DRIFT FROM TWO SHORES

BY

BRET HARTE

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The Man on the Beach

1.

He lived beside a river that emptied into a great ocean. The narrow strip of land that lay between him and the estuary was covered at high tide by a shining film of water, at low tide with the cast-up offerings of sea and shore. Logs yet green, and saplings washed away from inland banks, battered fragments of wrecks and orange crates of bamboo, broken into tiny rafts yet odorous with their lost freight, lay in long successive curves— the fringes and overlappings of the sea. At high noon the shadow of a seagull's wing, or a sudden flurry and gray squall of sand- pipers, themselves but shadows, was all that broke the monotonous glare of the level sands.

He had lived there alone for a twelvemonth. Although but a few miles from a thriving settlement, during that time his retirement had never been intruded upon, his seclusion remained unbroken. In any other community he might have been the subject of rumor or criticism, but the miners at Camp Rogue and the traders at Trinidad Head, themselves individual and eccentric, were profoundly indifferent to all other forms of eccentricity or heterodoxy that did not come in contact with their own. And certainly there was no form of eccentricity less aggressive than that of a hermit, had they chosen to give him that appellation. But they did not even do that, probably from lack of interest or perception. To the various traders who supplied his small

wants he was known as “Kernel,” “Judge,” and “Boss.” To the general public “The Man on the Beach” was considered a sufficiently distinguishing title. His name, his occupation, rank, or antecedents, nobody cared to inquire. Whether this arose from a fear of reciprocal inquiry and interest, or from the profound indifference before referred to, I cannot say.

He did not look like a hermit. A man yet young, erect, well- dressed, clean-shaven, with a low voice, and a smile half melancholy, half cynical, was scarcely the conventional idea of a solitary. His dwelling, a rude improvement on a fisherman’s cabin, had all the severe exterior simplicity of frontier architecture, but within it was comfortable and wholesome. Three rooms—a kitchen, a living room, and a bedroom—were all it contained.

He had lived there long enough to see the dull monotony of one season lapse into the dull monotony of the other. The bleak northwest trade-winds had brought him mornings of staring sunlight and nights of fog and silence. The warmer southwest trades had brought him clouds, rain, and the transient glories of quick grasses and odorous beach blossoms. But summer or winter, wet or dry season, on one side rose always the sharply defined hills with their changeless background of evergreens; on the other side stretched always the illimitable ocean as sharply defined against the horizon, and as unchanging in its hue. The onset of spring and autumn tides, some changes among his feathered neighbors, the footprints of certain wild animals along the river’s bank, and the hanging out of party-colored signals from the wooded hillside far inland, helped him to record the slow months. On summer afternoons, when the sun sank behind a bank of fog that, moving solemnly shoreward, at last encompassed him and blotted out sea and sky, his isolation was complete. The damp gray sea that flowed above and around and about him always seemed to

shut out an intangible world beyond, and to be the only real presence. The booming of breakers scarce a dozen rods from his dwelling was but a vague and unintelligible sound, or the echo of something past forever. Every morning when the sun tore away the misty curtain he awoke, dazed and bewildered, as upon a new world. The first sense of oppression over, he came to love at last this subtle spirit of oblivion; and at night, when its cloudy wings were folded over his cabin, he would sit alone with a sense of security he had never felt before. On such occasions he was apt to leave his door open, and listen as for footsteps; for what might not come to him out of this vague, nebulous world beyond? Perhaps even SHE—for this strange solitary was not insane nor visionary. He was never in spirit alone. For night and day, sleeping or waking, pacing the beach or crouching over his driftwood fire, a woman's face was always before him—the face for whose sake and for cause of whom he sat there alone. He saw it in the morning sunlight; it was her white hands that were lifted from the crested breakers; it was the rustling of her skirt when the sea wind swept through the beach grasses; it was the loving whisper of her low voice when the long waves sank and died among the sedge and rushes. She was as omnipresent as sea and sky and level sand. Hence when the fog wiped them away, she seemed to draw closer to him in the darkness. On one or two more gracious nights in midsummer, when the influence of the fervid noonday sun was still felt on the heated sands, the warm breath of the fog touched his cheek as if it had been hers, and the tears started to his eyes.

Before the fogs came—for he arrived there in winter—he had found surcease and rest in the steady glow of a lighthouse upon the little promontory a league below his habitation. Even on the darkest nights, and in the tumults of storm, it spoke to him of a patience that was enduring and a steadfastness that was immutable. Later on he found a

certain dumb companionship in an uprooted tree, which, floating down the river, had stranded hopelessly upon his beach, but in the evening had again drifted away. Rowing across the estuary a day or two afterward, he recognized the tree again from a "blaze" of the settler's axe still upon its trunk. He was not surprised a week later to find the same tree in the sands before his dwelling, or that the next morning it should be again launched on its purposeless wanderings. And so, impelled by wind or tide, but always haunting his seclusion, he would meet it voyaging up the river at the flood, or see it tossing among the breakers on the bar, but always with the confidence of its returning sooner or later to an anchorage beside him. After the third month of his self-imposed exile, he was forced into a more human companionship, that was brief but regular. He was obliged to have menial assistance. While he might have eaten his bread "in sorrow" carelessly and mechanically, if it had been prepared for him, the occupation of cooking his own food brought the vulgarity and materialness of existence so near to his morbid sensitiveness that he could not eat the meal he had himself prepared. He did not yet wish to die, and when starvation or society seemed to be the only alternative, he chose the latter. An Indian woman, so hideous as to scarcely suggest humanity, at stated times performed for him these offices. When she did not come, which was not infrequent, he did not eat.

Such was the mental and physical condition of the Man on the Beach on the 1st of January, 1869.

It was a still, bright day, following a week of rain and wind. Low down the horizon still lingered a few white flecks—the flying squadrons of the storm—as vague as distant sails. Southward the harbor bar whitened

occasionally but lazily; even the turbulent Pacific swell stretched its length wearily upon the shore. And toiling from the settlement over the low sand dunes, a carriage at last halted half a mile from the solitary's dwelling.

"I reckon ye'll hev to git out here," said the driver, pulling up to breathe his panting horses. "Ye can't git any nigher."

There was a groan of execration from the interior of the vehicle, a hysterical little shriek, and one or two shrill expressions of feminine disapprobation, but the driver moved not. At last a masculine head expostulated from the window: "Look here; you agreed to take us to the house. Why, it's a mile away at least!"

"Thar, or tharabouts, I reckon," said the driver, coolly crossing his legs on the box.

"It's no use talking; I can never walk through this sand and horrid glare," said a female voice quickly and imperatively. Then, apprehensively, "Well, of all the places!"

"Well, I never!"

"This DOES exceed everything."

"It's really TOO idiotic for anything."

It was noticeable that while the voices betrayed the difference of age and sex, they bore a singular resemblance to each other, and a certain querulousness of pitch that was dominant.

"I reckon I've gone about as fur as I allow to go with them hosses," continued the driver suggestively, "and as time's vallyble, ye'd better unload."

"The wretch does not mean to leave us here alone?" said a female voice in shrill indignation. "You'll wait for us, driver?" said a masculine voice, confidently.

"How long?" asked the driver.

There was a hurried consultation within. The words "Might send us packing!" "May take all night to get him to listen to reason," "Bother! whole thing over in ten minutes," came from the window. The driver meanwhile had settled himself back in his seat, and whistled in patient contempt of a fashionable fare that didn't know its own mind nor destination. Finally, the masculine head was thrust out, and, with a certain potential air of judicially ending a difficulty, said:

"You're to follow us slowly, and put up your horses in the stable or barn until we want you."

An ironical laugh burst from the driver. "Oh, yes—in the stable or barn—in course. But, my eyes sorter failin' me, mebbee, now, some ev you younger folks will kindly pint out the stable or barn of the Kernel's. Woa!—will ye?—woa! Give me a chance to pick out that there barn or stable to put ye in!" This in arch confidence to the horses, who had not moved.

Here the previous speaker, rotund, dignified, and elderly, alighted indignantly, closely followed by the rest of the party, two ladies and a gentleman. One of the ladies was past the age, but not the fashion, of youth, and her Parisian dress clung over her wasted figure and well-bred bones

artistically if not gracefully; the younger lady, evidently her daughter, was crisp and pretty, and carried off the aquiline nose and aristocratic emaciation of her mother with a certain piquancy and a dash that was charming. The gentleman was young, thin, with the family characteristics, but otherwise indistinctive.

With one accord they all faced directly toward the spot indicated by the driver's whip. Nothing but the bare, bleak, rectangular outlines of the cabin of the Man on the Beach met their eyes. All else was a desolate expanse, unrelieved by any structure higher than the tussocks of scant beach grass that clothed it. They were so utterly helpless that the driver's derisive laughter gave way at last to good humor and suggestion. "Look yer," he said finally, "I don't know ez it's your fault you don't know this kentry ez well ez you do Yurup; so I'll drag this yer team over to Robinson's on the river, give the horses a bite, and then meander down this yer ridge, and wait for ye. Ye'll see me from the Kernel's." And without waiting for a reply, he swung his horses' heads toward the river, and rolled away.

The same querulous protest that had come from the windows arose from the group, but vainly. Then followed accusations and recrimination. "It's YOUR fault; you might have written, and had him meet us at the settlement." "You wanted to take him by surprise!" "I didn't. You know if I'd written that we were coming, he'd have taken good care to run away from us." "Yes, to some more inaccessible place." "There can be none worse than this," etc., etc. But it was so clearly evident that nothing was to be done but to go forward, that even in the midst of their wrangling they straggled on in Indian file toward the distant cabin, sinking ankle-deep in the yielding sand, punctuating their verbal altercation with sighs, and only abating it at a scream from the elder lady.

"Where's Maria?"

"Gone on ahead!" grunted the younger gentleman, in a bass voice, so incongruously large for him that it seemed to have been a ventriloquistic contribution by somebody else.

It was too true. Maria, after adding her pungency to the general conversation, had darted on ahead. But alas! that swift Camilla, after scouring the plain some two hundred feet with her demitrain, came to grief on an unbending tussock and sat down, panting but savage. As they plodded wearily toward her, she bit her red lips, smacked them on her cruel little white teeth like a festive and sprightly ghoul, and lisped:

"You DO look so like guys! For all the world like those English shopkeepers we met on the Righi, doing the three-guinea excursion in their Sunday clothes!"

Certainly the spectacle of these exotically plumed bipeds, whose fine feathers were already bedrabbled by sand and growing limp in the sea breeze, was somewhat dissonant with the rudeness of sea and sky and shore. A few gulls screamed at them; a loon, startled from the lagoon, arose shrieking and protesting, with painfully extended legs, in obvious burlesque of the younger gentleman. The elder lady felt the justice of her gentle daughter's criticism, and retaliated with simple directness:

"Your skirt is ruined, your hair is coming down, your hat is half off your head, and your shoes—in Heaven's name, Maria! what HAVE you done with your shoes?"

Maria had exhibited a slim stockinged foot from under her skirt. It was scarcely three fingers broad, with an

arch as patrician as her nose. “Somewhere between here and the carriage,” she answered; “Dick can run back and find it, while he is looking for your brooch, mamma. Dick’s so obliging.”

The robust voice of Dick thundered, but the wasted figure of Dick feebly ploughed its way back, and returned with the missing buskin.

“I may as well carry them in my hand like the market girls at Saumur, for we have got to wade soon,” said Miss Maria, sinking her own terrors in the delightful contemplation of the horror in her parent’s face, as she pointed to a shining film of water slowly deepening in a narrow swale in the sands between them and the cabin.

“It’s the tide,” said the elder gentleman. “If we intend to go on we must hasten; permit me, my dear madam,” and before she could reply he had lifted the astounded matron in his arms, and made gallantly for the ford. The gentle Maria cast an ominous eye on her brother, who, with manifest reluctance, performed for her the same office. But that acute young lady kept her eyes upon the preceding figure of the elder gentleman, and seeing him suddenly and mysteriously disappear to his armpits, unhesitatingly threw herself from her brother’s protecting arms—an action which instantly precipitated him into the water—and paddled hastily to the opposite bank, where she eventually assisted in pulling the elderly gentleman out of the hollow into which he had fallen, and in rescuing her mother, who floated helplessly on the surface, upheld by her skirts, like a gigantic and variegated water-lily. Dick followed with a single gaiter. In another minute they were safe on the opposite bank.

The elder lady gave way to tears; Maria laughed hysterically; Dick mingled a bass oath with the now audible

surf; the elder gentleman, whose florid face the salt water had bleached, and whose dignity seemed to have been washed away, accounted for both by saying he thought it was a quicksand.

"It might have been," said a quiet voice behind them; "you should have followed the sand dunes half a mile further to the estuary."

They turned instantly at the voice. It was that of the Man on the Beach. They all rose to their feet and uttered together, save one, the single exclamation, "James!" The elder gentleman said "Mr. North," and, with a slight resumption of his former dignity, buttoned his coat over his damp shirt front.

There was a silence, in which the Man on the Beach looked gravely down upon them. If they had intended to impress him by any suggestion of a gay, brilliant, and sensuous world beyond in their own persons, they had failed, and they knew it. Keenly alive as they had always been to external prepossession, they felt that they looked forlorn and ludicrous, and that the situation lay in his hands. The elderly lady again burst into tears of genuine distress, Maria colored over her cheek-bones, and Dick stared at the ground in sullen disquiet.

"You had better get up," said the Man on the Beach, after a moment's thought, "and come up to the cabin. I cannot offer you a change of garments, but you can dry them by the fire."

They all rose together, and again said in chorus, "James!" but this time with an evident effort to recall some speech or action previously resolved upon and committed to memory. The elder lady got so far as to clasp her hands and

add, “You have not forgotten us—James, oh, James!”; the younger gentleman to attempt a brusque “Why, Jim, old boy,” that ended in querulous incoherence; the young lady to cast a half-searching, half-coquettish look at him; and the old gentleman to begin, “Our desire, Mr. North”—but the effort was futile. Mr. James North, standing before them with folded arms, looked from the one to the other.

“I have not thought much of you for a twelvemonth,” he said, quietly, “but I have not forgotten you. Come!”

He led the way a few steps in advance, they following silently. In this brief interview they felt he had resumed the old dominance and independence, against which they had rebelled; more than that, in this half failure of their first concerted action they had changed their querulous bickerings to a sullen distrust of each other, and walked moodily apart as they followed James North into his house. A fire blazed brightly on the hearth; a few extra seats were quickly extemporized from boxes and chests, and the elder lady, with the skirt of her dress folded over her knees—looking not unlike an exceedingly overdressed jointed doll—dried her flounces and her tears together. Miss Maria took in the scant appointments of the house in one single glance, and then fixed her eyes upon James North, who, the least concerned of the party, stood before them, grave and patiently expectant.

“Well,” began the elder lady in a high key, “after all this worry and trouble you have given us, James, haven’t you anything to say? Do you know—have you the least idea what you are doing? what egregious folly you are committing? what everybody is saying? Eh? Heavens and earth!—do you know who I am?”

"You are my father's brother's widow, Aunt Mary," returned James, quietly. "If I am committing any folly it only concerns myself; if I cared for what people said I should not be here; if I loved society enough to appreciate its good report I should stay with it."

"But they say you have run away from society to pine alone for a worthless creature—a woman who has used you, as she has used and thrown away others—a—"

"A woman," chimed in Dick, who had thrown himself on James' bed while his patent leathers were drying, "a woman that all the fellers know never intended"—here, however, he met James North's eye, and muttering something about "whole thing being too idiotic to talk about," relapsed into silence.

"You know," continued Mrs. North, "that while we and all our set shut our eyes to your very obvious relations with that woman, and while I myself often spoke of it to others as a simple flirtation, and averted a scandal for your sake, and when the climax was reached, and she herself gave you an opportunity to sever your relations, and nobody need have been wiser—and she'd have had all the blame—and it's only what she's accustomed to—you—you! you, James North!—you must nonsensically go, and, by this extravagant piece of idiocy and sentimental tomfoolery, let everybody see how serious the whole affair was, and how deep it hurt you! and here in this awful place, alone—where you're half drowned to get to it and are willing to be wholly drowned to get away! Oh, don't talk to me! I won't hear it—it's just too idiotic for anything!"

The subject of this outburst neither spoke nor moved a single muscle.

"Your aunt, Mr. North, speaks excitedly," said the elder gentleman; "yet I think she does not overestimate the unfortunate position in which your odd fancy places you. I know nothing of the reasons that have impelled you to this step; I only know that the popular opinion is that the cause is utterly inadequate. You are still young, with a future before you. I need not say how your present conduct may imperil that. If you expected to achieve any good— even to your own satisfaction—but this conduct—"

"Yes—if there was anything to be gained by it!" broke in Mrs. North.

"If you ever thought she'd come back!—but that kind of woman don't. They must have change. Why"—began Dick suddenly, and as suddenly lying down again.

"Is this all you have come to say?" asked James North, after a moment's patient silence, looking from one to the other.

"All?" screamed Mrs. North; "is it not enough?"

"Not to change my mind nor my residence at present," replied North, coolly.

"Do you mean to continue this folly all your life?"

"And have a coroner's inquest, and advertisements and all the facts in the papers?"

"And have HER read the melancholy details, and know that you were faithful and she was not?"

This last shot was from the gentle Maria, who bit her lips as it glanced from the immovable man.

"I believe there is nothing more to say," continued North, quietly. "I am willing to believe your intentions are as worthy as your zeal. Let us say no more," he added, with grave weariness; "the tide is rising, and your coachman is signaling you from the bank."

There was no mistaking the unshaken positiveness of the man, which was all the more noticeable from its gentle but utter indifference to the wishes of the party. He turned his back upon them as they gathered hurriedly around the elder gentleman, while the words, "He cannot be in his right mind," "It's your duty to do it," "It's sheer insanity," "Look at his eye!" all fell unconsciously upon his ear.

"One word more, Mr. North," said the elder gentleman, a little portentously, to conceal an evident embarrassment. "It may be that your conduct might suggest to minds more practical than your own the existence of some aberration of the intellect—some temporary mania—that might force your best friends into a quasi-legal attitude of—"

"Declaring me insane," interrupted James North, with the slight impatience of a man more anxious to end a prolix interview than to combat an argument. "I think differently. As my aunt's lawyer, you know that within the last year I have deeded most of my property to her and her family. I cannot believe that so shrewd an adviser as Mr. Edmund Carter would ever permit proceedings that would invalidate that conveyance."

Maria burst into a laugh of such wicked gratification that James North, for the first time, raised his eyes with something of interest to her face. She colored under them, but returned his glance with another like a bayonet flash. The party slowly moved toward the door, James North following.

“Then this is your final answer?” asked Mrs. North, stopping imperiously on the threshold.

“I beg your pardon?” queried North, half abstractedly.

“Your final answer?”

“Oh, certainly.”

Mrs. North flounced away a dozen rods in rage. This was unfortunate for North. It gave them the final attack in detail. Dick began: “Come along! You know you can advertise for her with a personal down there and the old woman wouldn’t object as long as you were careful and put in an appearance now and then!”

As Dick limped away, Mr. Carter thought, in confidence, that the whole matter—even to suit Mr. North’s sensitive nature—might be settled there. “SHE evidently expects you to return. My opinion is that she never left San Francisco. You can’t tell anything about these women.”

With this last sentence on his indifferent ear, James North seemed to be left free. Maria had rejoined her mother; but as they crossed the ford, and an intervening sand-hill hid the others from sight, that piquant young lady suddenly appeared on the hill and stood before him.

“And you’re not coming back?” she said directly.

“No.”

“Never?”

“I cannot say.”

"Tell me! what is there about some women to make men love them so?"

"Love," replied North, quietly.

"No, it cannot be—it is not THAT!"

North looked over the hill and round the hill, and looked bored.

"Oh, I'm going now. But one moment, Jem! I didn't want to come. They dragged me here. Good-by."

She raised a burning face and eyes to his. He leaned forward and imprinted the perfunctory cousinly kiss of the period upon her cheek.

"Not that way," she said angrily, clutching his wrists with her long, thin fingers; "you shan't kiss me in that way, James North."

With the faintest, ghost-like passing of a twinkle in the corners of his sad eyes, he touched his lips to hers. With the contact, she caught him round the neck, pressed her burning lips and face to his forehead, his cheeks, the very curves of his chin and throat, and—with a laugh was gone.

2.

Had the kinsfolk of James North any hope that their visit might revive some lingering desire he still combated to enter once more the world they represented, that hope would have soon died. Whatever effect this episode had upon the solitary—and he had become so self-indulgent of his sorrow, and so careless of all that came between him and it, as to meet opposition with profound indifference—the only appreciable result was a greater attraction for the solitude that protected him, and he grew even to love the bleak shore and barren sands that had proved so inhospitable to others. There was a new meaning to the roar of the surges, an honest, loyal sturdiness in the unchanging persistency of the uncouth and blustering trade-winds, and a mute fidelity in the shining sands, treacherous to all but him. With such bandogs to lie in wait for trespassers, should he not be grateful?

If no bitterness was awakened by the repeated avowal of the unfaithfulness of the woman he loved, it was because he had always made the observation and experience of others give way to the dominance of his own insight. No array of contradictory facts ever shook his belief or unbelief; like all egotists, he accepted them as truths controlled by a larger truth of which he alone was cognizant. His simplicity, which was but another form of his egotism, was so complete as to baffle ordinary malicious cunning, and so he was spared the experience and knowledge that come to a lower nature, and help debase it.

Exercise and the stimulus of the few wants that sent him hunting or fishing kept up his physical health. Never a lover of rude freedom or outdoor life his sedentary predilections and nice tastes kept him from lapsing into

barbarian excess; never a sportsman he followed the chase with no feverish exaltation. Even dumb creatures found out his secret, and at times, stalking moodily over the upland, the brown deer and elk would cross his path without fear or molestation, or, idly lounging in his canoe within the river bar, flocks of wild fowl would settle within stroke of his listless oar. And so the second winter of his hermitage drew near its close, and with it came a storm that passed into local history, and is still remembered. It uprooted giant trees along the river, and with them the tiny rootlets of the life he was idly fostering.

The morning had been fitfully turbulent, the wind veering several points south and west, with suspicions lulls, unlike the steady onset of the regular southwest trades. High overhead the long manes of racing cirro stratus streamed with flying gulls and hurrying water-fowl; plover piped incessantly, and a flock of timorous sand-pipers sought the low ridge of his cabin, while a wrecking crew of curlew hastily manned the uprooted tree that tossed wearily beyond the bar. By noon the flying clouds huddled together in masses, and then were suddenly exploded in one vast opaque sheet over the heavens. The sea became gray, and suddenly wrinkled and old. There was a dumb, half-articulate cry in the air—rather a confusion of many sounds, as of the booming of distant guns, the clangor of a bell, the trampling of many waves, the creaking of timbers and soughing of leaves, that sank and fell ere you could yet distinguish them. And then it came on to blow. For two hours it blew strongly. At the time the sun should have set the wind had increased; in fifteen minutes darkness shut down, even the white sands lost their outlines, and sea and shore and sky lay in the grip of a relentless and aggressive power.

Within his cabin, by the leaping light of his gusty fire, North sat alone. His first curiosity passed, the turmoil

without no longer carried his thought beyond its one converging centre. SHE had come to him on the wings of the storm, even as she had been borne to him on the summer fog-cloud. Now and then the wind shook the cabin, but he heeded it not. He had no fears for its safety; it presented its low gable to the full fury of the wind that year by year had piled, and even now was piling, protecting buttresses of sand against it. With each succeeding gust it seemed to nestle more closely to its foundations, in the whirl of flying sand that rattled against its roof and windows. It was nearly midnight when a sudden thought brought him to his feet. What if SHE were exposed to the fury of such a night as this? What could he do to help her? Perhaps even now, as he sat there idle, she—Hark! was not that a gun—No? Yes, surely!

He hurriedly unbolted the door, but the strength of the wind and the impact of drifted sand resisted his efforts. With a new and feverish strength possessing him he forced it open wide enough to permit his egress when the wind caught him as a feather, rolled him over and over, and then, grappling him again, held him down hard and fast against the drift. Unharmed, but unable to move, he lay there, hearing the multitudinous roar of the storm, but unable to distinguish one familiar sound in the savage medley. At last he managed to crawl flat on his face to the cabin, and refastening the door, threw himself upon his bed.

He was awakened from a fitful dream of his Cousin Maria. She with a supernatural strength seemed to be holding the door against some unseen, unknown power that moaned and strove without, and threw itself in despairing force against the cabin. He could see the lithe undulations of her form as she alternately yielded to its power, and again drew the door against it, coiling herself around the log-hewn doorpost with a hideous, snake-like suggestion. And then a struggle and a heavy blow, which shook the very foundations

of the structure, awoke him. He leaped to his feet, and into an inch of water! By the flickering firelight he could see it oozing and dripping from the crevices of the logs and broadening into a pool by the chimney. A scrap of paper torn from an envelope was floating idly on its current. Was it the overflow of the backed-up waters of the river? He was not left long in doubt. Another blow upon the gable of the house, and a torrent of spray leaped down the chimney, scattered the embers far and wide, and left him in utter darkness. Some of the spray clung to his lips. It was salt. The great ocean had beaten down the river bar and was upon him!

Was there aught to fly to? No! The cabin stood upon the highest point of the sand spit, and the low swale on one side crossed by his late visitors was a seething mass of breakers, while the estuary behind him was now the ocean itself. There was nothing to do but to wait.

The very helplessness of his situation was, to a man of his peculiar temperament, an element of patient strength. The instinct of self-preservation was still strong in him, but he had no fear of death, nor, indeed, any presentiment of it; yet if it came, it was an easy solution of the problem that had been troubling him, and it wiped off the slate! He thought of the sarcastic prediction of his cousin, and death in the form that threatened him was the obliteration of his home and even the ground upon which it stood. There would be nothing to record, no stain could come upon the living. The instinct that kept him true to HER would tell her how he died; if it did not, it was equally well. And with this simple fatalism his only belief, this strange man groped his way to his bed, lay down, and in a few moments was asleep. The storm still roared without. Once again the surges leaped against the cabin, but it was evident that the wind was abating with the tide.

When he awoke it was high noon, and the sun was shining brightly. For some time he lay in a delicious languor, doubting if he was alive or dead, but feeling through every nerve and fibre an exquisite sense of peace—a rest he had not known since his boyhood—a relief he scarcely knew from what. He felt that he was smiling, and yet his pillow was wet with the tears that glittered still on his lashes. The sand blocking up his doorway, he leaped lightly from his window. A few clouds were still sailing slowly in the heavens, the trailing plumes of a great benediction that lay on sea and shore. He scarcely recognized the familiar landscape; a new bar had been formed in the river, and a narrow causeway of sand that crossed the lagoon and marshes to the river bank and the upland trail seemed to bring him nearer to humanity again. He was conscious of a fresh, childlike delight in all this, and when, a moment later, he saw the old uprooted tree, now apparently forever moored and imbedded in the sand beside his cabin, he ran to it with a sense of joy.

Its trailing roots were festooned with clinging sea-weed and the long, snaky, undulating stems of the sea-turnip; and fixed between two crossing roots was a bamboo orange crate, almost intact. As he walked toward it he heard a strange cry, unlike anything the barren sands had borne before. Thinking it might be some strange sea bird caught in the meshes of the sea-weed, he ran to the crate and looked within. It was half filled with sea-moss and feathery algae. The cry was repeated. He brushed aside the weeds with his hands. It was not a wounded sea bird, but a living human child!

As he lifted it from its damp enwrappings he saw that it was an infant eight or nine months old. How and when it had been brought there, or what force had guided that elfish cradle to his very door, he could not determine; but it must

have been left early, for it was quite warm, and its clothing almost dried by the blazing morning sun. To wrap his coat about it, to run to his cabin with it, to start out again with the appalling conviction that nothing could be done for it there, occupied some moments. His nearest neighbor was Trinidad Joe, a "logger," three miles up the river. He remembered to have heard vaguely that he was a man of family. To half strangle the child with a few drops from his whisky flask, to extricate his canoe from the marsh, and strike out into the river with his waif, was at least to do something. In half an hour he had reached the straggling cabin and sheds of Trinidad Joe, and from the few scanty flowers that mingled with the brushwood fence, and a surplus of linen fluttering on the line, he knew that his surmise as to Trinidad Joe's domestic establishment was correct.

The door at which he knocked opened upon a neat, plainly-furnished room, and the figure of a buxom woman of twenty-five. With an awkwardness new to him, North stammered out the circumstances of his finding the infant, and the object of his visit. Before he had finished, the woman, by some feminine trick, had taken the child from his hands ere he knew it; and when he paused, out of breath, burst into a fit of laughter. North tried to laugh too, but failed.

When the woman had wiped the tears from a pair of very frank blue eyes, and hidden two rows of very strong white teeth again, she said:

"Look yar! You're that looney sort a' chap that lives alone over on the spit yonder, ain't ye?"

North hastened to admit all that the statement might imply.

"And so ye've had a baby left ye to keep you company? Lordy!" Here she looked as if dangerously near a relapse, and then added, as if in explanation of her conduct—

"When I saw ye paddlin' down here—you thet ez shy as elk in summer—I sez, 'He's sick.' But a baby—Oh, Lordy!"

For a moment North almost hated her. A woman who, in this pathetic, perhaps almost tragic, picture saw only a ludicrous image, and that image himself, was of another race than that he had ever mingled with. Profoundly indifferent as he had always been to the criticism of his equals in station, the mischievous laughter of this illiterate woman jarred upon him worse than his cousin's sarcasm. It was with a little dignity that he pointed out the fact that at present the child needed nourishment. "It's very young," he added. "I'm afraid it wants its natural nourishment."

"Whar is it to get it?" asked the woman.

James North hesitated, and looked around. There should be a baby somewhere! there MUST be a baby somewhere! "I thought that you," he stammered, conscious of an awkward coloring—"I—that is—I—" He stopped short, for she was already cramming her apron into her mouth, too late, however, to stop the laugh that overflowed it. When she found her breath again, she said—

"Look yar! I don't wonder they said you was looney! I'm Trinidad Joe's onmarried darter, and the only woman in this house. Any fool could have told you that. Now, ef you can rig us up a baby out o' them facts, I'd like to see it done."

Inwardly furious but outwardly polite, James North begged her pardon, deplored his ignorance, and, with a

courtly bow, made a movement to take the child. But the woman as quickly drew it away.

"Not much," she said, hastily. "What! trust that poor critter to you? No, sir! Thar's more ways of feeding a baby, young man, than you knows on, with all your 'nat'ral nourishment.' But it looks kinder logy and stupid."

North freezingly admitted that he had given the infant whisky as a stimulant.

"You did? Come, now, that ain't so looney after all. Well, I'll take the baby, and when Dad comes home we'll see what can be done."

North hesitated. His dislike of the woman was intense, and yet he knew no one else and the baby needed instant care. Besides, he began to see the ludicrousness of his making a first call on his neighbors with a foundling to dispose of. She saw his hesitation, and said—

"Ye don't know me, in course. Well, I'm Bessy Robinson, Trinidad Joe Robinson's daughter. I reckon Dad will give me a character if you want references, or any of the boys on the river."

"I'm only thinking of the trouble I'm giving you, Miss Robinson, I assure you. Any expense you may incur—"

"Young man," said Bessy Robinson, turning sharply on her heel, and facing him with her black brows a little contracted, "if it comes to expenses, I reckon I'll pay you for that baby, or not take it at all. But I don't know you well enough to quarrel with you on sight. So leave the child to me, and, if you choose, paddle down here to-morrow, after sun up—the ride will do you good—and see it, and Dad

thrown in. Good by!" and with one powerful but well-shaped arm thrown around the child, and the other crooked at the dimpled elbow a little aggressively, she swept by James North and entered a bedroom, closing the door behind her.

When Mr. James North reached his cabin it was dark. As he rebuilt his fire, and tried to rearrange the scattered and disordered furniture, and remove the debris of last night's storm, he was conscious for the first time of feeling lonely. He did not miss the child. Beyond the instincts of humanity and duty he had really no interest in its welfare or future. He was rather glad to get rid of it, he would have preferred to some one else, and yet SHE looked as if she were competent. And then came the reflection that since the morning he had not once thought of the woman he loved. The like had never occurred in his twelvemonth solitude. So he set to work, thinking of her and of his sorrows, until the word "Looney," in connection with his suffering, flashed across his memory. "Looney!" It was not a nice word. It suggested something less than insanity; something that might happen to a common, unintellectual sort of person. He remembered the loon, an ungainly feathered neighbor, that was popularly supposed to have lent its name to the adjective. Could it be possible that people looked upon him as one too hopelessly and uninterestingly afflicted for sympathy or companionship, too unimportant and common for even ridicule; or was this but the coarse interpretation of that vulgar girl?

Nevertheless, the next morning "after sun up" James North was at Trinidad Joe's cabin. That worthy proprietor himself—a long, lank man, with even more than the ordinary rural Western characteristics of ill health, ill feeding, and melancholy—met him on the bank, clothed in a manner and costume that was a singular combination of the frontiersman

and the sailor. When North had again related the story of his finding the child, Trinidad Joe pondered.

"It mout hev been stowed away in one of them crates for safe- keeping," he said, musingly, "and washed off the deck o' one o' them Tahiti brigs goin' down fer oranges. Least-ways, it never got thar from these parts."

"But it's a miracle its life was saved at all. It must have been some hours in the water."

"Them brigs lays their course well inshore, and it was just mebbe a toss up if the vessel clawed off the reef at all! And ez to the child keepin' up, why, dog my skin! that's just the contrariness o' things," continued Joe, in sententious cynicism. "Ef an able seaman had fallen from the yard-arm that night he'd been sunk in sight o' the ship, and thet baby ez can't swim a stroke sails ashore, sound asleep, with the waves for a baby-jumper."

North, who was half relieved, yet half awkwardly disappointed at not seeing Bessy, ventured to ask how the child was doing.

"She'll do all right now," said a frank voice above, and, looking up, North discerned the round arms, blue eyes, and white teeth of the daughter at the window. "She's all hunky, and has an appetite— ef she hezn't got her 'nat'ral nourishment.' Come, Dad! heave ahead, and tell the stranger what you and me allow we'll do, and don't stand there swappin' lies with him."

"Weel," said Trinidad Joe, dejectedly, "Bess allows she can rar that baby and do justice to it. And I don't say—though I'm her father—that she can't. But when Bess

wants anything she wants it all, clean down; no half-ways nor leavin's for her."

"That's me! go on, Dad—you're chippin' in the same notch every time," said Miss Robinson, with cheerful directness.

"Well, we agree to put the job up this way. We'll take the child and you'll give us a paper or writin' makin' over all your right and title. How's that?"

Without knowing exactly why he did, Mr. North objected decidedly.

"Do you think we won't take good care of it?" asked Miss Bessy, sharply.

"That is not the question," said North, a little hotly. "In the first place, the child is not mine to give. It has fallen into my hands as a trust—the first hands that received it from its parents. I do not think it right to allow any other hands to come between theirs and mine."

Miss Bessy left the window. In another moment she appeared from the house, and, walking directly towards North, held out a somewhat substantial hand. "Good!" she said, as she gave his fingers an honest squeeze. "You ain't so looney after all. Dad, he's right! He shan't gin it up, but we'll go halves in it, he and me. He'll be father and I'll be mother 'til death do us part, or the reg'lar family turns up. Well—what do you say?"

More pleased than he dared confess to himself with the praise of this common girl, Mr. James North assented. Then would he see the baby? He would, and Trinidad Joe having already seen the baby, and talked of the baby, and felt

the baby, and indeed had the baby offered to him in every way during the past night, concluded to give some of his valuable time to logging, and left them together.

Mr. North was obliged to admit that the baby was thriving. He moreover listened with polite interest to the statement that the baby's eyes were hazel, like his own; that it had five teeth; that she was, for a girl of that probable age, a robust child; and yet Mr. North lingered. Finally, with his hand on the door-lock, he turned to Bessy and said—

"May I ask you an odd question, Miss Robinson?"

"Go on."

"Why did you think I was—'looney'?"

The frank Miss Robinson bent her head over the baby.

"Why?"

"Yes, why?"

"Because you WERE looney."

"Oh!"

"But—"

"Yes—"

"You'll get over it."

And under the shallow pretext of getting the baby's food, she retired to the kitchen, where Mr. North had the

supreme satisfaction of seeing her, as he passed the window, sitting on a chair with her apron over her head, shaking with laughter.

For the next two or three days he did not visit the Robinsons, but gave himself up to past memories. On the third day he had—it must be confessed not without some effort—brought himself into that condition of patient sorrow which had been his habit. The episode of the storm and the finding of the baby began to fade, as had faded the visit of his relatives. It had been a dull, wet day and he was sitting by his fire, when there came a tap at his door. "Flora;" by which juvenescent name his aged Indian handmaid was known, usually announced her presence with an imitation of a curlew's cry: it could not be her. He fancied he heard the trailing of a woman's dress against the boards, and started to his feet, deathly pale, with a name upon his lips. But the door was impatiently thrown open, and showed Bessy Robinson! And the baby!

With a feeling of relief he could not understand he offered her a seat. She turned her frank eyes on him curiously.

"You look skeert!"

"I was startled. You know I see nobody here!"

"Thet's so. But look yar, do you ever use a doctor?"

Not clearly understanding her, he in turn asked, "Why?"

"Cause you must rise up and get one now—thet's why. This yer baby of ours is sick. We don't use a doctor at our house, we don't beleeve in 'em, hain't no call for

‘em—but this yer baby’s parents mebbee did. So rise up out o’ that cheer and get one.”

James North looked at Miss Robinson and rose, albeit a little in doubt, and hesitating.

Miss Robinson saw it. “I shouldn’t hev troubled ye, nor ridden three mile to do it, if ther hed been any one else to send. But Dad’s over at Eureka, buying logs, and I’m alone. Hello—wher yer goin’?”

North had seized his hat and opened the door. “For a doctor,” he replied amazedly.

“Did ye kalkilate to walk six miles and back?”

“Certainly—I have no horse.”

“But I have, and you’ll find her tethered outside. She ain’t much to look at, but when you strike the trail she’ll go.”

“But YOU—how will YOU return?”

“Well,” said Miss Robinson, drawing her chair to the fire, taking off her hat and shawl, and warming her knees by the blaze, “I didn’t reckon to return. You’ll find me here when you come back with the doctor. Go! Skedaddle quick!”

She did not have to repeat the command. In another instant James North was in Miss Bessy’s seat—a man’s dragoon saddle—and pounding away through the sand. Two facts were in his mind: one was that he, the “looney,” was about to open communication with the wisdom and contemporary criticism of the settlement, by going for a doctor to administer to a sick and anonymous infant in his possession; the other was that his solitary house was in the

hands of a self-invited, large-limbed, illiterate, but rather comely young woman. These facts he could not gallop away from, but to his credit be it recorded that he fulfilled his mission zealously, if not coherently, to the doctor, who during the rapid ride gathered the idea that North had rescued a young married woman from drowning, who had since given birth to a child.

The few words that set the doctor right when he arrived at the cabin might in any other community have required further explanation, but Doctor Duchesne, an old army surgeon, was prepared for everything and indifferent to all. "The infant," he said, "was threatened with inflammation of the lungs; at present there was no danger, but the greatest care and caution must be exercised. Particularly exposure should be avoided." "That settles the whole matter, then," said Bessy potentially. Both gentlemen looked their surprise. "It means," she condescended to further explain, "that YOU must ride that filly home, wait for the old man to come to- morrow, and then ride back here with some of my duds, for thar's no 'day-days' nor picknicking for that baby ontil she's better. And I reckon to stay with her ontil she is."

"She certainly is unable to bear any exposure at present," said the doctor, with an amused side glance at North's perplexed face. "Miss Robinson is right. I'll ride with you over the sands as far as the trail."

"I'm afraid," said North, feeling it incumbent upon him to say something, "that you'll hardly find it as comfortable here as—"

"I reckon not," she said simply, "but I didn't expect much."

North turned a little wearily away. “Good night,” she said suddenly, extending her hand, with a gentler smile of lip and eye than he had ever before noticed, “good night—take good care of Dad.”

The doctor and North rode together some moments in silence. North had another fact presented to him, i. e. that he was going a- visiting, and that he had virtually abandoned his former life; also that it would be profanation to think of his sacred woe in the house of a stranger.

“I dare say,” said the doctor, suddenly, “you are not familiar with the type of woman Miss Bessy presents so perfectly. Your life has been spent among the conventional class.”

North froze instantly at what seemed to be a probing of his secret. Disregarding the last suggestion, he made answer simply and truthfully that he had never met any Western girl like Bessy.

“That’s your bad luck,” said the doctor. “You think her coarse and illiterate?”

Mr. North had been so much struck with her kindness that really he had not thought of it.

“That’s not so,” said the doctor, curtly; “although even if you told her so she would not think any the less of you—nor of herself. If she spoke rustic Greek instead of bad English, and wore a cestus in place of an ill-fitting corset, you’d swear she was a goddess. There’s your trail. Good night.”

3.

James North did not sleep well that night. He had taken Miss Bessy's bedroom, at her suggestion, there being but two, and "Dad never using sheets and not bein' keerful in his habits." It was neat, but that was all. The scant ornamentation was atrocious; two or three highly colored prints, a shell work-box, a ghastly winter bouquet of skeleton leaves and mosses, a star-fish, and two china vases hideous enough to have been worshiped as Buddhist idols, exhibited the gentle recreation of the fair occupant, and the possible future education of the child. In the morning he was met by Joe, who received the message of his daughter with his usual dejection, and suggested that North stay with him until the child was better. That event was still remote; North found, on his return to his cabin, that the child had been worse; but he did not know, until Miss Bessy dropped a casual remark, that she had not closed her own eyes that night. It was a week before he regained his own quarters, but an active week—indeed, on the whole, a rather pleasant week. For there was a delicate flattery in being domineered by a wholesome and handsome woman, and Mr. James North had by this time made up his mind that she was both. Once or twice he found himself contemplating her splendid figure with a recollection of the doctor's compliment, and later, emulating her own frankness, told her of it.

"And what did YOU say?" she asked.

"Oh, I laughed and said—nothing."

And so did she.

A month after this interchange of frankness, she asked him if he could spend the next evening at her house. "You see," she said, "there's to be a dance down at the hall at Eureka, and I haven't kicked a fut since last spring. Hank Fisher's comin' up to take me over, and I'm goin' to let the shanty slide for the night."

"But what's to become of the baby?" asked North, a little testily.

"Well," said Miss Robinson, facing him somewhat aggressively, "I reckon it won't hurt ye to take care of it for a night. Dad can't— and if he could, he don't know how. Liked to have pizened me after mar died. No, young man, I don't propose to ask Hank Fisher to tote thet child over to Eureka and back, and spile his fun."

"Then I suppose I must make way for Mr. Hank—Hank—Fisher?" said North, with the least tinge of sarcasm in his speech.

"Of course. You've got nothing else to do, you know."

North would have given worlds to have pleaded a previous engagement on business of importance, but he knew that Bessy spoke truly. He had nothing to do. "And Fisher has, I suppose?" he asked.

"Of course—to look after ME!"

A more unpleasant evening James North had not spent since the first day of his solitude. He almost began to hate the unconscious cause of his absurd position, as he paced up and down the floor with it. "Was there ever such egregious folly?" he began, but remembering he was quoting

Maria North's favorite resume of his own conduct, he stopped. The child cried, missing, no doubt, the full rounded curves and plump arm of its nurse. North danced it violently, with an inward accompaniment that was not musical, and thought of the other dancers. "Doubtless," he mused, "she has told this beau of hers that she has left the baby with the 'looney' Man on the Beach. Perhaps I may be offered a permanent engagement as a harmless simpleton accustomed to the care of children. Mothers may cry for me. The doctor is at Eureka. Of course, he will be there to see his untranslated goddess, and condole with her over the imbecility of the Man on the Beach." Once he carelessly asked Joe who the company were.

"Well," said Joe, mournfully, "thar's Widder Higsby and darter; the four Stubbs gals; in course Polly Doble will be on hand with that feller that's clerking over at the Head for Jones, and Jones' wife. Then thar's French Pete, and Whisky Ben, and that chap that shot Archer—I disremember his name—and the barber—what's that little mulatto's name—that 'ar Kanaka? I swow!" continued Joe, drearily, "I'll be forgettin' my own next—and—"

"That will do," interrupted North, only half concealing his disgust as he rose and carried the baby to the other room, beyond the reach of names that might shock its ladylike ears. The next morning he met the from-dance-returning Bessy abstractedly, and soon took his leave, full of a disloyal plan, conceived in the sleeplessness of her own bedchamber. He was satisfied that he owed a duty to its unknown parents to remove the child from the degrading influences of the barber Kanaka, and Hank Fisher especially, and he resolved to write to his relatives, stating the case, asking a home for the waif and assistance to find its parents. He addressed this letter to his cousin Maria, partly in consideration of the dramatic farewell of that young lady,

and its possible influence in turning her susceptible heart towards his protege. He then quietly settled back to his old solitary habits, and for a week left the Robinsons unvisited. The result was a morning call by Trinidad Joe on the hermit. "It's a whim of my gal's, Mr. North," he said, dejectedly, "and ez I told you before and warned ye, when that gal hez an idee, fower yoke of oxen and seving men can't drag it outer her. She's got a idee o' larnin'—never hevin' hed much schoolin', and we ony takin' the papers, permiskiss like—and she says YOU can teach her— not hevin' anythin' else to do. Do ye folly me?"

"Yes," said North, "certainly."

"Well, she allows ez mebbee you're proud, and didn't like her takin' care of the baby for nowt; and she reckons that ef you'll gin her some book larnin', and get her to sling some fancy talk in fash'n'ble style—why, she'll call it squar."

"You can tell her," said North, very honestly, "that I shall be only too glad to help her in any way, without ever hoping to cancel my debt of obligation to her."

"Then it's a go?" said the mystified Joe, with a desperate attempt to convey the foregoing statement to his own intellect in three Saxon words.

"It's a go," replied North, cheerfully.

And he felt relieved. For he was not quite satisfied with his own want of frankness to her. But here was a way to pay off the debt he owed her, and yet retain his own dignity. And now he could tell her what he had done, and he trusted to the ambitious instinct that prompted her to seek a better education to explain his reasons for it.

He saw her that evening and confessed all to her frankly. She kept her head averted, but when she turned her blue eyes to him they were wet with honest tears. North had a man's horror of a ready feminine lachrymal gland; but it was not like Bessy to cry, and it meant something; and then she did it in a large, goddess-like way, without sniffling, or chocking, or getting her nose red, but rather with a gentle deliquescence, a harmonious melting, so that he was fain to comfort her with nearer contact, gentleness in his own sad eyes, and a pressure of her large hand.

"It's all right, I s'pose," she said, sadly; "but I didn't reckon on yer havin' any relations, but thought you was alone, like me."

James North, thinking of Hank Fisher and the "mullater," could not help intimating that his relations were very wealthy and fashionable people, and had visited him last summer. A recollection of the manner in which they had so visited him and his own reception of them prevented his saying more. But Miss Bessy could not forego a certain feminine curiosity, and asked—

"Did they come with Sam Baker's team?"

"Yes."

"Last July?"

"Yes."

"And Sam drove the horses here for a bite?"

"I believe so."

"And them's your relations?"

"They are."

Miss Robinson reached over the cradle and enfolded the sleeping infant in her powerful arms. Then she lifted her eyes, wrathful through her still glittering tears, and said, slowly, "They don't— have—this—child—then!"

"But why?"

"Oh, why? I saw them! That's why, and enough! You can't play any such gay and festive skeletons on this poor baby for flesh and blood parents. No, sir!"

"I think you judge them hastily, Miss Bessy," said North, secretly amused; "my aunt may not, at first, favorably impress strangers, yet she has many friends. But surely you do not object to my cousin Maria, the young lady?"

"What! that dried cuttle-fish, with nothing livin' about her but her eyes? James North, ye may be a fool like the old woman— perhaps it's in the family—but ye ain't a devil, like that gal! That ends it."

And it did. North dispatched a second letter to Maria saying that he had already made other arrangements for the baby. Pleased with her easy victory, Miss Bessy became more than usually gracious, and the next day bowed her shapely neck meekly to the yoke of her teacher, and became a docile pupil. James North could not have helped noticing her ready intelligence, even had he been less prejudiced in her favor than he was fast becoming now. If he had found it pleasant before to be admonished by her there was still more delicious flattery in her perfect trust in his omniscient skill as a pilot over this unknown sea. There was a certain enjoyment in guiding her hand over the writing-book, that I fear he could not have obtained from an intellect less

graciously sustained by its physical nature. The weeks flew quickly by on gossamer wings, and when she placed a bunch of larkspurs and poppies in his hand one morning, he remembered for the first that it was spring.

I cannot say that there was more to record of Miss Bessy's education than this. Once North, half jestingly, remarked that he had never yet seen her admirer, Mr. Hank Fisher. Miss Bessy (coloring but cool)—"You never will!" North (white but hot)— "Why?" Miss Bessy (faintly)—"I'd rather not." North (resolutely)—"I insist." Bessy (yielding)—"As my teacher?" North (hesitatingly, at the limitation of the epithet)—"Y-e-e-s!" Bessy—"And you'll promise never to speak of it again?" North— "Never." Bessy (slowly—"Well, he said I did an awful thing to go over to your cabin and stay." North (in the genuine simplicity of a refined nature)—"But how?" Miss Bessy (half piqued, but absolutely admiring that nature)—"Quit! and keep your promise!"

They were so happy in these new relations that it occurred to Miss Bessy one day to take James North to task for obliging her to ask to be his pupil. "You knew how ignorant I was," she added; and Mr. North retorted by relating to her the doctor's criticism on her independence. "To tell you the truth," he added, "I was afraid you would not take it as kindly as he thought."

"That is, you thought me as vain as yourself. It seems to me you and the doctor had a great deal to say to each other."

"On the contrary," laughed North, "that was all we said."

"And you didn't make fun of me?"

Perhaps it was not necessary for North to take her hand to emphasize his denial, but he did.

Miss Bessy, being still reminiscent, perhaps, did not notice it. “If it hadn’t been for that ar—I mean that thar—no, that baby—I wouldn’t have known you!” she said dreamily.

“No,” returned North, mischievously, “but you still would have known Hank Fisher.”

No woman is perfect. Miss Bessy looked at him with a sudden—her first and last—flash of coquetry. Then stooped and kissed—the baby.

James North was a simple gentleman, but not altogether a fool. He returned the kiss, but not vicariously.

There was a footstep on the porch. These two turned the hues of a dying dolphin, and then laughed. It was Joe. He held a newspaper in his hand. “I reckon ye woz right, Mr. North, about my takin’ these yar papers reg’lar. For I allow here’s suthin’ that may clar up the mystery o’ that baby’s parents.” With the hesitation of a slowly grappling intellect, Joe sat down on the table and read from the San Francisco “Herald” as follows: “‘It is now ascertained beyond doubt that the wreck reported by the Aeolus was the American brig Pomare bound hence to Tahiti. The worst surmises are found correct. The body of the woman has been since identified as that of the beau-ti-ful daughter of—of—of—Terp—Terp—Terpish’—Well! I swow that name just tackles me.”

“Gin it to me, Dad,” said Bessy pertly. “You never had any education, any way. Hear your accomplished daughter.” With a mock bow to the new schoolmaster, and a capital burlesque of a confident school girl, she strode to the middle of the room the paper held and folded book-wise in

her hands. “Ahem! Where did you leave off? Oh, ‘the beautiful daughter of Terpsichore—whose name was prom-i-nently connected with a mysterious social scandal of last year—the gifted but unfortunate Grace Chatterton’—No—don’t stop me—there’s some more! ‘The body of her child, a lovely infant of six months, has not been recovered, and it is supposed was washed overboard.’ There! may be that’s the child, Mr. North. Why, Dad! Look, O my God! He’s falling. Catch him, Dad! Quick!”

But her strong arm had anticipated her father’s. She caught him, lifted him to the bed, on which he lay henceforth for many days unconscious. Then fever supervened, and delirium, and Doctor Duchesne telegraphed for his friends; but at the end of a week and the opening of a summer day the storm passed, as the other storm had passed, and he awoke, enfeebled, but at peace. Bessy was at his side—he was glad to see—alone.

“Bessy, dear,” he said hesitatingly, “when I am stronger I have something to tell you.”

“I know it all, Jem,” she said with a trembling lip; “I heard it all—no, not from THEM, but from your own lips in your delirium. I’m glad it came from YOU—even then.”

“Do you forgive me, Bessy?”

She pressed her lips to his forehead and said hastily, and then falteringly, as if afraid of her impulse:

“Yes. Yes.”

“And you will still be mother to the child?”

“HER child?”

"No dear, not hers, but MINE!"

She started, cried a little, and then putting her arms around him, said: "Yes."

And as there was but one way of fulfilling that sacred promise, they were married in the autumn.

Two Saints of the Foot-hills

It never was clearly ascertained how long they had been there. The first settler of Rough-and-Ready—one Low, playfully known to his familiars as "The Poor Indian"—declared that the Saints were afore his time, and occupied a cabin in the brush when he "blazed" his way to the North Fork. It is certain that the two were present when the water was first turned on the Union Ditch and then and there received the designation of Daddy Downey and Mammy Downey, which they kept to the last. As they tottered toward the refreshment tent, they were welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm by the boys; or, to borrow the more refined language of the "Union Recorder,"—"Their gray hairs and bent figures, recalling as they did the happy paternal eastern homes of the spectators, and the blessings that fell from venerable lips when they left those homes to journey in quest of the Golden Fleece on Occidental Slopes, caused many to burst into tears." The nearer facts, that many of these spectators were orphans, that a few were unable to establish any legal parentage whatever, that others had enjoyed a State's guardianship and discipline, and that a majority had left their paternal roofs without any embarrassing preliminary formula, were mere passing clouds that did not dim the golden imagery of the writer. From that day the Saints were adopted as historical lay figures, and entered at once into possession of uninterrupted gratuities and endowment.

It was not strange that, in a country largely made up of ambitious and reckless youth, these two—types of conservative and settled forms—should be thus celebrated.

Apart from any sentiment or veneration, they were admirable foils to the community's youthful progress and energy. They were put forward at every social gathering, occupied prominent seats on the platform at every public meeting, walked first in every procession, were conspicuous at the frequent funeral and rarer wedding, and were godfather and godmother to the first baby born in Rough-and-Ready. At the first poll opened in that precinct, Daddy Downey cast the first vote, and, as was his custom on all momentous occasions, became volubly reminiscent. "The first vote I ever cast," said Daddy, "was for Andrew Jackson; the father o' some on your peart young chaps wasn't born then; he! he! that was 'way long in '33, wasn't it? I disremember now, but if Mammy was here, she bein' a school-gal at the time, she could say. But my memory's failin' me. I'm an old man, boys; yet I likes to see the young ones go ahead. I recklect that thar vote from a suckumstance. Squire Adams was present, and seein' it was my first vote, he put a goold piece into my hand, and, sez he, sez Squire Adams, 'Let that always be a reminder of the exercise of a glorious freeman's privilege!' He did; he! he! Lord, boys! I feel so proud of ye, that I wish I had a hundred votes to cast for ye all."

It was hardly necessary to say that the memorial tribute of Squire Adams was increased tenfold by the judges, inspectors, and clerks, and that the old man tottered back to Mammy, considerably heavier than he came. As both of the rival candidates were equally sure of his vote, and each had called upon him and offered a conveyance, it is but fair to presume they were equally beneficent. But Daddy insisted upon walking to the polls—a distance of two miles—as a moral example, and a text for the California paragraphers, who hastened to record that such was the influence of the foot-hill climate, that "a citizen of Rough-and-Ready, aged eighty-four, rose at six o'clock, and, after milking two cows,

walked a distance of twelve miles to the polls, and returned in time to chop a cord of wood before dinner."

Slightly exaggerated as this statement may have been, the fact that Daddy was always found by the visitor to be engaged at his wood- pile, which seemed neither to increase nor diminish under his axe, a fact, doubtless, owing to the activity of Mammy, who was always at the same time making pies, seemed to give some credence to the story. Indeed, the wood-pile of Daddy Downey was a standing reproof to the indolent and sluggish miner.

"Ole Daddy must use up a pow'ful sight of wood; every time I've passed by his shanty he's been makin' the chips fly. But what gets me is, that the pile don't seem to come down," said Whisky Dick to his neighbor.

"Well, you derned fool!" growled his neighbor, "spose some chap happens to pass by thar, and sees the old man doin' a man's work at eighty, and slouches like you and me lying round drunk, and that chap, feelin' kinder humped, goes up some dark night and heaves a load of cut pine over his fence, who's got anything to say about it? Say?" Certainly not the speaker, who had done the act suggested, nor the penitent and remorseful hearer, who repeated it next day.

The pies and cakes made by the old woman were, I think, remarkable rather for their inducing the same loyal and generous spirit than for their intrinsic excellence, and it may be said appealed more strongly to the nobler aspirations of humanity than its vulgar appetite. Howbeit, everybody ate Mammy Downey's pies, and thought of his childhood. "Take 'em, dear boys," the old lady would say; "it does me good to see you eat 'em; reminds me kinder of my poor Sammy, that, ef he'd lived, would hev been ez strong and

beg ez you be, but was taken down with lung fever, at Sweetwater. I kin see him yet; that's forty year ago, dear! comin' out o' the lot to the bake-house, and smilin' such a beautiful smile, like yours, dear boy, as I handed him a mince or a lemming turnover. Dear, dear, how I do run on! and those days is past! but I seems to live in you again!" The wife of the hotel-keeper, actuated by a low jealousy, had suggested that she "seemed to live OFF them;" but as that person tried to demonstrate the truth of her statement by reference to the cost of the raw material used by the old lady, it was considered by the camp as too practical and economical for consideration. "Besides," added Cy Perkins, "ef old Mammy wants to turn an honest penny in her old age, let her do it. How would you like your old mother to make pies on grub wages? eh?" A suggestion that so affected his hearer (who had no mother) that he bought three on the spot. The quality of these pies had never been discussed but once. It is related that a young lawyer from San Francisco, dining at the Palmetto restaurant, pushed away one of Mammy Downey's pies with every expression of disgust and dissatisfaction. At this juncture, Whisky Dick, considerably affected by his favorite stimulant, approached the stranger's table, and, drawing up a chair, sat uninvited before him.

"Mebbee, young man," he began gravely, "ye don't like Mammy Downey's pies?"

The stranger replied curtly, and in some astonishment, that he did not, as a rule, "eat pie."

"Young man," continued Dick, with drunken gravity, "mebbee you're accustomed to Charlotte rusks and blue mange; mebbee ye can't eat unless your grub is got up by one o' them French cooks'? Yet WE— us boys yar in this camp—calls that pie—a good—a com-pe-tent pie!"

The stranger again disclaimed anything but a general dislike of that form of pastry.

"Young man," continued Dick, utterly unheeding the explanation— "young man, mebbee you onst had an ole—a very ole mother, who, tottering down the vale o' years, made pies. Mebbee, and it's like your blank epicurean soul, ye turned up your nose on the ole woman, and went back on the pies, and on her! She that dandled ye when ye woz a baby—a little baby! Mebbee ye went back on her, and shook her, and played off on her, and gave her away—dead away! And now, mebbee, young man—I wouldn't hurt ye for the world, but mebbee, afore ye leave this yar table, YE'LL EAT THAT PIE!"

The stranger rose to his feet, but the muzzle of a dragoon revolver in the unsteady hands of Whisky Dick, caused him to sit down again. He ate the pie, and lost his case likewise, before a Rough-and- Ready jury.

Indeed, far from exhibiting the cynical doubts and distrusts of age, Daddy Downey received always with childlike delight the progress of modern improvement and energy. "In my day, long back in the twenties, it took us nigh a week—a week, boys—to get up a barn, and all the young ones—I was one then—for miles 'round at the raisin'; and yer's you boys—rascals ye are, too—runs up this yer shanty for Mammy and me 'twixt sun-up and dark! Eh, eh, you're teachin' the old folks new tricks, are ye? Ah, get along, you!" and in playful simulation of anger he would shake his white hair and his hickory staff at the "rascals." The only indication of the conservative tendencies of age was visible in his continual protest against the extravagance of the boys. "Why," he would say, "a family, a hull family—leavin' alone me and the old woman—might be supported on what you young rascals throw away in a single spree. Ah, you

young dogs, didn't I hear about your scattering half-dollars on the stage the other night when that Eyetalian Papist was singin'? And that money goes out of Ameriky—ivry cent!"

There was little doubt that the old couple were saving, if not avaricious. But when it was known, through the indiscreet volubility of Mammy Downey, that Daddy Downey sent the bulk of their savings, gratuities, and gifts to a dissipated and prodigal son in the East—whose photograph the old man always carried with him—it rather elevated him in their regard. "When ye write to that gay and festive son o' yourn, Daddy," said Joe Robinson, "send him this yer specimen. Give him my compliments, and tell him, ef he kin spend money faster than I can, I call him! Tell him, ef he wants a first-class jamboree, to kem out here, and me and the boys will show him what a square drunk is!" In vain would the old man continue to protest against the spirit of the gift; the miner generally returned with his pockets that much the lighter, and it is not improbable a little less intoxicated than he otherwise might have been. It may be premised that Daddy Downey was strictly temperate. The only way he managed to avoid hurting the feelings of the camp was by accepting the frequent donations of whisky to be used for the purposes of liniment.

"Next to snake-oil, my son," he would say, "and dilberry-juice— and ye don't seem to pro-duce 'em hereabouts—whisky is good for rubbin' onto old bones to make 'em limber. But pure cold water, 'sparklin' and bright in its liquid light,' and, so to speak, reflectin' of God's own linyments on its surfiss, is the best, onless, like poor ol' Mammy and me, ye gets the dumb-agur from over-use."

The fame of the Downey couple was not confined to the foot-hills. The Rev. Henry Gushington, D.D., of Boston, making a bronchial tour of California, wrote to the

"Christian Pathfinder" an affecting account of his visit to them, placed Daddy Downey's age at 102, and attributed the recent conversions in Rough-and-Ready to their influence. That gifted literary Hessian, Bill Smith, traveling in the interests of various capitalists, and the trustworthy correspondent of four "only independent American journals," quoted him as an evidence of the longevity superinduced by the climate, offered him as an example of the security of helpless life and property in the mountains, used him as an advertisement of the Union Ditch, and it is said in some vague way cited him as proving the collateral facts of a timber and ore-producing region existing in the foot-hills worthy the attention of Eastern capitalists.

Praised thus by the lips of distinguished report, fostered by the care and sustained by the pecuniary offerings of their fellow- citizens, the Saints led for two years a peaceful life of gentle absorption. To relieve them from the embarrassing appearance of eleemosynary receipts—an embarrassment felt more by the givers than the recipients—the postmastership of Rough-and-Ready was procured for Daddy, and the duty of receiving and delivering the United States mails performed by him, with the advice and assistance of the boys. If a few letters went astray at this time, it was easily attributed to this undisciplined aid, and the boys themselves were always ready to make up the value of a missing money-letter and "keep the old man's accounts square." To these functions presently were added the treasurerships of the Masons' and Odd Fellows' charitable funds—the old man being far advanced in their respective degrees—and even the position of almoner of their bounties was super-added. Here, unfortunately, Daddy's habits of economy and avaricious propensity came near making him unpopular, and very often needy brothers were forced to object to the quantity and quality of the help extended. They always met with more generous relief from the private hands

of the brothers themselves, and the remark, "that the ol' man was trying to set an example—that he meant well,"—and that they would yet be thankful for his zealous care and economy. A few, I think, suffered in noble silence, rather than bring the old man's infirmity to the public notice.

And so with this honor of Daddy and Mammy, the days of the miners were long and profitable in the land of the foot-hills. The mines yielded their abundance, the winters were singularly open and yet there was no drouth nor lack of water, and peace and plenty smiled on the Sierrean foothills, from their highest sunny upland to the trailing falda of wild oats and poppies. If a certain superstition got abroad among the other camps, connecting the fortunes of Rough- and-Ready with Daddy and Mammy, it was a gentle, harmless fancy, and was not, I think, altogether rejected by the old people. A certain large, patriarchal, bountiful manner, of late visible in Daddy, and the increase of much white hair and beard, kept up the poetic illusion, while Mammy, day by day, grew more and more like somebody's fairy godmother. An attempt was made by a rival camp to emulate these paying virtues of reverence, and an aged mariner was procured from the Sailor's Snug Harbor in San Francisco, on trial. But the unfortunate seaman was more or less diseased, was not always presentable, through a weakness for ardent spirits, and finally, to use the powerful idiom of one of his disappointed foster-children, "up and died in a week, without slinging ary blessin'."

But vicissitude reaches young and old alike. Youthful Rough-and- Ready and the Saints had climbed to their meridian together, and it seemed fit that they should together decline. The first shadow fell with the immigration to Rough-and-Ready of a second aged pair. The landlady of the Independence Hotel had not abated her malevolence towards the Saints, and had imported at considerable

expense her grand-aunt and grand-uncle, who had been enjoying for some years a sequestered retirement in the poorhouse at East Machias. They were indeed very old. By what miracle, even as anatomical specimens, they had been preserved during their long journey was a mystery to the camp. In some respects they had superior memories and reminiscences. The old man—Abner Trix—had shouldered a musket in the war of 1812; his wife, Abigail, had seen Lady Washington. She could sing hymns; he knew every text between "the leds" of a Bible. There is little doubt but that in many respects, to the superficial and giddy crowd of youthful spectators, they were the more interesting spectacle.

Whether it was jealousy, distrust, or timidity that overcame the Saints, was never known, but they studiously declined to meet the strangers. When directly approached upon the subject, Daddy Downey pleaded illness, kept himself in close seclusion, and the Sunday that the Trixes attended church in the school-house on the hill, the triumph of the Trix party was mitigated by the fact that the Downeys were not in their accustomed pew. "You bet that Daddy and Mammy is lying low jest to ketch them old mummies yet," explained a Downeyite. For by this time schism and division had crept into the camp; the younger and later members of the settlement adhering to the Trixes, while the older pioneers stood not only loyal to their own favorites, but even, in the true spirit of partisanship, began to seek for a principle underlying their personal feelings. "I tell ye what, boys," observed Sweetwater Joe, "if this yer camp is goin' to be run by greenhorns, and old pioneers, like Daddy and the rest of us, must take back seats, it's time we emigrated and shoved out, and tuk Daddy with us. Why, they're talkin' of rotation in offiss, and of putting that skeleton that Ma'am Decker sets up at the table, to take her boarders' appetites away, into the post- office in place o' Daddy." And, indeed, there were

some fears of such a conclusion; the newer men of Rough-and-Ready were in the majority, and wielded a more than equal influence of wealth and outside enterprise. "Frisco," as a Downeyite bitterly remarked, "already owned half the town." The old friends that rallied around Daddy and Mammy were, like most loyal friends in adversity, in bad case themselves, and were beginning to look and act, it was observed, not unlike their old favorites.

At this juncture Mammy died.

The sudden blow for a few days seemed to reunite dissevered Rough- and-Ready. Both factions hastened to the bereaved Daddy with condolements, and offers of aid and assistance. But the old man received them sternly. A change had come over the weak and yielding octogenarian. Those who expected to find him maudlin, helpless, disconsolate, shrank from the cold, hard eyes and truculent voice that bade them "begone," and "leave him with his dead." Even his own friends failed to make him respond to their sympathy, and were fain to content themselves with his cold intimation that both the wishes of his dead wife and his own instincts were against any display, or the reception of any favor from the camp that might tend to keep up the divisions they had innocently created. The refusal of Daddy to accept any service offered was so unlike him as to have but one dreadful meaning! The sudden shock had turned his brain! Yet so impressed were they with his resolution that they permitted him to perform the last sad offices himself, and only a select few of his nearer neighbors assisted him in carrying the plain deal coffin from his lonely cabin in the woods to the still lonelier cemetery on the hill-top.

When the shallow grave was filled, he dismissed even these curtly, shut himself up in his cabin, and for days

remained unseen. It was evident that he was no longer in his right mind.

His harmless aberration was accepted and treated with a degree of intelligent delicacy hardly to be believed of so rough a community. During his wife's sudden and severe illness, the safe containing the funds intrusted to his care by the various benevolent associations was broken into and robbed, and although the act was clearly attributable to his carelessness and preoccupation, all allusion to the fact was withheld from him in his severe affliction. When he appeared again before the camp, and the circumstances were considerately explained to him, with the remark that "the boys had made it all right," the vacant, hopeless, unintelligent eye that he turned upon the speaker showed too plainly that he had forgotten all about it. "Don't trouble the old man," said Whisky Dick, with a burst of honest poetry. "Don't ye see his memory's dead, and lying there in the coffin with Mammy?" Perhaps the speaker was nearer right than he imagined.

Failing in religious consolation, they took various means of diverting his mind with worldly amusements, and one was a visit to a traveling variety troupe, then performing in the town. The result of the visit was briefly told by Whisky Dick. "Well, sir, we went in, and I sot the old man down in a front seat, and kinder propped him up with some other of the fellers round him, and there he sot as silent and awful ez the grave. And then that fancy dancer, Miss Grace Somerset, comes in, and dern my skin, ef the old man didn't get to trembling and fidgeting all over, as she cut them pidgin wings. I tell ye what, boys, men is men, way down to their boots—whether they're crazy or not! Well, he took on so, that I'm blamed if at last that gal HERSELF didn't notice him! and she ups, suddenly, and blows him a kiss—so! with her fingers!"

Whether this narration were exaggerated or not, it is certain that the old man Downey every succeeding night of the performance was a spectator. That he may have aspired to more than that was suggested a day or two later in the following incident: A number of the boys were sitting around the stove in the Magnolia saloon, listening to the onset of a winter storm against the windows, when Whisky Dick, tremulous, excited, and bristling with rain-drops and information, broke in upon them.

"Well, boys, I've got just the biggest thing out. Ef I hadn't seed it myself, I wouldn't hev believed it!"

"It ain't thet ghost ag'in?" growled Robinson, from the depths of his arm-chair; "thet ghost's about played."

"Wot ghost?" asked a new-comer.

"Why, ole Mammy's ghost, that every feller about yer sees when he's half full and out late o' nights."

"Where?"

"Where? Why, where should a ghost be? Meanderin' round her grave on the hill, yander, in course."

"It's suthin bigger nor thet, pard," said Dick confidently; "no ghost kin rake down the pot ag'in the keerds I've got here. This ain't no bluff!"

"Well, go on!" said a dozen excited voices.

Dick paused a moment, diffidently, with the hesitation of an artistic raconteur.

"Well," he said, with affected deliberation, "let's see! It's nigh onto an hour ago ez I was down thar at the variety show. When the curtain was down betwixt the ax, I looks round fer Daddy. No Daddy thar! I goes out and asks some o' the boys. 'Daddy WAS there a minnit ago,' they say; 'must hev gone home.' Bein' kinder responsible for the old man, I hangs around, and goes out in the hall and sees a passage leadin' behind the scenes. Now the queer thing about this, boys, ez that suthin in my bones tells me the old man is THAR. I pushes in, and, sure as a gun, I hears his voice. Kinder pathetic, kinder pleadin', kinder—"

"Love-makin'!" broke in the impatient Robinson.

"You've hit it, pard—you've rung the bell every time! But she says, 'wants thet money down, or I'll—' and here I couldn't get to hear the rest. And then he kinder coaxes, and she says, sorter sassy, but listenin' all the time—woman like, ye know, Eve and the sarpint!—and she says, 'I,ll see to-morrow.' And he says, 'You won't blow on me?' and I gets excited and peeps in, and may I be teetotally durned ef I didn't see—"

"What?" yelled the crowd.

"Why, DADDY ON HIS KNEES TO THAT THERE FANCY DANCER, Grace Somerset! Now, if Mammy's ghost is meanderin' round, why, et's about time she left the cemetery and put in an appearance in Jackson's Hall. Thet's all!"

"Look yar, boys," said Robinson, rising, "I don't know ez it's the square thing to spile Daddy's fun. I don't object to it, provided she ain't takin' in the old man, and givin' him dead away. But ez we're his guardeens, I propose that we go down thar and see the lady, and find out ef her

intentions is honorable. If she means marry, and the old man persists, why, I reckon we kin give the young couple a send-off thet won't disgrace this yer camp! Hey, boys?"

It is unnecessary to say that the proposition was received with acclamation, and that the crowd at once departed on their discreet mission. But the result was never known, for the next morning brought a shock to Rough-and-Ready before which all other interest paled to nothingness.

The grave of Mammy Downey was found violated and despoiled; the coffin opened, and half filled with the papers and accounts of the robbed benevolent associations; but the body of Mammy was gone! Nor, on examination, did it appear that the sacred and ancient form of that female had ever reposed in its recesses!

Daddy Downey was not to be found, nor is it necessary to say that the ingenuous Grace Somerset was also missing.

For three days the reason of Rough-and-Ready trembled in the balance. No work was done in the ditches, in the flume, nor in the mills. Groups of men stood by the grave of the lamented relict of Daddy Downey, as open-mouthed and vacant as that sepulchre. Never since the great earthquake of '52 had Rough-and-Ready been so stirred to its deepest foundations.

On the third day the sheriff of Calaveras—a quiet, gentle, thoughtful man—arrived in town, and passed from one to the other of excited groups, dropping here and there detached but concise and practical information.

"Yes, gentlemen, you are right, Mrs. Downey is not dead, because there wasn't any Mrs. Downey! Her part was

played by George F. Fenwick, of Sydney—a 'ticket-of-leave-man,' who was, they say, a good actor. Downey? Oh, yes Downey was Jem Flanigan, who, in '52, used to run the variety troupe in Australia, where Miss Somerset made her debut. Stand back a little, boys. Steady! 'The money?' Oh, yes, they've got away with that, sure! How are ye, Joe? Why, you're looking well and hearty! I rather expected ye court week. How's things your way?"

"Then they were only play-actors, Joe Hall?" broke in a dozen voices.

"I reckon!" returned the sheriff, coolly.

"And for a matter o' five blank years," said Whisky Dick, sadly, "they played this camp!"

“Jinny”

I think that the few who were permitted to know and love the object of this sketch spent the rest of their days not only in an attitude of apology for having at first failed to recognize her higher nature, but of remorse that they should have ever lent a credulous ear to a priori tradition concerning her family characteristics. She had not escaped that calumny which she shared with the rest of her sex for those youthful follies, levities, and indiscretions which belong to immaturity. It is very probable that the firmness that distinguished her maturer will in youth might have been taken for obstinacy, that her nice discrimination might at the same period have been taken for adolescent caprice, and that the positive expression of her quick intellect might have been thought youthful impertinence before her years had won respect for her judgment.

She was foaled at Indian Creek, and one month later, when she was brought over to Sawyer’s Bar, was considered the smallest donkey ever seen in the foot-hills. The legend that she was brought over in one of “Dan the Quartz Crusher’s” boots required corroboration from that gentleman; but his denial being evidently based upon a masculine vanity regarding the size of his foot rather than a desire to be historically accurate, it went for nothing. It is certain that for the next two months she occupied the cabin of Dan, until, perhaps incensed at this and other scandals, she one night made her way out. “I hadn’t the least idee wot woz comin’,” said Dan, “but about midnight I seemed to hear hail onto the roof, and a shower of rocks and stones like to a blast started in the canyon. When I got up and struck a light,

thar was suthin' like onto a cord o' kindlin' wood and splinters whar she'd stood asleep, and a hole in the side o' the shanty, and—no Jinny! Lookin' at them hoofs o' hern—and mighty porty they is to look at, too—you would allow she could do it!" I fear that this performance laid the foundation of her later infelicitous reputation, and perhaps awakened in her youthful breast a misplaced ambition, and an emulation which might at that time have been diverted into a nobler channel. For the fame of this juvenile performance—and its possible promise in the future—brought at once upon her the dangerous flattery and attention of the whole camp. Under intelligently directed provocation she would repeat her misguided exercise, until most of the scanty furniture of the cabin was reduced to a hopeless wreck, and sprains and callosities were developed upon the limbs of her admirers. Yet even at this early stage of her history, that penetrating intellect which was in after years her dominant quality was evident to all. She could not be made to kick at quartz tailings, at a barrel of Boston crackers, or at the head or shin of "[racial expletive] Pete." An artistic discrimination economized her surplus energy. "Ef you'll notiss," said Dan, with a large parental softness, "she never lets herself out to onst like them mules or any jackass ez I've heerd of, but kinder holds herself in, and, so to speak, takes her bearings—sorter feels round gently with that off foot, takes her distance and her rest, and then with that ar' foot hoverin' round in the air softly, like an angel's wing, and a gentle, dreamy kind o' look in them eyes, she lites out! Don't ye, Jinny? Thar! jist ez I told ye," continued Dan, with an artist's noble forgetfulness of self, as he slowly crawled from the splintered ruin of the barrel on which he had been sitting. "Thur! did ye ever see the like! Did ye dream that all the while I was talkin' she was a meditatin' that?"

The same artistic perception and noble reticence distinguished her bray. It was one of which a less sagacious animal would have been foolishly vain or ostentatiously prodigal. It was a contralto of great compass and profundity—reaching from low G to high C— perhaps a trifle stronger in the lower register, and not altogether free from a nasal falsetto in the upper. Daring and brilliant as it was in the middle notes, it was perhaps more musically remarkable for its great sustaining power. The element of surprise always entered into the hearer's enjoyment; long after any ordinary strain of human origin would have ceased, faint echoes of Jinny's last note were perpetually recurring. But it was as an intellectual and moral expression that her bray was perfect. As far beyond her size as were her aspirations, it was a free and running commentary of scorn at all created things extant, with ironical and sardonic additions that were terrible. It reviled all human endeavor, it quenched all sentiment, it suspended frivolity, it scattered reverie, it paralyzed action. It was omnipotent. More wonderful and characteristic than all, the very existence of this tremendous organ was unknown to the camp for six months after the arrival of its modest owner, and only revealed to them under circumstances that seemed to point more conclusively than ever to her rare discretion.

It was the beginning of a warm night and the middle of a heated political discussion. Sawyer's Bar had gathered in force at the Crossing, and by the light of flaring pine torches, cheered and applauded the rival speakers who from a rude platform addressed the excited multitude. Partisan spirit at that time ran high in the foot-hills; crimination and recrimination, challenge, reply, accusation, and retort had already inflamed the meeting, and Colonel Bungstarter, after a withering review of his opponent's policy, culminated with a personal attack upon the career and private character of the eloquent and chivalrous Colonel Culpepper Starbottle of

Siskiyou. That eloquent and chivalrous gentleman was known to be present; it was rumored that the attack was expected to provoke a challenge from Colonel Starbottle which would give Bungstarter the choice of weapons, and deprive Starbottle of his advantage as a dead shot. It was whispered also that the sagacious Starbottle, aware of this fact, would retaliate in kind so outrageously as to leave Bungstarter no recourse but to demand satisfaction on the spot. As Colonel Starbottle rose, the eager crowd drew together, elbowing each other in rapt and ecstatic expectancy. "He can't get even on Bungstarter, onless he allows his sister ran off with a [racial expletive], or that he put up his grandmother at draw poker and lost her," whispered the Quartz Crusher; "kin he?" All ears were alert, particularly the very long and hairy ones just rising above the railing of the speaker's platform; for Jinny, having a feminine distrust of solitude and a fondness for show, had followed her master to the meeting and had insinuated herself upon the platform, where way was made for her with that frontier courtesy always extended to her age and sex.

Colonel Starbottle, stertorous and purple, advanced to the railing. There he unbuttoned his collar and laid his neckcloth aside, then with his eye fixed on his antagonist he drew off his blue frock coat, and thrusting one hand into his ruffled shirt front, and raising the other to the dark canopy above him, he opened his vindictive lips. The action, the attitude, were Starbottle's. But the voice was not. For at that supreme moment, a bray—so profound, so appalling, so utterly soul-subduing, so paralyzing that everything else sank to mere insignificance beside it—filled woods, and sky, and air. For a moment only the multitude gasped in speechless astonishment—it was a moment only—and then the welkin roared with their shouts. In vain silence was commanded, in vain Colonel Starbottle, with a ghastly smile, remarked that he recognized in the interruption the voice and

the intellect of the opposition; the laugh continued, the more as it was discovered that Jinny had not yet finished, and was still recurring to her original theme. “Gentlemen,” gasped Starbottle, “any attempt by [Hee-haw! from Jinny] brutal buffoonery to restrict the right of free speech to all [a prolonged assent from Jinny] is worthy only the dastardly”—but here a diminuendo so long drawn as to appear a striking imitation of the Colonel’s own apoplectic sentences drowned his voice with shrieks of laughter.

It must not be supposed that during this performance a vigorous attempt was not made to oust Jinny from the platform. But all in vain. Equally demoralizing in either extremity, Jinny speedily cleared a circle with her flying hoofs, smashed the speaker’s table and water pitcher, sent the railing flying in fragments over the cheering crowd, and only succumbed to two blankets, in which, with her head concealed, she was finally dragged, half captive, half victor, from the field. Even then a muffled and supplemental bray that came from the woods at intervals drew half the crowd away and reduced the other half to mere perfunctory hearers. The demoralized meeting was adjourned; Colonel Starbottle’s withering reply remained unuttered, and the Bungstarter party were triumphant.

For the rest of the evening Jinny was the heroine of the hour, but no cajolery nor flattery could induce her to again exhibit her powers. In vain did Dean of Angel’s extemporize a short harangue in the hope that Jinny would be tempted to reply; in vain was every provocation offered that might sting her sensitive nature to eloquent revolt. She replied only with her heels. Whether or not this was simple caprice, or whether she was satisfied with her maiden effort, or indignant at her subsequent treatment, she remained silent. “She made her little game,” said Dan, who was a political adherent of Starbottle’s, and who yet from that day

enjoyed the great speaker's undying hatred, "and even if me and her don't agree on politics—YOU let her alone." Alas, it would have been well for Dan if he could have been true to his instincts, but the offer of one hundred dollars from the Bungstarter party proved too tempting. She passed irrevocably from his hands into those of the enemy. But any reader of these lines will, I trust, rejoice to hear that this attempt to restrain free political expression in the foot-hills failed signally. For, although she was again covertly introduced on the platform by the Bungstarters, and placed face to face with Colonel Starbottle at Murphy's Camp, she was dumb. Even a brass band failed to excite her emulation. Either she had become disgusted with politics or the higher prices paid by the party to other and less effective speakers aroused her jealousy and shocked her self-esteem, but she remained a passive spectator. When the Hon. Sylvester Rourback, who received, for the use of his political faculties for a single night, double the sum for which she was purchased outright, appeared on the same platform with herself, she forsook it hurriedly and took to the woods. Here she might have starved but for the intervention of one McCarty, a poor market gardener, who found her, and gave her food and shelter under the implied contract that she should forsake politics and go to work. The latter she for a long time resisted, but as she was considered large enough by this time to draw a cart, McCarty broke her to single harness, with a severe fracture of his leg and the loss of four teeth and a small spring wagon. At length, when she could be trusted to carry his wares to Murphy's Camp, and could be checked from entering a shop with the cart attached to her—a fact of which she always affected perfect disbelief—her education was considered as complete as that of the average California donkey. It was still unsafe to leave her alone, as she disliked solitude, and always made it a point to join any group of loungers with her unnecessary cart, and even to follow some good-looking miner to his cabin. The

first time this peculiarity was discovered by her owner was on his return to the street after driving a bargain within the walls of the Temperance Hotel. Jinny was nowhere to be seen. Her devious course, however, was pleasingly indicated by vegetables that strewed the road until she was at last tracked to the veranda of the Arcade saloon, where she was found looking through the window at a game of euchre, and only deterred by the impeding cart from entering the building. A visit one Sunday to the little Catholic chapel at French Camp, where she attempted to introduce an antiphonal service and the cart, brought shame and disgrace upon her unlucky master. For the cart contained freshly-gathered vegetables, and the fact that McCarty had been Sabbath-breaking was painfully evident. Father Sullivan was quick to turn an incident that provoked only the risibilities of his audience into a moral lesson. "It's the poor dumb beast that has a more Christian sowl than Michael," he commented; but here Jinny assented so positively that they were fain to drag her away by main force.

To her eccentric and thoughtless youth succeeded a calm maturity in which her conservative sagacity was steadily developed. She now worked for her living, subject, however, to a nice discrimination by which she limited herself to a certain amount of work, beyond which neither threats, beatings, nor cajoleries would force her. At certain hours she would start for the stable with or without the incumbrances of the cart or Michael, turning two long and deaf ears on all expostulation or entreaty. "Now, God be good to me," said Michael, one day picking himself out from a ditch as he gazed sorrowfully after the flying heels of Jinny, "but it's only the second load of cabbages I'm bringin' the day, and if she's shtruck NOW, it's ruined I am entoirely." But he was mistaken; after two hours of rumination Jinny returned of her own free will, having evidently mistaken the time, and it is said even consented to

draw an extra load to make up the deficiency. It may be imagined from this and other circumstances that Michael stood a little in awe of Jinny's superior intellect, and that Jinny occasionally, with the instinct of her sex, presumed upon it. After the Sunday episode, already referred to, she was given her liberty on that day, a privilege she gracefully recognized by somewhat unbending her usual austerity in the indulgence of a saturnine humor. She would visit the mining camps, and, grazing lazily and thoughtfully before the cabins, would, by various artifices and coquetries known to the female heart, induce some credulous stranger to approach her with the intention of taking a ride. She would submit hesitatingly to a halter, allow him to mount her back, and, with every expression of timid and fearful reluctance, at last permit him to guide her in a laborious trot out of sight of human habitation. What happened then was never clearly known. In a few moments the camp would be aroused by shouts and execrations, and the spectacle of Jinny tearing by at a frightful pace, with the stranger clinging with his arms around her neck, afraid to slip off, from terror of her circumvolving heels, and vainly imploring assistance. Again and again she would dash by the applauding groups, adding the aggravation of her voice to the danger of her heels, until suddenly wheeling, she would gallop to Carter's Pond, and deposit her luckless freight in the muddy ditch. This practical joke was repeated until one Sunday she was approached by Juan Ramirez, a Mexican vaquero, booted and spurred, and carrying a riata. A crowd was assembled to see her discomfiture. But, to the intense disappointment of the camp, Jinny, after quietly surveying the stranger, uttered a sardonic bray, and ambled away to the little cemetery on the hill, whose tangled chapparal effectually prevented all pursuit by her skilled antagonist. From that day she forsook the camp, and spent her Sabbaths in mortuary reflections among the pine head-boards and cold "hic jacets" of the dead.

Happy would it have been if this circumstance, which resulted in the one poetic episode of her life, had occurred earlier; for the cemetery was the favorite resort of Miss Jessie Lawton, a gentle invalid from San Francisco, who had sought the foot-hills for the balsam of pine and fir, and in the faint hope that the freshness of the wild roses might call back her own. The extended views from the cemetery satisfied Miss Lawton's artistic taste, and here frequently, with her sketch-book in hand, she indulged that taste and a certain shy reserve which kept her from contact with strangers. On one of the leaves of that sketch-book appears a study of a donkey's head, being none other than the grave features of Jinny, as once projected timidly over the artist's shoulder. The preliminaries of this intimacy have never transpired, nor is it a settled fact if Jinny made the first advances. The result was only known to the men of Sawyer's Bar by a vision which remained fresh in their memories long after the gentle lady and her four- footed friend had passed beyond their voices. As two of the tunnel-men were returning from work one evening, they chanced to look up the little trail, kept sacred from secular intrusion, that led from the cemetery to the settlement. In the dim twilight, against a sunset sky, they beheld a pale-faced girl riding slowly toward them. With a delicate instinct, new to those rough men, they drew closer in the shadow of the bushes until she passed. There was no mistaking the familiar grotesqueness of Jinny; there was no mistaking the languid grace of Miss Lawton. But a wreath of wild roses was around Jinny's neck, from her long ears floated Miss Jessie's hat ribbons, and a mischievous, girlish smile was upon Miss Jessie's face, as fresh as the azaleas in her hair. By the next day the story of this gentle apparition was known to a dozen miners in camp, and all were sworn to secrecy. But the next evening, and the next, from the safe shadows of the woods they watched and drank in the beauty of that fanciful and all unconscious procession. They kept their secret, and never a

whisper or footfall from these rough men broke its charm or betrayed their presence. The man who could have shocked the sensitive reserve of the young girl would have paid for it with his life.

And then one day the character of the procession changed, and this little incident having been told, it was permitted that Jinny should follow her friend, caparisoned even as before, but this time by the rougher but no less loving hands of men. When the cortege reached the ferry where the gentle girl was to begin her silent journey to the sea, Jinny broke from those who held her, and after a frantic effort to mount the barge fell into the swiftly rushing Stanislaus. A dozen stout arms were stretched to save her, and a rope skilfully thrown was caught around her feet. For an instant she was passive, and, as it seemed, saved. But the next moment her dominant instinct returned, and with one stroke of her powerful heel she snapped the rope in twain and so drifted with her mistress to the sea.

Roger Catron's Friend

I think that, from the beginning, we all knew how it would end. He had always been so quiet and conventional, although by nature an impulsive man; always so temperate and abstemious, although a man with a quick appreciation of pleasure; always so cautious and practical, although an imaginative man, that when, at last, one by one he loosed these bands, and gave himself up to a life, perhaps not worse than other lives which the world has accepted as the natural expression of their various owners, we at once decided that the case was a hopeless one. And when one night we picked him up out of the Union Ditch, a begrimed and weather-worn drunkard, a hopeless debtor, a self-confessed spendthrift, and a half- conscious, maudlin imbecile, we knew that the end had come. The wife he had abandoned had in turn deserted him; the woman he had misled had already realized her folly, and left him with her reproaches; the associates of his reckless life, who had used and abused him, had found him no longer of service, or even amusement, and clearly there was nothing left to do but to hand him over to the state, and we took him to the nearest penitential asylum. Conscious of the Samaritan deed, we went back to our respective wives, and told his story. It is only just to say that these sympathetic creatures were more interested in the philanthropy of their respective husbands than in its miserable object. "It was good and kind in you, dear," said loving Mrs. Maston to her spouse, as returning home that night he flung his coat on a chair with an air of fatigued righteousness; "it was like your kind heart to care for that beast; but after he left that good wife of his—that perfect saint—to take up with that awful woman, I think I'd have left him to die in the ditch. Only to

think of it, dear, a woman that you wouldn't speak to!" Here Mr. Maston coughed slightly, colored a little, mumbled something about "women not understanding some things," "that men were men," etc., and then went comfortably to sleep, leaving the outcast, happily oblivious of all things, and especially this criticism, locked up in Hangtown Jail.

For the next twelve hours he lay there, apathetic and half- conscious. Recovering from this after a while, he became furious, vengeful, and unmanageable, filling the cell and corridor with maledictions of friend and enemy; and again sullen, morose, and watchful. Then he refused food, and did not sleep, pacing his limits with the incessant, feverish tread of a caged tiger. Two physicians, diagnosing his case from the scant facts, pronounced him insane, and he was accordingly transported to Sacramento. But on the way thither he managed to elude the vigilance of his guards, and escaped. The alarm was given, a hue and cry followed him, the best detectives of San Francisco were on his track, and finally recovered his dead body—emaciated and wasted by exhaustion and fever—in the Stanislaus Marshes, identified it, and, receiving the reward of $1,000 offered by his surviving relatives and family, assisted in legally establishing the end we had predicted.

Unfortunately for the moral, the facts were somewhat inconsistent with the theory. A day or two after the remains were discovered and identified, the real body of "Roger Catron, aged 52 years, slight, iron-gray hair, and shabby in apparel," as the advertisement read, dragged itself, travel-worn, trembling, and disheveled, up the steep slope of Deadwood Hill. How he should do it, he had long since determined—ever since he had hidden his Derringer, a mere baby pistol, from the vigilance of his keepers. Where he should do it, he had settled within his mind only within the last few moments. Deadwood Hill was seldom frequented;

his body might lie there for months before it was discovered. He had once thought of the river, but he remembered it had an ugly way of exposing its secrets on sandbar and shallow, and that the body of Whisky Jim, bloated and disfigured almost beyond recognition, had been once delivered to the eyes of Sandy Bar, before breakfast, on the left bank of the Stanislaus. He toiled up through the chimisal that clothed the southern slope of the hill until he reached the bald, storm-scarred cap of the mountain, ironically decked with the picked, featherless plumes of a few dying pines. One, stripped of all but two lateral branches, brought a boyish recollection to his fevered brain. Against a background of dull sunset fire, it extended two gaunt arms—black, rigid, and pathetic. Calvary!

With the very word upon his lips, he threw himself, face downwards, on the ground beneath it, and, with his fingers clutched in the soil, lay there for some moments, silent and still. In this attitude, albeit a skeptic and unorthodox man, he prayed. I cannot say—indeed I DARE not say—that his prayer was heard, or that God visited him thus. Let us rather hope that all there was of God in him, in this crucial moment of agony and shame, strove outward and upward. Howbeit, when the moon rose he rose too, perhaps a trifle less steady than the planet, and began to descend the hill with feverish haste, yet with this marked difference between his present haste and his former recklessness, that it seemed to have a well- defined purpose. When he reached the road again, he struck into a well-worn trail, where, in the distance, a light faintly twinkled. Following this beacon, he kept on, and at last flung himself heavily against the door of the little cabin from whose window the light had shone. As he did so, it opened upon the figure of a square, thickset man, who, in the impetuosity of Catron's onset, received him, literally, in his arms.

"Captain Dick," said Roger Catron, hoarsely, "Captain Dick, save me! For God's sake, save me!"

Captain Dick, without a word, placed a large, protecting hand upon Catron's shoulder, allowed it to slip to his waist, and then drew his visitor quietly, but firmly, within the cabin. Yet, in the very movement, he had managed to gently and unobtrusively possess himself of Catron's pistol.

"Save ye! From which?" asked Captain Dick, as quietly and unobtrusively dropping the Derringer in a flour sack.

"From everything," gasped Catron, "from the men that are hounding me, from my family, from my friends, but most of all—from, from— myself!"

He had, in turn, grasped Captain Dick, and forced him frenziedly against the wall. The captain released himself, and, taking the hands of his excited visitor, said slowly—

"Ye wan some blue mass—suthin' to unload your liver. I'll get it up for ye."

"But, Captain Dick, I'm an outcast, shamed, disgraced—"

"Two on them pills taken now, and two in the morning," continued the captain, gravely, rolling a bolus in his fingers, "will bring yer head to the wind again. Yer fallin' to leeward all the time, and ye want to brace up."

"But, Captain," continued the agonized man, again clutching the sinewy arms of his host, and forcing his livid face and fixed eyes within a few inches of Captain Dick's,

“hear me! You must and shall hear me. I’ve been in jail—do you hear?—in jail, like a common felon. I’ve been sent to the asylum, like a demented pauper. I’ve—”

“Two now, and two in the morning,” continued the captain, quietly releasing one hand only to place two enormous pills in the mouth of the excited Catron, “thar now—a drink o’ whisky—thar, that’ll do— just enough to take the taste out of yer mouth, wash it down, and belay it, so to speak. And how are the mills running, gin’rally, over at the Bar?”

“Captain Dick, hear me—if you ARE my friend, for God’s sake hear me! An hour ago I should have been a dead man—”

“They say that Sam Bolin hez sold out of the Excelsior—”

“Captain Dick! Listen, for God’s sake; I have suffered—”

But Captain Dick was engaged in critically examining his man. “I guess I’ll ladle ye out some o’ that soothin’ mixture I bought down at Simpson’s t’ other day,” he said, reflectively. “And I onderstand the boys up on the Bar think the rains will set in airly.”

But here Nature was omnipotent. Worn by exhaustion, excitement, and fever, and possibly a little affected by Captain Dick’s later potion, Roger Catron turned white, and lapsed against the wall. In an instant Captain Dick had caught him, as a child, lifted him in his stalwart arms, wrapped a blanket around him, and deposited him in his bunk. Yet, even in his prostration, Catron made one more despairing appeal for mental sympathy from his host.

"I know I'm sick—dying, perhaps," he gasped, from under the blankets; "but promise me, whatever comes, tell my wife—say to—"

"It has been lookin' consid'ble like rain, lately, hereabouts," continued the captain, coolly, in a kind of amphibious slang, characteristic of the man, "but in these yer latitudes no man kin set up to be a weather sharp."

"Captain! will you hear me?"

"Yer goin' to sleep, now," said the captain, potentially.

"But, Captain, they are pursuing me! If they should track me here?"

"Thar is a rifle over thar, and yer's my navy revolver. When I've emptied them, and want you to bear a hand, I'll call ye. Just now your lay is to turn in. It's my watch."

There was something so positive, strong, assuring, and a little awesome in the captain's manner, that the trembling, nervously- prostrated man beneath the blankets forbore to question further. In a few moments his breathing, albeit hurried and irregular, announced that he slept. The captain then arose, for a moment critically examined the sleeping man, holding his head a little on one side, whistling softly, and stepping backwards to get a good perspective, but always with contemplative good humor, as if Catron were a work of art, which he (the captain) had created, yet one that he was not yet entirely satisfied with. Then he put a large pea-jacket over his flannel blouse, dragged a Mexican serape from the corner, and putting it over his shoulders, opened the cabin door, sat down on the doorstep, and leaning back against the door- post, composed himself to meditation. The

moon lifted herself slowly over the crest of Deadwood Hill, and looked down, not unkindly, on his broad, white, shaven face, round and smooth as her own disc, encircled with a thin fringe of white hair and whiskers. Indeed, he looked so like the prevailing caricatures in a comic almanac of planets, with dimly outlined features, that the moon would have been quite justified in flirting with him, as she clearly did, insinuating a twinkle into his keen, gray eyes, making the shadow of a dimple on his broad, fat chin, and otherwise idealizing him after the fashion of her hero-worshiping sex. Touched by these benign influences, Captain Dick presently broke forth in melody. His song was various, but chiefly, I think, confined to the recital of the exploits of one "Lorenzo," who, as related by himself—

Shipped on board of a Liner,
'Renzo, boys, Renzo,

a fact that seemed to have deprived him at once of all metre, grammar, or even the power of coherent narration. At times a groan or a half-articulate cry would come from the "bunk" whereon Roger Catron lay, a circumstance that always seemed to excite Captain Dick to greater effort and more rapid vocalization. Toward morning, in the midst of a prolonged howl from the captain, who was finishing the "Starboard Watch, ahoy!" in three different keys, Roger Catron's voice broke suddenly and sharply from his en-wrappings:

"Dry up, you d—d old fool, will you?"

Captain Dick stopped instantly. Rising to his feet, and looking over the landscape, he took all nature into his confidence in one inconceivably arch and crafty wink. “He’s coming up to the wind,” he said softly, rubbing his hands. “The pills is fetchin’ him. Steady now, boys, steady. Steady as she goes on her course,” and with another wink of ineffable wisdom, he entered the cabin and locked the door.

* * * * * * * *

Meanwhile, the best society of Sandy Bar was kind to the newly-made widow. Without being definitely expressed, it was generally felt that sympathy with her was now safe, and carried no moral responsibility with it. Even practical and pecuniary aid, which before had been withheld, lest it should be diverted from its proper intent, and, perhaps through the weakness of the wife, made to minister to the wickedness of the husband—even that was now openly suggested. Everybody felt that somebody should do something for the widow. A few did it. Her own sex rallied to her side, generally with large sympathy, but, unfortunately, small pecuniary or practical result. At last, when the feasibility of her taking a boarding-house in San Francisco, and identifying herself with that large class of American gentlewomen who have seen better days, but clearly are on the road never to see them again, was suggested, a few of her own and her husband’s rich relatives came to the front to rehabilitate her. It was easier to take her into their homes as an equal than to refuse to call upon her as the mistress of a lodging-house in the adjoining street. And upon inspection it was found that she was still quite an eligible partie, prepossessing, and withal, in her widow’s weeds, a kind of poetical and sentimental presence, as necessary in a wealthy and fashionable American family as a work of art. “Yes, poor Caroline has had a sad, sad history,” the languid Mrs. Walker Catron would say, “and

we all sympathize with her deeply; Walker always regards her as a sister." What was this dark history never came out, but its very mystery always thrilled the visitor, and seemed to indicate plainly the respectability of the hostess. An American family without a genteel skeleton in its closet could scarcely add to that gossip which keeps society from forgetting its members. Nor was it altogether unnatural that presently Mrs. Roger Catron lent herself to this sentimental deception, and began to think that she really was a more exquisitely aggrieved woman than she had imagined. At times, when this vague load of iniquity put upon her dead husband assumed, through the mystery of her friends, the rumor of murder and highway robbery, and even an attempt upon her own life, she went to her room, a little frightened, and had "a good cry," reappearing more mournful and pathetic than ever, and corroborating the suspicions of her friends. Indeed, one or two impulsive gentlemen, fired by her pathetic eyelids, openly regretted that the deceased had not been hanged, to which Mrs. Walker Catron responded that, "Thank Heaven, they were spared at least that disgrace!" and so sent conviction into the minds of her hearers.

It was scarcely two months after this painful close of her matrimonial life that one rainy February morning the servant brought a card to Mrs. Roger Catron, bearing the following inscription:

Richard Graeme Macleod

Women are more readily affected by names than we are, and there was a certain Highland respectability about this that, albeit, not knowing its possessor, impelled Mrs.

Catron to send word that she "would be down in a few moments." At the end of this femininely indefinite period—a quarter of an hour by the French clock on the mantel-piece—Mrs. Roger Catron made her appearance in the reception-room. It was a dull, wet day, as I have said before, but on the Contra Costa hills the greens and a few flowers were already showing a promise of rejuvenescence and an early spring. There was something of this, I think, in Mrs. Catron's presence, shown perhaps in the coquettish bow of a ribbon, in a larger and more delicate ruche, in a tighter belting of her black cashmere gown; but still there was a suggestion of recent rain in the eyes, and threatening weather. As she entered the room, the sun came out, too, and revealed the prettiness and delicacy of her figure, and I regret to state, also, the somewhat obtrusive plainness of her visitor.

"I knew ye'd be sorter disapp'inted at first, not gettin' the regular bearings o' my name, but I'm 'Captain Dick.' Mebbe ye've heard your husband—that is, your husband ez waz, Roger Catron— speak o' me?"

Mrs. Catron, feeling herself outraged and deceived in belt, ruche, and ribbon, freezingly admitted that she had heard of him before.

"In course," said the captain; "why, Lord love ye, Mrs. Catron—ez waz—he used to be all the time talkin' of ye. And allers in a free, easy, confidential way. Why, one night—don't ye remember?— when he came home, carryin', mebbee, more canvas than was seamanlike, and you shet him out the house, and laid for him with a broomstick, or one o' them crokay mallets, I disremember which, and he kem over to me, ole Captain Dick, and I sez to him, sez I, 'Why, Roger, them's only love pats, and yer condishun is such ez to make any woman mad-like.' Why,

Lord bless ye! there ain't enny of them mootool differences you and him hed ez I doesn't knows on, and didn't always stand by, and lend ye a hand, and heave in a word or two of advice when called on."

Mrs. Catron, ice everywhere but in her pink cheeks, was glad that Mr. Catron seemed to have always a friend to whom he confided EVERYTHING, even the base falsehoods he had invented.

"Mebbe now they WAZ falsehoods," said the captain, thoughtfully. "But don't ye go to think," he added conscientiously, "that he kept on that tack all the time. Why, that day he made a raise, gambling, I think, over at Dutch Flat, and give ye them bracelets— regular solid gold—why, it would have done your heart good to have heard him talk about you—said you had the prettiest arm in Californy. Well," said the captain, looking around for a suitable climax, "well, you'd have thought that he was sorter proud of ye! Why, I woz with him in 'Frisco when he bought that A 1 prize bonnet for ye for $75, and not hevin' over $50 in his pocket, borryed the other $25 outer me. Mebbe it was a little fancy for a bonnet; but I allers thought he took it a little too much to heart when you swopped it off for that Dollar Varden dress, just because that Lawyer Maxwell said the Dollar Vardens was becomin' to ye. Ye know, I reckon, he was always sorter jealous of that thar shark—"

"May I venture to ask what your business is with me?" interrupted Mrs. Catron, sharply.

"In course," said the captain, rising. "Ye see," he said, apologetically, "we got to talking o' Roger and ole times, and I got a little out o' my course. It's a matter of—" he began to fumble in his pockets, and finally produced a

small memorandum- book, which he glanced over—"it's a matter of $250."

"I don't understand you," said Mrs. Catron, in indignant astonishment.

"On the 15th of July," said the captain, consulting his memorandum- book, "Roger sold his claim at Nye's Ford for $1,500. Now, le's see. Thar was nigh on $350 ez he admitted to me he lost at poker, and we'll add $50 to that for treating, suppers, and drinks gin'rally—put Roger down for $400. Then there was YOU. Now you spent $250 on your trip to 'Frisco thet summer; then $200 went for them presents you sent your Aunt Jane, and thar was $400 for house expenses. Well, thet foots up $1,250. Now, what's become of thet other $250?"

Mrs. Catron's woman's impulse to retaliate sharply overcame her first natural indignation at her visitor's impudence.

Therein she lost, woman-like, her ground of vantage.

"Perhaps the woman he fled with can tell you," she said savagely.

"Thet," said the captain, slowly, "is a good, a reasonable idee. But it ain't true; from all I can gather SHE lent HIM money. It didn't go THAR."

"Roger Catron left me penniless," said Mrs. Catron, hotly.

"Thet's jist what gets me. You oughter have $250 somewhar lying round."

Mrs. Catron saw her error. “May I ask what right you have to question me? If you have any, I must refer you to my lawyer or my brother-in-law; if you have none, I hope you will not oblige me to call the servants to put you from the house.”

“Thet sounds reasonable and square, too,” said the captain, thoughtfully; “I’ve a power of attorney from Roger Catron to settle up his affairs and pay his debts, given a week afore them detectives handed ye over his dead body. But I thought that you and me might save lawyer’s fees and all fuss and feathers, ef, in a sociable, sad-like way—lookin’ back sorter on Roger ez you and me once knew him—we had a quiet talk together.”

“Good morning, sir,” said Mrs. Catron, rising stiffly. The captain hesitated a moment, a slight flush of color came in his face as he at last rose as the lady backed out of the room. “Good morning, ma’am,” said the captain, and departed.

Very little was known of this interview except the general impression in the family that Mrs. Catron had successfully resisted a vague attempt at blackmail from one of her husband’s former dissolute companions. Yet it is only fair to say that Mrs. Catron snapped up, quite savagely, two male sympathizers on this subject, and cried a good deal for two days afterward, and once, in the hearing of her sister-in-law, to that lady’s great horror, “wished she was dead.”

A week after this interview, as Lawyer Phillips sat in his office, he was visited by Macleod. Recognizing, possibly, some practical difference between the widow and the lawyer, Captain Dick this time first produced his credentials—a “power of attorney.” “I need not tell you,” said Phillips, “that the death of your principal renders this

instrument invalid, and I suppose you know that, leaving no will, and no property, his estate has not been administered upon."

"Mebbe it is, and mebbe it isn't. But I hain't askin' for anythin' but information. There was a bit o' prop'ty and a mill onto it, over at Heavytree, ez sold for $10,000. I don't see," said the captain, consulting his memorandum-book, "ez HE got anything out of it."

"It was mortgaged for $7,000," said the lawyer, quickly, and the interest and fees amount to about $3,000 more."

"The mortgage was given as security for a note?"

"Yes, a gambling debt," said the lawyer, sharply.

"Thet's so, and my belief ez that it wasn't a square game. He shouldn't hev given no note. Why, don't ye mind, 'way back in '60, when you and me waz in Marysville, that night that you bucked agin faro, and lost seving hundred dollars, and then refoosed to take up your checks, saying it was fraud and a gambling debt? And don't ye mind when that chap kicked ye, and I helped to drag him off ye—and—"

"I'm busy now, Mr. Macleod," said Phillips, hastily; "my clerk will give you all the information you require. Good morning."

"It's mighty queer," said the captain, thoughtfully, as he descended the stairs, "but the moment the conversation gets limber and sociable-like, and I gets to runnin' free under easy sail, it's always 'Good morning, Captain,' and we're becalmed."

By some occult influence, all the foregoing conversation, slightly exaggerated, and the whole interview of the captain with the widow with sundry additions, became the common property of Sandy Bar, to the great delight of the boys. There was scarcely a person who had ever had business or social relations with Roger Catron, whom "The Frozen Truth," as Sandy Bar delighted to designate the captain, had not "interviewed," as simply and directly. It is said that he closed a conversation with one of the San Francisco detectives, who had found Roger Catron's body, in these words: "And now hevin' got throo' bizness, I was goin' to ask ye what's gone of Matt. Jones, who was with ye in the bush in Austraily. Lord, how he got me quite interested in ye, telling me how you and him got out on a ticket-of-leave, and was chased by them milishy guards, and at last swam out to a San Francisco bark and escaped;" but here the inevitable pressure of previous business always stopped the captain's conversational flow. The natural result of this was a singular reaction in favor of the late Roger Catron in the public sentiment of Sandy Bar, so strong, indeed, as to induce the Rev. Mr. Joshua McSnagly, the next Sunday, to combat it with the moral of Catron's life. After the service, he was approached in the vestibule, and in the hearing of some of his audience, by Captain Dick, with the following compliment: "In many pints ye hed jess got Roger Catron down to a hair. I knew ye'd do it: why, Lord love ye, you and him had pints in common; and when he giv' ye that hundred dollars arter the fire in Sacramento, to help ye rebuild the parsonage, he said to me—me not likin' ye on account o' my being on the committee that invited ye to resign from Marysville all along o' that affair with Deacon Pursell's darter; and a piece she was, parson! eh?—well, Roger, he ups and sez to me, 'Every man hez his faults,' sez he; and sez he, 'there's no reason why a parson ain't a human being like us, and that gal o' Pursell's is pizen, ez I know.' So ye see, I seed that ye was hittin' yourself over Catron's

shoulder, like them early martyrs." But here, as Captain Dick was clearly blocking up all egress from the church, the sexton obliged him to move on, and again he was stopped in his conversational career.

But only for a time. Before long, it was whispered that Captain Dick had ordered a meeting of the creditors, debtors, and friends of Roger Catron at Robinson's Hall. It was suggested, with some show of reason, that this had been done at the instigation of various practical jokers of Sandy Bar, who had imposed on the simple directness of the captain, and the attendance that night certainly indicated something more than a mere business meeting. All of Sandy Bar crowded into Robinson's Hall, and long before Captain Dick made his appearance on the platform, with his inevitable memorandum-book, every inch of floor was crowded.

The captain began to read the expenditures of Roger Catron with relentless fidelity of detail. The several losses by poker, the whisky bills, and the record of a "jamboree" at Tooley's, the vague expenses whereof footed up $275, were received with enthusiastic cheers by the audience. A single milliner's bill for $125 was hailed with delight; $100 expended in treating the Vestal Virgin Combination Troupe almost canonized his memory; $50 for a simple buggy ride with Deacon Fisk brought down the house; $500 advanced, without security, and unpaid, for the electioneering expenses of Assemblyman Jones, who had recently introduced a bill to prevent gambling and the sale of lager beer on Sundays, was received with an ominous groan. One or two other items of money loaned occasioned the withdrawal of several gentlemen from the audience amidst the hisses or ironical cheers of the others.

At last Captain Dick stopped and advanced to the footlights.

"Gentlemen and friends," he said, slowly. "I foots up $25,000 as Roger Catron hez MADE, fair and square, in this yer county. I foots up $27,000 ez he has SPENT in this yer county. I puts it to you ez men—far-minded men—ef this man was a pauper and debtor? I put it to you ez far-minded men—ez free and easy men—ez political economists—ez this the kind of men to impoverish a county?"

An overwhelming and instantaneous "No!" almost drowned the last utterance of the speaker.

"Thar is only one item," said Captain Dick, slowly, "only one item, that ez men—ez far-minded men—ez political economists—it seems to me we hez the right to question. It's this: Thar is an item, read to you by me, of $2,000 paid to certing San Francisco detectives, paid out o' the assets o' Roger Catron, for the finding of Roger Catron's body. Gentlemen of Sandy Bar and friends, I found that body, and yer it is!"

And Roger Catron, a little pale and nervous, but palpably in the flesh, stepped upon the platform.

Of course the newspapers were full of it the next day. Of course, in due time, it appeared as a garbled and romantic item in the San Francisco press. Of course Mrs. Catron, on reading it, fainted, and for two days said that this last cruel blow ended all relations between her husband and herself. On the third day she expressed her belief that, if he had had the slightest feeling for her, he would, long since, for the sake of mere decency, have communicated with her. On the fourth day she thought she had been, perhaps, badly advised, had an open quarrel with her relatives, and intimated that a

wife had certain obligations, etc. On the sixth day, still not hearing from him, she quoted Scripture, spoke of a seventy-times-seven forgiveness, and went generally into mild hysterics. On the seventh, she left in the morning train for Sandy Bar.

And really I don't know as I have anything more to tell. I dined with them recently, and, upon my word, a more decorous, correct, conventional, and dull dinner I never ate in my life.

“Who Was My Quiet Friend?”

“Stranger!”

The voice was not loud, but clear and penetrating. I looked vainly up and down the narrow, darkening trail. No one in the fringe of alder ahead; no one on the gullied slope behind.

“O! stranger!”

This time a little impatiently. The California classical vocative, “O,” always meant business.

I looked up, and perceived for the first time on the ledge, thirty feet above me, another trail parallel with my own, and looking down upon me through the buckeye bushes a small man on a black horse.

Five things to be here noted by the circumspect mountaineer. FIRST, the locality—lonely and inaccessible, and away from the regular faring of teamsters and miners. SECONDLY, the stranger’s superior knowledge of the road, from the fact that the other trail was unknown to the ordinary traveler. THIRDLY, that he was well armed and equipped. FOURTHLY, that he was better mounted. FIFTHLY, that any distrust or timidity arising from the contemplation of these facts had better be kept to one’s self.

All this passed rapidly through my mind as I returned his salutation.

"Got any tobacco?" he asked.

I had, and signified the fact, holding up the pouch inquiringly.

"All right, I'll come down. Ride on, and I'll jine ye on the slide."

"The slide!" Here was a new geographical discovery as odd as the second trail. I had ridden over the trail a dozen times, and seen no communication between the ledge and trail. Nevertheless, I went on a hundred yards or so, when there was a sharp crackling in the underbrush, a shower of stones on the trail, and my friend plunged through the bushes to my side, down a grade that I should scarcely have dared to lead my horse. There was no doubt he was an accomplished rider—another fact to be noted.

As he ranged beside me, I found I was not mistaken as to his size; he was quite under the medium height, and but for a pair of cold, gray eyes, was rather commonplace in feature.

"You've got a good horse there," I suggested.

He was filling his pipe from my pouch, but looked up a little surprised, and said, "Of course." He then puffed away with the nervous eagerness of a man long deprived of that sedative. Finally, between the puffs, he asked me whence I came.

I replied, "From Lagrange."

He looked at me a few moments curiously, but on my adding that I had only halted there for a few hours, he said: "I thought I knew every man between Lagrange and Indian Spring, but somehow I sorter disremember your face and your name."

Not particularly caring that he should remember either, I replied half laughingly, that, as I lived the other side of Indian Spring, it was quite natural. He took the rebuff, if such it was, so quietly that as an act of mere perfunctory politeness I asked him where he came from.

"Lagrange."

"And you are going to—"

"Well! that depends pretty much on how things pan out, and whether I can make the riffle." He let his hand rest quite unconsciously on the leathern holster of his dragoon revolver, yet with a strong suggestion to me of his ability "to make the riffle" if he wanted to, and added: "But just now I was reck'nin' on taking a little pasear with you."

There was nothing offensive in his speech save its familiarity, and the reflection, perhaps, that whether I objected or not, he was quite able to do as he said. I only replied that if our pasear was prolonged beyond Heavytree Hill, I should have to borrow his beast. To my surprise he replied quietly, "That's so," adding that the horse was at my disposal when he wasn't using it, and HALF of it when he was. "Dick has carried double many a time before this," he continued, "and kin do it again; when your mustang gives out I'll give you a lift and room to spare."

I could not help smiling at the idea of appearing before the boys at Red Gulch en croupe with the stranger;

but neither could I help being oddly affected by the suggestion that his horse had done double duty before. “On what occasion, and why?” was a question I kept to myself. We were ascending the long, rocky flank of the divide; the narrowness of the trail obliged us to proceed slowly, and in file, so that there was little chance for conversation, had he been disposed to satisfy my curiosity.

We toiled on in silence, the buckeye giving way to chimisal, the westering sun, reflected again from the blank walls beside us, blinding our eyes with its glare. The pines in the canyon below were olive gulfs of heat, over which a hawk here and there drifted lazily, or, rising to our level, cast a weird and gigantic shadow of slowly moving wings on the mountain side. The superiority of the stranger’s horse led him often far in advance, and made me hope that he might forget me entirely, or push on, growing weary of waiting. But regularly he would halt by a bowlder, or reappear from some chimisal, where he had patiently halted. I was beginning to hate him mildly, when at one of those reappearances he drew up to my side, and asked me how I liked Dickens!

Had he asked my opinion of Huxley or Darwin, I could not have been more astonished. Thinking it were possible that he referred to some local celebrity of Lagrange, I said, hesitatingly:

“You mean—”

“Charles Dickens. Of course you’ve read him? Which of his books do you like best?”

I replied with considerable embarrassment that I liked them all— as I certainly did.

He grasped my hand for a moment with a fervor quite unlike his usual phlegm, and said, “That’s me, old man. Dickens ain’t no slouch. You can count on him pretty much all the time.”

With this rough preface, he launched into a criticism of the novelist, which for intelligent sympathy and hearty appreciation I had rarely heard equaled. Not only did he dwell upon the exuberance of his humor, but upon the power of his pathos and the all-pervading element of his poetry. I looked at the man in astonishment. I had considered myself a rather diligent student of the great master of fiction, but the stranger’s felicity of quotation and illustration staggered me. It is true, that his thought was not always clothed in the best language, and often appeared in the slouching, slangy undress of the place and period, yet it never was rustic nor homespun, and sometimes struck me with its precision and fitness. Considerably softened toward him, I tried him with other literature. But vainly. Beyond a few of the lyrical and emotional poets, he knew nothing. Under the influence and enthusiasm of his own speech, he himself had softened considerably; offered to change horses with me, readjusted my saddle with professional skill, transferred my pack to his own horse, insisted upon my sharing the contents of his whisky flask, and, noticing that I was unarmed, pressed upon me a silver-mounted Derringer, which he assured me he could “warrant.” These various offices of good will and the diversion of his talk beguiled me from noticing the fact that the trail was beginning to become obscure and unrecognizable. We were evidently pursuing a route unknown before to me. I pointed out the fact to my companion, a little impatiently. He instantly resumed his old manner and dialect.

“Well, I reckon one trail’s as good as another, and what hev ye got to say about it?”

I pointed out, with some dignity, that I preferred the old trail.

"Mebbe you did. But you're jiss now takin' a pasear with ME. This yer trail will bring you right into Indian Spring, and ONNOTICED, and no questions asked. Don't you mind now, I'll see you through."

It was necessary here to make some stand against my strange companion. I said firmly, yet as politely as I could, that I had proposed stopping over night with a friend.

"Whar?"

I hesitated. The friend was an eccentric Eastern man, well known in the locality for his fastidiousness and his habits as a recluse. A misanthrope, of ample family and ample means, he had chosen a secluded but picturesque valley in the Sierras where he could rail against the world without opposition. "Lone Valley," or "Boston Ranch," as it was familiarly called, was the one spot that the average miner both respected and feared. Mr. Sylvester, its proprietor, had never affiliated with "the boys," nor had he ever lost their respect by any active opposition to their ideas. If seclusion had been his object, he certainly was gratified. Nevertheless, in the darkening shadows of the night, and on a lonely and unknown trail, I hesitated a little at repeating his name to a stranger of whom I knew so little. But my mysterious companion took the matter out of my hands.

"Look yar," he said, suddenly, "thar ain't but one place twixt yer and Indian Spring whar ye can stop, and that is Sylvester's."

I assented, a little sullenly.

"Well," said the stranger, quietly, and with a slight suggestion of conferring a favor on me, "ef yer pointed for Sylvester's—why—I DON'T MIND STOPPING THAR WITH YE. It's a little off the road—I'll lose some time—but taking it by and large, I don't much mind."

I stated, as rapidly and as strongly as I could, that my acquaintance with Mr. Sylvester did not justify the introduction of a stranger to his hospitality; that he was unlike most of the people here—in short, that he was a queer man, etc., etc.

To my surprise my companion answered quietly: "Oh, that's all right. I've heerd of him. Ef you don't feel like checking me through, or if you'd rather put 'C. O. D.' on my back, why it's all the same to me. I'll play it alone. Only you just count me in. Say 'Sylvester' all the time. That's me!"

What could I oppose to this man's quiet assurance? I felt myself growing red with anger and nervous with embarrassment. What would the correct Sylvester say to me? What would the girls—I was a young man then, and had won an entree to their domestic circle by my reserve—known by a less complimentary adjective among "the boys,"—what would they say to my new acquaintance? Yet I certainly could not object to his assuming all risks on his own personal recognizances, nor could I resist a certain feeling of shame at my embarrassment.

We were beginning to descend. In the distance below us already twinkled the lights in the solitary rancho of Lone Valley. I turned to my companion. "But you have forgotten that I don't even know your name. What am I to call you?"

"That's so," he said, musingly. "Now, let's see. 'Kearney' would be a good name. It's short and easy like. Thar's a street in 'Frisco the same title; Kearney it is."

"But—" I began impatiently.

"Now you leave all that to me," he interrupted, with a superb self- confidence that I could not but admire. "The name ain't no account. It's the man that's responsible. Ef I was to lay for a man that I reckoned was named Jones, and after I fetched him I found out on the inquest that his real name was Smith, that wouldn't make no matter, as long as I got the man."

The illustration, forcible as it was, did not strike me as offering a prepossessing introduction, but we were already at the rancho. The barking of dogs brought Sylvester to the door of the pretty little cottage which his taste had adorned.

I briefly introduced Mr. Kearney. "Kearney will do—Kearney's good enough for me," commented the soi-disant Kearney half-aloud, to my own horror and Sylvester's evident mystification, and then he blandly excused himself for a moment that he might personally supervise the care of his own beast. When he was out of ear-shot I drew the puzzled Sylvester aside.

"I have picked up—I mean I have been picked up on the road by a gentle maniac, whose name is not Kearney. He is well armed and quotes Dickens. With care, acquiescence in his views on all subjects, and general submission to his commands, he may be placated. Doubtless the spectacle of your helpless family, the contemplation of your daughter's beauty and innocence, may touch his fine sense of humor and pathos. Meanwhile, Heaven help you, and forgive me."

I ran upstairs to the little den that my hospitable host had kept always reserved for me in my wanderings. I lingered some time over my ablutions, hearing the languid, gentlemanly drawl of Sylvester below, mingled with the equally cool, easy slang of my mysterious acquaintance. When I came down to the sitting-room I was surprised, however, to find the self-styled Kearney quietly seated on the sofa, the gentle May Sylvester, the "Lily of Lone Valley," sitting with maidenly awe and unaffected interest on one side of him, while on the other that arrant flirt, her cousin Kate, was practicing the pitiless archery of her eyes, with an excitement that seemed almost real.

"Who is your deliciously cool friend?" she managed to whisper to me at supper, as I sat utterly dazed and bewildered between the enrapt May Sylvester, who seemed to hang upon his words, and this giddy girl of the period, who was emptying the battery of her charms in active rivalry upon him. "Of course we know his name isn't Kearney. But how romantic! And isn't he perfectly lovely? And who is he?"

I replied with severe irony that I was not aware what foreign potentate was then traveling incognito in the Sierras of California, but that when his royal highness was pleased to inform me, I should be glad to introduce him properly. "Until then," I added, "I fear the acquaintance must be Morganatic."

"You're only jealous of him," she said pertly. "Look at May—she is completely fascinated. And her father, too." And actually, the languid, world-sick, cynical Sylvester was regarding him with a boyish interest and enthusiasm almost incompatible with his nature. Yet I submit honestly to the clear-headed reason of my own sex, that I could see nothing more in the man than I have already delivered to the reader.

In the middle of an exciting story of adventure, of which he, to the already prejudiced mind of his fair auditors, was evidently the hero, he stopped suddenly.

"It's only some pack train passing the bridge on the lower trail," explained Sylvester; "go on."

"It may be my horse is a trifle oneasy in the stable," said the alleged Kearney; "he ain't used to boards and covering." Heaven only knows what wild and delicious revelation lay in the statement of this fact, but the girls looked at each other with cheeks pink with excitement as Kearney arose, and, with quiet absence of ceremony, quitted the table.

"Ain't he just lovely?" said Kate, gasping for breath, "and so witty."

"Witty!" said the gentle May, with just the slightest trace of defiance in her sweet voice; "witty, my dear? why, don't you see that his heart is just breaking with pathos? Witty, indeed; why, when he was speaking of that poor Mexican woman that was hung, I saw the tears gather in his eyes. Witty, indeed!"

"Tears," laughed the cynical Sylvester, "tears, idle tears. Why, you silly children, the man is a man of the world, a philosopher, quiet, observant, unassuming."

"Unassuming!" Was Sylvester intoxicated, or had the mysterious stranger mixed the "insane verb" with the family pottage? He returned before I could answer this self-asked inquiry, and resumed coolly his broken narrative. Finding myself forgotten in the man I had so long hesitated to introduce to my friends, I retired to rest early, only to hear, through the thin partitions, two hours later, enthusiastic

praises of the new guest from the voluble lips of the girls, as they chatted in the next room before retiring.

At midnight I was startled by the sound of horses' hoofs and the jingling of spurs below. A conversation between my host and some mysterious personage in the darkness was carried on in such a low tone that I could not learn its import. As the cavalcade rode away I raised the window.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Sylvester, coolly, "only another one of those playful homicidal freaks peculiar to the country. A man was shot by Cherokee Jack over at Lagrange this morning, and that was the sheriff of Calaveras and his posse hunting him. I told him I'd seen nobody but you and your friend. By the way, I hope the cursed noise hasn't disturbed him. The poor fellow looked as if he wanted rest."

I thought so, too. Nevertheless, I went softly to his room. It was empty. My impression was that he had distanced the sheriff of Calaveras about two hours.

A Ghost of the Sierras

It was a vast silence of pines, redolent with balsamic breath, and muffled with the dry dust of dead bark and matted mosses. Lying on our backs, we looked upward through a hundred feet of clear, unbroken interval to the first lateral branches that formed the flat canopy above us. Here and there the fierce sun, from whose active persecution we had just escaped, searched for us through the woods, but its keen blade was dulled and turned aside by intercostal boughs, and its brightness dissipated in nebulous mists throughout the roofing of the dim, brown aisles around us. We were in another atmosphere, under another sky; indeed, in another world than the dazzling one we had just quitted. The grave silence seemed so much a part of the grateful coolness, that we hesitated to speak, and for some moments lay quietly outstretched on the pine tassels where we had first thrown ourselves. Finally, a voice broke the silence:

"Ask the old Major; he knows all about it!"

The person here alluded to under that military title was myself. I hardly need explain to any Californian that it by no means followed that I was a "Major," or that I was "old," or that I knew anything about "it," or indeed what "it" referred to. The whole remark was merely one of the usual conventional feelers to conversation—a kind of social preamble, quite common to our slangy camp intercourse. Nevertheless, as I was always known as the Major, perhaps for no better reason than that the speaker, an old journalist, was always called Doctor, I recognized the fact so far as to

kick aside an intervening saddle, so that I could see the speaker's face on a level with my own, and said nothing.

"About ghosts!" said the Doctor, after a pause, which nobody broke or was expected to break. "Ghosts, sir! That's what we want to know. What are we doing here in this blanked old mausoleum of Calaveras County, if it isn't to find out something about 'em, eh?"

Nobody replied.

"Thar's that haunted house at Cave City. Can't be more than a mile or two away, anyhow. Used to be just off the trail."

A dead silence.

The Doctor (addressing space generally) "Yes, sir; it WAS a mighty queer story."

Still the same reposeful indifference. We all knew the Doctor's skill as a raconteur; we all knew that a story was coming, and we all knew that any interruption would be fatal. Time and time again, in our prospecting experience, had a word of polite encouragement, a rash expression of interest, even a too eager attitude of silent expectancy, brought the Doctor to a sudden change of subject. Time and time again have we seen the unwary stranger stand amazed and bewildered between our own indifference and the sudden termination of a promising anecdote, through his own unlucky interference. So we said nothing. "The Judge"—another instance of arbitrary nomenclature—pretended to sleep. Jack began to twist a cigarrito. Thornton bit off the ends of pine needles reflectively.

"Yes, sir," continued the Doctor, coolly resting the back of his head on the palms of his hands, "it WAS rather curious. All except the murder. THAT'S what gets me, for the murder had no new points, no fancy touches, no sentiment, no mystery. Was just one of the old style, 'sub-head' paragraphs. Old-fashioned miner scrubs along on hardtack and beans, and saves up a little money to go home and see relations. Old-fashioned assassin sharpens up knife, old style; loads old flint-lock, brass-mounted pistol; walks in on old- fashioned miner one dark night, sends him home to his relations away back to several generations, and walks off with the swag. No mystery THERE; nothing to clear up; subsequent revelations only impertinence. Nothing for any ghost to do—who meant business. More than that, over forty murders, same old kind, committed every year in Calaveras, and no spiritual post obits coming due every anniversary; no assessments made on the peace and quiet of the surviving community. I tell you what, boys, I've always been inclined to throw off on the Cave City ghost for that alone. It's a bad precedent, sir. If that kind o' thing is going to obtain in the foot-hills, we'll have the trails full of chaps formerly knocked over by Mexicans and road agents; every little camp and grocery will have stock enough on hand to go into business, and where's there any security for surviving life and property, eh? What's your opinion, Judge, as a fair-minded legislator?"

Of course there was no response. Yet it was part of the Doctor's system of aggravation to become discursive at these moments, in the hope of interruption, and he continued for some moments to dwell on the terrible possibility of a state of affairs in which a gentleman could no longer settle a dispute with an enemy without being subjected to succeeding spiritual embarrassment. But all this digression fell upon apparently inattentive ears.

"Well, sir, after the murder, the cabin stood for a long time deserted and tenantless. Popular opinion was against it. One day a ragged prospector, savage with hard labor and harder luck, came to the camp, looking for a place to live and a chance to prospect. After the boys had taken his measure, they concluded that he'd already tackled so much in the way of difficulties that a ghost more or less wouldn't be of much account. So they sent him to the haunted cabin. He had a big yellow dog with him, about as ugly and as savage as himself; and the boys sort o' congratulated themselves, from a practical view-point, that while they were giving the old ruffian a shelter, they were helping in the cause of Christianity against ghosts and goblins. They had little faith in the old man, but went their whole pile on that dog. That's where they were mistaken.

"The house stood almost three hundred feet from the nearest cave, and on dark nights, being in a hollow, was as lonely as if it had been on the top of Shasta. If you ever saw the spot when there was just moon enough to bring out the little surrounding clumps of chapparal until they looked like crouching figures, and make the bits of broken quartz glisten like skulls, you'd begin to understand how big a contract that man and that yellow dog undertook.

"They went into possession that afternoon, and old Hard Times set out to cook his supper. When it was over he sat down by the embers and lit his pipe, the yellow dog lying at his feet. Suddenly 'Rap! rap!' comes from the door. 'Come in,' says the man, gruffly. 'Rap!' again. 'Come in and be d—d to you,' says the man, who has no idea of getting up to open the door. But no one responded, and the next moment smash goes the only sound pane in the only window. Seeing this, old Hard Times gets up, with the devil in his eye, and a revolver in his hand, followed by the yellow dog, with every tooth showing, and swings open the door.

No one there! But as the man opened the door, that yellow dog, that had been so chipper before, suddenly begins to crouch and step backward, step by step, trembling and shivering, and at last crouches down in the chimney, without even so much as looking at his master. The man slams the door shut again, but there comes another smash.

This time it seems to come from inside the cabin, and it isn't until the man looks around and sees everything quiet that he gets up, without speaking, and makes a dash for the door, and tears round outside the cabin like mad, but finds nothing but silence and darkness. Then he comes back swearing and calls the dog. But that great yellow dog that the boys would have staked all their money on is crouching under the bunk, and has to be dragged out like a coon from a hollow tree, and lies there, his eyes starting from their sockets; every limb and muscle quivering with fear, and his very hair drawn up in bristling ridges. The man calls him to the door. He drags himself a few steps, stops, sniffs, and refuses to go further. The man calls him again, with an oath and a threat. Then, what does that yellow dog do? He crawls edgewise towards the door, crouching himself against the bunk till he's flatter than a knife blade; then, half way, he stops. Then that d—d yellow dog begins to walk gingerly—lifting each foot up in the air, one after the other, still trembling in every limb. Then he stops again. Then he crouches. Then he gives one little shuddering leap—not straight forward, but up—clearing the floor about six inches, as if—"

"Over something," interrupted the Judge, hastily, lifting himself on his elbow.

The Doctor stopped instantly. "Juan," he said coolly, to one of the Mexican packers, "quit foolin' with that riata.

You'll have that stake out and that mule loose in another minute. Come over this way!"

The Mexican turned a scared, white face to the Doctor, muttering something, and let go the deer-skin hide. We all up-raised our voices with one accord, the Judge most penitently and apologetically, and implored the Doctor to go on. "I'll shoot the first man who interrupts you again," added Thornton; persuasively.

But the Doctor, with his hands languidly under his head, had lost his interest. "Well, the dog ran off to the hills, and neither the threats nor cajoleries of his master could ever make him enter the cabin again. The next day the man left the camp. What time is it? Getting on to sundown, ain't it? Keep off my leg, will you, you d—d Greaser, and stop stumbling round there! Lie down."

But we knew that the Doctor had not completely finished his story, and we waited patiently for the conclusion. Meanwhile the old, gray silence of the woods again asserted itself, but shadows were now beginning to gather in the heavy beams of the roof above, and the dim aisles seemed to be narrowing and closing in around us. Presently the Doctor recommenced lazily, as if no interruption had occurred.

"As I said before, I never put much faith in that story, and shouldn't have told it, but for a rather curious experience of my own. It was in the spring of '62, and I was one of a party of four, coming up from O'Neill's, when we had been snowed up. It was awful weather; the snow had changed to sleet and rain after we crossed the divide, and the water was out everywhere; every ditch was a creek, every creek a river. We had lost two horses on the North Fork, we were dead beat, off the trail, and sloshing round, with night coming on,

and the level hail like shot in our faces. Things were looking bleak and scary when, riding a little ahead of the party, I saw a light twinkling in a hollow beyond. My horse was still fresh, and calling out to the boys to follow me and bear for the light, I struck out for it. In another moment I was before a little cabin that half burrowed in the black chapparal; I dismounted and rapped at the door. There was no response. I then tried to force the door, but it was fastened securely from within. I was all the more surprised when one of the boys, who had overtaken me, told me that he had just seen through a window a man reading by the fire. Indignant at this inhospitality, we both made a resolute onset against the door, at the same time raising our angry voices to a yell. Suddenly there was a quick response, the hurried withdrawing of a bolt, and the door opened.

"The occupant was a short, thick-set man, with a pale, careworn face, whose prevailing expression was one of gentle good humor and patient suffering. When we entered, he asked us hastily why we had not 'sung out' before.

"'But we KNOCKED!' I said, impatiently, 'and almost drove your door in.'

"'That's nothing,' he said, patiently. 'I'm used to THAT.'

"I looked again at the man's patient, fateful face, and then around the cabin. In an instant the whole situation flashed before me. 'Are we not near Cave City?' I asked.

"'Yes,' he replied, 'it's just below. You must have passed it in the storm.'

"'I see.' I again looked around the cabin. 'Isn't this what they call the haunted house?'

"He looked at me curiously. 'It is,' he said, simply.

"You can imagine my delight! Here was an opportunity to test the whole story, to work down to the bed rock, and see how it would pan out! We were too many and too well armed to fear tricks or dangers from outsiders. If—as one theory had been held—the disturbance was kept up by a band of concealed marauders or road agents, whose purpose was to preserve their haunts from intrusion, we were quite able to pay them back in kind for any assault. I need not say that the boys were delighted with this prospect when the fact was revealed to them. The only one doubtful or apathetic spirit there was our host, who quietly resumed his seat and his book, with his old expression of patient martyrdom. It would have been easy for me to have drawn him out, but I felt that I did not want to corroborate anybody else's experience; only to record my own. And I thought it better to keep the boys from any predisposing terrors.

"We ate our supper, and then sat, patiently and expectant, around the fire. An hour slipped away, but no disturbance; another hour passed as monotonously. Our host read his book; only the dash of hail against the roof broke the silence. But—"

The Doctor stopped. Since the last interruption, I noticed he had changed the easy slangy style of his story to a more perfect, artistic, and even studied manner. He dropped now suddenly into his old colloquial speech, and quietly said: "If you don't quit stumbling over those riatas, Juan, I'll hobble YOU. Come here, there; lie down, will you?"

We all turned fiercely on the cause of this second dangerous interruption, but a sight of the poor fellow's pale

and frightened face withheld our vindictive tongues. And the Doctor, happily, of his own accord, went on:

"But I had forgotten that it was no easy matter to keep these high- spirited boys, bent on a row, in decent subjection; and after the third hour passed without a supernatural exhibition, I observed, from certain winks and whispers, that they were determined to get up indications of their own. In a few moments violent rappings were heard from all parts of the cabin; large stones (adroitly thrown up the chimney) fell with a heavy thud on the roof. Strange groans and ominous yells seemed to come from the outside (where the interstices between the logs were wide enough). Yet, through all this uproar, our host sat still and patient, with no sign of indignation or reproach upon his good-humored but haggard features. Before long it became evident that this exhibition was exclusively for HIS benefit. Under the thin disguise of asking him to assist them in discovering the disturbers OUTSIDE the cabin, those inside took advantage of his absence to turn the cabin topsy-turvy.

"'You see what the spirits have done, old man,' said the arch leader of this mischief. 'They've upset that there flour barrel while we wasn't looking, and then kicked over the water jug and spilled all the water!'

"The patient man lifted his head and looked at the flour-strewn walls. Then he glanced down at the floor, but drew back with a slight tremor.

"'It ain't water!' he said, quietly.

"'What is it, then?'

"'It's BLOOD! Look!'

"The nearest man gave a sudden start and sank back white as a sheet.

"For there, gentlemen, on the floor, just before the door, where the old man had seen the dog hesitate and lift his feet, there! there!—gentlemen—upon my honor, slowly widened and broadened a dark red pool of human blood! Stop him! Quick! Stop him, I say!"

There was a blinding flash that lit up the dark woods, and a sharp report! When we reached the Doctor's side he was holding the smoking pistol, just discharged, in one hand, while with the other he was pointing to the rapidly disappearing figure of Juan, our Mexican vaquero!

"Missed him! by G-d!" said the Doctor. "But did you hear him? Did you see his livid face as he rose up at the name of blood? Did you see his guilty conscience in his face. Eh? Why don't you speak? What are you staring at?"

"Was it the murdered man's ghost, Doctor?" we all panted in one quick breath.

"Ghost be d—d! No! But in that Mexican vaquero—that cursed Juan Ramirez!—I saw and shot at his murderer!"

The Hoodlum Band

or, The Boy Chief, the Infant Politician, and the Pirate Prodigy

BY JACK WHACKAWAY

Author of "The Boy Slaver," "The Immature Incendiary," "The Precocious Pugilist," etcetera, etcetera.

CHAPTER ONE

It was a quiet New England village. Nowhere in the valley of the Connecticut the autumn sun shone upon a more peaceful, pastoral, manufacturing community. The wooden nutmegs were slowly ripening on the trees, and the white pine hams for Western consumption were gradually rounding into form under the deft manipulation of the hardy American artisan. The honest Connecticut farmer was quietly gathering from his threshing floor the shoe-pegs, which, when intermixed with a fair proportion of oats, offered a pleasing substitute for fodder to the effete civilizations of Europe. An almost Sabbath-like stillness prevailed. Doemville was only seven miles from Hartford, and the surrounding landscape smiled with the conviction of being fully insured.

Few would have thought that this peaceful village was the home of the three young heroes whose exploits would hereafter—but we anticipate.

Doemville Academy was the principal seat of learning in the county. Under the grave and gentle administration of the venerable Doctor Context, it had attained just popularity. Yet the increasing infirmities of age obliged the doctor to relinquish much of his trust to his assistants, who, it is needless to say, abused his confidence. Before long their brutal tyranny and deep-laid malevolence became apparent. Boys were absolutely forced to study their lessons. The sickening fact will hardly be believed, but during school hours they were obliged to remain in their seats with the appearance at least of discipline. It is stated by good authority that the rolling of croquet balls across the floor during recitation was objected to, under the fiendish excuse of its interfering with their studies. The breaking of windows by base balls, and the beating of small scholars with bats, were declared against. At last, bloated and arrogant with success, the under- teachers threw aside all disguise and revealed themselves in their true colors. A cigar was actually taken out of a day scholar's mouth during prayers! A flask of whisky was dragged from another's desk, and then thrown out of the window. And finally, Profanity, Hazing, Theft, and Lying were almost discouraged!

Could the youth of America, conscious of their power and a literature of their own, tamely submit to this tyranny? Never! We repeat it firmly. Never! We repeat it to parents and guardians. Never! But the fiendish tutors, chuckling in their glee, little knew what was passing through the cold, haughty intellect of Charles Fanuel Hall Golightly, aged ten; what curled the lip of Benjamin Franklin Jenkins, aged seven; or what shone in the bold blue eyes of Bromley Chitterlings, aged six and a half, as they sat in the corner of

the playground at recess. Their only other companion and confidant was the negro porter and janitor of the school, known as "Pirate Jim."

Fitly, indeed, was he named, as the secrets of his early wild career—confessed freely to his noble young friends—plainly showed. A slaver at the age of seventeen, the ringleader of a mutiny on the African Coast at the age of twenty, a privateersman during the last war with England, the commander of a fire-ship and its sole survivor at twenty-five, with a wild intermediate career of unmixed piracy, until the Rebellion called him to civil service again as a blockade-runner, and peace and a desire for rural repose led him to seek the janitorship of the Doemville Academy, where no questions were asked and references not exchanged: he was, indeed, a fit mentor for our daring youth. Although a man whose days had exceeded the usual space allotted to humanity, the various episodes of his career footing his age up to nearly one hundred and fifty- nine years, he scarcely looked it, and was still hale and vigorous.

"Yes," continued Pirate Jim, critically, "I don't think he was any bigger nor you, Master Chitterlings, if as big, when he stood on the fork'stle of my ship, and shot the captain o' that East Injymen dead. We used to call him little Weevils, he was so young-like. But, bless your hearts, boys! he wa'n't anything to little Sammy Barlow, ez once crep' up inter the captain's stateroom on a Rooshin frigate, stabbed him to the heart with a jack-knife, then put on the captain's uniform and his cocked hat, took command of the ship and fout her hisself."

"Wasn't the captain's clothes big for him?" asked B. Franklin Jenkins, anxiously.

The janitor eyed young Jenkins with pained dignity.

"Didn't I say the Rooshin captain was a small, a very small man? Rooshins is small, likewise Greeks."

A noble enthusiasm beamed in the faces of the youthful heroes.

"Was Barlow as large as me?" asked C. F. Hall Golightly, lifting his curls from his Jove-like brow.

"Yes; but then he hed hed, so to speak, experiences. It was allowed that he had pizened his schoolmaster afore he went to sea. But it's dry talking, boys."

Golightly drew a flask from his jacket and handed it to the janitor. It was his father's best brandy. The heart of the honest old seaman was touched.

"Bless ye, my own pirate boy!" he said, in a voice suffocating with emotion.

"I've got some tobacco," said the youthful Jenkins, "but it's fine- cut; I use only that now."

"I kin buy some plug at the corner grocery," said Pirate Jim, "only I left my port-money at home."

"Take this watch," said young Golightly; "it is my father's. Since he became a tyrant and usurper, and forced me to join a corsair's band, I've began by dividing the property."

"This is idle trifling," said young Chitterlings, mildly. "Every moment is precious. Is this an hour to give to wine and wassail? Ha, we want action—action! We must strike the blow for freedom to-night—aye, this very night. The scow is already anchored in the mill-dam, freighted with

provisions for a three months' voyage. I have a black flag in my pocket. Why, then, this cowardly delay?"

The two elder youths turned with a slight feeling of awe and shame to gaze on the glowing cheeks, and high, haughty crest of their youngest comrade—the bright, the beautiful Bromley Chitterlings. Alas! that very moment of forgetfulness and mutual admiration was fraught with danger. A thin, dyspeptic, half-starved tutor approached.

"It is time to resume your studies, young gentlemen," he said, with fiendish politeness.

They were his last words on earth.

"Down, tyrant!" screamed Chitterlings.

"Sic him—I mean, Sic semper tyrannis!" said the classical Golightly.

A heavy blow on the head from a base-ball bat, and the rapid projection of a base ball against his empty stomach, brought the tutor a limp and lifeless mass to the ground. Golightly shuddered. Let not my young readers blame him too rashly. It was his first homicide.

"Search his pockets," said the practical Jenkins.

They did so, and found nothing but a Harvard Triennial Catalogue.

"Let us fly," said Jenkins.

"Forward to the boats!" cried the enthusiastic Chitterlings.

But C. F. Hall Golightly stood gazing thoughtfully at the prostrate tutor.

"This," he said calmly, "is the result of a too free government and the common school system. What the country needs is reform. I cannot go with you, boys."

"Traitor!" screamed the others.

C. F. H. Golightly smiled sadly.

"You know me not. I shall not become a pirate—but a Congressman!"

Jenkins and Chitterlings turned pale.

"I have already organized two caucuses in a base ball club, and bribed the delegates of another. Nay, turn not away. Let us be friends, pursuing through various ways one common end. Farewell!" They shook hands.

"But where is Pirate Jim?" asked Jenkins.

"He left us but for a moment to raise money on the watch to purchase armament for the scow. Farewell!"

And so the gallant, youthful spirits parted, bright with the sunrise of hope.

That night a conflagration raged in Doemville. The Doemville Academy, mysteriously fired, first fell a victim to the devouring element. The candy shop and cigar store, both holding heavy liabilities against the academy, quickly followed. By the lurid gleams of the flames, a long, low, sloop-rigged scow, with every mast gone except one, slowly worked her way out of the mill-dam towards the Sound. The

next day three boys were missing—C. F. Hall Golightly, B. F. Jenkins, and Bromley Chitterlings. Had they perished in the flames who shall say? Enough that never more under these names did they again appear in the homes of their ancestors.

Happy, indeed, would it have been for Doemville had the mystery ended here. But a darker interest and scandal rested upon the peaceful village. During that awful night the boarding-school of Madam Brimborion was visited stealthily, and two of the fairest heiresses of Connecticut—daughters of the president of a savings bank, and insurance director—were the next morning found to have eloped. With them also disappeared the entire contents of the Savings Bank. and on the following day the Flamingo Fire Insurance Company failed.

CHAPTER TWO

Let my young readers now sail with me to warmer and more hospitable climes. Off the coast of Patagonia a long, low, black schooner proudly rides the seas, that breaks softly upon the vine-clad shores of that luxuriant land. Who is this that, wrapped in Persian rugs, and dressed in the most expensive manner, calmly reclines on the quarter-deck of the schooner, toying lightly ever and anon with the luscious fruits of the vicinity, held in baskets of solid gold by Nubian slaves? or at intervals, with daring grace, guides an ebony velocipede over the polished black walnut decks, and in and out the intricacies of the rigging. Who is it? well may be asked. What name is it that blanches with terror the cheeks of the Patagonian navy? Who but the Pirate Prodigy—the relentless Boy Scourer of Patagonian seas? Voyagers slowly drifting by the Silurian beach, coasters along the Devonian shore, still shudder at the name of Bromley Chitterlings—the Boy Avenger, late of Hartford, Connecticut.

It has been often asked by the idly curious, Why Avenger, and of what? Let us not seek to disclose the awful secret hidden under that youthful jacket. Enough that there may have been that of bitterness in his past life that he

"Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave,"

or "whose soul would heave above the sickening wave," did not understand. Only one knew him, perhaps too well—a queen of the Amazons, taken prisoner off Terra del Fuego a week previous. She loved the Boy Avenger. But in vain; his youthful heart seemed obdurate.

"Hear me," at last he said, when she had for the seventh time wildly proffered her hand and her kingdom in marriage, "and know once and forever why I must decline your flattering proposal: I love another."

With a wild, despairing cry, she leaped into the sea, but was instantly rescued by the Pirate Prodigy. Yet, even in that supreme moment, such was his coolness that on his way to the surface he captured a mermaid, and, placing her in charge of his steward, with directions to give her a stateroom, with hot and cold water, calmly resumed his place by the Amazon's side. When the cabin door closed on his faithful servant, bringing champagne and ices to the interesting stranger, Chitterlings resumed his narrative with a choking voice:

"When I first fled from the roof of a tyrannical parent, I loved the beautiful and accomplished Eliza J. Sniffen. Her father was president of the Workingmen's Savings Bank, and it was perfectly understood that in the course of time the entire deposits would be his. But, like a vain fool, I wished to anticipate the future, and in a wild moment persuaded Miss Sniffen to elope with me; and, with the entire cash assets of the bank, we fled together." He paused, overcome with emotion. "But fate decreed it otherwise. In my feverish haste, I had forgotten to place among the stores of my pirate craft that peculiar kind of chocolate caramel to which Eliza Jane was most partial. We were obliged to put into New Rochelle on the second day out, to enable Miss Sniffen to procure that delicacy at the nearest confectioner's, and match some zephyr worsteds at the first fancy shop. Fatal mistake. She went—she never returned!" In a moment he resumed in a choking voice, "After a week's weary waiting, I was obliged to put to sea again, bearing a broken heart and the broken bank of her father. I have never seen her since."

"And you still love her?" asked the Amazon queen, excitedly.

"Aye, forever!"

"Noble youth. Here take the reward of thy fidelity, for know, Bromley Chitterlings, that I am Eliza Jane. Wearied with waiting, I embarked on a Peruvian guano ship—but it's a long story, dear."

"And altogether too thin," said the Boy Avenger, fiercely, releasing himself from her encircling arms. "Eliza Jane's age, a year ago, was only thirteen, and you are forty, if a day."

"True," she returned, sadly, "but I have suffered much, and time passes rapidly, and I've grown. You would scarcely believe that this is my own hair."

"I know not," he replied, in gloomy abstraction.

"Forgive my deceit," she returned. "If you are affianced to another, let me at least be—a mother to you."

The Pirate Prodigy started, and tears came to his eyes. The scene was affecting in the extreme. Several of the oldest seamen—men who had gone through scenes of suffering with tearless eyes and unblanched cheeks—now retired to the spirit-room to conceal their emotion. A few went into caucus in the forecastle, and returned with the request that the Amazonian queen should hereafter be known as the "Queen of the Pirates' Isle."

"Mother!" gasped the Pirate Prodigy.

"My son!" screamed the Amazonian queen.

They embraced. At the same moment a loud flop was heard on the quarter-deck. It was the forgotten mermaid, who, emerging from her state-room and ascending the companion-way at that moment, had fainted at the spectacle. The Pirate Prodigy rushed to her side with a bottle of smelling-salts.

She recovered slowly. “Permit me,” she said, rising with dignity, “to leave the ship. I am unaccustomed to such conduct.”

“Hear me—she is my mother!”

“She certainly is old enough to be,” replied the mermaid; “and to speak of that being her own hair!” she added with a scornful laugh, as she rearranged her own luxuriant tresses with characteristic grace, a comb, and a small hand-mirror.

“If I couldn’t afford any other clothes, I might wear a switch, too!” hissed the Amazonian queen. “I suppose you don’t dye it on account of the salt water. But perhaps you prefer green, dear?”

“A little salt water might improve your own complexion, love.”

“Fishwoman!” screamed the Amazonian queen.

“Bloomerite!” shrieked the mermaid.

In another instant they had seized each other.

“Mutiny! Overboard with them!” cried the Pirate Prodigy, rising to the occasion, and casting aside all human affection in the peril of the moment.

A plank was brought and two women placed upon it.

"After you, dear," said the mermaid, significantly, to the Amazonian queen; "you're the oldest."

"Thank you!" said the Amazonian queen, stepping back. "Fish is always served first."

Stung by the insult, with a wild scream of rage, the mermaid grappled her in her arms and leaped into the sea.

As the waters closed over them forever, the Pirate Prodigy sprang to his feet. "Up with the black flag, and bear away for New London," he shouted in trumpet-like tones. "Ha, ha! Once more the Rover is free!"

Indeed it was too true. In that fatal moment he had again loosed himself from the trammels of human feeling, and was once more the Boy Avenger.

CHAPTER THREE

Again I must ask my young friends to mount my hippogriff and hie with me to the almost inaccessible heights of the Rocky Mountains. There, for years, a band of wild and untamable savages, known as the "Pigeon Feet," had resisted the blankets and Bibles of civilization. For years the trails leading to their camp were marked by the bones of teamsters and broken wagons, and the trees were decked with the drying scalp locks of women and children. The boldest of military leaders hesitated to attack them in their fortresses, and prudently left the scalping knives, rifles, powder, and shot, provided by a paternal government for their welfare, lying on the ground a few miles from their encampment, with the request that they were not to be used until the military had safely retired. Hitherto, save an occasional incursion into the territory of the "Knock-knees," a rival tribe, they had limited their depredations to the vicinity.

But lately a baleful change had come over them. Acting under some evil influence, they now pushed their warfare into the white settlements, carrying fire and destruction with them. Again and again had the government offered them a free pass to Washington and the privilege of being photographed, but under the same evil guidance they refused. There was a singular mystery in their mode of aggression. School-houses were always burned, the schoolmasters taken into captivity, and never again heard from. A palace car on the Union Pacific Railway, containing an excursion party of teachers en route to San Francisco, was surrounded, its inmates captured, and—their vacancies in the school catalogue never again filled. Even a Board of Educational Examiners, proceeding to Cheyenne, were taken prisoners, and obliged to answer questions they

themselves had proposed, amidst horrible tortures. By degrees these atrocities were traced to the malign influence of a new chief of the tribe. As yet little was known of him but through his baleful appellations, "Young Man who Goes for his Teacher," and "He Lifts the Hair of the School Marm." He was said to be small and exceedingly youthful in appearance. Indeed, his earlier appellative, "He Wipes his Nose on his Sleeve," was said to have been given to him to indicate his still boy-like habits.

It was night in the encampment and among the lodges of the "Pigeon Toes." Dusky maidens flitted in and out among the camp-fires like brown moths, cooking the toothsome buffalo hump, frying the fragrant bear's meat, and stewing the esculent bean for the braves. For a few favored ones spitted grasshoppers were reserved as a rare delicacy, although the proud Spartan soul of their chief scorned all such luxuries.

He was seated alone in his wigwam, attended only by the gentle Mushymush, fairest of the "Pigeon Feet" maidens. Nowhere were the characteristics of her great tribe more plainly shown than in the little feet that lapped over each other in walking. A single glance at the chief was sufficient to show the truth of the wild rumors respecting his youth. He was scarcely twelve, of proud and lofty bearing, and clad completely in wrappings of various-colored scalloped cloths, which gave him the appearance of a somewhat extra-sized pen-wiper. An enormous eagle's feather, torn from the wing of a bald eagle who once attempted to carry him away, completed his attire. It was also the memento of one of his most superhuman feats of courage. He would undoubtedly have scalped the eagle but that nature had anticipated him.

"Why is the Great Chief sad?" asked Mushymush, softly. "Does his soul still yearn for the blood of the pale-

faced teachers? Did not the scalping of two professors of geology in the Yale exploring party satisfy his warrior's heart yesterday? Has he forgotten that Hayden and Clarence King are still to follow? Shall his own Mushymush bring him a botanist to-morrow? Speak, for the silence of my brother lies on my heart like the snow on the mountain, and checks the flow of my speech."

Still the proud Boy Chief sat silent. Suddenly he said: "Hist!" and rose to his feet. Taking a long rifle from the ground he adjusted its sight. Exactly seven miles away on the slope of the mountain the figure of a man was seen walking. The Boy Chief raised the rifle to his unerring eye and fired. The man fell.

A scout was dispatched to scalp and search the body. He presently returned.

"Who was the pale face?" eagerly asked the chief.

"A life insurance agent."

A dark scowl settled on the face of the chief.

"I thought it was a book-peddler."

"Why is my brother's heart sore against the book-peddler?" asked Mushymush.

"Because," said the Boy Chief, fiercely, "I am again without my regular dime novel, and I thought he might have one in his pack. Hear me, Mushymush; the United States mails no longer bring me my 'Young America,' or my 'Boys' and Girls' Weekly.' I find it impossible, even with my fastest scouts, to keep up with the rear of General Howard, and replenish my literature from the sutler's wagon.

Without a dime novel or a 'Young America,' how am I to keep up this Injin business?"

Mushymush remained in meditation a single moment. Then she looked up proudly.

"My brother has spoken. It is well. He shall have his dime novel. He shall know what kind of a hair-pin his sister Mushymush is."

And she arose and gamboled lightly as the fawn out of his presence.

In two hours she returned. In one hand she held three small flaxen scalps, in the other "The Boy Marauder," complete in one volume, price ten cents.

"Three pale-faced children," she gasped, "were reading it in the tail end of an emigrant wagon. I crept up to them softly. Their parents are still unaware of the accident," and she sank helpless at his feet.

"Noble girl!" said the Boy Chief, gazing proudly on her prostrate form; "and these are the people that a military despotism expects to subdue!"

CHAPTER FOUR

But the capture of several wagon-loads of commissary whisky, and the destruction of two tons of stationery intended for the general commanding, which interfered with his regular correspondence with the War Department, at last awakened the United States military authorities to active exertion. A quantity of troops were massed before the "Pigeon Feet" encampment, and an attack was hourly imminent.

"Shine your boots, sir?"

It was the voice of a youth in humble attire, standing before the flap of the commanding general's tent.

The General raised his head from his correspondence.

"Ah," he said, looking down on the humble boy, "I see; I shall write that the appliances of civilization move steadily forward with the army. Yes," he added, "you may shine my military boots. You understand, however, that to get your pay you must first—"

"Make a requisition on the commissary-general, have it certified to by the quartermaster, countersigned by the post-adjutant, and submitted by you to the War Department—"

"And charged as stationery," added the General, gently. "You are, I see, an intelligent and thoughtful boy. I trust you neither use whisky, tobacco, nor are ever profane?"

"I promised my sainted mother—"

"Enough! Go on with your blacking; I have to lead the attack on the 'Pigeon Feet' at eight precisely. It is now half-past seven," said the General, consulting a large kitchen clock that stood in the corner of his tent.

The little boot-black looked up; the General was absorbed in his correspondence. The boot-black drew a tin putty blower from his pocket, took unerring aim, and nailed in a single shot the minute hand to the dial. Going on with his blacking, yet stopping ever and anon to glance over the General's plan of campaign, spread on the table before him, he was at last interrupted by the entrance of an officer.

"Everything is ready for the attack, General. It is now eight o'clock."

"Impossible! It is only half-past seven."

"But my watch and the watches of your staff—"

"Are regulated by my kitchen clock, that has been in my family for years. Enough! It is only half-past seven."

The officer retired; the boot-black had finished one boot. Another officer appeared.

"Instead of attacking the enemy, General, we are attacked ourselves. Our pickets are already driven in."

"Military pickets should not differ from other pickets," interrupted the boot-black, modestly. "To stand firmly they should be well driven in."

“Ha! there is something in that,” said the General, thoughtfully. “But who are you, who speak thus?”

Rising to his full height, the boot-black threw off his outer rags, and revealed the figure of the Boy Chief of the “Pigeon Feet.”

“Treason!” shrieked the General; “order an advance along the whole line.”

But in vain. The next moment he fell beneath the tomahawk of the Boy Chief, and within the next quarter of an hour the United States Army was dispersed. Thus ended the battle of Boot-black Creek.

CHAPTER FIVE

And yet the Boy Chief was not entirely happy. Indeed, at times he seriously thought of accepting the invitation extended by the Great Chief at Washington, immediately after the massacre of the soldiers, and once more revisiting the haunts of civilization. His soul sickened in feverish inactivity; schoolmasters palled on his taste; he had introduced base ball, blind hooky, marbles, and peg- top among his Indian subjects, but only with indifferent success. The squaws insisted in boring holes through the china alleys and wearing them as necklaces; his warriors stuck spikes in their base ball bats and made war clubs of them. He could not but feel, too, that the gentle Mushymush, although devoted to her pale-faced brother, was deficient in culinary education. Her mince pies were abominable; her jam far inferior to that made by his Aunt Sally of Doemville. Only an unexpected incident kept him equally from the extreme of listless Sybaritic indulgence, or of morbid cynicism. Indeed, at the age of twelve, he already had become disgusted with existence.

He had returned to his wigwam after an exhausting buffalo hunt in which he had slain two hundred and seventy-five buffalos with his own hand, not counting the individual buffalo on which he had leaped so as to join the herd, and which he afterward led into the camp a captive and a present to the lovely Mushymush. He had scalped two express riders and a correspondent of the "New York Herald"; had despoiled the Overland Mail Stage of a quantity of vouchers which enabled him to draw double rations from the government, and was reclining on a bear skin, smoking and thinking of the vanity of human endeavor, when a scout

entered, saying that a pale-face youth had demanded access to his person.

"Is he a commissioner? If so, say that the red man is rapidly passing to the happy hunting-grounds of his fathers, and now desires only peace, blankets, and ammunition; obtain the latter and then scalp the commissioner."

"But it is only a youth who asks an interview."

"Does he look like an insurance agent? If so, say that I have already policies in three Hartford companies. Meanwhile prepare the stake, and see that the squaws are ready with their implements of torture."

The youth was admitted; he was evidently only half the age of the Boy Chief. As he entered the wigwam and stood revealed to his host they both started. In another moment they were locked in each other's arms.

"Jenky, old boy!"

"Bromley, old fel!"

B. F. Jenkins, for such was the name of the Boy Chief, was the first to recover his calmness. Turning to his warriors he said, proudly—

"Let my children retire while I speak to the agent of our Great Father in Washington. Hereafter no latch keys will be provided for the wigwams of the warriors. The practice of late hours must be discouraged."

"How!" said the warriors, and instantly retired.

"Whisper," said Jenkins, drawing his friend aside; "I am known here only as the Boy Chief of the 'Pigeon toes.'"

"And I," said Bromley Chitterlings, proudly, "am known everywhere as the Pirate Prodigy—the Boy Avenger of the Patagonian Coast."

"But how came you here?"

"Listen! My pirate brig, the 'Lively Mermaid,' now lies at Meiggs' Wharf in San Francisco, disguised as a Mendocino lumber vessel. My pirate crew accompanied me here in a palace car from San Francisco."

"It must have been expensive," said the prudent Jenkins.

"It was, but they defrayed it by a collection from the other passengers—you understand, an enforced collection. The papers will be full of it to-morrow. Do you take the 'New York Sun'?"

"No; I dislike their Indian policy. But why are you here?"

"Hear me, Jenk! 'Tis a long and a sad story. The lovely Eliza J. Sniffen, who fled with me from Doemville, was seized by her parents and torn from my arms at New Rochelle. Reduced to poverty by the breaking of the savings bank of which he was president—a failure to which I largely contributed, and the profits of which I enjoyed—I have since ascertained that Eliza Jane Sniffen was forced to become a schoolmistress, departed to take charge of a seminary in Colorado, and since then has never been heard from."

Why did the Boy Chief turn pale, and clutch at the tent-pole for support? Why, indeed!

"Eliza J. Sniffen," gasped Jenkins, "aged fourteen, red-haired, with a slight tendency to strabismus?"

"The same."

"Heaven help me! She died by my mandate!"

"Traitor!" shrieked Chitterlings, rushing at Jenkins with a drawn poniard.

But a figure interposed. The slight girlish form of Mushymush with outstretched hands stood between the exasperated Pirate Prodigy and the Boy Chief.

"Forbear," she said sternly to Chitterlings; "you know not what you do."

The two youths paused.

"Hear me," she said rapidly. "When captured in a confectioner's shop at New Rochelle, E. J. Sniffen was taken back to poverty. She resolved to become a schoolmistress. Hearing of an opening in the West, she proceeded to Colorado to take exclusive charge of the pensionnat of Mad. Choflie, late of Paris. On the way thither she was captured by the emissaries of the Boy Chief—"

"In consummation of a fatal vow I made never to spare educational instructors," interrupted Jenkins.

"But in her captivity," continued Mushymush, "she managed to stain her face with poke-berry juice, and mingling with the Indian maidens was enabled to pass for

one of the tribe. Once undetected, she boldly ingratiated herself with the Boy Chief—how honestly and devotedly he best can tell—for I, Mushymush, the little sister of the Boy Chief, am Eliza Jane Sniffen."

The Pirate Prodigy clasped her in his arms. The Boy Chief, raising his hand, ejaculated:

"Bless you, my children!"

"There is but one thing wanting to complete this reunion," said Chitterlings, after a pause, but the hurried entrance of a scout stopped his utterance.

"A commissioner from the Great Father in Washington."

"Scalp him!" shrieked the Boy Chief; "this is no time for diplomatic trifling."

"We have, but he still insists upon seeing you, and has sent in his card."

The Boy Chief took it, and read aloud, in agonized accents:

"Charles F. Hall Golightly, late Page in United States Senate, and Acting Commissioner of United States."

In another moment, Golightly, pale, bleeding, and, as it were, prematurely bald, but still cold and intellectual, entered the wigwam. They fell upon his neck and begged his forgiveness.

"Don't mention it," he said, quietly; "these things must and will happen under our present system of

government. My story is brief. Obtaining political influence through caucuses, I became at last Page in the Senate. Through the exertions of political friends I was appointed clerk to the commissioner whose functions I now represent. Knowing through political spies in your own camp who you were, I acted upon the physical fears of the commissioner, who was an ex-clergyman, and easily induced him to deputize me to consult with you. In doing so, I have lost my scalp, but as the hirsute signs of juvenility have worked against my political progress I do not regret it. As a partially bald young man I shall have more power. The terms that I have to offer are simply this: you can do everything you want, go anywhere you choose, if you will only leave this place. I have a hundred thousand-dollar draft on the United States Treasury in my pocket at your immediate disposal."

"But what's to become of me?" asked Chitterlings.

"Your case has already been under advisement. The Secretary of State, who is an intelligent man, is determined to recognize you as de jure and de facto the only loyal representative of the Patagonian government. You may safely proceed to Washington as its envoy extraordinary. I dine with the secretary next week."

"And yourself, old fellow?"

"I only wish that twenty years from now you will recognize by your influence and votes the rights of C. F. H. Golightly to the presidency."

And here ends our story. Trusting that my dear young friends may take whatever example or moral their respective parents and guardians may deem fittest from these pages, I hope in future years to portray further the career of those

three young heroes I have already introduced in the spring-time of life to their charitable consideration.

The Man Whose Yoke Was Not Easy

He was a spare man, and, physically, an ill-conditioned man, but at first glance scarcely a seedy man. The indications of reduced circumstances in the male of the better class are, I fancy, first visible in the boots and shirt; the boots offensively exhibiting a degree of polish inconsistent with their dilapidated condition, and the shirt showing an extent of ostentatious surface that is invariably fatal to the threadbare waist-coat that it partially covers. He was a pale man, and, I fancied, still paler from his black clothes.

He handed me a note.

It was from a certain physician; a man of broad culture and broader experience; a man who had devoted the greater part of his active life to the alleviation of sorrow and suffering; a man who had lived up to the noble vows of a noble profession; a man who locked in his honorable breast the secrets of a hundred families, whose face was as kindly, whose touch was as gentle, in the wards of the great public hospitals as it was beside the laced curtains of the dying Narcissa; a man who, through long contact with suffering, had acquired a universal tenderness and breadth of kindly philosophy; a man who, day and night, was at the beck and call of anguish; a man who never asked the creed, belief, moral or worldly standing of the sufferer, or even his ability to pay the few coins that enabled him (the physician) to exist and practice his calling; in brief, a man who so nearly lived

up to the example of the Great Master that it seems strange I am writing of him as a doctor of medicine and not of divinity.

The note was in pencil, characteristically brief, and ran thus:

"Here is the man I spoke of. He ought to be good material for you."

For a moment I sat looking from the note to the man, and sounding the "dim perilous depths" of my memory for the meaning of this mysterious communication. The good "material," however, soon relieved my embarrassment by putting his hand on his waistcoat, coming toward me, and saying, "It is just here, you can feel it."

It was not necessary for me to do so. In a flash I remembered that my medical friend had told me of a certain poor patient, once a soldier, who, among his other trials and uncertainties, was afflicted with an aneurism caused by the buckle of his knapsack pressing upon the arch of the aorta. It was liable to burst at any shock or any moment. The poor fellow's yoke had indeed been too heavy.

In the presence of such a tremendous possibility I think for an instant I felt anxious only about myself. What I should do; how dispose of the body; how explain the circumstance of his taking off; how evade the ubiquitous reporter and the coroner's inquest; how a suspicion might arise that I had in some way, through negligence or for some dark purpose, unknown to the jury, precipitated the catastrophe, all flashed before me. Even the note, with its darkly suggestive offer of "good material" for me, looked diabolically significant. What might not an intelligent lawyer make of it?

I tore it up instantly, and with feverish courtesy begged him to be seated.

"You don't care to feel it?" he asked, a little anxiously.

"No."

"Nor see it?"

"No."

He sighed, a trifle sadly, as if I had rejected the only favor he could bestow. I saw at once that he had been under frequent exhibition to the doctors, and that he was, perhaps, a trifle vain of this attention. This perception was corroborated a moment later by his producing a copy of a medical magazine, with a remark that on the sixth page I would find a full statement of his case.

"Could I serve him in any way?" I asked.

It appeared that I could. If I could help him to any light employment, something that did not require any great physical exertion or mental excitement, he would be thankful. But he wanted me to understand that he was not, strictly speaking, a poor man; that some years before the discovery of his fatal complaint he had taken out a life insurance policy for five thousand dollars, and that he had raked and scraped enough together to pay it up, and that he would not leave his wife and four children destitute. "You see," he added, "if I could find some sort of light work to do, and kinder sled along, you know—until—"

He stopped, awkwardly.

I have heard several noted actors thrill their audiences with a single phrase. I think I never was as honestly moved by any spoken word as that "until," or the pause that followed it. He was evidently quite unconscious of its effect, for as I took a seat beside him on the sofa, and looked more closely in his waxen face, I could see that he was evidently embarrassed, and would have explained himself further, if I had not stopped him.

Possibly it was the dramatic idea, or possibly chance; but a few days afterward, meeting a certain kind-hearted theatrical manager, I asked him if he had any light employment for a man who was an invalid? "Can he walk?" "Yes." "Stand up for fifteen minutes?" "Yes." "Then I'll take him. He'll do for the last scene in the 'Destruction of Sennacherib'—it's a tremendous thing, you know. We'll have two thousand people on the stage." I was a trifle alarmed at the title, and ventured to suggest (without betraying my poor friend's secret that he could not actively engage in the "Destruction of Sennacherib," and that even the spectacle of it might be too much for him. "Needn't see it at all," said my managerial friend; "put him in front, nothing to do but march in and march out, and dodge curtain."

He was engaged. I admit I was at times haunted by grave doubts as to whether I should not have informed the manager of his physical condition, and the possibility that he might some evening perpetrate a real tragedy on the mimic stage, but on the first performance of "The Destruction of Sennacherib," which I conscientiously attended, I was somewhat relieved. I had often been amused with the placid way in which the chorus in the opera invariably received the most astounding information, and witnessed the most appalling tragedies by poison or the block, without anything more than a vocal protest or command, always delivered to

the audience and never to the actors, but I think my poor friend's utter impassiveness to the wild carnage and the terrible exhibitions of incendiarism that were going on around him transcended even that. Dressed in a costume that seemed to be the very soul of anachronism, he stood a little outside the proscenium, holding a spear, the other hand pressed apparently upon the secret within his breast, calmly surveying, with his waxen face, the gay auditorium. I could not help thinking that there was a certain pride visible even in his placid features, as of one who was conscious that at any moment he might change this simulated catastrophe into real terror. I could not help saying this to the Doctor, who was with me. "Yes," he said with professional exactitude; "when it happens he'll throw his arms up above his head, utter an ejaculation, and fall forward on his face—it's a singular thing, they always fall forward on their face—and they'll pick up the man as dead as Julius Caesar."

After that, I used to go night after night, with a certain hideous fascination; but, while it will be remembered the "Destruction of Sennacherib" had a tremendous run, it will also be remembered that not a single life was really lost during its representation.

It was only a few weeks after this modest first appearance on the boards of "The Man with an Aneurism," that, happening to be at dinner party of practical business men, I sought to interest them with the details of the above story, delivered with such skill and pathos as I could command. I regret to say that, as a pathetic story, it for a moment seemed to be a dead failure. At last a prominent banker sitting next to me turned to me with the awful question: "Why don't your friend try to realize on his life insurance?" I begged his pardon, I didn't quite understand. "Oh, discount, sell out. Look here—(after a pause). Let him assign his policy to me, it's not much of a risk, on your

statement. Well—I'll give him his five thousand dollars, clear."

And he did. Under the advice of this cool-headed—I think I may add warm-hearted—banker, "The Man with an Aneurism" invested his money in the name of and for the benefit of his wife in certain securities that paid him a small but regular stipend. But he still continued upon the boards of the theatre.

By reason of some business engagements that called me away from the city, I did not see my friend the physician for three months afterward. When I did I asked tidings of The Man with the Aneurism. The Doctor's kind face grew sad. "I'm afraid—that is, I don't exactly know whether I've good news or bad. Did you ever see his wife?"

I never had.

"Well, she was younger than he, and rather attractive. One of those doll-faced women. You remember, he settled that life insurance policy on her and the children: she might have waited; she didn't. The other day she eloped with some fellow, I don't remember his name, with the children and the five thousand dollars."

"And the shock killed him," I said with poetic promptitude.

"No—that is—not yet; I saw him yesterday," said the Doctor, with conscientious professional precision, looking over his list of calls.

"Well, where is the poor fellow now?"

"He's still at the theatre. James, if these powders are called for, you'll find them, here in this envelope. Tell Mrs. Blank I'll be there at seven—and she can give the baby this until I come. Say there's no danger. These women are an awful bother! Yes, he's at the theatre yet. Which way are you going? Down town? Why can't you step into my carriage, and I'll give you a lift, and we'll talk on the way down? Well—he's at the theatre yet. And— and—do you remember the 'Destruction of Sennacherib?' No? Yes you do. You remember that woman in pink, who pirouetted in the famous ballet scene! You don't? Why, yes you do! Well, I imagine, of course I don't know, it's only a summary diagnosis, but I imagine that our friend with the aneurism has attached himself to her."

"Doctor, you horrify me."

"There are more things, Mr. Poet, in heaven and earth than are yet dreamt of in your philosophy. Listen. My diagnosis may be wrong, but that woman called the other day at my office to ask about him, his health, and general condition. I told her the truth—and she FAINTED. It was about as dead a faint as I ever saw; I was nearly an hour in bringing her out of it. Of course it was the heat of the room, her exertions the preceding week, and I prescribed for her. Queer, wasn't it? Now, if I were a writer, and had your faculty, I'd make something out of that."

"But how is his general health?"

"Oh, about the same. He can't evade what will come, you know, at any moment. He was up here the other day. Why, the pulsation was as plain—why, the entire arch of the aorta— What! you get out here? Good-by."

Of course no moralist, no man writing for a sensitive and strictly virtuous public, could further interest himself in this man. So I dismissed him at once from my mind, and returned to the literary contemplation of virtue that was clearly and positively defined, and of Sin, that invariably commenced with a capital letter. That this man, in his awful condition, hovering on the verge of eternity, should allow himself to be attracted by—but it was horrible to contemplate.

Nevertheless, a month afterwards, I was returning from a festivity with my intimate friend Smith, my distinguished friend Jobling, my most respectable friend Robinson, and my wittiest friend Jones. It was a clear, star-lit morning, and we seemed to hold the broad, beautiful avenue to ourselves; and I fear we acted as if it were so. As we hilariously passed the corner of Eighteenth Street, a coupe rolled by, and I suddenly heard my name called from its gloomy depths.

"I beg your pardon," said the Doctor, as his driver drew up by the sidewalk, "but I've some news for you. I've just been to see our poor friend ——. Of course I was too late. He was gone in a flash."

"What! dead?"

"As Pharaoh! In an instant, just as I said. You see, the rupture took place in the descending arch of—"

"But, Doctor!"

"It's a queer story. Am I keeping you from your friends? No? Well, you see she—that woman I spoke of—had written a note to him based on what I had told her.

He got it, and dropped in his dressing-room, dead as a herring."

"How could she have been so cruel, knowing his condition? She might, with woman's tact, have rejected him less abruptly."

"Yes; but you're all wrong. By Jove! she ACCEPTED him! was willing to marry him!"

"What?"

"Yes. Don't you see? It was joy that killed him. Gad, we never thought of THAT! Queer, ain't it? See here, don't you think you might make a story out of it?"

"But, Doctor, it hasn't got any moral."

"Humph! That's so. Good morning. Drive on, John."

My Friend, the Tramp

I had been sauntering over the clover downs of a certain noted New England seaport. It was a Sabbath morning, so singularly reposeful and gracious, so replete with the significance of the seventh day of rest, that even the Sabbath bells ringing a mile away over the salt marshes had little that was monitory, mandatory, or even supplicatory in their drowsy voices. Rather they seemed to call from their cloudy towers, like some renegade muezzin: "Sleep is better than prayer; sleep on, O sons of the Puritans! Slumber still, O deacons and vestrymen! Let, oh let those feet that are swift to wickedness curl up beneath thee! those palms that are itching for the shekels of the ungodly lie clasped beneath thy pillow! Sleep is better than prayer."

And, indeed, though it was high morning, sleep was still in the air. Wrought upon at last by the combined influences of sea and sky and atmosphere, I succumbed, and lay down on one of the boulders of a little stony slope that gave upon the sea. The great Atlantic lay before me, not yet quite awake, but slowly heaving the rhythmical expiration of slumber. There was no sail visible in the misty horizon. There was nothing to do but to lie and stare at the unwinking ether.

Suddenly I became aware of the strong fumes of tobacco. Turning my head, I saw a pale blue smoke curling up from behind an adjacent boulder. Rising, and climbing over the intermediate granite, I came upon a little hollow, in which, comfortably extended on the mosses and lichens, lay a powerfully-built man. He was very ragged; he was very

dirty; there was a strong suggestion about him of his having too much hair, too much nail, too much perspiration; too much of those superfluous excrescences and exudations that society and civilization strive to keep under. But it was noticeable that he had not much of anything else. It was The Tramp.

With that swift severity with which we always visit rebuke upon the person who happens to present any one of our vices offensively before us, in his own person, I was deeply indignant at his laziness. Perhaps I showed it in my manner, for he rose to a half- sitting attitude, returned my stare apologetically, and made a movement toward knocking the fire from his pipe against the granite.

"Shure, sur, and if I'd belaved that I was trispassin on yer honor's grounds, it's meself that would hev laid down on the say shore and takin' the salt waves for me blankits. But it's sivinteen miles I've walked this blessed noight, with nothin' to sustain me, and hevin' a mortal wakeness to fight wid in me bowels, by reason of starvation, and only a bit o' baccy that the Widdy Maloney gi' me at the cross roads, to kape me up entoirley. But it was the dark day I left me home in Milwaukee to walk to Boston; and if ye'll oblige a lone man who has left a wife and six children in Milwaukee, wid the loan of twenty-five cints, furninst the time he gits worruk, God'll be good to ye."

It instantly flashed through my mind that the man before me had the previous night partaken of the kitchen hospitality of my little cottage, two miles away. That he presented himself in the guise of a distressed fisherman, mulcted of his wages by an inhuman captain; that he had a wife lying sick of consumption in the next village, and two children, one of whom was a cripple, wandering in the streets of Boston. I remembered that this tremendous indictment

against Fortune touched the family, and that the distressed fisherman was provided with clothes, food, and some small change. The food and small change had disappeared, but the garments for the consumptive wife, where were they? He had been using them for a pillow.

I instantly pointed out this fact, and charged him with the deception. To my surprise, he took it quietly, and even a little complacently.

"Bedad, yer roight; ye see, sur" (confidentially), "ye see, sur, until I get worruk—and it's worruk I'm lukin' for—I have to desave now and thin to shute the locality. Ah, God save us! but on the say-coast thay'r that har-rud upon thim that don't belong to the say."

I ventured to suggest that a strong, healthy man like him might have found work somewhere between Milwaukee and Boston.

"Ah, but ye see I got free passage on a freight train, and didn't sthop. It was in the Aist that I expected to find worruk."

"Have you any trade?"

"Trade, is it? I'm a brickmaker, God knows, and many's the lift I've had at makin' bricks in Milwaukee. Shure, I've as aisy a hand at it as any man. Maybe yer honor might know of a kill hereabout?"

Now to my certain knowledge, there was not a brick kiln within fifty miles of that spot, and of all unlikely places to find one would have been this sandy peninsula, given up to the summer residences of a few wealthy people. Yet I could not help admiring the assumption of the scamp, who

knew this fact as well as myself. But I said, "I can give you work for a day or two;" and, bidding him gather up his sick wife's apparel, led the way across the downs to my cottage. At first I think the offer took him by surprise, and gave him some consternation, but he presently recovered his spirits, and almost instantly his speech. "Ah, worruk, is it? God be praised! it's meself that's ready and willin'. 'Though maybe me hand is spoilt wid brickmakin'."

I assured him that the work I would give him would require no delicate manipulation, and so we fared on over the sleepy downs. But I could not help noticing that, although an invalid, I was a much better pedestrian than my companion, frequently leaving him behind, and that even as a "tramp," he was etymologically an impostor. He had a way of lingering beside the fences we had to climb over, as if to continue more confidentially the history of his misfortunes and troubles, which he was delivering to me during our homeward walk, and I noticed that he could seldom resist the invitation of a mossy boulder or a tussock of salt grass. "Ye see, sur," he would say, suddenly sitting down, "it's along uv me misfortunes beginnin' in Milwaukee that—" and it was not until I was out of hearing that he would languidly gather his traps again and saunter after me. When I reached my own garden gate he leaned for a moment over it, with both of his powerful arms extended downward, and said, "Ah, but it's a blessin' that Sunday comes to give rest fur the wake and the weary, and them as walks sivinteen miles to get it." Of course I took the hint. There was evidently no work to be had from my friend, the Tramp, that day. Yet his countenance brightened as he saw the limited extent of my domain, and observed that the garden, so called, was only a flower-bed about twenty-five by ten. As he had doubtless before this been utilized, to the extent of his capacity, in digging, he had probably expected that kind of work; and I daresay I discomfitted him by pointing him to an almost

leveled stone wall, about twenty feet long, with the remark that his work would be the rebuilding of that stone wall, with stone brought from the neighboring slopes. In a few moments he was comfortably provided for in the kitchen, where the cook, a woman of his own nativity, apparently, "chaffed" him with a raillery that was to me quite unintelligible. Yet I noticed that when, at sunset, he accompanied Bridget to the spring for water, ostentatiously flourishing the empty bucket in his hand, when they returned in the gloaming Bridget was carrying the water, and my friend, the Tramp, was some paces behind her, cheerfully "colloguing," and picking blackberries.

At seven the next morning he started in cheerfully to work. At nine, A. M., he had placed three large stones on the first course in position, an hour having been spent in looking for a pick and hammer, and in the incidental "chaffing" with Bridget. At ten o'clock I went to overlook his work; it was a rash action, as it caused him to respectfully doff his hat, discontinue his labors, and lean back against the fence in cheerful and easy conservation. "Are you fond uv blackberries, Captain?" I told him that the children were in the habit of getting them from the meadow beyond, hoping to estop the suggestion I knew was coming. "Ah, but, Captain, it's meself that with wanderin' and havin' nothin' to pass me lips but the berries I'd pick from the hedges—it's meself knows where to find thim. Sure, it's yer childer, and foine boys they are, Captain, that's besaching me to go wid 'em to the place, known'st only to meself." It is unnecessary to say that he triumphed. After the manner of vagabonds of all degrees, he had enlisted the women and children on his side—and my friend, the Tramp, had his own way. He departed at eleven and returned at four, P. M., with a tin dinner-pail half filled. On interrogating the boys it appeared that they had had a "bully time," but on cross-examination it came out that THEY had picked the berries. From four to

six, three more stones were laid, and the arduous labors of the day were over. As I stood looking at the first course of six stones, my friend, the Tramp, stretched his strong arms out to their fullest extent and said: "Ay, but it's worruk that's good for me; give me worruk, and it's all I'll be askin' fur."

I ventured to suggest that he had not yet accomplished much.

"Wait till to-morror. Ah, but ye'll see thin. It's me hand that's yet onaisy wid brick-makin' and sthrange to the shtones. An ye'll wait till to-morror?"

Unfortunately I did not wait. An engagement took me away at an early hour, and when I rode up to my cottage at noon my eyes were greeted with the astonishing spectacle of my two boys hard at work laying the courses of the stone wall, assisted by Bridget and Norah, who were dragging stones from the hillsides, while comfortably stretched on the top of the wall lay my friend, the Tramp, quietly overseeing the operation with lazy and humorous comment. For an instant I was foolishly indignant, but he soon brought me to my senses. "Shure, sur, it's only larnin' the boys the habits uv industhry I was—and may they niver know, be the same token, what it is to worruk fur the bread betune their lips. Shure it's but makin' 'em think it play I was. As fur the colleens beyint in the kitchen, sure isn't it betther they was helping your honor here than colloguing with themselves inside?"

Nevertheless, I thought it expedient to forbid henceforth any interruption of servants or children with my friend's "worruk." Perhaps it was the result of this embargo that the next morning early the Tramp wanted to see me.

"And it's sorry I am to say it to ye, sur," he began, "but it's the handlin' of this stun that's desthroyin' me touch at the brick- makin', and it's better I should lave ye and find worruk at me own thrade. For it's worruk I am nadin'. It isn't meself, Captain, to ate the bread of oidleness here. And so good-by to ye, and if it's fifty cints ye can be givin' me ontil I'll find a kill—it's God that'll repay ye."

He got the money. But he got also conditionally a note from me to my next neighbor, a wealthy retired physician, possessed of a large domain, a man eminently practical and businesslike in his management of it. He employed many laborers on the sterile waste he called his "farm," and it occurred to me that if there really was any work in my friend, the Tramp, which my own indolence and preoccupation had failed to bring out, he was the man to do it.

I met him a week after. It was with some embarrassment that I inquired after my friend, the Tramp. "Oh, yes," he said, reflectively, "let's see: he came Monday and left me Thursday. He was, I think, a stout, strong man, a well-meaning, good-humored fellow, but afflicted with a most singular variety of diseases. The first day I put him at work in the stables he developed chills and fever caught in the swamps of Louisiana—"

"Excuse me," I said hurriedly, "you mean in Milwaukee!"

"I know what I'm talking about," returned the Doctor, testily; "he told me his whole wretched story—his escape from the Confederate service, the attack upon him by armed negroes, his concealment in the bayous and swamps—"

"Go on, Doctor," I said, feebly; "you were speaking of his work."

"Yes. Well, his system was full of malaria; the first day I had him wrapped up in blankets, and dosed with quinine. The next day he was taken with all the symptoms of cholera morbus, and I had to keep him up on brandy and capsicum. Rheumatism set in on the following day, and incapacitated him for work, and I concluded I had better give him a note to the director of the City Hospital than keep him here. As a pathological study he was good; but as I was looking for a man to help about the stable, I couldn't afford to keep him in both capacities."

As I never could really tell when the Doctor was in joke or in earnest, I dropped the subject. And so my friend, the Tramp, gradually faded from my memory, not however without leaving behind him in the barn where he had slept a lingering flavor of whisky, onions, and fluffiness. But in two weeks this had gone, and the "Shebang" (as my friends irreverently termed my habitation) knew him no more. Yet it was pleasant to think of him as having at last found a job at brick-making, or having returned to his family at Milwaukee, or making his Louisiana home once more happy with his presence, or again tempting the fish-producing main—this time with a noble and equitable captain.

It was a lovely August morning when I rode across the sandy peninsula to visit a certain noted family, whereof all the sons were valiant and the daughters beautiful. The front of the house was deserted, but on the rear veranda I heard the rustle of gowns, and above it arose what seemed to be the voice of Ulysses, reciting his wanderings. There was no mistaking that voice, it was my friend, the Tramp!

From what I could hastily gather from his speech, he had walked from Saint John, N. B., to rejoin a distressed wife in New York, who was, however, living with opulent but objectionable relatives. "An' shure, miss, I wouldn't be askin' ye the loan of a cint if I could get worruk at me trade of carpet-wavin'—and maybe ye know of some mannfacthory where they wave carpets beyant here. Ah, miss, and if ye don't give me a cint, it's enough for the loikes of me to know that me troubles has brought the tears in the most beautiful oiyes in the wurruld, and God bless ye for it, miss!"

Now I knew that the Most Beautiful Eyes in the World belonged to one of the most sympathetic and tenderest hearts in the world, and I felt that common justice demanded my interference between it and one of the biggest scamps in the world. So, without waiting to be announced by the servant, I opened the door, and joined the group on the veranda.

If I expected to touch the conscience of my friend, the Tramp, by a dramatic entrance, I failed utterly; for no sooner did he see me, than he instantly gave vent to a howl of delight, and, falling on his knees before me, grasped my hand, and turned oratorically to the ladies.

"Oh, but it's himself—himself that has come as a witness to me carrakther! Oh, but it's himself that lifted me four wakes ago, when I was lyin' with a mortal wakeness on the say-coast, and tuk me to his house. Oh, but it's himself that shupported me over the faldes, and whin the chills and faver came on me and I shivered wid the cold, it was himself, God bless him, as sthripped the coat off his back, and giv it me, sayin', 'Take it, Dinnis, it's shtarved with the cowld say air ye'll be entoirely.' Ah, but look at him— will ye, miss! Look at his swate, modist face—a blushin' like your own,

miss. Ah! look at him, will ye? He'll be denyin' of it in a minit—may the blessin' uv God folly him. Look at him, miss! Ah, but it's a swate pair ye'd make! (the rascal knew I was a married man). Ah, miss, if you could see him wroightin' day and night with such an illigant hand of his own—(he had evidently believed from the gossip of my servants that I was a professor of chirography)—if ye could see him, miss, as I have, ye'd be proud of him."

He stopped out of breath. I was so completely astounded I could say nothing: the tremendous indictment I had framed to utter as I opened the door vanished completely. And as the Most Beautiful Eyes in the Wurruld turned gratefully to mine—well—

I still retained enough principle to ask the ladies to withdraw, while I would take upon myself the duty of examining into the case of my friend, the Tramp, and giving him such relief as was required. (I did not know until afterward, however, that the rascal had already despoiled their scant purses of three dollars and fifty cents.) When the door was closed upon them I turned upon him.

"You infernal rascal!"

"Ah, Captain, and would ye be refusin' ME a carrakther and me givin' YE such a one as Oi did! God save us! but if ye'd hav' seen the luk that the purty one give ye. Well, before the chills and faver bruk me spirits entirely, when I was a young man, and makin' me tin dollars a week brick-makin', it's meself that wud hav' given—"

"I consider," I broke in, "that a dollar is a fair price for your story, and as I shall have to take it all back and expose you before the next twenty-four hours pass, I think

you had better hasten to Milwaukee, New York, or Louisiana."

I handed him the dollar. "Mind, I don't want to see your face again."

"Ye wun't, captain."

And I did not.

But it so chanced that later in the season, when the migratory inhabitants had flown to their hot-air registers in Boston and Providence, I breakfasted with one who had lingered. It was a certain Boston lawyer—replete with principle, honesty, self- discipline, statistics, aesthetics, and a perfect consciousness of possessing all these virtues, and a full recognition of their market values. I think he tolerated me as a kind of foreigner, gently but firmly waiving all argument on any topic, frequently distrusting my facts, generally my deductions, and always my ideas. In conversation he always appeared to descend only half way down a long moral and intellectual staircase, and always delivered his conclusions over the balusters.

I had been speaking of my friend, the Tramp. "There is but one way of treating that class of impostors; it is simply to recognize the fact that the law calls him a 'vagrant,' and makes his trade a misdemeanor. Any sentiment on the other side renders you particeps criminis. I don't know but an action would lie against you for encouraging tramps. Now, I have an efficacious way of dealing with these gentry." He rose and took a double-barreled fowling-piece from the chimney. "When a tramp appears on my property, I warn him off. If he persists, I fire on him—as I would on any criminal trespasser."

"Fire on him?" I echoed in alarm.

"Yes—BUT WITH POWDER ONLY! Of course HE doesn't know that. But he doesn't come back."

It struck me for the first time that possibly many other of my friend's arguments might be only blank cartridges, and used to frighten off other trespassing intellects.

"Of course, if the tramp still persisted, I would be justified in using shot. Last evening I had a visit from one. He was coming over the wall. My shot gun was efficacious; you should have seen him run!"

It was useless to argue with so positive a mind, and I dropped the subject. After breakfast I strolled over the downs, my friend promising to join me as soon as he arranged some household business.

It was a lovely, peaceful morning, not unlike the day when I first met my friend, the Tramp. The hush of a great benediction lay on land and sea. A few white sails twinkled afar, but sleepily; one or two large ships were creeping in lazily, like my friend, the Tramp. A voice behind me startled me.

My host had rejoined me. His face, however, looked a little troubled.

"I just now learned something of importance," he began. "It appears that with all my precautions that Tramp has visited my kitchen, and the servants have entertained him. Yesterday morning, it appears, while I was absent, he had the audacity to borrow my gun to go duck-shooting. At

the end of two or three hours he returned with two ducks and—the gun."

"That was, at least, honest."

"Yes—but! That fool of a girl says that, as he handed back the gun, he told her it was all right, and that he had loaded it up again to save the master trouble."

I think I showed my concern in my face, for he added, hastily: "It was only duck-shot; a few wouldn't hurt him!"

Nevertheless, we both walked on in silence for a moment. "I thought the gun kicked a little," he said at last, musingly; "but the idea of— Hallo! what's this?"

He stopped before the hollow where I had first seen my Tramp. It was deserted, but on the mosses there were spots of blood and fragments of an old gown, blood-stained, as if used for bandages. I looked at it closely: it was the gown intended for the consumptive wife of my friend, the Tramp.

But my host was already nervously tracking the bloodstains that on rock, moss, and boulder were steadily leading toward the sea. When I overtook him at last on the shore, he was standing before a flat rock, on which lay a bundle I recognized, tied up in a handkerchief, and a crooked grape-vine stick.

"He may have come here to wash his wounds—salt is a styptic," said my host, who had recovered his correct precision of statement.

I said nothing, but looked toward the sea. Whatever secret lay hid in its breast, it kept it fast. Whatever its calm eyes had seen that summer night, it gave no reflection now.

It lay there passive, imperturbable, and reticent. But my friend, the Tramp, was gone!

The Man from Solano

He came toward me out of an opera lobby, between the acts—a figure as remarkable as anything in the performance. His clothes, no two articles of which were of the same color, had the appearance of having been purchased and put on only an hour or two before—a fact more directly established by the clothes-dealer's ticket which still adhered to his coat-collar, giving the number, size, and general dimensions of that garment somewhat obtrusively to an uninterested public. His trousers had a straight line down each leg, as if he had been born flat but had since developed; and there was another crease down his back, like those figures children cut out of folded paper. I may add that there was no consciousness of this in his face, which was good-natured, and, but for a certain squareness in the angle of his lower jaw, utterly uninteresting and commonplace.

"You disremember me," he said, briefly, as he extended his hand, "but I'm from Solano, in Californy. I met you there in the spring of '57. I was tendin' sheep, and you was burnin' charcoal."

There was not the slightest trace of any intentional rudeness in the reminder. It was simply a statement of fact, and as such to be accepted.

"What I hailed ye for was only this," he said, after I had shaken hands with him. "I saw you a minnit ago standin' over in yon box— chirpin' with a lady—a young lady, peart and pretty. Might you be telling me her name?"

I gave him the name of a certain noted belle of a neighboring city, who had lately stirred the hearts of the metropolis, and who was especially admired by the brilliant and fascinating young Dashboard, who stood beside me.

The Man from Solano mused for a moment, and then said, “Thet’s so! thet’s the name! It’s the same gal!”

“You have met her, then?” I asked, in surprise.

“Ye-es,” he responded, slowly: “I met her about fower months ago. She’d bin makin’ a tour of Californy with some friends, and I first saw her aboard the cars this side of Reno. She lost her baggage- checks, and I found them on the floor and gave ‘em back to her, and she thanked me. I reckon now it would be about the square thing to go over thar and sorter recognize her.” He stopped a moment, and looked at us inquiringly.

“My dear sir,” struck in the brilliant and fascinating Dashboard, “if your hesitation proceeds from any doubt as to the propriety of your attire, I beg you to dismiss it from your mind at once. The tyranny of custom, it is true, compels your friend and myself to dress peculiarly, but I assure you nothing could be finer than the way that the olive green of your coat melts in the delicate yellow of your cravat, or the pearl gray of your trousers blends with the bright blue of your waistcoat, and lends additional brilliancy to that massive oroide watch-chain which you wear.”

To my surprise, the Man from Solano did not strike him. He looked at the ironical Dashboard with grave earnestness, and then said quietly:

“Then I reckon you wouldn’t mind showin’ me in thar?”

Dashboard was, I admit, a little staggered at this. But he recovered himself, and, bowing ironically, led the way to the box. I followed him and the Man from Solano.

Now, the belle in question happened to be a gentlewoman—descended from gentlewomen—and after Dashboard's ironical introduction, in which the Man from Solano was not spared, she comprehended the situation instantly. To Dashboard's surprise she drew a chair to her side, made the Man from Solano sit down, quietly turned her back on Dashboard, and in full view of the brilliant audience and the focus of a hundred lorgnettes, entered into conversation with him.

Here, for the sake of romance, I should like to say he became animated, and exhibited some trait of excellence—some rare wit or solid sense. But the fact is he was dull and stupid to the last degree. He persisted in keeping the conversation upon the subject of the lost baggage-checks, and every bright attempt of the lady to divert him failed signally. At last, to everybody's relief, he rose, and leaning over her chair, said:

"I calklate to stop over here some time, miss, and you and me bein' sorter strangers here, maybe when there's any show like this goin' on you'll let me—"

Miss X. said somewhat hastily that the multiplicity of her engagements and the brief limit of her stay in New York she feared would, etc., etc. The two other ladies had their handkerchiefs over their mouths, and were staring intently on the stage, when the Man from Solano continued:

"Then, maybe, miss, whenever there is a show goin' on that you'll attend, you'll just drop me word to Earle's Hotel, to this yer address," and he pulled from his pocket a

dozen well-worn letters, and taking the buff envelope from one, handed it to her with something like a bow.

"Certainly," broke in the facetious Dashboard, "Miss X. goes to the Charity Ball to-morrow night. The tickets are but a trifle to an opulent Californian, and a man of your evident means, and the object a worthy one. You will, no doubt, easily secure an invitation."

Miss X. raised her handsome eyes for a moment to Dashboard. "By all means," she said, turning to the Man from Solano; "and as Mr. Dashboard is one of the managers and you are a stranger, he will, of course, send you a complimentary ticket. I have known Mr. Dashboard long enough to know that he is invariably courteous to strangers and a gentleman." She settled herself in her chair again and fixed her eyes upon the stage.

The Man from Solano thanked the Man of New York, and then, after shaking hands with every body in the box, turned to go. When he had reached the door he looked back to Miss X., and said—

"It WAS one of the queerest things in the world, miss, that my findin' them checks—"

But the curtain had just then risen on the garden scene in "Faust," and Miss X. was absorbed. The Man from Solano carefully shut the box door and retired. I followed him.

He was silent until he reached the lobby, and then he said, as if renewing a previous conversation, "She IS a mighty peart gal— that's so. She's just my kind, and will make a stavin' good wife."

I thought I saw danger ahead for the Man from Solano, so I hastened to tell him that she was beset by attentions, that she could have her pick and choice of the best of society, and finally, that she was, most probably, engaged to Dashboard.

"That's so," he said quietly, without the slightest trace of feeling. "It would be mighty queer if she wasn't. But I reckon I'll steer down to the ho-tel. I don't care much for this yellin'." (He was alluding to a cadenza of that famous cantatrice, Signora Batti Batti.) "What's the time?"

He pulled out his watch. It was such a glaring chain, so obviously bogus, that my eyes were fascinated by it. "You're looking at that watch," he said; "it's purty to look at, but she don't go worth a cent. And yet her price was $125, gold. I gobbled her up in Chatham Street day before yesterday, where they were selling 'em very cheap at auction."

"You have been outrageously swindled," I said, indignantly. "Watch and chain are not worth twenty dollars."

"Are they worth fifteen?" he asked, gravely.

"Possibly."

"Then I reckon it's a fair trade. Ye see, I told 'em I was a Californian from Solano, and hadn't anything about me of greenbacks. I had three slugs with me. Ye remember them slugs?" (I did; the "slug" was a "token" issued in the early days—a hexagonal piece of gold a little over twice the size of a twenty- dollar gold piece—worth and accepted for fifty dollars.)

"Well, I handed them that, and they handed me the watch. You see them slugs I had made myself outer brass filings and iron pyrites, and used to slap 'em down on the boys for a bluff in a game of draw poker. You see, not being reg'lar gov-ment money, it wasn't counterfeiting. I reckon they cost me, counting time and anxiety, about fifteen dollars. So, if this yer watch is worth that, it's about a square game, ain't it?"

I began to understand the Man from Solano, and said it was. He returned his watch to his pocket, toyed playfully with the chain, and remarked, "Kinder makes a man look fash'nable and wealthy, don't it?"

I agreed with him. "But what do you intend to do here?" I asked.

"Well, I've got a cash capital of nigh on seven hundred dollars. I guess until I get into reg'lar business I'll skirmish round Wall Street, and sorter lay low." I was about to give him a few words of warning, but I remembered his watch, and desisted. We shook hands and parted.

A few days after I met him on Broadway. He was attired in another new suit, but I think I saw a slight improvement in his general appearance. Only five distinct colors were visible in his attire. But this, I had reason to believe afterwards, was accidental.

I asked him if he had been to the ball. He said he had. "That gal, and a mighty peart gal she was too, was there, but she sorter fought shy of me. I got this new suit to go in, but those waiters sorter run me into a private box, and I didn't get much chance to continner our talk about them checks. But that young feller, Dashboard, was mighty perlite. He brought lots of fellers and young women round to the box to

see me, and he made up a party that night to take me round Wall Street and in them Stock Boards. And the next day he called for me and took me, and I invested about five hundred dollars in them stocks—may be more. You see, we sorter swopped stocks. You know I had ten shares in the Peacock Copper Mine, that you was once secretary of."

"But those shares are not worth a cent. The whole thing exploded ten years ago."

"That's so, may be; YOU say so. But then I didn't know anything more about Communipaw Central, or the Naphtha Gaslight Company, and so I thought it was a square game. Only I realized on the stocks I bought, and I kem up outer Wall Street about four hundred dollars better. You see it was a sorter risk, after all, for them Peacock stocks MIGHT come up!"

I looked into his face: it was immeasurably serene and commonplace. I began to be a little afraid of the man, or, rather, of my want of judgment of the man; and after a few words we shook hands and parted.

It was some months before I again saw the Man from Solano. When I did, I found that he had actually become a member of the Stock Board, and had a little office on Broad Street, where he transacted a fair business. My remembrance going back to the first night I met him, I inquired if he had renewed his acquaintance with Miss X. "I heerd that she was in Newport this summer, and I ran down there fur a week."

"And you talked with her about the baggage-checks?"

"No," he said, seriously; "she gave me a commission to buy some stocks for her. You see, I guess them fash'nable

fellers sorter got to runnin' her about me, and so she put our acquaintance on a square business footing. I tell you, she's a right peart gal. Did ye hear of the accident that happened to her?"

I had not.

"Well, you see, she was out yachting, and I managed through one of those fellers to get an invite, too. The whole thing was got up by a man that they say is going to marry her. Well, one afternoon the boom swings round in a little squall and knocks her overboard. There was an awful excitement—you've heard about it, may be?"

"No!" But I saw it all with a romancer's instinct in a flash of poetry! This poor fellow, debarred through uncouthness from expressing his affection for her, had at last found his fitting opportunity. He had—

"Thar was an awful row," he went on. "I ran out on the taffrail, and there a dozen yards away was that purty creature, that peart gal, and—I—"

"You jumped for her," I said, hastily.

"No!" he said gravely. "I let the other man do the jumping. I sorter looked on."

I stared at him in astonishment.

"No," he went on, seriously. "He was the man who jumped—that was just then his 'put'—his line of business. You see, if I had waltzed over the side of that ship, and cavoorted in, and flummuxed round and finally flopped to the bottom, that other man would have jumped nateral-like and saved her; and ez he was going to marry her anyway, I

don't exactly see where I'D hev been represented in the transaction. But don't you see, ef, after he'd jumped and hadn't got her, he'd gone down himself, I'd hev had the next best chance, and the advantage of heving him outer the way. You see, you don't understand me—I don't think you did in Californy."

"Then he did save her?"

"Of course. Don't you see she was all right. If he'd missed her, I'd have chipped in. Thar warn't no sense in my doing his duty onless he failed."

Somehow the story got out. The Man from Solano as a butt became more popular than ever, and of course received invitations to burlesque receptions, and naturally met a great many people whom otherwise he would not have seen. It was observed also that his seven hundred dollars were steadily growing, and that he seemed to be getting on in his business. Certain California stocks which I had seen quietly interred in the old days in the tombs of their fathers were magically revived; and I remember, as one who has seen a ghost, to have been shocked as I looked over the quotations one morning to have seen the ghostly face of the "Dead Beat Beach Mining Co.," rouged and plastered, looking out from the columns of the morning paper. At last a few people began to respect, or suspect, the Man from Solano. At last, suspicion culminated with this incident:

He had long expressed a wish to belong to a certain "fash'n'ble" club, and with a view of burlesque he was invited to visit the club, where a series of ridiculous entertainments were given him, winding up with a card party. As I passed the steps of the club- house early next morning, I overheard two or three members talking excitedly—

"He cleaned everybody out." "Why, he must have raked in nigh on $40,000."

"Who?" I asked.

"The Man from Solano."

As I turned away, one of the gentlemen, a victim, noted for his sporting propensities, followed me, and laying his hand on my shoulders, asked:

"Tell me fairly now. What business did your friend follow in California?"

"He was a shepherd."

"A what?"

"A shepherd. Tended his flocks on the honey-scented hills of Solano."

"Well, all I can say is, d—n your California pastorals!"

The Office Seeker

He asked me if I had ever seen the "Remus Sentinel."

I replied that I had not, and would have added that I did not even know where Remus was, when he continued by saying it was strange the hotel proprietor did not keep the "Sentinel" on his files, and that he, himself, should write to the editor about it. He would not have spoken about it, but he, himself, had been an humble member of the profession to which I belonged, and had often written for its columns. Some friends of his—partial, no doubt—had said that his style somewhat resembled Junius'; but of course, you know—well, what he could say was that in the last campaign his articles were widely sought for. He did not know but he had a copy of one. Here his hand dived into the breast-pocket of his coat, with a certain deftness that indicated long habit, and, after depositing on his lap a bundle of well-worn documents, every one of which was glaringly suggestive of certificates and signatures, he concluded he had left it in his trunk.

I breathed more freely. We were sitting in the rotunda of a famous Washington hotel, and only a few moments before had the speaker, an utter stranger to me, moved his chair beside mine and opened a conversation. I noticed that he had that timid, lonely, helpless air which invests the bucolic traveler who, for the first time, finds himself among strangers, and his identity lost, in a world so much larger, so much colder, so much more indifferent to him than he ever imagined. Indeed, I think that what we often attribute to the impertinent familiarity of country-men and rustic travelers

on railways or in cities is largely due to their awful loneliness and nostalgia. I remember to have once met in a smoking-car on a Kansas railway one of these lonely ones, who, after plying me with a thousand useless questions, finally elicited the fact that I knew slightly a man who had once dwelt in his native town in Illinois. During the rest of our journey the conversation turned chiefly upon his fellow-townsman, whom it afterwards appeared that my Illinois friend knew no better than I did. But he had established a link between himself and his far-off home through me, and was happy.

While this was passing through my mind I took a fair look at him. He was a spare young fellow, not more than thirty, with sandy hair and eyebrows, and eyelashes so white as to be almost imperceptible. He was dressed in black, somewhat to the "rearward o' the fashion," and I had an odd idea that it had been his wedding suit, and it afterwards appeared I was right. His manner had the precision and much of the dogmatism of the country schoolmaster, accustomed to wrestle with the feeblest intellects. From his history, which he presently gave me, it appeared I was right here also.

He was born and bred in a Western State, and, as schoolmaster of Remus and Clerk of Supervisors, had married one of his scholars, the daughter of a clergyman, and a man of some little property. He had attracted some attention by his powers of declamation, and was one of the principal members of the Remus Debating Society. The various questions then agitating Remus—"Is the doctrine of immortality consistent with an agricultural life?" and, "Are round dances morally wrong?"—afforded him an opportunity of bringing himself prominently before the country people. Perhaps I might have seen an extract copied from the "Remus Sentinel" in the "Christian Recorder" of May 7, 1875? No? He would get it for me. He had taken an active part in the last campaign. He did not like to say it, but

it had been universally acknowledged that he had elected Gashwiler.

Who?

Gen. Pratt C. Gashwiler, member of Congress from our deestrict.

Oh!

A powerful man, sir—a very powerful man; a man whose influence will presently be felt here, sir—HERE! Well, he had come on with Gashwiler, and—well, he did not know why—Gashwiler did not know why he should not, you know (a feeble, half-apologetic laugh here), receive that reward, you know, for these services which, etc., etc.

I asked him if he had any particular or definite office in view.

Well, no. He had left that to Gashwiler. Gashwiler had said—he remembered his very words: "Leave it all to me; I'll look through the different departments, and see what can be done for a man of your talents."

And—

He's looking. I'm expecting him back here every minute. He's gone over to the Department of Tape, to see what can be done there. Ah! here he comes.

A large man approached us. He was very heavy, very unwieldy, very unctuous and oppressive. He affected the "honest farmer," but so badly that the poorest husbandman would have resented it. There was a suggestion of a cheap lawyer about him that would have justified any self-

respecting judge in throwing him over the bar at once. There was a military suspicion about him that would have entitled him to a court-martial on the spot. There was an introduction, from which I learned that my office-seeking friend's name was Expectant Dobbs. And then Gashwiler addressed me:

"Our young friend here is waiting, waiting. Waiting, I may say, on the affairs of State. Youth," continued the Hon. Mr. Gashwiler, addressing an imaginary constituency, "is nothing but a season of waiting—of preparation—ha, ha!"

As he laid his hand in a fatherly manner—a fatherly manner that was as much of a sham as anything else about him—I don't know whether I was more incensed at him or his victim, who received it with evident pride and satisfaction. Nevertheless he ventured to falter out:

"Has anything been done yet?"

"Well, no; I can't say that anything—that is, that anything has been COMPLETED; but I may say we are in excellent position for an advance—ha, ha! But we must wait, my young friend, wait. What is it the Latin philosopher says? 'Let us by all means hasten slowly'—ha, ha!" and he turned to me as if saying confidentially, "Observe the impatience of these boys!" "I met, a moment ago, my old friend and boyhood's companion, Jim McGlasher, chief of the Bureau for the Dissemination of Useless Information, and," lowering his voice to a mysterious but audible whisper, "I shall see him again to-morrow."

The "All aboard!" of the railway omnibus at this moment tore me from the presence of this gifted legislator and his protege; but as we drove away I saw through the open window the powerful mind of Gashwiler operating, so to speak, upon the susceptibilities of Mr. Dobbs.

I did not meet him again for a week. The morning of my return I saw the two conversing together in the hall, but with the palpable distinction between this and their former interviews, that the gifted Gashwiler seemed to be anxious to get away from his friend. I heard him say something about "committees" and "to-morrow," and when Dobbs turned his freckled face toward me I saw that he had got at last some expression into it—disappointment.

I asked him pleasantly how he was getting on.

He had not lost his pride yet. He was doing well, although such was the value set upon his friend Gashwiler's abilities by his brother members that he was almost always occupied with committee business. I noticed that his clothes were not in as good case as before, and he told me that he had left the hotel, and taken lodgings in a by-street, where it was less expensive. Temporarily of course.

A few days after this I had business in one of the great departments. From the various signs over the doors of its various offices and bureaus it always oddly reminded me of Stewart's or Arnold and Constable's. You could get pensions, patents, and plants. You could get land and the seeds to put in it, and the Indians to prowl round it, and what not. There was a perpetual clanging of office desk bells, and a running hither and thither of messengers strongly suggestive of "Cash 47."

As my business was with the manager of this Great National Fancy Shop, I managed to push by the sad-eyed, eager-faced crowd of men and women in the anteroom, and entered the secretary's room, conscious of having left behind me a great deal of envy and uncharitableness of spirit. As I opened the door I heard a monotonous flow of Western

speech which I thought I recognized. There was no mistaking it. It was the voice of the Gashwiler.

"The appointment of this man, Mr. Secretary, would be most acceptable to the people in my deestrict. His family are wealthy and influential, and it's just as well in the fall elections to have the supervisors and county judge pledged to support the administration. Our delegates to the State Central Committee are to a man"—but here, perceiving from the wandering eye of Mr. Secretary that there was another man in the room, he whispered the rest with a familiarity that must have required all the politician in the official's breast to keep from resenting.

"You have some papers, I suppose?" asked the secretary, wearily.

Gashwiler was provided with a pocketful, and produced them. The secretary threw them on the table among the other papers, where they seemed instantly to lose their identity, and looked as if they were ready to recommend anybody but the person they belonged to. Indeed, in one corner the entire Massachusetts delegation, with the Supreme Bench at their head, appeared to be earnestly advocating the manuring of Iowa waste lands; and to the inexperienced eye, a noted female reformer had apparently appended her signature to a request for a pension for wounds received in battle.

"By the way," said the secretary, "I think I have a letter here from somebody in your district asking an appointment, and referring to you? Do you withdraw it?"

"If anybody has been presuming to speculate upon my patronage," said the Hon. Mr. Gashwiler, with rising rage.

"I've got the letter somewhere here," said the secretary, looking dazedly at his table. He made a feeble movement among the papers, and then sank back hopelessly in his chair, and gazed out of the window as if he thought and rather hoped it might have flown away. "It was from a Mr. Globbs, or Gobbs, or Dobbs, of Remus," he said finally, after a superhuman effort of memory.

"Oh, that's nothing—a foolish fellow who has been boring me for the last month."

"Then I am to understand that this application is withdrawn?"

"As far as my patronage is concerned, certainly. In fact, such an appointment would not express the sentiments—indeed, I may say, would be calculated to raise active opposition in the deestrict."

The secretary uttered a sigh of relief, and the gifted Gashwiler passed out. I tried to get a good look at the honorable scamp's eye, but he evidently did not recognize me.

It was a question in my mind whether I ought not to expose the treachery of Dobbs' friend, but the next time I met Dobbs he was in such good spirits that I forebore. It appeared that his wife had written to him that she had discovered a second cousin in the person of the Assistant Superintendent of the Envelope Flap Moistening Bureau of the Department of Tape, and had asked his assistance; and Dobbs had seen him, and he had promised it. "You see," said Dobbs, "in the performance of his duties he is often very near the person of the secretary, frequently in the next room, and he is a powerful man, sir—a powerful man to know, sir—a VERY powerful man."

How long this continued I do not remember. Long enough, however, for Dobbs to become quite seedy, for the giving up of wrist cuffs, for the neglect of shoes and beard, and for great hollows to form round his eyes, and a slight flush on his cheek-bones. I remember meeting him in all the departments, writing letters or waiting patiently in anterooms from morning till night. He had lost all his old dogmatism, but not his pride. "I might as well be here as anywhere, while I'm waiting," he said, "and then I'm getting some knowledge of the details of official life."

In the face of this mystery I was surprised at finding a note from him one day, inviting me to dine with him at a certain famous restaurant. I had scarce got over my amazement, when the writer himself overtook me at my hotel. For a moment I scarcely recognized him. A new suit of fashionably-cut clothes had changed him, without, however, entirely concealing his rustic angularity of figure and outline. He even affected a fashionable dilettante air, but so mildly and so innocently that it was not offensive.

"You see," he began, explanatory-wise, "I've just found out the way to do it. None of these big fellows, these cabinet officers, know me except as an applicant. Now, the way to do this thing is to meet 'em fust sociably; wine 'em and dine 'em. Why, sir,"—he dropped into the schoolmaster again here—"I had two cabinet ministers, two judges, and a general at my table last night."

"On YOUR invitation?"

"Dear, no! all I did was to pay for it. Tom Soufflet gave the dinner and invited the people. Everybody knows Tom. You see, a friend of mine put me up to it, and said that Soufflet had fixed up no end of appointments and jobs in that way. You see, when these gentlemen get sociable over their

wine, he says carelessly, 'By the way, there's So-and-so—a good fellow—wants something; give it to him.' And the first thing you know, or they know, he gets a promise from them. They get a dinner—and a good one—and he gets an appointment."

"But where did you get the money?"

"Oh,"—he hesitated—"I wrote home, and Fanny's father raised fifteen hundred dollars some way, and sent it to me. I put it down to political expenses." He laughed a weak, foolish laugh here, and added, "As the old man don't drink nor smoke, he'd lift his eyebrows to know how the money goes. But I'll make it all right when the office comes—and she's coming, sure pop."

His slang fitted as poorly on him as his clothes, and his familiarity was worse than his former awkward shyness. But I could not help asking him what had been the result of this expenditure.

"Nothing just yet. But the Secretary of Tape and the man at the head of the Inferior Department, both spoke to me, and one of them said he thought he'd heard my name before. He might," he added, with a forced laugh, "for I've written him fifteen letters."

Three months passed. A heavy snow-storm stayed my chariot wheels on a Western railroad, ten miles from a nervous lecture committee and a waiting audience; there was nothing to do but to make the attempt to reach them in a sleigh. But the way was long and the drifts deep, and when at last four miles out we reached a little village, the driver declared his cattle could hold out no longer, and we must stop there. Bribes and threats were equally of no avail. I had to accept the fact.

"What place is this?"

"Remus."

"Remus, Remus," where had I heard that name before? But while I was reflecting he drove up before the door of the tavern. It was a dismal, sleep-forbidding place, and only nine o'clock, and here was the long winter's night before me. Failing to get the landlord to give me a team to go further, I resigned myself to my fate and a cigar, behind the red-hot stove. In a few moments one of the loungers approached me, calling me by name, and in a rough but hearty fashion condoled with me for my mishap, advised me to stay at Remus all night, and added: "The quarters ain't the best in the world yer at this hotel. But thar's an old man yer—the preacher that was—that for twenty years hez taken in such fellers as you and lodged 'em free gratis for nothing, and hez been proud to do it. The old man used to be rich; he ain't so now; sold his big house on the cross roads, and lives in a little cottage with his darter right over yan. But ye couldn't do him a better turn than to go over thar and stay, and if he thought I'd let ye go out o' Remus without axing ye, he'd give me h-ll. Stop, I'll go with ye."

I might at least call on the old man, and I accompanied my guide through the still falling snow until we reached a little cottage. The door opened to my guide's knock, and with the brief and discomposing introduction, "Yer, ole man, I've brought you one o' them snow-bound lecturers," he left me on the threshold, as my host, a kindly-faced, white-haired man of seventy, came forward to greet me.

His frankness and simple courtesy overcame the embarrassment left by my guide's introduction, and I followed him passively as he entered the neat, but plainly-

furnished sitting-room. At the same moment a pretty, but faded young woman arose from the sofa and was introduced to me as his daughter. “Fanny and I live here quite alone, and if you knew how good it was to see somebody from the great outside world now and then, you would not apologize for what you call your intrusion.”

During this speech I was vaguely trying to recall where and when and under what circumstances I had ever before seen the village, the house, the old man or his daughter. Was it in a dream, or in one of those dim reveries of some previous existence to which the spirit of mankind is subject? I looked at them again. In the careworn lines around the once pretty girlish mouth of the young woman, in the furrowed seams over the forehead of the old man, in the ticking of the old-fashioned clock on the shelf, in the faint whisper of the falling snow outside, I read the legend, “Patience, patience; Wait and Hope.”

The old man filled a pipe, and offering me one, continued, “Although I seldom drink myself, it was my custom to always keep some nourishing liquor in my house for passing guests, but to-night I find myself without any.” I hastened to offer him my flask, which, after a moment’s coyness, he accepted, and presently under its benign influence at least ten years dropped from his shoulders, and he sat up in his chair erect and loquacious.

“And how are affairs at the National Capital, sir?” he began.

Now, if there was any subject of which I was profoundly ignorant, it was this. But the old man was evidently bent on having a good political talk. So I said vaguely, yet with a certain sense of security, that I guessed there wasn’t much being done.

"I see," said the old man, "in the matters of resumption; of the sovereign rights of States and federal interference, you would imply that a certain conservative tentative policy is to be promulgated until after the electoral committee have given their verdict." I looked for help towards the lady, and observed feebly that he had very clearly expressed my views.

The old man, observing my look, said: "Although my daughter's husband holds a federal position in Washington, the pressure of his business is so great that he has little time to give us mere gossip—I beg your pardon, did you speak?"

I had unconsciously uttered an exclamation. This, then, was Remus— the home of Expectant Dobbs—and these his wife and father; and the Washington banquet-table, ah me! had sparkled with the yearning heart's blood of this poor wife, and had been upheld by this tottering Caryatid of a father.

"Do you know what position he has?"

The old man did not know positively, but thought it was some general supervising position. He had been assured by Mr. Gashwiler that it was a first-class clerkship; yes, a FIRST class.

I did not tell him that in this, as in many other official regulations in Washington, they reckoned backward, but said:

"I suppose that your M. C., Mr.—Mr. Gashwiler—"

"Don't mention his name," said the little woman, rising to her feet hastily; "he never brought Expectant

anything but disappointment and sorrow. I hate, I despise the man."

"Dear Fanny," expostulated the old man, gently, "this is unchristian and unjust. Mr. Gashwiler is a powerful, a very powerful man! His work is a great one; his time is preoccupied with weightier matters."

"His time was not so preoccupied but he could make use of poor Expectant," said this wounded dove, a little spitefully.

Nevertheless it was some satisfaction to know that Dobbs had at last got a place, no matter how unimportant, or who had given it to him; and when I went to bed that night in the room that had been evidently prepared for their conjugal chamber, I felt that Dobbs' worst trials were over. The walls were hung with souvenirs of their ante-nuptial days. There was a portrait of Dobbs, aetat. 25; there was a faded bouquet in a glass case, presented by Dobbs to Fanny on examination-day; there was a framed resolution of thanks to Dobbs from the Remus Debating Society; there was a certificate of Dobbs' election as President of the Remus Philomathean Society; there was his commission as Captain in the Remus Independent Contingent of Home Guards; there was a Freemason's chart, in which Dobbs was addressed in epithets more fulsome and extravagant than any living monarch. And yet all these cheap glories of a narrow life and narrower brain were upheld and made sacred by the love of the devoted priestess who worshiped at this lonely shrine, and kept the light burning through gloom and doubt and despair. The storm tore round the house, and shook its white fists in the windows. A dried wreath of laurel that Fanny had placed on Dobbs' head after his celebrated centennial address at the school-house, July 4, 1876, swayed in the gusts, and sent a few of its dead leaves down on the

floor, and I lay in Dobbs' bed and wondered what a first-class clerkship was.

I found out early the next summer. I was strolling through the long corridors of a certain great department, when I came upon a man accurately yoked across the shoulders, and supporting two huge pails of ice on either side, from which he was replenishing the pitchers in the various offices. As I passed I turned to look at him again. It was Dobbs!

He did not set down his burden; it was against the rules, he said. But he gossiped cheerily, said he was beginning at the foot of the ladder, but expected soon to climb up. That it was Civil Service Reform, and of course he would be promoted soon.

"Had Gashwiler procured the appointment?"

No. He believed it was ME. I had told his story to Assistant- secretary Blank, who had, in turn related it to Bureau-director Dash—both good fellows—but this was all they could do. Yes, it was a foothold. But he must go now.

Nevertheless, I followed him up and down, and, cheered up with a rose-colored picture of his wife and family, and my visit there, and promising to come and see him the next time I came to Washington, I left him with his self-imposed yoke.

With a new administration, Civil Service Reform came in, crude and ill-digested, as all sudden and sweeping reforms must be; cruel to the individual, as all crude reforms will ever be; and among the list of helpless men and women, incapacitated for other work by long service in the dull routine of federal office, who were decapitated, the weak,

foolish, emaciated head of Expectant Dobbs went to the block. It afterward appeared that the gifted Gashwiler was responsible for the appointment of twenty clerks, and that the letter of poor Dobbs, in which he dared to refer to the now powerless Gashwiler, had sealed his fate. The country made an example of Gashwiler and—Dobbs.

From that moment he disappeared. I looked for him in vain in anterooms, lobbies, and hotel corridors, and finally came to the conclusion that he had gone home.

How beautiful was that July Sabbath, when the morning train from Baltimore rolled into the Washington depot. How tenderly and chastely the morning sunlight lay on the east front of the Capitol until the whole building was hushed in a grand and awful repose. How difficult it was to think of a Gashwiler creeping in and out of those enfiling columns, or crawling beneath that portico, without wondering that yon majestic figure came not down with flat of sword to smite the fat rotundity of the intruder. How difficult to think that parricidal hands have ever been lifted against the Great Mother, typified here in the graceful white chastity of her garments, in the noble tranquillity of her face, in the gathering up her white-robed children within her shadow.

This led me to think of Dobbs, when, suddenly a face flashed by my carriage window. I called to the driver to stop, and, looking again, saw that it was a woman standing bewildered and irresolute on the street corner. As she turned her anxious face toward me I saw that it was Mrs. Dobbs.

What was she doing here, and where was Expectant?

She began an incoherent apology, and then burst into explanatory tears. When I had got her in the carriage she

said, between her sobs, that Expectant had not returned; that she had received a letter from a friend here saying he was sick—oh very, very sick— and father could not come with her, so she came alone. She was so frightened, so lonely, so miserable.

Had she his address?

Yes, just here! It was on the outskirts of Washington, near Georgetown. Then I would take her there, if I could, for she knew nobody.

On our way I tried to cheer her up by pointing out some of the children of the Great Mother before alluded to, but she only shut her eyes as we rolled down the long avenues, and murmured, "Oh, these cruel, cruel distances!"

At last we reached the locality, a negro quarter, yet clean and neat in appearance. I saw the poor girl shudder slightly as we stopped at the door of a low, two-story frame house, from which the unwonted spectacle of a carriage brought a crowd of half-naked children and a comely, cleanly, kind-faced mulatto woman.

Yes, this was the house. He was upstairs, rather poorly, but asleep, she thought.

We went upstairs. In the first chamber, clean, though poorly furnished, lay Dobbs. On a pine table near his bed were letters and memorials to the various departments, and on the bed-quilt, unfinished, but just as the weary fingers had relaxed their grasp upon it, lay a letter to the Tape Department.

As we entered the room he lifted himself on his elbow. "Fanny!" he said, quickly, and a shade of

disappointment crossed his face. “I thought it was a message from the secretary,” he added, apologetically.

The poor woman had suffered too much already to shrink from this last crushing blow. But she walked quietly to his side without a word or cry, knelt, placed her loving arms around him, and I left them so together.

When I called again in the evening he was better; so much better that, against the doctor’s orders, he had talked to her quite cheerfully and hopefully for an hour, until suddenly raising her bowed head in his two hands, he said, “Do you know, dear, that in looking for help and influence there was one, dear, I had forgotten; one who is very potent with kings and councilors, and I think, love, I shall ask Him to interest Himself in my behalf. It is not too late yet, darling, and I shall seek Him to-morrow.”

And before the morrow came he had sought and found Him, and I doubt not got a good place.

A Sleeping-car Experience

It was in a Pullman sleeping-car on a Western road. After that first plunge into unconsciousness which the weary traveler takes on getting into his berth, I awakened to the dreadful revelation that I had been asleep only two hours. The greater part of a long winter night was before me to face with staring eyes.

Finding it impossible to sleep, I lay there wondering a number of things: why, for instance, the Pullman sleeping-car blankets were unlike other blankets; why they were like squares cut out of cold buckwheat cakes, and why they clung to you when you turned over, and lay heavy on you without warmth; why the curtains before you could not have been made opaque, without being so thick and suffocating; why it would not be as well to sit up all night half asleep in an ordinary passenger-car as to lie awake all night in a Pullman. But the snoring of my fellow-passengers answered this question in the negative.

With the recollection of last night's dinner weighing on me as heavily and coldly as the blankets, I began wondering why, over the whole extent of the continent, there was no local dish; why the bill of fare at restaurant and hotel was invariably only a weak reflex of the metropolitan hostelries; why the entrees were always the same, only more or less badly cooked; why the traveling American always was supposed to demand turkey and cold cranberry sauce; why the pretty waiter-girl apparently shuffled your plates behind your back, and then dealt them over your shoulder in a semicircle, as if they were a hand at cards, and not always

a good one? Why, having done this, she instantly retired to the nearest wall, and gazed at you scornfully, as one who would say, "Fair sir, though lowly, I am proud; if thou dost imagine that I would permit undue familiarity of speech, beware!" And then I began to think of and dread the coming breakfast; to wonder why the ham was always cut half an inch thick, and why the fried egg always resembled a glass eye that visibly winked at you with diabolical dyspeptic suggestions; to wonder if the buckwheat cakes, the eating of which requires a certain degree of artistic preparation and deliberation, would be brought in as usual one minute before the train started. And then I had a vivid recollection of a fellow-passenger who, at a certain breakfast station in Illinois, frantically enwrapped his portion of this national pastry in his red bandana handkerchief, took it into the smoking-car, and quietly devoured it en route.

Lying broad awake, I could not help making some observations which I think are not noticed by the day traveler. First, that the speed of a train is not equal or continuous. That at certain times the engine apparently starts up, and says to the baggage train behind it, "Come, come, this won't do! Why, it's nearly half-past two; how in h-ll shall we get through? Don't you talk to ME. Pooh, pooh!" delivered in that rhythmical fashion which all meditation assumes on a railway train. Exempli gratia: One night, having raised my window-curtain to look over a moonlit snowy landscape, as I pulled it down the lines of a popular comic song flashed across me. Fatal error! The train instantly took it up, and during the rest of the night I was haunted by this awful refrain: "Pull down the bel-lind, pull down the bel-lind; simebody's klink klink, O don't be shoo-shoo!" Naturally this differs on the different railways. On the New York Central, where the road-bed is quite perfect and the steel rails continuous, I have heard this irreverent train give the words of a certain popular revival hymn after this

fashion: “Hold the fort, for I am Sankey; Moody slingers still. Wave the swish swash back from klinky, klinky klanky kill.” On the New York and New Haven, where there are many switches, and the engine whistles at every cross road, I have often heard, “Tommy make room for your whooopy! that’s a little clang; bumpity, bumpity, boopy, clikitty, clikitty, clang.” Poetry, I fear, fared little better. One starlit night, coming from Quebec, as we slipped by a virgin forest, the opening lines of Evangeline flashed upon me. But all I could make of them was this: “This is the forest primeval- eval; the groves of the pines and the hemlocks- locks-locks-locks-loooock!” The train was only “slowing” or “braking” up at a station. Hence the jar in the metre.

I had noticed a peculiar Aeolian harp-like cry that ran through the whole train as we settled to rest at last after a long run—an almost sigh of infinite relief, a musical sigh that began in C and ran gradually up to F natural, which I think most observant travelers have noticed day and night. No railway official has ever given me a satisfactory explanation of it. As the car, in a rapid run, is always slightly projected forward of its trucks, a practical friend once suggested to me that it was the gradual settling back of the car body to a state of inertia, which, of course, every poetical traveler would reject. Four o’clock the sound of boot-blacking by the porter faintly apparent from the toilet-room. Why not talk to him? But, fortunately, I remembered that any attempt at extended conversation with conductor or porter was always resented by them as implied disloyalty to the company they represented. I recalled that once I had endeavored to impress upon a conductor the absolute folly of a midnight inspection of tickets, and had been treated by him as an escaped lunatic. No, there was no relief from this suffocating and insupportable loneliness to be gained then. I raised the window-blind and looked out. We were passing a farm-house. A light, evidently the lantern of a farm-hand,

was swung beside a barn. Yes, the faintest tinge of rose in the far horizon. Morning, surely, at last.

We had stopped at a station. Two men had got into the car, and had taken seats in the one vacant section, yawning occasionally and conversing in a languid, perfunctory sort of way. They sat opposite each other, occasionally looking out of the window, but always giving the strong impression that they were tired of each other's company. As I looked out of my curtains at them, the One Man said, with a feebly concealed yawn:

"Yes, well, I reckon he was at one time as poplar an ondertaker ez I knew."

The Other Man (inventing a question rather than giving an answer, out of some languid, social impulse): "But was he—this yer ondertaker—a Christian—hed he jined the church?"

The One Man (reflectively): "Well, I don't know ez you might call him a purfessin' Christian; but he hed—yes, he hed conviction. I think Doctor Wylie hed him under conviction. Et least that was the way I got it from HIM."

A long, dreary pause. The Other Man (feeling it was incumbent upon him to say something): "But why was he poplar ez an ondertaker?"

The One Man (lazily): "Well, he was kinder poplar with widders and widderers—sorter soothen 'em a kinder, keerless way; slung 'em suthin' here and there, sometimes outer the Book, sometimes outer hisself, ez a man of experience as hed hed sorror. Hed, they say (VERY CAUTIOUSLY), lost three wives hisself, and five children

by this yer new disease—dipthery—out in Wisconsin. I don't know the facts, but that's what's got round."

The Other Man: "But how did he lose his poplarity?"

The One Man: "Well, that's the question. You see he interduced some things into ondertaking that waz new. He hed, for instance, a way, as he called it, of manniperlating the features of the deceased."

The Other Man (quietly): "How manniperlating?"

The One Man (struck with a bright and aggressive thought): "Look yer, did ye ever notiss how, generally speakin', onhandsome a corpse is?"

The Other Man had noticed this fact.

The One Man (returning to his fact): "Why there was Mary Peebles, ez was daughter of my wife's bosom friend—a mighty pooty girl and a professing Christian—died of scarlet fever. Well, that gal—I was one of the mourners, being my wife's friend—well, that gal, though I hedn't, perhaps, oughter say—lying in that casket, fetched all the way from some A1 establishment in Chicago, filled with flowers and furbelows—didn't really seem to be of much account. Well, although my wife's friend, and me a mourner—well, now, I was—disappointed and discouraged."

The Other Man (in palpably affected sympathy): "Sho! now!"

"Yes, SIR! Well, you see, this yer ondertaker, this Wilkins, hed a way of correctin' all thet. And just by manniperlation. He worked over the face of the deceased

ontil he perduced what the survivin' relatives called a look of resignation—you know, a sort of smile, like. When he wanted to put in any extrys, he perduced what he called—hevin' reglar charges for this kind of work—a Christian's hope."

The Other Man: "I want to know."

"Yes. Well, I admit, at times it was a little startlin'. And I've allers said (a little confidentially) that I had my doubts of its being Scriptoorl, or sacred, we being, ez you know, worms of the yearth; and I relieved my mind to our pastor, but he didn't feel like interferin', ez long ez it was confined to church membership. But the other day, when Cy Dunham died—you disremember Cy Dunham?"

A long interval of silence. The Other Man was looking out of the window, and had apparently forgotten his companion completely. But as I stretched my head out of the curtain I saw four other heads as eagerly reached out from other berths to hear the conclusion of the story. One head, a female one, instantly disappeared on my looking around, but a certain tremulousness of her window-curtain showed an unabated interest. The only two utterly disinterested men were the One Man and the Other Man.

The Other Man (detaching himself languidly from the window): "Cy Dunham?"

"Yes; Cy never hed hed either convictions or purfessions. Uster get drunk and go round with permiscous women. Sorter like the prodigal son, only a little more so, ez fur ez I kin judge from the facks ez stated to me. Well, Cy one day petered out down at Little Rock, and was sent up yer for interment. The fammerly, being proud-like, of course didn't spare no money on that funeral, and it waz—now

between you and me—about ez shapely and first-class and prime-mess affair ez I ever saw. Wilkins hed put in his extrys. He hed put onto that prodigal's face the A1 touch—hed him fixed up with a 'Christian's hope.' Well, it was about the turning- point, for thar waz some of the members and the pastor hisself thought that the line oughter to be drawn somewhere, and thar was some talk at Deacon Tibbet's about a reg'lar conference meetin' regardin' it. But it wasn't thet which made him onpoplar."

Another silence; no expression nor reflection from the face of the Other Man of the least desire to know what ultimately settled the unpopularity of the undertaker. But from the curtains of the various berths several eager and one or two even wrathful faces, anxious for the result.

The Other Man (lazily recurring to the fading topic): "Well, what made him onpoplar?"

The One Man (quietly): "Extrys, I think—that is, I suppose, not knowin'" (cautiously) "all the facts. When Mrs. Widdecombe lost her husband, 'bout two months ago, though she'd been through the valley of the shadder of death twice—this bein' her third marriage, hevin' been John Barker's widder—"

The Other Man (with an intense expression of interest): "No, you're foolin' me!"

The One Man (solemnly): "Ef I was to appear before my Maker to- morrow, yes! she was the widder of Barker."

The Other Man: "Well, I swow."

The One Man: "Well, this Widder Widdecombe, she put up a big funeral for the deceased. She hed Wilkins, and

thet ondertaker just laid hisself out. Just spread hisself. Onfort'natly— perhaps fort'natly in the ways of Providence—one of Widdecombe's old friends, a doctor up thar in Chicago, comes down to the funeral. He goes up with the friends to look at the deceased, smilin' a peaceful sort o' heavinly smile, and everybody sayin' he's gone to meet his reward, and this yer friend turns round, short and sudden on the widder settin' in her pew, and kinder enjoyin, as wimen will, all the compliments paid the corpse, and he says, says he:

"'What did you say your husband died of, marm?'

"'Consumption,' she says, wiping her eyes, poor critter. 'Consumption—gallopin' consumption.'

"'Consumption be d—d,' sez he, bein' a profane kind of Chicago doctor, and not bein' ever under conviction. 'Thet man died of strychnine. Look at thet face. Look at thet contortion of them fashal muscles. Thet's strychnine. Thet's risers Sardonikus' (thet's what he said; he was always sorter profane).

"'Why, doctor,' says the widder, 'thet—thet is his last smile. It's a Christian's resignation.'

"'Thet be blowed; don't tell me,' sez he. 'Hell is full of thet kind of resignation. It's pizon. And I'll—' Why, dern my skin, yes we are; yes, it's Joliet. Wall, now, who'd hey thought we'd been nigh onto an hour."

Two or three anxious passengers from their berths: "Say; look yer, stranger! Old man! What became of—"

But the One Man and the Other Man had vanished.

Morning on the Avenue

Notes by an Early Riser

I have always been an early riser. The popular legend that "Early to bed and early to rise," invariably and rhythmically resulted in healthfulness, opulence, and wisdom, I beg here to solemnly protest against. As an "unhealthy" man, as an "unwealthy" man, and doubtless by virtue of this protest an "unwise" man, I am, I think, a glaring example of the untruth of the proposition.

For instance, it is my misfortune, as an early riser, to live upon a certain fashionable avenue, where the practice of early rising is confined exclusively to domestics. Consequently, when I issue forth on this broad, beautiful thoroughfare at six A. M., I cannot help thinking that I am, to a certain extent, desecrating its traditional customs.

I have more than once detected the milkman winking at the maid with a diabolical suggestion that I was returning from a carouse, and Roundsman 9999 has once or twice followed me a block or two with the evident impression that I was a burglar returning from a successful evening out. Nevertheless, these various indiscretions have brought me into contact with a kind of character and phenomena whose existence I might otherwise have doubted.

First, let me speak of a large class of working-people whose presence is, I think, unknown to many of those

gentlemen who are in the habit of legislating or writing about them. A majority of these early risers in the neighborhood of which I may call my "beat" carry with them unmistakable evidences of the American type. I have seen so little of that foreign element that is popularly supposed to be the real working class of the great metropolis, that I have often been inclined to doubt statistics. The ground that my morning rambles cover extends from Twenty-third Street to Washington Park, and laterally from Sixth Avenue to Broadway. The early rising artisans that I meet here, crossing three avenues— the milkmen, the truck-drivers, the workman, even the occasional tramp—wherever they may come from or go to, or what their real habitat may be—are invariably Americans. I give it as an honest record, whatever its significance or insignificance may be, that during the last year, between the hours of six and eight A. M., in and about the locality I have mentioned, I have met with but two unmistakable foreigners, an Irishman and a German. Perhaps it may be necessary to add to this statement that the people I have met at those early hours I have never seen at any other time in the same locality.

As to their quality, the artisans were always cleanly dressed, intelligent, and respectful. I remember, however, one morning, when the ice storm of the preceding night had made the sidewalks glistening, smiling and impassable, to have journeyed down the middle of Twelfth Street with a mechanic so sooty as to absolutely leave a legible track in the snowy pathway. He was the fireman attending the engine in a noted manufactory, and in our brief conversation he told me many facts regarding his profession which I fear interested me more than the after-dinner speeches of some distinguished gentlemen I had heard the preceding night. I remember that he spoke of his engine as "she," and related certain circumstances regarding her inconsistency, her aberrations, her pettishnesses, that seemed to justify the

feminine gender. I have a grateful recollection of him as being one who introduced me to a restaurant where chicory, thinly disguised as coffee, was served with bread at five cents a cup, and that he honorably insisted on being the host, and paid his ten cents for our mutual entertainment with the grace of a Barmecide. I remember, in a more genial season—I think early summer—to have found upon the benches of Washington Park a gentleman who informed me that his profession was that of a "pigeon catcher"; that he contracted with certain parties in this city to furnish these birds for what he called their "pigeon-shoots"; and that in fulfilling this contract he often was obliged to go as far west as Minnesota. The details he gave—his methods of entrapping the birds, his study of their habits, his evident belief that the city pigeon, however well provided for by parties who fondly believed the bird to be their own, was really ferae naturae, and consequently "game" for the pigeon-catcher—were all so interesting that I listened to him with undisguised delight. When he had finished, however, he said, "And now, sir, being a poor man, with a large family, and work bein' rather slack this year, if ye could oblige me with the loan of a dollar and your address, until remittances what I'm expecting come in from Chicago, you'll be doin' me a great service," etc., etc. He got the dollar, of course (his information was worth twice the money), but I imagine he lost my address. Yet it is only fair to say that some days after, relating his experience to a prominent sporting man, he corroborated all its details, and satisfied me that my pigeon-catching friend, although unfortunate, was not an impostor.

And this leads me to speak of the birds. Of all early risers, my most importunate, aggressive, and obtrusive companions are the English sparrows. Between six and seven A. M. they seem to possess the avenue, and resent my intrusion. I remember, one chilly morning, when I came upon a flurry of them, chattering, quarreling, skimming, and

alighting just before me. I stopped at last, fearful of stepping on the nearest. To my great surprise, instead of flying away, he contested the ground inch by inch before my advancing foot, with his wings outspread and open bill outstretched, very much like that ridiculous burlesque of the American eagle which the common canary-bird assumes when teased. "Did you ever see 'em wash in the fountain in the square?" said Roundsman 9999, early one summer morning. I had not. "I guess they're there yet. Come and see 'em," he said, and complacently accompanied me two blocks. I don't know which was the finer sight—the thirty or forty winged sprites, dashing in and out of the basin, each the very impersonation of a light-hearted, mischievous puck, or this grave policeman, with badge and club and shield, looking on with delight. Perhaps my visible amusement, or the spectacle of a brother policeman just then going past with a couple of "drunk and disorderlies," recalled his official responsibilities and duties. "They say them foreign sparrows drive all the other birds away," he added, severely; and then walked off with a certain reserved manner, as if it were not impossible for him to be called upon some morning to take the entire feathered assembly into custody, and if so called upon he should do it.

Next, I think, in procession among the early risers, and surely next in fresh and innocent exterior, were the work-women or shop- girls. I have seen this fine avenue on gala afternoons bright with the beauty and elegance of an opulent city, but I have see no more beautiful faces than I have seen among these humbler sisters. As the mere habits of dress in America, except to a very acute critic, give no suggestion of the rank of the wearer, I can imagine an inexperienced foreigner utterly mystified and confounded by these girls, who perhaps work a sewing-machine or walk the long floors of a fashionable dry-goods shop. I remember one face and figure, faultless and complete—modestly yet most

becomingly dressed— indeed, a figure that Compte-Calix might have taken for one of his exquisite studies, which, between seven and eight A. M. passed through Eleventh Street, between Sixth Avenue and Broadway. So exceptionally fine was her carriage, so chaste and virginal her presence, and so refined and even spiritual her features, that, as a literary man, I would have been justified in taking her for the heroine of a society novel. Indeed, I had already woven a little romance about her, when one morning she overtook me, accompanied by another girl—pretty, but of a different type—with whom she was earnestly conversing. As the two passed me, there fell from her faultless lips the following astounding sentence: "And I told him, if he didn't like it he might lump it, and he traveled off on his left ear, you bet!" Heaven knows what indiscretion this speech saved me from; but the reader will understand what a sting the pain of rejection might have added to it by the above formula.

The "morning-cocktail" men come next in my experience of early rising. I used to take my early cup of coffee in the cafe of a certain fashionable restaurant that had a bar attached. I could not help noticing that, unlike the usual social libations of my countrymen, the act of taking a morning cocktail was a solitary one. In the course of my experience I cannot recall the fact of two men taking an ante-breakfast cocktail together. On the contrary, I have observed the male animal rush savagely at the bar, demand his drink of the bar-keeper, swallow it, and hasten from the scene of his early debauchery, or else take it in a languid, perfunctory manner, which, I think, must have been insulting to the bar-keeper. I have observed two men, whom I had seen drinking amicably together the preceding night, standing gloomily at the opposite corners of the bar, evidently trying not to see each other and making the matter a confidential one with the bar-keeper. I have seen even a thin disguise of simplicity assumed. I remember an elderly gentleman, of most

respectable exterior, who used to enter the cafe as if he had strayed there accidentally. After looking around carefully, and yet unostentatiously, he would walk to the bar, and, with an air of affected carelessness, state that "not feeling well this morning, he guessed he would take—well, he would leave it to the bar-keeper." The bar-keeper invariably gave him a stiff brandy cocktail. When the old gentleman had done this half a dozen times, I think I lost faith in him. I tried afterwards to glean from the bar-keeper some facts regarding those experiences, but I am proud to say that he was honorably reticent. Indeed, I think it may be said truthfully that there is no record of a bar-keeper who has been "interviewed." Clergymen and doctors have, but it is well for the weakness of humanity that the line should be drawn somewhere.

And this reminds me that one distressing phase of early rising is the incongruous and unpleasant contact of the preceding night. The social yesterday is not fairly over before nine A. M. to-day, and there is always a humorous, sometimes a pathetic, lapping over the edges. I remember one morning at six o'clock to have been overtaken by a carriage that drew up beside me. I recognized the coachman, who touched his hat apologetically, as if he wished me to understand that he was not at all responsible for the condition of his master, and I went to the door of the carriage. I was astonished to find two young friends of mine, in correct evening dress, reclining on each other's shoulders and sleeping the sleep of the justly inebriated. I stated this fact to the coachman. Not a muscle of his well-trained face answered to my smile. But he said: "You see, sir, we've been out all night, and more than four blocks below they saw you, and wanted me to hail you, but you know you stopped to speak to a gentleman, and so I sorter lingered, and I drove round the block once or twice, and I guess I've got 'em quiet again." I looked in the carriage door once more on these sons

of Belial. They were sleeping quite unconsciously. A bouttonniere in the lappel of the younger one's coat had shed its leaves, which were scattered over him with a ridiculous suggestion of the "Babes in the Wood," and I closed the carriage door softly. "I suppose I'd better take 'em home, sir?" queried the coachman, gravely. "Well, yes, John, perhaps you had."

There is another picture in my early rising experience that I wish was as simply and honestly ludicrous. It was at a time when the moral sentiment of the metropolis, expressed through ordinance and special legislation, had declared itself against a certain form of "variety" entertainment, and had, as usual, proceeded against the performers, and not the people who encouraged them. I remember, one frosty morning, to have encountered in Washington Park my honest friend Sergeant X. and Roundsman 9999 conveying a party of these derelicts to the station. One of the women, evidently, had not had time to change her apparel, and had thinly disguised the flowing robe and loose cestus of Venus under a ragged "waterproof"; while the other, who had doubtless posed for Mercury, hid her shapely tights in a plaid shawl, and changed her winged sandals for a pair of "arctics." Their rouged faces were streaked and stained with tears. The man who was with them, the male of their species, had but hastily washed himself of his Ethiopian presentment, and was still black behind the ears; while an exaggerated shirt collar and frilled shirt made his occasional indignant profanity irresistibly ludicrous. So they fared on over the glittering snow, against the rosy sunlight of the square, the gray front of the University building, with a few twittering sparrows in the foreground, beside the two policemen, quiet and impassive as fate. I could not help thinking of the distinguished A., the most fashionable B., the wealthy and respectable C., the sentimental D., and the man of the world E., who were present at the performance, whose

distinguished patronage had called it into life, and who were then resting quietly in their beds, while these haggard servants of their pleasaunce were haled over the snow to punishment and ignominy.

Let me finish by recalling one brighter picture of that same season. It was early; so early that the cross of Grace Church had, when I looked up, just caught the morning sun, and for a moment flamed like a crusader's symbol. And then the grace and glory of that exquisite spire became slowly visible. Fret by fret the sunlight stole slowly down, quivering and dropping from each, until at last the whole church beamed in rosy radiance. Up and down the long avenue the street lay in shadow; by some strange trick of the atmosphere the sun seemed to have sought out only that graceful structure for its blessing. And then there was a dull rumble. It was the first omnibus—the first throb in the great artery of the reviving city. I looked up. The church was again in shadow.

With the Entrees

"Once, when I was a pirate—!"

The speaker was an elderly gentleman in correct evening dress, the room a tasteful one, the company of infinite respectability, the locality at once fashionable and exclusive, the occasion an unexceptionable dinner. To this should be added that the speaker was also the host.

With these conditions self-evident, all that good breeding could do was to receive the statement with a vague smile that might pass for good-humored incredulity or courteous acceptation of a simple fact. Indeed, I think we all rather tried to convey the impression that our host, when he WAS a pirate—if he ever really was one—was all that a self-respecting pirate should be, and never violated the canons of good society. This idea was, to some extent, crystallized by the youngest Miss Jones in the exclamation, "Oh, how nice!"

"It was, of course, many years ago, when I was quite a lad."

We all murmured "Certainly," as if piracy were a natural expression of the exuberance of youth.

"I ought, perhaps, explain the circumstances that led me into this way of life."

Here Legrande, a courteous attache of the Patagonian legation, interposed in French and an excess of politeness,

"that it was not of a necessity," a statement to which his English neighbor hurriedly responded, "Oui, oui."

"There ess a boke," he continued, in a well-bred, rapid whisper, "from Captain Canot—a Frenchman—most eenteresting—he was—oh, a fine man of education—and what you call a 'slavair,'" but here he was quietly nudged into respectful silence.

"I ran away from home," continued our host. He paused, and then added, appealingly, to the two distinguished foreigners present: "I do not know if I can make you understand that this is a peculiarly American predilection. The exodus of the younger males of an American family against the parents' wishes does not, with us, necessarily carry any obloquy with it. To the average American the prospect of fortune and a better condition lies OUTSIDE of his home; with you the home means the estate, the succession of honors or titles, the surety that the conditions of life shall all be kept intact. With us the children who do not expect, and generally succeed in improving the fortunes of the house, are marked exceptions. Do I make myself clear?"

The French-Patagonian attache thought it was "charming and progressif." The Baron Von Pretzel thought he had noticed a movement of that kind in Germany, which was expressed in a single word of seventeen syllables. Viscount Piccadilly said to his neighbor: "That, you know now, the younger sons, don't you see, go to Australia, you know in some beastly trade—stock-raising or sheep—you know; but, by Jove! them fellahs—"

"My father always treated me well," continued our host. "I shared equally with my brothers the privileges and

limitations of our New England home. Nevertheless, I ran away and went to sea—"

"To see—what?" asked Legrande.

"Aller sur mer," said his neighbor, hastily.

"Go on with your piracy!" said Miss Jones.

The distinguished foreigners looked at each other and then at Miss Jones. Each made a mental note of the average cold-blooded ferocity of the young American female.

"I shipped on board of a Liverpool 'liner,'" continued our host.

"What ess a 'liner'?" interrupted Legrande, sotto voce, to his next neighbor, who pretended not to hear him.

"I need not say that these were the days when we had not lost our carrying trade, when American bottoms—"

"Que est ce, 'bot toom'?" said Legrande, imploringly, to his other friend.

"When American bottoms still carried the bulk of freight, and the supremacy of our flag—"

Here Legrande recognized a patriotic sentiment and responded to it with wild republican enthusiasm, nodding his head violently. Piccadilly noticed it, too, and, seeing an opening for some general discussion on free trade, began half audibly to HIS neighbor: "Most extraordinary thing, you know, your American statesmen—"

"I deserted the ship at Liverpool—"

But here two perfunctory listeners suddenly turned toward the other end of the table, where another guest, our Nevada Bonanza lion, was evidently in the full flood of pioneer anecdote and narration. Calmly disregarding the defection, he went on:

"I deserted the ship at Liverpool in consequence of my ill- treatment by the second mate—a man selected for his position by reason of his superior physical strength and recognized brutality. I have been since told that he graduated from the state prison. On the second day out I saw him strike a man senseless with a belaying pin for some trifling breach of discipline. I saw him repeatedly beat and kick sick men—"

"Did you ever read Dana's 'Two Years before the Mast'?" asked Lightbody, our heavy literary man, turning to HIS neighbor, in a distinctly audible whisper. "Ah! there's a book! Got all this sort of thing in it. Dev'lishly well written, too."

The Patagonian (alive for information): "What ess this Dana, eh?"

His left hand neighbor (shortly): "Oh, that man!"

His right hand neighbor (curtly): "The fellah who wrote the Encyclopaedia and edits 'The Sun'? that was put up in Boston for the English mission and didn't get it."

The Patagonian (making a mental diplomatic note of the fact that the severe discipline of the editor of "The Sun," one of America's profoundest scholars, while acting from patriotic motives, as the second mate of an American

"bottom," had unfitted him for diplomatic service abroad): "Ah, ciel!"

"I wandered on the quays for a day or two, until I was picked up by a Portuguese sailor, who, interesting himself in my story, offered to procure me a passage to Fayal and Lisbon, where, he assured me, I could find more comfortable and profitable means of returning to my own land. Let me say here that this man, although I knew him afterward as one of the most unscrupulous and heartless of pirates—in fact the typical buccaneer of the books—was to me always kind, considerate, and, at times, even tender. He was a capital seaman. I give this evidence in favor of a much ridiculed race, who have been able seamen for centuries."

"Did you ever read that Portuguese Guide-book?" asked Lightbody of his neighbor; "it's the most exquisitely ridiculous thing—"

"Will the great American pirate kindly go on, or resume his original functions," said Miss Jones, over the table, with a significant look in the direction of Lightbody. But her anxiety was instantly misinterpreted by the polite and fair-play loving Englishman: "I say, now, don't you know that the fact is these Portuguese fellahs are always ahead of us in the discovery business? Why, you know—"

"I shipped with him on a brig, ostensibly bound to Saint Kitts and a market. We had scarcely left port before I discovered the true character of the vessel. I will not terrify you with useless details. Enough that all that tradition and romance has given you of the pirate's life was ours. Happily, through the kindness of my Portuguese friend, I was kept from being an active participant in scenes of which I was an unwilling witness. But I must always bear my testimony to one fact. Our discipline, our esprit de corps, if I may so term

it, was perfect. No benevolent society, no moral organization, was ever so personally self-sacrificing, so honestly loyal to one virtuous purpose, as we were to our one vice. The individual was always merged in the purpose. When our captain blew out the brains of our quartermaster, one day—"

"That reminds me—DID you read of that Georgia murder?" began Lightbody; "it was in all the papers I think. Oh, I beg pardon—"

"For simply interrupting him in a conversation with our second officer," continued our host, quietly. "The act, although harsh and perhaps unnecessarily final, was, I think, indorsed by the crew. James, pass the champagne to Mr. Lightbody."

He paused a moment for the usual casual interruption, but even the active Legrande was silent.

Alas! from the other end of the table came the voice of the Bonanza man:

"The rope was around her neck. Well, gentlemen, that Mexican woman standing there, with that crowd around her, eager for her blood, dern my skin! if she didn't call out to the sheriff to hold on a minit. And what fer? Ye can't guess! Why, one of them long braids she wore was under the noose, and kinder in the way. I remember her raising her hand to her neck and givin' a spiteful sort of jerk to the braid that fetched it outside the slip-knot, and then saying to the sheriff: 'There, d—n ye, go on.' There was a sort o' thoughtfulness in the act, a kind o' keerless, easy way, that jist fetched the boys—even them thet hed the rope in their hands, and they—" (suddenly recognizing the silence): "Oh,

beg pardon, old man; didn't know I'd chipped into your yarn—heave ahead; don't mind me."

"What I am trying to tell you is this: One night, in the Caribbean Sea, we ran into one of the Leeward Islands, that had been in olden time a rendezvous for our ship. We were piloted to our anchorage outside by my Portuguese friend, who knew the locality thoroughly, and on whose dexterity and skill we placed the greatest reliance. If anything more had been necessary to fix this circumstance in my mind, it would have been the fact that two or three days before he had assured me that I should presently have the means of honorable discharge from the pirate's crew, and a return to my native land. A launch was sent from the ship to communicate with our friends on the island, who supplied us with stores, provisions, and general information. The launch was manned by eight men, and officered by the first mate—a grim, Puritanical, practical New Englander, if I may use such a term to describe a pirate, of great courage, experience, and physical strength. My Portuguese friend, acting as pilot, prevailed upon them to allow me to accompany the party as coxswain. I was naturally anxious, you can readily comprehend, to see—"

"Certainly," "Of course," "Why shouldn't you?" went round the table.

"Two trustworthy men were sent ashore with instructions. We, meanwhile, lay off the low, palm-fringed beach, our crew lying on their oars, or giving way just enough to keep the boat's head to the breakers. The mate and myself sat in the stern sheets, looking shoreward for the signal. The night was intensely black. Perhaps for this reason never before had I seen the phosphorescence of a tropical sea so strongly marked. From the great open beyond, luminous crests and plumes of pale fire lifted themselves, ghost- like,

at our bows, sank, swept by us with long, shimmering, undulating trails, broke on the beach in silvery crescents, or shattered their brightness on the black rocks of the promontory. The whole vast sea shone and twinkled like another firmament, against which the figures of our men, sitting with their faces toward us, were outlined darkly. The grim, set features of our first mate, sitting beside me, were faintly illuminated. There was no sound but the whisper of passing waves against our lap-streak, and the low, murmuring conversation of the men. I had my face toward the shore. As I looked over the glimmering expanse, I suddenly heard the whispered name of our first mate. As suddenly, by the phosphorescent light that surrounded it, I saw the long trailing hair and gleaming shoulders of a woman floating beside us. Legrande, you are positively drinking nothing. Lightbody, you are shirking the Burgundy—you used to like it!"

He paused, but no one spoke.

"I—let me see! where was I? Oh, yes! Well, I saw the woman, and when I turned to call the attention of the first mate to this fact, I knew instantly, by some strange instinct, that he had seen and heard her, too. So, from that moment to the conclusion of our little drama, we were silent, but enforced spectators.

"She swam gracefully—silently! I remember noticing through that odd, half-weird, phosphorescent light which broke over her shoulders as she rose and fell with each quiet stroke of her splendidly rounded arms, that she was a mature, perfectly-formed woman. I remember, also, that when she reached the boat, and, supporting herself with one small hand on the gunwale, she softly called the mate in a whisper by his Christian name, I had a boyish idea that she

was—the—er—er—female of his species—his—er—natural wife! I'm boring you—am I not?"

Two or three heads shook violently and negatively. The youngest, and, I regret to say, the OLDEST, Miss Jones uttered together sympathetically, "Go on—please; do!"

"The—woman told him in a few rapid words that he had been betrayed; that the two men sent ashore were now in the hands of the authorities; that a force was being organized to capture the vessel; that instant flight was necessary, and that the betrayer and traitor was—my friend, the Portuguese, Fernandez!

"The mate raised the dripping, little brown hand to his lips, and whispered some undistinguishable words in her ear. I remember seeing her turn a look of ineffable love and happiness upon his grim, set face, and then she was gone. She dove as a duck dives, and I saw her shapely head, after a moment's suspense, reappear a cable's length away toward the shore.

"I ventured to raise my eyes to the mate's face; it was cold and impassive. I turned my face toward the crew; they were conversing in whispers with each other, with their faces toward us, yet apparently utterly oblivious of the scene that had just taken place in the stern. There was a moment of silence, and then the mate's voice came out quite impassively, but distinctly:

"'Fernandez!'

"'Aye, aye, sir!'

"'Come aft and—bring your oar with you.'

"He did so, stumbling over the men, who, engaged in their whispered yarns, didn't seem to notice him.

"'See if you can find soundings here.'

"Fernandez leaned over the stern and dropped his oar to its shaft in the phosphorescent water. But he touched no bottom; the current brought the oar at right angles presently to the surface.

"'Send it down, man,' said the mate, imperatively; 'down, down. Reach over there. What are you afraid of? So; steady there; I'll hold you.'

"Fernandez leaned over the stern and sent the oar and half of his bared brown arm into the water. In an instant the mate caught him with one tremendous potential grip at his elbows, and forced him and his oar head downward in the waters. The act was so sudden, yet so carefully premeditated, that no outcry escaped the doomed man. Even the launch scarcely dipped her stern to the act. In that awful moment I heard a light laugh from one of the men in response to a wanton yarn from his comrade—James, bring the vichy to Mr. Lightbody! You'll find that a dash of cognac will improve it wonderfully.

"Well—to go on—a few bubbles arose to the surface. Fernandez seemed unreasonably passive, until I saw that when the mate had gripped his elbows with his hands he had also firmly locked the traitor's knees within his own. In a few moments—it seemed to me, then, a century—the mate's grasp relaxed; the body of Fernandez, a mere limp, leaden mass, slipped noiselessly and heavily into the sea. There was no splash. The ocean took it calmly and quietly to its depths. The mate turned to the men, without deigning to cast a glance on me.

"'Oars!' The men raised their oars apeak.

"'Let fall!' There was a splash in the water, encircling the boat in concentric lines of molten silver.

"'Give way!'

"Well, of course, that's all. WE got away in time. I knew I bored you awfully! Eh? Oh, you want to know what became of the woman— really, I don't know! And myself—oh, I got away at Havana! Eh? Certainly; James, you'll find some smelling salts in my bureau. Gentlemen, I fear we have kept the ladies too long."

But they had already risen, and were slowly filing out of the room. Only one lingered—the youngest Miss Jones.

"That was a capital story," she said, pausing beside our host, with a special significance in her usual audacity. "Do you know you absolutely sent cold chills down my spine a moment ago. Really, now, you ought to write for the magazines!"

Our host looked up at the pretty, audacious face. Then he said, sotto voce—

"I do!"