

**THE MAN OF THE HOUR**

By ROBERT BROWN BALE

It was nearing the zero hour. "Only ten minutes and it will all be over," murmured Fred Turner to himself as he glanced at the watch encircling his wrist. Although the time for the greatest test of his life had come, he was not scared. "Only a little nervous," he laughed aloud as he noticed how his hand trembled. He crossed the room and took a bottle from the cabinet. After pausing a moment in deliberation, he raised it to his lips and took two short swallows. He coughed and replaced the bottle in the cabinet.

He looked at the watch again. "Eight minutes," he muttered. He felt a sudden sickening nausea as he thought of the responsibility that was his. Thousands were depending on him; hundreds were at that very moment preparing for the end and they were counting on him. If he should fail—ah, but he must not think of that—he COULDN'T fail. He must think of the others and forget himself. And the thought of those innumerable

souls that had placed their faith in him seemed to give him new courage for the ordeal he was soon to face.

"Seven minutes," he said, and he seemed to be speaking to someone. He was speaking to someone—to his wife and baby back home. As he thought of his dear ones at home, back home in safety, and how they looked as he kissed them goodbye last, a tear trickled down his cheek, and he reached forth his hand as if to touch those forms he loved so well, and in his imagination he viewed again that parting scene when his little wife had whispered to him through sobbing lips, "I know you'll do it, Fred, for the baby—and me." He came to himself with a start and glanced hurriedly at his watch. Five minutes. He looked at the instruments before him. How clean they looked; they were ready to do their part. Carefully he checked every gauge and saw that everything was in perfect condition. Oh, if he were only as calm as those instruments before him.

A shudder passed over him as he saw that he only had two minutes left. Tiny drops of perspiration

popped out on his forehead and his hands became hot and sweaty. He began to tremble like a leaf and then with a mighty effort gained control of himself. He closed his eyes for one brief moment of prayer as he realized that the hour had come. Then he straightened his shoulders and stepped to his post.

His eyes were glued on the second-hand. His own hand reached for the handle in front of him. Forty seconds. He was dimly conscious of gun-shots in the distance. "Fools," he thought, "why hadn't they waited for his signal?" Thirty seconds. The strain was becoming terrific. He tightened his grip on the handle. Twenty seconds. The rat-a-tat-tat of the guns had increased and was getting near him. He heard a cannon boom far away. His nerves were beginning to break. Ten seconds. In the tenseness of the moment he bit his lip but the blood trickled down his chin unnoticed. Five seconds. He weakened and wavered for an instant, but realizing that now, if ever, he must be a MAN, he caught himself and tightened his grip on the handle until the nails bit into the

flesh. Three seconds. Two seconds. One second. It was the zero hour—the end had come. Throwing all his strength into one mighty effort he jerked the lever forward. A mighty peal of thunder rent the air. It deafened him, but he made no effort to stop up his ears—he lay exhausted on the floor, unable to move. The thunder continued uninterrupted. Other thunders sent back their answers and the earth trembled as though in an earthquake. Finally Fred arose and pushed the lever back. The thunder stopped at once. Several times he pushed the lever backward and forward, each time being rewarded with a clap of thunder. Then he pushed the lever up to stay. He looked to his instruments, saw that they were all in perfect condition, turned out the light, locked the door and started home.

Fred Turner, chief whistle-blower for the largest factory in the state, had handled well his biggest assignment—blowing out the old year of 1933 and blowing in the new year of 1934. He had done his job well and he was satisfied. Now he could take things easy for another year.

**Phi Deltas Have Humorous Program**

**Thanksgiving Idea Prevails in Literary Society Meeting**

The Phi Delta Literary Society celebrated Thanksgiving by reviewing its history from several angles given by members of the society as follows:

Humorous Remarks, Paul "Tiny" Jakes; Thanksgiving (Poem), Page Morton; Scrambled History of Thanksgiving, Robert Bale; The Meaning of Thanksgiving, William Hatfield.

Parker Meek then gave an impromptu discussion on the value of Turkey for Thanksgiving followed by a few inspirational remarks by President Jack Murr before the meeting closed.

At the last meeting for the quarter a humorous debate was held by the feminine members of the society on the subject "Resolved That Hot Biscuits Should Be Served In The Mercer Dining Hall For Breakfast" to which the Ciceronians were invited and a good

time was had by all. It was announced at the conclusion of this meeting that election of officers would be held at the first meeting in the winter quarter.

She: Your mustache looks like a faintly dotted line, Nic.  
 Nic: Do you love me?  
 She: Of course.  
 Nic: Marry me then?  
 She: Well, I guess so.  
 Nic: Well then, sign on the dotted line.

A silk worm is a chap who buys stockings at ten dollars a pair for a sweet girlie.

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