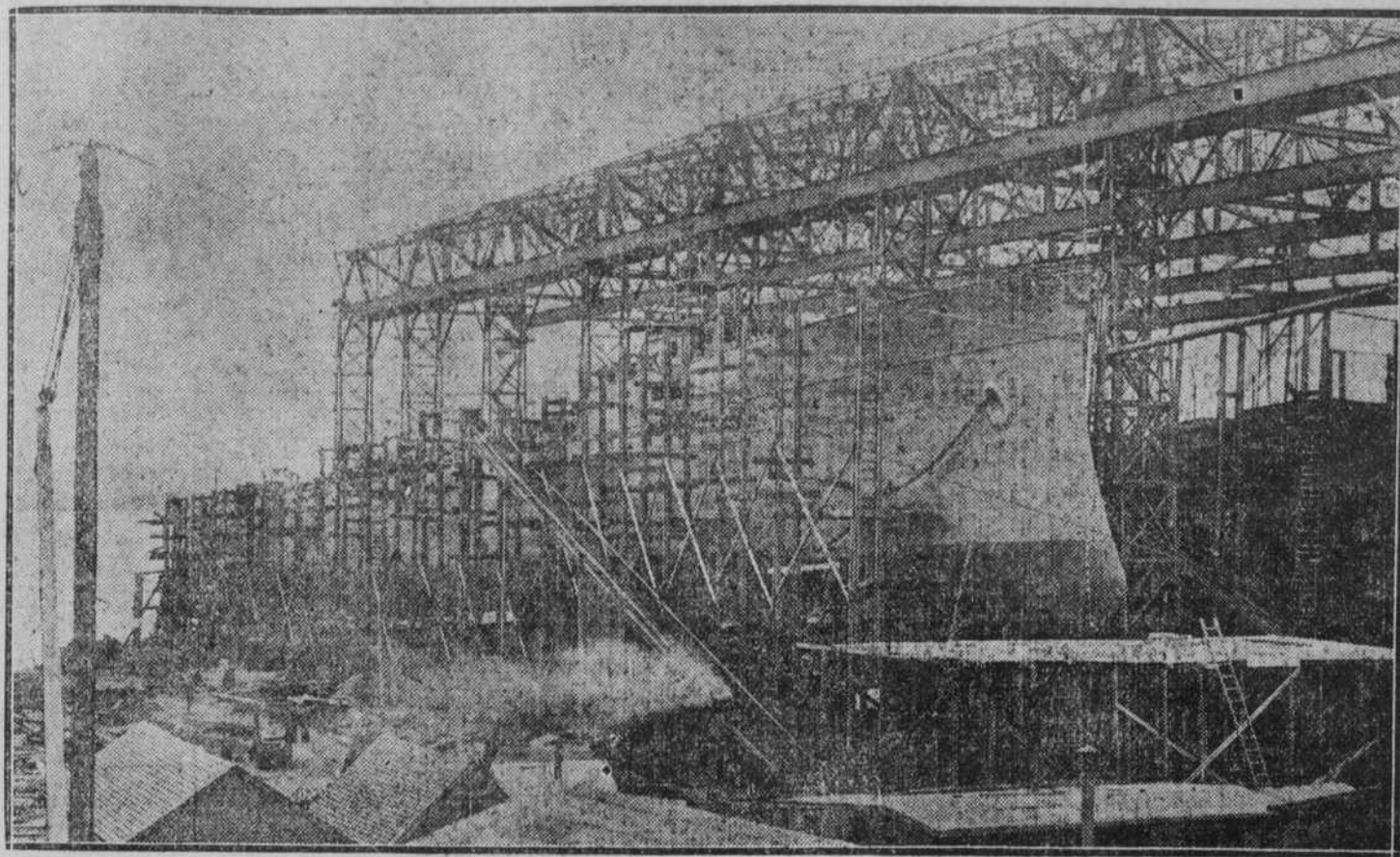
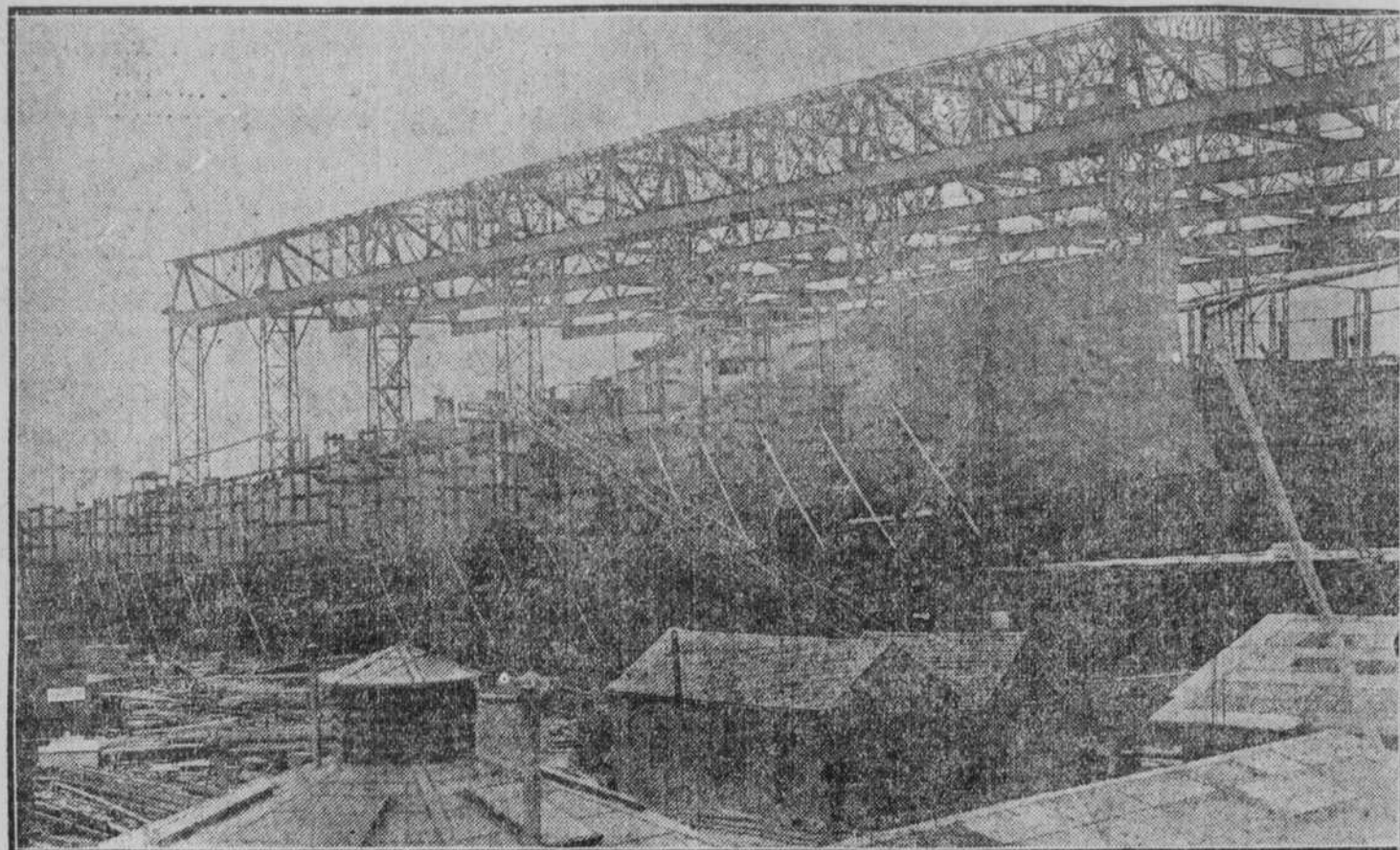
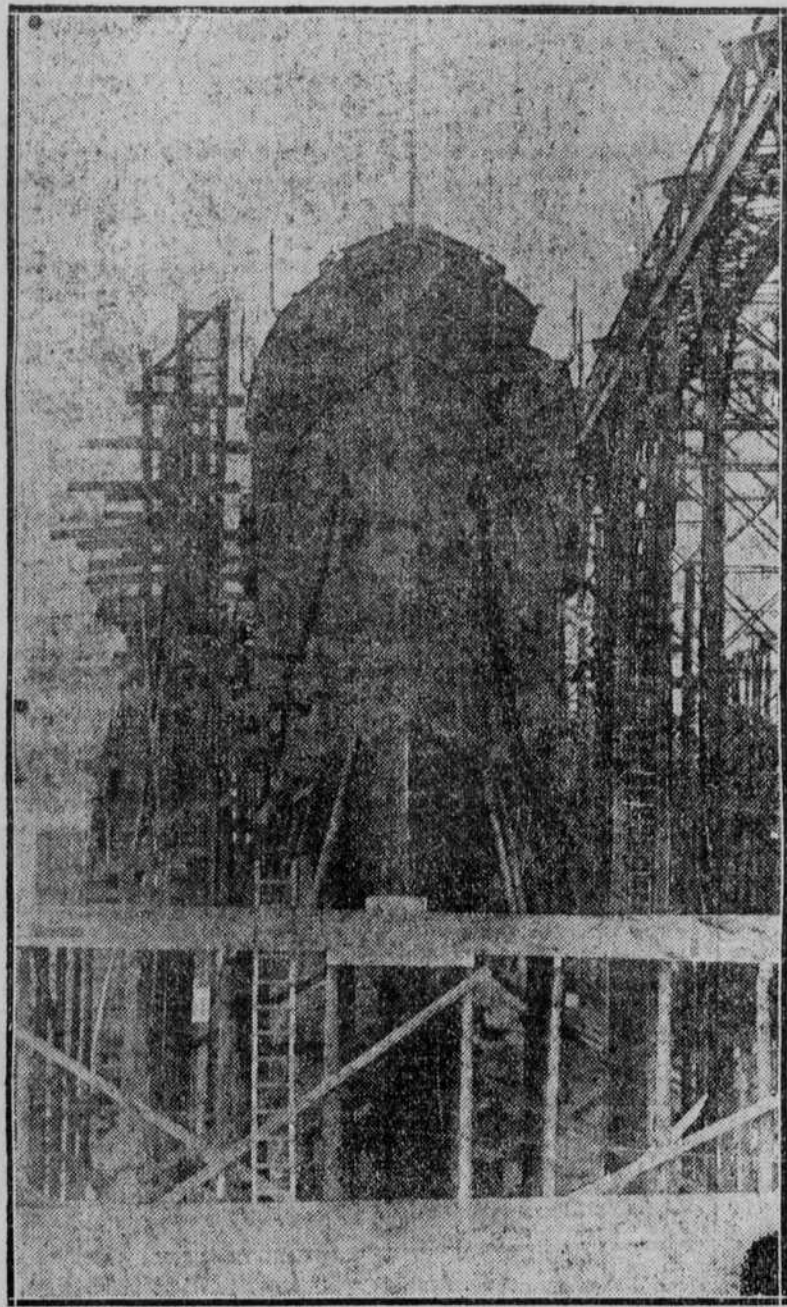


SCENES AT LAUNCHING OF THE CRUISER "BIRMINGHAM"



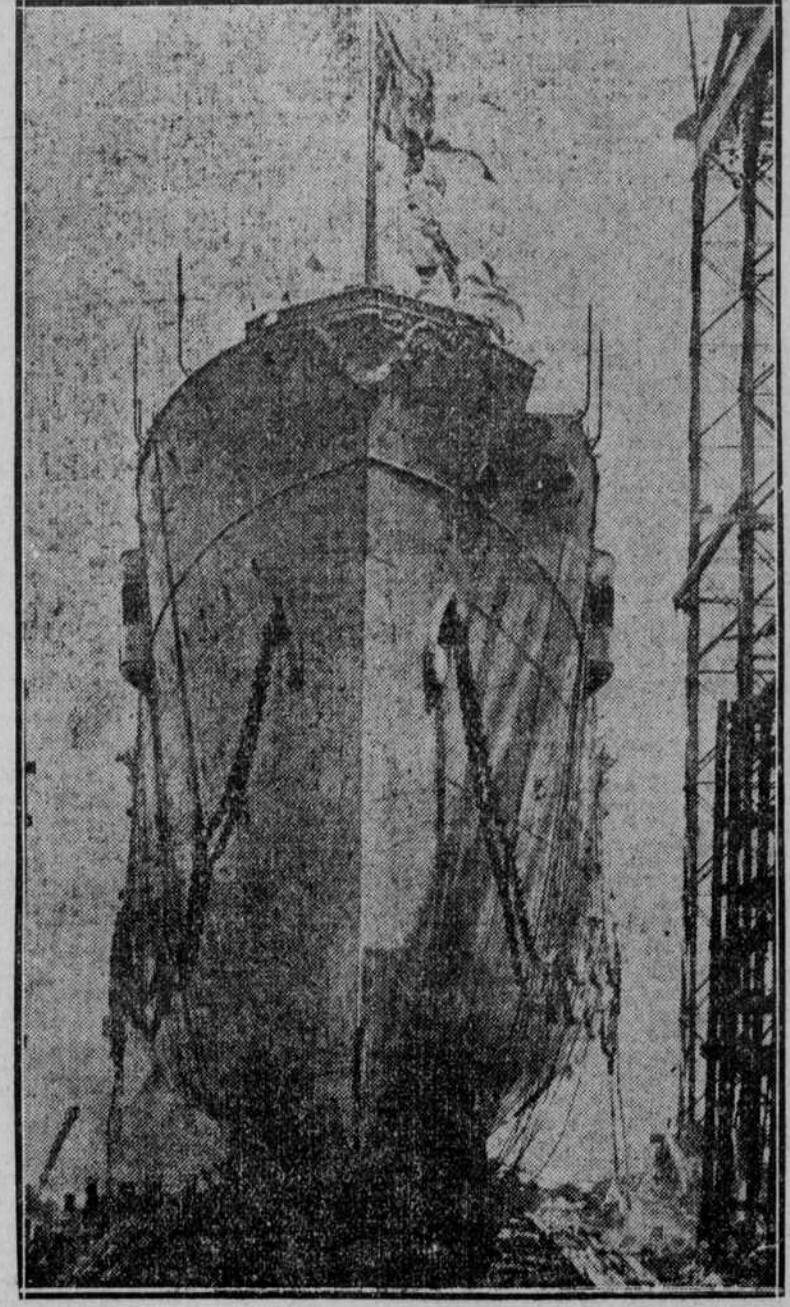
TWO VIEWS OF THE CRUISER BIRMINGHAM ON THE STOCKS BEFORE TAKING PLUNGE INTO FORE RIVER.



BOW VIEW OF THE BIRMINGHAM, ON THE STOCKS BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER.



MISS MARY CAMPBELL, SPONSOR, TALKING WITH ADMIRAL W. L. CAPPS, U. S. N., CHIEF CONSTRUCTOR OF THE NAVY, JUST BEFORE THE LAUNCH.



THE BIRMINGHAM ENTERING THE WATER AT THE END OF THE LAUNCHING SLIP.

REALM OF BOOKS

BY PAUL PRY.

"An Experiment in Perfection," by Marion T. D. Barton, Published by Doubleday, Page & Co.

"An Experiment in Perfection" bears the imprint of April, 1907, as the date of publication, and it is first of all a story that is far above the average. It is unusual in its conception, as the title rather suggests, and seems to be a study in character drawing designed to give "different valuations and measurements of life." It is exceptionally well written and enlists the attention and the interest of the reader in spite of everything.

In spite oftentimes of the due probabilities of situations, for one finds it very difficult to believe in the genuineness of love between Jerry and Persis when so much transpires to prove conclusively just the contrary. Yet there is a strong human element in the situations that holds the reader's heart sympathy even against the mental conviction. A quotation gives probably the best idea of the underlying stimulus of the story. One friend says to the other: "Honestly, Persis, you may not realize it, but you are very hard to please and keep interested. You're quite exacting, you know. You expect and demand so much of people you love. No matter how nice they are, you keep pushing them up into further pinnacles of perfection till sometimes one's head spins. . . . So you see I never could drum up enough courage to face your superiority and incorruptibility. Your very passion for perfection, the very invincibility of your ideas about righteousness were what made me fear and be so." This subject confession from a friend rather explains the otherwise eccentric evolutions of the husband of Persis from the law to the ministry, then insanity and tragic end.

This same friend further says to Persis: "My poor religion! Often it struggled and pleaded with me. But you must not fail to differentiate between my God and yours. My God understands, forgives and consoles. Yours, cross between Paganism and Puritanism that it is, persecutes, censures and avenges." Persis, I think, may well be explained as an example of self-love and the title of the story be easily paraphrased as "An Experiment in Self-love." There is quite an unexpected and soothing climax to the story in the second marriage of Persis. The genuine fine love of Calvin amends for much in the story and the close of the book could be so satisfying if the reader could only be persuaded to believe in the final complete honesty of Persis.

"The Truth About the Case," by M. F.

Goren, J. B. Lippincott Company, publishers. "The Truth About the Case," just from the press, is made up of a number of true detective stories by the ex-chief of the Paris Detective Police. The stories are taken from the diary of M. Giron and are consequently made up of an interesting combination of facts and impressions during his eventful experiences. There are some half dozen stories in the book, each one more thrilling than the last it would seem. The illustrations by Arthur G. Dove give them just the note of reality needed to entirely awe the breathless reader.

"Heroes of the Navy in America," by Charles Morris. Published by J. B. Lippincott Company.

"Heroes of the Navy" is by the author of "Historical Tales," "Half Hours With American Authors," and other interesting and popular books. The text in the present volume begins with the dramatic actions of the "land-lubbers" under Jerry O'Brien, their gallant leader in 1775, as being the first notable instance of "Yankee Spirit" upon the "briny deep." A number of finely written chapters follow and the book closes all too soon with the story of the sinking of the "Merrimack" by Richmond Pearson Hobson.

"Aunt Jane of Kentucky" by Eliza Calvert Hall. Published by Little, Brown & Co.

In "Aunt Jane of Kentucky" the colored frontispiece and page decorations are by Beulah Strong. And this portrait of "Aunt Jane," who is a "philosopher in homespun," endears the reader to her at the very outset, and while listening to her "recollections" one learns to love her flowers, her stories and her quaint, tender philosophy. The initial story in the book, "Sally Ann's Experience," which was originally published in the Cosmopolitan Magazine, was pronounced a little masterpiece in rural character delineation and homespun philosophy and has been read and reread with the greatest success on many platforms. The stories present rural life in Kentucky and the humor of the book is softened and refined by being linked with pathos and romance.

Mrs. Hall has had experience as a writer, but this is her first published book.

"The Stories of Jamestown and Its Environs," by Will T. Hale. Publishing House of M. E. Church, South. In the foreword of these little stories of Jamestown the author writes: "In his excellent work, 'The Beginnings of a Nation,' Edward Eggleston thus justifies the considerable space devoted to the earliest permanent settlement in New England. 'Historical importance does not depend on population. Plymouth

was the second step in the founding of a great nation.' How much more appreciable is the first sentence to Jamestown, 'That sacred spot,' to quote John Fiske, 'the first abiding place of Englishmen in America.' For Jamestown was the first step. The earliest Protestant church, tried by jury, thanksgiving services, literary effort, and free school followed hard upon the day when Virginia 'set its timid foot safely on the shores of America.'"

And with this thought in mind "Jamestown's memories deserve our reverence forever and a day," the author has written his story. Simply, but most interestingly, the story grows and they are most aptitudes of the present revived and renewed interest in its history and memories.

"Tales of a Warrior," by Charles Richardson. The Neale Publishing Co. "Tales of a Warrior" is made up of a number of short stories evincing great insight, sympathy and good humor. "Ha, ha! laughed Mr. Boler, 'I'll tell you something will make you laugh, but I'm

afraid you'll cry before I get through.'"

"Life of Robert Edward Lee," by Henry E. Sheppard, M. A. L. L. D. The Neale Publishing Co.

Dr. Sheppard is in every way fitted to offer this loving service in the writing of the life of General Lee. He served long and honorably in the Confederate army; he knew General Lee personally; he is an accomplished scholar and author, and has been engaged in literary and educational work since the war. So that out of a long and close study of the man, the conditions under which he lived and worked, and the results he achieved, and out of a loving study of Lee, his life, ideals, character and genius, Dr. Sheppard has written this life of the great chief. And this loving work is better than biography; it is characterization.

"Astyanax," by Joseph M. Brown.

Broadway Publishing Co.

In the preface to this remarkable book the author writes: "From my seventeenth year I was impressed with the fact that while Greece has its Iliad and Odyssey, Rome its Aeneid, Scandinavia its Sagas, Germany its Nibelungen Lied, Spain its Chronicles of the Cid, Portugal its Lusad, and England its Romances of King Arthur, America possesses no story of an epic nature with more than a local significance. . . . So I have reconstructed in the warm hues of fancy the ancient cities, temples and forts, and with no means of knowing the nomenclature of those earliest epochs, the day dawn of our continent has supplied the names and to some degree the traits of the aboriginal nations or tribes peculiar to their localities, with their leading heroes, or as we may term them, the characters of the races, as shown in history or tradition dating back a few centuries before Columbus' discovery, as well as prevailing since his advent."

With this endeavor the author has made of his story of "Astyanax" an epic romance of Iliad, Atlantis and Amaraca.

The story is a most remarkable, not to say extraordinary conception, and the illustrations and maps by William Lincoln Hudson add to the unique value of the text. The story as a literary effort is most affectionately and tenderly dedicated to the author's father and mother, the former Joseph E. Brown of Georgia, whose fellow citizens conferred upon him the three prevailing highest honors in their power—governor, chief justice and senator."

"The Long Labrador Trail," by Dillon Wallace. The Outlook Publishing Co.

It will be remembered that in the spring of 1902, when Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., went to Labrador to explore a section of the unknown interior that he was accompanied by his friend Dillon Wallace. Before the former finally succumbed to starvation, says the author in the preface, Mr. Hubbard agreed that should he survive he would write and publish the story of the journey. This Mr. Hubbard did in "The Lure of the Labrador Wild."

The author says of the present volume, "The Long Labrador Trail." "Not I, but Hubbard, planned the journey of which this book tells, and from him I received the inspiration and with him the training and experience that enabled me to succeed. It was his spirit that led me on over the wearisome trails and through the rushing rapids, and to him and to his memory belong the credit and the honor of success."

In the opening lines of the book, which relate so much that is pathetic and desperate in the experiences of these men in their heroic endeavor the author writes: "It's always the way, Wallace! When a fellow starts on the long trail he's never willing to quit. It'll be the same with you if you go with me to Labrador. When you come home you'll hear the voice of the wilderness calling you to return, and it will lure you back again." This Mr. Hubbard said to his friend with prophetic insight about the trip into the unexplored Labrador wilderness, which eventually cost him his own life and both of them indescribable suffering and hardships.

The book is a complete story of these experiences and what was accomplished. It forms valuable reading to any one, but especially to such a one as may be interested historically in the effort or in the world's of the author "have smelt the camp fire smoke; who have drunk in the pure forest air, laden with the smell of the fir tree; who have dipped your paddle into untamed waters, or climbed mountains, with the knowledge that none but the red man has been there before you, or have, perchance, had to fight the wilds and nature for your very existence." In other words it possesses a subtle meaning to "you of the wilderness brotherhood."

"The First Claim," by M. Hamilton. Received from Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. Published March, 1907, \$1.50.

"His Courtship," by Helen R. Martin. Published by McClure, Phillips & Co. "His Courtship" is a very readable little novel, the best characteristic of which is the character work. The scene of the story is laid at the Morningstar

Farm up in New York state, where a number of city people are spending the summer in a vain endeavor to cultivate the "simple life." The heart interest clusters around the gentle womanliness of little Eunice and with the finding of some secret documents in the haunted chamber of the old farm house, the narrative assumes a livelier note and is altogether a very attractive, interesting love story.

A Plant That Coughs.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat. "I heard a cough and looked behind me nervously," said a huntsman, "for I was stalking gazelles in that lion-colored waste, the Sahara Desert, and having got rather too far south, I expected at any moment to become a pin cushion for the poisoned darts of the dread Tounaregs."

"But there was no one there. The flat desert quivered in the sunshine and here and there a dusty plant stood wearily. But though I commanded the landscape for a radius of 50 miles, not a living creature was in sight. "Another cough. I swung around quickly. The same plant, yellow with dust, drooping in the dry heat. That was all. "Hack! Hack!"

"On my left this time. I swung around again. A like plant met my eye. The thing was growing rather ghastly. "Another cough. I swung around quickly. It shook all over, and then, tightening up as a man does when he is about to sneeze, it gave a violent cough, and a little cloud of dust arose."

"I found out afterward that the plant was the coughing bean, which is common in many tropical countries. In the long, dry heats this weird growth's pores become choked with dust, and it would die of suffocation were it not that a powerful gas accumulates inside it, which, when it gains sufficiently pressure like the human cough. The explosion shakes the plant pores free of their dust and the coughing bean is in good health again."

Curious.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer. "It's funny what curiosity people have about mail," remarked "Bob" McCarty, clerk at the Hollenden, yesterday. The proximate cause of his remark was a florid faced guest who had just left the desk after inquiring for the "M" mail. The guest had found a letter in the bunch from Phenix, A. T., addressed to a man who, except for the middle initial, bore the same name as his.

"Better open it, hadn't it?" he suggested to the clerk. "Not unless you think it is yours," advised "Mc" Clerk. "Do you know any one in Phenix?" "Well, I am the guest. I knew nothing about ten years ago that I sent there. He might have written the go on. "Yes, and he knew just what the go on would be in Cleveland, did the clerk, as he took the letter temptation away."