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# THE STATE EMPLOYEE

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## Theodore Roosevelt and Civil Service Reform

HON. ALEXANDER C. FLICK, *State Historian*

Many years ago Lord Macauley said: "Any people that does not revere the worthy deeds of its ancestors will do nothing worthy of remembrance by its descendants." It is because of this recognition of "greatness" in our leaders of bygone days that we honor them with special recognition.

If Theodore Roosevelt were alive today he would be seventy-five years old. Perhaps no man in American history was more ardently loved or more cordially hated during his lifetime than he. To many he was a Moses leading the chosen people to the Promised Land; to others he was a dangerous ogre bent on the destruction of established American traditions. He was one of those impetuous personalities who could never do anything commonplace.

As time passes, Theodore Roosevelt stands out in perspective as "The Young David of the New Ideals"—the statesman who as Governor introduced the Ten Commandments at Albany and as President preached the "Square Deal" from Washington. Although dead fourteen years, his is still a miracle-working name for every forward-looking cause and a shibboleth for all sorts of reformers—a Jeremiah who could "speak softly but carry a big stick."

Shakespeare was in error when he said that the evil a man does lives after him but the good is interred with his bones. The constructive deeds of a great man also survive him. An illustration of this fact is found in the battle waged so intelligently and so effectively at Albany and at Washington by Theodore Roosevelt for the reform of the civil service.

It was not President Jackson but a New Yorker, William L. Marcy, who coined the phrase, "to the victor belongs the spoils." With Jackson, removals from office as well as appointments for party reasons became the accepted order of the day, although the spoils system had been in operation in states and municipalities before his time. During his first year as President some two thousand officeholders were removed.

Reform in civil service was of slow but continuous growth after

*Continued on Page 7*

## The Shorter Day For Institution Employees

By HON. LEWIS E. LAWES, *Warden, Sing Sing Prison*

Since the present time has seen employees of practically every type of industry and business granted shorter hours, it is only fair to point out that state civil service employees, especially those working in institutions, are justly due some consideration in this respect. I have repeatedly recommended that a six-day week of forty-eight hours be instituted for that is sufficient time for any of the employees of the state to do their work if they are to be most efficient.

In Sing Sing, confronted with the duty of considering first of all the matter of safety and security, I have found it necessary to call upon the custodial force to work from 60 to 64 hours a week. This extra duty is dolefully referred to by the men as "doing their NRA." In spite of these long hours which leave them very little time for relaxation, the morale of the officers of Sing Sing has never been higher for they believe that the State of New York is not so unappreciative that it will long permit such conditions to endure.

Aside from the denial to these men of the right to some of the advantages that pertain to those employed in private industry, there is an added hazard in that these very long hours are likely to result in lessened alertness and a dimming of a keen observation that is essential to men employed to guard prisoners.

Therefore, even though the financial condition of the State treasury is not as good as we could wish, it is imperative that action be taken at the next session of the legislature to right the injustice being done to state employees, even if it is done only on the basis of seeking the best interests of the state services.

Editor's Note.—This fine contribution by Major Lawes is an outstanding plea for the application

of the New Deal to the hours-of-employment problem in State institutions. It is confidently expected that its sincerity and clear reasoning will convince those who have hesitated heretofore, and that the thought now being given to the matter by executive and legislative leaders will bear early fruit. There is inherent in this proposal also the soundest and sanest unemployment relief of a permanent character yet suggested.

## Good Will to Men, And A Merry Xmas!

The "big bad wolf" of depression is slinking away. Nudity in the realm of facts is now universally welcomed. President Roosevelt has found new uses for the alphabet, and children now learn their N. R. A.'s instead of the old formula.

One must turn back the pages of history to Moses and Christ to find a doctrine of unselfishness as unselfish as that put forward by the America of this day.

This Association reaches out with patriotic loyalty to hold high the torch of progress and to hasten the arrival of the good days ahead. We see beyond the new plowing to the heading wheat, and yet beyond that to the strengthening bread of generous, cooperative endeavor. We see the spoilsman under whatever name himself despoiled. And we see the realization on earth of the Christmas message "Good will to men!" May your Christmas, through the virtue of Hope, be a Happy, a Merry one!

## Will the Salary Dollar Suffice?

The salary dollar is the most important dollar in the world. This is the dollar that runs the wheels of industry, the tractors of the farms, the long freight trains, the busy stores, and that makes possible the services of the doctor, the dentist, the lawyer, the engineer, and every other artisan or professional man or woman who adds to the breadth of life.

There are millions of our citizens working for salaries, or wages which mean the same. These millions are the patriotic backbone of the country and they are solidly behind the National Administration in its endeavors to distribute salary dollars fairly among all who will work. To the workers, salary dollars represent not gold, silver or greenbacks; they mean food, shelter, clothing, education for the children, conveniences for the mothers; capacity to continue the church and the school and social institutions, the fruits and the glory of civilization.

It doesn't make any difference to the worker whether inflation, deflation or reflation is adopted to make possible the purchase of these goods. Whatever the political or economic expert, in an unselfish and just spirit, finds to be best, will suit the worker. But he must have this salary dollar. And the dollar must fit the price tags of the necessities of civilization.

It is with this thought in mind that this Association, following its pledged program, has placed before executive, legislative and administrative heads of government, before trade groups, chambers of commerce, and citizens generally, its recent booklet entitled "Cost of living and price trends and their relationship to salaries paid to employees of the State of New York." This study shows that from the very moment when the salaries of state workers were reduced, the salary dollar declined in purchasing power. Every other worker's salary dollar did likewise.

It is the prime purpose of the NRA to keep the salary dollar and the cost of living in tune at about the 1926 level. The booklet shows by a number of graphs that a further increase of from 50 per cent to 150 per cent, according to standard indices in the cost of living, will be required to actually reach the 1926 level of prices. The salary dollar must, of course, increase as much. When the salary dollar decreases in purchasing power the way to save the situation, and the

only way, is to increase the number of salary dollars. This does not mean increased real salaries. It means only that salary dollars are firmly hitched to prices or the cost of living so as to assure a salary of constant buying power in essential commodities like milk, meat, rent, clothing, fuel, etc.

In the booklet referred to, the Association, on behalf of State employees, makes the following plea to the budget-making authorities of the State:

"This Association deems it necessary that the salary cuts now in effect be eliminated at the earliest possible time. Furthermore, as a safeguard against the proposed price trends of the future, the Association asks that power be given in the proposed budget, which would provide that salaries be adjusted commensurate with future decrease in the value of the dollar and the increase in cost of living. This is necessary in order to maintain the purchasing power of the State employee based on the average salary after elimination of the salary cut."

There is nothing selfish about this. We ask it for State workers because we speak in a particular way for them, but we urge it alike upon industry and business for the salaried and the wage earning men and women everywhere.

## Sick Leave Rules

The uniform minimum rules for sick leave adopted by the Governor's cabinet and presented for voluntary application in the various departments, seem not yet to have been put in effect in the case of large numbers of institution workers.

It is obvious that with 30,000 employees so closely knit together as the State employee body that any discrimination favoring any class or group wherever located is certain to be resented as unfair and unjust by those not similarly provided for and an unsatisfactory condition as to morale results. A perusal of the uniform rules for sick leave promulgated by the Governor's cabinet after prolonged study shows them to be as moderate as humane practice should tolerate.

Apparently a misunderstanding exists as to the application of the rules as the minimum allowance desirable, and the matter will be brought to the attention of Governor Lehman upon his return to Albany, together with the facts as to actual allowances in the different services.

## Is Not This The Time?

Your Association has addressed Governor Lehman, requesting that provision be made in the forthcoming budget so that the long work day in institutional service as a policy of the State of New York may be abolished for all time. Our Program of Progress for 1934 calls for this forward-looking act. There is no doubt that history is being made in these years. And it is history that thinks of the well-being of all. Economic welfare is found not to be the divine right of any single group. One of the highest virtues of the New Deal is its demand for a revision of the hours of labor. The following transcript from the Association's letter to the Governor speaks for itself:

"We beg to point out to you that the present long-day policy of the State of New York is directly at variance with the underlying principles of the National Recovery Program. We believe that the present State policy is indefensible as to its economic and social results. It is not conceivable that the people of this State should approve so fully of an expenditure of \$60,000,000 for the relief of unemployed citizens and their families, and not approve of State expenditures which would open to thousands of citizens the opportunity to work and support their families at tasks now closed to them by reason of admittedly unjustifiable exactions in the way of long daily service made by the State from thousands of its civil servants.

"We believe that the taxpayers of the State, when properly advised by you of such a change in policy and of the obvious results, would heartily support your stand. This seems amply proven by their attitude toward the expenditures referred to, and by the apparent faith and confidence of the great mass of citizens in the National Recovery Program, the success of which is dependent so largely upon questions of employment, hours of work and labor income. Plainly, every dollar which the State would expend on the shorter day would pass directly into business channels; these dollars would not be lost but would repay many fold in increased community activity, in better service to the State in the lines of work affected, and in increased social accomplishment on the part of the workers."

## The Merit System Marches On

The civil service system established under provision in the New York State Constitution requiring the selection of civil servants on the basis of their merit and fitness to serve the State, is founded upon the same principles of fair play that appeal so strongly to the millions of admirers of the New Deal in business and in politics. Recent decisions of the courts renouncing some of the ever recurring acts of political spoilsmen, and upholding the civil service system in important ways, adds lustre to the memory of the great Grover Cleveland and the great Theodore Roosevelt both of whom, though of different political faiths, fought so valiantly to establish this honest plan to assure economical and efficient public service.

Says the New York Times, commenting upon the court decisions referred to:

"Not in years have civil service reformers had so much cause for encouragement as in this city and State in the last few months. In one decision after another the courts have upheld and defended the merit system. Under one such recent decision little nests of privilege in the municipal courts here are about to be swept clean. Under another, handed down by the Appellate Division on Friday, the fond recollection of a slight indisposition related somehow to the World War will no longer serve to qualify a veteran for appointment and promotion in the civil service of the State over the heads of his less fortunate fellow-workers. A proposal to extend that preference has just been repudiated by the people at the polls. At Albany Governor Lehman and the State Commission have been working together quietly to purge the rolls of unnecessary exemptions. Now is the time to press this advantage."

## Recreational Activities

As this issue goes to press news reaches us indicating activity in institutions and departments along all lines of seasonal athletic and recreational projects. All such are valuable in building up morale as well as good health.

The Association is cooperating with the Albany City Recreational Committee in its large program conducted throughout the schools of the city.

### Association Cooperates with University in Educational Program

The August issue of The State Employee outlined the Association's efforts to establish educational helps toward self-improvement for State employees both from the standpoints of increased efficiency of the service and cultural advantage to the individual.

Today finds the program advanced to a considerable degree. As a result of Association endeavors Syracuse University opened an extension center for State employees in the Albany area on September 18, 1933, and an enrollment of approximately 1,000 State workers in classes covering over thirty subjects, and with a faculty of forty instructors, indicates somewhat the keen interest displayed in this educational undertaking. The financial support of this work is cared for entirely by the enrolled students and Syracuse University.

The Association was obliged, reluctantly, because of rules of the State Education Department as to correspondence instruction, to abandon its announced plan to conduct correspondence courses. It urges workers at different centers to examine the courses offered by local or correspondence institutions. Advice will be gladly given by our Committee on Education relative to any such courses.

The value of constant attention to self-improvement is so patent that the Association believes continued efforts will ultimately result in a cooperative endeavor that will make educational opportunities for civil service workers a routine matter everywhere throughout the State.

The Civil Service System in its direct relation to employee questions does not now go far beyond the recruiting stage. The State Department of Civil Service should be clothed with powers to not only develop a just compensation plan, uniform efficiency ratings, set reasonable hours of work, deal with sick leaves, vacations, and kindred matters relating to employment, but should also have a definite educational program to assure the constant development of higher efficiency on the part of each worker, thus making careers in public service a source of the greatest possible benefit to the State.

## New York State Government Is Economical

Here is an illustration which tells graphically where taxes are spent. The attempts by certain groups to charge high taxes to State government are grossly misleading. State government costs have been cut to the bone, and State personnel expenditures are only a fraction over one cent of the whole dollar. High taxes do not lurk among the thrifty State expenditures.



### The Best Shall Serve the State

In prosperity or adversity, in new ventures in government as in old, one need remains unchanged, namely, the need that the best shall serve the State.

It is not claimed that any method of selection to disclose merit and fitness in human beings is so perfect that it is infallible in its results. It is readily asserted and abundantly proven throughout long years of trial that free play for the civil service system assures a body of public servants clean and able and fit to sustain the continuity of all public projects and the fundamental activities of the government itself in times of political or partisan upheaval or under other circumstances that may arise.

The outstanding characteristic of the civil service system of selection of public servants is the opportunity afforded to all citizens, rich and poor, Jew, Gentile, Democrat, Republican or Socialist

to qualify upon equal terms for civil positions in government and to have a patriotic part in the up-building of public service. How different this plan to the one that makes religious worship, partisan political service, social position, or personal friendship the avenue to service in State government, with a consequent aftermath of feelings of righteous injustice aroused in the minds of many good citizens who properly diagnose the case as one of "Pull" or "Special Privilege," neither of which influences have a rightful place in any just or economical governmental arrangement.

Little by little the fallacy of disrupting public service through the distribution of party "spoils" is dawning upon large groups of loyal party adherents. The realization that an honest and efficient public servant, chosen under the fair rules of the civil service system, is the greatest asset possessed by any political party is be-

Continued on Page 6

### Politics

Partisan politics took up a large part of the news space during October and early November. Much of this dealt directly with New York City elections. Editorial comment in the New York Times, November 3rd, read:

"The Civil Service Forum sent its retiring president (Frank J. Prial) a check for \$10,000 when he entered the primary; last week's Chief announced that the Forum and its constituent bodies had made generous contributions to the Prial campaign fund, and will continue to do so as the occasion requires." Pointed criticism of any civil service activity of this sort then followed.

Since this editorial appeared we have received a number of inquiries as to whether the Association of State Civil Service Employees had a part in political contributions referred to or other political funds.

This Association, composed entirely of State Civil Service workers, did not contribute directly or indirectly to the political funds of any party or any candidate. The virtues of the Civil Service System are the chief asset of all political parties, and because of complete neutrality of purpose must always be free of political debt or partisan tribute. Furthermore it is a fundamental doctrine of this Association to avoid alliance with other associations or organizations, including local groups of all kinds not wholly composed of State workers, because of the necessity of keeping our program for State service and State employee betterment entirely in an open, frank, unbiased, and unfettered position, where selfish, personal or political aims or ambitions cannot control.

Progressive policies are openly advocated and supported by the Association but partisan political activities, good or bad, are outlawed under the clear cut tenets of the civil service system.

The Association believes in honest political party adherence for the individual, and urges that public workers by reason of their intimate knowledge of public affairs should stand firmly for sound platforms and unselfish and patriotically constructive effort on the part of their own political organizations.

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"The NRA plan is to get complete cooperation by organization—the organization of each great industry and parallel with it the organization of the workers."

The above quotation is from an address by Gen. Hugh S. Johnson, Recovery Administrator, before the American Federation of Labor Convention.

The success of the efforts of this Association of state civil service employees depends for realization upon the earnestness and progressiveness of the individuals who comprise the civil service body working unitedly as one man in their own organization.

President Roosevelt once publicly said to this Association that he hoped "State employees would continue to organize, always insisting upon intelligent leadership."

Governor Lehman, speaking at the 50th Anniversary Dinner said: "Your Association has made my task as Governor much easier."

A recent letter from Commissioner Graves of the Education Department says:

"The Association deserves support from all working for the State."

Dr. Parran of the Health Department writes:

"I heartily approve of the aims of the Association."

President Graves of The Tax Commission, urging support of the Association upon State workers, says:

"I have always taken a deep, if not active, interest in the work of this Association and believe that every Civil Service employee should be enrolled in the Association's membership."

The article by Warden Lawes, an internationally known progressive, adds to the proof of confidence in the capacity of this single State-wide, all State-employee organization to foster the highest ideals in State functioning as well as to promote the best and the fairest of employment practices in public service. If your own organization with your full membership support cannot do this, then it cannot and will not be done.

**State civil service employees—all ranks—all positions—your Association needs your membership support—the time to join or renew is now. Do it today!**

**Interesting**

A group of forward-looking citizens of Albany has formed The Albany Forum. The Forum is planning to bring to Albany, on the dates mentioned below, some of the outstanding lecturers of the country. Meetings will take place on Sundays, at 3:30 P. M., at the Albany Business College Auditorium, 130 Washington Avenue, Albany. Course tickets are \$1.00; single admission tickets 35c. Dates and speakers follow:

- December 10. Lindsay Rogers—Administering the N. R. A.
- December 17. Gorham Munson—Unemployment or Paid Leisure?
- January 7. Professor Evans—The Crisis and the New Deal.
- January 14. Powers Hapgood—Mines, Miners and the Public.
- January 21. Nathaniel Peffer—Storm Over Asia.
- January 28. Miss Jennie Lee—Dictatorship and Revolution in Europe.
- February 4. Frank Crosswaith—Your Money's Worth.
- February 11. Professor Broadus Mitchell—The Basic Aims of New Social Order.
- February 18. David C. Coyle—The Irrespressible Conflict.
- February 25. Spencer Miller, Jr.—Labor Under the N. R. A.

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# THE STATE EMPLOYEE

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## Logical Legislation

During the past few years of depression, many civil service employees in various branches of the service have suffered severely, by reason of demotion in salary and in rank.

The Civil Service Law provides that a worker whose position is abolished or made unnecessary, through no delinquency or misconduct on his part, shall be deemed to be suspended without pay, which suspension shall be made in the inverse order of original appointment in the service, and he shall be entitled to have his name entered upon a preferred list. Preference in the case of lay-offs on the basis of seniority is thus clearly and properly recognized.

At the last session of the Legislature, this Association caused to be introduced a measure which in substance provided as follows:

"Whenever, for reasons of economy, curtailment of activities or otherwise, a person holding a position in the competitive or non-competitive classes of the state service is, through no inability or fault of his own, reduced in class, rank or salary grade, such reduction shall be made in the inverse order of original appointment in the service and he shall be entitled to have his name entered upon a preferred list, together with those who, as hertofore provided in this section, may have been separated from the same or similar position."

This measure was not adopted. The principle proposed is wholly sound. This is the time for Civil Service employees to give thought to necessary strengthening of the Civil Service Law at the coming session of the Legislature, and to confer with their incoming representatives in the Senate and Assembly relative to this improvement, as well as to the other

points of the Association's program. Make the Association program your program and give it thought and attention.

## The Civil Servant's Pledge Of Faith and Service

I have faith in my Country and its Institutions. I believe in the importance of my job and in the dignity of all public service. I count myself fortunate to live and work in a State where I may obtain public employment through competition fairly won and under a system which permits me to look forward to a career as a public employe and advancement through merit.

I know that government is no better than the people who direct its affairs and do its work. I will be honest, loyal and industrious in the work I have to do. I will be courteous in my relations with my superiors, my fellow workers and the public. I will use public property entrusted to my care for the purposes intended and protect and conserve it as though it were my own.

I will refrain from doing anything that will bring discredit upon the State as my employer or upon me as a civil servant. I will strive, through my acts and my work, to realize the purposes for which government is established and so merit the esteem and respect of the people.

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*Continued from Page 3*  
coming better understood.  
Because the administration of civil service has at times been weak, because partisan political selfishness has at times triumphed, and because these things could occur again if citizen apathy in the safeguarding of the constitutionally established civil service system should develop, there is a very obvious need for a vigilance committee among good citizens generally.

It is not enough that civil servants, organized to promote good public service, should take a strong stand for the preservation of the merit system. This is the common duty of every man and woman, and of every boy and girl, for in the full effectiveness of the civil service system alone lies their guarantee of equal opportunity to have a part in public service regardless of race, religion, political party adherence, or personal prejudices.

Civil service employees should take a more active interest in activities that will in any way strengthen in the public mind the conception of fairness and economy inherent in the civil service system. There is great need for this.

**A Correction**  
An error, transposition of legends of Charts 3 and 6 occurred in the first run of the Association's latest booklet, entitled "Cost of Living and Price Trends and Their Relationship to Salaries Paid to Employees of the State of New York." Chart 3, showing the drop well below 60 in February is Fisher's Index of 120 Commodities" and Chart 6, where the low only touches 60 in February is the "Wholesale Prices—U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics." The charts both show rise in prices to the same point. The second run of the Booklet carries the charts in correct positions.

**Great Membership Activity**  
Officers and committees are greatly encouraged by the apparent enthusiastic appreciation of the need of a single State-wide all-State Employee organization, and its capacity to secure attention and fair settlement of the fundamental employment problems.  
Over a thousand new or renewal membership applications are already in for 1934.

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## Theodore Roosevelt and Civil Service Reform

*Continued from Page 1*

1853 when Congress ordered clerkships filled only by those passing a satisfactory examination. The first Federal Civil Service Commission was appointed in 1871 by President Grant whose administration was not free from questionable practices. Six years later an examination was required of appointees for postal and customs positions in New York City. But the first permanent foundation was laid fifty years ago when the Civil Service Act of 1883 was passed bringing 14,000 federal employees under the Civil Service Commission, a bipartisan board of three members, which was continued by subsequent Presidents with its jurisdiction gradually widened until today about 300,000, or 62 per cent, are protected by it.

In 1889 President Harrison appointed as a member of the Commission the youthful Theodore Roosevelt. Against the advice of friends he accepted the place and thus began his constructive work to reform the civil service by the application of honesty, efficiency, permanence, and promotion on merit to government employment. From the outset he steered the Commission and illustrated the fact that all his life in every conference where Theodore Roosevelt sat was the head of the table. The law was enforced vigorously and the classified list was greatly extended, in the face of a continual battle with the politicians. President Harrison reappointed him to the Commission in 1892 and as a result of his six years of effort, civil service reform was permanently established in the United States.

Meanwhile in New York State Governor Cleveland in 1883, following the example of the Federal government, had recommended that State civil service should be based on "fitness and efficiency" and persuaded the Legislature to authorize him to create a bipartisan Civil Service Commission. The following year Governor Cleveland reported that the Commission was in operation and that New York

City and Brooklyn also had "thorough" systems. It was his boast that New York State "leads in the inauguration of a comprehensive State system of civil service." He also declared that since the children are educated at public expense the best qualified among them should be induced to enter the public service.

When Theodore Roosevelt was elected Governor in 1899, he eagerly continued the constructive work of Governor Cleveland. His first message dealt with State civil service improvement at great length. He found the civil service encrusted with abuses, and urged a uniform law for the whole State to carry out the provision of the Constitution of 1894. He denounced the prevailing system which was based on non-competitive examinations as a "farce" and a "fraud." He insisted upon open and free competition for positions and urged that practical written examinations should be supplemented by physical and technical tests, citing as a model the postal and navy yard service.

As a result of this message the New York Civil Service Law was amended to increase appointments on merit, to give the Civil Service Commissioners higher pay and to provide funds for a more adequate inspection of the effectiveness of those employed by the State. Thus it may be said that Governor Cleveland initiated our present State civil service system, Governor Theodore Roosevelt organized it on a sound basis, and later governor's improved and extended it.

When Theodore Roosevelt became President in 1901 he had an opportunity to put into operation more effectively the Federal Civil

Service system based on merit for which he had worked so hard for six years as a member of the Civil Service Commission. Hence one is not surprised to find the merit system extended to the employees of the District of Columbia. The rural free delivery carriers and the consular employees were brought under the Commission's rules. The classified list was increased from 84,000 to 143,000, or 50 per cent of all Federal employees. His interpretation of the law meant appointment on the ground of fitness, protection against unfair removal, promotion on merit and adequate compensation.

So today on the seventy-fifth birthday of Theodore Roosevelt, we the employees of New York State, who are the beneficiaries of his persistent efforts to reform and elevate civil service, honor his memory.

Editor's Note—This is an address delivered by Dr. Flick at the Association luncheon in honor of the 75th Birthday of Theodore Roosevelt. It is an inspiring article.



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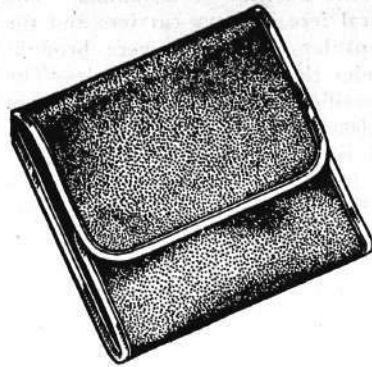
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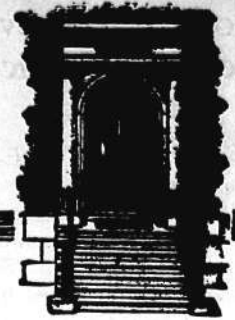


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