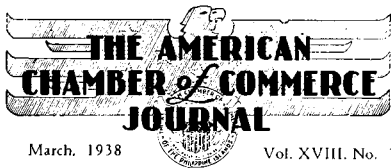




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Editor and
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Just Little Things

● We met Old Talmadge (he won't mind this, we're friends) at Fred Harden's *Plaza Lunch* the other night. Some men might not see it as we do, but to us Talmadge is a most remarkable man. Biologists could argue interminably over Talmadge, environment vs. heredity; and in the end they would not agree as to whether Talmadge's character is strong because of heredity, or whether what seems to be heredity is a kind of environment—a conscious patterning from great figures in a man's family. You see, the name is not a very common one. Yet *Who's Who* turns up three Talmadges: Constance the actress, Eugene the Georgia politician, Norma, another actress, (Mrs. George Jessel.) And old boys like us readily remember back to Reverend Talmadge, the New York preacher who used to make the chautauqua circuits during the allegedly gay nineties.

Talmadge of the Tabernacle, he was.

But our Talmadge too has his claims. He is a well driller, he probably drilled the first artesian well in the Islands, and during the past thirty-five years has dotted the provinces with Talmadge wells pretty thickly. Recently he has been using his rig to test the Elizalde's iron property for them, in Masbate. This aggravated his sprue, which is chronic, and he has left a lieutenant in charge while he rests in Manila and battles the sprue with meals more varied than mining camps afford. He is, of course, about seventy years old, but don't challenge him on that account—he could still cut and shoot his way out of most fights if put to it.

In the old campaign days Talmadge rode with the Scouts, among whom a group of thirteen took Sherman

literally. The glint in Talmadge's eye is still blue steel; he was always a bad man to cross, and still is. Hot blood or cold, it's much the same with Talmadge. At Angeles, in the campaign days, when court martial culminated in a hanging party, Talmadge was detailed to spring the trap. Really he volunteered for this duty, and he's sprung other hangman's traps since. If it's duty, he can do it. The old law of an eye for an eye runs in him strongly. By birth he's an Indiana man, but this is incidental. His career has been the Philippine border, out in the villages, his well rig thumping away—slim meals, mud roads, the whole job a tough one.

No work for an angel this. At about the outset of it when Henry C. Ide of Vermont (afterward minister to Madrid) was the Islands' governor general, a group of well sheltered Manilans presented Ide a memorial complaining that they undersooted that many young men in the government, on provincial duty, were not all that they should be morally. Not the least interested, Governor Ide handed back the memorial, and asked the delegates if they thought he could run the government with a bunch of eunuchs.

Talmadge is the father of twenty-two children, from two marriages. As they have come up to the age for it, they and Dad have srimmaged through to college educations for them, girls and boys alike. That's something, and something quite unusual, we think, to manage on the takings of a well-drilling rig. Many of the older children are married and living in the United States, where they procured their college schooling. Four are

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Just Little...

(Continued from page 5)

married into a single family, two brothers, two sisters. There are grandchildren, of course—we have no idea how many. Next June, eight of the younger children, boys and girls, will be in college together, at Cebu. Still younger ones, including the baby, a girl about fourteen, whom Talmadge has of course spoiled, await the day of their college matriculations eagerly. And that's Old Talmadge, the well-driller currently fighting a spell of his chronic sprue. When you golf at the Wack-Wack course, you can partly attribute its prime condition to him—he sunk the wells that irrigate it.

● Another oldtimer you sometimes come upon at Harden's is D. L. "Dave" Minnich, typical of the men who have bucked the line, and still do, in the land transportation business. These men stand out from the crowd, you can spot them anywhere. All have one attribute in common, good-humored courage. You recall it in the late king of the business, A. L. Ammen. You see it in the present king, Judge L. D. Lockwood, and in the man that made *Pambusco* popularly prosperous—"If you'll sound your horn, we'll move over—" Colonel Andreas, whom we believe to be the oldest reserve officer in the aviation service of the army. Mere courage in the game is not enough, it's too hair-triggerish. Good-humored courage does the trick, which is the weeding out of chiselers who hijack the traffic. You have to have the courage to hold your fire until they show the whites of their eyes—that is, until they have cheated themselves, the dealer in Manila who sold them cars, and the public, to the bone—and then you must be ready with both barrels, and you must not flinch.

At crises in this hazardous business, tickets 1 centavo 1 kilometer, you have to lay your money on the line; often it is a lot of money, and often, especially when your line is a young one, you have to have a bank or a friend put up for you. These inexorable circumstances are the weeding process, cleaning up the business until only men of instant courage, and good-humored patience, are left. Meanwhile, throughout all the vicious in-fighting, blow for blow the man who comes through to a win is he who strikes hardest and smiles longest.

The square-shooter, he's the only winner.

Though Dave Minnich has been in the game many years, more recently he has been managing Northern Luzon Transportation with headquarters at San Fernando, Union—a line covering the Ilokano provinces of northwestern Luzon. At last he has the line on its feet, there's a future ahead. Step by step he has pushed on, one chisler quitting, another selling out, until the line's present terminus in Cagayan is Pamplona, and a riverboat connection reaches Aparri. Soon, no doubt, Minnich's busses will cover the whole route; long since he began selling bus-railroad tickets picking up passengers as far as north as Bangui and Abulog and carrying them by bus to San Fernando, by train from San Fernando to Manila—cutting traveling time by days. Well, that's what does it, courage iced with patient good humor. Without the icing, that sort of cake would be plain dough... no sale. So our kudos are not to Dave Minnich alone, they're to the type: their prototypes were the boys of the Pony Express, the Hills, Harrimans, and Standfords who followed their pony trails with railroads. For smaller rewards, the game here is just as hard.

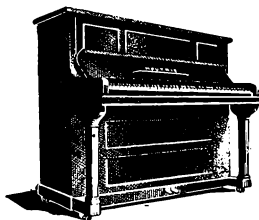
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