

DOC' HORNE

DOC' HORNE

A Story of the Streets and Town

BY

GEORGE ADE

AUTHOR OF "ARTIE," "PINK MARSH," ETC.

PICTURES BY

JOHN T. McCUTCHEON



NEW YORK
DUFFIELD & COMPANY

1906

501694

COPYRIGHT, 1899, BY
HERBERT S. STONE & CO.

*This edition published July, 1906, by
Duffield & Company*

THIS STORY IS REWRITTEN IN PART FROM A SERIES
OF ARTICLES THAT FIRST APPEARED IN THE CHICAGO
RECORD, AND THANKS ARE DUE TO MR. VICTOR
F. LAWSON FOR PERMISSION TO USE THIS MATERIAL

PS1006
-A6D6
1906
copy 2

THE TROW PRESS, N. Y.

Doc' Horne

CHAPTER I

THE HIGH WATER IN '57

"If they had built the Mississippi levees as I told them to, long before the war, they wouldn't be washed away every year," said Doc' Horne.

"You've been through that flood country, have you, Doc?" asked the lush.

"As often as you have fingers and toes," replied Doc. "I think it was in 1857 that I went out from Cairo in charge of a relief expedition, and the river was so high that, as far as you could see in any direction, nothing but tree tops and the roofs of houses showed above the water."

"Those floods must be awful," said the dentist.

"My uncle didn't think so," remarked the lush, with a palpable wink at the lightning dentist. "My uncle was down south

for his health, and was living in a small house a short distance from Vicksburg. He occupied an upper room, and his two negro servants slept downstairs. Well, when the flood season came, his neighbors were uneasy, and some of them moved away, but he was never much of a man to worry about trouble until it actually came. He believed the levee was strong enough to hold the current, and he said that even if there was an overflow it wouldn't do any more harm than dampen his front yard. He took his regular sleep every night, and didn't fret. Now what do you think? This will interest you, Doc'."

"Yes?" said Doc', inquiringly.

"Yes, sir, he awoke one morning and saw a tree just outside his window. He didn't know what to make of it. There hadn't been any tree there the night before. He began to think some one had worked a miracle on him, so he got up and looked out of the window, and there was a whole clump of timber in front of him, and the whole country, as far as he could see, was inundated. You see, the levee had broken during the night and flooded the country for miles. The water simply lifted my uncle's

house off its wooden foundation and floated it a half-mile or so, and lodged it against this patch of timber. He slept through it all."

"Were the servants drowned?" asked the dentist.

"No, they ran away. They were so frightened they didn't even stop to arouse my uncle, and he always said he was glad they hadn't aroused him, because he hated to get up in the night. If I remember it right, the two servants were found in a cottonwood tree the next day. It may have been some other kind of a tree, but I think it was a cottonwood."



"It's not unlikely," said Doc', with a look

(with)
THE RACE-TRACK MAN.

of dry disdain at the lush. "That country used to be full of cottonwood trees when I was along there making contracts for steamboat fuel."

"Your uncle must have had a hard time

getting his house back to where it belonged," suggested the race-track man.

"I suppose he waited until there was another flood, and then let it float back," said the dentist.

"Now, here; this is right—what I'm telling you," said the lush, who pretended to resent these interruptions. "He didn't have to move the house at all. The new location over by the patch of timber suited him so well that he bought the land, had a new foundation put under the house, and it so happened that the flood set it down almost exactly on a north and south line, so that it didn't have to be moved more than three inches to make it face exactly east. The flood brought the stable along, too, and dropped it just a short distance from the house, so that uncle didn't have very many things to move over from the old location."

"Would you like to have a true story?" asked Doc' Horne. "When I was out in charge of this same relief expedition, we picked up in mid-river a cradle in which a baby was asleep. We learned afterward that the baby had floated some thirty miles before we found it. I presume that the

water gave a gentle rocking movement to the cradle and kept the child asleep."

There was a pause of a few moments, and then the dentist said: "Well, anyway, I don't like this wet season of the year."

"Yes, but we're better off here than they are out in the country, where the roads are muddy," said the lush.

"That's a fact. Down in Indiana, where I used to live, we had the black prairie mud. At this time of the year it would take four horses to pull a two-wheeled cart with a man and a sack of flour in it."

"I don't doubt it," said Doc.' "Any one who was acquainted with this western country in the early days can tell you some remarkable stories of what we had to contend with in overland travel. Why, right here in Chicago, before they put down the corduroy roads, wagons used to mire in Clark Street, and any one who lived as far out as Evanston or La Grange had to swim half of the way to get to Chicago at this time of the year. On the occasion of my first visit to this town, a man named Simpson and I used to take a great many horseback rides out into the surrounding country. He was trying to sell me some tracts of so-called

farm land, but it was really swamp and raw prairie, and I couldn't see my way clear to buy. Most of it is worth from one hundred to one thousand dollars a front foot now, but that's neither here nor there.

"As I said, we used to take many horse-back rides together. It was in May, and we were having some very warm weather, following a season of continued rains. The roads had been practically impassable for weeks, but they were drying rapidly, especially on top. You have doubtless seen, gentlemen, a muddy road with this dry crust. At intervals along the roads there were deep rucks, or 'mud-holes,' as they were called. When a mud-hole dries rapidly a cracked and flaky crust forms on top, and the large flakes curl up and warp in the sun. Often enough the crust will be as dry as a bone, while underneath are several feet of soft mud. I don't know that you ever heard the term, gentlemen, but in those days a mud-hole with this deceptive dry crust on top was called a 'loblolly.' Often it would require weeks of warm weather to dry out one of those places.

"Well, as I started to tell you, Simpson and I came to one of these low places in the

road. It seemed dry, even dusty, on top, but I had had some experience in prairie country, so I told Simpson to go slow. He had been out from the east but a short time, and thought he knew it all. He started across. Of course, the dry shell broke through as if it were thin ice, and the first thing he knew he and the horse were stuck deep in the softest mire I ever saw. I jumped off my horse and threw him one end of my hitch-rein, and pulled him out. I supposed, of course, that the horse could get out of the mud if relieved of the weight. He couldn't, though. The more he struggled, the deeper he went. I had heard of horses sinking in quicksand, but that was the first and only time I saw a horse sink right down into the mud."

"Did he go clear in under?" asked the race-track man.

"Yes, sir, he sank completely out of sight, and we had to stand there helpless. We couldn't save him. I understand that later in the summer some of the men dug down, out of curiosity, to see how far he had sunk, and they had to dig about five feet before they came to the saddle."

"Doc', that cigar doesn't seem to be burn-

ing very well," said the lush. "Try a fresh one."

Only the dentist knew that this tender of the cigar was an act of surrender on the part of the lush, who had boasted that he could tell a story which would silence Doc' for all evening.



A FRESH CIGAR.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST SYMPTOM OF MATRIMONY

The lightning dentist stood in the doorway of the Alfalfa European Hotel and looked out at the dripping street. The granite blocks of the pavement were newly washed, and they shone in surprised cleanliness where the light fell on them.

A hansom cab rolled by, the horse steaming and the driver crouched inside a great rubber coat. Only one light could be seen in the big, water-soaked building opposite, and that was in a first-floor office where a late employ   was doubled over a ledger.

One or two pedestrians sloshed along, bracing their umbrellas against the cold wind. The lightning dentist turned up his coat collar and shivered with sympathy. A stronger gust of wind blew the raindrops against his face and he retreated.

He saw Doc' Horne, the actor and the lush seated in drooping silence near the steam heater. They had moved their chairs

toward the radiator as if to deceive themselves, but they knew the radiator was the coldest thing in the room. Doc' Horne had been attempting to read an evening paper. Even the paper was moist, for it did not crackle when he folded it and gave it a disgusted fling.

"Bad night," observed the dentist, gloomily, rubbing his hands.

"Miserable, miserable," said Doc' Horne.

"It's cold in this office to-night," said the dentist. "I wish I knew where to go or what to do."

"We might go into the bar and see Steve," said the lush, hopefully.

This suggestion was received in silence.

"Or," continued the lush, "we might go up to my room and send down for something to drink. Come on; it will be more comfortable up there."

The invitation was accepted without any enthusiasm. Before the party went upstairs the lush sent the bell-boy for a bottle of whisky and a large-sized reservoir of seltzer.

Whenever the lush had visitors he always made these preparations for entertaining them, no matter whether they drank

SYMPTOM OF MATRIMONY II

or not. Doc' Horne was a total abstainer. The actor was a cautious drinker, who, when dragged to the bar, usually compromised on sweet Catawba wine or a small glass of beer. Even the lightning dentist, although he told stories of fabulous expenditures for wine while visiting in Cincinnati, seldom took more than one drink an evening.

Nevertheless, the lush put the whisky, the seltzer, the ice and the glasses on the table in his room and confidently invited his friends to "drink hearty." The lightning dentist took his one drink, although he nearly choked in the effort, and the others mildly protested and asked to be excused.



"OUR HOST."

The lush expressed himself as disappointed at their failure to be "good fellows," and drank two magnificent "high balls" in order to rebuke them. Then he sat on the bed and at intervals thereafter he would point at the bottles on the table and look

inquiringly at his guests, who never failed to shake their heads.

The conversation had gone the range of commonplaces, mostly in regard to the weather, and then it turned upon the fact that a European hotel on a wet and chilly night is not the most cheerful place in the world.

"Here we are, gentlemen, four of us," said Doc' Horne. "All of us have reached the age at which men should marry—perhaps all have passed the age at which it is advisable to choose a helpmate."

"That's a fact, Doc'," said the lush, reaching for the seltzer.

"Of course, matrimony is a lottery. Perhaps we are better off than if we had joined the Benedicts, but on a night like this it occurs to me that if I were seated before my own grate-fire in my own library, with my own children around me, I would be happier than I am here." Doc' made a reassuring gesture, and continued: "I don't mean to reflect on the hospitality of our friend here or intimate that I am not satisfied with the present company, but——"

"Certainly, we understand," said the actor.

"If we were to own up, gentlemen, I suppose every man-jack of us came very near being married at some time or other."

The lush softly prepared another "high-ball."

"Doctor, I consider it quite remarkable that you never married," said the actor.

"Maybe he couldn't find a woman good enough for him," suggested the dentist.

"I have met thousands who were too good for any man who ever lived," replied Doc', with considerable warmth. "The problem in matrimony is not to find a good woman. The problem is to find a woman who will be sufficiently patient and charitable to bear with the faults which are common to the sex represented here this evening."

"The ladies," said the lush, arising from the bed and holding out the glass as if to offer a toast.

"Sit down!" commanded the dentist.

"It is largely a question of compatibility," continued Doc'. "Harmless compound No. 1—harmless compound No. 2. You put them together and the result is an explosive. Poison No. 1 added to poison No. 2 gives a harmless neutral. Two beautiful colors—

put them together and you have discord. Matrimony is often a plunge in the dark. The man never knows whether he will land on a bed of roses or in a nest of thorns. That is, he doesn't know unless he has a knowledge of women based on the study of many marriages and the resulting experiences. Now I know just what kind of a wife I ought to have, but it has required many years of study for me to find it out. I know you gentlemen fairly well. I know the kind of wife that each of you ought to——"

"Do you, for a fact, Doc'?" asked the dentist, eagerly.

"What kind 'v wife I ought to have, Doc'?" asked the lush.

"None—just at present," replied Doc', closing his lips tightly.

"Thanks," and he reached for the bottle.

"Doc', you said a while ago that probably every one of us had come very near being married at some time or other," put in the dentist. "Now, as a matter of fact, how near did you ever come to it?"

"I was married once," said Doc', quietly.

"Wha-a-at!"

"I was and I was not. I am a single man in the United States. In Brazil, at this

minute, I would be a married man, provided Rita is still living."

"What's her name—Rita?"

"Yes, I haven't seen her in thirty years. That's rather a long time for a man to remain away from his wife, eh?"

He winked at the dentist and shook with inward laughter. They waited.

"The circumstances were rather peculiar," began Doc', gazing hard at the floor. "It was in, let's see—yes, 1866. I was in New York that spring to transact some business, and while there I became acquainted with a Brazilian named Miguel Bartos, a coffee planter. He had been visiting in New York and I had met him at a club there. He was about to return to Brazil on a sailing vessel that he owned, and he invited me to go as far as Savannah with him. They were to touch at Savannah, I remember, to get the mail and some small supplies. I had a little time at my disposal, so I accepted the invitation. I didn't know until after we sailed that Señor Bartos——"

"I knew him well," said the lush.

"I didn't know that he had a daughter," continued Doc', ignoring the interruption. "She was a perfect specimen of the Spanish

type of beauty—olive complexion, dark hair and the most wonderful eyes I ever saw. Señor Bartos and the daughter, his business partner, named Pramada, and I, were the only passengers on board. The captain was a Spaniard, the first mate an American who had lived in the tropics for years, and the crew was made up entirely of Brazilians. Well, we had lovely weather, and, very naturally, I was thrown into the society of the señorita much of the time. I showed her many attentions, but no more than I thought were due from any American gentleman under the circumstances. I didn't realize until it was too late that she was completely infatuated with me."

"How could she help herself?" asked the lush.

"Now, sir!" said Doc', turning on the lush, "will you allow me to continue?"

"Sure thing," replied the lush, with a faltering salute.

"If I had remembered Spanish customs, particularly as they are localized in Brazil, I wouldn't have allowed myself to become entangled. She was a young girl, and I was considerably her senior and did not realize the significance of what I did. One

evening, in the presence of her father, I kissed her. You must remember that she was quite young. I regarded her as a mere child. Even at that I would not have presumed to take such a liberty had she not suggested it in a bantering spirit. Her father was present, and I saw no harm in it so long as he did not object. You may be able to appreciate my surprise and consternation, gentlemen, when Señor Bartos called me into the cabin next day and informed me in all seriousness that according to Brazilian custom, when an unmarried man kisses a woman of eligible age the act is equivalent to a betrothal and may be regarded as a marriage under the common law. He said that his daughter loved me, and that he was willing to give a handsome dowry, but he would insist that I proceed to Brazil with them and have an additional ceremony performed in the cathedral. When I showed my surprise and told him I had no intention of marrying his daughter he drew a dagger and would have stabbed me if Señor Pramada had not restrained him. I was told that I would be killed if I failed to carry out the marriage contract. Well, there I was. I pretended to consent,

but I was determined to escape when the vessel touched at Savannah. I knew every man on board had been cautioned to watch me and prevent my escape. I had to proceed with secrecy, but I managed to get the first mate on my side. He promised to help me.

“Well, when we anchored off Savannah the captain and Señor Bartos went ashore and got my mail, but I was given to understand that I must not leave the vessel. One of the letters that I received made it necessary that I should be in Pittsburg in a few days, and I was more than ever determined to get away. Late that night the mate and I slipped on deck and dropped one of the boats into the water. Just as we jumped into the boat Señor Bartos came on deck and began to fire at us. We pulled away, and he put a knife into his mouth and jumped overboard to follow us. Of course we could have escaped him, but I was afraid he would drown, so we put back and I hauled him out of the water. He was nearly exhausted, but still full of deviltry, for he made a vicious lunge at me with the knife, but I grabbed his arm and took the weapon away from him and then I gave him a good hard talking to. I said: ‘Señor Bartos, I claim

to be a man of honor, and I would not violate any promise, however lightly made, but you cannot come up into this part of the world and enforce your South American customs. I respect your daughter as a charming and innocent girl, but I do not propose to marry her under compulsion. I am going ashore here. You may go back to the vessel.' Well, the mate went ashore with me. If they had ever got hold of him they would have murdered him for helping me to escape. I never heard anything more of them after that."

"It's a good thing that Brazilian law doesn't hold in this country," said the dentist.

"Our host is dead to the world," observed the actor. They turned and saw that the lush had dropped over on the pillows and fallen asleep.

"Let him rest," said Doc'. "I expect we had better go out. Just turn down the gas. He'll sleep all right as he lies."

So they went out, leaving their host under the peaceful influence.

As Doc' moved along the hallway toward his room the lightning dentist followed him.

"Can I see you alone for a little while?" he asked.

"Certainly, my dear sir," replied Doc', with an acquiescent wave of the hand. "Come right into my room."

Doc' fumbled in the darkness until he found a match, and then he lighted the gas. The dentist slowly settled into a chair and held his hat in front of him.

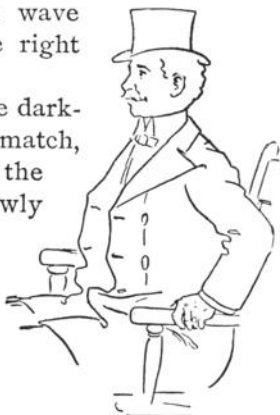
"Doc', this — this mustn't go any farther than you," he said, with some embarrassment.

"I never betrayed a confidence in my life."

"It's something I wouldn't think of mentioning to any one else around the hotel."

"Whatever it may be, it will be safe in my hands."

"I know that. I'll tell you what has induced me to speak. A little while ago you were speaking of matrimony and you compared it to a plunge in the dark. You



THE LIGHTNING
DENTIST.

said that a man never knew where he was going to land."

"I qualified that statement."

"I know you did, but that and some more things you said put me to thinking. This is what I wanted to tell you, and you mustn't whisper a word of it to any one else. I'd like to get married."

Doc' looked at him with grave interest, and rubbed his nose.

"I don't blame you," he said. "You heard my views this evening."

"Yes, but some of the things you said later on kind o' scared me. I'd hate to make any mistake and get tied up to the wrong girl."

"There is no reason why you should make any mistake if you are properly advised. You are a good-looking man, still young, well-dressed, established in a profession, fair prospects, I dare say, and——"

"I've got more money put away than anybody in this hotel knows anything about," said the dentist, his voice trembling with gratification at Doc's studied eulogy. "I sold the lots the other day that I've been holding. I cleared up a thousand. Next year I expect to have an interest in the

Neapolitan Dental Parlors, where I'm working now. It's a sure money-maker. Doc', we've got ten men at work now, and I have enough extracting alone to keep me busy most of the time. We're doubling our advertising contracts, and I feel so sure of staying there and making a good thing out of it that I want to settle down and have a nice little home of my own. A man can't stand this hotel life forever."

"True, true. I don't want to be inquisitive, but is there any one in particular that——"

"No, because I've simply lived between office and hotel. But I'm going to look around. I'm going to find a nice girl—and I tell you what I want you to do for me, Doc'. Before I make any definite move or commit myself—understand?—I want you to meet the girl and give me your candid opinion. I don't want to make any mistake. I heard you say that you could pick out the right kind of a wife for any one of your friends, and I want you to promise that you'll—well, not exactly pick out one for me, but help me to select one. I don't know whether you just understand or not."

"I think I do. I am at your service at any time."

So this compact was made: that after the dentist had "looked around" and selected a young woman, Doc' should inspect her and give an expert opinion based on his vast experience with the sex.

CHAPTER III

THE ALFALFA EUROPEAN HOTEL

Chicago is a city made up of country people. It is a metropolis having a few saving virtues of a village. It is spread over so many square miles of prairie and has so many farms alternating with scanty suburbs that no one has been able to draw the line between urban and suburban, or the line between suburban and rural. When one is in State Street he finds proof that Chicago is urban, suburban and rural.

In 1880 the population was 500,000 and a few over. In 1900 it is to be 2,000,000, census or no census. Ask any real estate man. Was not a club organized in 1896 to concede the 2,000,000 mark?

Whence came the 1,500,000 increase? From Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Poland, Russia, China, Austria, Greece, and any other country you choose to name. Also from all those towns set in close columns in the United States Postal Guide.

Not long ago, before the Spanish-American war was fought and while women still wore puff sleeves, there stood in a street toward the smoky center of town a hotel, not of the first class. The building was thin, and might have appeared tall but for the fact that it was overtopped by two mountainous structures, shutting out the eastern sky. The street front was mostly buffet, but there was a hallway leading back to a dim apartment, called the office, and here there were chairs and a counter, and behind the counter a box of pigeon-holes for keys and letters. From the office a stairway and an elevator shaft led to the upper region of narrow hallways and cramped bedchambers.

It was the Alfalfa European Hotel. Alfalfa, because the name had a pleasing sound; European, because no meals were served in the house.

Of the men who lived at the Alfalfa Hotel, either as transient guests or on arrangement for a weekly rate, the one worth knowing was Calvin Horne, called Doc' Horne by his familiars. His age cannot be given. He never told it. He was bald on the top of his head. His face had the fullness of youth, but it was wrinkled. The chin beard

was white. When it is said, further, that he wore clothes such as might be worn by any old gentleman who had ceased to be fastidious on the point of personal adornment, the reader knows as much as any one would know in taking a first glance at Doc' Horne as he sat in the office of the Alfalfa European Hotel with his satellites grouped about him. His daily employment at the time of the beginning of this story called him to the Federal offices, where he checked pension lists or classified vouchers or performed some other kind of labor quite unsuited to him. Doc' overshadowed his occupation, and it is doubtful if there will be another reference to it anywhere in this book.

In the succeeding pages, when it is related that Doc' and his companions moved in and about the hotel, it is not to be concluded that they had the hotel to themselves. Many strangers came to the desk and claimed their keys and rode upward in the tremulous elevator. Men whose names do not appear and whose comments will be suppressed stood at a respectful distance and heard what Doc' had to say of love and life. Mr. Ike Francis, proprietor, is somewhere in

the office, smoking a pipe, and other persons are in the background, reading newspapers. These are mere details of the setting and will not be pointed out again.



THE ALFALFA QUINTETTE.

To recur to the original proposition, that Chicago is a city made up of country people: one evening Doc' sat in the office and told a chapter to an actor from a farm in Ohio, a drinking man from a village in New York, a lightning dentist from an interior county of Indiana, and a race-track man from the blue-grass part of Kentucky.

They were talking of women, and the topic lasted well at the Alfalfa Hotel, as elsewhere. The actor had said that once upon a time he went up a ladder and into a burning house to save a young woman. That reminded Doc' Horne of Crosbyville.

"Let's see—I spent two or three years in Crosbyville, off and on," he began, "and

this must have happened in the fall of '51 or the spring of '52. I remember that I left Crosbyville just about the time of the presidential campaign, and that was—well, it must have been about June, '52. No matter; the date doesn't make any difference.

"In order that you may understand this story better, I'll have to go back a little. The first time I ever visited in Crosbyville I was invited out to a shooting-match. We didn't shoot at glass balls or live pigeons in those days. We usually put a white square of paper up against a tree and blazed away at it with rifles, and, although our firearms were of defective bore, I can assure you that some of the best shooting I ever saw was at these old-time matches out in the woods. However, that has nothing to do with the story.

"One of my friends invited me to go to the shooting-match, and after I got out there I was asked to enter the contest. Well, I went in and I happened to get a rifle that sighted just right for me, and I won. A man who had been introduced to me as Capt. Jaynes made the next highest score. It seemed to me that the other contestants took

their defeat good-naturedly, but on the way home my friend told me to look out for this Capt. Jaynes. He was a hot-headed Kentuckian, and it seems that this was the first time he had been defeated in years, and it worried him a good deal. My friend told me that he had taken a dislike to me and would probably try to pick a quarrel at the first opportunity.

"Well, that same afternoon I invited all the men who had been at the shooting-match to come over to the tavern. It was customary for the winner of the match to stand treat to the others. Capt. Jaynes came in rather late, while we were all sitting round and talking. I arose and asked him to join the party. He bowed very coldly and said that he was not in the habit of drinking with strangers. Now, I was rather touchy in my younger days. I said: 'Very well, captain; I withdraw the invitation. I made the mistake of supposing that you would feel at home in a company of gentlemen.' I knew what to expect when I said that. He started to draw a knife, but before he could lift it I had hold of him. They pulled us apart and tried to quiet him, but he went away raving mad. They all said he would

kill me the first time we met, but he must have cooled down when he had time to think it over. I saw him often after that—passed him on the street. He never made a move, but I knew that he hated me and would be glad of a chance to do me an injury.

“The captain’s house was right on the bank of the Green River, and stood near his mill. It was an old-fashioned two-story house, very broad and well built, and thickly surrounded by trees. It was considered the best house in Crosbyville. The captain was the wealthiest and one of the most prominent citizens of the town. He was a widower and had two children—a son of fourteen or so, and a daughter named Elizabeth. She was a very beautiful girl—very charming. I had met her several times, but, of course, I had never become well acquainted with her on account of my standing feud with her father.

“Well, to make a long story short, the whole town was aroused by an alarm of fire one night, and when we turned out the Jaynes’ mill was one mass of flames. It was an old-style structure, with a framework of heavy logs, and it made a fearful blaze. The wind was blowing the flames toward the

house. Every one saw that it was no use to try and save the mill, so we turned in to defend the house—got up on the roof and passed buckets and put out wet blankets to catch the sparks, but all in vain, gentlemen, all in vain. The men were driven off the roof, and the water dried as fast as it was thrown on. All at once one whole side of the house seemed to spring into a flame. There was a general shout, and everybody retreated to a safe distance. The members of the family and the neighbors had been removing the household goods. Just as the house caught fire, and all the men were getting out of it as fast as they could, I heard Elizabeth Jaynes cry out: 'The canary!' Then she ran back into the house, with every one calling to her to stop. I didn't hesitate a moment, I assure you. She went through that terrific heat and dense smoke right up the stairway, and I followed. I caught her by the arm at the top of the stairs and told her to come back. She was hysterical and excited—said she wouldn't leave until she got the bird. In spite of all I could do she pulled away from me and ran to the front room—her bedroom, I believe—and felt her way to where the bird-cage was

hanging. Gentlemen, it was never any hotter in any bake-oven than it was in that room. As soon as she got the bird-cage I dragged her back through the hall. The smoke was not so thick now because the fire had got a free draught through the house and was making a fearful roar and spreading rapidly. When we reached the stairway the whole lower end of it was ablaze. I dragged the girl away to the front window, but by that time the whole veranda was on fire. The crowd outside saw us, and shouted something—I couldn't tell what. I saw there was no escape over that burning veranda. When the people shouted, the girl fainted dead away. I threw her across my shoulder and started for the rear of the house, because I knew that was my only salvation. The whole stairway was ablaze by that time, and flames were creeping up through the floor. I closed my lips tightly and in about four leaps I reached a back window. Outside there was a big tree, almost brushing the window. I kicked out the window sash and simply jumped into the tree. It was the only thing to be done. Luckily, I got my arm over a limb, which sagged with us and dropped us to the

ground. I scrambled to my feet and ran, with the girl still hanging absolutely limp and helpless over my shoulder. I went straight for the river with the intention of jumping in. The heat was something awful. It had driven away the men who had been filling their buckets at the river.



TELLING ABOUT IT.

"Just as I staggered down the river bank I saw a skiff. Some one had probably rowed across the river to the fire, for the boat was not fastened. I dropped the girl into the boat and gave it a strong push out into the current, and in a few seconds we were floating down stream and were safe."

'She had the canary, I suppose?' said the lightning dentist.

"Oh, yes. She was in a dead faint, but she hadn't let go of the cage. As soon as I recovered my breath and wet my clothes in two or three places where they were on fire,

I splashed water in the girl's face and she recovered consciousness, but was still hysterical and did not seem to realize fully what had happened.

"We could look up the river and see the burning house. It made a huge blaze and threw a bright glare across the river. I remember the peculiar effect of this glare on the windows of the houses across the river. It caused them to glow as if the houses were filled with live flames. The girl was so frightened that she thought all the houses were afire.

"When I got ready to row back I discovered that I hadn't any oars. The current was swift and we were drifting rapidly, so I pulled out a seat-board and used it as a rudder, and in a few minutes I made a landing near a house occupied by a Mr. Wesley. Miss Jaynes was so weak and nervous that she could hardly walk, but I assisted her to this house and aroused the family.

"The woman of the house was very kind. She cared for the young lady for about two hours and had one of the boys drive us back to Crosbyville. Now, in the general excitement we had forgotten that the people in Crosbyville had every reason to believe that

we had perished in the flames. You couldn't blame them for thinking so. The window from which I had leaped was well hidden by trees, and there was no one at the river bank when we leaped into the boat. We learned afterward that the men had pulled down the burning veranda and had planted a ladder at the front window where we had been seen, but the blaze was so fierce that they had been driven back.

"As I say, every one supposed that we were lost; so you can imagine what happened when we drove up in front of the ruins about seven o'clock in the morning. They were already searching for our bodies. Yes, sir; they thought we were ghosts. As soon as I explained to them how we got away you never heard such cheering in your life. They lifted Miss Jaynes out of the wagon and took her over to a neighboring house, to which the captain had been taken. The man was almost wild with grief. Those who went over to the house say it was one of the most affecting meetings that could be imagined. First he wept like a baby and then he jumped up and laughed like a boy and said he didn't care for the loss of his buildings so long as his daughter was safe.

I suppose his daughter must have given him a very favorable account of my efforts in her behalf, for presently he came out of the house and walked up to where I was standing and said: 'Mr. Horne, you have done me the greatest service that one man can do another. All that I have is at your command now and forever. I once did you an injustice. You have repaid me. Will you take the hand of a man who honestly admits himself beaten and humiliated?' I said to him: 'Captain, you are a brave and gallant man, but you were mistaken for once. Let us say no more about the misunderstandings of the past.' We shook hands, and from that day forward we were friends. He was a man of passions and prejudices, but if he came to know you and like you he was the truest friend a man ever had."

"There's only one thing needed to make that a good story," suggested the dentist. "You ought to say that you married the captain's daughter."

"I am not going to sacrifice truth in order to make a fancy romance," replied Doc'.

CHAPTER IV

THE GALLANTRY OF THE HORNES

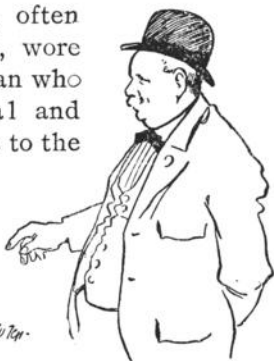
Taking your first glance at the Alfalfa colony you would not have supposed that these men, taken collectively or individually, could have lured a resisting woman from the other side of the street. The men were not youthful, and only one of them strove to be a thing of beauty.

The lightning dentist sought color effects. When he came to the street doorway in light checked trousers, saffron-colored vest and blue coat, his knotted four-in-hand cravat darting into the crack of his shirt-bosom at a point some two inches below the collar, and his hands clammy from perfumed toilet soap, he seemed to feel that he was doing more than his share to make this world a pleasant place of abode.

The actor had a sort of reminiscent splendor which commanded respect, if not admiration. His attire and his bearing suggested the pathos of a summer pavilion with snow on the roof. His garments fitted him, but

here and there a pin had to serve for a button, and sometimes the cuffs were frayed and cracked. The actor seemed to have the hopeful impression that he could atone for other shortcomings in his appearance by putting an extra polish on his shoes and allowing part of a slightly soiled handkerchief to protrude from his upper coat pocket.

The drinking man, often mentioned as the lush, wore the plain garb of a man who selects the material and gives no directions as to the cut. The race-track man favored the styles of his boyhood days. His shoes were rather box-toed, and his cravat was a black string pulled into a bow.



THE PROPRIETOR.

Were these men, lolling in the shiny arm-chairs, born to smile at women and lead them captive? Doubt it if you will, but it is a fact that each of them (Doc', the lush, the dentist, the actor and the race-

track man) had been a principal in a love affair. Each had confessed.

Women of quality, every one of them. No names were given, but "she" invariably "belonged to one of the best families in town," and she came out of the story blameless, for her protector sat near. Doc' Horne permitted no man to speak in disparagement of the absent sex.

His nodding plume you could not see. The weak gaslight struck no glitter from his breastplate. The extended hand grasped no lance, of the kind that might get in the way and trip up the race-track man or the actor. Yet the plume and the cuirass and the lance were there. Chivalry lived again.

Time and again Doc' routed the dull cynicism which usually flourishes in a hotel lobby. One evening the actor, believing that he had discerned a great truth, observed that an outsider ought never to interfere in a quarrel between husband and wife.

"That's right," said the dentist. "You know the old story of the fellow who tried to stop a man from beating his wife. When he tried to part them, both turned in and gave him a terrible licking."

"Gentlemen, I'm sorry that I cannot fully agree with you," said Doc' Horne, after a satisfying pull at his cigar. "I admit that it is seldom advisable to take any part in family quarrels, but when a woman is in danger of bodily harm it is the duty of any gentleman to protect her, even at the risk of his life. It may be that I regard these things differently, but I was educated in the old school, and my father always impressed upon me the fact that gallantry was an instinct among the Hornes. The other day I offered my seat to a young lady. She seemed rather surprised, and said, 'Really, sir, I don't like to take the seat; you are an old man!' I said to her, 'My dear madam, I am always young in the presence of the fair sex.' "

"You want to be careful, Doc'," suggested the dentist.

"And then you got off at the next corner?" asked the lush.

"No, sir, I did not. I want to tell you younger men another thing. There is too much false gallantry these days. Any one of you would jump up to give your seat to a stylish and beautiful young lady, but you'd let a poor, tired washerwoman ride from

here to Englewood hanging on to one of those straps. My father always taught me to respect the sex without regard to social conditions. Why, the worst fight I ever had in my life was on account of a lumberman's wife. It was a year or so before the war, when some of the first big lumber camps were being established in northern Michigan. I went up to a little town called Pagowic to look over the country and visit a friend of mine, Col. Clayton Walters, who had charge of a big timber district for some New York capitalists. He had built a pleasant cabin on the main street of the village, or the camp, rather, and I put up with him. Right across the street from our place was a little cabin occupied by a French-Canadian lumberman known as 'Big Antone.' He was considerably over six feet tall, raw-boned and 'rangy,' as they say, and I learned the first day I landed there that he was the bully of the camp. He could cut down more timber than any other man on the job, and there were all kinds of stories as to his great strength. He had a wife, a young and rather pretty woman, and as he was full of bad whisky most of the time he led her a dog's life. I used to hear him

abusing her and scolding her, and it made me indignant. I said to Col. Walters one day: 'Colonel, why don't you compel Antone to stop abusing his wife?' He said to me: 'Horne, there isn't a man in the camp dares to cross that fellow. He's too dangerous.' 'Well,' I says, 'if he goes too far, *I'll* cross him.'

"As luck would have it, the very next morning I heard a scream across the way, and when I went to the door I saw Antone's wife run out of the house. He followed her and struck her across the head with the flat of his hand. Well, sir, all the Horne blood that was in me boiled at the sight. I jumped up and said: 'That settles it!' The colonel knew what I meant, and he knew he couldn't stop me, but he followed after and told me to take a pistol. I told him I didn't need any. As I walked across the street I pulled out my handkerchief and wrapped it as tightly as I could around my right hand, so as to protect the knuckles. I knew that big Antone was probably the best rough-and-tumble fighter in Michigan, but I was confident that I had a few tricks that he had never heard of.

"I went right up to the door and called to him. He came out and his wife fol-

lowed. I said: 'Antone, you must stop striking this woman. If you don't, I'll give you the best licking you ever had in your life.' Well, sir, for a minute he was so surprised that he couldn't speak, and then he began to curse me in all the choice French-Canadian phrases at his command. Then he up and slapped me. It was only a slap, but it nearly took my head off. He led at me again, but I dodged and backed away. I knew I didn't dare to clinch with him. He seemed to think I was afraid of him and began to laugh. He dropped his hands and I walked toward him as if to speak to him again. When I got within reach I swung with all my might and caught him right on the point of the jaw. I knew about the knock-out blow long before it was commonly used by pugilists, and I had figured that my chance to whip him was to get him off his guard and then catch him on the jaw.

"He staggered backward, and before he could recover himself I hit him again, and he tumbled back and lay as quiet as a mouse. His wife screamed and ran over to pick him up, and about the same time the colonel arrived with a pistol in his hand. He expected to find me pounded to a pulp.

"In a few moments 'Big Antone' sat up and looked around him, just like a man awakening from a sleep. I went up to him



AN EVENING SESSION.

and said: 'You remember what I told you. Don't strike this woman again.' Then I went away with the colonel. 'Big Antone'

was so humiliated at being whipped by a man of my size that he left camp that same day and went up the river to work. But the colonel told me afterward that it was the best thing that ever happened to him. He didn't go around looking for fights after that, and he was never known to strike his wife again. Of course that was an exceptional case, and if I hadn't known the trick of the knock-out blow it might have been serious for me. But, serious or not, I believe I would have interfered after I saw him strike the woman. It isn't in the nature of a Horne to sit by and see such things done."

CHAPTER V

THE DENTIST SEES ONE

The lightning dentist had extracted twenty-three teeth that morning. Number twenty-four had not appeared. He leaned against the chair and thought of the woman he was to marry. It seemed that he could see her. She was neither blonde nor brunette, not tall nor short, vague and without specifications, but she was very beautiful.

The dentist glanced at the clock on the mantel. The time was 12:22. "I will hurry out and get some lunch," he said.

With that he pulled off his white jacket and hung it on a hook in the closet, jumped into his street coat and bolted through the doorway, shouting:

"Down! Hey, there! Going down!"

The swift elevator-car came to a bumping pause in its downward flight. He dived through the open door and sprawled on other men whose faces seemed pale in the dim light of the shaft. A pull at the lever,

a confusing glimpse of parallel floors and rows of glazed windows, all flying upward, and the car was on the ground floor.

The dentist did not see the squirming multitude in the street nor hear the clangor of the car bells. He was trying to decide whether or not a piano would be a necessity at the beginning.

As he entered the place wherein food is for sale on quick delivery, he did not observe that he was riding in a jam of people and propelling himself by means of his elbows.

The place was crowded. It was a brilliantly lighted tunnel.

Long counters extended from front to rear. On one side of each counter was a row of stools, with a man on every stool. The men were so close one to another that their arms threatened to interlock as they beckoned and gesticulated or swung themselves in desperate feeding. Behind these men stood other men, restless, watchful, waiting their chance to pounce upon stools as soon as any wild men at the counter wrenched themselves out of the struggling line.

A babel of voices was constantly mingled with the shuffling of feet, the crash of

colliding dishes, and the loud jingle of cutlery.

If a Niagara of cups and saucers and knives and forks had been falling into a stone quarry the noise would have been the same.

Behind each long counter were waiters in white. They hopped and cavorted, lunged back and forth, uttered strange cries into the air, and propelled dishes and feeding implements along the smooth counter after the manner of shuffleboard players.

The dentist pushed down the line.

He saw a man wearily lift himself away from a crescent of pie-crust.

Aha! He had captured the stool away from two other men. They moved on, looking at the food in front of each feeder, to see if he would soon arise.

"Where's my tea?" demanded the man at the immediate right of the dentist.

"Cream toast!" shrieked the colored man, who was in an ecstasy of employment.

"Tea! tea!"

"Yes, seh."

"Ham sandwich and——" began the dentist.

"Take away yo' sliced tomatoes!" shouted some one in his ear.

"Sliced tomatoes," echoed a voice farther away.

"Cup o' tea!" bawled the man at the right.

"Huckleberry pie!" exclaimed some one at the left.

"Ham sandwich and——"

Crash! A knife and fork fell in front of the dentist.

A glass of water floating a large piece of ice reeled sloppily on the spattered counter and stopped in front of him.

"Ham sandwich and——"

"How 'bout co'n cakes?" bellowed the colored man, standing on tiptoe and threatening some one with a fork.

"Take 'em away!"

"Hurry up that tea!"

"'Nuther piece o' butter!"

"What kind o' pie?"



HE ADMIRER ALL BLONDES.

"Where's my check?"

"Ham sandwich and——"

Crash — boom — bang—thump—explosion
—stampede—panic!

"Ham sandwich!" screeched the waiter, bobbing up from nowhere and dropping a plate near the dentist.

" 'N' a cup o' coffee."

"How about that tea?"

"Is that pie comin'?"

"Yes, seh." One answer for all three.

The waiter dove under the counter. He ran and counter-ran.

He juggled spoons and saucers. He chuckled with delight when another waiter, sprinting along the narrow passageway, bumped into him.

He had two cups in the left hand and one cup in the right hand as he danced around a cluster of nickel-plated boilers and pulled at sundry faucets.

The delirium grew on him. He passed out pasteboard checks with one hand and cut a pie with the other.

The dentist shared in the exultation. He clutched the ham sandwich and tore away the greater part of it at the first bite.

His neighbor ordered a second piece of

huckleberry pie. The other neighbor gulped the tea and, in a choking voice, called for his check.

As the tea neighbor slid away another man bolted in and collided with the dentist, who came very near spilling his coffee.

"Pork 'n' beans, glassmilk," said the new-comer, rapping on the counter.

The dentist shuddered slightly and then returned to his coffee.

"In a hurry, too," said the new-comer.

"What kind of sweet cakes——"

"Is that blackberry pie under there?"

"Where's the mustard?"

"I want another——"

"Hurry up with that——"

"It's a kind of a cream cake with jelly on——"

"Take away your wheats!" (*Loudly.*)

"I've got you!" (*More loudly.*)

"Glass o' water."

"Rolls and milk."

"Can you give me——"

Biff—bang—platters—spoons—glasses—sugar-bowls—salt-cellars!

The dentist heard nothing. He was furnishing the front room.

He joined the long, jostling line that

moved in irregular order past the cashier's desk. As he handed out the buttery bit of pasteboard and laid a silver dollar on top of it, he became aware that there was a new cashier behind the marble. She made change hesitatingly—but such a vision! The uplift of golden hair, the chaste pallor of her complexion, the whiteness of her teeth, the clinging fit of the cloth gown—all these he saw without enumerating them.

She was a blonde. He admired all blondes.

It occurred to him that she would do. All that afternoon he extracted teeth, but his heart was not in the work.

CHAPTER VI

A PEST APPEARS AT THE ALFALFA

The dentist burned to tell Doc' of his discovery. As for the campaign of conquest, it unfolded itself as an easy pathway before him. He would be introduced by the manager of the lunch-room; he would talk to her three times before asking permission to call; he would call twice before suggesting the theater; his watchword must be "Gentility."

Doc' was not at the usual restaurant, but the dentist found him later on. He and the race-track man were in the office of the hotel. The race-track man was finding fault with the manner in which Mr. Ike Francis managed the Alfalfa. The dentist sat with them and waited for an opportunity to take Doc' away.

"I never had anything to do with a hotel in my life," said the race-track man, "but I could take hold of this place and improve it; I can promise you that."

"No doubt you could," said Doc'. "At the same time I am inclined to take a charitable view of the situation here. Mr. Francis has a great deal to contend with. I can sympathize with him because I kept a hotel for two weeks once—not from choice, but from necessity. That was enough for me, gentlemen. I am afraid that I am too independent and proud-spirited to succeed as a host. If I don't like a man I can't attempt to be friendly with him even to further my financial interests."

"Where did you keep a hotel, Doc'?" asked the dentist.

"Didn't I ever tell you about it? It was when I was in Leadville during the first boom. Three of us had pooled our interests and were buying mines. A man named Jackson had a mine that we were anxious to get. We made him an offer, and he said he'd sell if we'd buy his hotel too. He wanted to raise all the money he could to start a concert hall. We didn't want the hotel, but we knew we could sell it again, because it was making money, so we closed the deal. At the request of my partners I took charge of the hotel and ran it until we could find a customer. I had no difficulty in

handling the work, but I didn't like it. I didn't like to be annoyed by petty details. If I am going to manage anything I want to have subordinates who will take the details off my hands. However, I reorganized the working force and in two weeks' time I made that the best hotel in Leadville. We had mostly miners and prospectors at the hotel, and although they were good fellows and didn't mean any harm, they were too boisterous at times. They used to fire their revolvers just to frighten the women who worked in the dining-room. Why, one night there must have been twenty shooting at the same time. I requested them to stop it, but they didn't seem to pay any attention, so one evening, just as they all tramped in to supper, I followed them in and sat at the head of the long table, next to the door. I pulled my forty-two out of the belt and laid it on the table. Then I said: 'Boys, I don't believe we'd better have any more shooting in the dining-room. It annoys the women and makes too much smoke. Let's do our shooting on the outside.' That's all I said, but I guess they knew what it meant. There wasn't any more shooting in the dining-room."

"So you made good with the gun-play, did you?"

The three were startled and turned to look at the speaker. They saw a freckled young man with large ears, nose somewhat awry, hat set carelessly on a crop of rusty hair. His garments were a tight fit, and bore a uniform pattern of up-and-down stripes. This freckled person laid his hand on Doc's shoulder (which no member of the chosen colony had ever dared to do), and said: "I'll bet you've been a purty good scrapper in your time."

Doc' looked up at him, literally speaking, and down at him, figuratively speaking, and in that godlike frown of rebuke the freckled boy discerned a friendly invitation to go ahead and say something more.

"I've been mixed up once or twice myself," he said.

Without further introduction the freckled boy reached for a chair, seated himself and began a tale of dolor.

"Do you know Danny Oswald—St. Louis boy?"

The three shook their heads solemnly.

"Well, he's all right. Say, you meet that boy and anything he's got is your'n, under-

stand? Many's the time I've went to him—
'Well, Danny, how about it, are you strong
to-day?' 'How much?'—
that's all, understand?—
'How much?' Good up to
the limit. He knowed, too,



THE BOY.

that any time I had
anything in my cloze he
could come and get it.
That's me, you know.
If a friend's right, he
can have anything.
That's me."

He tapped Doc'
Horne on the knee and
squinted at him.

"That's proper,"
said Doc', because he
couldn't think of anything else to say.

"Well, I was out with Dan one night, an'
that was right in this town, too—State
Street. We went into a place and we'd had
two glasses of beer—mebbe it was three. I
know I bought and then Danny come back
at me, and it seems to me I had 'em piled
up again—mebbe not."

The dentist fidgeted in his chair and
looked at the clock.

"Anyway, after we'd had 'em, I noticed a guy standin' at the bar kind o'—well, s'pose the bar run from me over to the steam heater, I'd be standin' where that chair is and this fellow where you're settin' there" (*indicating the dentist*). "Let's see—yes, that was about the way of it. He was a husky guy, too—broad shoulders, big mits, understand?—big fellow."

Doc' Horne blinked at the freckled boy and rubbed his nose with violence.

"Well, this fellow was standin' here and me over there, when I hear him say: 'I wonder where his cheap nobs got the hat'—meanin' me. I had on a new white Fedora hat, cost me three-fifty—elegant hat. When I hear him say this, without turnin' around, mind you, I says loud enough for him to hear: 'Don't let the hat worry you, just keep your face closed.' I was lookin' in the mirror behind the bar, understand?—an' I see him start along the bar toward me—understand, don't you? I see it in the mirror."

"Certainly we understand," said Doc'.

"He come at me," continued the freckled boy, rising, "just as if I'd come right up here at you" (*indicating Doc*). "He's comin', see? and I'm lookin' at him in the

mirror. I didn't turn around at all till he was in reach, and then I turned—like that—and if I didn't hand him a jolt that he'll remember! Mamma!"

"Hit him, eh?" asked Doc', affecting a mild interest.

"Hit him? Say—here! Le' me show you now. He was comin' along the bar, see? and was just behind me when I swung around. It wasn't a punch exactly; it was more of a hook—I kind o' pivoted on him. You know what that is, the Marine blow, the one that put Dempsey out. I caught him right, too."

He doubled his fist and placed it against Doc's chin in order to illustrate the manner in which he did it.

"I got him right there," he continued, pushing with his fist as he spoke.

"If I'd caught him farther back," said the freckled boy, running his fingers along Doc's jawbone, "I might 'a broke my knuckles and not brought him down neither. I got him right, though. He didn't know whether he was in Chicago or East Skowhegan."

With that he went to his chair, flushed and happy.

"Gentlemen, I must bid you good-night," said Doc', as he arose. "I dislike to tear myself away from these jovial reminiscences, but I have some writing to do in my room."

He looked at the freckled boy and gave a barely perceptible shake of the head and then walked over to get his key. The lightning dentist followed and spoke to him. "Doc', I saw a fine girl to-day."

"So soon?"

"Well, never put off till to-morrow what should have been done ten years ago."

"You simply saw her or you met her, which?"

"Well, I saw her and I can meet her if I want to."

"Attractive?"

"My God!"

"H'm."

The dentist told of her occupation and suggested that no language could aptly describe her personal charms.

"Where is the place?" asked Doc'.

"The Hyperion Quick Lunch, just two doors from our building."

"Well, don't be in too much haste."

Next day Doc' called at the Hyperion

Quick Lunch, and when evening came he had a piece of news for the dentist.

"Abandon all hope," he whispered to him as they sat with the other members of the colony who were assisting the police to unravel the latest "mystery."

"What do you mean?" asked the dentist, quick to take alarm.

"She is the wife of the manager."

VII

DOC' DECIDES TO LEAVE THE HOTEL

It becomes necessary to report three calamities affecting members of the Alfalfa colony.

First was the discovery that the chosen wife of the dentist was already married to the manager of the Hyperion Quick Lunch. Second was the freckled boy, who persisted in joining the group on no provocation, and talking of his prowess and his ability to fascinate women. The third was a clash between Doc' and the lush—a vulgar exhibition of what Doc' afterward called the “ruder passions belonging to a primitive state of society.”

It may be said to the credit of the lightning dentist that he showed no inclination to quarrel with Fate when he learned that the beautiful cashier at the Hyperion was already married.

“Fortunately the thing hadn't gone very far,” he remarked to Doc'.

"And the woman, although pleasing to the eye, was of a cold and unsympathetic nature," said Doc'. "I knew that the moment I looked at her. You are not discouraged by this preliminary experience?"

"Not at all."

To prove which he soon found one who seemed desirable and who was not married, as will be related hereafter.



THE DAILY ROUTINE.

The freckled boy threatened to be a permanent affliction, and yet this boy, like every other organic being, had certain uses which were discovered in due time.

The distressing encounter between Doc' and the lush might be passed over in silence were it not for the fact that it helped to make the subsequent reconciliation more warming to all concerned.

The trouble came in the following manner:

One evening the lush had been emphasizing the daily routine, and so his stare was glassy as he dropped into a chair and smiled at his companions. There had been some talk about dancing, and Doc' had ventured to say that although he had not danced a great deal in recent years, he had no doubt that he could go out on the floor and waltz until two o'clock in the morning.

"By y'rself, Doc'?" asked the lush.

"I am not in the habit of waltzing by myself," said Doc', somewhat stiffly. "When I used to go about a great deal in Philadelphia society I was counted one of the best waltzers in the city."

"Phil'delphi'! Doc', y're ringin' in a new one on us. When's you in Phil'delphi'?"

"I was in Philadelphia the latter part of the '60's," said Doc', moving uneasily in his chair. "I don't know that it concerns you, but some of the best people in Philadelphia are my friends."

"D' they know it?" asked the lush.

Doc' made no reply for several moments, but it could be seen by the nervous manner in which he handled his cigar that he had been deeply offended. Finally he turned to the lush and said: "Sir, I

can overlook the insinuation contained in your remark. You have been drinking."

"I nev' drink," replied the lush. "What I want to know is, do these Phil'delphi' people know they're friends yours?"

"I am not in the habit of answering such foolish questions."

"Where is Phil'delphi', Doc'?"

Doc' drew at his cigar until the live end was glowing red.

"On th' dead, Doc', did y' ever see Phil'delphi'?" and the lush chuckled.

Doc' was striving to preserve a dignified silence. The race-track man and the dentist kept back the lurking smiles.

"Wha' railroad is it on?" asked the lush.

"Sir-r-r!" said Doc', suddenly turning, "do you realize that these remarks are insulting? I can make certain allowances for a man in your condition, but I object, sir, to having you or any one else call into question any statements I may make to these gentlemen here."

"Get ep," said the lush, from whose flushed face the amiable smile had never departed.

"And I want it understood," added Doc'.

The drinks had been badly mixed, and the lush was reckless.

"Don't mean me, do you, Doc'?" he asked.

"Yes, I mean you."

"What'd I do?"

"You appeared to doubt certain statements that I made to these gentlemen here."

"When's that?"

"Just a few moments ago."

"About Phil'delphi'?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tha's all right. I s'pose y've been there."

"Suppose? Didn't you hear me say that I had been there?"

"Y' got friends there, too?"

"Yes, sir, I have got friends there."

"Well, I jus' wondered if they know 'bout it."

"Exactly so, and I don't want you to say anything of the kind again."

"Y'aint mad, are you, Doc'?"

"Never you mind whether I'm mad or not. I've told you several times that I am of a sensitive nature, and when any man deliberately attempts to belittle my statements he will hear from me. Yes, sir," and he glared at the race-track man and the dentist.

"Y' wouldn't lick me, would you, Doc'?" asked the lush, with a labored wink at the dentist.

"I make no threats," replied Doc', rummaging in his pockets for a match with which to relight his cigar.

The lush looked at Doc' unsteadily and his lips moved in an effort to reopen the discussion. He turned to the race-track man and the dentist for encouragement, but they were grave and noncommittal.

The lush brightened up all at once. "Oh, Doc'," said he, "wha' state's Phil'delphi' in?"

"Silence!" And the voice of the infuriated man rose to a shriek.

The lush leaned back in his chair and began to cackle at his joke.

In another instant Doc' had arisen and made a right-hand pass at the lush, missing him only about two feet.

The race-track man jumped in front of Doc' and tried to calm him.

The lush stood up and began a very deliberate effort to remove his coat, but the dentist seized him by the shoulders and pushed him through the street doorway and into the hotel corridor.

"Le'm come on," shouted the lush, valiantly, as he was pushed along; "I'm purt' good scrapper m'self."

"Stand aside, sir, stand aside," shouted Doc', as he attempted to dodge past the race-track man. "I have a right to demand satisfaction of that scoundrel."

"Sit down," urged the race-track man. "Don't pay any attention to him. He's drunk."

"That may be, sir; but he must not insult a Horne, drunk or sober."

"Well, he's gone now. Wait till he gets sober and then talk to him."

The dentist, having conducted the lush through a side door to the bar-room, returned to the front door and assisted in pacifying Doc'. As soon as Doc' became convinced that it was his duty, as a Horne, to ignore the cheap insinuations of a tipsy man, he recovered his spirits and told how he had been similarly insulted at a club in San Francisco in 1873. He knocked the man through a plate-glass mirror, and when he offered to pay for the glass the club would not permit him to do so, claiming that he had done what any gentleman should have done under the circumstances.

Just as Doc' was concluding this story the lush, who had been refreshed by several new drinks, came slowly toward the front door and halted about twenty feet away from Doc' and his audience.

"Doc', y're big bluff," said he, very thickly, as he teetered back and forth. "Y're full canal water—nev' saw Phil'delph'."

"Don't pay any attention to him," said the race-track man to Doc'. "He doesn't know what he's saying."

So Doc' preserved a grim silence.

The lush, having vindicated himself, executed a serpentine course back to the office and was then taken to his room in the custody of a bell-boy.

"That is the first time I have lost my temper since 1880," said Doc'.

Next day the lush was apprised of what he had done, so he went to Doc' and said: "I—I want to apologize for what happened last night."

"Your apology is accepted," replied Doc', speaking with much reserve. It was evident that he had not forgiven the lush.

Two days after the attempted assault, the race-track man said to the dentist:

"Were you out in front the other evening when Doc' told about being elected recorder of Tracy County, Ohio, in 1858?"

"I heard him speak of it, but I wouldn't be sure of names or dates."

"Well, I remember the name, and I remember the date, and I think I've got him nailed. This morning I was over in the public library to look up a point and decide a bet for a friend of mine, and while I was looking through the catalogue I saw a book, 'Complete History and Official Register of Ohio'; understand? I got it out, and sure enough I found in the back part a list of the counties and the officers ever since the organization. I turned to Tracy County, and I found that a man named Thomas Pettit was recorder from 1858 to 1862. I thought I might have been mistaken as to the year, but I couldn't find Doc's name anywhere in the book. He never held an office in that county at all."

"Oh, well, what if he didn't? You're not going to say anything to him about it, are you? I don't believe I would. You know Doc' is as sensitive as a woman, and——"

"All I'm going to do is ask him which is right, him or the book over in the library."

"I don't think you ought to do it. I don't see that it can do any good."

"Oh, well, Doc' 'll say that the book's wrong."

That evening the race-track man found his opportunity.

"By the way, Doc', didn't you tell us the other evening that you was once elected recorder of Tracy County, Ohio?"

"Yes, I believe I did tell you about it."

"Let's see, what year was that?"

"I told you the year, didn't I?"

"It was 1858, wasn't it?"

"Yes, 1858 — two years before Abe Lincoln ran."

"The reason I asked you was that I thought you might have been mistaken as to the year or the county."

"A man couldn't very well forget the name of a county,"

"TRACY COUNTY—1858." suggested the lush, who was in a protracted lapse of sobriety.

"Certainly not," said Doc'.

"There's a mistake somewhere," said the



race-track man. "I happened to be looking through a history of Ohio the other day, and it gave the name of Thomas Pettit as the man who was elected recorder in Tracy County in 1858. Of course the history may be wrong, but that's what it said. I wanted to be sure, so I copied it down, and I've got it here." He produced from his vest pocket a folded piece of paper, and opening it, read: "Tracy County, Ohio; recorder from 1858 to 1862, Thomas Pettit."

Doc' sat staring at the speaker, and although he made an effort to remain calm, his outstretched hand was trembling as he said: "Let me see that paper."

The race-track man gave the paper to him. Doc' laid it in his lap, and with deliberation brought out his spectacle-case and opened it. He carefully adjusted his spectacles, and then, turning sidewise so as to get the light that came out through the doorway, read what was on the paper, his lips moving as he did so.

"Yes; this is all right. I thought maybe it said that Tom Pettit had been chosen at the regular election. The history's got it right. It just says there, you'll see, that he was recorder from 1858 to 1862."

"I know, but I thought that you became recorder in 1858."

"I became nothing of the kind, and I didn't say so. I did say to you gentlemen, without suspecting that the statement needed verification, that I was *elected* recorder in 1858. I did not say that I ever *was* recorder. I had the fun of the campaign, overcame the regular majority, cleaned the other fellow out, and what more did I want? Three days after I was elected I received an offer to go to Cincinnati and act as business manager for a company that had just been organized to run a line of packets on the Ohio River. As I hadn't qualified for the recordership I accepted the Cincinnati position, and the county commissioners had to accept my resignation and elect some one to take my place. One of the commissioners wanted to elect Willoughby, who had run against me, but the other two were friendly to me. The feeling still ran high, so they sided with me, and elected Tom Pettit, who was a cousin of mine."

Doc' paused and then asked: "How does it happen that you went and looked this up?"

"I didn't look it up," the race-track man

hastened to explain. "I just ran across it accidentally."

"Indeed!"

Thereupon Doc' arose and walked away without the courtly "Good-night, gentlemen," which usually fell on the group with all the flavor of a benediction.

On the following morning Doc' notified Mr. Ike Francis, the proprietor, that he intended to leave the Alfalfa Hotel as soon as he could find another room. He gave no reasons.

CHAPTER VIII

TROLLEY CARS IN ST. LOUIS

June had come, month of roses and marriages.

Every morning the dentist read in his newspaper the long list of marriage licenses and the full column of wedding stories. It



was maddening to him, and the injustice of the whole situation smote him. He wondered if he was to be a

social outcast, bearing some defect which made him odious to women. If not, why should he, with money and a wardrobe, have no applications, being openly ready to marry

"IT WAS MADDENING."

any one who pleased him—and Doc' Horne?

From fretting at his failure to attract women he would turn to reviling himself as one lacking courage and enterprise. He had opportunities. Why did he not improve them?

One day in the office he was presented to Miss Milbury, cousin of one of the operatives in the Neapolitan Dental Parlors. They talked for several minutes and she suggested to him that he would be welcome if he chose to come to the flat some evening with her cousin.

Here was the chance, and he did not allow it to slip by. He did not respond with the usual and quite indefinite "Thank you," or "It's very kind of you," but said, promptly: "Yes, indeed, I would be glad to call, if you will suggest an evening," and the young woman, rather startled at his eagerness, said, "Oh—ah—Tuesday evening," and did not urge him further. But he required no urging.

He notified Doc' Horne that he was about to call on one who promised well. Doc' showed a courteous interest, but volunteered no suggestions.

"What's the matter, Doc'?" asked the dentist. "Ain't you feeling well?"

"You are perhaps the one person to whom I can speak freely," said Doc'. "I am not entirely happy in my associations here at the Alfalfa. This freckled boy is not an example of good breeding, to say the least, and his familiarities are beginning to wear

on me. Our friend who drinks too much offered me a gratuitous insult the other evening, and that—well, that speculative person who bets on the races has contrived to make himself disagreeable. I have been in thirty states of the Union and mixed with all classes, but whenever it is possible I prefer to be with gentlemen."

"They think the world of you, Doc'," said the dentist. "I know the lush is sorry for what he did, and besides, you know, he apologized."

The dentist said other reassuring things, with the result that when Doc' walked back to the hotel after his restaurant dinner, and the freckled boy was not to be seen, he took his place with the others.

The lush saluted him humbly and sadly. For several days the lush had been complaining of stomach trouble. After an evening spent at the bar, the lush would retire at midnight, cheerful and in excellent mind and body, according to his own admission.

Next morning he would be out of sorts.

There would be dry fever parching his eyes and his lips would work uneasily on something of an unpleasant taste.

"I don't know what's the matter with me this morning," he would say. "My stomach seems to be out of whack. I can't imagine what's the matter. I haven't been eating any fruit."

Then he would recall the fact that an eminent physician once told him that the best thing in the world for a disordered stomach was whisky and soda.

Sometimes, if he had reason to believe that he was suffering from indigestion, he drank whisky and pepsin. He had been known to use whisky and quinine to fight malarial symptoms.

In spite of his willingness to take any kind of medicine that would mix with whisky harmoniously, his stomach continued to be treacherous and troublesome. This evening he was gloomy, for he had been neglecting the treatment.

As Doc' put his chair alongside that of the dentist and looked down the hazy street, which was already settling into an evening calm, a stranger, of harmless bearing and a rather limp mustache, dragged a chair toward them and asked:

"Gentlemen, may I sit with you and enjoy this evening breeze?"

"Certainly, certainly, my dear sir," replied Doc'. "You are a new-comer at the hotel?"

"Yes, I am with you temporarily. My wife and the children have gone into the country for a few weeks, so I closed up the house and came down here to live."

The dentist turned and looked at the stranger as soon as "wife" was mentioned. Here was a man who had entered that state for which the dentist was striving. Doubtless he could give information.

"I should think a married man would find it rather lonesome around this kind of a hotel," suggested the dentist.

The married man turned and looked at him as if startled, and then said quietly: "Oh, I don't mind it."

"All three of us are bachelors," said the dentist.

"Yes, poor, miserable bachelors," added Doc', with a smile, for he alone understood why the dentist was interested in the topic of matrimony.

"I don't see why you should be miserable," said the married man, shaking his head. "You're just as free as the air here. There's no one to find fault with anything

you do. You can come and go when you please, turn in when you want to, eat and drink what you like—oh, well, some people never know when they're well off."

"You'd get tired of it soon enough, and be more than anxious to get back home," said the dentist.

"Oh, well, perhaps—perhaps," said the married man. "Only, I want to tell you that some people never know when they're well off." Then, as if to vary the conversation, he turned to Doc' and said to him: "You are a professional man, I believe?"

"Because they call me Doc'?"

"Yes, I supposed you were a doctor."

"No."

"And never was?"

"Yes—and no. I never took a degree, but I did practice medicine for a while—a little while. It was during the war. I was in Cincinnati at the time, engaged in certain negotiations regarding a government contract. There was a large camp of Union soldiers near Covington, and a mysterious malady had broken out among the men, a number of whom had died. The sickness was a sort of combination of cholera and quinsy. At least one hundred of the soldiers

had it when I reached Cincinnati. As soon as I learned the facts in the case I recognized the disease as one that I had suffered from myself, in Louisiana. I had made a thorough study of it, and by certain experiments had got the remedy for it. Well, I went to the camp and announced my willingness to treat the patients. At first the



"I SEEN 'EM.

surgeons wouldn't listen to me, but I had influential friends in the army who brought them to time, and

I had my way. You see, this epidemic had baffled them, and they didn't like to admit that any one knew how to handle it. Gentlemen, I began treating those men, and in ten days I had every one on his feet, feeling like a fighting cock.

Of course the whole camp supposed I was a physician, and so I was called Doc' by the officers and men alike. The appellation of Doc' followed me to——"

"Say, what do you think a fellow said to

me just now?" asked a boisterous voice, and the four men thus suddenly disturbed looked up and saw the freckled scourge.

Doc's story was never finished.

"A fellow was tryin' to tell me that this town had trolley cars before St. Louis did," said the freckled boy, placing his hand on Doc' Horne's knee and glaring at the embarrassed old gentleman. "Now, what do you think o' the nerve o' some people? I seen them trolley cars in St. Louis long enough before they was here. Ain't that right, huh?"

"I don't know," replied Doc', looking steadfastly toward the front door.

"Well, I know, you can gamble on that. The nerve o' that guy! I tell you I seen 'em in St. Louis before they knowed what a trolley pole was in this town. It's funny if I wouldn't know it, too, bein' in both places. You can bet they had trolley cars in St. Louis before they had 'em here. I'd like to bet a thousand on it. I just think that'd be easy money—that's what I think. This fellow might stand around all day and tell that to people that don't know no better, but I'm tellin' you that I seen 'em there. I'll call anybody down on them statements."

The four stared drearily at the freckled boy. He seemed to interpret their silence as a contradiction of what he had been saying. At least they did not appear to be properly convinced, or they would have said so.

"I seen them trolley cars in St. Louis when they didn't have 'em in but mighty few towns in this country," said he, impressively tapping the lush on the breast. Then he laughed scornfully and continued: "This fellow I was talkin' to thought he had some boy that'd never been around any. I know when they begin to run trolley cars in St. Louis and I know when they used the first cable in Kansas City. Mebbe I know it and mebbe I don't. If I don't, then some guy can win a little bundle o' money." He put his hand into his watch pocket, as if to draw out a roll of bills, and then paused and began a new attack on the imaginary foe who was persisting that Chicago had trolley cars before St. Louis had any.

"W'y, there was lots of towns had trolley cars before this town had 'em," said he, with a contemptuous glance at the married man. "Yes, you bet, there was a good and plenty of towns had 'em."

"Well, what of it?" asked Doc' Horne, sharply.

"What of it? W'y, didn't this fellow out here try to tell me that you had trolley cars here before they ever had 'em in St. Louis? Say, if that didn't make me sick. I called him in a minute, and I had him cinched, too, becuz I seen 'em down there."

Doc' moaned and then arose and started away.

"And then he shut up," added the freckled boy, smiling proudly, as he dropped into the chair vacated by Doc'.

CHAPTER IX

HOME LIFE IN TWO EPISODES

The married man's conversation frightened the dentist.

"Did you hear what he said, Doc'?" asked the dentist later in the evening. They were having one of their confidential dialogues.

"Yes, but what of it?"

"Why, here we've been at this hotel, complaining because we had no homes, or firesides, or—or children or anything, and along comes this married man with a wife and a home and two

children, and so on, and seems to be tickled to death to get to the hotel here and live with us. That's a fact. After you left he said he only wished to the Lord he could settle right down and stay with



"SHE."

us. And he kept on saying that us fellows here didn't know when we were well off. I'll tell you, Doc', that kind of talk is enough to worry a man who's getting ready to jump into matrimony at the first chance."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," said Doc', tilting his head backward and smiling at the dentist in mild benevolence. "You know and I know that there have been unhappy marriages. That is no indication that your marriage will be a failure. Besides, this married man may have spoken hastily. Before a month has passed he will be anxious to go back to his family. Perhaps his wife nags him sometimes and he is glad to get away from her for a few weeks now and then. Or perhaps he has soured her life by his indifference, and now puts the blame on her. Don't let his experience frighten you."

Now, in order that the married man at the Alfalfa European Hotel may not be set up as a fair specimen of his kind, it is well that one should know something about his wife. Not that she is a fair specimen either, but simply the kind of martyr who would encourage a husband to seek peace with the shaggy bachelors at the Alfalfa.

FIRST EPISODE

(*She is at the breakfast table with Walter, aged eleven, and Lulu, aged six. He comes, with a morning paper in his hand. He sits and reads.*)

She—"Children, say good-morning to your papa."

Walter—"Good-morning, papa."

Lulu—"Good-morning, papa."

He—"Good morning, children."

She—"I want you children to always speak to your papa in the morning, whether he notices you or not."

He—"I see that the President started on his trip."

Walter—"Where's he going, papa?"

She—"Sh-h-h! When your papa comes to the breakfast table he doesn't want to talk to any one. I'll explain to you what it is after breakfast, Walter."

He (*lowering paper*)—"What is it he wants to know?"

She—"Never mind, Walter. I'll tell you after breakfast. Your father isn't in a very good humor this morning. He was out late last night."

He—"I wasn't out very late."

She—"I'd like to know what time it was when you came in."

He—"Huh?"

She—"Well, if you're so intent on that paper, I'll not disturb you. Walter! Eat *all* of your oatmeal."

Walter—"I don't want any more, mamma."

She—"Well, I want you to eat more oatmeal and less fruit."

He—"I wouldn't compel him to eat oatmeal unless he wants it."

She—"Very well, Walter, you may eat whatever you please. That seems to be your *father's* idea of dieting a child. What's the matter with you, Lulu?"

Lulu—"I'm sleepy."

She—"Did you wake up when your father came in?"

Lulu—"No'm."

She—"Well, it's a wonder. He made enough noise—coming in at all hours of the night!"

He—"I came in once—that was all."

She—"That was late enough, goodness knows."

He—"Oh, it wasn't so very late."

She—"I'd like to know what time it was."

He—"It was about twelve, I guess."

She—"Indeed? I heard it strike twelve some time before you came in—some *little* time before you came in."

He—"Well, if it struck twelve before I came in it must have been after twelve when I arrived."

She—"Indeed, it was!"

He—"All right, we've got that settled, and now you may pour me a cup of coffee, sweetness."

She—"Please don't use such language as that in the presence of the children. I judged it must have been one o'clock."

He—"What was one o'clock?"

She—"When you came in."

He—"Are you still talking about that?"

She—"I can very well understand why *you* don't want to talk about it."

He—"Why? What do you suspect?"

She—"Well, wasn't it one o'clock?"

He—"I don't think so. I came home on the cable car."

She—"The *last* cable car?"

He—"Well, I didn't wait to see if any more came along."

She—"Oh, you didn't?"

He—"No, ma'am."

She—"What time does the last cable run?"

He—"I don't know; but you can find out at the general offices."

She—"Oh, I can, can I?"

He—"Yes, ma'am."

She—"Do your lodge meetings last until midnight?"

He—"Not very often."

She—"Then you were *not* at the lodge meeting *all* the time?"

He—"I was there all of the time there was any meeting going on. I had to leave after the meeting adjourned, because the man wanted to lock up the place."

She—"Oh, you *did*, did you?"

He—"Yes, ma'am. Will you have another piece of bacon?"

She—"Where was the meeting held?"

He—"Masonic Temple."

She—"And it took you until one o'clock to get from the Masonic Temple up to the house here?"

He—"Did it?"

She—"How long does it take to come home on the cable?"

He—"What is that—a conundrum?"

She—"The meeting couldn't have lasted later than eleven o'clock."

He—"You're talking about the lodge meeting now?"

She—"I most *certainly* am. You must have gone somewhere after the meeting."

He—"I always go somewhere after every lodge meeting. I have to."

She—"You don't come home—evidently."

He—"When, after the lodge meeting? That's when I always come home—after the meeting. You don't expect me to come home before the meeting, do you, dear?"

She—"I must say that I don't see anything to laugh at."

He—"Don't you? Well, I enjoy this."

She—"I'd like to know how you put in your time late at night downtown."

He—"Well, I'll tell you what I did last night if you promise not to tell any one."

She—"Yes, I dare say you will tell me."

He—"This is confidential. I was out robbing a house."

She—"Humph! I suppose you think that's funny."

He—"Well, I don't know what else to tell you. If I said that I'd been out visiting dis-

reputable saloons and drinking rum, I know you wouldn't believe *that*."

She—"I don't know of any place downtown that could be visited, with propriety, at midnight."

He—"Have you made a pretty thorough study of night resorts, my dear?"

She—"I dare say I don't know as much about them as you do. I think it's shameful for a man who professes to be a church member."

He—"You think what's shameful, pet?"

She—"It's not necessary to go into details in the presence of the children."

He—"Details of what? What in the world are you talking about?"

She—"I can *not* understand how you put in your time at such an hour of the night."

He—"You can't understand it?"

She—"No, sir, I cannot."

He—"Well, then, if you don't know how I put in my time, what is there to suppress? Go ahead and tell the children all about it."

She—"I don't think such things ought to be discussed before children, anyway."

He—"Yes, I've noticed that you feel that way about it."

She—"You seem to be rather sarcastic this morning."

He—"Not at all."

(*A pause.*)

She—"You're not very hungry this morning."

He—"No; not very."

She—"You must have had something to eat before you came home last evening."

He—"Yes."

She—"I thought as much. Why didn't you say so at first? Do you think it's the proper thing to go to such places?"

He—"What places do you mean?"

She—"I mean *places*, such as the one you visited."

He—"Oh, you know the place, do you?"

She—"I can guess, I suppose."

He—"Yes, ma'am."

She—"And if it's going to have this effect on you I hope you won't go very often. You seem to be *very* much interested in your paper this morning."

He—"Pardon me, dear. Was there anything you wanted to talk to me about?"

She—"Certainly not."

He—"I thought perhaps you'd like to know where I went last night after lodge meeting."

She—"Not at all. I have no curiosity in the matter whatever."

He—"Oh, all right. I didn't know but what you'd be interested to find out what it was kept me out so late. However——"
(*Resumes his newspaper.*)

SECOND EPISODE

(*It is dusk. She has put aside her fancy work and is looking at the flower-bed in the center of the grass plat. He enters, humming a tune, and kisses her in a dutiful manner.*)

She—"Oh!"

He—"What's the matter? Didn't you expect it?"

She—"Oh! I do believe——"

He—"Believe what?"

She—"Come here again."

He—"What do you want?"

She—"Come here" (*pulling him down by the coat as he comes near her*). "I thought I wasn't mistaken. I smelled it clear across the room the minute you came in."

He (*after a pause*)—"Smelled what?"

She (*looking intently at the flower-bed, and biting her lower lip*)—"I don't know—some kind of liquor."

He (*airily*)—"Oh, that? I told Schamwurst I'd get a lecture, but—he insisted."

She—"I'm afraid I haven't the pleasure of knowing—Mr.—ah—your friend."

He—"Who, Schamwurst? He's the German that owns the new flat building just beyond Berry Avenue there. I've handled most of his business for two or three years, and I've just written policies to cover the



"I TOLD SCHAMWURST I'D GET A LECTURE."

new building. That's how I happened to go into his place to-day."

She—"What do you mean by his *place*?"

He—"Why, I mean his place of business, the only one he has."

She—"It's a *saloon*, isn't it?"

He—"Well, yes, it's a saloon—nice, quiet German place, though."

She—"Why didn't this man come to your office if he wanted to see you?"

He—"Well, I couldn't very well ask him to come all the way downtown. I'm going after business, you know. I'm not asking business to hunt *me* up."

She—"Then why didn't you go and see him at his home?"

He—"I'd like to know when I'd find him at home. He's in the saloon all day. Besides, he lives upstairs, and I suppose there might be some objection to my visiting a place that was *above* a saloon."

She—"It seems to me you know a great deal about the place" (*with a nervous little laugh*). "You must be a frequent visitor."

He—"Oh, pshaw! I've written a policy covering his home place and I know he lives upstairs."

She (*decisively*)—"Well, I wouldn't transact any business with a saloon-keeper if I had to sit around a doggery and drink liquor."

He—"My sitting around consisted of a very brief visit, and I did *not* drink any liquor."

She—"What was it, then?"

He—"Well, it was—just a glass of beer—

some kind of light beer. Schamwurst was very anxious that I should try it and I——"

She—"He wanted to get you started so that you'd come there and spend your money. That's the way they do."

He—"Nonsense."

She—"Oh, I'm talking nonsense, am I?"

He—"Schamwurst merely wished to be courteous, that's all. How could I refuse him? I didn't want him to think that I had any prejudice against him, on account of his business. Besides, what's one little glass of beer?"

She—"It contains alcohol, doesn't it?"

He—"I suppose so. I don't know and I don't care."

She—"Well! I think *you'd* better go and lie down a while if beer guzzling has *that* effect on you."

He (*repressing himself*)—"I have told you several times that I had one *small* glass of beer."

She—"Well, you might as well drink a dozen, so far as the principle of the thing is concerned—every bit."

He—"If that's the case I'm sorry I didn't drink the dozen."

She (*sniffing*)—"I suppose you are."

He—"You *bet* I am. If I'm going to have the reputation of being a drunkard I might as well have some fun along with it."

She—"If I were you I wouldn't *be* in any business that compelled me to visit these dens and drink alcohol and come home to my family all—all reeking with——"

He—"Thank you! I am now reeking, am I? I suppose I am more or less intoxicated also?"

She—"I don't care to talk about it any more. If you choose to go into saloons and sit around and drink beer I don't suppose that anything I can say will stop you, but I *do* think you ought to remember that you have two children and that you are *supposed* to be a member of the church. I only hope for the sake of the family that none of our church friends will ever catch you coming out of one of those places."

He—"That's very good. Church friends, indeed! Don't you suppose there are people in that church who keep beer right in their own houses?"

She—"That isn't any reason why *you* should. If it ever comes to that, that you'll have your dram right here in the house—where the children——"

He—"Now, who said anything about bringing stuff into this house?"

She—"Well, if you're *determined* to drink it, I don't see why it wouldn't be just as well for the children to see it here as to find out that their father was sitting around in these resorts, drinking with saloon-keepers."

He (*arising from his chair and walking about uneasily*)—"All right! All right! I'll have a keg sent up in the morning."

She (*breaking*)—"I—I—never expected to see you in this condition."

He—"What condition? Oh, Great Scott!"

She (*arising and moving toward the door with the handkerchief at her eyes*)—"I don't—don't—think—you'd talk this way if you—"

He—"You're quite right. I am rum's maniac. Leave me alone, and I'll sleep off my debauch."

(*She goes out.*)

All this is told that some light may be thrown on the married man's reiteration, "You fellows never know when you're well off."

CHAPTER X

ACQUAINTANCES OR FRIENDS—WHICH ?

Doc' Horne regarded his associates and fellow-roomers at the Alfalfa European Hotel as mere acquaintances. A few men had floated together in one eddy of the city's turbulence. They had exchanged names, swapped stories and organized themselves into a small community through the promptings of a natural hunger for companionship. Members of the community drifted away and were lost, and those remaining behind did not seem to miss them. Strangers came and were carelessly received into fellowship. It was a loose sort of intercourse, and there was no evidence that any genuine friendships were growing out of the chance meetings.

The humiliating encounter with the lush, the race-track man's endeavor to discredit the story of Ohio politics, and the freckled boy's persistence in talking slangily about himself had helped to convince Doc' Horne that the dentist was his only friend,

and that he (Doc') could be happier in another hotel.

It is possible that he might have gone from the Alfalfa, had it not been for a slight attack of illness which crumpled him in bed one morning.



THE PATIENT.

The freckled boy heard of Doc's illness from the chambermaid. He went to the room at once and found Doc' curled under the bed clothes into the shape of a letter S, and groaning dismally.

"Great heavens, Doc'!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter?"

"Oh, my dear sir," replied Doc', with a quavering sigh of pain. "Oh, gee!"

"A fever, Doc'?"

"A complication, my boy. Liver wrong—caught cold on top of it. I haven't had anything of this kind since I was in Washington in 1874. Oh, dear!"

"Well, Doc', old boy, if there's anything I can do for you, you bet it's me'll do it. When any friend o' mine gets laid out on his

back there's nothin' too good for him. Look here! That dentist has got some new and sassy night-gowns. I'll go and pinch one for you, so that you'll look good and swell when any one comes in to see you."

"Oh, never mind," said Doc', feebly, caressing his stomach region.

"Well, I'll do it just the same. That red flannel you're wearin' may be comfortable, but, on the level, it don't help your looks any."

So he went out and intimidated a chambermaid, who allowed him to go into the dentist's room, and he returned with the "sassy" garment. Also, he loudly ordered the chambermaid to bring clean pillow-slips.

The gown was a white, starchy garment with red scallops around the neck and down the front. After Doc' had put on the gown and propped himself up against two fat, white pillows he made a respectable appearance, although he insisted that he suffered as much as ever.

"I've got to duck," said the freckled boy. "I've told that kid to come up here every little while to see what you want. I'll see you later."

"Don't put yourself out on my account," said Doc', timidly.

"Look here!" exclaimed the boy, laying his hand on the old man's shoulder. "You're sick, and we're goin' to take care of you. You bet if there's anything you want you can get it."

Doc' tried to say something, but failed. He simply nodded.

When the freckled boy went downstairs he met the lush, to whom he told the news. The lush was on his way to the bar to try a gin cocktail as a remedy for heartburn, but he forgot his own malady when he heard about Doc'.

Without waiting for the slow elevator to come down he bounded up the stairway three steps at a time and dashed into Doc's little room at the end of the hall.

"By George, Doc', you must excuse me for not coming up sooner, but I just heard about this."

"I didn't give in until last night," said Doc'. "My physician thinks it's nothing serious."

"Well, by thunder, you know—can't take any chances. Did he give you any medicine?"

"Yes; some capsules and drops."

"Rats! If you've got a cold and feel sort of run down the best thing you can do is to get a bottle of good whisky and hit it about every half hour. Now, Doc', I'm goin' to get you some that I know is all right."

"Maybe I hadn't better——" began Doc'.

"Oh, pshaw! good whisky can't hurt you. I've been this way myself two or three times, and whisky is the only thing that ever helped me. I'll be back in a little while."

He hurried away, and fifteen minutes later, as he came into

the office with a basket of peaches in one hand and a quart bottle of whisky in the other, he met the race-track man.

"What are you doing with that stuff?" asked the race-track man.

"Great Scott! Haven't you heard? Doc's laid up in his room sick as he can



WITH SUPPLIES.

be. I've been out buying some things for him."

"You don't expect a sick man to eat a peck of peaches, do you?"

"A little fruit won't hurt him. I've got a quart of whisky there that cost me two dollars. That ought to fix him. Come on up and see the old boy."

"Sure, I will. I wonder if he's got anything to read? Expect I'd better buy something."

The race-track man went out and purchased all the morning papers, a copy of "Lovers Once, but Strangers Now," and a New York weekly paper filled with scandalous half-tone reproductions of photographs.

The two men carried their supplies up to Doc's room and laid them on the bedspread in front of him.

"Honestly, boys—this is too much; don't go to all this trouble," said Doc', who was really embarrassed.

These two men, of all!

"I'm rather afraid to eat fruit," he said.

"Well, here's something you needn't be afraid of," said the lush, calling attention to the bottle of whisky. Merely to prove

that the liquor was all right he drew the cork and poured a heavy drink into the glass on the table and drank it with great ease.

"Now, Doc'," said he, pouring another drink.

"I expect I'd better not drink anything until I see my physician," said Doc'.

"You take it then," said the lush, offering the glass to the race-track man.

"No, I never drink in the morning," was the reply.

The lush gazed at the drink thoughtfully, and, after a moment's hesitancy, swallowed it.

"Now, Doc'," said he, "don't you want me to read to you?"

"No, I don't want to put you to all that——"

"Get out! You must think we're barbarians to neglect an old friend when he's sick. I can stay here all day and read to you. Say, Doc', on the square, you ought to take a good drink of that liquor. It would put new life into you."

"I'm afraid to try it."

The lush spent the greater part of the day in Doc's bedroom, striving to perform various services for the patient. At

times Doc' would be calm and free from pain, and at other times he would rub his stomach region, wince and groan. At such times the lush would become greatly excited. He would take a small drink to quiet his nerves and would then declare, with some profanity, that it "broke him all up" to see an old friend suffer.

When the lightning dentist arrived at the hotel late in the afternoon and heard the news from Mr. Ike Francis, he ran out and purchased a bouquet of yellow roses. Going in on tiptoe, he laid the flowers on the spread.

Doc' saw the bouquet, and his cup ran over. He tried to blink away the tears, and the lightning dentist was so embarrassed that he turned and went out, still on tiptoe.

He came back later, when he was sure that he could control his feelings. The lush had given up nursing, and retired to his room to take a nap.

"You boys have been kind to me to-day," said Doc', who was sitting half-way up, with the yellow roses in front of him. "My God! what a thing it is to have friends! I've made fortunes and I've lost them, but I made good friends and I never lost them.

It's a great blessing, my dear sir, to grow old and still hold to your faith in humanity. Even that freckled boy——"

"Are you feeling some better by this time?"

"I'll be all right to-morrow. I know these attacks, and I know how to combat them."

"I'd spend the evening with you, Doc', but this is my night to go and call on Miss Milbury."

"Is she the one you mentioned the other day?"

"Yes, and I'm anxious to know her better, because she's darned pretty and seems to be very refined."

"You might drop in after you get home and tell me what kind of a time you had."

"I'd like to, first-rate, if it wouldn't be disturbing you. If you fall asleep you wouldn't want to be——"

"Oh, that's all right. Come right in. I'll be awake."

Sure enough, Doc' was awake when the dentist returned from his call. The lush was there. After taking his nap he had returned to his post of duty and now he sat near the bedside, gazing at Doc' with an

expression of plaintive solicitude and an air of wavering sleepiness.

"I'm bringin' him 'round all ri'," he remarked.

The presents were on the table. The infallible remedy in the quart bottle had been reduced in quantity until it was half-way down the label, but the basket of peaches was still unbroken.

"You had a pleasant evening?" asked Doc', looking up from the pillows.

"Great!" replied the dentist, not choosing to be any more specific in the presence of the lush.

The dentist wore light gray coat and trousers, patent-leather shoes, a plaid waist-coat of hempen material, a blue and white bow tie and a roan-colored derby hat. On his lapel was a large flower, although it was small for a peony.

Catching Doc's eye, he looked down at the flower and touched it with his thumb, and then Doc' knew she had given it to him.

"Ain't I good nurse, Doc'?" asked the lush.

"You certainly have been kind and faithful to-day," replied Doc'.

"Yes, but when a man's laid up, a woman is the only one who can take care of him," suggested the dentist.

"Oh, I don' know," said the lush. "I'm pretty goo' little nurse myself."

"Just the same, if I'm going to be sick, I want a woman to nurse me," said the dentist.

"That's where a woman is an angel, gentlemen—a ministering angel, sure enough, is in the sick-room," remarked Doc', putting his head higher on the pillow so that he could look out at them. "Once I was taken suddenly ill in New Orleans and had to go to the hospital. I was delirious for four weeks—clear out of my head. The third day of my illness, so they told me afterward, a beautiful woman attired in black came to the hospital and asked permission to nurse me, saying that she was a friend of mine. Well, sir, that woman was at my bedside almost constantly for a month. The attendants at the hospital said they never witnessed a more wonderful exhibition of gentleness and devotion. On the day when I regained consciousness this woman left the hospital and I never could learn who she was or why she had

taken such an interest in me. I made every effort to find her, but I couldn't do it. I guess it's time to take another of those capsules."

The lush was willing to sit up all night, but the dentist understood, and succeeded in taking him away. When they were in the hallway the lush said: "New Orleans—hoshpital. Doc' has ev'y slymptom of man's goin' to get well."

CHAPTER XI

A LECTURE ON THE COCKTAIL

Being reëstablished in warmest fellowship with the members of the hotel colony, Doc' looked hopefully toward his task of finding a wife for the dentist, and then voluntarily accepted the burden of reforming the lush.

The lush, sober, was a well-behaved person and one slow to admit that he ever drank too much or too often. Like other drinking men, he believed that he could deceive himself and deceive others. If any one had suggested "reform" to him, he would have been deeply hurt. What was there to reform?



ABSTINENCE.

Acting under the orders of a physician, once he had stopped drinking for a full week. That is, he drank only Jamaica ginger and hard cider during this period of abstinence, on the technical claim that they were not alcoholic liquors. He changed his diet also, and ate lunches somewhat like the following:

Turtle Soup with sherry.

Rum Omelette.

Maraschino Punch.

Mince Pie with brandy sauce.

He kept the pledge for a week, and was in misery most of the time, and then went back to drinking, announcing that the experiment was a failure.

Doc' had talked with him in private and suggested, with much diplomacy, that he drink nothing but lithia water for a full month.

"That stuff is poison to me, Doc'," he would say. "I know what you want. You want me to let up on the other thing, but you're wrong, Doc'—you are, for a fact." He was not deeply offended. In fact, he was rather amused that any one should think it advisable for him to change his habits.

One evening, in front of the hotel, he announced that he had found a drink cure.

"You've been giving me good advice, Doc'," he said, nudging the dentist, "and so you'll be interested to know that I've found something that will cure any man of drinking."

"What is it?" asked Doc', declining to be amused.

"A German cocktail. Did you ever notice what happens in a German garden when you order a cocktail? Well, it simply throws all the machinery out of gear. The waiter has to go and consult the manager, and the manager calls a conference of bartenders, and they all get together and talk it over, and then somebody gets out a book and reads the directions. They put a tumbler out on the bar, and every man who remembers anything that goes into a cocktail comes and drops it into this tumbler. I don't know myself, but a friend of mine says that the first thing a German puts into a cocktail is a jigger of Pilsener beer. Then they begin on the green bottles behind the bar and finish up with a little Rhine wine and a straw. I know it took them a half-hour to compound this—whatever it was they

brought me the other night. It came on in a kind of a small fruit dish and had cherries, orange peel, watermelon, pineapple and several other kinds of fruit around the edges, and some——”

“I guess it wasn't as bad as that,” said the dentist, laughing.

“Well, it broke all records with me. It seemed to have every ingredient except the one that makes a cocktail worth drinking. I know I could taste the caraway seed in it. They put a few caraway seeds into everything. But I drank it, and then I came back here to the hotel and had a dream that I'll remember if I live to be a million years old. This cocktail was giving me trouble, and I wasn't sure that I could sleep. I think I did fall asleep, however. I hope I was asleep when it happened.

“I felt something tickling my feet, and I looked up over the covers, and there was a yellow monkey sitting on the foot-board. He says, ‘What time is it?’ I told him I didn't know. Then he says, ‘Don't you remember me?’ I told him that his face was familiar, but I couldn't place him. He laughed very pleasantly, and then he began mixing drinks. He'd balance one glass on

his head and curl his tail around another glass containing the drink. He'd give his tail a flip and send the liquor up into the air, and it would all come down in the glass on his head without spilling a drop. Then he'd change glasses and repeat the performance.

"I complimented him on his dexterity, or rather his caudality, and then he told me he'd like to introduce a friend. I said, 'All right,' so he put the end of his tail in his mouth and blew on it, like a whistle, and a polka-dot alligator crawled up on the foot-board and sat down alongside the monk. I must say the alligator worried me a little. He was black, with white spots, and he had electric lights in his eyes. I saw something like it once before at a variety theater. One eye would go out and the other would keep on shining, and then they'd change about. Then both would go out for a minute. Sometimes they'd simply blink, rapidly.

"The alligator looked at me, and then he said to the monkey, 'What time did he say it was?' The monkey told him I didn't know, and then both of them laughed. By George, that alligator had the most disagreeable laugh I ever heard in all my life!

"The monkey jumped down on the bed-

spread and walked up and sat on the pillow right beside my head. He began smoothing back my hair, using first one paw and then the other. One was as hot as fire and the other as cold as ice. In the meantime

Mr. Alligator sat on the foot-board and gave me the laugh.



"GET HIS EYE!"

All at once he yelled, 'Get his eye!' The next thing I knew that monkey had his hind legs twined around my neck and was trying to take one of my eyes out. It occurred to me that he was presuming too much

on short acquaintance, and I made a fight, but he was too good for me. He got the eye all right. Yes, and as soon as he got it, he made a jump clear out into the middle of the floor. Then, what do you think? Why, he and the alligator moved the dresser out from the wall and began to play 'ant'ny over' with my eye. Wasn't that a nerve for you? It was the first game of 'ant'ny over' I'd seen since I was a boy.

"When the alligator got excited he stood right up and balanced himself on the tip of his tail, and the electric lights in his eyes changed colors. One moment they'd be blue, then green, then red, and so on. I sat there watching the game for ten minutes or more, I should judge, and then I looked around, and in the corner of the room was something that looked like a prairie wolf keeping score! That's the last I remember. I think I must have rolled over in bed and started another set of wheels."

"Merciful Providence!" gasped the dentist. "All that from one cocktail?"

"I had other things, but it was the cocktail—one German cocktail—that made all the trouble. That's why I call it the drink cure. The man who tackles one of those every night will either stop or else they'll carry him away with a floral monkey on top of the casket."

"The cocktail is an enemy to normal civilization," said Doc', leaning back in his chair and assuming the manner of a lecturer in a college of law. "It is a convivial little devil, prompting us to take what we do not need."

"Half the people nowadays are not satis-

fied with simple and plain food. A man has to hit his stomach with a fiery cocktail before he can eat a bite. Then he sits down and begins putting mustard, horseradish, chili sauce, pepper and other stuff on his meat before it has the right sting. Is it any wonder that he gets his system into such a condition that an oyster cracker has no more taste than a paper wad? Why, you'll see a man put a drop of tabasco sauce on each cracker so that he will know the cracker is there. The tabasco sauce helps him to locate it."

"That's no lie," said the lush, for he was addicted to the habit of eating loaded crackers.

"My old home in Pennsylvania was three miles from the schoolhouse," said Doc'. "I used to walk it every morning and carry my books and a little basket of lunch. Sometimes it would be colder than Greenland's icy mountains, but I'd put on my yarn mittens and wrap my comforter around my head, and go the whole three miles on a dog-trot—yes, sir. By the time we got our noon recess I was ready to eat everything in that basket, even if it were cold bread and butter and doughnuts. Then when school

was over, you'd see me tramping down that long lane, kicking up the snow—perfectly contented, you know. I didn't need any cable cars to haul me around.

"I'd get home about dusk and hurry out to help with the chores. We'd have to feed the stock and put down some hay and milk the cows, and then I'd get in my wood.



NO CABLE CARS.

Before I'd get through it would be dark. I'd come into the house, and there would be my mother in the kitchen, standing in front of our old cast-iron stove, her sleeves rolled up, stirring a pot of mush. She'd always order me out of the kitchen, but I'd stay, just the same. A hungry boy always likes to see the supper cooked."

"That's so," said the dentist, with a sigh.

"Well, sir, that mush would boil and sputter so that mother would have to stand off at arm's length when she stirred it, and how that old stove would roar and get red in the face! Wouldn't have any light in the room except one candle and what came through the cracks in the stove. I can remember just as well how she used to swing that pot off of the stove and pour the hot mush into a big—I don't know what you call it—a deep dish with blue stripes around it. Then while the mush was cooling, she'd get a pitcher of milk—and it was milk, too."

"I'll bet it was," said the lightning dentist, warmly.

"Gentlemen, I have eaten famous dinners in my day. I've eaten dinners at which the smallest course meant a dollar of somebody's money, but do you think I enjoyed them as I did that mush and milk at home? No, sir! and I didn't have to go out and drink any Manhattan cocktails to get up an appetite either. I had my appetite ready."

"And you had it with you," suggested the lush.

"I had it with me. I suppose that somewhere in this world there is mush and milk just as good as mother prepared it, but I

can't find it. But, as I say, gentlemen, maybe I'm to blame more than the mush or milk is. You take any kind of stomach and let it go against bad hotels and queer restaurants for a period of years and it may become a little discouraged."

"That settles it, Doc'," said the lush. "You've converted me. I believe I'll order some mush and milk."

"Be careful," said the dentist; "it may poison you."

"I believe it would. Well, I'll compromise by going into Steve's and getting a milk punch."

CHAPTER XII

ONE OBJECTION TO MISS MILBURY

After the dentist had called at the Milbury flat three times and had taken Miss Letitia Milbury to the theater once, he made a successful effort to have Doc' Horne invited to



LETITIA.

dinner. The dentist was more fond of Miss Milbury every time they met. He was supremely confident that Doc' would like her, for she was in the bloom of what he judged to be twenty-two and had no shortcomings of any kind. In regard to size, she was

neither too large nor too small. He had described her to Doc' as "a plump figure." It seemed to him that her hair was brown—certainly it was combed in a most bewitching fashion. She talked readily,

and sympathized with him in all opinions he had ever expressed to her. She could play the piano and sing.

Her mother had been mentioned to Doc' as a "fine old girl." The dentist anticipated no difficulty in falling deeply in love with Miss Letitia Milbury. Before doing so, he wished to keep his agreement with Doc' Horne. But he had no fears. He knew that his elderly friend would indorse the peerless creature. Could any one help liking her?

If the dentist had been candid with himself he would have admitted that his true reason for wishing to have Doc' invited to dinner was quite selfish. He wished to exhibit Miss Milbury as a prospective possession. He believed that Doc' would be surprised and impressed, perhaps made a trifle envious.

He secured the invitation for Doc' by the most shameless lobbying. He repeatedly said to Miss Milbury: "I have a friend, Doc' Horne, down at the hotel, that I'm sure you and your mother would like to know."

When Miss Milbury invited the dentist to come to the flat for dinner he said, in pursuance of his set policy: "Yes, indeed, I'll

come, and sometime or other, when I'm coming out here to dinner, or any other time, I want to bring Doc' Horne with me—you know, my friend I've spoken about so often."

Then Miss Milbury said, with exclamatory eagerness: "Why, bring him out *this* time!"

The dentist said that he couldn't possibly think of it, especially after he had said what he had. It looked too much as if—but some time or other he *would* bring Doc' out to the flat, knowing that both Miss Milbury and her mother would like him, because he was a very superior gentleman.

"Why wait?" asked Miss Milbury. "Bring him *this* time. That will make just four."

Thus overthrown by her persuasions, the dentist agreed to have Doc' at the flat on the following Thursday evening.

Doc' was rather taken by surprise when told, in the most summary manner, that he was to be and appear at the Milbury flat.

"My dear sir, are you attempting to bring me back to all that I forswore many years ago?" asked Doc', taking hold of the dentist's arm, which was a most friend-like

manifestation for him. "Are you going to start me to dining out again?"

"Oh, but this once, Doc', you must come," said the dentist. "I've promised them."

"Well, if I do accept, it will be making an exception to the rule," he said. "Every day or two I meet on the street here some man I used to know in New York, or Harrisburg, or Richmond, or some other place, and it's always the same thing—'Horne, when can you come out and take dinner with me?' If I started in to accept these invitations I'd be laid up with the gout in three months' time. Besides, I stopped drinking champagne years ago, and if I went with these men it would be that or nothing. So, for various reasons, I invariably beg off."

The dentist assured him that the Milburys would not urge him to drink champagne.

"Thursday evening—Thursday evening—let me see. No, I haven't any conflicting engagements. You say there'll be only the four of us?"

"Only four, Doc', and I know you'll like them, because they're fine people."

So it was settled that Doc' would go.

Then, as luck would have it, he and the dentist had to run the gauntlet as they came out of the hotel at six o'clock on Thursday evening, for the lush and the freckled boy and a dozen weary transients were sitting outside the front door, and they stared with surprise at the dentist's waistcoat, which was cream-colored, and his cravat, which was blue, and his saddle-colored shoes, which had a coppery polish. As for Doc', his familiar black suit had been thoroughly brushed, and the white lawn tie put a dash of the clerical into his appearance.

"Look, look!" whispered the freckled boy, as the two approached, and he nudged the lush. "Wouldn't that more'n jolt you?"

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Doc', with the least inclination of the head. The dentist adjusted his cravat and looked straight ahead, trying to be unconscious. He seemed to be in a hurry.

"Give the girls my regards," said the lush, as the two passed him. "Um-m-m! Smell the perfumery. What is it, orange bitters?"

The dentist flushed, but made no response. He had betrayed his secret, however.

From that moment until the day he left the hotel to be married, he was under scrutiny.

It seemed to the dentist that Doc' was a bit restless and apprehensive for a man who had known Richmond society before the war, had done a great deal of dancing in Philadelphia, had been on the stage for three months at one time, had been challenged to fight on account of a Memphis belle, and had fascinated a Brazilian senorita without one effort to be more attractive than usual. Several times Doc' adjusted his cuffs and the white lawn bow, wiped his palms with the handkerchief and asked, without seeming to remember that he had asked the question before, "How long shall we remain after dinner?" To which the dentist replied that they would depart as soon as he (Doc') was ready to go, but there probably would be no inclination to hurry away, as the Milburys were "fine people."

The dentist made allowance for the fact that Doc' had been out of society for several seasons, and was about to meet strangers. He felt sure that at the proper time, with the encouragement given by Miss Milbury and her mother, Doc' would come to himself

and appeal to the women as being all that the dentist had promised.

For the first five minutes at the flat Doc' sat speechless and mournful, listening, with dull gaze, to the criticism of the play which the dentist and Miss Milbury had attended. Once or twice he sighed secretly and acted as if he were about to turn and sit sidewise in the chair, but on discovering that he was being watched, he changed his plans. The dentist was worried. Miss Milbury had expected an immediate performance.

Doc's first effort at speech was in reference to a photograph on the mantel. After looking at it for a full minute he doubtfully broke a lull in the talk and asked, "Will you be kind enough to tell me, Miss Milbury, who the original of that photograph is—or was?"

"Oh, that? That's my uncle."

"Is the name Flanders?"

"No—Milbury."

"I thought at first it was my friend Flanders who used to have a studio in Brooklyn."

"No, that's Uncle Jim. He has a nursery in Danville."

Doc' was not acquainted in Danville, so

he fell out of the conversation, which reverted to the subject of the drama, and then Mrs. Milbury came in. She surprised Doc', for she was large—very large. The dentist had told of her cordiality, her goodness of heart, her ability to make one "feel at home" as soon as one sat down beside her, but he had not prepared Doc' to meet a woman of such weight and girth, and so he was un-



MRS. MILBURY.

nerved at the moment of introduction and mumbled his line, which he had rehearsed to himself as follows: "Madam, I am both charmed and delighted to make your acquaintance."

At the table Doc' faced Mrs. Milbury, and the dentist sat opposite the daughter. A frightened servant, whom Mrs. Milbury addressed as "Eliza," brought in the roast, the vegetables, the light biscuit, and the tea. During the meal the conversation

back and forth revealed to Doc' that Mrs. Milbury was a widow, that she had enough property to supply an income, that she and Letitia had come to Chicago from a town of five thousand that Letitia might "take music," and that they had found it rather lonesome in the city at first, but lately they had been meeting some "lovely people."

"Including my young friend here," said Doc', with an unfolding gesture of the right arm toward the dentist.

This was the first evidence that he was regaining his powers. Probably the tea had something to do with it.

After they had returned to the front room and Mrs. Milbury had urged them to smoke, and Doc' had found a comfortable chair, Miss Milbury sang "Oh, Promise Me," with the dentist turning the music. Mrs. Milbury found a palm-leaf fan for Doc' and told him that she always liked to see a man enjoying his evening cigar. Thus, one cheering influence after another helped to make Doc' conversational.

Miss Milbury had been longing to go to a summer resort, and this led Doc' to observe that he hoped to spend a few weeks at one of the northern lakes if he could

arrange his business affairs so as to get away from town.

"Are you fond of boating, Doctor?" asked Mrs. Milbury.

"I am fond of all forms of outdoor sports, Mrs. Milbury, especially swimming," he replied. "At one time I considered myself quite a swimmer, but I haven't swum a long distance for—let me see—seventeen years ago this summer. Yes, it was the year of the presidential election. I'll tell you, I had to let myself out that time."

"On a bet?" asked the dentist.

"Oh, no—no, sir, I wouldn't attempt anything of the kind merely for a bet. No, I had to catch a train."

"Why, how strange!" exclaimed Miss Milbury.

"Wait until I tell you the circumstances and you'll understand. Have you ever been to Lake Plankinac? Beautiful place! I used to go up there to rest and ride around in the boats for a few days at a time. As I told you, this was seventeen years ago. I remember, because I had been doing some confidential work during the presidential campaign. I was at Plankinac and had been there three days, and this happened

on the afternoon when I was to start home. The lake was about four miles long and two miles wide. The hotel where I stopped was toward the north end of the lake. There was a railroad station there and another



"I HAD A NICE, LIGHT CEDAR BOAT."

station at the south end of the lake, three miles away. I was to take a five o'clock train for Milwaukee, where I was to meet a certain gentleman and have a most important interview with him. It was absolutely necessary that I should catch this train.

“About an hour before train-time I went out to take a final row. I jumped into the boat and pulled away toward the south end of the lake. That was my usual ride—down to the south end of the lake and back. Well, I had a nice, light cedar boat and I was making fair speed—I suppose a mile in eight minutes or so, when all at once I went crash! into a piling that had been sunk in a sandbar. The fishermen used to tie to this piling and then drift away so as to fish just off the bar. The piling stood just above the water, and I tore a hole in that cedar boat that you could have put your foot through.

“I got the boat lifted and pulled it off, and of course the water poured in so that there was no hope of keeping afloat. I jumped back into the stern, pulled off my shoes and swung them around my neck, tied together, and lowered myself into the water. The boat was completely water-logged, and I knew I couldn't use the oars, but I thought I could swim along behind the boat and push it back to the hotel. I tried it, but it was slow work, because a live breeze had sprung up from the north and the waves were rolling against me. I saw that it

would take me an hour or more to get back to the hotel working that way, and I remembered all at once that I had to catch the five o'clock train. I was at least a mile from shore, considerably over two miles from the hotel, and a good long mile from the railway station at the south end of the lake. I saw that if I expected to reach the shore at all in time to catch the train I would have to make for the south end. I let the boat swing around and started to swim behind it, pushing it with the wind. I made better headway, but it was pretty mean work, because the boat was half-full of water, and just as heavy as a drag. I knew that the hotel people would recover the boat all right, so I simply let it go, and I started for the shore alone. I figured that I had no time to waste if I wanted to catch that train, so I swam with my long overhand sailor stroke—I've always found that I can make better speed that way. The wind kept getting higher, and for the last half mile or so I was riding in the white caps. I want to tell you, ladies, that even in a little lake, four miles long, you can get up a pretty good sea if you get the wind to coming right. I didn't mind the waves, however,

because they sort of helped me along. When I was about a hundred yards from the shore I heard the engine whistle for the station at the north of the lake. I was somewhat exhausted by that time, naturally enough. I had often swum longer distances than that, but never before had I attempted to keep up such a speed. I could see the train coming along through the woods, and I made a final spurt."

"Did you ever!" observed Mrs. Milbury, with an upward roll of the eyes.

"Just as I came out on the bank the train stopped at the station, and I had to make a run. I swung on the platform as the wheels began to turn. I got on the train on the side opposite the station, and, for that reason, the people on the platform didn't see me.

"I sat out on the front end of the car until the conductor came along, and then explained my predicament to him. Luckily he recognized me—I had been over the road two or three times with a party of gentlemen in a private car—and he put the baggage car at my disposal so I could dry my clothes.

"It was late in the evening when I arrived in Milwaukee. I took a carriage up to my

hotel, and when I walked in, the clerk gave a yell and threw up both hands. You see, the hotel people up at Plankinac had found the boat, and they supposed, of course, that I had been drowned, so they had telegraphed the news to Milwaukee and from Milwaukee it had been sent all over the



(W.K.)

THE OVERHAND STROKE.

country by the Associated Press. I hurried around to the newspaper offices to deny the rumor. At one place they had an obituary notice about two columns long already set up. The funniest part of it all was what the people up at Plankinac said. They declared that no man could have swum ashore in such rough water, but the conductor told his story and they had to give in."

"Well, I think it's perfectly wonderful that you had the courage to strike out from that boat and swim such a long distance," said Miss Milbury.

"I wanted to catch that train, and I caught it," said Doc'.

Both the women were so interested in this feat of swimming that Doc' had to tell them of a high dive into the Cumberland River, made as the result of a "dare" given him by a Miss Durbin, of Tallahassee, distantly related to Gen. Wade Hampton, of Louisiana, and other stories.

While the good-nights were being said, Doc' promised to call again. Miss Letitia Milbury had whispered that Doc' was "exceedingly interesting," and the dentist was happy.

The ensuing conversation passed after Doc' and the dentist had boarded the car.

"Well, Doc', she's a darned fine girl, ain't she?" asked the dentist.

"Remarkable—remarkable."

"Good looking, don't you think so?"

"Very—very."

"It strikes me, too, that she has a good even temper."

"I saw or heard nothing to induce me to believe otherwise."

"And a lot of common sense. That's what so few of them have now, Doc', is common sense."

"I dare say. The mother seems to be a very superior person also."

"Yes, but she's so big! Gee! but she's fat."

"You do not like large women?"

"Well, I don't positively dislike any woman because she happens to be rather stout, but I don't believe I could love a very fat woman. I don't object to a plump one, but I wouldn't care for one as fat as Mrs. Milbury is."

"I'm very sorry to hear you say that."

"Sorry? Why so?"

"Because, my dear sir, the daughter, in ten or fifteen years from now, will be fully as large as the mother is at present."

"Good heavens! Why—how do you know?"

"I argue from the well-known laws of heredity. Those two women are just alike both in temperament and physical characteristics. You can see that by merely looking at them."

"Oh, I don't know. There is a certain family resemblance, to be sure, but—no, I can't see it."

"Naturally there is not a close resemblance, because one is twenty-two and the other is probably forty-five, but what the daughter is now, the mother was twenty

years ago. I know that, because I looked through the album while you and Miss Milbury were at the piano, and there was a picture of the mother taken years ago, and it might pass for a photograph of the daughter to-day, only the mother was then slimmer than the daughter is at the present time."

"Slimmer?" gasped the dentist.

"It's a fact. I hope I'm not meddlesome in saying what I have, but it's only right that you should know it. The young lady is charming and, just at present, decidedly attractive, but you may take my word for it, in the course of a very few years she will be stout—quite stout—possibly as large as her mother."

"That settles it," said the dentist, in a voice which sounded strangely hollow.

"I have observed hundreds of cases," added Doc'.

The dentist could not trust himself to speak. He alighted from the car and walked over to the hotel in staring silence, as if all hope were dead.

CHAPTER XIII

WAS IT BRIDGEMAN?

On the night after the visit to the Milbury flat the dentist was in hiding. Doc' Horne was sitting in front of the hotel with the lush and a large, side-whiskered man, lately arrived at the Alfalfa and known to be a book-agent. These three were enjoying one of the first balmy evenings of the delayed summer.

Doc' had been leaning back, dreamily blowing rings of smoke, and the book-agent had been attempting to recite a portion of "Thanatopsis" to the lush, who claimed he had never heard of William Cullen Bryant.

Suddenly Doc' straightened up in his chair and looked most intently at a passing man who carried a walking-stick and seemed to be in a hurry.

"Well, I'll declare!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter, Doc'?" asked the lush.

Doc' continued to gaze at the pedestrian until he turned the corner.

"That's most extraordinary," he said; "I could have sworn that was Bridgeman."

"Who's Bridgeman?" asked the book-agent.

"Bridgeman *was* a friend of mine. I say *was* because I suppose he's dead, but I assure you, gentlemen, that the man who walked by here was so much like Bridgeman that I felt sure for a moment it was he."

"Don't you know whether your friend is dead or alive?" asked the book-agent.

"He disappeared—that's all we knew about it."

"Ran away?"

"Well, the whole affair was a mystery. I always believed in Bridgeman, and the sheriff always maintained that he was loyal to us, but there were others who claimed that he sold us out."

"What was it—politics?"

"No, indeed; something a great deal more serious than that. We were after a gang of



"WELL, I'LL DECLARE!"

counterfeiters. Let's see—that was thirty years ago this summer. The way I came to be drawn into it was that Jim Martin, who was United States marshal, wrote me to join him in a small town down in Kentucky. He said he thought he could promise some excitement. I went down there, not knowing what was up. After I arrived I found that Jim had located a gang of counterfeiters and wanted to get a few cool and nervy men to help him make the arrests. We had been out on several little excursions together, and Jim knew me pretty well. He said that as soon as he found where the gang made its headquarters he would send for me, because he knew I didn't want to miss any fun."

Doc' stopped to relight his cigar, and then he resumed: "When I got down to this little station I found Jim and a deputy named Hayes and the sheriff of that county and Bridgeman. That made five of us in all, and Jim said he would as soon have the five as twenty ordinary men. It happened that when I got there the counterfeiters had cleared out. It was supposed that they made occasional trips to the cities to dispose of their goods. We waited around there a

week before they came back. You see, we were supposed to be a hunting party from Cincinnati, and the house at which we stopped was at least five or six miles from the cabin where the counterfeiters worked, so that we felt satisfied they hadn't taken alarm. Bridgeman was detailed to watch the cabin and report if the gang came back. I saw him every day for a week or more, and came to have a high regard for his courage and shrewdness."

Doc' paused and said: "That man who passed here was wonderfully like Bridgeman."

"Would you know him after such a long time?" asked the book-agent.

"I never forget a face," replied Doc'.

"Well, what happened to Bridgeman?" asked the lush. "That's what I want to know."

"That's what I was about to tell you. On



HE RESEMBLED BRIDGEMAN.

the eighth day, I think it was, Bridgeman reported that all four members of the gang had returned to the cabin. Jim determined to make a raid on the place that night. The cabin was in a deep ravine that ran down toward a creek, and it was necessary to go through heavy brush and up and down hills to get to it, unless you knew the winding path. Bridgeman knew the country, and that's why he had been put to do the spying.

"We set out about dark and rode, one at a time, to a point that had been agreed upon, a clump of timber at a cross-roads. Then it was decided to send Bridgeman ahead to make sure for the last time that the men were at the cabin. He was to ride to the end of the roads and tie his horse and then slip through the brush and see that everything was clear. Then he was to come back and notify us and we were to follow him single file through the brush, and surround the cabin before the inmates were alarmed. You see, we didn't want to descend on the cabin in force if there was no one there but the woman. We wanted to nab the whole crowd."

"Naturally," assented the book-agent.

"Well, we sent Bridgeman ahead and then

we followed slowly after. It was getting late and the night was dark and cloudy. I was in a new country, but Jim and the sheriff had been over the ground once or twice before. I suppose we were about a quarter of a mile away from the cabin when we heard two shots. I said to Jim: 'Come



"IT WAS GETTING LATE."

on; we're needed,' and we put the spurs to the horses and dashed down the road. I was the first one to reach the end of the road where the path started. Instead of jumping off my horse I simply guided him to the opening in the brush and followed the winding path as far as I could. Then I

jumped off and ran on foot. When I came to the little clearing where the cabin was I made a run for the door, kicked it open and went into the house. Jim said afterward that it was the most foolhardy act that he had ever heard of. Well, the house was empty. I went to the door and called to the boys, who were tumbling down through the brush, and they came running up. There wasn't a soul around the place. We lighted a candle and found some of the broken dies and a few cooking utensils, but the counterfeiters had escaped and taken everything of value with them. Then we began to wonder what had become of Bridgeman. We shouted his name and we scoured the woods for him, but he couldn't be found anywhere."

"And he was never found?" asked the book-agent.

"Well, there's a question as to that. One man claimed that he afterward met him, face to face, in Louisville, and it was supposed that his sister received letters from him. This much is certain, though. He was never seen in that part of the country again, and most of the people believed that he had been killed by the counterfeiters and

his body buried in some lonely place or else sunk in the creek. His horse returned home next day."

"And you say some people didn't believe he was dead?"

"Some people claimed that he sold out to the counterfeiters and gave them warning of an attack or else they couldn't have moved out in such a hurry. It was claimed that the gang had already cleared out before we started out that night. Bridgeman fired a couple of shots himself so as to make us believe that he had been in a fight and then he rode off with the gang, leaving us to scour around the cabin while he and the others were making time across the country. That, as I say, was the theory and there are some facts to support it, but I always believed in Bridgeman. You can imagine my surprise at seeing this man walk past to-night. It was a wonderful resemblance, making the usual allowance for the changes of thirty years."

"Why didn't you speak to him?" asked the lush.

"Well, if it really was Bridgeman, it simply proves that he betrayed us that night and escaped with the counterfeiters. Of

course, if he did that, I wouldn't shake hands with him any more than I'd take hold of a snake. Bridgeman either turned traitor or else he was killed."

"If he was killed this can't be the man," suggested the lush.

"Evidently not."

"And if he wasn't killed, you don't want anything to do with him," ventured the book-agent.

"Come to think of it, I don't believe it was Bridgeman," said Doc'. "Bridgeman was taller than this fellow."

CHAPTER XIV

DOC' IN WAR TIME

On the way from the restaurant to the hotel, the dentist walked beside Doc' and told his troubles.

"I don't know what to do, Doc'," he said. "I got a note from Miss Milbury to-day, and she wants me to call this evening."

"Well, why not call?"

"Because I don't want to go ahead and act as if—to tell the truth, after what you told me the other night, I think it would be better to call the whole thing off."

"My dear young friend! You may call on a young lady with propriety, even if you have no matrimonial intentions. I have called on hundreds of women—taken them to parties, picnics, theaters, receptions and so on, and yet I have managed to remain a bachelor."

"Yes, but you're different. You can control yourself. I can't. From the minute I met her, Doc', I thought there was more

than a possibility of it turning out all right."

"So it may! If you prefer this young



"I HAVE MANAGED TO REMAIN A BACHELOR."

lady to any other you have met, go ahead! It is true that she will become stouter as she grows older, but the accretion will be gradual and probably you wouldn't notice—"

"I *would* notice it."

"I'm rather sorry now that I told you what I did, but I thought it was my duty."

"It broke me all up, Doc', but I don't blame you. I'll go out there to-night, but I hate to do it. I'll keep thinking of what you told me."

He went into the hotel to prepare for his call, and Doc' joined the evening group on the sidewalk. There had been changes in the company. Both the actor and the race-track man had left the Alfalfa, one to join a summer company playing under a tent, and the other to try his fortunes at a Cincinnati track. Among the new-comers were two who pleased Doc'. One was the book-agent, already mentioned, and the second was a youth employed as a salesman in a bicycle store.

The book-agent was a person to command respect. He was large, and he had whiskers, and it is known that many a politician has gone to congress and many a doctor has built up a country practice with no other qualifications than these two. The book-agent wore a somewhat faded Prince Albert coat, which supported his assumption of learning and professional dignity.

The stringy side-whiskers were lightly

streaked with gray, and the growing baldness was only half-concealed by a long wisp of hair which was brought up from the side and spread across the bare patch. The book-agent spoke rather slowly, biting off his words with the precision of a hardened school teacher. During the first hour with him one would be led to believe that he had spent his life among the poets. His conversation was literally stuffed with gems of verse. After a second or third meeting with him it became apparent that he repeated himself, calling up the same quotation twice or thrice in the same week. The lush, who was an observant person during his lucid intervals, concluded, after three weeks, that the book-agent had a limited repertoire of verses and couplets which he had learned from book prospectuses. This conclusion was borne out by a study of the agent's outfit which he carried with him. He had a prospectus of the "Sweet Singers of All Time," giving sample pages and illustrations, and the lush found, on looking through it one day, that all the stray bits of poetry which the learned book-agent casually called to mind were in this condensed volume.

Any one who has been importuned by a book-agent will remember the set speech, the eulogium on the calf binding, and the reading of chance passages as the leaves are turned. By repetition the book-agent had memorized the poetry, and he used it constantly to embellish his conversation.

Therefore, at a first meeting the book-agent made a profound impression. A Johnsonian figure of a man, who enriched his talk with extracts from the poets of all ages—he rather awed Doc'.

Besides, he was so conscious of his own learning. He smiled indulgently on the bicycle salesman, even as he quoted Shakespeare, and all his intercourse was marked by a calm and thoughtful politeness. He had the habit of patting and rubbing himself in front as if to quiet the seething emotions of his soul.

The bicycle salesman was a gaunt young man with a surplus of hair, which seemed to be especially luxuriant on the back of his head. He wore a cap at least a size too small, so that the effect of the hair-burst just below the cap was something fantastic and yet greatly to be desired by those who ride the wheel.

His head appeared to be peculiarly elongated because of the mat of hair behind.

Doc' soon perceived that the bicycle youth was an excellent listener of responsive temperament, and he rather liked him.

Lush and the freckled boy were in a dispute as Doc' seated himself. It was a pleasant summer evening. The book-agent had his vest widely unbuttoned and was gazing with surprise and reproach at the two disputants.

Doc' sat and listened for several moments before he could determine the subject under debate. This is what it proved to be:

Which was the greater general, Grant or Lee?

No one can ever tell how these hotel controversies begin, and no one ever saw one of them arrive at any conclusion.

The lush was defending the military reputation of Grant. Not that he knew very much about Grant or had any decided opinion as to his military genius, but because the freckled boy had said something in favor of Lee.

"If Lee had only had as many soldiers as Grant had there wouldn't have been a thing to it," said the freckled boy. "He'd 'a'

give Grant a horrible finish. Don't tell me no different."

"What was your regiment?" asked the lush.

"Well, I come about as near fightin' as you did."

"I'll tell you just how much you know about Lee. You saw his picture on a cigar box somewhere. What's his first name?"

"Robert E. Lee."

"That's right! That's the name of the cigar—the Robert E. Lee cigar. I knew that's where you got the name."

"I s'pose I don't know nothin' about the siege of Richmond?"

"Who won out there?"

"Why shouldn't he win out when he had four times as many soldiers?"

"Who's that—Lee?"

"No, it wasn't Lee."

"Well, who was it came out ahead?"

"Well, I s'pose every one knows that Grant finally captured Richmond."

"That doesn't prove anything, though, does it? I guess that was an accident. Things just happened to come his way. He didn't know a thing."

"But he had the soldiers."

"Well, that's where he was smooth. Why didn't Lee get some soldiers and have them there?"

"He couldn't get them."

"Well, I don't think much of a general who can't get soldiers when he needs them. That's part of the business—having your men there."

"What do the books say?"

"What books?"

"W'y, the histories. They say it was great the way Lee stood off Grant. It was a toss-up there for a while, and if anything Lee had a shade the best of it."

"But Lee finally surrendered."

"Yes—I s'pose so."

"And that proves that Grant was a poor general, does it?"

"Here! would you expect a welter-weight to lick a man that weighed one-seventy?"

"I'm talking about generals—not prize-fighters."

"I'll leave it to Doc'," said the freckled boy.

"Really, gentlemen, I don't care to express a preference," said Doc', with a bland smile. "Each was a military genius in his way. I met both of them—General

Lee before the war and General Grant during the campaign of 1868. I admire them, not only as soldiers, but as American gentlemen, and feel that it would hardly be proper to enter into any dispute as to their relative merits."

The book-agent sighed and repeated, softly:

"The union of lakes, the union of lands,
The union of states none can sever;
The union of hearts, the union of hands,
And the flag of our union forever!"

"Just the same, Lee was a great general," said the freckled boy.

"Did you enter the service when grim-visaged war reared its awful front?" asked the book-agent, looking at Doc'.

"Not as a soldier—no. That is, not as an ordinary soldier. Was I in the service? Yes, and no. I was often at the front, and I had a certain connection with the war department, but I was not a soldier in the common acceptance of the term. I held a position of a quasi-military character, you might say. My exact standing with the secretary of war and the importance of my errands on several occasions were known to but few people. I did not figure as a repre-

sentative of the government, and I doubt if you will find my name mentioned anywhere in the records. It may be in there, but I doubt it. Stanton was always very careful about those things."

"Stanton?" asked the bicycle youth.

"Edwin M. Stanton—secretary of war," explained the book-agent.

"A certain official said to me once: 'Horne, I want you to go and arrange this matter for me, and I don't want any one to ever know anything about it, outside of we three.' The third person to whom he referred was a general—a western man."

"Well, did you arrange it?" asked the bicycle salesman.

"If I were at liberty to tell you the name of the general, you'd know how well I arranged it. My visit to the general marked the turning-point of one of the most important campaigns of the war. The department wanted to give this general some advice which was not to be a matter of record. If you've ever had anything to do with the government service, you know quite well that some messages are too important and confidential to be submitted to writing. After I had concluded my business, this

general—and you'd know his name in a minute if I mentioned it—this general said to me: 'Horne, what's your private opinion of this whole business?' He wanted it, and I gave it to him. I agreed with Stanton on the main proposition, but I had my own opinion as to how the thing ought to be put into effect. We sat up for two or three hours talking it over, and I could see that he was impressed by my suggestions, although he didn't say very much. Well, sir, I started back to Washington, under the cover of darkness, but from that day the details of the campaign were along the lines which I had laid down in our private conference. I don't say it boastingly, gentlemen, but merely to prove what I have said time and again, that very often a general is credited with some coup, the inspiration for which is provided by a man behind the scenes—some one who never figures in history."

"What excuse could you give for running around the country and following up the armies?" asked the bicycle salesman.

"I was ostensibly a commercial traveler trying to sell goods to sutlers and other dealers near the large camps. That gave me a good excuse for visiting the front at

any time. Nearly all the people who met me supposed I was a traveling salesman and nothing more. If you were to meet one of the subordinate officers whom I knew about that time and ask him, 'Was Cal Horne connected with the war department?' he'd say, 'No; Horne was the fellow who used to come around with supplies for the sutlers.' I wasn't telling my business to every Tom, Dick and Harry."

CHAPTER XV

“WOMAN,” BY THE FRECKLED BOY

Miss Letitia Milbury and her mother went into the country for a month, and the dentist said that all was for the best. He was sorry that he had met Miss Milbury and more sorry still that he had taken Doc' Horne to call on her. More than once he wondered if it could be true that Miss Milbury would be as large as her mother. It seemed to him that he could recall having met many slim women each of whom had a stout mother. He wondered if Mr. Milbury had been a heavy



AT THE CONCERT GARDEN.

man. And more than once he wondered if Doc's confident theory as to hereditary stoutness could be accepted. This was a mournful period for the dentist. Since Miss Milbury was not for him, he was glad that she had gone from the city.

The first sign of his recovery came at about the time of his meeting with Miss Laura Tupham at a concert garden on the north side.

"I went out to a German garden last night with a friend of mine, in the leather business, and we ran into a lot of his friends," he reported to Doc'. "I met one girl that was fine. Her name is Tupham—Laura Tupham."

"My mother had some distant relatives by the name of Tupham," said Doc'. "One of the Tuphams is said to have given Cornelius Vanderbilt his start in life."

"I don't know where this girl comes from, but she's all right. She's going to be out at the garden again next week, and I've promised to be there. By the way, her mother was with her. She's a mighty well-preserved woman, Doc'. You wouldn't take her to be more than ten years older than this girl."

Doc' turned and looked at him, rather puzzled.

"I'm afraid you are attaching too much importance to our conversation the other evening," he said.

"Oh, no, I understand," with a forced smile. "It isn't true in all cases. But I just thought I'd tell you."

The lush came out and joined them, so they were silent.

"Such a fine piece of scandal," said the lush. "You wouldn't guess it in a thousand years. You know the book-agent? Well, he's a divorced man."

"Divorced! Is that so?" asked the dentist. It seemed to him at that moment that the whole world was in a conspiracy to block his purpose and frighten him away from matrimony.

"Yes, I believe she got her papers since he came here to live. He's been worried a good deal for fear it would get into the papers, but it seems to be all right."

"Did he tell you about it?" asked Doc'.

"Yes; you know, he's inclined to be pious, and he cornered me yesterday and gave me a little argument on the liquor proposition. I told him I had to drink now and then to

drown my sorrows, and then he tried to convince me that he had had more trouble than I ever dreamed of, and still got through it without taking a drink."

"Who's that?" demanded the freckled boy, who had come up unobserved, as usual.

Doc' frowned in annoyance.

"The book-agent," replied the lush. "After he started in he gave me the whole story. It seems that he married her two years ago, for her money. He didn't say so, but he showed me her picture, and then I knew. Our friend with the whiskers was number three. He met her at a meeting of the Society for the Umptification of Something-or-other and thought it was a good thing, so he grabbed it. He went out to her house to live, and from the hard-luck story he told me, why, his life must have been one long picnic. She's a vegetarian, and wouldn't let him eat meat. Then she made him wear a kind of health underwear that gave him the hives. He says that she made him sit up all one night and rub her back with liniment, and no matter where he rubbed she'd say it wasn't the right place. You ought to have heard him. Why, he

nearly cried when he told me about it. I figured that she married him so as to have something to experiment on. She was nearly everything—a spiritualist, a vegetarian, a suffragist, a faith cure, a health underwear, theosophist,—”

“What’s that?” asked the freckled boy.

“She thinks this isn’t her first time on earth,” said the lush.

“Rats!”

“From what he told me, I’d just as soon be married to a Bengal tiger. Darned if I didn’t feel sorry for him. He said that at the time he left her place he got some of her handkerchiefs into his grip by mistake, and she had him arrested for stealing. What do you think of that?”

“A man’s a chump for gettin’ married,” said the freckled boy, gravely.

“When she applied for her divorce she charged him with cruelty, desertion, harsh and abusive language, and failure to provide. He was telling me that he was absolutely innocent, and that he didn’t leave her house until she made it so hot for him that he couldn’t stand it another day.”

“Is she a good-looker?” asked the freckled boy.

"She's a sight. I'd like to know why in the world he ever married her."

"I s'pose the book graft was slow," said the freckled boy. "She's got some coin, ain't she?"

"She's got money now that she had before the war. He says that he nearly starved to death while he was living with her. Vegetarian, you know. Oatmeal and prunes for breakfast, brown bread and potatoes for dinner. You ought to get him to tell you about it."

"Do you know what I'd do if I had that kind of a wife?" asked the freckled boy. "I don't believe in bein' rough with a lady as long as she is one, but if she'd ever try any o' that funny work with me, I'd call her down if I had to swing on her."

"Oh, well, I don't know," remarked the lush. "It isn't a very proper thing to do—to slug a perfect lady. I'd simply go ahead and run the house in my own way and pay no attention to anything she said. You see, after a woman talks herself black in the face without getting an argument, she has to stop."

"It's too bad that our friend did not confer with you gentlemen before he left his

wife," said Doc', with a half-restrained smile. "You know how to manage women and could have given him some valuable advice."

"Well, I've never been married, but I've always known one thing," said the dentist. "A man has got to assert his independence in his own house. If he lets his wife think she can order him around and treat him like a schoolboy, he might as well give up all hope of having any liberty of his own. I don't say that a man ought to be harsh with a woman, but he ought to give her to understand that he can come and go once in a while without asking her permission."

"That's right," said the lush. "If this book-agent friend of ours had gone out and got drunk the night he married the old girl, and then come home and chased her around the house with a hatchet, she'd have had some respect for him. I knew a man once who chased his wife with a hatchet at least once a month. He loved her all right, and wouldn't have harmed her for anything in the world, but he claimed that he had to make this hatchet demonstration at least once a month in order to maintain his rights. After every outbreak she'd be pleasant and

attentive for several weeks. Then her respect for his rights would begin to weaken, and he would have to get out his hatchet again."

In concluding he winked at the dentist.

"Seriously speaking, I don't believe a woman has much regard for a man who allows himself to be tied to her apron strings," said the dentist.

"W'y, of course not!" exclaimed the freckled boy, with an indifferent gesture, to show that he was an expert. "I'll win out a girl in ten minutes where one o' them easy, polite guys wouldn't make a showin' in an hour. You've got to be a little rough with 'em if you want to get along. Chop all this business of writin' notes an' promisin' to be good. Promise nothin'! You head the combination yourself, understand? If you don't, you'll be runnin' errands for her, an' some other geezer won't do a thing but pull the handle an' let you through the chute. That's right. The minute one of 'em thinks she's got you dead, that spoils her. You've got to ring 'er up every twenty minutes an' square yourself. But when you keep 'er guessin', then she does the ringin' up.

“I’ve got a brother that don’t know a thing about them fairies. He won’t stand for none o’ this lady-friend business. When one of ’em gives him the saucy eye an’ begins to pick things off o’ his coat, he up and barks at her an’ scares her to death.

“There’s none of ’em can cut saucy capers with that boy. He has his way or the lights go out—that’s all there is to it. When he cops out a shirt-waist and puts it on a trolley car he says: ‘Now you’re with me, an’ not me with you. Start nothin’, and if any argument comes up, you out of the way!’ That’s right, too; make ’em know their place.

“An’ don’t let ’em kid you. If one of ’em gets to thinkin’ she’s a kidder, that swells her all out o’ shape, an’ it takes many a jolt to make her behave. I was up at a dance one night an’ I met a tall party that thought she was old stringer No. 1. She had a lot o’ moldy ones left over from last year’s ten-twent’-and-thirt’, an’ she kept shootin’ ’em in there an’ gettin’ puffed up till her cloze didn’t fit her. If there’s anything makes me sore it’s to have one o’ them laundry queens try to sew buttons on me. Purty soon I says: ‘Gertie, you’re lively company

an' a very neat josher, but you don't last, so I think I'll have to put a tag on you. I don't want you to get mad at nothin' I say to you, becuz I can see that you belong with the best, an' besides we're all good fellows here together. At the same time, Gertie, I must say that before you try to pump the hot air you ought to oil up. Now, I'll tell you what I'm goin' to do with you. You're gettin' too swift an' reckless an' you may run somethin' down, so I'm goin' to send you out to a blacksmith shop an' have a fender put on you.' She come back with the best she had, an' when she got through, I says: 'If you've finished, Gertie, you might as well blow. There ain't nothin' doin' for you over in this corner. An' never come to one o' these dances till you get a dress that fits you. You're a sight!'

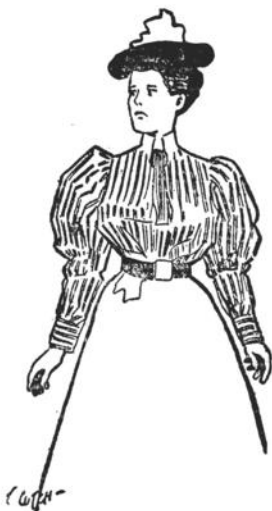
"Well, say, she was wild. This was a new game for her. She'd had a lot o' them cigarette children over in the corner, makin' goo-goo eyes at 'em an' talkin' 'em to a standstill, an' just about the time when she thought she was good enough to travel in any class she bumped into me an' got a crimp that'll last her for many's the day.

"But here's what I started out to tell you:

After I'd roasted her do you think she quit me an' went back to little Horace with the hair and Ernest with the red necktie? I should sa-a-y not! She followed me across the floor, an' just as I was moppin' in a scuttle o' beer about a foot high I feel somebody give me a punch in the back, an' when I turns around here's the tall party. She says, 'I think you're just as mean as you can be!' oh, fine an' sassy! 'Don't follow me,' I says. 'I'm tired o' lookin' at you. I've got a swell dame here from the south side, an' if she ever sees me talkin' to you I won't get another piece o' jewelry in six months. Now duck! Go back to them chewin'-gum Willies. You can make good with them, but you don't stand one-two-seventeen with me. I don't like your shape, for one thing. You're gettin' round-shouldered. What you been doin' all your life—leanin' over a fence?'

"Oh, say, I toasted her shameful, but that's what she needed. An' the rougher I shot it into her the closer she stuck to me. She was mad, all right, but she didn't want to quit. I'd see her standin' over talkin' to some guy, an' the minute she'd see me, that'd rattle her. Then I'd give her the

quiet laugh an' over she'd come. She'd say: 'I never met any gentleman before that said such awful things to me as you said right here to-night.' 'I'll tell you, Gert,' I says, takin' 'hold of her mitt, 'that's becuz



"A SHIRT-WAIST."

you never met a true friend before.' Then she wouldn't know what to think. I had her in the air, sure enough. Just about the time when she'd think I was weakenin' an' was goin' to take it all back an' tell her she was a nice girl, I'd say: 'Well, run along now. I've got to go an' meet a friend.' Then she'd be sore again—oh, crazy! Never would speak to the old

rowdy thing again—never! But just the same I knew I couldn't lose her.

"On the square, I got ashamed o' myself after while. The girl was all right, mind you, only she was just new—that's all.

Before I got through with her, though, I made a good fellow out of her. I made her quit. That's what I done. I had her clinchin' an' beggin' me to stop, and she was the tameest thing you ever see. She didn't have one funny crack left. I certainly put her out o' the stringin' business. Then I says to her: 'You ain't mad, are you, Gert?' She was so leary by that time she didn't know what to say. With that I jollied her a little an' says to her: 'As soon as you've been around some more you'll know how to take a joke.' Then I danced with her a couple o' times an' bought her somethin' to eat, an', say, she couldn't see nobody else. Now, there's a girl I may meet a thousand times, an' it's like gettin' money from home that she won't never try to kid me again. I should say not. You've got to have 'em a little afraid of you—there ain't no use talkin'. If you want 'em to behave you've got to be a little rough now an' then."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen!" said Doc', nodding his head slowly. "Are we at the end of the nineteenth century or do we still live in caves and holes in the ground? Have we become civilized or do

we still rule by fear? Is it possible that any one in the semblance of a human being still holds to the monstrous belief that the creature put upon earth to be man's companion and helpmate is deserving only of his brutal persecutions? I wouldn't have believed it, but I have sat here and listened—listened with shame, I must confess. I thought we had got further away from savagery. The aborigines held the very theory which is advocated so eloquently by my young friend here. I only hope that he will live to blush for his words. Good night, gentlemen!"

"What's the matter with him?" asked the freckled boy, as Doc' entered the hotel. "Did somebody say somethin'? He seems to be sore."

CHAPTER XVI

THE LETTER FROM MISS MILBURY

On the evening appointed, the dentist went to the German garden on the north side to meet his friend in the leather business, who had promised to be there with Miss Laura Tupham and others. This time Miss Tupham was not accompanied by her mother, and she seemed to enjoy her liberty, for she talked rapidly and almost incessantly, and the dentist suspected that she wanted to flirt with him. She showed her playful anger at the friend in the leather business by urging the dentist to move around and sit beside her, and she even put her arm within his and said, "There



"IN THE LEATHER BUSINESS."

now!" this performance impressing the dentist as being rather bold, although not entirely displeasing. He reflected that Miss Milbury had never done anything of the kind, although he had been with her at least six times, and this was the second time he had met Miss Tupham. He wondered if she ever seized hold of other men, after meeting them once or twice, and the more he wondered, the stronger became the conviction that she was not to be Miss Milbury's successor in his affections.

If he had any remaining doubt, it vanished when he saw the waiter put a glass of beer in front of her. The dentist had become accustomed to seeing both men and women drink the forbidden cups, but he had never overcome the belief that it was sinful for them to do so. He drank sometimes, but always with a shame which he could not fully conceal. He had been reared in a community in Indiana which would have closed all doors against any woman who dared to drink beer in a place of public entertainment. The other women of the town would have persecuted her with endless denunciation. The dentist often told himself that he had become "liberal" and

no longer judged people by the narrow code of a fanatical village, and yet he was shocked and made sorry when he saw that Miss Tupham was to drink a glass of beer. The question at once came to him, "What would my relatives say of me and think of me if I married a woman who drank beer?"

To be sure, he drank with her and even clinked glasses and laughed with the others, but he knew that this would be the end of it, so far as Miss Laura Tupham was concerned.

The dentist was in the city, but not of it. The Indiana part of him insisted that any woman who drank a glass of beer in a public garden thereby degraded herself. He doubted if Miss Milbury would even visit such a place.

He was quite unhappy as he rode back to the hotel in the open car with his hat off, the dusty breezes cooling his head. He found Doc' Horne, the married man, the lush, and the book-agent sitting in a semicircle near the Alfalfa doorway.

The high buildings to the west intercepted the breeze and the street was packed with a moist and stifling heat. Doc' had removed

his collar and tucked a handkerchief inside his neckband.

The book-agent's side-whiskers were hanging limp and becalmed. He had removed both coat and vest. Occasionally he shifted the pale flowered suspenders and patted himself and murmured, "Oh, dear!"

The five sat for a while and weakly cursed the temperature.

"Ah-h-h-h-h!" exclaimed the dentist in admiration, for a long fork of lightning had suddenly played across the wall of black clouds to the north. While the members of the colony were still looking, a faint rumble of thunder was heard, and a cooler puff of air revived them.

"Feel that?" asked the dentist. "We're going to have rain."

"I wouldn't be surprised if we had some lightning, too," said Doc' Horne, squinting at the clouds.

"I hope not," said the dentist. "I'm afraid of lightning."

"There isn't much danger if you keep away from the windows," said the lush. "If a man sits in the window he's almost sure to be struck by lightning. Best way's to

get in feathers—non-conductor. Go get in a feather bed and you're safe."

"That's good advice," said the dentist. "I don't suppose they've had a feather bed in the Alfalfa for ten years."

"Speak to the old man and he'll send out and get a feather bed for you," said the lush. "Anything we haven't got we can send out and get."

The book-agent, who had been watching the flashes in the north, broke the silence with a quotation:

"The sky is changed, and such a change! O night
And storm and darkness! Ye are wondrous strong;
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder."

"That's great," said the dentist, in a whisper, after the book-agent had finished.

"Who wrote it?"

"Byron."

"He's the fellow you were telling me about the other night."

"No; that was Bryant—William Cullen Bryant."

"Oh, I see. There are two of them."

"There are five or six poets altogether," said the lush.

"I never was particularly afraid of lightning," said the book-agent, addressing Doc' Horne, so as to give a turn to the conversation.

"I never worry about it at all," said Doc'.



THE BOOK-AGENT.

"I suppose that when it comes my time to go, they'll get me, no matter where I am. The possibility of being struck by lightning never occurs to me, although, as a matter of fact, I ought to be apprehensive, I suppose, considering that I had such a narrow escape once. I was visiting some of my relatives

down in Pennsylvania and had been out on a long walk. A storm came up very suddenly when I was at least a mile from the house. I took refuge under a tall tree, and I had barely done so when the tree was struck by lightning. The lightning ran down the

trunk and tore up the ground terribly. My clothes were ripped down one side and the shoe on that side—it was the left shoe, I think—was scorched just as if it had been put into the fire. I remember that the nails in the heel were partly melted. Beyond giving me a certain numbness for a while, the stroke had no effect on me. I suppose that's because——”

Just then the cooling breeze came with new strength and big raindrops began to splash on the hot stones.

The members of the colony picked up their chairs and ran into the hotel. When the dentist went to get his key he found a letter in the box and recognized the handwriting. The letter was from Miss Milbury!

He went to his room and stood under the gas jet to read what she had written. Quick flashes of lightning illumined the blank walls beyond his two windows. Peal after peal of crashing thunder struck the building. The dentist had a fierce satisfaction in listening to the storm as he read the letter. He regarded the wild accompaniment as an expression of the tumult that had been raised in his own soul.

This is the letter:

LAKE WAUTENON, July 24.

Dear Friend:—

When mother and I first spoke to you of our being at the lake this summer, you promised faithfully that you would run out some Sunday and call on us. Perhaps you have forgotten your promise, but you *did* promise, and we really want you to come. The lake is more beautiful this year than ever before, and there were never so many nice people here—from Milwaukee and Chicago and quite a number from the south. We are at a cottage not far from the hotel. The 'bus will meet you at the Wautenon station and bring you to the hotel, and then any one can tell you the way. If you are coming out on Saturday you had better write or telegraph to the hotel for a room, as there is a crowd here every Sunday. Mother and I really hope you will come, because we know it must be dreadful to be cooped up in the dusty and smoky city, all through this hot weather.

We are living in a cottage with a family from our old home. I am sure you would like them.

Let us know when you are coming, and please don't disappoint us. Mother sends her regards and both of us wish to be remembered to Mr. Horne. Perhaps you could induce him to come with you. Be *sure* and come.

I am, yours sincerely,

LETITIA MILBURY.

Clearly it was not a love letter, and yet it was full of meaning for the dentist, who walked back and forth in his room, gazing at the floor and pursing his lips. Acting on

a sudden impulse, he bolted into the hallway and went direct to Doc' Horne's room. Doc' had removed his outer garments and was sitting in the window, cooling off.

"Doc', I'm in the devil of a fix," said the dentist, as he frowned and twisted his mustache.

"What in the world's the matter now?"

"I've got a letter from Miss Milbury, and she wants me to come out to the lake and visit them. It seems that I promised them I would. I don't remember it, but I suppose I did."

"Are you going?"

"I hadn't ought to go, Doc'. You know that. I hadn't ought to. If you're not going to do a thing it isn't right to—well, to pretend that you are. I don't want to mislead any one. I'm a gentleman, Doc'. I don't believe there ought to be any deception in a case of this kind."

"Oh, well, write a diplomatic letter and excuse yourself."

"I can tell you one thing—I'd like mighty well to go."

"Why not go, then?"

The dentist continued to pull at his mustache, but he made no reply.

"How about the young lady you met last week?" asked Doc', softly.

The dentist shook his head.

"I'd go out and visit them, I think," said Doc', in a consoling tone. "Don't you think you'd better?"

"No!" exclaimed the dentist, jamming the letter into his side pocket, and without saying another word he walked out.

Doc' was saddened by the turn of affairs. He began to fear that he was not succeeding as a match-maker for the dentist.

CHAPTER XVII

DOC' HORNE AS A DETECTIVE

It came out one evening that Doc' Horne had been a detective in Bolivar. He was talking with the married man, and had given his theory as to that week's "mysterious disappearance."

"You would have made a good detective, Doc'," said the married man.

"I don't know that I have any particular ability in that line," said Doc', picking at the charred end of his cigar. "I never

was a professional detective, but I cleared up one mystery after the police had given it up. Certainly I gave a few points to the cross-



THE CROSS-ROADS ORACLE.

roads oracles over my way. The town of Bolivar was about forty miles from our home. For over a year there had been a series of mysterious robberies at Bolivar—at least thirty private houses and stores had been entered. The locks had been picked in most cases, although occasionally the robbers would get in by cutting out glass with a diamond. They took only jewels and money—never anything bulky. They went to the best houses in town and seemed to know the premises, for they never spent any time in rummaging. They went direct to the place where the valuables were concealed. One peculiarity of the robberies was that no one had ever been awakened while the thieves were in the house. It was supposed that chloroform or some drug was used to keep the inmates of the house asleep while the robbers were at work, but this could never be proved. The robbers had never been caught at work except once. A night-watchman saw a door ajar and went into the house to investigate. Some one stepped up to him and clapped a handkerchief to his face, and that was the last he remembered until daylight. The police put on extra men at night after that, but it

didn't seem to make any difference. The robberies went ahead just the same—two or three a month. At last a friend of mine said to me: 'Horne, why don't you go over to Bolivar and find out who is committing all those robberies?' I didn't care much for the reward, but the mystery of the thing attracted me, and so I went over to Bolivar.

"Whenever I undertake anything I begin at the beginning. I didn't go off on any wild-goose chase. When I reached Bolivar I went to the chief of police and got a list of robberies for a year past, the date of each one, the value of goods stolen, and the location of each house entered. Then I went to my room and sat down, with a map of Bolivar in front of me, and I marked with dots the houses which had been robbed. When I finished I found that I had dotted out a sort of broad path connecting the extreme northeast of town with the southwest. You must understand that Bolivar was built along the river, which runs south at that part of its course. My discovery relating to the path of the robberies was interesting, but it didn't prove anything. Then I studied the dates, and in two minutes I made another discovery. I found

that all the robberies had been committed during the first half of each month—that is, between the first and fifteenth. Strangely enough, no one had ever called attention to that fact before. I said to myself: 'These robberies are committed by some one who is either out of town during the last half of each month, or who has some particular reason for keeping quiet. It is evident that he knows all about the interior arrangements of the residences in this town. He is a clever man, also, or he would not have escaped suspicion.' Well, I sat around and thought it over, and I'll confess I was puzzled to know how to begin. Then a very curious thing happened. I picked up a morning paper and glanced at it, and there, on the first page, was a big advertisement of 'Dr. James Brascall, specialist in electrical treatment, will be in Bolivar from May 1st to May 15th.' I jumped up and said: 'That's my man!' I'd never heard of him before, but I felt, intuitively, that I had struck a trail.

"I began making inquiries. I learned that Dr. Brascall had been visiting Bolivar, in a professional way, two weeks out of each month for a year or more. He had an

office on the main street, but he also gave treatments in his room at Mrs. Allen's house, which was in the northwest part of town. He was well liked in Bolivar, especially by the men, and had been admitted to membership in the club there. Much to my surprise, I learned that he was not a society man. So far as I could ascertain, he had visited but two or three of the houses which had been robbed. His reputation in the town was above reproach. He attended church regularly and had no bad habits. The doctors of the town called him a quack and an impostor, naturally, because he advertised, but, on the other hand, most of his patients stood up for him. I could learn of nothing which would show that he had been implicated in the robberies, and yet I felt in my bones that he was the man. I went to Mrs. Allen's house, where he roomed, and, under pretense of wishing to engage a room, I got into conversation with the woman. She said she could give me a room on the second floor—that Dr. Brascall had taken the only first-floor room. I asked her if I could have the doctor's room while he was in Pittsburg. She said the doctor paid for the room, even while he was out of

town, and had given particular orders that no one should be allowed in his room while he was away. In further conversation she said that the doctor never went out at night, but this did not spoil my theory, as I surmised that he might have taken a first-floor room so as to be able to get out through a window without disturbing any one.

“The case presented difficulties, and yet I was more than ever keen to fix the robberies on this doctor. I went to the chief of police and had another long talk. I asked him if he had ever suspected any one. He said that at one time Bill Gregory was under suspicion. I asked about Gregory and learned that he was a man-of-all-work, employed by Mrs. Walton, a widow, who lived in the southeast part of town. She had come to Bolivar about a year before and had brought Gregory with her. He did all the work around the place, and drove her phaeton when she went calling. She was something of an invalid, subject to nervous attacks, and this Gregory had to help her in and out of the houses where she called. It seemed that one night Gregory was seen coming out of an alley, and a policeman stopped him and found a revolver on him.

Gregory claimed that he was on his way to summon Dr. Brascall to attend Mrs. Walton, who was suffering from one of her attacks, and that he had come through the alley for a short cut. The policeman doubted him, so he went with Gregory to Mrs. Allen's house. After some delay, Dr. Brascall came to the door. The policeman followed the doctor to Mrs. Walton's house. He found her in great pain. She said she had sent Gregory for the doctor, and of course that satisfied the policeman and relieved Gregory from suspicion.

"Well, sir, that set me to thinking. I asked the chief to indicate to me on the map where Mrs. Walton lived. He did so, and I saw at once that this house and the house in which the doctor lived marked the ends of the district within which the robberies had been committed. In other words, any one proceeding from the doctor's house to Mrs. Walton's house could pass by any house or store that had been robbed and still not be going out of the way. I surmised at once that Mrs. Walton was in the plot; that she was to be ready to testify, in case the doctor fell under suspicion because of his appearance on the streets at night, that she had

sent for him and that he was on his way to attend her. But Mrs. Allen had said that the doctor did not go out at night. I believed then that Gregory came to his window and tapped and that the doctor crawled out of the window. At any rate, I felt sure that both Gregory and the charming widow were in the game. I inquired regarding Mrs. Walton, and learned that she was very popular with the best people, and was a prominent member of the literary club which met at the homes of the members. At last I began to understand how the doctor, supposing that he was the guilty ring-leader, learned where the jewelry and valuables were kept in each residence. By this time I had the case fairly mapped out in my own mind, but I hadn't a particle of proof.

"I sounded the chief of police as to Dr. Brascall, without hinting my suspicions. It seemed that he and the doctor were intimate friends. In fact, the doctor had assisted him in getting up a new schedule for the night policemen so that they could cover the town more effectively. Yes, sir, that doctor had actually assigned the policemen to their beats, so that he would know how to keep out of their way.

"Well, when my investigations were about this far along, the doctor, whom I had seen only casually, went to Pittsburg. I followed him, and learned that while he was in that city he made but little pretense to practice, and spent most of his time in gambling. As soon as he returned to Bolivar again I resolved to bring matters to a head and watch the house where he lived. For three nights I lay crouched behind a rose bush watching his windows, and I could have sworn that no one came to the house or went away. On the third morning, after I got back to the hotel, I learned that the Pearson residence had been entered and fifteen hundred dollars' worth of diamonds taken. I could not believe that Brascall had left the house that night, and yet I felt sure that he had done the job. I knew that I had to deal with a mystery, sure enough.

"My whole theory was apparently destroyed. I had surmised that the widow, Mrs. Walton, would send this man Gregory to summon Dr. Brascall. The doctor and Gregory would start in the direction of the widow's house at the other end of the town. If seen out at night together they had a plausible story to tell, and the widow stood ready to

corroborate everything they said. There would never be any chance to implicate them unless they were actually caught in the act of robbery. I had watched the house in order to shadow the doctor. There had been another robbery, and yet he had not left the house, so far as I could observe. Some men would have been discouraged under the circumstances, but I was not. I simply concluded that he was clever enough to get out of the house without using the front door or the back door or crawling through a window."

"How could that be?" asked the married man.

"There was a cellar under the house," said Doc', impressively. "What was to prevent him loosening the carpet and sawing out a trapdoor in the floor, so that he could lower himself into the cellar, and thus get out of the house through a cellar door at the rear? A grape arbor extended from this cellar door to the barn or shed, next to the alley. He could come up out of the cellar, slip along the grape arbor, go through the shed, and reach the alley without being seen by any one watching the house from the side or front."

"Well, I'll be darned!" said the bicycle youth.

"I examined the cellar the evening after the Pearson robbery," said Doc'.

"How did you get in?" asked the married man.

Doc' smacked his lips dryly and winked at the dentist. Then he said: "I simply went in. Suffice to say, I located the trap-door, and figured out in my own mind the exact plan of the robbers. Brascall and Gregory would plan on a robbery for a certain night. Gregory would leave Mrs. Walton's house for the pretended purpose of summoning the doctor. One might naturally suppose that he would have gone to the house where the doctor roomed and rung him or tapped on his window. But they were too shrewd. They figured that sooner or later some suspicious person would be waiting to shadow them, and so they had it arranged that Brascall was to come out through the cellar and meet Gregory in the alley. Then they would start in the general direction of the widow's house. As I told you before, Brascall knew exactly what districts the police were covering at that time of night, because he had helped the chief arrange the

schedule. His appearance on the street at any hour of the night would arouse no suspicion, and he could carry a box supposed to be a 'battery' for his electrical treatment. I'll tell you, that man was clever. I saw that I would have to detect him in the act before I could bring any proof which would be conclusive to a jury. The only sensible plan, it seemed to me, was to hide in that shed every night until they went out again, and then to follow them. For five nights I sat all night long back in a dark corner of this shed, waiting for something to happen. On the sixth night—it was then along about the middle of June, and I remember it was a warm night, but cloudy—I heard some one in the alley. In a little while the door leading to the yard opened, and in came Brascall with a big box, which he carried by a handle. My eyes were accustomed to the darkness, and I could see him distinctly. He passed through to the alley, and I heard the two men walk away together, talking in a low tone. I slipped out and followed at a safe distance. Then I realized for the first time that I had no authority as an officer; that it was one man against two desperate, armed men, and that

even if I saw them commit a robbery my word might not be accepted against that of Dr. Brascall, who was well known in Bolivar, while I was a comparative stranger. But it was too late to back out. I followed them, and, to make a long story short, I saw them slip through the back yard of Judge Wilkinson's house and start to work at the door. They were experts, sure enough, for they had that door open in two minutes. They slipped in, and closed the door behind them, and I tiptoed up, and, taking off my shoes, I followed into the house. Just inside the door my foot struck something, and at the same time I got an odor of chloroform or ether. I picked up the cloth soaked with the stuff, whatever it was, and threw it out of the back door. I could hear the two men ahead of me in the house, and I guessed that they were planting these soaked cloths around the house so as to keep the inmates asleep. In a flash I realized what I would have to do. I opened the back door, and then I felt my way through the sitting-room to the front hallway. I could hear the two men whispering in the parlor. It was a big risk, but I felt my way to the stairway, which I could see dimly, and then crawled

upstairs. There was a big pair of windows on the landing above, opening in the old-fashioned way, like shutters. I gently pushed the windows open. One of them squeaked, but I heard no sound from below, so I went ahead. I felt a draught of air up the stairway. I knew that most of the other windows were open also, and so I had no fear of the chloroform keeping the family asleep while there was a movement of fresh air in the house. My time had come. I stood at the bend of the stairway, and when Brascall and Gregory came up I jumped between them and the front door and said: 'Don't move, or I'll shoot!' Then I blew a police whistle, and the old judge himself came running out, followed by the whole family, half-dressed. Brascall and Gregory stood there looking into my pistol. I had caught them fairly. The women were screaming, and every one was excited, of course. Judge Wilkinson grabbed Brascall, and wanted to know what was the matter. Gentlemen, would you believe it? Brascall told him that he and Gregory saw me enter the house and had followed me. The judge believed it, too, but I didn't lose my nerve. I told them to send for the police and have

all three of us taken to the station. Brascall protested, and said he had to call on Mrs.



FOR THREE NIGHTS—BEHIND A ROSE BUSH,

Walton at once, but he couldn't bluff me. I made the police take all three of us to the station. When we got there I said: 'Open that box!' They opened Brascall's box, and it contained what seemed to be a battery. The police laughed at me. They actually laughed at me. They thought I was the thief and was trying a clever scheme to clear myself. Well, I was mad. I grabbed that 'battery' and tore off the false top, and underneath was a kit of tools for picking locks and a bottle of chloroform. Brascall smiled at Gregory and said: 'It's all up.' Then I told the police to go and search his rooms. They found all the Pearson diamonds, and of course that settled it. But maybe you think that town wasn't torn up next day! They never did get through poking fun at that chief of police. It came out later that Mrs. Walton was really Brascall's wife."

"Well, what did Brascall get?" asked the married man.

"Ten years, the same as Gregory," replied Doc'. "He always claimed that if I had kept away from Bolivar he never would have been caught."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LOSS OF "THE LITTLE LADY"

As the month of August was passing, the freckled boy met with reverses. He lost not only his money but his "little lady," this being the name he gave to the girl whom he had favored with his society at least two nights in every week.

When the boy first came to the hotel he found employment as a house-to-house salesman and "introduced" a new kind of soap. In a few weeks he learned that a fortune awaited him at the race-track, so he began to "play the horses." Luck was with him at the start, for he carried a roll of bills, which he brought out and fondled every



TRYING TO RECOUP.

evening, merely to tantalize those persons who were so stupid as to work for a living.

He would crowd himself to the front of the evening group at the hotel and say: "Well, I picked three of 'em to-day. I got a four-to-one that I ought to backed off the board becuz I couldn't see nothin' else to it. I ought to laid a hunderd on that race. At that, I'm forty to the good. W'y, it's just like takin' candy away from a baby. I s'pose I don't know a thing about them ponies. An' I've got to-morrow's card just about figured out, too."

"Keep at it, my young friend," said Doc'. "It's only a question of time until they take all you have."

"Don't you believe it, Doc'. Whenever I lay a piece o' money on a race I know purty well what I'm doin'."

One evening when he came back he did not display any money. Neither did he talk about his unfailing ability to pick the winner. The colony suspected that his career as a race-track gambler had come to an end. Three days after that, the dentist found him standing in front of a doorway in Jackson Street, urging people to "go upon

the inside" and have their straw hats cleaned for five cents a hat.

"Hello!" exclaimed the dentist. "You're not at the track any more?"

The boy was embarrassed, but he managed to say: "No, I've got a better thing right here."

"Cleaning straw hats?"

"Yes, we knock out fifty a day."

"Hats?"

"Naw, not hats! Fifty plunks."

"At five cents a hat?"

"Well, we take it in, just the same. They keep us busy nearly all the time. It's a little quiet just now."

The news was carried to the hotel, and the lush found great pleasure in taunting the boy.

"So you're the fellow that couldn't go wrong?" he asked.

"That's all right," said the freckled boy, sullenly. "I didn't lose much."

"No, but you lost all you had."

"I may lose, but I don't holler. That's me! It's my money an' I quit game. You don't hear me hollerin'. All I say is that the horse was pulled. That's right, too. Say, there was the rankest job ever pulled

off on a track. I know them horses. That wasn't my first day at a track, I'll tell you that. There was only one way for Dido to lose that race, and that was to drop dead at the post."

"But she didn't win?" asked the lush.

"How could she, when she was pulled? I just tore up two hunderd dollars' worth of tickets—that's all I done. Well, that's all right. I ain't hollerin', but I want to tell you that Gracie Watson didn't have no more license to beat Dido that day than I've got to walk backwards from here to Milwaukee and beat the limited. Talk about your steals! W'y, it was worse than takin' money right out o' your pocket. Everybody seen it. And at that this dog only wins by a head. Would I play him for place? No, not for a minute. I says, 'There's only one horse in the race, and them others'll be back o' the flag. It was the worst case of fixin' a race I ever seen. Oh well, a man gets it that way once in a while. I lose my money and I ain't hollerin'."

During the two weeks of his connection with the hat-cleaning industry the boy played poker at a Clark Street room, in the hope that he might recoup his losses. The

poker-players "trimmed him," as he expressed it, and in this period of financial depression the "little lady" rejected him, or, to use his own language, "tied a can to him."

He told the dentist the story one night. The dentist listened in sad amusement and thought of the contrast between this love affair and his own.

"She's got my name up over the door with 'nix' after it," said the freckled boy. "My coin give out, an' my talk wasn't strong enough to hold her, so I'm scratched."

"Did you have a quarrel?" asked the dentist.

"Last night. I've told you about this little party, ain't I?"

"I think so."

"Well, she was number one with me yesterday, and I thought I was the hot favorite with her, but she couldn't see me to-day if I run in front of her and made motions."

"And I thought you were popular."

"Strong? It looked to me that you couldn't get us apart with a crowbar. I thought she needed me. If anybody 'd said to me that he could split us out I'd told him

to write his own ticket. That's how good I was. I had myself billed as the real papa. I was writin' mash notes to myself. That's right. I had about three lamps goin' at the same time an' I couldn't roll 'em big enough. Then just about the time I begin to pick out red plush furniture for the bird's nest I wake up an' find myself layin' in the snow. I'm a bright young fellow—with a copper on it. Me sayin' that a blacksmith couldn't drive a needle in between us! Well, you could get a half-mile track inside o' the separation to-day. Say, I can just see the canary goin' up to join the carpenters' union—a hammer in each hand. Got a brother, too—a scrapper. Husky? He's got a chest on him like a snow-plow. If ever I go to the mat with that truck-horse there won't be a thing to it."

"You're not afraid of him, are you?"

"I ain't, eh? You ought to see him. He's got me nervous. I go along the street with my guard up, on the level. You ought to see me to-day—ridin' on the platform so as to be ready to make a run for it if anything come off. You think you get me on one o' them high trains? Well, I should say otherwise. None o' the elevated for me.

It's too far to jump. I refuse to start unless they put me on a track."

"Why should he interfere? You didn't do anything that would justify him in licking you, did you?"

"Well, I didn't use her none too gentle. I kind o' jolted her a couple."

"Then I don't blame him."

"I didn't pass 'em to her, understand? I did it pullin' away, see? Here! I'll tell you what led up to it. You know, when I been landin' in there they light all the gas in the house, and then if I don't look pleased they send out and get some more. Well, last night things didn't light up in any hurry, but I was so swelled on myself settin' there with the blue check and the new four-in-hand that I didn't take no notice. Purty soon the real article floated in and handed me a cake of ice. Well, that didn't stop me, becuz my specialty is makin' these chilly dolls change their minds and think well of me. I started in to deal a very neat line of talk about the weather, an' she give me a glassy look an' says: 'How about the tickets?' This is the fifth week that I been tellin' her that I'd take her to see a dollar'n a half show. I says: 'Just my luck!

Couldn't get a seat in the house.' 'No-o-o?' she says, givin' me the haughty look. 'No,' I says, 'I couldn't get nothin' at all except way up high, and I wouldn't take you up among them fellows, becuz I love you too well for that!' No use. That didn't faze her. I begin to get next, and see that I'd lost my number by failin' to show up with three dollars' worth of tickets, but no box office ever gets three out o' me at one toss, unless they use chloroform. As I say, I saw she had an awful grouch about the tickets. Either that or somethin' live had turned up and was workin' to undermine me. In either case it was up to me to pump some hot air. I slid over on the sofa next to her an' tried for the half-Nelson, but she hollered and refused to clinch. Then I started in to be rough, but she wouldn't stand for it. She fouled me with her wrist right in the face an' broke away. Oh, the look she give me! Talk about your lemon ice or your sour drops! She set clear over on the other side of the room, and no nearer than that could I get. The way she wiggled around on that chair you'd thought there was an oil stove under it. It was 'yes' and 'no' to all the cracks I made, but no givin'

in, an' after while I begin to get sore myself, and was about to get up an' declare myself when some one rings the front door-bell, an' she does a sprint to see who it is. In a little while I hear her buzzin' somebody out in the hall. Me in the parlor, understand? pipin' the pictures an' the phoney album an' her outside makin' it pleasant for the new entry. This went on for about ten minutes an' then I begin to see that I'm in the way. They'd laugh once in a while, and I figured that they was havin' fun with me. Whoever the guy was, he put the rollers under me all right. They kept me shell-roaded in the parlor for fifteen minutes, and then I broke out. I didn't mind bein' thrown, but I wanted 'em to notice how graceful I went into the air. So I went out and broke it up."

"Did you make trouble?"

"Did I? First I sneaked up to the door an' listened. I heard him say somethin' about the 'fourth row of the circle' an' 'leavin' the house about half-past seven,' an' I knew that whoever he was, he'd give up his coin an' copped the princess. I opened the door sudden, and there they was, settin' on the bottom stair, holdin' hands.

I says: 'I thought I'd come out an' mingle. It's gettin' a little frosty in there, an' I'd like to meet some nice people an' talk it over. I've got some lovely conversation that's never been used at all.' The little lady shot one o' them cold-storage looks at me an' said: 'We're havin' a private talk.' That encouraged his nobbs with the pink shirt to come up strong, an' he says: 'It's about a matter that don't interest you.' That was two bumps as near as I could count. I'm bright enough to see it was my cue to duck, but I'd been there too long to let any stranger chase me out. So I says: 'If you've got time to step outside I'd like to fix it up with you.' The little lady pushes in between us an' says to me: 'You behave yourself!' He was gettin' pale an' leary, an' said to her that he thought he'd be goin'. By that time I was so mad that nothin' but a scrap'd do me. He opened the door an' side-stepped, me after him an' the little lady hangin' on to me an' sayin': 'Now, you behave! Now, you behave!' Him down the steps in a hurry, an' then kickin' around for somethin' to throw at me. She had me collared on the top step an' was hangin' on as if she thought I was a

good thing. I told her two or three times to break nicely, but she wouldn't listen. Well, Bud, you know how it is. You ain't expected to swing on 'em, so all I could do was to let the elbow go back a couple o' times. She let out a horrible grunt, an' then made one o' them ladylike over-handed swipes at me, but I dodged it. Cinch! Just as I dodges, a brick comes past me, bing! an' hits the front door. Then me after the enemy. Did I ketch him? W'y, I didn't have a show for the money. When I'd run a block he must 'a' been at Garfield Park. Besides, here I was, bare-headed. I started back an' s'posed I'd have to tear down the house to get my hat, but I finds it on the steps. You ought to see me nail it an' run my mile. I was expectin' brother to come right out o' the window at me."



"THE LITTLE LADY."

"What were you afraid of? Hadn't you just chased one fellow away?"

"Who? The one that come in with a check for my seat? Say, he wouldn't weigh 115, shirt and all. You can bet I always pick the right man before I lose control o' myself."

"But he was big enough to cut you out, wasn't he?"

"Yes, but he had to loosen up with the coin before he done it. If ever I get a flash at that boy it'll be first me to him an' then one o' them rubber-tired wagons from the hospital."

CHAPTER XIX

THE DENTIST LOSES HIS LAST CHANCE

The dentist did not reply to the letter from Miss Milbury. He intended to write the diplomatic letter suggested by Doc', but on sitting down to compose it he found that he could not choose the language. He feared that a thankful letter, protesting gratitude, would encourage her to write again and might involve him in a correspondence. Then it would be more difficult than ever to give her up. As he sat with the



THE DENTIST IN SUMMER.

pen poised above the letter, he told himself that only a brute could answer such a letter with cold and discouraging formality. He dismissed, one after another, the lies

which might be offered in explanation of his "regrets." At last he tore up the paper and said that he would try again, to-morrow.

A week passed, and he told himself that he had waited too long and would not answer at all. It was a rude but effective way of closing an incident which he had hoped to make the prelude to his life's happiness.

One day he received an advertising folder from the hotel at Wautenon. He concluded that Miss Milbury had given his name to the proprietor of the hotel. She could not and would not write to him again, until he had paid the courtesy of an answer, but she could give him a last chance. The folder was in the style usually chosen for the advertising of summer resorts:

"Oh, fairest spot on all this earth!
Oh, dream of paradise!
Wautenon."—McKay.

Beneficent Nature was indeed kindly in her gifts to this favored region. Here glimmers an opalescent lake set with a framework of richest foliage! The trees rise tall and stately from the very edge of the dimpled waters, and the hush of primeval Nature is only broken by the cheery twitter of feathered songsters or the splash of some finny monarch glorying in strength and freedom. Here, far from the haunts of

busy men, the worn traveler may seek surcease from the cark and care of this workaday world and while the hours away in sweet forgetfulness. Or, if he be piscatorially inclined, boats, tackle and bait will be provided at moderate charges.

Nestling in the groves, "God's first temples," are limpid streams that purl softly over their mossy beds or sing tender lullabys as they ripple adown the pebbly inclines. May Ransom, the blithe poetess of Bradbury, visited Lake Wautenon two years ago, and while under the spell of its varied charms wrote these lines:

"Most beauteous home I ever knew,
And one that is so restful, too."

Truly spoken, for any one who has lingered in the cool, deep shade of Wautenon's shore or partaken of the true hospitality at the magnificent hostelry will thereafter cherish the memory in his or her heart of hearts.

The dentist showed this circular to Doc', and gave his suspicion.

"She had something to do with sending it," he said. "They don't know me up at 'Lake Wautenon.'"

"And you say you didn't answer her letter?" inquired Doc'. "That's bad—too bad."

"I didn't see any confounded use in keeping up a correspondence after what you told me. I thought it would be better for me not

to go ahead, so I stopped the only way I knew how. I simply stopped. I didn't answer her letter. And it was a low-down, mean way to end the whole business, too. Darned if I ain't ashamed of myself. Oh, well, I'll never see her again. I suppose she'll think I've turned out to be a pretty cheap specimen. Oh, well! What's the difference? It's all right."

He was as cheerful as a man speaking from the gallows.

Doc' had been slow of perception during the previous talks with his friend, but now he understood that the dentist was very much in love with Miss Milbury. However, as the dentist did not seem disposed to admit it, even if he knew it, Doc' did not offer his services as a reconciling agent.

For many weeks after that, the dentist did not mention the name of Miss Milbury, and he never spoke of matrimony except to damn it. He came into his partnership in the Neapolitan Dental Parlors, and he moved into the largest front room in the Alfalfa Hotel. The prosperity which had justified his intention to marry was growing, but he seemed less cheerful than before.

The waistcoats and cravats were changed less frequently.

Doc' was again deceived. He believed that the dentist had lapsed into indifference, and he began to doubt that the dentist had loved deeply, even during July and August.

CHAPTER XX

THE REFORMATION OF THE LUSH

After months of delicate persuasion Doc' accomplished a purpose. He induced the lush to promise to refrain from all drinking for the period of one month. In making



"DELICATE PERSUASION."

on the quiet I begin to think I'm a regular drunkard."

this promise the lush did not admit that he had been drinking too much or that any change in his daily habits was necessary. He gave the promise merely to oblige Doc'.

"You seem anxious to make a good boy out of me, Doc'," he said. "Sometimes when you give me these sermonettes

"Not at all, my dear sir, but I wouldn't be

surprised if you did, occasionally, drink a little more than is good for you."

"Do you think so, Doc'?" asked the lush, tapping on the arm of his chair and not lifting his eyes when he asked the question.

"I don't mean to say that you drink to excess," explained Doc'; "but I think it possible that if you would practically abstain from drinking for a while your general health might improve, and possibly your nerves would be steadier."

"Well, I don't know; it doesn't seem to me I've been drinking more than usual. I've been accustomed, for some time, to take a drink whenever I felt like it."

"That's true, but possibly your system isn't as hardy as it used to be. You take my advice. Don't touch a drop of it, for—say, a month."

The lush drew a long whistle.

"Do you know what you're asking me to do?" he said.

"You're like every other man, I suppose? You can drink it or you can leave it alone."

"Well, Doc', I'll go and get a final one right now, and that'll be the last one for a month. And when I say a month I mean it. It's a go!"

He meant it, too. The dentist, the freckled boy, and even the book-agent smiled and were skeptical when he told of his resolution. Their apparent contempt maddened him, and made him all the more determined.

The first week was full of misery for him. He was glum and solitary, avoiding the night sessions at the front door. He made many trips to the corner drug-store and tried to get cheer from phosphates and other temperance drinks. Failing in this effort, he would return to his room. He resented all friendly speech, even though it came from Doc'.

One Sunday the dentist was passing the door when he heard groans and profane exclamations. Being rather frightened, he knocked.

"Come in!" shouted the lush.

The dentist opened the door and saw his friend coiled on the bed. The shoes, coat and vest had been removed. The lush had his head butted into a soft pillow.

"Feeling rocky?" asked the dentist, in a gentle tone.

"No—feeling fine," replied the lush, glaring up at him.

"What can I do for you?"

"Go get an ax and hit me in the head. Oh-h! Gosh!"

"Can you eat anything?"

"Yes, certainly. I just had two sponge cakes and a gallon of lemonade. Eat anything? I look like a man that wants to eat, don't I?"

"Where does it pain you the most?"

"Nowhere! You don't think I'm in pain, do you?"

There was a timid knock at the door, and the lush yelled, "Come in!"

The bellboy slipped in softly and asked: "Did you ring?"

The lush sat up on the bed and glared at the boy, who began to tremble.

"How long does it take electricity to travel?" he asked.

"Huh?" from the boy.

"Huh? When I push this button up here, does it take twenty minutes for the bell to ring downstairs?"

"I don't know, sir."

"You don't know? How does it happen that you came up here at all?"

"The clerk sent me up."

"Oh, he did, did he? Well, you tell that

clerk that when I ring I want somebody to come here the same day. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what is it I told you to tell him?"



"Why—that when you——" The boy became confused and was unable to say any more.

"That's right!" exclaimed the lush. "You've got a great memory."

"Oh, leave the boy alone," said the dentist, interfering as mildly as he could.

"I'll have to write
"WHENEVER I FELT LIKE IT." it out," snarled the lush. "Say, if you can remember it till you get downstairs, tell that cheap clerk to send into the drug-store and get me a small bottle of Jamaica ginger."

"Yes, sir; is that all?" asked the boy, moving toward the door, as if anxious to escape.

"Then when you get that, you go and

jump down the elevator-shaft." Having thus delivered himself, he plowed his head into the pillow once more, kicked convulsively and let out one long, lingering, quavering groan of the most intense agony.

Then he flopped over on the bed, threw one of the pillows into the air, and began to sing in a husky, trembling voice:

"Be it ev-er so hum-bul,
There's no-ho place like home."

After this he put his head under the pillow and lay very quiet for several moments, apparently to induce the dentist to believe that the end had come.

There was another tap at the door, and the dentist said, "Come in!"

It was the chambermaid.

She came into the room, and then said, very timidly: "I wondered if he wanted me to tidy up the room for him."

"I'll ask him," said the dentist.

The lush still had the pillow over his head and he pretended not to hear. This frightened the chambermaid, who said: "Goodness me! Poor man!"

"What the dickens do you want?" He came out from under the pillow very sud-

denly, with his hair rumpled. When he saw the chambermaid standing at the doorway, he looked at her so ferociously that she was alarmed and began to back away.

"The girl wants to know if she can clean up the room a little."

"I don't care what she does. Tell her to go ahead and make the bed, and not mind me. I don't s'pose I've got any right in this room even if I do pay for it, have I?"

"Well, the girl simply wanted to know."

"You tell her to come in and take up the carpet if she wants to. Ooh-h-h-h!"

"I'll come back after a while," said the pale chambermaid, backing out of the room.

"Why don't you have the girl fix up the room a little?" asked the dentist.

"Why are you worrying about that girl? Is she a friend of yours? Because, if it's any accommodation to you, I can go out and sit in the bath-tub while she fixes up the room. I don't see that I've got anything to say about it, anyway. Come in!" This last was delivered in a shriek.

The frightened bellboy came in on tiptoe, carrying a bottle wrapped in pink paper. He mumbled something about ginger.

"Well, give it to me," exclaimed the lush.

"What are you holding it for? I'm the one that's going to take this ginger. You didn't buy it for yourself, did you?"

"No, sir," replied the boy, meekly.

"Great Scott!" he shouted, when he pulled away the paper and saw the four-ounce bottle of ginger. "Why didn't you bring this in a bucket?"

"Huh?"

"Huh? The next time I order ginger you tell the clerk to have it sent up in a barrel. Did you think I wanted to bathe in ginger? Of all the idiots I ever saw, this hotel is swarming with 'em. You tell the clerk I'm going to drink two or three quarts of this ginger and use the rest to wash the windows with. You just tell him that for me. And sometime this afternoon, if you haven't got anything else to do and you feel well at the time, you might bring me a pitcher of water—and be sure it's full of microbes."

"Full of what?" asked the terror-stricken boy.

"Microbes! Will you remember that? I want plenty of microbes."

"Yes, sir."

"And don't forget about jumping down

the elevator-shaft. You know you promised me to do that."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what are you waiting for?"

"Oh!" and the boy escaped.

The lush once more put his head under the pillow and began to groan. The dentist said: "Well, good-by; I'm glad to find you so amiable," and he followed the bell-boy. Just as he left the room he thought he heard, from under the pillow, something like "Go to blazes!"

After nearly two weeks of abstinence the lush spent less time in his room, and was more companionable, sometimes sitting with the others of an evening, although he had little to say. He was irritable and the freckled boy's loud conversation annoyed him. With the others he was serious, but not discourteous. Doc' hoped that the reformation would be for all time.

The lush might never have taken another drink if he had not been subjected to a most unusual temptation when Doc' was arrested on the only criminal charge ever brought against a Horne.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW HE THWARTED THE ST. LOUIS ROBBERS

The first cool weather of autumn hurries the tramp population into Chicago. The wandering beggars who have infested



"WROTE MY ST. LOUIS ADDRESS ON THE ENVELOPE."

country lanes and ridden on car-trucks dur-

ing the summer, flock into the city. They assemble at the basement drinking places in the squalid "levee" district by day and at night they creep into ten-cent lodging houses or lie in dark stairways. When they tell their stories to doubting pedestrians they are workingmen who have sought jobs for many days and are dying of hunger. Some who are not too much weakened in body and spirit demand the money which they cannot get by beggary. Cold weather stings them to desperation, and the cringing "hobo" becomes the "desperate robber" so frequently mentioned by the police reporter.

After a week of frosty nights the newspapers spoke of the "annual carnival of crime," and the colony at the Alfalfa Hotel had several meetings to discuss the footpad and criticise the police department.

One evening Doc' told of his experience with highway robbers. The bicycle salesman had been reading an evening paper, and when he lowered it he said: "Well, what do you think of that? Here's a fellow that went into a house right in the broad of day and choked a woman and got away with all the money and jewelry."

"That's nothing—for Chicago," said the lush. "Over here on the west side they went into a house while the family was in the dining-room, and moved out all the furniture in the parlor, including the piano. They left the carpets, I believe."

"When was that?" asked the bicycle youth.

"Oh, most any old time. I can't remember the dates of all the robberies in Chicago."

The dentist confessed that he had been caught at the dark entrance to an alley and compelled to surrender a watch and a pocketbook containing \$48. Two men had done the job, one of them holding a large revolver close to his head.

"If a man gets the drop on you, the only thing to do is to keep cool and make no resistance," said Doc' Horne. "You should have crossed the street when you saw the two men coming over toward you. That would have shown that you suspected them, and they wouldn't have taken a chance in following you back across the street. There's nearly always some way of outwitting a footpad if you only keep cool and use your head. Three of them had me cornered

once, and thought they were going to get \$2,500, but I fooled them just the same."

"Was that in Chicago?" asked the dentist.

"No, that was in St. Louis, a long time ago—shortly after the war. The fellows who were after me knew that I had the money, and I had to do some maneuvering to beat them. I had been there in St. Louis several weeks negotiating some business for New York parties, and in that time I had become pretty well acquainted with the moneyed men around town, who, at that time, were inclined to be rather sporty. I gambled occasionally, myself. One night I went into the largest gambling house with a friend of mine and began to play roulette. It's a game I seldom played, but I had a fancy to play it this night. Well, I lost \$500 almost as fast as I could buy chips. Finally, I had five dollars' worth of white chips left, and I pushed them over on the double-o, and, much to my surprise, the double-o came. That was the turn of my luck. Within an hour I had \$3,000 in front of me. I lost back to \$2,500 and cashed in. The dealer had to give me an order on the proprietor, and as I didn't want to carry small bills, he gave me two \$1,000 bills and

one \$500 bill. He said he'd keep the money in the safe for me, but I was accustomed to handling large sums, so I just took the bills and put them in my vest pocket. My friend and I left the place. I walked with him to the corner, and then started for home—I then had apartments in a private house.

“On my way home I had to pass through the wholesale district. It was a business part of town—very dark and lonesome at night. But I had a revolver and never thought of such a thing as being robbed. Well, sir, I hadn't walked a block from the corner at which I had left my friend, until I saw two men ahead of me about half or two-thirds of a block. I saw them pass under a lamp, and just as they did so they turned to see if I was coming. While I was watching them closely, determined that they shouldn't catch me napping, I heard foot-falls behind me, and I knew that two men were following me. Then I began to appreciate my situation. If I hurried, the men in front would stop me. If I turned back, the two men behind would intercept me. They were so close to me that I could not escape into a side street except by running, and then they would have a chance to

shoot at me from behind. If there was to be any shooting done, I wanted to be faced around and have a hand in it. You can understand my predicament. Their plan was, evidently, for the two men in front to slacken their pace so that I would catch up with them, and the two men coming up behind, they would have me surrounded, four men to one. They evidently believed they would have a tough job or there wouldn't have been four men in it. I felt sure that I could kill one or two of them if it came to shooting, but I didn't see much chance to escape if four of them opened up on me.

"I had to do something mighty quick, and I made up my mind in a flash. I reached in my inside pocket, where I always carried some stamped envelopes, and pulled one of them out. I slipped the money into the envelope, and then, taking my card-case out of my pocket, so as to have something on which to rest the letter, I felt for my pencil. It wasn't there! I remembered that I had loaned it to a fellow in the gambling-room. Do you know what I did? I stopped right under a street lamp that had a mail-box attached to it, and yelled to those fellows in

front and asked: 'Either of you got a pencil?' They stopped, and seemed to be in doubt about coming back, but they evidently didn't want to arouse my suspicions, so one of them walked back and asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted a pencil. In the meantime the fellows who had been following behind had stopped to see what was going to happen. They were probably surprised to see me call this fellow back. As for him, he didn't know what to do. I told him I wanted to mail a letter, and had forgotten part of the address and wanted to put it on, as it was important that the letter should be in the mail the first thing in the morning. The explanation seemed to satisfy him. He came up to me, handed me a stub of pencil, and I rested the letter on the card-case, wrote my St. Louis address on it and dropped it into the mail-box. It was a big chilled-steel box, put there for the convenience of some of the wholesale houses that sent out quantities of mail.

"After I had mailed the letter I said to the man who had loaned me the pencil: 'Are you going down street?' He mumbled something and I followed along, and we

overtook his partner in front. Presently the two men behind came up, and the five of us walked along in silence. It was a darker part of the street, and I knew they were about ready to state their business, so I stopped all of a sudden, and said: 'Gen'lemen, what can I do for you?' They were surprised, but a big fellow, one of the two who had been behind, said: 'You'd better give us that \$2,500 if you want to get home alive.' I replied that I had no such sum. 'We know better,' the big fellow said. 'We saw you put it in your pocket when you left the gambling house,' and he started to come at me. 'Hold on,' I said. 'Don't get excited. It is true that I had \$2,500, but I put it into an envelope and mailed it to myself at that big box back there. One of your party was kind enough to give me the pencil with which I wrote the address.' Then I said to them: 'Gentlemen, if you want that money, go and get it out of the mail-box. If you think you can break into a steel box which is on a corner, under a street lamp, and not get into trouble with the police, why, go ahead and try it.' The big fellow cursed and began to threaten, but I said: 'It won't do you any good to attack

me. You're four to one, but I'll kill one of you before you can get me out of the way.' Then one of the fellows said: 'What's the use, boys? He's too slick for us.' The four simply turned and walked away, and I went on home. Next morning when I reached the office, there was my letter with the \$2,500 in it, lying on the desk with the other mail."

"Well, I'll be dog-goned!" exclaimed the bicycle youth. "Say, what would you have done if that fellow hadn't let you have the pencil?"

"I'd have put in the envelope without any address on it. I could have proved my property at the postoffice next day. My principal object in borrowing the pencil was to throw those fellows off their guard and make them think I didn't suspect anything."

CHAPTER XXII

THE STORY OF OKOBONEE

The man who brought upon Doc' Horne the extreme humiliation of his life was known at the Alfalfa Hotel as the hustler.



THE HUSTLER.

In the United States of America a hustler is one who is busy, persistent, resourceful and combative, usually that he may accumulate money. The term is frequently applied to one who talks rapidly and deals with large figures. Hustling may be activity or the semblance of activity.

The hustler at the hotel was a slender young man with reddish hair and a close mustache. He wore a

business suit of gray. His black derby hat was set on the back of the head.

When the members of the colony first noticed him he was sitting in the office adding up figures in a memorandum book and whistling below his breath. His coat sleeves were pulled up, so as to expose the full width of cuff. Presently he put away the memorandum book and took from the inside pocket of his coat a loose handful of letters. He sorted them and finally found a sheet on which was a pencil drawing. The members of the colony were watching him.

After the hustler had regarded the pencil drawing at arm's length he handed it toward Doc' Horne, and asked: "How would that look in three colors?"

"Eh—what?" exclaimed Doc', much astonished.

"The line at the top, 'Champion Tablets'—blue, understand? Same as the ketch-line below, 'Knocks the wind out of you.' I think I'll have this framework in solid black, and use the red for the punchin' bag and the man's head. I'm goin' to have a picture of a prize-fighter in there, punchin' the bag. Good scheme, eh?"

"Well, I don't know that I exactly under-

stand this," said Doc', bringing out his spectacles so as to make a critical study of the drawing.

"It's a little preparation, tablet form, that a certain party here in Chicago has just got up. I've taken hold of it and I'm goin' to push it for him. This is the name of it up here at the top, 'Champion Tablets,' and at the bottom here we have the ketch-line, 'Knocks the wind out of you.' "

"Well, what are they good for?" asked the lightning dentist, who had arisen and was looking over Doc's shoulder.

"Just what it says there. To be taken after hearty eating—removes that feeling of fullness, understand? Good for children with the colic, dyspeptics, and any one who has stomach-ache, cramps — great thing! Picture of a prize-fighter, understand? That'll ketch 'em. They'll stop to look at that. Then they read this, 'Champion Tablets,' and below, the ketch-line, 'Knocks the wind out of you.' I'm goin' to have down here in this corner what the tablets can cure."

"Will you have room in the corner?" asked the lush, who had been listening in coldness and doubt.

"Oh, yes; I'll get it in there in black," said the hustler, who had not caught the sarcasm of the question. "That's goin' to make a ketchy thing," and he took the drawing away from Doc' and again held it at arm's length. "Get a twenty-four sheet stand of that and it'll scream. I was around to-day figurin' on a hundred thousand single sheets to put on the fences and boards. We're goin' to place a lot of newspaper advertising, too, but we don't want to do that till we get enough stock to send samples to all the druggists. We expect to reach every druggist in the United States within six weeks. And say, gentlemen," putting the picture back into his pocket, "I've got the greatest scheme for advertising this preparation that you ever heard of. What do you think of advertising with elephants?"

"Elephants? How do you mean?" asked the lightning dentist.

"Why, I mean elephants. You understand—a party gets up a new preparation and wants to introduce it to the trade—he sends out his men to distribute samples. Sometimes they send 'em out in open carriages with white horses. Sometimes they

dress 'em up and have 'em carry banners. All them things is out of date. I've got the only scheme on earth—send 'em out ridin' on top of elephants. Huh? How about that?"

"Well, where are you going to get your elephants?" asked the dentist.

"I know where I can get six. That'd be enough to start on."

"Yes, I should think six elephants would be enough for a starter," remarked the lush. "Enough for a fair mess."

"Of course, I wouldn't buy 'em," said the hustler. "I'd pay so much for the use of 'em. I put my man on top of the elephant, understand? He's all togged out—long-tailed coat, plug hat and all that—got a rose in his button-hole. He'll ride in one of these covered things, understand? I'll have another man—from the circus—to sit up on the elephant's head and carry this big banner, 'Champion Tablets.' Then I'll have another fellow—from the circus—to lead the elephant. Go up to drug-store; this fellow on top carries a kind of ladder and comes down, walks into the drug-store, presents his card, hands the druggist a box of sample packages and walks out. He don't try to sell anything, understand? Let the sales-

man go around later on, understand? All we want to do at the start is to get people to talkin'. I'll tell you that if we start out six elephants in Chicago we'll wake up the whole town. It'll cost ten thousand before we take in a cent, but it'll do the work."

"I don't believe the city authorities would allow you to take elephants through the street," suggested the book-agent, staring thoughtfully at the hustler.

"They wouldn't, eh?" demanded the hustler. "Why wouldn't they? Don't they let a circus parade, huh? If they stopped me, do you know what I'd do? I'd apply for an injunction and take the case into the courts. I'd get advertising out of it some way. They might stop me, but I'd have everybody talking about 'Champion Tablets.' Do you know what I'm goin' to do with one of them elephants? I know where I can find the man that painted the white elephant for Barnum. I'm goin' to have him paint one of the elephants red, white and blue in stripes, all except on the sides, and there I'm goin' to have 'Champion Tablets' in big letters, black on white. What do you think of that?"

"Don't you go to leading any red, white

and blue elephants past this hotel," said the lush. "I saw a green one with pink legs go past one night and I didn't get over it for a week."

"An elephant is not dangerous if he is properly handled," said Doc' Horne. "I remember distinctly——"

Doubtless the company would have had an elephant-taming story had not the fire engine come thundering around the corner. The colony went out to the street with the hope that there would be a successful fire somewhere in the neighborhood, but not too near the Alfalfa. It was disappointed.

Next night the hustler happened to be sitting near when Doc' told the book-agent about the Indian herb treatment. For a week or more the book-agent had complained of an aguish sensation. He sat near the steam-heater, with his coat collar turned up, and took little part in the conversation, now and then interjecting something doleful in the way of verse.

"I was just thinking," began Doc' Horne, gazing at his friend as if in solicitude, "that if all the ingredients were accessible I could prepare you a mixture that would set you right in twenty-four hours. So far as I can

judge from your appearance you are suffering from malaria, and possibly you are weakened by some nervous strain. I don't know where I could get the herbs or I'd fix up something for you."

"Can't you get them at the drug-store?" asked the bicycle youth.

"I'm afraid not. Some of the herbs are very rare. Did I ever tell you of how I happened to learn the secret of that Indian remedy?"

The hustler, who had been pulling letters out of his pockets and then putting them back again, squared around and listened alertly.

"It was on my first or second visit to this part of the country," said Doc'. "I did a great deal of overland traveling about that time, and up near Waukegan, on one of my excursions, I met a very interesting old Indian doctor named Okobonee, which means 'voice of the night,' as it was supposed that this medicine man went into the forest at night and held communication with the Great Spirit. The circumstances of our meeting were rather peculiar. I was on horseback and overtook him hobbling through the woods. It seemed that he had climbed a tree in order to pluck some of the

green leaves growing at the extremities of the branches—and, by the way, these leaves happen to be one of the ingredients of the remedy of which I have spoken. He had climbed the tree and had crawled out to get



"I WAS JUST THINKING."

these tender leaves, which were full of the vegetable juice, and in so doing he lost his hold and fell to the ground, turning his ankle. He was quite lame when I overtook him. I dismounted and assisted him to get on my horse, and we proceeded to his cabin,

or tepee, as you might call it. He was very grateful to me, and insisted that I should remain with him over night. I did so—in fact, I remained several days, for I found him a very interesting character. He taught me how to collect and prepare the ingredients for this remedy, to which I have referred. It seemed that this remedy had been famous among the Indians for years. I took away quite a bundle of the herbs and

leaves with me, and after I got back to Chicago I studied out their botanical names and made up a rough formula of the compound. I used it with remarkable success, occasionally; but, as I say, I can't prepare it unless I get out in the woods and find the ingredients. You can't buy them."

"Say, Doc', you're foolish," said the hustler, pulling up his coat sleeves. "See here! If you've got that remedy you're a sucker not to do something with it, and I'll tell you why."

"Oh, I don't want to go into the patent-medicine business," said Doc', smiling and shaking his head.

"Oh, rats! There's no need of throwin' away a good thing. See here! Put it up in packages—understand? 'Horne's Healing Herbs'—one big H to do for all three words. Then your picture—the goods would sell on the strength of your picture—fine-looking, gray-bearded old gentleman, with the autograph, 'Doc' Horne,' below."

"But I'm not really a doctor?"

"What's the difference? Here, I'll tell you what'd be better still—your picture on one side and the picture of the Indian on the other side—what's his name?"

"Okobonee," replied Doc', unwillingly.

"The secret of Okobonee for the succoring of humanity.' What I'm stuck on is the story about this old Indian, and how you met him and learned the secret. That'd make a great pamphlet. Do you think you could put us on to the formula so we could make the stuff?"

"I suppose so," said Doc', with no enthusiasm.

"Well, that wouldn't be so important. We could fake up something, but the name and story ketch me. 'Horne's Healing Herbs' — 'The story of Okobonee's secret,' and all that kind of stuff. Say, Doc', on the dead, I'd like to talk it over with you, and I'll make you a proposition. We've got to have you in so we can use the big H and have somebody to fasten the Indian story to. The more I think of that Indian story the better I like it."

"I'm not seeking notoriety," said Doc'. "If that was all I wanted I've had plenty of chances to figure in the newspapers. You can go ahead and get up all the patent medicines you please, but I can't have anything to do with it."

He spoke with such emphasis that the

hustler said: "Oh, well, if you feel that way, all right, but just the same, I want to talk to you again about this business."

Two days later, much to Doc's surprise, the hustler came with drawings and type-written literature intended to show how "Horne's Healing Herbs" could be advertised. There was a newspaper "ad" with a big H and a sample label such as would be placed on each half-pound package of the remedy. The label had pictures of Okobonee, with war bonnet and paint, and "Doctor Horne" with long whiskers. The hustler explained to Doc' and the others that the "jays" always had more confidence in a doctor with long chin whiskers. When the drawings were passed around the lush congratulated Doc' and predicted that he would make a fortune.

"I know I want a package as soon as you put any on the market," said the lush. "Doc's picture alone is worth the price."

This irritated Doc', but encouraged the hustler, who read the advertising circular which a literary friend had outlined under his direction:

Strange that the greatest secret of the nineteenth century should be guarded by one man for nearly

fifty years! Strange that there should be living to-day an eminent physician who has at command all the mystic knowledge gathered from Nature by the medicine men of the aborigines! Stranger still that the priceless remedy, the healing herbs of Okobonee, should be freely offered to suffering humanity by the guardian of this secret! In the lonely forest, beneath the rustling trees, where every whisper through the branches was as the voice of the Great Spirit, Okobonee, the healer and physician, spent many hours in study of Nature's bountiful resources. He learned the manifold secrets of vegetable creation, and out of his knowledge compounded a sovereign remedy more potent than any drug or mineral poison that ever came from the laboratory of chemist. He used this remedy among his own people—the noble red men of the forest. The cures were marvelous—almost miraculous. The fame of Okobonee spread from tribe to tribe, and all the sick and ailing from far and near came to receive his ministrations. He waxed old in the service of humanity, but still he continued in the study of Nature and Truth.

How fortunate that his knowledge did not die with him! What a blessing that the great boon was not lost to mankind! It was surely nothing else than providence that directed Doctor Horne, the eminent physician, to visit the primeval forest in which Okobonee held silent commune with the forces of Nature, and that greater and immutable force which the savage tribes held in vague reverence as the Great Spirit. Imagine the meeting between these two great men. One, the silent student of Nature, the primeval man of simple knowledge such as comes from a contemplation of God's handiwork,

although lacking that finer culture imparted by modern civilization; the other the representative of advanced thought; of all that is modern and progressive in science, a student whose researches have penetrated every department of human knowl-

Horne's Healing Herbs.

A Magic Indian &
REMEDY
IMPROVED BY
MODERN SCIENTIFIC
METHODS.
**THE SECRET
OF
OKOBONEE**

OKOBONEE *Doctor Horne*

DIRECTIONS: —————

"THE HUSTLER CAME WITH DRAWINGS."

edge. Yielding to the solicitation of many friends, who know the unprecedented virtues of the remedy of Okobonee, Dr. Calvin Horne, the renowned practitioner and master of materia medica, has consented to send the magic preparation into all parts of the world, that suffering and disease-ridden humanity may take hope. Horne's Healing Herbs are put up in uniform packages of one-half pound each, and the price is—

"I'm in favor of makin' it two dollars," said the hustler. "The more you charge 'em, the better they think it is."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Doc', with a smile and a slow shake of the head.

"I can find plenty o' capital to back it," said the hustler, putting the papers into his pocket.

"Let's not be in any hurry," said Doc'.

The lush winked at the dentist. They could see that Doc' was yielding.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HUSTLER DISAPPEARS

The Okobonee Medicine Company, when organized to manufacture Horne's Healing Herbs, was to receive the financial support of a capitalist whom the hustler was not at liberty to designate until all the terms had been arranged. Doc' continued to listen to the generous promises made by the hustler, but he never agreed to become a responsible partner in the medicine company. At the same time he dallied and doubted, remembering that other men had made large fortunes by the manufacture and sale of proprietary remedies. The hustler announced that he had given up all plans in relation to Champion Tablets and was devoting his entire time to "interesting" the capital which was to enable him to put a full-page advertisement in every metropolitan newspaper in the United States. His projects were large but indefinite, and his talk, when well prolonged, had a hollow sound. One day, when he sought to borrow

two dollars, Doc' lost faith in him and said: "My dear sir, it occurs to me that there is no need of any further talk regarding this medicine enterprise. As you know, I have permitted you to outline your plans to me, and have hesitated to put a final and definite veto to your suggestions because you have seemed so much in earnest and have suggested to me that your financial welfare depended on my willingness to coöperate with you. I take it that you are without capital. So far as I am concerned, I have none which is free for investment at this time. Putting aside the rather vague generalities in which we have dealt up to this time, I ask you the direct question, have you the money to carry out this project?"

"I hope to get it," replied the hustler. "I was talkin' to a party yesterday."

The hustler seemed almost discouraged, but he brightened when Doc' said: "In regard to the loan, I think I can let you have the amount you mention. I feel under some obligations to you, but as this whole enterprise is yours I can't see why I should be involved in it. So count me out."

"Do you mean it?"

"Absolutely."

"I'd like to use your picture and that story."

"Use what you please, so that you omit the name of Calvin Horne."

"Just as you say, Doc'. I'll hand you this two some time," putting the money into his pocket.

Next day he had gone from the hotel, owing Ike Francis six dollars for room rent.

The freckled boy then announced that he had "sized" the hustler for a "pan-handler" from the very start.

Doc' felt relieved that the man had gone and taken his temptations with him. The riddance was worth two dollars.

CHAPTER XXIV

DOC' IS ARRESTED

One evening in November, two days after the hustler disappeared, and only one



day before the dentist found Miss Milbury, Calvin Horne, sitting in the office of the Alfalfa European Hotel and talking Shakespeare with the book-agent, was arrested on a criminal warrant charging him with obtaining money under false pretenses.

"TALKING SHAKESPEARE." "Yes, sir, my name is Horne," he answered, looking up at the large man who interrupted the talk.

"I'm an officer," said this plain-clothes man, lifting his coat to show a heavy star which was on the vest, away back under the

armhole. "I got a warrant for you. Do you know about it?"

"Do I—what do you mean, sir?" demanded Doc', staring hard and throwing away his cigar.

"I think there must be some mistake," said the book-agent. "This is Doctor Horne."

"Calvin Horne," read the officer, looking at the warrant.

"Calvin," corrected Doc'.

"You're the man, all right," said the officer. "Don't try none o' your funny business with me. I been workin' on the case—saw you here to-day, and had you pointed out to me."

"What in God's name is the meaning of all this?" asked Doc', taking hold of the book-agent's arm.

"I can read this if you want to hear it," said the officer. "The charge is obtainin' money."

"This is all Greek to me," said Doc'. "It's simply a mistake—that's all."

"Who swore out the warrant?" asked the book-agent.

He and Doc' had arisen and stood facing the big man in plain clothes, who gave the

book-agent one condemning glance, which meant, "As if both of you didn't know!" and then he replied: "A man named Parkman."

"I never heard of him," said Doc'.

"I s'pose you never heard of a fake medicine company, neither—did you?" asked the officer. "You can tell the judge all about it in the morning."

"Medicine company! Has that fellow involved me in one of his rascally schemes? Officer, do you mean to say that I, Calvin Horne, am arrested on a charge of obtaining money under false pretenses? I'll have you understand, sir, that I never touched a penny of soiled money in my life."

"Say, I ain't tryin' this case, you know," said the officer. "You and this fellow was pardners, wasn't you?"

"No, sir!"

"What's the matter, Doc'?" asked the freckled boy, pushing a curious transient out of the way.

"It appears, my boy, that I am under arrest," said Doc', who held a handkerchief in his trembling hand and now wiped his face with it.

"Pinched?"

"It's the fault of that scoundrel who wanted to get Doc' into the medicine company," said the book-agent. "He's the man you want to arrest," he added, turning to the officer. "Where is he?"

"How do I know?" Then to Doc': "Are you ready to go with me?"

"Go with you?" asked Doc'. "Go where?"

"Where do people usually go when they're arrested? Over to the station-house."

"I warn you, sir, I warn you," said Doc', with upraised and threatening forefinger. "This arrest is a mistake, sir—a hideous outrage, my man, and some one will suffer for it."

"Oh, that's all right," said the officer, with a tolerant grin. "If you've got any friends you can give bail to-night and square the whole thing in the morning. There's no need of gettin' worked up about it."

"Indeed!"

"I can see that the officer isn't to blame," said the book-agent. "He is simply doing his duty. I dare say you can arrange the matter of bail as soon as you get over there."

"You can get bailed out along about mid-

night," said the plain-clothes man. "The judge comes down about that time. Mebbe you can get him sooner if you know him."

"And in the meantime, sir?"

"Well, you ain't any better than anybody else, are you? Do you know the captain?"

"Do you mean, sir, that I—that after being arrested on some preposterous charge I may be thrown into a —locked up?"

"Well, I don't know where else you could be put."

"My God!"

Doc' sank back into his chair, breathing loudly. The plain-clothes man seemed surprised that any one should be so agitated over the everyday ceremony of an arrest. The book-agent laid his hand on Doc's shoulder and recited, solemnly:

"Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne."

The freckled boy had hurried to the restaurant and given the alarm to the dentist and the lush, who were dividing a sirloin steak.

All three came in the front door with a run and a slam, the dentist being the first to reach Doc'.

"What does this mean, Doc'?" he demanded.

"I—don't know," replied Doc', slowly lifting his head. Tears were in his eyes.

The book-agent explained.

"You don't mean to say that you've arrested him?" demanded the dentist, turning to the officer.

"What if I have?" asked the plain-clothes man.

"Well, if you have, it's a confounded shame!" said the dentist, lifting his voice.

"Smash him!" said the freckled boy, in a disguised voice, with his hand over his mouth.

The officer turned quickly to make trouble.

"Shut up!" ordered the lush, and he stepped up to take command of the situation. "Do I understand, officer, that you have a warrant for Mr. Horne?"

"I've served the warrant, and I don't know who you are—cuttin' in here."

"I am simply one of his friends, that's all. Let's not lose our tempers. I guess you know as well as any of us that Mr. Horne here can give any bond up to a million dollars if you allow him time to notify his

friends. It won't be necessary for him to go to the station at all, will it?"

"Of course it will!" replied the officer, amazed.

"If we can bring to you here, within an hour, messages from the mayor and the chief to guarantee his appearance at any time or place, then will it be necessary for him to go?"

"He can't give no bond unless he goes to the station," said the plain-clothes man, who began to look at Doc' with a new interest.

"Hurry out and get me four messenger boys—quick!" said the lush to the freckled boy. "What magistrate is on duty to-night?"

"Ramsay, I think."

"He and Mr. Horne are brother members of the Loyal Legion. Great heavens! Some one is going to sweat for this to-morrow." Then to the other members of the colony: "It's a good thing the warrant got into the hands of a man who knows how to be decent in a case of this kind." He put his hand on Doc's shoulder and said, consolingly: "We'll simply walk over to the captain's office and sit there until we can arrange the bond. If there's any delay

we'll have Judge Thompson, Col. Munster and Alec Moody there by ten o'clock."

He led the plain-clothes man to one side and whispered to him: "Doc', there, is Alec Moody's cousin."

Alec Moody was the king of criminal lawyers, a millionaire, a power at the city hall. Judge Thompson had been "mentioned" as a candidate for mayor. Col. Munster was a broker and the treasurer of the Policemen's Benevolent Association.

"One of you speak to Cap', and I think he'll let him stay right in the office," said the plain-clothes man. "It'd be a dirty shame to throw him downstairs. He might get in with a bum or a Chinaman, or any one."

"Why, it would be dreadful—a man of his age!" said the lush. "He's nearly eighty years old. He doesn't look it, but that's what he is. When we walk over to the station you won't take hold of him, or anything like that?"

"I guess it ain't necessary."

"And let me walk along with him. You won't lose anything by treating him well. This whole thing is a put-up job."

"He seems to be a quiet old guy—don't look to me like a crook."

"I'd like to get hold of the idiot that swore out this warrant."

"I think we'd better go over to the station," said the plain-clothes man. "I've got to let 'em know I served the warrant."

"Just as soon as I arrange for those messages."

The members of the colony had listened in numb admiration to the masterful lying of the lush, and none ventured to assist. The freckled boy came with two messengers. The lush took him over to the counter and gave whispered instructions to hold the boys there until Doc' had gone. Then he walked up to Doc' and said: "We'll go over there and arrange this business. It won't take long."

Doc' arose, white, his face suddenly drawn with the thinness of age, and said: "If I am to be incarcerated, I protest with——"

"Nothing of the kind," said the lush, and he laughed as he took hold of Doc's arm. "A mere formality."

He went ahead, with Doc' by his side. The plain-clothes man followed, with the dentist for his mate. The book-agent lumbered behind. As they passed out to the

street they heard the freckled boy explaining the incident to a group of awed transients and saying: "If ever I get a crack at that lobster he'll have to take a trip layin' down, feet first."

The five, on their way to the station, fought the cold wind along a narrow street between high buildings, dark and forbidding. As they came to the iron steps of the station-house (a square brick building on a corner), the lush hurried in ahead of the others and the plain-clothes man moved up to catch step with Doc'.

It was a bare, rectangular room, with two iron posts to support the ceiling. At one end, in a recess shut off by a wire screen, sat a large man in his shirt sleeves. He had gray hair and mustache, and was reading an evening paper through a pair of steel-bowed spectacles. An overhead lamp threw a glare about him. This man was the desk sergeant. From a room behind the recess came the buzz of muffled telephones.

The lush was standing by an open door marked "Captain," and he beckoned to Doc', saying: "Step right in here until we can get the papers made out." At this the

desk sergeant peered out from behind the screen. The plain-clothes man went over to the window and explained to him.

One gas jet was burning low in the captain's room. Doc' sat in a broad arm-chair and looked at the floor. Both the dentist and the book-agent went in with him, but they sat helpless, because they could not say anything to suit the occasion. The lush was pleading with the desk sergeant, who said that the judge always came between eleven o'clock and midnight, and couldn't and wouldn't be sent for any sooner.

The freckled boy arrived with a prepared speech, enumerating the influential politicians who had been notified and who might appear at any moment. The desk sergeant listened with a grin, suggestive of doubt. In order to get rid of this element of danger, the lush sent the boy to the magistrate's residence far out on the south side, as he had learned that the magistrate was attending a political club dinner downtown.

It meant a wait. The lush buttoned his overcoat and went out into the street. He walked north until he came to a place where

drinks were fifteen cents each, and there he drank two high allowances of whisky.

Back at the station a whispering reporter led him into a dim corner and wanted to know something about the man Horne, who had been arrested.

The lush told the reporter to go to the devil and suggested that he would thrash any person who put anything about Doc' into any newspaper.

He went into the captain's office and began to outline to Doc' his plan for revenge. The dentist begged him to remain quiet. He went out and took another drink.

At last the magistrate came, and the prisoners who had been waiting in the basement cells were brought up and stood in a line across the big room—men sleepy drunk;



THE MAGISTRATE.

men with bruised faces; chalky women with their hats pulled forward, who showed a weary and smiling contempt for this familiar process of taxation. Doc' did not come out until the others had signed their names and paid their dollars. Only those who could pay the fees and get the guarantee of a bondsman were released. As no member of the colony was a property owner, the lush had found a negro who made a business of signing bonds. Doc' came out with his mournful escort, and wrote his name on a paper laid before him. The dentist paid a dollar to the magistrate and another to the negro. The police reporter stood by and watched through half-closed eyes. He was smoking a bulldog pipe.

"Nine o'clock in the morning," said the desk sergeant, blotting the signatures.

"Come on, Doc'," said the lush.

Doc' followed him without giving sign that he had heard. As they moved toward the door the freckled boy entered, breathing heavily.

"I—couldn't find—his nobs," he said. "You fixed it, did you?"

"Yes—all right," replied the dentist, sharply.

As soon as they were outside the lush gave a long groan of relief and then turned to look up at the station-house.

"Oh, temple of justice!" he said, removing his hat. "Hooray for the palladium of our liberties! All I want to do is to smash one o' those windows. I've had five drinks, and I'm going to have fifty-five more."

He walked out into the street to find something to throw at the window. The dentist and the freckled boy had to pull at him to induce him to follow Doc' and the book-agent.

Doc' did not seem to observe that the lush had broken his promise. He did not speak during the walk back to the hotel.

CHAPTER XXV

THE TRIAL

The members of the colony saw a mention of the arrest in the morning papers, and hoped that Doc' would overlook it.

The dentist went to Doc's room at seven o'clock and the old man was not there. He had gone for a walk. The lush and the freckled boy were at the bar early. They had assisted Steve in closing it the night before.

The dentist took breakfast with the book-agent at the restaurant, and when they came back into the hotel Doc' was sitting there reading his favorite newspaper, now his enemy.

The item was much the same in all the morning papers. The colony concluded that it had been sent out in duplicate by a news bureau.

A FAKE MEDICINE COMPANY.

TWO SMOOTH CITIZENS WHO GOT THE BEST OF GULLIBLE BUSINESS MEN.

Calvin Horne, otherwise known as "Doc" Horne, was arrested at the Alfalfa Hotel last evening by Detective Clancy, of central detail, charged with

having obtained money under false pretenses. The warrant was sworn out by Oscar Parkman, of the printing house of Parkman, Benedict and Blair, who alleges that other business houses have been victimized as well. It is said that Horne and a partner named Jackson H. Smith, both of whom have been living at the Alfalfa Hotel, claimed to be at the head of a concern called The Okobonee Medicine Company, with a capital of \$100,000 and the backing of several substantial citizens. "Doctor" Horne posed as the president of the company and Smith was supposed to be secretary and treasurer. They represented to several business houses that the "company" had rented an entire floor in the new Gunnison building and was about to do extensive advertising. So plausible were the claims made by the duo that Mr. Parkman advanced \$25 in cash and gave credit for \$18 worth of printing. On Monday he became suspicious and started an investigation which developed the fact that the prominent "stockholders" knew nothing about the "Okobonee Medicine Company." Smith cannot be found by the police and it is supposed that he has left the city. Horne, who is about 60 years old and is said to hold a minor position in the government building, professed surprise and indignation when taken into custody last evening. He will have a preliminary hearing before Justice Ramsay this morning.

"Gentlemen, have you seen this infamous publication?" asked Doc', as he held the paper toward them. His eyes were blood-shot, and he had the pallor of a sick man, the

corners of his mouth being drawn downward as if by physical suffering. He spoke quietly.

"'Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny,'" quoted the book-agent.

"I wouldn't worry about that, Doc'," said the dentist. "They'll have to take every word of it back. Have you been to breakfast?"

"Breakfast?—no. What time is it?"

"We'll start over there in about a half an hour. I was wondering if you wanted a lawyer."

"What have I done that I should require a lawyer?"

"Nothing, only I thought——"

"I will not dignify this contemptible attack by offering a defense. Let the accusation fall of its own rottenness. Besides, the plot has succeeded. I am in the dock. The taint has been put on me. That's all the craven hound wanted, whoever he is. Smith was a puppet—nothing more. I will be in my room when you gentlemen are ready to go."

He arose, pushing on the arms of the chair to lift himself, and walked over to the elevator.

The lush and the freckled boy came out from the bar-room and saw him. They were flushed and odorous.

"That thing'll be straightened out in the papers, Doc'," said the freckled boy, going over to him. "We won't stand for nothin' like that. They'll put in a piece an' get the whole thing right or we'll start somethin'. You see if we don't."

"You do nothing of the kind," said Doc', without looking at him. He stepped into the elevator and rode upward.

The colony held an indignation meeting full of threats and vituperation. The bicycle salesman, who had been absent the night before, came in to hear the account of the lush's strategy to save Doc' from a cell.

"Well, they can't prove anything against Doc', do you s'pose?" asked the bicycle youth.

This was the first time that any one had raised a question as to the outcome of the trial. The book-agent quoted, this time from Doc'. He said: "The charge will fall of its own rottenness."

Five members of the colony followed Doc' out of the hotel and over to the police station. Doc' was calmer than he had been the

night before, and the freckled boy remarked. "He's got his nerve with him all right, all right."

In the big room at the station were patrolmen in uniform, unbuttoned and uncombed



lawyers smoking ragged cigars, fat negro women without hats, puffy men in striped clothes, drooping men in soiled garments and a few plain-clothes men, including Clancy, who did not seem pleased to see the lush again.

The colony pushed through the waiting room and into the court room, which was a dusky place,

"THE CHARGE WILL FALL." the only light from the outside filtering in through two windows that opened on an alley. Crowded on the parallel benches which faced the magistrate's high seat were men in sun-bleached clothes who smelled of smoke and drink, glistening

negroes, veiled women, gaping and dirty boys without collars, giggling women with flowery hats, and a few women tightly veiled. Placid Chinamen were here, and restless Italians and the usual filling of curious loafers. Doc' and his companions slid into a bench near the back wall. A bailiff was pushing at the people who crowded forward in the main aisle and noisily commanded every one to "Go on now! Get seats!"

The trials began with twenty men and women crowding and pushing one another inside of the railing. The murmur of talk and the noise of shuffling feet prevented the people on the benches from hearing any of the talk between the magistrate and those who were jostling about in front of him. Now and then the clerk bawled out the names of defendants, some of whom were waiting on the benches and others of whom were being brought up from below and shoved into the keeping of the officers who had arrested them. After a defendant had been discharged he had to fight his way out of the compact group in front of the court. The defendant found guilty was dragged out of the crowd by a policeman and led over to the clerk's cage to pay his fine. If

he could not pay he was led down the stairway into the basement, to await the afternoon wagon to the bridewell.

Justice moved with scorching speed here. Sixty cases had been disposed of—drunkenness, petty thievery, assault, vagrancy, opium smoking, disorderly conduct—before the clerk shouted: "Calvin Horne, Oscar Parkman, Officer Clancy!"

"Come on, boys," said the lush. "Stick to him."

They followed him up the aisle and pushed behind him, through the gate and up to the high desk protecting the court.

"Are the parties here?" asked the justice. "Where's—let's see—where's Horne?"

"I am he," said Doc', who had been blocked by a large man with red hair.

"Well, get up here closer, where we can take a look at you. Let him past you there. (This to the red-headed man.) What are you waiting here for? Your case is over. Get out and make room for some of these other people. Where's Parkman?"

"Here!" said a small man, with close side whiskers of brown and a pair of concave eye-glasses. The members of the colony tiptoed to get a look at the man.

Doc' said, "Not guilty."

"And who are all these?" demanded the court, frowning at the five who were close behind Doc'.

"We are witnesses, your honor," said the lush. "That is, if you need us, which I don't think you will."

"I'll decide as to that," said the court. "Be sworn."

A mumbling oath was recited by a busy clerk. The court looked at the plain-clothes man and asked: "What do you know about the case, Clancy?"

"I served the warrant, your honor. All I know is that this man" (indicating Doc') "and the fellow Smith that got the money from Mr. Parkman here lived together at that hotel down there, and had got up some kind of a company together, and——"

"I deny it!" said Doc'.

"We'll hear from you later," said the court, addressing Doc'. Then to Mr. Parkman: "Did this man get any property from you on false pretenses? Tell your story, and cut it short."

"I want to show you these," began the complainant, taking two cards from his pocket and handing them to the court.

"Those are the business cards of the fraudulent concern. This man claimed to be the president of the company."

"He didn't," growled the freckled boy, from his place of shelter behind the dentist.

"You fellows keep still," said the court, turning to Doc's witnesses.

"Ask this man if he ever saw me before," said Doc', who had turned a stern and unfaltering gaze on Parkman.

"Is this the man who got the money?" asked the court.

"His partner got it."

"You told me when you swore out the warrant that this man had got money and merchandise from you under false pretenses," said the court.

"Well, he did get it, indirectly."

"How do you know he did?"

"Because he and Smith were partners. The card there shows that this man was president of the company."

"That's no proof. Are you sure they were in partnership?"

"They lived together at this hotel and hatched up this whole scheme. I can prove it."

"Yes, you can!" said the lush.

"Hush," said Doc'. "Let this gentleman conclude—or perhaps he has concluded."

"Did you ever see this man before?" asked the court, addressing Parkman.

"Well—no, but his partner, Smith——"

"Prove—that—partnership," said Doc', with measured slowness, as he raised his fist and brought it down on the desk in front of him. "Your honor, I have no interest in this hearing further than to ascertain whether this attack on me was prompted by a malicious desire to smirch my reputation or was due to the asinine stupidity of this person on my left."

"Give it to him, Doc'," said the freckled boy, speaking over the dentist's shoulder.

"For the first time in my life I stand in a dock to answer a criminal charge," said Doc', turning to the right and then to the left, addressing not only the court, but the loitering policemen and reporters. "What is the basis for this charge? This man had been told that I was in partnership with a scoundrel to whom he had loaned money."

"Smith told me," said the complainant, squinting at the court through his glasses.

"You haven't got any case," said the

court, shaking his head slowly, as if he were sorry to be compelled to say it.

"Well, I have good reasons for thinking they were in cahoots," said Parkman, persistently.

"That's all," said the court, with decision. "Dismissed!"

All turned to move out of the pen and were elbowing for the gate when Parkman turned and exclaimed: "Your honor! Your honor!"

"Well, what is it?"

"This man here (pointing at the freckled boy) has just now threatened me. He said he'd poke me in the eye when we got outside."

"My goodness, you believe everything people tell you, don't you?" asked the lush, grinning at Parkman.

"Say, your honor, I never spoke to him at all," said the freckled boy. "I don't want nothin' to do with him."

"Why, this boy wouldn't harm a fly," said the lush. "All we're goin' to do to Mr. Parkman is sue him for fifty thousand for false arrest."

"If he pokes you in the eye, you swear out a warrant for him," said the court to Parkman.

Doc' had walked ahead with the dentist, the book-agent and the bicycle salesman. The salesman had offended Doc' by trying to shake hands and bubble his congratulations.

"I trust you did not admit the possibility of any other result," said Doc'. "I desire no congratulations."

"Oh!" said the salesman.

"Wait a minute!" shouted the freckled boy, as he followed them out of the station. "Let's hang around here till that guy comes out. Say, he's scared stiff."

"He is beneath our contempt," said Doc'. "Come, gentlemen," and he led the way with the book-agent. The dentist and the bicycle salesman hurried to their places of employment. The lush and the freckled boy went away together. They had conducted themselves as chums ever since Doc's arrest, forgetting their past differ-



"THE BICYCLE SALESMAN."

ences in the strenuous effort to save Doc' and punish his persecutors. The freckled boy had an intermittent job as collector for a laundry, but he had not displayed any money since the catastrophe at the race track. It was believed in the colony that the lush paid the expenses of the all-day and all-night celebration which followed the triumphant acquittal.

The newspapers failed to mention the fact that Doc' had been cleared of the charge against him. Their silence was thought to be unjust, inasmuch as they had told of the arrest, so the book-agent sent a long letter to each of the dailies demanding fair play, but the letter was not printed, and the freckled boy always insisted that Parkman had "stacked the cards."

CHAPTER XXVI

UNITED

The dentist came into the hotel at 5 p. m., and found Ike Francis behind the counter, asleep.

"Where's Doc'?" he asked, in a loud voice.

Mr. Francis looked up and drowsily recognized the speaker.

"In his room—ain't been out since noon," he replied.

The dentist had vague fears as he ran up the stairway. He was relieved to find Doc' sitting under the double gas-light, reading a book, which he threw on the bed when the dentist spoke to him.

"Doc', what do you think?"

"I am in no condition to think. The occurrences of the last twenty-four hours have unnerved me."

"Well, I met her to-day."

"Her?"

"Miss Milbury—ran right into her on

State Street. And say, she was looking fine. And what do you think, Doc'? She seems to be at least ten pounds lighter than she was last spring."

"Indeed!"

"I went right up to her. I don't know why—but I couldn't help it. She didn't know how to treat me at first. She was polite, but—well, not very cordial. She wanted to know why I never answered her letter. Do you know what I did? I told her I never received it. I didn't know any other way out of it."

"I told you to answer that letter."

"She asked about you too, Doc'."

Doc' stroked his chin-beard and glanced hesitatingly at the dentist.

"Do you think—did she say anything about that infamous publication?"

"No, of course not. Why, nobody will see that."

"Every friend I have in the city will see it. They won't believe it, but the disgrace is there, my dear sir—the fact that I have stood in the dock. If this had happened thirty years ago I would have shot Parkman dead as he stood there in that court room."

"Doc', I'm going out there to call to-night."

Doc' shifted in his chair and seemed ill at ease under the beaming smile of the dentist.

"I have thought several times that I would recall to your attention a little conversation we had away last summer," he said. "You seemed to attach considerable significance to it at the time. I told you that Miss Milbury might, possibly, when she became quite old, say fifty or over, be somewhat stout—at any rate, stouter than she is at present. If my memory serves me, I made no prediction, but simply said, in an off-hand way, that she might become heavier in time. If you find that you still have a fondness for this admirable and most talented young lady, I hope to God that nothing I said to you, in jest, at that time, will deter you from paying her your attentions. If you search through the world from now until doomsday, I don't believe you'll ever find a woman more qualified in every particular to become the wife of a man who has all the noble qualities which are revealed in you."

"Put her there, Doc'," said the dentist, extending his hand. His chin trembled and

he blinked as he took hold of the out-stretched hand.

"I'm glad you feel that way. You're right, too. She's the finest girl I ever met. Will you go out there with me again some night?"

Doc' shook his head slowly.

"Not after what has happened," he said. "A blemish has been put on my reputation. I have been held up to the public gaze as a swindler and confidence man. I have no desire to compromise two good women by going into their home as a guest. If they have not heard what has happened, they will hear it soon enough. They may not believe the slander, but as long as I am under this cloud, I have no desire to force myself on comparative strangers. I would prove an embarrassment to you, perhaps a hindrance to your plans. No, sir; I cannot go."

Thereafter he consistently refused to call on the Milburys, although the dentist went every evening.

CHAPTER XXVII

DOC' GOES AWAY

One day in December Doc' received a telegram announcing the death of a sister in an Ohio town. He went to the funeral, and was absent from the hotel for six days. After he returned he confided to the dentist that he had come into about \$15,000 of his sister's estate. At first the dentist thought there might be some mistake, but Doc' had letters from the lawyers, and he showed a copy of the will.

This news caused rejoicing at the hotel, and Doc' was congratulated by all members of the colony. He, alone, was unmoved by his good fortune. He said he had made fortunes and lost fortunes and given away fortunes all his life, and he didn't imagine that any acquisition of wealth meant very much to a man of his age and temperament.

Ever since the arrest and the trial, Doc' had shown a moody indifference to all events around him. The dentist's love affair was now off his conscience. The first attempt

to reform the lush having failed, Doc' did not renew the effort. As he sat with the



"THE LEDGES OF THE TOWN WERE WHITE."

evening group he was courteous and tolerant, even when the freckled boy offered his heathen dogmas, but he seldom told a story, and never showed a lively interest in one that was being told. He who had dominated the company and shown himself

the cheering influence became a restraint on the good-fellowship.

The colony had a theory which accounted for this change in him. He was supposed to be brooding over the disgrace of the arrest. He thought that every one knew of his humiliation, and that some who knew of it doubted his innocence. He had been the commanding figure at the Alfalfa Hotel, but now he felt that he had no right to assume a superiority, having stood in the dock charged with a prison offense. They dared not attempt to drag him out of his melancholy by any argument or assurance, because not one of them ever spoke of the hustler or Parkman, or the two times at the station. But when the money came, the dentist, believing that a change of scene and the diversions of travel might serve to effect a cure, suggested that Doc' ought to take a vacation.

Every member of the colony seconded the suggestion, and Doc', brightening under their good wishes, decided to take that long-postponed trip to Europe.

Time and time again he had intended to go to Europe. Once he had bought his ticket and started to the steamer, when he

received a telegram from Detroit to the effect that Col. Pounds, a friend from boyhood, was involved in a business smash-up, and needed an adviser.

This time he would go. He could arrange his business affairs so that they would be safe in the hands of an attorney. He would go to Europe and perhaps find some of the gentlemen who had been connected with the foreign legations during Grant's two terms. While in Europe he could brush up his French and German, both of which he had spoken with considerable fluency during his residence in Washington.

As soon as he had determined to go, he was in a hurry to get away. The cold weather had come and the ledges of the town were white with clinging snow. He was to take a winter boat and go direct to Italy, and one of the first men to be hunted up in Rome would be Flanders, who once had a studio in Brooklyn.

On the evening before his departure Doc' was the guest of honor at a little dinner organized by the dentist, and served in the rear apartment of the restaurant which the Alfalfa colony patronized. The book-agent, the lush, the freckled boy, the bicycle sales-

man, and Mr. Ike Francis, proprietor, sat at the table. The lush brought with him the material which he regarded as necessary to the drinking of a farewell toast. Doc' was himself again, and recalled that this very evening happened to be the anniversary of a farewell dinner given him by several citizens of Baton Rouge, the year before Buchanan ran.

Doc' was in Europe nine months recovering his health and self-respect. When he came back to Chicago in the autumn, on his way to Cincinnati to visit a cousin who was commonly mistaken for Chauncey M. Depew, he wished to go to the Alfalfa European Hotel, but there was no such hotel in Chicago. The old home and the lower houses that propped it up on each side had been torn away to make room for a twelve-story office building with four elevators, and every floor busily inhabited.

The dentist and his wife were living at a family hotel on the south side.

In the scattering of the colony the lush had found refuge on the north side. He continued to have desk-room with a real estate firm, and his habits were somewhat

improved, according to what the dentist said to Doc', as he never took a drink unless he felt that he needed it.

The bicycle salesman had disappeared.

The book-agent had re-married, and was managing his wife's lecture tour throughout the corn states.

Ike Francis had gone back to a country town to manage a hotel that was not in danger of being torn down.

The freckled boy, by the last report reaching the dentist, was traveling with a circus as a purveyor of lemonade and a "gentlemanly agent" who sold concert tickets.

THE END