

ASTOUNDING

SCIENCE-FICTION

TITLE REGISTERED U. S. PATENT OFFICE

CONTENTS JULY, 1941

VOL. XXVII NO. 5

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All stories in this magazine are fiction. No actual persons are designated either by name or character. Any similarity is coincidental.

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Printed in the U. S. A.

STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC. • 79 7th AVE., NEW YORK

OUT THIRD
FRIDAY
EACH MONTH

Next Issue on
Sale July 18th
\$2 per Year
20c per Copy



THE GEOMETRICS OF JOHNNY DAY

By Nelson S. Bond

As a businessman, Johnny Day may have been a lamb among wolves—but he could make geometry do tricks!

Illustrated by Schneeman

OLD MacDonald had a firm. It was called the Northern Bridge, Steel & Girder Co., and Hector MacDonald's boast was that despite a

plethora of municipal, State, Federal and other taxes, despite the mad machinations of That Man in the White House, it managed to issue its

annual report to stockholders in black ink.

It was also his boast that the N. B. S. & G. operated on a principle of maximum efficiency at minimum cost, a statement grudgingly borne out by those workmen whose sole duty it was to salvage tiny steel shavings from the workshop floors.

"'Tis braw folly," decided old MacDonald, "to waste gude metal so! And the junkman will pay nowt for't. Shave it fine and scour it. 'Twill make excellent steel wool at a savin' o' three-fufty the carton."

So they did, and it did.

Not that old MacDonald was stingy. He paid his men well—without benefit of unions—and provided comfortable, though not luxurious, working conditions. He was a thrifty man, deploring waste in any shape or form. "Time is money!" was his watchword; to spare himself the expenditure of this valuable commodity, his office was bulwarked by a battery of secretaries employed to protect him from the host of sales, insurance, and contact men who prey on busy executives.

Thus it was with great surprise that, upon entering his sanctum after an inspection tour of the welding shop, he found awaiting him a young man of whose presence he had not been forewarned.

His first reaction was one of anger, his second was a gesture of dismissal. Spluttering for words, he lifted an arm toward the door. But the young man further confused the issue by seizing the outstretched hand, pumping it vigorously, and grinning.

"How do you do, sir? My name's Day; John Day."

MacDonald retrieved his hand with a snort.

"How," he demanded, "did you get in here?"

AST—8g

Johnny Day continued to grin, which was clever. It concentrated attention on his fine, strong lips and jaw line, made the watcher overlook his shortness of stature, the fact that he wore rimless bifocals, and that his hair line thinned back above the temples. He nodded amiably toward the window behind MacDonald's desk.

"Through there," he said.

"What!" said MacDonald. He strode to the casement, peered out. His office was on the second floor. But he saw for the first time that the brickwork facing was so arranged as to afford easy hand and footholds to an agile man.

He turned to face Johnny. "Ye clumb!" he said.

Johnny nodded. "I've been trying to get in to meet you," he explained, "for three weeks. Your secretaries have pebbles for hearts. All they can say is, 'Sorry!' I had to find another way."

MacDonald stroked his jaw thoughtfully. "I *should*," he mused, "ha' ye thrun oot on ye're nawdle. But ye've done me a favver in exposin' a vulneerable spot. Therefore, I'll listen to ye"—he took out his watch—"fr exactly twa minutes. Though, mind, ye're wastin' y'r time! I've na use fr insurance, stocks, nor nowt else. But proceed. What is it ye want?"

JOHNNY'S GRIN faded, and his lips became as serious as his eyes.

"I want," he said, "a job."

"Eh?" said MacDonald.

"I want to work for you."

"Ye said that," said MacDonald, "afore. The slight change o' vair-beeage doesna' deceive me. Ye want a job, eh? And just what is it that ye do?"

"I draw things," Johnny told him, "and I add things and I say A plus

B equals C. In other words, I am—or used to be—a mathematics professor. A geometry teacher. But I quit. I'm tired of looking at faces; smooth, pleasant, dumb young faces. I want a chance to apply my special talents in the business world. There . . . there's another reason, too—"

"The fairest," said MacDonald, "is sufficient." And he shuddered. "My secretaries were richt, Mr. Day. There's na place f'r ye in this concairn. If ye were an engeeneer, pairhaps, or even a fairest-class puddler. But a teacher! A hypothetecal word-monger—" He gazed at his watch. "Y'r twa minutes is up, young man. If ye'd be so kind as to shut the door softly when leavin'—"

"Look, Mr. MacDonald," said Johnny Day desperately, "you're making a big mistake. I'll admit that I know little or nothing about the steel-construction business. But I can learn. And while I'm learning, I can be of *some* value. The science of mathematics is useful everywhere, in thousands of little ways—"

"Name one!" said MacDonald.

"I . . . I beg your pardon?" faltered Johnny.

"Name," repeated MacDonald sardonically, "one." He rocked on his heels and smirked. "I'm a fair mon, Mr. Day," he said, "I'm open to convection. I'll gie ye a chance f'r to prove y'r claim. If ye're richt, I'll find a job f'r ye. If not, I'll ask ye to remove y'r A's and B's quietly.

"Look about ye, Mr. Day. The room we stond in was designed and equipped by efficiency experts whose purpose it was to achieve maximum efficiency at minimum cost. Ye'll see that the office is neat, but not gaudy; complete wi'oot the expense o' needless geegaws.

"However, if ye can show me *one*

way in which a cent might ha' been saved in the equippin' o' this room—disregardin' the initial cost of furniture and materials, which I bought at wholesale—I'll put y'r name on the pay roll. Is that fair?"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny mechanically, already scanning the room. The assignment did not sound difficult. But the more he looked, the harder became the test. MacDonald's boast was not a vain one. The arrangement of the office was strictly, maddeningly, functional. Sturdy, but inexpensive, furniture; a hardy fiber carpet, painted walls, plain, unornate lighting fixtures—

"Well?" said MacDonald gleefully.

"The . . . the lamp on your desk!" Johnny's heart gave a lurch; he seized at a timber-sized straw. "The wire which feeds it comes from all the way across the room! Representing a sheer waste of . . . of about forty feet of wire! At nine cents a yard—"

"Forty-two feet," chortled MacDonald, "at eight and a half cents. One dollar and nineteen cents to run that extension. Not bad, lad—"

"Then I get the job?" breathed Johnny.

"Ye dinna! Ye overlooked the trifn' fact that by runnin' yon extension I saved the labor and equipment cost o' puttin' in a second outlet! Wi' the wall plug alone costin' eighty-nine cents, and the labor at least three dollars—" Again he glanced at his watch; this time impatiently. "Well, I maun be askin' ye to leave now. This is all verra gay and entertainin, but time is money, and—"

"*Wait!*" cried Johnny Day.

"Eh? What's that?"

"I've got it!" said Johnny. And swiftly, "What was the cost of that wire? Eight and a half cents a

yard? Then two feet would be worth approximately six cents, right? And you said if I could save a single penny—”

MACDONALD glanced again at the extension under discussion. Simple, cloth-bound cord, it originated from a plug set rather high in the blank north wall, the wall facing his desk, ran down this wall to the floor, along the floor under the carpet, up the south wall to the wainscoting, to connect with a triple socket.

“Well?” he growled.

“Too long!” proclaimed Johnny triumphantly. “Sheer waste! It could be two feet shorter and still do the trick! When do I start work, Mr. MacDonald?”

“Bide a wee!” MacDonald shook his head. “It won’t do, lad. I know ye could save a few feet by stretchin’ it across the room deerect, but ’twouldna be practeecal! Folks would be forever tanglin’ their pates in it. It had to run along the floors and walls—”

“Of course,” said Johnny. “I know that.”

“Then what’re ye blatherin’ about? D’ye think it’s made o’ roober? It canna be shorter and yet follow the wall. It touches only twa walls and the floor!”

“That’s just it!” said Johnny. “It ought to touch three walls, the floor, and the ceiling!”

“Three walls—” MacDonald shifted nervously. His voice lowered. “Look, lad, ye’re a bit excited. Pairhaps a leetle rest . . . a cup o’ tea—”

But Johnny’s attention was elsewhere. He had moved to MacDonald’s desk, found paper and pencil, sketched a pair of diagrams with swift, sure strokes. He thrust his drawing under the older man’s nose exuberantly.

“There’s the proof. Get your engineers to study it out; they’ll agree with me. Geometry is always right. It’s your eyes that deceive you. The route of the extension cord is a problem in geodesics—and curiously enough, the *shortest* possible route is one that requires the wire to run upon five of the six sides of the room.

“In rough figures, *my* method of running that extension requires two less feet of wire than the method employed by your efficiency experts. A saving of almost six cents—or six times as much as you asked me to save. And I can”—breathlessly—“I can start work today, Mr. MacDonald!”

MacDonald stared at Johnny, then he stared at the wire, then at the diagram in his hand, then at Johnny again. He said, “Well, I’ll be dommed!” and his mouth was wry, but it twitched at the corners. His eyes twitched, too. And he pushed a button and spoke sentences into a gadget. He said, “Pearson, I’m sending you a young mon. Put him to work. He says he can lairn the business. . . . Aye! Verra gude!”

“Thank you, sir!” said Johnny.

“Get along wi’ ye,” said MacDonald. “Ye’re wastin’ my time, since ye now work here. I’m a hard mon, but a fair one. Ye passed my test square and honest. Wait a minute!”

Johnny paused at the door. “Yes, sir.”

“Ye said ye had a second reason f’r wantin’ to work f’r me?”

Johnny fidgeted. “Well, sir—”

“Speak up, mon! Time is money! Is there something else ye’re wantin’ beside a job? What is it?”

Johnny’s face cleared. The grim came back. “There *is* another thing, sir,” he said quietly. “I want to marry your daughter!”

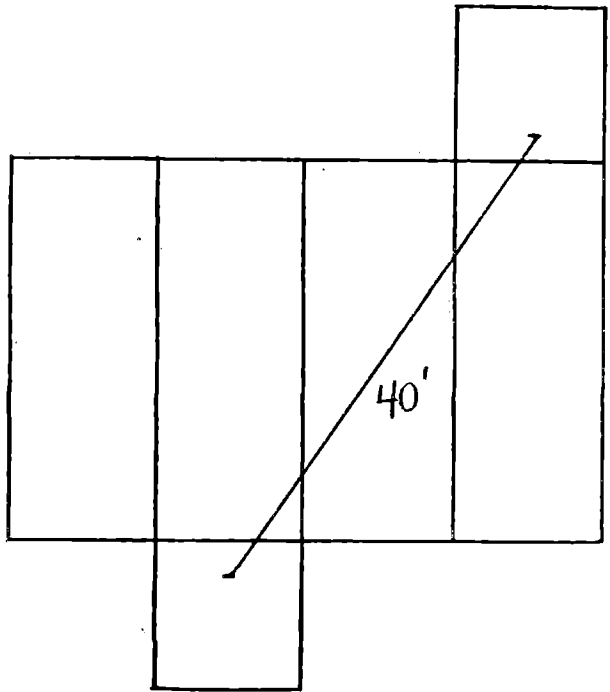
And he ducked out. Quickly. Which was a very wise decision—

So JOHNNY DAY, one-time professor, erstwhile follower of Euclid, Lobachevsky, Riemann, Bolyai, transferred his "special talents" to the workaday world.

It was not the easy transition he had hoped for and expected. He soon discovered that there exists a wide chasm between the serene mountain peak of Theory and the harsh plateau of Practice. A specific knowledge of general quintics, he found, did not aid in determining the tensile strength of a new type of girder. By formulae and figures the structure was sound; an actual test found it faulty. Johnny rechecked his computations fretfully; the plant engineers shrugged and called the experiment a "cheese cake cast," and tried another type.

He was assigned to the shipping department. Eager to prove his worth, he spent two whole days figuring out how to most compactly load a freight car with cylindrical cable reels. He drew cubes and squares and cylinders and consumed reams of paper and came within an iota of solving the problem of the squared circle.

He got what he wanted, finally. When he carried it to the loading foreman, gleefully, this worthy—a Bulgarian named Derek, who required assistance in counting his weekly earnings—pointed out that he had been loading freight cars in



The Day method of running a lamp cord—

just that manner for the past nineteen years.

He found a niche, ultimately, in the Estimate Department. There was little opportunity here for the exercise of his "special talents," his mathematical requirements did not extend beyond the complicated functions of multiplication and division—but it was a job, and Johnny was happy.

He was happy because he was working for *her* father, and because every so often—about five days a week, in fact—*she* visited the office.

She was Peggy MacDonald. She was sugar, and spice, and everything nice; she had hair the color of tarnished sunlight, eyes the color of a Highland loch, and Johnny's heart did things every time she came within a mile and a quarter. The strange and wonderful part was that she felt the same way about Johnny.

"In another year, Johnny," she said. "By that time daddy will realize how brilliant you are, how important to the business. You'll be a vice president, or at *least general manager*, and then—"

"I might as well be a vice president now," Johnny told her gloomily, "for all the good I do around here. The office boy has a more important job than I have. Well, I'm getting what I deserve. I tricked your old—I mean, your dad—into a job, and now—"

"You didn't trick him," declared Peggy indignantly. "You beat him at his favorite trick. And he can growl and grumble all he likes, I know he respects you for it."

"M-m-m!" said Johnny.

"And didn't he turn over a complete estimate job assignment to you just the other day?"

Johnny said, "Ye-e-es," grudgingly. "Yes, he did. But what is it? A contract assignment for government steel? The handling of a big corporation job? No! The assignment of constructing a new, all-steel fence around our own company property. Peanuts!"

"It's a beginning," said Peggy stanchly. "It will lead to bigger things. How's it coming?"

"Oh, all right, I suppose. He hasn't complained, anyway. I designed it in the shape of a circle—you know, largest space-inclosure at a minimum cost for materials—and put through an order for the new flexi-steel to be used. He O. K.'d everything. The job will be finished in a day or two, except for the painting, of course."

"And who's going to do that?"

"I don't know yet. I've sent letters to the major paint men in town, inviting their bids. The cheapest—"

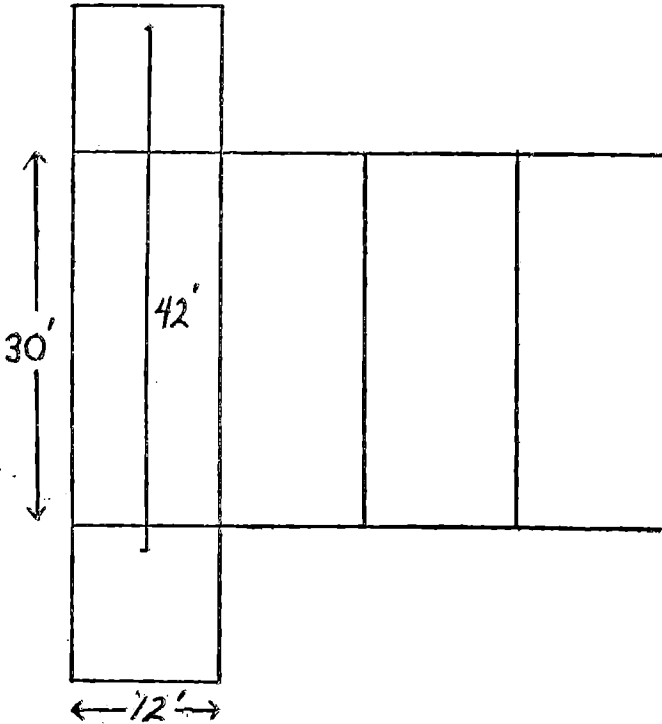
Peggy looked thoughtful.

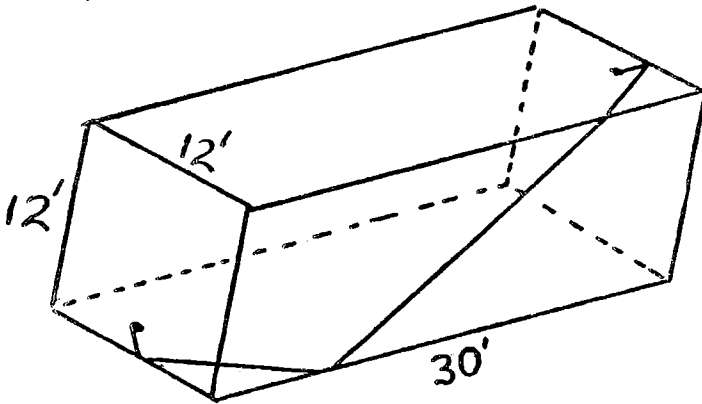
"You didn't write to Campbell, by any chance?"

"Bruce Campbell? Tartan Paint & Varnish? Why . . . why, yes. His company is the largest in town."

"Oh, Johnny, you shouldn't have! Mr. Campbell and daddy are old enemies. I don't mean they'd actually *fight* each other, or anything like that, but—Well, Campbell is a Lowlander and daddy is a High-

—and, believe it or not—the longer route.





It looks funny, but it's shorter this way—

lander, and you know what *that* means. They spend half their waking hours trying to think of ways to take advantage of each other. If Campbell bids on this job—

Johnny's neck turned red.

"I don't see," he growled, "where friendship and enmity have anything to do with it. If Campbell's bid is the lowest, and the quality of work satisfactory, he should have the job. Furthermore—"

HE NEVER GOT to mention the "furthermore." For just then the door of MacDonald's sanctum opened, MacDonald strode to Johnny's desk. He glared once at Peggy, then ignored her. To Johnny:

"It has come to my attention, Mr. Day, that ye sent the Tartan Paint & Varnish Co. an invitation to bid on the paintin' o' the new fence?"

"Yes, sir. I was just explaining to Peg . . . to Miss MacDonald—"

"I wish to make it clear," said MacDonald emphatically, "that by makin' sooch a gesture ye are doin' what is known in cairtain caircles as 'leadin' wi' y'r chin.' This I wish to make clear for the pairticular reason that tonicht I am leavin' for

Cleveland, and willna be back fr' a week.

"Mind, I'm not forbidden' that ye accept an offer from Campbell if by some meeracle the auld tightwad should happen to submit the best offer. All I *do* say is that ye'd best not only be

careful, but unco' canny, in dealin' wi' yon penny-clutchin' auld pirate. One slip and he'll ha' y'r eye teeth!

"In which case?"—MacDonald's eyes glinted coldly—"Mr. Day, the N. B. S. & G. will most reluctantly be fairced to dispense wi' y'r valleeable sairvices. Do ye oonderstand?"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny.

"Verra well, then. I leave the matter to y'r discretion. If," said MacDonald, "ye possess sooch. Peggy!" He stalked away, then stopped at the door. "Incidentally—when Campbell's estimator cooms, ye might find a way to delay him an hour or so. Nowt breaks that auld rascal's hairt so much as to ha' his men squander gude time. Peggy!"

"Yes, daddy." Peggy's lips framed the word, "Tomorrow!" Then she was gone, and Johnny got back to work.

THUS it was that, two days later, Johnny Day stared thoughtfully at the fistful of estimates submitted by painters who had entered bids on the now-completed fence.

Topmost of these papers was the bid from the Tartan Paint & Varnish Co. It read, "ESTIMATE. For painting, according to approved

specifications, exterior fence of Northern Bridge, Steel & Girder Co. —\$200.00.”

Johnny pushed his hand through his hair and looked again and couldn't believe it. He leafed through the other bids. The lowest of them was \$225, the highest, \$415.08.

“I wonder why,” thought Johnny, “the eight cents?” And discarded the bid. And discarded the others, one by one, until there remained in his hand only the Tartan Co. bid. “It's the lowest!” he muttered defensively. “MacDonald be hanged! There's only one sensible thing to do—”

And he reached for the phone.

That was on a Tuesday. On Wednesday the Tartan men began work, and young Prentiss, Johnny's companion in the Estimate Department, whistled and said, “Oh-oh! Campbell! The old man's not going to like it, Johnny!”

On Thursday the job was well under way, and Peggy's eyes were as worried as her voice.

“Why did you do it, Johnny? You know how my father feels about Campbell.”

“He won't object to Campbell's getting the worst of a business deal, will he?” retorted Johnny. “The Tartan Co. submitted the lowest bid. A suicidal underestimate, if I know paint costs.”

“That's just it,” said Peggy thoughtfully. “Campbell doesn't submit suicidal underestimates, Johnny. He's too canny. Something's wrong—”

“There's nothing wrong,” growled Johnny. “Read the contract. The specifications are there in black and white.”

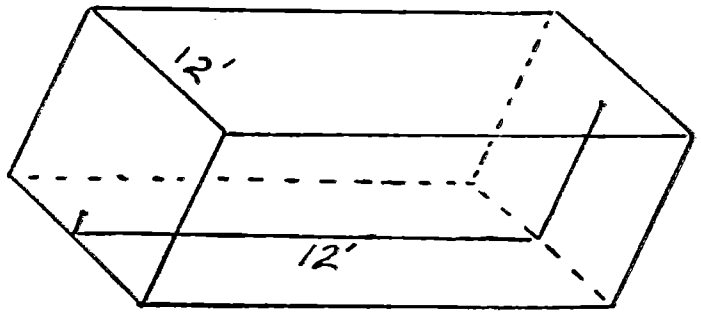
“I know, but—”

“Suppose,” said Johnny, “you leave this to me. I'm responsible. I'll take care of any trouble that comes up.”

WHICH made easy saying. Because he didn't actually expect any trouble. But it came, ready or not. And sooner than Peggy, or Prentiss, or anyone else, had dreamed. A wad of trouble. The very next day. The foreman of the painting crew came to Johnny's office late in the afternoon. He said, “Well, I think there's going to be about a half gallon of red lead left over, Mr. Day. If you don't mind, I'll leave it here. You can use it for touching up spots later on.”

Johnny said, “That's nice. Thanks!” before it made sense to him. Then he started. “Eh!” he said. “What's that? Left over? But . . . but you're not half finished yet!”

“My instructions,” the foreman told him, “were to do the outside of the fence. There's just a little bit left to do. We'll finish it first thing tomorrow morning.”



30'
—than this!

“Outside!” yelled Johnny. He yelled other things. Loudly. They had no effect on the foreman, who ducked into a shell of reserve and took refuge behind a single sentence.

“I dunno nothin’ about it, you better call the boss.”

So Johnny called, and what he heard from the general manager of the Tartan Paint & Varnish Co. gave him that dropping-elevator feeling in the pit of his stomach. Arguing over the telephone got him nowhere, so he went to the Tartan office; there, by sheer belligerence, got to face old Campbell himself.

Which must have been just what Campbell was waiting for, because the grin on his face stretched from here to the Antipodes. He took a duplicate of the original bid from his desk and shook it under Johnny’s nose.

“Ye’ll notice, yoong mon,” he said, “that this estimate calls for the paintin’ o’ the *exterior* fence o’ y’r concern! There’s nowt said about paintin’ *both* side o’ yon fence. ’Tisna my fault ye mistook the meanin’ o’ the waird ‘exterior.’ Any gudē dictionary will inform ye it means ‘outside,’ not ‘outer’ or ‘surroundin’’ as ye seem to think.

“Furthermore, should y’r employer care to make an issue o’ the matter, any court o’ law would agree—”

Johnny left. There was no use in arguing the matter any further. Campbell was shrewd, but his logic was unassailable. ‘Exterior’ did mean ‘outside,’ therefore just one side of the fence. It did not matter that Johnny had presumed the bid to mean a complete painting of the outer fence. Old MacDonald’s prediction had come true.

Johnny went back to his office. Peggy was waiting there. She had heard the bad news from Prentiss.

“Oh, Johnny! What are you gō-

ing to do now? I knew something like this would happen. You've got to make him do both sides of the fence—"

"He offered to," said Johnny gloomily, "for another two hundred and fifty dollars! Your father was right. I'm a hypothetical theorist. I don't belong in a business office. I'd better go back to teaching. 'Special talents'! Huh! My special talent is for allowing myself to be chiseled by the first verbal sharpster who comes down the pike."

"If it were anyone else but Campbell!" wailed Peggy. "Daddy will die! He'd rather lose an arm than lose a trick to Bruce Campbell."

"What is today? Friday? Well, anyway, your father won't hear about it till Monday. Perhaps by that time—"

"But he will, Johnny! I got a telegram this morning. He's finished his business in Cleveland. He's flying back tonight. He'll be at the office tomorrow morning!"

Johnny groaned.

"This is it, then. I had some cock-eyed notion about borrowing the money, having the job finished at my own expense so he'd never find out. But I can't do that in so short a time. This is the end, Peggy. The end of my big ideas, my plans for a career in the business world. I've jumped right off the end of that damned fence—"

He stopped suddenly, his mouth and eyes widening.

"The end of the fence!" he repeated. "The end of the fence! Of course! *That's it!*"

Peggy looked startled.

"Wh-what's what, Johnny? Do you feel well?"

"Listen, Peggy—when does the outside of a fence end and the in-

side begin. Can you tell me that?"

"Why . . . why, I don't know, Johnny. When you can't go any farther without crossing an edge, I suppose. But what's that got to do with—"

"Crossing an edge!" howled Johnny gleefully. "We've got him! Prentiss, there are some men on night duty, aren't there? Well, get 'em—quick! We've got a little job that must be done before those painters get here tomorrow. Hurry up!"

Peggy gasped, "Johnny, what is it? Are you—"

"Tell you later, sugar!" Johnny was scribbling on a scratch pad. He ripped off the sheet and shoved it into Prentiss' hands. "It's a good thing we used that flexible steel. Here, Prentiss. Tell the men to join the fence like this. Get it?"

AT EIGHT-THIRTY the following morning the painters returned to finish their job. At eight forty-one the foreman of the paint crew stalked into Johnny's office, glowering.

"Lookit, mister!" he said, "there's somethin' funny about that there damn fence. When I left here last night I only had about twenty feet left to paint. Now—"

Johnny grinned at him. "I dunno nothin' about it," he said blandly, "you better call the boss."

Baffled, the foreman did so. Johnny listened to his explanation gleefully. "But I tell you they ain't no end to it. Awright, come see for yourself. Send the old man!" And he banged up the receiver. "Campbell's coming over here!" he threatened darkly.

"Good," said Johnny.

Five minutes later, Hector MacDonald arrived at the office. The grapevine telegraph had operated.

He wasted no time on preliminaries. He skewered Johnny with a glance.

"So ye done it!" he roared. "In spite o' my warnin' yet let y'rself get bilked by Campbell! Well, ye know what I said. Pack y'r kit, young mon!"

"Good morning, chief," said Johnny.

MacDonald turned a delicate mauve. "Gude mornin'?" he bel-lowed. "Is that all ye have to say? Ye pull a boner that costs me twa hoondred dollars, make me a laughin' stock in the eyes o' yon thievin' Lowland scoundrel, and ye chirp, 'Gude mornin'!"

"It's a *very* good morning," said Johnny. "The marines have landed, and the situation is well in hand. Ah—there's Mr. Campbell now. How do you do, Mr. Campbell?"

The president of the Tartan Paint & Varnish Co. didn't answer his greeting. He pointed a shaking finger at MacDonald; his voice was shrill with pious wrath.

"What kind o' de'iltry is this, MacDonald? I've seen yonder fence, and 'tis no proper fence a-tall! It coorves!"

"Coorves?" repeated MacDonald dazedly. But Johnny interrupted before he could say anything more.

"Curves, Mr. Campbell. Why, yes, I suppose it does. But there's nothing wrong in that, is there? I believe most fences curve to some extent."

"To some extent, aye! Back and forth! But not oop and doon, like this 'un! And there's no end to't! The outside's the inside, and the inside's the outside." Campbell wiped his forehead and glared. "'Tis skullduggery!" he raved. "I've given my men orders to stop work. I'll not paint both sides o' the fence fr' the price o' one!"

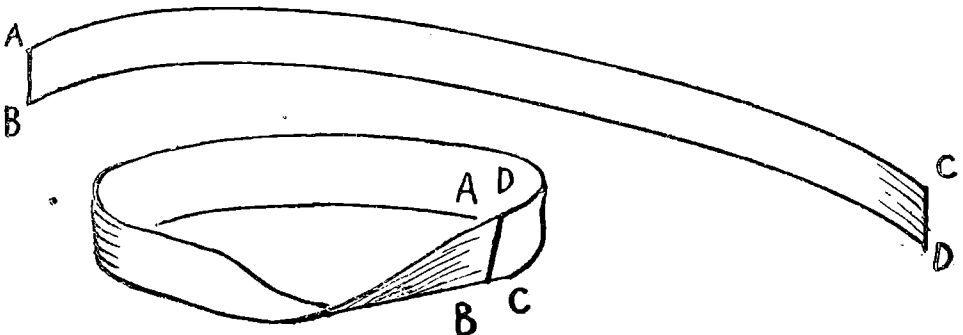
MACDONALD could only gulp and stare at Johnny. With rare acumen, he kept his mouth shut. Johnny grinned lazily, but there was an edge to his words.

"You'd better tell them to get back to work, sir. They're just wast-ing time, and time is money. Be-cause, you see, they haven't finished painting one side of the fence as yet."

"But they ha'!" howled Campbell. "They've painted the entire outside, now they're *inside*, still paintin'—"

"I'm sorry, sir, but you're mis-taken. That fence *has* no inside. They haven't come to an edge yet, have they?"

"—and, presto, there is no inside surface!"



"Edge! There is no edge!"

"Exactly. No edge, no inside. Both sides of the fence are outside. Therefore, by the terms of the contract, you are bound to continue painting until you reach the spot from which you started."

Campbell snorted. "I'll do nothin' o' the sort. I'll take this case to law! I'll—"

"I shouldn't, if I were you," said Johnny pleasantly. He picked a strip of paper from his desk; a long, thin oblong. "Because if you do, we can bring a hundred mathematicians into court to testify that what I've said is true. There is no end to that fence, Mr. Campbell, and it has only one side. It is what is known as a 'Mobius strip.'

"Consider this strip of paper to be the fence. It is so joined that the upper end of one extremity connects to the lower end of the other; thus the fence undergoes a half twist. And that half twist has eliminated one of the sides!

"You don't believe me? Convince yourself by drawing a pencil line straight down the center of the strip, extending it until you return to the point from which you started. Now separate the end of the strip, and you will find that both sides are covered by a straight line, even though in drawing you did not cross any edges.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Campbell"—Johnny tossed the strip of paper to the paint man—"I'm afraid you'll have to continue painting the *outside* of the fence until both sides are painted. I beg your pardon, sir?"

"Nothin'," said MacDonald. "I said nothin'."

Campbell twisted the strip of paper and studied it. He frowned. He re-twisted it and studied it again.

A look of respect crept into his eyes. He nodded. To Johnny he said, "Verra well, young mon. Ye win. I take consolation in knowin' that yonder auld cow dinna ken any more about this bit o' geometrical rascality than I did. Y'r talents are goin' to waste, Mr. Day, in a plant like this. How much is he payin' ye?"

Johnny thought of his weekly salary and started to answer honestly enough. "Twenty-five—" he began.

But MacDonald interrupted hastily.

"—hoondred a year!" he finished. "And I'll thank ye to no' attempt to steal my valeeable employees, Campbell."

"I'll gi'e ye," said Campbell to Johnny, "Three thousand. What d'ye say?"

"We-e-ell," said Johnny.

"But beginnin' today," broke in MacDonald swiftly, "his salary is thirty-fi' hoondred. And"—he cast a sidelong, meaningful glance at Johnny—"and though it doesna concainr ye, Bruce Campbell, I might add that there are certain pairsonal reasons—havin' my approval—by reason o' which Mr. Day would undoohtedly rather remain wi' this company. Am I right—Johnny, lad?"

Johnny stared at him. Things went round and round for a minute. When they settled down, he was conscious that Campbell, disgruntled, was leaving; that old MacDonald was still gazing at him with an air of benevolent, almost parental, fondness; that entering the office was a reason for staying with hair of tarnished sunlight and eyes the color of a Highland loch. And—

And, "Aye!" said Johnny Day.