

**"TELL IT AGAIN."
COL. CLIPSHAM'S
CALENDAR**

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"Tell it again." Col. Clipsham's Calendar by Edward E. Hale

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EDWARD E. HALE

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BY
EDWARD E. HALE.



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Annals of the - Sep 13, 1941

COL. CLIPSHAM'S CALENDAR.

I.

COL. CLIPSHAM led a curious life, but, for a man at his age, not an unpleasant one. His professional duties were not oppressive, and he had entered into a career which made it almost sure that they would never be oppressive. He had a very comfortable suite of rooms in his sister's house, and always breakfasted with her family. As will be seen, they did not often expect him at dinner, but nieces and nephews, Sister Prue and her husband Wintergreen, were always glad if he did look in at that meal. For the rest, Clipsham was a general favorite in Tamworth, where he lived, and if there were not a german every evening, or a progressive euchre party on his list,

1941

why, there was the Thursday Club and the Whist Club and the Chess Club, and the Union and the Association, and the pretty new room of the Harvard Club. "As to that," said Clipsham truly, if you had asked him how he spent his evenings, "I am never so happy as I am with a novel or with the newspaper at home." But it was to be observed that he seldom enjoyed this acme of his happiness, at the top-notch of his life's tide.

The one thing of which Clipsham's friends were sure was this, that he would never go into public life. True, he always voted;—he even voted for the school committee, which most of the people in Tamworth forgot to do. But it was also true that he did not attend primary meetings. And it was by a series of rather curious circumstances that the public was led to place

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that confidence in him which has now lifted him so far out of the run of machine-made politics. It is the business of this story to tell, for the first time so far as I know, the way those circumstances followed each other.

Clipsham was a man of iron memory. And this was not all pig-iron. One might say steel memory, or a memory of watch-springs, if we understood better than we do the action of the mechanism of memory. By this I mean that he recollected what are called little things at the right moment, as well as he remembered the big things all along his life. He remembered that the national debt was \$2,198,765,432.10 when it was at that precise amount, but he also remembered that he had told the washerwoman's boy to come round at a quarter past eight Friday evening and he would give him a ticket to the

circus. On such a combination, of what I call the pig-iron memory and what I call the watch-spring memory, does much of the good cheer and success of a happy life depend.

But on a fatal day, after Clipsham was thirty-three years old, he thought he forgot something. I do not myself believe he did. If he did, it was before breakfast, when no one ought to be asked to remember anything,—not whether Semiramis is the name of an empress or of a toadstool. But he thought he forgot something. And so it was that he went down to Mr. Backup's shop and bought this calendar, of which I am going to tell you the story.

There it is. He gave it to me on the day of his inauguration. You see it has the days of the week on one scroll, and the days of the month on another. Then you turn this cog at the begin-

ning of the month, and you are ready for thirty-one more days, if there be so many. The only defect in the machine is that you might suppose that there were thirty-one days in February. But, as Judge Marshall said, "the court is expected to know something."

Now, Clipsham is a charming public speaker. He tells a story well,—in particular, he tells with great good humor a story to his own disadvantage. He remembers well,—that has been said. He passes by a sudden change,—what do singers call it, modulation?—from grave to gay, or from gay to grave. Best of all, he never says one word about himself. Then he never pretends that he does not like to speak. He does like to speak. A man would be an ass who did not like to speak, if he spoke as well as Clipsham does.