The THOUSANDTH WOMAN

by ERNEST W. HORNUNG

Author of The AMATEUR CRACKSMAN, RAFFLES, Etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS by O. IRWIN MYERS

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Cazalet, on the steamer Kaiser Fritz homeward bound from Australia, cries out in his sleep that Henry Craven, who ten years before had ruined his father and himself, is dead and finds that Hilton Toye, who shares the stateroom with him, knows Craven and also Blanche Macnair, a former neighbor and playmate.

CHAPTER II—When the daily papers come aboard at Southampton Toye reads that Craven has been murdered and calls Cazalet's dream second sight. He thinks of doing a little amateur detective work on the case himself.

CHAPTER III—In the train to town Cazalet and Toye discuss the murder, which was committed at Cazalet's old home. Toye hears from Cazalet that Scruton, who had been Cazalet's friend and the scapegoat for Craven's dishonesty, has been released from prison.

CHAPTER IV—Cazalet goes down the river and meets Blanche.

CHAPTER V—Toye also comes to see Blanche and tells Cazalet that Scruton has been arrested, but as he doesn't believe the old clerk is guilty he is going to ferret out the murderer.

CHAPTER VI—Cazalet and Blanche go to Cazalet's old home and meet Mr. Drinkwater of Scotland Yard.

CHAPTER VII — Cazalet goes with Drinkwater to the library where the murder was committed, shows him a secret passage he knew of as a boy, and leads the way through it.

CHAPTER VIII—In town Toye, talking with Cazalet about the murder, suggests finger prints on the weapon found in the secret passage as a means of trapping the murderer and succeeds in securing a print of Cazalet's hand.

CHAPTER IX—Toye traces Cazalet's movements while a passenger on the Kaiser Fritz, finds that he left the boat before the murder and returned just after it, and warns him.

CHAPTER X—Cazalet and Blanche spend the week of their lives together.

CHAPTER XI—Blanche tells Cazalet that she would stick to the "thousandth man" to the gallows' foot and after.

CHAPTER XII—Toye finds proof of Cazalet's guilt and binds Blanche not to marry Cazalet as the price of silence.

CHAPTER XIII—Cazalet succeeds in getting Scruton out of the law's clutches as a suspect but he and Blanche are confronted by Toye with the alternative of parting or having Cazalet denounced as the murderer.

CHAPTER XIV—Scruton appears and confesses the murder and Toye gracefully retires as a suitor and amateur detective.

CHAPTER XIII.

Faith Unfaithful.

"It's all perfectly true," said Cazalet calmly. "Those were my movements while I was off the ship, except for the five hours and a bit that I was away from Charing Cross. I can't dispute a detail of all the rest. But they'll have to fill in those five hours unless they want another case to collapse like the one against Scruton!"

Old Savage had wriggled like a venerable worm, in the experienced talons of the Bobby's Bugbear; but then Mr. Drinkwater and his discoveries had come still worse out of a hotter encounter with the truculent attorney; and Cazalet had described the whole thing as only he could describe a given episode, down to the ultimate dismissal of the charge against Scruton, with a gusto the more cynical for the deliberately low pitch of his voice. It was in the little lodging-house sitting room at Nell Gwynne's Cottages; he stood with his back to the crackling fire that he had just lighted himself, as it were, already at bay; for the folding doors were in front of his nose, and his eyes roved incessantly from the landing door on one side to the curtained casement on the other. Yet sometimes he paused to gaze at the friend who had come to warn him of his danger; and there was nothing cynical or grim about him then.

Blanche had broken her word for perhaps the first time in her life; but it had never before been extorted from her by duress, and it would be affectation to credit her with much compunction on the point. Her one great qualm lay in the possibility of Toye's turning up at any moment; but this she had obviated to some extent by coming straight to the cottages when he left her—presumably to look for Cazalet in London, since she had been careful not to mention his change of address. Cazalet, to her relief, but also a little to her hurt, she had found at his lodgings in the neighborhood, full of the news he had not managed to communicate to her. But it was no time for taking anything but his peril to heart. And that they had been discussing, almost as man to man, if rather as innocent man to innocent man; for even now, or perhaps now in his presence least of all, Blanche could not bring herself to believe her old friend guilty of a violent crime, however unpremeditated, for which another had been allowed to suffer, for however short a time.

And yet he seemed to make no secret of it; and yet—it did explain his whole conduct since landing, as Toye had said.

She could only shut her eyes to what must have happened, even as Cazalet himself had shut his all this wonderful week, that she had forgotten all day in her ingratitude, but would never, in all her days, forget again!

"There won't be another case," she heard herself saying, while her thoughts ran ahead or lagged behind like sheep. "It'll never come out—I know it won't."

"Why shouldn't it?" he asked so sharply that she had to account for the words, to herself as well as to him.

"Nobody knows except Mr. Toye, and he means to keep it to himself."

"Why should he?"

"I don't know. He'll tell you himself."

"Are you sure you don't know? What can he have to tell me? Why should he screen me, Blanche?"

His eyes and voice were furious with suspicion, but still the voice was lowered.

"He's a jolly good sort, you know," said Blanche, as if the whole affair was the most ordinary one in the world. But heroics could not have driven the sense of her remark more forcibly home to Cazalet.

"Oh, he is, is he?"

"I've always found him so."

"So have I, the little I've seen of him. And I don't blame him for getting on my tracks, mind you; he's a bit of a detective, I was fair game, and he did warn me in a way. That's why I meant to have the week—" He stopped and looked away.

"I know. And nothing can undo that," she only said; but her voice swelled with thanksgiving. And Cazalet looked reassured; the hot suspicion died out of his eyes, but left them gloomily perplexed.

"Still, I can't understand it. I don't believe it, either! I'm in his hands. What have I done to be saved by Toye? He's probably scouring London for me—if he isn't watching this window at this minute!"

He went to the curtains as he spoke. Simultaneously Blanche sprang up, to entreat him to fly while he could. That had been her first object in coming to him as she had done, and yet, once with him, she had left it to the last! And now it was too late; he was at the window, chuckling significantly to himself; he had opened it, and he was leaning out.

"That you, Toye, down there? Come up and show yourself! I want to see you."

He turned in time to dart in front of the folding doors as Blanche reached them, white and shuddering. The flush of impulsive bravado fled from his face at the sight of hers.

"You can't go in there. What's the matter?" he whispered. "Why should you be afraid of Hilton Toye?"

How could she tell him? Before she had found a word, the landing door opened, and Hilton Toye was in the room, looking at her.

"Keep your voice down," said Cazalet anxiously. "Even if it's all over with me but the shouting, we needn't start the shouting here!"

He chuckled savagely at the jest; and now Toye stood looking at him.

"I've heard all you've done," continued Cazalet. "I don't blame you a bit. If it had been the other way about, I might have given you less run for your money. I've heard what you've found out about my mysterious movements, and you're absolutely right as far as you go. You don't know why I took the train at Naples, and traveled across Europe without a handbag. It wasn't quite the put-up job you may think. But, if it makes you any happier, I may as well tell you that I was at Uplands that night, and I did get out through the foundations!"

The insane impetuosity of the man was his master now. He was a living fire of impulse that had burst into a blaze.

"I always guessed you might be crazy, and I now know it," said Hilton Toye. "Still, I judge you're not so crazy as to deny that while you were in that house you struck down Henry Craven and left him for dead?"

Cazalet stood like red-hot stone.

"Miss Blanche," said Toye, turning to her rather shyly, "I guess I can't do what I said just yet. I haven't breathed a word, not yet, and perhaps I never will, if you'll come away with me now—back to your home—and never see Henry Craven's murderer again!"

"And who may he be?" cried a voice that brought all three faceabout.

The folding-doors had opened, and a fourth figure was standing between the two rooms.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Person Unknown.

The intruder was a shaggy elderly man, of so cadaverous an aspect that his face alone cried for his death-bed; and his gaunt frame took up the cry, as it swayed upon the threshold in dressing-gown and bedroom slippers that Toye instantly recognized as belonging to Cazalet. The man had a shock of almost white hair, and a less gray beard clipped roughly to a point. An unwholesome pallor marked the fallen features; and the envenomed eyes burned low in their sockets, as they dealt with Blanche but fastened on Hilton Toye.

"What do you know about Henry Craven's murderer?" he demanded in a voice between a croak and a crow. "Have they run in some other poor devil, or were you talking about me? If so, I'll start a libel action, and call Cazalet and that lady as witnesses!"

"This is Scruton," explained Cazalet, "who was only liberated this evening after being detained a week on a charge that ought never to have been brought, as I've told you both all along." Scruton thanked him with a bitter laugh. "I've brought him here," concluded Cazalet, "because I don't think he's fit enough to be about alone."

"Nice of him, isn't it?" said Scruton bitterly. "I'm so fit that they wanted to keep me somewhere else longer than they'd any right; that may be why they lost no time in getting hold of me again. Nice, considerate, kindly country! Ten years isn't long enough to have you as a dishonored guest. 'Won't you come back for another week, and see if we can't arrange for a nice little sudden death and burial for you?' But they couldn't you see, blast 'em!"

He subsided into the best chair in the room, which Blanche had wheeled up behind him; a moment later he looked round, thanked her curtly, and lay back with closed eyes until suddenly he opened them on Cazalet.

"And what was that you were saying—that about traveling across Europe and being at Uplands that night? I thought you came round by sea? And what night do you mean?"

"The night it all happened," said Cazalet steadily.

"You mean the night some person unknown knocked Craven on the head?"

"Yes."

The sick man threw himself forward in the chair. "You never told me this!" he cried suspiciously; both the voice and the man seemed stronger.

"There was no point in telling you."

"Did you see the person?"

"Yes."

"Then he isn't unknown to you?"

"I didn't see him well."

Scruton looked sharply at the two mute listeners. They were very intent, indeed. "Who are these people, Cazalet? No! I know one of 'em," he answered himself in the next breath. "It's Blanche Macnair, isn't it? I thought at first it must be a younger sister grown up like her. You'll forgive prison manners, Miss Macnair, if that's still your name. You look a woman to trust—if there is one—and you gave me your chair. Anyhow, you've been in for a penny and you can stay in for a pound, as far as I care! But who's your Amer'can friend, Cazalet?"

"Mr. Hilton Toye, who spotted that I'd been all the way to Uplands and back when I claimed to have been in Rome!"

There was a touch of Scruton's bitterness in Cazalet's voice; and by some subtle process it had a distinctly mollifying effect on the really embittered man.

"What on earth were you doing at Uplands?" he asked, in a kind of confidential bewilderment.

"I went down to see a man."

Toye himself could not have cut and measured more deliberate monosyllables.

"Craven?" suggested Scruton.

"No; a man I expected to find at Craven's."

"The writer of the letter you found at Cook's office in Naples the night you landed there, I guess!"

It really was Toye this time, and there was no guesswork in his tone. Obviously he was speaking by his little book, though he had not got it out again.

"How do you know I went to Cook's?"

"I know every step you took between the Kaiser Fritz and Charing Cross and Charing Cross and the Kaiser Fritz!"

Scruton listened to this interchange with keen attention, hanging on each man's lips with his sunken eyes; both took it calmly, but Scruton's surprise was not hidden by a sardonic grin.

"You've evidently had a stern chase with a Yankee clipper!" said he. "If he's right about the letter, Cazalet, I should say so; presumably it wasn't from Craven himself?"

"No."

"Yet it brought you across Europe to Craven's house?"

"Well—to the back of his house! I expected to meet my man on the river."

"Was that how you missed him more or less?"

"I suppose it was."

Scruton ruminated a little, broke into his offensive laugh, and checked it instantly of his own accord. "This is really interesting," he croaked. "You get to London—at what time was it?"

"Nominally three-twenty-five; but the train ran thirteen minutes late," said Hilton Toye.

"And you're on the river by what time?" Scruton asked Cazalet.

"I walked over Hungerford bridge, took the first train to Surbiton, got a boat there, and just dropped down with

"What Do You Know About Henry Craven's Murderer?"

the stream. I don't suppose the whole thing took me very much more than an hour."

"Aren't you forgetting something?" said Toye.

"Yes, I was. It was I who telephoned to the house and found that Craven was out motoring; so there was no hurry."

"Yet you weren't going to see Henry Craven?" murmured Toye.

Cazalet did not answer. His last words had come in a characteristic burst; now he had his mouth shut tight, and his eyes were fast to Scruton. He might have been in the witness-box already, a doomed wretch cynically supposed to be giving evidence on his own behalf, but actually only baring his neck by inches to the rope, under the joint persuasion of judge and counsel. But he had one friend by him still, one who had edged a little nearer in the pause.

"But you did see the man you went to see?" said Scruton.

Cazalet paused. "I don't know. Eventually somebody brushed past me in the dark. I did think then—but I can't swear to him even now!"

"Tell us about it."

"Do you mean that, Scruton? Do you insist on hearing all that happened? I'm not asking Toye; he can do as he likes. But you, Scruton—you've been through a lot, you know—you ought to have stopped in bed—do you really want this on top of all?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

DELAWARE

Last Week's Letter.

Chas. Mawe and children, Mrs. Fred Glanz and children and Misses Stella and Pearl Beebe.

Harley Davis, who has been visiting relatives here for the past two weeks, returned to Minneapolis, Sunday evening.

Miss Anna Balster of Monticello came Monday morning for a couple of days visit with her sister, Mrs. Peter Wallert, and husband.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Zirtzman were called to Manchester last week by the illness of the latter's father, Mr. Starbird.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mauson returned home from their honeymoon trip to St. Peters, Minnesota, Friday evening.

Mrs. Levi Kaster was an Oneida visitor Tuesday.

A very interesting Christmas program was given in the Swedish church Friday evening by the little folks in both English and Swedish language. A Xmas tree very prettily decorated was also in display.

Mr. Axel Ortberg and daughter, Miss Izella of North Dakota, are here visiting the former's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Ortberg.

Mr. S. G. Collis of Cedar Rapids, spent Friday and Saturday with his mother and sister, Mrs. H. J. Collis, and Mrs. Levi Kaster and family.

Miss Florence Beebe of Arlington, came Friday evening to spend the holiday vacation with her grand-parents, Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Spear.

Mrs. Frank Coats and sons of Delhi and Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Malmgren, of Manchester, spent Christmas day with Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Coats.

Roy Anderson and Elmer Manson were Manchester callers Friday.

Messrs. Swanson and Miss Hilda Swanson of Sand Creek, attended Swedish church here Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. O. Manson and son, Eddie, were Oneida callers Thursday.

Miss Edith Lundine of Cedar Rapids, spent Christmas day with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gus Lundine, and family.

Edwin Malmgren of Manchester, visited relatives in town Tuesday.

Mrs. Minnie Nagel and daughter, of Thorpe, is spending a few days with the former's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gurke.

Gus Lundine was in Manchester Friday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Amos Bronnell and son of Wisconsin, came Friday for a visit with relatives.

Mr. Wilfong and John Wilhelm are transacting business in Kansas City, Missouri.

Mr. E. J. Paris was injured one day last week by a horse kicking him.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Guthornson and children visited at the Chas. Angell home Sunday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Manson and children and Leon Maack of Greeley, visited with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. H.. Maack, Christmas day.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Harder and Miss Emma Harder of Montana, are visiting in the Chas. Mawe and Gus Grimms homes.

Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Sackett and Mrs. E. P. Coats and daughter, Izora, were Manchester visitors Wednesday.

Joe Verderber of Delhi, was a Delaware business caller in town Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Yeldon, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Manson, Mrs. Wight, Miss Mary and Mart Claus and Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Yeldon and daughter were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Pete Woellert Sunday evening.

Harley Davis went to Dubuque last week and spent a few days with his brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. George Guthormson.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hilmer visited in Chicago over Sunday.

An interesting Christmas program was given in the German church, Christmas eve.

Levi Kaster was a business caller in Manchester Friday.

Gene Dawson visited friends in Cedar Rapids the latter part of last week.

Mrs. Isaac Williams, who was working in the hospital under the care of Dr. Kresensky at Greeley, came home Friday evening.

Oscar Manson and family were entertained at the Olaf Manson home Sunday.

Mrs. Si Kenny of Earlville, is visiting her daughter, Mrs. Fred Voelschow, and family.

Mrs. Sundermeyer and children, of Durango, are visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. Hillers and family.

Mrs. Clara Fear and daughter, Miss Pearl and Mrs. Thompson, ate Christmas dinner with the former's son, Lee Fear and family.

Mr. Olaf Persson of Greenleaf, Kansas, came Friday for a visit with his brother, Peter and family.

Mrs. J. J. Meader and son, Amos, of Cedar Rapids spent Christmas with the former's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Kingsley.

Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Hendrickson, of Arlington, spent Saturday and Sunday with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Spear.

Miss Esther Anderson of Cedar Rapids, came Tuesday evening for a visit with her sister, Miss Jennnie.

Mr. and Mrs. George Guthornson, of Dubuque, spent the latter part of last week with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Davis. Clifford Davis returned to Dubuque, with them for a week's visit.

STRAWBERRY POINT

Last Week's Letter.

Bert McClair has returned home from Dakota where he has been looking after his property.

Miss Mae Campbell of Cedar Rapids, has been here visiting in the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs.. E. J. Campbell.

A. O. Kingsley has been enjoying a visit from his neice, Mrs. Williams of Delhi.

Miss Lucy Porter is here visiting with her parents.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Mitchell have returned home, after a visit with relatives in Minnesota.

Chas. Sauerberry has sold his property on Spring street to Clarence Campbell formerly of Lamont.

Mrs. Amy Culbertson of Edgewood, spent Saturday here.

Mrs. R. C. Norris has been visiting with relatives and friends.

Guy Smith was a Dundee visitor, Thursday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Lingard of Dundee, were seen on our streets Saturday.

Miss Clara Opperman, who is attending college at Fayette, spent Christmas with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Opperman.

Misses Georgia and Susan Balloff have been visiting with their mother, Mrs. Mary Balloff.

Mr. and Mrs. Gus Kamoose entertained at their home Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Opperman and family, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Barr and family, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kamoose, Floyd Snyder and Andrew Hughes of this place, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Allenstein and family of Lamont.

Mrs. E. C. Kamoose is quite ill.

Mrs. G. W. Pilinton of Edgewood, was shopping and calling on friends here Tuesday.

Andrew Hughes, who is attending college at Ames, came home Wednesday morning for a visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Hughes.

Miss Margaret Platt of Oelwein, has been here visiting with her sister, Mrs. Wayne Coykendall.

Mr. B. Cooley of Dubuque, has been here visiting in the home of George Marsh.

Mr. and Mrs. John Meyers and children of Armour, S. D., are here visiting her mother, Mrs. Mary Balloff, and other relatives.

Miss Leta Eppler has returned to her home from Manchester, where she has been visiting friends.

Mrs. Frank Grapes has returned home from Iowa City, where she submitted to an operation.

Mrs. Jacob Falk has returned to her home in Ft. Atkinson, after a visit with friends and relatives here.

Miss Elsie Barer who is attending college at Ames, is here, spending her vacation with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Will Barker.

Mrs. E. A. Blake is in Delhi visiting with her grand-daughter, Mrs. Floyd Barnes.

Mrs. Edwin Goodman is visiting with her sister, Miss Daykins, of Dubuque.

We are glad to report Grace Hines getting along nicely, after an operation for goitre.

Mr. and Mrs. Len Smith and daughter of Cresco, are here visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Sloan, and other relatives.

The Christmas program given by the Sunday schools of the different churches were well appreciated by all present.

Clint Fairweather formerly of this place, was very badly burned one day last week while working with his automobile. He lit a match to look into the gasoline tank, which he supposed was empty. The tank contained sufficient gasoline to result in an explosion, which damaged the car and burned him very badly.

E. C. Kamoss is very ill at this writing.

Mrs. J. H. Klingbeil is visiting with relatives in Lamont.

Mrs. Harry Huene, of Forsyth, Montana, is here visiting with her mother, Mrs. Belle Dunning.

Mrs. Dora Nace is visiting with home folks at Arlington.

Miss Bessie Howard spent Tuesday with friends in Arlington.

Mr. and Mrs. W. O. Dunning, of Cedar Rapids, are here visiting with relatives.

Mr. C. Marsh of Cedar Rapids, is here visiting relatives.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

Orpha E. Schmock and husband to John Brigman, lot 669, Manchester, Iowa, $105.00.

A. L. Strain to Robert Strain, W 1-2 lot 56 Henry Acres Addition to Manchester, Iowa, 200.00.

Evlyn L. Noble, et al to R. W. Carmer, lots 15 and 30 F. A. Densmore's Add., Edgewood, Iowa, 175.00.

William Krueger to J. S. Merten, NW SE and N 1-2 NE SW Sec. 11, Elk Twp, 3000.00.

Emma C. Zearley and husband et al, to Jacob W. Smith, lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 block 3 first Western Addition to Colesburg, 1400.00.

Charles H Binning and wife to Fred J. Binning, SE SE 10 S 1-2 SW and W 39 1-2 SW SE and 1 rod on S. side SE SE 11, North Fork Twp., 11200.00.

A. D. Hubbell and wife to Ed. Beohm, SW NE, W 1-8 SE NE, Pt NE SE, W 1-2 SE, Pt. E 1-2 SW Pt SE NW 14 Honey Creek, Twp, 13,300.00.

Joseph Hutchinson, and wife to Sarah H. Bradley, Lot 21 of Ballard's subdiv., to Manchester, Iowa, 1.00.

John S. Merten and wife to Joseph A. Klaus, Pt. E 1-2 NE 18 Pt. NW 1-4, 17, SE SE and Pt. NE SE, 7 Pt., W 1-2 SW, 8, Colony Twp. 1.00.

Alfred Marolf and wife to William J. Kurth, SE NW NW SE and Pt. of NE 1-4 Sec. 34 and Pt. NW SW, 35, Delhi Twp., 27000.00.

Shea Tree Cuts Butter Cost.

One shea tree beside each man's back porch would cut a big slice of butter off the monthly food bill. In Africa vegetable butter is made from the fruit of this tree, and it is said to be of richer taste than any butter made from cows milk—alleged or actually scraped from a churn and squeezed into the wooden mold which leaves a yellow rosebud on top of the cake. The Arabs used it in early times, but the Greeks and Romans did without it, used oil, and consequently wore purple silk togas.

Unavoidable Disappointment.

Brudder Johnson was a pompous negro who took an active part in church work. One night the preacher said: "Brudder Johnson, will you lead us in prayah?" "Ah'm sorry to disappoint de Lawd tonight, pahson," replied Brudder Johnson, "but Ah has a cold on mah chest."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Anniversaries of Snakebite.

A curious fact, and one not generally know, is the recurring symptom of snakebite on or about the anniversary of a bite. The victim of a snakebite may have these recurring symptoms for ten or twelve years, and there is a case on record where the recurring symptoms lasted for twenty-five years.

Misfit.

Ad in a New York paper: "Wanted—Bookkeeper and salesman. Must have one leg shorter than the other." We were about to telephone this opportunity to a friend, when we suddenly remembered that what he had was one leg longer than the other.

Novel Theatrical Scenery.

A method has been invented by a Russian artist for painting several theatrical scenes on the same canvas, the pictures changing as the light thrown on them is changed.

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The beginning of a NEW YEAR is a good time to start your business on a systematic basis.

We would suggest that you deposit your money with this BANK subject to check. By paying your bills and obligations by check you will be enabled to keep absolute record of all your transactions.

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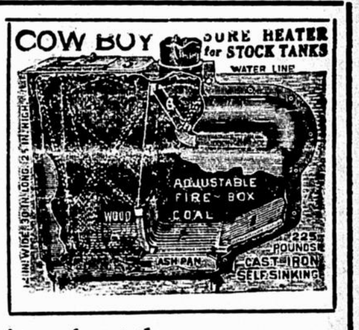

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