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# Life in New York!

"Searching For The White Elephant"



AND

"Kicked into Good Luck."

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**SEARCHING**

FOR THE

**WHITE ELEPHANT**

IN NEW YORK.



A Humorous Record of Many Adventures.

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF "WILD OATS,"  
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# THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

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## PART FIRST

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HARRY QUEER was carefully reared in a little town on the Hudson river; sent carefully to day and Sunday school; carefully kept from the company of bad boys, who were given to skylarking nights; as carefully kept from reading anything contained between yellow covers, and especially from noticing the roguish maids of the town who were prone to cast seducing glances toward him.

Harry was handsome and his parents were wealthy; and not only that, he was to come into possession of quite a large fortune when of age. For this reason he was looked upon with longing eyes from many quarters, and for this reason, also, his parents endeavored to teach him that his person was much too good to be bestowed upon anything to be found in his native place.

How well they succeeded may be guessed; but, at all events, he was looked upon as "a nice young man," and when he became of age he was rich, but hadn't sowed a solitary one of his "wild oats."

But his money set him to thinking about the world without, and from which he had been so studiously kept. He had read much of New York but had never seen it, although he had often given vent to sighs when he saw the beautiful steamers coming from and going to that great mart, and wished within himself that he could learn something more

about it. In short, he sometimes went so far as to wish that he might plunge into and enjoy something of its society.

If the girls of the country were so attractive, and had so many seductive ways with them, what must the fairies of Gotham be? He had seen a few of them at intervals, as they chanced to come and go, and although taught to regard them as little short of beautiful devils, they nevertheless made an impression and awakened a hankering which was gradually getting the best of him.

But, outside of this influence, a desire to see something of the world urged him to the resolution, and he resolved to turn his back on the country and cut away from the parental apron-strings which had held him so long. He felt himself of age, and resolved to be a man in actions as well as in stature, so he communicated his resolution to his careful parents.

They were horrified, and used every argument to dissuade him from his rashness. He was their only child, and if he should be led away—oh, lord! it would be worse than a funeral to them. But the resolution on Harry's part was not rescinded, although he promised to consider the matter a while longer before going.

To his parents, the idea of allowing their first and only born to mingle in unselected grades of society was almost too much to con-

template. He would surely be ruined, and perchance return to them a fast young man, loving whisky, cigars, and strange women.

But while Harry was considering the matter he made the acquaintance of a young man who knew all about New York, and the glowing accounts he gave him of it nearly turned him topsy-turvy. He was determined to go, then, come weal or woe.

His mother shed tears and his daddy gave good advice in large doses, all of which Harry promised to follow, and to write home every day, and to telegraph to let them know that he had done so. So his trunk was packed, his purse well filled, and he stood upon the landing ready to take the boat for New York. His over-careful parents attended closely upon him, making suggestions and giving advice.

"Now, *do* be careful, my son," said the mother, as he was about to step on board, "do be careful about going out nights. New York is dreadful full of them 'ere pesky traps set for the unsuspecting; so do all your going about during the day-time, and go to bed regularly at nine o'clock."

Harry promised faithfully, and shaking hands with both of his parents he stepped on board, and was soon lost to view on his way to the empire city.

On board the boat he fell in with an old schoolmate, who was much surprised at seeing him so far from home and on such an errand. This schoolmate, Tom Lanky, was a backwoods youth, but he had been much in New York, and knew considerable about its pleasant and unpleasant ins and outs.

"What are you going there for, Harry?" he asked, after learning his destination.

"Well, Tom, to tell the truth, I think I am going there to develop myself and see the metropolitan elephant."

"Oh, ah! that's it, eh? Well, I advise you to go for the *White Elephant*," replied Tom, with a broad grin.

"Why so, Tom?"

"Because you are sure to find the mouse-colored animals wherever you find the white one."

"By the *White Elephant* you mean——"

Tom whispered a few words in his ear and stepped back to note the effect.

"Don't know about that, Tom," replied Harry, coloring deeply and shaking his head.

"Well, you'll know about it after you have been there a short time. It's a gay old town, you bet."

"You know I have kept at home pretty well, and——"

"Yes, and that's what's the matter with our Hannah; you have seen just nothing of the world, and its high time you did. Come down to the bar and take a drink."

"Oh! no; couldn't think of it. No, no, Tom, I never drank a drop of anything in my life. No, no; it would intoxicate me."

"May be, just a little, but that won't kill you. Besides you have to get used to it, you know."

"Why so?"

"Because they drink it in New York."

"Don't they have any water there?"

"Yes, they wash the street with it now and then, and use it for cooking and other mechanical purposes, but they do not drink it there as a beverage. So come on, my boy, and take your maiden drink."

"Well, if what you say is true, I suppose I must, but I don't think its hardly pious."

"I know it; but piety is another thing that you will have to drop if you stay in New York."

"You don't tell me so?"

"But I do, though; there isn't a spark of it there."

"Haven't they any churches?"

"Well, yes; they have splendid buildings with steeples to 'em, where they have fashionable gatherings every Sunday during the season, but no piety; no, no!"

"Why, it must be a very bad place, Tom."

"No it isn't; its a good place. The people don't take to piety, that's all, and of course they are better off without it."

"I have heard some hard stories about the place, but I had no idea that the people were so bad."

"Well, never mind; you will like them. If you find that *White Elephant* you will wish that you had taken to studying zoology long ago. But come on, let us have a drink. Pshaw! don't hesitate, for the man who hesitates is lost. Steamboat whiskey is well watered, and is good for new beginners——come."

Reluctantly our Adonis yielded, and at length stood before a bar for the first time in his life, where, he poured out his maiden drink. It was only whiskey, and, as Tom had said, lacked the quality of strength, however many worse ones it may have possessed. But Harry possessed nerve and native pluck, and so bracing himself against a post he closed his eyes and swallowed the contents of his glass.

A glass of water hastily swallowed, after he had possessed himself of the bourbon, kept him from utter strangulation, and wiping the tears from his eyes he tried to appear quite unconcerned. This part, however, was a failure, for he *was* concerned about the receptacle into which he had poured the villainous mixture.

But they turned and went up on deck again as though nothing had happened. Tom explained to him that he could find much better liquor when he got to the city, and as it began to effect him a trifle he proposed that they go down into the cabin and have dinner.

This being agreed to, they were soon seated before a huge array of dishes and but little to eat, for, next to the badness of steamboat liquor, the baldness of steamboat dining-tables is the most noteworthy, unless we except the waiters who usually *wait* until you "stake" them with a dollar or so, as a re-

ward for the flourishes and passes which they usually execute.

But all this had but little in it to attract the attention of our hero, for directly opposite, at another table, sat a beautiful girl, whose eyes sought his quite as often and even more ardently than his met those that glittered under her arching brows. The whiskey had given him the boldness to look—aye, to admire—and had the waiters attempted to lather and shave him they could not have diverted his attention.

The young lady was exceedingly beautiful, and dressed in the very height of fashion. But she was not a country girl, although she evidently saw that her admirer was quite as green as he was good-looking.

Life's book was before him, and he was now admiring the binding!

#### AN AFTER-DINNER ADVENTURE.

The young lady in question was in company with a woman quite old enough for the traditional "aunt," or she might have been a companion, chosen for the purpose of making the contrast between them all the more favorable to the younger and more beautiful one.

They rose to leave the table a moment before the same operation was performed by Harry and his friend. But on going up the steep cabin stairs they were just far enough behind to obtain a view of one pair of exquisitely-rounded and trimly-dressed ankles and another pair so attenuated that they resembled whitened hoe-handles.

Harry drew several short, quick breaths in succession, and grasped Tom's arm in a way which showed that a transient glimpse of a doubtful heaven had made a decided impression upon his sensitive nature.

"How is that, Harry?"

"Isn't she an angel, Tom? Gracious!"

"Well, I can't answer for her near relations with that other place we have heard so

much about, but I guess she is about as near an angel as any of them. See! they have gone out upon the forward deck; let's go out, also, eh?"

Harry nodded assent, and it was quite evident that there was no part of that boat quite so attractive as that blessed and, to him, brightened for the time being by the delightful creature in the blue dress and gold trimmings.

So they took seats upon the forward deck, and Tom ignited the large end of a cigar. The female who had created the unmistakable sensation under our hero's vest was walking gracefully backward and forward and admiring the beautiful scenery, casting, every now and then, an artful glance at her victim as he sat there in the gathering twilight.

Finally she and her companion took seats where glances could be exchanged, and this artillery of the eyes was kept up until darkness demanded closer practice or a cessation of cupidonian hostilities. Tom, by this time, got tired of watching them, and retired to the other side of the boat to see if my new phase would eventuate.

It only required a little artful practice and a few graceful moves on her part to bring them quite close enough to converse, and this she did without seeming to do it or to have any particular object in view.

"Can you tell me, sir, the name of the town we are now nearing?" she asked, with more melody than Harry had ever heard in any one voice before.

"Ah! yes—I—that is—is Yonkers," stammered Harry, coloring as red as a beet.

"Thank you; quite a pleasant place I should say," she added, still more musically, and at the same time bestowing upon him a look which thrilled him clear down in his boots.

"Yes, yes, you are quite right; it is a very fine place, and is growing rapidly," he replied, with a little more composure but quiet as much color.

There were several things said about Yonkers, all of which was very interesting, especially to Harry. He had never cared a continental for the one-horse town before, but now that he heard it praised by such a rare divinity he almost wished that he lived there.

"I trust that you will excuse me, sir, but there is something about you, in your looks and manners, which so reminds me of a dear brother that I feel myself drawn almost irresistibly toward you."

Harry colored worse than ever, and wished he had a tongue. He wished, also, that he was that beloved relation, and wondered why he had not been born a brother so beloved.

"You know one cannot help these feelings, sir."

"I suppose so—I—yes, you are right, and——" the poor fellow broke down here, completely.

"I love him very dearly," she said, with a little sigh.

"I—I envy him," he stammered, again coloring and looking like a school-boy who expected a reprimand.

"Well," she replied, with a smile mellowed with just a shade of sentiment. "There cannot be purer love than that of a sister for her brother."

"I should say so, although I never knew what it was to possess a sister's love. But I wish that I had such a sister's love, or was, indeed, the brother you mention."

It was an effort, but he made the speech.

"I am sure, sir, I can but—but——" and she looked up into his face in the mellow light which came from the cabin window with such a sweet look, "I can but say that I wish so, too."

Harry started as though a mustard plaster had been suddenly applied to his spine. Was she as much in love with him as he was with her? Oh! query, query!

It was growing chilly, and the companion

of the enchantress, who had kept accommodatingly aloof while the most interesting portion of the conversation was going on, suggested that they had better retire to the cabin.

"The mist has become very disagreeable, my dear," she added, with a shrug of her angular shoulders.

Harry wished from the bottom of his heart that she could be missed, and as for its being chilly, pshaw! he never felt himself in such a glow in the whole course of his life.

She looked at him as if to read his thoughts on the subject of retiring, and then glanced appealingly to her friend.

"I know it is hard to disturb congenial companions," said Miss Angularity, "but I fear for your health, Laura. However, you can continue your mutual entertainment where there is less danger of taking cold."

"Well, suppose we do—that is, if agreeable to you," said the poetic beauty, with a look which said "I really trust that you will not refuse."

He hadn't the slightest idea of refusing, and offering her his arm hesitatingly, but which she accepted with enthusiasm, they were soon seated in the cabin.

Tom, who had kept his eye upon them from the first, observed this last move with evident satisfaction.

"He is gone to a thread, sure. I guess he is on the trail of the *White Elephant*, but I must keep my eye out," saying which he strode leisurely into the cabin and took a seat where he could see without being seen. But he needn't have taken that trouble, for Harry was as blind as an owl to everything else in the world but the fair divinity by his side. He was "gone to a thread," and no mistake.

"Do you believe in affinities?" asked the young creature, soon after they were again seated.

"In what, pray?"

"In an affinity of soul."

"Really, that is something I have never studied; but I am not sure that I understand you entirely," replied Harry, considerably confused.

"Well, what I mean is this. Do you not hold it as true that there are people whom nature created for each other; and that they will, at some period of their lives, find each other—do you understand?"

"I think I do, and yet my experience has been too limited to admit of my knowing much about it."

"Oh, ah! you rogues of men always say that," she said, laughing so merrily.

"I was not aware of that, even, until you tell me so; yet, if such is the case, how strange that I should meet with mine at first trial."

"How so—what do you mean?" she asked, with a curious look in her beautiful eyes.

Harry colored as though the blood would spurt out of every point on his face. He was slightly taken aback.

"Do you mean," she continued, lowering her voice to a musical murmur, "that I am your affinity?"

"Well, if thinking ever so much of you makes you my affinity, I——"

"Ah, but it does not. That is only ordinary love. But listen just a moment. If I loved you in return, and we were every way calculated to make each other as happy as happiness can be, then we should be affinities in real earnest; do you see?" and in order that he might be able to do so she pressed his hand slightly, just enough to send his blood tingling through his veins again.

"I wish you did, though," replied the bashful lover, as soon as he could command his utterance.

"Do you, indeed—truly, earnestly?" and, oh! she gave his hand such an artful squeeze, and looked up into his face with such a look! if he was "gone to a thread" before, he was by this time drawn to the attenuity of a spider's web.

"I—I will swear it if you like."

"Don't swear, but—" and suddenly changing her tactics and the joyous expression of her face to one of sadness she partially averted her face.

"But what—tell me!" he said, earnestly, taking her soft, white hand in his.

"I—I am so sorry, so utterly miserable," she replied, without moving, only just enough to give expression to a slight shudder.

"For what? do tell me!"

"I knew it would come sooner or later," she continued.

"Knew what would come?"

"I have always felt that I should meet my soul's affinity."

"And does that distress you, pray?"

"Yes, yes, oh! so much! so much!" and at this point she turned her sorrowful eyes back to his, that were so full of earnest inquiry and solicitation.

"But you were only now dwelling upon the felicity of such a discovery. How do you reconcile it?"

"Yes, I feel it; I feel that you are my—my affinity, but we have met too late, too late!"

"How so?" and Harry involuntarily glanced around him, as though to see if a rival was at hand.

"Well, I will tell you; it is only right and just that you should know, since we have made the discovery of our mutual and heaven-ordained love. About a year ago a cruel combination of circumstances forced me to marry a man whom I did, do, and always shall detest."

Harry started as though a needle in the cushion had assisted him, and then sunk back again looking very much like a bursted bladder.

"Oh, fate, fate!" and she visited her eyes with a beautifully-embroidered handkerchief.

"And so you are really married?" he asked, as soon the coffee-grounds of his emotion had settled a trifle.

"Alas! yes, in the eyes of an odious law I

am the wife of another. But, oh! I never knew until now how utterly forlorn was my situation. Until now I never loved."

She seemed "gone to a thread" herself. But women bear up under such things better than men, you know.

There were several moments of dramatic silence.

"Do you reside in New York?" asked Harry, at length, and like one a trifle resigned.

She bowed, and again turned away her face to hide her emotion.

"Will you tell me his name?"

"Yes; let us exchange cards."

"Certainly," and he produced one of his own.

"But, for heaven's sake, for the love you bear me, don't do anything rash."

"Not a bit of it. Here is my card."

She glanced at it, and then looked up with a smile that made things look like a sun-shower.

"Harry Queer, eh?"

Our hero bowed quietly.

"And here is mine," she said, producing a delicate bit of Bristol-board from an ivory card-case and handing it to him.

"Laura Allen," he read, musingly.

"You see my address is all there. But tell me, Harry—"

"Tell you what, Laura?"

"Do you think as I do?"

"I have no means of knowing that. But I feel very sorry to know that you are married."

"I do not doubt you, darling. But do you believe that because one is unfortunately married that she may not love another?"

"Such ideas regarding love are rather popular just now, I believe."

"Yes, and are growing popular every day," she replied, growing more and more in earnest. "But do you believe in such sentiments?"

"Yes, I do," he replied, firmly.

"So do I; and now that I have found my counterpart I shall love you in spite of heaven, or the other place, and feel that I am doing only what is right—only what nature ordained—and you will love me, Harry?"

"With all my heart; that is, provided he does not find it out."

"Oh, we can arrange all that, and taste such hours of bliss as shall in part repay our misfortune. I will arrange it. Keep watch of the 'Personals' in the *Herald*, and I will arrange our next meeting. Will you do so?"

"Ask me if I would live. To be sure I will. What is all this bustle about?" he added, looking around among the passengers who were making for the cabin stairs.

"We are nearing New York. Here comes my friend. We must part now, oh! agony. But we will meet and be happy yet—you will be true to me? And you won't love me any the less because of my misfortune?" she asked, with a pathos which made his heart leap.

"No, no, Laura, I cannot do that. Under any and all circumstances I am yours. Do not let our parting be for a great length of time."

"Trust me, darling," she said; and as the cabin was entirely cleared by this time she took advantage of the occurrence, and placing her beautiful white arms around his neck she drew him down to her, not unwillingly, and gave him such a kiss as would have required an earthquake or a direct interposition of Providence to obliterate.

The affair was quickly over with, and away flew his married divinity to prepare for disembarkation, but turning as she went to kiss back her pretty hand to him.

Harry Queer felt as though in a dream, and stood in his tracks like a statue, until the thump of the boat against the dock toppled him over into his seat and thoroughly awakened him.

Tom Lanky came up at that moment with an inquiring smile upon his mustached phiz.

"Well, Harry, old man, what luck?"

"Well, I don't know," he replied, turning away with a look which betokened that he didn't care to tell how well or how ill he had succeeded.

"Don't know, eh? Well, that's good. Upon my word if you go it this way on your first trial what will you do when well under weigh? But come, let us get ashore. Do you know where you are going?"

"No, Tom, I haven't the slightest idea. I will put myself under your direction until I get better posted."

"All right, my boy, I know all about it, for once I was green and now I am ripe. Come out here until we can find a hackman."

This adjunct of a steamboat landing was not at all hard to find; and taking the checks for their baggage he was soon ready to start.

"St. Nicholas," said Tom, as Jehu banged the door of his carriage upon them and intruded his head for orders.

#### A DREAM AND ITS REALIZATION.

For two or three days the excitement and novelty of the metropolis kept our hero in a feverish state, not enough so, however, to make him forget his steamboat Venus, but quite enough to tone down his enthusiasm a trifle. He saw thousands of beautiful faces and fairy figures, but none of them could obliterate the superior charms of Laura Allen, and he watched the "Personal" column with the greatest care, hoping to hear from her as per agreement.

For two or three nights he went to bed punctually at nine o'clock, as agreed upon with his mother; but at length Tom Lanky came for him and they went to the theater. This was another epoch in Harry's life, and he was delighted beyond all measure. He began to get glimpses of the New York elephant, and they were exceeding pleasing, yea, verily, and he began to see how much he had lost and how lively he had got to work to

make up for it. At last he saw the "Personal" addressed to him, and which was worded thus:

"HARRY Q.—. Please meet your affinity at No. — Bond street, Saturday afternoon, at three. Remember, LAURA."

It was then Friday, and his heart thumped so loud that he was almost afraid that the guests of the house would mistake it for the gong which had frightened him so at first. But he kept his own counsel, and although he accompanied Tom to see the Blonde Burlesques that evening, made no mention of how fast he was getting upon the trail of the *White Elephant* he came in search of. In fact, Tom seemed perfectly willing that he should do so, at least while he paid all the bills and did not refuse to lend him a "ten" now and then.

But punctually at the hour appointed he presented himself at the trysting-place, and was admitted by the radiant Laura herself, looking, if possible, even more beautiful than ever.

They retired to the parlor, and love's young dream was again pluming its wings for another poetic flight.

An hour passed on, and the affinities became intoxicated with freedom. Harry's brain seemed more like a burning pin-wheel than aught else; but while thus occupying a private box in the heaven of supreme felicity a step was heard in the entry, coming towards the door of the parlor.

"Oh, my God! My husband!" screamed Laura, starting up; and going into a gentle swoon she fell more completely into her lover's arms than ever.

As for Harry he felt as though being shot out of a twenty-inch mortar.

"Come in, Tom, there is nobody here; it will only take a minute," he heard a man say, as he took hold of the door-knob. The next moment there was a tableau.

The "husband" and Tom Lanky entered the room together and struck attitudes.

Then came some decidedly mélo-dramatic acting; Laura "came to," and Harry staggered to his feet.

The husband pulled his own hair an instant and then went for Harry's capillaries. Tom threw himself between them.

"What!" exclaimed the injured husband, glaring upon Tom. "Do you attempt to shield the outrager of my happiness, my home; do you—dare you—?"

"But he is my friend," put in Tom.

"I care not, he must die!" and drawing a revolver he cocked it and tried to get a shot at the vile traducer.

Tom seized his arm.

"For heaven's sake do not kill him!" screamed Laura.

"Out, vile woman; I shall kill both of you!"

"Kill me and spare him!"

"Never!" and again he skirmished for Harry's head.

"What is the meaning of this, Harry?" said Tom, in great anxiety for his old school-mate, "I am sure you meant no harm. Explain the affair."

But Harry had nothing to say why the killing should not go on.

"You see he is guilty. Let me 'drill' him!" and the outraged husband struggled manfully to instigate a coroner's inquest. But Tom struggled for his friend, and finally wrenched the dangerous weapon from the husband's hands.

"Now, Harry, you are safe for a moment; let me speak a word with you," he said, approaching him, while Laura darted out of the room followed by her unreasonable brute of a husband.

"I'll fix this thing for you, Harry," continued Tom.

"Do, for heaven's sake! I'm ruined."

"Not yet, but devilish near to it; money can save you. How much have you got with you, quick?"

"Five or six hundred dollars—why?"

"Give me all you have, and then get out of this on double quick before he returns. He is a perfect devil, but money will make it all right with him."

"Here, take it. Come up to the hotel as quick as you can."

"All right; now git;" and Harry did

"git" without loss of time, leaving his money in the hands of a friend to settle things.

Five minutes afterward the wife, the husband, and Tom were dividing Harry's money into three equal parts.

*Thus endeth the first lesson!*





## PART-SECOND.

## THE SECOND SEARCH.

At the close of his first essay in searching for the *White Elephant* of New York, Harry Queer had the misfortune to be taken in and done for, to the tune of about six hundred dollars, while just on the verge of a lover's felicity. To come directly to the point, the girl whom he fell in love with, and who announced herself as his affinity, proved to be a trickster and drew him into an ambush where he was plucked by his friend and her supposed indignant husband.

Returning from the bower of bliss—but which proved to be a den of thieves—he waited at the hotel for his friend, his supposed rescuer, Tom Lanky, to come and inform him how the affair had ended. At length he came.

"How is it, Tom, how did you settle it?" he asked, the moment he entered the room.

"Well, I managed to pacify him after a long time, but it was devilish hard work," replied the virtuous Tom.

Harry drew a sigh of relief.

"How the deuce did you happen to make such an impression on her?" he asked, with a quizzical smile.

"I don't know, really, you know we met upon the boat."

"Yee."

"By the way, why didn't you warn me?"

"By the way, how in thunder could I warn you? I saw you flirting with her, but such things are so ordinary that I paid no attention to it. Why did you keep it from me—why didn't you mention your little game?"

"Oh, dear, I thought it was all right."

"But you see it is not. The only thing

that you are to blame for is getting caught."

"How could I avoid it?"

"Well, you will learn better next time."

"Yes, you may depend upon that."

"But to think the poor girl is turned out of house and home on your account."

"Did he turn her out of doors?" asked Harry, eagerly.

"He has done just that, poor girl."

"Where has she gone, do you know?"

"No, why?"

"Why, I should like to assist her."

"Be careful, young man. I know it is right that you should assist her, but be sure you don't make matters worse."

"How so?"

"He will watch you, my boy, for he would like to shoot you, as you plainly saw, and for a while he will keep a close eye upon your movements. Now I will tell you what to do. Give me fifty dollars and I will find her and tell her you sent it. Supply her little wants in this way for a while, and when he gets cooled down a bit I will bring you together again. Do you see it?"

"Yes, but I have given you all the money I have."

"Nonsense, you don't pretend to tell me you have no more."

"Why, yes; I have more in the bank."

"Well, draw a check, payable to bearer, and I will get it without any trouble."

"So I can," and with an honest desire to do a friendly action he drew his check for fifty dollars, and handed it to the obliging go-between.

Tom pocketed it, and after giving him some more friendly advice he agreed to go to the

theater with him that evening, and with this understanding they separated.

Tom Lanky bought a new suit of clothes with that check.

Left to himself once more, he thought of the commencement he had made in sowing his *wild oats*, and then his mind reverted to his parents at home. Remembering that he had not written to them for the past two days, contrary to his mother's express injunction, that he should write daily. He felt somewhat conscience stricken.

Seizing a pen he wrote as follows:

"Dear Parents: I have been quite busy lately and have not had time to write you. I am getting along finely, I have seen much of the city and have enjoyed it highly, although I find it pretty costly. I attend church and prayer meeting regularly, and have given quite a sum to the various charities, all of which I know you will be pleased to learn. I have found an old school-mate here, and being a very nice young man we enjoy ourselves very much together. So don't worry about me, for I am very careful and do not go out nights. I am placing the finishing touches upon my education. Good-by."

"From your affectionate son, "HARRY."

It will be seen by this that Harry was a very charitable young man, and considered it one of his duties to prevent any anxiety in the minds of his parents. Tom Lanky instructed him in this virtue.

At half-past seven o'clock Tom Lanky called for him, dressed in that new suit of clothes. Harry noted the fact.

"Ah! that's a nice suit. What did it cost you, Tom?" he asked, standing back and surveying his friend.

"Don't know, Harry. Birthday present from my uncle."

"I congratulate you, my friend."

"All right. Now, then hurrah for the English blondes."

"The what?"

"Why, the beautiful blondes—the Lydia Thompson troupe, the enchanting burlesquers—Lydia, the Sun-burst; Pauline, the Venus; Weber, the Beautiful Devil, Harland, the Statuesque, and all the rest so stunningly sensational. Why, my dear boy, I will bet you ten to one that you will have forgotten all about your Laura Allen when you return to night."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure of it; come."

"What are they?" asked Harry, as he proceeded to dress for the new sensation.

"Women, garden of Eden pattern," replied Tom, pulling at a cigar which he was holding in the light.

"Nothing wrong in going—nothing—"

"Nonsense, come along. There is nothing wrong in New York."

With this assurance they started out.

"Did you see Laura?"

"Yes. She is ever so thankful, and told me to tell you that everything would be lovely yet. I'll fix things, never you mind."

Harry felt quite happy, and with this assurance they went into the theater and secured seats.

The play for the evening was *Ixion*, and they had not been seated long before the curtain went up and beauty unadorned began to flood the stage.

Harry was all eyes and ears. Such displays of trunks and limbs never dawned upon him before, even in the country where they are supposed to exist in profusion.

Tom asked his opinion several times but scarcely received a reply, so enraptured was he with what was being exhibited upon the stage.

"How is that, Harry?" he asked, as Venus came upon the scene.

"My gracious! isn't she splendid!" he whispered.

"About as fine as they make 'em," replied Tom, carelessly.

"And do they allow such things here?"



"Why, don't you see?" and Tom gave his shoulders a Frenchy shrug.

"Yes, but do they do it every night?"

"Yes, that is, until people get tired of it."

"What! do they ever get tired of such——"

"Yes, they expect something new—something that will outstrip their old love."

"And how natural they look," mused our hero.

"Yes, they are the real children of nature or, at least, they reduce themselves to such a state."

"But aren't they—I mean, aren't they ashamed?"

"Do they look like it?"

"Well, I don't see them blush much. But, oh! oh!——"

"What is the matter, old man?" asked Tom, as his pupil started at a new display of naked talent.

"I never saw such handsome girls before in my life. I never dreamed of such beauty. Gracious! I say, Tom, do they ever speak to ordinary people?"

"Well, that depends upon circumstances. If an outsider has a plenty of money and is disposed to put it out liberally, why they do not hesitate to smile upon him. They are very much like other women," and Tom yawned languidly.

"But very much more beautiful. It must be a pleasure to spend money with such divinities."

"Have you forgotten your steamboat divinity?"

Harry blushed and looked sober for a minute.

"Didn't I tell you she would be eclipsed?"

"Well, she was the first one I ever knew, you see. And besides, she—she doesn't dress quite so—so lively like, and hasn't such confounded nice ways with her as these girls have. Oh, gracious! see that."

"Yes, I see."

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"I like it," replied his well-posted school-mate, carelessly.

A short silence followed, during which Harry was deeply interested in the burlesque before him. His heart was in his mouth, and he seemed wholly transported to Mount Olympus, the tramping-grounds of the gods.

If he had only known how bewitching these mythological gods were, how much more interesting his ancient history and mythology would have been when he was pouring over it at school.

While thus cogitating, and before he was aware of it, the curtain fell and he was again shut out into utter darkness. And yet, feeling that only a thin cloth divided them, he could hardly find it in his heart to quit the place; it seemed enchanted.

But Tom was equal to the task, and so hurried him along until they reached the open air, after which he took him over to "Asa's" and there asked him what he would take.

The bland and courteous Asa smiled and waited for the word. Tom suggested a whisky cocktail for his own consolation, and in less than a second a glass tumbler was whirling in the air; was caught, received a small quantity of Stoughton bitters, a trifle of sugar, a few swallows of whisky, some ice, etc., after which it was well shook up, turned through a small strainer into a glass, flavored with lemon, and presented with almost an air of magic.

Harry was so lost in admiration for the moment that he forgot all about what he was going to take himself, and when the dexterous concocter leaned forward to learn his desire, he was still undecided. Finally he concluded to take one of the same kind of drinks, not, however, because he knew its taste from a dose of castor oil, but because he wanted to see the artist mix another.

Tom paid for the drinks, strange as it may appear, and then the two strolled out upon Broadway.

"I should like to make the acquaintance of Lydia Thompson," said Harry, as they moved along.

"I'll take a cigar with you," said Tom, without heeding what had been said or making a reply of any kind, but turning into a cigar store.

"I don't smoke, but I'll——"

"Nonsense, you must learn these accomplishments. Take a mild one at first. Don't appear green; come in."

Tom was tutor and Harry was pupil, and so he obeyed.

"And so you would like to become acquainted with the gushing Lydia, eh?" asked Tom, as they came out of the store.

"Indeed I would. Do you know her?"

"Yes, yes," and Tom puffed away as though the honor didn't amount to much after all.

"Will you present me?"

"Well—now," said Tom, and he spoke at long intervals between the puffs of smoke which he blew out.

"Well, what, Tom?"

"I should like to introduce you well enough, but, as I said before, there are so many who want the same thing that she refuses to become acquainted except with those who have money and can get up a little entertainment, in the shape of a champagne supper, whereat she and her companions can meet and have a social time, you know."

"Is that so. How much will it cost, do you think?"

"Well, now, let us understand each other. Suppose I tell her that a nice supper has been provided, and that I have a wealthy friend who would like to make her acquaintance will you carry out the part of that wealthy friend?"

"Well, yes, if it does not cost too much. What will be the expense, do you think?"

"Oh, a hundred maybe. That's nothing to you."

"I'll stand that. When will you see her?"

"To morrow, if I can."

"And you will make it all right?"

"To be sure; of course I will."

"Then do it. When shall it be?"

"I'll fix that, also."

"All right, I am very anxious."

"Well, now, allow me to make another suggestion. Go and get you a fashionable suit of clothes and get yourself up like the other bloods you see about town."

"But how can I afford it?"

"Pshaw; you are worth half a million. Besides, you want to make a good impression, don't you?"

"Of course."

"Then follow my instructions."

They parted that night in front of the St. Nicholas, with all arrangements made and completed.

#### A SIDE SHOW.

The evening was pleasant, and Harry stood for some moments upon the steps of the hotel admiring the passing throng, and Gotham's queens of the shadow, as they flitted with professional smiles past the place. "How are you, Harry?" said one of the night queens, as she flirted bewitchingly past him.

Under the gas-light she looked exceedingly pretty, and as she turned to smile on our hero his heart gave a sudden bound and he started to retire.

"She knows my name," he muttered; "I wonder who she is? Gracious! but she's pretty."

He looked after her and saw a snowy handkerchief flutter a moment in the breeze, and the fair owner thereof dart down a side street.

Mustering courage he walked slowly to the corner, and just as he was about to follow the midnight divinity met him plumply face to face.

"I beg pardon," stammered Harry, after her free and easy salutation, "you called me

by name; I cannot recollect of ever having met you before."

"But you know Laura Allen, eh?"

"Yes, yes, where is she?"

"Down the street a short distance."

"Can I see her?"

"Yes, come with me."

They started off together, she taking his arm and acting as familiarly as though they had been the oldest of friends, even school-mates.

Arriving at a house in Mercer street, she paused and told him to wait until she returned. Entering the house and going directly through to the rear she passed into another yard, and then springing lightly out through the alley-way she was soon upon the street again, "lost in the crowd."

Harry waited for fifteen or twenty minutes, and, at length, seeing no prospect of his escort's return, he began to suspect that something was wrong; that Laura's jealous and demonstrative husband was there, or something of the kind had happened, and reluctantly he noted the number of the house and returned to his hotel.

As usual, before going to bed, he thought to wind up his watch, but on looking for it he found an empty pocket. Going from pocket to pocket in a desperate search for it he also discovered that his wallet was gone, probably to keep his ticker company, and after contemplating the matter for some time he concluded that he had been robbed. But the mystery of it all! How did she know Laura Allen—how did she know him, and, lastly, what was the meaning of his being robbed?

#### THE GRAND SUPPER.

The next day Tom Lanky called upon him. He told him of his mishaps and adventures, but was only laughed at for his greenness.

"Pshaw! you was only picked up by a daughter of the night and robbed, that's all. Its nothing when you get used to it, and as

for her knowing your name that was all guess-work. She may have heard something regarding your affair with Laura, but that's all."

"Well, if it is all, I am at least two hundred dollars poorer than I was, confound her."

"Yes? well, you are attending school now and must expect to pay roundly for what you learn. But now I have a bit of news for you."

"What is it, pray?" asked Harry, brightening up.

"Oh, you are a sly dog!" said Tom, nudging him under the arm and laughing as though he was actually tickled.

"Why so, what do you mean?"

"And a good-looking one to, ha! ha! ha!"

"I don't understand you, Tom."

"Oh, its all right, old man, you are a perfect lady-killer. You are destined to make your mark in New York, you bet."

"In what way?"

"Why, Lydia Thompson fell in love with you last night."

"Fell in love with me? Why, she never had an introduction. Impossible."

"You are raw yet. What has being introduced to do with falling in love? Why love laughs at all conventionalities in this modest town, do you know that? Yes, she saw you with me and was only too anxious to become acquainted with you. Do you see?"

Harry colored like a school girl.

"But there is one condition connected with her consent to meet you at our little champagne supper to night."

"What is it?" he asked eagerly.

"It is this, that she be introduced to you as Lydia Neil."

"What is her object?"

"Simply to guard her professional name. It is the same way with the rest. I will give Markham, Weber, Harland, and the others such names as they desire to be known by to

the non-professional world. But it is all right, you see. You don't care a continental for the shadow so long as you have the substance, eh?"

"No, if she desires it I shall only be too proud to comply."

And so the affair progressed.

That night, at about twelve o'clock a merry party was gathered in the private supper-room of a fashionable restaurant up town, in the center of which stood a table that was loaded down with choice eatables. In one corner of the room stood a large wine-cooler, in which were about a dozen bottles of golden seal champagne, while other outward signs showed that ample preparations had been made for a festive time.

Harry had never seen anything so brilliant, and when Tom presented him to the gushing Lydia and the other divinities it seemed as though the measure of his bliss was full to the brim. What a shame it was that they should choose to be known as Brown, Jinks, Jones, and Smith, when in reality they were well nigh equal to angels of the first water.

Tom constituted himself master of ceremonies, and seating Harry and the supposed *Leion* side by side, and the other members of the company in good places for feeding, he took the head of the table and ordered the assault to commence. And it did commence in right good earnest.

Had Harry possessed eyes for anything but the charms he beheld in his enamored Lydia he would have noticed that her blondes were excellent feeders, and that however graceful they might be upon the stage they could act in quite a different style when away from it. They put away food as though anxious to do it in the most expeditious manner possible.

Such a charming conversationalist, as he found the Thompson to be, completely disarmed all bankings for any of the rest, and nearly destroyed his appetite as well. She was only a short time over from Hingland,

you see, and knew but little about our society, you know. She had seen many gentlemen during her short life, but never had she seen one who could attract her attention while upon the stage until she saw Harry last night. Oh! oh!

Harry was flattered, and she kept him continually as red as a beet, pouring her soft sentimentalities upon him, personal and red hot. In fact, he was completely overwhelmed, and wished he might take his heaven in slices, and more at his leisure. She appeared to grow beautiful by the minute, and he didn't wonder that she found it an easy matter to take a whole town by storm.

But when the champagne began to flow everything began to come in double doses upon him. Even the hairs upon his head began to grow musical, while the waving gold which crowned the beauteous creature beside him seemed but so many tuneful strings of her heart, over which her perfumed breath swept to awaken a delightful melody for an accompaniment to her voice.

Oh!

For nearly an hour they drank, until at length things began to get mixed. The table was making a circuit of the room, the dishes upon it were waltzing with each other, and the various members of the company, as they appeared to our hero's eye, were making mysterious and comical flights against the ceiling overhead. In short, everything was animated, mixed, and musical.

The melody of the fair Lydia's voice became blended with other tunes in his head, and finally he felt himself being transported into realms of bliss, resting upon the willing shoulder of his attendant angel.

Poor, happy, translated Harry Queer! To the other members of the company all this happiness and translation only appeared in this wise; he had become dead drunk, and had slid under the table.

The others were in no funeral mood, and when they saw where their hero had fallen

they gathered around, pushed the table aside, and tried to revive him by pouring champagne upon his head.

"How are you, Thompson!" said one of the blondes.

"I wonder what Lydia would say if she knew what a glorious old time we have had in her name?"

"And why shouldn't ballet girls have fine suppers as well as the principals? Find another flat, Tom."

"Keep your own counsel, girls, for we haven't done with our Romeo yet," put in Tom.

The blondes gathered around the happy Harry as he lay there in the downy arms of oblivion, and taking off their blonde wigs and throwing them in a heap upon him they joined hands and indulged in the highest

kind of a dance, known only to English burlesque.

Then they did the *can-can*, and wound up by filling their handkerchiefs and pockets with fruit-cake and what wine remained unopened, and then, like Arabs, they gathered their skirts around them and softly stole away.

Tom Lanky lingered, and, after securing the wigs and Harry's pocket-book, he called for the landlord's bill. This he paid, and taking twenty-five dollars for his own trouble he placed the remainder back where he found it, and then, resigning the body to the servants, he joined the blondes.

The veil was being gradually lifted.

By gradual approaches Harry was nearing the object of his search, the mysterious *White Elephant*.



## PART THIRD.

### THE THIRD SEARCH.

At the close of the second search for the mythical animal, we left our hero, Harry Queer, upon the floor in a state of dreamy beatitude. The blonde troupe of burlesquers, and especially the enchanting Lydia, had translated him—by the aid of champagne—quite out of this grub-life, and given wings to his imagination without furnishing a rudder, so that he was left to float helplessly on the uncertainty of a blissful dream.

He found it much harder to wake up than to go to sleep. The one had been accomplished and accompanied by the most enchanting music, the melody of beautiful lips, the other by sundry acute jerks and snaps in the head, together with a strange uncertainty regarding the ability of the stomach to hold its own in the struggle.

If he had been to heaven he had most assuredly returned to earth again now. And what a place the translating angels had dropped him into!

The lights were out and the glitter had gone. A sad wreck was everywhere apparent. Broken glasses, bottles, inverted and perverted earthenware, tasted fruit, trampled sweets, and faded flowers were scattered around him in the greatest and limpest profusion.

Consciousness returned only gradually, and fortunate for him it was that this was so, for had the whole situation dawned upon him at once the effect must have been overwhelming.

And there may also be a reasonable doubt indulged in, as to whether he would have desired a photograph of himself taken as he came to himself. The position might have

been striking enough to suit a pre-Raphaelite, but the expression and the accessories wouldn't have made up just such a picture as Harry Queer would have enjoyed sending home to his trusting parents in the country.

His head was resting upon the spittoon, which some chance or good angel had filled with orange skins to make it comfortable; one leg was on a chair and the other doubled up under him, drawn up as though ashamed of its mate, while one hand rested lovingly in a dish of soup, and the other clutched a quantity of raspberry jelly, and during his waking struggles he had rubbed it several times over his face, and done it so artistically that he resembled a demoralized circus clown more than anything else earthly.

And one of the departed angels, anticipating the sour of his waking moments, had kindly sprinkled him with flower of sugar, and with that the jelly had mixed with beautiful effect.

And in such a condition did our hero find himself about ten o'clock next day after his supper with the blondes. What it all meant he couldn't for the life of him make out. His first impression was that a fugitive swarm of bees had set up business in his skull and hadn't room enough to work to advantage. Then he wondered if it wasn't a nightmare and her seven foal.

He only toyed with his astonishment a few minutes, however, for betaking himself to action he formed a right angle of himself upon the floor, and gazed around upon the deserted, dilapidated banquet. And yet everything was a mystery. Where was he?

He attempted to rise and make a solution of the problem, but that swarm of bees

proved too heavy, and the result was he run his head into the wine cooler where he paused a moment to reflect. The cold water and the ice did him good service, for after soaking his overheated knob for a few moments he managed to get himself into a chair.

While accomplishing this he accidentally pulled the bell-cord, and by the time he had got comfortably balanced in his seat an Irish waiter put in an unwilling appearance. O'Rafferty had been up late the night before, and had only enjoyed two or three hours' sleep between that time and being awakened by the boss to look after the morning customers who came for their cock-tails and eye-openers.

"Fat the blazes do yees want?" he growled, after contemplating Harry for a moment.

"Where the blazes am I?" asked Harry, huskily.

"Out of your head, I guess."

"Well, who's who—"

"The divil. Fat's the matter wid yees?"

"My head aches; I'm dying of thirst."

"Faith, an' I 'brieve ye're tellin' the truth. It's a cock-tail yees want."

"A what?"

"An eye-opener, sure—something to wet yer whistle wid."

Harry reflected upon the waiter's suggestive wisdom and instantly concluded that if his eyes were opened and his whistle wet he might then be able to comprehend the situation a trifle better.

"Shall I bring yees one?" he asked, gruffly.

Harry nodded, and O'Rafferty left the room.

"I wonder what it all means?" he sighed, and then waited for his medicine.

O'Rafferty soon returned with it.

"There now, put that fornenst yer handsome mug, and see if it don't give yees ase."

Harry swallowed it at a gulp. He would have done it had it been castor oil.

"Now, thin, go and wash yerself and look more like a christian. Bad luck to the black-guard that don't know when to stop."

"Stop what?" asked Harry.

"Drinkin' an' makin a baste of hisself."

"Have I been drinking?"

"Ha! ha! ha! Bedad, but that's rich. Begorra, yees are one of the innocents, sure enough. Come here, man alive," and O'Rafferty led him to a full-length mirror which stood at the end of the room.

"Now, what does yees think about it?"

Harry started back in affright.

"The devil!" he ejaculated.

"As near like him as two peas, sure."

"How did this all happen?"

"Faith, yees drank too much and ate too little."

"I don't remember that I drank anything," reflected our hero.

"It's precious little else yees did and mighty little else yees remember. Yees had a party here last night, sure."

"A party?" asked the bewildered bacchanal.

"Yes, faith, and as merry a one as iver played the divil with waiters. Don't yees mind the actresses?"

"Oh, ah!—the—the blondes."

"Aye, faith, but blondes or brunettes, they're good eaters an' drinkers, sure."

"Where are they now?"

"At home, sure; where would they be?"

"And my friend Tom—Mr. Lanky?"

"Sure they all went away before daylight, an' mighty glad I was of their lavin'."

"Did they see me in this plight?"

"Faith, I think they did, for they went away laughin like very divils at something, an' you're the funniest thing they left behind them, sure."

"Bring me some water."

"Bedad, but that's the most sensible order yees could give," and away he went to bring it.

A good wash done much to make the

handsome Harry look more like himself, and after ascertaining that the bills were all paid he left the place and started for his hotel.

He never felt so sorry for anything in his life, and his greatest desire now was to see Tom and hear how the beautiful blondes regarded him.

That night Tom Lanky came. He was sober even to moodiness. Not the faintest shadow of a smile lurked around his physiognomy.

As he entered Harry's room that individual caught him anxiously and inquiringly by the hand.

"How is it, Tom—how is it?" he asked, eagerly.

"Well, I am all right," he replied, coldly.

"How about the ladies?"

"Ha, the least you say on that subject the better."

"Were they offended at me—was I drunk?"

"One 'yes' will answer both of these questions."

"I feel—well, there can be no mistake about it; I was overmatched. But what did they say?"

"They left you in sorrow; I excused you the best I could; I told them that you was green and unused to drinking wine—in short, patched the accident up the best I could under the circumstances. But you will have to practice awhile on champagne before you can drink it without having your ballast shift."

"Will they speak to me again, Tom?"

"Well, perhaps. Let matters rest for a week or so, and in the meantime we can fix things. Lydia loves you to distraction, and you have a good hold with them all. But keep quiet for a week or such a matter. By the way, I have a letter here for you, from Laura Allen," saying which he handed him a dainty, highly-perfumed note, the bare mention of which made Harry blush like a girl.

He broke the envelope and read as follows:

"MY OWN HARRY—(May I still call you so?)—How my heart yearns for you! I am in exile, in torment, and yet I do not blame you for it. My own foolish heart has caused it all. I was so completely blinded by my love for you that I heeded nothing else. Can you, *will you*, ever forgive me? Shall I ever see you again? Has my blissful dream dissolved? Must I die in despair? Save me, Harry, save and love me! I am dying for the sunshine of your smile. Come to me, or send me a word of cheer by our mutual friend."

"In life and death, your own

"LAURA."

Harry felt troubled. His conscience was far too tender yet to withstand such an appeal, and as he finished reading he folded up the letter and sank into a chair.

"She loves you yet, eh?"

"Yes, yes, she loves me, Tom; but what shall I do?"

"Well, that depends upon how you feel toward her."

"I am sorry she is married—I do rather like her."

"Then either go and see her, or write a note."

"Which would be the safest?"

"Why, the note, of course. Write her a kind little note and inclose a good fat green-back to help her along, and that will ease her heart for the present. She is desperately sweet on you, that I know."

Harry drew a long sigh.

"Why, you are a perfect lady-killer, Harry; old man, I am glad that I am not in love with anybody likely to cross your path. But write the note and I will take it to her."

Harry was silent a moment, and then going to his portfolio he drew out a sheet of paper and wrote as follows:

"DEAR LAURA—I trust we may be happy yet. Perhaps it was foolish for us to love, but what is to be will be, as what *was* to be is. Our friend will give this to you and explain matters better than it could be done in writing. I will see you before long. Good by. From your own

"HARRY."

He placed a twenty-dollar greenback in the note and folded it into a wrapper.

"Here, Tom, now make it all right with her. Tell her not to get too much in love with me for it might cause her trouble."

"All right. I'll tone her down," said Tom, taking the note and starting for the door.

"When shall I see you again, Tom?"

"Well, next week, sometime; to-morrow is Sunday, and I have an engagement; say Wednesday."

"Make it sooner, if possible, and in the meantime see Lydia and tell her I am as deeply in love with her as she is with me. I shall go to church to-morrow. Where would you recommend me?"

"Well, if you don't want too great a contrast from the theaters, go to the Twenty-eighth Street. The admittance is only ten cents, and you are sure of getting your money's worth. Sensational preaching and lots of pretty girls. Good-by."

"Don't forget our blonde friends."

"All right," and away went Tom Lanky, the very mutual friend of Harry Queer and Laura Allen.

As he left the hotel he was joined by the irate "husband" of Laura Allen.

"Well, Tom, how much did you raise?" he asked, as they turned up the street together.

Without making any reply Tom drew the letter from his pocket and opened it.

"Only twenty," he said, carelessly, as he fingered the green denomination.

"Bah!" replied the other, contemptuously.

"Why, that twenty's better than nothing.

Don't be a hog. Let the man be bled gradually, won't you?"

"No; scoop him out at once!"

"You may handle your geese as you like, and I will do the same. Let's go and take a drink."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE PLEASURES OF CITY LIFE.

The next day Harry went to the church that Tom had directed him to, and learned that even going to such places was attended with much more pleasure than in the country.

As he beheld the beautiful girls, full of life and dead-ripe for flirtation, when he contrasted the music, scenery, effects, and the audience with the one where his pious and careful parents had trained him to go, his heart leaped with joy. It was as good as a theater, and he inwardly resolved to attend that particular church so long as he remained in town.

Sunday evening, while our hero was engaged in writing a letter home to his parents, there came a rap upon his door, and, calling upon the rapper to enter, the door opened, and the ebony knob of a colored servant was introduced.

"Gemman down stairs, sah, wants to see you, sah; here's his pasteboard, sah," and he handed him a card, with much flourish of arms and body.

Harry glanced curiously at it and read aloud:

"REV. CHARLES BLISTER."

"Who the deuce is he, I wonder?"

"Don't know, sah," was ebony's reply.

"What can he want of me, plague take him?"

"Don't know, sah. Shall I show him up, sah?"

"Yes," replied Harry, with a look and tone which plainly told as to how welcome he would be.

"All right, sah," and the shadow disappeared.

"Rev. Charles Blister," mused Harry, still holding the card between his fingers, "how does he know me, I wonder. Now I shan't get my letter written to-night, and I wanted to go out for a walk by-and-by."

While he mused thus another rap came upon the door, following which in there stepped a stately raven, or rather a crane, in the shape of a man possibly forty years of age, standing quite six feet in his shoes, and dressed to look six inches taller than that.

He wore a long-skirted black coat, buttoned up to his white neck-tie and choker, a stove-pipe hat, ornamented with several inches of crape (in mourning for mankind, probably), and his hair was combed smoothly back and apparently plastered to his scalp. His hands were covered with black Lisle gloves, and his large feet were done up in a pair of well-blackened No. 12 shoes.

There was a suspicious pimple upon his nose, from which there spread a cherry-colored hue that nearly overcame his meaningless and unexpressive features.

Harry thought the moment he entered the room that if he was the custodian of piety it would certainly spoil in the absence of other people's saltpeter.

"Good evening, Mr. Queer," said the reverend, lifting his hat from his head to the table.

"Good evening; Reverend Mr. Blister, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; I come directly from your good parents."

"Oh, ah! the deuce you do," and Harry nettled in his seat as though only partially delighted at the news.

"Yes," replied the reverend, at the same time taking a seat and a good look at young Harry.

"How are they, pray?"

"Well; but anxious on your account. Here is a letter that your mother wished me

to convey to you, and in it you will probably find a request that you receive me for, and I become, your spiritual guide and adviser."

Harry suppressed a sigh and opened his mother's letter.

While he was reading the letter the Reverend Blister took a calm and conclusive look at his future pupil, and evidently concluded that he hadn't played a bad card in getting letters of introduction to Harry's parents and in turn to the young man himself. There was undoubtedly "oil" in him that could be reached without much boring.

"Yes," said Harry, as he finished reading the letter, "Mother recommends me to you."

"You to me, and me to you. That is it, my young friend, for I trust we shall like each other very much. I am without a settled pulpit just now, and, aside from my regular theological readings, I have nothing on hand to prevent my attending to your spiritual necessities."

Harry glanced up, half appealingly, to the man.

"But do not mistake me, young man; I am not one of those ministers who, believe in Puritanism. I am liberal. I have been young, and am not old even now. I know what a youth desires, and also what he requires. I understand your position in New York exactly. You are here for the purpose of seeing and learning. I approve of all this; I believe it is a part of the religion of life to get well posted in everything regarding it. So you see you have nothing to fear in me. I promised your parents that I would be your spiritual guide, and that relieves them of a heavy burden of anxiety. Now you can act with even more freedom than you could have done, conscientiously, had I not brought about that satisfactory feeling of security at home. See?"

Harry did see, and grasping the liberal reverend by the hand he shook it cordially.

"I trust we understand each other?"

"I think we do," replied Harry.

"That is right. I wish to feel like a brother toward you, with liberty to come and go when I like, always promising not to interfere with any of your rational pleasures. I am thoroughly acquainted with the city, and may be of some assistance to you in prosecuting your searches."

"I presume you may."

"Would you like to take a walk this evening?"

"I was intending to go out."

"It is too late to go to church, but if you have no objection we will take a stroll up Broadway. It will do us both good, and enable us to take a still further step toward becoming acquainted."

"Thank you; it will afford me much pleasure."

#### SUNDAY EVENING ON BROADWAY.

Teacher and pupil walked out together, each indulging in a cigar. Harry was delighted with the liberality of his spiritual mentor, and the said mentor was delighted with his pupil's generosity and desire to learn.

They conversed in snatches upon nearly everything, and a stranger would have remarked it as strange that their views were so nearly alike on all points. Harry, from the dread he had at first of having a minister with nothing else to do set as a watch upon his actions, now began to give vent to pleasant anticipations regarding the future. He believed in solid, straight-laced old ministers for the country, but, according to the ideas he had formed regarding metropolitan society, he concluded that the Reverend Blister was just the cut.

Up Broadway they went; strolled through Union square; still on and up to Madison square, and into and around the Fifth Avenue Hotel, until it was quite ten o'clock. But it was a bright moonlight night, and the thousands of witching eyes that "assisted" on the occasion made it suggestive of any-

thing but retiring. The gay promenaders of both sexes were out in full force.

On the corner of Fifth avenue and Twenty-third street, as they were about to cross, they met a magnificent young lady, dressed in the height of fashion, and far more beautiful than any other of Gotham's fair daughters that Harry had looked upon thus far.

His companion lifted his hat, and she returned his salutation with grace and evident pleasure.

"Heavens, how beautiful!" escaped Harry, almost loud enough to be overheard by the young lady herself. "Do you know her?"

"Ah, yes, I have that pleasure," replied the reverend, casting a look backward over his shoulder.

"You may well call it a pleasure," replied our young Romeo, sighing and gazing back at her. "See, how like a fabled fairy she glides along! Who is she, pray?"

"Her name is Bessie Barlow, niece and ward of Soshington Barlow, Esq. She is an orphan, very wealthy, very accomplished, affectionate, and beautiful."

"Heavens! I can appreciate Romeo's feelings on meeting Juliet, now," sighed Harry.

"Indeed; and so your heart was not pre-occupied?"

"No, no. In the language of Hamlet I can say:

"Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there  
She all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain!"

"Ah, my dear young friend, she is worthy of all the love you can bestow upon her. In all of my acquaintance she approaches nearer to our ideal of an angel than any other. She is charity itself, and is continually doing good."

"Oh, rapture!"

"It would be curious, indeed, if she loved you as ardently at first sight as you love her; it would be quite as romantic as the love of

Romeo and Juliet. But I think her heart is free."

"Are you sure of it?" he asked, eagerly clutching the reverend by the arm.

"Yes, I almost know it."

"Let us turn and walk after her; it seems to be growing darker as the distance between us increases. Come."

"I will do so, although it is getting late."

"Oh! fie upon the hour; all hours are but the beads of day when love beams upon them."

"You have got it bad," thought the Reverend Blister, as he chuckled over our hero's poetry.

"By Jove, there she is on the opposite side of the street!" said Harry, almost beside himself.

"Wait," said Blister, "she is out with her cousin, and is probably accompanying her home. We will manage to overtake them and you shall have an introduction. But I wish a favor of you first, for I may not see you again to-night. I simply wish you to loan me fifty dollars until I get a remittance."

"Is that all? certainly, with pleasure," and quickly manipulating his pocket-book he produced the required amount and handed it to him.

"Thanks," said Blister, putting the cash under cover.

"Now, then, let's overtake them; come."

It only required a few moment's walk to overtake the young ladies, and Harry was duly made acquainted with the beautiful Bessie Barlow.

Blister, D.D., offered his arm to the other lady and took the lead in the direction of Madison avenue, while the enraptured, bewildered, intoxicated Harry Queer offered his to the enchantress and followed a few yards behind.

It took some time for Harry to get the full use of his tongue, but Bessie did not allow the conversation to flag for a moment, being an adept at it.

"I presume you will see Miss Barlow to her residence," said Blister, after they had escorted the other lady home.

"I will do so with the greatest pleasure, with her consent."

"I shall be only too happy, thank you. And to you, Dr. Blister, I know I shall be ever grateful," replied Bessie, glancing artfully from him to Harry.

"He is a pupil of mine, and I shall hold you responsible for any arrows he may receive; so mind, my lady," and with a laugh the trio separated, and Harry walked with his charmer in the direction of her residence. The touch of her arm upon his seemed to electrify the very nap upon his coat—how must he have felt under such a sensation?

The Reverend Mephistophles Blister paused on the corner of the street and gazed up Fifth avenue after them. A broad grin spread itself over his features, and, turning away with a chuckle, he said:

"Fifty dollars and a lay-out for more! Ha! ha! ha! Bessie is a very clever girl. She'll make somebody's fortune yet."



## PART FOURTH.

## THE FOURTH SEARCH.

At the end of the *third search* we left our still unsophisticated hero nestling the arm of the beautiful Bessie Barlow closely against that portion of his body where his heart was supposed to perform its functions, as he was escorting her to her abode.

Mephistophles Blister, or, according to his card, Rev. Charles Blister, watched them until they were quite out of sight, and then turned away, happy at the thought of how well his little game was working, and how much superior a few such pupils would be to almost any "settlement" over a congregation.

But let us return to our hero, Harry Queer.

The patient reader who has followed him since his first advent in New York cannot have failed to notice that his heart is very susceptible, and that he has a weakness of falling head over heels in love with nearly every acceptable candidate. But, like many other of our sex, both with and without experience, however *many* awaken such feelings, they are liable at any time to come in contact with some particular one who is sure to pin them straight through their largest blood-vessel. Alas! and alack, that it should be so!

But so it is, and Harry Queer had the fortune or misfortune to meet his fate in Bessie Barlow. She was all that his ideality had ever pictured while said function was engaged in bestowing feminine graces upon any particular daughter of Eve to beautify her to suit his fancy.

And beautiful indeed was Bessie Barlow,

and more experienced heads and hearts than Harry Queer's had felt the influence of that combined loveliness on more than one occasion. Apparently she was not over twenty years of age, and she might have been even younger than that. She was tall, formed like a Venus, lithe and free in her most graceful movements, while nature, as though in love with the product of her favorite mould, had given it not only a good share of brains but other ornaments which are now-a-days much more highly appreciated.

A wealth of blonden glory covered her head, and besides furnishing a chignon fully up to the standard there was surplus enough to form a goodly shower of ringlets which fell gracefully around her shoulders. In short, were I a regular novelist, I might go on still further and tell all about her teeth of pearl, behind lips of coral, and eyes which vied with the diamond in brightness.

But I will not overdo the matter in any such a way. She had white teeth (natural) and red lips, but her eyes were so unlike diamonds that they resemble a pair of roguish, sentimental, loving, knowing, melting, bewitching, conquering, soul-speaking, *female eyes* much more than anything else in the wide, wide world.

In dress she excelled, for she was a girl of taste. No matter what she had on there was something about it or about her that seemed to make it a part of herself. Her clothes clung to her, and they couldn't have found a prettier model to show off upon. She was, in short, a human fairy—plenty of human.

Reader, haven't you seen a bonnet that increased fifty per cent. in value when placed

upon some heads? So have I (of course you say yes), and Bessie Barlow was one of those girls that would make ever so plain an article of dress look perfectly stunning.

Well, they walked homeward. Harry could scarcely work his tongue so freely as he wished, but he hoped from the bottom of his boots that she lived ten miles away, for the moon and everything seemed so much brighter than he felt as though he was treading upon the very verge of heaven, and had got a premium angel attached to his elbow; whew!

Such feelings are not wholesome. There comes a reaction almost always, which is little better than a festival of small-pox, and quite as likely to leave the subject pitted.

"You mustn't go any further now, sir," said Bessie, as she reached the corner of Twenty-seventh street and Fifth avenue.

"No further! and wherefore, permit me to ask?" said Harry, startled into a full stop.

"Well, I wouldn't like 'Gardie' to see you. Some other time—after we are better acquainted—I am sure I shall only be too, too happy to—"

"I—I well, now, I am sure I hoped you lived a long distance away. Tell me."

"What, pray?"

"Or, rather I—I want to tell you something. I—oh—I love you desperately, Miss Barlow."

"Dear me, pray don't, I—"

"Do I offend you?"

"I am offended, and I am not. Please don't, now; right here. Some other time."

"Oh, may I hope, may I?"

"Yes, yes, but not now, I will see Dr. Blister; he is my spiritual guide, and I am sure I—"

"So he is mine. When will you see him in reference to the business of my heart? Oh, I am so poor an orator when speaking for myself—say that it shall not be long, Miss Barlow."

What Harry lacked in eloquence he made

up in earnestness, for he stood there with both of her hands in his, looking straight into her face with an intensity of expression little below melting point.

"Well, I will try and see him to-morrow or next day. But I fear you are too impetuous. Only think, we have not known each other an hour yet."

"Then I have lived only an hour, for everything else seems a blank. No, no; do not speak of hours. You have rolled days months and years into one homeopathic spell, and it has charmed my life. You have condensed the prose of a whole lifetime into poetry, and the burden of it all is—I love you?"

"I—I—but not now; some *other* time. Let me go now—good night; good night!" and before the impetuous Harry could interpose she sped away like a liberated fawn.

Harry gazed after her until she was lost in the maze, and then turning away like one recovering from a stroke of lightning he drew a heavy sigh and started in the opposite direction.

He had spoken the truth, for every other charm that had agitated him seemed lost and forgotten in the sunshine which she had cast about him.

It is said that love is as blind as a bat. It may be: at all events it generally makes a subject blind, although he is apt to act very much like a donkey who can see very well.

Harry Queer seemed to be particularly stuck in the region of his top-lights, for every other person whom he met upon the sidewalk he managed to run plump against, and was once or twice shoved into the gutter to pay for his stupidity. But, wholly intent upon the subject of his thoughts, he paid not the slightest attention to any of his pedestrian mishaps, but sometimes returned to the sidewalk, and again he continued his way in the middle of the street.

"Hold on here, sir! You are drunk," said a policeman who had followed him for



a block or two, and who concluded that he would not be a dangerous customer to lay hold upon.

"Good evening, sir!" said Harry, as the officer brought him to a stand-still and a right about. "What did you ask me?"

"I said that you are drunk, sir," replied the officer.

"Drunk? Well, it's the most blissful drunk I ever had in my life. Was you ever in love, sir?"

"Oh, lots of times, but I generally got taken in when I was too drunk to walk without stumbling against people. So, come along, young feller."

"What! do you mean it?" asked Harry, in surprise, since he had treated the whole thing as joke until now.

"I was never more serious in my life; come along."

"But I tell you I am not drunk; I am in love, and was only thinking about her."

"Oh, yes, in love with gin, and thinking about it."

"Dakes hem in, Bister Bolicemens!" said a big Dutchman, who made his way through the crowd, "Dake hem in, for he chust runs blump inter me ant mine frau, ant ter childers, ant noket us mit ter gutters, ant he pees trunk ush ter tyfel!"

"Hi say, Johnny," said another spectator, "'ere's a go. A 'eavy swell taken in by a copper—too much lush."

And various other expressions were made use of by the crowd, all of which might have been very amusing to them but hardly enough so to our hero to make the situation relishable.

"Come along with me," said the officer, taking him by the collar.

"But I tell you I am not drunk," said Harry, as he was being pulled through the crowd.

"All right, we'll settle that hereafter. Come on quietly, and we will be good friends."

Harry had only Dobson's choice, and so he went along without further resistance.

After they had left the crowd behind they begun to talk quite rationally together.

"I don't see why you should arrest me," said Harry, quite innocently.

"I don't see why you should object," said the officer.

"Well, if for no other reason—because I am not drunk, I haven't drank a drop, sir."

"Then it simply becomes a question of veracity between us. You say you are not; I say you *are* drunk. Now, suppose we compromise the matter."

"What do you mean?" asked Harry confidently.

"You see the disgrace attending an arrest, eh?"

"Not if I can prove myself guiltless."

"How green you are. Why, you will be convicted on my testimony in spite of yourself. There is no escape, be you drunk or sober, if I swear against you. Now, what will you give if I let you go (seeing that there is a *doubt* in the matter, you *know*)," he added, in a parenthesis.

"Well, I don't know," said Harry, and they both came to a full stop in a dark place on the walk.

"I shall lock you up in a damp cell, you know, if I take you in, and shall swear that you were drunk and disturbing the peace. On that case you will get all the way from one to six months' on the Island. Do you see?"

"I'll give you fifty dollars."

"Bah! make it one hundred and swear that you will never mention it, and away you go."

"This is rather hard. Mr. Policeman."

"All right, if you had rather go to Blackwell's Island."

"Well, let me see if I have got that amount about me," and he went in search of his pocket-money.

"Yes, here it is; now, may I go?"

"Yes, all right, old man; take care of yourself."

"I will try it," and Harry once more turned his steps toward the hotel, walking with great care to prevent running into anybody.

The policeman watched him out of sight, after which he was joined by another party, a rough-looking customer, with a soft hat well pulled down over his classic brow.

"How much did you make, Bill?"

"A cool hundred; I wonder what Tom Lanky would say to that? I must peel off this toggery or a copper may overhaul me, come," and they turned down a side street and disappeared in the darkness.

This "policeman" was no other than the irate "husband" of Laura Allen! *Oh, Elephant!*

How many ways there are of turning an honest penny in this world; what need is there of being poor?

This little bit of by-play on the part of these financial geniuses had the effect of toning down our hero's mental enthusiasm as well as his pocket-money, and his thoughts were for some hours thereafter divided between his inamorati and love's expensive side-issues.

Two days passed in blissful uncertainty and speculative dreams. The Reverend Charles Bliester did not wait upon him during the time, and Harry floundered about like a ship-wrecked turtle, walking up and down Broadway, eager only to set his eyes upon one object—Bessie Barlow.

But he saw her not, and concluding that she did not visit the down-town and unfashionable part of the city he resolved to change his quarters, and so removed to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, feeling that he would be nearer, and trusting to see her often.

On the third day Bliester, D.D. made his appearance and was warmly greeted.

"Waiving everything else, have you seen Miss Barlow?" asked our hero, eagerly.

"Oh, yes, twice."

"What does she say of me—what?"

"I hardly dare tell you, my friend."

"Why not? I suspect she does not love me but—"

"Of course your intentions are honorable."

"How can you doubt it?"

"I do not, or I would stop proceedings at once. She does love you, dearly."

"Oh, rapture! when shall I see her again?"

"Not until you have learned to curb yourself somewhat."

"How so?"

"I must tell you: by a provision in her father's will, if she is married before she is twenty-one years of age she forfeits her fortune and it goes to a spendthrift cousin. Now she is only nineteen, and affairs have to be conducted with great care. We have talked it over and come to this conclusion: If you meet at all, it must not be at the house of her guardian, and if you marry, the whole affair must be kept secret; in fact, it must not even be recorded, do you see?"

"Yes, yes, I understand it exactly."

"Well, then, I know a respectable widow lady, residing in her own house, up-town, where you can meet as often as you choose, and by paying her a trifle you can not only obtain an elegant trysting-place but be sure that no questions will be asked in the premises. What do you say?"

"I agree to anything that will enable me to see her and be in her company. When can these arrangements be made, for I am all impatience."

"I will see her to-day, and if things can be fixed all right, I will drop you a note and appoint a time for meeting between you."

"Do so, and I shall be eternally grateful to you."

"One thing more, be careful about letting your parents know anything about this, or they would blame and lose confidence in me, which I would not have them do for the

world. I act in this way solely on your account," said D.D., with fine effect.

"I believe you, and also believe that you know that I will be grateful to you in return."

"I do believe it. Now, if I were you, I would go home before long and satisfy your parents as to how you are getting along, and also close up and take possession of the property which they told me you had come into possession of. Life in New York is expensive, and in the career you are about to enter upon a good bank account will be of great service."

"True, but I have quite a large sum standing to my credit there now."

"Oh, ah, indeed; I didn't know," replied Blister, in the most friendly way imaginable. "Then you are all right. But then it would be well to have these things attended to in time, you know."

"Certainly; I shall heed your advice."

"Now, then, I will go and see the widow. Good-day; I trust you believe me your friend."

"Indeed, sir, I haven't a doubt about it."

"Thank you," and away went Blister, leaving Harry Queer up to the boiling point of delightful anticipation.

"By Jove, he's the best parson I ever knew in the whole course of my life," said he, seating himself complacently.

The next day he was again waited upon by the D.D., and the result of his negotiations with the "widow" was an easy understanding, and the assignment of a nicely-furnished parlor where he could meet with his divinity whenever it pleased them both to do so.

It was a feast that made him all the more hungry, and before a week had elapsed an engagement of marriage existed between them, and an agreement to refer the consummation of the whole thing to the Reverend Charles Blister, D.D.

So Harry and his spiritual adviser considered and debated upon the proposition.

The Reverend D.D. was not only deeply interested, but deeply moved.

"Before we consider this matter any further, I wish to have you understand me. I have a great interest in you both. To a certain extent I am responsible for the actions of both. Now, before any move is made towards solemnizing this secret marriage, let us consider."

In two or three years more, if she remains single, or her marriage is kept a profound secret, she will be even more wealthy than yourself. If her marriage becomes known she will lose everything. Now, are you willing to make over fifty thousand dollars to her, in her maiden name, appointing me as her guardian, to stand in the light of indemnity in case, by any untoward mishap, the marriage should become known. You see it amounts simply to making property over to your wife, anyway."

"I see no objections to such procedure."

"You see, I wish to shift the blame from my shoulders in case of miscarriage, for if she should lose her fortune through my connivance or advice it might prevent me from ever getting a settlement, and you know how important that is to a young and ambitious minister."

"I understand you. But how shall I proceed?"

"Well, make up your mind what this fifty thousand dollars shall consist in, and then any lawyer will draw up the papers, and make the transfer and settlement."

Harry was thoughtful for a moment.

"Of course," continued Blister, "you see the entire justice of the transaction. You would not even have her meet the shadow of a risk of financial ruin on your account; of course not. It is simply justice, and after the years of her supposed probation are up you can be married again in a more open manner."

"You are right, I see it; I see it. And you can perform the ceremony, can you not?"

"I can and will, provided all these points are made good, and I conclude that I am not only making you one of the happiest of men but one of the most fortunate ones also. Now, when will you see to it and have this transfer of property made?"

"Right away. I will see Bessie to-day, and will go home to-morrow and arrange things."

"Can you arrange things without exciting the suspicion of your parents? You know it would be awkward to have them asking questions."

"Yes, for I have nearly half that amount in bonds, and more than enough in real estate, standing in my own name, to make up the amount."

"Good! Let it be arranged, if possible, so that your father cannot find it out, for he might not approve of your getting married just yet, do you see?"

"Trust me, never fear; I will go to Bessie at once! and all shall be made right."

"That's right; I trust you see how important it is that I should not be known in the matter, on account of my future settlement."

"Never fear for that. If you are the cause of making me so happy as a marriage with Bessie Barlow would make me, you shall be provided for, if chance does not favor you with a settlement."

"Ah, but my reputation, Harry."

"We will be careful."

"There is much need of it; I am very poor, and although I willingly make you happy, I must not forget myself. Bills have to be paid, you know."

"Are you in want of money now?"

"I am, indeed; but you must not give or lend it to me, for I owe you money already."

"Nonsense; never mention it. Here is an hundred dollars. Take it freely. Above all you must not want."

"You are too kind. But I trust I shall

be able to make it all right at some other time."

"I know you will. But I must go now, for I have much to do before I return home," said he, taking up his hat and preparing to go.

"I will walk a short distance with you, come."

And the two men, pupil and mentor, the divine and the green, left the hotel together.

The whole affair was talked over between Harry and Bessie, and she said that she should leave it all to Mr. Blister, knowing that he would do right in the matter. As for herself, she should throw herself into his arms, happy, only there, and caring nothing for the future.

Harry climbed a round higher on the ladder which fortune had pointed heavenward for him, and then started for his home.

There was a "quiet" little scene that night at the house of the "widow" on West Twenty-fifth street, which should not be omitted in this narrative, in order that it may be strictly true both in word and deed.

Bessie Barlow, Bessie the magnificent, was seated in the parlor, waiting, as though for her affianced. There was a heavenly smile on her features, mingled with a little earthly deviltry, it may be, and the "widow" flitted in and out, now and then, as though anxious, also, about the coming of some one, whose presence was actually needed in order to make something complete.

Presently the bell rang, and the Reverend Charles Blister came striding into the room.

"Well, Charley, how is it; has he gone?" asked Bessie, bounding toward him as he made his appearance.

"Gone, all right; I saw him off."

"Now, then, let us have a square drink," said the "widow," presenting herself with a decanter and a triplet of tumblers.

"You are an angel," said Blister; "and I take to angels so naturally. Come, drink deep."

There was a "quiet" drink, deep and strong, with toasts, when the Reverend Blister caught Bessie around the waist. She seemed to anticipate the movement, and joining issue with her spiritual mentor they whirled around the room very much like people of the world, and just as though they were not angel and minister.

This lasted for about two minutes, when the "widow" came in for her share, and gently lifting her drapery, so as to leave her shapely ankles unfettered, she began to show off her good points and what she knew about the can-can. Bessie was not behind in this respect either, and doing one better in the preparations, more especially as regards personal points, she removed all obstructions of the snowy drapery about her gaiters, and the two females began the dance.

The Reverend Charles Blister caught the spirit of the occasion, and, forgetting his piety, he sailed in, and there was an exhibition of *Jardin Mabille* for a few minutes that was never excelled. It was in all respects a high old breakdown. They had another "quiet" drink and then some more can-can, and they kept it up until the furniture appeared to be dancing can-cans, when they all got tired, took another "quiet" drink all around, and voted the whole thing a success.

"I am to be your guardian, mind," said Blister, as they took their last drink.

"And a jolly old guardian you will make," said the "widow."

"You are satisfied, are you not, Bessie?"

"Splendid arrangement," was all the angel could articulate, because angels are just as liable to have their articulation bothered by brandy and water as anybody else.

The evening wound up with a nice little supper of good things and everybody was happy. And there were several little suppers given during the week, and it was voted by all three that things looked prosperous.

Harry Queer returned, after transacting his business, and, of course, made his first call at the house of the "widow," where, by telegram, he had made an appointment to meet Bessie in the evening.

Somehow or other the Reverend Charles Blister happened to call and found how matters stood. The property was all right. The papers would be made out the following day, after which there would be a private marriage if everything was propitious.

At the end of another week the whole thing was arranged; the deeds and transfer of the bonds and securities was made to Bessie Barlow, with the Reverend Charles Blister as her guardian and matrimonial stake-holder.

The following night there was a wedding. Blister did the agreeable, and the "widow" acted as witness to the ceremony. It was a subdued, a condensed, a homeopathic heaven to Harry Queer. He believed the goal won; the white elephant found and captured!

Query: Did his search end with this bit of by-play?

Oh! Query? Query?

## PART FIFTH.

### THE FIFTH SEARCH.

While we laugh over our conquests,  
Forgetting short-comings and sins,  
Some other chap may be saying—  
"Let him do the laughing who wins!"  
The loves we have and are proud of,  
The joys that may tickle our ribs,  
We may the soonest be rid of  
The sooner announce themselves abs.  
For life's a sort of burlesque,  
On what we conceive or mark out;  
And wine which we gather may prove  
A bottle of smoke with the cork out.

(A Chap chuck full of poetry.)

We herewith propose to solve the query which ended the last search for the White Elephant, by our hero, Harry Queer.

Married! Probably there never was a word which would awaken a greater number of different emotions, unless it be that other one, Dead!

If a person dies, that is the end of his mundane dodging, at least; but if he becomes spooney, and gets married, what a field for conjecture regarding his future!

I believe I am not strictly original in saying that marriage is a lottery: I think I have heard it before somewhere, and yet I am sure it is quite as true as though I had first given niterance to the sentiment.

But yet I think the simile a trifle at fault, for where may we find a well-regulated lottery or policy-shop where the blanks are so much more numerous than the prizes? Maybe there are such concerns, but how quick they become known and avoided.

Perhaps on account of the numerousness of the blanks in this matrimonial lottery we may conclude that there is a very good reason why those who formerly patronized the business should fall off as they do. I just hint,

this may be the cause, for verily the parsons and the legal marggists are loud in their lamentations, now-a-days, because the lads and lasses do not toe the matrimonial scratch so numerously as they used to do.

But Harry Queer got married; he was not loth, whoever else might be. He came up to the altar like a hungry chicken to a full dough dish. He believed the institution a good one, and as for blanks, he had never heard of such things.

He had never had much to do with lotteries.

He was happy on account thereof.

But let us see what luck he had; see if he made a "strike" and drew a prize.

In order to insure his wife against loss (in case their secret marriage became known) he made over fifty thousand dollars to her before marriage, making the Rev. Charles Blister her guardian and trustee; her father's will cutting her off without a sixpence in case she should marry before she was twenty-one.

Great and responsible Blister! Greenly, honest Harry Queer! Fortunately beautiful Bessie Barlow!

The following day they adjourned to Long Branch on their new moon, there to wait for the quartering and the felling thereof into a first class honeymoon.

Talk about life, love's delights, and all that sort of thing, why it was better than a regular old-fashioned taffy-pull!

While the young couple, whom the Reverend Charles Blister had made so happy, were sipping the ambrosia, he was busy with Bessie's newly-acquired fortune. He had full power, and, still working for the interest

of the young lady, he naturally, very naturally, concluded that said fortune would be much handier when it should be so manipulated as to be carried in a wallet.

So he manipulated; he wasn't long in doing it either, for at the end of a week he took it into his head to visit the bride and groom at Long Branch, and while felicitating them upon their happiness he also found a convenient opportunity to speak with the bride alone.

The bridegroom was playing billiards.

The bride and her spiritual adviser met in the parlor of the Stetson House.

"Now, Charley, what have you done—have you got it all arranged?" she asked, as soon as she felt unobserved.

"Yes, everything is downy," replied the D.D.

"Got the whole fifty thousand into money?"

"Yes; and from greenbacks into gold."

"You are a gem, now what?"

"Are you ready?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yes, yes; Harry is an awful bore; he persists in being so loving that I cannot endure him. Why, do you know he seems to be getting worse every day; he don't leave my sight for a moment; I hate loving men—they are not smart."

"Allright; but I suppose it will be best to take him to New York with us; let me see—" and the D.D. tapped his sober forehead with his long forefinger.

"Be smart, now, Charley; don't slip up in the last move, mind!" and her beautiful eyes, just a trifle wicked about something at that moment, flashed full and bold upon him.

"Do I fail?" he asked in a deep undertone.

"Well, all right, see that you don't, that's all."

"I have it; say nothing, but come to town when he does; mind, now, when he comes you come, too, and go straight to the widow's,—see! I'll show you then whether I fail

or not; now I'll seek him and take a good-by shake, and go up to the city in the next boat;" and shaking hands warmly with Bessie he left the room.

Two days afterward Harry Queer received a telegram from Blister, asking him to return to town that night without fail.

Surmising that something of importance was up he made preparations to comply with the request, but concluding that the business would only engage him for a short time he told Bessie that she had better remain until his return.

But she, dear, loving wife, would not hear to anything of the kind.

"Why, Harry, how could you think of such a thing?" she asked, throwing her white, plump arms around his neck, and looking beautifully reproving from her magnificent eyes. "Do you think I could be happy in your absence, even for so short a time?"

"Your will is my law, darling," and so they both went on board the steamer and returned to New York.

Blister met them at the landing and rode with them to the house of their friend, the widow, during which he explained that he had just heard that day that Bessie's guardian was expected in town the day following, and, consequently, her absence from home would be inquired into. Besides, a friend of his, who had spent his last Sabbath in Harry's native village, informed him that his father was coming to New York some day during the week.

So it was voted best to put the old-fashioned face upon matters, and allow Bessie to return to her home, Harry to his hotel, and calmly await less threatening skies.

Harry agreed to it, for although it clouded his dreams for awhile, yet he could but see that it was best, more especially as he had got to meet his father.

The following day they were not to meet, but the day after that the widow's house

should again be their trysting-place. And so they separated.

The next day Harry Queer was bothered. He looked for his dad, but he came not, and although he had an honest face made up he found no use for it. At night Tom Lanky came to his hotel, and together they went to the theater for the purpose of killing time.

In answer to his inquiries as to where he had been for so long a time, Harry informed him that he had been traveling—still in search of the mythical animal—and just hinted that he might be at that time in actual possession of all he sought.

Tom suspected much, but found his old schoolmate very uncommunicative and non-committal. In fact, rather averse to conversation than otherwise. After theater he tried the effect of several drinks upon him, but beyond enabling him to have a good excuse for taking charge of his watch and a few dollars in change (lest somebody might steal them), he did not get at what had lately transpired, and so helped him home to his hotel.

The next day Harry awoke with a headache, but finding that he had been robbed he sought the police and told them the circumstances. The result was, that in the course of an hour or so Tom Lanky was in durance vile with the watch in his pocket.

Harry was notified, and again the old schoolmates met. Tom upbraided him for unkindness, saying that he took the property for safe-keeping, etc., all of which was undoubtedly true. The result was Harry refused to prosecute and Tom was discharged.

The rich, green victim is getting a trifle sharp, thought Tom, after he regained his liberty.

This occurrence bothered him so long that it was late in the afternoon when he rang the bell of the "widow's" door, where, by arrangement, he was to meet his wife.

He had been blue, cloudy, miserable all-

day, but now he once more stood on the threshold of sunshine and the paradise he had all these hours been banished from. His beautiful wife was within a few yards of him, and doubtless quite as anxious to be embraced as he was to do the embracing.

He rung the bell boldly, and boldly waited.

The bell sounded very loud, but yet there was no reply, so he concluded it had not been heard and rang again.

This time he waited two or three minutes, still without hearing a footfall inside.

What did it mean? Another ring.

He went down the front stoop and gazed up at the windows. The blinds were all closed, as usual, but still no reply to his bell-ringing.

A trifle vexed, he again rushed up to the door and treated the bell-knob to three or four very emphatic jerks, which made things jingle and echo inside.

Then he waited a moment, during which he mentally congratulated himself that *that* shake-up would fetch them, dead or alive.

But still there was no reply.

Could he have mistaken the house? He looked at the number; it was all correct. What then?

While he was inwardly endeavoring to solve this problem, a bold son of Erin came up the steps with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Are yees amoosin' yersilf?" he asked, as he proceeded to carry his tongue over one side of the paper in a decidedly grotesque manner, all the while keeping his eyes upon our hero.

"What do you mean?" asked Harry, more than ever perplexed at the man's behavior in connection with the other mysteries.

"I mane to post this bill, sure," was Pat's reply, still licking the back side of it, and all the while looking into his questioner's face.

"What is there on it?"

"Musslage—sticking stuff, sure."

"What is on the other side of it?" he asked, impatiently.

"Printin', sure," and having completed his licking process Pat stuck the bill up on the door-post.

"What!" exclaimed Harry, starting back aghast. "'To Let!' What does this mean?"

"That the house is empty, sure, and that the man wants to be rid of it, so he does."

"Where are the people who lived here?"

"Faith, I think they must be out."

"But where, where?"

"How should I know? I'm not the boss. Just you foller the directions of the bill an' ye'll find all the particulars, sure."

"When was it vacated?"

"When the woman went out."

"When was that, you stupid ass?"

"Aisy, now; don't call names."

"When did she go?"

"Yesterday, I think."

"And you do not know where she has gone?"

"Divil a thing I know only what I've towld yees. But its mighty little comfort ye'll get a pulling that bell, sure. Folley the directions and the boss will rent it to yees chape," and away went Pat, slowly followed by the mystified Harry Queer.

"Gone," he muttered to himself as he reached the sidewalk and again glanced up at the house, "gone without leaving any word! What can it mean?"

Following the direction of the bill he sought the house-agent who had the letting of the property, in hopes of obtaining a solution of the problem.

But all the house-agent knew was that a woman by the name of Brown had taken the house one month ago; had given the Reverend Charles Blister as reference; had paid her rent, and yesterday she returned the key, stating that she had moved and of course had no further use for it. Where she had gone he knew not. This was all the satisfaction he could get from this source.

Harry concluded that he knew just about as much as the agent did.

He sought the hotel to collect his thoughts. He began to figure up how much he knew. Where did Blister, D.D., reside? He had never thought to ask him. Where did Bessie reside? She had never told him. He was clearly at sea, poor, green fool!

For three days he continued in this state of fearful uncertainty. But during that time he did not get a whit nearer a solution of the bothering mystery than when he first found himself in it.

Then he went to the County Clerk's office to see if anything had been done with that portion of the fifty thousand dollars he had made over to his wife, and which consisted in real estate. There he learned that it had been sold to one Jenkins, for cash.

This set him to thinking a layer or two deeper.

Then he placed the whole affair in the hands of the captain of the detectives to work up.

It was worked up without much trouble.

The Reverend Charles Blister, D.D. was another name and guise for Charley Ryan, one of the boldest confidence operators to be found in the city. Bessie Barlow was another clever "operator," and the probabilities were that they had shared the spoil. The "widow" was simply an accomplice.

This was enough to make our hero homesick, but following up the business the detectives found that Ryan and Bessie Barlow were seen driving from this "widow's" house in the direction of an European steamer which sailed that afternoon.

If the poor devil was homesick before, he wanted to go home to his parents now. He concluded that elephant-hunting was not a paying business, and as it had robbed him of half his fortune he resolved to return to his native village and take better care of the remaining half. But he was awfully mad, and if he could have laid his hands on Blister

about that time Blister would have had a good excuse for calling a doctor.

But just as he had made up his mind to go home and forget that ever he had been taken in and done for, Tom Lanky made his appearance with a new sensation, with which to change the whole course of future events.

Tom was in splendid feather, quite the reverse to Harry, who felt like denouncing everybody.

"Now, Harry, old man, I have an idea."

"I am very glad of it," he replied, gloomily.

"And I am deuced glad to hear you say so," said Tom.

"And if you have it—why just keep it; I am going home; I have got quite enough of New York."

"What! enough of Gotham!—enough of—I say, how about that *White Elephant* you came to find!"

"I have found it, by thunder, I have," and he got out of his seat and walked the room rapidly.

"No! when, where, how!" asked Tom, also rising.

"No matter; I am cured. No more white elephants, no more seeing the sights for me; I belong at home."

"Pshaw! you have got the dumps. Tell me all about it; what is the matter with you?"

Harry looked at his old schoolmate and hesitated.

"Tom, I sometimes think you are just as big a beat as any of them," he broke out, bluntly.

"Good heavens! after all the good advice I have given you, too? Well, here's ingratitude," and Tom looked hurt.

"Perhaps I wrong you; but, as near as I can make out, you very much resemble one."

"Come, come, you wrong me indeed, I am the best friend you have got in the world, and I will prove it. You are down

in the mouth. Come, spit it out; tell me all about your troubles."

It required considerable coaxing and many protestations of friendship on Tom's part, but at last Harry came to the confessional scratch, and, under the most solemn vows of secrecy, he told him of his costly matrimonial experience.

Tom looked at him for some moments in silence after the confession had made the sad story complete.

"Well, what do you think of my case?" he asked.

"You know I have said I was your friend. Well, I don't think I go back on my friendship much when I tell you that you are a fool."

"Tell me something I don't know, Tom."

"Well, you are getting sharpened."

"I hope I am," was Harry's meek response.

"The fact is, you cut me, an honest man and your friend, and took up with a disguised sharper. He has gone through you as though you were an oyster. You were duped by a pretty face and a put-up job. Now, do you think you have learned anything by all this experience?"

"You may bet that I have; I won't believe anybody hereafter, be he priest or devil."

"That is all very well, but don't go to the other extreme, now, because you have been skinned at one. I can tell you of another job that was put up on you, and you, innocent youth, you shelled right out."

"To what do you refer?"

"Why, the policeman who arrested you for being drunk—he was a fraud and had no more right to arrest you than I have. He went for your money, and got it."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Harry, with protruding eye-balls. Again he felt home-sick and walked the floor.

"It is a fact. Now, see, you are not sharp enough. You should have known that he

could not hold you when you were not drunk, and you should also have known better than to have married that girl without knowing more about her."

"But I was dead in love with her."

"And you are dead-cured now, eh?"

"I think you may bet on that, also."

"And do you think you can see a pretty face now without falling in love with it?"

"I think I can contemplate a great many, even a few *blondes*, eh, Tom? By the way, I think I was rather taken in on that affair also."

"Not a bit of it; you got your money's worth; and, had you not got drunk, there's no knowing what might have come out of it."

"Well, I think it quite as well that I *did* get drunk, for I am freer from complications now than I might have been had things gone soberly. But what is your little game, now, Tom?"

"No game at all, Harry. I simply wish to point out the mistake you would make in returning to your parents and telling them all about what has happened. Why, they would have you placed under a guardian."

"I wish I had been," and he said it fervently.

"Why not stay here, and say nothing about your foolishness, and do something to retrieve your losses?"

"Perhaps it would be better. What have you to suggest?"

"Would you like to engage in business?"

"Perhaps. Of what nature?"

"Well, I know a man who has a patent right which he wishes to dispose of, and we might buy it."

"What is the patent?"

"A hen's nest."

"A what?"

"A patent double-acting, deceiving, coaxing hen's nest."

"Is it a big thing?" he asked, with open eyes.

"Bet high that it is. The nest is provided

with a false bottom, so arranged that after a hen has laid her egg she gets up to take a look at it, as they always do, when, by a hidden spring and trap, the egg disappears, and the poor bewildered chickabiddie, feeling that she has not yet done her daily duty, immediately settles herself and lays again. So she continues, and ten eggs to one can be obtained, as compared to the natural nests. It is a big thing, indeed!"

"Do you think it will pay?"

"Why, no well-regulated family would be without one. We could establish ourselves in the city, and send agents all over the country to get orders. It will be a splendid thing; a huge success."

"Bring on your man, Tom, I think I will buy in this patent nest," said Harry, with considerable enthusiasm.

"Now, then, you talk like a man. I'll bring him up to your rooms this afternoon," and shaking our hero's hand with congratulatory cordiality he started towards the door; but, concluding that he had not yet put in the necessary number of shakes or said all the complimentary things he might say, he turned back again and went through the same process.

"I tell you, my dear fellow, you are beginning to see sharp. I am proud to own you for a schoolmate. Hang all elephant-seeking. Money is the thing. You are getting your eye-teeth cut, and I am glad of it. Good-by, old boy, good-by. We'll make our fortunes yet, never fear; good by," and after shaking Harry's hand several times more he left the room.

"Well, I am glad to see that my friends appreciate my training. But it may be that he won't appreciate my acquired sharpness after all. I find people are exceedingly queer," and, as he finished his cogitation, he went and unlocked a door leading to his bedroom.

"Now, Vaun, come out," he said, and out there stepped a smart, quiet-looking man,

with whom he had been talking just as the servant announced Thomas Lanky.

They conversed together for some time in an under-tone.

"I think I won't go home just yet, Vaun; I'll stay and see my friend's patent hen's nest. He will be here this afternoon."

"All right," replied the smart, quiet-looking man; and with a quiet bow he left the room.

Three hours afterward Tom Lanky and the ingenious inventor were in attendance upon our hero. The inventor, who struggled under the name of Howell, explained his invention by the aid of a life-sized model, although he failed to produce a hen for actual experiment. Yet he was exceedingly plausible and eloquent, and he must be a dunce indeed who could not see that the invention was all that was claimed for it, and even a great deal more.

Harry saw it. The modest inventor only asked five thousand dollars for his entire right, and after Tom had again urged the purchase of it Harry agreed to buy, and paid fifty dollars to bind the bargain; agreeing to pay the rest as soon as the necessary papers were made out.

Things were fixed splendidly, and Tom Lanky once more insisted on shaking hands with his old schoolmate, and then they both "shook" with the ingenious, the modest, the magnanimous inventor.

While they were engaging in this "shake" Harry's bedroom-door again opened, and Mr. Vaun walked into the cheerful company.

Tom and the inventor glanced at the intruder and somehow lost some of their happiness. Tom looked at Harry inquiringly and attempted to speak, but Mr. Vaun spoke first.

"Well, Tom, if you and Jim have got through with this little bargain you may accompany me to headquarters."

"Nipped, by thunder!" gasped the inventor, in a loud whisper.

"Nipped at last," quietly added Mr. Vaun, going into his coat-pocket, "and for fear you might serve me as you propose to serve the innocent hens, I will just place these bracelets on your wrists. You know me well enough not to resist."

Tom and the inventor were handcuffed together by the wrist.

"What the devil do you mean by this, Harry?" asked Tom, turning to him with honest indignation, and like one actually hurt in a tender place.

"Nothing; only I am getting my *eye-teeth cut*," was the cool reply. "The detective will explain the rest. But before you go I will trouble your friend for that fifty dollars."

The fifty reluctantly came out. Oh, elephant!

"Good-by, old schoolmate; I am glad our friend Vaun knows you so well; we shall be able to understand each other much better; day, day."

"Come along, boys," said Vaun; and with curses loud and deep the two "speculators" were taken to headquarters, and the bitten followed the biters.



## PART SIXTH.

### THE SIXTH SEARCH.

MATRIMONY has its uses as well as its abuses. This fact may never have occurred to anybody before, and I may unintentionally be doing much good and affording great consolation to the weary ones of earth who have never yet been able to see it in that light, by thus announcing the fact under my signature. But, reckless of the consequences, I again declare that matrimony has its uses; its blessings in disguise. Pooh?

Yes, I imagine that a goodly percentage of the Benedicks are pooh-poohing the idea, and perhaps a few of the more temperate ones quietly ask me to point out these left-handed blessings.

I don't wish for an argument in the premises, and so I will simply mention a few of the leading blessings, any of which may have been experienced without being enjoyed, and without knowing it, for we are all of us poor, short-sighted cusses, very much like so many porkers in a potatoe-patch, rooting and eating, without analyzing, looking up, or saying grace.

To begin with, then, matrimony makes a man sharper. It develops him from a "spoony" into a "loony" (Ah! a slip of the pen. Leave that last word out, Mr. Printer. It is not the one I was intending to use, at all.) Now, then, it develops him from a "spooney" (that is, a chap with a divinity on his brain) into a sobered, sensible man.

It takes the romances out of him, and romance is the worst working capital a fellow can have in this world. It makes him practical; opens his eyes to the reality of things; assists him to take a long look ahead, and enables him to see what a donkey a man

is when he is in love. It is a breathing place in his life, a time to prepare, with the remainder of his mundane existence, to undo the foolish acts he may have perpetrated up to that time.

A man is often foolish before marriage but seldom afterward. He is very much like a lump of clay when in love and before the hardening influences of matrimony overtake him, but after a short, baking experience of *this* kind he becomes a different individual altogether. Being in love augments verdancy, if it does not positively originate it. Marriage ripens green fruit, (until it drops off, sometimes).

And this ripening is what was the matter with our hero, Harry Queer. Those who have followed him through his various experiences, while in search of the White Elephant of New York, may by this time, or up to the closing paragraphs of the Fifth Search, have arrived at the conclusion that he was both green and spoony, and the sharpers by whom he had been so fearfully taken in did just right in taking his money from him, since he did not know enough to take care of it himself. Perhaps, and perhaps not.

But they went just one step too far. They assisted him to marry the girl he was so sweet upon, and thus defeated themselves by allowing him to eat of the fruit which eventually opened his eyes and enabled him to know good from evil. In short, Harry Queer awoke from the spell which love and enthusiasm had cast about him, and was a new man from the moment his wife eloped with the chap who married them. He undoubtedly rejoiced, as most men would under such a perfect *pour* of blessings, but the experience of the affair

## THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

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had also opened his eyes and sharpened his understanding. "It is an ill wind," etc., you know.

As the detective, whom he had employed to help him out of the meshes, began to unfold the various transactions by which he had been victimized, he saw through much more than had ever found its way into his skull before. He shook his greenness as a lobster does soon after taking a boiling hot bath. But one feeling now animated his bosom—the desire to get square and to take in permanently those who had taken him in transiently, but effectually. Naturally, therefore, his next search was not for the mythical elephant, but for the keeper thereof, who had taken the animal away from him just as he had obtained possession of her, together with the fifty thousand dollars with which he had purchased the slippery prize.

Up to the present time neither he or Mr. Vaun, the detective, could get any further clue upon his eloping wife and the Reverend Blister than that they had vanished from sight, with a strong probability of having gone to Europe; in fact, going with Harry's money and enjoying his honeymoon. White Elephants are so uncertain! But Mr. Vaun was not sleeping, and Harry was seconding him, "assisting," as it were, and doing his horizontal best for that straying fifty thousand. But the individuals they were after were seldom asleep, and even then they had one eye open.

Tom Lanky and his ingenious friend, the inventor of the patent hen's nest, were safely cared for, having let themselves to the State, to work in the granite quarries at Sing-Sing, a well-known stopping-place on the Hudson river. So in case it became necessary to interview them the thing could be easily managed.

A fortnight passed without anything more exciting than usually attends the healing of a wound. During this time Harry had received a visit from his anxious parents. But

he managed to appear still innocent in their eyes, although they would insist upon his moving from the Fifth Avenue Hotel to a more quiet private house, where the expense was less and where the inmates attended some legitimate place of worship. This done they again left him to the prosecution of his new business, the reality of which they knew nothing.

Mr. Vaun was still on the alert, but like a man who is hunting for bears and deers when nothing larger than chip-munks and sparrows exist he found nothing worthy of his powder and ball. But still he kept at work, and kept hoping for larger game.

One evening as our hero was wending his way homeward he was met by a lad who handed him a letter, stating that he had been ordered to deliver it by a lady who had given him a tenpence for his trouble. Without looking around to see who it might have come from he broke the seal and read, while the boy waltzed away in delight:

"FRIEND HARRY—Pardon this trespass by a broken-hearted girl. Harry, I have never ceased to love you from the moment our eyes first met, although misfortune appears to have stamped that love with a dark brand. My husband and I have separated forever. I could not bear his brutality any longer. Now I am alone in the world, and, alas! doubly alone when I feel that you are near me and yet we cannot meet. I can bear such existence but a short time longer, and if you still refuse to forgive and love me I will rush unbidden to that bourne from whence no traveler returns. I want you, Harry; I am dying for your love, and should you relent and wish to renew a happiness once so complete, please address

LAURA ALLEN,  
Box —, Station E."

As he finished reading he drew a long breath and realized that there was a slight agitation under his shirt front. Oh, how the old time did come over him for a few min-



utes as he continued his walk homeward. In spite of all that had transpired he still felt a slight hankering after the beautiful steam-boat angel who first wakened the sensational sentiment of love within his bosom.

But the more he thought of it the more his experience came up before him, and the uncertainty of women was impressed upon his mind. As luck, or something of the kind, would have it, he found Mr. Vaun waiting for him when he reached the house.

With as little blushing as possible he told the story of his first love and its subsequent cost, and then handed him the letter he had just received. The detective read it through calmly.

"Have you seen her lately?" he asked.

"No, not in a long time."

"Are you still spooney on her?"

"Well, not much; I'm not affected that way so much as I was."

"I have an idea."

"No!"

"Fact! Do you answer that letter right away. Make an appointment with her. Meet her, say, on Madison Square, to-morrow night. I shall shadow you both, but you must not see me,—understand!"

"Yes, I will do as you say, seeing that you have an idea. In fact, I had a little rather do it than not, for I think she knows something about a few ducats of mine. Besides, she is good company."

"Look out, Mr. Man. Good company has been bad for you."

"Never fear for me; I believe I am a trifle sharper than I was when she first knew and took me in. In fact, I rather love danger now."

"Yes, you green ones usually turn out right sharp after some good experience in city life," said Vaun, with a twinkle in his eye. "Now, let us go and hoist something, and then you answer the letter."

Taking our hero's arm they started for a restaurant where a pair of sherry shoemak-

ers were made and taken in. During this refreshing process Vaun entertained Harry with a continuation of his knowledge respecting countrymen who had come to New York and were taken in badly while in search of the *White Elephant*, but who afterward rose to the dignity of aldermen, gamblers, cracksmen, and Wall street operators as a result of their acquired smartness, all of which tickled Harry's vanity immensely, and when they had again refreshed, by the aid of two more cobblers, they parted, and he was in high glee at the bare prospect of what he might yet be.

That night he answered Laura's letter, swinging himself at his horizontal best in its composition, and really astonishing himself regarding the amount of sentiment and poetry there was in him. The letter was posted. It reached its intended, and, true as a donkey to a thistle, she bled her to the trysting-place, where she was duly met by the emancipated Harry, the man who had come up out of great tribulation.

He was dressed in the height of fashion, and there was something in his very presence which showed her he had shed his down, and that matrimony had done its work. In fact she hardly knew her man, and the change created not only surprise but evident disappointment. But she greeted him cordially, lovingly, nevertheless, and, except the trusting wonder which he had manifested before, he, too, was enthusiastic in his greeting.

But there was a polished bitterness about him which choked off any attempt at sentiment on her part which was exceedingly provoking.

"Ah! Harry, Harry there is a great change in you!" she exclaimed, sorrowfully.

"Change? There is no 'change' in me, or large bills either, for that matter," said he with just emphasis enough to startle her.

They seated themselves upon one of the settees under the foliage.

"How short a time it takes to change a man in New York," she sighed.

"Yes. But it depends a great deal upon what company he falls into, more especially upon the kind he is first taken in by."

"I do not understand you. But if you refer to the unfortunate meeting with the man who was my husband, I judge you very unkind if you blame me for it. When I spoke of change I had reference to that particular kind which takes place in a man the moment he is fully convinced that a woman loves him."

"The sun ripens fruit, and experience does the same for green men."

"More enigmas! But I suppose it is all right. I, too, have lived to learn that if a woman would thrive in a man's love she should never confess it."

"Well, that should depend upon the amount of experience he has had. If green, it might not be a bad thing to do to confess it. But if experience has prepared his nostrils for snuff, I should suggest that as little be said about it as possible."

"That is right, that is manly; mock me," she said, turning her beautiful eyes up to him with a half merry, half reproving look.

"No, no, not for the world, Mrs. Allen."

"Do not call me that name again, if you have a spark of mercy left in you; I detest it. Tell me, Harry, why are you so bitter and uncharitable? Do you tire of the love you once swore was all in all to you?"

"Yes, I am both tired and retired."

"Then you do not love me any longer?"

"That does not necessarily follow."

"Then what do you mean, Harry? You are killing me," and she went for her handkerchief just as natural.

Harry watched her a moment in silence.

"Have you a cold?" he asked at length, knocking the ashes from his cigar.

"There would be a good reason for having

one," she said, after looking somewhat mad and considerably reproving into his well-collected features, "sitting so close to an iceberg."

"An iceberg, eh? Well, as you have the other requisites for making ice cream, suppose we start the business?" and Harry laughed loudly at his witty, left-handed compliment, while she looked but little like either sugar or cream.

"Oh, I understand; you love somebody else."

"Why shouldn't I? I am married."

"Married!" She exclaimed, starting up and gazing curiously at him.

"Taken in and done for, finally."

"And you never told me of all this?" she asked, at length.

"What is the use of heralding one's misfortune? Besides I thought you knew it."

"How should I? Oh! Harry, Harry! after I have left the man to whom I was bound, and all because of my love for you and its supposed reciprocation."

"Why, I thought that one so smart as you are would have known that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush. I am surprised."

"More mockery; but it's all right," she said, again seating herself.

"I am glad to hear you say so. It seems to me that you must know my wife."

"How should I, pray?"

"Well, out of sympathy, if nothing else. She is very much like you in all her tastes and accomplishments."

"And was it for that you loved her?"

"That's what was the matter with me, I believe."

"Ah! but the thought, the terrible thought that you are married!" and again she went for her handkerchief.

"Yes, I feel just that way myself," said Harry, puffing at his cigar.

"And does she love you, Harry?"

"Well, as well as one of her peculiar education could, I suppose."

"And do you love her, Harry?"

"As well as I could any one of her peculiar disposition."

"But there is a mystery about all you say; who was your wife before you married her?"

"A woman."

"No, no, I mean her name, before she took yours?"

"Barlow; Bessie Barlow. Did you ever know her?" he asked, looking earnestly into her face.

"No; why do you ask?"

"Because, knowing that your tastes and accomplishments run in the same channel, I did not know but that you had the honor of her acquaintance?"

"No;" she answered, abstractedly.

"Do you know this likeness?" said a man, who seemed already at her side, at the same time thrusting a *carte-de-visite* before her.

She uttered a little scream and looked up at the intruder.

"Harry Vaun!" she exclaimed, with bated breath.

"Yours, truly," replied the detective. "Now," he continued, "just step out here to the gas-lamp and see if you recognize the picture of this individual!"

"What do you mean?" she asked, faintly.

"I mean to see if you recognize this picture. Come."

"No harm in taking a look," suggested Harry Queer, cool as boarding-house cabbage.

"This is a job," said Laura, manifesting considerable hesitation.

"Never mind what it is, Sally; come and do as I bid you."

Reluctantly she complied.

"Do you recognize it?" asked Vaun, after she had examined it a moment.

"No," she replied, sharply, "I never saw her in my life, to my knowledge."

"Take care, Sally; you might put your foot in it," said Vaun.

"Let me alone; I know nothing about her."

"Since when? I have seen you in her company."

"You are mistaken, sir; I never saw her."

"Do you remember the time you went through old Deerland, of Jersey? Perhaps you did not see her then, oh, no; didn't see her all through that job;" and Vaun indulged in quite a laugh, but in which she did not join.

"Now, Sally," continued the detective, "I want to find Kate O'Brine, *alias* 'Bessie Barlow,' and *alias* several other names. You can be made useful, and so I propose to squeeze you. The little job you put up on this gentleman will be forgotten, provided you help me find Kate and the 'doctor.' You know who I mean, Charley Ryan. But to make sure that you do not play tricks on travelers I must take you to headquarters and put you under lock and key for awhile."

"The devil you will. Now, I say, Harry, that is rather rough. You don't mean it?"

"You will be willing to bet on it in half-an-hour from now. Come."

"No, no, Vaun, don't take me there; I—I'll squeal," she said, convulsively grasping his arm. "Let up on me, and I'll peach."

"All right; but you must go along to headquarters until I find everything 'dead to rights.' You are slippery, Sally."

Harry Queer was trying to get through his head all this time what she could mean by "squealing" and "peaching." He concluded he had something to learn, yet.

Reluctantly Sally "came up," and the trio started toward Broadway. But an idea appeared to seize the sentimental creature as they neared the gate, and she came to a dead halt.

"Nary a let up?" she asked the detective, in a whisper.

"Nary," was his laconic reply.

"And you will let up on me if I 'peach' on Kate?"

"Yes, yes. But we've had chin-music enough about it," he replied, impatiently.

"Well, then, come with me," she said, sullenly.

"Square deal, now, you know; no job;" said Vaun, as they faced to the right and started up Broadway.

"Never fear," she replied, as the three walked along.

"I suppose there is no occasion for any further sentiment or love-making," suggested Harry Queer, as she manifested a disposition to appear in his company rather than in that of the detective.

The gentle, loving, sentimental Laura, with two or three *aliases*, glanced up at our hero as though she could have kissed his jugular vein open, but her tongue made no reply.

"I say, Vaun," said she, after a few moments silence, "Do me a favor, will you?"

"Perhaps so; what is it?"

"I don't like this business," she said, tossing her pretty head, savagely.

"I dare say; you gals never *do* like only one part of the confidence business, that of getting your victim dead to rights. You don't relish the after-clap; no, no; but what is your little game now, Sally?"

"Well, I will tell you; both Kate and the 'doctor' live where I do, and as I am acting square towards you, why not make this business appear a little more decent on my part? Suppose you take me into the house on pretence of wishing to search me for 'swag'!"

"Swag, what the devil is 'swag'?" mused Mr. Queer.

"Then you can spot your game and make it look better for me."

"All right, Sally; come on;" and on they went at a renewed pace.

She led the way across town to the Sixth

avenue, and into that part of it known as the "burnt district." A ward detective of the Twenty-ninth Precinct recognized Mr. Vaun, and, suspecting business, he asked if he could assist in any way, and was told to watch their movements and be ready in case of a sudden call.

Reaching the front door of a house between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth streets, on the avenue, Sally led the way in and up-stairs, followed by the keen and cautious Vaun and the bewildered Harry Queer. Making as little noise as possible, they reached the second floor, when she opened the door leading to the front room, magnificently furnished, and the whole party entered.

There chanced to be a whole party already in the room. One of that party was the "doctor," *alias* Charles Blister, D.D.; another was the late wife of our hero, while a third was the sometime "widow," at whose house Harry's cup of felicity was so prettily filled.

"This fellow has arrested me!" exclaimed Sally as she entered, but there was no disposition manifested to make inquiries or to enter into any of the particulars of what had happened. The first thing to do was to see that nothing further "happened," and to that end the game seemed instantly to be "every one for himself and the devil for them all."

The Reverend Blister exclaimed "The devil!" and proceeded to vanish through another door into another room, closely followed by Vaun.

Kate O'Brine, otherwise Bessie Barlow, spit out a word of four letters, which sounded very hot, and also attempted to vanish through an open window, without the slightest regard to coroners or undertakers. Harry Queer, her late bill-payer-in-chief, rushed to the rescue, and pulled her back by her front hair and waterfall.

In this he was kindly assisted by the "widow," who had once been so hospitable

to him. She assisted by throwing the piano stool at him, and following it up by one or two lusty whacks over the head with a wine bottle. She was instantly reinforced by Bessie, and between the two of them poor Harry was having it warm enough to melt the wax in his ears or the filling in his teeth. But Bessie was only doing legitimate business, and of course her "husband" knew it; but what right had the "widow" to assault him? It made him mad.

Meanwhile the struggle for personal fondling and familiarity between detective Vaun and Blister, D.D. was decidedly exciting. Up on the roof of the house went the "doctor," quite as lively as ever spindleshanks carried a body, followed by the detective, bent on being not more than a month behind him.

While on the roof Vaun gave the signal agreed upon with the other detective, and by the time the chase had reached the next roof two to one was the odds against the Blister.

After skipping over one or two roofs Blister leaped upon another that was full twenty feet lower down, and was on the point of escaping when the other detective confronted him. Here was more than a bargain, but in his ministerial career he had encountered many thorns and overcame them, so he again took heart. The next thing he took, however, was a leap to a still lower roof, from which he attempted to reach the backyard of mother earth by shinning down a tin leader.

Down went the detectives, and down went Blister, but rather faster than he could have wished, for the leader broke, and the D.D. found a settlement in a huge tub of "mash," which some illicit distiller had only covered to keep out eyes, not falling bodies. This is the first good ever known to result from whisky, and this would not probably had the desired effect if it had not been in its "infancy." As it was, the D.D. was so com-

pletely baptized that he could not escape; and so they had him, although it was hard work to pull him out of the bath of "mush."

Taking him back to the room from whence they had departed so unpolitely, they found the beautiful Bessie Barlow and the enchanting Laura Allen engaged in a rough and tumble fight upon the floor, and so completely mixed up were they that it would have taken a puzzle-picker to decide which chignon, false hair, hoops, limbs, and underwear belonged to either one or other of the fair belligerents.

This was one part of the struggle that was going on in the room. The other part of the fun was between Harry Queer, the "widow," and a negro wench, a servant who had come to the rescue of her mistress, armed with a mop well soaked in dirty water. Even the position of this group might have been artistically bettered, for, as it was, it appeared that Harry and the "widow" had clinched, and after having gone through a large mirror, and upset a centre table and several chairs, they had fallen together and rolled under the piano, busting the pedals and scraping the bark from one or two legs.

Meanwhile the wench was belaboring poor Harry with her mop, giving him a sposh with it in the face now and then, while her mistress was affectionately chewing one of his thumbs and pulling his hair at the same time. It was warm work under that piano, and Harry was feeling it muchly.

Of course the two detectives soon created a diversion in our hero's favor, and more dead than alive he was pulled from the den of the enraged lioness. Bessie and Laura were also pulled apart after some considerable labor, and the amount of repair wanted by that party was enough to delight the hearts of several doctors, tailors, and dress-makers. Of course they were all taken to headquarters, and a nice-looking lot they were, as the crowd thought who followed them.

A long story can be made short in this way. The most of Harry's fifty thousand dollars was recovered, and Bessie, with the Reverend Blister and the "widow" went to Blackwell's Island for a few months. Laura escaped that muss with two black eyes, an unromantic nose, torn dresses, and a considerable loss of her natural hair; and so the whole affair was settled to the delight of all parties, especially Harry Queer, and his friend, detective Vaun.

With his money once more in his possession, Harry paid a short visit to his parents in the country. But there was no rest for him there; and without any particular aim or object in view he again returned to the city to cultivate the elephant he had found, and to take his chances in whatever adventure might turn up.

By this time, it must be remembered, Harry had become very fond of adventure and the fast life of tropical New York, and taking particular pains to learn and to be smart, he soon found that he could himself play the same games that was at first played upon him. As a natural consequence, he became one of the sharpest of the sharp, and gloried in the knowledge of it. His sometime piety gradually forsook him, and he became in all respects a regular New Yorker.

No more was he looked upon as a flat; no more did the sharps spread their tempting nets for him, but instead of that he was rather looked up to with pride by those who first assisted him to learn the ropes.

One incident, to prove how well his meerschau was colored, and I will leave him to continue his usefulness in a community where he is perfectly at home, and where *sharp* is the word.

Tom Lanky had escaped from Sing-Sing by one of those dark-lantern manipulations regarding which everybody seems to be in the dark; and the two old schoolmates had again become good friends. A rich uncle of Harry's came down from the country, chock-

full of money and innocence. He wanted to see the sights of Gotham. Harry was just the chap to show them. Tom Lanky was also just the chap to assist him in doing so. Laura Allen was also full of her olden enthusiasm for rich strangers.

Now this uncle, although tinged with the frosts of age, still had lots of buckram and sympathy in him, and although a dutiful deacon at home he was nevertheless only human when abroad. Laura was placed artfully in his way, won upon him artfully, and at length caught him as she had caught Harry on his first search for the animal, and took a thousand dollars to satisfy the demands of the outraged husband; Tom Lanky acting the part of the indignant husband, and Harry "happening" to be the friend and mediator. But the old deacon would settle with no one but the lovely Laura, she promising to make it all right with her "jealous" husband.

It was a success all around; and the rich old uncle thought himself so lucky in getting off so reasonably that he thanked his nephew for the part he had acted, and in consideration of his silence promised to put him down for a good thing in his will.

And Harry Queer is a gay sport in New York to-day. He rides behind the fastest horses and by the side of the prettiest calico. He is known to be rich and handsome. He is a favorite in society, and, although not a marrying man, there is no lack of ancient mammas who would gladly have him for a son-in-law. At fashionable balls he is the heaviest of the heavy swells, and makes a sensation among the admiring fair ones.

But, gay as he is, victorious as he is, he often pauses amid the hilarity which surrounds him to take a retrospective glance and to recall his first *début* into New York society, and his first few searches for THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

CURTAIN.



# KICKED INTO GOOD LUCK:

BEING THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A VAGABOND.

BY JOHN CARBOY.

## CHAPTER I.

THE KICK OF A MULE LIFTS ME INTO PUBLIC NOTICE, AND I GO TO THE CITY.

"No, sir," said the old man, dropping his hand upon my shoulder, "no, sir. This boy isn't mine. Boys never run in my family. Gals mostly. No, sir, this boy come of a kick. He was histed into my grip by a mule's heels—one of them old Jerusalem mules. You see, I was gittin my ole hoss shod down to Bijes smithy, and there was a mule standin' nigh the door—kind a waftin his ears, with his eyes half shat and his head a hangin down, suthin like an old Hard Shell deacon gittin ready to flop at a camp-meetin. Well, Bijes had jest begun hammerin a red-hot chunk of iron, when—whang!— afore I could wink an eye, that are mule ned lifted his hind huffs and given this ere boy an almighty histe clean through the door into the shop, and he lit crossways over the anvil onto that red-hot hoss-shoe, jest as Bijes was slammin down his hammer for a big lick. The boy dropped off that mazin' quick, you bet.

"Jest as he began to gather himself up, a cussed, nasty, strange, lean, thin, mangy, yellor dog, with red eyes, slit nose, cropped ears, and a broken tail, which had sneaked in from nobody knowd where, made a dive at the boy, and ketches him by the slack of his rags. Didn't the boy yell then! The rags sort of give, and the dog took a fresh holt higher up, and happened to shet his ornery jaws onto the boy's pocket, where he hed a lot of loose fish-hooks and tacks. Then the dog and the boy howled, didn't they! Them hooks held the dog, and the boy started for the door jest in time to pitch head first into Bijes's wife, who was comin in with his dinner-pail. She weighed a couple of hundred; down she squelched, clus to that blasted mule—jest nigh enough to lift him

to lift his heels agin and boost her up agin the old hoss-box, where there was a bucket of water, which come kaswash all over the old woman.

Bijes rushed for his wife, and I grabbed the boy by the scruff of the neck with one hand and the dog with the other, and after a jerk or two fetched 'em apart, the dog howlin with his mouthful of hooks, and the boy bawlin like sixty. I don't spose it's worth while tellin what came of that mule; only I know only next day there were a pair of extra-sized ears tacked up alongside the shop-door, and a week or so after Bijes hed a mule-skin apron. Well, leave me git back to the A in the primer.

"Boy," sez I, "whose are you?"

"Don't know."

"Where did you come from?"

"That's more'n I keer to tell; taint much diff, I guess."

"Where you goin?" sez I, kinder coaxin, for I began to feel sort of sorry for the little unfortun'ate cuss.

"I'm goin to git away from here; is that your dog?"

"No. Sich dogs as them don't hev any owners. Them dogs travel sideways—cat-cornered, so's to be handy fur kickin."

"Well, Bub," sez I, "ef you don't know who you are, ner where you're goin, ner where you come from, either your eddication has been neglected, or else you've got no memory to speak of." Well, bimeby I squeeze out of the fellow, little by little, enuff to let me know he belonged nowhere nigh this place, and was wanderin on, sleepin wherever he could, and livin on what odd jobs he could pick up. He wan't bigger than knee-high to a leg of mutton. So, thinkin to give him a rest, I took him home, fed him up, had some of my old coats and breeches cut down to his figger, and set him to work a chorin' it. That's five years ago, and here

he is yet. Nobody came after him, he didn't go after anybody, and hasn't needed more'n one walloppin a week. And his name is Job. I call him Job, and as my name is Toddel, I spose Job Toddel 'll stick to him as well as any other."

Thus explained the old man—I listening not very attentively, still, under the shadow of his huge horny hand—what he knew of my early history, to a queer-looking little man in a black, threadbare suit, and with no visible signs of a shirt except a huge collar, which seemed to grow farther up about his neck every moment. I remember that his head looked like the butt end of a smoked ham between the sideboards of a wheelbarrow; and when he held out his arms, which he did while speaking, I felt tempted to catch hold of them and wheel him off.

This little man had called at the house three or four times, and, with all his oddity, I rather liked him; and one day—the day before this upon which my supposed father dubbed me the child of a mule's kick—he asked me how I would like to go to the great city, and live there and make a man of myself. He wanted a boy, he said, to go upon errands—a green country boy suited him best; he had an eye upon me, said I was quick and active, and once in a while I could come back and see my good old friend, and a great deal more to the same effect.

All the while the great shirt-collar seemed to be closing in and rising higher, and his little round head sinking lower beneath the dusty curled rim hat. I wouldn't have been much astonished to have seen him shut himself up like a rat in a box-trap.

So, on this day, having gained my consent by his wonderful stories of what I might become, and would be sure to see in that great world of brick and mortar, on this day he opened out to the "old man."

I was a good stout boy, youth rather, but my wardrobe was not calculated to add to my attractiveness. It consisted of one suit, which had lasted like a suit at law. There seemed to be no more wear-out or change in it than there is in an old debt.

"Well," said the old man, "if you fancy the boy, you can have him. What's your business, though?"

The head came forward from the deeper shadows of the shirt-collar, and the queer little man, with his hands stuck into his pockets, answered:

"My dear sir—dear sir—fact is, I'm a lawyer, attorney, you know; I—I'm a notary also. Have been a judge, was once an alderman, and, sir, I'm proud to say I began life in the sub-cellar of impecuniosity."

"What kind of a bildin is that? never heard of it afore—taint a horsepital, is it?" queried the old man.

"No, no, ha! The sub-cellar of impecuniosity, sir, is the very lowest strata of—hard up. Yes, sir, and my first upward step was choppin hash out of plate-scraps in a Chatham street all-night restaurant—fact, sir. Then, sir, I traveled, gained a knowledge of the world as a boy of all work and no play in a double-headed baby-show; we had a boar-constrictor also, sir. The constrictor one night swallowed the baby, the sheriff seized the constrictor for the rent of the hall, and—I—yes, sir, I went to work next in a minister's stable, stayed there till he got a call to run off with a deacon's wife, and then I brought up, sir, in the city, and got into a lawyer's office, did the sweep-in', in six months was promoted to be chief engineer of the stove, studied law six months and—well, I'm on the parlor floor of prosperity. That's my business, sir."

"Yes, sort of a pepper and-salt business, if you put it all together," said my protector. "Now then," this to me, "now then, dy'e want to go with this gent, ef I fix things?" Of course I did, and so I answered him.

The two men went into house; in half an hour the shirt-collar loomed out and came toward me. "All right, younker! Now, sir, go in to the old man, get your instructions, and be ready to start this afternoon. He'll tell you our bargain."

So I went! The old man looked very solemn, and there was a suspicious watery haze about his eyes. "Now, Job, we're goin to part; since I've had you you've been tolerable handy. I shall miss you, specially on wallopin days. It was a heap of fun to wallop you; you didn't fight back, like my gals used to. Now, all you've got to do isn't much with this lawyer. You'll miss your wallopins; but ef you think you can't get along without 'em, why he'll let you come down here once in a while. But if he attempts to flax you out, let me know. Go up-stairs and git on your Sunday rig, and I'll talk to yer again."

My Sunday "rig" was a clean shirt collar.

## CHAPTER II.

ON THE CARS—ANOTHER KICK, AND I AM LOST.

ARRATED in my Sunday suit—being my old clothes and a clean shirt, I was on my way to the city, leaving the old home and the haunts of Podunk behind me. P. S.—Podunk is in Jersey. It is not on the new maps. It was summer time, and things were dusty. My new guardian, whose name was Koke—Mr. Bacon Koke, or Bacon Koke, Esq.—told me a great many anecdotes on the way.

Just before we arrived at the depot in Jersey City, he got into an altercation with a chap from Rahway, who was in serious trouble concerning the sudden and mysterious disappearance of his wife with some other woman's husband—who I discovered afterwards was a little, dried-up, shriveled parson, who had been hammering pulpits and reviving the civilized heathens round about the region of Paterson.

Mr. Koke ventured to suggest to him the propriety of a divorce.

Then the injured Jersey chap raised his voice and his arm, and went off into a spasm of objective eloquence. "Di-vo-rce! not a inch of it, sir! She's divorced now! What's the use of divorces? She's gone! So's he! Blast him! He converted her. He brought her into the fold, and he folded her up like a umbrella. Yes he did. I—I wouldn't a cared a d--n if he only took the whole family. It's rough—infernal rough! Not only that, but he borried five dollars of me the day he left, and my wife carried off my best store-clothes. Now there's my family left, an' I've got to take care of 'em. If I catch him I'll convert him! Won't I? Don't talk to me about divorce."

"Well," said Koke, his shirt-collar spreading out like a Chinese fan and lifting his back hair, "divorce, my friend, will relieve you of her."

"Oh, shet up—hain't I relieved of her! She's relieved herself. I didn't want her; but it's the way the thing was done. Taking my coat and things for that Hard Shell

sneak to wear. Tain't her, it's my breeches. When a man loses his breeches—his best breeches, and his best coat, and hain't no chance to git any more, it's hard. Divorce! Will a divorce git back them things?" The Jersey chap became too full for utterance.

Koke subsided, and presently we rolled into the Jersey ferry-house.

We had just stepped out upon the platform, when I saw the crowd suddenly give way, and the Jersey chap make a wild rush toward the gate.

"That's him—he's my pork!" he roared, and the next minute he had collared the Parson. And on the Parson's arm was his wife—his runaway wife.

She was thin as the shadow of a telegraph wire, and half a foot taller than her new affinity.

Jerseyman grabbed the Parson's coat, gave a jerk, and rip! the back split open downwards, as if it had been slit by a first-class butcher. Jerseyman's wife yelled—screamed—the crowd roared, but the Parson made no resistance—only accidentally slung his umbrella round, and the point of it furrowed the cheek of a square-shouldered brakeman, who instantaneously hauled off and keeled over the next man to him.

"You miserable, cussed viper—you swamp skunk!" bawled the injured Jerseyman, giving the Parson a tremendous kick.

"The Lord's will be done," murmured the Parson, wriggling in the avenger's grasp.

"Tain't the Lord that's kicking you, it's me! The Lord don't wear double-soled boots, nor he don't own them breeches, and this coat. Take 'em off and hand 'em over," thundered the Jerseyman.

Meanwhile the wife had "come to," and rushing up to her deserted hubby, threw her long arms about his neck, her face as red as a gobbler's comb.

The crowd yelled. Two Jersey policemen arrived and separated the belligerents at the precise moment that the Parson's coat was let into another compound lateral fracture, leaving one undivided half in the hands of the Jerseyman, and another undivided half hanging upon its wearer's back, swinging loose like a pirate's flag in a calm.

While the crowd was swaying to and fro, I glanced around for my friend.

He was gone! I ran back, here and there, but he was not to be found.



What could I do? I was frightened—bewildered. In vain I endeavored to get a glimpse of that towering shirt-collar and the curled rimmed hat that overshadowed it. I chased a dozen shirt-collars, but alas! their owners were strange to me.

Did anybody know Koke the lawyer? I described him to the gate-keeper. No, he never noticed people's shirt-collars. All he looked at was the tickets. Tickets was his business, and if they had the right paste-boards, he didn't care whether they had shirts or not. "So," he added, "young man, pass out and ketch that boat. You'll find him over in New York. It's a small place, my boy! Show your tickets!"

I passed out. Fortunately, the old lawyer had entrusted the keeping of my ticket to my own care.

And in fifteen minutes I placed my feet within the corporate limits of—

Gotham!

Koke! Certainly I could find him! Or he would find me.

### CHAPTER III.

I MAKE MY BOW IN THE BOWERY—THE RESULT IS ANOTHER KICK.

ALL that day I wandered through the city. Toward nightfall, tired, disgusted, hungry, I halted in front of a great white-columned building, ablaze with wonderful illuminated paintings and flaring gas-lamps, and all sorts of flags and strips of colored cloth.

I knew it was a theatre.

Hunger and the desperation of weariness had sharpened my cheek. Cheek is a blessing to people in trouble. Without it a poor devil would never rise in life. When a man has cheek he never commits suicide. Some people call it genius. It's only refined cheek—cheek polished off, and sometimes sugar-coated with a thin wash of modesty, to make it swallow smooth.

I had heard of theatres, and in Podunk had at one time carried a banner on the stage there, for and at the benefit of Alphonzo Budgy, the great North American tragedian, in his thrilling play of "The Buccaneer of Bloody Bay, or the Bantam of the Blasted Heath." The thought struck me that I might get a few shillings as a supernumerary. I looked at the posters.

Lucky venture. So I thought then.

In tremendous letters appeared the name of the veritable Budgy—"Mr. A. Budgy."

I carried the banner for him in Podunk—why not carry it here?

Job Toddel, courage! From the lowly supe you may arise to the lofty height of fame upon which stands "the great exponent of histrionic art"—Budgy!

So I started. I inquired the way to the stage-door. I found it in Elizabeth street, surrounded by a small crowd of small boys. I boldly walked in and asked the doorkeeper for Mr. Budgy.

"Can't see him!"

"But I must see him!"

"Must! See here, young cove, you'd better sherry your nibs, er I'll move you. Mr. Budgy's dressin', and won't see nobody. Them's his orders."

"But," I persisted.

"Oh, cheesse it!" he jerked out, "come, now, that's too thin. You can't git in, and that ends it."

"But," I put in, "but he sent for me, and wants me right away." This was a whopper. A desperate fix needs a desperate remedy. Cheek is better than Rad's Ready Relief.

"What's yer name?"

"Job Toddel."

"That's a pretty name, isn't it? Names must have been scarce where you come from. Job is good. Well, if Budgy wants you so bad, you'd better pass in; but jest look out you don't go down a trap or butt through a flat. You'll find Budgy, if you ask for him. When you don't want what you can't see, ask for it. You'd better not leave your name in there. Names like yours ain't picked up every day—do you know why?"

"I don't," said I.

"Well, it's cause nobody 'll have 'em. Come, hustle in."

And in the midst of great stacks of painted canvas and narrow passages, in that strange, false world, the stage, and its innumerable accessories; not the least of which are dust and darkness, I entered and groped my way.

In one of the entrances I encountered Budgy, ready robed for his part.

He was to do "Pizarro," in the play of that name. He was walking up and down, muttering the text of his part. In his sphere Budgy was a great man.

I approached him timidly. He didn't notice me. I spoke. "Mr. Budgy," I said.

Still he continued his muttering and walking up and down in the narrow entrance.

"Mr. Budgy," I said, in a louder toot.

"Gin and water—not much water—make it stout, Billy," was the answer in a sepulchral semi-whisper. And then he continued his muttering.

"Mr. Budgy," I exclaimed in a louder tone.

"Ha! well, go get it. Don't stand there. The second music's on; so hurry up. Be quick, Bill!"

"But I am not Bill," I ventured.

The eminent Budgy looked down. "Not Bill—ha! Then who in—are you, and what do you want? Speak!"

I told him, as briefly as possible, what I wanted, who I was.

"Well, my boy, things are rather shaky here just now. Fact is, slums are low. No sale in two weeks—biz is fearfully quibsy. But if you're in such a close quarter, with nix a cab to weed in, why, I'll fix it for you. Here, follow me!"

I started after him, through the dark entrance, on to the dimly-lighted stage. But before I had got half-way across, I stumbled and fell, pitched forward, and my head went through the side of a painted house.

Mr. Budgy, something after the manner of the dramatic Buccaneer hurling the foul betrayer of innocents from the presence of the persecuted heroine of the melo-drama, grasped me, and, with "Look out for yourself now," jerked me from the floor, and stood me up much as an alley-boy would set up a tenpin.

He hailed the captain of the supes and whispered a few words to that functionary, a bow-legged, broad-shouldered man, rather tall, and in tights and tunic, with a feathered cap on his head, looking as fierce as an exaggerated Shanghai rooster when no other rooster is nigh. The noble captain nodded, grinned, and then I followed him to the supers' dressing-room, but not before the great Budgy had patted me on the back and in a deep bass monotone said: "All right, my boy, you won't get much pay, but I'll find you a place to sleep to-night, and I guess you won't starve. But don't depend on this for a living—keep your eye open."

I did keep my eye open, to my sorrow, as will presently appear.

Arrayed in a pair of tights, which were by no means tight, and a Peruvian dress several sizes too large for me, I returned to the

stage, and awaited orders. The orchestra was whanging away, and there was a hurrying to and fro, getting the stage ready and the scenes in their proper grooves.

By some conversation I learned that there had been a general strike and demand for back salaries," especially among the stage carpenters, and scene-shifters. The "eminent" who was to do Rolla, was a big brassy-faced amateur, who, I judged by his appearance, had much more talent for swallowing whisky than for the business of an actor. What "spout shop" he came from I did not know.

Everything being ready, up went the curtain.

Through the first act all went smoothly. In front there were two or three of the usual interruptions of boys being jerked out by the ushers, other boys falling over seats, in their haste to get seated, cat-calls and the preliminary yells and whistling incidental to an East-side theatre.

The second act began. The amateur who did Rolla blazed away for the "King and Cora," and Budgy sustained his reputation as a first-class Pizarro.

The front scene had been run on, but the next, the grand altar-scene, was not set,—no altar-piece in the center, nothing ready. Where was the stage-carpenter? Gone out to see a man.

The "altar-piece" was found and brought forth by one of the scene-shifters, but not a stage-brace was to be found. The scene in front was nearly over; the High-priests and Virgins of the Sun, and all the rest of the sacrificial Peruvians, were ready.

The wire upon which the fire (a bottleneck wrapped in cotton saturated in spirits of wine) was to descend to the altar swung idly from the "flies."

Already had the prompter hurriedly ejaculated "All ready," to whistle off. A wait—a long wait. The audience began to grow uneasy. But there lay the altar piece, when it should have been set up.

"D—n it, fasten the blasted thing up somehow!" roared the prompter.

"Go on without it," suggested a dilapidated high-priest. "Let 'em imagine the altar."

"Can't wait, clear the stage, bawled the prompter.

At this moment a brilliant idea struck Budgy, who seemed to be officiating as stage manager.

"I've got it. Here, one of you supes. Here, you! come here." He beckoned to me. I went to him at the centre of the stage.

"Now, young chap, do you get behind this altar-piece. There, just catch hold of these two cleets, so you can hold it up steady. Don't move! there!" I obeyed orders. "Hand the end of that wire here," Budgy hastily twisted the end of the wire around the point of a nail projecting through the back of the altar-piece above my head. "Now, then, look out when the fire shoots down on that wire, and don't you stir a peg. D'ye hear?"

"Yes, sir," I answered doubtfully, as I sat squatted behind the altar, my arms extended like the wings of a bat nailed to a barn-door, and my hands grasping the battens.

"All right. Whistle off—so much for ingenuity," cried Budgy to the prompter.

And faces brightened, the prompter's whistle blew merrily, stilling the tempest of cat-calls, stamping, and hissing in front; and the flats drew off, disclosing the grand altar in the centre of the stage; while the procession of priests and virgins of the sun, closing up with portions of the rag-tag and bob-tail of the gallant Peruvian army, marched on and took their places on either side of the stage.

Then came Rolla and that old Fakir Ataliba, and the action of the scene began. The invocation was made, and the prompter gave the man in the flies the signal to start the expected fire down the wire.

Meanwhile, during the progress of the scene, I squatted behind, and holding up the altar, had discovered a small hole on a level with my eye in the altar, through which I could gaze upon the proceedings in front. Absorbed in a contemplation of the audience and the front of the stage, I had entirely forgotten the coming fire, or anything connected with it.

But the fire came. The bottle-neck and saturated cotton did their duty.

The chorus began:—

"Give praise, give praise.  
Our God has heard."

As the fiery ball darted down the wire, it struck the nail on the altar with such force that it detached the wire from it, and the burning mass fell upon my head and spread over my shoulders.

One wild, unearthly yell; one plunge forward; down went the altar; and pandemonium let loose was as nothing compared to the uproar, yells, and tumult in front, or the ripping, swearing, and confusion on the stage.

Budgy fairly groaned. Rolla was dumb-founded.

As for myself, my first impulse was to rush to the foot-lights; then, like a mad dog frightened at a dash of water, I plunged off at a tangent and made a maniacal exit at the first entrance, my arms flying like the sails of a windmill, and screaming—"Put me out! I'm a fire—put me out!"

And the boys in front caught the cry.

"Put him out!"

"Singe him!"

Just at this time the scene-shifters, at the order of the prompter, desperately rushed a pair of flats across the front grooves, to close in the confusion on the stage, and succeeded in nearly crushing the life out of Ataliba, who, scarcely knowing whether he stood on his head or heels, ran between them.

"Look out, old hoss-hair," screamed the boys.

"Give him another scrunch."

As for myself, somebody dashed a bucket of water over me, which only frightened me the more. On I rushed toward the stage-door, when the door-keeper, only having an indistinct idea of what the row was about, immediately conceived that I had been detected in endeavoring to set fire to the theatre, at once grabbed me, and began a series of cuffing and kicking sufficient to have reduced any ordinary youth to the condition of a pile of pulp.

## CHAPTER IV

I GET INTO AN ECONOMICAL LODGING-HOUSE.

"Here, Jim," roared the doorkeeper, giving me another shake, "hand me that old umbrella there? Blast me if I haven't a notion to shove it down his throat and histe it."

Before my amiable captor could put into execution his benevolent purpose of inconspicuously distending my esophagus by the sudden expansion of the blue-cotton tent, Mr. Budgy came up.

"There, let him slide," said the eminent.

"Now, then, young pie-ball, go change your togs and make yourself scarce."

"Git!" added the doorkeeper.

I did.

I shook myself out of the tights and tunic and put on the rags of civilized existence. As I was leaving the supers' dressing-room, Budgy again appeared.

"Now, my boy—bad scrape for you! It's all right, though. Here's fifty cents; take it, go to a foreign land, and be happy in the joy of the present, forget the mis-er-ry of the past, and think only of a glorious future. Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once."

"But the doorkeeper—he won't begin kicking again—"

"Never fear!" interrupted Budgy, loftily.

"The base minion of an unscrupulous manager will not dare to lift his sacrilegious boot to mar the tender form of him who calls me friend! Nixy! Be prudent—economical; don't drink, and—ha! Farewell; my duty calls, and I must away!" and, with a melodramatic flourish of his arm, he left me.

With fifty cents in my hand, and indignant recollections of more than fifty kicks and cuffs in my mind, and a half-formed idea that I was nearly old enough to commence the game of kicking back, I made my exit from that stage out into the night-darkened streets.

After some fruitless wandering from one street to another, I found in William street a lodging-house, evidently conducted upon that wise and economical plan which for the exceedingly small and insignificant sum of twenty-five cents introduces the somnolently inclined to a bed which could have been called by any other name and looked just as comfortable.

"Now, young man," said the landlord, "this is a first-class bunk. You know the rules?"

I said no.

"Well, our rule is the same as the rest of the first-class bunkin' kens. We leaves no light to a two-shillin' lodger, and no pillar with a fifteen-cent snoozer. Ef you want any luxuries, them's extra. In the mornins you kin wash down at the hydrant, and dry yourself off with the other end of your shirt. Good-night!"

And he left me—not without, however, remarking that "if I had any valuables, diamonds, or sich, I had better deposit 'em in the office safe—my pocket."

He might have spared my barefaced poverty that bit of jocular insult. *That* was a mental kick.

I tumbled into bed, and, being pretty well wearied out, I fell asleep, and dreamed the devil was using me for a club in a baseball match, with my landlord as pitcher, while the green little lawyer, in his tremendous shirt collar, was dancing around on the outskirts of the lower regions as a fielder.

## CHAPTER V.

I CROWD INTO COURT AND AM PUSHED INTO A BIT OF GOOD LUCK.

The next morning I started out and invested a portion of my remaining funds in a couple of "butter-cakes," as hard as flattened bullets, and a cup of thick fluid about as far from coffee as the dirty waiter who served it it was from heaven.

Crossing the Park behind the old City Hall, I saw a great crowd pushing and thronging toward toward the Court-house.

I asked a bootblack what it meant.

"Nothing," he replied, "only they're taking in that downy cove that shot the other cove."

"Downy Cove," said I, innocent of the slang vernacular, "did he shoot his brother?"

"You *must* be green! Cove isn't his name. That's what I call him. No, they both fit over a woman. That feller, 'll kitch it. Have a shine, sir? Shine 'em up?" Not obtaining that job, the boy added, "That are feller 'll get a shine, if he ain't sharp, all round his wizzzen."

Curiosity, and the hope that I was as likely to be kicked into a chance of luck, good or bad, in the Court-house as anywhere else, induced me to push in with the rest.

Almost before I had a chance for a second thought, I found myself up-stairs, near the entrance of the "Sessions," jammed and pushed up with a policeman taking me by the collar.

"Git back, now! Hustle back, there, gen'men! Clear the passage-way!" He gave me a shove which sent me up against another policeman, who gave me a mild punch with the end of his club. This curled me backward and landed me with my elbows into the digestive organs of a person behind me.



"God bless me!" The voice was familiar.

I turned, or rather twisted around. There stood Koke, shirt-collar, hat and all, with a green bag in his hand. He recognized me at once.

"Gracious! Why, Job, why, I've been searching for you all over."

"You ought to have found me, then, for I have been there ever since I lost you," I answered. The old fellow laughed. "Good boy!" he said. "But come in the court-room, and wait for me. I'm late, and—officer, pass this boy. Job, follow me."

I did. The court-room was crowded. I kept close behind Koke as he pushed his way through, until he reached the railing inclosing the bar. "Now, Job, you stand right here until court is over. Then wait for me until I come out."

Then I began to comprehend the nature of the scene before me.

Sitting on the bench was a dark-complexioned man who looked like a Jew peddler in a new suit of clothes. I am quite sure the Judge's name was Moses Mendiza. He evidently thought himself a good man. Beneath Judge Moses, who was picking his teeth and listening very attentively to nothing in particular, were assembled the attorneys and other functionaries.

Presently the prisoner was brought in. The modern scoundrels and assassins, in the way of dress and style, are a great improvement upon the old-fashioned Bill Sykes variety. They wear better clothes than honesty can afford.

As he came in, he shook hands with half a dozen lawyers, smiled confidently at the jury, nodded familiarly to the crowd generally, and finally condescended to seat himself beside his chief counsel, first dusting the chair with his embroidered handkerchief.

I imagine he dusted the thought of the gallows with equal ease from his delicate mind.

He didn't look much like an assassin. More like a billiard-sharp just after making a big count.

"Silence!" After much bawling by a red-faced official, and a confused shuffle, comparative stillness ensued.

Then proceedings began. Judge Moses ceased picking his teeth, and went to work at his finger-nails with a small knife.

The jury arranged themselves for a comfortable nap with their eyes open.

Three or four reporters made themselves ready with pencil and tobacco for business.

Mr. Koke gave his huge collar a tremendous upward pull—such an awful pull that I almost expected to see him lift himself up to the ceiling, or pull his shirt off over his head.

The counsel for the prisoner arose. He was a short, thick-set man, with a long-haired wig of the color of rotten lemon-peel, and a face which looked as if its owner had soaked it with a permanent dye of South Carolina cocktails.

He moved an adjournment. One of his principal witnesses in the case, "whose evidence, your honor, will vindicate beyond dispute, the character of this innocent man—a man who, as I well know, is the victim of a base and diabolical conspiracy hatched by the minions of a lawless press, their subsidized hirelings, the grand jury, and—and—other parties desirous of pandering to that debauched public opinion which is opposed to converting human stomachs into bullet-pouches! We ask an adjournment for six months, until the absent witness can be produced—or another one found that will answer the purpose. I can if necessary, go out into the street and bring forward fifty people who didn't see my client fire that pistol at the unfortunate and misguided man, who, with malice aforethought, insisted on dying and did die in order to have a fellow-mortal hung up!" And the learned counsel brought his fist down upon the table before him with a bang.

The judge picked his two front teeth, patted the side of his nose softly as if to coax an idea out of it, and then, in an elaborate mass of words and with frequent reference to his tooth-pick, decided to grant a postponement for three months. Then the crowd oozed out slowly, the prisoner betaking himself with the stout sheriff and a pair of thin deputies toward the Tombs, pausing, no doubt, as is the custom, divers times on the route at sundry gin-mills to sluice his and the officers' throats with slight freshets of fluidical lightning.

"Now, young man," said Koke, "I've found you; I'll try and keep track of you. Now we'll go—court's adjourned for the day. You must have a suit of clothes: then you'll go to my home, which you can call your home hereafter. Nobody there but my wife, grandfather, and two daughters. Come now."

I ventured to asked him what he thought would be done with that prisoner I had seen in court.

"Pooh! pooh! nothing. His counsel is a great man—wonderful! Judges dare not refuse him anything. He'd punch their heads right on the bench, if they did. He's thrashed half a dozen lawyers, kicked two judges off the bench in open court, and cow-hided three or four editors. His muscle is greater than all the talent of the bar. He'll have that case postponed till all the witness against him have died of extreme old age. Hal hal! Wonderful man that!"

Mr. Koke seemed to know everybody, for his head was continually bobbing toward people he met, who invariably answered his nod. But to any of them he rarely spoke. He walked fast and talked fast.

He took me to a clothing-house, where I was fitted out with an entire suit. From thence to a hat-store, and winding up the "expense," as he facetiously termed it, with a pair of boots.

I felt human for once. One new suit of clothes will exhilarate a man more than fifty rum-punches. It is equal to a month's board at the Fifth Avenue.

"There," said Koke. "We'll go up-town—up Broadway. We'll walk. Feel better, eh? I thought so. You think I'm queer, I suppose. There's nothing queer in human nature. We are only queer when we are not natural. And it's not natural to be poor. Hal! here we're in Broadway."

Somehow I began to like the old man—or rather, love him, as perhaps I might have loved my father had I ever known him. I even began to think that without his expansive shirt-collar and curled rimmed hat, he wouldn't be half so lovable, for they seemed a part of himself.

## CHAPTER VI.

I GO HOME WITH KOKE—HE MAKES A NOTE OF TWO OR THREE NOTABLES ON THE WAY THITHER.

"There, d'ye notice that little active old fellow with the sharp, restless eyes that look like a couple of convex sixpences, coming out of that store?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, that's the poorest man in New York. He's worked hard all his life, and

now all he's accumulated for a rainy day is a couple of immense very good stores and a few millions in cash. The more he gets the poorer he feels. He continues to save a little by hiring cheap clerks. What he don't know about being hard up with half a dozen millions on hand as pocket-change isn't worth knowing. If you don't believe it, ask him to lend you half a dollar.

"There," he continued, after we had passed on a few steps, "there's another man slashing along as if his feet were a couple of plows, hat thrown back and a pair of child-like and bland eyes peering out over a queer nose—that's the Later Franklin. He can lift up his head and say, without fear of dispute, that he has raised the biggest gourd in the country. He invented turnips and cock-eyed potatoes, and is now trying to raise a few beats of the political sort. He's sent more people West than any other eleemosynary institution in the land. He has been engaged lately in a new work "What I Don't Know about Farming," which will make about one hundred volumes, quarto-bible size. There will be a sequel to it; his pamphlet containing what he *does* know about farming. Ah, Job, he's very pious, and never been known to utter an oath!"

"Do you see that nervous, eccentric young gentleman—not bad-looking either, if he does wear blue broadcloth—there, that one peering into the store windows, with, however, a "single eye" glancing at a bevy of pretty women just passing him. That, my boy, is one of the four hundred and fifty authors of "Beautiful Snow." It has taken more people to write that poem than all the rest of the poems ever published in this country. But this one is the Simon Pure—the original—he wrote it first, but didn't get it patented soon enough. He is strictly temperate, never uses tobacco, lives in splendid style in Fifth avenue, is cheek-by-jowl with the Astors, Stewart, and other financiers of the city. Peterson, his publisher, with his accustomed liberality, pays him fifty per cent. on every copy issued, besides a large percentage on what he don't sell. He is an especial friend of Golden-Age Tilton, and is the boon companion of Greeley, on account of the philosopher's neatness of attire and general urbanity of speech."

Directly Mr. Koke pointed out another individual, who was at that moment entering the Metropolitan Hotel.

"That's a dramatist. Not the small one, but the man with the broad-brimmed shoulders and square hat, with an immense hook-handled cane, who walks as if he owned all the theatres in the country. He is an original, and hard study and intense application are the cause of the extraordinary redness of face and stoutness which mark his appearance. He is so weak most of the time, so debilitated, that he is compelled to ride in a crystal cab. In that mighty brain of his there are yet a score or two of sensational dramas waiting for customers. He is very abstemious in his habits, does all his writing in the open air, upon claret-colored paper, with green ink, and when once he begins a play he never pauses until he has written another one. He invariably commences with the last act, so that he can bring out the parts more perfectly. He lives principally on pork and doughnuts, cider and broiled sardines, but obtains his inspiration chiefly from luncheons of cheese and pickled tripe. He, by the way, is a member of the great 'Bloaters' Club.'"

By this time we had reached Union square, he still talking and pointing out celebrities of all sorts. He seemed to take a singular delight in this almost constant revelation of the people he knew.

"Job, next week I am going to have a little social gathering. I have 'em every month or two at the house, and then you'll see some of the queer ones. And it'll do you good to notice their ways, speech, and appearance. Ah! here we are at home."

Up a flight of brown-stone steps, and after the application of his latch-key, we entered the house—neatly furnished, but not expensively. I followed him up the stairway and into an apartment which he termed his library. There were shelves laden with books, pamphlets, and dusty heaps of papers, paste-board boxes, and innumerable odds and ends of scraps and memoranda, letters, and ink-bottles scattered about. In the centre of the room was a large table littered over with documents, newspapers, and few lawbooks.

"Here we are," said he, "and, as usual, my old father has been fumbling about the room. He's a lively old gentleman, Job. You'll like him. He's ninety-six. Never was sick a day in his life, never lost a tooth; there isn't a gray hair in his head. He has been married sixteen times, was divorced twelve times; was intimately acquainted

with General Washington, who presented him with that apple-tree hatchet. He fought through the war of eighteen-twelve, lost one of his ears, and has thirteen bullets in his body now. He would have been one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence if he had been old enough. I am proud of him. He walks ten miles every morning before breakfast, and never goes to bed without taking from ten to twenty hot whiskies, and never snores."

Mr. Koke, after admonishing me not to get out of sight, left the room, promising to return in a few moments.

Meantime, I amused myself in looking about me and in examining the titles of the books, which rested upon the shelves with as little regard to care as if they had been thrown on them with a pitchfork.

## CHAPTER VII.

I BECAME AN INMATE OF BACON KOKE'S HOUSE AND AM WELCOMED AS "A YOUNG MAN."

After a while, Mr. Koke returned, radiant in the stiff glory of his highest collar, and attired in a faded dressing-gown, his feet encased in a pair of carpet slippers which were in the last stage of a down-at-the-heel collapse.

"Ha! looking at the papers—certainly! But come down to the sitting-room; being home, you must know who make the home. Don't be bashful. Bashfulness has choked more first-class genius into oblivion than all other causes combined. Ready?"

I replied in the affirmative, and in the shadow of the great collar I followed to an apartment down-stairs.

"Here, Job, this is my youngest daughter, Certiorari Koke, and this is my eldest, Capias Koke; Certy for short, Cahey for short. And this is my father—my father!"

The youngest daughter, who was very thin, much under the ordinary height, and, with the exception of a pair of bright-blue eyes, not at all handsome; the eldest, very tall, angular, and with a nose like the rudder of a sail-boat—one of those mountainous Roman noses which, once seen, are never forgotten—greeted me quite cordially.

"Father, this is Job, I spoke to you about."

"Eh? louder, son; eh?" the old gentleman said, his voice having much that sort of rasping sound produced by a cow rubbing her back against a splintered rail.

"My father, Job, is a little hard of hearing; you musn't mind if he doesn't understand you at all times." Then again to his father: "This is Job Toddle, father; the young man" (I blushed at being called a man so suddenly) "I spoke to you about."

"Lout!" said the old man, "he don't look like it; looks rather smart. When I was of his age I could lift a bar'l of flour with myself a settin' on it; but I can't do it now; though, 'taint my strength I've lost, but my—ah-o-ah—" and here he went off into a series of wheezy coughing, after which he began again: "What's your name, did he say?"

"Job Toddle, sir," I replied, sitting down, at the instance of Mr. Koke, between him and Miss Certy.

"Job Noddle, eh? Well that's a fair name, though there ain't much of a handle to it. Way long back in them Bible times, men was strong accordin' to the length of their hair; but 'taint hair now, it's accordin' to the length of his name. Noddle, git your name up;" a protracted wheeze and the inveterate old father subsided.

"Girls, what's the time? Gracious! four o'clock! Well, I shan't go down-town, I'll remain at home. Meantime, have dinner at sharp six. Can you write, Job?"

"Oh, yes-sir."

"Good. To-morrow I'll give you something to do in that line. Meantime, girls, make the young gentleman comfortable. One of these days he'll be a great lawyer—if he cultivates his cheek, ha!" I'll go up to my den, ha! and arrange some little matters," and my queer little patron, with a twitch at the mighty collar, gathered his faded robe about him and disappeared.

The old father had retired into a wheezy slumber.

Certy looked at her sister. Cahey returned the glance. Then both looked at me. I simply stared straight between them at the wall.

"Certy," said the eldest, "will that odious Dr. Lunk be here this evening? I do detest that man, but papa will have him call. I don't see what papa sees in him, for my part."

"I know our delightful Splitman will be here. He's just returned from Washington. How beautiful he writes! His language soars—"

"Sores!" wheezed old grandpa, who had awakened from his cat-nap, "Sores! if it's biles, soap and sugar 'll fetch 'em to a head, Cahey. I remember when you was a baby you had warts—"

"Now, grandpa, don't, don't!" cried Miss Cahey, not at all relishing his garrulity. I said nothing about a boil."

"Oil is good for burns—not for biles. When I was a boy—"

"Do, grandpa, be quiet; you'll bring on your fits again. Now, do; that's a good grandpa." By a bit of feminine fondling, to which he was evidently accustomed, she reduced him to his former condition of wheezy cat-nap. Then she began conversing with me regarding general topics, and finally merged into an ecstatic expression of her unbounded admiration for the great Splitman.

"You have read his poems, have you not?" No. I had not, I modestly replied.

"Goodness! What have you lost! You will read them. Once you do, you'll never, never forget them. Oh! they are so exalted! so—so lovely."

Miss Certy said but little, and that little was neither long nor worthy of record. After a while, dinner was announced by a maid who must have been originally designed by an all-wise Providence for another century, somewhere in the past, when women were giants and men pigmies. She had a large voice, a month large enough to let the voice out whole with perfect ease, or to take in a week's rations of hard-tack. She was dressed very neatly; but that mouth! I shall never forget it.

Had it been cut a little deeper, the top of her head would have dropped off.

"Misses Koke, dinner is on."

"Did you call papa?"

"I did, ma'am."

"Well, waken grandpa and help him out. Come, Mr. Job."

The gigantic maid took the old gentleman by the hand, saying:

"Grandpa, dinner's on."

He started out of his wheeze. She repeated, "Dinner's on, sir."

"Thinner! oh, you ain't; just a large as ever, so you are. Why, I remember when my son—"

We passed out and left the maid to hear the balance of the interesting reminiscence, Mr. Koke overtaking us as we entered the dining-room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE, THE PATIENT GETS WELL—PUNISHED.

Just then there came a scream from the maid. Mr. Koke, followed by me, ran up and found his father lying upon the floor.

"Oh—he dropped like a piece of lead, sir—oh—dear! Oh, dear! he's dead."

"Shut up," roared Mr. Koke.

Whereupon Capey and Certy began crying in chorus with the maid.

"Here! Job, you go up the street and get the first doctor you can find—there is one on the next block—be quick—it may be something serious. And, Certy, slip on a shawl and hat and go for Doctor Lunk—it's better to make sure of having some one here."

I lost no time in obeying.

I found a physician—a fierce, thin-looking man, and gave him the direction, begging him to call at once. He came along with me.

When we arrived at the house, we were admitted by the gigantic maid, who told us she and Mr. Koke had carried the stricken man up-stairs to his bedroom.

I followed the doctor and Mr. Koke up. The old man lay upon the bed, breathing heavily, but unconscious.

"Doctor, do the best you can," said Mr. Koke in a low tone.

The doctor took off his gloves and hat, placed them upon a table, put on his eyeglasses, grasped the patient's pulse, and hauled from his vest-pocket an old-fashioned bull's-eye watch.

"Poultice the bowels with mustard—get the mustard at once." The maid vanished in search of it.

"Is it anything serious?" whispered Mr. Koke.

"Um!" replied the doctor in a low, rapid tone, "that depends! His pericardium, through senility, has coagulated with the albumic serum. If the mustard draws well it may remove the asphyxia sufficiently to open communication between the œsophagus and the smaller intestines."

"Thank you—thank you," said Mr. Koke; "do all you can—do all you can!"

I, unlearned as I was, half suspected the doctor to be a quack. What Mr. Koke thought I found out afterwards. The doctor's name was Pestle.

Presently the maid entered with the mus-

tard, and followed by Certy and Dr. Lunk—the "odious" Lunk.

Dr. Pestle turned from the bedsided, and he beheld Dr. Lunk.

Dr. Lunk, with one withering glance at Dr. Pestle, stepped quickly toward that bed.

"I'm glad you're here, doctor. Now you and Dr. Pestle—can consult—and—and—" Mr. Koke paused.

Dr. Lunk had a very large head, with small eyes, a small nose, turned upward like a pot-hook, and which head and trimmings surmounted a short, stout body, arrayed in a suit of gray. Dr. Lunk merely glanced at the patient, raised his eyebrows, and turned away.

"What's that mustard for?" inquired Lunk frigidly.

"I formed a hasty diagnosis, doctor," replied Pestle, equally as frigid in tone, "and to restore the normal—"

"Dr. Pestle—you are mistaken—mustard is not required. The powerful concatenation of fluidical—"

"I beg pardon," interrupted Pestle. "The fluid cannot concatenate while asphyxia—"

"Dr. Pestle," said Lunk, with tremendous severity, "in all my experience in practice I never found a total prostration of the system without the presence of a fluidical—"

"Really, Dr. Lunk, you ought to know—but excuse me one moment; suppose we meet half way. Mr. Koke and—the Misses Koke—will you—will you retire a moment, and we will examine the patient, and—"

"But, doctor—gentlemen, don't delay, he may grow worse—certainly, we'll retire—"

"We will be answerable, sir," said Dr. Lunk, bowing to Mr. Koke.

Mr. Koke and others of the family retired from the room. I had seated myself at the bay-window behind the curtain, and my presence not being noticed, I thought I might as well remain until their consultation was over. Besides, it would not do for me to volutarily make my appearance, after the rest had departed, in the room.

No sooner had the door closed than Lunk turned upon Pestle, giving him a tremendous frown.

"Pestle, by what right did you precede me here in this house, sir, when I am the regular family physician. Mustard on a man's bowels!"

"Dr. Lunk—I was called and I came, and I'll do so again—wherever I can put in an entering wedge against old-school quackery

and maltreatment. Yes, sir! That old man wants mustard. Mustard will reduced—"

"Pestle, you're an ass!" blurted out Lunk.

"What's that?" exclaimed Pestle, unable to believe that any man would dare apply such a term to an apostle of mustard treatment, "what's that, sir?"

"You're a consummate ass, Pestle."

"Dr. Lunk! is that intended as a professional slur or a personal insult?"

"Both, you miserable mustard-pot!"

"Lunk, you're an imbecile, an allopathic nonentity."

"Pestle, what undertaker's your partner?"

"Lunk, who's your gravedigger? What per cent. does the Greenwood Cemetery pay you on deposits you send over there, eh?"

They were becoming sarcastic and belligerent.

Meanwhile the patient—the old man—seemed to breathe easier.

"Pestle, do you mean to leave this case to me, or do you want to keep it and add to your bill the expenses of a funeral, and put this worthy family into mourning for a year?"

"Lunk, I was called first. My diagnosis—"

"D—n your diagnosis and your first call! I'm the regular—"

"Lunk, your beastly language is pardonable. You were once a police surgeon—during the same year that such frightful mortality prevailed among arrested inebriates, you old shadow of death!" Pestle's anger was rapidly rising. Lunk's little eyes fairly snapped, and his big head appeared to swell with the surplus of rage which agitated him.

As is the case in all great medical disputations, the original cause of the trouble in this momentous affair was entirely lost sight of.

Lunk and Pestle, however, suddenly remembered it might be advisable to take a glance at the patient, and do a little additional diagnosing.

Whereupon, inspired by the same thought, like two valorous knights rushing to the rescue of some hapless victim of persecution, Dr. Lunk, LL. D., A. S. S., and Dr. Pestle, also double LL. D. and extra A. S. S., simultaneously made a dive for the bed-side.

Each grabbed a wrist of the old man. Each jerked out his watch. Instead of looking at their watches, they glared at each other.

"Pulse rapid—irregular!" quoth Lunk.

"Pulse normal in its beat!" quoth Pestle.

"Pestle, you're a beat!" added Lunk, in a tone of ineffable scorn.

"Your diagnosis is wrong?" put in Pestle, pretending not to hear his rival's last remark.

"Blister—mustard!" Evidently Lunk was growing wilder in his desire for an outbreak.

"Dr. Lunk, you are unfit to associate with anybody above the social condition of an ourang-outang!"

This was enough for Lunk. He instantaneously clutched the unfortunate Pestle by the throat, whereupon Pestle, spying upon a table within reach a lady's small clot satchel, grasped it, and, suddenly freeing himself from the choking process so benevolently tendered him by his adversary, dashed the bag full in his face. The satchel happened to contain, among other articles, divers empty bottles, which produced a crash.

"Infamous wretch!"

"Miserable impostor!"

"You legalized murderer!"

"D—d licensed quack!"

And a variety of such complimentary and refined expressions accompanied and gave an appetizing flavor to their belligerent efforts.

Both were evidently furious. Had there been a case of instruments at hand, I have no doubt they would immediately have begun a mutual and thorough dissection of each other. As it was, Pestle banged away with the satchel of broken glass. Lunk's face, beginning to bear material evidence of the satchel's handiwork, Lunk ran for the door. Just as he reached it, it was violently opened. The door being harder than Dr. Lunk's head, and the force behind the door being greater than his power of resistance, the door had the best of it, and science went down. Lunk was knocked to the floor.

In rushed Koke—his daughters—preceded by the grenadier maid.

Dr. Pestle still wildly flourished his weapon.

The noise and uproar was more powerful than any mustard might have been, for, aroused by it, the old man suddenly sat bolt-upright in bed.

"Bless me! gentlemen, what's this mean? I—I—" exclaimed Koke.

"Yes—" wheezed the resuscitated patient.

"Dream! I had a dream; thought I was a

—was a turkey running away from a Jersey Thanksgiving. That's a sign of suthin' I know."

Dr. Lunk had gathered himself up to the segment of a perpendicular, and collected such portion of his scattered and battered senses as enabled him to explain, which he no sooner began to do than the exasperated Pestle also began his explanation. Again—both talking at once, growing fiercely earnest and louder—each forgot everything except that he had a dire enemy in front who must be immediately snuffed out by blows of either words or fists.

"He's a liar!" roared Lunk, with his knuckles under Pestle's nose.

"You're a ruffian!" bawled Pestle, with his knuckles in close proximity to Lunk's nasal pot-hook.

"Strike me if you dare!"

"Come, gentlemen, what *does* this mean?" screeched Koke in despair.

Certy and Capey were too frightened to do other than stand like statues.

Accidentally Pestle's fist grazed the fated nose of Lunk, and Lunk hauled off and fairly lifted Pestle and sent him backwards against the bedside, where he "lit" with his full weight upon the old man, knocking him senseless.

At this juncture the grenadier maid proved her usefulness. She caught Lunk by the collar as resolutely as if he had been a small boy, and, incontinently and unresisted, walked him out of the room into the hallway.

Pestle recovered himself, his eye looking as heavy and muggy as the moon in eclipse.

The maid treated Pestle precisely as she did Lunk.

"There," said she, "have it out as soon as you like, you brutes."

By this time it had grown quite dark, and, having come out from my half-concealment, Mr. Koke hurriedly dispatched me to find another physician.

Mr. Koke's head was level at last.

I started on my errand willingly, but feeling somewhat collapsed through want of food.

I left the two doctors slowly descending the stairs—one behind the other—each looking as foolish as a newly-sheared sheep.

My business—the business upon which I had been dispatched by my patron so suddenly—was to obtain a copy of the record of divers mortgages. I had a letter to a

certain "limb of the law," who would secure it for me. Also other business which does not require mention now.

Going out in the afternoon, I encountered a policeman who was sauntering along, fully equipped in regulation style.

"Officer, will you please direct me the nearest way to the Post-office?"

The "officer" paused, looked at me a second, placed his crooked-headed cane between his knees, which closed upon it like the jaws of a vice; hoisted his umbrella, ejected a two-ounce quid of tobacco from his mouth glancing after it regretfully, and then repeated, in an abstracted manner, as if he was trying to recall to his memory some long-forgotten subject—"The Post-off *is*?"

"Yes, I replied."

"Stranger here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Post-off *is*?"

He closed the umbrella, lifted his cane from between his knees, placed the umbrella under one arm, the cane under the other, drew by a dexterous motion of his forearms and hands from his pockets a plug of tobacco and a knife, sliced off a liberal chew, planted it between his teeth, closed the knife with a decisive snap, put it away, and then remarked:

"Post-off *is* is in State street," and slowly, without further word, oozed up the street, evidently conscious that he had fully and faithfully fulfilled one of the most arduous and trying duties of his responsible position as a public official.

His direction would have been extremely valuable had I known the whereabouts of State street, its length, and the locality in it of the Post-office. As it was, it might have been in Kamtchatka. However, I found it by accident.

Having satisfactorily transacted my business, after compelling a number of those wandering Bedouins (policemen) to drop their canes and hoist their umbrellas, in order to give me in brief doses a vast amount of vague and bewildering information, I managed to "do the sights" of the Hub hastily.

I think Boston must have originally been laid out by spiders. The streets are a web, in which the stranger, however wary, is doomed to become entangled and lost.

The soup-house charity system is a great institution here. Soup is always ready for the poor, and those who come first don't get any.

To get a pint of soup requires a physician's certificate that the applicant's stomach is entirely collapsed; a certificate from the Mayor that the party is a native; two affidavits that he is a member of the Temperance Society; one certificate that he is orthodox in religious belief, and a recommendation from five first-class citizens that that he has never before, in the whole course of his life, either asked for or wanted soup at the expense of the corporation.

Being thus prepared, and by bringing his own spoon, he can get outside of a pint of the exhilarating essence of beef-bones, flavored with an economical assortment of beans and carrots.

"Have to be stringent," said the disburser of the soup, "have to be keeferful. If we didn't the hull State would be a piling into the city after free soup. Our people are strong on freedom—specially in vittels."

There are very few paupers in the almshouse here. A pauper who wants to get in has so many certificates and affidavits and other documents and passports to collect, that he generally gets into some other business, or the State-prison, unless he happens to die of old age.

On the afternoon of the succeeding day I left the mighty Hub, and as I was whirled away in the cars, looking out of the car-window, my last vision of the city was the great yellow dome of the Capitol, looming up against the leaden sky like an exaggerated pumpkin of the Cape Cod variety.

Bound for the Metropolis. Also for the steamer of that name.

A short run by the train, which was equally short in the quality of speed, and was in charge of a conductor blessed with a shortness of speech, health, body, and hair, and who jerked the tickets and punched them as if each individual bit of paper was his deadly enemy—a short run, and we reached the boat.

A pleasant evidence of the inherent ambition of the American people is invariably displayed at all places of arrival and departure either by cars or boats, in the furious and terrible struggle of each man to get aboard first.

No sooner does the car "pull up" than each man leaps to a perpendicular, grabs his luggage, and begins to push and crowd out with an unchristian and reckless disregard of the tenderness of the corned feet of

his fellow-passengers. He glares savagely at everybody else for presuming to oppose his progress. He swears at everything. He is as impatient as an old woman with a loose hair down her back, and as mad as a man with the itch and no hands to scratch it.

The average American traveler is an inveterate growler. Nothing suits him except himself. He regards every other fellow-traveller as an intruder who is after the best seat, or berth, or place at the table.

Besides, he is invariably within a minute of being too late for the boat or train at starting, and always attributes his fault to the "blasted monopoly" or the "cussed" something else, but never to his own delay.

He will do more square and three-cornered swearing in one hour than the Chappaqua Philosopher could get through with in a day; more newspaper reading; chew more tobacco and blow off more argumentative political gas than the traveler of any other nation on the face of the earth. He looks upon hotel-keepers, waiters, baggage-masters, railway and steamboat companies, as the integral parts of a vast band of robbers, swindlers, and conspirators organized for the sole purpose of skinning him—particularly him. Yet he becomes indignant and frowns any assertion of such a lamentable condition of affairs, if it chance to be uttered by a foreigner, and at once "goes" for him with the ferocity of a terrier pouncing upon a rat.

So, across the gang-plank from the platform to the boat, everybody pushing, jamming, and crowding; a confused, struggling, pell-mell mass, each individual person feeling insulted because there is another person or a dozen more in front of him who will get on board first.

I managed to get on safely enough, save in one instance, where some fellow dropped his valise upon my foot.

A rattling of iron-wheeled trucks rushing back and forwards from shore to boat, a furious splashing of water, a rumbling and trembling of the floating palace, as if down in its innermost depths there was a baby earthquake tied up and struggling to get loose—and slowly we moved off from the lights and noises of the pier, into the darkness of the sound.

A modern ark, with more varieties of animals in its saloons and over its decks than ever old Noah dreamed of.



## CHAPTER XI.

INCLUDES A DOG-STORY, AND ALSO EXPLAINS HOW NUMBER SIX BECAME NUMBER NINE, AND BROUGHT DIRE DISASTER TO A LOVING BRIDE AND GROOM.

Wandering about the saloon of the steamer, which was somewhat crowded, I managed to drop into a luxurious easy-chair just behind a little group of men, evidently farmers, who were getting off a quantity of "dog talk."

One of the stories I overheard was a whopper. An old fellow, who ought to have known better, told it.

"That dog of mine—he want more'n two shades off color from a pepper and salt brindle—that dog, gentlemen, was the smartest animile that ever curled a tail. He was born in Africa."

"In Africa?" repeated one of the party.

"Yes sir, in Africa, sired by General McSwingle's mastiff, and dammed by a female bull-pup, which had been stragglin' about Cape Town nigh upon a year. Well, I got him from McSwingle, when he came back home. He was great, was that dog on huntin', and of all beasts he did partic-lerly hate the lions. He fairly animosited a lion."

"Guess he took good keer to keep out'n the way though," put in another of the party.

"Did he? No, sir; but when they got to know that dog's way of fightin', them lions scattered like skeeters in a high wind. Ther want no chance for 'em."

"Why, how *did* he fight 'em?"

"Well, General McSwingle told me, and the General is a man of truth. Ef anybody else hed told me, I might hev doubted it. But I believed the General, and the dog proved it afterwards."

"Well, how did he get the best of the lions?" repeated another of the party.

"Easy enough. Every afternoon that dog went out of his own accord toward a jungle where the lions used to gather, and as sure as shootin', the General's party in an hour or two after would see the dog comin' back covered with blood, but with nary a scratch or wound onto him. And every time he came back, the General went toward the jungle and always found a dead lion. One day he folloed the dog, an' watched his motions."

"Well, he risked—the dog, not the General—about, capered around the subskirts of the jungle, ontill presently a great big he-lion

come outswingin' his tail and crouching and sneakin' along ready for a spring onto the dog. The dog didn't seem to scare worth a cuss, he only barked and bounced about aggravin' the beast. Bime by the lion got tired of foolin', and it seemed as if the dog was tired, and he squatted and the lion squatted. And the two animals wasn't more'n five or six feet apart.

"There they squatted, glaring at each other, both waggin' their tails, an' both ready fur a spring. The General expected to see the dog turn tail, git up and git. But he didn't. Presently the lion give an awful roar, and with his mouth open like the entrance to a bone yard, made a tremenjous leap for the dog. The General said, jest then he wouldn't have give a counterfeit nickel fur that pup's life. But jest as the lion leaped, the dog leaped, and then the General saw the dog's little game. Both on 'em jumped, and as quick as a streak of lightning the dog went plump into the lion's mouth, head first, and was out of sight!"

"And that ended the dog!" said one of the listeners with a grin.

"Not much. The lion shet his mouth suddenly and began to crunch, and groan, and roll over and over, and the next thing the General see was the lion flop over, clean dead."

"And the dog—the dog!" exclaimed two or three of the party.

"Well, in about two seconds the dog, covered with blood, was running back towards camp! He had gone clean through the lion and come out at the other end! That's so!"

"And that was the way he killed the lions. When I got him I had to go to New Orleans on bizness, so I took him with me. One day I went out to Bayou Fouché, and while we were strolling along nigh the shore a thunderin alligator hove in sight. The orney reptile was lyin down into the water's edge with his upper jaw thrown back, waiting till he got his tongue full of flies. The dog made for him full split, and into that alligator's mouth he went like a dose of salts down a rat-hole. The alligator fetched his jaw down with a snap, and—[here the narrator sighed, and in a subdued, mournful tone continued]—and, gentlemen, I never seed or heard of that dog again, nor the alligator either, untill five years after. Then I happened in New Orleans again and went to the Museum. There I saw a stuffed alligator

hanging from the ceiling and tacked to it a card stating this:—

## THIS ALLIGATOR

WAS KILLED IN BAYOU FOUCHE,  
by some negroes belonging to Colonel  
Rawbones.

Upon opening the Alligator, which  
was little else than skin and bones, they  
found in his stomach

## A LIVE DOG,

much emaciated, and which lived three  
years after.

"And in a glass case close by, sure enough, there was my old dog stuffed and holdin a card in his mouth on which was printed 'THIS IS THE DOG THE ALLIGATOR SWALLOWED.' You see the alligator's stomach was too tough for the dog to bite through, and he had to stay there and catch what the reptile swallowed."

That was enough dog story for me, so I left that part of the saloon.

I met 'on the after-deck, a young married couple enjoying the "moonlight upon the waters." I did not exactly meet them, I simply stood a little distance from them, and, sometimes distinctly and sometimes indistinctly, overheard their talk.

But they were not telling dog stories.

"Isn't this bee-u-uti-ful, darling?" I heard her say, "so lovely—it's like a dream, isn't it, love?"

Her darling cooed and billed, put his arm around her waist, and said, "Yes, beauty, it is magnificent."

"So sublime! how soft the moonlight, and how gently it falls upon the water, away there in the distance, kissing the quivering, shivering ripples so sweetly!"

"Glorious!"

"And the stars!"

"But really, love, this night-air will chill my darling. Come, let us go in." And they did go in, looking into each other's eyes; she leaning upon him like a sick kitten against a warm brick.

As they passed me I heard her ask, "What is the number of my, my state-room, my dear?"

"Our state-room, pet, is number nine; everything is *ours* now."

Afterwards I passed them in the saloon promenading and making an exhibit of themselves, as all just-married young green-ies do.

And thereby hangs a tale, as the monkey remarked to his back-bone.

Somewhere about eleven o'clock the happy spoony conducted his bride to "our" state-room.

Number 9.

And I heard her, as I passed them in my walk, say to him, "Now, don't be out long, darling. I shall be so lonesome."

"Don't lock the door, dear."

"How can I, darling, when you have the key in your hand?"

So he closed the door softly upon his angel, and hied him to the regions below, probably in search of a nightcap cocktail.

Meanwhile, during his absence, there came up from those regions below a hilarious party of three or four who were evidently heavily laden with a spiritual cargo, and who, through much thickness of tongue and unsteadiness of utterance, continued to bid each other "goonight, Bob, goonight Joe. hic-goo-goonight, fellows." Then followed the pump-handle business of promiscuous handshaking, and each one reeled off to his state-room in search of a sleep with a double-barreled head-ach: at the other end of it.

All disappeared save one.

He experienced a terrible difficulty in finding his key. I sat opposite number nine, upon one of the lounges, and in front of me he paused. His search was long, and his countenance had that vague expression of idiotic bewilderment peculiar to a man whose last drink has been too heavy.

Wher'n-hic-devil is-hic-the blas-hic-ted er a key-that-er a-hic-wher-hic-wher is't er a maybe-hic-door's isn't lock-hic-locked. Lem'me see, whars the hic-number-ah?" In the innermost depths of one of his pockets, where his hand had been groping, it grasped and brought forth the missing key.

He looked at the number upon it, and—to my utter amazement, he made directly for number nine.

What could it mean? He opened the door, and, entering, closed it. Meanwhile, lo! bridegroom cometh.

He came up conversing with a little fat fellow, who looked like the apotheosis of a grin. He was grinning all over. So great was his jollity that his round body and protuberant paunch shook like an Illinois ague.

They were evidently enjoying a joke of some kind.

The bridegroom had just grasped his fat friend's hand to bid him good night, when, from the interior of number nine there arose a series of terrific shrieks and screams mingled with the hoarser exclamations of a masculine voice.

"Murder! Thieves! George, where are you? Murder! murder!"

Tremendous was the uproar. George the bridegroom rushed to the state-room.

"Shet up!" roared the masculine voice within. "It's mistake—shet up!—wher's my breeches?"

"Murder! came the cry louder than ever.

From out of the state-rooms rushed the occupants, in every condition of undress—men, women, and children, waiters, chambermaids, officers of the boat, and even the deck-hands from below, joined the throng, which now crowded, regardless of personal appearance, about the door of Number 9.

George the bridegroom plunged frantically toward the door, threw it open entered.

A moment of dire suspense. The throng, breathless.

"O dear, George, are you safe?"

"My love—my life—for God's sake, speak! Ha "

Then there came the sound of a struggle. "Wretch! villain!" shouted the now infuriated George.

"Let go, I'll explain. My breeches!" came in choking utterance from the other masculine.

"Oh! help, help! He'll shoot you, George. He's a murderer, I know he is!"

The excitement outside was now at its height.

A moment passed. Then a man appeared with nothing on but his shirt, and desperately grasping one leg of a pair of pants, and looking as if he had just escaped the hangman. George held him by the throat with one hand, and with the other was belaboring him, while every third or fourth blow was accompanied by a vigorous kick.

The women ran off when they beheld the disrobed legs flying out the other spectators roared.

"Go it, shirttail!" shouted one.

"Hang on, Spooky!" bawled another.

"Part 'em, part 'em!" cried a third.

"Shameful, disgrace to the line."

"You villain!" puffed George.

"Let go me! It's a mistake," gasped the victim. And then, finding no release otherwise, he suddenly dropped his pants, and by a dextrous twist dislodged the hand from his throat, turned and grasped his assailant, and the battle waged furiously.

The bride, yelling like a Comanche squaw over a pile of fresh scalps, rushed out of the state-room and attempted a little heroic business. She forgot, in her excitement, that she was not much better clad than the intruder.

"Save him! save him!"

Just as the parties had wrestled into the middle of the cabin, the Captain appeared, and, assisted by two or three of the waiters, separated the belligerents.

Then, briefly, the cause of all the tumult was explained to the entire satisfaction of all parties.

The inebriated individual, his eyesight being considerably obfuscated by the blinding effects of "that last snifter," had looked at the 6 on his key wrong side up, which inversion of the figure converted it into a 9; consequently he bolted for the apartment occupied by the bride, who, in the interim of her liege-lord's absence, had dropped into a doze. The intruder had entered, and before she discovered the he was not her he, he had undressed.

Then began the row.

Moral: After the fifteenth drink be sure of your figures, and never try to look at anything upside down.

Peace again reigned in Warsaw. I sought my room, and next morning awoke to find the boat lying quietly at the pier, and myself once more within the corporate limits of the great metropolis.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MRS. KOKE AND I HAVE SOME TROUBLE

Arriving at the house, I found the family at breakfast, and then, for the first time, I had the satisfaction of meeting Mrs. Koke. She was a large, robust woman, with something of the vinegary expression of countenance usually found in the newspaper portraits of female lecturers of the woman's rights persuasion. Her voice was large and sharp, like herself.

Yet she spoke to me, after she learned my name from Miss Certy, quite pleasantly, but with a tinge of patronage.

As for the young ladies, they seemed glad of my return, and, with smiles upon their faces and beefsteak in their mouths, motioned me to a seat at table, between "mother" and Cappy.

As breakfast progressed, I soon discovered that Mrs. Koke regarded me with no very good-natured feeling.

I respectfully inquired in reference to the old gentleman's health, inasmuch as I did not see him at table.

"Mr. Koke's father is feeble," replied Mrs. Koke, severely. "Very feeble. Had those doctors killed him, they would have sent an unrepented soul out of the world."

"Why, ma!" cried Certy, poisoning a square inch of beef steak upon a fork.

"Now, ma! poor grandpa!" added Cappy.

"Children!" continued Mrs. Koke, in a rightfully positive tone. "I repeat it, his is a soul to be saved, you are souls to be saved and, Job, you're a soul to be saved, and a soul saved is an angel gained. Mr. Koke's father swear. As the father of Mr. Koke, I respect him; as a sinner I loathe him. He even yesterday, feeble as he is, actually said 'damn the toast.' I couldn't believe my ears, and I asked him 'What's that?' in order that if he should repeat it, I could believe my ears. And he did say it again, 'd-a-m-n that toast.' Oh, it's—it's monstrous."

Having, in all the society I had come in contact with, heard that expressive syllable of oburgation freely and invariably uttered in conversation, I did not think it necessary to mentally condemn the old gentleman. So I looked as meek as Mackerilville milk, humbly bowed my head, and silently contemplated the contents of my plate.

"Job," Mrs. Koke continued, "Job, do you ever swear?"

"Certainly not," I replied. Little did I think of the future.

"I'm glad of it. Thank Heaven, there is one male person in this household darkened by that old man's profanity who does not swear."

At the precise moment she closed her thankful expression, the Gigantic Maid handed me a cup of coffee. In taking it from her expansive hand, it slipped, the cup slid in the saucer, upset, and the boiling-hot contents inundated my hand and arm. "Damnation!" I roared, leaping to my feet.

I couldn't have kept that fearfully profane expletive down had it been to save my life.

Certy and Cappy screamed as in duty bound.

Mrs. Koke arose. Her face was terrible in its expression of wrath; as terrible as that sort of a face could be without bursting "Job!"

I continued wringing my hand.

"Job Toddle, leave this house. I wonder the roof don't fall in and crush you!"

"Ma'am," said the Gigantic Maid, "a little sweet-oil 'fore he goes, on his hand. Coffee was bilin, and it's blistered it, ma'am."

"No! no sweet-oil till he repents his awful blasphemy. Go, Job!" Mrs. Koke then, having thus passed sentence of excommunication, turned her back upon me.

"Go, Job," whispered the Gigantic Maid. "Mr. Koke 'll be home to-morrow, and then you kin come back like the prodigious son after the fat calf. Mrs. Koke isn't head of the house when he's home, for he swears like a hack-driver."

She told the truth, for I had heard my benefactor, on divers occasions, let out some bare-back oaths with an ease and facility which betokened considerable familiarity with that branch of the "Later Franklin's" philosophy.

"As for oil, go down to the kitchen. I'll do your hand up."

Holding my burned hand tightly with the other, I passed out. I noticed that Certy and her sister had recovered their normal serenity of mind, and, despite the imminent danger of being crushed by a falling roof, or of some other equally awful judgment coming suddenly upon the luckless household containing an old man who said "damn," and a young man who added the nation to it, had resumed the discussion of their beefsteak and potatoes.

As the door closed, Mrs. Koke exclaimed, "He swore and was burned. Sodom and Gomorrah blasphemed and were burned."

I cannot say, with any regard for veracity, that this breakfast was a pleasant rounding-off of my trip from Boston. But it was my luck. If there was no possible means by which I could get into trouble through my own individual stupidity or misfortune, trouble was certain to come to me in some way.

I descended to the kitchen, and a few moments after was followed by the maid.

The kitchen was a marvel of neatness and size.

And behold! there, near one of the windows, lost in the depths of an easy-chair, and the obscurity of a wheezy snooze, reclined that wretched old man, evidently unconscious of his awful depravity. Could it be possible that age and the evil associations of the past had seared his conscience against all consideration or thought of the fearful doom which awaits the man who deliberately and coolly damns his toast.

"Don't be scared, Mr. Job," said the maid, as she came in. "Mrs. Koke don't come down here onct a week. That's why she put grandpa down here."

She touched the old man with her great, broad, honest, toil-roughened hand. "Mr. Koke, Job's here."

"Beer—ha! yes," the old man started, then added, "Eh! yes, yes, but blow the froth off."

"No, no! Job's here," cried the maid, in a louder tone, pointing to me. He seemed to comprehend this time, and nodded half a dozen times.

"What's the matter, young man?" he wheezed.

"I've scalded my hand," I replied.

"Sculpin grease's good for it," he suggested. "Git three sculpins, skin 'em, clean 'em, fry the fat out, rub it in well. I recollect when I was nigh upon as young as you, I got scotched by the bustin of a cannon—" a fit of prolonged asthmatic wheezing cut his story short. Out of the wheeze he relapsed into his chronic doze.

"SWEET-OIL, Mr. Job," said the maid. "Piece of linen to wrap around it, then you won't feel the pain very long. Sit here a while till it's easier. The old man there is fallin fast, but"—here her voice sank to a whisper—"but Mrs. Koke is too hard upon him, 'specially when Mr. Koke's away. She'll be glad when he's gone, and—and—you won't say anything about it, Mr. Job—we'll be glad when she's gone. Why, only last Sunday night she made me histe up stairs to the parlor prayer meetin when she know'd it was my Billy's callin time, an' he's always reglar."

Her Billy, I discovered afterwards, was a policeman about large enough as to size to be easily tied up in her apron, and make no more show of bulk than a peck of potatoes. It has always been a mystery to me why women of Amazonian physical proportions invariably exhibit so much fondness for little men. Is it because they wish to avoid any

equality in the pitched battles they may have in matrimonial life?

I have noticed, too, that servant-girls, waiting-maids, and the other single female "help" about a house, have an especial partiality for policemen. Were it not for the kitchens and areas, where these infatuated females reign, the life of a policeman would be a dull round; no nice morsels of lunch, cups of hot coffee, or something stronger, perhaps, no sly hugging and love-making and exhilarating kisses to enliven the dreary monotony of an entire attention to their official duties. I take it, as many of the buxom maids find to their sorrow, that the larger portion of the fascinating wearers of the municipal M. P. buttons are usually on the beat, for that is a part of their duty.

My hand being properly cared for, I prepared to make my exit.

But I was not to leave. Fate, or a turn of luck (I think luck can turn more somersaults than any circus gymnast ever born), decreed that I should remain.

The voice of Mrs. Koke, from the top of the basement stairway, was heard addressing the maid.

"Come up, I want you a moment."

She obeyed, and shortly after came back. "Mr. Koke suddenly came home. She's told him what you said at table and all about it, and he's rippin, but he don't swear before her; and he wants you to come up."

"How did he know I was in the house?"

"I—I told him 'cause he asked me square out where you'd gone."

I went up the stairs, and entered the awful presence of the offended Mrs. Koke and the indignant "head of the house."

I expected to be annihilated. I wasn't. But I saw that Koke within his mighty shirt-collar and under his curled rimmed hat, which seemed to turn up higher than ever, had been in a rage; and by the expression of Mrs. Koke's countenance I also concluded that she had been compelled to yield.

"I tell you, Mrs. K., it's my business why I brought Job into the house, and not yours. When I get ready, I'll let you know, but until I say so he remains here as one of the family, d'ye hear? As for his swearing, upsetting hot coffee on his hand, or cramming your piety down his throat, or putting him out of the house, won't stop it. I'll tend to morals; you tend to his victuals and shirt-buttons. There, Mrs. K., the case is closed

and your exceptions are worthless. Ah here he is!" He turned and saw me standing near the doorhat in hand.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### I AM FORGIVEN MY "AWFUL CRIME."

Mr. Koke allowed me to undergo the infliction of a short moral lecture from his wife, and then took me with him up to his library. Then I related my success in transacting his business in Boston and gave him the records I had received.

"Now, Job, you must make it up with Mrs. K. She's queer, but she means well. Humor her, ha! Let her lecture; when she gets through, say nothing. I've settled the trouble so far, but don't have any more of it. One of these days you will know why I have taken to you. Mrs. Koke is moral, and she belongs to half a dozen soup and charity societies, as well as a whole dozen of other bothersome things. It pleases her and don't hurt me. If she asks you to repent, do it every hour in the day. If she wants you to go with her to any of her society meetings, or go out with her upon any of her soup and charity excursions, do it; you'll learn something and she'll like you all the better. But never laugh. Next to swearing, she abominates laughing. That's why Certy and Capy do all their heavy laughing when she's out. I do an extra amount of swearing before I come home to make up for its being tabooed in her presence. So now you understand how the cat jumps; act accordingly. After a week or two I'll have matters arranged for you to begin in my office, ha!"

To this long speech I listened attentively. And in reply told him I would try and obey his instructions.

After some further conversation relating to affairs of no moment in connection with this narrative, and bidding me remain at home and nurse my scalded hand the remainder of the day, he started for his office. A little while after the library door opened.

"Job!"

I locked up, and Mrs. Koke stood before me.

"Ma'am," I answered, very meekly.

"Job, at the earnest intercession of Mr. Koke, I have forgiven you for your awful sin. Does your hand pain you much?"

"Not a great deal; it is easier, thank you."

"Job, would you like to accompany me this afternoon with two other members of our Sub-Relief and Personal Inspection Committee, upon our regular visiting round?"

As this was meant as a command, I at once expressed myself pleased at the opportunity. She received my apparent eagerness to comply very graciously.

"Come to the sitting-room in half an hour. A very distinguished honorary member, the Reverend Titus A. Peep, will go with us. Job, remember, you must repent in time," and so saying, she disappeared.

She is queer, thought I. But with my patron's advice fresh in my mind, I resolved to try and please her, and so make my home pleasant.

When the half-hour had elapsed, I descended to the sitting-room, where I found myself in the presence of the Sub-Relief Committee and the distinguished Honorary Member thereof.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### THE CHARITY EXPEDITION OF THE REV. TITUS A. PEEP AND THE SUB-RELIEF COMMITTEE OF THE PERSONAL INSPECTION AND RELIEF SOCIETY.

The Reverend Titus A. Peep took me by the hand, and his hand felt something like the side of a catfish, smooth and cool. He was rather tall, angular, and stiff in appearance. He reminded me of the Delsarte system of elocution. He looked as if he had originally been built up in separate sections, and had been put together in a hurry unfinished. A high narrow forehead, covered with a sparse crop of tan-colored hair, cold gray eyes, overhung by tan-colored, irregular brows, and divided by a thin nose, beneath which yawned a mouth not at all up to the Walker standard of beauty—these features, inclosed in a broken hedge of tan-colored whiskers, completed the portrait as I recollect him. He was dressed in black; a standing collar of the garrote pattern and a white necktie.

Beside him stood Mrs. Koke and the two other members, whom she mentioned as my dear sisters, Mrs. Spout, and Mrs. Blat. These two ladies were of uncertain age, very fash-



ionably clad, and seemed to imagine themselves very high and mighty and important. But they were severely serious.

"Job, you will now accompany us."

"Job," said the Reverend Titus A. Peep, as if he were about beginning a sermon. "Job, a name of patience, of penitence, full of biles, sick and sore, ah me! My son, had Job lived in these days of abomination, trial, tribulation, and, I may say, other vileness too complex for present mention, his patience would have—possibly—in other words—worn out. Job, go with us this day and learn the ways of sin which—which, I may say, are too intricate for enumeration at this time."

Each of the members glanced meekly at Mr. Peep, and then uttered a sigh.

"Let us go forth upon our mission of mercy. Sister Koke, have you the necessary vouchers in your satchel?"

She answered with a sort of Chinese mandarin inclination of the head.

"Come, then, let us move to our appointed goal, and feed the naked and clothe the hungry, or *vice versa*."

And forth they went in solemn silence, I bringing up the rear and wondering how they intended feeding the hungry, considering that the committee had nothing edible with them.

Over to the East side of the city they proceeded—past the Tombs and into Baxter street.

There they paused in front of a policy-shop, in the door of which stood a huge negro with a ten-cent stamp in one hand, and a slip of paper covered with figures in the other.

All about them, on the pavement in the street, and up the narrow alley-ways between the buildings—everywhere the reeking filth and decaying garbage heaps; the puddles of slimy, dirty water, the ragged frowzy-headed children; the full-grown wrecks of humanity bleared and besotted with rum, or with faces pinched and shrunken from want and hunger, wandering past or huddling together in little groups. Surely, surely here was work for the Rev Titus A. Peep and his committee, or for a hundred committees.

Mr Peep took from his pocket a small memorandum-book.

"Ah! Case Number One to-day is Thomas Brown and family, basement, rear building, No. — Baxter street. That must be near here. Bless us! Where are the numbers?"

The negro, who had overheard Mr. Peep, stepped forward, and, making a half bow,

said, "Boss, scuse me, Mister Brown lives jes up de alley heah, down in de cellar. 'Spect you'll find 'im in bad way, kase his wife aint 'spected to live, and two of his young 'uns dun gone now."

"Thank you—ah."

We found our way into the basement, through the noisome alley; through a small court-yard, filthier and more sickening in stench than the street, down a flight of wooden steps partly broken, and then through an apology for a door hung upon leather hinges, one of the panels knocked out, and swinging to and fro.

There on a bundle rather than a pallet of rags which possibly had once been blankets or bedding, with the dim light from the doorway resting like a pall upon her sunken, hunger-sharpened features, lay the dying wife of Case Number One, otherwise Thomas Brown. Upon an upturned herring-box beside her, sat, or rather couched, over her the husband, looking himself, in the gloom, like the grim incarnation of Famine gloating over its victim.

An excellent opportunity for the charity of the Sub-Relief Committee and of the Rev. Titus A. Peep.

No furniture, only a barrel with a rough board over it, upon which were two or three cracked plates, a cup or two, and that inevitable companion of poverty, a bottle. No fire, only a bit of sheet-iron in one corner of the cellar blackened with the charred remains of a few bits of kindling.

The Rev. Titus A. Peep, flanked on either side by the other eminent members of the Sub-Relief, advanced toward the "Case Number One" very much as if they were walking into a den of wolves.

"Dear Lord," murmured Mr Peep to Mrs. Koke, "isn't this horrible? But the way of the transgressor is hard, and poverty is the child of sin." Then to Brown, who scarcely looked up, "Ahem! my good man, ah! you are Thomas Brown, are you not?"

The man slowly arose and confronted Mr. Peep, haggard, ragged, a stony glare in his sunken eyes, and with a nervous twitching of the hands, as if he were preparing to spring upon the party like a wild beast driven at bay.

"Well, 'sposin' 'tis, what's up now?"

"We have come as Visiting Members of the Personal Inspection and Relief Society for the Amelioration of the Condition of the

Home Poor. We have marked your case as Number One."

"Well!" interrupted the man, "what of it?"

"Is your wife very ill?" meekly inquired Mrs. Blat, her deliberate utterances dropping like icicles from a pump-spout.

"Ill? no, she's wuss. She's got past bein' ill; she's sick."

"I wonder," mildly suggested Mrs Koke, "if she thinks of repentance?"

"My man, Mr Brown, do you not know you are killing your wife by living in such an abode as this—the same amount of money—"

"Money, that's a good on! The likes of you talk to the likes of me about money! Look about you, no fire, no vittels, no doctor—"

"There's the Dispensary," interrupted Mrs Peep somewhat nervously, beneath the man's glowering look.

A groan from the woman upon the pallet, and her husband turned toward her.

"What d'ye want, Bet, poor girl? More pain?"

"For the love of God, Tom," she muttered, her utterance broken by spasms of pain, "these people, who are they? Are they going to take me away to—the hospital? Oh, no, no, don't!"

"What profanity!" whispered Mrs. Koke.

"Mr Brown," said Mr. Peep, "we have come to aid you; to lift you out of your degradation, to provide you with food and raiment. 'I'm so hungry, Tom,' said the woman, not heeding Mr. Peep's remark. 'I've been asleep, and dreamed I was away off there at the old home, eating Christmas dinner, and I thought we had turkey and such good things.'"

"Be quiet, Bet—don't fret—we'll both of us step out one of these days, and then, down there we won't dream of things we can't get."

"It's singular that poor people are always banking after the luxuries of life which they know are above their station," whispered Mrs. Spout.

"They don't seem to think of their souls," added Mrs. Koke.

"Now, then—what's to be done—what do you want?" said the man.

"First, let me entreat you to join us in a short season of prayer; it will give you new strength, and then we'll see what can

be done beside," said Mr. Peep, lifting up his hands.

"Prayer!" exclaimed the irreverent man, with a hideous chuckle. "Prayer—baked or boiled? I 'spose you'll give a slice of bread with it, won't you? Now, see here! I know your little game! There's bin others here of your sort. They left a lot of tracts, and sang a psalm, and palavered half an hour while my two babies—God help me—while my two babies were layin there dyin of the same disease their mother's got now. When they went away they left me a twenty-five-cent stamp—blast them! Why don't you give your prayers to the rich, who can enjoy 'em on full stomachs, and give food to the poor, and help 'em to get work, and make the rascally landlords act decent to the poor cusses who are obliged to live in sich holes as this? Bet wants vittels and medicine, and I want what I can't get because I'm ragged and starving—work!"

Mr. Peep dropped his hands appalled.

Mrs. Spout and Mrs. Blat rolled up their eyes like ducks in a thunder-shower, in holy horror, while Mrs. Koke seemed to be undergoing a species of mental collapse.

"My dear sisters," exclaimed Mr. Peep, we had better leave this poor, benighted, mistaken man a little longer, in that further suffering may bring him to a consciousness of his sin! He has refused prayer, which is food for the soul. What is food for the soul is nutriment for the body." Mr. Peep then, looking back toward the door, probably to make sure of a safe exit in case the obdurate heathen made any belligerent demonstrations, addressed himself to the man, who had sullenly resumed his seat upon the box: "I pity you—but I shall leave you; but, like bread cast upon the waters, I will return after many days."

"Well soaked," growled the man.

"What depravity!" uttered the ladies in chorus *sotto voce*.

"Meanwhile here is an order for two dollars' worth of groceries and coal."

"Ha!" the man reached forward and clutched it. "Ha! that's the prayer for me. God bless you! But when—when shall I get these—this—eh?"

"Well, you must take the order first to the chairman of the Relief Committee tomorrow, between two and four o'clock—he will sign it; then take it up to our general office in Forty-ninth street next day, and

the secretary will countersign it; on the following Saturday, take it to our financial bureau, and the cashier will certify it, and on the succeeding Monday our distributing agent will take the order and place upon it the name of the grocery at which you can at once procure the amount."

Uttering an awful imprecation, the man tore the order into pieces, and savagely threw them upon the floor.

"That's for your order and you—all of you! That another game. You are worse than the last party as came here. He left me a Bible, which I shoved up the spout for ten pence, and got a loaf of bread and bit of cheese with it. Get out of here!"

"Pray—"

"Shut up!" thundered the enraged Brown.

"Tell me," quired Mrs. Blat, stepping forward, "tell me, Mr. Brown, what's the matter with your wife; perhaps I can send her something at once to relieve her!"

There was a softness in Mrs. Blat's tone which had its effect upon him.

"She—why, ma'am, if you must know before you go—she's, she's got the same as my two little ones died of."

"And what's that—fever?"

"No; look down close to her face."

All three of the committee obeyed—they *did* look down.

"Now you see! She's got the SMALL-POX!"

"Ladies, let's go; this is horrible!"

I don't think I ever beheld a more sudden and rapid disappearance from any place than Mr. Titus A. Peep and his respected admirers made at that precise time.

Before the three women could get to the top of the basement steps, Mr. Peep had reached the street pavement and had succeeded in making a stumble over a small boy, and falling full length, head first, into a pile of garbage and filth at the mouth of the alley.

The boy howled; others of the wretched juvenile denizens of the court and *gamins* of the street gathered about shouting; the mother of the upset boy rushed out and began pouring a Niagara torrent of oaths and imprecations upon the devoted Peep.

Finally, after a policeman had, by the merest accident, happened along, the honorary member of the Sub-Relief and his party were relieved from the imminent danger threatened them by the mob, and slowly

and sadly made their way—without a thought of me—to the nearest hack-stand, secured a carriage, and were driven to the Koke mansion. I walked home.

The next day Dr. Lunk was sent for, and general vaccination was instituted, under the superintendence of the Rev. Titus A. Peep. Mr. Koke laughed, the gigantic maid was horrified, and the two Misses Koke indulged in a series of highly interesting but not very alarming series of hysterical faints.

"Remember," said Mrs. Koke to me, as Dr. Lunk took hold of my arm, "Job—if it pains you pray for strength, but don't say damn it—that's blasphemy!"

"I'll bet he thinks it," muttered Koke, giving me a wink.

Dr. Lunk performed his task with the alacrity of a workman who knows his wages is sure and his job a yearly one.

## CHAPTER XV.

I TAKE PART IN A MASS-MEETING OF THE "OUTS," AND AM KICKED AGAIN.

"WORKINGMEN AROUSE!!

Strike For Your Altars and Fires!

STRIKE FOR THE GREEN GRAVES OF YOUR SIRS!

DOWN WITH THE BLOATED ARISTOCRATS! COME OUT IN YOUR STRENGTH

OR

THE COUNTRY IS LOST,

And silken-lined, gold-mounted chariots of the despotic nepotist and his minions fattened upon the taxes wrung from the sweat of your brows, will crush you beneath their wheels.

BEWARE! BEWARE!! BEWARE OF THE INS! COME WITH BANNER, BRAND, AND BOW!! No More Tyrannical Taxation! No More Infernal Revenue!

There will be a Grand Mass Meeting of the Outs at

COOPER INSTITUTE,

On Wednesday evening next, at 8 o'clock, to ratify the nomination of the Outs' Convention, on which occasion

FIRE-WORKS,

BLOWHARD'S Full Brass Band, a Quartet Club, and other attractions, will fire the patriotic souls of a people whose noblest instincts of National Pride have been flattened to the earth by the dastardly and villainous machinations of the Ins, who are now de-

stroying the interests of the Constitution, and whose infamy must be wiped out!

Among the distinguished statesmen, heroes, and patriots, who have been invited and are expected to address the meeting are Hon. Morris Greedy, General Swashbuckle, Hon. Paddy O'Finnegau (the eminent Irish patriot, who will play a solo on Erin's harp), the Rev. Weathercock Blatherskite, Hon. Brass Knucks, Hon. Three-Decker Shyster, and a hundred others.

Thesplendid decorations have been borrowed for the occasion by Messrs. Putemup & Knockemdown, the well-known auctioneers. COME ONE! COME ALL!! Our cause is just, and win we must, while in you we trust!! Victory is ours! One more blow!

Posters of this sort, and of all colors, plastered everywhere over dead-walls, brick-piles, board-fences, on wagons drawn through the streets by worn-out huckster horses, gave token that the periodical roar of an election was at hand.

Having but little copying to do, in consequence of Mr. Koke, shirt collar, curled rimmed hat, and all, being involved in political business, I had ample leisure to look about me and add to my stock of knowledge and experience the events of the great electioneering battle then in progress between the Ins and the Outs.

They acted as if they were the inmates of a couple of rival lunatic asylums, let loose to refresh themselves with a free fight. And they "fit" accordingly.

The contest, at the time I refer to, had reached its climax.

I was not an In, nor did I care a straw about the Outs. Mr. Koke was with the Ins—for he was the appointed legal adviser of an eminent In who had, by a remarkable agility in always being on the winning side, grown gray in office.

The Ins had the most money, but the Outs made the greatest amount of noise. They always do.

The Ins claimed all the respectability—the Outs went for "the hard-handed sons of toil."

The Ins had half a dozen or more papers which, every morning, sent the Outs to the towermost depths of political perdition, and proved conclusively to the entire satisfaction of their readers that all the morality, religion, honesty, and purity in the whole country belonged exclusively to the Ins, "whose aims were lofty, whose integrity was incor-

ruptible, and who soared to nobler ends than the paltry greed of power or the execrable lust for petty peculation."

Orators in the pulpit deserted their Biblical text and administered to their admiring congregations long-worded harangues on the demoniac and debasing character of the wretched Outs. But the followers of the meek and lowly did not pray for the misguided Outs—not a bit of it. They were got paid for that.

All over the State the battle was waged. Eyes were blacked, noses flattened, ears operated upon by the dental surgery of fierce champions of either party; heads were punched, and, if profanity may be considered an unpardonable sin, there was a sufficient amount of general swearing, heavy "cussin," and promiscuous anathematizing done to have consigned both parties, horse, foot, and dragoons, voters, candidates, and stump-speakers, to Satan's dominions forevermore, if Satan would have allowed the average peace and quiet of his well-warmed hotel to be disturbed by an influx of such customers as permanent lodgers.

I made my way at an early hour to "Cooper Institute," in order, as a spectator, to understand more perfectly things political. The cohorts of the Outs were gathered in their might, and every soul of them seemed to have specially prepared himself for a protracted and desperate season of howling, whistling, and enthusiastic elbowing into some special locality where it was an utter impossibility for him to get without creating a general row. One after another then filed into the open space in front of the hall; ward deputations of patriots—each deputation being a conglomerate mixture of pot-house bums, shrieking tatterdemalions, such as even Falstaff would have incontinently expelled from his army; boys who ought to have been put in their little beds, if they had any; and a small sprinkling of working mechanics and laborers, who, before the night was over, would dissolve in tanglefoot whisky, and other extras, the money which should have brought comfort, clothes, and victuals to their families.

"Hooror!"

"Fall in, there—now, then—three cheers for Swashbuckle—hip—hip—hooror—tiger—a-a-a-h!"

"What you stickin' that lantern in my face for—can't you hold it up—say?"

"Histe him, Billy. Hustle him—he's an In, d— him!"

Then an indiscriminate rub-a-dub—boom, bang—crash! yelling, pushing, swearing, swinging of lanterns, firing of Roman candles, and fizzing of blue and red lights—and the unterrified Outs, after an hour of desperate endeavor, gradually oozed into the great Hall, and took up, as nearly as such a boisterous crowd could, their appointed positions. Seeing no other chance, I became a rampant Out, and crowded in with them.

Packed like sardines, writhing and squirming like eels crowded in a basket—the great mass filled the hall, so that, despite ventilation, the process of individual perspiration threatened, in a little while, to resolve every mother's son of them into grease-spots on else run their flesh off and leave them sitting in their bones like the grinning skeletons in an Egyptian mausoleum.

The band sweltered and blowed through the preliminary and usual overtures. Having Hailed Columbia, Spangled the Starry Banner, and Doodled the Yankee, their efforts being to blow and drum the crowd into silence, they took a closing sweat by Hailing the Chief, as the chairman, a consumptive, bald-headed fellow, advanced upon the platform from among a score of other bald-headed Outs, and said something which couldn't, by any possibility, be heard beyond the reach of his arm.

Chairmen and presidents of mass-meetings invariably have thick tongues and thin voices.

This one made a few up-and-down automatic gestures with his right arm, as if he were a Jerseyman catching mosquitoes, then opened the usual sheet of paper, and commenced reading something.

"Louder! louder!"

"Silence! Down in front!"

"Three cheers for Paddy O'Finnegan!"

"Silence! Shet up!"

"Look out for pickpockets!"

Amid all this uproar the pantomimic old bald-head kept on with his private and confidential reading—occasionally cheered by a clapping of hands from the bald-heads behind him.

Finally he folded up the inevitable "resolutions," bowed, removed his eye-glasses, wiped his narrow apology for a forehead—extending the wipe to the extensive clearing above—turned, nodded to somebody—said

something—introduced the somebody, and then retired.

"Three cheers for Swashbuckel!" roared the crowd. The Outs knew their favorite leader. And he knew them.

He bowed with dignity—grinned condescendingly—looked to the right and the left—until at last, when his friends had shouted and tigered, and catcalled themselves hoarse, he began.

He was stout, red-faced, had a loud voice, a military mustache, and the strut and swagger of a newly-elected militia officer. Swashbuckel was a warrior, statesman, and a great Out.

"Fel-low Outs" (with a wave of his hand) "Beneath these starry emblems" (pointing to the banners) "and in the presence of this ma-ges-tic bird of freedom" (pointing to a wooden eagle elevated in front, with one of its wings broken off, and its tail in a frightfully dilapidated condition), "we have met to ratify the nomination of our late convention!"

"Fellow Outs, I feel that a crisis is coming!"

"Let her come!" bawled an enthusiastic Out.

"Silence!" roared a dozen voices.

"I feel," continued Swashbuckel, "that we all have a great stake—"

"Sirloin or chuck?" bawled an inebriated butcher, who was immediately silenced by some one smashing his hat over his eyes.

"That we all have a great stake in the coming canvass—"

"Sew it up," yelled a little sailmaker near the platform.

"Silence!"

"The Ins, headed by the bloated despot who sits enthroned in the Capitol, surrounded by the servile minions who are aiding him in crushing out the last vestiges of our freedom, who are scattering to the winds the tattered and patched constitution of our common country, must be hurled from power, or we are lost—and then where will we be?"

"Advertised in the *Herald*—forty cents a line"—interrupted a shrill voice.

"Put him out!" roared the crowd.

"Fellow Outs, I will be brief. There are many eminent orators who are to address you this evening, and who are more eloquent than I—"

"No! no! Go on!"

"Let 'em rip!"

"Hoorer for Swashy!"

"I had no intention of making a speech to-night—"

"What 'er yer tryin' it for, then?" bawled a voice in a distant part of the hall.

"But I could not come here and keep silent—"

"No, nor nobody else," roared another voice.

"In view of the awful calamity—"

"Where is it, Swashy?"

This was too much, so the crowd shouted:

"Put that In out."

At this precise point a missile, evidently hurled by an infamous In, landed immediately between the oculars of the great Swashbuckel, and that missile, when it "lit" afterwards upon the floor, was discovered by the bald-headed committee to be the loose remains of a defunct cat, odorous with the usual result of decomposition.

Swashbuckel was indignant—disgusted. He smiled, he bowed—he bowed again, as if the reception of such an evidence of the deep and abiding respect of the audience was the crowning glory of his life.

The band struck up, "Come to me, my Darling."

But the uproar increased. And another compliment came, in another shape. This time it was the anatomical remains of a sometime deceased rat, which, being flung somewhat forcibly, landed in the face of the respected chairman.

"Hurrah for the Outs!"

"Order! order!"

"Three cheers for Swashbuckel!"

Somebody yelled fire.

Another party—evidently anxious to contribute a small mite to the general fund of a particular arrow—instantaneously pitched into a little short fat fellow, near the main north entrance, whereupon two policemen, being thoroughly awakened from their usual state of torpid contemplation of the salary due them on the first of the coming month, incontinently grabbed an old cripple and a very small dry-goods clerk, and with the usual celerity of men conscious of doing their duty, and their whole duty, collared the helpless innocents and at once dragged them off to the station.

Of course the vigilant and efficient officials did not return to their post of duty until long after the hall was closed, and the trouble of further interference with the patriotic voters present was unnecessary.

In vain the band played—blowed and

banged and whanged on their winged and stringed instruments; in vain the calls to order; in vain the efforts of the assembled Outs to put down the uproar of the Ins, who were mingled in with the crowd like pepper and salt in a Bleecker-street oyster-stew.

I tried to make my exit, but at one of the doors toward which I was forced by the crowd, I found two members of the Fat Men's Club wedged in, and suffering untold torture, between a party outside trying to get in and a party inside trying to get out. Both being of about equal strength and the eminent fat contributors to the size of the meeting being only human, and, therefore, unable to exercise any great degree of supernatural power in extricating themselves, the battle of push and shove on both sides, for some minutes, remained doubtful. Relief came.

Somebody—he must have been a man of more than usual power—with his flexors and extensors, gave me a propulsive movement through the application of at least a number nine, double-soled, copper-toed boot. It forced me into the breach, and coming with the sudden and tremendous force of a small-sized catapult against them, a dislodgment was effected.

I found myself carried out like a chip upon a wave. Indistinctly I heard the music of the band, but distinctly I did hear about as large an amount of first-class profanity as could reasonably have been expected even from the daily *Trombone*.

My feet were crushed, trodden upon as if they were worms; my hat was mashed, both of my rear pockets slit open and a bunch of fire-crackers exploded within an inch of my face.

The unnecessary objurgations and anathemas which were heaped upon me by individuals who thus forced themselves upon my notice and thereby claimed a personal recognition of their presence, were innumerable. Had I been a small stream with twenty-five obstructions to my desire for peaceably running to my natural destination, I could not have so many serious interruptions in the shape of extensive dams as barred my exit from the hall.

I broke loose at last, and once more breathed upon the sidewalk the free and wholesome atmosphere which a benign Providence vouchsafes to every one of its creatures, whether of high or low degree.

I oozed out. I was wilted. I felt like a man who is compelled to reject the nour-

ishment of a last light cock-tail at the close of a long night's spree—exhausted. I was sore physically—mentally disgusted.

There was another great crowd into which I was pushed. I was too much weakened to refuse being pushed into it by the surging crowd behind me. Therefore it was that I unwillingly, and most certainly against my will, beheld that which, I trust, I may never see again—a dying man; a human being but a moment before full of health and hope, of vigorous life, and with all the world before him; now lying prone and helpless, limp and nerveless.

"Stand back there, give him air! Don crowd up here!"

"Where's the police?"

"Send for a doctor!"

"Take off his necktie! there now, jerk off his shirt—loosen him!"

"Who shot him?"

"Ain't shot, stabbed in the side!"

"Shot too—I seed it—plugged 'im with a bullet first and then jabbed a knife into him—cussed mean!"

Thus the crowd. Thus in similar words, one and another, until at last a venturesome policeman came, and after due inquiry, finding that the safety of his valuable person from damage and the integrity of his uniform were free from stain, advanced to the front and gruffly and with a you-ought-to-have-sent-for-me before air, inquired, "What's up, boys?"

He got his answer. The man had been shot. He had been stabbed. He had been beaten with a cart-pin. He had been punched and kicked. All that ordinary humanity could endure without an instantaneous death he had received, if the statement of a score of the bystanders could be accepted as the truth. The policeman stooped over him, gave the palid, half-expressionless face a look not by any means of commiseration, then arose, and, giving his waist-belt a professional jerk, inquired, "Anybody know him, eh?"

One spoke. A little stunted specimen of humanity, who trembled as he replied to the query of the officer.

"Yes, I—I know 'im, lives over in Pell street. Don't you know 'im?"

Certainly not. How could anybody know him in that crowd? Was there ever a crowd gathered around a fallen-unfortunate who, collectively, did or wanted to know the object of their curiosity?

"He's goin' fast."

"Come, now, clear the road here; don't crowd up so! Stand back, I say!" and, with his baton, the policeman made a weak and ineffectual feint of forcing back the throng.

Yes, stand back! All of human origin, stand back, in the presence of that power from whom earth receives its return of dust—Death.

Stand back! Room for the victim! room for all who are passing from this world into that other world, which presses so closely upon this, and yet is so far away! Stand back! For neither policemen, surgeons, nor all the kindly hopes or the fondest prayers of the nearest and dearest of friends, can avail now!

Yet, what matters it? He is only a Rough that is thus dying. Only a Rough, nothing more.

And so, soon, he was taken up, and, through the instigation of some one or two friends who came at last, was borne away, dying, to his home—to that place he called a home, in Pell street.

And escaping the tender mercies of the hospital, he was returned to the place which, in the early morning, he had left full of life.

I followed the stretcher upon which he was borne to the miserable tumble-down tenement, on the upper floor of which he belonged.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HOW THE ROUGH WAS FINISHED IN PELL ST.

As the men carrying the stretcher upon which, moaning and writhing, the victim of political humbug lay, covered with an old blanket taken from a furniture cart, the crowd followed as if they were following some grand raree-show got up for their especial delectation.

There is something especially attractive in the sight of human misery and suffering. Let a man drop to the ground by carelessly stepping upon a banana-rind or orange-peel and twist his foot, and there will in less time than it took him to fall be a couple of score of earnest inquiries into "What's the matter?" Curiosity conquers all other feeling then. The desire, morbid as it may be, to know all the particulars, to get a

glimpse of the unfortunate's face, and the wild scrambling and pushing and elbowing to force themselves into close proximity to the sufferer, that they may not miss hearing his slightest groan, or lose sight of the contortions of his features, is as unconquerable in a street-crowd as death itself.

The more terrible or disgusting the spectacle, the more eager everybody to see it and know all about it, and carry the information each to his own especial neighborhood and scatter it as the farmer does hay-seed all over the lot.

On through the busy streets surged the crowd, the places of those dropping off filled by others, until in the dark, narrow lane, known as Pell street, in its filthiest, darkest place, the bearers paused. A few moments of rest, and the victim was borne up a narrow, creaking flight of stairs, the party being heralded by two or three youths, one of whom held a kerosene-lamp, and in his haste flourished it so recklessly that, just as he arrived at the top step, the glass chimney fell with a crash, and was instantly succeeded by a sudden glare of light, a sharp, explosive snap, and the youth plunged rather than tumbled down the stairs, all ablaze with the flaming contents of the burst lamp.

Forgetting everything but his own especial misery, yelling as if he were chased by fiends, he dashed down against the party with the stretcher coming up. His impetus was too great for resistance. The frightened bearers, to save themselves, dropped the poor helpless mass of bruised humanity which they had carried; a cry of fire was raised below in the passage by the crowd, who didn't know what was the matter, and those in the street took it up, "Fire! fire! fire!"

Meanwhile, the mother of the wounded man, who, sobbing and crying, with two or three others of the female tenants of the house, was awaiting the coming-up of the bearers, seeing the accident, set up a terrific howling and shrieking. The victim, the dying Rough, was at last gathered up, after being trodden upon, and his face so trampled in the darkness, at the foot of the stairs, that it looked like a pulp of blood and hair.

Yet he lived.

"Take him to the 'ospital!" suggested one.

"Git a ambulance!"

"Where's the doctor?"

From out of the gloom of the street, wedging through the mass of lookers on, a short,

stout man pushed his way into the darkness of the passage, now only made the more visible by the flickering light of a couple of sputtering tallow candles which some one had procured.

"Here's the doctor!"

"Now, then, stand back here!"

The short, stout man, after straightening the limbs of the limp form, made a cursory examination of the pulse, laid his hand over the region of the heart, then, with a handkerchief, wiped away a little of the clotted blood from the face, and then arose.

"Policeman here—oh, ah yes, beg pardon: didn't see you."

The policeman grinned and nodded in acceptance of the doctor's apology. The policeman should have apologized for standing there where he was wanted, instead of being, according to the time-honored and invariable custom of policemen, just as far as possible from an attendance to his duty.

"Sooner the better," added the doctor. "Bad case—shot certainly, clubbed probably—stamped on, I think; stabbed, I should judge—bad case—take him to the station—ambulance, eh?"

"All right—now, then—"

At this moment some one outside yelled, "Here's the ambulance!"

"Clear the passage!" The policeman waved his baton, swore a little, and succeeded in partially clearing the way.

Meantime the mother of the mangled Rough had rushed down the stairs, and, kneeling beside the now insensible form of her son, beloved by her as fondly as if he had all his life been the glory rather than the shame and disgrace of her wretched life, crying pitiously, old and withered and poverty-stricken, clung to his form, calling upon him by endearing names which perhaps she had called him in the days of his boyhood, trying to brush back the clotted, smearing mass of bruised flesh and tangled hair from his forehead, kissing his swollen lips, from which oozed the life-blood; she clung to him with the tenacity of despair. Oh! how much better the world would be, how much less of crime and misery and remorse there would be to darken and make terrible the records of its history, if all men, of whatsoever degree, remembered the great love their mothers have borne for them from the cradle to the grave; the sacrifices their love has made, and is ever ready to make, and all the tenderness and pray-



ers and forgiveness with which that all-absorbing love has followed them through peril, error, and sin, wherever over the broad earth they may have wandered!

Could this Rough, whose associations perhaps for years had been with the vilest outcasts of his quarter of the city, and who had paused at nothing in the way of crime to follow the evil examples which in his lowly origin had surrounded him, have ever realized the extent of his mother's love,—he, its only object,—and so felt how devoted it was, I do not think he would have been lying there, a spectacle for the jeering crowd.

"Come now, old 'ooman; this won't do. Come, git up." Thus the policeman, endeavoring to lift her up and loosen her hands from around the body.

"Histe her up. He'll die afore they git 'im to the hospital."

Presently the policeman, not roughly, but as tenderly as possible, forced her up and back from her position.

She gave one wild shriek, and fell in a dead faint into the arms of one of the bystanders, who incontinently, as if fearful of catching some contagious disease, stepped aside, and let her drop helpless to the ground.

At the same instant the Rough was lifted by the policeman, the ambulance attendant, and one or two others, and placed in the vehicle at the door, and driven away, the horses being whipped into a break-neck speed, which is the usual method; the jolting and bouncing the wounded inmate receives being apt to relieve him of what little life there may be in him at the start before he gets to the hospital, thereby saving the eminent surgeons of that institution any further trouble, the city expense, and the necessity of unloading the "stiff" before it gets to the Morgue.

I read, the next morning, in one of the papers, that the Rough had died on the way to the hospital, that his body had been removed to the Morgue, and that an inquest was in progress to ascertain, if possible, *who* had given him his death-blow.

I thought if the sapient jury *did* by any occult process discover *who* gave the death-blow to a man who, from the time of receiving his first wound, had been tramped on by a miscellaneous crowd, had been carried from one place to another twenty blocks away, had then been thrown down-stairs, then carted off, and jolted and thumped and

bounced about in an ambulance, they would, should the perpetrators all be arrested, crowd that old swamp mausoleum, the Tombs, with such a mixed collection of the odds and ends of street, political, and official life as it never before contained.

But those old hardened criminals, "some person or persons unknown," were found by the jury, after due deliberation, to be the guilty parties.

I have since learned that pretty much all the murders, assassinations, as well as the pleasant little mutual bar-room duels resulting in death, throughout the metropolis, have, according to the coroner's juries, been committed by those desperate villains, "persons Unknown."

If either "person or persons unknown" should ever be caught and, thus relieve the juries of their standing joke, it is possible the number of murders, in the future, would be materially diminished. I suggest the offer of a large reward for the "Unknown." Very likely a coroner's jurymen might be caught, or, perhaps, even a greater official.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE BORES OF AN EDITORIAL LIFE.

One day Mr. Koke sent me with a message to the editor of a weekly paper, with the express injunction to "wait for an answer."

The office was down in that limbo of the press—that region which is within sight of, and serves as a background for that mammoth chunk of bronze elevated upon a pedestal, which, through that invariable kindness which characterizes the critics of the time towards obscure artists who sculpt for a precarious existence, is permitted to be recognized as an effigy of Franklin the First.

After some difficulty, I found the office of the weekly aforesaid in a dingy, muddy, narrow street—the street being no wider than the sidewalk should have been, and the sidewalk equally as impassable, nearly all day, as the street; piles of brick, heaps of refuse dirt, the collections of weeks and months of neglect; paper parcels containing all manner of filth thrown from the upper windows of the old time-scarred buildings which darkened the thoroughfare; loads of merchandise, barrels of dry colors, the dust of which made the air heavy; push-

carts, horse-carts, and paper-vans backed up on either side; mud an inch deep here, and mud puddles a foot deep there; while through all, and occupying whatever spare space the dirt-heaps and brick-piles did not fill, traversed a track upon which never less than three or four horse-cars were blocked up; the drivers swearing at cartmen and porters; a solitary ancient policeman bawling and giving all sorts of orders which nobody understood, and in return receiving the most awful anathemas from the wrangling Jehus; printer's boys (devils, they used to be called, until the devil was proved by our later Evangelical exponents to be a most respectable and orderly, not to say moral, personage) swaggering about or rushing along with mysterious brown-paper parcels, containing consumptive slices of pie and all manner of cups and bottles filled with pot-house coffee, lager-beer, or something stronger—all these made up the components of this lane—this entrance to the Hades of journalists, print and paper dealers, of presses rumbling and jarring and shaking all day and all night, and of all the miseries and nuisances which are a part and parcel of that mighty power which builds up nations, makes and destroys at will reputation and parties; which exalts to fame quacks and empirics, gives to the world its daily or weekly history, and is at all times particularly anxious to receive advertisements on the most reasonable terms—puff direct or puff oblique included.

Historic region!—historic evermore in the annals of American journalism; historic ever, in having had in yonder basement, now devoted to other business, the abiding-place of "Butter-cake Dick" and of Bennett's *Herald*, before, out on the Thomas-street murder and its then wonderful report of Helen Jewett and her liaison with Robinson, it arose by slow degrees to its present palatial corner and influence; historic, too, in its having been the rendezvous of countless literary Bohemians, who scribbled out their fretful hour, strutted their brief career, and then, like the poor—some of them very poor—players who were their boon companions in adversity, passed away to make room for the new race.

Well, I found the office up four or five flights of demoralized stairs, worn rough and splintered with the dragging up and down of "forms," and the walls black and grimy with ink and chalk and pencil scratchings of all

sorts, proving beyond question the truth of the old adage, "that art of some kind, like light and darkness, is everywhere."

I entered first the "publication office." There were a short, wide counter, with a pile of paper, and a slouchy, wild-looking boy lying upon it; a high desk, in front of which, upon a high stool, sat a sharp-looking individual, with a pen behind his ear and a cigar-stump in his mouth; a square table, so spotted and smeared with ink that its original color was entirely obliterated; a small iron safe covered with Patent-office reports, and, I imagine, containing within it nothing of any greater value and on the walls, cobwebbed, dusty, and yellow, two or three maps, an engraving of the Heenan and Sayres fight overlapping one of the Last Supper, and one or two old maps of somewhere.

At the counter I inquired for the editor.

The slouchy boy moved a little, and said, "Hey?"

The sharp-looking individual removed the cigar-stump from his mouth, looked at it, then at me, and, turning about upon his stool, scratched a match, tried to ignite the soggy remains, failed, threw the match down, replaced the cigar between his lips, and then mildly inquired:

"What's wantin'?"

"Is the editor in?" I repeated.

"What for?" was the rejoinder.

"I have a message for him, to which I am to have an answer."

"What is it? Tickets to the opera?"

"No, sir; message from Mr. Koke, sir," said I.

"If it's tickets; I'll take 'em, needn't see the editor for that; he's busy."

I found out afterward that tickets left with the sharp individual never reached the editorial room, and that this custom is observed very faithfully in all publication offices.

"It is," I repeated, "a message from Mr. Koke—lawyer Koke?"

"Oh! yes—ah—I'll see—never mind—Johnny!" The boy came slowly up like a ship coming out of a fog or a sick man waking out of a dream. "Yes, sir."

"Johnny, show him up to the editorial rooms."

"Yes sir."

Piloted by Johnny, I ascended one more flight of stairs, and, after receiving an admonition from my guide not to "git through

that 'are broken step," or to "tread onto that are hatch-door," I entered the "sanctum sanctorum."

And there sat the editor and his assistant. And it was the dirtiest, closest, grimmest apartment I had ever seen.

It was *not* lighted by two windows, which opening into a dark area, were almost opaque with the accumulated dust and dirt of years. The floor was covered or defiled by an old, worn-out matting, stained and filled with tobacco-juice and stains. The walls were of a kin to those in the publication office.

A big, broad-shouldered man, with a bushy head, and with a worn expression on his countenance and a still more worn expression to his coat, was sitting at a desk near one of the rayless windows.

"The editor—Mr. Slapdash?" I queried, holding out the missive.

"No, sir," quoth the solitary occupant, looking up with a dazed air, "just gone out to lunch. Sit down and wait, if it's important and personal."

"Thank you," I answered, and forthwith dropped into a chair, which was old enough and shabby enough to have been one of the first ever manufactured by the Boss of the Ring in his apprenticeship days.

So I waited. And I found, before I left the place, that an editor's life was not exactly one long and glorified succession of free passes to the theatre, free drinks, and complimentary dinners. I discovered that he had work to do—some of it being work for other people, who, thinking it no work at all, never even thanked him for it, even though it brought to them money and position.

I found that the editor of a paper was supposed by the general public to be a sort of perpetually unfinished artesian well to be continuously bored by everybody—a pack-horse to bear patiently an immense load of other people's wants, complaints, and responsibilities; and that for him to say "no" to any proposition from any one of his friends was equivalent to his being at once pronounced either an ass or an ungrateful brute.

By and by Mr. Slapdash, the editor, came in. He brought in with him an odor of rum-punch and a bundle of papers. The odor pervaded the dingy office, and the papers were thrown upon the desk. The sub-editor seemed to be somewhat enlivened by the inhalation of the odor, and looked as though he would like to step out and odorize

his own mouth in the same manner. But he didn't. He only drew in a long, long breath as the editor leaned over the desk near him, and, merely remarking, "This young man has a note from Mr. Koke," plunged into his wrestle with ink and paper.

I took a good survey of this wonderful Slapdash.

He was large and heavily-built; a heavy black beard and a mustache, which hung thick and heavy over his mouth. He had a dark, bilious countenance, rather wild brown eyes, and black curly hair. He had a swagger to his gait and that air, and bearing which is the inevitable accompaniment of an unlimited amount of egotism. I discovered, before I left, that he was loud and blatant, and blew his personal trumpet with a vigor and skill which ought to have made it heard from Maine to Georgia. He was a poet. He could cover more foolscap in a given time with the lucubrations of his gigantic intellect than any other writer in town. He seemed to be about thirty-five or forty years of age. I handed him the note. He opened it as I have sometimes seen Jersey men open a clam without a knife—by jerking it apart. He glanced over it, gave me a look, and then asked, "Can you wait awhile? I'll have to send over to the City Hall before I answer it."

Of course I could wait.

While I waited, divers of his friends came in. Every one of them brought a new odor with him; and, with the entrance of each additional odor, the sub-editor drew a long breath, and went at his work immediately afterward with renewed energy.

These friends came in separately, each one remaining, however, until another entered. "How are you, Slapdash? Anything new?" was the first salutation, and the last was invariably, "Come, Slapdash—come—let's have something—won't take a minute."

But Slapdash resisted these temptations. The sub-editor, pegging away at his task, looked up wistfully, but he wasn't asked. He seemed to be quite resigned, however, with this social neglect.

Directly an undersized man came in—a fellow whose profile looked like the outline of a parrot, and whose voice was thick and mushy, as if the roof of his mouth had been burned, and he didn't dare touch it with his tongue. He was dressed in the latest style, and his breath had an odor upon it.

"Ah—is this Mr. Slapdash," he inquired with a supercilious tone, as if to say? "Off with your hats; I'm here now!"

"I am Mr. Slapdash," said the bilious poet-journalist.

"Ah—well, I had an idea that—ah, you wanted some of my matter—a few sketches, or something of that sort. You really need something of the sort, you see. My name is—*is* Cheekit—Bibulus Cheekit."

"Indeed. Yes, sir," replied Slapdash, sitting at his desk and hoisting one leg over its edge. "Well, we always want good matter, and pay for it—suitable matter, I mean. I write considerable of that myself."

"Well, sir, I am prepared to furnish just what you want. I am a journalist—further comment is useless. I am now contributing a series of sketches to *The Fudgit*, which have made that paper—yes, sir, made it."

"*The Fudgit*—um—well—"

"You know me now, sir," and Mr. Cheekit looked out of his fishy eyes as if he expected to see us all incontinently commit harkari in the insanity of our delight at being honored by the presence of so distinguished an author as the great Cheekit. But we didn't.

"I'll bring you in a two-column sketch. My price is ten dollars a column." This was uttered loftily.

"Bring it in," said Mr. Slapdash, "and if we accept it, we'll pay that price—if it's a fair sample."

"Did I understand you to say if you accept it?"

Mr. Slapdash nodded.

"Sir, I'm above that. Beyond that, sir, altogether. There must be no *if* when I bring in matter. What I write must be published, sir. I don't sell my sketches by sample, sir. *The Fudgit* takes anything I write. They never even read it, sir; they know it'll suit. I am the intimate associate of the greatest living poet, artist, and novelist—Baggs—and Baggs worships me, drinks with me, and I feel it an honor to pay for his drinks, sir. He admires me, sir, and we both belong to the Tickle-me-and-I'll tickle-you Club, sir. We are always together. I refer you, sir, to him. He knows my talent."

Mr. Slapdash was an egotist himself; but this embryo scribbler fairly took his breath away.

He was bearded in his own den. "What

*nom de plume* do you write under, Mr. Cheekit?"

"None, sir, none, sir. My matter speaks for itself, without the prestige of a name. But I see, sir, you don't know your business. You have lost a brilliant. Your paper cannot succeed, sir; good day, sir!"

"Be very happy to see you at any time, sir but we never buy a pig in a poke. I; never take root-beer when I can get whisky good day, sir!"

#### CHAPTER XVII. (CONTINUED).

Cheekit walked out, or rather strutted out; and, after he had disappeared, Mr. Slapdash's brown eyes twinkled merrily, and, stroking his glossy beard with his hand, he exclaimed, "That's bore Number One, today."

No. Number Two. That inventor of reversible sheet-iron shirt-collars has been here, and he brought a friend with him who wants us to insert, in our editorial columns, a notice of his patent double-ender shoe-pegs, warranted to outlast the shoes!"

When that ass comes here again, tell him "Nothing goes in for less than fifty cents a line."

Entered just then a tall, angular individual, flat-bodied, round-shouldered, with a sort of hippety-hop step, and who was arrayed in a suit of black, rather the worse for wear, a silk hat of doubtful fashion, and with a greasy gloss of age to it, and a pair of stiff new twenty-shilling peg-shoes, which squeaked fearfully. They were evidently one size too small, or else his feet were one size too large, for every time he put a foot down or lifted a foot up, a spasm of pain contorted his thin bony face, and made him look as if he had a diarrhea cramp in his stomach, with nowhere to go for relief.

But this thin man in the tight shoes had other trouble. He wanted to see the editor. His voice belied the weakness of his general appearance. It was strong and fierce, albeit a little kindly, as if it had been slightly gin-soaked.

"Sir! are you the editor of this journal?" holding out the paper in question.

"I believe I am."

"Are you the author of this abominable slander, this outrageous, villainous, dastardly attack upon an innocent man? Yes, sir, a man, sir, who, despite adverse circumstances,



and I may say of unparalleled persecution—Are you the author of this article, sir?"

He made a forward step, the shoes squeaked, the face underwent a screw of agony, and, giving his grease-glossed hat an indignant pitch over his scanty eyebrows, he folded his arms, or tried to, and awaited an answer.

Slapdash took the paper and read the offensive article aloud. Thus it ran:—

"A ~~se~~ individual, evidently one of the Jeremy Diddler family, who gave his name as A. Pickup, has been operating quite extensively among the up-town boarding-houses, engaging board, remaining a week, and then suddenly disappearing with such loose valuables belonging to other people as chanced within his reach. He was arrested, and will now, doubtless, have steady board for a few months up the river."

"Well," said Slapdash, "what of it?"

"Sir!" exclaimed the proprietor of the squeaking shoes, "sir, what of it? is no satisfaction. I am A. Pickup! See, I look like Jeremy Diddler!"

Mr. Slapdash answered, "This is only a mere mention of a fact!"

"Fact, sir! A slander, sir! I use mild terms, sir. A vile slander, sir! I look like a man who 'operates' in boarding-houses, sir! I look like a man with other peoples' loose valuables in my pocket. You must retract this sir, or—or take the consequences, sir!" as he swelled out with this terrible threat, and in endeavouring to give a crushing effect to his words by assuming the Delsarte ramrod straight-up-and-down position, one of the shoes must have given him an extra pinch, for his face contracted into one of the most diabolical expressions of agony ever seen outside of Bellevue Hospital.

At this moment Slapdash gently laid his hand upon a heavy lignum-vitæ rule, which lay upon the desk.

Mr. Pickup noticed, in the midst of his agony, this hostile movement.

"If you are A. Pickup, and this article is not true, and you consider yourself slandered, you can have satisfaction, sir—you can get your legal remedy."

"It is—it is infamous! Let me explain—d—n these shoes—fact is, it's the most extraordinary concatenation of adverse circumstantial evidence, combined with that natural animosity boarding-housekeepers always entertain toward impoverished genius struggling for—for, to use a vulgarism, wrestling for, its hash. Godelmithey! how

these shoes pinch! Made to order, sir, but the cussed bootmaker must have put 'em upon somebody else's last. As I was remarking, sir, I was sojourning at Mrs. Knucklebone's boarding establishment, supposing it to be first-class, and its mistress to be a lady. I passed there a week. Such feeble board, sir—a swindle. Boot-leg coffee—fearful, fearful. I—I—well, at the end of the week, I stated to Mrs. Knucklebone that she must wait a day or two for the paltry pittance she charged for cold victuals, or I would have to leave. That flint-hearted apotheosis of second-hand meanness, sir, absolutely ordered me to depart at once. Fortunately my baggage was not there. I left. After I left, there was a dress-coat missing, also a few toilet articles. I was accused of—of stealing—larceny, sir. I, A. Pickup, sir, nabbed for priggish. I, a lineal descendant of the Pickups of Europe!"

Mr. Slapdash listened to this yarn patiently, and then, releasing the ferrule from his hand, arose and intimated his desire for a termination of the interview.

"Well, sir, shall I be compelled—" here Pickup advanced his foot, and again the shoe squeaked, and his whole anatomy seemed to writhe with agony—"to seek legal satisfaction?"

"As you please."

He said not another word, but with a frown of ineffable scorn, and a glance which was intended to wither Slapdash, but didn't, departed, writhed out with his hippety-hop and squeak, greased hat, and wrath.

As he squeaked and limped out, another visitor came in with a rushing, bustling air. "Ha, Slap, hard at it, I see. By the way, gentleman just left here, felt down-stairs, heard him cursing his shoes. Oh, Slap! I want a favor—won't trouble you—fact is, want to take my wife and her two sisters to theatre to-night; don't care about myself, you know, but like to please women folks. I want you to send up and get me pass for three, four, make it four; do it, can't you?"

Slapdash was sorry, but really he had had so many passes during the week and—

"You have? Never mind, next week, then. Can't you get 'em ahead, for this day week, eh?"

Slapdash said he'd see about it.

"Do, do Slap. Take a drink, eh? Come along."

But Slapdash didn't come along. He had

had his breath sufficiently odorized already. "Some other time."

The Sub-Editor looked as if he could odorize his esophagus then and there without a particle of trouble. Not being invited, he went off into another intermittent fit of scribbling, this time, however, rather languidly.

The ticket-beggar, after one more and a somewhat fainter attempt to inveigle Slapdash into a fluidical revivification of his internal organs, departed as hurriedly as he had entered.

"That chap 'll go to every office in turn, spend half a day's time and half a dozen dollars in treating, in order to get dead-head tickets, when he could buy seats for one-fourth the amount, and lose no time. By George! what infernal fools some people are! Well, if there were no fools, men of sense would be at an awful discount, and blood-and-thunder literature useless." Then he turned toward his sub-editor: "Begin that 'Busted Boot; or, the Blasted Buccaneer of Bean-top Bridge' in next week's paper. It'll sell."

A short, bow-legged boy waddled in, holding a dilapidated cap in one hand and a letter in the other.

"Stold to gav this to theditor soon's comin, sir."

Mr. Slapdash took the note, opened it, hastily read it, resumed his seat, and then said, "All right; no answer."

"Please write it down, cos he told me to bring an answer."

"Well, you've got it; tell him there's no answer. Now start."

The boy stared a moment, fumbled with his cap, turned it inside out, then re-turned it, put one foot on top of the other, took it off, gave his head a slow scratch, implying doubt, and finally blurted out, "I can't recollect that; write it down, he—"

"No answer," said the editor, savagely.

"Don't bother me! Go!"

This *did* start him. He waddled his retreat from the awful presence, muttering, "I'll forget all that—know I will." "No answer, go, bother me, with a—blast my buttons if I'll try."

Then Slapdash turned to me, "Here, take this to Mr. Koke." As he said this, he enclosed the note brought by the boy in an envelope, sealed it, and, writing the name of Mr. Koke on the back, passed it into my keeping.

"Tell Mr. Koke I'll see him in a day or two," and then, very pleasantly smiling, he added, "Now, good day, and never become an editor."

I went home, thinking, on the way, that if I should ever get into the unfortunate business I should take especial pains to have an office in some place where daylight and cleanliness were visible to the naked eye at least once in every twenty-four hours.

In conveying that sealed envelope to Mr. Koke, I little dreamed how intimately its contents were connected with my destiny in after-life.

So it is, often, that we are the bearers of our own fate when we think we are only the messengers of that of our neighbors.

On my way homeward I invested five-pence in two apples. They were ripe and large, and I began to enjoy my purchase at once.

Alas! One was rotten from skin to core; the other was the home of half a dozen worms.

If anybody else had bought those apples, they would have been good.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

BEING SOLEMN AND SHORT, INVOLVING A FUNERAL, AND THE INCIDENTS APPERTAINING THEREUNTO.

There was great tribulation, and an opening and closing and slamming of doors in the house of Mr. Koke, one night. There was the sound of feet hurrying up and down stairs, and all this unusual confusion and noise aroused me; and presently there comes a knock at the door of the little bedroom I occupied.

"Mr. Job, git up. Suthins happened." The voice was that of the amazonian maid. "Be quick!"

I dressed, and opened the door.

"What's the matter?" I queried.

"He won't—he won't damn' any more toast, poor man! He's gone where toast is not and where the weary cease from swearing, and the wicked git no tracts?"

"Who? What d'ye mean?" I repeated.

"Old Grandpa Koke is—is gone. Heard a noise in his room—went in. Gone, sir. Dead as King David, Mr. Job. He died happy. There was a smile on his face and a dollar-bill in his hand. Come down; Mr.

Koke wants you to go out."

I followed her down-stairs, and into the room where death had been before me.

Mr. Koke was standing by the bed, looking very sad, and without his vast shirt-collar. Dr. Lunk was there, his face wearing a sort of puckered seriousness, as if he had just swallowed a dose of aloes and ipsecac, and was mentally troubled which way the potion would work.

"There's no hope, then, Doctor?" I heard Mr. Koke say.

"No!" replied Dr. Lunk; "clear case of senile decay. Even I couldn't have prevented his demise, had I been here an hour before it occurred. Science can't fight senility."

Through the windows the ashen gray of the morning began to appear. The old man who lay there, forever still and motionless, was greeting, now, another day—that eternal day in the great world beyond this.

Mr. Lunk began putting on his kids.

Mr. Koke beckoned me toward him, and whispered to me "Job!"

Mr. Lunk spoke up. "Get Pall."

Mr. Koke nodded. "Job, go to — avenue, number —, and tell Mr. Pall, the undertaker, to—come here at once."

I soon found Mr. Pall's place. There was a dim, ghostly light in the rear of the store, which was lined on either side with glass cases containing rows of sample coffins, whose polished screws reflected a dull gleam as if they were the wide-open eyes of dead men staring at me as I peered in.

I rang the night-bell at the side-door. Presently the door opened, and a carrot-headed youth came in view. I delivered my message.

"Is he stiff?" said the boy, with a grin.

"Who?" I asked.

"Why, the corpse; cos, if he is, there aint no hurry."

I retorted sharply, but the youth didn't seem to mind it. "All right," he added. "I'll knock the boss up, and he'll be right along."

In about an hour the "Boss" appeared at Mr. Koke's. The "Boss," or, in more elegant phrase, the undertaker, was a thin man, with thin mutton-chop whiskers, thin lips, a thin nose, a pyramidal forehead, small eyes, scanty brows, a sharp chin, long neck, and was arrayed in a suit of black. To me he looked like a dilapidated Mephistopheles.

His attendants, two in number, were ordinary-looking individuals, who, as

far as muscular strength was concerned, seemed as eminently capable of laying out live people as dead ones.

"Sad news this, Mr. Koke," said Mr. Pall, handkerchief in hand, and drawing a fine bead upon his face. "Ah, was he ill very long?" Mr. Koke said "No!" and Mr. Pall continued: "Where are the remains of the dear old gentleman. Ah! I remember him well. He was so bright, so—ahem! so vigorous; I really took a great liking to him!"

Considering that, in fact, Mr. Pall had never seen the old man, and that this was the first intimation he had had that such a being ever existed, it was rather cool.

"Come with me," said Mr. Koke.

Followed by two assistants and myself, they ascended to the room and entered, not before, however, one of the assistants, who brought up the rear, had tripped his foot upon the stairway and barely escaped rolling to the bottom.

"Jim, straighten up," said his companion, "don't drop slugs here."

"I say, Bill," whispered the other, "after this yerc old stiff there's that one over there in Thompson street to be iced, and them two in Oliver street. Who's the boss goin' to send down there? Ain't none of them furst class s' far's I kin see."

Mr. Koke soon went away, and left the undertaker and his assistants alone with their task.

Meanwhile there were great preparations below stairs among the female members of Mr. Koke's family to meet the coming exigencies of well-dressed woe, and to present a proper darkness of grief in the transit from the house to the cemetery, where the poor old man who had so often and so recklessly damned his toast was to be mingled with dust.

Mrs. Koke rehearsed with great fervor a system of hysteric sobbing, and sopped her eyes into an alarming condition of inflammation in the endeavor to wipe away an imaginary deluge of tears.

The two young ladies held long consultations as to the precise amount of grief-stricken over-skirts and anguished crape they should invest their persons in for the occasion.

The Reverend Titus A. Peep had been sent for, and that unctuous model of missionary piety put in an early appearance, with his countenance drawn out to the regulation funeral-sermon length, and his voice toned

down to that peculiar melancholy pitch supposed to be absolutely necessary in the delivery of all obituary remarks of whatsoever degree.

Mrs. Koke having had in the loss of her sainted mother and her brother some considerable experience in the business of mourning, and the various details of etiquette attending the conduct of a lady in her social position on such a solemn occasion, felt herself equal to the emergency.

The moment the Reverend Titus A. Peep appeared in the little back parlor, she struck position number one, indicative of uncontrollable grief, by graphically throwing herself upon the sofa and covering her face with a white handkerchief with a black border. Whereupon Mr. Peep raised his pious hand, stepped forward, and dolefully ejaculated:—

"Death and sin are everywhere—ah!"

"How can I stand this?" sobbed Mrs. Koke.

"Sin can be wiped away by repentance, Sister Koke, but death cannot—ah! We must—ah—take it as it comes. Let us not grieve alone. Let us mourn together. It is not good for mourners to be alone—ah! Then, sister, let us go into the sackcloth and ashes of sorrow in blessed communion together—ah!"

Mrs. Koke sobbed more violently, as if she intended to dispose of her whole stock before going into the proposed partnership of agony with her Christian brother, Mr. Peep.

Mr. Peep seated himself beside her upon the sofa, folded his hands meekly across his breast, glanced out of the corner of his eye at Mrs. Koke, and thus resumed:

"Where are the other beloved parts of this grief-stricken household—ah? Would it not be well even now, at this opportune moment, to call them together and refresh their desolated minds with a short and earnest season of prayer?"

The gigantic maid being duly summoned endeavored to collect the "parts." But this pious effort resulted in failure. The two Misses Koke didn't feel like being refreshed with any kind of a season of prayer. Mr. Koke had gone out. One of the undertaker's assistants up-stairs rather grimly hinted that at "such an early hour in the morning a short season of rare beef-steak would fit his stomach much better than a parson's chin-music."

Finally, the only part borne into the presence of Mr. Peep was myself. I went like a lamb to the slaughter.

Meanwhile the undertaker's assistants had fulfilled a portion of their sad offices up stairs and had departed, leaving him in waiting to receive instructions from Mr. Koke. When that gentleman came in the undertaker met him with a lugubrious bow and a funereal smile.

"Mr. Koke, what—what style of a shell—beg your pardon—case would you like? Or do you leave that to my taste? Rosewood, satin-lined, double-fluted, with extra oval glass is the style now. Not many carriages, I suppose? Just enough for family. Not fashionable to have long funerals."

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Koke, "do as you please; as you please."

"Yes, sir; yes, sir," said the delighted undertaker.

"When will you have the funeral?"

"The day after to-morrow?"

"Precisely, sir, and, about how many carriages?"

"Six."

"Plumes?"

"No sir."

"Ah, oh, yes, certainly, make it plain and impressive, of course. I assure you I will do the best I can to make the services impressive, very impressive. It is a melancholy duty we owe to—by the way, the plate silver, of course, date, name, birth, eh?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Koke, turning away, not over well-pleased at the pertinacity of the undertaker, "I leave it in your hands."

"Thank you, sir,—I—I—"

Mr. Koke disappeared through the door near which he was standing, and Mr. Pall there upon immediately seized his hat, adjusted it with great care upon his thin head, and smiling softly departed mentally summing up the extreme amount to which, by the utmost possible stretch of charges upon each and every article he could extend the bill.

Mr. Pall regarded Death as his drummer, a cheap one, too, for the King of Terrors never asked for his percentage on the custom he brought in.

"There's Koke," he thought, as he proceeded slowly homeward to enjoy his rather late breakfast—"There's Koke looks a little shakey. He'd dress well in a patent case; look fine; well off, too; inconsolable widow; wouldn't mind expense either."

These women don't know *my* business, ha! Let me see—Koke's father now—Koke hereafter, then perhaps Mrs. Koke or some of the friends of the family will be snuffed out. Of course Mr. Pall will do the honors. Oh certainly, especially as Dr. Lunk is my friend and there family physician. By the way, Lunk sent me that Fifth-avenue job—big thing too—I'll send him over his commission on it this very day. It'll encourage him to hand in custom." And so, over and over again musing upon the profits of having Death and Dr. Lunk as his best friends, he went in to his morning repast, and enjoyed his beef-steak with unusual gusto.

In the afternoon the remains were placed in the front parlor, in one of Mr. Pall's most elaborate "cases," and there for a few brief hours lay all that was mortal of the poor old man whose life-path had ended where all our life-paths must end—in oblivion.

When all was ready, Mr. Pall requested Mr. Koke and the family to "look in" and see. Pall wanted them to be satisfied, in the midst of their grief, that he had solemnly done his duty.

So while they came in, Mr. Pall went out, his modesty being of that peculiar nature that he preferred being out of hearing.

Mrs. Koke, leaning upon the arm of the Reverend Mr. Peep (who had just been assuaging a portion of his unutterable grief with tea and toast), followed by the Misses Koke and Mr. Koke, came in.

The sobbing was at its height; Mr. Koke simply glanced a moment at the calm, rigid face of his dead father, and passed out, soon followed by his two daughters, leaving his wife and Mr. Peep alone together.

Mr. Peep bent over the casket.

"Such is life—such is death," he said in his most lugubrious tone. "My sister—ah. This is a lesson we should all profit by—ah. Wide is the road and many there are who travel therein—ah."

Mr. Peep, leaning over the casket, looking into the dead face and uttering these words, brought his remarks to a close.

Without observing it, Mrs. Koke had slightly touched, with her foot, one of the trestles or stools upon which the casket rested, and this gave a sudden motion to the head of the corpse.

Mr. Peep was not a courageous man by any means. His faith in himself outside of his mechanical business of peddling moral-

ity and piety was not great. Like all of his ilk of humbugs, he was a coward at heart. Now, as he leaned over the casket and saw this movement of the dead man's head, he didn't pause to consider how it occurred. He saw the head move, and instantly to his debilitated mental vision came the idea that the defunct was about to rise up, through some miraculous interposition of Providence, and "go for" him particularly. As he started back, Mrs. Koke uttered a sudden shriek. This capped the climax. Mr. Peep waited for nothing further. He made an instantaneous bolt for the door, his hair standing out like limp quills on the frightful porcupines. Mrs. Koke, noting his fright, incontinently set up a fierce succession of shrieks which alarmed the entire household force—the gigantic maid bringing up the rear.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Peep rushed out of the door and plunged head first, like a ram butting at a gate-post, into the corporate anatomy of undertaker Pall, who, alarmed by the screams of Mrs. Koke, was upon the point of entering the parlor.

When an irresistible body comes in contact with an immovable body, the result is generally estimated in total as a complete smash-up, with not many fragments to gather up. Now, as Mr. Peep was not altogether an irresistible body, and as Mr. Pall was quite the reverse of an immovable body, the sudden collision of these two distinguished beings only resulted in the immediate doubling-up of Mr. Pall and a full-length prostration of the Reverend Titus A. Peep.

"D—n it!" roared Pall, clapping his hands over his wafery stomach.

"Lord bless me!" cried Peep, recovering with difficulty the necessary equipoise which would enable him to assume a perpendicular. Mr. Pall's face looked as contracted as a poor man's funeral. At best his head was so thin that, while a rear view presented only a scanty foreground of hair with a large perspective of ears, the front revealed little else than a big instalment of chin and a pair of eyes which had every appearance of having originally been wedged apart by the outgrowth between them of the bony

excrecence, which he occasionally blew out under the insane impression that it was a nose.

Mr. Peep was simply bewildered. He looked as if he had accidentally swallowed one of his own sermons, and was in doubt as to whether it would act as an emetic or a physic.

"My good sir," said Pall, "what's the trouble?"

"Oh—Lord help us—I—I—the body moved!" tremblingly uttered Mr. Peep.

"What!" said Pall, for the instant forgetting his usual assumption of chronic grief, "What body moved?"

"In t—there—I—I—seen the—he—head turn—it's a dispensation—a—a—"

"Bah! That body move!" Pall began to get indignant. "No, sir, it didn't. It couldn't. When I stretch out a stiff in a case it can't move. No stiff sir, like that—"

"Stiff—what's that? I referred to—to—the remains of—of—"

"Remains is stiff, corpse is stiff, so's a body, and that's what I mean by stiff, and a stiff, as is put into such a case with such trimmings, can't move. It's unnatural, and what's unnatural can't be, and what can't be won't happen. I've been in this bizness twenty years, and I never had one of my customers move. No, sir."

Meanwhile, the screams of Mrs. Koke and the gigantic maid had somewhat subsided, and the undertaker appearing in the room, soon quieted them and reduced their agony to a series of hysteric sobs, gradually fading into a quiet red-eyed intermittent snuffle.

Mr. Pall merely glanced at the face of the dead, then smiled thinly, shook his head, winked to himself, and after assuring Mrs. Koke that all was right, retired in good order, and shortly after left the house, mentally hoping that some day or other he might have the melancholy satisfaction of "screwing down and planting" the remains of a certain missionary minister, whose obituary should bear the name of Rev. Titus A. Peep.

"And after I got hold of him, I'd like to catch him moving, that's all!"

Next day came all sorts of people to "see the dear good man once more." There came all the neighbors, and the neighbors' friends, and their friends, and the outside acquaintances of their friends' relatives, and divers and sundry distant relatives of some

Koke or other who had years ago been laid away, and who brought their friends.

Next to having a front seat at a first-class wedding, with a sight of all the entire ceremony, the bride's dress, the bridegroom's hair, and a taste of the reception lunch, nothing affords so much nerve-quivering enjoyment to the average female mind as either going to a funeral or visiting the house and viewing the body when it is all ready for inspection.

So all that day they came. In pairs, in quartettes, in triplets, and singly. Old women, whose noses and chins nearly met, fraternally hooking it over their cavernous mouths; middle-aged females, full of doleful gabble and a large assortment of the newest patterns of consolation, one dose of which, administered in another place, would make the hearer think of suicide; young women, who tried hard to look solemn and pull their visages into a glum mournful condition, which was belied by the bright sparkle of their eyes and the furtive inspection they gave every other feminine visitor's style of dress.

On they came, were ushered into the parlor, sat awhile, rested, walked up, white handkerchiefs in their hands, to the case, glanced at the placid rigid features of the departed, pumped up perhaps some apocryphal tears (one or two old women nearly strangled themselves in a vain endeavor to get up a few sobs), then passed out to make room for others.

That old man never knew how many friends he made by dying.

"What was the matter with him?" inquires one.

"Dr. Lunk says it was servility."

"Senility," correctively added her companion—"but isn't he handsomely laid out? Wonder who's his undertaker?"

"Mr. Pall. Oh, isn't he a love of an undertaker, so sad and polite, and so ready. Dear me, I must be going. He looks as if he died easy."

"Yes, mum, very ezy," puts in an old female landmark, who looked like the ghost of a number one salt mackerel, "monstrous ezy, towards the last he scarcely breathed. Mrs. Muggins told me, that Mrs. Snafflebit told her, that she heard Dr. Lunk say, when he came to see her baby, which had a sudden spell of dumb colic, which he said if he hadn't got there jest then might have ended in an epicure of the something or

other, which I disremember, that this poor old man died so ezy that he didn't even need a grain of calomel to help him out. And Dr. Junk ought to know, for he's had so many of his best patients die, it's given him a lot of experience. His patients allays go off ezy. Ah, me! suz! sich is death!"

"Very old, wasn't he?"

"Near eighty."

"I heard he was 'most a hundred. He fit in the war of eighteen-twelve, as Mr. Ske-witt says, and he knowd him, and saw the medal General T'ppecanoe gave him at the battle of the Kegs."

"He looked young for his age. D'ye see that Mrs. Stepup over there in the corner? Goodness, what a slazy silk her skirt is! How sad I feel for poor Mrs. Koke. I do believe Mary Ann, there's a loose hair down my back; it itches awfully. Come, let's get out, there comes that old backbiting Mrs. Tunglasher; I do detest her; she's always making remarks about everybody."

There were a few of the Rev. Titus A. Peep's flock, who merely called, left their condolences and an odor of musk rose—musk rose being Mr. Peep's favorite scent—and went their way.

To revive your popularity in a neighborhood and become the object of universal interest thereabout; to have the front door of your residence under constant scrutiny from behind the window blinds over the way; to be bored into a condition of temporary imbecility, it is only necessary to improvise the preliminaries of a funeral, or hang half a yard of crape upon the door-knob. There is nothing equal to it, except the red flag of the auctioneer drooping from your parlor window.

And the most astonishing thing about it is that so many of your friends and acquaintances never know you, and seem to utterly ignore you on all possible occasions while you are without the luxury of a funeral in your house, and that, as soon as you do secure that first-class attraction, they come, like shad in the spring-time, with a rush.

It must be that most of them are anxious for a free ride *behind* the hearse to the cemetery, and not *in* it, as you might devoutly wish when you come to settle the vehicular bill. Besides, it affords all these second-hand mourners at least one chance in their lives to be driven to the very curb of their own doorways in a carriage.

There are some old and middle-aged

gossips, peripatetic grief pedlars, who watch the obituary columns of the daily papers as eagerly as the broker does the stock quotations.

Towards night the going in and coming out reduced itself to a few straggling sight-seers. Then evening came over the house, and, in the closed parlor the Night and Death were alone together.

Night and Solitude, fit companions for their guest, the eternal Night of Death. And who of all of us, and of the best of us, and of the wisest and profoundest of us, shall say that the other world, so far as the consciousness of the light of any kind of mental life is concerned, is not an endless night?

All the wisdom and learning we can gather, like the wealth we may accumulate, leave us at the touch of Death. When some one returns to claim his wealth, his knowledge of the great hereafter, whether of eternal life or eternal oblivion, be that knowledge of ever so small a degree, will be passing that of a dozen Solomons, and of as little use in reforming mankind into earthly saints.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### I AM KICKED INTO GOOD LUCK AT LAST.

The funeral was over. Mr. Peep had relieved himself of a long and doleful discourse, in which he elaborated, from firstly far into tenthly, on the virtues of the deceased; showing to his own satisfaction, if not to anybody else's, why he was born into this world of sin; why he lived in this vale of tears; why he became old, and why he died and made no sign, and how he must have gone straightway into Abraham's bosom. The Rev. gentleman made no allusion to the sinful manner in which the old man had upon several occasions damned his toast—but while the sermon was being delivered Mrs. Koke thought of it, and bewailed mentally that she had not succeeded in making him repent of such enormities.

Mr. Peep exhausted two hours in this funeral oratory, and when he at last brought it to a close, and had launched off into a long and lugubrious prayer, which seemed like eternity, to have no end, the sparse assemblage began heartily to hope that some temporary bronchial affection would suddenly intervene and bring his share of the ceremonies to a premature wind-up.

But it didn't, and he went through it to his heart's content.

Then, when he sat down, and wiped his pious brow with a folded handkerchief, Mr. Pall began where he had left off. The casket was closed and removed to the hearse; one by one the carriages were filled and the procession moved off to its appointed destination—Greenwood.

In a few days the house of Mr. Koke resumed its accustomed method, and the household affairs went on as if death had never made a call. Mr. Koke relapsed into a higher and stiffer shirt-collar, and the only other change made in his personal appearance was in his hat. He purchased a new one, built exactly after the fashion of his old one, but the crown was enveloped in the usual badge of mourning.

A week or two had elapsed, when one morning, at breakfast, Mr. Koke asked me to wait in the "library" for him, as he wished to "have a talk" with me upon something of importance.

I waited accordingly.

Presently he came up. There was a serious expression resting upon his face, as serious as was possible for a face possessing the peculiar characteristics of his.

"Job," said he, "sit down there, ha! in that chair. Ah, now, then, I've got something to say to you, my boy. Do you remember—of course you do, it is only old fellows like me who forget—you recollect your old guardian in Jersey, who said you come of a kick, don't you?"

"Yes, and he was good to me. Why, have you heard of him lately?"

"Hear of him? Never lost sight of him. Well, he said you come of a kick. He was right in one way and in another he wasn't. Now what d'ye think of me, eh?"

"What can I think of you—who have done so much for me—I have had nothing but kindness at your hands?"

"Um! you think so now. Well, these two questions answered, now for the third. Haven't you any sort of idea who your parents were, or—where they are, or how you came to lose sight of them? How long was it between the time of your going about like a vagabond and you're being picked up by old man Toddle?"

I hesitated. For the life of me I could not conceive what he was, to use his own phrase, "driving at." Was there to be an end of my present prospects, and was I to be

kicked out again into the world, a homeless, friendless vagrant, or to be sent back to my old protector Toddle? But my mental cogitations were no answer to his question. I glanced at his face and saw in it a look which reassured me. So I replied: "It was many years ago, six years ago, I think, since I was kicked into that blacksmith shop by that mule. I remember that for two or three years before that I had been wandering from place to place, a part of the time being passed in the poorhouse, where they put me. Before that I remember I had a home. It was a good one as far as my mother had to do with it. I remember her and my father. My father was always quarreling with her, and whenever they had a row it generally ended by her cuffing my ears and in him giving me a kick. My earliest recollection of my mother's care is of a spanking followed by an extra dose of Godfrey's cordial: and my latest remembrance of my father is the worst kicking I ever received in my life. That mule's kick was a luxury compared to it."

"Ah!"—Mr Koke exclaimed. And then he indulged in one of those quiet internal laughs in which his whole system seemed to quiver with it; even his shirt-collar appeared to momentarily lose its stiffness and take a shake.

"Ah!" he repeated—"well, well, and then one day you got tired of cuffing and kicking and left—departed—eh?"

"Yes," I answered, "yes, but my memory of it is indistinct; I only can recall dimly the fact that I one day mounted a peddler's wagon, and got up on the seat with him to take a ride. I didn't intend to run away then, but it was nearly dark when I got off the wagon to walk back home. I wandered out of the road, child-like, and—"

"—You got into a farmer's house, where they took care of you over night, and the next morning you told them your name. They happened to know your parents, and just then a tramping tin-ware mender came along, and they sent you in his care homewards. But he didn't take you home."

I looked at the old man. He was indulging in one of his inward bits of merriment. Was he laughing at my astonishment in hearing him so glibly narrate the history of my childhood and its troubles?—a history which I had supposed none but myself and my parents knew, or was familiar with!

"He didn't take you home," he repeated,



"and he had no notion of doing it either. Now, then, I have asked you three questions. You have answered them to the best of your knowledge and belief. Ha! you thought I didn't know your history, eh? D'y'e suppose I didn't know—ha!—who you were when I saw you with that old Jerseyman over there—or that I'd have taken you on sight without some other object in view than a mere purpose of being charitable or of getting a message boy? Gammon. Lawyers don't waste their substance in that way. Yet, after you'd been with me a while, I rather took to you. You ain't a bad one, as the world goes. Now, then, Job, I'll tell you something you don't know. I have been, all the time you have been in my charge, doing up a little bit of legal business in which your name has figured—ha!—yes, figured quite extensively. Fact is, you had more interest in it than anybody else outside of the lawyers—ha!"—and he gave the shirt-collar a nervous jerk that almost raised it from its fastenings. This was followed by another of his noiseless internal laughs, which made his face look like a sour stomach.

I made no reply. I, however, had lost all fear of being kicked out into the world again, at all events by Mr. Koke.

"Yes, my boy, you've been in law, but now things are about settled, so that you are out of it. See here."

He took from a drawer in the table a little parcel of documents, tied together by the usual red tape. "These—ha!—these concern you. Job Toddle, you are no longer Job Toddle—ha!"

I began to think the old man a sort of Arbaces the Egyptian—what else was to come!

"No, sir, your name is Briggs, ha!—and your father was Captain Briggs of the brig Bragloo, and your mother was Perseverance Push of Pushville Forks, and became Mrs. Captain Briggs, and the result of this matrimonial limited copartnership was—you, Joseph John Briggs, the only and legal heir to all and singular their estate real and personal, land, hereditaments, boots, breeches, skirts, and trimmings generally, etcetera, and so forth, according to the best of deponent's belief and knowledge. Yes, sir—ha!"

I knew now, for memory's door so long closed was unlocked, and one by one the incidents of my earlier life began to crowd upon me.

"That tinware-mender, Job—I beg your pardon—Joe, now—that tinware-mender, Joe, didn't take you home and didn't mean to. He tramped you off with him. You remember him, eh?"

"Yes—yes, he took me to his house, a little house—"

"House—an old tumble-down devil's hole, into which—ha! the Lord Almighty's blessed sunlight couldn't get. And there he kept you, hoping a reward would be offered for you by your parents. But it wasn't. And you have never seen your father or mother since—ha!"

"Are—are—is my mother alive?"

"Stop. This won't be a very long story ha! Well, that Jersey tin-mender kept you with him, and by ill treatment and keeping you half-starved, and by not letting you know whether you were a mile or a hundred miles away from your house—only telling you it wasn't anywhere where you'd be likely to find it—continued to reduce your intellectual calibre to a condition of mild idiocy. One day you cleared and dodged him—wandered off. If you had stayed there a week longer, I would have found you, for even then an agent of mine was on your track. He just grazed you—ha!"

The old necromancer the wizard! He went on with his story.

"Now, why was I so anxious to find you? For the exercise of my benevolence? Not a bit of it—ha! To adopt you? No—two daughters are enough trouble for any one man—expense, too!—ha! Every week you've been here you've been a profit to me—money in my pocket—yes!" He paused, in order to refresh himself with another internal convulsion, and then resumed.

"No, sir—though I did not say so to old Toddle over there when I found you—I took you as a profitable investment. A few days after you disappeared your father left home in his brig Bragloo. He sailed away. He could not help himself. The owners gave him his orders for a trip to Galveston, and go he must. He didn't care much whether you were found or not. Your mother and he had quarrelled like cats and dogs ever since they were married. He did the heavy swearing, drinking, and kicking, and breaking things when he was at home, and your mother did the everlasting scolding, fault-finding, henpecking, cuffing, and broom-sticking. It was hard to tell which beat

Sometimes he had an upper hold, and sometimes he went under. So his chief solace was in getting beastly drunk and in getting his temper up to hyena point; and when it happened, which was frequently, if not oftener, that they didn't care to kick and cuff each other, they let you have it right and left. Well—ha!—he sailed away on the briny ocean, and that voyage was the first time he ever took to water without whisky in it. He was knocked overboard by a board over the boom falling on him. He wrestled with the water a while, but being unacquainted with its way of fighting, he gave it up and went down among the fish. If it had been a vat of whiskey he could have drank his way out of it in half an hour's time. Well—ha!—by and by the news of his death came to your mother, and she packed up and left Jersey. She came here and took up a widowhood's last resource—keeping a boarding-house. Ha! didn't she make her boarders suffer! They alternated between starvation and indigestion. Talk about liver-complaint! there were more bad livers in her house than in any other in the city. Well—ha!—Joe, she kept soul and life together under a cheap covering of ribs and calico, and managed to keep the wolf, otherwise known as the landlord, from the door for a year or so, until one day she received news of the sudden collapse of an uncle of hers in Connecticut, and who had, by his will, left her property to the amount of many thousand dollars. So she wanted a lawyer. One of her boarders—a favorite, because he had paid his board regular and got so used to the living death of cheap hash, that a good square meal would have been suicide—recommended me, Bacon Koke, Esq. She called on me, told me her story, and put her business in my hands. I saw the will. It was rather queer. It gave her simply this: a burial lot in Pushville Forks burial-ground, a blank tombstone, upon which she could have her obituary carved at any time she choose; and the interest to live upon, of all his property—provided until her son—you, the lost boy—should come of age—but that she was to receive nothing until you, Joe Briggs, should be found, or proper evidence given that you had gone the way of all flesh, or words to that effect—ha! Now, until this came out, she didn't care a red penny whether you ever turned up or not—but then, she was anxious. I advertised for you. That

was a failure. Then I went systematically to work. Joe, it cost just one thousand dollars to find you—precisely. I looked all over Jersey for you. At last that mule's kick turned you up. It was at your mother's request I should keep you in my own house until reorganized, and put into respectable condition. On the strength of what I knew, I advanced her money, so she could drop the boarding-house business and assume a better position socially, which she did—ha! The day before yesterday, as her legal adviser, I arranged and completed all the necessary transfer of the property and money devised to her by the will, minus my fees and expenses incurred in caring for you, to her possession. To-morrow you go to your mother's house. Joe, treat her well, and perhaps you will change her vinegar temper to something better. She may take a liking to you. Mothers do sometimes have an inward hankering after their children, even if they don't love them. To-morrow I'll take you up to her, and then after a few weeks, if you and her agree upon it, and you think well of the profession, it's possible I will take you in my office as a regular student—ha!—there, my story is ended, so far as you are concerned with me. When you are of age, and that won't be long, you, by the will, of which I have here a copy, will come in possession of all the property, providing that during her lifetime you take care of your mother. I know you'll do that, Joe, for if you don't, and she comes to me as her legal adviser—ha—I'll take measures to—ah!—to make you, ha!"

And thus our interview ended. I can't precisely say how I felt. I was dazed. My mother's strange perversity in disliking me, my father's sad death, my own career, a succession of kicks and cuffs from everybody in my earlier boyhood, and the sudden, unexpected revolution of my mother's whereabouts, and my inheritance seemed more like a dream than reality. Yet Mr. Koke being real, and I being sure of having my eyes open and my full sense of hearing, there could be no doubt.

## CHAPTER XX.

### HOME AT LAST—THE FINAL KICK.

The next day, having invested myself with a new suit, I was ready to accompany Mr. Koke to my mother's presence. Imme-



diately after breakfast he declared himself ready and we left the house, took an up-town car, and, somewhere up among the forties, we came to the street.

I felt an anxiety I can scarcely describe. It was not, I well knew, the anxiety that would arise from any feeling of love for the parent who had almost ignored my existence; nor yet was it the mere anxiety arising from curiosity. It was rather, I think, a sort of anxious desire to get through with what I imagined would be an unpleasant meeting. I had resolved to let Mr. Koke do the preliminary talking, so that in the interim I could take a sort of superficial inventory of my long-unseen mother's general appearance and disposition.

We paused in front of a modest three-storied dwelling with green blinds and without the usual English basement. Mr. Koke gave his royal collar an upward twitch, and then gave the bell-knob an outward twitch. In a moment a servant-girl, evidently of Milesian origin, with Yankee trimmings, answered the summons.

"Mrs. Briggs in?"

"Yes, walk in, sir."

Mr. Koke, being no stranger to the premises, did walk without further ceremony into the parlor, and I followed at his heels.

"Mary," said Mr. Koke, "tell Mrs. Briggs that Mr. Koke is here."

"Yes, sir."

Presently a door leading to the rear apartment opened, and then entered a thin-featured woman, whose countenance had that sharp, worn look which I have since found, in my experience, is peculiar to women who have had to wrestle their livelihood out of the begrudged payments of the great nomadic tribe of hash-eaters.

She looked every inch a boarding-house keeper. I wouldn't have been in any wise astonished if she had at once exclaimed: "Hull bed-room, third floor front—eight dollars a week with board, weekly in advance—dinner at six—references required—and all the comforts of a home—single gents preferred—no latch-key."

But she didn't utter any such remark. She merely came in, floated in like an iceberg, and brought with her that peculiar coolness people sometimes imagine pervades an apartment which has contained a corpse.

The presence of some people, I have noticed, always brings that nameless chill with it which congeals everything approaching

sociability into a frigid disposition to silence. She was of that ilk.

"Good morning, Mr. Koke; I didn't expect you so soon."

"Ha! yes—I'm early. Early bird catches the worm—not that I consider you a worm, Mrs. Briggs. Oh! no—ha!"

She looked to me as cold as a worm. From her I might look in vain for any display of motherly feeling ordinarily vouchsafed a child.

"Well, Mr. Koke,"

Mr. Koke interrupted her, "Pardon, Mrs. Briggs, ha! This—this is Joseph—Joe—ha! your long-absent son. I have—"

My mother came, or rather moved, toward me in an automatic, formal manner, much as she would have moved toward an entire stranger.

"Well, Joseph," said she, with no more emotion discernible in her voice than if she were speaking to her corner-groceryman of the price of a bunch of carrots, "are you tired of being away from your mother?"

I had a notion to asking her if she wasn't tired of having me away from her.

"Joseph," she continued, "as this is to be your home hereafter, we may as well understand each other. Especially can this be said in presence of Mr. Koke."

"Ha! ma'am, don't commit me to any family-matters—ha! I—"

"Oh! this is nothing *very* private—only that I wished to impress upon Joseph's mind the fact that I can have no real affection for a son who ran away from home and never came back to it, and who, according to your own account, Mr. Koke, never expressed any desire for knowledge concerning the parents he had so—so cruelly deserted!"

Of all the cold-blooded, brazenly cool exhibitions of pure, unadulterated cheek, this was the cap-sheaf. The refreshing impudence with which she ignored the remembrance of the daily beatings, cuffings, kickings, jerked ears, and dramatic bastinadoings, as well as the almost continuous enforced starvation to which, from boyhood up to the time I went off on the peddler's wagon, I had been subjected, was certainly astounding. Even Mr. Koke, in his astonishment at her Greenland frigidty, forgot his "ha!" and omitted its usual accompaniment, a pull at his shirt-collar.

As for myself, I said nothing. How could I? Had I been told that somebody had gone up on top a balloon instead of under

it, I should not have been half as incredulous.

"So, Joseph, while you may not be inclined to love me as a child should love the author of its being, you must respect me, and I will do the same toward you, and in that way we shall get along quite comfortably."

"Ha!" blurted out Mr. Koke, "ha! yes—go through motions, Joe—go through the motions, Joe—that's all."

"Precisely," said my mother; "appearances are all that are necessary for comfort, when the real thing does not exist. Perhaps, after a while, we may come like each other better. Mr. Koke, I suppose you have arranged the legal matters connected with the future carrying out of the provisions of the will?"

"Ha! yes, certainly, Mrs. Briggs, here are the documents."

"Very well, you keep charge of them; I may lose them."

Other conversation ensued of not much import, and then Mr. Koke, bidding me an affectionate "Temporary good-bye—ha!" departed, leaving me alone with my mother. Warm-blooded, hopeful youth alone with a

human iceberg. One must freeze or melt the other.

And what did the future bring me? It brought me to a better understanding of my mother; it brought to her, with the gray hairs that came slowly to her brow, a change of disposition, and a constant evidence in her increasing kindness toward me, that her harsh temper had given place to something akin to love; it brought to me an honored place at the bar, through the efforts of Mr. Koke; and, most memorable record of all, it brought to the home made happy by the perfect reconciliation of my mother and myself, a dear and loving wife, whose maiden name has appeared in these pages as Certiorari Koke, "Certy, for short." All this the future brought me; and now, as the pen in this tired hand traces the last lines of this its task, it speaks for me when it utters a thankful prayer for all the blessings which, although coming to me, through all the years of my homeless boyhood and youth, in the disguise of kicks and cuffs and misfortunes, have ended as happily at last, in permitting me to be permanently

