

wickerwork—dyed black. I never saw a cap like that before in my life."

"Neither did I; nowhere else but here. But that's the kind of cap streetcar motormen used to wear in the summer in Galesburg, Illinois. I was just a little kid but I remember them. What color was that streetcar, red or green?"

"It was yellow," Marsh said quietly. "I saw it pass under a street light just before it reached me, and it was yellow."

"That's right," I said. "The streetcars in Galesburg were painted yellow, and the last of them quit running years ago." I stood up and put my knuckles on the tabletop, resting my weight on them, leaning down to look Marsh in the eyes. "But you saw one last night just the same. I don't know how or why but you did, and I know it and believe you." I smiled, straightening up to stand beside the table. "But no one else ever will. Of course you're right; you'd never enjoy living in Galesburg now."

Do you see what I mean? Do you see why I'm a reporter? How else would you hear a story like that at first hand? I never turned it in, of course; I just wrote that Mr. E. V. Marsh, of Chicago, had considered but decided against building a factory here, and it ran as a little five-inch story on page three. But it's because of occasional stories like Marsh's that I expect to continue reporting for the *Register-Mail* as long as I live or can get around. I know the town laughs at me a little for that; it's been a long time since Galesburg took me seriously, though it once expected big things of me.

I was first in my high-school class, in fact, and was offered a scholarship at Harvard. But I didn't take it. I went to Knox, the local college right here in town, working my way through

—my mother was alive then but my father was dead and we didn't have much money. That's when I started reporting for the *Register-Mail*, full time in the summers, part time during school, and I graduated second in my class, Phi Beta Kappa, *summa cum laude*, and could have had any of several scholarships for postgrad work, or a job with American Chiclé in South America. The town thought I was going places, and so did a girl I was engaged to—a junior at Knox, from Chicago. But I wasn't going anywhere and knew it; and I turned down every offer that would take me from Galesburg, and when she graduated next year the girl turned me down and went home.

So there's my trouble, if trouble it is; I'm in love with a town, in love with the handful of Main Street buildings that were built in the last century and that don't look much different, except for the modernized store fronts, from the way they do in the old photographs. Look at their upper stories, as I always do walking along Main, at the tall slim windows with the rounded tops, and maybe, just maybe, you're seeing at least one of the buildings Abraham Lincoln saw when he was in Galesburg. Yes; he debated Douglas on a wooden platform built over the east steps of Old Main at Knox, something the college never seems to get tired of reminding the world about. And Old Main, too, stands very little changed, on the outside, anyway, from the day Lincoln stood there grasping his coat lapels and smiling down at Douglas.

There's sordidness and desolation in Galesburg, and just plain ugliness, too. But in so many other places and ways it's a fine old town, and I move through its streets, buildings, and private houses every day of my life, and know more about