

Upside Down

By RAY FISHER

"Sorry, young man," said the portly Mr. Horace Seymour, rising to indicate that the ten-minute interview was at an end; "but your quest is futile. I cannot allow my daughter to marry a man with no more alluring future than the one that confronts you."

Mr. Seymour paused in his march across the room. "I'm really inclined to believe you are sincere about that," he conceded, lighting a cigar. "However, that is not the question. It is not so much that you are not wealthy, but that you evidently have not the resourcefulness, the acumen to accumulate money. My daughter must become the wife of a successful man, and he must have the goods to show that he is successful. But you are a mail carrier, and while it is an honest occupation and a very necessary one in the running of the world, it is so prosaic, so devoid of thrills, so lacking in opportunity for achievement that—well, no, I cannot see much hope for you. You need not tell me that Ruth loves you. I believe she does, or thinks she does, but she will forget you. I'm sorry I let the matter go so far. I didn't realize that her activities in entertaining service men would lead to any such serious affair."

"In concrete terms, Mr. Seymour," said Weldon, "just what would you require of me to make me eligible as a son-in-law? I'm determined to meet your requirements. Just tell me how to go about it and I'll leave you."

"Sit down," he said abruptly, and dropped into his own swivel chair. "I'm wasting time, but I want to be square. Here's the crux of the thing. You're not on your feet, figuratively speaking. You're upside down. Nine young men out of ten are upside down; they're like turtles flopped on their backs, unable to make progress. Sometimes a fellow will get on his feet overnight and then he can speed to the heights of success. You're honest or you wouldn't be carrying mail for a living. You're too honest to succeed. My advice may sound hard, but it's the only recipe for success. Go after the coin and get it, no matter how, so long as you don't run afoul of the law. Use your brains; put it over the other fellow; grab his coin and you'll win everybody's admiration, especially your victim's, to use a harsh but applicable term. You'll find such a course profitable and also thrilling; not humdrum like carrying mail."

"You ask for a plain business proposition. Well, here it is. It sounds impossible, and for you it probably is. If you can come to me inside of two weeks with a ten-thousand-dollar bank account you can have Ruth and there'll be no questions asked. It will prove your resourcefulness. Good day."

Weldon Miller went to his boarding house and spent the rest of the day shut in his room, smoking and thinking. Early in the evening he appeared to come to a decision, for he flung on his coat and hat and took a street car to the Second National bank. His card brought quick action, for in a few moments he was shaking hands with the president of the institution, who appeared to have seen no more than thirty years.

"By George! I'm glad to see you, Weldon," said the president, shaking his visitor's hand warmly. "What can I do for you? Ever since I inherited this soft job I've been trying to start you in business, but you've always refused."

"You can do something, all right, Ferd," said Weldon, accepting a long, brown cigar and a light. "You can help turn me right-side up. You know old man Seymour of the First State, don't you? Well, listen—"

Second National bank, "that going up in an airship does not require an extra amount of courage, but when it comes to looping-the-loop and going through all those fancy maneuvers—well, I reckon you wouldn't care to try it yourself."

"Wouldn't, hey? How much do you want to bet on that?" "I'll wager ten thousand," replied the challenger, "that if you will go up in an airplane and let the aviator put you through a program of stunts you will be crying quits inside of an hour after leaving the ground."

"It's a go," said Mr. Seymour. "Put up the cash." A committee was selected to arrange for the bet. All that was necessary was to secure the services of an aviator at the local flying field and swear him to secrecy, for it would not do for the Seymour family to learn of the matter. The arrangements were duly made and two days later, on a clear afternoon, Mr. Seymour, attired in aviation clothes, was strapped to the passenger seat of a biplane. If he was nervous he it to his credit that he did not show it. The plane rose gracefully and Mr. Seymour's stomach seemed to climb into his throat with the same motion. He had read it was best not to look down, so he kept his gaze averted, with the result that he did not suffer severe nausea. In fact, he enjoyed the sensation of soaring through space and could not refrain from mentally "pooh-poohing" at the dangers of aviation and chuckling over the ten thousand that would be his.

However, he had reckoned not with the man in control of the craft. Suddenly the machine tipped and started nose first at a sharp angle for the earth. The banker lost his breath and clung desperately to the seat. It seemed that he was going to be dashed to pieces, but abruptly the plane righted itself and shot upward at the same angle. Then it turned far on one side and seemed about to tip completely over, but recovered its equilibrium and tipped to the other side. Before Mr. Seymour could realize what had occurred the machine took another nose dive, this time dropping so far that it almost scraped the top of a tree. Then up, far up, it soared again and—heavens! it turned completely over sideways and began rolling over and over. This lasted for, it seemed, an hour, although it was actually only fifteen seconds. Hardly had the craft got to a horizontal position when it took another dive, but instead of heading for the earth the nose turned clear under, the engine was shut off and the plane, upside down, began falling rapidly. The passenger could have sworn that the machine had dropped fifty miles, but it was only a thousand feet, when it struggled once more to an upright position and began looping-the-loop.

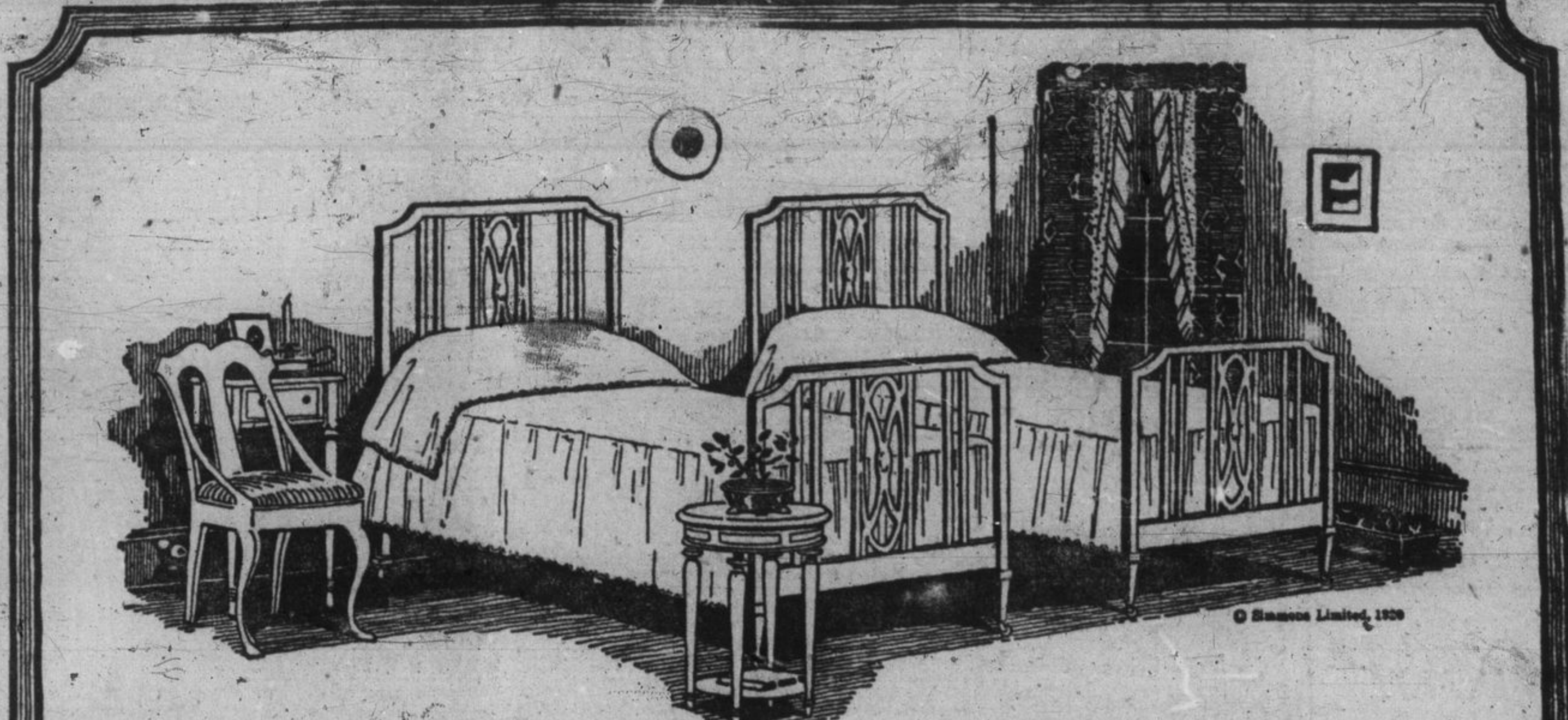
"Enough!" groaned Mr. Seymour through the speaking tube. "Get me to the ground in safety and you can have anything I own." The next day Mr. Seymour did not get to the office until mid-afternoon. He found Weldon Miller awaiting him. The banker glared at him and inquired brusquely as to his errand. "I've got the ten thousand," said the young man, holding out a bank check, one from the Second National. "Furthermore, I have your consent to marry Ruth." Mr. Seymour stood at his desk and glared at Weldon. "Where do you get that stuff?" he said in a voice that was almost a roar. "What do you mean, ten thousand? What do you mean, consent?"

Weldon helped himself to a seat. "I won the ten thousand in a bet," he said. "Mr. Hollister of the Second National loaned me an equal amount and put it up for me. And while we were doing stunts in the sky you told me I could have anything you owned if I put you safely back on the ground. You see, I'm an air mail carrier."

The banker dropped into his chair, flabbergasted. "You win," he said weakly. Secret of Greatness. It is Emerson who somewhere says that the average run of men fret and worry themselves into nameless graves, while here and there a great unselfish soul forgets itself into immortality. Many hundred years before, a much wiser man had said: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

A rather cryptic utterance; so contradictory in sound that the majority of men pass it by unheeding. But now and then there comes a man who, sensing its truth, harnesses his life to it, forgetting every selfish thought and purpose. Often he knows himself to be a little man; or, at best, only medium-sized. But the world, beholding the marvel of his influence, remembers him and calls him great.—Bruce Barton, in Red Book.

The truth of figures sometimes depends to a large extent upon the man who makes them. A lot of people submit when they ought to protest.



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WHICH IS CRUSOE'S ISLAND.

Opinion Seems to Favor To-ago Above Claims by Juan Fernandez.

For many years Juan Fernandez, a Chilean island off the eastern coast of South America, was known as Crusoe's Island, because another adventurer had spent five years there in solitude, and it was thought for some time that Defoe had recorded this hermit's experience. But following Crusoe's directions that he landed on an island in a latitude of eleven

degrees nearer the mouth of the Orinoco river and in sight of the island of Trinidad one comes upon the island of Tobago, the only one answering the description.

An interesting discovery which gave prominence to Tobago as the real Crusoe's island occurred some years ago, when the skeleton of a goat was unearthed in a cave on the island. This coincides remarkably with Crusoe's statement that he found a dying goat in a hillside cave and later buried it there. "Crusoe's goat" became for a time an object of great popular interest and figured

as a prominent exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair.

Tobago's failure to obtain greater recognition of its importance as the "only authentic Robinson Crusoe island" is doubtless due to the fact that it is a retiring little island, concerned chiefly with its plantations and trade. Leaving Crusoe out altogether, Tobago has had an eventful history, from the time it was discovered by Columbus, on his third voyage, until England took it from France in 1803, and started to turn it into a profitable colony.—Exchange.

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By GEORGE McMANUS



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