

It's a busy place, Chicago is!

by
ONEY
FRED
SWEET

WAS in a hurry—an awful hurry. You know what a Chicago man's being in a hurry means. His fast walk with his eyes fixed intently ahead and his oblivion to his surroundings have created an impression that the visitor has carried away. It is the stranger in the city whose eyes and ears are confused by the unusual sights about him. It is the stranger, turned loose in "the loop" who sees Chicago—really sees it—at every turn he makes. The street traffic, the height of the buildings, and the rushing throngs of pedestrians almost oppress him, for he misses not one sight or sound. He reads every sign, he observes every window display, he starts at every traffic policeman's whistle. You may not be able these days to pick out the stranger in town by his clothes, but you can spot him by the expression on his face. His eyes are tired from looking at so much that to him is new and unusual and worth while.

But in my hurry the other morning I was bothered by few of the things that distract the stranger. My attitude toward Chicago's "loop" was that of the man who has traversed the same street to and from work six days a week, for a period, say, of six months. I could not have told you who sat ahead of me or opposite me on the suburban train that came clanging into the great darkened Union station shed. Passing down the block that is the gateway to the world, I heard nothing of the cabmen's calls; the red uniformed depot ushers rushed by me unnoticed; Canal street, throbbing with strange life, so far as I was concerned, might have been a monotonous prairie, and as I turned in Madison street, the river, down which a great lake boat was approaching, did not so much as excite a passing glance.

Mine was the average Chicago man's hurry, and yet, although I had left home strictly on time and no real obstacle crossed my path, I was late in getting to work.

Bang! Goes an Automobile Tire.

I had about reached the elevated viaduct in Madison street and was pressing straight ahead without a thought about anything else in the world except my destination, when I heard a loud report just back of me. It sounded as if some one had shot off a gun. My feet came to a stop and I craned my neck in the direction of the noise. Some half hundred other well seasoned Chicagoans had paused and were craning their necks in the same direction. There was but a moment or two of hesitancy and then I turned around and walked across the street where a man was steering his \$495 runabout up against the curbing. Before he could get out of the car there was a nice little army of us trying to look over each other's shoulders and between each other's elbows. Our numbers were increased by others coming along who merely saw the crowd and

wanted to find out what it was all about.

There wasn't a man in the bunch but who was determined to witness the whole proceeding to the finish—business of getting out of car, business of going to tool box and getting out jack, business of jacking up wheel. I didn't know any one in the crowd that was elbowing me—had never seen any of them before and would probably never see any of them again. The man who had had the accident might have lived in Evanston, Oak Park, or Englewood so far as I knew or cared, but for some reason I was peculiarly fascinated in watching him get out an ordinary screw driver and a pair of pliers. I was like a snake watching a bird, when he unstrapped his extra tire and carried it around the car to adjust it, although altogether I think I have seen this same process gone through with some ninety-five to ninety-six times.

So you suppose I could stir from my spot and give some one else my point of vantage until that fellow had finally pumped up the new tire? Not on your life! I had to wait until he had cranked up the car again, moved the throttle so as not to run too fast, and moved up the gear lever from "neutral" into "low." I stuck until he had speeded up the engine, let the clutch in, and driven away. It was not until then that I breathed a sigh

of relief and felt I could conscientiously be on my way.

My! Souvenir Postal Cards.

Luckily there were no more exploded automobile tires between that point and the office. But I had little more than crossed Clark street, as oblivious to the great throbbing city about me as though I were walking down a country road at night, when I came bump into another group of silent, gaping, average fellow Chicagoans. They were standing in front of a window. I nudged and elbowed and crowded until I had a satisfactory line of vision. It was a souvenir postal card store! Against the window were hung pictures with printed words beneath them that attempted to carry out the idea of sentiment or humor, whichever the case might be.

Here are a few samples:

Picture of a man and girl sitting on a

barrel. Words beneath it: "We're having a barrel of fun in Chicago."

Highly colored picture of pretty girl. Words in big type coming from her lips: "O, my; it's lonesome here without you."

Dress suited intoxicated man sprawled in bathtub. Words beneath him: "Doesn't he look natural?"

In fact the capers of intoxicated men

garbed in rather battered dress suits were sprinkled profusely among the window decorations. A few pictures of "September Morn"—by all odds the most popular bit of art that ever graced one of these institutions—were sidetracked over in a corner beneath a set of suitable birthday greetings.

It required considerable effort to get a

front row position before the window of this little place that is enabled to "come across" with over \$400 a month in rent. There was no comradeship between us as we stood there, our eyes drifting from picture to picture and from cute saying to cute saying, most of which had been studied myriads of time in the past. The weariness of the wait until every card had been scanned was not brightened by any acquaintanceship banter that might have passed among a similar group gathered together on a village street. We were as silent and mirthless as we were thorough in leaving no postal card ungazed upon.

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Halt! the War Map!

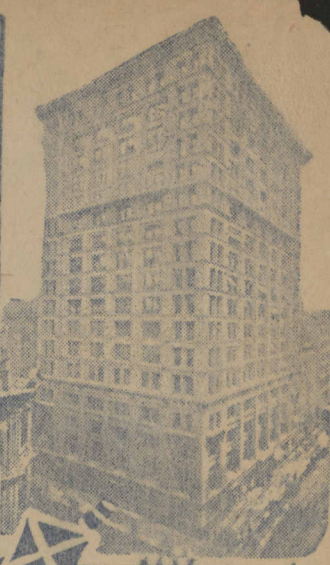
No, it's the man who is in Chicago for the first time, or who only gets into the city once or twice a year, who really sees Chicago. It is he who can tell you how far the building by which he is passing lifts itself into the sky. It is he who realizes that an elevated train is crunching above his head. It is he who marvels at so many different sorts of people rushing past him. It is he who notices the uniform of taxi driver, messenger boy, street sweeper, and policeman. The evidence of exaggerated luxury awes him, and the supplication of the beggar lingers in his ears. The man who takes the same street six days a week, say, for a period of six months, has long since ceased seeing all these things. Apparently his senses have largely

been dulled except for the trivial.

But I will say this for myself that when I reached the corner of Dearborn and Madison streets I didn't spend any time trying to make out the eagle resting on the statue on top of the Tower building, having had my spell of that some two years ago, when for a period of a month crowds made up of seasoned Chicagoans gathered every day to conjecture as to whether what appeared to be an eagle was really a fowl or not. I remember an argument between a couple of friends of mine at the time, in which one insisted that he had just seen the eagle flutter, that he was sure the bird had recently lit and that by looking closely you could see its tail feathers. But without being handicapped by the eagle on the statue theory—a theory only exploded after the daring trip of a steeplejack—I was still late in getting to work.

At that, I might not have been so late in spite of the bursted automobile tire. I might have overcome that delay more or less and also the halt in front of the postal card window. But I bumped up against a crowd in front of my familiar old friend—the war map!

It took ten minutes more before I could possibly break away from there. I've been waiting for nearly two months now to see one of those green or red or black or yellow button armies get killed off, and it'll be just my luck, I'm afraid, to have it happen when I ain't around.



When a Man's
in a Hurry He
Hasn't Time to
Look for the Tops
of the Buildings.



QUIN
HALL

