I could, but it swerved before it reached us an' ran along beside the trail. About fifty feet ahead it swerved again and cut across the trail, an' the extreme edge caught the Indian, picked him up in the air, an' threw him at least thirty feet."

"Was he hurt?" cried Hamilton.

"Not a bit, for there was nothin' to fall on but snow. He picked himself up, looked carefully at his snow-shoes to see that they had not been damaged, an' resumed his place at the head of the dogs. What would have become of him if he had been plucked into the middle of the whirlwind is hard to say. I wouldn't have counted on seein' him again anyway."

"But you never really got caught by any?"

"Wouldn't be here talkin', if I had," was the reply. "But when we come to the track of that whirlwind column, it was a puzzle how to get across. The column, goin' like a railroad train, had cut a gully in the hard snow full ten feet deep,—the sides as clean cut as though done with a knife, or rather with a scoop, because the edge was slightly scalloped all the way along."

"How did you get across?"

"Axes," was the brief reply. "We cut through the snow crust and beat down a steep path on both sides of the gully an' made the dogs take it. Dog harness is strong, but I was afraid of the strain on it that time."

"How long did the blizzard last?"

"You mean the whirlwinds?"

"Yes, sir," the boy answered.

"Not very long,—quarter of an hour, perhaps. Then I felt a slight breeze, an' at the same moment the columns, bendin' their heads like grass before the wind, swept to the right of us, an' were out of sight in a moment. The Indian yelled and pointed to the left, throwin' himself on the ground as he did so."

"What was it?" cried Hamilton.

“It looked like a solid wall of snow, an’ before I realized it was comin’, the storm struck, hurled me to the ground, an’ rolled me over an’ over in the snow. I wasn’t hurt, of course, but it took me so long to get my breath that I thought it was never goin’ to come, an’ that I should suffocate. But after that first burst, the blizzard settled down to the regular variety, an’ we all felt more at home. But even at that, it was the worst one I ever saw in the North, an’ I’ve been there nine winters.”

“What did you do? Go back?”

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"No use tryin' to go back," the traveler said, "because those whirlwinds had cut gullies across the snow in every direction so that our old trail was no use to us. We went ahead a bit, as far as we could, but soon realized that there was nothin' to do but camp right where we were an' wait for the blizzard to blow over. Usually two days is enough for the average storm to let up a little, but it was not until the third day that there was any chance of startin', an' even then it was almost as bad as could be for travel. But I had to make a start then."

"Why?" asked Hamilton, who always wanted to know the details of everything.

"Because we were runnin' short of dog-feed, an' you can't let your dogs die of hunger, for then you can't get anywhere. But the blizzard had drifted everything an' was still driftin', so that the snow was hard in some places and soft in others; the travelin' was almost impossible, an' you couldn't see twenty yards ahead. Then while the blizzard had filled the gullies made by the whirlwinds, the snow in them was not packed down as hard as the rest of the surface, an' dogs an' sled an' Indian an' myself would all go flounderin' into the drift, an' it would be a tough pull to get the sled out again.—That was a hard trip.

"The worst of it came when, without a bit of warnin', without our even knowin' where we were, the hard crust of the snow gave way beneath us, an' the sled, the dogs, and myself fell headlong down a slope an' into a stream of runnin' water, the sled upside down, of course."

"How about the Indian?" asked the boy.

"He saved himself from goin' into the water, an' it was a good thing that he did, for he was able to help in pullin' us out. But, from one point of view, the accident was a help, for it told the Indian just where we were. There was only one stream of that size in that neighborhood, an' until we found it, we were hopelessly lost. But from that time we knew that the settlement we were headin' for was straight up the stream, an' all we had to do was to follow it. But it was a race for life, in order to get to camp before frozen clothin' and various frostbites crippled me entirely."

"But how about the dogs?" queried Hamilton. "I should think it would be worse for them than for you."

The Alaskan shook his head.

"A 'husky' can stand just about anythin' in the way of cold," he said, "an' my leaders 'Tussle' and 'Bully' were a couple of wonders. Only one of the dogs gave out. Well, we made the camp finally, pretty well done up all round. The worst of it was, that when we come to unpack the sled—we did it with an ax because everythin' was frozen solid—the census pouch was missin'. Luckily there was no past work in it,—only blank schedules,

information papers, an' things of that sort. So I made up the schedules on odd bits of paper and skins, as I told you, an' the supervisor copied them on the schedule to send in, an' that schedule you have in your hand is the copy of those very pieces of skin."

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[Illustration: CAN WE MAKE CAMP? A last rush for shelter as the blizzard strikes, wiping out all landmarks.]

Hamilton glanced at the paper with redoubled interest.

"I suppose it was no use trying to get the pouch back," he said.

"I didn't think it would be," the Alaskan replied "but I tried to reach the place where the sled had been overturned, an' each time the weather drove me back. On the third day I got a chance to go with some Eskimos with reindeer to a little settlement about twenty miles off, an' so I went along and got the names there, comin' back on a reindeer sled. That's the only time I ever felt like Santa Claus. I'm sure I don't look it."

[Illustration: TO ESKIMO SETTLEMENTS BY REINDEER. Census enumerator using half-wild animals when dog-team was too exhausted to go farther. (*Courtesy of the Bureau of the Census.*)]

Hamilton looked at his spare figure and laughed.

"No," he said, "I don't think an artist would be likely to pick you for the part. How did you like the reindeer, though? I've always wondered that they didn't use them more in Alaska. The government keeps a herd, doesn't it?"

"Yes," was the reply, "but that is more for fresh meat than for travel. A good reindeer is a cracker-jack of an animal when he wants to be, but when he takes a streak to quit, it doesn't matter where it is or what you do to him, he won't go another step. A balky mule is an angel of meekness beside a reindeer. You can always make a mule see what you want him to do—although the odds are that he won't do it even then—but when a reindeer gets stubborn,—why, he just can't be made to understand anythin'!"

"Yet I've read that they use them a good deal in Lapland!" said the boy in surprise.

"They have domesticated them more thoroughly, I guess," the Northerner replied. "In time they may be worked up here in the same way, and when you consider how short a time the government has had to do what is already accomplished, it seems to me the result is wonderful. Of course, so far as traffic is concerned there are dogs enough, and they do the work in mighty good shape."

"How did you work back from the settlement which you had got to with such difficulty?" the boy asked.

"I came back another way, in order to take in a little group of houses on a small pay-creek," was the reply. "But it was comin' back from that trip, on the Koatak River, that I had quite a time, although I was not the sufferer. We had been havin' a hard spell of weather, but there come a week when conditions on the trail were much better an' we



were reelin' off the miles in great shape. I hadn't a place on my map for about sixty miles, when in the distance I saw a little hut, just in the fringe of some stunted cottonwoods and some scraggy willows, for we were not far from the timber limit.

“Billy,’ I called to the Indian, ‘ever see that hut before?’

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"The Indian shook his head, but knowin' that I wanted to see an' count everybody in the district, he turned off the trail—he said it was a trail but I couldn't see it—an' led the way to the hut. I went in an' found a man lying on a couple of planks, just about dead. He was one of the survivors of the wrecked steamer *Filarleon*, and had frozen all the fingers of both hands. Two or three were turnin' gangrenous; an' one of these had got so bad that with his other crippled hand, he had sawed off the decomposin' member with his pocket-knife. One foot also was frozen an' had turned black, but that afterwards recovered."

"What did you do for him?" asked the boy.

"Put him on the sled, of course," the Alaskan answered, "an' took him to the nearest settlement. I afterwards heard that a doctor happened in to camp soon after I left, an' got at his hurts right away, an' that he was put back into fair condition all but the one finger.—That's no tenderfoot's country up there."

"I wonder you stuck it out," said Hamilton. "But then," he added a moment later, "I can see how a fellow would hate to quit."

"It was tough," reluctantly admitted the narrator, "an' I'll tell you what I did. I'm not much of a hand with the pen, but right in the middle of the work I found a man who was goin' down the river, an' I sat down and wrote a long letter to the supervisor. It was about as plaintive a thing as I ever read. I had no reason to expect an answer, but by chance another party was comin' up that way, an' some weeks later I received a reply. What do you suppose he said!"

"I haven't the least idea," answered the boy.

"His answer read just this way:

"I chose you because you were experienced in the treeless coast. Go to it. We are expecting you to make good."

"And," Hamilton said, his eyes shining, "I'll bet you did!"

CHAPTER IX

CONFRONTED WITH THE BLACK HAND

The sidelights that Hamilton had received on the Alaskan enumeration had given him a greater zest for census work than ever, and he devoted not a little of his spare time to the study of conditions in the far North. Indeed, the lad became so enthusiastic about it that every evening, when he reached home, he worked out the route of the enumerator whose schedules he had edited during that day's work. He had secured the big

geological reconnaissance map of Alaska for the purpose. Consequently, it was with a sense of regret that he faced the day when the last of the Alaskan schedules had been edited.

“What next, I wonder, Mr. Barnes?” said Hamilton, laying down his pen and glancing round to his companion. “How about Porto Rico? They had a census this spring, too, didn’t they?”

“I imagine the Porto Rico work is about done,” his friend replied, “at least I know that most of it came in some weeks ago. How are you on Spanish?”

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"I can read it all right," Hamilton answered, "although I don't write particularly well. But are the schedules all in Spanish?"

"Yes, indeed," said the other.

"I don't think simple Spanish would bother me at all," Hamilton replied. "I knew a chap who was going to the Philippines and he wanted some one to take up Spanish with him so that he wouldn't be alone in it; and to keep him company, I hammered at it too. But, after a bit, he joined a class, so I dropped out, although I did study once in a while so as not to forget it altogether."

"Why don't you suggest that you know Spanish," remarked Barnes, "and perhaps you'll get the chance."

Accordingly, when a little later, the final copy on the Alaskan schedules was turned in, Hamilton asked concerning the Porto Rican work, and ventured his slight familiarity with Spanish.

"We have several translators," replied the chief, "but still, I suppose Mr. Alavero can make you useful. I'll let you know later on."

In a few moments he returned and beckoned to the boy, who followed him, with a word of farewell and thanks to the editor of the Alaskan schedules with whom he had enjoyed working greatly.

"Mr. Alavero," the official said, introducing Hamilton, "this is Noble. I don't know what his Spanish is like, but I think he may be of some use to you in getting out the manufactures statistics, as he did some work along that line early in the year and has been with the census ever since."

The editor smiled affably at the boy and shook hands with heartiness.

"The schedule work is all done," he said, "but it will take some time preparing the report. It is going to be fuller than most of them because there is so much American capital invested in Porto Rico that a detailed analysis will be of value."

"It is real editorial work, then!" Hamilton said, with a note of pleasure in his voice.

"I think," said the chief dryly, "that Mr. Alavero will do the editorial work, as you call it, since he is the editor; you are to assist him in preparing tables and matters of that kind."

But no sooner had the Bureau official gone than the Porto Rican came forward.

"If you like," he said, "we'll try to arrange some part of the work that you can do all yourself, writing and everything else, so that it will be 'real' editorial work, and you'll be able to see your own writing in print."

Hamilton thanked him fervently, and from that day on would have done anything for his new superior.

"This is a considerable change, Mr. Alavero," said Hamilton the following morning, when he found himself at a table littered with maps and drawings of the island, with papers in Spanish and English, with reports and circulars containing pictures of the sub-tropical landscapes and towns of Porto Rico. "I have been doing nothing but Alaska for a month past."

"Too cold!" the Porto Rican cried, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I was in Washington this last winter and I thought I should die of freezing."

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"You are from Porto Rico yourself, Mr. Alavero?"

"I was never away from the island at all," was the reply, "never even on a steamboat until I came to the United States last autumn; I came to show the people in your Congress that the coffee growers of Porto Rico need help."

"Why?"

"Porto Rican coffee is the finest in the world," the editor answered with a graphic gesture, "and when Porto Rico was Spanish we could sell in Europe at high prices, but now the European tariff against the United States includes us, and our coffee is taxed so that we cannot sell it. And the American market is satisfied with Brazilian coffee, which is of a cheaper grade."

"Is coffee the principal crop down there?" queried the boy. "I notice that nearly half these papers and books deal with coffee plantations."

"It is still, but not as it once was," the Porto Rican answered. "Sugar and tobacco are the other big crops."

"Coffee is easy to grow, isn't it?" asked the boy. "It doesn't want all the attention that cotton does?"

"After a grove is well-established, no, though we prune a great deal; but sugar, yes. That's not such an obstacle though. There is plenty of labor on the island."

"Isn't the bulk of the island colored?"

"No, no, no," answered the Porto Rican, shaking his finger in emphatic denial, "more than three-fifths are pure white, a much smaller proportion of negroes than in some of your Southern States. The negroes were slaves, but Spain freed them in 1873. There was no war." He smiled. "We are a most peaceful people."

[Illustration: GATHERING COCOANUTS. Where the census-taker in Porto Rico had to wait for his figures until the head of the house climbed down. (*Courtesy of the Department of War.*)]

"Not like our other accession from Spain," Hamilton commented. "I mean the Philippines; you certainly couldn't call the Filipinos peaceful, it seems to me that they come just about as wild as they make them."

"Wild? You do not know the half!" said the excitable little editor, who, despite the frequency of his gestures and the volubility of his explanations was busily working with diagrams the while. "You know there was a census in Porto Rico in 1899?"

"I didn't until this morning," the boy answered "but as I see that most of these tables are compared with that year it is evident that there must have been."

"There was a census," the editor went on, after a pause during which he had been working over a column of figures, "and my uncle was a supervisor. Mr. Gatten—you know him?"

"Only by name," Hamilton replied.

"He was in the Porto Rico census, too. Then in 1903 he went to assist in the census of the Philippines. It was done by the War Department, because the fighting was hardly over. You think the census difficult? You should hear my uncle! The Dattos were not all stopped fighting, because just as soon as the Philippine Commission thought it safe, the census began."

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"Did any one get killed by hostile natives?" asked Hamilton, scenting a story.

"Several wounded, one badly, but no one killed. But"—and he wagged a finger warningly—"there were plenty of places where the census was only estimated! The blowpipe and the poison arrow are most dangerous. Even with the soldiers taking the census and going with other census men, it was very risky among the uncivilized tribes."

"They are really wild?" said Hamilton.

"I think the wildest people in the world, the most savage, are in those jungles. My uncle had to go to the haunts of the Pygmies."

"Pygmies!" exclaimed Hamilton in surprise. "I didn't know that the Stars and Stripes floated over Pygmy tribes! I thought they were only in Africa!"

"The Negritos are pygmies," answered the editor, "seldom over four feet ten inches for the man and the woman two or three inches shorter; they use their toes like fingers, they wear only a loin-cloth, their hair is fuzzy like a black bush, and they seldom use fire, even for cooking."

"How do they live?" asked Hamilton. "We have got used to thinking of the Red Indians as a part of the United States races, but the Pygmies seem outlandish. Have they huts or do they live in caves, or how?"

"Nothing!" was the answer. "A few have rough huts, but most of them wander in the forests."

"But where do they sleep?"

"On the ground."

"I should think they would be afraid of wild beasts," the boy remarked.

"There are very few in the Philippines," was the reply.

"How about snakes, then?" queried the lad.

"They have to take chances on snakes. But you know a snake will scarcely ever strike unless alarmed or attacked. No snake will bite a sleeping man. Wild animals only attack for food, and man is left alone as much as possible."

"Haven't they pythons there? And a python could easily strangle and swallow a man."

"He could, but he doesn't," the Porto Rican pointed out; "rabbits are more his size, or a young fawn. The Negritos are safe enough, as far as that goes."

“What do they live on?”

“Fish, mostly, together with roots and berries; and they can get all they want with bow and arrow, or with a stone. They can throw a stone as straight as you could shoot a bullet.”

“We ought to import some of them for baseball pitchers,” suggested Hamilton with a grin. “But it really must have been an awful job enumerating them. And when it comes to poisoned arrows!—No thank you, I’d rather stick to old Kentucky. Are there many of them?”

“No,” was the reply, “the Negrito is dying out, just as the aboriginal tribes all over the world are doing. There are only about twenty-three thousand of the Pygmies left now.”

“But there are more natives than that in the Philippines?” queried the boy.

“Hundreds of thousands. You see there are really three different types of savages in the Philippines, according to the census reports. The aboriginal tribes are the Negritos, perhaps as close to primitive man as any people on earth; those are the ones I have been telling you about, and they are a race all to themselves, as different from the rest of the Filipinos as the negro is from the white man. The true Filipinos are Malays.”

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"Even the head-hunters?"

"Certainly. There are Filipinos of two grades,—apparently of two periods of migration. The first came and settled the islands away a long time back, driving the Pygmies to the forests, and occupying the coasts themselves. These tribes, the Igorots, the Ilongots, the Bilans, and so forth, are of the same general type as the head-hunters of Borneo, and some,—like the Ilongots—to this day carry out the savage custom that 'no young man can be accepted in marriage until he has presented his bride with a human head.'"

"That is certainly savage," Hamilton agreed; "one never thinks that sort of thing can be going on still, and certainly not under the American flag!"

"It is, though," the Porto Rican replied. "The third group," he continued, "the Moros and so forth, are all Mohammedans, and they seem to have come to the islands after the semi-civilization of the Malay archipelago and its submission to Mohammedanism. The Moros are haughty and assume the air of conquerors. As the Igorots drove the Negritos to the forest and thence to the wild interior, so the Moros drove the Igorots. They are largely pure Malay, warlike and cruel, but shrewd and capable of culture. They assume an over-lordship over all other tribes and their Dattos can generally enforce it."

"It seems strange," the boy said, "to think of going among those savages and asking them the same questions that United States citizens were asked, writing the answers on the same kind of schedules, and counting these ferocious head-hunters on a tabulating machine."

"Of course," the editor reminded him, "the Philippine census last time was taken by the War Department, although the Bureau is even now considering what will be the best way to attack the problem should it have to take the next Philippine census, as it probably will. But while it was primitive, the work wasn't so very different. They were able to use advance schedules, for example."

The boy stared, and his informant laughed outright.

"They were a little different," he explained, "and it was during the enumeration of the Igorots and similar tribes. It was soon found that they could count up to ten but no further. A certain number of them could grasp the idea of ten groups of ten. So a bundle of sticks was sent to each village and each man was made to cut notches in these sticks up to ten to show how many children, or pigs, or chickens he had. In some of the villages so my uncle told me, the supervisor had a branding iron made with which he had branded on the tally sticks the figure of a pig, or a house, or a chicken or whatever it might be."

"That is about as far back, I should think, as any one could go, in the way of census-taking," the boy said. "I thought some of my up-country negro farmers were barbaric—"

especially when I came across some voodooism, but now I see I didn't know what barbarism meant."

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"There's just as much savagery—of a kind—right in the heart of civilization," said the Porto Rican. "The slums of a great city are little less dangerous than a Philippine jungle, and you will do well to remember it."

"Why should I remember it especially?" asked Hamilton in surprise.

"Mr. Burns, who has been made an Inspector, told me the other day that he expected to start soon for some of the larger cities, where reports of census frauds had been made, and that he thought he would take you along, if the Director was willing."

"You mean the Mr. Burns I was with in New Haven?"

"Yes, he seems to want to have you as his assistant in that work."

"That would be just splendid," said Hamilton, his eyes shining, "but how about the Porto Rican report, Mr. Alavero?"

"I think I can manage it," the other replied, endeavoring to suppress a smile, "and the chapter that you were working on is nearly done, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," the boy answered, "I can finish it in a couple of days."

"That will be in plenty of time," the editor assured him. "I don't think Mr. Burns intends to start until some time next week."

Before many days had passed Hamilton found the correctness of the Porto Rican's information, for as he was busily engaged in compiling a big tabulation on the proportion of breadwinners per age and sex for one of the provinces of the island, his friend the special agent of manufactures, under whom he had been at New Haven, strolled into the office.

"Why, Mr. Burns," the boy said delightedly, jumping up and shaking hands, "I haven't seen you for ever so long."

"I haven't been in Washington more than twenty-two per cent of the time," was the reply "and I'm going away on the eleven-fifty next Tuesday evening. Do you want to come along?"

"But—"

"The Director said, if you wanted to come, I could take you."

"Where are we going, Mr. Burns?"

"New York."

“What for?”

“Seems to me, Alavero,” said the Inspector, turning to the Porto Rican, “that you’ve been teaching this lad to ask questions. Out of the four remarks he has made since I came in, two have been questions. Fifty per cent is a high average. Well, I’ll tell you,” he added, turning to the boy, “it’s just this: there are always some cities that aren’t satisfied with the census. I believe of the cities of over thirty thousand inhabitants at this census there has been something like nine, decimal-eight-one per cent protests, and the most necessary of these the Bureau investigates. Perhaps ten or a dozen in the entire country get a recount. The Bureau doesn’t officially recognize some of them but sends an inspector to look over the ground, and see if everything was done right. That’s what we’re going to do in New York.”

“All right,” said Hamilton briefly.

“You’ll be on that train?”

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"Yes, Mr. Burns," the boy answered. "Eleven-fifty P.M., Tuesday."

The opportunity was one which Hamilton had been coveting, for he felt that if he only had a chance to get at the city methods he would have covered almost the entire ground of the field-work of the Decennial Census, and while he was sorry to leave his Porto Rican friend, still the novelty appealed to him greatly, and in spite of his former chief's mathematical conversation, Hamilton was genuinely fond of him.

"I've been wondering, Mr. Burns," the boy said, as they stood in the great concourse of the Union Station at Washington, "whether there would not be a very large number of protests about census figures,—people always seem to have such an exaggerated idea of the size of their own towns."

"There is to some extent," Burns replied. "I think something like a hundred places filed protests in this last census."

"Then I read something, too, about census frauds," Hamilton said, "soon after the taking of the census, in which it was suggested that some enumerators—who were paid per capita—had bolstered up the figures in order to get more out of it."

"There was a little of that," the Inspector said, "but by far the greatest amount of fraud was due to the desire on the part of the inhabitants of a town or city to make the place appear larger and more important. Tacoma, Washington, was the most flagrant example of this, why, they padded 32,527 names there, and even when the Census had made a recount they tried to repeat the same performance, complaining of the results and demanding a second recount."

"Was this granted?"

"It was," the Inspector replied, "largely in order that the Census Bureau itself might have an opportunity to check the correctness of its methods. The second recount was performed by expert statisticians and with extreme care."

"And how did it come out?" the boy asked.

"It substantiated the first recount in every way. It was, indeed, a wonderful object lesson in showing how small is the margin of error in the United States Census."

"But was there really much fraud among the enumerators and supervisors, Mr. Burns?"

"With perhaps one exception, no criticism could be made of the supervisors, but you can't have 70,000 enumerators, chosen for temporary work, and expect perfection! There was quite a little over-counting, caused by entering hotel transients as having permanent residences, by numbering citizens both at business and home addresses, and the constant difficulty of the floating population. Deliberate frauds were very few;

where trouble was found it was usually discovered to have been due to the unauthorized activity of committees of boards of trade or other commercial organizations, giving lists of names all ready to be copied on the enumerator's schedule, which the latter did not take the time and trouble to verify."

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"Then do you think the net result of the census is to make it seem that there are more people in the country than really are here?"

"No," the Inspector replied confidently, "the total figures are an understatement, probably of about one per cent, maybe a little less, but certainly not much more."

"I think that's mighty close," Hamilton said. "But do towns never wish to have small numbers announced?"

"There was only one case, so far as I know," the other replied, "in which a Business Men's Association wrote and demanded a recount on the ground that the figures were too big. The reason was a dispute about raising city salaries when a certain population mark was reached.

"And now, Noble," he continued, moving on toward the train platform, "we want to look into the question of statistics in New York carefully. Personally I believe the work has been as well done as possible, and I know the Director is satisfied, but one or two little matters have come up, which want looking into."

Being on a midnight train, Hamilton had no chance for further talk with the Inspector; but it was quite a home-coming when, after passing through the great tunnels under the Hudson River, he found himself next morning among the skyscrapers of New York again.

"I suppose every one feels the same way about his own town," Hamilton said, "but it always seems to me that you feel the bigness of things more in New York than anywhere. In Washington there always seems lots of time to do everything you want, but New York is just made up of hustle. You've got to know what you want in this city and you've got to do it in a hurry, before some one else gets there first."

"New York certainly is hurried and restless; I can't say I like the noise and the skyscrapers," replied Burns.

"But it's great the way those buildings tower up," the boy exclaimed enthusiastically, "the low houses and poky ways of older and smaller cities look as though they were made for dwarfs, after living in the New York streets."

"Yet there are taller buildings, in other places, even in Europe," the statistician remarked.

"Spires!" answered the boy, "propped up by buttresses and flying buttresses and all the rest of it so as to keep them from falling. Look at those," he added, pointing at the skyscrapers before him, "they're not afraid to stand by themselves; they mean something, they have a use, while a spire just sticks straight up, pointing at nothing and being of no service unless it is to hang bells in a belfry. I don't care what people say

about those crazy old tumble-down buildings of the Middle Ages, they may be beautiful and all that, but they're useless nowadays. The New York skyscraper is the greatest example of architecture in the world because it best does what it was built to do."

"You are enthusiastic, Noble," said his friend.

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"I'm a New Yorker all the way through," the lad continued, "and I want to feel that I'm right in the whirl of things, where there is so much to do that you can't crowd it into a day, where the fun is at the same speed as the work. No backwaters for me, I want to be right out in the center. I don't say that I'm going to win, but I want to be a game sport and try my strength with the rest of the crowd in the current, sink or swim. It's all right to say that the heart of the nation is Washington, and the backbone is the farm, but its nerve center is here,—right here in New York. America's the wonder of the world, all right, but all there is to it is capital plus brains, and New York is the furnace that melts them down into that quickness and grip on things we call the American spirit. Millions from every race of the world come here, and the Statue of Liberty is the first symbol, and the skyscrapers of lower New York the first reality they see of the Land of Promise."

"How about the inside of these great shells of structure?"

"No such office buildings in the world," the boy answered enthusiastically. "The salt winds from over three thousand miles of ocean blow around them; in their steel walls there are lots of windows; lightning speed elevators make the top floor easier to get at than the second story of a dark, old-fashioned staircase building; and I've heard that the marble mosaic entrances of the larger of them put the Italian palaces to shame. I don't know Europe, but I do know New York, and I believe, Mr. Burns, if you knew it as I do, you'd be as proud of it too."

The Inspector looked at the boy quietly.

"You're wrong," he said soberly, "in thinking that I don't know New York. To-morrow morning you do a little work in a section of the city in which you have probably never been, and I think we'll hear less tall talk. If you could count the tens of thousands of families who live in rooms with nothing but court windows; if you could find out in how many thousand families children are toiling under sweatshop conditions till far into the night; if you were to ask the tuberculosis district nurses what conditions they find, you might then do a little thinking on your own account. It's only right you should be proud of New York, but you'd better see both sides before you are sure of yourself. Now, I suppose you're going home?"

"Yes, sir," said Hamilton, a little taken aback by his friend's rebuke.

"Call at my hotel early to-morrow morning and I'll start you on a 'Seeing New York' trip of a new kind." And turning off sharply, the Inspector swung himself aboard a passing cross-town car.

Nine o'clock the next morning found Hamilton in one of the worst districts he had ever seen. Thronged as it was, the boy was sufficiently conscious of his difference from the people he met to feel uncomfortable. He had one of the schedules that had been filled out during the enumeration of the city, and the Inspector had bidden him verify certain

portions of it which were either confusing or slightly incorrect. This was to be done in a dozen or so districts, and if the information was found to be adequate, showing that the enumerators' work had been faithfully done, there would be no need for further inspection.

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The home manufacture of ostrich feathers first gave Hamilton a clear insight into poverty. Four or five rooms each occupied by a family of several persons he entered in one tenement, and in each he found three or four people working over ostrich plumes, working nervously at high speed, afraid to stop, even for a moment. He noted conditions carefully, and was amazed to find that each of the little strands was wired—he had always supposed that plumes grew upon the ostrich the way that they are sold.

In one such family dejection seemed to have reached its lowest ebb. The window looked out on a court,—a court that was never cleaned and where all manner of rubbish was thrown. Although it was morning and a brilliant, sunshiny day, the light within was so dim that it was hard to work by; yet with characteristic shiftlessness the window had not been washed for months and diminished still further the little light there was; a mattress in the opposite corner from a shaky cooking gas-burner showed that this room was the entire home.

[Illustration: TAKING THE CENSUS IN A CITY. Enumerator at a doorway, entering in his portfolio the details of a household.]

“Where is your husband?” asked the boy, noting on the schedule a man’s name as head of the family.

“In hospital—perhaps dead. See!”

The woman pointed to a telegram which had fallen to the floor. Hamilton picked it up. It read:

“John Sobieski worse. Come at once,” and was signed with the name of one of the large hospitals.

“Did you go?” asked the boy.

The woman shook her head.

“Two hours lost, if I go. No good. Two hours’ work means twenty-four cents. What’s the use?”

“What’s the matter with him?”

“Consumption. I die soon, next year, perhaps. All the children sick.”

The boy looked around at ‘all the children.’ There were five of them in that room, and all—even the youngest, a baby four years old—were knotting the feathers on the plume. The baby could hardly do it, but he was learning.

“Many hands make light work,” said Hamilton as cheerfully as he could. “With so many little workers you ought to get along finely.”

“Yes,” the woman answered listlessly, “we get along. Some days we make as much as a dollar!”

“Each of you?”

“Do we look so rich? One dollar for everybody. But that is only sometimes, when I am not too sick. We can get a little more than five dollar the week, by working all the time.”

The boy hastily asked the remaining questions on the schedule, found everything correctly reported and relieving his conscience by giving a little help out of his own pocket, he left for the next place.

On the floor below was a family working on fur, every one of them with hacking coughs caused by tiny particles of fur in the lungs.

“We work or we starve,” was again the unanswerable explanation.

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In the house next door, embroidering rich cloaks, Hamilton found a family of which several of the members had a bad infectious skin disease. Chancing to meet a health inspector soon afterwards he told him about this family and gave him their address.

"I can stop it, as far as this family is concerned," the health officer said, "and I suppose I ought to. But you know what it means, I suppose?"

"What?" asked the boy.

"It means, if I take their work away, they will starve to death in a couple of weeks."

"And if you don't?"

"If I don't, they'll go on spreading disease. Oh, I'll have to put a stop to it, of course, but tell me what is going to happen to the family."

"They ought to go to a hospital," Hamilton said.

The health officer shook his head.

"They are not hospital cases," he said. "None of them need more medical attention than they can get in a dispensary, and every hospital to which they applied would treat them in an Out-Patient department. They would have to take in more work, or die."

"But where would they get the work?"

"Any of these sweatshop jobbers will give it to them. It makes no difference to the middlemen where the work is done or out of what dens it comes, as long as it is done cheap."

"And is all clothing open to the same risk?" asked the boy.

The health inspector shook his head.

"Cheap clothing is not," he said, "because even the cheapest kind of labor is more expensive than machinery, and machine-made clothes are clean. But costly dresses which need hand embroidery are sent to sweatshops to be done. Not all, of course, but enough of them to keep thousands of women and children working day and night the year round. The more elaborate the gown, the longer is it likely to have been in a tenement that the future wearer would not even allow her dog to enter."

From house to house Hamilton went, finding misery at every step, with the single consolation that the schedule showed in almost every case that the son or the daughter who was working had moved out of the slums, or that the family had progressed sufficiently to find better quarters. Everywhere the children from these fearful homes

seemed to have been dowered with promise, and as Burns had suggested, the sole comfort and hope for the future lay in the fact that the New York slum is a one-generation slum.

It was growing toward noon when Hamilton finished the short list that the Inspector had given him in that poorest section, and he was glad when he was able to leave the pressure of the poverty behind him. His next district was a section of the Italian quarter, and Hamilton knew that while he would find poverty of a certain kind there, there was enough of the community spirit among the Italians to prevent such conditions as he had witnessed and enough frugality among them to enable them to make the best of all they had.

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Feeling that it was time for lunch, the boy hunted around a while for some restaurant that looked as though it would serve a meal that would not be too distasteful. After a little search he found a small place that seemed to be just the thing. The sign board was in Italian and the list of dishes pasted on the windows was in Italian, but Hamilton's Spanish enabled him to make out what the phrases meant, and he went in. At a table not far from the door, a man was sitting with his back to the entrance. He did not hear the lad's step until Hamilton was just behind him, then, with an Italian cry, he turned upon its face the paper on which he had been writing, and jumped to his feet so quickly that the chair on which he had been sitting overturned, and he stumbled as he stepped back a pace or two. He glared threateningly at the boy, who apologized for startling him. But it was evident that the man did not understand a word of English.

Hearing the clatter the proprietor came out from an inner room, and seeing the Italian standing there, broke into a passionate torrent of speech, all utterly unintelligible to Hamilton.

"I hava told heem," he explained to the boy, "that I not wanta heem in this-a place at all."

"I shouldn't think you would," said Hamilton, "I don't like his looks. Can I have some dinner?" he added, laying on the table a book he had just taken from his pocket, for the boy when alone always read at his meals.

"Certainly, sair," and the proprietor rattled off a string of dishes from which the boy made a copious selection, for he was hungry.

But he noticed that the man who had been sitting at the table had not left the place but was furtively watching, a few steps away. He was an ugly-looking customer, and Hamilton, full of grit as he was, felt uneasy. Casting his eye down to where he had laid his book, he noticed the piece of paper sticking from beneath it, and noticed moreover, a heavy shadow as though there were a drawing on the other side. His pulse beat a little faster as an idea came into his mind, but he showed no sign until the proprietor returned to set the table.

"I think," he said, watching the stranger carefully as he spoke, "that gentleman left a paper behind him. Ask him."

The proprietor, looking much puzzled, put a question in Italian, to which was evidently returned a sharp denial.

Still watching him, Hamilton slowly reached out his hand for the paper which lay on the table, only half-hidden by the book, and turning it over laid it flat upon the white cloth.

It was the Black Hand.

[Illustration: FESTA IN THE ITALIAN QUARTER. Boys in Little Italy, New York, preparing for one of the many characteristic holidays. (*Brown Bros.*)]

CHAPTER X

RIOTS AROUND A CITY SCHOOL

There was a moment's utter silence. The bright little restaurant had suddenly become charged with mystery, the slinking stranger seemed to have become in a moment allied to secret powers of evil, and the whole atmosphere seemed baneful in the sinister significance of that drawing on the table. A glance at the restaurant-keeper dispelled all question of complicity. His jaw had fallen, his face was ashen, his lips bluish.

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The other saw his advantage in the terror the mere display had excited, and stepping forward, he reached out his hand to pick up the paper, saying in English:

“Mine!”

Before the Italian had time to grasp the sketch, Hamilton quietly took it and folded it in half.

“I wouldn’t be so ready to claim it, if I were you,” he said, knowing that the other might not understand the words but could tell the tone.

“What are you going to do?” queried the restaurant-keeper in a hoarse whisper. “They will kill-a me!”

Hamilton thought hard for a moment or two. In the first place the matter had nothing to do with the Census Bureau, and the boy felt that while he was on duty in that work and wearing the census badge he was not a private citizen. Again, it was not a crime to draw a hand on a piece of paper, and the space obviously left for the blackmail message had not been filled in, and thirdly he could not swear that he saw him draw the hand; he only saw the paper in the man’s possession.

“Tell him,” he said to the restaurant-keeper, “that I shall say nothing about it, that I am not a policeman, nor a spy; tell him that so far as I am concerned I do not know that he had anything to do with it, and return him the paper.”

And bending forward, he reached out the paper to the Italian, who first snatched it eagerly, and then, having secured it, made a ceremonious bow. The proprietor of the restaurant translated the boy’s words, and with a brief reply, which Hamilton rightly construed to be thanks, the stranger left the store. No sooner was he gone than the restaurateur, with a word of apology, sank into the nearest chair, fairly exhausted with fright.

“I tell you, sair,” he said, as soon as he could get his breath, “I had-a nothing at all to do with that-a man.”

“It’s pretty hard to know about these things,” said Hamilton, who was somewhat unnerved himself, “but I don’t believe you had. Anyway, there’s no harm done. I’ve always heard about the Black Hand society, but I didn’t expect to run across it first thing, that way.”

“There is no Black-a Hand society,” the Italian said, “at least I do not think there is.”

“How do you mean there’s no Black Hand?” asked Hamilton a little indignantly, “haven’t I just seen it?”

The Italian shook his head.

“What were you so scared about, then?” queried the boy impatiently.

“Mafia,” said the other, his lips just shaping the syllables.

“You mean that the Mafia use the Black Hand?”

The Italian nodded.

“And that it is the sign of the Mafia?”

“No,” said the restaurant proprietor. “It is this-a way. When the Mafia was all-a broken up in-a the Sicily, the chiefs come to America. But the people are so far away it is difficult-a to speak-a to them all. One day one of the Mafia leaders write a letter threatening to kill. His—what you call it—nickname was ‘Il Mano Nera’—”

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"That means 'The Black Hand,' doesn't it?" queried the boy.

The Italian nodded.

"He sign at the bottom with a Black Hand because the man-a to whom he write, once was member of the Mafia. The police see the letter, a newspaper print-a big long story about Italian society which have the Black-a Hand for its sign, and saying that much recent murders was done. Everybody become-a frightened, and the Mafia and the Camorra right away both begin-a to use Black Hand. So you see when I say there is no Black-a Hand society, no chief, no place-a to meet, no meetings, no plan-a to share money, no oath, it is quite true, but if I say there is a society which used the Black-a Hand that is true, too. But all I want-a to do is to be let alone. Now, I will get you your dinner, sair."

Hamilton felt distinctly uncomfortable in being left alone, not feeling at all sure that the man who had been there before would not suddenly dash in upon him unawares and stab him in the back with a stiletto to make sure of his not talking, nor that the restaurant-keeper might not put some poison in his coffee. Take it all in all, it was the most nerve-racking meal he had ever eaten.

Chatting with the Inspector that evening over his Black Hand experiences he found that his chief took a very serious view of the question.

"If we were receiving immigrants from the north of Italy," he said, "it would be an entirely different matter, but all the Italians who are coming in now are from the 'toe' and the 'heel' of Italy, and from Sicily. You see, the north of Italy are really Celts, like the French and Irish, being descended from the Lombards, but the Sicilians and Calabrians are a mixture of the old pirates, the Moors, and the degenerated Latin races that were left when the Roman Empire fell to pieces. The endeavor to break up the Mafia sent all the leaders of that nefarious Sicilian society here, and now the attack upon the Neapolitan Camorra lands another criminal group. Italy has sent us a larger proportion of criminals than any other country, and under our present laws, if they have been three years here, they cannot be deported. The Vincenzo Abadasso case was a good example of the folly of that rule."

"Who was he?" asked Hamilton.

"He was an Italian immigrant who had been arrested twenty-seven times and convicted twenty-five and who came over here a couple of years ago. Within a few months of his arrival he was arrested here and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. And now, although he is a professed criminal, they won't be able to deport him, because when his prison term is up, he will have been in the United States three years."

"I suppose there are a lot of Italians coming over now?" said Hamilton questioningly.

“A little over three weeks ago,” was the reply, “as I heard from a friend in the Immigration Bureau, there was a funeral in a small village near Naples and not enough able-bodied civilians could be found in the place to carry the casket. All of them were in America. There are scores of towns in southern Italy where all the work—of every kind—is done now by the women, because the men have emigrated.”

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“What do you think about this Black Hand business?”

“I think your friend the restaurant-keeper was nearly right, only that it is being used by all sorts of crooks as well, who have no connection with either the Mafia or the Camorra. Mark you, I think those two secret societies are apt to be much misrepresented, just as the Jesuits were during the Middle Ages and the Freemasons were at other periods. The Camorra was once simply the Tammany Hall of Naples. But when, as happened last year, there were six hundred and fourteen Black Hand outrages in two States in four months it is idle to say that it does not exist in America. The Camorrist trials over the Cuocolo murders at Viterbo, perhaps the most sensational in the world since the Dreyfus case, have shown its power to be more dangerous than any one could for a moment have imagined. And the danger lies here—there are more Camorrists in New York than in Naples!”

For a moment the boy looked at the Inspector, astounded.

“You mean—” he began, and stopped.

“I mean that the worst elements of the two worst societies in Europe are concentrating in New York, and that unless rigorous measures are taken to keep them down, America will harbor graver dangers than any it has yet known. Russian nihilism, Polish anarchism, German socialism may join hands with the Sicilian Mafia and the Neapolitan Camorra to institute a criminal organization such as the world has never seen before. There are enough ignorant immigrants to yield to a wave of fear, and the Black Hand thrives and grows on terror. But, wisely held in check until they learn, these very Sicilians and Neapolitans bring much that is of value to the making of an American people.”

“Oh, there couldn’t be any real danger!” Hamilton exclaimed. “The spirit of American institutions would prevent such a happening; that could only be in some old-world city like Naples. The Camorra comes down from the Middle Ages, anyway.”

The Inspector shook his head.

“I hope so,” he said, “and I only trust you may be right,” and he turned the subject to the actual work in hand.

It so chanced that the very next day Hamilton had an opportunity of seeing, in a mild way, how truly the Inspector had spoken with regard to the alienizing of the crowds in the streets of New York. He had been working steadily several hours, and early in the afternoon he noticed a great deal of shouting in the streets. Being curious, and noticing that numbers of women were hurrying past, gesticulating violently, Hamilton followed, until almost before he was aware, the crowd grew so dense as to engulf him, and he was carried along, whether he would or no, up the street. Some of the women were

crying, some shrieking, and all wore a furtive, strained expression as though in great distress.

Although there was a great deal of shouting, not a word was in a language familiar to Hamilton, and although he questioned every one around him he could find no one that understood his questions. All that he could gather was from some one in the front of the crowd who kept on crying out in English at irregular intervals:

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"Our children, we want our children!"

Even if the boy had desired to break through the crowd to return to his work he could not have done so, and he really did not wish to,—he was too much interested in following the purposes of the throng. Finally the people stopped, but the boy was so far back that he could see nothing of what was going on at the head of the crowd. Being determined, however, Hamilton elbowed his way by main force and reached the woman who was still crying:

"Our children, we want our children!"

Hamilton spoke to her, but the woman paid no heed. Finally, seeing that she would not listen, he shouted at her as harshly as he could. Then she turned and tried to answer his questions.

"What's all the row about?" he asked.

"They rob us. Steal our children. Make them walk far away, never see our children any more. Oh, my Mario, oh, my Petronilla. Oh, our children, we want our children!"

Further information the boy could not get. He worked his way clear to the front of the mob and saw the police gathering on all sides. Breaking through the front rank he stepped up to the nearest policeman, who merely shifted his grip on his night stick.

"That's quite a mob," he said in a conversational tone.

"It is that, sorr," said the policeman, recognizing immediately that the boy was not one of the rioters.

"I'm a census officer," the boy continued, "and I was doing some inspection work for the census when I got caught in the crowd. What's the matter with them?"

"'Tis a bunch of dummies they are," was the reply; "'tis thinkin' they are that the schools are goin' to steal their children. As if any one would be wantin' their brats. The most of us has enough of our own to keep."

"But why should the school want to steal their children? Do you mean that they don't want them to go to school?"

"'Tis not that, sorr," the Irishman answered, "but 'tis due to some 'fire drill' business. The little ones are taught in the school that when a bell rings—'tis the fire bell I'm m'anin'—they sh'd all march out dacintly and in order. 'Tis a good idea, that same, an' I'm favorin' it. But it's hard to make the children see it, so that they have to drill them often."

"That all seems right enough," Hamilton answered.

“Ye would think so, sorr,” continued the policeman “But most of these mothers come from countries on the other side where they make them soldiers whether they want to be or not, an’ this drillin’ business scares the old folks ’most to death.”

“But if it continues and nothing happens, I don’t see why they should go on being scared. You would think the children had grown used to it.”

“The children! They’re not makin’ any trouble, it’s all the parents.”

“Then what started it?”

“There was some street corner lecturer here the day before yisterday, tryin’ to teach the people that children were the cause of poverty an’ that the only way to prevent poverty was to get rid of the children, either by havin’ fewer or by shippin’ off the existin’ surplus.”

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"It's silly for them to heed a man like that!"

"It's worse than silly, sorr," the policeman said. "But even then I don't believe there would have been trouble. But yisterday, some rich lady, plannin' to give the children a picnic this afternoon and a treat, told them they were all goin' out to the country and that they must tell their mothers they wouldn't be home until late."

"What about that?" asked the boy. "I should think they would be glad that the children should have some pleasure. From all I've seen recently of the way people live in this neighborhood, I don't believe the children have any too much good times."

"An' so they should be glad, sorr, but they won't see it that way. They know the children have been drilled for weeks an' weeks; they know a man on the street corner said the children ought to be shipped away; an' the next day they are told that the children are goin' to be taken into the country, an' they don't believe the children'll ever come back."

"Surely they can't be as silly as all that! And what do you suppose they want to do?"

"They don't know what they want," the policeman answered, "but it's a bad business when a crowd gathers. Look there now!"

Hamilton looked where the man was pointing. On the outskirts of the crowd the boy noted a number of half-grown toughs, hoodlums, and trouble-makers generally. The cries were increasing, and the boy could see that these men were doing all they could to stir up the rest of the crowd.

"Where they come from, I don't know," the police officer said, "but any time that there's a little trouble, they'll make it as big as they can."

"But the whole thing's so absurd," the boy said. "What do they think they're going to do, —raid the school?" He laughed.

The policeman turned on him quickly.

"'Tis absurd, as ye say, sorr," he said rebukingly "but there's many a good man been hurt with less cause than this. That crowd's growin' by thousands. Do you slip away, sorr, I'm afraid there's goin' to be trouble."

"Not much," Hamilton answered, "now I'm in this far, I'm going to stay and see the fun out."

"Well then, sorr," advised the policeman, "ye'd better slip through the school gates. Show your census badge, and the other men at the gate will let ye through."

Thanking him, Hamilton walked across the narrow stretch of road between the foremost ranks of the crowd and the little group of policemen gathered in front of the school entrance. As he did so, a bottle came whizzing at his head with deadly aim. Fortunately he had been keeping his head partly turned curiously toward the crowd, and he saw the missile in time to dodge. It missed him and went hurtling on, just passing between two policemen and smashing on the iron bars of the railing.

“You nearly got hit that time,” said one of the policemen, as Hamilton showed his badge and was let through. “How did you get in with them?”

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"Just doing my work," the boy answered, "and got carried right along. I was curious at first,—then when I wanted to get out I found I couldn't. I think," he added, a little nervously, for the flying jagged bottle had startled him not a little, "that's the first time I've been in front of a mob."

"I wish it was the last I'm likely to be," was the reply, "especially a crowd of women like that. Men you know what to do with."

"What do you suppose they'll do?" asked the boy. "Try to rush the school?"

"They did once not far from here," the policeman answered, "it was a school on the East Side, where nearly all the children were Jewish, and in order to make it easier for the poorer children the school authorities had opened a sort of restaurant where the kids could get lunch for three cents. The story got abroad that the children were getting ham and pork, and the whole section rose in arms. We tried to disperse them and couldn't. There was no way of reasoning with them, there was nothing they could do, but they just hung around."

"What for?"

"Waiting a chance to burn the school down, every one seemed to think. They did make one rush toward the end of the afternoon, and several people were wounded. One of our men was badly stabbed, but he got over it. Watch now," he added, in a sharp voice. "There's something doing!"

The crowd hushed a moment, and a man's voice could be heard, but whether pacifying the women or inflaming them, Hamilton could not make out. The next moment answered him. Without any apparent preparation, the whole face of the crowd suddenly seemed to burst, the end closed in, and in a second one of the wildest hordes Hamilton had ever seen was at the school gates. There was a brief struggle and nightsticks were drawn. The crowd rolled back, then surged on, more angrily than before. But the bluecoats stood firm, and when the crowd rolled back the second time a number showed broken heads.

"Son," called the police lieutenant, "you scamper along, and tell the principal to hurry up with letting out the school. I sent him one message now this means business."

Hamilton turned and ran for all he was worth toward the building, but just as he reached there, he saw the children marching in regular order out of the rear door, and he came back immediately to report. As he did so he found that the crowd was getting ready to make a third attempt to attack the police, when, turning the corner, sauntering down the narrow lane between the crowd and the police, came an Italian boy, about fourteen years old, with half a dozen other ragged boys at his heels. On seeing him, the lieutenant turned to Hamilton.

“That’s Caesar,” he said, with a sigh of relief. “I’ve known him for the past year or two, and he’ll settle all this trouble.”

The boy looked at the police lieutenant with surprise. The police force had had trouble enough, and what could a boy do? He voiced his query.

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"His father's a 'Man of Silence,'" was the reply, "and Caesar himself knows all there is to know. You'll see."

Arriving at the center of the crowd, just by the school gate, the boy turned, and speaking to the nearest officer, said, in English, without a trace of foreign accent, shrugging his shoulders:

"Some of them won't ever learn!"

For a moment he scanned the mob, called the names of two or three men on the outskirts, and Hamilton could see them wince as this fourteen-year-old lad named them; then he commenced a speech, which seemed,—so far as Hamilton could tell—to be ridiculing them for their fears.

The crowd relaxed, and for a moment Hamilton thought the whole trouble was over; but suddenly a man sprang to the front of the rioters, and gesticulating wildly, answered the boy in what seemed to be a threatening tone. The young Italian lad heard him through patiently, then almost without raising his voice, uttered one crisp sentence. The man turned white to the lips and slunk away.

"Ask him," said Hamilton to a policeman, "what he said?"

"I only asked him," the Italian said, "if he wanted me to find out his name—so that you would know it if you wanted to arrest him of course," he added, as an afterthought.

The policeman looked at him and pulled the boy's ear, in fun.

"Av I knew as much about some things as you do," he said, "they'd make me chief. Maybe, though," he added, "I wouldn't hold it long. But what about this, Caesar, is it all over?"

The Italian nodded.

"See," he said, "they all go!"

It was as the boy said; Hamilton could see that little by little the crowd was dispersing and that the members of the boyish gang were going all through the groups, evidently explaining that the trouble was all over.

"Ye see what we're up against," the policeman said to Hamilton. "Here's a slip of a lad that c'n just make a crowd do what he says because his father is a leader in the Mafia. There's never any one gives credit enough to the force for keepin peace, between all these foreigners and the Chinks; this ain't an American city, it's a racial nightmare."

"Do the Chinese give much trouble, then?"

“Not such a great deal usually, but they do once in a while. There’s bloody murder in Chinatown going on now, or going to begin mighty soon. Three were killed yesterday and the word was given out at Headquarters this morning that the Tongs were out.”

[Illustration: THE FIGHTING MEN OF THE TONGS. The younger combatants of the Five Brothers outside the impregnably guarded headquarters in Chinatown, New York.]

“Have we Tongs in New York?” asked Hamilton. “I’ve heard all about the troubles in the West. Before the fire in San Francisco, I know, there were fifteen organized Tongs of Highbinders, each with its paid band of ‘Hatchet Men’ for no other purpose than to rule Chinatown. The man who got up the report for the government told me that ‘Frisco Chinatown was far more under Tong rule and had far more crimes in proportion than any city in China.”

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"There are six strong Tongs in New York that I know about," the policeman answered, "and I guess there are a lot more. But I reckon it's the same in 'Frisco as it is here, they keep their killings to themselves, and they don't let any white men get mixed up in it at all. That's why you never can tell anything about it. But right now Chinatown is pretty dangerous, and all the sight-seeing business there has been shut off. No one is going into Mott and Pell Streets now."

"Pell Street!" exclaimed the boy. "Is that in Chinatown?"

"Right in the heart of it," was the reply. "Why?"

"Because I'm headed there now," Hamilton answered, taking from his pocket the schedule he had been given by Burns to check up, and showing it to the officer.

"That's Chinatown all right," the policeman said, "just look at the names!"

"I hadn't looked at it closely," the boy remarked, "why, yes, so it is. Well, Tong or no Tong, I suppose I've got to chance it, if those are orders."

The policeman shook his head.

"Looks to me as though you'd have to wait a while. Take some other district first and come back next week."

"Can't," the boy answered. "The Census Inspector and I have to go to 'Frisco to straighten out a Chinese tangle over the census there. The Chinese refused point-blank to have anything to do with the census, and there was a heap of trouble."

"What was it?" asked the policeman, walking along beside Hamilton in the direction of Chinatown, his beat extending to the limits of that section.

"When the rule for the census was issued, so they told me in Washington," Hamilton answered, "in order to make sure that the Chinese would not place any obstacles in the way, not only was a copy of the President's proclamation in Chinese pasted all over the walls of the city, but, in addition a decree was made by the Chinese consul-general that it was the wish of the Chinese government that the population in the city be properly numbered."

"That was a good idea," said the policeman approvingly.

"It would have been," said Hamilton, "if the Chinese had paid any attention to it. Instead of that, some of the Tongs got together and had a brief threat printed and pasted across the face of the President's proclamation, as well as that of the consul, that no Chinaman was to give any information to a census officer, unless he wanted to come under the displeasure of the Tongs."

“The nerve of them!”

“At this,” continued the boy, “the consul put out a second order, sharper than the first, not only commanding obedience, but pointing out that refusal would lay the person refusing open to fine or imprisonment. Over these second orders again was pasted the former threat of the Tongs. A few days later the enumerators, each accompanied by a policeman, went through Chinatown. The Chinese wouldn’t understand any language, not even their own. They didn’t refuse to give information, they simply answered, ‘No understand’ when any question was asked.”

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TRANSLATION OF THE PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the Director of the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce and Labor of the United States, in a letter to His Excellency Chang, His Imperial Chinese Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, requests that, since it has been the custom of the United States to take a census of the population once in every ten years, many of which have been taken and are on record, and since the present year is the time for taking another such census, which is to include the people of every nationality residing within the territory of the United States, and as the Chinese residents of this country, through possible ignorance of the English language, may mistake the object of the enumerators to be that of ascertaining what the people possess and its value, in order to impose taxes, or that of investigating the certificates of registration, etc., a proclamation be issued fully explaining the matter to the Chinese people; And whereas, instructions have been received from His Excellency to the effect that, the taking of a census being merely to ascertain the population of the country, and having no connection in any way with the imposing of taxes or the examination of certificates by the customs authorities of the Treasury Department, and for fear that our countrymen may not understand the purpose and make trouble through a mistaken notion of the whole proceeding, the Consul-General at San Francisco and the Consul at New York shall publish and make known to all Chinese residing in every part of the United States that it is the custom of the United States to take a census at stated intervals, that this proceeding has no connection with the laying of taxes or the examination of certificates of residence, that our countrymen have no cause for suspicion or alarm, but, as soon as the enumerators present themselves, they should answer the questions put to them without evasion or reservation, in order not to incur the penalty of the law: Now, therefore, we, Li Yung Yew, His Imperial Chinese Majesty's Consul-General at the port of San Francisco, and Yang Yu Ying, His Imperial Chinese Majesty's Consul at the port of New York, in pursuance of instructions as aforesaid, do hereby publish and make known that inasmuch as it is the custom of the United States to take a census of the population thereof once in every ten years, and as this proceeding has no connection whatever with the laying of taxes or the examination of certificates of residence, and as all persons irrespective of nationality are to be enumerated under the provisions of the law, our countrymen should not be alarmed or cherish any suspicion, but, as soon as the proper officers of the Census Bureau present themselves with this Consular proclamation, should answer all the questions put to them without evasion or reservation, in order not to incur the penalty of the law.

A list of the questions to be answered is hereby appended for the information of all concerned:

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Population schedule (32 questions).

Agriculture schedule (59 questions).

Dated Hsuan Tung, second year, First moon (February, 1910), and sealed with our respective seals of office.

THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES

CHINESE CONSULAR PROCLAMATION

[Illustration: Chinese text]

(SEE TRANSLATION ABOVE)

“What was finally done?” the policeman queried.

“The Consul-General had to ask the Five Companies to back up the census order, and they did. The fifth layer of paper was put on the billboards, and the Five Companies, without beating around the bush, just ordered the Chinese to do as they were told.”

“I’ve always heard that the Five Companies were stronger on the Pacific coast than they are here. I wonder why?”

“I asked that very question,” Hamilton said, “and the man who told me all about this explained that it was because they controlled the Chinese slave traffic to America.”

“Tis like enough,” the policeman agreed, “and of course the most of that would be on the other slope. But there’s enough of it here, just the same, and half the trouble between the Tongs is because of it.”

“That was what started the trouble in Oakland between the Hop Sings and the Bing Gongs,” Hamilton said, “and there were eight men killed in that. It began over the possession of a slave girl who had been given as security for debt. But they never caught any one for that.”

[Illustration: ARRESTED AS THE FIRING STOPS. Watching the close of a shooting affray; the principals trying to escape the police.]

“You can’t ever catch a Chinaman,” the policeman said. “I’ve arrested a dozen myself—but it never did any good. Look at Boston—it was open talk that there were two regular executioners under Tong law, but the Chinks got out of it by tellin’ the judge that there never had been any executions and that it was merely an ancient title!”

"There have been cases in New York, too," the boy said, "that they haven't found out yet!"

"It doesn't matter what the case is—you can never prove it on them. Look at that young girl, a missionary, who was killed! And that's only one of dozens. And they can shoot, and shoot straight, too!" he added. "Look at the shooting galleries," the two were walking down the Bowery, "they've been kept going for years by the practice of the Tong marksmen. You'd never think it, but some of those Highbinders could make our crack shots do their best to keep an even score. Well," he broke off, "here we are at Mott Street. Bob," he called to the policeman across the street, "here's a young fellow wants to go into Chinatown."

"Sorry, sir," said the other, a great big burly fellow, coming forward to meet them, "but orders are strict. No one going in at all, unless on business."

"It is on business, officer," said Hamilton. "I'm a census agent and the Inspector told me to check up some names on this schedule."

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The policeman took it and looked it over.

"I think those are all right, sir," he said, "I know most of 'em by name. But that's one of those underground places and we don't any of us go down there any more than we have to. Of course when we have to go—why, that's another matter. I think, sir, you can take it those names are about all right."

"I don't feel that I could make a report like that," Hamilton answered. "I was sent to check it up personally, and don't you think I'd better do it? There's a chap there," he added, pointing to a young fellow standing a few yards up the street, "he doesn't look Chinese."

"He's a reporter, sir," the policeman said, "an' he's like us,—it's part of his business to take chances."

"Mine, too," said Hamilton; "only he represents a newspaper and I'm here for the government."

The policeman scratched his chin in perplexity.

"Do you wait here," he said, "and I'll call up the station."

He came back in a minute or two.

"The lieutenant says it'll be all right," he said. "I told him that I hadn't seen any sign of trouble—not that that means anything," he added, "but if you wait a minute the other man will be up this way; he's patrollin' the streets and you can go along with him."

"How many of you are there here?" asked the boy.

"Generally half a dozen in these two or three streets," the policeman answered, "but I guess right now there's twice that number."

Just as he had expected, another policeman appeared shortly, and Hamilton was passed on to him. His conductor was taciturn, and the boy was glad when the reporter joined them. In reply to a question, Hamilton told his purpose, and the reporter, scenting a story, volunteered to accompany them. The boy was willing enough, especially as he found the reporter had the Chinese district as his regular assignment and was well known in Chinatown.

The address given, as the first policeman had said, was merely that painted over a stairway.

"I guess we go down here," Hamilton said.

The policeman answered not a word, he simply pushed past the boy and went down first; Hamilton followed, and the reporter came next. At the bottom of the stair the policeman rapped on a door with his nightstick, a good loud rap. It was opened, and he strode in, followed by the two boys. A few questions from Hamilton verified one or two items of information, but details about the rest of the house were not forthcoming. In answer to questions the Chinaman simply pointed to the ground.

"Next floor down, I reckon," the reporter said.

"But we're in the cellar now," objected Hamilton

The reporter laughed.

"We build above ground, the Chinese below," he said. "Lots of these houses have five stories underground, and nearly all have either two or three. A Chinaman doesn't care about fresh air at all, and he won't waste money in fuel when he can keep warm in an underground burrow. Come on, I guess we'll go down some more."

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The policeman still leading the way, three of them went down a rickety stair, not much better than a ladder, and found themselves in a sort of storehouse.

"They don't keep things to eat here!" exclaimed Hamilton, scarcely able to breathe the foul air and the exhalations from decaying food-stuffs.

"Sure," the reporter answered. "Cheerful, isn't it?"

Hamilton gave a little shiver of repugnance, but taking out his schedule, asked the underground store-keeper all the personal questions on it. Then, realizing that he would be able to know about his customers, the lad quickly made enough inquiries to assure him that there was no fault to find with the work, and started for the upper air. Just as they passed out of the stairway, the policeman, who was the last, still being on the steps, Hamilton heard a shot, and a bullet came whizzing by his head. It was answered by a fusillade of shots.

The boy's first instinct was to duck back under the cover of the staircase from which he had just come out, but the policeman, as he left it, roughly gave him a push, as much as to say, "Keep out of there," and started on a dead run for the group where the firing was going on.

"That's the Hip Sings," the reporter said, pulling Hamilton into the shadow of a doorway, "the Ong Leongs have been waiting for them, ever since that affair in the theater."

"What was that?" asked Hamilton, although more interested in the immediate excitement than the story.

"Time of the Chinese New Year," the reporter answered in short, crisp sentences.

"There was a gala performance in the theater with suppers and banquets before and after. Everybody brought fire-crackers to the theater, and at a certain time all the fire-crackers were set off. When the noise stopped eighteen men were found shot dead, all members of the Ong Leong Tong. The Hip Sing men were blamed for it, but none ever caught."

"What's up now?" cried Hamilton, in alarm.

As he spoke two men dashed out of a building near by, and fired at the group beyond. The others turned and made a rush. The two newcomers cut across the street, thus for a moment diverting the line of fire which had been perilously close to where the two boys were standing.

"This is too hot for me," said the reporter, "we'd better get out of here as fast as we know how. We'll go to the end of this street and turn to the right. Are you ready? Come along."

Out from the doorway like a couple of frightened hares the two lads bolted, pursued by a few shots which, they flew so far over their heads, Hamilton surmised were intended as a warning to keep out of the way rather than as attempts to shoot them. In the few seconds that had elapsed it seemed that the streets had become full of running policemen, and Hamilton looked back.

As he did so, he saw one of the men in the nearest group stagger sideways and stand for an instant alone in the center of the street. There was the sharp bark of a sawed-off revolver, and the wounded man just reached the shelter of a doorway as the bullet sang over the spot on which he had stood a second before.

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The sight unnerved Hamilton. He clutched the reporter's arm.

"Chinese, Camorristis, sweatshop workers, and negroes!" he cried, a hysterical note in his voice. "Are there no Americans in an American city?"

The reporter grasped his shoulder and pointed to where, a block or two away, the towering framework of a Titanic building pierced the sunlit air, far above the sordid savagery of the human rat-holes near by. Guiding monster beams into place, sure-set upon the frailest foothold, forms of men, made tiny by the distance, were silhouetted against the sky.

"The post of honor is the post of danger," he said; "it is in work like that, where skill is linked to daring, where brain is joined to nerve, that the Yankee stands. If you want to see the American in America, don't look down, look up!"

[Illustration: WORK FOR AMERICANS. Where skill and nerve and endurance are required is where the true American is found. (*Copyright by Brown Bros.*)]

THE END