Take It From Dad

by George G. Livermore,

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Lynn, Mass.
September 25, 19—

Dear Ted:

Your letter asking me if I think you are a failure at school, and wanting to know whether I can give you a job in the factory, came this morning.

"Yes," to the first, and, "I can but I won't" to the second. I didn't send you to Exeter to have you leave in a week; and as for the factory, I guess it can stagger along a couple of years more without you, although I sure do appreciate your wanting to work. It's so different from anything else you have ever wanted, and as Lew Dockstader once said, "Variety is the spice of vaudeville."

Sure, Exeter is a rotten place in the fall, when it rains eight days a week, and there's nothing except soggy leaves and mud everywhere, and a continuously weeping sky that's about as cheerful as the Germans at the peace table. You don't know any one well enough yet to say three words to, and your teachers seem to be playing a continual run of luck, by always calling on you for the part of the lesson you haven't learned.

Sure it's rotten; not Exeter, but what's the matter with you. It begins with an "h" and ends with a "k," but like other diseases, lockjaw excepted, and you'll never have that anyway, it's just as well to catch it young and get it over with.

Then, too, I guess you're beginning to realize that the leader of the Lynn High School Glee Club and left end of the football team isn't so big a frog, after all, when he gets into a puddle with five hundred other boys, most of whom never heard of Lynn.

Your learning this young is a blessing which you don't appreciate now. I had to wait until I took that trip to Binghamton with the Masons. I'd thought till then I was some pumpkins of a shoemaker grinding out eight thousand pairs a day, eleven with two shifts, but when I moseyed through Welt & Toplift's and saw them make fifty thousand pairs without batting an eye, I realized I had been looking at myself through the wrong end of the telescope.

Say, Ted, did I ever tell you about the time your grandfather and grandmother went to the Philadelphia Exposition and left me at Uncle Nate's?

You never saw Uncle Nate; but I don't know as you need feel peeved about it. Anyway, Uncle Nate had whiskers like a Bolshevik, and catarrh. He was a powerful conscientious man, except in a horse dicker, when he shed his religion like a snake does his skin.

Uncle Nate lived over at Epping Four Corners, six miles from our farm, and owing to his judgment of horse flesh he was about as popular there as General Pershing would be at a Red meeting.

I landed at Uncle Nate's at noon, and by six o'clock he had asked me four times if I was a good boy, and I could tell by the look in his eye that he'd ask me that a dozen times more before I went to bed.

Along about seven it began to grow dark and I began to miss my mother. Uncle Nate sat in a rocking chair in the dining room with his feet on the stove, chewing fine cut and reading a farm journal, and I sat in a small chair with my feet on the floor, reading the "Pruno Almanac" and chewing my fingers.

He said nothing, and I said the same. After a while I got so blame lonesome I stole out on the back steps and stood there wishing I was dead or in jail, or something equally pleasant.

Gosh all hemlock! I was homesick. Then I remembered Sandy, our hired man, was still at the farm. I pointed my nose toward home and skedaddled and, believe me, I went some until I hit the woods just below the intervale, where the wind was soughing through those tall pines like invisible fingers plucking on Old Nick's harp. It sure was the lonesomest place I had ever been in; but the thought of Uncle Nate drove me on until I came to where the old Shaker graveyard runs down close to the road.

I'd forgotten the graveyard until just as I got up to it a white, shapeless figure jumped into the road and ran toward me, waving its arms.

Old Von Kluck did a turning movement before Paris; but he had nothing on me. I turned and, believe me, son, I went back to Uncle Nate's so fast I almost met myself coming away. I slid into the house like a dog that's just come from killing sheep and found the old gentleman asleep in his chair.

When he awoke he said I'd been a good boy not to disturb his nap, and he gave me a nickel, which surprised me so I almost refused it.

After that we were great pals, and I actually hated to leave him when the folks got home.

Cheer up, Ted, you'll like the school better before long, and try learning all your lessons instead of only part; you can fool a lot of teachers that way.

One thing more, don't write any doleful letters to your Ma just now. I'm planning a surprise trip with her to the White Mountains for our twenty-first wedding anniversary, and if you go butting in on her good time I'll tan you good. No, I won't, I'll stop your allowance for a month. That'll hurt worse.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

P. S.—I forgot to tell you the ghost I met by the graveyard was a half-wit who had escaped from Danvers in his nightshirt. They caught him the next morning, in a tree on the common, where he sat singing songs, thinking he was a canary.

Lynn, Mass.
September 30, 19—

Dear Ted:

So your roommate is a ham, is he? Well, if he is, you're in luck. Ham is selling for fifty cents a pound in Lynn and is going up.

Time was when ham was looked down upon as the poor man's meat, but now, when there are no poor except professional men and shoe manufacturers, his pigship has come into his own.

Seriously, Ted, I didn't care much for your last letter, it left a taste in my mouth like castor oil. I've got a pretty good idea of the appearance and general make-up of that "ham" of yours, and I'm laying myself a little bit of a lunch at the Touraine next time I'm in Boston, against reading one of your Ma's new books on the Ethical Beliefs of the Brahmins I'm right.

Comes from a small town in Kansas. Never been fifty miles away from home before, and would have taken the next train back after the frigid reception you gave him if he had had the price, and the old folks out there weren't betting on him to make good. Wears half-mast pants, draped with fringe at the bottom, and the sleeves of his coat seem to be racing each other to his elbows, and for general awkwardness he'd make a St. Bernard puppy look as graceful as Irene Castle.

You're at an age now, Ted, when you know so much more than you ever will again, it would be presumptuous for me to offer any advice.

Advice is the most beautiful exponent known of the law of supply and demand. No one wants it, that's why so much of it is always being passed around free. A man will give you a dollar's worth of advice when he'd let you starve for a nickel. But while I think of it, I want to tell you of something that happened at the Academy the year your Uncle Ted was there. That fall there blew into school a rawboned youth from the depths of Aroostook, Maine. He tucked his jean trousers in high cowhide boots, wore red flannel underwear, and spent most of his time stumbling over some one else's feet when he couldn't trip over his own. The school was full, and the only vacant place was the other half of Ted's room, so the faculty planted him there. Ted made him about as welcome as a wood pussy at a lawn party, for at the time he was badly bitten by the society bug and thought a backwoodsman roommate would queer him with the club he wanted to make. For a week Ted was as nasty to his new

roomie as possible, hoping he'd get sick of his company and seek other quarters. Apparently Aroostook never noticed a thing. Just went on in his awkward way, and the nastier Ted got, the more quiet he became.

On the night of the president's reception Ted hurried back to his room to dress, filled with pride and prunes. Pride because of a brand-new dress suit he had bought with an unexpected check dad had absent-mindedly sent him, and prunes because supper at the place he boarded consisted mostly of that rare fruit. When Ted opened the door his roommate was greasing his cowhide boots, and wearing an air of general expectancy.

Ted brushed by him into the bedroom, and changed into his dress suit, his mind delightfully full of his lovely raiment and the queen of the town belles he had persuaded to accompany him.

At last, hair slicked and clothes immaculate, he rushed out into the study where his roomie stood, evidently waiting for him.

"Guess I'll walk along with you, Ted, if you don't mind?" Aroostook said. "I cal'late this reception thing is a right smart way to get to know folks."

"In those clothes?" Ted asked with biting sarcasm, delightfully oblivious of the fact that he was wearing evening clothes for the first time. Ted says he hates to remember the look that came into his roommate's eyes at his remark. The sort of a look a friendly pup has when he wags himself to your feet only to receive a kick instead of the expected pat.

His roommate did not reply, and furious at himself for having spoken as he did, and also afraid of the guying he might have to stand for his roommate's appearance, Ted walked silently down the stairs beside him. At the door he shot another venomous arrow by hurrying off in an opposite direction, exclaiming, "Well, you can't go with me anyhow! I'd stay home if I were you. I don't think you'll enjoy yourself."

Basking under the smiles of his fair lady, Ted walked by her side to the reception, pouring into her ears the story of his ridiculous roommate, and she, as heartless a young miss as ever lived, made Ted promise to introduce her so she and her friends might enjoy him at close quarters.

After a few dances Ted spied his victim leaning awkwardly against a pillar in the gym, and looking about as much at ease as a boy who's been eating green apples.

Ted introduced his partner, and in five minutes his roommate was surrounded by a bevy of town beauties. Boys are cruel as young savages, but for sheer, downright, wanton cruelty give me the thoughtless girl of seventeen. That precious crew let him try to dance with them, mocked and guyed him when he stumbled over their feet or stepped on their dresses, and poked so much fun at him that at last he left the hall, his face flaming, and his eyes wet with tears of mortification.

Little beast that Ted was, he took upon himself great credit for his humiliation and acted like a perfect cad for the rest of the evening, starting delighted giggles whenever possible by brilliant remarks about his backwoodsman.

Later, as Ted and his fair companion were walking down Main Street on the way to her home, they met a little rat-eyed "townie" by the name of Dick Cooke whom Ted had thrashed a week before, for trying to steal his coat from a locker in the gym. He made an insulting remark to the girl and started to run. Seeing, as Ted believed, a cheap chance to play the hero, he piled after him. He only

went a few feet, then turned and from out of the shadows of one of those old houses, four of his cronies lit into Ted.

Ted went down with a crash, his head hitting the sidewalk so hard he saw stars. Then he heard a shout, "Stick it out, Ted, I'm coming!" There was a rush of heavy feet and spat, spat, spat, came the sound of bare fists landing where they were aimed.

When Ted struggled to his feet his gawky roommate was standing beside him, and the "townies" were tearing down the street as though Old Nick himself were after them.

Ted didn't make a long speech of apology for his meanness to his roommate. It's only in stories a boy does that, but, believe me, he treated him differently.

And, would you believe it, in less than two months Aroostook was wading through the Andover line as if it were so much knitting yarn, and at mid-year Ted was taken into the Plata Dates on the sole recommendation of being his roommate.

A fellow by the name of Burns once said, "Rank is but the guinea's stamp"; now, I don't know much about guineas, but what I do know is that the grain on a side of sole leather don't tell the whole story. It's the sound, clean, close-knit fibers underneath that make it figure right.

Son, there's going to be a place at our Sunday dinner table for that "ham" of yours. Bring him home. I've a notion it's sweet pickle he needs to be cured in, not sour.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

October, 2, 19—

Dear Ted:

You could; but I wouldn't. If you go to the principal and tell him a senior sold you the wall paper in your room, he'd get your money back for you; and you'd get interest with it, not the six per cent kind either; but a guying from the whole school, and probably the nickname of "Wally", that would stick to you closer for the rest of your life than that paper stuck to your wall.

You seemed surprised that any one who talked so nicely and seemed such a likeable, jovial sort of good fellow, would flim-flam you like that. Let me tell you right here, that the easy talkers and jolly good fellows, are the ones you want to watch in business sharper than an old maid watches her neighbors.

The short worded man I'll listen to, for he condenses all he has to say, and is usually worth hearing. But when one of your slick word wrestlers gets by the outer guard, and begins filling my office with clouds of rosy talk of how I'll soon have John D. shining my shoes if I'll only buy goods of him, I slip my wallet into my hip pocket and lean back on it, while I make signs to Mike to clear a path to the door.

Honestly, Ted, I'm glad you bought that wall paper. The male human is so constituted that he has got to make at least one fool investment during his life and it's just as well to get it out of your system early. If I were you, I'd write that six dollars down in my expense book as spent in a worthy cause, for it may save

you from some day buying stock in the Panama Canal, or a controlling interest in the Brooklyn Bridge.

Speaking of fool buys, naturally reminds me of the time your Ma and I were boarding with your Aunt Maria over in Saugus. We'd just been married, and I was spending my days bossing the sole leather room in Clough & Spinney's, and my nights in trying to figure how the fellow who said two can live as cheaply as one got his answer.

Your Aunt Maria was a good woman, but so tight she squeaked, and when she let go of a dollar the eagle usually left his tail feathers behind.

Aunt Maria, in my estimation, was the most unlikely prospect in the whole of Massachusetts, for a book agent, but one day a slick specimen representing, "The Heroines of English Literature," blew into her parlor, and when he left he had fifty dollars, in cash mind you, of her money, and an order for a set of twenty volumes.

The next day, when she had somewhat recovered from the effects of her severe gassing; and had begun to think of that fifty, lost forever, her mouth looked as though she had been eating green persimmons, and she was about as amicable as a former heavy weight champion just after he has lost his title.

For a month we had so many baked bean suppers, your Ma and I began to wonder if she had bought the world's supply, and took to accepting invitations from people we didn't like.

Now Aunt Maria in spite of her closeness, was some punkins in Saugus society. She was president of the Sewing Circle, and a strenuous leader in the Eastern Star, and one Saturday afternoon about six weeks after she had invested in, "The Heroines of English Literature," the Sewing Circle was holding a meeting in her parlor, while I was in the dining room trying to figure out a trip to the Isle of Shoals for your Ma and me.

After they had got through shooting to pieces the reputation of the absent members, and had guzzled their tea, one of the bunch spied "The Heroines" on a little side table where Aunt Maria had installed them upon their arrival. Out of sheer curiosity, the crowd fell upon them with cackles of delight, and to make themselves solid with their president, praised the books to the sky.

Aunt Maria saw a great light; and before her guests left she had sold them enough sets so that the commissions from the publishers more than made up her fifty dollars, and as a special favor to her dearest friend she delivered her own set to her then and there. For a time, after that, "The Heroines" were the most popular reading matter that ever hit Saugus. Popular with the women, I mean, for the men figured Aunt Maria's epidemic of literature cost them a good many new suits of clothes, and the village watch dogs almost went on a strike, because there were so many collectors coming around after partial payments it was hard for a dog to tell whether they were tramps or new members of his family.

Which all goes to prove that even a poor buy may sometimes be turned into a good account. Now you can draw some, Ted, or at least your teacher said you could, when he pried a hundred dollars out of me for pictures to decorate the high school.

I told him you could overdraw your allowance all right, but he insisted you had true technique, whatever that is, so I loosened up.

Why not try a little freehand stuff on your newly acquired wall paper! You might start a fad like Aunt Maria did, that would stamp you as one of the

school weisenheimers, and by the way if the boy who sold you the wall paper isn't going to college tell him I'd like to see him some day. I'll need a cub salesman in the Middle West, next summer, and I don't like to see so much natural ability going to waste.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
October 15, 19—

Dear Ted:

There have been farmers and doctors and lawyers and preachers in the Soule family, and, in the old days, I believe we boasted of a pirate and a highwayman or two, but no artists, and I'd rather you didn't break the record.

Am glad though the faculty didn't fire you, for carrying out that fool suggestion of mine of decorating the other boy's wall paper. Fifteen rooms is going some Ted, and the $30.00 you received will come in real handy to pay for new school books, won't it?

After you've been tried here in the factory, to prove whether you can ever be made into a shoe manufacturer, and we decide you can't; I have no objection to your joining the grave diggers union, or driving a garbage cart, but as for your being an artist, you haven't a chance. Your Ma says I am prejudiced against artists because they are temperamental, but so far as I can see the accent must all be on the first part of the word for I never knew one who had brains enough to make a living.

You remember Percy Benson, son of old man Benson who lived on Ocean Street, don't you? Well, Percy was a promising youngster until he began to draw the cover designs of the high school Clarion, although I told his father when he was born that the name Percy was too much of a handicap for any kid to carry successfully. The old man allowed he'd never heard of a shoe manufacturer with that name but said, "The boy's Ma got it out of a book she'd been reading and that settled it." and knowing Mrs. Benson I guess he was right.

As I was saying, Percy did real well until he started drawing covers for the high school paper. After these had been accepted he swelled up like a pouter pigeon and nothing would do but he must go abroad to study. His father kicked like a steer; but in the end Percy and his mother prevailed, and Lynn lost sight of him for a few years.

For a time, I used to ask the old man how Percy was getting along with his painting, but as he always changed the subject to the leather market, I soon quit. One day after Percy had been gone about three years, I came home early and found your Ma holding a tea fight in the parlor.

After balancing a cup on my knees without spilling more than half of its contents, and getting myself so smeared with the frosting of the cake I was supposed to eat that I'd have given ten dollars for a shower bath, the conversation lulled, and remembering your Ma had told me I never talked enough in society, I asked Mrs. Benson how Percy was doing.

Ted it tickled her most to pieces, and she opened up a barrage of technique, color, fore-shortening, and high lights, winding up with the astonishing fact that one of Percy's pictures had been hung in a saloon.

I was gasping for breath like a marathon runner at the end of the twenty-third mile, but your Ma was all smiles so I thought I must be making a hit.

That's where I went wrong, and while you're about it Ted just paste this in your hat for future reference. When you begin to be pleased with yourself you're in as much danger as a fat boy running tiddelies on early November ice.

As saloon was the only word in the Benson cannonade that I understood, I replied when the bombardment was over.

"Glad to hear it, I'm sure. If the French brewers are paying him for pictures to hang in their saloons, he should be able to paint some snappy clothing ads for American manufacturers before long."

Mrs. Benson choked, gasped, strangled, and grew so red in the face I thought she was going to have apoplexy. Then she bounded out of her chair with one word, "insulting," and made for the door with your Ma one jump behind, imploring her to stay.

When your Ma returned, I learned saloon was the French word for picture gallery, and that my society stock had gone down like an aviator in a nose dive.

About a year later Old Man Benson busted trying to flood the retailers with bronze kid boots, and it was a real honest-to-goodness failure. The old man was wiped out and Percy came home from Paris.

One morning I was over at the Benson's factory along with a bunch of other creditors. The meeting had hardly got under way, when Percy entered in a cloud of cigarette smoke, and with a breath that made me think the French knew what they were about when they called the place at which he had been studying Booze Arts.

No one there had much love for Percy, but we all realized his father was too old to start again and that it was up to Percy to go to work, for from his general appearance it did not look as though the artist business was paying any dividends. So as gently as I could, I suggested he paint the inside of my factory at $25 per. I was pretty sure it was more than he was worth, but I felt sorry for the old man. Did he take it? He did not. He gave me one scornful glance and strode out of the room with the air of an insulted king. Did he go to work? Not much! He married a waitress at the Dairy Lunch who ought to have known better, and to-day she is working in the stitching room at Fair Bros. while Percy spends his days coloring photographs for about ten a week, and his nights preaching revolution at radical meetings.

Forget the artist stuff Ted, and take a second helping of the education they pass around so liberally at Exeter. It can't hurt you any, and who knows but it may do you some good. And by the way if you can spare the time from your studies (and I guess you can if you try real hard) why not play a little football?

Your Ma says she's afraid you'll have your brains knocked out, but I tell her not to worry over the impossible.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

October 21, 19—

Dear Ted:

As I was walking down Market Street to the factory the other afternoon, I overheard two of your old schoolmates refer to me as the father of the Exeter end.

I'm glad you're on the team, and for the next year or two I don't mind being the father of a star end, provided you keep it firmly fixed in your head that it's just as important to keep old Julius Cæsar from slipping around you for twenty-five yards, as it is to keep the Andover quarter from running back kicks.

After you go to work, if anyone refers to me as the father of an end, I'll feel like turning the factory over to the labor unions, because if there is anything that disgusts a live business man it's to see a young fellow in business trying to live on a former athletic reputation. Just you remember, son, that the letter on your sweater fades quickly; but the letters on a degree last through life.

I didn't care much for that part of your last letter where you said you were afraid you were not good enough to hold down a regular job on the team, and I want to go on record right now that if that's the way you feel about it you're dead right. No man ever succeeded without confidence in himself, and it don't hurt any to let others know you have it.

I don't mean boasting. I despise above all else a person who is in love. That is, with himself, but as yet I have never heard of a scientific organization of bushel raisers, so it won't do you a bit of harm to let a little of your light shine forth now and then.

And, Ted, go out on the field every day with the idea that you're better than the average as a football player, and when you get a kick in the ribs or have your wind knocked out, come up with a grin and go back at 'em harder than before.

Play to win, Ted, but play clean. Your coach doesn't tolerate dirty football, and I don't tolerate dirty business. Play nothing except football on the football field, do nothing except study in your class rooms, and when you go to work, work in business hours. If you stick to that prescription you'll come out with a pretty fair batting average at the end of your life.

You say that if you play in the Andover game you'll be up against an opponent who will out-weigh you fifteen pounds. Don't let that worry you. No less a person than the great Lanky Bob said, "The bigger they are the 'arder they fall." All through your life you will be running up against men who are bigger than you physically, mentally, and in a business way, so it's just as well to get used to the fact while you're young.

Your dreading your bigger opponent reminds me of something that happened to me when I was about your age.

In those days the Annual Cattle and Poultry Show held at Epping was quite the event of our social season, and the one thing all the people looked forward to, for months.

This particular year I had been saving my money a nickle here and a dime there, for your grandfather was determined none of his children should grow up to be spendthrifts, and would turn over in his grave if he knew the allowance I give you.

You needn't tell your Ma this, but in those days I was sweet on Alice Hopkins who was the belle of the town, and after much careful planning and skillful maneuvering had wrung an ironclad promise from her to let me escort her to the show, and I was pretty sure she would keep it, for somehow she got wind of the fact that I had all of $10 to spend which was considerably more than any of

her other swains had managed to accumulate. My father loaned me his best buggy for the occasion, and I spent the entire afternoon before the great day washing and polishing it, and grooming our bay mare until she shone; and believe me, I was some punkins in my own estimation when I drove up to Alice's house the next morning and she rustled in beside me in a new pink dress.

As we rolled along the river road, the mist rising white from the marshes, the brilliant splashes of color on the sumac and maples, the autumn tang of the crisp September air, and Alice looking prettier each minute at my side, all made my thoughts turn toward a rosy future in which she and I would ride on and on. I was oblivious of the fact that my entire capital consisted of a spavined colt and the ten dollars in my pocket, and that I had about as much chance of gaining my parents' consent to marry, as a German has of being unanimously elected the first president of the League of Nations.

Alice, I found after I had hitched the horse to the rail in the maple grove inside the fair grounds, had no such vague ideas. She had the curiosity of a savage, the digestion of an ostrich, and the greed of a miser. At her prompting we drank pink lemonade, ate frankfurters at every booth, and saw all the side shows, from the bearded lady and the blue monkey to the wild man from Borneo and the marvel who could write with his toes. At times I protested feebly, as my supply of dollars dwindled, but Alice would pout prettily and guide me gently by the elbow to the ticket seller, and then almost before I knew it another quarter had been squandered.

At noon, I remembered the nice box of luncheon my mother had put up for us and which I left under the buggy seat, but Alice tossed her head and marched smack into the dining tent where a sloppy greasy meal was served at a dollar a plate.

I followed meekly, groaning inwardly, for all I had left was three dollars, but trying to console myself with the reflection that after all the candy and popcorn, and frankfurters, and pink lemonade, and with a regular country dinner besides, Alice couldn't eat much in the afternoon and my wallet would get a rest while we watched the races.

On our way over to the track, after dinner, I noticed a group of men and boys clustered about a placard which read, "Wrestling Tournament For Boys Under Eighteen." Now I was the champion wrestler of the village for I was big and strong for my age and quick as a cat, and when we drew near and I saw a prize of $10 was offered to the winner, I felt that there was a chance to retrieve my fallen fortunes and get the necessary wherewithal to feed Alice throughout the afternoon if her inclinations still ran in that direction.

The judges entered me in the second group, the winner of which was to wrestle the winner of the first group for the championship. The second group was composed of boys all of whom I had defeated, and all of whom promptly withdrew when I entered. Two contestants remained in the first group, a great hulking farm boy, Caleb Henry, whom I had beaten the only time we had ever met, but only after a severe struggle on my part, and a little undersized shrimp of a fellow who looked half scared to death and whom I was sure I could lick with one arm.

Hoping that by some miracle the little chap might win, for I had no hankering for a severe struggle with Caleb, I escorted Alice over to a seat beside the track and was overjoyed on my return to find my hopes had been fulfilled.

As I threw off my coat and advanced with overflowing confidence toward the little unknown, he looked smaller and more insignificant than ever, and my head was so filled with the thoughts of the heaps of ice cream I could buy for Alice with the $10 prize money that I grappled my antagonist carelessly, and the next minute was giving a very creditable imitation of a pinwheel as I flew through the air lighting on the back of my neck, the little fellow sitting on my chest and pinning my shoulders to the grass.

I spat out a mouthful of dirt and struggled to my feet. One of the legs of my Sunday pants was ripped clear to the knee, and one shirt sleeve was torn off. Again we grappled, and again I was thrown as quickly as before.

Sore with defeat, I pulled on my coat and limped away with the jeers of the crowd echoing in my ears. Alice was not where I had left her, and after a half an hour's search I found her in a booth eating ice cream with Jim Davis, a hated rival who promptly informed me she had promised to ride home with him.

Rats, you know, Ted, leave a ship under certain conditions. Yes, I got a licking from my father when I reached home for spoiling my Sunday suit. A corker it was, too, with a hickory branch.

Oh! I forgot to say the little fellow who threw me so hard was the Champion Lightweight of New England.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
October 26, 19—

Dear Ted:

If you imagine I've been wringing tears out of my handkerchief, and wearing crepe on my hat since I got your last letter, you're as mistaken as the Kaiser was when he started out to lick the world.

To tell the truth, Ted, I had to wipe a number eleven smile off my face when I reached the part about the seniors making you moan like new mown hay.

From the way you have been strutting around Lynn the past few months, I rather expected there was something coming to you, so I wasn't surprised to learn you'd collected it, for things are so arranged in this world that people usually get what is due them, whether it's a million dollars or Charlestown.

Some persons claim hazing is brutal. Maybe some kinds are; but your handwriting seems pretty firm in your last letter, especially in the part where you ask for an extra $10, so I guess you have not suffered any great damage. Personally, I have always maintained that hazing, if not carried too far, is the greatest little head reducer on the market, and it doesn't cost a dollar a bottle, war tax extra, either.

Perhaps it is not in keeping with the lordly dignity of your advanced years, to furnish entertainment for your schoolmates by fighting five rounds with your shadow, or asking your girl to go to a dance over an imaginary telephone. You should remember, however, that your turn will come with the new boys next fall, and you've got a long time ahead in which to think up original stunts.

Every time hazing is mentioned it reminds me of Sammy Smead and the Brothers of Mystery. I can't remember ever having told you about the Brothers,

or Sammy either, for that matter, and as I have a few minutes before starting for the 10:30 to Boston, here goes!

Sammy was the son of old Isaac Smead, sole owner of the Eureka Wooden Ware factory in Epping. As old Isaac could smell a dollar farther than a buzzard can a dead cow, and as he had in early life developed a habit of collecting farm mortgages, which in those days were about as easy to pay off as the national debt of Germany, he waxed sleek and prospered mightily, until at the time about which I write, he was not only Epping's wealthiest resident, but also a selectman, pillar in the Second Church, president of the bank, and general grand high mogul of everything.

Sammy was the old man's only child, and knew it. He wore velvet pants: and patent leather shoes in the summer when all the other boys were barefooted; but his most heinous crime as I remembered it, was the round white starched collar he used to wear over the collar of his jacket.

Sammy's mother did what she could to spoil him. At that she didn't have to put in any overtime, for he was about as willing a subject, as could possibly have been found.

Those were the days, when any quantity of fraternal societies were coming into existence, and as Epping was a town where not more than five persons ever agreed on any one subject, it was a mighty good territory for new lodges.

Naturally, with all the men joining the Amalgamated Brotherhood of Clodhoppers, and the order of Husbandmen, and the women scrambling over each other in a bargain counter rush to be charter members of the Sisters of Ceres, we boys thought we had something coming to us in the way of a secret society, so we gathered in Fatty Ferguson's barn one afternoon, and banded ourselves into the Brothers of Mystery. Fatty Ferguson being the proud possessor of a discarded uniform once worn by a member of the Epping Cornet Band, was elected Grand Exalted Ruler, and I was made Keeper of the Sacred Seal, although my chance of doing business, depended on our improbable capture of such an animal, which we planned to keep in Fred Allen's duck pond.

The editor of the Epping Bugle printed some red silk badges for us to pin on our coats, and the Brothers were ready. At first, we attracted considerable attention at school by our badges, elaborate handclasps, and whispered passwords whenever two of the Brothers chanced to meet. As all the boys in our neighbourhood were members, with the exception of Sammy Smead, the novelty soon passed.

Now Sammy had everything we boys had, and a good many things we hadn't, but like everyone else in the world, he wanted what he hadn't which at that particular time, was a full-fledged membership in the Brothers.

Sammy, needless to say, had not been excluded from our select circle by chance, and it is doubtful if he would ever have become a member, if his mother, who was High Priestess of the Sisters of Ceres, had not found out that her darling had been left out in the cold.

She straightway called upon my mother, who having designs on an office on the Executive Board of the Sisters, passed the word along to me that if I wanted a new sled for Christmas, it would be well to see that Sammy was made a Brother.

Sammy being about as popular with the Brothers as sulphur and molasses, I was howled down when I proposed his name at a meeting, until I had a happy

thought, that as all the Brothers were charter members, we had had no initiations.

The idea of initiating Sammy, instantly became tremendously popular, and he was duly informed that he had been elected a member, and was told to report at our barn at three o'clock the next afternoon.

Did Sammy show up? He did, velvet pants, patent leather shoes, white collar and all. Only a circus could have kept him away.

We blindfolded him, and put him through a course of sprouts in the barn, including making him ride a pig bareback around the floor, and walk the plank which was a beam above the hay mow, and to which he hung like a cat, squalling and whimpering, until Skinny Mason stepped on his fingers and made him let go.

Having exhausted the resources of the barn, we marched him out into the yard planning to hang him by the heels from a tree, when to our delight we discovered a two-wheeled iron barrel of tar, which the workman who had been mending our driveway, had left uncovered when he knocked off for the day.

Instinctively, we marched Sammy up to the tar barrel, and I liberally daubed his hateful and, wonderful to relate, still clean collar with its contents, taking more pains to get it on his collar, than to keep it off his clothes. It was hard work, for the tar was lukewarm and naturally heavy; but I was making a pretty good job of it, when I heard Fred Allen yell, "Look Out!"

I turned just in time, and saw charging full tilt across the yard my old billy goat. The Brothers scattered in all directions, but Sammy who was blindfolded and did not sense his danger, stood patiently waiting his fate. Billy struck him squarely amidships, and Sammy leaving his feet, described a beautiful curve in the air, and landed head first in the tar barrel, just as his mother, who had been visiting my mother, stepped out on the porch to see how her darling was enjoying himself with his little playmates.

I only mentioned Sammy, to show you that you got off easy. The next time you are called upon to perform, do whatever is asked willingly. There's no fun in making a person do what he wants to do, and if you show no great indignation at doing a few tricks, you'll soon be let alone. Don't try to be funny, if you succeed you will have to give encores, and I take it that is not what you are after.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

P. S. —I did not get a sled; but I did saw three cords of wood, stove length.

Lynn, Mass.

October 30, 19—

Dear Ted:

Somehow the price of cut soles is worrying me more, just now, than the fact that you have not been elected to one of the school clubs.

I realize that your not making one of the school clubs yet, is a terrible tragedy in your young life; but I feel as though you are going to survive, and perhaps you will be elected to one after all. I've found it a pretty good rule, not to figure a shipment of shoes a total loss even when the jobber writes that he's returning

them, and if I were you I wouldn't borrow trouble until it's necessary. Trouble is the easiest thing in the world to borrow, and about the hardest to discount at the bank.

Maybe it's just as well you are having your touch of society chills and fever young, for it may save you from making a bigger fool of yourself later on. No one minds a young fool much, but an old one is about as sad an object as a Louisville distiller attending a Supreme Court decision on the prohibition law.

Society is all right, some of it; but just because you eat dessert at the end of your dinner, is no reason why you should make a meal of it. A little society, like the colic, goes a long way, and you want to remember that a man, like a piece of sole leather, usually figures out to what he is.

Burns, not Frankie the lightweight, but Bobbie who used to edit the Edinborough Daily Blade, back in the days when freshmen wore whiskers and plug hats, hit the nail on the head when he said, "A man's a man, for a' that."

I'll never forget when Aunt Carrie caught the society fever, nor will she. It was a couple of years before I was married, and it didn't make me want to postpone having a home of my own, although it did influence me to choose a girl who was society proof.

After your Grandmother Soule died, Carrie ran our old house and was doing a pretty good job of it, until Algernon Smiley came to Epping as principal of the grammar school. Algernon wore spectacles, a lisp, and long hair, and he could spout more poetry than a gusher well can oil. At that, he was a harmless sort of insect, if the girls of the town hadn't taken him seriously.

Algernon was a graduate of Harvard, and the only thing I ever had against that university. It didn't take him long to discover there was no real society in Epping, and not being at all backward about coming forward when he had anything to say, Carrie and her girl friends soon had the same idea. Now Epping had staggered along over two hundred years without the help of society, and was doing quite well thank you, with its church sociables, bean suppers, and candy pulls, until Algy butted in.

Everything we did was all wrong. "There was no culture," and having the hearty backing of all the girls he set out to culturate us. His first offense was a series of lectures, but after the young men had listened to him rave about the art of Early Egyptian Dancing, and the history of Nothing before Something, they unanimously had previous engagements when Algy sprang a lecture.

Next Algernon started a Browning Club, which consisted, so near as I could judge, in his reading a poem, and then everyone in the club expressing a different opinion as to what the poem meant. It may be good business for a poet to write a poem no one can understand, but believe me when I buy a rhyme for a street car ad it's got to be one every woman will recognize as advertising "The Princess Shoe."

To get back to Algy, after a while the attendance at the Browning clubs began to get mighty poor, and he had to think up a new scheme to keep the town from getting decultured. Somehow, the little cuss had scraped an acquaintance with some pretty solid men on the Harvard faculty, and he managed to drag several of them up to Epping to deliver lectures, with the result that the culture business began to show a healthy growth. Epping was not stupid, it had been bored.

Now while Algy had been trying to culturate Epping, he'd worn considerable horsehair off the sofa in Farmer Boggs' parlor, sitting up nights with his

daughter Ruby. Ruby was a nice cow-like girl, who hadn't much to say and proved it when she talked, and as Algy was never so happy as when he was doing all the talking, he got along with her fine. Then, too, Pa Boggs owned free and clear the best farm in the township, and had $15,000 salted away in Boston and Maine stock, and Algy, for all his culture, wasn't overlooking any bets like those.

Where Algy went wrong, was in patronizing people he thought didn't know as much as he. Whenever old man Boggs juggled beans with his knife, Algy would smile upon him so condescendingly the old man would almost bust with rage; and when Mrs. Boggs said "hain't" he would raise his eyes as though calling upon heaven to forgive her; but what blew the lid off came at a Browning Club meeting that Carrie had insisted upon having at our house.

Algy imported a noted Professor to give a talk on Prehistoric Fish, and when the great man had finished, we all stood around, the girls telling him how much they enjoyed it, and the men wishing he would go, so they could retire to the kitchen and shirt sleeves. Poor Ruby, during a lull in the general conversation, started the old chestnut about Ben Perkins the light keeper at Kittery falling down the light house stairs, ending with, "and you know he had a basket of eggs in one hand, a pitcher of milk in the other, and when he reached the bottom they had turned into an omelette. Ain't spinal stairs awful?"

At the word "spinal" the Professor snickered, and Algy who was always nasty when Ruby made a break, said, "I'm surprised at your ignorance Ruby: you mean spiral."

Ruby began to cry, and everyone looked uncomfortable. I was hopping mad. I guess maybe it was the tight patent leather shoes I had on. Anyway I'd seen about enough of Algy.

"Shut up, you Goat," I snapped at him. "Haven't you brains enough to know she meant the back stairs!"

Algy claimed he was insulted.

I allowed it wasn't possible.

Then he said he was a fool to have tried to culturize Epping.

I said I reckoned his allowing he was a fool, made it unanimous, and invited him out in the yard to settle things, although I never could have hit him, if he had accepted my invitation.

In two weeks Algy left town, and the next fall Ruby married Will Hayes over at George's Mills, and has been happy ever since.

Ted, I wouldn't think too much about those clubs. There's no use worrying about what people think of you; probably they don't. You've only been at Exeter a few weeks, so if I were you I wouldn't jump into the river yet. Now I'll admit it will please me if you are elected to a club, but if you aren't, I'm not going to go around with my head bowed in shame, and neither are you, for ten years from now, no one will be greatly interested whether you belonged to the Belta Pelts or the Plata Dates, and above all things don't toady. Eating dirt never got anyone anything. Look at Russia.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

November 6, 19—

Dear Ted:

I'm glad you've been elected to the Plata Dates, if for no other reason than because now that you have stopped worrying whether you would be, you will have time to worry about your studies. Don't you fool yourself that because E stood for excellent at the high school, I don't know that it stands for Execrable at Exeter. Now you are on the football team, it's better to have an E on your sweater, than on your report.

I thought when you were elected to the Plata Dates, you would be bubbling over with joy, but your letters are about as cheerful as a hearse. The teachers are picking on you, the football coach doesn't recognize your ability, and even the seniors so far ignore your presence, by failing to remove their hats and step into the gutter when you come along.

Whatever you do, don't get sorry for yourself. There's nothing in the world more silly than a person who is sorry for himself, and the ones who are, are always the ones who have no cause to be. Now I don't believe for a minute that the teachers at Exeter have picked you alone, out of five hundred boys, to jump on; they're too busy, and I guess your coach's main idea is to get a team together that can lick Andover, so it might be well, if you are finding people hard to please, to ask yourself if it's their fault.

If you go into your classrooms with only part of your lessons learned, you aren't going to fool your teachers very long, and if you go on to the football field with an air that the coach can't show you anything he's not likely to try. Half knowledge, is the most dangerous thing in the world. I never saw a successful shoe manufacturer who only had half knowledge of making shoes, and I guess Walter Camp isn't putting anyone on his All American, who only knows how to play his position half way.

You might as well make up your mind, Ted, to learn Virgil, from the "Arma virumque cano" thing to Finis. And it's just as well to let the coach think he can show you something about football: he only played three years on the Harvard 'Varsity, and even if you do know more than he, it will make him feel good.

Being sorry for yourself is a bad habit. I had it once for a whole year, and believe me it was the worst year I ever put in, and I'm counting the panic of 1907 too.

I'd been super. over at Clough & Spinney's in Georgetown for three years, and had the little shop running like a high-grade watch, when Henry Larney of Larney Bros. in Salem died and left the whole show to his son Claude. "But in trust" nevertheless, as the wills say, and it's a mighty good thing he did for Claude spent most of his time and all his money at Sheepshead Bay and Saratoga Springs, and couldn't tell a last from a foxing.

Old Josiah Lane was trustee, and having about as much respect for Claude's ability as a shoemaker as I have for the Bolsheviki as business men, he looked around for someone to run the factory and lighted on me.

When I got over being dizzy at the thought of running a five thousand pair factory, I grabbed the job, because I was afraid I'd refuse it if I stopped to consider the responsibility. That's a pretty good plan for you to follow, Ted. Don't let a big job scare you, just lay right into it, and if you keep both feet on the floor and don't rely too much on the bridge to make fancy shots, pretty soon the job begins to shrink, and you begin to grow, and before long you fit.

I had every possible kind of trouble with the factory: a strike that tied us up flat for eight weeks in the middle of the summer, to a fire in the storehouse that destroyed five thousand cases of shoes and every blamed time I was in the midst of a mess, old Josiah Lane would blow in, and blow up. It seemed like the old cuss was always hovering around like a buzzard over a herd of sick cattle, and when he lighted on me I felt as though he went away with chunks of my hide in his skinny fingers.

I was the worst shoemaker in the world, couldn't handle help, was a rotten financial man, had no head for details, and was so poor a buyer, it was a wonder some of the leather companies didn't run me for governor. As for production, he could make more shoes with a kit of cobbler's tools, than I could turn out with the help of the S. M. Co.

That old bird used to sit in the office chewing fine cut, and drawling out sarcastic remarks, until I could have knocked him cold; but even then I realized that a man who made shoes from pegs to welts, knew something, and I needed all the knowledge I could get.

After every bawling out, old Josiah used to creak to his feet, remarking, "I'll give ye another trial though I'm foolish to do it," while I stood by trembling with rage, wishing I wasn't married so I could bust his ugly old head open with a die.

Gosh! I used to get mad for the things that happened weren't my fault. First, I thought how foolish I'd been to leave my soft job at Clough & Spinney's, then, I began to get mad at the factory, myself, and all the daily troubles that were forever piling in on me, and I determined I'd lick that job if it killed me.

I gave more time to listening to old Josiah at my periodical dressing downs, and less time to hating him, and I lived in that old ark of a factory, until I knew every nail in every beam in its dirty ceiling, and could run any machine in it in the dark.

Along in the late fall, the monthly balance sheets began to look less like the treasury statements of the Dominican Republic, but they weren't so promising that there was any danger of J. P. Morgan coming to me for advice on how to make money, and on the 15th of December I wrote out my resignation, and handed it to old Josiah. The old man never even read it. Just tore it up, threw it under the desk, and sat chewing his fine cut, until I thought I'd jump out the window if he didn't say something.

"Want to git through do ye?" he drawled at last.

"I don't want to, I am," I snapped back.

Old Josiah reached in his pocket and handed me a paper. I opened it and nearly fainted. It was a three year contract calling for an annual $1000 increase in salary.

When I hit the earth again, I looked at the old man sitting there wagging his jaws and grinning, but somehow his smile had lost its sarcasm, and he seemed less like one of these gargoyle things that the foreigners hang on the outside of their churches, and more like a shrewd kindly old Yankee shoemaker.

Ted, I learned something that year besides how to run a big shoe factory. I learned that a rip snorting bawling out doesn't necessarily mean your superior thinks you a lightweight: if he couldn't see ability, he wouldn't take the trouble to cuss you. So when your teachers, or the coach, land on you don't think of "Harry Carey", (that isn't right but it's the nearest I can come to Jap for suicide) but if they land on you twice for the same mistake, pick out a nice deep spot in the jungle. If you don't the ivory hunters will get you.

Cheer up Ted crepe is expensive, and when you get blue be glad of the things you haven't got. I will be in Exeter Saturday afternoon. Look for me on the 1:30.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
November 20, 19—

Dear Ted:

I didn't say anything about it when you were home last Sunday, for you were so happy basking in the glory of that thirty-five yard drop-kick that won the Andover game I hadn't the heart to cast any gloom, but honestly Ted, as a deacon in the First Church I don't enjoy walking to service with a son who looks like a combination of an Italian sunset and a rummage sale of Batik draperies.

It's perfectly true that clothes don't make the man, but they help to, and because Joseph wore a coat of many colors and was chosen to rule a nation, is no reason for a young fellow to get himself up like an Irish Comedian at Keith's and expect to do likewise.

Customs have changed a little in the last few thousand years, and although it may still be true that a South Sea Islander may rule the tribe by virtue of being the proud possessor of a plug hat and a red flannel petticoat, it doesn't follow that a passionate pink tie with purple dots, and pea green silk socks with bright yellow clocks, will help you to sell a bill of goods to a hard-headed buyer in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

I don't want to rub it in too hard, for I realize that in boys there's an age for loud clothes, the same as there is in puppies for distemper, and that if given the right treatment they usually survive and are none the worse for their experience.

I won't hire a salesman who wears sporty clothes and carts around a lot of jewelry, for when one of my men is calling on the trade he is not exhibiting the latest styles in haberdashery, but the latest samples of the "Heart of the Hide" line, for I've learned that a buyer whose attention is distracted from the goods in question is a buyer lost.

All this reminds me of an experience I had when I was in my first and only year at Epping Academy. The Academy was really a high school although I believe my father did pay $10 a year for my tuition, and the teachers were called professors.

Well anyhow, at that time my one ambition in life was to own a real tailor-made suit, vivid color and design preferred.

Now buying my clothes had always been a simple matter, for when I needed a new suit which in my father's estimation was about once in two years, my mother and I drove over to the "Golden Bee Emporium: Boots & Shoes, Fancy Goods & Notions" at Bristol Centre, where, after much testing for wool between thumb and finger, and with the aid of lighted matches, and in direct opposition to my earnest request for brighter colors, I was always fitted out in a dark gray, or blue, or brown, ready made, and three sizes too large so I could grow into it.

One afternoon on my way home from school, I stopped in at the Mansion House, to see if I could persuade Cy Clark, the clerk, to go fishing on the following Saturday. As I entered the door an array of tailors' samples, on a table

by a front window, caught my eye. All thoughts of Cy promptly left my mind as I let my eyes feast longingly upon their checks and plaids and stripes.

The salesman, seeing that his wares had me running in a circle, assured me that the Prince of Wales had a morning suit exactly like one of his particularly violent black and white checks and that Governor Harrison had just ordered three green and red plaids.

The salesman informed me that $25 was the regular price but as a special favor I could buy at $20. Now I had $18 at home which I had earned that summer picking berries and doing chores, and finally protesting so violently I was sure he was going to weep, the drummer gave in and I raced home, broke open my china orange bank, and was back at the hotel having my measurements taken inside of ten minutes, for I was mortally afraid some one else would snap up the prize in my absence.

For the next three weeks I hung around the express office so much that old Hi Monroe threatened to lick me if I didn't keep away and not pester him.

Finally my suit came.

To tell the truth, I was somewhat startled, when I opened the box, for although the sample was pretty noticeable, the effect of the cloth made up in a suit was wonderful. From a background of stripes and checks of different colors, little knobs of brilliant purple, yellow, red, blue, and green broke out like measles on a boy's face, and I felt that maybe after all I had been a little hasty in my choice.

But when I tried the suit on, and gazed at myself in the mirror, my confidence returned, and I felt I had the one suit in town that would make people sit up and take notice. I was right.

I entered the dining room that evening just as my father was raising his saucer of tea to his lips.

"Good heavens!" he cried, spilling the tea in seven different directions.

"Why William, what have you got on?" my mother asked.

My brother Ted answered for her, "A rug."

Do you know Ted, blamed if that suit didn't look like a rug, an oriental one made in Connecticut, and your Uncle called the turn, although I never forgave him for it. That's why I named you after him.

At first, my father vowed no son of his was going to wear play actor's clothes around the village, but when he heard I had paid $18 for the suit, he changed his mind and said he wouldn't buy me another until it was worn out.

Your Uncle Ted made a lot of cheap remarks about rugs, which I put down to jealousy, and general soreheadedness, because I had made him pay me the day before, a dollar he owed me for six months. Even Grandma Haskins vowed it looked more like a crazy quilt than a suit of clothes, and I was feeling pretty blue until my mother made them lay off.

Next morning, I started for school, full of pride in my new clothes for I was sure my folks didn't know a nobby suit when they saw it, although there were knobs enough on that one for a blind man to see.

Ted had sneaked out ahead of me though, and when I reached the school yard I was greeted with cries of "Rug," and "Good morning, your Royal Highness," and "How's Governor Harrison this morning?" Ted had told them all.

On the way home, I met old Jed Bigelow in the square driving a green horse. Just as the horse got along side of me he shied, and then ran away throwing Jed into the ditch and ripping a wheel off his buggy. I always thought it was a

piece of paper that did the trick, but Jed swore it was the suit and threatened to send the constable after me.

How I hated that suit. At the end of two days I would never have worn it again but my father hid my other clothes and would only let me wear them to church on Sundays. Then I did my best to spoil it by wrestling and playing football in it, but the cloth was about an inch thick, it wouldn't tear and mud came off it like cheap blacking comes off a pair of shoes.

Finally, at the end of the month, my mother came to my rescue and sent it to the poor in Boston and I want to state right here that it's probably still being worn somewhere in the slums of that city, for it never would wear out. It was the only indestructible suit ever made.

Of course I know that as end on the football team you have a certain position to uphold, and I want you always to look well dressed; but I do wish you would try to choose clothes that I can't hear before you turn the corner, and by the way Ted, everything's going up except your marks. Now the football season's over perhaps you'll have more time to study. I'd try if I were you, it can't hurt you any.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
December 1, 19—

Dear Ted:

I can't say I was totally unprepared for the news, when your report came yesterday, for I met Professor Todd at the club a week ago and much against his will he had to admit, that when he asked you in your oral English exam., who wrote "The Merchant of Venice," you weren't sure whether it was Irvin Cobb or Robert W. Chambers.

Naturally, I expected a disaster when the fall marks came, but I was not prepared for a massacre. I had hoped for a sprinkling of C's with maybe a couple of B's thrown in careless like for extra poundage; but that flock of D's and E's got under my hide. It's all very well, for you to say that you can't see how it's going to help you make shoes to know how many steps A must take to walk around three sides of a square field two hundred feet to a side, if he wears number eight shoes and stops two minutes when half way round to watch a dog fight; but let me tell you one thing, son, any training that will teach you to think quickly, and get the right answer before the other fellow stops scratching his head, is valuable. And to-day, in the shoe business, the man who can trim all the corners and figure his product to fractions, is the man who buys the limousines, while[64] the fellow who runs on the good old hit or miss plan is settling with the leather companies for about fifteen cents on the dollar, and his wife is wondering whether she can make money by giving music lessons.

Probation is a good deal like the "flu": easy to get, and liable to be pretty serious if you don't treat it with the respect it deserves.

It isn't as if you were a fool. No son of your Ma's let alone mine could be, and your Grandfather Soule could have made a living selling snowballs to the Eskimos. It's pure kid laziness, and shiftlessness, mixed in with a little too

much football, and not enough curiosity to see what's printed on the pages of your school books.

Now you're on probation, there's only one thing to do, and that's what the fellow did who sat down by mistake on the red hot stove, and the quicker you do it the more comfortable it's going to be for all concerned including yourself.

So far as I've been able to see, there's no real conspiracy among the teachers at Exeter to prevent your filling your pockets with all the education you can carry away, and if I were you I'd be real liberal in helping myself. Education is a pretty handy thing to have around, and it stays by you all your life. Just because I've succeeded without much, is no sign you can, and anyway you'll feel a lot more comfortable later on when the conversation turns to history, and you know the Dauphin was the French Prince of Wales, and not a fish, as I always thought, until I looked the word up in the Encyclopedia.

Now I want you to sail into that Math., just as you hit the Andover quarter when he tried your end, and drop old J. Cæsar with a thud before he can get started. I know J. C. was a pretty tough bird, and how he ever found time to write all those books between scraps, I never could quite understand, unless he only fought an eight hour day, but it's your job to get him and get him hard.

One thing, Ted, that's going to save you heaps of trouble if you can only get it firmly fixed in that head of yours, is that you can't get anywhere or anything without WORK.

Just because you're the old man's son, isn't going to land you in a private office when you start in with William Soule. There's only one place in this factory a young fellow can start, whether he's a member of the Soule family or the son of a laborer, and that's bucking a truck in the shipping room at twelve per, where he'll get his hands full of splinters from the cases, and a dressing down from Mike that'll curl his hair whenever he makes a fool mistake.

There's no short cut to achievement, and work is what'll land you on the top of the heap quicker than anything else, although I've seen a lot of lightweights who spent enough time working hard to avoid work, to succeed with half their energy if spent in the right direction.

That reminds me of a fellow named Clarence I hired some years ago to make himself generally useful around the office. He said he was looking for work and he told the truth all right. He wanted to find out where it was, so he could keep away from it.

I let him stay a couple of months because I rather enjoyed watching his methods. In the morning, he would spend the first two hours scheming how to get the other clerks to do his work for him, and in the afternoon he was so blame busy seeing they had done it, he had little time to do anything else. I had seen people who hated work, but I had never seen anyone before who avoided it as though it were the plague.

The last straw came one afternoon when old Cyrus White of Black & White, the big St. Louis jobbers, walked out of my private office just after giving me an order for three thousand cases and tripped in a cord that fool work avoider Clarence had rigged up, so he could raise or lower the window shade without leaving his desk.

Now old Cy weighs about two twenty and Clarence who had looped one end of the string around his wrist weighed about ninety-eight pounds with a straw hat on, so when Cy went down with a crash that shook the whole factory, he just naturally yanked Clarence right out of his chair, and the two of them

became so tangled up in the cord, they lay like a couple of trussed fowls while the water cooler which had also capsized gurgled spring water down old Cy's neck.

You're right, I lost that three thousand case order, and it was ten years before I could sell old Cy another bill of goods, and to make matters worse, I had to pay Clarence $200 damages, for in his rage Cy nearly bit off one of his ears. Ever since, when I find anyone on my pay roll who is working to avoid work, he gets a swift trip to the sidewalk.

Now I'm not going to stop your allowance because you're on probation, I've more heart for the suffering Exeter shopkeepers than to do that. Neither am I going to forbid your going to the Christmas house party: those would be kid punishments and you're no longer a kid, although you've been acting like one for some time.

I'm simply putting it up to you as a man to get off probation by New Year's, and I want you to remember that as a 'varsity' end you've got to set a good example to the "preps." Think it over.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
December 10, 19—

Dear Ted:

I always thought J. Cæsar, Esq., and one Virgil wrote Latin, but when I was in your room last Saturday afternoon I saw you had copies of their books in English.

Now I'll admit that an English translation is the only way I could ever read those old timers. Latin is as much a mystery to me as the income tax; but one reason I am sending you to Exeter, is so you can play those fellows on their home grounds with a fair chance of winning.

I always thought you were a pretty good sport Ted, and I have always tried to teach you the game, and to play it square. I still think you're a good sport, and the only reason you are using those "trots" is because you haven't stopped to consider how unfair it is to J. Cæsar & Co.

I have a sneaking sort of liking for those old birds. J. Cæsar was the world's first heavyweight champion, and in his palmy days could have made Jack Dempsey step around some, and as for Virgil he could make words do tricks even better than I. W. W. meaning I. Woodrow Wilson. So it was a sort of shock to me to see you giving them a raw deal.

When you get right down to cases, son, your lessons are one of the few things that can't beat you if you study 'em, so it's pretty small punkins to try to rig the game against 'em. A shoemaker can buy his leather right, and figure his costs correctly on an order, but the buyer may get cold feet and refuse them, or the unions may call a strike, or one of about a hundred other things may happen to knock the profits higher than one of Babe Ruth's home runs.

With lessons it's different. Study them and they can't beat you. You wouldn't expect much glory if the Andover team you beat had been made up of one legged men. What about the handicap you're making the All-Romans play under when you tackle them with a couple of "trots" in your fists.

There's another reason I don't want you using "trots", and it's because it's liable to get you into the habit of doing things the easiest way. Now anyone is a boob if he doesn't do a thing the easiest way provided it's the right way; but he's more of a boob if he does a thing the easiest way only because it's the easiest way. And using English translations on your Latin is like paying number one prices for a block of poor damaged leather: it may be easier to get the leather, but when it's made into shoes and you begin to hunt for the profit you find it's gone A. W. O. L.

I don't remember ever having told you about Freddy Bean, but speaking of doing things the easiest way reminds me of him, so while I have the time I'll tell you.

Freddy's Pa ran a little store in Epping just across from the railroad station, where according to its sign he sold Books, Magazines, Newspapers & Stationery, and as he owned his own house and had a thrifty wife he managed to make a living although Epping was not a literary community. Pa Bean was an inoffensive little fellow who always wore a white tie with his everyday clothes, and loved to work out the piano rebuses in the newspapers in the evenings. He had advanced ideas on politics, was a single taxer, and to-day would be classed as a radical. Then we used to call him Half-Baked.

Freddy was a good average boy and likeable enough except for his one bad habit of wanting to do everything the easiest way, and believe me he carried it to extremes.

He used to sleep in his clothes because it was easier than dressing in the morning, but his Ma walloped that out of him. Then he had the bright idea of putting a sign with the price marked on it on most of the articles in his Pa's shop and going to the ball game, when the old gentleman went over to Bristol Centre Saturday afternoons on business. This worked all right at first for the Epping folks were honest, but one Saturday some strangers carried off about $100 worth of goods and Freddy got his from his father and got it good.

I could tell you a lot about the messes Freddy got into trying to do things the easiest way, but the super. is hanging around with a lot of inventory sheets so I'll have to cut this short with Freddy's prize performance. One summer morning Freddy's Pa and Ma went away for the day, but before they started Half Baked led Freddy out into the yard, shoved an axe into his unwilling hands and ordered him to cut down an oak that stood close to one side of the house, and was growing so big it was shutting out a lot of sunlight.

Now there wasn't a boy in Epping at that time who hadn't had considerable experience in chopping wood, unless it was Sammy Smead and he never counted anyway except on the afternoon we initiated him into the Brothers of Mystery, and there wasn't one of us who didn't hate it; but Freddy loathed it more than anything else, principally I guess, because there wasn't any easy way out. If you had to cut wood you had to cut it, and that's all there was to it.

Along about two that afternoon, a crowd of us boys bound for the swimming hole happened by Freddy's house, and found him pretty limp and blistery. He'd only hacked about half through the tree, but I think his mental anguish was worse than his physical exhaustion, because scheme as he might he had hit on no easy way to fell that oak, and the job looked as though it would last till sundown.

Freddy was a good diplomat, and he tried all the Tom Sawyer stuff on us he carried, but not a chance. There was not one of us who would chop wood when

he didn't positively have to, and it looked as though Freddy was going to chop until the job was finished, when Dick Harris said something about blowing it up with some gunpowder his father had stored in a keg in his corn crib.

There was not one of us who would have helped Freddy cut down the tree, neither was there one of us who would refuse to help him blow it up, and Freddy, because he saw an easy way out, was the most enthusiastic of all.

We did it. First we dug a hole about four feet deep at the foot of the tree and buried the keg of powder after boring a hole in the top for a fuse. We packed the dirt down tight all around the keg leaving just enough loose to run the fuse through. Then Freddy as master of ceremonies lighted the fuse and we stepped back to wait results.

We didn't wait long. There was a roar and we found ourselves on the grass in the midst of what resembled a volcano on the war path. Dirt, stones, grass, sticks, and heaven knows what else were milling around us in clouds, and out of the corner of one eye I saw Ma Bean's geranium bed sail gaily across the street and drape itself over Mrs. Harry Brown's front gate. Glass was falling around us like shrapnel, for every window in the Bean's house shivered itself out onto the lawn. The tree—well, Sir, it fell on the house, knocked off a chimney and broke down the piazza roof, and the next day Half Baked had to hire Jed Snow's team of oxen to pull it clear before they could even start cutting it up.

I've a very vivid recollection of what my father gave me, and I rather think Freddy's was the same only more so, in fact none of the crowd slid bases for some time, and Half Baked made Freddy cut six cords of wood during the next month.

I don't know what has become of Freddy, but I have never seen his name in the headlines, so I guess he's still hunting for easy ways to do things, but you can bet he's left gunpowder out of his schemes for the last forty years.

Now Ted you just mail me those "trots." I'll enjoy them, and you give those old timers a fair show from now on. It's not sporting Ted to pull a "pony" on them, for they can't win any way if you don't want them to. Play the game.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
January 27, 19—

Dear Ted:

That notice from Professor Todd stating that you had been taken off probation was the most welcome bit of news I've had in a long time, and the enclosed check is my way of saying thank you.

I knew if you once stopped fooling and got right down to cases, that none of those old best sellers like J. C. or Virgil could hold you for downs, and as for Quadratic Equations, your instructor writes me that if you'll take 'em seriously you can make 'em eat out of your hand.

Now you're again on speaking terms with your lessons, you can keep their friendship by visiting with them a couple of hours a day, and when they once learn you mean business they'll follow you around like a hungry cat follows the milk man.

There's nothing succeeds like success, whether it's getting respectable marks in your studies, or selling shoes, and if you don't believe it ask Charlie Dean.

Probably you've always thought of Charlie as my star salesman and you're right, but it wasn't many years ago Charlie couldn't have sold five dollar gold pieces for a quarter, even if he gave a patent corn cutter away with each as a premium.

Charlie came to work for me right out of the high school, and as he was always willing to do a little more than his share around the office, I decided to give him a try on the road, where he'd have a chance to make real money. So when a younger salesman left me one New Year's, I put Charlie through a course of sprouts in the factory to be sure he knew how the "Heart of the Hide" line was made, gave him a couple of trunks full of new samples, and shipped him out to the middle west.

Charlie was gone three months and he didn't sell enough goods to pay the express on his samples, but realizing a cub salesman's first trip is always his hardest, I swallowed my tongue and sent him out again.

I couldn't understand it. Charlie was no loafer, and I felt sure he was working hard each day, but he had no more success in persuading buyers to stock "The Heart of the Hide" line than old King Canute had in bossing the sea around. If he had done fairly well, I'd thought he was just green and would develop, but when he had been out six months and his sales record sheet was as white as a field of new fallen snow, I decided too much was enough, and wired him to return to the factory, for Fair Bros. were getting more solid in that territory every day, and I simply had to have distribution there.

When Charlie arrived in Lynn, I was going to fire him, for I never believed in putting a man back in the office who has been on the road. He's too liable to be down on the house, and afflict all the other clerks with the same poison; but Charlie pleaded so hard to stay, I finally gave him back his old job, and, as he showed no signs of being a trouble maker, I paid him no further attention.

The next winter, I had a hunch that women's fall styles would run heavy on calfskin, so I loaded up with a hundred thousand pairs of heavyweight cut soles and patted myself on the back that I had put one over on the trade. A few weeks later, the buyers made so loud a noise about Vici Kid a deaf mute could have heard 'em.

There I was, caught flatfooted with a hundred thousand pairs of soles stored in the basement, and the market on them dropping every day so fast I got dizzy when I tried to figure out how much I stood to lose.

I tried to take a loss and turn them back to the manufacturer. Nothing doing, nor would any other cut sole house take them except at a price that would have come near to busting me. Next I tried the manufacturers of women's shoes, not a chance. Then as the soles ran pretty heavy I tried boys' makers, again nothing doing.

I was getting desperate, for I had a lot of money tied up in those soles, and so far as I could see I was liable to own 'em for some time unless the sheriff took 'em.

One morning, I happened to think of Al Lippincott. You know his factory in Dover, the red one you can see from the station? Al makes a line of boys' and youths', but he is the hardest buyer in the whole trade, a regular rip tearing snorter who begins to yell the minute a salesman steps into his office, and keeps it up until the salesman either wants to lick him or to beat it.

I got Al on the long distance, and finally, after his usual outburst that nearly melted the wire, he allowed he was going to be in Lynn that afternoon and would drop in.

I went home feeling somewhat better, but while I was eating lunch the telephone rang, and I learned your Ma had been badly smashed up in an automobile accident, and had been taken to the Salem Hospital.

I never thought of Al again until I was going to bed that night, and then I was so worried about your Ma I didn't care much whether he'd called or not.

The next morning, when I rolled back the top of my desk, I found an order for the whole hundred thousand pairs of cut soles made out in Charlie Dean's handwriting and billed to Al Lippincott at two cents a pair more than I had paid for 'em.

I never asked Charlie how he made the sale, and he never told me, but when he asked for another chance on the road he got it, and knowing he'd sold the toughest man in the United States he made good from the kick-off.

I only mention Charlie because when you were on probation you were in the same kind of fix he was before he sold Al Lippincott. Now you know you can lick those studies of yours. I want you to crowd 'em so hard the teachers will mark down at least a B for you when you get up to recite.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
February 10, 19—

Dear Ted:

This trouble you seem to be having with your eyes, is causing your Ma a great deal of worry. She has visions of a blind son tapping his way through life with a cane and I expect in a few days, she'll have reached the dog on a leash stage. I'd be more worried, if I hadn't happened to remember that the mid-years are only two weeks off, and that eye trouble is one of the best known alibis.

Your suggestion of coming home early Sunday, so you can give your eyes a rest, I agree to most heartily. We'll go into Boston and have an oculist examine you. Then if you need glasses, I'll see that you get them, and if you don't, you're out of luck if you're trying to establish an alibi for flunking your exams.

Eyesight is a mighty curious thing. Some folks get so nearsighted they'll step over a ten dollar bill to pick up a nickel, and others can see a dollar a pair profit in a shipment of shoes the ordinary manufacturer would be glad to sell at cost. It takes pretty good eyesight to be a successful shoe manufacturer nowadays, for it's the ability to see profits where they don't exist, and then handle your output so that you make two little profits grow where only one grew before, that buys new tires for the car, and sends sons to "prep" schools.

Somehow, your reports don't make me feel you've strained your eyes studying. If you had, you wouldn't have made the break you did in your oral English exam. when according to Professor Todd you stated that Ben Johnson was president of the American League. Then, too, I haven't had an excess electric light bill from the school, so it's hard for me to believe your eyesight has been ruined by your burning the midnight electricity.

I remember a clerk I once had in the office, who had a terrible time with his eyes, especially, when he was about due for a bawling out for some fool mistake. He once made out a lot of shoe tags with the specifications calling for eight iron soles on comfort slippers, and when I was about to claw his hide for such a blunder, he claimed his desk was so far from a window he couldn't half see. I remembered that a lot of folks can read real well by electric light, and there was a hundred candle power bulb right over him; but I gave him the benefit of the doubt and moved him over beside a window.

Two weeks later, he made a mistake in a bill that cost me several hundred dollars, and then it was the bright light that dazzled him. I was suspicious, but he pleaded so hard for a day off, to rest his poor eyes in a darkened room, I told him to go ahead, and the next noon as I was driving home along the boulevard I spotted him fishing from some rocks, in a glare that would have made an Arab see green.

I meant to fire him, but I was so busy I forgot it, and for a month he went along without making a noticeable mistake. Then he came to me one day for a raise. I told him that his eyesight was so poor, that if the cashier put any extra money in his envelope he'd never even see it, and that he'd better strain his eyes a little looking for another job, as I couldn't have the responsibility on my shoulders of his going blind while working for me.

The old man wasn't born yesterday, Ted, and having had considerable experience with eyesight alibis he's a bit gun shy.

Perhaps one reason I'm a little suspicious of this eye trouble of yours, is that I have a very vivid recollection of your Uncle Ted the first year he was at boarding school. Ted started out like a whirlwind that fall, all A's and B's in his studies, until along in November he began to get more interested in wrestling with a flute he was trying to learn to play, than with his lessons, so that in December his marks had a striking resemblance to those of the present-day Germany.

In January, he developed serious eye trouble. He wrote home that his eyes were so bad he couldn't study, and was sure to fail at mid-year. Whether my father believed the first part of his wail I never knew, but I'm sure he did the second. Anyway he collared Ted one Saturday afternoon, and drove him over to the oculist at Bristol Centre taking me along as ballast.

Ted put up some pretty good arguments against going, claiming a terrible headache and a violent pain in his stomach. My father made him though, and when we finally reached the oculist, Ted really did look sick enough to have had not only eye trouble, but about all the other known diseases, as well.

Doctor Boggs, who was a queer little scrap of a man, as quick tempered as gunpowder, plumped Ted down in a chair, and began to peer at his eyes through a magnifying glass. The more he looked, the more nervous Ted became. Finally, the doctor asked him if his eyes felt any better, and Ted allowed they did.

Then the doctor put a lot of charts up about twenty feet away, and asked Ted to read the letters on them, which he did so quickly the doctor couldn't change the charts fast enough. I grinned, for by then I was sure Ted was faking. Ted also realized that for a boy whose eyes had been causing him so much trouble, he'd been giving a remarkable exhibition so when Doctor Boggs began trying different glasses on him, Ted protested that he couldn't see a thing with any of them.

The doctor was very patient, trying on pair after pair, Ted groaning louder with each new one. At last, the old fellow stopped for a few minutes and rummaged around in a desk drawer where he kept a lot of his eyeglasses. Suddenly, he turned to Ted clapped a new pair on his nose, and stood back smiling sweetly at him.

"There my boy," he said, as sweet as honey. "Those are much better, aren't they!"

I took a look at Ted and almost choked. Then I realized what was coming to him, so I tried to pass him the high sign. It was too late.

"Those are the only ones I've been able to see through, doctor," Ted chirped innocently.

The next instant, the doctor with one word "Fraud!" grabbed Ted by an ear and marched him to the door, while father followed looking about as pleasant as a thunder storm.

You've probably guessed the reason why already. There was no glass in the last frames. After we got home, father and Ted retired to the woodshed and I heard the most heartrending sounds. When Ted returned to school his marks began to improve at once, and they kept on getting better and better until the end of the year, and since that day Ted has never had on a pair of glasses. It was one of the quickest and most complete cures of eye trouble ever recorded, and it also proved that old Doctor Boggs knew his job.

Faking is mighty poor business Ted, whether it's trying to establish an alibi for flunking your school exams, or making army shoes with paper soles for the government. The first is apt to get you into the habit of shirking your work, and the second is mighty likely to land you in jail. Some business men, not many, by faking the quality of their goods shoot up like a sky rocket, but when the time for repeat orders comes along, they come down like the stick, and if there's anything any more useless than the spent stick of a sky rocket, it's a man who tries to ease his way through life on alibis.

Do your best and stand by it. If it is your best, you have no cause to be ashamed no matter how it turns out, and remember that a man who never made a mistake never made anything.

My boy, if there really is something the matter with your eyes, we can't have them attended to any too quickly, and if there isn't I somehow feel a little frankness now, on my part, may effect almost as rapid a cure as your Uncle Ted's and without any painful ending.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.
February 20, 19—

Dear Ted:

My boy, I owe you an apology for doubting you had eye trouble. It was hard for me to believe you were faking; but the circumstantial evidence against you was pretty strong. I should have known better, though, for you have always played fair with me so I ask your pardon.

That letter from the oculist, in Portsmouth, saying you needed glasses was a relief and a disappointment. A relief, to know you weren't trying to slip one over,

and a disappointment to learn you must wear glasses. Don't let wearing glasses disturb you. You won't need them when you are playing football, and if you only wear them when you read your nose won't be disfigured by the strain.

It's funny how a young fellow like you, who has the time and the education to appreciate them, don't seem to care about reading good books, while an old rough and ready like your dad, can't have enough of them. When I was your age, I was too busy trying to help support the family, to find time to read much besides the Epping Bugle, whereas, you seem to be too busy figuring out how to have a good time, to care what the biggest men of the world thought about things.

You've wanted to know why I am always buying so many books, and although I never realized it before, I guess it's because I couldn't have them when I was young.

Yes, on that house party at Manchester, Ted, go ahead and have a good time and while I remember it here's a check that may come in handy for a few extras. If I were you, I'd take all the extras in the way of clothes you can cram into a suit case.

Forewarned is forearmed you know, and it's just as well when going to a house party, or to a fight, to carry all the heavy artillery you muster, for you never can be sure you won't need it.

I've been to only one house party, and I don't expect I shall ever go to another; but if I do even if it's only for a week end, I'm going to take every rag of clothing I own from oilskins to dress suit, not forgetting rubber boots and pumps, especially the pumps.

I believe a person is supposed to have a good time at a house party, but my only offense was about as enjoyable as the time I had typhoid.

Perhaps you remember the summer your Ma and I went to Pittsfield for two weeks, and left you with your Aunt Sarah over at Marblehead.

Well anyway we did, and I haven't thought much of Pittsfield since. We got there on a Friday, and the next morning I went down town for something and ran slap into Jack Hamilton.

Jack and I were boys together in Epping, and used to do considerable business trading rabbits and whatever live stock we happened to own.

Jack left Epping when he was seventeen, went to work for a stock broker in Boston, and made barrels of money, incidently marrying a Philadelphia girl who had callouses on her thumbs from cutting coupons.

Jack has always been my broker and handled all my finances, but for a good many years we hadn't seen much of each other socially, so when he suggested your Ma and I go out that afternoon to his cottage in Lenox, and stay over Sunday, I was glad to accept, thinking we'd have a chance to talk over old times. I went back to the hotel and told your Ma, and then promptly forgot all about it, for there was an old fellow living in Pittsfield who'd just invented an extension last that looked good to me.

I spent most of the afternoon in the old inventor's shop and when I returned to the hotel along about five, I found a high-wheeled cart outside which Jack had sent over to get us, and your Ma having duck fits for fear I wouldn't show up.

She said she'd put everything in my suit case I'd need, so I only slicked up a bit and we were off.

It was a mighty pretty ride over to Lenox, but when we turned in at the gate to Jack's cottage, I thought our driver had made a mistake, for the place looked bigger than the Boston Public Library, and about as homelike as a New York apartment house.

A frozen-faced individual in brass-buttoned red vest and a waiter's uniform met us at the front door, and when I told him I was William Soule of Lynn he led the way into the hall and disappeared.

We hung around for some time. Then a maid came along and showed us to our rooms. It was a mighty nice room I had, with pink silk wall coverings and gray wicker furniture, and with a tiled bath off it, that gleamed like a Pullman porter's smile. I looked the bed over carefully, decided it was comfortable, and then thought I'd go out in the yard and walk around. As I stepped on to the piazza, a haughty-faced woman disentangled herself from a group of ladies who were playing cards, and came towards me murmuring, Mr. Soule?

I pleaded guilty, and she extended two cold fingers, that had about as much cordiality in them as a dead smelt, and said she was pleased to meet me. From her tone, I judged she wasn't going to lead any cheers over the fact, so I bowed politely and marched on out to the stables in front of which I saw a boy exercising a mighty likely-looking colt. Jack had some fine horses, and a wonderful herd of Jerseys. His head groom was a real human sort of chap, who knew more about cattle than any man I ever met, and we were having a real good visit together when a gong like a fire alarm started somewhere in the house.

I made the piazza in three jumps, tore through the hall and up the stairs determined to get your Ma out before the house burned down, for what I'd seen of the Lenox Fire Department, sitting in his shirt sleeves before the door of the hose house as we drove over from Pittsfield, hadn't inspired me with any great amount of confidence in his ability to put out anything bigger than a bonfire.

As I rushed into the upper hall, I thought it funny I didn't smell smoke, so when I ran smack into a maid I grabbed her and asked her where the fire was.

"Fire!" she squealed.

"Yes," I answered, "wasn't that a fire gong?"

Ted, you should have seen her face. I thought she'd choke. She did her best to keep it straight, and not laugh, but it was some struggle.

At last she managed to stammer, that the gong wasn't for fire at all, but to let the guests know it was time to dress for dinner.

I felt as big as a man on Broadway looks from the tower of the Woolworth building, so I slipped her a dollar and ducked for my room.

There I sat down to get my breath, hoping that girl wouldn't tell on me, and wishing I was back in Lynn, for I saw rough weather ahead unless I kept my eyes open and my mouth shut.

I shaved, and started to climb into my regimentals. Your Ma had put in shirts, studs, collars, tie, vest, coat, silk socks, pants, and every last article of necessary trappings except pumps, and pumps were about as necessary to me then as a little leather is to a pair of shoes.

I had a horrible sort of feeling as though my stomach was slowly revolving around inside of me, and my legs felt as if they were trying to go two ways at once, for I had worn a pair of tan shoes over from Pittsfield, and I knew from the glimpse I'd caught of Mrs. Hamilton's friends, that if I didn't wear my dress suit I'd rank lower than the deuce in that game.

Just how to wear that dress suit I couldn't quite figure out. It had to be done, that was certain, but as raw as I was on society stuff, I knew tan shoes and full dress would not get by. Then I remembered the bell in the wall beside the bed. In two jumps I had a thumb on it squeezing for dear life, for I thought if one of the servants answered, I could get word out to my friend the head groom to lend me a pair of black shoes. What size didn't matter, I'd have made any size fit.

Then I heard someone running along the hall outside, and yanked open the door in the face of the same maid I'd asked about the gong.

I slammed the door shut and looked at my watch. It was seven o'clock, and I figured half an hour at the most, was all the time I had to get a pair of black shoes, and from the way I was located, a pair of black shoes seemed as easy to get as money from the government on a war contract.

Jack wasn't home, and anyway he wore shoes about three sizes smaller than mine, and as for his wife she was out of the question.

I'd about decided to go to bed and play sick, when I happened to glance out of the window and saw a girl about fifteen riding a horse around the circular drive in front of the house.

She was a real friendly-looking kid, and grinned up at me as she passed, so the next time she came around I leaned out and beckoned to her. She rode up under my window, and I told her the fix I was in.

"What size?" she asked without any hesitation.

"Anything from nine up," I replied.

"Gimme some money," she said.

I dropped her a ten spot. She caught it and was off, tearing down the drive like a jockey, and twenty minutes later she shoved a pair of pumps through my door she'd bought in Pittsfield, and I sailed down to dinner a trifle late, but as dignified as a London alderman.

Now Ted you've had considerable more experience with society than I've had, and probably you won't make any break at that house party, but if I were you after you get your suit case packed, I'd go through it a second time to see if anything's missing. Carefulness is a mighty handy habit to have around the house, whether it's a man's ability to look far enough ahead not to borrow on his insurance policy, or his wife's skill in keeping down the bills.

I've had clerks in the office who'd do a job in jig time and leave behind enough mistakes to make the Bolsheviki envious, and when it comes time to sweeten salaries they are always surprised and hurt, because they are passed by for the fellows who haven't such fancy windups, but do have better control.

Speed is a tremendous asset to-day, and when it's combined with control it's almost unbeatable. For example, Walter Johnson. Still, I've seen old Cicotte mow down the Red Sox with only two hits when he hadn't enough speed to break a window, and you'll find that a young fellow who can do a job in half a day, and get it right, is a better man to have on your pay roll than a chap who can do the same work in half an hour, and then spend a day correcting his mistakes.

Have a good time, and perhaps when you get back to school your eyes will feel better so you can make a creditable showing at your mid-years.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

P. S.—The girl who bought me the pumps is Jack Hamilton's daughter. She's married and has three children so don't get excited.

Lynn, Mass.

February 28, 19—

Dear Ted:

I did considerable wondering while you were home last week, why it was your clothes carried a reek that seemed a cross between a tannery vat and a grease extractor.

Your Ma says "stink" is vulgar. Maybe it is, but it's good plain English, and it describes that poison gas you seemed to be carrying around with you, better than any such ladylike word as smell.

I wasn't wise until you stopped at the corner on the way to the station and lighted one. I was looking out the window at the time, and it made me plumb disgusted to see you swagger off polluting the air with a cigarette.

Now I never believed in raising a boy on "Don't." When you say "Don't" do a thing, the average person at once wants to do the very thing you tell him not to do, although before you had forbidden it, you probably could not have hired him to do it. "Don'ts" were what got the Germans in bad.

When I was in Berlin in '99 attending the International Shoe Manufacturers' Congress, there were "Verboten" signs on pretty nearly everything. "Verboten" is German for "Keep off the Grass," or something like that, anyway it means "Don't," and every time I saw one of those blamed signs, I immediately wanted to do what was forbidden.

One evening Al Lippincott and I strayed away from the bunch, and wandered into a sort of open air garden. There was a theatre, with a vaudeville show that the Watch and Ward Society at home would have closed up the first night. But the music was fine, so we picked out a table and ordered a light lunch of pickled pigs feet and sauerkraut, and were attending strictly to business when the manager, followed by two German army officers, walked up, and informed us we'd have to give up our seats. Seems they had some fool rule about civilians having to clear out if army officers wanted their table.

Now Al has always had dyspepsia, and the pickled pigs feet and sauerkraut had not done his stomach any good, and I had been "verbotened" almost to death ever since I had been in Berlin so we told them to run away and play, and turned our backs.

The next instant someone grabbed Al by the coat collar and gave him a shake.

"Do you not understand pig dog it is verboten?" a voice said.

Al wrenched free, and saw it was the younger of the two officers who had given him the shaking. He was a pasty faced, pimperly, fair-haired young man, with a monocle in one eye, and a waist that looked like it was made that way by corsets, and he had a 45 calibre sword dangling by his side that was bigger than any the Crusaders ever carried.

If he hadn't said "verboten," Al might have given him a good bawling out and let it go at that, but "verboten" to us by that time was like waving a red flag in front of a he cow, so Al gave him a good shove. The officer tripped over his

sword and sat down ker-splash in a plate of hot soup an old lady was eating at the next table.

Waiters came running from all directions, but Al and I grabbed up a couple of chairs and they danced around in a circle not daring to close, while the soup spiller and his friend sputtered with rage.

"I am disgraced," yelled the one Al capsized.

"I want to fight. I would kill you, but you are not titled. I'm disgraced."

"You're a disgrace, all right," Al interrupted, "but if you want a fight, I guess we can help you out. I'm the Earl of Dover," he continued kicking a waiter in the shin who had come too near for safety, "and my friend here is the Duke of Lynn, so if you know some nice quiet place where we can settle this without gloves, lead on, we're with you."

At the mention of our titles the officers quieted down, and whispered together, then the older one bowed stiffly to me and said, "My friend accepts your friend's challenge. Follow us if you please."

They stalked out. Al and I followed. We turned into a side street, and finally came into a quiet square with a watering trough in the centre.

"We will not be interrupted here," said the older officer.

"Fine," Al replied, peeling off his coat, while the soup spiller did the same.

"Here is a sword," said the older officer handing Al his.

"What's that for?" Al asked.

"To fight with," the officer replied.

"I fight with my fists," Al shouted.

"Fighting with the fists is verboten," the officer replied.

"Get out of my way" Al yelled, and, shoving him aside, he grabbed the younger, sat down on the edge of the watering trough, spread him across his lap, and gave him with his own sword a good spanking, while the older one danced around yelling like a wild man.

Ted, you never heard such a yowling and hollering as those two set up. It would have raised the dead, and it did raise about twenty police, who grabbed us just as Al was ducking the younger one in the watering trough for the second time.

Well sir, they carted Al and me off to jail, and dumped us into a cell, where there was a straw mattress on the floor. Al had hay fever, and, believe me, we spent a pretty miserable night.

In the morning, we learned the young officer Al spanked was Prince Pigestecher, a fourteenth cousin of an aunt of the Kaiser's. We were in bad. It took the American Embassy three weeks working night shifts to get us out of jail, and then we greased our way with a five hundred dollar fine each, and that's why I made nurses' shoes at cost for the British Government when the war started.

I only mentioned this experience of Al's, to show the danger of too many "Don'ts," and it's one reason why I am not going to say, "Don't smoke cigarettes." I want you to think it over carefully, and see if in your own mind you think a boy not yet eighteen is doing a fine, manly thing to go around with a scent on his breath like Moon Island at low tide. Is he setting a good example to the younger boys, who look up to him because he's a 'varsity end, and one of the big men of the school?

Ask your trainer if cigarettes will improve your wind. I have read a lot of truck written by men with a string of letters after their names, who try to prove

that cigarettes do not hurt a man, but I never yet have read anything that proved to my satisfaction that they did anyone any real good.

Remember Ted that no matter how seriously you take yourself, you are not a man. I want you to grow up a clean, manly, two-fisted shoemaker, not a chicken-breasted, weasel-eyed manufacturer of cigarette ashes. Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and a few others who were not bush leaguers managed[104] to do pretty well without smoking cigarettes, and they are good examples for a young American to imitate. Think it over, my boy.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

March 12, 19—

Dear Ted:

The most welcome letter I found waiting for me on my return from St. Louis was the report of your mid-years. Ted, you did real well considering all the handicaps you were working under, and I'm more than pleased to see that the old Soule fighting spirit has been passed along to you.

We Soules have always prided ourselves on being able to do our best work when things looked blackest. That back to the wall, "Don't give up the ship," determination has pulled us through some mighty rough places, whether hauling trawls on the Grand Banks, or fighting our way up from the ranks in business.

You are just beginning to realize you have the same amount of grit engrained in your hide, and it's a mighty comforting thought to wear under your shirt, for the man who won't be licked seldom is, and the quality of never knowing when you are beaten has made more impossible things possible, than any other one thing in the world.

I remember how when my father died and left me my mother, two young sisters, and a big mortgage to support. I was mad clear through. Not at the idea of having to support my folks, I was glad enough to do that, for no boy ever had better; but because I couldn't finish my schooling. I determined I'd work like blazes to cheat Fate for the nasty wallop it had handed me, and work like blazes I did. After all I think it was good for me. A boy who has to make his own way usually does, if he has the right stuff in him, and that's why I don't intend you shall step from school into a private office here in the factory.

It's so much more gratifying when the time comes to look back, to know that what you have, you alone have made possible, and not to have to give the credit to some one else. And that's why, when you go to work, I'm going to see to it that you learn shoemaking from tanning to selling, so that when your time comes to look back you can say to yourself, "My father left me a ten thousand pair factory, but I've boosted it to twenty-five."

There was one thing though in your recent letter I don't quite get, and that's the necessity for your spending so much of your time in Portsmouth. Now I know Portsmouth is a nice New England town, filled with quaint old colonial houses, and enough historical incidents to make a three volume series, but I never knew you to be wildly interested in such things, and since I got that bill

of $24.25 from the Rockingham for dinners, I'm suspecting you don't go there to study history.

One evening last fall, on the way home from Ogunquit, the car broke down in Portsmouth, and while it was being repaired, I took in one of the movies. The show was quite good and I enjoyed it, until I came out when it was over, and found a crowd of Exeter boys hanging around the entrance speaking to any good looking young girl who was alone.

Then there was a general pairing off, and strolling up and down the main streets, looking in the shop windows, and much loud talking, giggling, and laughter, while the young townies stood on the corners making cheap remarks. Some of your schoolmates took their lady friends into the little lunch rooms with which Portsmouth is so plentifully supplied, and bought them suppers of ham and eggs, and ice cream, while a few with more money went to the Rockingham.

I moseyed around the town quite a bit watching these schoolmates of yours, and was thoroughly disgusted. Not that I saw anything really wrong. I didn't. Every one of the boys had taken the cars for Exeter by eleven, but there was such a general kissing and dumbfoolishness I'd like to have spanked the lot.

Perhaps it's heaps of satisfaction to a young fellow, one of the big men of the school, to hike for Portsmouth with a few dollars of his dad's burning holes in his pocket, cut the prettiest shop or factory girl out of a crowd, and carry her off for supper, spending his week's allowance in one evening, but I can't see it.

Now don't think I'm down on factory girls. I'm not. I've employed heaps of them, and with mighty few exceptions they've been respectable hard-working girls, who could hold their head up anywhere, and although as a rule they would scratch a fellow's eyes out who tried to get fresh with them, they don't mind paying for what they consider a good time with a few kisses.

Now I'm not a snob, and if I ever see any signs of your becoming one, I'll whale it out of you in jig time, for I hate a too-proud-to-speak individual, as much as I hate a crooked leather salesman. But I'd rather you spent your evenings in Exeter, on the piazza of those Eaton girls to whom you introduced me, than parading the streets of Portsmouth with a factory girl hanging on your arm.

I remember my first lesson in chivalry, and before the super. comes in to tell me there's an embargo on freight out of Lynn, I'll pass it along.

I was in the grammar school, and about ten years old. One day at recess, a little girl named Sally Perkins had a bag of peppermint candy and was treating the other girls, when Butcher Burch, a great hulking boy of twelve, snatched the bag out of Sal's hand and began to gobble it as fast as he could.

I was furious, for little Sally was a nice pleasant girl who never stuck her tongue out at me, and I should like to have whaled the Butcher, but he had soundly thrashed me on several occasions, and I knew he would repeat if I made any protest.

I stood hesitating. Sally was crying her head off, and the Butcher was cramming the candy into his ugly mouth as fast as he could, when along came my father.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

I told him, suggesting he make the Butcher return the candy.

"That's your job," he replied.

"But he can lick me," I stammered, remembering former disastrous battles I had fought with the bully.

"That makes no difference," replied my father. "It's just as well for you to learn now, that whenever you see a girl or a woman insulted, it's the business of every decent man or boy to come to her rescue. I give you your choice of fighting that boy now, or taking a licking from me when you come home."

I took a good look at my father and saw he meant every word he said, and then because I hated the Butcher for what he had done to Sally, I lowered my head and sailed in, fists flying like a windmill.

Luckily, one of my first blows hit the Butcher full on the mouth and he let out a howl—and candy. He must have had half a pound in his mouth when I hit him. Knowing that my only chance was to bewilder him with my attack, I let fly everything I knew, and for a couple of minutes I had the best of it. Then his weight and strength began to tell, and he hammered me about as he pleased, finally landing a swing on my jaw that knocked me off my feet.

When I came to, I found my head resting on my father's knee, while Sally was mopping away at my bloody nose with her little, and not too clean, handkerchief, clutching in her other hand the remnants of her bag of candy. Young as I was I'll never forget the look of pride on my father's face, when later he handed me over to my mother for repairs, saying, "Patch him up, Mother, he's been fighting to protect a girl."

Ted, my boy, I want you to grow up with a reverent respect for all women, for the worst woman who ever lived, you may be sure, had some good qualities, and the best of them are far too good for any man. Besides you owe it to your Ma, for no sweeter, better woman than she ever breathed, and although there may be no real harm in the girls you meet in Portsmouth, the sort who let a fellow pick them up on the street and kiss them good night, are not the kind who are going to increase your respect for women, so my advice to you is, cut it out.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

March 20, 19—

Dear Ted:

You didn't have to write me that those boys you brought home with you on last Sunday were wonders. They told me so themselves.

Seriously Ted, they didn't make much of a hit with me. I don't mind a young fellow holding up his head. It's a sign of spirit the same as it is in a horse. No man who wears his chin on his vest gets far in life, and no one but a tin horn who's trying to throw a bluff he can ride, wants a horse that hangs its head between its knees; but neither have I much use for the young chap who's nose is forever pointing skyward as though he were marching along the edge of a tanning vat on a hot summer day.

Spirit's all right now that we have prohibition, but superiority of manner isn't. If you really are a man's superior he knows it, and if you aren't and try to act as if you are, he's liable to laugh at you; and by superior I mean superior in brains or ability to accomplish worth while things.

Now one of your friends thought he'd impress me by saying that he was descended from the Earl of Hampton, and he didn't like it a bit when I told him I wouldn't hold that up against him, and that for all I knew the Earl might have been perfectly respectable. He also said his ancestors came over on the Mayflower, and wanted to know if any of my family had crossed on the same ship, and I'll bet he thought I was impossible when I told him it was more likely to have been the Cauliflower, for the Soules were always fond of New England boiled dinners.

The other was money superior. From what he said, I learned that his dad had made a mint out of raincoat contracts during the war, and has ever since been setting up autos for the family like the lumber jacks used to set up drinks for the crowd in Pat Healey's saloon on pay night.

Money's a mighty useful article to have around these days, and it's nothing against a man if he has plenty of it, nor is it to his discredit if he hasn't—and ancestors don't do a fellow any harm if he keeps remembering they're dead and can't help him earn a living.

Money will buy many things worth having, but not the things most worth while. For a poor man with a reputation for keeping his word is a better citizen any day than a millionaire who's a liar, and I'd much rather have a young man on my pay roll, whose family came over in the steerage and hasn't a grudge against work, than a fellow who can trace his ancestry back to the peerage and is trying to get by on dead men's reputations.

Now don't think I'm down on millionaires. I'm not; some of the biggest men in this country are also the richest. But when you and I took that trip to Washington, the men whose statues we saw in the Hall of Fame, were not honored by their states for the money they had made, but for what they had done, and I didn't notice any inscription reading, "John Jenkins Stuart, Great-grandson of the Second Assistant Royal Bartender."

It's usually a poor plan to criticise a person's friends, but I'm going to do that very thing in regard to yours, for I've had considerable more experience than you, and I know how dangerous the wrong kind of friends are. The right kind of friends never did anyone any harm, and the wrong kind never did anyone any good, and take it from me, son, the two boys you brought home over the week end are not the right kind.

Unless I'm much mistaken, one will try to get by on his ancestors' reputation, and the other on his father's money, and neither will be classed among the three hundred hitters when the great Umpire calls them out.

You don't have to be ashamed of your ancestors, or my money, and it did me a world of good to overhear you say to young Raincoats that I might not have made a million out of the war, but there wasn't a leather company in the country which wouldn't sell me any amount of stock I cared to order. That's the sort of a reputation I've always tried to deserve. It's the aim of every decent American business man, but just the same it's fine to feel my only kid's as proud of it as I am.

Now I've met several of your schoolmates I'd sooner tie up to than the boys you exhibited. That roommate of yours for instance. He's pretty green yet, and his taste in neckties is awful, although it's improving, but I'll bet that ten years from now you'll be more proud of what he's accomplished, than he will of what you've done, unless you scratch considerable dirt in the meantime. That other

boy, the dark-haired one from Virginia, he'll get on too; he's worth while, cultivate him.

When I was a little older than you, I once made a mistake in a friend that had mighty serious results, and I don't want you running the same risks.

It was when I was working in the Epping National Bank, that a pretty slick fellow by the name of J. Peters Wellford blew into town, hired two rooms at the Mansion House, and the best rig Sol Higgins had in his livery stable, and settled down to live the life of a gentleman of leisure.

Now every man in Epping worked, except George Banes the town half wit, and Jim Spencer the town drunk, and a person who labored neither with his hands nor brains was considered not quite respectable.

J. Peters, however, didn't get drunk, and he had a wit that was sharper than a new-honed razor, and, as he wasn't curious, paid his bills, and seemed to mind his business and no one else's, besides having faultless manners and a pocket full of ready money, the younger folks after a short period of probation welcomed him with open arms.

He never made much of a hit with the old people, and as I look back I can see it was their intuition gained by hard experience that warned them that J. Peters was not all he seemed, although at the time I put it down to pure envy.

From the first, J. Peters who was at least fifteen years older, took a great fancy to me.

He was forever hanging round the bank, inviting me to dinner at the Mansion House, driving me about the country and going fishing with me on Saturday afternoons.

J. Peters was extremely well read, seemed to have traveled everywhere, and knew men intimately whose names in the financial world were all majestic. I thought J. Peters a whale of a chap and tried in every possible way to imitate him, even to copying so far as I was able his slow drawling way of speaking.

My father couldn't see J. Peters with a spy glass, but neither could he prove anything to his discredit, and as I was then at the beautiful age of eighteen when one knows so much more than he ever does again, my father's warnings flowed out of my ears like water from a sieve.

One day, six months after J. Peters had arrived in Epping, he proposed that I accompany him on a week end trip to Boston which I was crazy to do, but had to refuse on account of my finances being at low tide.

J. Peters wouldn't take no for an answer, however, and finally persuaded me to go as his guest.

We were to take the noon train on a Friday; but when Thursday night came he called to me from the piazza of the Mansion House as I was on my way home from work, and told me that something had come up which would prevent his going until Saturday.

He pushed a roll of bills into my hands telling me to go as we had planned, engage rooms at the American House, buy theatre tickets for Saturday evening, and wait for him as he would follow on the Saturday noon train.

His story sounded plausible enough so I followed his directions, and had a gorgeous time until six o'clock Saturday evening came and with it no J. Peters. I waited for him in the lobby of the hotel until midnight, and then went to bed feeling he must have missed his train but would show up the next day.

He didn't though, and I spent Sunday roaming around the city seeing the sights, returning to the hotel for supper. Just as I was pushing my way through

the front door someone grabbed me, then I felt something cold and steely clasped around my wrists, and looking up saw Hen Winters, the sheriff of Epping County, scowling down at me.

When I recovered enough from my fright to understand what it all meant, I learned that I was wanted for stealing $20,000 in Cash from the Epping National Bank, and that explanations were out of order.

The bank had been robbed. J. Peters and I were missing, and the mere fact that all the money Hen found in my pockets after a painstaking search amounted to $9.75 didn't get me anywhere, for my intimacy with J. Peters was known to everyone in town.

Back I went to Epping handcuffed to Hen, and the fact that we reached home late when no one was at the station to see us, was all that kept my folks from dying of shame.

My father stood my bail, and in a few days the detectives put matters straight by discovering that on the night I left for Boston, J. Peters alone had robbed the bank and made good his escape to Canada, but, believe me, Ted, until that mess was cleaned up I felt about as joyful as a leather merchant who's carrying a big stock in a falling market.

Now I don't believe for a minute, that either of those boys you brought home with you over Sunday, will turn out to be a J. Peters. It takes brains to be a successful bank robber, and in my estimation neither has enough of that commodity to head the lowest class in a school for feeble minded. But I do think they have enough nonsense in their heads to get you into a peck of trouble if you continue to run with them, so if I were you I'd cut them out.

At the best those boys may be harmless. There are a lot of things that don't do a man any particular harm, but life is only a short stretch, so why clutter it up with a lot of harmless things, when every young American has the opportunity to enrich it with what is really worth while.

The friends you make during the next few years will be your friends through life, and if I were you I'd select them as carefully as you do your neckties for they will wear much longer.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

March 28, 19—

Dear Ted:

Don't think that the old man has set up as a sort of a composite wiseacre, who believes he knows more than Solomon, Socrates & Company. A man can't knock around the shoe trade for thirty odd years without picking up a pretty general line of useful knowledge, and if he has a son, it's kind of up to him to see that the boy gets the benefit of what his dad learned in the School of Hard Knocks. That's why I have tried to give you some hints in my letters in regard to certain things I would not do. Betting is one of them.

When I read your last letter in which you said you cleaned up twenty bucks on the Indoor Games, I realized that although you were not yet slithering down the greased toboggan slide to perdition, it wouldn't do any harm to hand out a

little advice you can use as a sort of sand paper seat to your pants, to keep you from exceeding the speed limit.

Speaking of sand paper, reminds me of something that happened one year on the train coming home from the Shoe and Leather Fair at St. Louis, and as I have a few minutes before Miss Sweeney brings in the figures on that last shipment of the Company's leather, I'll pass it on to you for what it's worth.

I was in the observation car, trying to write a few letters amid the chatter of a group of red hot sports, who I judged from their remarks, were on the way home from playing the races at New Orleans. One young fellow, in a sunset suit, was particularly noisy. Every few minutes, he would draw a huge wad of bills out of his pocket and waving them under his friends' noses would boast of what he was going to do to Wall Street when he hit little old New York.

Now I have considerable respect for Wall Street's ability to take care of itself, and somehow I couldn't picture all the old bulls and bears putting up the shutters and hiking for the tall grass, when that particular youth who had a chin like a fish's, landed in their midst.

The train stopped at a small town, and an old man who looked like the greenest rube in captivity came into the car. He sat down opposite the bunch of sports and pulling a country newspaper out of his pocket buried himself in its pages.

From where I sat, I could see the sporting fraternity sizing him up and presently the young loudmouth crossed over and sat down beside him.

"Nice country around here Uncle," young freshy began.

"Shore is," the old farmer answered. "So durned fine I hate tew leave it. I bean here nigh on forty years, and I hain't left Bington more'n twict. I sold the old farm a short spell back, and I'm going to Chicago now to live with a granddarter."

"Have a cigar?" asked the young sport.

"Don't keer if I do," replied the farmer biting off the end, and taking one of the safety matches from a holder on the wall of the car he tried to strike it on the sole of his boot.

Now at that time safety matches had not been used to any great extent, still I didn't suppose it was possible there was anyone who did not know what they were, although I knew that in some of those small mountain towns away from the railroad, the people were said to be a hundred years behind the times. When the old man tried to scratch another, and then a third, I was convinced he'd never heard of or seen a safety match, and I wondered what he'd do next.

"Powerful pore matches, these be," he said with a grunt, as he reached for a fourth and attempted to light it on the leg of his trousers.

A crafty, cunning look, spread over the young sport's weak face. "You can't light those matches that way," he said.

"I'll bet I kin," the old man replied doggedly, making his fifth unsuccessful attempt.

"What will you bet?" the young fellow asked, quickly, an evil light gleaming in his fishy eyes.

"Wal I never yet seen a match I couldn't light on my pants. I'll bet you a quarter."

The young man fished out his wad of bills. "I'm no tin horn," he replied, with a sneer. "But if you want to lose your money, I'll bet you $100 you can't light one of those matches on your trousers."

"Land sakes!" cried the old farmer. "A hundred dollars?"

"That's what I said," replied the young fellow, grinning at his pals. "This gentleman will hold the money," he continued, peeling off a hundred dollar bill from his roll and thrusting it into my hands.

I had just about decided to spoil the game with a little history on safety matches, when the old farmer who had been fishing around in his wallet, darted a shrewd glance at me, then deliberately winked.

Finally, he counted out $100 in small bills, which he handed over to me, grabbed a safety match from the container, rubbed it on the leg of his trousers, and when to my astonishment, it burst into flame, calmly lighted his cigar and held out his hand for the $200 which I passed over to him.

Later, in the pullman, as the old fellow was mooching by my chair, he raised his coat enough to show me the side of a safety match box sewed to the leg of his trousers.

Now the only trouble with betting, Ted, is that it's wrong. It's wrong for several reasons. First, because it's trying to get something for nothing; second, because a man always loses when he can't afford it; third, because gambling of any kind will sooner or later get a young fellow into the kind of company he don't want to introduce to his folks; fourth, because if a fellow sticks to gambling all his life he's pretty sure to die in the neighborhood of the poorhouse; and fifth, no matter how slick a gambler you become, you will always meet a slicker one, who will trim you to a fare-thee-well.

It's fine to back your teams to the limit, and I'd think you a pretty poor sort of a stick if you didn't yell your head off at a game, but do you think it helps to steady a players nerve in a pinch, to know that if he doesn't deliver, his schoolmates will have to live on snow balls or some other light refreshment for a couple of months.

No Ted, old scout, betting is not only wrong, it's foolish.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

April 6, 19—

Dear Ted:

I agree with you, you do need a new hat. One about two sizes larger than you have been wearing, I should judge from the line of talk you turned loose when you were home last Sunday.

Now it's all right for a fellow to think well of himself. He'll never get far if he doesn't, but it's just as well to be careful how you sing your own praises, for some day your audience may consist of persons who know the folks who live next door to you.

You've done pretty well so far in making a decent showing in your mid-years under a big handicap, playing on the football team, and making the glee club, besides being elected to the Plata Dates and the student council, but you want to remember that even a vegetarian can't live long on his laurels and keep up the good work, for you haven't completed your school course by a good bit.

Sunday, you gave a pretty fair exhibition of enlargement of the cranium commonly known as swelled head. That's one of the most dangerous of all

known diseases, and one you can't cure any too quickly. It's all right to be pleased with yourself for accomplishing something worth while, but it's all wrong to keep on being pleased with yourself unless you keep on accomplishing things worth while.

Whenever you can look at yourself in the mirror and be satisfied, you should consult a conscience oculist, for as sure as shooting there's something wrong with your inner sight.

But worst of all, is to let people know you're satisfied with yourself, and it's just as well to remember that the word I is the most superfluous in the English language.

Hot air may be a necessity in the Balloon corps, but the private offices in the factory are steam heated, and the men who sit in them are not there because they talk about themselves, but because they think for the firm.

The reason I'm handing you a pretty stiff dose in this letter, is principally because you need it. I've seen a lot of promising young fellows start out with a rush, and then after they have made a moderate success, become so satisfied with themselves that they stick in a small job, when they have the ability to go much higher if they could stand prosperity.

There is always an over production of beginners but the supply of completers is never equal to the demand, and I want you to remember that the 31st of December is just as good a day on which to do business as January first.

It's all very nice to be considered the biggest man in your class, but you aren't going to be long if you go around telling people how big you are. Keep from making liars of the friends who praise you, and remember that persons who try to show off their greatness usually end by showing it up.

A horse who rushes the field for the first quarter doesn't always finish in the lead. No one deserves much credit for starting out with a big splash. It's the fellow who's doing business at the finish who really counts.

You've been a little too successful so far this year in everything except your studies, and your success has settled in your head.

Now don't think I'm not glad you are popular with your schoolmates: I am, but I'd much rather you weren't quite so popular with yourself. I don't want to rub it in Ted, but I do want you to realize that it's a blamed sight easier to reduce a swelled head when it's young than after it begins to get bald.

I had my little experience when I was super. at Clough & Spinney's in Georgetown so I'll pass it along to you for what it's worth.

I'd started in as a boy in the shipping room, been promoted to shipping clerk, then I'd worked as a laster, going from that to the sole leather room. I'd married and been promoted to foreman, and having saved some money I'd bought a little house which was nearly paid for when I was made super.

I was about as happy a young fellow as you could find in all the New England shoe trade, for I'd been progressing steadily ever since I'd started work and it looked like a rosy future ahead.

As I look back now, I see that it was my help that made my success possible quite as much as my own efforts. Americans to the backbone, everyone of them! Steady going respectable men and women some of whom had been working in the shop when I was born, and who would have told any agitator to mind his own business, who might have undertaken to tell them they were working too hard.

Well, anyway, at the end of two years I had that little factory running as slick as a greased pig, and I was wearing a self-satisfied smile in consequence that I didn't even try to conceal, for old Hiram Spinney had taken to calling me William, and Ezra Clough used to invite your Ma and me to supper most every Sunday evening.

Then one day old Hiram landed a whopping big government contract, and it was up to me to make the shoes according to specifications and on time.

Well sir, there was a great bustle and hurrying around the little shop, extra hands were hired, new machinery installed, and then I started for Boston to buy the leather.

For the first time I was doing business in a really big way, and I was so full of the size of the order I was to place, I felt sure there was only one leather company that could handle my business, so I pooh-poohed[132] several salesmen whom I met on South Street, and who having heard of our government contract assured me they had blocks of leather I could use to good advantage.

I bought my leather at what I considered a very good figure, had a good lunch at the old United States, and sat around the lobby for a while talking with the shoe and leather men I knew, letting it be pretty generally understood that as a superintendent I was some punkins.

Then on the strength of my wonderful ability as a buyer, I went up town and blew in about $100 on a new outfit for myself and some presents for your Ma.

When I took the train for Georgetown that evening, I ran bang into old Hiram Spinney and as we settled down in the same seat, he began to quiz me about the orders I had placed.

Full of pride because I considered I had bought to the best advantage, I started in to tell the old man what a great superintendent he had, poking a good deal of scorn at the foolish salesmen who had tried to interest me in their small blocks of leather, when I was out to buy a large quantity.

Old Hiram didn't say anything until I got through praising myself, which took some time as I was thoroughly sold on the idea.

When I'd finished, he looked at me out of the corner of his eye.

"Didn't even bother to look at those small lots of leather?" he asked.

"Nope, couldn't waste my time on 'em," I replied.

"I did," he answered, "looked pretty good to me too."

He went on telling me the prices quoted on each lot, describing the leather so accurately I knew I had passed by some mighty good things.

Gee! Ted, I could feel myself all shrivel up like a red toy balloon after a kid sticks a pin in it. I'd eaten a mighty good supper, but I felt hollow inside, and I guess my face looked as though I was seasick, for as near as I could figure I'd paid $12,000 more for my leather than I needed to have done.

Old Hiram let me squirm until the train reached Georgetown and we had stumbled off on to the platform.

"Thought maybe you'd like to know I bought those odd blocks," he said as I started for home.

"You did!" I replied, for I couldn't see how we possibly could use them along with what I'd purchased.

"Yep."

"What about the lot I bought?" I asked.

"I just stepped in and cancelled your order ten minutes after you'd left."

I was so happy I could have yelled for joy and at the same time I felt like two bits and a nickel.

"William," said old Hiram walking up and laying a hand on my shoulder, "you're a good boy, and you've done real well, but lately you've given signs of being too self-satisfied. Forget your own importance for the next ten years and then you will have reason to be proud."

He gave me a friendly little pat, and trudged off into the dark.

Old Hiram cured me. To this day I've remembered his advice, and tried to follow it. It's still bully good dope. I'd play it for all it's worth if I were you.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

April 30, 19—

Dear Ted:

Frankly Ted, I don't see how you ever did it. I have had some experience with expense accounts having twenty salesmen on the road; but no travelling man I have employed, ever had the nerve to present such a collection of outrageous bills as was contained in your last letter.

I'll admit, I was prepared for a few modest accounts, mostly for extra food, for a boy your age is nearly always hungry, and of course they starve you at the Commons, although I managed to get quite a substantial meal there the night I had dinner with you. But as near as I can judge the Exeter townspeople must be on the verge of starvation, for surely you have consumed all the food supplies in all the stores in the township.

I put you on an allowance this year, so you could learn how to handle money, and so far the net result has been that you have given a most perfect example of how not to do it.

A boy who can't keep pretty close to his allowance, is going to grow into a man who can't live within his income, and neither are going to score many touchdowns in the game of life, although they may do a whole lot of flashy playing between the twenty yard lines. Besides, it's just as well to remember that no one yet ever succeeded in eating his way into Who's Who.

Perhaps some of it is hereditary, though, for I remember when your Uncle Ted first went away to school, your grandmother gave him an allowance and made him promise to keep account of every cent he spent.

When he came home on his first vacation, she sat down with him and went over his accounts, on the whole much pleased, because he had kept within what she had given him.

Every third or fourth entry was S. P. G. and being a devoutedly religious woman she was delighted to find her boy had given so much of his money to the Society for Propagation of the Gospel, until Ted, being honest, had to own up that S. P. G. stood for Something, Probably Grub.

Your bills for extra feed, would make those of a stable full of trotting horses look like the meal tickets of a flock of dyspeptic canaries. But I don't mind those so much for I don't want to see you starve.

What I do mind is six silk shirts at twelve per, and a dozen silk sox at three dollars a pair. Now when you are making $15,000 a year which you won't be for

some time, if you want to pay twelve dollars for a shirt that's your funeral, although I rather suspect that by then you will have found out that real good shirts can be bought much cheaper.

Of course when you had bought a few shirts at twelve dollars a throw, a dressing gown at forty, and silk pajamas at $15 came real natural.

Did I ever tell you how a necktie cost me $150? Well I will, before the super. comes in and tells me there's a new strike in the stitching room.

I was nineteen, and had been clerking for three years in Jed Barrow's store. Jed was so busy putting sand in the sugar, and mixing his Java with a high grade of chicory, he didn't have much time to think of advancing my wages, but I was careful, I had to be, and at the end of three years I had saved $178. I never have forgotten the exact figures, because it came so blamed hard.

There, one day, Jed suggested I take a week's vacation. I think he was afraid I was going to ask for a raise, and did it to get me out of the way, but as my Uncle Ezra had invited me to visit him in Boston I took my week, without pay, and hiked to the big town.

Uncle Ezra was the aristocrat of the family. He lived in one of those old yellow brick houses on Beacon Hill just across from the common, the kind with the lavender glass in the downstairs windows, and if the old man hadn't been so busy being an aristocrat, he'd have made a first-rate radical, for he was continually writing letters to the Transcript complaining about everything as it was.

Uncle Ezra greeted me cordially enough, until he caught sight of my necktie which I'll admit was somewhat bewhiskered and more green than black.

"My boy, what an awful tie!" he exclaimed.

"Really, you must let me buy you another," and he pulled some money out of his pocket.

Being proud, I refused, making some excuses about not having time to buy a new one. The first chance I got, I scooted across to a fancy haberdasher on Tremont Street, and picking out a handsome dark-blue tie told the clerk to wrap it up. I had never paid more than a quarter for a tie, and when he calmly told me it was two dollars I almost fainted, but I felt I couldn't very well refuse to take it so I went to the back of the store and put it on. Do you know Ted, when that rich silk tie was contrasted with my blue serge that had seen considerable service as Sunday best, I felt about as comfortable as a man in overalls wearing a plug hat.

He who hesitates is sold. I hesitated, and the next thing I knew a smart young salesman was selling me a new suit, then I noticed the shoes I was wearing were patched. Well, sir, before I finished I had a complete new outfit, and that store had $150 of my money. It didn't worry me any until I was passing the Savings Bank at home. Then it struck me all of a sudden that in a week I had spent what it had taken three years of back-twisting work to save, and that the net result of my labor I could show in money was exactly nothing.

Ever since I have spent a little less than I earned, and that is a bully principle for you to imitate. I hate a tightwad, Ted, as much as you do; but I hate what is commonly known as a good spender a blame sight more. I don't want you to grow into a man who groans every time he spends a cent, and neither do I want you to feel that money is like the smallpox to be gotten rid of as quickly as possible.

A good spender is usually a man who believes in giving himself a good time, and who leaves his wife to take in boarders and his children to shift for themselves.

Now I'm going to pay your food bills, this time for I don't believe the Exeter townspeople will get much to eat until the storekeepers collect the money owing them, and can lay in a new stock; but you are going to pay for those silk shirts, pajamas, and other dodads, at the rate of three dollars a week until you've paid me back what I advance. Then after you have paid in full, if you want to buy more on the same terms all right.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

May 10, 19—

Dear Ted:

If I'd had time before I left Exeter last week, you and I would have had a heart to heart talk about some of those freak books and magazines I found strewn all over your room.

"Equalization of the Masses," "The Worker's Share," and "The Exploitation of the People," are heavy-sounding titles, and the contents, I should judge from my hurried examination, would be about as easy to digest as a bake-shop plum pudding.

Your study table also seemed to be carrying more than its share of long-haired magazines, and although I read some of their foolishness just to see how foolish they really were, I was afraid all the time I was looking at them, some one would come in and catch me.

Now I've read a considerable number of fool articles in my life, but that one on "Soviet Government for the United States," wins in a walk. How anybody outside of Danvers could believe in such nonsense is beyond me, especially after what has happened in Russia, but as old Jed Bigelow used to say, "There ain't nothin' so foolish but some critter will believe it," and Jed was right.

When you told me a few weeks ago you had joined the Radical Club, I thought it was just a kid fad you'd taken up to have a little something extra to do, but I didn't imagine you'd started in to support all the crack-brained, long-haired, wild-eyed writers who are making a living out of the good nature of this country.

Radicalism is mighty dangerous business Ted, about as safe as smoking cigarettes in a patent leather factory, and if I really thought you believed you were in sympathy with all that nonsense I'd whale you good.

The trouble with you is you're just beginning to think a little for yourself. Now thinking for yourself is fine, but until you begin to direct your thoughts in the right direction you're a good deal like the cannon Uncle Abijah invented during the Spanish War. It was a first-rate gun when he could control it, but it was as likely to kill the people behind it as those at whom it was aimed, so Uncle Abijah gave it up as a bad job after it had blown off most of his whiskers and a couple of fingers.

These radical galoots who want to tip everything in the country upside down from the constitution to the movies get under my hide, and if I had my way I'd

make everyone of them work at least eight hours a day and bathe oftener than every thirty-first of February.

It makes me mad clear through, to see these snakes who leave their own countries because the sheriff wants 'em, busy before the immigration authorities can disinfect 'em, plotting to overthrow the government who gives 'em the only chance they ever had.

In a republic all men are born equal, but that's all. It's nonsense to suppose that a good for nothing loafer who makes his living by stirring up hatred against law and order, is the equal of a decent, God-fearing, hard-working citizen, who minds his own business, pays taxes, and tries to raise a family of straight Americans, and if anyone tries to tell me two such men are equal, I'll let him know mighty quick I think he's either a liar or a blame fool.

A lot of children cut open their dolls to see what's inside, and a lot of folks who ought to know better are monkeying around with this radicalism business to see what's in it. I can tell you what's in it: "Nothing!" and working to promote nothing is a fool's job.

Now you may think I'm too conservative, but I believe that when Thomas Jefferson & Co. wrote the constitution of the United States they did a pretty fair job, and until some one can improve on it, which hasn't been done yet, I'm backing up the old constitution with every bit of my strength.

Whenever I hear of anyone becoming interested in radicalism, it always reminds me of an old fellow by the name of Charlie Gabb who lived in Epping. Now Gabb was rightly named, for he used to hang around Sol. Whittaker's store filling the place with hot air, until Sol. nailed chicken wire over the top of his cracker barrels.

Gabb was against everything as it was. Nothing was right, work included, I guess, for he was never known to do any, and was supported by a long-suffering wife who used to earn their living by going out working by the day. He was agin the government, and agin all law, and claimed all wealth should be divided equally among the people. There wasn't anything he couldn't improve on, but as he was harmless in spite of all his talk, no one paid any serious attention to him.

Gabb went on talking for a number of years, without exciting any of the Epping folks over much, and then the woolen mill was built, and a lot of Poles came to town to work in it.

They were hard working, saving sort of people, but as they had only just come over from Poland where I imagine they had a pretty rough time with the Germans on one side and the Russians on the other, both trying to rob them of everything they had, they were down on all governments on general principles, and it wasn't long before old Gabb had made a big impression on them. I don't know as they could be blamed for Gabb could talk louder, and longer, and faster, than anyone else I ever heard, and I'll admit that some of the stuff he had to offer sounded pretty well, until one sat down and started to figure out what it really meant.

Those Poles couldn't have understood much Gabb said, but it sort of flattered them to have an American take any notice of them, so in a short time Gabb became their leader, and used to gather them all together twice a week, on the common, and give them a harangue that would make your hair curl.

Then Epping got the surprise of its life, for one day the Poles quit the woolen mill in a body, and under old Gabb's leadership hiked over to a deserted village

five miles back in the hills, where they lived a community life sharing everything alike.

This was a splendid arrangement for Gabb, for never having had anything, when it came time to divide up what there was, Gabb got a little something from each family, and owning nothing himself he didn't have anything to give away. Then, too, as chief of the tribe, he was allotted the best house, and was altogether much better off than he had ever been in his life.

For a time, the village prospered, for the Poles were workers, and weren't afraid to put in a little overtime when their farms needed it, and old Gabb whenever he drove over to Epping used to crow over the success of his socialistic experiment.

Now Gabb had a brother who lived at Bristol Centre, who was a regular fellow, and couldn't see the Epping member of his family with a telescope. The Bristol Centre Gabb had worked hard all his life, and owned one of the largest hog ranches in New England. One day, this brother who was a bachelor died, and Charlie suddenly found himself the owner of a farm and about two thousand hogs.

Now if Charlie Gabb really believed what he'd been preaching for years, he'd have divided up his farm and two thousand hogs among the Poles, who'd been more or less supporting him, but he did nothing of the kind. He left his socialistic friends and moved over to Bristol Centre, taking possession of his brother's farm, hogs, and all.

The Poles heard of their leader's good fortune and waited patiently for him to divide. Nothing doing. Finally, a committee went over and asked old Gabb when the grand division of pigs was to take place, and he chased them off his farm with a pitchfork.

A week later, in the middle of the night, Epping was awakened by the greatest yelling, and squeaking, and grunting, that was ever heard in one place in the history of the world.

The Poles had raided old Gabb's hog farm, and were driving through Epping what they considered their share of his property.

Old Gabb was trailing along behind, cursing and howling for the sheriff, who when he heard what had happened couldn't be found, although I remember seeing him hanging out his window in his night shirt, laughing so hard I thought he'd bust.

Old Gabb started about a hundred lawsuits, but everyone sympathized with the Poles, and as one pig looks about as much like another as two peas do, Gabb couldn't swear to his property, so he lost every case. From the time of the great pig raid until he died, Gabb was the staunchest conservative in the country, and if anyone mentioned socialism to him he nearly had a fit.

Now, Ted, you are going to cut out this radical business pronto, toot sweet, and at once, and if I don't hear from you within a week that you have resigned from that Radical Club and severed diplomatic relations with that sort of nonsense, you'll leave Exeter so quick you won't know what hit you, for as long as I'm head of the Soule tribe, no member of my family is going to do anything that can in any manner be regarded as harmful to the country that our grandfathers fought for from Bunker Hill to Gettysburg.

I know that it is curiosity that has interested you in radicalism. Well, try to realize that in these trying days when the whole future of the world is at stake,

every American no matter how young, has as stern a duty to perform in upholding law and order as ever our continentals had at Valley Forge.

Organize an American Club. Get together the biggest boys you can and start a club to teach the young foreigners who work in the mills and factories that America gives a square deal to all.

Show these young fellows through teaching them our American sports, that clean playing and good sportsmanship are two of the biggest things in life. Help teach them to build up, not tear down. You Exeter boys are only boys, and yet as Americans there is nothing you cannot accomplish; and God knows that to help in every possible way, the newcomers among us, to understand our American ideals is as great a privilege as was given to the boys who went "over there," that liberty might not perish from the earth.

Make me proud of you my boy, not ashamed. Make me feel that when I take down the old family Bible and turn to its fly leaf, where the history of our family has been written for generations, that in time your name will be worthy of a place beside those of our men who did their part in making the United States the greatest nation the world has ever known.

Play up Ted! You're one of the country's pinch hitters, and I know you can be depended upon to deliver.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

May 26, 19—

Dear Ted:

You can't imagine how proud I am of this new American Club of yours, and the school is too, if the letters I received from the principal, and most of the professors are good indications of what they feel. The Boston papers have taken it up, and as you have probably seen, Andover is forming an American Club for the young foreigners in the Lawrence mills, and yesterday when I met the Governor, he asked to be introduced to you when he speaks in Lynn next week.

This sort of work is so much more worth while than the radical business, I know you can't help feeling you're a better American for having undertaken it, and you may be sure that when you are older, you'll get a heap of satisfaction out of the thought, that there are a lot of good Americans who might have grown up to be trouble makers, if you and your friends hadn't helped to steer them into good citizenship.

If I were you, I'd accept the principal's offer for the use of the vacant room in the Administration Building. Fit it up as a reading room with a lot of the best magazines, histories of the United States, and lives of famous Americans for the young foreigners who can read English, and get some of the instructors to help teach the ones who can't. Thursday I'll send you a check for $200 which I've raised among a few friends. This will help buy the books, so in the fall when school reopens, you'll be ready to start things with a rush.

As to where you are going to college when you finish school, I wouldn't worry about that now if I were you. Finish school first, by then you'll probably know where you want to go.

I've always found it a pretty good rule to follow, never to worry about another job, until I've finished the one I'm working on. There are lots of people who make themselves sick worrying about things that never happen, when they might as well save their doctor's bills and enjoy life.

Personally, I think it doesn't make much difference where you go, as long as you go to college to do a fair amount of work, and not just to play football and have a good time.

There are a lot of advantages in going to one of the big universities, where you can study anything from Egyptian Hair Dressing in the fourth century B. C., to the vibrations caused by an airplane flying at one hundred miles an hour, and where you have the advantage of wonderful libraries, museums, and laboratories, to help you in your work.

Then again, the small college with its solid academic course, based principally on honest to goodness horse sense, is a pretty good place, for not having fifty-seven varieties of courses, it's apt to rub thoroughly into a boy's hide what it does have to offer.

When the time comes for you to go to college I'm not going to interfere, I am going to let you make your own choice; but as that time is nearly two years away, I'd do a little more thinking about how you are going to pass your final exams, this year, than worrying about what college you are going to enter a year from next fall.

You remind me of a clerk, by the name of Charlie Harris, I once had in the factory. Charlie was a good, hard working boy, came to me right from high school, and as he didn't seem to have a grudge against the hands of the clock because they moved slowly, and was always willing to do a little more than his share of the work, I became interested in him.

Charlie had one queer trick, though, he was never satisfied with finishing the job he had on hand, but was forever worrying about the next bit of work he might have to do, not worrying mind you, because[155] he had the next job coming to him. As I said before Charlie wasn't afraid of work, but he was always afraid something was going to queer the future job, before he could get to it, and get it finished.

One winter, when you were a little chap, my shipper got the grippe and was out for three months. I wished his job on Charlie, and Charlie made good although you never would have thought so from the length of his face. Our shipments were sent out on time, well packed, and properly routed, but Charlie was as doleful as a rejected suitor at a pretty girl's wedding.

There wasn't a day, he didn't come in and spill gloom all over my office, prophesying that soon every thing would go wrong. Nothing happened though, so I used to laugh at him, and tell him to forget it.

Early in February, I was due to make a big shipment of shoes to a jobbers' warehouse on or before March first.

Everything had gone smoothly. I'd had no labor troubles, had bought my stock right, and stood to make a nice juicy profit, for on the first day of February all the shoes were in cases in the shipping room, ready to start on their journey to Chicago.

On the night of the second, it started to snow, for three days it came down in perfect clouds burying Lynn four feet deep.

For three days traffic was completely stalled, for although the snow was wet and sticky when the storm started, along in the afternoon of the second day, it

turned cold, with the result that the whole mass turned into ice, and made it impossible to clear the streets.

Still I wasn't worrying any, for Jim Devlin my old truckman, I knew, would be among the first to do business as soon as it was possible to get through the streets, and I still had several days leeway before my shoes must start for Chicago.

On the morning of the fifth day when pungs were beginning to get around, Charlie gloomed into my office, and informed me that Devlin hadn't a single team on runners, having the previous fall traded off all his pungs for drays. Devlin had been so sure he could hire enough pungs to take care of our big shipment, he hadn't even told us the fix he was in, until having tried every teamster and livery stable within miles of Lynn, he found he couldn't get a single one. Everybody wanted pungs, and the truckmen who owned any were rushing theirs night and day to take care of their regular customers.

I tried to borrow from everyone I knew, with no luck, for all the shoe manufacturers had use for every pung they could get their hands on to get their own shoes to the freight yards. Finally, I gave up in disgust, and sat down to figure out my loss, when I happened to glance out the window of my office, that looks out on the alley that leads to our shipping room door.

There were about three hundred kids lined up there, each one with a sled, and I wondered what in the world they were up to, when one staggered around the corner of our building, dragging a sled after him, on which was perched a shoe case with "The Princess Shoe," stencilled in red letters across the top.

I let out a whoop, and dove for the shipping room, where I found Charlie and his crew as busy as ants, tying cases of shoes onto the kids sleds as fast as the boys backed them up to the shipping-room door.

Before night, every case of shoes had been delivered to the freight yards, and Charlie's pay had been increased $10 a week, but the next morning when I reached the factory, I found him almost weeping because he was afraid that when the snow melted it would flood our shipping room which in those days was level with the street.

For five years after that, I used Charlie as a sort of pinch hitter around the factory giving him all sorts of work, but never letting him know what his next job was to be, and as he couldn't worry about what was coming, he more than made good.

Ted, any real college is a good college. It's all up to you, for so far as I know, there's nothing to prevent you learning a lot in any one of them. The thing for you to do for the next two years, is to study hard at Exeter, then when it comes time to take your exams, you needn't be afraid about being able to get into any college you choose.

I'll be in Exeter Saturday to have a look at your American Club, and at his special request I'm bringing the Governor's private secretary with me. So long old boy.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

June 8, 19—

Dear Ted:

If the super. had come in, and told me the hands were going to strike, unless I lowered the piecework rates, I wouldn't have been more surprised, than I was at your last letter. It was some shock; and at first I couldn't believe you were serious; after re-reading it I see you are, and I guess a few hints from the old man may help relieve the pain a bit, for it's as plain as your Aunt Sarah you're going to suffer, no matter how your love affair turns out.

To me, the idea of your really being in love, seems as impossible as Trotsky being elected Alderman by the Beacon Hill Ward of Boston, but it doesn't take a specialist to diagnose the symptoms, and from the stuff you have spilled all over the pages of your last letter, I should say you had an acute case with a fever going on 105 degrees.

Now, I say no matter how things turn out it is going to be painful, and at your age and vast experience of life, it can only turn out one way, and that's a broken heart for you for about a week, and then a gradual interest in life, until two weeks from now the outcome of the baseball game with Andover, will be even more important to you than how to get enough to eat between meals.

There's one thing you have done though Ted, you've played fair with the old man, and that's entered on the credit side of your ledger, although you may not think so when you've finished this letter. I am glad you introduced me to the girl at the game last Saturday, and I assure you I enjoyed every minute of her society, and would again, for she and I had a lot in common, both of us being practical business men. But when it comes to having her for a daughter-in-law, I can think up more reasons for not wanting her, than a jobber can for refusing to stock a line of shoes he feels may be out of style, before he can unload them on the retailer.

In the first place, Ted, I should judge she is slightly older than you, about eight years is my guess, and although eight years is all right when it's on the man's side, it's apt to be pretty awkward when your wife is constantly referred to by strangers as your mother; likely to make you feel foolish, and the lady peevish; and about the time you'll be thinking of changing from tennis to golf, she'll be changing from one piece dresses to wrappers, and wrappers never yet kept a man's eyes from straying in other directions.

Miss Shepard is good looking, I'll admit; real attractiveness though in spite of the soap advertisements and beauty doctors, is more than skin deep, and you must remember that no matter how perfect a surface a thing has, it's the quality underneath that counts.

After all there's not much difference between girls and sole leather. A run of leather on the warehouse floor, may look like nice profits, and when it's cut you find it didn't figure out at all as you expected; and a girl may look like a June morning before marriage, and turn out an equinoctial storm afterwards.

A smart shoe man, doesn't buy a block of leather without sizing up what's under the grain, and a young man when looking around for steady company can well do likewise. I don't want you to think I have anything against good looks, I haven't and if you can get them with other qualities, all right. It must be tough, to have to sit opposite a face at breakfast, that curdles the milk in your coffee, but better that and sizzling ham and eggs, than a rose bud for looks, and cold oatmeal.

Your lady-love didn't strike me as a young woman of means, and as for your capital, it consists principally of some loud clothes and a fair knowledge of

football, neither being what you might call liquid assets, when it comes to setting up housekeeping. And speaking of housekeeping, do you think she is the kind of girl, who would enjoy getting three squares a day, running the vacuum cleaner in between, with dish washing and mending as side lines?

Now Hortense may be only six or eight years older than you. In wisdom she's nearly twenty, and you had better believe she's got no fool ideas about trying to live on three dollars a day, with sugar twenty cents a pound. No girl who's lived all her life in an academy town is so foolish as that, and if you think I'm going to finance you a couple of years from now, in a home of your own, you're taking off with the wrong foot.

I know I married when I was only twenty and was getting $18.00 a week, but your Ma is one woman in a million, a country town girl who was taught housekeeping from childhood, and who could make a dollar go further than even the immortal George, when he made his famous throw from deep center in the Potomac League. She could take my week's pay on a Saturday night, after having set aside the rent and insurance money, buy enough food for the next week, the clothes we needed, and still have some left to tuck away in the savings bank. And right here, let me tell you if you ever make another crack like you did two weeks ago, about your Ma wearing too many rings, I'll give you the worst licking you ever had. Perhaps she does, but she likes 'em, and when I think of the work those fingers have done for us, she's welcome to cover 'em with rings, if she likes, and her thumbs also for that matter.

Your Ma made me, and the right girl is the best inspirer of success a young fellow can have, while the wrong kind, is about as much help to a man trying to shin up the greased pole of success, as a nice thick coating of lard on his fingers.

Probably you don't remember John White. John and I were great pals when we were boys. Used to swim, play ball, and hunt together, fought at least one pitched battle a week, but when any one touched either of us, the other was on the intruder like a wildcat. We both got married about the same time, and John who was sensible as he could be in most things, picked out a girl who hadn't the brains of an intelligent guinea pig.

We were both working in Clough & Spinney's at the time, and three months after John was married, he had indigestion, and was wearing safety pins on his clothes instead of buttons.

Noon hours, he used to tell me what a lucky fellow he was to have married Priscilla, but as the weeks went by his praises seemed to lack the right ring, although I must say he did his best.

I often wondered how he was getting along, for in my estimation Priscilla Brown was pretty much of a lightweight, and although a nice enough girl, about as useful around a house, as one of those iron dogs some folks have on their front lawns. One day, John invited us over to Topsfield, where he lived, to supper. When we got there, I thought your Ma would have a fit. She's as orderly as a West Point Cadet, and there were clothes strewn all over John's parlor, and more dust on the furniture, than there is in some of the seashore lots the fly-by-night real estate companies sell.

We waited, and waited, and then waited some more for our supper. Finally, we had it, everything out of a can and cold, but the prize performance came when Priscilla started to serve jam and bread for dessert. She put down beside me, a loaf of bread she said she had just baked, and asked me to cut it. I tried.

All I had was a knife. What I needed was a chisel. In my efforts to hack through the crust, the loaf slipped off the table and landed like a thousand bricks on my pet corn. I hollered right out, and made an enemy of Priscilla for life.

After supper, while Priscilla and your Ma were doing the dishes, John and I held a funeral in his back yard, and buried that loaf of bread beside a stone wall at the rear of the garden. A month later, old Josh Whipple who was near sighted, struck it while he was mending John's wall, and before he realized it wasn't a stone, he had slapped it into a hole in the wall with a lot of mortar. It stayed there until the next winter, when the weather finally destroyed it.

John had brains, and ambition, and was never an enemy of work, but to-day he is foreman of the making room in a measely little Maine factory, when he might be running his own, and it was only Priscilla who queered him. Whenever he'd manage to put by a little money, she always needed a new set of furs, or a vacation, or a thousand other things which she got. John never got his factory.

After all, I think I'm indebted to Hortense Shepard, for letting you spend most of your allowance on her, and clutter up her front porch on spring evenings. You might be spending your time and my money, in worse places. I'm not going to forbid you seeing her. What I am going to do is to ask you as man to man, if you don't think it would be fairer to the lady in question, not to propose until you have some visible means of support? Just think of the awful hole you'd be in, if you did, and she called your bluff and said, "Yes."

A school widow like Hortense, isn't a bad institution after all, for she gives a young man like you a chance to be in a love with a nice girl, even if she is old enough to be, let's say, his aunt. I'd ease off gradually, there, if I were you. I'm sure it won't keep her awake nights, if you call only once a week instead of five times. For no matter how much you may think she cares, she doesn't, any more than for any nice young fellow, who'll give her candy and flowers, and beau her around to the games.

After you've gone through school and college, and have been in the factory long enough to have faint glimmers of shoemaking, it'll be time enough to think of getting married. Now, I'd spend more time with the queens of history and less time with those of Exeter.

Don't take it too hard my boy, and remember that when the right time and right girl come along, the old man will be rooting tooth and nail for you to win.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

Lynn, Mass.

June 16, 19—

Dear Ted:

Well son the school year is about over now and taking it all in all you haven't done so badly. Of course that probation mess last winter was not at all to my liking, and I could have survived the shock of a higher average of marks for the year, still I think you have given promises of better things to come.

When I asked you last Sunday what you intended doing this summer vacation, thinking you had planned hanging around home most of the time, I must say I was startled to learn the itinerary you had laid out for yourself. It looks as though you were going to be about as busy as the Prince of Wales was

when he was visiting in New York, and he was busier than a one-armed paper hanger with St. Vitus dance.

Now I never believed in bringing you up on the all work and no play theory, but from the jobs you've set yourself I should judge you will be working harder at playing this summer than you ever did at anything else.

Newport, Narragansett, Magnolia, Kenneybunkport, and Bar Harbor are not exactly the places I should choose to get rested in for a coming year of work, but you are young and maybe you can stand it. Still I don't want you to make the mistake I did the year of the panic.

Nineteen seven was some year for me. Business was so jumpy I never knew when I came home at night whether the next day would bring the sheriff into the factory, or whether I might get a big order that would float me safely over the rocks. By June, I had lost thirty pounds and couldn't sleep nights, but the sheriff wore a disappointed look when I met him, and I didn't have to walk on the opposite sidewalk when I passed the Company's store in Boston.

Your Ma had been doing considerable worrying about my being overworked, and when I had pulled things around so that I could breathe again, she suggested a vacation. I agreed having in my mind a nice, quiet, little village on the Maine coast, where I could lie around in the sun and dose, or go fishing when I felt real rambunctious. Now your Ma, had just been reading a book called, "The Invigoration of the Human Mind and Body," by some fellow with a string of letters after his name.

Professor Wiseacre claimed that to get a thorough rest a person should spend his vacations in doing exactly the opposite from what he did the rest of the year, and as much as I should like to I can't quarrel with him about that, but what I am ready to go to the mat with him for, was his elaboration of this theory into the fact that if a person kept away from society most of the year, his vacation should be spent in the midst of its giddy whirl.

Your Ma was thoroughly sold on this idea, although I calculate she didn't have to be persuaded much harder than a shoe jobber does to take a thousand cases at present prices, when he thinks the market is going up.

I fell for it. Your Ma ordered a lot of sixty horse power clothes, and we rented a big cottage at Magnolia. Now I knew Magnolia was fashionable; but it's on the coast so I thought that once in a while I could slip away in a dory for a few hours' fishing off Norman's Woe, or get over to Gloucester for a chin with some of the captains of the fleet; but I soon found out that I had about as much chance of doing either as a rabbit has of dying of old age in the snake cage at the zoo.

The first morning, I came down in an old suit and flannel shirt, with a cod line in my pocket, carrying a can full of clams for bait. When your Ma saw me she waved me back like a traffic cop, and asked in a hurt tone if I had forgotten we were going to take our meals at the hotel. I had. I never did again. I changed into white flannels and stood around on the hotel piazza after breakfast saying, "Fine morning, Glad to meet you," while your Ma renewed her acquaintance with a number of ladies. About eleven, I tried to make a break, but learned I was to escort to the beach a crowd of females aged fifteen to seventy-five.

I sat on the beach for an hour getting my shoes full of sand, and then it was time to convey the crowd back to the hotel for lunch. Next, we went for an auto ride, stopping at the Grill for tea, after which it was time to dress for dinner, and then I had to stick around at a dance until after midnight.

I kept this up for two weeks, and the only time I escaped was one rainy day when I managed to dodge the hotel debating society, and get in a morning's fishing before it cleared up.

In two weeks, I was so fed up with changing my clothes, and going to the beach, and having tea, and hanging around dances, I just longed for the peaceful clatter of the making room, and would have done something desperate, if I hadn't met a young doctor who was making a great reputation advising people to do just what they wanted.

He told me I needed a complete change. I didn't put up any argument against that, and I sort of hinted the factory would be the most complete change I could think of; so he ordered me back to work and charged me a tremendous fee, but it was worth it, for in two weeks after I had returned, I felt rested.

Now I had rather hoped you and I would get a chance to pal around together this summer, for you will be away from home quite a lot during the next few years, and I want to be a real chum to you, Ted. I never had any use for the father and son business where the old man says, "Why, good morning Reginald," in a sort of a surprised tone as though he suddenly remembers he has a son after all. I want to be a real friend of yours, in on your good times, and ready to lend a hand whenever it's needed. In a few years I want to change the firm name from William Soule & Company to William Soule & Son, and I want it to be more than a change in the firm's name. I want it to be a real partnership.

We'll be glad to have you home again Ted, even if it's only between trips, for you've been missed this year, my boy. Your Ma and I aren't as young as we were, and there's been many an evening when I've been reading the paper, and she's been sewing, and neither of our minds on what we were doing, for we were thinking of a hulking kid of ours. Some years from now when you have a boy of your own you'll understand.

That's why, I guess, I hoped you'd be at home a lot this summer, and that later you and I could take a fishing trip together, but I promised you you could do anything within reason this vacation and my word has never been broken. We'll expect you Thursday.

Your affectionate father,
WILLIAM SOULE.

P. S.—Bully for you, Ted. Your letter saying you are going to chuck all the fancy stuff and stay home this summer just came. You couldn't have pleased us more, and I've cabled old Indian Joe to save us two weeks in August. You and I are going to Newfoundland after salmon. Will we have a good time? I'll say so!