

Editor of N. Y. Herald
Franklin

NO THROUGHFARE.

BY

C—S D—S, BELLAMY BROWNJOHN, AND DOMBY.

2
SECOND EDITION.

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PRELUDE.

THE marvellous success of the first edition of this story has induced the author to revise, correct, and enlarge it so that it may take its place among the standard literature of the day. Without consulting Judge Ames, of the Probate Court, I have changed the names of some of the characters, so as to give the narrative, in its present form, an appearance of originality.

Not less than ten nor more than a hundred and ninety thousand copies of the first edition were circulated in a single day, and the author is not a greenback the heavier for it. There is really but one writer of the following story, but I have permitted the names of my associates who *began* the tale with me, to remain, as it may add to their popularity and increase public curiosity to hear the readings. Notwithstanding my close intimacy with C. D. and Domby, no complimentary tickets for their entertainments have been received, and, as Mr. Loring will testify, I scorn to make money out of the sale of this volume, in order to buy them.

Flinging myself on the indulgence of the American public,

I remain, truly theirs,

BELLAMY BROWNJOHN.

BOSTON, JAN. 1, 1868.

NO THROUGHFARE.

OVERTURE.

DAY of the month and year, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five. Boston time by the great clock of the Old South, ten at night. The clock on the Home for Little Wanderers did not strike as fast as the rest, being probably out of repair. The moon shone brightly. A veiled lady flitters to and fro round the postern gate of said Home. She observes Sally, one of the nurses, and timidly gives her two greenbacks and a bundle, and says, after a little verbal "sparring," — "Walter Wilding;" and after gasping "Kiss him for his mother," slopes.

Day of the month and year, the first Sunday in October, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven. Boston time by the clock of the Old South, thirty minutes and thirty-three seconds past one, post meridian. The clock on the Home for Little Wanderers has been repaired by Ridgeway, and keeps as good time as anybody's clock.

The boys are taking dinner. A veiled lady appears on the scene and asks, which is "Walter Wilding." The attendant is not allowed to tell, but, touched by her manner, goes among the boys and touches the young hopeful. The veiled female gives him some candy, touches the boy's face with her hair, and departs. And so ends the touching scene.

The principal "strains" omitted in this

overture will be found in one of the last scenes.

ACT I.

THE CURTAIN GOES UP.

In a court-yard of the city of Boston — a court-yard diverging from a steep and slippery street opposite the Middlesex shore of Charles River — stood the store of Wilding & Co., liquor-dealers. The court-yard itself was called Tipple Corner, and watermen had ceased to apply there, because their wares were never bought or used about the establishment. There was a tree in Tipple Corner; there was a pump in Tipple Corner, but it was seldom disturbed. All Tipple Corner belonged to Wilding & Co., liquor-dealers. They lived there.

Mr. Wilding put on his hat at the age of five-and-twenty, and told Bintrey, his lawyer, that that hat covered the owner of this property, and the business transacted on this property. He was thankful. He then hung it up again.

A plain statement of facts without pantomime would have been quite as effective in this instance.

Bintrey said "Ha, ha!" and took a glass of wine.

Then Wilding took something.

Then they both took something.

Wilding got pathetic and cried, and told

how he had lived with his mother seven years after she took him from the Home, and when she died she set him up in the liquor business as successor to Pebblestone Nephew.

"Have you a partner secured?" asked Bintrey.

"I reckon."

"And a house-keeper advertised for?"

"You bet."

After Wilding's proposing to get up a chorus for the Little Wanderers' Home, they parted, Bintrey evidently thinking his employer had got enough.

Joey Ladle, the cellarer, then entered, and complained that he had to drink all his wine through the pores of his skin, and didn't like the idea of changing the sign, as it changed the luck of the house, — an idea which, by the way, proved to be the correct one.

ENTER THE HOUSE-KEEPER.

In response to an advertisement in the daily papers, numerous applicants for the position of house-keeper appeared.

Wilding ran the gauntlet that must be run by all who advertise. There were the usual species of applicants, old women, young women, and women who appeared neither old nor young. Handsome, homely, plain-looking, and pretty; painted and unpainted; chalked eye-browed and unchalked eye-browed; one-eyed, two-eyed, squint-eyed, cross-eyed, crooked-eyed, etc., et cetera, *ad infinitum*, — until poor Wilding was ready to give up in despair, and curse the newspapers for their extensive circulation.*

At last, however, a woman *dressed in black*, came, saw, and conquered.

*This was written by D—s, and is considered one of his most felicitous descriptive passages.

She was a widder, and her name was Coldslaw.

THE HOUSE-KEEPER SPEAKS.

Mrs. Coldslaw waited on Mr. Wilding in the dining-room.

"About breakfast, sir?"

"Eight o'clock, — ham and eggs, — fresh eggs."

She looked toward the chimney-piece, where hung a picture, and started.

"Tea?"

"Tea."

"If your tea stands too long —"

"If my tea stands too long — aha! methinks I have seen those countenance before! You were —"

"I was at the Home for Little Wanderers. That picture —"

"My mother at twenty-five."

"Your mother! ha! ha! ha! Heaven forgive me! the nurse touched the wrong boy! You are somebody else! Walter Wilding was carried away, and you took his place!"

"Then," said Wilding, with a noble burst of enthusiasm, to which he was sometimes addicted, "I will advertise for him and sign over my property to the Home for Little Wanderers, if I don't find the true Wilding."

He then sent for Bintrey and read a letter from Neponset.

NEW CHARACTERS ON THE SCENE.

George Vendale, the new partner, entered the store. Wilding was agitated.

"What is the matter?"

"I am another. I had no business to come into this business. I am somebody else, and, consequently, was never in it!"

Vendale proposed to take something to cheer up his spirits, which was done.

"The letter — is it for you or for us?"

"For us."

Vendale opens and reads letter from hard-cider manufactory, at Neponset, which commends the new firm to Hoofensheister, Dock Square, their agent.

Vendale, by the way, was in love with Hoofensheister's niece, whom he had met in summer travel.

VENDALE MAKES LOVE.

One night George went a-wooing, to the house of Hoofensheister. In the sitting-room was Madame Door, who is introduced into the story for the purpose of bringing things round right by and by. A description of her personal appearance is unnecessary. There is nothing for her to say which will add interest to the tale; and we consequently invite the reader to inspect her to his satisfaction, and make up his own mind what she is like. There she sits with her back to the wall. Look at her!

Marguerite was not there. He asked for her, and she came. Hoofensheister went away, and Madame Door went to sleep. Vendale said, —

"Fair Marguerite, dost thou lovest me?"

She turned her eyelids toward the ceiling and murmured, "I dost."

He bent over her tenderly, and took from his coat-pocket a box of jewelry and put it about her neck. She blushed and tried on the necklace.

Hoofensheister returned and made a row. Vendale outgeneralled him, and under certain restrictions began to court Marguerite in regular New England fashion. This restriction was to always have a third person in the room. Hoofensheister chose Madame Door to be watcher, but she invariably turned her back to the wall, and never looked up during the whole evening. Vendale and Marguerite of course only whis-

pered. They never said anything with their voices.

EXIT WILDING.

At this point Messrs. D—s, Brownjohn, and Domby held a consultation in regard to Wilding, as it was evident that to make the story interesting he must be got rid of, somehow.

Mr. Domby suggested that an apoplectic fit would be a good idea.

"No," said D—s, "that's too sudden, and is not always sure death. He must go gradually."

Brownjohn thought that a coroner's verdict, "Died of cold, hunger, and being squeezed to death, at the corner of Tremont Street and Hamilton Place, November 18th, 1867," would be a capital idea.

"That would hurt the sale of tickets for the next reading," said Domby.

D—s, with an eye to business, assented.

Brownjohn, not being an interested party, did not insist upon the tragedy.

"But he must die before the beginning of the next chapter," continued D—s.

"Why not get rid of him by appointing him to a foreign consulship?" asked Domby.

"That would not be death, but life eternal," said Charlie, in his quizzical, humorous way.

"A Western railroad train," suggested Brownjohn.

"Sure death," soliloquized Domby, solemnly.

"But how to get him there!" queried Charlie.

"Plain enough," interposed Brownjohn. "Liquor-dealer — Longworth wines — rye whiskey — Bourbon; of course he must have all these to stock his cellars with."

"But, at the end of the last chapter it looks as if he was going to give up business,"

said Charlie. "That won't do; he had better fall downstairs, have a hog'shead of wine roll over him, or something of that sort."

"That would also be too sudden," said Domby. "You want to keep the nerves of the reader on a steady strain, but never shock them."

This sensible observation was complimented by the speaker's companions.

"Consult 'Norwood,'" suggested Brown-John. "How did Beecher slaughter all his characters? I didn't get through even the middle chapters, but I saw there was to be trouble ahead."

"Let him die," said Domby, wisely, "as little Dombey did,—water on the brain. If you remember aright, he was always talking of the wild waves, and trying to dam the onward rolling river."

The joke took, and all hands took something at Domby's expense.

"I have it!" said D—s, while he nervously rubbed his chin whiskers. "I'll kill him in good old style, as I've killed heaps of troublesome characters before him." He took a pen and wrote:—

"Gradually, under the pressure of his brooding mind, his body stooped, his step lost its elasticity, his eyes were seldom lifted from the ground. . . . At length, when the partnership was but five months old, Walter Wilding took to his bed, and his house-keeper became his nurse. . . . He extended his hand to her, and she gently took it. . . . He died . . . and we all smiled to think how easily he got over it."

"Now," said Charlie, rising, "I am going to walk up to Worcester and back to get a good appetite for dinner.* You fill in

* The distance from Boston to Worcester and back is about eighty miles,—his accustomed stroll of an afternoon.

the blanks while I am gone. Of course make it pathetic, or it will be ridiculous. Don't begin the next act till I get back." He vanished.

ACT II.

VENDALE MAKES MISCHIEF.

After Wilding's death, and since he was "shinning up" to Marguerite, Vendale attended strictly to biz. He frequented neither the lager-beer saloons nor the genteel resorts where drinks were not sold over the counters, but furnished at side-tables, and, as he did not sell by the glass himself, the State Constabulary allowed him to "go in" and make all he could. If he did not earn a certain amount, Hoofensheister would not allow him to marry his niece,—and Hoofensheister was determined he should never have that sufficient income. We have before stated that Hoofensheister was agent of the firm of which Wilding & Co. purchased their spirits.

H. called one morning and found V. in a peck of trouble—a lot of hard cider marked "1795" had turned out only corn whiskey, and a large amount of money sent by Wilding & Co. to the firm at Neponset had been stolen!

When he heard this, Hoofensheister tipped over the envelope-case and spilt the contents.

Vendale had found the forged receipt, and Hoof. wanted to see it. Hoof. pretended to be warming his hands over the fire, when a porter entered and dashed a hod of coal in the grate and quenched the flame and all prospects of Hoofensheister burning the paper. Hoof. looked filmy, whispered "Imbecile!" and on the whole

concluded he didn't care much about examining the receipt.

"I will write to Neponset to-night!" said Vendale.

It is supposed he wrote, as in eight or nine days he got an answer telling him to get some one who could talk French to start for Neponset at once with the receipt, as the firm could then tell who forged it. They suspected who the victim was.

"Who was to be sent to Neponset with the receipt?"

Tipple Corner afforded plenty of people who could talk French, but few who were honest. The more he thought of it, the more plainly necessity faced him and said "Go."

Just then Hoofensheister came in, and said he would go too.

He measured Vendale and found his companion was the biggest man.

Vendale carried the receipt in the breast-pocket of his coat.

He went to bid Marguerite good-by.

Vendale's last look was for Marguerite. Marguerite's last words to him were "Don't go." She smelt a mice.

ACT III.

IN THE VALLEY.

On a cold and stormy day in February, a solitary horse, hitched into one pung which contained two individuals, might have been seen wending his way through the drifted snow on the road between Boston and Neponset. The men were Vendale and Hoofensheister, and the horse was a hired one. As they rode slowly on, Hoofensheister muttered to himself, while his filmy eyes gleamed from beneath his beetle brows:

"Where shall I rob him if I can? Where shall I murder him if I must?" No opportunity presented itself until they arrived at Holbrook's, in Neponset. They were in a room there which looked out upon Neponset river, at that place rapid and deep, swollen and loud. Vendale lounged upon a couch; Hoofensheister walked to and fro, now stopping at the window looking at the irregular reflection of the town lights in the dark water (and peradventure thinking, "If I could fling him into it"), now resuming his walk with his eyes upon the floor.

"Where shall I rob him if I can? Where shall I murder him if I must?" So as he ran the room, paced the river, paced the river, paced the river, paced the river.

"Do you lock your door at night?" asked H.

"No; I sleep too soundly.

"I advise you to put your valuable papers under your pillow. Take a drink? This didn't come from Tipple Corner, but is Dorchester rum."

Vendale didn't follow the advice, but accepted the invitation.

"Good-night;" and Hoofensheister vanished to his own apartments.

Left alone, Vendale raked up the fire and dozed, undozed, and raked it down again, and *vice versa*. The gas-light from the tallow candle burned dimly, and threw its sickly rays about the apartment. Suddenly the latch lifted, the door opened softly, and—horrors!—a man entered!

"Who's there? ha! ha! boo! boo! yah! yah! too! too!" cried Vendale, springing forward and endeavoring to frighten the intruder.

It was Hoofensheister. "Not in bed?" shouted he, catching Vendale by the fore-shoulder, as if meaning mischief. "Are you ill?"

"Ill? no."

"Thank Heaven! 'Twas but a dream!" cried Hoof., throwing himself upon his knees with upturned eye and outstretched hands.

Vendale noticed the glare in his eyes, and "made a note of it."

However, he accepted his apology.

They then took something.

"Bad rum," ventured Vendale.

"No other kind in Dorchester," replied Hoof.

Both leaned their elbows on the table. Vendale dozed. Hoofensheister watched him, — Hoofensheister got up, — Hoofensheister went to the bed, and turned down the pillow. Nothing there. Why should he turn the pillow, if not to seek those papers that are in your breast?

Can the reader guess this conundrum, or does he give it up?

It was early candle-light in the morning, but the candle had gone out. Hoofensheister called out sharply "Vendale! we are called!"

Vendale rose. He shook himself. He yawned. He looked stupid. He felt more so. He scratched his head, which felt very large. He thought not, and did not think. Out into the street. Everything was strange. His step was unsteady; and, like the witch in "Macbeth," he felt a "pricking of the thumbs." He drank a couple bottles of Congress, two of Missisquoi, tried several rochelles, and consumed a large quantity of citrate of magnesia. He danced, and cut a pigeon-wing in the bracing air. He then took breakfast. After the matin repast, Hoofensheister said to him, —

"Our journey amounts to nothing after all."

"How for nothing?"

"The House is in Canton. You know

we are a Hard-Cider House in Nepouset, and a Saw-mill at Canton. Well, boards happening to press of a sudden more than cider, — which had gone through the press, — Dusenberry was summoned to Canton. Holland, the other partner has been taken ill, and nobody can see him. What do you do? Go back?

"Go on," said Vendale.

"On?"

"On? yes. Across Blue Hill down to Canton."

ON THE MOUNTAIN.

It was impossible to take the team with them, so they struck a bee-line through Milton for the Blue Hill.

The horror of a winter's journey over this rough and rugged elevation is known only to fox-hunters; mountain torrents, whirlwinds, and avalanches beset the traveller at every step. The dreaded snow-slide buries squirrels, partridges, and rabbits in its relentless fury, and if men are in the way, it buries them also.

Hoofensheister, who was an old gunner, passed on, followed by Vendale, except when he stopped to take something.

Vendale got dozy but followed, and suddenly became conscious of struggling with Hoof., on the top of a big snow-drift, on a high cliff.

"Wherefore?" gasped Vendale.

"Because!" shouted Hoofensheister.

"You are a villain!"

"You are a fool! The receipt!"

At these words Vendale, who felt that he was enchained, sprang into the air, turned a complete somersault over the projecting cliff, and landed a hundred and fifty feet below in the top of a large hemlock. As his body was regaining a perpendicular position in mid air he shouted, "God bless Mar-

guerite!" From the tree he rebounded into the air some fifteen feet, and, horrors! losing his self-control, plunged headlong down another hundred feet! — but caught with his right hand a huge icicle, one of fifty that hung from the edge of a ledge, pointing down into the abyss a thousand feet below!

The mountain storm raged again, and again it did not rage.

Two men, two dogs, and another man and woman were soon upon the scene. The dogs looked sharply down into the abyss and howled.

"He's there!" cried the female. "Give me the brandy and the rope."

She girded herself with a cord under the breast and arms; she formed it into a kind of jacket; she drew it into knots; she laid its end side by side with another rope; she twisted and twined them together; she knotted them together; she set her jaws upon them in different places, and to separate them where she bit were impossible; she threw them round a big maple, strained, and the tree came up by the roots; she held them for two men to strain at, and they strained; then they all strained, — giving a long strain, a strong strain, and a strain all together, — every one except Marguerite Hoofensheister, who stood there unmoved, firm as Bunker Hill Monument, and, like the quality of mercy, was not strained.*

With two kegs for a balance-pole, down she slid into the ice and darkness.

Soon the cry came up, "Enough," and they ceased paying out.

"How does he lie?"

"He doesn't lie — he hangs."

"This is no time for jesting, woman! — how does he hang, then?"

"Perpendicularly! There were fifty icicles

* These are the strains spoken of in the overture.

on the edge of the ledge, and the forty-ninth has nearly melted beneath his grasp! If that breaks before I get to him, I shall never be married!"

The men and dogs at the top of the cliff were horror-stricken.

The moon's pale beams glimmered for a moment, and in that moment when the moon's pale beams glimmered, she was seen to grasp the fiftieth icicle in her hand and transfer the rope from her body to that of Vendale.

A cry came up softly, "Pull away."

Simultaneously with the order the fiftieth icicle, which furnished Marguerite Hoofensheister's hold on life, snapped in twain!

She fell, — just the length of Vendale, — and caught the heel of his boot! ! !

Not observing the additional weight, the men at the top hoisted away heartily.

During the tedious journey up the craggy and icy cliff, Marguerite's mind was beset with horrid emotions. Supposing the boot should come off! or the pegs of the heel pull out! But Vendale encouraged her with every assurance as to the strength of his brogans. Said he, "Fair maid, if they were custom-maid, I should fear for your life; but they were purchased of the C. O. D. Man at starvation prices, and I know they are stout."

She breathed easier, after this, and in another moment a shout, which rang from crag to crag, told the ice-bound hills that the lovers were safe, and there was no discount on C. O. D. boots.

THE CLOCK-LOCK.

When the three novelists had recovered from the effects of the trying and fearful scenes just witnessed, Mr. Dombey exhibited a patent clock-lock, which he wished to

"ring into" the story somehow, as it would give the invention a good lift on this side of the Atlantic. D—s joined with Domby in the plan, and immediately begun, in his imagination, to erect a building in which to display the curiosity.

To this Brownjohn objected, declaring there was no opening for the lock, and if they were interested in any speculation they ought to advertise it in a legitimate way. "No Throughfare," of course, offered no way.

"But," said D—s, "we have the right to introduce the clock-lock."

"Yes," joined in Domby, "and a combination will be exhibited which would redeem any story."

"But the reader can't see it," objected Brownjohn, "and it would be impossible to explain its intricate machinery without diagrams."

"Mr. Brownjohn," said D—s,—leaning forward with a very convincing expression, which plainly said, "It is mine,"—"whose story is this?"

"That's what I want to know—whose is it, Domby?"

"Well, the fact of it is," said D., a little hesitatingly, "I don't think one writer ought to father the whole concern, but all three of us can stand it, if we hang together."

"I have written a few stories, alone," said D—s, more flushed than ever, "which have proved popular; and I reckon my reputation won't suffer if I shoulder this, even with the patent thrown in. Mr. Brownjohn, you have leave to withdraw."

"And that is the way!" shouted Brownjohn, excitedly, "that you would smother struggling genius! What have you done in this story, sir? You begun by telling what time it was; is that a reason why the time-

keeper should be introduced? You described Tiptle Corner; must you describe the clock-lock? The work of your hands is observed on little points throughout the yarn; must the hands of the clock-lock deface their labor? No, sir—the shades of Pickwick, Sam Weller, Micawber, Copperfield, Nickleby, the Dombey's, and Sarey Gamp forbid!"

D—s turned upon his heel with a look of unutterable disgust. He motioned to Domby, and they conversed in an undertone for several minutes. At the conclusion of the consultation, the author of American Notes blandly said,—

"Mr. Brownjohn, magnanimity is an attribute of the English character. We leave you in entire possession of this thrilling narrative. I do not wish the fraternal bond of union between the two countries to be ruptured by a quarrel about a work, whose every element is moral, and whose principal incidents, though improbable, are yet exciting. The clock-lock must have a place in my Christmas story,* and it cannot be stopped. You have got a job on hand if you attempt to harmonize the conflicting elements of this tale without machinery."

He bowed, took his hat, motioned to Domby, and they withdrew, notwithstanding without D—s sarcastically observing,—

"You had better get that crowd from the top of the hill soon. They are freezing to death up there!"

As they passed out of the door, Domby, with a sardonic smile, observed, "He can't do it."

"Can't I, though?" shouted Brownjohn, as the door closed behind them. "Ah, ha! we'll see!"

Seating himself in the chair just vacated

*This threat has been carried out in a rival publication, the principal incidents of which are taken from this story.

by D—s, he looked over the MS. and took in the situation at once. He sneezed, scratched his head, seized a pen, and wrote as follows:—

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

George Vendale and Marguerite Hoofensheister, with their dumb and human companions, made their way from the top of Blue Hill—as hundreds had done before them. As they were passing beneath the shadow of a high rock, a man upon its top was seen to level a pistol at Vendale's head. Quicker than a flash, Joey Ladle aimed with his unerring rifle, and the body of Hoofensheister came tumbling down into the valley. In his pocket were found papers which proved conclusively that George Vendale was the true WALTER WILDING, the man who was not touched.

Walter Wilding and Marguerite Hoofensheister married and did well. Considering that they owed to Mr. D—s everything—even their very existence—they followed him everywhere he went, and made large sums of money in speculating on tickets for his readings. Domby and Brownjohn received none of the profits, but it is supposed that Charlie did, as he always dressed well in public.

Bintrey became a patent lawyer, and put the clock-lock through the patent office. By a peculiar arrangement it passed entirely

into his hands, D—s and Domby receiving nothing for their ownership.

The last seen of the two men and dogs, they were chasing a fox over Blue Hill.

Joey Ladle never died.

The other persons mentioned in the story were alive and prosperous on Christmas Day, 1867.

P. S.—The reason why this is called "No Throughfare" is no affair of the reader's.

POSTSCRIPT.—For the benefit of aspiring playwrights I publish the following warning, which lately appeared in a Boston newspaper:—

"NO THROUGHFARE."—To the Editor of the Transcript: Whereas, intimations have been made that certain obscure but ambitious dramatists are about to perpetrate a play, the incidents of which are to be taken from the "thrilling tale" published on the first page of last Saturday's Transcript, this is to warn them to at once desist, as the author himself has prepared a drama which will be produced whenever a theatre can be found sufficiently first-class to bring it out.

In this connection the writer would state that he desires the full benefit of his exciting narratives, and will at once proceed to dramatize all, except his political and religious articles, as soon as they appear in print.

BELLAMY BROWNJOHN.

Boston, Dec. 31, 1867.