When the Current Was Off.

Dennis H. Stovall.

Martin Phelan, senior member of the firm of Phelan and Company, buttoned his long coat more snugly around his tall angular frame. He was obliged to lean heavily against the stiff east wind as he walked from his suburban home to the little waiting station. Added to the fury of the wind were the bullet-like particles of sleet, which cut icily at his cheeks.

"Beastly weather this!" he muttered, as he gained the shelter of the six-by-eight station and peered through the storm up the track. "Just my luck to be delayed by a late car. Seems queer that they must invariably run behind time on Sunday morning, just as if we business men have no need of hurrying except on week days."

While he stamped impatiently around the little shed-like station, the singing of the trolley wire announced the coming of a car. By the time he had crossed the platform it had rolled up and slid to a halt. It was only nine-thirty, and Phelan was not surprised to find only two other passengers aboard. Of this, however, he was glad, for he was in no mood for company. In fact, the apparent happiness of the two passengers annoyed him. How they could laugh and smile on such a morning as this was beyond his understanding. He met their pleasant "Good morning," with a slight nod of his head. Just then the car gave a lurch and he stumbled over the feet of one of them. Though the man begged his pardon, Phelan turned and glowered at him unmercifully. It was on his tongue to ask the man if he wanted the whole car.

Phelan sat down opposite the two and tucked his chin down in his coat collar. Then he recognized the twain as neighbors of his—neighbors they were in point of distance, for their homes were not far from his own. Still he did not know their names though he had seen them a number of times before, as they took the same car as he on their way to work.

Since they were merely wage-workers—at least he had believed them to be—Phelan wondered why they were on their way to the city at this hour Sunday morning. They certainly had no account books to look over, no records of business to review, no ledgers to balance. While he wondered one of the men took a Bible from his overcoat pocket, opened its well-worn pages on his knee, and the two drawing closer together, fell into a lively discussion over the text before them. In the rapid-fire talk, Phelan caught brief references to "our fellows," "lookout committee," "last week's lesson," and other phrases which, though foreign to him in their exact meaning, conveyed enough to satisfy him that the two neighbors were evidently on their way to church or Sunday-school. Their conversation, however had no spark of interest for the broker. Had they talked of the stock market, he would have listened with an eager ear, for that would have been worth while.

The storm increased in fury, and it was with difficulty that the car pushed its way against the terrific wind. Once it stopped and the motorman seemed to have difficulty in getting it under way again. Phelan rose impatiently and walked to the forward end of the car. He was afraid they would be delayed, and it was necessary for him to be at his office at ten o'clock to attend a special meeting of the company directors. When he looked inquiringly at the conduetor, who was sitting huddled in a corner, that official volunteered the information: "Power is mighty weak this morning. Storm has crippled the wire somewhere, I reckon."

This was discouraging news to the broker, but when he returned to his seat he discovered the two men still absorbed in their Bible discussion, with the book open before them. The raging storm, or the possibility of being delayed, did not worry them. "They are the sort of men who never shoulder heavy responsibilities," reasoned Phelan to himself, "otherwise they would not become so deeply absorbed in stuff that was prepared for the world as it was two thousand years ago. Conditions are totally different now. We cannot shape ourselves to fit—"

Just then the car came to an abrupt halt. The conductor uncurled himself and went out in the vestibule, returning presently with the information: "Current is shut off. Nothing to do but wait awhile." With that he dropped back in his corner. The motorman came in and sat down opposite him. The two men went on with their discussion. Phelan rose, stamped his feet, and muttered his impatience. He rubbed the mist from a window and looked out. They were yet a long distance from the city. There was nothing to do but remain in the car till it was ready to start. He sat down again, and reached in his pocket for the morning paper. He had forgotten it.

He settled himself once more, fully determined to shut his ears to the discussion of the two men. But, despit his best efforts, he could not two earnest Bible students across the aisle. The stray bits that came to him awoke an interest in things long forgotten; moreover they teemed with more practical, present-day ideas than he had believed possible in the ancient text.

"This fifteenth chapter of Romans," he heard one of the two declare, "from which our to-day's lesson is taken, certainly proves that Christianity is an all-round religion." Phelan did not believe this, and so opened his ears to hear what reason the man would give for its truth. "It shows that Christianity is a circle whose circumference includes every phase of life," the man went on. "It is not a Sunday asylum. It reaches every class of men. It goes into the bank, into the store, into the workshop, and into the prison; and everywhere it goes it has a message for the manners, morals and minds of men."

Though the broker was annoyed by their talk, this statement was more than his argumentative nature could stand, so he interrupted the discussion by the qeury: "Do you honestly believe that?"

"I certainly do," the man replied pleasantly. "My own experience proves it as much as these words of the old-time apostle; in fact, we need to prove these things by our lives in order to be fully convinced of them."

"That is much easier said than done," the broker remarked.

"I have no doubt of that," returned the man with the Bible. "Nothing good in this world is won without sacrifice. The true Christian lives a life of unselfishness as Paul indicates in the first verse of this chapter: 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' As someone has said, it is this sort of doctrine that 'makes all of us 'mother, nurse and night watchman of the race.'"

"The doctrine is all right," the broker agreed, "but is it practical in this age? Can you show me a bunch of men who really practice it?"

"I think we can," promptly returned the man with the Bible. "We are on our way to meet just such a 'bunch' of men."

Phelan grew more interested. For the moment he forgot about the storm and the delay. Both the conductor and the motorman pricked up their ears and slid down the seats to be nearer the three.

"What is it, and where is it?" the broker asked, with mild curiosity.

"It's the Brotherhood Bible Class for men only, organized and operating on a twentieth century plan. We meet at twelve o'clock at the White Temple."

The broker was silent a moment, as if trying to recall something. Then he stuck his finger in his jacket pocket with the remark: "The Brotherhood Bible Class—then this must have referred to it. I have reeeived several of them of late, but have not taken the time to unravel its message."

He passed the card across to the two Bible class men. Both of them had seen similar cards before. It contained a picture of four links welded together, and bore these words:

"Are you a link in the chain of Brotherhood? If not, you should be. Two hundred men are already linked on, but there's plenty of room for you. Meet with them at the White Temple Sunday noon."

"Do these two hundred men practice this doctrine of unselfishness that you have been reading about?" Phelan asked.

"It is the purpose of every one of them to earnestly try to practice it," the Bible class man replied. "We believe in getting under the other fellows load. If we find a poor fellow down, we don't step on him, but stoop and lift him up."

"That's genuine brotherhood, sure enough,' said the broker, "but I've never yet found an organization that made it a prime feature"

"Then you should become a 'link' at once," the Bibia class man declared. "Nothing would please us better than to show the way."

"I'm too busy to give much time—"

He was interrupted by the drone of the motor underneath the car. The motorman leaped up and ran forward. The trolleys sang again, and in a moment they were whirling forward through the storm. Yet a few minutes, and they had reached the down-town section. Before getting off, Phelan, whose mind had wandered far from his business cares and the coming directors' meeting since the car had gotten under way, came over and offered the two Brotherhood men his hand. "I'm grateful to you for having brought this to my attention. I'm going to give it sincere investigation. And by the way, we are neighbors. This is an opportune time to get acquainted. Phelan is my name."

"Barnes is mine, and this is my working partner—Simpson."

"My wife will call at your homes soon," the broker said. "We may as well begin making an earnest practice of this doctrine of brotherhood."

"And we will call for you this morning, if you will give us your office address," they assured him.

He gave them his card, and all the hard lines of his face seemed suddenly to disappear. "Thank you," he replied, "that will be kind. keep out all that was said by the I shall be ready for you." Then he rose to go. "This is my street, and I must get off. We have become acquainted, anyway,, and that's a good beginning."

True to his promise, the broker was ready and waiting when the Brotherhood men called for him. When he left the class that day, and after greetings were over, he sought out Barnes and Simpson. Grasping their hands in a firm clasp, he declared, "Your Brotherhood 'bunch' is all and more than you represented. I'm glad the current was shut off this morning for a time."—Selected.

Religion In Trifles.

"An eight foot piece of gas tubing, madam? That will be ten ing,madam? That will be ten cents extra, please,"said the clerk. hanging up the shorter piece the young woman had just returned and taking down another. While he was wrapping up the new pack-she turned to her companion and said, "How much did I return? It was five feet wasn't it? Or was it six feet? If it was, I owe fifteen cents instead of ten,"taking out her purse again.

"Why do you bother?"was the reply "That is his lookout not yours."

"Oh,but it is mine,"was the rejoinder. "I'm going to see how long it is. I'm not positive, but my impression is that it is five feet." She hunted till she found the tubing, which proved to be just five feet. She paid the extra nickle and was off, leaving the clerk looking after her in puzzled wonder.

"Now what made her do that?" he said to a cash girl who had witnessed the incident. She need not have done it; nobody would have known."

'God would have known," the girl replied softly, her cheeks flushing faintly in the effort to speak the words..

"God would have known!" All day the sentence repeated itself to the lad as he thought of different instances of petty trickery on his part in the past. At night it had not left him. In the morning it still haunted him. It marked the turning point in his life.

The young girl had no idea of the far-reaching consequences of her words. She could not have foreseen their potency. But that for the right not only changed the whole course of the boys life, but afected to a greater or less extent for the better, lives of all with whom he came in contact.

"You never can tell when you do an act
Just what the result will be;
But with every act you are sowing seed,
Though its harvest you cannot see
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9.13	6.27	7.12	DENTON	8.37	3.27
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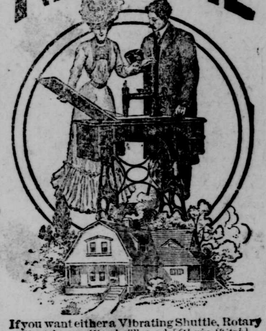

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