

Paine Albert Bigelow

The Bread Line: A Story of a Paper



Albert Paine

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I

THE FIRST DINNER

This is the story of a year, beginning on New Year's eve.

In the main it is the story of four – two artists and two writers – and of a paper which these four started. Three of them – the artists and one of the writers – toiled and dwelt together in rooms near Union Square, and earned a good deal of money sometimes, when matters went well. The fourth – the other writer – did something in an editorial way, and thus had a fixed income; that is, he fixed it every Saturday in such manner that it sometimes lasted until Wednesday of the following week. Now and then he sold a story or a poem "outside" and was briefly affluent, but these instances were un plentiful. Most of his spare time he spent in dreaming vague and hopeless dreams. His dreams he believed in, and, being possessed of a mesmeric personality, Barrifield sometimes persuaded others to believe also.

It began – the paper above mentioned – in the café of the Hotel Martin, pronounced with the French "tang," and a good place to get a good dinner on New Year's eve or in any other season except that of adversity, no recollection of which period now vexed the mind of the man who did something in an editorial way, or those of the two artists and the writer who worked and dwelt together in rooms near Union Square. In fact, that era of prosperity which began in New York for most bohemians in the summer of '96 was still in its full tide, and these three had been caught and borne upward on a crest that as yet gave no signs of undertow and oblivion beneath. But Barrifield, still editing at his old salary, had grown uneasy and begun to dream dreams. He did not write with ease, and his product, though not without excellence, was of a sort that found market with difficulty in any season and after periods of tedious waiting. He had concluded to become a publisher.

He argued that unless publishers were winning great fortunes they could not afford to pay so liberally for their wares.

He had been himself authorized to pay as much as fifteen cents per word for the product of a certain pen. He forgot, or in his visions refused to recognize, the possibility of this being the result of competition in a field already thickly trampled by periodicals, many of them backed by great capital and struggling, some of them at a frightful loss, toward the final and inevitable survival of the richest. As for his companions, they were on the outside, so to speak, and swallowed stories of marvelous circulations and advertising rates without question. Not that Barrifield was untruthful. Most of what he told them had come to him on good authority. If, in the halo of his conception and the second bottle of champagne, he forgot other things that had come to him on equally good authority, he was hardly to be blamed. We all do that, more or less, in unfolding our plans, and Barrifield was uncommonly optimistic.

He had begun as he served the roast. Previous to this, as is the habit in bohemia, they had been denouncing publishers and discussing work finished, in hand, and still to do; also the prices and competition for their labors. The interest in Barrifield's skill at serving, however, had brought a lull, and the champagne a golden vapor that was fraught with the glory of hope. It was the opportune moment. The publication of the "Whole Family" may be said to have dated from that hour.

Barrifield spoke very slowly, pausing at the end of each sentence to gather himself for the next. Sometimes he would fill a plate as he deliberated. At other times he would half close his eyes and seem to be piercing far into the depths of a roseate future.

"Boys," he began, in a voice that was fraught with possibility, and selecting a particularly tender cut for Perner, who was supposed to have an estate somewhere, "boys," – he laid the tempting slice on Perner's plate, added a few mushrooms, some brown gravy, and a generous spoonful of potato, then passing the plate to Perner and beginning to fill another, – "I've been thinking of – of a – of the – greatest" – pausing and looking across the table with drowsy, hypnotic eyes – "the greatest scheme on —*earth!*"

Amid the silence that followed this announcement he served the next plate. Then Van Dorn, who had been acquainted with him longer than the others, spoke:

"What is it this time, old man?"

Barrifield turned his gaze on Van Dorn and laughed lazily. He was handsome, rather stout, and of unfailing good nature. He pushed back his blond hair and rested his gray, magnetic eyes steadily on the artist. Then he laughed again and seemed to enjoy it. Van Dorn, who was slender, impulsive, and wore glasses, laughed, too, and was lost. Barrifield handed him a filled plate as he said:

"You're just right, Van, to say *this* time – just right. There have been – other times; other – times." He was filling the third plate. He paused and laughed till he shook all over. "Van remembers a pictorial syndicate he and I once started," he said to Livingstone, as he handed his plate. "We spent nearly – nearly a thousand dollars and a lot of time – that is, Van did – getting up some stuff, and then sold one picture to one paper for three dollars!"

He leaned back in his chair to enjoy a laugh, in which, this time, all joined.

"And never got the three dollars," added Van Dorn, at last.

"And never got the three dollars," echoed Barrifield. "It was a beautiful scheme, too; Van knows that – beautiful!" At which statement all laughed again.

Barrifield began to furnish his own plate now, and became serious.

"This scheme is different," he observed at last; "it's been tried. It's been tried and it hasn't. The scheme that's been tried" – he helped himself to the rest of the mushrooms and gravy – "we'll improve on."

The others caught the collective pronoun, and began to feel the pleasant sense of ownership that comes with the second bottle and a scheme.

"Our scheme will beat it to death." He lowered his voice and shot a cautious glance at the other tables. "Boys," he whispered, "it's a *high-class weekly* at a *low price!*"

He looked from one to the other to note the effect of this startling announcement. It was hardly manifest. The three seemed to be eating more or less industriously and without much care of anything else. They were thinking, however.

"It's a field," observed Perner, at last.

"*Barrifield*," said Van Dorn, who sometimes made puns.

Barrifield became excited. He did this now and then.

"Field! It's *the* field," he declared fiercely – "the only field! Everything else is full. There's a ten-cent monthly in every block in New York! And" – whispering hoarsely – "even then they're getting rich! Rich! But there's only one high-class family weekly at less than four dollars in the country, and that's a juvenile! What I propose" – he was talking fast enough now – "is to establish a high-class family weekly – for the whole family – at *one dollar a year!*"

He paused again. His words had not been without effect this time. The three listeners knew thoroughly the field of periodicals, and that no such paper as he proposed existed. His earnestness and eager whisper carried a certain weight, and then, as I have said before, he was strangely persuasive. Perner, who had once been engaged in business, and had, by some rare fortune, kept out of the bankruptcy court, was first to speak. His "ten years' successful business experience," which he referred to on occasion, gave his opinion value in matters of finance, though at present he was finding it no easy problem to keep up with the taxes on a certain tract of vacant property located rather

vaguely somewhere in the Southwest and representing the residue of his commercial triumphs. He was a tall, large-featured man, cleanly shaven, and, like Van Dorn, wore glasses.

"Can you do it, Barry?" he said, looking up with an expression of wise and deep reflection. "Won't it cost you more than that to get up the paper?"

"That," observed Barrifield, calmly, "is the case with every great magazine in the country. The paper and printing cost more than they get for it."

"They make it out of the advertising, you know," put in Livingstone, timidly.

Livingstone was younger than the others, and had a smooth, fresh face.

"Of course," snapped Perner; "I know that! But they've got to have circulation before they can get the advertising, and it takes time and money – barrels of it – to get circulation."

"We'll furnish the time," suggested Van Dorn, sawing at his meat, "if Barry'll put up the capital."

Barrifield looked up quickly.

"I'll do it!" he announced eagerly; "I'll do it!"

The others showed immediate interest. Barrifield looked from one to the other, repeating his assertion as if signing a verbal contract. Then his gaze wandered off into nowhere, and he absently fed himself and waited for the spirit to move further.

"I'll furnish the capital," he continued deliberately, at length, "and it won't be money, either." The three faces watching him fell. "That is, not much money. It'll take a little, of course. I think I know where I could get all the money I want – a dozen places, yes, fifty of them. But this isn't a money scheme. If it was I could get it. I know any number of men, capitalists, that would jump at it. But that isn't what we want. We want men who know what a paper is, and can do the work themselves."

"We want a good advertising man first," said Perner the businesslike.

"That's good sense," assented Barrifield, at which Perner felt complimented and began to assume proprietary airs.

"Those things we can hire," Barrifield continued. "We shall want several men in clerical and executive positions. The general direction and management of affairs we shall, of course, attend to personally. We could get a business manager with all the money we need if we wanted him, but he'd be some fellow with no appreciation of the kind of a paper we intend to make, and would try to cut down and stick to old methods until he choked the plan, just as many a good plan has been killed before."

The third bottle of champagne had been opened.

"That's exactly right," declared Perner, as he lifted his glass, while the others nodded. "Half the periodicals running to-day are starved and killed by the business office. Why, MacWilliams of 'Dawn' told me yesterday that he couldn't buy that Easter poem of mine just because there had been a kick down-stairs on the twenty-five he paid me for the Christmas thing, and –"

"What's your scheme, Barry?" interrupted Van Dorn, who did not want Perner to get started on the perennial subject of editorial wrongs.

Barrifield filled his glass and drained it very slowly. Then he set it down and wiped his lips with his napkin. The waiter brought coffee and cigars. He selected a long, dark Panetela, and lighted it with the air of one making ready to unburden himself of deep wisdom.

"Did any of – you – fellows," he began, puffing the smoke into the air and following it with his eyes, "ever hear of a man named Frisby? Did you, Perny? Did you, Stony?" dropping his eyes from one to the other.

"I have," said Van Dorn. "Runs a paper called the 'Voice of Light,' with prize packages and the worst illustrations in the world."

"That's the man!" assented Barrifield. "Old friend of mine. Yankee by birth, and one of the keenest publishers in the country. That paper, the 'Voice of Light,' has a circulation of nearly *one half-million copies!*"

"He ought to get better pictures, then," grunted Van Dorn.

"Exactly!" nodded Barrifield. "And that's one place we'll improve on Frisby's scheme."

"I didn't suppose religious papers ever had schemes," observed Livingstone.

Barrifield grinned.

"Did you ever see a copy of the 'Voice'?" he asked.

"I have," said Perner. "It offers twenty-five dollars' worth of books and a trip to the Holy Land for one year's subscription."

"That's it! That's the paper!" laughed Barrifield.

"But our paper won't be a religious paper, will it, old man?" asked Livingstone, anxiously.

"Not in the sense of being ecclesiastic. It will be pure in morals and tone, of course, and, at the same time, artistic and beautiful – such a paper as the 'Youth's Friend,' only larger in its scope. It will, as I have said before, appeal to the whole family, young and old, and that is another improvement we'll make on Frisby's scheme."

"What's the price of Frisby's paper?" asked Perner.

"Two dollars a year. Poor matter, poor pictures, poor paper, poor printing, poor prizes, and two dollars a year. We'll give them high-class matter, high-class pictures, fine printing, beautiful paper, splendid prizes, all for one dollar a year; and that's where we'll make the third and great improvement on Frisby's scheme."

"But how'll you do it without money, Barry? That's the improvement we want," laughed Livingstone.

"That," said Barrifield, letting his voice become a whisper once more – "that isn't an improvement. *That's Frisby's scheme!*"

II

FRISBY'S SCHEME

Barrifield lighted a fresh cigar and blew more smoke into the air.

"Frisby told me himself," he said drowsily, and apparently recalling certain details from the blue curling wreaths. "I lent him money and helped him into a position when he first came here, and he's never forgotten it. He held the position five years and learned the publishing business. Then he started the 'Voice of Light.' He did it without a dollar. He told me so."

Livingstone leaned forward eagerly.

"But I say, old man, how did he do it, then?"

"Nerve. Nerve and keen insight into humanity. The 'Voice of Light' had been started by some fellows who had spent all their money trying to build it up on the old lines and failed completely. They had tried to sell out, but nobody would have it. They had no assets – nothing but debts.

"Then they tried to give it away. They tried a good while. Frisby heard of it at last, and went over and said they might give it to him. They did it. He didn't have a dollar.

"He had some good clothes, though, and he put them on. He put on the best he had, and he went over to the printers. The 'Voice' owed them a good bill, and they were glad to hear the paper had changed hands. Their account couldn't get any worse, and Frisby's clothes and manner indicated that it might become better. He told them he contemplated getting out at once a special edition of a million copies. He intimated that if they couldn't handle such a number of papers he would be obliged to arrange for them elsewhere. They almost hugged Frisby's knees to keep him from going. He didn't have a dollar – not a dollar.

"Then he went across to an advertising agency and engaged a page in the 'Great Home Monthly' and a page in the biggest Sunday-school paper in the world. He asked them the discount for cash, and their special figures to compare with those of other agencies. They looked at his good clothes and sized up his talk, which was to the point and no waste words. They booked his order for four thousand dollars' worth of advertising – quick, before he changed his mind. He didn't have a dollar. He told me so.

"He went up to the Cambridge Bible Company – biggest Bible concern in the world – and asked for cash figures on a quarter of a million Bibles. They thought he was crazy at first, but they made a figure before he went away that was less than a third what the same Bible sold for at retail the world over. They told him they had only half the order on hand. He said that those would do to start with, and that he would let them know when to begin delivering. He would send over a check when he wanted the first lot. They said that settlement on the 1st of each month would do. He did that all in one day, – he told me so, – and he didn't have a dollar – not a dollar."

Barrifield paused and looked from one to the other to note the effect of his statements. The three listeners were waiting eagerly for more. Livingstone and Van Dorn were watching his lips for the next word to issue. Perner was gazing into his glass, but there was a slight flush and a look of deep reflection on his face. Barrifield maintained silence, and the sense of his importance grew powerfully with each second. By and by his eyes half closed and drifted vaguely into the unseen. Livingstone promptly recalled him.

"But go on with the story, old man. What was the next step? It's no fair play to get us all worked up this way and then go to sleep."

Barrifield chuckled lazily.

"That's all," he said; "the rest is mere detail. Frisby went home and got up copy for his advertising. He gave the Bible as a premium. It was a three-dollar Bible; sold at three dollars the world over, and you know there's not supposed to be much profit in Bibles. Frisby filled up the pages

he had engaged, offering in glowing terms the Bible and the paper both for two dollars. He got the indorsement of the Rev. Montague Banks, whose name is familiar to every man, woman, and child between the oceans, and he sold over *one hundred thousand Bibles during the first six weeks! One hundred thousand! He told me so!*"

Barrifield's voice dropped to an intense whisper as he made this last statement, and the effect was tremendous. The others stared at him, at the ceiling, and at each other. They repeated the figures, and added under their breath various exclamations peculiar to each. Livingstone, who did not swear except when he pounded his finger or stumbled over a chair in the dark, only said:

"By gad! old man, by gad!"

"In one day," continued Barrifield, leaning half across the table and emphasizing each word with a slight motion of his head, "in one day he got in six thousand dollars cash! Think of it!"

The others *were* thinking, and thinking hard. Perner was first to venture an objection:

"But that was a religious paper, Barry, with a Bible for a premium. We could hardly expect – "

"That's just where you're wrong," anticipated Barrifield. "Ours will be religious in tone, too, and a home paper besides. It will go to every household that Frisby's would reach, and to thousands besides who are not of any particular denomination. We also will offer Bibles, but we will offer other things too. We will offer watches and cameras, and premiums for boys and girls – dolls, fishing-tackle, and guns – "

"I should think," interrupted Van Dorn, dryly, "that with a gun and a Bible we might gather in the most of them."

"Now you're talking sense!" said Barrifield, excitedly. "We'll get all of them. We'll capture the whole country. Frisby had a quarter of a million circulation in six months. We'll have half a million circulation in three months. Mark my words – half a million in three months!"

"But the price, Barry! A dollar a year and a premium." Perner was still unsatisfied. "How are we going to do it?"

Barrifield regarded him in a superior way.

"The paper itself," he said, "will cost us less than fifty cents a year, even figuring on a basis of only a quarter of a million circulation. Most of the premiums can now be bought for less than the other fifty. Those that can't we'll give just the same, only we'll add on the difference in the form of postage and packing. Nobody ever thinks of objecting to a slight additional charge for postage and packing."

He drew forth a paper on which there were figures. A round of chartreuse was being served, and in its yellow radiance all difficulties dissolved and all things became possible. He laid the sheet down where every one could see it more or less distinctly.

"The white paper," he continued, "will cost less than four cents a pound – less than one half-cent for each copy. The paper is always the big expense. Every publisher will tell you that. The paper for quarter of a million copies will cost twelve hundred and fifty dollars, the presswork about five hundred dollars. Everything else will cost less than another five hundred, so that a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a year will more than cover the cost of getting out the paper; but say it costs that, – we want to figure full, you know, – and then another hundred and twenty-five for premiums, or quarter of a million in all, which will be covered by actual subscription money, to say nothing of advertising returns, which ought to at least, counting three pages a week, be not less than one hundred and fifty thousand the first year, and that will be clear profit to be divided. I've figured it down to that to be on the safe side. With half a million circulation, of course, it would be twice as much and no extra cost except for presswork and white paper. I tell you, boys, it's the greatest scheme ever conceived."

He ran the items over glibly and pushed the paper across the table for each to examine in turn. The figures were beautifully made, and seemed to add correctly. If there were a few minor items, such as postage, clerk hire, and cost of circulation, omitted, it was probably because they were too insignificant to be considered. The general feeling was one of elation. In the spell of silence that lay

upon them each began to dream on his own account, and to build a castle about which shimmered the radiance of easily acquired wealth. In Livingstone's face there was a look that did not appear in the faces of his companions. It was not more eager, perhaps, but it was also tender. He was ten years younger than the others. Affluence meant much to all of them, but to him it meant something different – something of which the others did not know.

"But we'll have to have a little money to start on, won't we, old man?" asked Van Dorn, at last, reflectively, of Barrifield.

"Why, yes; I suppose a few hundred will be needed at the start to pay such little bills as may be presented. We want to impress everybody with the fact that we pay cash, don't you see? And discount everything. By paying the first bill the minute it's presented we'll establish the necessary credit, of course, and the next bill will be held till we call for it. Frisby didn't have a dollar, – not a dollar, – but then, the 'Voice of Light' was established, and possibly had some slight income, besides certain fixtures and connections, all of which we would have to secure, and probably at some cost. I could invite in all the money needed – all we need. Of course, it would be better if we could handle everything ourselves and not feel under any outside obligations. I could manage a fourth of it all right, or even a third – " He hesitated and looked dreamily across the table at the others.

Perner was first to speak.

"I'm like Frisby," he laughed. "I haven't got a dollar – in money." He made this statement in a manner that indicated he might have vast possessions in real properties or stocks. "I suppose I could manage a sixth, though, some way," he concluded suddenly, as if to regain a hold on a golden opportunity that was about to slip from his grasp.

The glamour of prospective riches was upon them. Van Dorn, remembering an old schoolmate who had prospered in commerce, stated incontinently that he could borrow anything from two dollars up to two thousand if he only had a mind to ask for it. Livingstone added hastily that he would take the other sixth interest, even if he didn't have quite enough money saved to pay for it right away. At each of these statements Barrifield assured them that they were talking sense, and that they were as good as millionaires already. The "Whole Family" had become definite. The friends were in high spirits as they rose to leave. The waiter who helped them on with their coats was liberally remembered.

It was eleven o'clock when they stepped out into the winter night. Barrifield, who was a married man and a suburban Brooklynite, took the South Ferry car at Broadway. The other three set their faces north in the direction of their apartments. Van Dorn was a widower, Perner a confirmed bachelor, and Livingstone also unmarried. They were untrammelled, therefore, as to their hours and habits.

As they marched up Broadway they laughed a great deal. They were prone to see the humorous side of life in all its phases, and the new paper with its various premium combinations furnished a novel source of amusement. It may be that the champagne stimulated the tendency to mirth, for the three became really hilarious as they proceeded.

On the corner of Tenth Street they halted. Across the way there was a long line of waiting men that extended around the corner in either direction.

"What's that?" exclaimed Perner.

"Why, don't you know?" said Van Dorn. "That's the bread line. They get a cup of coffee and a loaf of bread every night at twelve o'clock. Old Fleischmann, who founded the bakery, made that provision in his will. They begin to collect here at ten o'clock and before, rain or shine, hot or cold."

"It's cold enough to-night!" said Livingstone.

They drew nearer. The waifs regarded them listlessly. They were a ragged, thinly clad lot – a drift-line of hunger, tossed up by the tide of chance.

The bohemians, remembering their own lavish dinner and their swiftly coming plenitude, regarded these unfortunates with silent compassion.

"I say, fellows," whispered Livingstone, presently, "let's get a lot of nickels and give one to each of them. I guess we can manage it," he added, running his eye down the line in hasty calculation.

The others began emptying their pockets. Perner the businesslike stripped himself of his last cent and borrowed a dollar of Van Dorn to make his share equal. Then they separated and scoured in different directions for change. By the time all had returned the line had increased considerably.

"We'd better start right away or we won't have enough," said Livingstone.

He began at the head of the line and gave to each outstretched hand as far as his store of coins lasted. Then Van Dorn took it up, and after him Perner. They had barely enough to give to the last comers. The men's hands stretched out long before they reached them. Some said "Thank you"; many said "God bless you"; some said nothing at all.

"There's more money in that crowd than there is in this now," said Perner, as they turned away.

"That's so," said Livingstone. "But wait till a year from to-night. We'll come down here and give these poor devils a dollar apiece – maybe ten of them."

Livingstone's face had grown tender again. In fancy he saw them returning a year from to-night with ample charity. And another would come with them – one who would make the charity sweeter because of bestowing it with fair hands.

III

A LETTER FROM THE "DEAREST GIRL IN THE WORLD," OTHERWISE MISS DOROTHY CASTLE OF CLEVELAND, TO MR. TRUMAN LIVINGSTONE OF NEW YORK

"My dear old True: I have both laughed and cried over your letter, and I have thought, too, a great deal. It was awfully jolly to think of you and those good friends of yours dining together on New Year's eve, and there is only one way I would have had it different, and that way would have seemed selfish on my part, and unfair to the others, too.

"I do wish I might have been near by, though, unknown to you, and heard all that passed, for I know you only told me the good things the others said, and not all the best things – those you said yourself. Or, if you did not say them, you thought them, and were only restrained by modesty.

"I suppose you will get over that by and by, when you are as old as Perny and Barry and Van (you see, I am beginning to feel that I know your friends, and call them as you do); only I hope you won't get entirely over it, either, for do you know, True, that is just one reason why I love you – I mean because you are fine and manly and modest – just old True, that's all. And when I came to where you gave the money to the shivering men waiting for bread, I knew just how you felt, and I couldn't keep back the tears to save my life.

"And I know it was you, True, who proposed it, though you didn't say so, for it is exactly what you *would* do; and when you told how they put out their hands for the money, and some of them said 'God bless you,' and how we would go there together in a year, and with Perny and Van, too, and give them all something again, and perhaps more, – a great deal more, – I wanted to put my arms about you, True, and give you a good hug, and tell you how noble and generous you are, and how I wish I were more like you, for your sake.

"What a wonderful plan that is of Mr. Barrifield's! Do you know, it quite startles me; it seems like some fairy tale. And as for the figures, they fairly make me dizzy. Mr. Barrifield must be a very remarkable man to conceive such an extraordinary idea; and how fortunate for him that he has such men as you and Van and Perny to help him! Between Barry and Perny with their business and literary ability, and you and Van to look after the pictures, I am sure you will get out a beautiful paper, and one that ought to succeed. It seems like magic that it could be made to do so without great capital at the start, but, of course, Mr. Frisby did it 'without a dollar,' so it is possible, and Barry's plan certainly is plausible and fascinating. Then, too, if it should not turn out exactly as planned, he can always get those capitalists to come in, you know; and while I suppose you would be obliged to take a very small share then, it would be better than failure.

"You see, True, I have been thinking, as I said at the start, and I am with you, of course, heart and soul, in whatever you undertake; only, do you know, True, I can't make myself very enthusiastic about it. I mean I don't feel about it as I do about your work, and as I felt when you wrote me that you had got into the big magazines,

and had been given a serial to illustrate by the greatest of them all. I hardly slept a wink that night, I was so happy for you and for myself and for everybody. I am glad of this, too, but it is in a different way.

"I know it is hard to save when money is earned with one's hands, for it comes little at a time, and if the paper prospers it will be easier for you afterward. But, somehow, premiums and showy offers in big type don't seem to fit in with my thought of you, and the Bible premium especially doesn't appeal to me entirely. I suppose it is all right, and perhaps, as you say, a great many people will get Bibles who never had them before; but to me there is something almost sacrilegious in the thought of using the Bible as a means of making the paper sell. You know, True, I am not very strait-laced about such matters, either, and, after all, of course, if Mr. Frisby used it, and with the sanction of the Rev. Montague Banks, it must be all right. But you know also, True, that it isn't for money or luxury that I care, – I have had plenty of such things, – and it is just for your own dear, trusting self, and your aims and triumphs, that I love you.

"Your bohemian life there with Perny and Van has always seemed so delightful to me. You are all such good friends, and it must be beautiful to do your work together, and then go out and see the different phases of living and dying, and the struggle of existence, without the cares and worries of business. I have pictured you so often sitting about the fire at evening, smoking your pipes and dreaming the dreams that are only of your world, and happy in that comradeship which only men ever understand and feel for each other. Then I have tried not to be jealous of the others, and to make myself believe that by and by, when I came, it would not be so hard for you to give them up, and that sometimes I would let you go back to them, and then for the evening you could forget that I had ever come into your life and changed it all.

"You must let me say all this, True, because I feel it, and know, in spite of your noble letters to me, that it *will* make a difference, and that your life will never be quite the same afterward. And that is why I feel about the paper as I do, too, I suppose, for I feel that it will in some way rob you of the quiet happiness and the serene sweetness of art that you now enjoy, and for which I have been more than once tempted to give you up and go out of your life for your own sake. Only, True, I am weak and human, and can't let you go as long as you, too, are weak and human enough to love me and to make us both believe that I will be a help and an inspiration to you by and by.

"As I read over this letter now, it seems to me neither very cheerful nor encouraging, and not at all the letter I started out to write. But if I should write another I fear I should not improve on it, and anyway, True, you know it is from the heart, and that always and always my heart is *with* you and *for* you in whatever you do or undertake. Write to me as often as you can, and tell me the good things that happen, and the funny things, too; for I enjoy them all, and your letters are precious to me beyond anything that the days bring. Go right on, True; don't let anything I say make you hesitate for a moment. I am away off here, dreaming idle dreams, while you are there and see and know. I am sure you will do what is best – you always do; and remember that, whatever comes, I am, now and forever, your

"Dorothy."

IV

SOME PREMIUMS

It was decided to make Perner the editor. This decision was reached during a lunch on Twenty-third Street, where the proprietors of the "Whole Family" met one day some weeks after the initial dinner. A number of brief and informal meetings had been held, and a liberal amount of talk expended, besides the continuous discussion and badinage in the studio where Livingstone, Van Dorn, and Perner still worked, though in a manner disheartening to their publishers. The idea of starting a vast enterprise with little or no capital had in it something very fascinating to the bohemian temperament, while the consideration of its unique phases and the more or less appropriate premiums to be offered, afforded never-ending amusement. Work lagged, while hope tinted the air rose-color, and the god of mirth perched by the side of Venus Milo on the mantelpiece.

Livingstone, it is true, had begun, and with fine enthusiasm at first, a picture of the bread line as they had seen it on New Year's eve. The sketch was on canvas, and strong in composition and feeling. The others came over and stood one on either side of him and said so. They said so more than once, and with various degrees of emphasis. Perhaps this satisfied Livingstone, for after that his interest in the undertaking became that of a spectator also. The canvas stood on an easel in one corner, and served as a diversion when the "Whole Family" topic was for the moment exhausted.

But one day Barrifield came over just before noon, and announced that they should organize forthwith. He had been investigating certain premium articles, a number of which he had in his pockets. He said it was necessary to have some definite address, and whoever was to be editor should be chosen, that he might begin to cast about for desirable features. So they drifted over to the Twenty-third Street place to "eat things and talk," as Livingstone said. They had done a good deal of this lately.

While they were waiting for the dishes, Barrifield began emptying his pockets. He produced first from his vest an article that caused Livingstone to whisper:

"I say, old man, put that clock out of sight. You can hear it all over the place."

Barrifield stared at him reproachfully.

"That," he said, with great deliberation, "is a watch."

"I wouldn't have believed it," said Van Dorn, taking it in his hand. "I thought it was a water-meter."

Perner held it to his ear. In his youth he had lived on a farm.

"Twenty-horse-power vibrator," he announced, after listening.

"Stem-winder and – setter," continued Barrifield, undisturbed. "Perfect time."

The article was passed around.

"Didn't they have any thicker ones?" asked Livingstone.

"Well, of course," assented Barrifield, "it *is* a trifle thicker than a fine gold watch, but it's a perfect gem in other respects. The manufacturer of it told me he had carried one of them a year, and that it hadn't varied a second in that time."

"Maybe it was stopped," suggested Van Dorn, but Barrifield ignored this libel.

"Every boy will want one of the 'Whole Family' watches," he went on. "We can sell a barrel of them in every town."

"How many of them come in a barrel?" interrupted Livingstone.

Barrifield leaned across the table.

"And I can buy them," he said eagerly, "I can buy them for seventy-five cents! Think of it! Seventy-five cents! A five-dollar watch, given with the finest weekly paper ever offered, for only one dollar a year!"

"How will you do that?" asked Perner.

"That leaves us twenty-five cents for the paper."

"Why, you know, we'll add something for postage and packing, as I said before."

"Yes, and it will take something. By the time you get a box on that thrashing-machine, properly nailed and mailed, it will cost twenty-five cents." Perner's business experience was manifesting itself.

"Oh, pshaw, Perny!" protested Barrifield, "it won't cost half so much. We can get boys and girls for three dollars or so a week to attend to all that."

Perner closed his eyes for an instant and saw in fancy an army of youthful clerks packing various premiums for mailing. Then, remembering the difficulty with which he had managed even a small business with less than a dozen assistants, he sighed. He knew that big businesses really *were* conducted, and with a science and precision that was a constant source of wonder to him. Perhaps Barrifield knew the secret of their management.

"Even if it did cost that," proceeded Barrifield, "think of the quantity of them we will sell, and the immense circulation it will give us. We could afford to lose a little on each and make it back on the advertising."

Perner knew nothing of advertising, except that a certain paper received five thousand dollars a page for each issue, and Barrifield had assured them that the circulation of the "Whole Family" would be more than twice as great. He subsided, therefore, while Barrifield drew from his overcoat pocket a flat package of considerable size and weight. He undid the strings carefully, and a leather-bound, limp-covered book lay before them.

"That," he said triumphantly, "is the Bible!"

Van Dorn reached for it and turned some of the leaves curiously.

"First one Van ever saw," said Perner.

Livingstone took up the book with thoughtful regard.

"Do you really think we'd better use this as a premium?" he said hesitatingly. "It seems to me that it – that it's too – that it's overdoing it." Livingstone's smooth face flushed a little. "I mean that it's been overdone already," he added hastily and with confusion.

"Oh, my dear boy," said Barrifield, "the Bible is never overdone. This is a finer one than Frisby used, and I can get it for just what the watch costs. The 'Whole Family' and the great Instructor's Bible, worth both together five dollars, all for one dollar!"

"You don't mean to say that *this* won't cost postage!" said Perner.

"Not a great deal. Book postage is cheap, – very cheap, – and think how many of them we will sell and how much good they will do! One half-million Bibles and the 'Whole Family' – "

"You didn't bring the gun along, did you?" interrupted Van Dorn.

Just then the dishes were served, and the premiums were for the moment put aside. The talk, however, continued. Barrifield spoke of other premiums he had been considering and upon which he had secured "special inside figures" on large quantity. He no longer mentioned hundreds and thousands in relation to the new paper. He was reveling in millions that were as real to him as if they were already to his credit at the banker's. Presently he reviewed once more the story of Frisby and the "Voice of Light," whose cry in the wilderness had brought fortune so promptly to his aid.

He added fresh details recently obtained, and told how during the first month, when he had been waiting for his advertising to appear, he had been obliged to mortgage his household effects at five per cent. a week in order to live. He had received one thousand dollars in the first mail after the advertising appeared. And when that mail was brought in and laid on his desk he didn't have a dollar in his pocket – not a dollar. As Barrifield proceeded, any vague doubts of success that had crept into the minds of his listeners disappeared. They began the work of organization forthwith, and Van Dorn, who had faith in Perner's literary judgment, proposed that he be the editor. Perner, in turn, proposed Van Dorn as art editor, with Livingstone as his assistant. Barrifield was to be nominally business manager, though, for the reason that his present position consumed most of his time, and as the business offices for convenience were to be in the studios occupied by the other three, the

management, such as it was, would for a while fall mostly upon Perner, who referred once more to his ten years' successful experience, and assumed his double responsibility with some dignity.

A consideration of the first number's contents was then taken up, with the result that they were to prepare it mostly themselves. They were on familiar ground now, and Perner and Van Dorn each displayed some evidence of fitness for their respective positions. There must be two stirring serials, one of which they would buy. Barrifield knew where one could be had. Livingstone could do the pictures for this story. The other would be more in Van's line.

Then they lighted cigars and went back to the premiums, and Barrifield launched into the details of his recent explorations and discoveries in the vast jungles of Premium Land. He had examined and priced everything, from a nut-cracker to a trip abroad. Presently he began to spread a number of these things on the table, which the waiter had once more cleared. Besides the watch and Bible, there was a fishing-kit, all but the rod, which was described fully in a leaflet, a bicycle lamp, a pamphlet outlining a tour through the Holy Land, sample pages of a cook-book, and a pair of ear-muffs.

Barrifield arranged these on the cloth, explaining as he did so that a beautiful box kite had been too large to bring, as was also a gun of which he could get a limited quantity – a hundred thousand or so – at a ridiculously low figure. Van Dorn picked up the ear-muffs curiously.

"What do these cost?" he asked.

"Forty-eight cents a pair by the gross. Special inside figure because I told him we would want a quarter of a million pairs."

Van Dorn looked at them a little closer.

"The fellow I saw must have stolen his," he said, "for he was selling them yesterday on Broadway for twenty-five cents a pair."

"Impossible, Van! They couldn't be the same, you know," protested Barrifield, earnestly. "There are many qualities of ear-muffs. These are the very best-double-elastic, wire-set and-bound, storm-proof muffs. They cost forty-six cents to make – the manufacturer told me so. What you saw was a cheap imitation."

Barrifield put an end to further discussion on this point by calling attention to the bicycle lamp – something new and superior to any in use. He had been attracted by it in a sporting-goods window on Nassau Street. The price had been steep, – too steep for a premium, of course, – but he had made up his mind that if he could get on the "inside" he would find a price there within their reach. He had got on the inside. He had pursued the elusive "inside" even to Hoboken, and captured it there in the very sanctity of the factory – the president's private office.

"The president was a fine, big, smooth-faced man with one of these rich, hearty laughs," he explained, "and we had a long talk together. I told him we had a new scheme that would put us in a position to use a quarter of a million of these lamps the first year, and that we had been considering another make – which was true."

"It was," said Van Dorn, "and it would have been equally true to have said that we've been considering every known article of commerce, from a mouse-trap with two holes to a four-masted schooner."

"That caught him right away," continued Barrifield, regardless of this interruption. "He said he wanted to get started with a new thing like ours, and that he was going to let us on the inside. He had a talk with the manager, and came back and made me a net cash price of eighty-seven cents! Think of it! Eighty-seven cents for a two-dollar lamp! Given with the 'Whole Family' one year – fifty-two weeks – for one dollar and one new subscriber!"

Perner the businesslike was calculating.

"That would be two dollars we would get in all," he said, "for two subscriptions, two premiums, postage, and handling. Counting, say, seventy-five cents for the other premium, and twenty-five cents for postage and handling, we would have just thirteen cents left for our two subscriptions."

"By gad!" said Livingstone, weakly.

"But the advertising is where we come in," insisted Barrifield, eagerly. "And besides, everybody won't take lamps, either."

Van Dorn was smiling queerly.

"No," he said; "and if they did we can get them over at Cutten & Downum's for sixty-seven cents apiece. I saw them there yesterday."

"Not this lamp!" protested Barrifield. "I'll bet ten dollars it was a cheap imitation. I'll write to President Bright to-night about it. He's a fine man. He'd take some stock in the 'Whole Family' in a minute, if we'd let him. It couldn't have been this lamp!"

"Maybe not," assented Van Dorn; "but they had a big card up, saying 'Bright & Sons' Stellar, sixty-seven cents,' and the lamps looked just like this."

The others said nothing, but their confidence in Barrifield's purchasing ability had received a distinct jar. Presently Perner noticed the head waiter watching them intently. He was about to mention this when the minion walked over and spoke to Barrifield in a whisper. Barrifield grew red and began to drag the things together as the waiter moved away.

"What's the matter? What did he say, Barry?" asked Van Dorn.

At first Barrifield did not answer. Then the humor of it seized him, and he chuckled all over, growing even redder as he hid away the things.

"Come, old man, what did he say?" urged Livingstone.

Barrifield could hardly steady his voice for laughter.

"It's too good to keep," he admitted.

"Out with it, then," said Perner.

"Why," said Barrifield, "he said that they had sample-rooms up-stairs, and that it was against the rules to show samples here in the dining-room."

"Hoo-ee!" shouted Van Dorn. "That calls for something."

"By gad! yes," said Livingstone, "it does!"

It was well along in the afternoon when the friends left the place, and Perner, Van Dorn, and Livingstone returned to their apartments. They went over at first and stood for some moments before the picture of the bread line.

"Why don't you finish it, Stony?" asked Perner. "Finish it up and sell it for enough to pay your part in the 'Whole Family.'"

"Good scheme – I've thought of it," confessed Livingstone.

"Do you suppose there are any publishers in that line?" mused Van Dorn.

Livingstone laughed.

"I say, fellows, let's take a walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out the houses we're going to buy next year!"

As they turned to go, Van Dorn took up a blank piece of drawing-paper and a brush. He worked away a few moments, the others looking on. As they passed out he tacked it to the outer door with pins. Then they all faced about, and, standing abreast, read in the fading light of the hall-way:

OFFICE OF

THE WHOLE FAMILY

A WEEKLY PAPER

FOR YOUNG AND OLD

V
**A LETTER FROM MR. TRUMAN
LIVINGSTONE OF NEW YORK TO MISS
DOROTHY CASTLE OF CLEVELAND**

My dear, dearest Dorry: When I sit down to write to you there is always so much I want to say that I never know where to begin, and in the end I seem to tell you nothing at all except that I love you, which you have heard so much I am always afraid you will grow tired of hearing it again. Then I turn cold at the thought, and rewrite the letter to leave out some of the times, but before I am done I find them all in again somewhere else; so it is no use, you see, and I generally send the first letter, after all. Then, when it is gone I want it back, though I don't know whether I want it to take out some of the times I've said it, or to put in some more that I didn't say.

"Oh, Dorry dear, I do love you, and often when I have thought of you in your beautiful home surrounded by luxury, and then remembered that I have asked you to leave it all and cast your fortunes with a chap whose fortunes depend on the whim of the public and the fancy of the art editor, it has made me feel so guilty that I have more than once put into those letters I didn't send something about letting you take it all back and not allowing you to make such a sacrifice for me, even though you are true and noble and willing.

"And then I didn't send those letters, and I'm glad now that I didn't, for the hard days are going to be over soon, and I feel that I shall be able to offer you comforts that will, perhaps, keep you from regretting altogether those you have left behind. I am glad you are so enthusiastic too, now, about the paper, though you didn't feel just that way at the start, and after I got your first letter I had to talk the scheme all over again with Barry and Perny and Van to get back my courage and to be sure the Bible premium was all right.

"You know, Dorry, that money is a great thing, or at least you don't know, because you never had to do without it, but it is, and especially here where it is so hard to get, and where it takes so much of it to live even respectably. All that you have so often said about the bohemian life is fine and beautiful, and true in a way, too, but there are unpleasant phases of it as well. The struggle is very hard sometimes, and even Perny and Van, who do not need much money, and who will never be anything different from what they are now, even they are glad that they will be worth a million at least by this time next year.

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