

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of Odd Numbers

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Odd Numbers

Author: Sewell Ford

Release date: September 4, 2008 [eBook #26528]

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ODD NUMBERS \*\*\*

E-text prepared by Roger Frank  
and the Project Gutenberg Online Distributed Proofreading Team  
(<http://www.pgdp.net>)

---



“SISTERS? DO WE LOOK IT?” SAYS MAISIE”

---

## ODD NUMBERS BEING FURTHER CHRONICLES OF SHORTY McCABE

BY

SEWELL FORD

AUTHOR OF  
TRYING OUT TORCHY, ETC.

Illustrations by  
F. VAUX WILSON

---

COPYRIGHT, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, BY  
SEWELL FORD

COPYRIGHT, 1912, BY  
EDWARD J. CLODE

---

## Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. GOLIAH AND THE PURPLE LID	1
II. How Maizie Came Through	17
III. Where Spotty Fitted In	35
IV. A Grandmother Who Got Going	50
V. A Long Shot on DeLancey	67
VI. Playing Harold Both Ways	84
VII. Cornelia Shows Some Class	100
VIII. Doping Out an Odd One	116
IX. Handing Bobby a Blank	134
X. Marmaduke Slips One Over	151
XI. A Look In on the Goat Game	167
XII. Mrs. Truckles' Broad Jump	183
XIII. Heiney Takes the Gloom Cure	199
XIV. A Try-Out for Toodleism	214
XV. The Case of the Tiscotts	230
XVI. Classing Tutwater Right	246
XVII. How Hermy Put It Over	262
XVIII. Joy Riding with Aunty	279
XIX. Turning a Trick for Beany	294

---

## ODD NUMBERS

---

### CHAPTER I

#### GOLIAH AND THE PURPLE LID

One of my highbrow reg'lars at the Physical Culture Studio, a gent that mixes up in charity works, like organizin' debatin' societies in the deaf and dumb asylums, was tellin' me awhile back of a great scheme of his to help out the stranger in our fair village. He wants to open public information bureaus, where a jay might go and find out anything he wanted to know, from how to locate a New Thought church, to the nearest place where he could buy a fresh celluloid collar.

"Get the idea?" says he. "A public bureau where strangers in New York would be given courteous attention, friendly advice, and that sort of thing."

"What's the use?" says I. "Ain't I here?"

Course, I was just gettin' over a josh. But say, it ain't all a funny dream, either. Don't a lot of 'em come my way? Maybe it's because I'm so apt to lay myself open to the confidential tackle. But somehow, when I see one of these tourist freaks sizin' me up, and lookin' kind of dazed and lonesome, I can't chuck him back the frosty stare. I've been a stray in a strange town myself. So I gen'rally tries to seem halfway human, and if he opens up with some shot on the weather, I let him get in the follow-up questions and take the chances.

Here the other day, though, I wa'n't lookin' for anything of the kind. I was just joltin' down my luncheon with a little promenade up the sunny side of Avenue V, taking in the exhibits—things in the show windows and folks on the sidewalks—as keen as if I'd paid in my dollar at some ticket office.

And say, where can you beat it? I see it 'most every day in the year, and it's always new. There's different flowers in the florists' displays, new flags hung out on the big hotels, and even the chorus ladies in the limousines are changed now and then.

I can't figure out just what it was landed me in front of this millinery window. Gen'rally I hurry by them exhibits with a shudder; for once I got gay and told Sadie to take her pick, as this one was on me; and it was months before I got over the shock of payin' that bill. But there I finds myself, close up to the plate glass, gawpin' at a sample of what can be done in the hat line when the Bureau of Obstructions has been bought off and nobody's thought of applyin' the statute of limitations.

It's a heliotrope lid, and the foundation must have used up enough straw to bed down a circus. It has the dimensions and general outlines of a summerhouse. The scheme of decoration is simple enough, though. The top of this heliotrope summerhouse has been caught in a heliotrope fog, that's all. There's yards and yards of this gauzy stuff draped and puffed and looped around it, with only a wide purple ribbon showin' here and there and keepin' the fog in place.

Well, all that is restin' careless in a box, the size of a quarter-mile runnin' track, with the cover half off. And it's a work of art in itself, that box,—all Looey Cans pictures, and a thick purple silk cord to tie it up with. Why, one glimpse of that combination was enough to make me clap my hand over my roll and back away from the spot!

Just then, though, I notices another gent steppin' up for a squint at the monstrosity, and I can't help lingerin' to see if he gets the same kind of a shock. He's sort of a queer party, too,—short, stoop shouldered, thin faced, wrinkled old chap, with a sandy mustache mixed some with gray, and a pair of shrewd little eyes peerin' out under bushy brows. Anybody could spot him as a rutabaga delegate by the high crowned soft hat and the back number ulster that he's still stickin' to, though the thermometer is way up in the eighties.

But he don't seem to shy any at the purple lid. He sticks his head out first this way and then that, like a turtle, and then all of a sudden he shoots over kind of a quizzin' glance at me. I can't help but give him the grin. At that his mouth corners wrinkle up and the little gray eyes begin to twinkle.

"Quite a hat, eh?" he chuckles.

"It's goin' some in the lid line," says I.

"I expect that's a mighty stylish article, though," says he.

"That's the bluff the store people are makin'," says I, "and there's no law against it."

"What would be your guess on the price of that there, now?" says he, edging up.

"Ah, let's leave such harrowin' details to the man that has to pay for it," says I. "No use in our gettin' the chilly spine over what's marked on the price ticket; that is, unless you're thinking of investin'," and as I tips him the humorous wink I starts to move off.

But this wa'n't a case where I was to get out so easy. He comes right after me. "Excuse me, neighbor," says he; "but—but that's exactly what I was thinking of doing, if it wasn't too infernally expensive."

"What!" says I, gazin' at him; for he ain't the kind of citizen you'd expect to find indulgin' in such foolishness. "Oh, well, don't mind my remarks. Go ahead and blow yourself. You want it for the missus, eh?"

"Ye-e-es," he drawls; "for—for my wife. Ah—er—would it be asking too much of a stranger if I should get you to step in there with me while I find out the price?"

"Why," says I, lookin' him over careful,—“why, I don't know as I'd want to go as far as— Well, what's the object?"

"You see," says he, "I'm sort of a bashful person,—always have been,—and I don't just like to go in there alone amongst all them women folks. But the fact is, I've kind of got my mind set on having that hat, and—"

"Wife ain't in town, then?" says I.

"No," says he, "she's—she isn't."

"Ain't you runnin' some risks," says I, "loadin' up with a lid that may not fit her partic'lar style of beauty?"

"That's so, that's so," says he. "Ought to be something that would kind of jibe with her complexion and the color of her hair, hadn't it?"

"You've surrounded the idea," says I. "Maybe it would be safer to send for her to come on."

"No," says he; "couldn't be done. But see here," and he takes my arm and steers me up the avenue, "if you don't mind talking this over, I'd like to tell you a plan I've just thought out."

Well, he'd got me some int'rested in him by that time. I could see he wa'n't no common Rube, and them twinklin' little eyes of his kind of got me. So I tells him to reel it off.

"Maybe you never heard of me," he goes on; "but I'm Goliah Daggett, from South Forks, Iowy."

"Guess I've missed hearin' of you," says I.

"I suppose so," says he, kind of disappointed, though. "The boys out there call me Gol Daggett."

"Sounds most like a cussword," says I.

"Yes," says he; "that's one reason I'm pretty well known in the State. And there may be other reasons, too." He lets out a little chuckle at that; not loud, you know, but just as though he was swallowin' some joke or other. It was a specialty of his, this smothered chuckle business. "Of course," he goes on, "you needn't tell me your name, unless—"

"It's a fair swap," says I. "Mine's McCabe; Shorty for short."

"Yes?" says he. "I knew a McCabe once. He—er—well, he—"

"Never mind," says I. "It's a big fam'ly, and there's only a few of us that's real credits to the name. But about this scheme of yours, Mr. Daggett?" 7

"Certainly," says he. "It's just this: If I could find a woman who looked a good deal like my wife, I could try the hat on her, couldn't I? She'd do as well, eh?"

"I don't know why not," says I.

"Well," says he, "I know of just such a woman; saw her this morning in my hotel barber shop, where I dropped in for a haircut. She was one of these—What do you call 'em now?"

"Manicure artists?" says I.

"That's it," says he. "Asked me if I didn't want my fingers manicured; and, by jinks! I let her do it, just to see what it was like. Never felt so blamed foolish in my life! Look at them fingernails, will you? Been parin' 'em with a jackknife for fifty-seven years; and she soaks 'em out in a bowl of perfumery, jabs under 'em with a little stick wrapped in cotton, cuts off all the hang nails, files 'em round at the ends, and polishes 'em up so they shine as if they were varnished! He, he! Guess the boys would laugh if they could have seen me."

"It's one experience you've got on me," says I. "And this manicure lady is a ringer for Mrs. Daggett, eh?"

"Well, now," says he, scratchin' his chin, "maybe I ought to put it that she looks a good deal as Mrs. Daggett might have looked ten or fifteen years ago if she'd been got up that way,—same shade of red hair, only not such a thunderin' lot of it; same kind of blue eyes, only not so wide open and starry; and a nose and chin that I couldn't help remarking. Course, now, you understand this young woman was fixed up considerable smarter than Mrs. Daggett ever was in her life." 8

"If she's a manicure artist in one of them Broadway hotels," says I, "I could guess that; specially if Mrs. Daggett's always stuck to Iowa."

"Yes, that's right; she has," says Daggett. "But if she'd had the same chance to know what to wear and how to wear it—Well, I wish she'd had it, that's all. And she wanted it. My, my! how she did hanker for such things, Mr. McCabe!"

"Well, better late than never," says I.

"No, no!" says he, his voice kind of breakin' up. "That's what I want to forget, how—how late it is!" and hanged if he don't have to fish out a handkerchief and swab off his eyes. "You see," he goes on, "Marthy's gone."

"Eh?" says I. "You mean she's—"

He nods. "Four years ago this spring," says he. "Typhoid."

"But," says I, "how about this hat?"

"One of my notions," says he,—"just a foolish idea of mine. I'll tell you. When she was lying there, all white and thin, and not caring whether she ever got up again or not, a new spring hat was the only thing I could get her to take an interest in. She'd never had what you might call a real, bang-up, stylish hat. Always wanted one, too. And it wasn't because I was such a mean critter that she couldn't have had the money. But you know how it is in a little place like South Forks. They don't have 'em in stock, not the kind she wanted, and maybe we couldn't have found one nearer than Omaha or Chicago; and someway there never was a spring when I could seem to fix things so we could take the trip. Looked kind of foolish, too, traveling so far just to get a hat. So she went without, and put up with what Miss Simmons could trim for her. They looked all right, too, and I used to tell Marthy they were mighty becoming; but all the time I knew they weren't just—well, you know." 9

Say, I never saw any specimens of Miss Simmons' art works; but I could make a guess. And I nods my head.

"Well," says Daggett, "when I saw that Marthy was kind of giving up, I used to coax her to get well. 'You just get on your feet once, Marthy,' says I, 'and we'll go down to Chicago and buy you the finest and stylistest hat we can find in the whole city. More than that, you shall have a new one every spring, the very best.' She'd almost smile at that, and half promise she'd try. But it wasn't any use. The fever hadn't left her strength enough. And the first thing I knew she'd slipped away." 10

Odd sort of yarn to be hearin' there on Fifth-ave. on a sunshiny afternoon, wa'n't it? And us dodgin' over crossin's, and duckin' under awnin's, and sidesteppin' the foot traffic! But he keeps right close to my elbow and gives me the whole story, even to how they'd agreed to use the little knoll just back of the farmhouse as a burial plot, and how she marked the hymns she wanted sung, and how she wanted him to find someone else as soon as the year was out.

"Which was the only thing I couldn't say yes to," says Daggett. "'No, Marthy,' says I, 'not unless I can find another just like you.'—'You'll be mighty lonesome, Goliah,' says she, 'and you'll be wanting to change your flannels too early.'—'Maybe so,' says I; 'but I guess I'll worry along for the rest of the time alone.' Yes, sir, Mr. McCabe, she was a fine woman, and a patient one. No one ever knew how bad she wanted lots of things that she might of had, and gave up. You see, I was pretty deep in the wheat business, and every dollar I could get hold of went to buying more reapers and interests in elevator companies and crop options. I was bound to be a rich man, and they say I got there. Yes, I guess I am fairly well fixed."

11

It wa'n't any chesty crow, but more like a sigh, and as we stops on a crossing to let a lady plutess roll by in her brougham, Mr. Daggett he sizes up the costume she wore and shakes his head kind of regretful.

"That's the way Marthy should have been dressed," says he. "She'd have liked it. And she'd liked a hat such as that one we saw back there; that is, if it's the right kind. I've been buying 'em kind of careless, maybe."

"How's that?" says I.

"Oh!" says he, "I didn't finish telling you about my fool idea. I've been getting one every spring, the best I could pick out in Chicago, and carrying it up there on the knoll where Marthy is—and just leaving it. Go on now, Mr. McCabe; laugh if you want to. I won't mind. I can almost laugh at myself. Of course, Marthy's beyond caring for hats now. Still, I like to leave 'em there; and I like to think perhaps she does know, after all. So—so I want to get that purple one, providing it would be the right shade. What do you say?"

Talk about your nutty propositions, eh? But honest, I didn't feel even like crackin' a smile.

"Daggett," says I, "you're a true sport, even if you have got a few bats in the loft. Let's go back and get quotations on the lid."

"I wish," says he, "I could see it tried on that manicure young woman first. Suppose we go down and bring her up?"

12

"What makes you think she'll come?" says I.

"Oh, I guess she will," says he, quiet and thoughtful. "We'll try, anyway."

And say, right there I got a new line on him. I could almost frame up how it was he'd started in as a bacon borrowin' homesteader, and got to be the John D. of his county. But I could see he was up against a new deal this trip. And as it was time for me to be gettin' down towards 42d-st. anyway, I goes along. As we strikes the hotel barber shop I hangs up on the end of the cigar counter while Daggett looks around for the young woman who'd put the chappy polish on his nails.

"That's her," says he, pointing out a heavyweight Titian blonde in the far corner, and over he pikes.

I couldn't help admirin' the nerve of him; for of all the l'ongoline queens I ever saw, she's about the haughtiest. Maybe you can throw on the screen a picture of a female party with a Lillian Russell shape, hair like Mrs. Leslie Carter's, and an air like a twelve-dollar cloak model showin' off a five hundred-dollar lace dress to a bookmaker's bride.

Just as Daggett tiptoes up she's pattin' down some of the red puffs that makes the back of her head look like a burnin' oil tank, and she swings around languid and scornful to see who it is that dares butt in on her presence. All the way she recognizes him is by a little lift of the eyebrows.

13

I don't need to hear the dialogue. I can tell by her expression what Daggett is saying. First there's a kind of condescendin' curiosity as he begins, then she looks bored and turns back to the mirror, and pretty soon she sings out, "What's that?" so you could hear her all over the shop. Then Daggett springs his proposition flat.

"Sir!" says she, jumpin' up and glarin' at him.

Daggett tries to soothe her down; but it's no go.

"Mr. Heinmuller!" she calls out, and the boss barber comes steppin' over, leavin' a customer with his face muffled in a hot towel. "This person," she goes on, "is insulting!"

"Hey?" says Heinmuller, puffin' out his cheeks. "Vos iss dot?"

And for a minute it looked like I'd have to jump in and save Daggett from being chucked through the window. I was just preparin' to grab the boss by the collar, too, when Daggett gets in his fine work. Slippin' a ten off his roll, he passes it to Heinmuller, while he explains that all he asked of the lady was to try on a hat he was thinkin' of gettin' for his wife.

14

"That's all," says he. "No insult intended. And of course I expect to make it worth while for the young lady."

I don't know whether it was the smooth "young lady" business, or the sight of the fat roll that turned the trick; but the tragedy is declared off. Inside of three minutes the boss tells Daggett that Miss Rooney accepts his apology and consents to go if he'll call a cab.

"Why, surely," says he. "You'll come along, too, won't you, McCabe? Honest, now, I wouldn't dare do this alone."

"Too bad about that shy, retirin' disposition of yours!" says I. "Afraid she'll steal you, eh?"

But he hangs onto my sleeve and coaxes me until I give in. And we sure made a fine trio ridin' up Fifth-ave. in a taxi! But you should have seen 'em in the millinery shop as we sails in with Miss Rooney, and Daggett says how he'd like a view of that heliotrope lid in the window. We had 'em guessin', all right.

Then they gets Miss Rooney in a chair before the mirror, and fits the monstrosity on top of her red hair. Well, say, what a diff'rence it does make in them freak bonnets whether they're in a box or on the right head! For Miss Rooney has got just the right kind of a face that hat was built to go with. It's a bit giddy, I'll admit; but she's a stunner in it. And does she notice it any herself? Well, some!

"A triumph!" gurgles the saleslady, lookin' from one to the other of us, tryin' to figure out who she ought to play to.

"It's a game combination, all right," says I, lookin' wise.

"I only wish——" begins Daggett, and then swallows the rest of it. In a minute he steps up and says it'll do, and that the young lady is to pick out one for herself now.

"Oh, how perfectly sweet of you!" says Miss Rooney, slippin' him a smile that should have had him clear through the ropes. "But if I am to have any, why not this?" and she balances the heliotrope lid on her fingers, lookin' it over yearnin' and tender. "It just suits me, doesn't it?"

Then there's more of the coy business, aimed straight at Daggett. But Miss Rooney don't quite put it across.

"That's going out to lowy with me," says he, prompt and decided.

"Oh!" says Miss Rooney, and she proceeds to pick out a white straw with a green ostrich feather a yard long. She was still lookin' puzzled, though, as we put her into the cab and started her back to the barber shop.

"Must have set you back near a hundred, didn't they?" says I, as Daggett and I parts on the corner.

"Almost," says he. "But it's worth it. Marthy would have looked mighty stylish in that purple one. Yes, yes! And when I get back to South Forks, the first thing I do will be to carry it up on the knoll, box and all, and leave it there. I wonder if she'll know, eh?"

There wa'n't any use in my tellin' him what I thought, though. He wa'n't talkin' to me, anyway. There was a kind of a far off, batty look in his eyes as he stood there on the corner, and a drop of brine was tricklin' down one side of his nose. So we never says a word, but just shakes hands, him goin' his way, and me mine.

"Chee!" says Swifty Joe, when I shows up, along about three o'clock, "you must have been puttin' away a hearty lunch!"

"It wa'n't that kept me," says I. "I was helpin' hand a late one to Marthy."

---

## CHAPTER II

### HOW MAIZIE CAME THROUGH

Then again, there's other kinds from other States, and no two of 'em alike. They float in from all quarters, some on ten-day excursions, and some with no return ticket. And, of course, they're all jokes to us at first, while we never suspicion that all along we may be jokes to them.

And say, between you and me, we're apt to think, ain't we, that all the rapid motion in the world gets its start right here in New York? Well, that's the wrong dope. For instance, once I got next to a super-energized specimen that come in from the north end of nowhere, and before I was through the experience had left me out of breath.

It was while Sadie and me was livin' at the Perzazzer hotel, before we moved out to Rockhurst-on-the-Sound. Early one evenin' we was sittin', as quiet and domestic as you please, in our twelve by fourteen cabinet finished dinin' room on the seventh floor. We was gazin' out of the open windows watchin' a thunder storm meander over towards Long Island, and Tidson was just servin' the demitasses, when there's a ring on the 'phone. Tidson, he puts down the tray and answers the call.

"It's from the office, sir," says he. "Some one to see you, sir."

"Me?" says I. "Get a description, Tidson, so I'll know what to expect."

At that he asks the room clerk for details, and reports that it's two young ladies by the name of Blickens.

"What!" says Sadie, prickin' up her ears. "You don't know any young women of that name; do you, Shorty?"

"Why not?" says I. "How can I tell until I've looked 'em over?"

"Humph!" says she. "Blickens!"

"Sounds nice, don't it?" says I. "Kind of snappy and interestin'. Maybe I'd better go down and —"

"Tidson," says Sadie, "tell them to send those young persons up here!"

"That's right, Tidson," says I. "Don't mind anything I say."

"Blickens, indeed!" says Sadie, eyin' me sharp, to see if I'm blushin' or gettin' nervous. "I never heard you mention any such name."

"There's a few points about my past life," says I, "that I've had sense enough to keep to myself. Maybe this is one. Course, if your curiosity——"

"I'm not a bit curious, Shorty McCabe," she snaps out, "and you know it! But when it comes to ——"

"The Misses Blickens," says Tidson, holdin' back the draperies with one hand, and smotherin' a grin with the other.

Say, you couldn't blame him. What steps in is a couple of drippy females that look like they'd just been fished out of a tank. And bein' wet wa'n't the worst of it. Even if they'd been dry, they must have looked bad enough; but in the soggy state they was the limit.

They wa'n't mates. One is tall and willowy, while the other is short and dumpy. And the fat one has the most peaceful face I ever saw outside of a pasture, with a reg'lar Holstein-Friesian set of eyes,—the round, calm, thoughtless kind. The fact that she's chewin' gum helps out the dairy impression, too. It's plain she's been caught in the shower and has sopped up her full share of the rainfall; but it don't seem to trouble her any.

There ain't anything pastoral about the tall one, though. She's alive all the way from her runover heels to the wiggly end of the limp feather that flops careless like over one ear. She's the long-waisted, giraffe-necked kind; but not such a bad looker if you can forget the depressin' costume. It had been a blue cheviot once, I guess; the sort that takes on seven shades of purple about the second season. And it fits her like a damp tablecloth hung on a chair. Her runnin' mate is all in black, and you could tell by the puckered seams and the twisted sleeves that it was an outfit the village dressmaker had done her worst on.

Not that they gives us much chance for a close size-up. The lengthy one pikes right into the middle of the room, brushes a stringy lock of hair off her face, and unlimbers her conversation works.

"Gosh!" says she, openin' her eyes wide and lookin' round at the rugs and furniture. "Hope we haven't pulled up at the wrong ranch. Are you Shorty McCabe?"

"Among old friends, I am," says I, "Now if you come under——"

"It's all right, Phemey," says she, motionin' to the short one. "Sit down."

"Sure!" says I. "Don't mind the furniture. Take a couple of chairs."

"Not for me!" says the tall one. "I'll stand in one spot and drip, and then you can mop up afterwards. But Phemey, she's plumb tuckered."

"It's sweet of you to run in," says I. "Been wadin' in the park lake, or enjoyin' the shower?"

"Enjoying the shower is good," says she; "but I hadn't thought of describing it that way. I reckon, though, you'd like to hear who we are."

"Oh, any time when you get to that," says I.

"That's a joke, is it?" says she. "If it is, Ha, ha! Excuse me if I don't laugh real hearty. I can do better when I don't feel so much like a sponge. Maizie May Blickens is my name, and this is Euphemia Blickens."

"Ah!" says I. "Sisters?"

"Do we look it?" says Maizie. "No! First cousins on the whiskered side. Ever hear that name Blickens before?"

"Why—er—why——" says I, scratchin' my head.

"Don't dig too deep," says Maizie. "How about Blickens' skating rink in Kansas City?"

"Oh!" says I. "Was it run by a gent they called Sport Blickens?"

"It was," says she.

"Why, sure," I goes on. "And the night I had my match there with the Pedlar, when I'd spent my last bean on a month's trainin' expenses, and the Pedlar's backer was wavin' a thousand-dollar side bet under my nose, this Mr. Blickens chucked me his roll and told me to call the bluff."

"Yes, that was dad, all right," says Maizie.

"It was?" says I. "Well, well! Now if there's anything I can do for——"

"Whoa up!" says Maizie. "This is no grubstake touch. Let's get that off our minds first, though I'm just as much obliged. It's come out as dad said. Says he, 'If you're ever up against it, and can locate Shorty McCabe, you go to him and say who you are.' But this isn't exactly that kind of a case. Phemey and I may look a bit rocky and—— Say, how do we look, anyway? Have you got

such a thing as a——”

“Tidson,” says Sadie, breakin’ in, “you may roll in the pier glass for the young lady.” Course, that reminds me I ain’t done the honors.

“Excuse me,” says I. “Miss Blickens, this is Mrs. McCabe.”

“Howdy,” says Maizie. “I was wondering if it wasn’t about due. Goshety gosh! but you’re all to the peaches, eh? And me——”

Here she turns and takes a full length view of herself. “Suffering scarecrows! Say, why didn’t you put up the bars on us? Don’t you look, Phemey; you’d swallow your gum!”

But Euphemia ain’t got any idea of turnin’ her head. She has them peaceful eyes of hers glued to Sadie’s copper hair, and she’s contented to yank away at her cud. For a consistent and perseverin’ masticator, she has our friend Fletcher chewed to a standstill. Maizie is soon satisfied with her survey.

“That’ll do, take it away,” says she. “If I ever get real stuck on myself, I’ll have something to remember. But, as I was sayin’, this is no case of an escape from the poor farm. We wore these Hetty Green togs when we left Dobie.”

“Dobie?” says I.

“Go on, laugh!” says Maizie. “Dobie’s the biggest joke and the slowest four corners in the State of Minnesota, and that’s putting it strong. Look at Phemey; she’s a native.”

Well, we looked at Phemey. Couldn’t help it. Euphemia don’t seem to mind. She don’t even grin; but just goes on workin’ her jaws and lookin’ placid.

“Out in Dobie that would pass for hysterics,” says Maizie. “The only way they could account for me was by saying that I was born crazy in another State. I’ve had a good many kinds of hard luck; but being born in Dobie wasn’t one of the varieties. Now can you stand the story of my life?”

“Miss Blickens,” says I, “I’m willin’ to pay you by the hour.”

“It isn’t so bad as all that,” says she, “because precious little has ever happened to me. It’s what’s going to happen that I’m living for. But, to take a fair start, we’ll begin with dad. When they called him Sport Blickens, they didn’t stretch their imaginations. He was all that—and not much else. All I know about maw is that she was one of three, and that I was born in the back room of a Denver dance hall. I’ve got a picture of her, wearing tights and a tin helmet, and dad says she was a hummer. He ought to know; he was a pretty good judge.

“As I wasn’t much over two days old when they had the funeral, I can’t add anything more about maw. And the history I could write of dad would make a mighty slim book. Running roller skating rinks was the most genteel business he ever got into, I guess. His regular profession was faro. It’s an unhealthy game, especially in those gold camps where they shoot so impetuous. He got over the effects of two .38’s dealt him by a halfbreed Sioux; but when a real bad man from Taunton, Massachusetts, opened up on him across the table with a .45, he just naturally got discouraged. Good old dad! He meant well when he left me in Dobie and had me adopted by Uncle Hen. Phemey, you needn’t listen to this next chapter.”

Euphemia, she misses two jaw strokes in succession, rolls her eyes at Maizie May for a second, and then strikes her reg’lar gait again.

“Excuse her getting excited like that,” says Maizie; “but Uncle Hen—that was her old man, of course—hasn’t been planted long. He lasted until three weeks ago. He was an awful good man, Uncle Hen was—to himself. He had the worst case of ingrowing religion you ever saw. Why, he had a thumb felon once, and when the doctor came to lance it Uncle Hen made him wait until he could call in the minister, so it could be opened with prayer.

“Sundays he made us go to church twice, and the rest of the day he talked to us about our souls. Between times he ran the Palace Emporium; that is, he and I and a half baked Swede by the name of Jens Torkil did. To look at Jens you wouldn’t have thought he could have been taught the difference between a can of salmon and a patent corn planter; but say, Uncle Hen had him trained to make short change and weigh his hand with every piece of salt pork, almost as slick as he could do it himself.

“All I had to do was to tend the drygoods, candy, and drug counters, look after the post-office window, keep the books, and manage the telephone exchange. Euphemia had the softest snap, though. She did the housework, planted the garden, raised chickens, fed the hogs, and scrubbed the floors. Have I got the catalogue right, Phemey?”

Euphemia blinks twice, kind of reminiscent; but nothin’ in the shape of words gets through the gum.

“She has such an emotional nature!” says Maizie. “Uncle Hen was like that too. But let’s not linger over him. He’s gone. The last thing he did was to let go of a dollar fifty in cash that I held him up for so Phemey and I could go into Duluth and see a show. The end came early next day, and whether it was from shock or enlargement of the heart, no one will ever know.

“It was an awful blow to us all. We went around in a daze for nearly a week, hardly daring to believe that it could be so. Jens broke the spell for us. One morning I caught him helping himself to a cigar out of the two-fer box. ‘Why not?’ says he. Next Phemey walks in, swipes a package of wintergreen gum, and feeds it all in at once. She says, ‘Why not?’ too. Then I woke up. ‘You’re



right,' says I. 'Enjoy yourself. It's time.' Next I hints to her that there are bigger and brighter spots on this earth than Dobie, and asks her what she says to selling the Emporium and hunting them up. 'I don't care,' says she, and that was a good deal of a speech for her to make. 'Do you leave it to me?' says I. 'Uh-huh,' says she. 'We-e-e-ough!' says I," and with that Maizie lets out one of them backwoods college cries that brings Tidson up on his toes.

"I take it," says I, "that you did."

"Did I?" says she. "Inside of three days I'd hustled up four different parties that wanted to invest in a going concern, and before the week was over I'd buncoed one of 'em out of nine thousand in cash. Most of it's in a certified check, sewed inside of Phemey, and that's why we walked all the way up here in the rain. Do you suppose you could take me to some bank to-morrow where I could leave that and get a handful of green bills on account? Is that asking too much?"

"Considering the way you've brushed up my memory of Sport Blickens," says I, "it's real modest. Couldn't you think of something else?"

"If that had come from Mrs. McCabe," says she, eyin' Sadie kind of longin', "I reckon I could."

"Why," says Sadie, "I should be delighted."

"You wouldn't go so far as to lead two such freaks as us around to the stores and help us pick out some New York clothes, would you?" says she.

"My dear girl!" says Sadie, grabbin' both her hands. "We'll do it to-morrow."

"Honest?" says Maizie, beamin' on her. "Well, that's what I call right down decent. Phemey, do you hear that? Oh, swallow it, Phemey, swallow it! This is where we bloom out!"

And say, you should have heard them talkin' over the kind of trousseaus that would best help a girl to forget she ever came from Dobie.

"You will need a neat cloth street dress, for afternoons," says Sadie.

"Not for me!" says Maizie. "That'll do all right for Phemey; but when it comes to me, I'll take something that rustles. I've worn back number cast-offs for twenty-two years; now I'm ready for the other kind. I've been traveling so far behind the procession I couldn't tell which way it was going. Now I'm going to give the drum major a view of my back hair. The sort of costumes I want are the kind that are designed this afternoon for day after to-morrow. If it's checks, I'll take two to the piece; if it's stripes, I want to make a circus zebra look like a clipped mule. And I want a change for every day in the week."

"But, my dear girl," says Sadie, "can you afford to——"

"You bet I can!" says Maizie. "My share of Uncle Hen's pile is forty-five hundred dollars, and while it lasts I'm going to have the lilies of the field looking like the flowers you see on attic wall paper. I don't care what I have to eat, or where I stay; but when it comes to clothes, show me the limit! But say, I guess it's time we were getting back to our boarding-house. Wake up, Phemey!"

Well, I pilots 'em out to Fifth-ave., stows 'em into a motor stage, and heads 'em down town.

"Whew!" says Sadie, when I gets back. "I suppose that is a sample of Western breeziness."

"It's more'n a sample," says I. "But I can see her finish, though. Inside of three months all she'll have left to show for her wad will be a trunk full of fancy regalia and a board bill. Then it will be Maizie hunting a job in some beanery."

"Oh, I shall talk her out of that nonsense," says Sadie. "What she ought to do is to take a course in stenography and shorthand."

Yes, we laid out a full programme for Maizie, and had her earnin' her little twenty a week, with Phemey keepin' house for both of 'em in a nice little four-room flat. And in the mornin' I helps her deposit the certified check, and then turns the pair over to Sadie for an assault on the department stores, with a call at a business college as a finish for the day, as we'd planned.

When I gets home that night I finds Sadie all fagged out and drinkin' bromo seltzer for a headache.

"What's wrong?" says I.

"Nothing," says Sadie; "only I've been having the time of my life."

"Buying tailor made uniforms for the Misses Blickens?" says I.

"Tailor made nothing!" says Sadie. "It was no use, Shorty, I had to give in. Maizie wanted the other things so badly. And then Euphemia declared she must have the same kind. So I spent the whole day fitting them out."

"Got 'em something sudden and noisy, eh?" says I.

"Just wait until you see them," says Sadie.

"But what's the idea?" says I. "How long do they think they can keep up that pace? And when they've blown themselves short of breath, what then?"

"Heaven knows!" says Sadie. "But Maizie has plans of her own. When I mentioned the business college, she just laughed, and said if she couldn't do something better than pound a typewriter, she'd go back to Dobie."

"Huh!" says I. "Sentiments like that has got lots of folks into trouble."

"And yet," says Sadie, "Maizie's a nice girl in her way. We'll see how she comes out."

We did, too. It was a couple of weeks before we heard a word from either of 'em, and then the other day Sadie gets a call over the 'phone from a perfect stranger. She says she's a Mrs. Herman Zorn, of West End-ave., and that she's givin' a little roof garden theater party that evenin', in honor of Miss Maizie Blickens, an old friend of hers that she used to know when she lived in St. Paul and spent her summers near Dobie. Also she understood we were friends of Miss Blickens too, and she'd be pleased to have us join.

31

"West End-ave.!" says I. "Gee! but it looks like Maizie had been able to butt in. Do we go, Sadie?"

"I said we'd be charmed," says she. "I'm dying to see how Maizie will look."

I didn't admit it, but I was some curious that way myself; so about eight-fifteen we shows up at the roof garden and has an usher lead us to the bunch. There's half a dozen of 'em on hand; but the only thing worth lookin' at was Maizie May.

And say, I thought I could make a guess as to somewhere near how she would frame up. The picture I had in mind was a sort of cross between a Grand-st. Rebecca and an Eighth-ave. Lizzie Maud,—you know, one of the near style girls, that's got on all the novelties from ten bargain counters. But, gee! The view I gets has me gaspin'. Maizie wa'n't near; she was two jumps ahead. And it wa'n't any Grand-st. fashion plate that she was a livin' model of. It was Fifth-ave. and upper Broadway. Talk about your down-to-the-minute costumes! Say, maybe they'll be wearin' dresses like that a year from now. And that hat! It wa'n't a dream; it was a forecast.

"We saw it unpacked from the Paris case," whispers Sadie.

32

All I know about it is that it was the widest, featheriest lid I ever saw in captivity, and it's balanced on more hair puffs than you could put in a barrel. But what added the swell, artistic touch was the collar. It's a chin supporter and ear embracer. I thought I'd seen high ones, but this twelve-inch picket fence around Maizie's neck was the loftiest choker I ever saw anyone survive. To watch her wear it gave you the same sensations as bein' a witness at a hanging. How she could do it and keep on breathin', I couldn't make out; but it don't seem to interfere with her talkin'.

Sittin' close up beside her, and listenin' with both ears stretched and his mouth open, was a blond young gent with a bristly Bat Nelson pompadour. He's rigged out in a silk faced tuxedo, a smoke colored, open face vest, and he has a big yellow orchid in his buttonhole. By the way he's gazin' at Maizie, you could tell he approved of her from the ground up. She don't hesitate any on droppin' him, though, when we arrives.

"Hello!" says she. "Ripping good of you to come. Well, what do you think? I've got some of 'em on, you see. What's the effect?"

"Stunning!" says Sadie.

"Thanks," says Maizie. "I laid out to get somewhere near that. And, gosh! but it feels good! These are the kind of togs I was born to wear. Phemey? Oh, she's laid up with arnica bandages around her throat. I told her she mustn't try to chew gum with one of these collars on."

33

"Say, Maizie," says I, "who's the Sir Lionel Budweiser, and where did you pick him up?"

"Oh, Oscar!" says she. "Why, he found me. He's from St. Paul, nephew of Mrs. Zorn, who's visiting her. Brewer's son, you know. Money? They've got bales of it. Hey, Oscar!" says she, snappin' her finger. "Come over here and show yourself!"

And say, he was trained, all right. He trots right over.

"Would you take him, if you was me?" says Maizie, turnin' him round for us to make an inspection. "I told him I wouldn't say positive until I had shown him to you, Mrs. McCabe. He's a little under height, and I don't like the way his hair grows; but his habits are good, and his allowance is thirty thousand a year. How about him? Will he do?"

"Why—why—" says Sadie, and it's one of the few times I ever saw her rattled.

"Just flash that ring again, Oscar," says Maizie.

"O-o-oh!" says Sadie, when Oscar has pulled out the white satin box and snapped back the cover. "What a beauty! Yes, Maizie, I should say that, if you like Oscar, he would do nicely."

34

"That goes!" says Maizie. "Here, Occie dear, slide it on. But remember: Phemey has got to live with us until I can pick out some victim of nervous prostration that needs a wife like her. And for goodness' sake, Occie, give that waiter an order for something wet!"

"Well!" says Sadie afterwards, lettin' out a long breath. "To think that we ever worried about her!"

"She's a little bit of all right, eh?" says I. "But say, I'm glad I ain't Occie, the heir to the brewery. I wouldn't know whether I was engaged to Maizie, or caught in a belt."

## CHAPTER III

## WHERE SPOTTY FITTED IN

Also we have a few home-grown varieties that ain't listed frequent. And the pavement products are apt to have most as queer kinks to 'em as those from the plowed fields. Now take Spotty.

"Gee! what a merry look!" says I to Pinckney as he floats into the studio here the other day. He's holdin' his chin high, and he's got his stick tucked up under his arm, and them black eyes of his is just sparklin'. "What's it all about?" I goes on. "Is it a good one you've just remembered, or has something humorous happened to one of your best friends?"

"I have a new idea," says he, "that's all."

"All!" says I. "Why, that's excuse enough for declarin' a gen'ral holiday. Did you go after it, or was it delivered by mistake? Can't you give us a scenario of it?"

"Why, I've thought of something new for Spotty Cahill," says he, beamin'.

"G'wan!" says I. "I might have known it was a false alarm. Spotty Cahill! Say, do you want to know what I'd advise you to do for Spotty next?"

36

No, Pinckney don't want my views on the subject. It's a topic we've threshed out between us before; also it's one of the few dozen that we could debate from now until there's skatin' on the Panama Canal, without gettin' anywhere. I've always held that Spotty Cahill was about the most useless and undeservin' human being that ever managed to exist without work; but to hear Pinckney talk you'd think that long-legged, carrotty-haired young loafer was the original party that philanthropy was invented for.

Now, doing things for other folks ain't one of Pinckney's strong points, as a rule. Not that he wouldn't if he thought of it and could find the time; but gen'rally he has too many other things on his schedule to indulge much in the little deeds of kindness game. When he does start out to do good, though, he makes a job of it. But look who he picks out!

Course, I knew why. He's explained all that to me more'n once. Seems there was an old waiter at the club, a quiet, soft-spoken, bald-headed relic, who had served him with more lobster Newburg than you could load on a scow, and enough highballs to float the *Mauretania* in. In fact, he'd been waitin' there as long as Pinckney had been a member. They'd been kind of chummy, in a way, too. It had always been "Good morning, Peter," and "Hope I see you well, sir," between them, and Pinckney never had to bother about whether he liked a dash of bitters in this, or if that ought to be served frappe or plain. Peter knew, and Peter never forgot.

37

Then one day when Pinckney's just squarin' off to his lunch he notices that he's been given plain, ordinary salt butter instead of the sweet kind he always has; so he puts up a finger to call Peter over and have a swap made. When he glances up, though, he finds Peter ain't there at all.

"Oh, I say," says he, "but where is Peter?"

"Peter, sir?" says the new man. "Very sorry, sir, but Peter's dead."

"Dead!" says Pinckney. "Why—why—how long has that been?"

"Over a month, sir," says he. "Anything wrong, sir?"

To be sure, Pinckney hadn't been there reg'lar; but he'd been in off and on, and when he comes to think how this old chap, that knew all his whims, and kept track of 'em so faithful, had dropped out without his ever having heard a word about it—why, he felt kind of broke up. You see, he'd always meant to do something nice for old Peter; but he'd never got round to it, and here the first thing he knows Peter's been under the sod for more'n a month.

38

That's what set Pinckney to inquire if Peter hadn't left a fam'ly or anything, which results in his diggin' up this Spotty youth. I forgot just what his first name was, it being something outlandish that don't go with Cahill at all; but it seems he was born over in India, where old Peter was soldierin' at the time, and they'd picked up one of the native names. Maybe that's what ailed the boy from the start.

Anyway, Peter had come back from there a widower, drifted to New York with the youngster, and got into the waiter business. Meantime the boy grows up in East Side boardin'-houses, without much lookin' after, and when Pinckney finds him he's an int'restin' product. He's twenty-odd, about five feet eleven high, weighs under one hundred and thirty, has a shock of wavy, brick-red hair that almost hides his ears, and his chief accomplishments are playin' Kelly pool and consumin' cigarettes. By way of ornament he has the most complete collection of freckles I ever see on a human face, or else it was they stood out more prominent because the skin was so white between the splotches. We didn't invent the name Spotty for him. He'd already been tagged that.

Well, Pinckney discovers that Spotty has been livin' on the few dollars that was left after payin' old Peter's plantin' expenses; that he didn't know what he was goin' to do after that was gone, and didn't seem to care. So Pinckney jumps in, works his pull with the steward, and has Spotty put on reg'lar in the club billiard room as an attendant. All he has to do is help with the cleanin',

39

keep the tables brushed, and set up the balls when there are games goin' on. He gets his meals free, and six dollars a week.

Now that should have been a soft enough snap for anybody, even the born tired kind. There wa'n't work enough in it to raise a palm callous on a baby. But Spotty, he improves on that. His idea of earnin' wages is to curl up in a sunny windowseat and commune with his soul. Wherever you found the sun streamin' in, there was a good place to look for Spotty. He just seemed to soak it up, like a blotter does ink, and it didn't disturb him any who was doin' his work.

Durin' the first six months Spotty was fired eight times, only to have Pinckney get him reinstated, and it wa'n't until the steward went to the board of governors with the row that Mr. Cahill was given his permanent release. You might think Pinckney would have called it quits then; but not him! He'd started out to godfather Spotty, and he stays right with the game. Everybody he knew was invited to help along the good work of givin' Spotty a lift. He got him into brokers' offices, tried him out as bellhop in four diff'rent hotels, and even jammed him by main strength into a bank; but Spotty's sun absorbin' habits couldn't seem to be made useful anywhere.

For one while he got chummy with Swifty Joe and took to sunnin' himself in the studio front windows, until I had to veto that.

"I don't mind your friends droppin' in now and then, Swifty," says I; "but there ain't any room here for statuary. I don't care how gentle you break it to him, only run him out."

So that's why I don't enthuse much when Pinckney says he's thought up some new scheme for Spotty. "Goin' to have him probed for hookworms?" says I.

No, that ain't it. Pinckney, he's had a talk with Spotty and discovered that old Peter had a brother Aloysius, who's settled somewhere up in Canada and is superintendent of a big wheat farm. Pinckney's had his lawyers trace out this Uncle Aloysius, and then he's written him all about Spotty, suggestin' that he send for him by return mail.

"Fine!" says I. "He'd be a lot of use on a wheat farm. What does Aloysius have to say to the proposition?"

"Well, the fact is," says Pinckney, "he doesn't appear at all enthusiastic. He writes that if the boy is anything like Peter when he knew him he's not anxious to see him. However, he says that if Spotty comes on he will do what he can for him."

"It'll be a long walk," says I.

"There's where my idea comes in," says Pinckney. "I am going to finance the trip."

"If it don't cost too much," says I, "it'll be a good investment."

Pinckney wants to do the thing right away, too. First off, though, he has to locate Spotty. The youth has been at large for a week or more now, since he was last handed the fresh air, and Pinckney ain't heard a word from him.

"Maybe Swifty knows where he roosts," says I.

It was a good guess. Swifty gives us a number on Fourth-ave. where he'd seen Spotty hangin' around lately, and he thinks likely he's there yet.

So me and Pinckney starts out on the trail. It leads us to one of them Turkish auction joints where they sell genuine silk oriental prayer rugs, made in Paterson, N. J., with hammered brass bowls and antique guns as a side line. And, sure enough, camped down in front on a sample rug, with his hat off and the sun full on him, is our friend Spotty.

"Well, well!" says Pinckney. "Regularly employed here, are you, Spotty?"

"Me? Nah!" says Spotty, lookin' disgusted at the thought. "I'm only stayin' around."

"Ain't you afraid the sun will fade them curly locks of yours?" says I.

"Ah, quit your kiddin'!" says Spotty, startin' to roll a fresh cigarette.

"Don't mind Shorty," says Pinckney. "I have some good news for you."

That don't excite Spotty a bit. "Not another job!" he groans.

"No, no," says Pinckney, and then he explains about finding Uncle Aloysius, windin' up by askin' Spotty how he'd like to go up there and live.

"I don't know," says Spotty. "Good ways off, ain't it!"

"It is, rather," admits Pinckney; "but that need not trouble you. What do you think I am going to do for you, Spotty?"

"Give it up," says he, calmly lightin' a match and proceedin' with the smoke.

"Well," says Pinckney, "because of the long and faithful service of your father, and the many little personal attentions he paid me, I am going to give you—— Wait! Here it is now," and handed if Pinckney don't fork over ten new twenty-dollar bills. "There!" says he. "That ought to be enough to fit you out well and take you there in good shape. Here's the address too."

Does Spotty jump up and crack his heels together and sputter out how thankful he is? Nothin' so strenuous. He fumbles the bills over curious for a minute, then wads 'em up and jams 'em into his pocket. "Much obliged," says he.

"Come around to Shorty's with your new clothes on to-morrow afternoon about four o'clock,"

says Pinckney, "and let us see how you look. And—er—by the way, Spotty, is that a friend of yours?"

I'd been noticin' her too, standin' just inside the doorway pipin' us off. She's a slim, big-eyed, black-haired young woman, dressed in the height of Grand-st. fashion, and wearin' a lot of odd, cheap lookin' jewelry. If it hadn't been for the straight nose and the thin lips you might have guessed that her first name was Rebecca.

"Oh, her?" says Spotty, turnin' languid to see who he meant. "That's Mareena. Her father runs the shop."

"Armenian?" says I.

"No, Syrian," says he.

"Quite some of a looker, eh?" says I, tryin' to sound him.

"Not so bad," says Spotty, hunchin' his shoulders.

"But—er—do I understand," says Pinckney, "that there is—ah—some attachment between you and—er—the young lady?"

"Blamed if I know," says Spotty. "Better ask her."

Course, we couldn't very well do that, and as Spotty don't seem bubblin' over with information he has to chop it off there. Pinckney, though, is more or less int'rested in the situation. He wonders if he's done just right, handin' over all that money to Spotty in a place like that.

"It wa'n't what you'd call a shrewd move," says I. "Seems to me I'd bought his ticket, anyway."

"Yes; but I wanted to get it off my mind, you know," says he. "Odd, though, his being there. I wonder what sort of persons those Syrians are!"

"You never can tell," says I.

The more Pinckney thinks of it, the more uneasy he gets, and when four o'clock comes next day, with no Spotty showin' up, he begins to have furrows in his brow. "If he's been done away with, it's my fault," says Pinckney.

"Ah, don't start worryin' yet," says I. "Give him time."

By five o'clock, though, Pinckney has imagined all sorts of things,—Spotty bein' found carved up and sewed in a sack, and him called into court to testify as to where he saw him last. "And all because I gave him that money!" he groans.

"Say, can it!" says I. "Them sensation pictures of yours are makin' me nervous. Here, I'll go down and see if they've finished wipin' off the daggers, while you send Swifty out after something soothin'."

With that off I hikes as a rescue expedition. I finds the red flag still out, the sample rug still in place; but there's no Spotty in evidence. Neither is there any sign of the girl. So I walks into the store, gazin' around sharp for any stains on the floor.

Out from behind a curtain at the far end of the shop comes a fat, wicked lookin' old pirate, with a dark greasy face and shiny little eyes like a pair of needles. He's wearin' a dinky gold-braided cap, baggy trousers, and he carries a long pipe in one hand. If he didn't look like he'd do extemporaneous surgery for the sake of a dollar bill, then I'm no judge. I've got in too far to look up a cop, so I takes a chance on a strong bluff.

"Say, you!" I sings out. "What's happened to Spotty?"

"Spot-tee?" says he. "Spot-tee?" He shrugs his shoulders and pretends to look dazed.

"Yes, Spotty," says I, "red-headed, freckle-faced young gent. You know him."

"Ah!" says he, tappin' his head. "The golden crowned! El Sareef Ka-heel?"

"That's the name, Cahill," says I. "He's a friend of a friend of mine, and you might as well get it through your nut right now that if anything's happened to him——"

"You are a friend of Sareef Ka-heel?" he breaks in, eyin' me suspicious.

"Once removed," says I; "but it amounts to the same thing. Now where is he?"

"For a friend—well, I know not," says the old boy, kind of hesitatin'. Then, with another shrug, he makes up his mind. "So it shall be. Come. You shall see the Sareef."

At that he beckons me to follow and starts towards the back. I went through one dark room, expectin' to feel a knife in my ribs every minute, and then we goes through another. Next thing I knew we're out in a little back yard, half full of empty cases and crates. In the middle of a clear space is a big brown tent, with the flap pinned back.

"Here," says the old gent, "your friend, the Sareef Ka-heel!"

Say, for a minute I thought it was a trap he's springin' on me; but after I'd looked long enough I see who he's pointin' at. The party inside is squattin' cross-legged on a rug, holdin' the business end of one of these water bottle pipes in his mouth. He's wearin' some kind of a long bath robe, and most of his red hair is concealed by yards of white cloth twisted round his head; but it's Spotty all right, alive, uncarved, and lookin' happy and contented.

"Well, for the love of soup!" says I. "What is it, a masquerade?"

"That you, McCabe?" says he. "Come in and—and sit on the floor."

"Say," says I, steppin' inside, "this ain't the costume you're going to start for Canada in, is it?"

"Ah, forget Canada!" says he. "I've got that proposition beat a mile. Hey, Hazzam," and he calls to the old pirate outside, "tell Mrs. Cahill to come down and be introduced!"

"What's that?" says I. "You—you ain't been gettin' married, have you?"

"Yep," says Spotty, grinnin' foolish. "Nine o'clock last night. We're goin' to start on our weddin' trip Tuesday, me and Mareena."

"Mareena!" I gasps. "Not the—the one we saw out front? Where you going, Niagara?"

"Nah! Syria, wherever that is," says he. "Mareena knows. We're goin' to live over there and buy rugs. That two hundred was just what we needed to set us up in business."

"Think you'll like it?" says I.

"Sure!" says he. "She says it's fine. There's deserts over there, and you travel for days and days, ridin' on bloomin' camels. Here's the tent we're goin' to live in. I'm practisin' up. Gee! but this pipe is somethin' fierce, though! Oh, here she is! Say, Mareena, this is Mr. McCabe, that I was tellin' you about."

48

Well, honest, I wouldn't have known her for the same girl. She's changed that Grand-st. uniform for a native outfit, and while it's a little gaudy in color, hanged if it ain't becomin'! For a desert bride I should say she had some class.

"Well," says I, "so you and Spotty are goin' to leave us, eh?"

"Ah, yes!" says she, them big black eyes of hers lightin' up. "We go where the sky is high and blue and the sun is big and hot. We go back to the wide white desert where I was born. All day we shall ride toward the purple hills, and sleep at night under the still stars. He knows. I have told him."

"That's right," says Spotty. "It'll be all to the good, that. Mareena can cook too."

To prove it, she makes coffee and hands it around in little brass cups. Also there's cakes, and the old man comes in, smilin' and rubbin' his hands, and we has a real sociable time.

And these was the folks I'd suspected of wantin' to carve up Spotty! Why, by the looks I saw thrown at him by them two, I knew they thought him the finest thing that ever happened. Just by the way Mareena reached out sly to pat his hair when she passed, you could see how it was.

49

So I wished 'em luck and hurried back to report before Pinckney sent a squad of reserves after me.

"Well!" says he, the minute I gets in. "Let me know the worst at once."

"I will," says I. "He's married." It was all I could do, too, to make him believe the yarn.

"By Jove!" says he. "Think of a chap like Spotty Cahill tumbling into a romance like that! And on Fourth-ave!"

"It ain't so well advertised as some other lanes in this town," says I; "but it's a great street. Say, what puzzled me most about the whole business, though, was the new name they had for Spotty. Sareef! What in blazes does that mean?"

"Probably a title of some sort," says Pinckney. "Like sheik, I suppose."

"But what does a Sareef have to do?" says I.

"Do!" says Pinckney. "Why, he's boss of the caravan. He—he sits around in the sun and looks picturesque."

"Then that settles it," says I. "Spotty's qualified. I never thought there was any place where he'd fit in; but, if your description's correct, he's found the job he was born for."

---

## CHAPTER IV

### A GRANDMOTHER WHO GOT GOING

50

Ever go on a grandmother hunt through the Red Ink District? Well, it ain't a reg'lar amusement of mine, but it has its good points. Maybe I wouldn't have tackled it at all if I hadn't begun by lettin' myself get int'rested in Vincent's domestic affairs.

Now what I knew about this Vincent chap before we starts out on the grandmother trail wouldn't take long to tell. He wa'n't any special friend of mine. For one thing, he wears his hair cut plush. Course, it's his hair, and if he wants to train it to stand up on top like a clothes brush or a blacking dauber, who am I that should curl the lip of scorn?

Just the same, I never could feel real chummy towards anyone that sported one of them self raisin' crests. Vincent wa'n't one of the chummy kind, though. He's one of these stiff backed,

black haired, brown eyed, quick motioned, sharp spoken ducks, that wants what he wants when he wants it. You know. He comes to the studio reg'lar, does his forty-five minutes' work, and gets out without swappin' any more conversation than is strictly necessary.

All the information I had picked up about him was that he hailed from up the State somewhere, and that soon after he struck New York he married one of the Chetwood girls. And that takes more or less capital to start with. Guess Vincent had it; for I hear his old man left him quite a wad and that now he's the main guy of a threshin' machine trust, or something like that. Anyway, Vincent belongs in the four-cylinder plute class, and he's beginnin' to be heard of among the alimony aristocracy.

But this ain't got anything to do with the way he happened to get confidential all so sudden. He'd been havin' a kid pillow mix-up with Swifty Joe, just as lively as if the thermometer was down to thirty instead of up to ninety, and he's just had his rub down and got into his featherweight serge, when in drifts this Rodney Kipp that's figurin' so strong on the defense side of them pipe line cases.

"Ah, Vincent!" says he.

"Hello, Rodney!" says Vincent as they passes each other in the front office, one goin' out and the other comin' in.

I'd never happened to see 'em meet before, and I'm some surprised that they're so well acquainted. Don't know why, either, unless it is that they're so different. Rodney, you know, is one of these light complected heavyweights, and a swell because he was born so. I was wonderin' if Rodney was one of Vincent's lawyers, or if they just belonged to the same clubs; when Mr. Kipp swings on his heel and says:

"Oh, by the way, Vincent, how is grammy?"

"Why!" says Vincent, "isn't she out with you and Nellie?"

"No," says Rodney, "she stayed with us only for a couple of days. Nellie said she hadn't heard from her for nearly two months, and told me to ask you about her. So long. I'm due for some medicine ball work," and with that he drifts into the gym. and shuts the door.

Vincent, he stands lookin' after him with a kind of worried look on his face that was comical to see on such a cocksure chap as him.

"Lost somebody, have you?" says I.

"Why—er—I don't know," says Vincent, runnin' his fingers through the bristles that waves above his noble brow. "It's grandmother. I can't imagine where she can be."

"You must have grandmothers to burn," says I, "if they're so plenty with you that you can mislay one now and then without missin' her."

"Eh?" says he. "No, no! She is really my mother, you know. I've got into the way of calling her grammy only during the last three or four years."

"Oh, I see!" says I. "The grandmother habit is something she's contracted comparative recent, eh? Ain't gone to her head, has it?"

Vincent couldn't say; but by the time he's quit tryin' to explain what has happened I've got the whole story. First off he points out that Rodney Kipp, havin' married his sister Nellie, is his brother-in-law, and, as they both have a couple of youngsters, it makes Vincent's mother a grammy in both families.

"Sure," says I. "I know how that works out. She stays part of the time with you, and makes herself mighty popular with your kids; then she takes her trunk over to Rodney's and goes through the same performance there. And when she goes visitin' other places there's a great howl all round. That's it, ain't it?"

It wa'n't, not within a mile, and I'd showed up my low, common breedin' by suggesting such a thing. As gently as he could without hurtin' my feelin's too much, Vincent explains that while my programme might be strictly camel's foot for ordinary people, the domestic arrangements of the upper classes was run on different lines. For instance, his little Algernon Chetwood could speak nothing but French, that bein' the brand of governess he'd always had, and so he naturally couldn't be very thick with a grandmother that didn't understand a word of his lingo.

"Besides," says Vincent, "mother and my wife, I regret to say, have never found each other very congenial."

I might have guessed it if I'd stopped to think of how an old lady from the country would hitch with one of them high flyin' Chetwood girls.

"Then she hangs out with your sister, eh, and does her grandmother act there?" says I.

"Well, hardly," says Vincent, colorin' up a little. "You see, Rodney has never been very intimate with the rest of our family. He's a Kipp, and— Well, you can't blame him; for mother is rather old-fashioned. Of course, she's good and kind-hearted and all that; but—but there isn't much style about her."

"Still sticks to the polonaise of '81, and wears a straw lid she bought durin' the Centennial, eh?" says I.

Vincent says that about tells the story.

"And where is it she's been livin' all this time that you've been gettin' on so well in New York?" says I.

"In our old home, Tonawanda," says he, shudderin' some as he lets go of the name. "It's where she should have stayed, too!"

"So-o-o-o?" says I. I'd been listenin' just out of politeness up to that point; but from then on I got int'rested, and I don't let up until I've pumped out of him all the details about just how much of a nuisance an old, back number mother could be to a couple of ambitious young folks that had grown up and married into the swell mob.

55

It was a case that ought to be held up as a warnin' to lots of superfluous old mothers that ain't got any better taste than to keep on livin' long after there's any use for 'em. Mother Vincent hadn't made much trouble at first, for she'd had an old maid sister to take care of; but when a bad case of the grip got Aunt Sophrony durin' the previous winter, mother was left sort of floatin' around.

She tried visitin' back and forth between Vincent and Nellie just one consecutive trip, and the experiment was such a frost that it caused ructions in both families. In her Tonawanda regalia mother wa'n't an exhibit that any English butler could be expected to pass the soup to and still keep a straight face.

So Vincent thinks it's time to anchor her permanent somewhere. Accordin' to his notion, he did the handsome thing too. He buys her a nice little farm about a mile outside of Tonawanda, a place with a fine view of the railroad tracks on the west and a row of brick yards to the east, and he lands mother there with a toothless old German housekeeper for company. He tells her he's settled a good comfortable income on her for life, and leaves her to enjoy herself.

56

But look at the ingratitude a parent can work up! She ain't been there more'n a couple of months before she begins complainin' about bein' lonesome. She don't see much of the Tonawanda folks now, the housekeeper ain't very sociable, the smoke from the brick yards yellows her Monday wash, and the people she sees goin' by in the cars is all strangers. Couldn't Vincent swap the farm for one near New York? She liked the looks of the place when she was there, and wouldn't mind being closer.

"Of course," says he, "that was out of the question!"

"Oh, sure!" says I. "How absurd! But what's the contents of this late bulletin about her being a stray?"

It was nothing more or less than that the old girl had sold up the farm a couple of months back, fired the housekeeper, and quietly skipped for New York. Vincent had looked for her to show up at his house, and when she didn't he figured she must have gone to Nellie's. It was only when Rodney Kipp fires the grammy question at him that he sees he's made a wrong calculation and begins havin' cold feet.

57

"If she's here, alone in New York, there's no knowing what may be happening to her," says he. "Why, she knows nothing about the city, nothing at all! She might get run over, or fall in with disreputable people, or——" The other pictures was so horrible he passes 'em up.

"Mothers must be a great care," says I. "I ain't had one for so long I can't say on my own hook; but I judge that you and sister has had a hard time of it with yours. Excuse me, though, if I don't shed any tears of sympathy, Vincent."

He looks at me kind of sharp at that; but he's too busy with disturbin' thoughts to ask what I mean. Maybe he'd found out if he had. It's just as well he didn't; for I was some curious to see what would be his next move. From his talk it's plain Vincent is most worried about the chances of the old lady's doin' something that would get her name into the papers, and he says right off that he won't rest easy until he's found her and shooed her back to the fields.

"But where am I to look first?" says he. "How am I to begin?"

"It's a big town to haul a dragnet through, that's a fact," says I. "Why don't you call in Brother-in-Law Rodney, for a starter?"

"No, no," says Vincent, glancin' uneasy at the gym. door. "I don't care to have him know anything about it."

58

"Maybe sister might have some information," says I. "There's the 'phone."

"Thanks," says he. "If you don't mind, I will call her up at the Kipp country place."

He does; but Nellie ain't heard a word from mother; thought she must be with Vincent all this time; and has been too busy givin' house parties to find out.

"Have her cross examine the maids," says I. "The old lady may have left some orders about forwardin' her mail."

That was the clew. Inside of ten minutes Nellie 'phones back and gives a number on West 21st-st.

"Gee!" says I. "A hamfatters' boardin'-house, I'll bet a bag of beans! Grandmother has sure picked out a lively lodgin'-place."

"Horrible!" says Vincent. "I must get her away from there at once. But I wish there was someone who——Shorty, could I get you to go along with me and——"

"Rescuin' grandmothers ain't my long suit," says I; "but I'll admit I'm some int'rested in this



case. Come on.”

By the time our clockwork cab fetches up in front of the prunery it's after six o'clock. There's no mistakin' the sort of histrionic asylum it was, either. A hungry lookin' bunch of actorets was lined up on the front steps, everyone of 'em with an ear stretched out for the dinner bell. In the window of the first floor front was a beauty doctor's sign, a bull fiddle-artist was sawin' out his soul distress in the hall bedroom above, and up under the cornice the Chicini sisters was leanin' on the ledge and wishin' the folks back in Saginaw would send on that grubstake letter before the landlady got any worse. But maybe you've seen samples of real dogday tragedy among the profesh, when the summer snaps have busted and the fall rehearsals have just begun. What, Mabel?

“It's a sure enough double-in-brass roost,” says I. “Don't say anything that sounds like contract, or you'll be mobbed.”

But they sizes Vincent up for a real estate broker, and gives him the chilly stare, until he mentions the old lady's name. Then they thaws out sudden.

“Oh, the Duchess!” squeals a couple in chorus. “Why, she always dines out, you know. You'll find her around at Doughretti's, on 27th-st.”

“Duchess!” says Vincent. “I—I'm afraid there's some mistake.”

“Not at all,” says one of the crowd. “We all call her that. She's got Little Spring Water with her to-night. Doughretti's, just in from the avenue, is the place.”

And Vincent is the worst puzzled gent you ever saw as he climbs back into the cab.

“It can't be mother they mean,” says he. “No one would ever think of calling her Duchess.”

“There's no accountin' for what them actorines would do,” says I. “Anyway, all you got to do is take a peek at the party, and if it's a wrong steer we can go back and take a fresh start.”

You know Doughretti's, if you don't you know a dozen just like it. It's one of these sixty-cent table dotty joints, with an electric name sign, a striped stoop awnin', and a seven-course menu manifolded in pale purple ink. You begin the agony with an imitation soup that looks like Rockaway beach water when the tide's comin' in, and you end with a choice of petrified cheese rinds that might pass for souvenirs from the Palisades.

If you don't want to taste what you eat, you let 'em hand you a free bottle of pure California claret, vatted on East Houston-st. It's a mixture of filtered Croton, extra quality aniline dyes, and two kinds of wood alcohol, and after you've had a pint of it you don't care whether the milk fed Philadelphia chicken was put in cold storage last winter, or back in the year of the big wind.

Madam Doughretti had just fed the Punk Lady waltz into the pianola for the fourth time as we pulls up at the curb.

“It's no use,” says Vincent. “She wouldn't be here. I will wait, though, while you take a look around; if you will, Shorty.”

On the way over he's given me a description of his missin' parent; so I pikes up the steps, pushes past the garlic smells, and proceeds to inspect the groups around the little tables. What I'm lookin' for is a squatty old party with gray hair pasted down over her ears, and a waist like a bag of hay tied in the middle. She's supposed to be wearin' a string bonnet about the size of a saucer, with a bunch of faded velvet violets on top, a coral brooch at her neck, and either a black alpaca or a lavender sprigged grenadine. Most likely, too, she'll be doin' the shovel act with her knife.

Well, there was a good many kinds of females scattered around the coffee stained tablecloths, but none that answers to these specifications. I was just gettin' ready to call off the search, when I gets my eye on a couple over in one corner. The gent was one of these studio Indians, with his hair tucked inside his collar.

The old girl facin' him didn't have any Tonawanda look about her, though. She was what you might call a frosted pippin, a reg'lar dowager dazzler, like the pictures you see on fans. Her gray hair has been spliced out with store puffs until it looks like a weddin' cake; her hat is one of the new wash basin models, covered with pink roses that just matches the color of her cheeks; and her peek-a-poo lace dress fits her like it had been put onto her with a shoe horn.

Sure, I wa'n't lookin' for any such party as this; but I can't help takin' a second squint. I notices what fine, gentle old eyes she has, and while I was doin' that I spots something else. Just under her chin is one of them antique coral pins. Course, it looked like a long shot, but I steps out to the door and motions Vincent to come in.

“I expect we're way off the track,” says I; “but I'd like to have you take a careless glance at the giddy old party over under the kummel sign in the corner; the one facin' this way—there.”

Vincent gives a jump at the first look. Then he starts for her full tilt, me trailin' along and whisperin' to him not to make any fool break unless he's dead sure. But there's no holdin' him back. She's so busy chattin' with the reformed Sioux in store clothes that she don't notice Vincent until he's right alongside, and just as she looks up he lets loose his indignation.

“Why, grandmother!” says he.

She don't seem so much jarred as you might think. She don't even drop the fork that she's usin' to twist up a gob of spaghetti on. All she does is to lift her eyebrows in a kind of annoyed way, and shoot a quick look at the copper tinted gent across the table.

"There, there, Vincent?" says she. "Please don't grandmother me; at least, not in public."

"But," says he, "you know that you are a——"

"I admit nothing of the kind," says she. "I may be your mother; but as for being anybody's grandmother, that is an experience I know nothing about. Now please run along, Vincent, and don't bother."

That leaves Vincent up in the air for keeps. He don't know what to make of this reception, or of the change that happened to her; but he feels he ought to register some sort of a kick.

"But, mother," says he, "what does this mean? Such clothes! And such—such"—here he throws a meanin' look at the Indian gent.

"Allow me," says grandmother, breakin' in real dignified, "to introduce Mr. John Little Bear, son of Chief Won-go-plunki. I am very sorry to interrupt our talk on art, John; but I suppose I must say a few words to Vincent. Would you mind taking your coffee on the back veranda?"

64

He was a well-trained red man, John was, and he understands the back out sign; so inside of a minute the crockery has been pushed away and I'm attendin' a family reunion that appears to be cast on new lines. Vincent begins again by askin' what it all means.

"It means, Vincent," says she, "that I have caught up with the procession. I tried being the old-fashioned kind of grandmother, and I wasn't a success. Now I'm learning the new way, and I like it first rate."

"But your—your clothes!" gasps Vincent.

"Well, what of them?" says she. "You made fun of the ones I used to wear; but these, I would have you know, were selected for me by a committee of six chorus ladies who know what is what. I am quite satisfied with my clothes, Vincent."

"Possibly they're all right," says he; "but how—how long have you been wearing your hair that way?"

"Ever since Madam Montrosini started on my improvement course," says she. "I am told it is quite becoming. And have you noticed my new waist line, Vincent?"

Vincent hadn't; but he did then, and he had nothin' to say, for she has an hourglass lookin' like a hitchin' post. Not bein' able to carry on the debate under them headings, he switches and comes out strong on what an awful thing it was for her to be livin' among such dreadful people.

65

"Why," says grandmother, "they're real nice, I'm sure. They have been just as good to me as they could be. They take turns going out to dinner with me and showing me around the town."

"Good heavens!" says Vincent. "And this—this Bear person, does he——"

"He is an educated, full blooded Sioux," says grandmother. "He has toured Europe with Buffalo Bill, and just now he is an artists' model. He is very entertaining company, Johnny is."

"Johnny!" gasps Vincent under his breath. That's the last straw. He lays down the law then and there to grandmother. If she ever expects him to recognize her again, she must shake this whole crowd and come with him.

"Where to, Vincent?" says she.

"Why, to my home, of course," says he.

"And have your wife's maid speak of me as a dumpy old scarecrow? No, thank you!" and she calls the waiter to bring a demitasse with cognac.

"But no one could call you that now, mother," says Vincent. "You—you're different, quite different."

"Oh, am I?" says she.

"To be sure you are," says he. "Julia and I would be glad to have you with us. Really, we would."

66

She was a good natured old girl, grandmother was. She says she'll try it; but only on one condition. It was a corker, too. If she's going to give all her good friends at the actors' boardin' house the shake, she thinks it ought to be done at a farewell dinner at the swellest place in town. Vincent groans; but he has to give in. And that's how it happens the other night that about two dozen liberty people walked up from Appetite Row and fed themselves off Sherry's gold plates until the waiters was weak in the knees watchin' 'em.

"Is the old lady still leadin' the band wagon, Vincent!" says I to him yesterday.

"She is," says he, "and it is wonderful how young she has grown."

"New York is a great place for rejuvenatin' grandmothers," says I, "specially around in the Red Ink Zone."

67

Well, I've been slummin' up again. It happens like this: I was just preparin', here the other noontime, to rush around the corner and destroy a plate of lunch counter hash decorated with parsley and a dropped egg, when I gets this 'phone call from Duke Borden, who says he wants to see me the worst way.

"Well," says I, "the studio's still here on 42d-st., and if your eyesight ain't failed you——"

"Oh, chop it, can't you, Shorty?" says he. "This is really important. Come right up, can't you!"

"That depends," says I. "Any partic'lar place?"

"Of course," says he. "Here at the club. I'm to meet Chick Sommers here in half an hour. We'll have luncheon together and——"

"I'm on," says I. "I don't know Chick; but I'm a mixer, and I'll stand for anything in the food line but cold egg. Scratch the chilled hen fruit and I'm with you."

Know about Duke, don't you? It ain't much to tell. He's just one of these big, handsome, overfed chappies that help the mounted traffic cops to make Fifth-ave. look different from other Main-sts. He don't do any special good, or any partic'lar harm. Duke's got just enough sense, though, to have spasms of thinkin' he wants to do something useful now and then, and all I can dope out of this emergency call of his is that this is a new thought.

68

That's the answer, too. He begins tellin' me about it while the head waiter's leadin' us over to a corner table. Oh, yes, he's going in for business in dead earnest now, y'know,—suite of offices, his name on the letterheads, and all that sort of thing, bah Jove!

All of which means that Mr. Chick Sommers, who was a star quarterback in '05, when Duke was makin' his college bluff on the Gold Coast, has rung him into a South Jersey land boomin' scheme. A few others, friends of Chick's, are in it. They're all rippin' good fellows, too, and awfully clever at planning out things. Chick himself, of course, is a corker. It was him that insisted on Duke's bein' treasurer.

"And really," says Duke, "about all I have to do is drop around once or twice a week and sign a few checks."

"I see," says I. "They let you supply the funds, eh?"

"Why, yes," says Duke. "I'm the only one who can, y'know. But they depend a great deal on my judgment, too. For instance, take this new deal that's on; it has all been left to me. There are one hundred and eighteen acres, and we don't buy a foot unless I say so. That's where you come in, Shorty."

69

"Oh, do I?" says I.

"You see," Duke goes on, "I'm supposed to inspect it and make a decision before the option expires, which will be day after to-morrow. The fact is, I've been putting off going down there, and now I find I've a winter house party on, up in Lenox, and—— Well, you see the box I'm in."

"Sure!" says I. "You want me to sub for you at Lenox?"

"Deuce take it, no!" says Duke. "I want you to go down and look at that land for me."

"Huh!" says I. "What I know about real estate wouldn't——"

"Oh, that's all right," says Duke. "It's only a matter of form. The boys say they want it, and I'm going to buy it for them anyway; but, just to have it all straight and businesslike, either I ought to see the land myself, or have it inspected by my personal representative. Understand?"

"Duke," says I, "you're a reg'lar real estate Napoleon. I wouldn't have believed it was in you."

70

"I know," says he. "I'm really surprised at myself."

Next he explains how he happened to think of sendin' me, and casually he wants to know if a couple of hundred and expenses will be about right for spoilin' two days of my valuable time. How could I tell how much it would lose me? But I said I'd run the chances.

Then Chick shows up, and they begin to talk over the details of this new bungalow boom town that's to be located on the Jersey side.

"I tell you," says Chick, "it'll be a winner from the start. Why, there's every advantage anyone could wish for,—ocean breezes mingled with pine scented zephyrs, magnificent views, and a railroad running right through the property! The nearest station now is Clam Creek; but we'll have one of our own, with a new name. Clam Creek! Ugh! How does Pinemere strike you?"

"Perfectly ripping, by Jove!" says Duke, so excited over it that he lights the cork end of his cigarette. "Shorty, you must go right down there for me. Can't you start as soon as you've had your coffee?"

Oh, but it was thrillin', listenin' to them two amateur real estaters layin' plans that was to make a seashore wilderness blossom with surveyors' stakes and fresh painted signs like Belvidere-ave., Ozone Boulevard, and so on.

71

It struck me, though, that they was discussin' their scheme kind of free and public. I spots one white haired, dignified old boy, doing the solitaire feed at the table back of Duke, who seems more or less int'rested. And I notices that every time Clam Creek is mentioned he pricks up his

ears. Sure enough, too, just as we're finishing, he steps over and taps Duke on the shoulder.

"Why, howdy do, Mr. Cathaway?" says Duke. "Charmed to see you, by Jove!"

And it turns out he's DeLancey Cathaway, the big noise in the philanthropy game, him that gets up societies for suppressin' the poor and has his name on hospitals and iron drinkin' fountains. After he's been introduced all around he admits that he's caught one or two remarks, and says he wants to congratulate Duke on givin' up his idle ways and breakin' into an active career.

Oh, he's a smooth old party, Mr. Cathaway is! He don't let on to be more'n moderately int'rested, and the next thing I know he's sidled away from Duke and is walkin' out alongside of me.

"Going down town?" says he. "Then perhaps you will allow me to give you a lift?" and he motions to his town car waiting at the curb.

"Gee!" thinks I. "I'm makin' a hit with the nobility, me and my winnin' ways!"

That don't exactly state the case, though; for as soon as we're alone DeLancey comes right to cases.

"I understand, Mr. McCabe," says he, "that you are to visit Clam Creek."

"Yep," says I. "Sounds enticin', don't it?"

"Doubtless you will spend a day or so there?" he goes on.

"Over night, anyway," says I.

"Hum!" says he. "Then you will hardly fail to meet my brother. He is living at Clam Creek."

"What!" says I. "Not Broadway Bob?"

"Yes," says he, "Robert and his wife have been there for nearly two years. At least, that is where I have been sending his allowance."

"Mrs. Bob too!" says I. "Why—why, say, you don't mean the one that——"

"The same," he cuts in. "I know they're supposed to be abroad; but they're not, they are at Clam Creek."

Maybe you've heard about the Bob Cathaways, and maybe you ain't. There's so many new near-plutes nowadays that the old families ain't getting the advertisin' they've been used to. Anyway, it's been sometime since Broadway Bob had his share of the limelight. You see, Bob sort of had his day when he was along in his thirties, and they say he was a real old-time sport and rounder, which was why he was let in so bad when old man Cathaway's will was probated. All Bob pulls out is a couple of thousand a year, even that being handled first by Brother DeLancey, who cops all the rest of the pile as a reward for always having gone in strong for charity and the perfectly good life.

It's a case where virtue shows up strong from the first tap of the bell. Course, Bob can look back on some years of vivid joy, when he was makin' a record as a quart opener, buyin' stacks of blues at Daly's, or over at Monte Carlo bettin' where the ball would stop. But all this ends mighty abrupt.

In the meantime Bob has married a lively young lady that nobody knew much about except that she was almost as good a sport as he was, and they were doin' some great teamwork in the way of livenin' up society, when the crash came.

Then it was the noble hearted DeLancey to the rescue. He don't exactly take them right into the fam'ly; but he sends Mr. and Mrs. Bob over to his big Long Island country place, assigns 'em quarters in the north wing, and advises 'em to be as happy as they can. Now to most folks that would look like landin' on Velvetten-st.,—free eats, no room rent, and a forty-acre park to roam around in, with the use of a couple of safe horses and a libr'y full of improvin' books, such as the Rollo series and the works of Dr. Van Dyke.

Brother Bob don't squeal or whine. He starts in to make the best of it by riggin' himself out like an English Squire and makin' a stagger at the country gentleman act. He takes a real int'rest in keepin' up the grounds and managin' the help, which DeLancey had never been able to do himself.

It's as dull as dishwater, though, for Mrs. Robert Cathaway, and as there ain't anyone else handy she takes it out on Bob. Accordin' to all accounts, they must have done the anvil chorus good and plenty. You can just see how it would be, with them two dumped down so far from Broadway and only now and then comp'ny to break the monotony. When people did come, too, they was DeLancey's kind. I can picture Bob tryin' to get chummy with a bunch of prison reformers or delegates to a Sunday school union. I don't wonder his disposition curdled up.

If it hadn't been for Mrs. Bob, though, they'd been there yet. She got so used to rowin' with Bob that she kept it up even when Brother DeLancey and his friends came down. DeLancey stands for it until one morning at breakfast, when he was entertainin' an English Bishop he'd corraled at some conference. Him and the Bishop was exchangin' views on whether free soup and free salvation was a good workin' combination or not, when some little thing sets Mr. and Mrs. Bob to naggin' each other on the side. I forgot just what it was Bob shot over; but after standin' her jabs for quite some time without gettin' real personal he comes back with some stage whisper remark that cut in deep.

Mrs. Bob was right in the act of helpin' herself to the jelly omelet, usin' a swell silver servin'

shovel about half the size of a brick layer's trowel. She's so stirred up that she absentmindedly scoops up a double portion, and just as Bob springs his remark what does she do but up and let fly at him, right across the table. Maybe she'd have winged him too,—and served him right for saying what no gentleman should to a lady, even if she is his wife,—but, what with her not stoppin' to take good aim, and the maid's gettin' her tray against her elbow, she misses Bob by about three feet and plasters the English Bishop square between the eyes.

Now of course that wa'n't any way to serve hot omelet to a stranger, no matter how annoyed you was. DeLancey told her as much while he was helpin' swab off the reverend guest. Afterwards he added other observations more or less definite. Inside of two hours Mr. and Mrs. Bob found their baggage waitin' under the porte cochère, and the wagonette ready to take 'em to the noon train. They went. It was given out that they was travelin' abroad, and if it hadn't been for the omelet part of the incident they'd been forgotten long ago. That was a stunt that stuck, though.

As I looks at DeLancey there in the limousine I has to grin. "Say," says I, "was it a fact that the Bishop broke loose and cussed?"

"That humiliating affair, Mr. McCabe," says he, "I would much prefer not to talk about. I refer to my brother now because, knowing that you are going to Clam Creek, you will probably meet him there."

"Oh!" says I. "Like to have me give him your best regards!"

"No," says DeLancey. "I should like, however, to hear how you found him."

"Another report, eh!" says I. "All right, Mr. Cathaway, I'll size him up for you."

"But chiefly," he goes on, "I shall depend upon your discretion not to mention my brother's whereabouts to anyone else. As an aid to that discretion," says he, digging up his roll and sortin' out some tens, "I am prepared to——"

"Ah, button 'em back!" says I. "Who do you think you're dealin' with, anyway?"

"Why," says he, flushin' up, "I merely intended——"

"Well, forget it!" says I. "I ain't runnin' any opposition to the Black Hand, and as for whether I leak out where your brother is or not, that's something you got to take chances on. Pull up there, Mr. Chauffeur! This is where I start to walk."

And say, you could put his name on all the hospitals and orphan asylums in the country; but I never could see it again without growin' warm under the collar. Bah! Some of these perfectly good folks have a habit of gettin' on my nerves. All the way down to Clam Creek I kept tryin' to wipe him off the slate, and I'd made up my mind to dodge Brother Bob, if I had to sleep in the woods.

So as soon as I hops off the train I gets my directions and starts to tramp over this tract that Duke Borden was plannin' on blowin' some of his surplus cash against. And say, if anybody wants an imitation desert, dotted with scrub pine and fringed with salt marshes, that's the place to go lookin' for it. There's hundreds of square miles of it down there that nobody's usin', or threatenin' to.

Also I walked up an appetite like a fresh landed hired girl. I was so hungry that I pikes straight for the only hotel and begs 'em to lead me to a knife and fork. For a wonder, too, they brings on some real food, plain and hearty, and I don't worry about the way it's thrown at me.

Yon know how it is out in the kerosene district. I finds myself face to face with a hunk of corned beef as big as my two fists, boiled Murphies, cabbage and canned corn on the side, bread sliced an inch thick, and spring freshet coffee in a cup you couldn't break with an ax. Lizzie, the waitress, was chewin' gum and watchin' to see if I was one of them fresh travelin' gents that would try any funny cracks on her.

I'd waded through the food programme as far as makin' a choice between tapioca puddin' and canned peaches, when in drifts a couple that I knew, the minute I gets my eyes on 'em, must be Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cathaway. Who else in that little one-horse town would be sportin' a pair of puttee leggin's and doeskin ridin' breeches? That was Bob's makeup, includin' a flap-pocketed cutaway of Harris tweed and a corduroy vest. They fit him a little snug, showin' he's laid on some flesh since he had 'em built. Also he's a lot grayer than I expected, knowin' him to be younger than DeLancey.

As for Mrs. Bob—well, if you can remember how the women was dressin' as far back as two years ago, and can throw on the screen a picture of a woman who has only the reminders of her good looks left, you'll have her framed up. A pair of seedy thoroughbreds, they was, seedy and down and out.



"I KNEW IT MUST BE MR. AND MRS. BOB CATHAWAY"

I was wonderin' if they still indulged in them lively fam'ly debates, and how soon I'd have to begin dodgin' dishes; but they sits down across the table from me and hardly swaps a word. All I notices is the scornful way Lizzie asks if they'll have soup, and the tremble to Bob Cathaway's hand as he lifts his water tumbler.

As there was only us three in the room, and as none of us seemed to have anything to say, it wa'n't what you might call a boisterous assemblage. While I was waitin' for dessert I put in the time gazin' around at the scenery, from the moldy pickle jars at either end of the table, over to the walnut sideboard where they kept the plated cake basket and the ketchup bottles, across to the framed fruit piece that had seen so many hard fly seasons, and up to the smoky ceilin'. I looked everywhere except at the pair opposite.

Lizzie was balancin' the soup plates on her left arm and singsongin' the bill of fare to 'em. "Col'-pork-col'-ham-an'-corn-beef-'n'-cabbage," says she.

If Bob Cathaway didn't shudder at that, I did for him. "You may bring me—er—some of the latter," says he.

I tested the canned peaches and then took a sneak. On one side of the front hall was the hotel parlor, full of plush furniture and stuffed birds. The office and bar was on the other. I strolls in where half a dozen Clam Creekers was sittin' around a big sawdust box indulgin' in target practice; but after a couple of sniffs I concludes that the breathin' air is all outside.

After half an hour's stroll I goes in, takes a lamp off the hall table, and climbs up to No. 7. It's as warm and cheerful as an underground beer vault. Also I finds the window nailed down. Huntin' for someone to fetch me a hammer was what sent me roamin' through the hall and took me past No. 11, where the door was part way open. And in there, with an oil-stove to keep 'em from freezin', I see Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cathaway sittin' at a little marble topped table playin' double dummy bridge. Say, do you know, that unexpected glimpse of this little private hard luck proposition of theirs kind of got me in the short ribs. And next thing I knew I had my head in the door.

"For the love of Mike," says I, "how do you stand it?"

"Eh?" says Bob, droppin' his cards and starin' at me. "I—I beg pardon?"

Well, with that I steps in, tells him who I am, and how I'd just had a talk with Brother DeLancey. Do I get the glad hand? Why, you'd thought I was a blooming he angel come straight from the pearly gates. Bob drags me in, pushes me into the only rocker in the room, shoves a cigar box at me, and begins to haul decanters from under the washstand. They both asks questions at once. How is everybody, and who's married who, and are so and so still living together?

I reels off society gossip for an hour before I gets a chance to do some pumpin' on my own hook. What I wants to know is why in blazes they're hidin' in a hole like Clam Creek.

Bob only shrugs his shoulders. "Why not here as well as anywhere?" says he. "When you can't afford to live among your friends, why—you live in Clam Creek."

"But two years of it!" says I. "What do you find to do?"

"Oh, we manage," says he, wavin' at the double dummy outfit. "Babe and I have our little game. It's only for a dime a point; but it helps pass away the time. You see, when our monthly allowance comes in we divide it equally and take a fresh start. The winner has the privilege of paying our bills."

How was that for excitement? And Bob whispers to me, as we starts out for a little walk before turnin' in, "I generally fix it so Babe—er, Mrs. Cathaway—can win, you know."

From other little hints I gathers that their stay in Clam Creek has done one thing for 'em, anyway. It had put 'em wise to the great fact that the best way for two parties to get along together is to cut out the hammer music.

"So you had a talk with DeLancey?" says Bob on the way back. "I suppose he—er—sent no

message?"

It had taken Bob Cathaway all this while to work up to that question, and he can't steady down his voice as he puts it. And that quaver tells me the whole story of how he's been hoping all along that Brother DeLancey would sometime or other get over his grouch. Which puts it up to me to tell him what a human iceberg he's related to. Did I? Honest, there's times when I ain't got much use for the truth.

"Message?" says I, prompt and cheerful. "Now what in blazes was it he did say to tell you? Something about asking how long before you and Mrs. Cathaway was goin' to run up and make him a visit, I guess."

"A visit!" gasps Bob. "Did—did DeLancey say that? Then thank Heaven it's over! Come on! Hurry!" and he grabs me by the arm, tows me to the hotel, and makes a dash up the stairs towards their room.

"What do you think, Babe?" says he, pantin'. "DeLancey wants to know when we're coming back!"

For a minute Mrs. Bob don't say a word, but just stands there, her hands gripped in Bob's, and the dew startin' out of her eye corners. Then she asks, sort of husky, "Isn't there a night train, Bob?"

There wa'n't; but there was one at six-thirty-eight in the mornin'. We all caught it, too, both of 'em as chipper as a pair of kids, and me wonderin' how it was all goin' to turn out.

For three days after that I never went to the 'phone without expectin' to hear from Bob Cathaway, expressin' his opinion about my qualifications for the Ananias class. And then here the other afternoon I runs into Brother DeLancey on the avenue, not seein' him quick enough to beat it up a side street.

"Ah, McCabe," he sings out, "just a moment! That little affair about my Brother Robert, you know."

"Sure, I know," says I, bracin' myself. "Where is he now?"

"Why," says DeLancey, with never an eyelash flutterin', "he and his wife are living at Green Oaks again. Just returned from an extended trip abroad, you know." Then he winks.

Say, who was it sent out that bulletin about how all men was liars? I ain't puttin' in any not guilty plea; but I'd like to add that some has got it down finer than others.

83

---

## CHAPTER VI

### PLAYING HAROLD BOTH WAYS

Anyway, they came bunched, and that was some comfort. Eh? Well, first off there was the lovers, then there was Harold; and it was only the combination that saved me from developin' an ingrowin' grouch.

You can guess who it was accumulated the lovers. Why, when Sadie comes back from Bar Harbor and begins tellin' me about 'em, you'd thought she'd been left something in a will, she's so pleased.

Seems there was these two young ladies, friends of some friends of hers, that was bein' just as miserable as they could be up there. One was visitin' the other, and, as I made out from Sadie's description, they must have been havin' an awful time, livin' in one of them eighteen-room cottages built on a point juttin' a mile or so out into the ocean, with nothin' but yachts and motor boats and saddle horses and tennis courts and so on to amuse themselves with.

I inspected some of them places when I was up that way not long ago,—joints where they get their only information about hot waves by readin' the papers,—and I can just imagine how I could suffer puttin' in a summer there. Say, some folks don't know when they're well off, do they?

And what do you suppose the trouble with 'em was? Why, Bobbie and Charlie was missin'. Honest, that's all the place lacked to make it a suburb of Paradise. But that was enough for the young ladies; for each of 'em was sportin' a diamond ring on the proper finger, and, as they confides to Sadie, what was the use of havin' summer at all, if one's fiancé couldn't be there?

Bobbie and Charlie, it appears, was slavin' away in the city; one tryin' to convince Papa that he'd be a real addition to Wall Street, and the other trainin' with Uncle for a job as vice president of a life insurance company. So what did Helen and Marjorie care about sea breezes and picture postal scenery? Once a day they climbed out to separate perches on the rocks to read letters from Bobbie and Charlie; and the rest of the time they put in comparin' notes and helpin' each other be miserable.

84

85

"Ah, quit it, Sadie!" says I, interruptin' the sad tale. "Do you want to make me cry?"

"Well, they were wretched, even if you don't believe it," says she; "so I just told them to come right down here for the rest of the season."

"Wha-a-at!" says I. "Not here?"

"Why not?" says Sadie. "The boys can run up every afternoon and have dinner with us and stay over Sunday, and—and it will be just lovely. You know how much I like to have young people around. So do you, too."

"Yes, that's all right," says I; "but—"

"Oh, I know," says she. "This isn't matchmaking, though. They're already engaged, and it will be just delightful to have them with us. Now won't it?"

"Maybe it will," says I. "We ain't ever done this wholesale before; so I ain't sure."

Someway, I had a hunch that two pair of lovers knockin' around the premises at once might be most too much of a good thing; but, as long as I couldn't quote any authorities, I didn't feel like keepin' on with the debate.

I couldn't object any to the style of the young ladies when they showed up; for they was both in the queen class, tall and willowy and sweet faced. One could tease opera airs out of the piano in great shape, and the other had quite some of a voice; so the prospects were for a few weeks of lively and entertainin' evenin's at the McCabe mansion. I had the programme all framed up too, —me out on the veranda with my heels on the rail, the windows open, and inside the young folks strikin' up the melodies and makin' merry gen'rally.

Bobbie and Charles made more or less of a hit with me too when they first called,—good, husky, clean built young gents that passed out the cordial grip and remarked real hearty how much they appreciated our great kindness askin' 'em up.

"Don't mention it," says I. "It's a fad of mine."

Anyway, it looked like a good game to be in on, seein' there wa'n't any objections from any of the fam'lies. Made me feel bright and chirky, just to see 'em there, so that night at dinner I cut loose with some real cute joshes for the benefit of the young people. You know how easy it is to be humorous on them occasions. Honest, I must have come across with some of the snappiest I had in stock, and I was watchin' for the girls to pink up and accuse me of bein' an awful kidder, when all of a sudden I tumbles to the fact that I ain't holdin' my audience.

Say, they'd started up a couple of conversations on their own hook—kind of side issue, soft pedal dialogues—and they wa'n't takin' the slightest notice of my brilliant efforts. At the other end of the table Sadie is havin' more or less the same experience; for every time she tries to cut in with some cheerful observation she finds she's addressin' either Marjorie's left shoulder or Bobbie's right.

"Eh, Sadie?" says I across the centerpiece. "What was that last of yours?"

"It doesn't matter," says she. "Shall we have coffee in the library, girls, or outside! I say, Helen, shall we have— I beg pardon, Helen, but would you prefer—"

"What we seem to need most, Sadie," says I as she gives it up, "is a table megaphone."

Nobody hears this suggestion, though, not even Sadie. I was lookin' for the fun to begin after dinner,—the duets and the solos and the quartets,—but the first thing Sadie and I know we are occupyin' the libr'y all by ourselves, with nothing doing in the merry music line.

"Of course," says she, "they want a little time by themselves."

"Sure!" says I. "Half-hour out for the reunion."

It lasts some longer, though. At the end of an hour I thinks I'll put in the rest of the wait watchin' the moon come up out of Long Island Sound from my fav'rite corner of the veranda; but when I gets there I finds it's occupied.

"Excuse me," says I, and beats it around to the other side, where there's a double rocker that I can gen'rally be comfortable in. Hanged if I didn't come near sittin' slam down on the second pair, that was snuggled up close there in the dark!

"Aha!" says I in my best comic vein. "So here's where you are, eh? Fine night, ain't it?"

There's a snicker from the young lady, a grunt from the young gent; but nothing else happens in the way of a glad response. So I chases back into the house.

"It's lovely out, isn't it?" says Sadie.

"Yes," says I; "but more or less mushy in spots."

With that we starts in to sit up for 'em. Sadie says we got to because we're doin' the chaperon act. And, say, I've seen more excitin' games. I read three evenin' papers clear through from the weather forecast to the bond quotations, and I finished by goin' sound asleep in my chair. I don't know whether Bobbie and Charlie caught the milk train back to town or not; but they got away sometime before breakfast.

"Oh, well," says Sadie, chokin' off a yawn as she pours the coffee, "this was their first evening together, you know. I suppose they had a lot to say to each other."

"Must have had," says I. "I shouldn't think they'd have to repeat that performance for a month."



Next night, though, it's the same thing, and the next, and the next. "Poor things!" thinks I. "I expect they're afraid of being guyed." So, just to show how sociable and friendly I could be, I tries buttin' in on these lonely teeter-tates. First I'd hunt up one couple and submit some samples of my best chatter—gettin' about as much reply as if I was ringin' Central with the wire down. Then I locates the other pair, drags a rocker over near 'em, and tries to make the dialogue three handed. They stands it for a minute or so before decidin' to move to another spot.

Honest, I never expected to feel lonesome right at home entertainin' guests! but I was gettin' acquainted with the sensation. There's no musical doings, no happy groups and gay laughter about the house; nothing but now and then a whisper from dark corners, or the creak of the porch swings.

"Gee! but they're takin' their spoonin' serious, ain't they?" says I to Sadie. "And how popular we are with 'em! Makes me feel almost like I ought to put on a gag and sit down cellar in the coalbin."

"Pooh!" says Sadie, makin' a bluff she didn't mind. "Do let them enjoy themselves in their own way."

"Sure I will," says I. "Only this chaperon business is gettin' on my nerves. I don't feel like a host here; I feel more like a second story man dodgin' the night watchman."

There wa'n't any signs of a change, either. When they had to be around where we was they had hardly a word to say and acted bored to death; and it must have taxed their brains, workin' up all them cute little schemes for leavin' us on a siding so they could pair off. Course, I've seen engaged couples before; but I never met any that had the disease quite so hard. And this bein' shunned like I had somethin' catchin' was new to me. I begun to feel like I was about ninety years old and in the way.

Sunday forenoon was the limit, though. Sadie had planned to take 'em all for a motor trip; but they declines with thanks. Would they rather go out on the water? No, they didn't care for that, either. All they seems to want to do is wander round, two by two, where we ain't. And at that Sadie loses some of her enthusiasm for havin' bunches of lovers around.

"Humph!" I hears her remark as she watches Bobbie and Marjorie sidestep her and go meanderin' off down a path to the rocks.

A little while later I happens to stroll down to the summerhouse with the Sunday paper, and as I steps in one door Charlie and Helen slip out by the other. They'd seen me first.

"Well, well!" says I. "I never knew before how unentertainin' I could be."

And I was just wonderin' how I could relieve my feelin's without eatin' a fuzzy worm, like the small boy that nobody loved, when I hears footsteps approachin' through the shrubb'ry. I looks up, to find myself bein' inspected by a weedy, long legged youth. He's an odd lookin' kid, with dull reddish hair, so many freckles that his face looks rusty, and a pair of big purple black eyes that gazes at me serious.

"Well, son," says I, "where did you drop from?"

"My name is Harold Burbank Fitzmorris," says he, "and I am visiting with my mother on the adjoining estate."

"That sounds like a full description, Harold," says I. "Did you stray off, or was you sent?"

"I trust you don't mind," says he; "but I am exploring."

"Explore away then," says I, "so long as you don't tramp through the flowerbeds."

"Oh, I wouldn't think of injuring them," says he. "I am passionately fond of flowers."

"You don't say!" says I.

"Yes," says Harold, droppin' down easy on the bench alongside of me. "I love Nature in all her moods. I am a poet, you know."

"Eh!" says I. "Ain't you beginning sort of young?"

"Nearly all the really great men of literature," comes back Harold as prompt as if he was speakin' a piece, "have begun their careers by writing verse. I presume mine might be considered somewhat immature; but I am impelled from within to do it. All that will pass, however, when I enter on my serious work."

"Oh, then you've got a job on the hook, have you!" says I.

"I expect," says Harold, smilin' sort of indulgent and runnin' his fingers careless through his thick coppery hair, "to produce my first novel when I am twenty. It will have a somber theme, something after the manner of Turgenieff. Do you not find Turgenieff very stimulating?"

"Harold," says I, "all them Hungarian wines are more or less heady, and a kid like you shouldn't monkey with any of 'em."

He looks almost pained at that. "You're chaffing me now, I suppose," says he. "That sort of thing, though, I never indulge in. Humor, you know, is but froth on the deep seas of thought. It has never seemed to me quite worth one's while. You will pardon my frankness, I know."

"Harold," says I, "you're a wizard. So it's nix on the josh, eh?"

"What singular metaphors you employ!" says he. "Do you know, I can hardly follow you.

However, colloquial language does not offend my ear. It is only when I see it in print that I shudder."

"Me too," says I. "I'm just as sore on these foreign languages as anyone. So you're visitin' next door, eh? Enjoyin' yourself?"

That was a plain cue for Harold Burbank to launch out on the story of his life; but, say, he didn't need any such encouragement. He was a willin' and ready converser, Harold was; and—my!—what a lot of classy words he did have on tap! First off I wondered how it was a youngster like him could dig up so many; but when I'd heard a little more about him I could account for it all.

He'd cut his teeth, as you might say, on the encyclopedia. Harold's father had been a professor of dead languages, and I guess he must have died of it. Anyway, Mother was a widow, and from things Harold dropped I judged she was more or less frisky, spendin' her time at bridge and chasin' teas and dinner parties. It was clear she wa'n't any highbrow, such as Father must have been. All of which was disappointin' to Harold. He made no bones of sayin' so.

"Why pretend to approve of one's parent," says he, "when approval is undeserved?"

There was a lot of other folks that Harold disapproved of too. In fact, he was a mighty critical youth, only bein' able to entertain a good opinion of but one certain party. At any other time I expect he'd have given me an earache; but I'd been handed so much silence by our double Romeo-Juliet bunch that most any kind of conversation was welcome just then. So I lets him spiel away.

And, say, he acts like he was hungry for the chance. Why, he gives me his ideas on every subject you could think of, from the way Napoleon got himself started on the toboggan, to the folly of eatin' fried ham for breakfast. He sure was a wonder, that kid! Two solid hours we chinned there in the summerhouse, and it was almost by main strength I broke away for a one o'clock dinner.

Then, just as I'd got settled comf'table on the veranda in the afternoon, he shows up and begins again. There was nothin' diffident or backward about Harold. He didn't have any doubts about whether he was welcome or not, and his confidence about bein' able to entertain was amazin'.

It didn't do any good to throw out hints that perhaps he was bein' missed at home, or to yawn and pretend you was sleepy. He was as persistent as a mosquito singin' its evenin' song, and most as irritatin'. Twice I gets up and pikes off, tryin' to shake him; but Harold trails right along too. Maybe I'd yearned for conversation. Well, I was gettin' it.

At last I grows desp'rate, and in about two minutes more he would have been led home to Mother with the request that she tether him on her side of the fence, when I sees two of the lovers strollin' off to find a nook that wa'n't preempted by the other pair. And all of a sudden I has this rosy thought.

"Harold," says I, "it's most too bad, your wastin' all this flossy talk on me, who can't appreciate its fine points as I should, when there go some young people who might be tickled to death to have you join 'em. Suppose you try cheerin' 'em up?"

"Why," says Harold, "I had not observed them before. Thank you for the suggestion. I will join them at once."

Does he? Say, for the next couple of hours I had the time of my life watchin' the maneuvers. First off I expect they must have thought him kind of cute, same as I did; but it wa'n't long before they begun tryin' to lose him. If they shifted positions once, they did a dozen times, from the summerhouse to the rocks, then up to the veranda and back again, with Harold Burbank taggin' right along and spoutin' his best. He tackles first one pair, and then the other, until fin'ly they all retreats into the house. Harold hesitates a little about walkin' through the door after 'em, until I waves my hand cordial.

"Make yourself right to home, Harold," says I. "Keep 'em cheered up."

Not until he drives the girls off to their rooms and has Bobbie and Charles glarin' murderous at him, does he quit the sport and retire for supper.

"Come over again this evenin'," says I. "You're makin' a hit."

Harold thanks me some more and says he will. He's a great one to keep his word too. Bobbie and Marjorie have hardly snuggled up in one end of a hammock to watch the moon do things to the wavelets before here is Harold, with a fresh line of talk that he's bent on deliverin' while the mood is on.

Gettin' no answer from his audience didn't bother him a bit; for passin' out the monologue is his strong suit. Not to seem partial, he trails down Charlie and Helen and converses with them too. Course, all this occurrin' outside, I couldn't watch everything that took place; but I sits in the lib'ry with Sadie a lot more contented than I'd been before that week.

And when Marjorie drifts in alone, along about nine o'clock, and goes to drummin' on the piano, I smiles. Ten minutes later Helen appears too; and it's only when neither of the boys show up that I begins wonderin'. I asks no questions; but goes out on a scoutin' trip. There's nobody on the veranda at all. Down by the waterfront, though, I could hear voices, and I goes sleuthin' in that direction.

"Yes," I could hear Harold sayin' as I got most to the boat landin', "the phosphorescence that ignorant sailors attribute to electricity in the air is really a minute marine animal which—"

I expect I'll never know the rest; for just then there's a break in the lecture.

"One, two, three—now!" comes from Bobbie, and before Harold can let out a single squeal they've grabbed him firm and secure, one by the heels and the other by the collar, and they've begun sousin' him up and down off the edge of the float. It was high tide too.

"Uggle-guggle! Wow!" remarks Harold between splashes.

"That's right," observes Charles through, his teeth. "Swallow a lot of it, you windbag! It'll do you good."

Course, these young gents was guests of mine, and I hadn't interfered before with their partic'lar way of enjoyin' themselves; so I couldn't begin now. But after they was through, and a draggled, chokin', splutterin' youth had gone beatin' it up the path and over towards the next place, I strolls down to meet 'em as they are comin' up to the house.

"Hope you didn't see what happened down there just now, Professor," says Bobbie.

"Me?" says I. "Well, if I did I can forget it quick."

"Thanks, old man!" says both of 'em, pattin' me friendly on the shoulder.

"The little beast!" adds Charles. "He had the nerve to say you had put him up to it. That's what finally earned him his ducking, you know."

"Well, well!" says I. "Such a nice spoken youngster too!"

"Huh!" says Bobbie. "I suppose there'll be no end of a row about this when he gets home with his tale; but we'll stand for it. Meanwhile let's go up and get the girls to give us some music."

Say, I don't believe Harold ever mentioned it to a soul. It's a funny thing too, but he hasn't been over here since. And someway, gettin' better acquainted with the boys in that fashion, made it pleasanter all round.

But no more entertainin' lovers for us! Harolds ain't common enough.

---

## CHAPTER VII

### CORNELIA SHOWS SOME CLASS

"Oh, by the way, Shorty," says Sadie to me the other mornin', just as I'm makin' an early get-away for town.

"Another postscript, eh?" says I. "Well, let it come over speedy."

"It's something for Mrs. Purdy-Pell," says she. "I'd almost forgotten."

"Is it orderin' some fancy groceries, or sendin' out a new laundry artist?" says I. "If it is, why I guess I can—"

"No, no," says Sadie, givin' my tie an extra pat and brushin' some imaginary dust off my coat collar; "it's about Cousin Cornelia. She's in town, you know, and neither of the Purdy-Pells can get in to see her before next week on account of their garden party, and Cornelia is staying at a hotel alone, and they're a little anxious about her. So look her up, won't you? I told them you would. You don't mind, do you?"

"Me?" says I. "Why, I've been waitin' for this. Makin' afternoon calls on weepy old maids is my specialty."

"There, there!" says Sadie, followin' me out on the veranda. "Don't play the martyr! Perhaps Cornelia isn't the most entertaining person in the world, for she certainly has had her share of trouble; but it isn't going to hurt you merely to find out how she is situated and ask if you can be of any help to her. You know, if there was anything she could do for us, she would—"

"Oh, sure!" says I. "If I'm ever brought home on a shutter, I shall look for Cornelia to be waitin' on the mat with a needle and thread, ready to sew mournin' bands on the help."

That seems to be Cousin Cornelia's steady job in life, tendin' out on the sick and being in at the obsequies. Anyway, she's been at it ever since we knew her. She's a cousin of Mr. Purdy-Pell's, and his branch of the fam'ly, being composed mainly of antiques and chronic invalids, has been shufflin' off in one way or another for the last three or four years at the rate of about one every six months.

Course, it was kind of sad to see a fam'ly peter out that way; but, as a matter of fact, most of 'em was better off. At first the Purdy-Pells started in to chop all their social dates for three months after each sorrowful event; but when they saw they was being let in for a continuous performance, they sort of detailed Cousin Cornelia to do their heavy mournin' and had a black edge put on their stationery.

Maybe Cornelia didn't exactly yearn for the portfolio; but she didn't have much choice about

taking it. She was kind of a hanger-on, Cornelia was, you see, and she was used to going where she was sent. So when word would come that Aunt Mehitabel's rheumatism was worse and was threatenin' her heart, that meant a hurry call for Cousin Cornelia. She'd pack a couple of suit cases full of black skirts and white shirtwaists, and off she'd go, not showin' up again at the Purdy-Pells' town house until Aunty had been safely planted and the headstone ordered.

You couldn't say but what she did it thorough, too; for she'd come back wearin' a long crape veil and lookin' pasty faced and wore out. Don't know as I ever saw her when she wa'n't either just comin' from where there'd been a funeral, or just startin' for where there was likely to be one.

So she didn't cut much of a figure in all the gay doin's the Purdy-Pells was always mixed up in. And yet she wasn't such a kiln dried prune as you might expect, after all. Rather a well built party, Cornelia was, with a face that would pass in a crowd, and a sort of longin' twist to her mouth corners as if she wanted to crack a smile now and then, providin' the chance would only come her way.

103

And it wa'n't hardly a square deal to list her with the U.B.'s as soon as we did; for all this time she was doing the chief mourner act she was engaged to young Durgin. First off it was understood that she was waitin' for him to settle on whether he was goin' to be a minister or a doctor, him fiddlin' round at college, now takin' one course and then another; but at last he makes up his mind to chuck both propositions and take a hack at the law.

Durgin got there, too, which was more or less of a surprise to all hands, and actually broke in as partner in a good firm. Then it was a case of Durgin waitin' for Cornelia; for about that time the relations got to droppin' off in one-two-three order, and she seemed to think that so long as she'd started in on the job of ridin' in the first carriage, she ought to see it through.

Whether it was foolish of her or not, ain't worth while debatin' now. Anyhow, she stuck to it until the last one had cashed in, puttin' Durgin off from month to month and year to year. Then it turns out that the last of the bunch, Uncle Theodore, had left her a good-sized wad that Purdy-Pell had always supposed was comin' to him, but which he didn't grudge to Cornelia a bit.

So there she was, all the lingerin' ones off her hands, and her sportin' a bank account of her own. She's some tired out, though; so, after sendin' Durgin word that they might as well wait until fall now, she hikes off to some little place in New Hampshire and spends the summer restin' up. Next she comes down unexpected and hits New York.

104

In the meantime, though, Durgin has suddenly decided to scratch his entry for that partic'lar Matrimonial Handicap. Not that he's seriously int'rested in somebody else, but he's kind of got weary hangin' around, and he's seen a few livelier ones than Cornelia, and he feels that somehow him and her have made a great mistake. You know how they're apt to talk when they get chilly below the ankles? He don't hand this straight out to Cornelia, mind you, but goes to Mrs. Purdy-Pell and Sadie with the tale, wantin' to know what he'd better do.

Now I ain't got any grouch against Durgin. He's all right, I expect, in his way, more or less of a stiff necked, mealy mouthed chump, I always thought; but they say he's nice to his old mother, and he's makin' good in the law business, and he ain't bad to look at. The women folks takes his side right off. They say they don't blame him a bit, and, without stoppin' to think how Cousin Cornelia is going to feel left alone there on the siding, they get busy pickin' out new candidates for Durgin to choose from.

105

Well, that's the situation when I'm handed this assignment to go and inspect the head of the Purdy-Pells' obituary department and see if she's all comfy. Couldn't have weighed very heavy on my mind; for I don't think of it until late afternoon, just as I'm startin' to pull out for home. Then I says to myself that maybe it'll do just as well if I ring her up on the 'phone at her hotel. She's in, all right, and I explains over the wire how anxious I am to know if she's all right, and hopes nobody has tried to kidnap her yet, and asks if there's anything I can do.

"Why, how kind of you, Mr. McCabe!" says Cornelia. "Yes, I am perfectly well and quite safe here."

"Good!" says I. And then, seein' how easy I was gettin' out of it, I has to pile on the agony a little by addin', "Ain't there some way I can be useful, though? No errands you want done, or any place you'd like to be towed around to, eh?"

"Why—why——" says she, hesitatin'. "Oh, but I couldn't think of troubling you, you know."

"Why not?" says I, gettin' reckless. "Just remember that I'd be tickled to death, any time you push the button."

106

"We-e-ell," says she, "we were just wishing, Miss Stover and I, that we did have some gentleman friend who would——"

"Count me in," says I. "What's the game? Trip to Woodlawn Cemetery some day, or do you want to be piloted up to Grant's Tomb?"

No, it wa'n't either of them festive splurges she had in mind. They wanted a dinner escort for that evenin', she and Miss Stover. The other lady, she goes on to say, is a school teacher from up Boston way, that she'd made friends with durin' the summer. Miss Stover was takin' a year off, for the benefit of her nerves, and before she sailed on her Cook's trip abroad she thought she'd like to see a little of New York. They'd been tryin' to knock around some alone, and had got along all right daytimes, but hadn't dared venture out much at night. So if I wanted to be real generous, and it wouldn't be too much of a bore, they'd be very thankful if I would——

"In a minute," says I and, seein' I was up against it anyhow, I thought I might as well do it cheerful. "I'll be up about six, eh?"

"Chee!" says Swifty Joe, who always has his ear stretched out on such occasions, "you make a noise like you was fixin' up a date."

"What good hearin' you have, Swifty!" says I. "Some day, though, you'll strain one of them side flaps of yours. Yes, this is a date, and it's with two of the sportiest female parties that ever dodged an old ladies' home."

107

Excitin' proposition, wa'n't it? I spends the next half-hour battin' my head to think of some first class food parlor where I could cart a couple like this Boston schoolma'am and Cousin Cornelia without shockin' 'em. There was the Martha Washington; but I knew I'd be barred there. Also there was some quiet fam'ly hotels I'd heard of up town; but I couldn't remember exactly what street any of 'em was on.

"Maybe Cornelia will have some plans of her own," thinks I, as I gets into my silk faced dinner jacket and V-cut vest. "And I hope she ain't wearin' more'n two thicknesses of crape veil now."

Well, soon after six I slides out, hops on one of these shed-as-you-enter surface cars, and rides up to the hotel. I'd been holdin' down one of the velvet chairs in the ladies' parlor for near half an hour, and was wonderin' if Cornelia had run out of black headed pins, or what, when I pipes off a giddy specimen in wistaria costume that drifts in and begins squintin' around like she was huntin' for some one. Next thing I knew she'd spotted me and was sailin' right over.

"Oh, there you are!" she gurgles, holdin' out her hand.

108

"Excuse me, lady," says I, sidesteppin' behind the chair, "but ain't you tryin' to tag the wrong party?"

"Why," says she, lettin' out a chuckle, "don't you know me, Mr. McCabe?"

"Not yet," says I; "but it looks like I would if—Great snakes!"

And honest, you could hardly have covered my face cavity with a waffle iron when I drops to the fact that it's Cousin Cornelia. In place of the dismal female I'd been expectin', here's a chirky party in vivid regalia that shows class in every line. Oh, it's a happy days uniform, all right, from the wide brimmed gauze lid with the long heliotrope feather trailin' over one side, to the lavender kid pumps.

"Gee!" I gasps. "The round is on me, Miss Cornelia. But I wa'n't lookin' for you in—in—"

"I know," says she. "This is the first time I've worn colors for years, and I feel so odd. I hope I don't look too—"

"You look all to the skookum," says I.

It wa'n't any jolly, either. There never was any real sharp angles to Cornelia, and now I come to reckon up I couldn't place her as more'n twenty-six or twenty-seven at the outside. So why shouldn't she show up fairly well in a Gibson model?

"It's so good of you to come to our rescue," says she. "Miss Stover will be down presently. Now, where shall we go to dinner?"

109

Well, I see in a minute I've got to revise my plans; so I begins namin' over some of the swell grillrooms and cafes.

"Oh, we have been to most of those, all by ourselves," says Cornelia. "What we would like to see to-night is some real—well, a place where we couldn't go alone, out somewhere—an automobile resort, for instance."

"Whe-e-ew!" says I through my front teeth. "Say, Miss Cornie, but you are gettin' out of the bereft class for fair! I guess it's comin' to you, though. Now jest let me get an idea of how far you want to go."

"Why," says she, shruggin' her shoulders,— "how is it you put such things?—the limit, I suppose?"

"Honest?" says I. "Then how about Clover Blossom Inn?"

Heard about that joint, haven't you? Of course. There's a lot of joy-ride tank stations strung along Jerome-ave. and the Yonkers road; but when it comes to a genuine tabasco flavored chorus girls' rest, the Clover Blossom has most of the others lookin' like playgrounds for little mothers. But Cornie don't do any dodgin'.

"Fine!" says she. "I've read about that inn." Then she hurries on to plan out the details. I must go over to Times Square and hire a nice looking touring car for the evening. And I mustn't let Miss Stover know how much it costs; for Cornelia wants to do that part of it by her lonely.

110

"The dinner we are to go shares on," says she.

"Couldn't think of it," says I. "Let that stand as my blow."

"No, indeed," says Cornelia. "We have the money all put aside, and I sha'n't like it. Here it is, and I want you to be sure you spend the whole of it," and with that she shoves over a couple of fives.

I couldn't help grinnin' as I takes it. Maybe you've settled a dinner bill for three and a feed for the shofer at the Clover Blossom; but not with a ten-spot, eh?

And while Cornelia is goin' back in the elevator after the schoolma'am, I scoots over to get a machine. After convincin' two or three of them leather capped pirates that I didn't want to buy their blamed outfits, I fin'lly beats one down to twenty-five and goes back after the ladies.



"CORNELIA WHISPERED ABOUT THE PEROXIDE PUFFED GIRL"

Miss Stover don't turn out to be any such star as Cornelia; but she don't look so much like a suffragette as I expected. She's plump, and middle aged, and plain dressed; but there's more or less style to the way she carries herself. Also she has just a suspicion of eye twinkle behind the glasses, which suggests that perhaps some of this programme is due to her. 111

"All aboard for the Clover Blossom!" says I, handin' 'em into the tonneau; "that is, as soon as I run in here to the telephone booth."

It had come to me only at that minute what a shame it was this stunt of Cornelia's was goin' to be wasted on an audience that couldn't appreciate the fine points, and I'd thought of a scheme that might supply the gap. So I calls up an old friend of mine and has a little confab.

By the time we'd crossed the Harlem and had got straightened out on the parkway with our gas lamps lighted, and the moon comin' up over the trees, and hundreds of other cars whizzin' along in both directions, Cornelia and her schoolma'am friend was chatterin' away like a couple of boardin' school girls. There's no denyin' that it does get into your blood, that sort of ridin'. Why, even I begun to feel some frisky!

And look at Cornelia! For years she'd been givin' directions about where to put the floral wreaths, and listenin' to wills being read, and all summer long she'd been buried in a little backwoods boardin' house, where the most excitin' event of the day was watchin' the cows come home, or going down for the mail. Can you blame her for workin' up a cheek flush and rattlin' off nonsense? 112

Clover Blossom Inn does look fine and fancy at night, too, with all the colored lights strung around, and the verandas crowded with tables, and the Gypsy orchestra sawin' away, and new parties landin' from the limousines every few minutes. Course, I knew they'd run against perfect ladies hittin' up cocktails and cigarettes in the cloak room, and hear more or less high spiced remarks; but this was what they'd picked out to view.

So I orders the brand of dinner the waiter hints I ought to have,—little necks, okra soup, broiled lobster, guinea hen, and so on, with a large bottle of fizz decoratin' the silver tub on the side and some sporty lookin' mineral for me. It don't make any diff'rence whether you've got a wealthy water thirst or not, when you go to one of them tootsy palaces you might just as well name your vintage first as last; for any cheap skates of suds consumers is apt to find that the waiter's made a mistake and their table has been reserved for someone else.

But if you don't mind payin' four prices, and can stand the comp'ny at the adjoinin' tables, just being part of the picture and seeing it from the inside is almost worth the admission. If there's any livelier purple spots on the map than these gasolene road houses from eight-thirty P. M. to two-thirty in the mornin', I'll let you name 'em. 113

Cornelia rather shies at the sight of the fat bottle peekin' out of the cracked ice; but she gets over that feelin' after Miss Stover has expressed her sentiments.

"Champagne!" says the schoolma'am. "Oh, how perfectly delightful! Do you know, I always have wanted to know how it tasted."

Say, she knows all about it now. Not that she put away any more'n a lady should,—at the Clover Blossom,—but she had tackled a dry Martini first, and then she kept on tastin' and tastin' her glass of fizz, and the waiter keeps fillin' it up, and that twinkle in her eye develops more and more, and her conversation gets livelier and livelier. So does Cornelia's. They gets off some real bright things, too. You'd never guess there was so much fun in Cornie, or that she could look so much like a stunner.

She was just leanin' over to whisper something to me about the peroxide puffed girl at the next

table, and I was tryin' to stand bein' tickled in the neck by that long feather of hers while I listens, and Miss Stover was snuggled up real chummy on the other side, when I looks up the aisle and sees a little group watchin' us with their mouths open and their eyebrows up.

Leadin' the way is Pinckney. Oh, he'd done his part, all right, just as I'd told him over the wire; for right behind him is Durgin, starin' at Cornelia until he was pop eyed.

But that wa'n't all. Trust Pinckney to add something. Beyond Durgin is Mrs. Purdy-Pell—and Sadie. Now, I've seen Mrs. McCabe when she's been some jarred; but I don't know as I ever watched the effect of such a jolt as this. You see, Cornelia's back was to her, and all Sadie can see is that wistaria lid with the feather danglin' down my neck.

Sadie don't indulge in any preliminaries. She marches right along, with her chin in the air, and glues them Irish blue eyes of hers on me in a way I can feel yet. "Well, I must say!" says she.

"Eh?" says I, tryin' hard to put on a pleased grin. "So Pinckney brought you along too, did he? Lovely evenin', ain't it?"

"Why, Sadie?" says Cornelia, jumpin' up and givin' 'em a full face view. And you should have seen how that knocks the wind out of Sadie.

"Wha-a-at!" says she. "You?"

"Of course," says Cornie. "And we're just having the grandest lark, and—Oh! Why, Durgin! Where in the world did you come from? How jolly!"

"Ain't it?" says I. "You see, Sadie, I'm carryin' out instructions."

Well, the minute she gets wise that it's all a job that Pinckney and I have put up between us, and discovers that my giddy lookin' friend is only Cousin Cornelia doin' the butterfly act, the thunder storm is all over. The waiter shoves up another table, and they plants Durgin next to Cornie, and the festivities takes a new start.

Did Durgin boy forget all about them chilly feet of his? Why, you could almost see the frost startin' out before he'd said a dozen words, and by the time he'd let the whole effect sink in, he was no nearer contractin' chilblains than a Zulu with his heels in the campfire.

What pleases me most, though, was the scientific duck I made in the last round. We'd gone clear through the menu, and they was finishin' up their cordials, when I spots the waiter comin' with a slip of paper on his tray as long as a pianola roll.

"Hey, Pinckney," says I, "see what's comin' now!"

And when Pinckney reached around and discovers what it is, he digs down for his roll like a true sport, never battin' an eyelash.

"You would ring in the fam'ly on me, would you," says I, "when I'm showin' lady friends the sights?"

---

## CHAPTER VIII

### DOPING OUT AN ODD ONE

Say, notice any deep sea roll about my walk? No? Well, maybe you can get the tarry perfume as I pass by? Funny you don't; for I've been a Vice Commodore for most three weeks now. Yes, that's on the level—belay my spinnaker taffrail if it ain't!

That's what I get for bein' one of the charter members of the Rockhurst Yacht Club. You didn't, eh? Well, say, I'm one of the yachtiest yachters that ever jibbed a gangway. Not that I do any sailin' exactly; but I guess Sadie and me each paid good money for our shares of club stock, and if that ain't as foolish an act as you can find in the nautical calendar, then I'll eat the binnacle boom.

Course, this Vice Commodore stunt was sort of sprung on me; for I'd been such an active member I didn't even know the bloomin' clubhouse was finished until here the other day I gets this bulletin from the annual meetin', along with the programme for the openin' exercises.

"Gee!" says I. "Vice Commodore! Say, there must be some mistake about this."

"Not at all," says Sadie.

"Sure there is," says I. "Why, I hardly know one end of a boat from the other; and besides I ain't got any clubby habits. They've been let in wrong, that's all. I'll resign."

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" says Sadie. "When I took all that trouble to have you win over that ridiculous Bronson-Smith!"

"Eh?" says I. "Been playin' the Mrs. Taft, have you? In that case, I expect I'll have to stay with it. But, honest, you can look for a season of perfectly punk Vice Commodorin'."

As it turns out, though, there ain't one in ten members that knows much more about yachtin' than I do. Navigatin' porch rockers, orderin' all hands up for fancy drinks, and conductin' bridge whist regattas was their chief sea-goin' accomplishments; and when it come to makin' myself useful, who was it, I'd like to know, that chucked the boozy steward off the float when he had two of the house committee treed up the signal mast?

I suspect that's how it is I'm played up so prominent for this house warmin' episode. Anyway, when I arrives there on the great night—me all got up fancy in a double breasted serge coat, white flannel pants, and cork soled canvas shoes—I finds they've put me on the reception committee; and that, besides welcomin' invited guests, I'm expected to keep one eye peeled for outsiders, to see that nobody starts nothin'.

118

So I'm on deck, as you might say, and more or less conspicuous, when this Larchmont delegation is landed and comes stringin' up. It was "Ahoy there, Captain This!" and "How are you, Captain That?" from the rest of the committee, who was some acquainted; and me buttin' around earnest tryin' to find someone to shake hands with, when I runs across this thick set party in the open front Tuxedo regalia, with his opera hat down over one eye and a long cigar raked up coquettish from the sou'west corner of his face.

Know him? I guess! It's Peter K. Tracey; yes, the one that has his name on so many four-sheet posters. Noticed how he always has 'em read, ain't you? "Mr. Peter K. Tracey presents Booth Keene, the sterling young actor." Never forgets that "Mr."; but, say, I knew him when he signed it just "P. Tracey," and chewed his tongue some at gettin' that down.

Them was the days when he'd have jumped at the chance of managin' my ring exhibits, and he was known in sportin' circles as Chunk Tracey. I ain't followed all his moves since then; but I know he got to handlin' the big heavyweights on exhibition tours, broke into the theatrical game with an animal show that was a winner, and has stuck to the boxoffice end ever since.

119

Why shouldn't he, with a half ownership in a mascot Rube drama that never has less than six road companies playin' it, and at least one hit on Broadway every season? I admit I was some surprised, though, to hear of him buyin' a house on Fifth-ave. and makin' a stab at mixin' in society. That last I could hardly believe; but here he was, and lookin' as much jarred at findin' me as I was to see him.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" says I. "Chunk Tracey!"

"Why, hello, Shorty!" says he, and neither one of us remembers the "Charmed to see yuh, old chappy" lines we should have been shootin' off. Seems he'd been towed along with a bunch of near-swells that didn't dare treat him as if he really belonged, and he was almost frothin' at the mouth.

"Talk about your society folks!" says he. "Why,—blankety blank 'em!—I can go down the Rialto any afternoon, pick up a dozen people at twenty-five a week, drill 'em four days, and give a better imitation than this crowd ever thought of putting up!"

"Yes; but look who you are, Chunk," says I.

120

"I know," says he.

And he meant it too. He always was about the cockiest little rooster in the business; but I'd rather expected eight or ten years of ups and downs in the theatrical game, bein' thrown out of the trust and crawlin' back on his knees would have tempered him down some.

You couldn't notice it, though. In fact, this chesty, cocksure attitude seemed to have grown on him, and it was plain that most of his soreness just now come from findin' himself in with a lot of folks that didn't take any special pains to admit what a great man he was. So, as him and me was sort of left to flock by ourselves, I undertook the job of supplyin' a few soothin' remarks, just for old time's sake. And that's how it was he got rung in on this little mix-up with Cap'n Spiller.

You see, the way the committee had mapped it out, part of the doin's was a grand illumination of the fleet. Anyway, they had all the craft they could muster anchored in a semicircle off the end of the float and trimmed up with Japanese lanterns. Well, just about time for lightin' up, into the middle of the fleet comes driftin' a punk lookin' old sloop with dirty, patched sails, some shirts and things hangin' from the riggin', and a length of stovepipe stickin' through the cabin roof. When the skipper has struck the exact center, he throws over his mud hook and lets his sail run.

121

Not bein' posted on the details, I didn't know but that was part of the show, until the chairman of my committee comes rushin' up to me all excited, and points it out.

"Oh, I say, McCabe!" says he. "Do you see that?"

"If I didn't," says I, "I could almost smell it from here. Some new member, is it?"

"Member!" he gasps. "Why, it's some dashed old fisherman! We—we cawn't have him stay there, you know."

"Well," says I, "he seems to be gettin' plenty of advice on that point." And he was; for they was shoutin' things at him through a dozen megaphones.

"But you know, McCabe," goes on the chairman, "you ought to go out and send him away. That's one of your duties."

"Eh?" says I. "How long since I've been official marine bouncer for this organization? G'wan! Go



tell him yourself!"

We had quite an argument over it too, with Peter K. chimin' in on my side; but, while the chappy insists that it's my job to fire the old hooker off the anchorage, I draws the line at interferin' with anything beyond the shore. Course, it might spoil the effect; but the way it struck me was that we didn't own any more of Long Island Sound than anyone else, and I says so flat.

122

That must have been how the boss of the old sloop felt about it too; for he don't pay any attention to the howls or threats. He just makes things snug and then goes below and starts pokin' about in his dinky little cabin. Judgin' by the motions, he was gettin' a late supper.

Anyway, they couldn't budge him, even though half the club was stewin' about it. And, someway, that seemed to tickle Chunk and me a lot. We watched him spread his grub out on the cabin table, roll up his sleeves, and square away like he had a good appetite, just as if he'd been all by himself, instead of right here in the midst of so many flossy yachtsmen.

He even had music to eat by; for part of the programme was the turnin' loose of one of these high priced cabinet disk machines, that was on the Commodore's big schooner, and feedin' it with Caruso and Melba records. There was so much chatterin' goin' on around us on the verandas, and so many corks poppin' and glasses clinkin', that the skipper must have got more benefit from the concert than anyone else. At last he wipes his mouth on his sleeve careful, fills his pipe, and crawls out on deck to enjoy the view.

It was well worth lookin' at too; for, although there was most too many clouds for the moon to do much execution, here was all the yachts lighted up, and the clubhouse blazin' and gay, and the water lappin' gentle in between. He gazes out at it placid for a minute or so, and then we see him dive down into the cabin. He comes back with something or other that we couldn't make out, and the next thing I knows I finds myself keepin' time with my foot to one of them lively, swingin' old tunes which might have been "The Campbells Are Coming" or might not; but anyway it was enough to give you that tingly sensation in your toes. And it was proceedin' from the after deck of that old hulk.

123

"Well, well!" says I. "Bagpipes!"

"Bagpipes be blowed!" says Chunk. "That's an accordion he's playing. Listen!"

Say, I was listenin', and with both ears. Also other folks was beginnin' to do the same. Inside of five minutes, too, all the chatter has died down, and as I glanced around at the tables I could see that whole crowd of fancy dressed folks noddin' and beatin' time with their fans and cigars and fizz glasses. Even the waiters was standin' still, or tiptoin' so's to take it in.

Ever hear one of them out-of-date music bellows handled by a natural born artist? Say, I've always been partial to accordions myself, though I never had the courage to own up to it in public; but this was the first time I'd ever heard one pumped in that classy fashion.

124

Music! Why, as he switches off onto "The Old Folks at Home," you'd thought there was a church organ and a full orchestra out there! Maybe comin' across the water had something to do with it; but hanged if it wa'n't great! And of all the fine old tunes he gave us—"Nellie Gray," "Comin' Through the Rye," "Annie Laurie," and half a dozen more.

"Chunk," says I, as the concert ends and the folks begin to applaud, "there's only one thing to be done in a case like this. Lemme take that lid of yours."

"Certainly," says he, and drops a fiver into it before he passes it over. That wa'n't the only green money I collects, either, and by the time I've made the entire round I must have gathered up more'n a quart of spendin' currency.

"Hold on there, Shorty," says Chunk, as I starts out to deliver the collection. "I'd like to go with you."

"Come along, then," says I. "I guess some of these sailormen will row us out."

What we had framed up was one of these husky, rugged, old hearts of oak, who would choke up some on receivin' the tribute and give us his blessin' in a sort of "Shore Acres" curtain speech. Part of that description he lives up to. He's some old, all right; but he ain't handsome or rugged. He's a lean, dyspeptic lookin' old party, with a wrinkled face colored up like a pair of yellow shoes at the end of a hard season. His hair is long and matted, and he ain't overly clean in any detail. He don't receive us real hearty, either.

125

"Hey, keep your hands off that rail!" he sings out, reachin' for a boathook as we come alongside.

"It's all right, Cap," says I. "We're friends."

"Git out!" says he. "I ain't got any friends."

"Sure you have, old scout," says I. "Anyway, there's a lot of people ashore that was mighty pleased with the way you tickled that accordion. Here's proof of it too," and I holds up the hat.

"Huh!" says he, gettin' his eye on the contents. "Come aboard, then. Here, I guess you can stow that stuff in there," and blamed if he don't shove out an empty lard pail for me to dump the money in. That's as excited as he gets about it too.

Say, I'd have indulged in about two more minutes of dialogue with that ugly faced old pirate, and then I'd beat it for shore good and disgusted, if it hadn't been for Chunk Tracey. But he jumps in, as enthusiastic as if he was interviewin' some foreign Prince, presses a twenty-five-cent perfecto on the Cap'n, and begins pumpin' out of him the story of his life.

126

And when Chunk really enthuses it's got to be a mighty cold proposition that don't thaw some. Ten to one, too, if this had been a nice, easy talkin', gentle old party, willin' to tell all he knew in the first five minutes, Chunk wouldn't have bothered with him; but, because he don't show any gratitude, mushy or otherwise, and acts like he had a permanent, ingrowin' grouch, Chunk is right there with the persistence. He drags out of him that he's Cap'n Todd Spiller, hailin' originally from Castine, Maine, and that the name of his old tub is the Queen of the Seas. He says his chief business is clammin'; but he does a little fishin' and freightin' on the side. He don't work much, though, because it don't take a lot to keep him.

"But you have a wife somewhere ashore, I suppose," suggests Chunk, "a dear old soul who waits anxiously for you to come back?"

"Bah!" grunts Cap'n Spiller, knockin' the heel out of his corncob vicious. "I ain't got any use for women."

"I see," says Chunk, gazin' up sentimental at the moon. "A blighted romance of youth; some fair, fickle maid who fled with another and left you alone?"

"No such luck," says Spiller. "My trouble was havin' too many to once. Drat 'em!"

And you'd most thought Chunk would have let it go at that; but not him! He only tackles Spiller along another line. "What I want to know, Captain," says he, "is where you learned to play the accordion so well."

"Never learned 'tall," growls Spiller. "Just picked it up from a Portugee that tried to knife me afterwards."

"You don't say!" says Chunk. "But there's the musician's soul in you. You love it, don't you? You use it to express your deep, unsatisfied longings?"

"Guess so," says the Captain. "I allus plays most when my dyspepshy is worst. It's kind of a relief."

"Um-m-m—ah!" says Chunk. "Many geniuses are that way. You must come into town, though, and let me take you to hear some real, bang up, classical music."

"Not me!" grunts Spiller. "I can make all the music I want myself."

"How about plays, then?" says Chunk. "Now, wouldn't you like to see the best show on Broadway?"

"No, sir," says he, prompt and vigorous. "I ain't never seen any shows, and don't want to see one, either."

And, say, along about that time, what with the stale cookin' and bilge water scents that was comin' from the stuffy cabin, and this charmin' mood that old Spiller was in, I was gettin' restless. "Say, Chunk," I breaks in, "you may be enjoyin' this, all right; but I've got enough. It's me for shore! Goin' along?"

"Not yet," says he. "Have the boat come back for me in about an hour."

It was nearer two, though, before he shows up again, and his face is fairly beamin'.

"Well," says I, "did you adopt the old pirate, or did he adopt you?"

"Wait and see," says he, noddin' his head cocky. "Anyway, he's promised to show up at my office to-morrow afternoon."

"You must be stuck on entertaining a grouchy old lemon like that," says I.

"But he's a genius," says Chunk. "Just what I've been looking for as a head liner in a new vaudeville house I'm opening next month."

"What!" says I. "You ain't thinkin' of puttin' that old sour face on the stage, are you? Say, you're batty!"

"Batty, am I?" says Chunk, kind of swellin' up. "All right, I'll show you. I've made half a million, my boy, by just such batty moves as that. It's because I know people, know 'em through and through, from what they'll pay to hear, to the ones who can give 'em what they want. I'm a discoverer of talent, Shorty. Where do I get my stars from? Pick 'em up anywhere. I don't go to London and Paris and pay fancy salaries. I find my attractions first hand, sign' em up on long contracts, and take the velvet that comes in myself. That's my way, and I guess I've made good."

"Maybe you have," says I; "but I'm guessin' this is where you stub your toe. Hot line that'll be for the head of a bill, won't it—an accordion player? Think you can get that across?"

"Think!" says Chunk, gettin' indignant as usual, because someone suggests he can fall down on anything. "Why, I'm going to put that over twice a day, to twelve hundred-dollar houses! No, I don't think; I know!"

And just for that it wouldn't have taken much urgin' for me to have put up a few yellow ones that he was makin' a wrong forecast.

But, say, you didn't happen to be up to the openin' of Peter K.'s new Alcazar the other night, did you? Well, Sadie and I was, on account of being included in one of Chunk's complimentary box parties. And, honest, when they sprung that clouded moonlight water view, with the Long Island lights in the distance, and the Sound steamers passin' back and forth at the back, and the rocks in front, hanged if I didn't feel like I was on the veranda of our yacht club, watchin' it all over again, the same as it was that night!

Then in from one side comes this boat; no ordinary property piece faked up from something in stock; but a life sized model that's a dead ringer for the old Queen of the Seas, even to the stovepipe and the shirts hung from the forestay. It comes floatin' in lazy and natural, and when Cap Spiller goes forward to heave over the anchor he drops it with a splash into real water. He's wearin' the same old costume,—shirt sleeves, cob pipe, and all,—and when he begins to putter around in the cabin, blamed if you couldn't smell the onions fryin' and the coffee boilin'. Yes, sir, Chunk had put it all on!

Did the act get 'em interested? Say, there was fifteen straight minutes of this scenic business, with not a word said; but the house was so still I could hear my watch tickin'. But when he drags out that old accordion, plants himself on the cabin roof with one leg swingin' careless over the side, and opens up with them old tunes of his—well, he had 'em all with him, from the messenger boys in the twenty-five-cent gallery to the brokers in the fifteen-dollar boxes. He takes five curtain calls, and the orchestra circle was still demandin' more when they rung down the front drop.

"Chunk," says I, as he shows up at our box, "I take it back. You sure have picked another winner."

"Looks like it, don't it?" says he. "And whisper! A fifty-minute act for a hundred a week! That's the best of it. Up at the Columbus their top liner is costing them a thousand a day."

"It's a cinch if you can hold onto him, eh?" says I.

"Oh, I can hold him all right," says Chunk, waggin' his head confident. "I know enough about human nature to be sure of that. Of course, he's an odd freak; but this sort of thing will grow on him. The oftener he gets a hand like that, the more he'll want it, and inside of a fortnight that'll be what he lives for. Oh, I know people, from the ground up, inside and outside!"

Well, I was beginnin' to think he did. And, havin' been on the inside of his deal, I got to takin' a sort of pride in this hit, almost as much as if I'd discovered the Captain myself. I used to go up about every afternoon to see old Spiller do his stunt and get 'em goin'. Gen'rally I'd lug along two or three friends, so I could tell 'em how it happened.

Last Friday I was a little late for the act, and was just rushin' by the boxoffice, when I hears language floatin' out that I recognizes as a brand that only Chunk Tracey could deliver when he was good and warm under the collar. Peekin' in through the window, I sees him standin' there, fairly tearin' his hair.

"What's up, Chunk?" says I. "You seem peeved."

"Peeved!" he yells. "Why, blankety blank the scousy universe, I'm stark, raving mad! What do you think? Spiller has quit!"

"Somebody overbid that hundred a week?" says I.

"I wish they had; then I could get out an injunction and hold him on his contract," says Peter K. "But he's skipped, skipped for good. Read that."

It's only a scrawly note he'd left pinned up in his dressin' room, and, while it ain't much as a specimen of flowery writin', it states his case more or less clear. Here's what it said:

Mister P. K. Tracey;

Sir:—I'm through being a fool actor. The money's all right if I needed it, which I doant, but I doant like makin' a fool of myself twict a day to please a lot of citty foalks I doant give a dam about annie way, I doant like livin' in a blamed hotel either, for there aint annie wheres to set and smoak and see the sun come up. I'd rather be on my old bote, and that's whare I'm goin'. You needn't try to find me and git me to come back for I wont. You couldn't git me to act on that staige agin, ever. It's foolish.

Yours, TODD SPILLER.

"Now what in the name of all that's woolly," says Chunk, "would you say to a thing like that?"

"Me?" says I. "I don't know. Maybe I'd start in by admittin' that to card index the minds of the whole human race was a good deal of a job for one party to tackle, even with a mighty intellect like yours. Also, if it was put up to me flat, I might agree with Spiller."

---

## CHAPTER IX

### HANDING BOBBY A BLANK

Say, what do you make out of this plute huntin' business, anyway? Has the big money bunch got us down on the mat with our wind shut off and our pockets inside out; or is it just campaign piffle? Are we ghost dancin', or waltz dreamin', or what? It sure has me twisted up for fair, and I don't know whether I stand with the criminal rich or the predatory poor.

That's all on account of a little mix-up I was rung into at the hotel Perzazzer the other day. No, we ain't livin' there reg'lar again. This was just a little fall vacation we was takin' in town, so Sadie can catch up with her shoppin', and of course the Perzazzer seems more or less like home to us.

But it ain't often I've ever run against anything like this there. I've been thinkin' it over since, and it's left me with my feet in the air. No, you didn't read anything about it in the papers. But say, there's more goes on in one of them big joints every week than would fill a whole issue.

135

Look at the population the Perzazzer's got,—over two thousand, countin' the help! Why, drop us down somewhere out in Iowa, and spread us around in separate houses, and there'd be enough to call for a third-class postmaster, a police force, and a board of trade. Bunched the way we are, all up and down seventeen stories, with every cubic foot accounted for, we don't cut much of a figure except on the checkbooks. You hear about the Perzazzer only when some swell gives a fancy blow-out, or a guest gets frisky in the public dining room.

And anything in the shape of noise soon has the muffler put on it. We've got a whole squad of husky, two-handed, soft spoken gents who don't have anything else to do, and our champeen ruction extinguisher is Danny Reardon. To see him strollin' through the café, you might think he was a corporation lawyer studyin' how to spend his next fee; but let some ambitious wine opener put on the loud pedal, or have Danny get his eye on some Bridgeport dressmaker drawin' designs of the latest Paris fashions in the tea room, and you'll see him wake up. Nothing seems to get by him.

So I was some surprised to find him havin' an argument with a couple of parties away up on our floor. Anyone could see with one eye that they was a pair of butt-ins. The tall, smooth faced gent in the black frock coat and the white tie had sky pilot wrote all over him; and the Perzazzer ain't just the place an out of town minister would pick out to stop at, unless he wanted to blow a year's salary into a week's board.

136

Anyway, his runnin' mate was a dead give away. He looked like he might have just left a bench in the Oriental lodgin' house down at Chatham Square. He's a thin, gawky, pale haired youth, with tired eyes and a limp lower jaw that leaves his mouth half open all the time; and his costume looks like it had been made up from back door contributions,—a faded coat three sizes too small, a forty fat vest, and a pair of shiny black whipcord pants that someone had been married in about twenty years back.

What gets me is why such a specimen should be trailin' around with a clean, decent lookin' chap like this minister. Maybe that's why I come to take any notice of their little debate. There's some men, though, that you always give a second look at, and this minister gent was one of that kind. It wa'n't until I see how he tops Danny by a head that I notices how well built he is; and I figures that if he was only in condition, and knew how to handle himself, he could put up a good lively scrap. Something about his jaw hints that to me; but of course, him bein' a Bible pounder, I don't expect anything of the kind.

137

"Yes, I understand all that," Danny was tellin' him; "but you'd better come down to the office, just the same."

"My dear man," says the minister, "I have been to the office, as I told you before, and I could get no satisfaction there. The person I wish to see is on the ninth floor. They say he is out. I doubt it, and, as I have come six hundred miles just to have a word with him, I insist on a chance to—"

"Sure!" says Danny. "You'll get your chance, only it's against the rules to allow strangers above the ground floor. Now, you come along with me and you'll be all right." With that Danny gets a grip on the gent's arm and starts to walk him to the elevator. But he don't go far. The next thing Danny knows he's been sent spinnin' against the other wall. Course, he wa'n't lookin' for any such move; but it was done slick and prompt.

"Sorry," says the minister, shovin' his cuffs back in place; "but I must ask you to keep your hands off."

I see what Danny was up to then. He looks as cool as a soda fountain; but he's red behind his ears, and he's fishin' the chain nippers out of his side pocket. I knows that in about a minute the gent in the frock coat will have both hands out of business. Even at that, it looks like an even bet, with somebody gettin' hurt more or less. And blamed if I didn't hate to see that spunky minister get mussed up, just for objectin' to takin' the quiet run out. So I pushes to the front.

138

"Well, well!" says I, shovin' out a hand to the parson, as though he was someone I'd been lookin' for. "So you showed up, eh?"

"Why," says he,— "why—er—"

"Yes, I know," says I, headin' him off. "You can tell me about that later. Bring your friend right in; this is my door. It's all right, Danny; mistakes will happen."

And before any of 'em knows what's up, Danny is left outside with his mouth open, while I've towed the pair of strays into our sittin' room, and shooed Sadie out of the way. The minister looks kind of dazed; but he keeps his head well.

"Really," says he, gazin' around, "I am sure there must be some misunderstanding."

"You bet," says I, "and it was gettin' worse every minute. About two shakes more, and you'd been the center of a local disturbance that would have landed you before the police sergeant."

"Do you mean," says he, "that I cannot communicate with a guest in this hotel without being

liable to arrest?"

"That's the size of it," says I. "Danny had the bracelets all out. The conundrum is, though, Why I should do the goat act, instead of lettin' you two mix it up? But that's what happened, and now I guess it's up to you to give an account."

"H'm!" says he. "It isn't quite clear; but I infer that you have, in a way, made yourself responsible for me. May I ask whom I have to thank for——"

"I'm Shorty McCabe," says I.

"Oh!" says he. "It seems to me I've heard——"

"Nothing like bein' well advertised," says I. "Now, how about you—and this?" With that I points to the specimen in the cast offs, that was givin' an imitation of a flytrap. It was a little crisp, I admit; but I'm gettin' anxious to know where I stand.

The minister lifts his eyebrows some, but proceeds to hand out the information. "My name is Hooker," says he,— "Samuel Hooker."

"Preacher?" says I.

"Ye-es, a poor one," says he. "Where? Well, in the neighborhood of Mossy Dell, Pennsylvania."

"Out in the celluloid collar belt, eh?" says I. "This ain't a deacon, is it?" and I jerks my thumb at the fish eyed one.

"This unfortunate fellow," says he, droppin' a hand on the object's shoulder, "is one of our industrial products. His name is Kronacher, commonly called Dummy."

140

"I can guess why," says I. "But now let's get down to how you two happen to be loose on the seventh floor of the Perzazzer and so far from Mossy Dell."

The Reverend Sam says there ain't any great mystery about that. He come on here special to have a talk with a party by the name of Rankin, that he understood was stoppin' here.

"You don't mean Bobby Brut, do you?" says I.

"Robert K. Rankin is the young man's name, I believe," says he,— "son of the late Loring Rankin, president of the Consolidated——"

"That's Bobby Brut," says I. "Don't catch onto the Brut, eh? You would if you read the champagne labels. Friend of yours, is he?"

But right there the Rev. Mr. Hooker turns balky. He hints that his business with Bobby is private and personal, and he ain't anxious to lay it before a third party. He'd told 'em the same at the desk, when someone from Bobbie's rooms had 'phoned for details about the card, and then he'd got the turn down. But he wa'n't the kind that stayed down. He's goin' to see Mr. Rankin or bu'st. Not wantin' to ask for the elevator, he blazes ahead up the stairs; and Danny, it seems, hadn't got on his track until he was well started.

141

"All I ask," says he, "is five minutes of Mr. Rankin's time. That is not an unreasonable request, I hope?"

"Excuse me," says I; "but you're missin' the point by a mile. It ain't how long you want to stay, but what you're here for. You got to remember that things is run different on Fifth-ave. from what they are on Penrose-st., Mossy Dell. You might be a book agent, or a bomb thrower, for all the folks at the desk know. So the only way to get next to anyone here is to show your hand and take the decision. Now if you want to try runnin' the outside guard again, I'll call Danny back. But you'll make a mess of it."

He thinks that over for a minute, lookin' me square in the eye all the time, and all of a sudden he puts out his hand. "You're right," says he. "I was hot headed, and let my zeal get the better of my commonsense. Thank you, Mr. McCabe."

"That's all right," says I. "You go down to the office and put your case to 'em straight."

"No," says he, shruggin' his shoulders, "that wouldn't do at all. I suppose I've come on a fool's errand. Kronacher, we'll go back."

"That's too bad," says I, "if you had business with Bobby that was on the level."

142

"Since you've been so kind," says he, "perhaps you would give me your opinion—if I am not detaining you?"

"Spiel away!" says I. "I'll own up you've got me some interested."

Well, say, when he'd described his visit as a dippy excursion, he wa'n't far off. Seems that this Rev. Sam Hooker ain't a reg'lar preacher, with a stained glass window church, a steam heated parsonage, and a settled job. He's sort of a Gospel promoter, that goes around plantin' churches here and there,—home missionary, he calls it, though I always thought a home missionary was one that was home from China on a half-pay visit.

Mainly he says he drifts around through the coke oven and glass works district, where all the Polackers and other dagoes work. He don't let it go with preachin' to 'em, though. He pokes around among their shacks, seein' how they live, sendin' doctors for sick babies, givin' the women folks hints on the use of fresh air and hard soap, an' advisin' 'em to keep their kids in school. He's one of them strenuous chaps, too, that believes in stirrin' up a fuss whenever he runs across anything he thinks is wrong. One of the fights he's been making is something about the boys in the glass works.

"Perhaps you have heard of our efforts to have a child labor bill passed in our State?" says he.

"No," says I; "but I'm against it. There's enough kids has to answer the mill whistle, without passin' laws to make 'em."

Then he explains how the bill is to keep 'em from goin' at it too young, or workin' too many hours on a stretch. Course, I'm with him on that, and says so.

"Ah!" says he. "Then you may be interested to learn that young Mr. Rankin is the most extensive employer of child labor in our State. That is what I want to talk to him about."

"Ever see Bobby?" says I.

He says he hasn't.

"Know anything of his habits, and so on?" I asks.

"Not a thing," says the Rev. Sam.

"Then you take it from me," says I, "that you ain't missed much."

See? I couldn't go all over that record of Bobby Brut's, specially to a preacher. Not that Bobby was the worst that ever cruised around the Milky Way in a sea goin' cab with his feet over the dasher; but he was something of a torrid proposition while he lasted. You remember some of his stunts, maybe? I hadn't kept strict tabs on him; but I'd heard that after they chucked him out of the sanatorium his mother planted him here, with a man nurse and a private doctor, and slid off to Europe to stay with her son-in-law Count until folks forgot about Bobby.

And this was the youth the Rev. Mr. Hooker had come to have a heart to heart talk with!

"Ain't you takin' a lot of trouble, just for a few Polackers?" says I.

"They are my brothers," says he, quiet like.

"What!" says I. "You don't look it."

His mouth corners flickers a little at that, and there comes a glimmer in them solemn gray eyes of his; but he goes on to say that it's part of his belief that every man is his brother.

"Gee!" says I. "You've adopted a big fam'ly."

But say, he's so dead in earnest about it, and he talks so sensible about other things, besides appearin' so white clear through, that I can't help likin' the cuss.

"Look here!" says I. "This is way out of my line, and it strikes me as a batty proposition anyway; but if you're still anxious to have a chin with Bobby, maybe I can fix it."

"Thank you, thank you!" says he, givin' me the grateful grip.

It's a good deal easier than I'd thought. All I does is get one of Bobby's retinue on the house 'phone, tell who I am, and say I was thinkin' of droppin' up with a couple of friends for a short call, if Bobby's agreeable. Seems he was, for inside of two minutes we're on our way up in the elevator.

Got any idea of the simple way a half baked young plute can live in a place like the Perzazzer? He has one floor of a whole wing cut off for his special use,—about twenty rooms, I should judge,—and there was hired hands standin' around in every corner. We're piloted in over the Persian rugs, with the preacher blinkin' his eyes to keep from seein' some of the statuary and oil paintin's.

At last we comes to a big room with an eastern exposure, furnished like a show window. Sittin' at a big mahogany table in the middle is a narrow browed, pop eyed, bat eared young chap in a padded silk dressin' gown, and I remembers him for the Bobby Brut I used to see floatin' around with the Trixy-Madges at the lobster palaces. He has a couple of decks of cards laid out in front of him, and I guesses he's havin' a go at Canfield solitaire. Behind his chair stands a sour faced lackey who holds up his hand for us to wait.

Bobby don't look up at all. He's shiftin' the cards around, tryin' to make 'em come out right, doin' it quick and nervous. All of a sudden the lackey claps his hand down on a pile and says, "Beg pardon, sir, but you can't do that."

"Blast you!" snarls Bobby. "And I was just getting it! Why didn't you look the other way? Bah!" and he sends the whole lot flyin' on the floor. Do you catch on? He has the lackey there to see that he don't cheat himself.

But while the help was pickin' up the cards Bobby gets a glimpse of our trio, ranged up against the door draperies.

"Hello, Shorty McCabe!" he sings out. "It's bully of you to drop in. Nobody comes to see me any more—hardly a soul. Say, do you think there's anything the matter with my head?"

"Can't say your nut shows any cracks from here," says I. "Who's been tellin' you it did?"

"Why, all those blasted doctors," says he. "They won't even let me go out alone. But say," here he beckons me up and whispers mysterious, "I'll fix 'em yet! You just wait till I get my animals trained. You wait!" Then he claps his hands and hollers, "Atkins! Set 'em going!"

Atkins, he stops scrabblin' after the cards and starts around the room. And say, would you believe it, on all the tables and mantelpieces was a lot of those toy animals, such as they sell durin' the holidays. There was lions and tigers and elephants, little and big, and every last one of 'em has its head balanced so it'll move up and down when you touch it. Atkins' job was to go

from one to the other and set 'em bobbin'. Them on the mantels wa'n't more'n a few inches long; but on the floor, hid behind chairs, was some that was life size. One was a tiger, made out of a real skin, and when his head goes his jaws open and shut, and his tail lashes from side to side, as natural as life. Say, it was weird to watch that collection, all noddin' away together—almost gave you the willies!

"Are they all going?" says Bobby.

"Yes, sir," says Atkins, standin' attention.

"What do you think, eh?" says Bobbie, half shuttin' his pop eyes and starin' at me, real foxy.

"Great scheme!" says I. "Didn't know you had a private zoo up here. But say, I brought along someone that wants to have a little chin with you."

With that I hauls the Rev. Sam to the front and gives him the nudge to fire away. And say, he's all primed! He begins by givin' Bobbie a word picture of the Rankin glass works at night, when the helpers are carryin' the trays from the hot room, where the blowers work three-hour shifts, with the mercury at one hundred and twenty, to the coolin' room, where it's like a cellar. He tells him how many helpers there are, how many hours they work a day, and what they get for it. It didn't make me yearn for a job.

"And here," says the Rev. Mr. Hooker, pullin' the Dummy up by the sleeve, "is what happens. This boy went to work in your glass factory when he was thirteen. He was red cheeked, clear eyed, then, and he had a normal brain. He held his job six years. Then he was discharged. Why? Because he wasn't of any more use. He was all in, the juice sapped out of him, as dry as a last year's cornhusk. Look at him! Any doubt about his being used up? And what happened to him is happening to thousands of other boys. So I have come here to ask you, Mr. Rankin, if you are proud of turning out such products? Aren't you ready to stop hiring thirteen-year-old boys for your works?"

Say, it was straight from the shoulder, that talk,—no flourishes, no fine words! And what do you guess Bobby Brut has to say? Not a blamed thing! I doubt if he heard more'n half of it, anyway; for he's got his eyes set on that pasty face of Dummy Kronacher, and is followin' his motions.

The Dummy ain't payin' any attention to the speech, either. He's got sight of all them animals with their heads bobbin', and a silly grin spreads over his face. First he sidles over to the mantel and touches up one that was about stopped. Then he sees another, and starts that off again, and by the time Hooker is through the Dummy is as busy and contented as you please, keepin' them tigers and things movin'.

"Well?" says the Rev. Sam.

"Eh?" says Bobby, tearin' his eyes off the Dummy. "Were you saying something about the glass works? Beastly bore! I never go near them. But say! I want that chap over there. I want to hire him. What's his name?"

"Dummy Kronacher," says the Rev. Sam, comin' out strong on the first word.

"Good!" says Bobbie. "Hey, Dummy? What will you take to stay here with me and do that right along?"

Dummy has just discovered a stuffed alligator that can snap its jaws and wiggle its tail. He only looks up and grins.

"I'll make it a hundred a month," says Bobbie. "Well, that's settled. Atkins, you're fired! And say, McCabe, I must show this new man how I want this business done. You and your friend run in some other time, will you?"

"But," says Hooker, "can't you do something about those helpers? Won't you promise to——"

"No!" snaps Bobby. "I've no time to bother with such things. Atkins, show 'em out!"

Well, we went. We goes so sudden the Rev. Sam forgets about leavin' the Dummy until we're outside, and then he's for goin' back after him.

"What for?" says I. "That pair'll get along fine; they're two of a kind."

"I guess you're right," says he. "And it's something to have brought those two together. Perhaps someone will see the significance of it, some day."

Now what was he drivin' at then? You can search me. All I've been able to make out of it is that what ails the poor is poverty, and the trouble with the plutes is that they've got too much. Eh? Barney Shaw said something like that too? Well, don't let on I agree with him. He might get chesty.

---

## CHAPTER X

### MARMADUKE SLIPS ONE OVER

And you'd almost think I could accumulate enough freaks, all by myself, without havin' my friends pass theirs along, wouldn't you? Yet lemme tell you what Pinckney rung up on me.

He comes into the Studio one day towin' a party who wears brown spats and a brown ribbon to his shell rimmed eyeglasses, and leaves him planted in a chair over by the window, where he goes to rubbin' his chin with a silver-handled stick while we dive into the gym. for one of our little half-hour sessions. Leaves him there without sayin' a word, mind you, like you'd stand an umbrella in the corner!

"Who's the silent gazooks you run on the siding out front?" says I.

"Why," says Pinckney, "that's only Marmaduke."

"Only!" says I. "I should say Marmaduke was quite some of a name. Anything behind it? He ain't a blank, is he?"

"Who, Marmaduke?" says he. "Far from it! In fact, he has a most individual personality."

"That sounds good," says I; "but does it mean anything? Who is he, anyway?"

"Ask him, Shorty, ask him," says Pinckney, and as he turns to put his coat on the hanger I gets a glimpse of that merry eye-twinkle of his.

"Go on—I'm easy," says I. "I'd look nice, wouldn't I, holdin' a perfect stranger up for his pedigree?"

"But I assure you he'd be pleased to give it," says Pinckney, "and, more than that, I want to be there to hear it myself."

"Well, you're apt to strain your ears some listenin'," says I. "This ain't my day for askin' fool questions."

You never can tell, though. We hadn't much more'n got through our mitt exercise, and Pinckney was only half into his afternoon tea uniform, when there's a 'phone call for him. And the next thing I know he's hustled into his frock coat and rushed out.

Must have been five minutes later when I fin'ly strolls into the front office, to find that mysterious Marmaduke is still holdin' down the chair and gazin' placid out onto 42d-st. It looks like he'd been forgotten and hadn't noticed the fact.

One of these long, loose jointed, languid actin' gents, Marmaduke is; the kind that can drape themselves careless and comfortable over almost any kind of furniture. He's a little pop eyed, his hair is sort of a faded tan color, and he's whopper jawed on the left side; but beyond that he didn't have any striking points of facial beauty. It's what you might call an interestin' mug, though, and it's so full of repose that it seems almost a shame to disturb him.

Someone had to notify him, though, that he'd overslept. I tried clearin' my throat and shufflin' my feet to bring him to; but that gets no action at all. So there was nothing for it but to go over and tap him on the shoulder.

"Excuse me," says I, "but your friend has gone."

"Ah, quite so," says he, still starin' out of the window and rubbin' his chin. "'Tis a way friends have. They come, and they go. Quite so."

"Nobody's debatin' that point," says I; "but just now I wa'n't speakin' of friends in gen'ral. I was referrin' to Pinckney. He didn't leave any word; but I suspicion he was called up by—"

"Thanks," breaks in Marmaduke. "I know. Mrs. Purdy-Pell consults him about dinner favors—tremendous trifles, to be coped with only by a trained intelligence. We meet at the club later."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" says I. "In that case, make yourself to home. Have an evening paper?"

"Please take it away," says he. "I might be tempted to read about the beastly stock market."

"Been taking a little flyer, eh?" says I.

"What, I?" says he. "Why, I haven't enough cash to buy a decent dinner. But everybody you meet follows the market, you know. It's a contagious disease."

"So?" says I. "Now I've been exposed a lot and haven't caught it very hard."

"Gifted of the gods!" says he.

"Eh?" says I.

"I'm Marmaduke, you know," says he.

"I've heard that much," says I.

"To him that hath ears—mufflers," says he.

"Mufflers?" says I. "I guess I must be missin' some of my cues, Mister."

"Never care," says he. "Why cry over spilt milk when one can keep a cat?"

"Look here!" says I. "Are you stringin' me, or am I stringin' you?"

"Of what use to fret the oracle?" says he. "They say silence is golden—well, I've spent mine."

And, say, he had me doin' the spiral dip at that. I don't mind indulgin' in a little foolish conversation now and then; but I hate to have it so one sided. And, honest, so far as I figured, he might have been readin' the label off a tea chest. So with that I counters with one of my rough and ready comebacks.



"Marmaduke—did you say it was?" says I. "If you did, where's the can?"

"By Jove! That's rather good, though!" says he, rappin' the floor with his stick. "A little crude; but the element is there. Brava! Bravissimo!"

"Stirred up the pigeons, anyway," says I.

"Pigeons?" says he, lookin' puzzled.

"Well, well!" says I. "And he wants a diagram for that mossy one! Loft, you know," and I taps my forehead.

"Almost worthy of my steel!" says he, jumpin' up and shovin' out his hand. "Well met, Brother!"

"I don't know which of us has a call to get chesty over it; but here's how," says I, takin' the friendly palm he holds out. "Seen' it's gone this far, though, maybe you'll tell me who in blazes you are!"

And there I'd gone and done just what Pinckney had egged me to do. Course, the minute I asked the question I knew I'd given him a chance to slip one over on me; but I wa'n't lookin' for quite such a double jointed jolt.

"Who am I?" says he. "Does it matter? Well, if it does, I am easily accounted for. Behold an anachronism!"

"A which?" says I.

"An anachronism," says he once more.

"I pass," says I. "Is it part of Austria, or just a nickname for some alfalfa district out West?"

"Brave ventures," says he; "but vain. One's place of birth doesn't count if one's twentieth century mind has a sixteenth century attitude. That's my trouble; or else I'm plain lazy, which I don't in the least admit. Do you follow me?"

"I'm dizzy from it," says I.

"The confession is aptly put," he goes on, "and the frankness of it does you credit. But I perceive. You would class me by peg and hole. Well, I'm no peg for any hole. I don't fit. On the floor of life's great workshop I just kick around. There you have me—ah—what?"

"Maybe," says I; "but take my advice and don't ever spring that description on any desk Sergeant. It may be good; but it sounds like loose bearin's."

"Ah!" says he. "The metaphor of to-morrow! Speak on, Sir Galahad!"

"All right," says I. "I know it's runnin' a risk; but I'll chance one more: What part of the map do you hail from, Marmaduke?"

"My proper home," says he, "is the Forest of Arden; but where that is I know not."

"Why," says I, "then you belong in the new Harriman State Park. Anyway, there's a station by that name out on the Erie road."

"Rails never ran to Arden Wood," says he, "nor ever will. Selah!"

"Sounds like an old song," says I. "Are you taken this way often?"

"I'm Marmaduke, you know," says he.

"Sure, that's where we begun," says I; "but it's as far as we got. Is bein' Marmaduke your steady job?"

"Some would call it so," says he. "I try to make of it an art."

"You win," says I. "What can I set up?"

"Thanks," says he. "Pinckney has thoughtlessly taken his cigarette case with him."

So I sends Swifty out for a box of the most expensive dope sticks he can find. Maybe it wouldn't strike everybody that way; but to me it seemed like bein' entertained at cut rates. Next to havin' a happy dream about nothing I could remember afterwards, I guess this repartee bout with Marmaduke gets the ribbon. It was like blowin' soap bubbles to music,—sort of soothin' and cheerin' and no wear and tear on the brain. He stayed until closin' up time, and I was almost sorry to have him go.

"Come around again," says I, "when the fog is thinner."

"I'm certain to," says he. "I'm Marmaduke, you know."

And the curious thing about that remark was that after you'd heard it four or five times it filled the bill. I didn't want to know any more, and it was only because Pinckney insisted on givin' me the details that the mystery was partly cleared up.

"Well," says he, "what did you think of Marmaduke?"

"Neither of us did any thinkin'," says I. "I just watched the butterflies."

"You what?" says Pinckney.

"Oh, call 'em bats, then!" says I. "He's got a dome full."

"You mean you thought Marmaduke a bit off?" says he. "Nothing of the kind, Shorty. Why, he's a brilliant chap,—Oxford, Heidelberg, and all that sort of thing. He's written plays that no one will put on, books that no one will publish, and composed music that few can understand."

"I can believe it," says I. "Also he can use language that he invents as he goes along. Entertainin' cuss, though."

"A philosopher soufflé," says Pinckney.

"Does it pay him well?" says I.

"It's no joke," says Pinckney. "The little his father left him is gone, and what's coming from his Uncle Norton he doesn't get until the uncle dies. Meanwhile he's flat broke and too proud to beg or borrow."

"Never tried trailin' a pay envelope, did he?" says I.

"But he doesn't know how," says Pinckney. "His talents don't seem to be marketable. I am trying to think of something he could do. And did you know, Shorty, he's taken quite a fancy to you?"

"They all do," says I; "but Marmaduke's easier to stand than most of 'em. Next time I'm threatened with the willies I'll send for him and offer to hire him by the hour."

As a matter of fact, I didn't have to; for he got into the habit of blowin' into the studio every day or two, and swappin' a few of his airy fancies for my mental short-arm jabs. He said it did him good, and somehow or other it always chirked me up too.

And the more I saw of Marmaduke, the less I thought about the bats. Get under the surface, and he wa'n't nutty at all. He just had a free flow of funny thoughts and odd ways of expressin' 'em. Most of us are so shy of lettin' go of any sentiments that can't be had on a rubber stamp that it takes a mighty small twist to put a person in the queer class.

However, business is business, and I'd just as soon Marmaduke hadn't been on hand the other day when Pyramid Gordon comes in with one of his heavyweight broker friends. Course, I didn't know anything about the stranger; but I know Pyramid, and his funnybone was fossilized years ago. Marmaduke don't offer to make any break, though. He takes his fav'rite seat over by the window and goes to gazin' out and rubbin' his chin.

Seems that Mr. Gordon and his friend was both tangled up in some bank chain snarl that was worryin' 'em a lot. Things wouldn't be comin' to a head for forty-eight hours or so, and meantime all they could do was sit tight and wait.

Now, Pyramid's programme in a case of that kind is one I made out for him myself. It's simple. He comes to the studio for an hour of the roughest kind of work we can put through. After that he goes to his Turkish bath, and by the time his rubber is through with him he's ready for a private room and a ten hours' snooze. That's what keeps the gray out of his cheeks, and helps him look a Grand Jury summons in the face without goin' shaky.

So it's natural he recommends the same course to this Mr. Gridley that he's brought along. Another thick-neck, Gridley is, with the same flat ears as Pyramid, only he's a little shorter and not quite so rugged around the chin.

"Here we are, now," says Pyramid, "and here's Professor McCabe, Gridley. If he can't make you forget your troubles, you will be the first on record. Come on in and see."

But Gridley he shakes his head. "Nothing so strenuous for me," says he. "My heart wouldn't stand it. I'll wait for you, though."

"Better come in and watch, then," says I, with a side glance at Marmaduke.

"No, thanks; I shall be quite as uncomfortable here," says Gridley, and camps his two hundred and ten pounds down in my desk chair.

It was a queer pair to leave together,—this Gridley gent, who was jugglin' millions, and gettin' all kinds of misery out of it, and Marmaduke, calm and happy, with barely one quarter to rub against another. But of course there wa'n't much chance of their findin' anything in common to talk about.

Anyway, I was too busy for the next hour to give 'em a thought, and by the time I'd got Pyramid breathin' like a leaky air valve and glowin' like a circus poster all over, I'd clean forgot both of 'em. So, when I fin'ly strolls out absent minded, it's something of a shock to find 'em gettin' acquainted, Marmaduke tiltin' back careless in his chair, and Gridley eyin' him curious.

It appears that Pyramid's friend has got restless, discovered Marmaduke, and proceeded to try to tell him how near he comes to bein' a nervous wreck.

"Ever get so you couldn't eat, couldn't sleep, couldn't think of but one thing over and over?" he was just sayin'.

"To every coat of arms, the raveled sleeve of care," observes Marmaduke sort of casual.

"Hey?" says Gridley, facin' round on him sharp.

"As the poet puts it," Marmaduke rattles on,—

*"You cannot gild the lily,  
Nor can you wet the sea;  
Pray tell me of my Bonnie,  
But bring her not to me!"*

"Say, what the howling hyenas are you spouting about?" snorts Gridley, growin' purple back of the ears. "Who in thunder are you?"

"Don't!" says I, holdin' up a warnin' hand. But I'm too late. Marmaduke has bobbed up smilin'.

"A chip on the current," says he. "I'm Marmaduke, you know. No offense meant. And you were saying—"

"Huh!" grunts Gridley, calmin' down. "Can't wet the sea, eh? Not so bad, young man. You can't keep it still, either. It's the only thing that puts me to sleep when I get this way."

"Break, break, break—I know," says Marmaduke.

"That's it," says Gridley, "hearing the surf roar. I'd open up my seashore cottage just for the sake of a good night's rest, if it wasn't for the blasted seagulls. You've heard 'em in winter, haven't you, how they squeak around?"

"It's their wing hinges," says Marmaduke, solemn and serious.

"Eh?" says Gridley, gawpin' at him.

"Squeaky wing hinges," says Marmaduke. "You should oil them."

And, say, for a minute there, after Gridley had got the drift of that tomfool remark, I didn't know whether he was goin' to throw Marmaduke through the window, or have another fit. All of a sudden, though, he begins poundin' his knee.

"By George! but that's rich, young man!" says he. "Squeaky gulls' wing hinges! Haw-haw! Oil 'em! Haw-haw! How did you ever happen to think of it, eh?"

"One sweetly foolish thought," says Marmaduke. "I'm blessed with little else."

"Well, it's a blessing, all right," says Gridley. "I have 'em sometimes; but not so good as that. Say, I'll have to tell that to Gordon when he comes out. No, he wouldn't see anything in it. But see here, Mr. Marmaduke, what have you got on for the evening, eh?"

"My tablets are cleaner than my cuffs," says he.

"Good work!" says Gridley. "What about coming out and having dinner with me?"

"With you or any man," says Marmaduke. "To dine's the thing."

With that, off they goes, leavin' Pyramid in the gym. doorway strugglin' with his collar. Course, I does my best to explain what's happened.

"But who was the fellow?" says Mr. Gordon.

"Just Marmaduke," says I, "and if you don't want to get your thinker tied in a double bowknot you'll let it go at that. He's harmless. First off I thought his gears didn't mesh; but accordin' to Pinckney he's some kind of a philosopher."

"Gridley has a streak of that nonsense in him too," says Pyramid. "I only hope he gets it all out of his system by to-morrow night."

Well, from all I could hear he did; for there wa'n't any scarehead financial story in the papers, and I guess the bank snarl must have been straightened out all right. What puzzled me for a few days, though, was to think what had become of Marmaduke. He hadn't been around to the studio once; and Pinckney hadn't heard a word from him, either. Pinckney had it all framed up how Marmaduke was off starvin' somewhere.

It was only yesterday, too, that I looks up from the desk to see Marmaduke, all got up in an entire new outfit, standin' there smilin' and chipper.

"Well, well!" says I. "So you didn't hit the breadline, after all!"

"Perchance I deserved it," says he; "but there came one from the forest who willed otherwise."

"Ah, cut the josh for a minute," says I, "and tell us what you landed!"

"Gladly," says he. "I have been made the salaried secretary of the S. O. S. G. W. H."

"Is it a new benefit order," says I, "or what?"

"The mystic letters," says he, "stand for the Society for Oiling Squeaky Gulls' Wing Hinges. Mr. Gridley is one member; I am the other."

And, say, you may not believe it, but hanged if it wa'n't a fact! He has a desk in Gridley's private office, and once a day he shows up there and scribbles off a foolish thought on the boss's calendar pad. That's all, except that he draws down good money for it.

"Also I have had word," says Marmaduke, "that my aged Uncle Norton is very low of a fever."

"Gee!" says I. "Some folks are born lucky, though!"

"And others," says he, "in the Forest of Arden."

---

## CHAPTER XI

### A LOOK IN ON THE GOAT GAME

Pinckney was tellin' me, here awhile back at lunch one day, what terrors them twins of his was gettin' to be. He relates a tragic tale about how they'd just been requested to resign from another private school where they'd been goin' as day scholars.

"That is the third this season," says he; "the third, mind you!"

"Well, there's more still, ain't there?" says I.

"Brilliant observation, Shorty," says he, "also logical and pertinent. Yes, there are several others still untried by the twins."

"What you howlin' about, then?" says I.

"Because," says he, toyin' with the silver frame that holds the bill of fare, "because it is not my intention to demoralize all the educational institutions of this city in alphabetical order."

"G'wan!" says I. "The kids have got to be educated somewhere, haven't they?"

"Which is the sad part of it," says Pinckney, inspectin' the dish of scrambled eggs and asparagus tips and wavin' the waiter to do the serving himself. "It means," he goes on, "having a governess around the house, and you know what nuisances they can be."

"Do I?" says I. "The nearest I ever got to havin' a governess was when Mrs. O'Grady from next door used to come in to use our wash-tubs and I was left with her for the day. Nobody ever called her a nuisance and got away with it."

"What an idyllic youth to look back upon!" says he. "I can remember half a dozen, at least, who had a hand in directing the course of my budding intellect, and each one of them developed some peculiarity which complicated the domestic situation. I am wondering what this new governess of ours will contribute."

"Got one on the job already, eh?" says I.

"This is her third day," says he, "and if she manages to live through it with the twins, I shall have hope."

"Ah, pickles!" says I. "Those kids are all right. They're full of life and ginger, that's all."

"Especially ginger," says Pinckney.

"What of it?" says I. "Or are you just blowin' about 'em? It's all right, they're a great pair, and any time you want to entertain me for half an hour, turn 'em loose in my comp'ny."

"Done!" says Pinckney. "We'll take a cab right up."

"Put it off three minutes, can't you?" says I, lookin' over the French pastry tray and spearin' a frosted creampuff that was decorated up with sugar flowers until it looked like a bride's bouquet.

He insists on callin' my bluff, though; so up the avenue we goes, when I should have been hotfootin' it back to the studio. But I could see that Pinckney was some anxious about how the kids was gettin' on, Gertie being away for the day, and I thinks maybe I'll be useful in calmin' any riot he might find in progress.

All was quiet and peaceful, though, as Pinckney opens the door with his latchkey. No howls from upstairs, no front windows broken, and nobody slidin' down the banisters. We was just waitin' for the automatic elevator to come down when we hears voices floatin' out from the lib'ry. Pinckney steps to the doorway where he can see through into the next room, and then beckons me up for a squint.

It wa'n't the kids at all, but a couple of grownups that was both strangers to me. From the way the young woman is dressed I could guess she was the new governess. Anyway, she's makin' herself right to home, so far as entertainin' comp'ny goes; for she and the gent with her is more or less close together and mixed up. First off it looked like a side-hold lover's clinch, and then again it didn't.

"Is it a huggin' match, or a rough-house tackle?" I whispered over Pinckney's shoulder.

"I pass the declaration," says he. "Suppose we investigate."

With that we strolls in, and we're within a dozen feet of the couple before they get wise to the fact that there's an int'rested audience. I must say, though, that they made a clean, quick breakaway. Then they stands, starin' at us.

"Ah, Miss Marston!" says Pinckney. "Do I interrupt?"

"Why—er—er—you see, sir," she begins, "I—that is—we—"

And she breaks down with as bad a case of rattles as I ever see. She's a nice lookin', modest appearin' young woman, too, a little soft about the mouth, but more or less classy in her lines. Her hair is some mussed, and there's sort of a wild, desp'rate look in her eyes.

"A near relative, I presume?" suggests Pinckney, noddin' at the gent, who's takin' it all cool enough.

"Oh, yes, sir," gasps out the governess. "My husband, sir."

And the gent, he bows as easy and natural as if he was bein' introduced at an afternoon tea party. "Glad to know you," says he, stickin' out his hand, which Pinckney, bein' absent-minded

just then, fails to see.

"Really!" says Pinckney, lookin' the governess up and down. "Then it's not Miss Marston, but Mrs.—er——"

"Yes," says she, lettin' her chin drop, "Mrs. Marston."

"Very unfortunate," says Pinckney, "very!"

"Haw, haw, haw!" breaks out the strange gent, slappin' his knee. "I say now, but that's a good one, that is, even if it is at my expense! Unfortunate, eh? Perfectly true though, perfectly true!"

Now it takes a lot to get Pinckney going; but for a minute all he does is turn and size up this husband party with the keen sense of humor. I had my mouth open and my eyes bugged too; for he don't look the part at all. Why, he's dressed neat and expensive, a little sporty maybe, for a real gent; but he carries it off well.

"Glad to have your assurance that I was right," says Pinckney, still givin' him the frosty eye.

"Oh, don't mention it," says Mr. Marston. "And I trust you will overlook my butting in here to see Kitty—er, Mrs. Marston. Little matter of sentiment and—well, business, you know. I don't think it will happen often."

172

"I am quite sure it won't," says Pinckney. "And now, if the interview has been finished, I would suggest that——"

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" says Marston, edging towards the door. "Allow me, gentlemen, to bid you good-day. And I say, Kit, don't forget that little matter. By-by."

Honest, if I could make as slick a backout as that, without carryin' away anybody's footprint, I'd rate myself a headliner among the trouble dodgers. Pinckney, though, don't seem to appreciate such talents.

"That settles governess No. 1," says he as we starts for the elevator again. "We are beginning the series well."

That was before he saw how smooth she got along with Jack and Jill. After she'd given an exhibition of kid trainin' that was a wonder, he remarked that possibly he might as well let her stay the week out.

"But of course," says he, "she will have to go. Hanged if I understand how Mrs. Purdy-Pell happened to send her here, either! Shorty, do you suppose Sadie could throw any light on this case?"

"I'll call for a report," says I.

Does Sadie know anything about the Marstons? Well, rather! Says she told me all about 'em at the time too; but if she did it must have got by. Anyway, this was just a plain, simple case of a worthless son marryin' the fam'ly governess and bein' thrown out for it by a stern parent, same as they always are in them English novels Sadie's forever readin'.

173

The Marstons was Madison-ave. folks, which means that their back yard was bounded on the west by the smart set—and that's as far as there's any need of going. The girl comes from 'Frisco and is an earthquake orphan. Hence the governess stunt. As for young Marston, he'd been chucked out of college, tried out for a failure in the old man's brokerage office, and then left to drift around town on a skimpy allowance. So he was in fine shape to get married! The girl sticks to him, though, until there's trouble with the landlady, and then, when he only turns ugly and makes no move towards gettin' a job, she calls it off, gives him the slip, and begins rustlin' for herself.

"Oh, well," says Pinckney, "I suppose she ought to have a chance. But if that husband of hers is going to——"

"Next time you catch him at it," says I, "just 'phone down for me. It'll be a pleasure."

I meant it too; for after hearing how she'd lost other places on account of his hangin' around I could have enjoyed mussin' him up some.

With my feelin' that way, you can guess what a jar it is, one afternoon when I'm having a little front office chat with my old reg'lar, Pyramid Gordon, to see this same gent blow in through the door. Almost looked like he knew what he ought to get and had come after it.

174

"Well?" says I as chilly as I knew how.

"Quite so," says he, "quite so. I see you remember our recent meeting. Awkward situation for a moment, wasn't it, eh? Splendid chap, though, your friend——"

"Say, choke off the hot air," says I, "and let's hear what gave you the courage to climb those stairs!"

And what do you guess? He takes five minutes of steady chinnin' to get around to it; but he puts over such a velvety line of talk, and it's so int'restin' to watch him do it, that I let him spiel ahead until he gets to the enactin' clause in his own way. And it's nothing more or less than a brassy fingered touch for a twenty, all based on the fact that he met me at a house where his wife's drawin' wages.

"Mr. Gordon," says I, turnin' to Pyramid, who's heard it all, "what do you think of that, anyway?"

"Very neat, indeed," says Pyramid, chucklin'.

"And then a few!" says I. "I can almost see myself givin' up that twenty right off the bat. Nothing but great presence of mind and wonderful self-control holds me back. But look here, Mr. What's-your-name——"

"Marston," says he, flashin' an engraved visitin' card, "L. Egbert Marston."

"L. Egbert, eh?" says I. "Does the L stand for Limed? And what do they call you for short—Eggie?"

"Oh, suit yourself," says he, with a careless wave of the hand.

"All right, Eggie," says I; "but before we get in any deeper I've got a conundrum or two to spring on you. We got kind of curious, Pinckney and me, about that visit of yours. He thinks we disturbed a fond embrace. It looked diff'rent to me. I thought I could see finger-marks on the young lady's throat. How about it?"

Course he flushes up. Any man would under a jab like that, and I looked for him either to begin breakin' the peace or start lyin' out of it. There's considerable beef to Egbert, you know. He'd probably weigh in at a hundred and eighty, with all that flabby meat on him, and if it wa'n't for that sort of cheap look to his face you might take him for a real man. But he don't show any more fight than a cow. He don't even put in any indignant "Not guilty!" He just shrugs his shoulders and indulges in a sickly laugh.

"It doesn't sound nice," says he; "but sometimes they do need a bit of training, these women."

"For instance?" says I. "In the matter of handing over a little spendin' money, eh?"

"You've struck it," says he, with another shrug.

I glances at Pyramid; but there wa'n't any more expression to that draw poker face of his than as if it was a cement block.

"Egbert," says I, frank and confidential, "you're a sweet scented pill, ain't you?"

And does that draw any assault and battery motions? It don't. All the result is to narrow them shifty eyes of his and steady 'em down until he's lookin' me square in the face.

"I was hard up, if you want to know," says he. "I didn't have a dollar."

"And that," says I, "is what you give out as an excuse for——"

"Yes," he breaks in. "And I'm no worse than lots of other men, either. With money, I'm a gentleman; without it—well, I get it any way I can. And I want to tell you, I've seen men with plenty of it get more in meaner ways. I don't know how to juggle stocks, or wreck banks, or use any of the respectable methods that——"

"Nothing personal, I hope," puts in Mr. Gordon, with another chuckle.

"Not so intended," says Marston.

"Eh, thanks," says Pyramid.

"We'll admit," says I, "that your partic'lar way of raisin' funds, Mr. Marston, ain't exactly novel; but didn't it ever occur to you that some folks get theirs by workin' for it?"

"I know," says he, tryin' to seem good natured again; "but I'm not that kind. I'm an idler. As some poet has put it, 'Useless I linger, a cumberer here.'"

"You're a cucumber, all right," says I; "but why not, just for a change, make a stab at gettin' a job?"

"I've had several," says he, "and never could hold one more than a week. Too monotonous, for one thing; and then, in these offices, one is thrown among so many ill bred persons, you know."

"Sure!" says I, feelin' my temper'ture risin'. "Parties that had rather work for a pay envelope than choke their wives. I've met 'em. I've heard of your kind too, Egbert; but you're the first specimen I ever got real close to. And you're a bird! Mr. Gordon, shall I chuck him through the window, or help him downstairs with my toe?"

"I wouldn't do either," says Pyramid. "In fact, I think I can make use of this young man."

"Then you're welcome to him," says I. "Blaze ahead."

"Much obliged," says Pyramid. "Now, Mr. Marston, what is the most reasonable sum, per month, that would allow you to carry out your idea of being a gentleman?"

Egbert thinks that over a minute and then puts it at three hundred.

"And would it conflict with those ideas," Pyramid goes on, "if you were required, say twice a week, to spend an hour in a private office, signing your name?"

Egbert thinks he could stand that.

"Very well, then," says Pyramid, producin' his checkbook and gettin' busy with the fountain pen, "here is your first month's salary in advance. Whenever you find it convenient during the week, report at my offices. Ask for Mr. Bradley. Yes, Bradley. That's all," and Pyramid lights up one of his torches as satisfied as though he'd just bought in a Senator.

As for Egbert, he stows the check away, taps me on the shoulder, and remarks real friendly, "Well, professor, no hard feelings, I hope?"

"Say, Eggie," says I, "seems to me I expressed myself once on that point, and I ain't had any sudden change of heart. If I was you I'd beat while the beatin's good."

Egbert laughs; but he takes the advice.

"Huh!" says I to Pyramid. "I expect that's your notion of making a funny play, eh!"

"I'm no humorist, Shorty," says he.

"Then what's the idea?" says I. "What do you mean?"

"I never mean anything but cold, straight business," says he. "That's the only game worth playing."

"So?" says I. "Then here's where you got let in bad with your eyes open. You heard him tell how useless he was?"

"I did," says Pyramid; "but I always do my own appraising when I hire men. I anticipate finding Mr. Marston somewhat useful."

And say, that's all I can get out of Pyramid on the subject; for when it comes to business, he's about as chatty over his plans as a hard shell clam on the suffragette question. I've known him to make some freak plans; but this move of pickin' out a yellow one like Egbert and rewardin' him as if he was a Carnegie medal winner beat anything he'd ever sprung yet.

It's no bluff, either. I hears of this Marston gent sportin' around at the clubs, and it wa'n't until I accident'ly run across an item on the Wall Street page that I gets any more details. He shows up, if you please, as secretary of the Consolidated Holding Company that there's been so much talk about. I asks Pinckney what kind of an outfit that was; but he don't know.

"Huh!" says I. "All I'd feel safe in givin' Egbert to hold for me would be one end of the Brooklyn Bridge."

"I don't care what he holds," says Pinckney, "if he will stay away from our little governess. She's a treasure."

Seems Mrs. Marston had been doin' some great tricks with the twins, not only keepin' 'em from marrin' the furniture, but teachin' 'em all kinds of knowledge and improvin' their table manners, until it was almost safe to have 'em down to luncheon now and then.

But her life was being made miser'ble by the prospect of havin' Egbert show up any day and create a row. She confided the whole tale to Sadie, how she was through with Marston for good, but didn't dare tell him so, and how she sent him most of her salary to keep him away.

"The loafer!" says I. "And think of the chance I had at him there in the studio! Hanged if I don't get even with Pyramid for that, though!"

But I didn't. Mr. Gordon's been too busy this season to show up for any trainin', and it was only here the other day that I runs across him in the street.

"Well," says I, "how's that work scornin' pet of yours gettin' on these days?"

"Marston?" says he. "Why, haven't you heard? Mr. Marston is away on a vacation."

"Vacation!" says I. "He needs it, he does!"

"The company thought so," says Pyramid. "They gave him six months' leave with pay. He's hunting reindeer or musk ox somewhere up in British Columbia."

"Him a hunter?" says I. "G'wan!"

Pyramid grins. "He did develop a liking for the wilderness rather suddenly," says he; "but that is where he is now. In fact, I shouldn't be surprised if he stayed up there for a year or more."

"What's the joke?" says I, catchin' a flicker in them puffy eyes of Pyramid's.

"Why, just this," says he. "Mr. Marston, you know, is secretary of the Consolidated Holding Company."

"Yes, I read about that," says I. "What then?"

"It pains me to state," says Mr. Gordon, "that in his capacity of secretary Mr. Marston seems to have sanctioned transactions which violate the Interstate Commerce act."

"Ah-ha!" says I. "Turned crooked on you, did he?"

"We are not sure as yet," says Pyramid. "The federal authorities are anxious to settle that point by examining certain files which appear to be missing. They even asked me about them. Perhaps you didn't notice, Shorty, that I was cross-examined for five hours, one day last week."

"I don't read them muck rakin' articles," says I.

"Quite right," says Pyramid. "Well, I couldn't explain; for, as their own enterprising detectives discovered, when Mr. Marston boarded the Montreal Express his baggage included a trunk and two large cases. Odd of him to take shipping files on a hunting trip, wasn't it?" and Pyramid tips me the slow wink.

I'm more or less of a thickhead when it comes to flossy finance; but I've seen enough plain flimflam games to know a few things. And the wink clinched it. "Mr. Gordon," says I, "for a Mr. Smooth you've got a greased pig in the warthog class. But suppose Egbert gets sick of the woods and hikes himself back? What then?"

"Jail," says Pyramid, shruggin' his sable collar up around his ears. "That would be rather deplorable too. Bright young man, Marston, in many ways, and peculiarly adapted for——"

## CHAPTER XII

### MRS. TRUCKLES' BROAD JUMP

And do you imagine Kitty Marston settles down to a life job after that? Not her. At the very next pay day she hands in her two weeks' notice, and when they pin her right down to facts she admits weepy that she means to start out lookin' for Egbert. Now wouldn't that crust you?

Course, the sequel to that is another governess hunt which winds up with Madame Roulaire. And say, talk about your queer cases——But you might as well have the details.

You see, until Aunt Martha arrived on the scene this Madame Roulaire business was only a fam'ly joke over to Pinckney's, with all of us in on it more or less. But Aunt Martha ain't been there more'n three or four days before she's dug up mystery and scandal and tragedy enough for another one of them French dope dramas.

"In my opinion," says she, "that woman is hiding some dreadful secret!"

But Mrs. Pinckney only smiles in that calm, placid way of hers. You know how easy she took things when she was Miss Geraldine and Pinckney found her on the steamer in charge of the twins that had been willed to him? Well, she ain't changed a bit; and, with Pinckney such a brilliant member of the Don't Worry Fraternity, whatever frettin' goes on in that house has to be done by volunteers.

Aunt Martha acts like she was wise to this; for she starts right in to make up for lost opportunities, and when she spots this freaky lookin' governess she immediately begins scoutin' for trouble. Suspicions? She delivers a fresh lot after every meal!

"Humph!" says she. "Madame Roulaire, indeed! Well, I must say, she looks as little like a Frenchwoman as any person I ever saw! How long have you had her, Geraldine? What, only two months? Did she bring written references, and did you investigate them carefully?"

She wouldn't let up, either, until she'd been assured that Madame Roulaire had come from service in an English fam'ly, and that they'd written on crested notepaper indorsin' her in every point, giving her whole hist'ry from childhood up.

"But she hasn't the slightest French accent," insists Aunt Martha.

"I know," says Mrs. Pinckney. "She lived in England from the time she was sixteen, and of course twenty years away from one's——"

"Does she claim to be only thirty-six?" exclaims Aunt Martha. "Why, she's fifty if she's a day! Besides, I don't like that snaky way she has of watching everyone."

There was no denyin', either, that this Roulaire party did have a pair of shifty eyes in her head. I'd noticed that much myself in the few times I'd seen her. They wa'n't any particular color you could name,—sort of a greeny gray-blue,—but they sure was bright and restless. You'd never hear a sound out of her, for she didn't let go of any remarks that wa'n't dragged from her; but somehow you felt, from the minute you got into the room until she'd made a gumshoe exit by the nearest door, that them sleuthy lamps never quite lost sight of you.

That and her smile was the main points about her. I've seen a lot of diff'rent kinds of smiles, meanin' and unmeanin'; but this chronic half-smirk of Madame Roulaire's was about the most unconvincin' performance I've ever watched. Why, even a blind man could tell she didn't really mean it! Outside of that, she was just a plain, pie faced sort of female with shrinkin', apologizin' ways and a set of store teeth that didn't fit any too well; but she wa'n't one that you'd suspect of anything more tragic than eatin' maraschino cherries on the sly, or swappin' household gossip with the cook.

That wa'n't the way Martha had her sized up, though, and of course there was no keepin' her inquisitive nose out of the case. First thing anyone knew, she'd backed Madame Roulaire into a corner, put her through the third degree, and come trottin' back in triumph to Mrs. Pinckney.

"Didn't I tell you?" says she. "French! Bosh! Perhaps you haven't asked her about Auberge-sur-Mer, where she says she was born?"

Greraldine admits that she ain't done much pumpin'.

"Well, I have," says Aunt Martha, "and she couldn't tell me a thing about the place that was so. I spent ten days there only two years ago, and remember it perfectly. She isn't any more French than I am."

"Oh, what of it?" says Mrs. Pinckney. "She gets along splendidly with the twins. They think the world of her."

"But she's thoroughly deceitful," Aunt Martha comes back. "She misrepresents her age, lies



about her birthplace, and—and she wears a transformation wig.”

“Yes, I had noticed the brown wig,” admits Mrs. Pinckney; “but they’re quite common.”

“So are women poisoners,” snaps Martha. “Think of what happened to the Briggses, after they took in that strange maid! Then there was the Madame Catossi case, over in Florence last year. They were warned about her, you remember.”

187

And maybe you know how a good lively suspecter can get results when she keeps followin’ it up. They got to watchin’ the governess close when she was around, and noticin’ all the little slips in her talk and the crab-like motions she made in dodgin’ strangers. That appears to make her worse than ever, too. She’d get fussed every time anyone looked her way, and just some little question about the children would make her jump and color up like she’d been accused of burnin’ a barn. Even Sadie, who’d been standin’ up for her right along, begins to weaken.

“After all,” says she, “I’m not sure there isn’t something queer about that woman.”

“Ah, all governesses are queer, ain’t they?” says I; “but that ain’t any sign they’ve done time or are in the habit of dosin’ the coffeepot with arsenic. It’s Aunt Martha has stirred all this mess up, and she’d make the angel Gabriel prove who he was by blowin’ bugle calls.”

It was only next day, though, that we gets a report of what happens when Pinckney runs across this Sir Carpenter-Podmore at the club and lugs him out to dinner. He’s an English gent Pinckney had known abroad. Comin’ in unexpected that way, him and Madame Roulaire had met face to face in the hall, while the introductions was bein’ passed out—and what does she do but turn putty colored and shake like she was havin’ a fit!

188

“Ah, Truckles?” says Podmore, sort of cordial.

“No, no!” she gasps. “Roulaire! I am Madame Roulaire!”

“Beg pardon, I’m sure,” says Sir Carpenter, liftin’ his eyebrows and passin’ on.

That was all there was to it; but everyone in the house heard about it. Course Aunt Martha jumps right in with the question marks; but all she gets out of Podmore is that he presumes he was mistaken.

“Well, maybe he was,” says I. “Why not?”

“Then you haven’t heard,” says Sadie, “that Sir Carpenter was for a long time a Judge on the criminal bench.”

“Z-z-z-zing!” says I. “Looks kind of squally for the governess, don’t it?”

If it hadn’t been for Pinckney, too, Aunt Martha’d had her thrown out that night; but he wouldn’t have it that way.

“I’ve never been murdered in my bed, or been fed on ground glass,” says he, “and—who knows?—I might like the sensation.”

Say, there’s more sides to that Pinckney than there are to a cutglass paperweight. You might think, with him such a Reggie chap, that havin’ a suspicious character like that around would get on his nerves; but, when it comes to applyin’ the real color test, there ain’t any more yellow in him than in a ball of bluin’, and he can be as curious about certain things as a kid investigatin’ the animal cages.

189

Rather than tie the can to Madame Roulaire without gettin’ a straight line on her, he was willin’ to run chances. And it don’t make any difference to him how much Aunt Martha croaks about this and that, and suggests how dreadful it is to think of those dear, innocent little children exposed to such evil influences. That last item appeals strong to Mrs. Pinckney and Sadie, though.

“Of course,” says Geraldine, “the twins don’t suspect a thing as yet, and whatever we discover must be kept from them.”

“Certainly,” says Sadie, “the poor little dears mustn’t know.”

So part of the programme was to keep them out of her way as much as possible without actually callin’ her to the bench, and that’s what fetched me out there early the other afternoon. It was my turn at protectin’ innocent childhood. I must say, though, it’s hard realizin’ they need anything of that sort when you’re within reach of that Jack and Jill combination. Most people seem to feel the other way; but, while their society is apt to be more or less strenuous, I can gen’rally stand an hour or so of it without collectin’ any broken bones.

190

As usual, they receives me with an ear splittin’ whoop, and while Jill gives me the low tackle around the knees Jack proceeds to climb up my back and twine his arms affectionate around my neck.

“Hey, Uncle Shorty,” they yells in chorus, “come play Wild West with us!”

“G’wan, you young terrors!” says I, luggin’ ’em out on the lawn and dumpin’ ’em on the grass. “Think I’d risk my neck at any such game as that? Hi! leggo that necktie or I’ll put on the spanks! Say, ain’t you got any respect for company clothes? Now straighten up quiet and tell me about the latest deviltry you’ve been up to.”

“Pooh!” says Jill. “We’re not afraid of you.”

“And we know why you’re here to-day, too,” says Jack.

“Do you?” says I. “Well, let’s have it.”

"You're on guard," says Jill, "keeping us away from old Clicky."

"Old Clicky?" says I.

"Uh-huh," says Jack. "The goosy governess, you know."

"Eh?" says I, openin' my eyes.

"We call her that," says Jill, "because her teeth click so when she gets excited. At night she keeps 'em in a glass of water. Do you suppose they click then?"

"Her hair comes off too," says Jack, "and it's all gray underneath. We fished it off once, and she was awful mad."

"You just ought to hear her when she gets mad," says Jill. "She drops her H's."

"She don't do it before folks, though," says Jack, "'cause she makes believe she's French. She's awful good to us, though, and we love her just heaps."

"You've got queer ways of showin' it," says I.

"What makes Aunt Martha so scared of her?" says Jill. "Do you think it's so she would really and truly murder us all and run off with the jewelry, or that she'd let in burglars after dark? She meets someone every Thursday night by the side gate, you know."

"A tall woman with veils over her face," adds Jack. "We hid in the bushes and watched 'em."

"Say, for the love of Mike," says I, "is there anything about your governess you kids haven't heard or seen? What more do you know?"

"Lots," says Jill. "She's scared of Marie, the new maid. Marie makes her help with the dishes, and make up her own bed, and wait on herself all the time."

"And she has to study beforehand all the lessons she makes us learn," says Jack. "She studies like fun every night in her room, and when we ask questions from the back of the book she don't know the answers."

"She's been too scared to study or anything, ever since Monday," says Jill. "Do you think they'll have a policeman take her away before she poisons us all? We heard Aunt Martha say they ought to."

Say, they had the whole story, and more too. If there was anything about Madame Roulaire's actions, her past hist'ry, or what people thought of her that had got by these two, I'd like to know what it was.

"Gee!" says I. "Talk about protectin' you! What you need most is a pair of gags and some blinders. Now trot along off and do your worst, while I look up Pinckney and give him some advice."

I was strollin' through the house lookin' for him, and I'd got as far as the lib'ry, when who should I see but Madame Roulaire comin' through the opposite door. Someway, I didn't feel like meetin' them sleuthy eyes just then, or seein' that smirky smile; so I dodges back and pikes down the hall. She must have had the same thought; for we almost collides head on halfway down, and the next thing I know she's dropped onto a davenport, sobbin' and shakin' all over.

"Excuse me for mentionin' it," says I; "but there ain't any call for hysterics."

"Oh, I know who you are now," says she. "You—you're a private detective!"

"Eh?" says I. "How'd you get onto my disguise?"

"I knew it from the first," says she. "And then, when I saw you with the children, asking them about me—Oh, you won't arrest me and take me away from the darlings, will you? Please don't take me to jail! I'll tell you everything, truly I will, sir!"

"That might help some," says I; "but, if you're goin' to 'fess up, suppose you begin at Chapter I. Was it the fam'ly jewels you was after?"

"No, no!" says she. "I never took a penny's worth in my life. Truckles could tell you that if he could only be here."

"Truckles, eh!" says I. "Now just who was—"

"My 'usband, sir," says she. "And I'm Mrs. Truckles."

"Oh-ho!" says I. "Then this Roulaire name you've been flaggin' under was sort of a *nom de plume*?"

"It was for Katy I did it!" she sobs.

"Oh, yes," says I. "Well, what about Katy?"

And, say, that was the way it come out; first, a bit here and then a bit there, with me puttin' the ends together and patchin' this soggy everyday yarn out of what we'd all thought was such a deep, dark mystery.

She was English, Mrs. Truckles was, and so was the late Truckles. They'd worked together, him bein' a first class butler whose only fault was he couldn't keep his fingers off the decanters. It was after he'd struck the bottom of the toboggan slide and that thirst of his had finished him for good and all that Mrs. Truckles collects her little Katy from where they'd boarded her out and comes across to try her luck on this side.

She'd worked up as far as housekeeper, and had made enough to educate Katy real well and

marry her off to a bright young gent by the name of McGowan that owned a half interest in a corner saloon up in the Bronx and stood well with the district leader.

She was happy and contented in them days, Mrs. Truckles was, with McGowan doin' a rushin' business, gettin' his name on the Tammany ticket, and Katy patronizing a swell dressmaker and havin' a maid of her own. Then, all of a sudden, Mrs. Truckles tumbles to the fact that Katy is gettin' ashamed of havin' a mother that's out to service and eatin' with the chauffeur and the cook. Not that she wants her livin' with them,—McGowan wouldn't stand for that,—but Katy did think Mother might do something for a living that wouldn't blur up the fam'ly escutcheon quite so much.

195

It was just when Mrs. Truckles was feelin' this most keen that the French governess where she was got married and went West to live, leavin' behind her, besides a collection of old hats, worn out shoes, and faded picture postals, this swell reference from Lady Jigwater. And havin' put in a year or so in France with dif'rent families that had taken her across, and havin' had to pick up more or less of the language, Mrs. Truckles conceives the great scheme of promotin' herself from the back to the front of the house. So she chucks up as workin' housekeeper, splurges on the wig, and strikes a swell intelligence office with this phony reference.

Course, with anybody else but an easy mark like Mrs. Pinckney, maybe she wouldn't have got away with it; but all Geraldine does is glance at the paper, ask her if she likes children, and put her on the payroll.

"Well?" says I. "And it got you some worried tryin' to make good, eh?"

"I was near crazy over it," says she. "I thought I could do it at first; but it came cruel 'ard. Oh, sir, the lies I've 'ad to tell, keepin' it up. And with the rest of the 'elp all 'ating me! Marie used me worst of all, though. She made me tell 'er everything, and 'eld it over my 'ead. Next that Aunt Martha came and thought up so many bad things about me—you know."

196

"Sure," says I; "but how about this Sir Podmore?"

"I was 'ead laundress at Podmore 'Ouse," says she, "and I thought it was all up when he saw me here. I never should have tried to do it. I'm a good 'ousekeeper, if I do say it; but I'm getting to be an old woman now, and this will end me. It was for Katy I did it, though. Every week she used to come and throw it in my face that she couldn't call at the front door and—and—Well, I 'opes you'll believe me, sir; but that was just the way of it, and if I'm taken to jail it will kill Katy and —"

"Aha!" breaks in a voice behind us. "Here, Pinckney! Come, Geraldine! This way everybody!" and as I turns around there's Aunt Martha with the accusin' finger out and her face fairly beamin'. Before I can get in a word she's assembled the fam'ly.

"What did I tell you?" she cackles. "She's broken down and confessed! I heard her!"

"Is it true, Shorty?" demands Mrs. Pinckney. "Does she admit that she was plotting to——"

197

"Yep!" says I. "It's something awful too, almost enough to curdle your blood."

"Go on," says Aunt Martha. "Tell us the worst. What is it?"

"It's a case of standin' broad jump," says I, "from housekeeper to governess, with an age handicap and a crooked entry."

Course, I has to work out the details for 'em, and when I've stated the whole hideous plot, from the passing of Truckles the Thirsty to the high pride of Katy the Barkeep's Bride, includin' the tale of the stolen character and chuckin' the nervy bluff—well, they didn't any of 'em know what to say. They just stands around gawpin' curious at this sobbin', wabbly kneed old party slumped down there on the hall seat.

Aunt Martha, actin' as prosecutor for the State, is the first to recover. "Well, there's no knowin' how far she might have gone," says she. "And she ought to be punished some way. Pinckney, what are you going to do with her?"

For a minute he looks from Aunt Martha to the object in the middle of the circle, and then he drops them black eyelashes lazy, like he was half-asleep, and I knew somethin' was coming worth listenin' to.

"Considering all the circumstances," says Pinckney, "I think we shall discharge Marie, increase Mrs. Truckles' salary, give her an assistant, and ask her to stay with us permanently. Eh, Geraldine?"

198

And Geraldine nods hearty.

"Pinckney, let's shake on that," says I. "Even if your head is full of soap bubbles, you've got an eighteen-carat heart in you. Hear the news, Mrs. Truckles?"

"Then—then I'm not to go to jail?" says she, takin' her hands off her face and lookin' up straight and steady for the first time in months.

"Jail nothin'!" says I. "There's goin' to be a new deal, and you start in fresh with a clean slate."

"Humph!" snorts Aunt Martha. "Do you expect me to stay here and countenance any such folly?"

"I'm far too considerate of my relatives for that," says Pinckney. "There's a train at five-thirty-six."

And, say, to see Mrs. Truckles now, with her gray hair showin' natural, and her chin up, and a twin hangin' to either hand, and the sleuthy look gone out of them old eyes, you'd hardly know her for the same party!

These antelope leaps is all right sometimes; but when you take 'em you want to be wearin' your own shoes.

---

## CHAPTER XIII

### HEINEY TAKES THE GLOOM CURE

Two in one day, mind you. It just goes to show what effect the first dose of hot weather is liable to have on the custard heads. Well, maybe I oughtn't to call 'em that, either. They can't seem to help gettin' that way, any more'n other folks can dodge havin' bad dreams, or boils on the neck. And I ain't any mind specialist; so when it comes to sayin' what'll soften up a man's brain, or whether he couldn't sidestep it if he tried, I passes the make.

Now look at this dippy move of Mr. Jarvis's. Guess you don't remember him. I'd 'most forgot him myself, it's so long since he was around; but he's the young chap that owns that big Blenmont place, the gent that Swifty and I helped out with the fake match when he—Well, never mind that yarn. He got the girl, all right; and as he had everything else anybody could think of, it should have been a case of lockin' trouble on the outside and takin' joy for a permanent boarder.

But there the other mornin', just as I was havin' a breathin' spell after hammerin' some surplus ego out of a young society sport that had the idea he could box, the studio door opens, and in pokes this Mr. Jarvis, actin' like he'd been doped.

Now he's a big, husky, full blooded young gent, that's always used himself well, never collected any bad habits, and knows no more about being sick than a cat knows about swimmin'. Add to that the fact that he's one of the unemployed rich, with more money than he knows how to spend, and you can figure out how surprised I am to see that down and out look on his face. Course, I thinks something serious has been happenin' to him, and I treats him real gentle.

"Hello, Mr. Jarvis!" says I. "Somebody been throwin' the hooks into you, have they?"

"Oh, no," says he. "No, I—I'm all right."

"That's good," says I. "Dropped in to let me hand you a few vibrations with the mitts?"

"No, thank you, Shorty," says he, fingerin' a chair-back sort of hesitatin', as if he didn't know whether to sit down or stand up. "That is—er—I think I don't care for a bout to-day. I—I'm hardly in the mood, you see."

"Just as you say," says I. "Have a seat, anyway. Sure! That one; it's reserved for you. Maybe you come in to enjoy some of my polite and refined conversation?"

"Why—er—the fact is, Shorty," says he, fixin' his tie kind of nervous, "I—I don't know just why I did come in. I think I started for the club, and as I was passing by in a cab I looked up here at your windows—and—and—"

"Of course," says I, soothin'. "What's the use goin' to the club when the Physical Culture Studio is handier? You're feelin' fine as silk; how're you lookin'?"

"Eh? Beg pardon?" says he, gettin' twisted up on that mothy gag. "Oh, I see! I'm looking rotten, thank you, and feeling the same."

"G'wan!" says I. "You ain't got any license to have feelin's like that. Guess you got the symptoms mixed. But where do you think it hurts most?"

Well, it takes five or ten minutes of jollyin' like that to pull any details at all out of Jarvis, and when I does get the whole heartrendin' story, I hardly knows whether to give him the laugh, or to send out for a nursin' bottle.

Ever seen a great, grown man play the baby act? Talk about a woman in a cryin' spell! That ain't a marker to watchin' a six-foot, one hundred and eighty-pound free citizen droop his mouth corners and slump his shoulders over nothin' at all. Course, I don't always feel like a hickey boy myself, and I'll admit there are times when the rosy tints get a little clouded up; but I has my own way of workin' out of such spells before the mullygrubs turns my gray matter into curdled milk. But Jarvis, he's as blue as a rainy Monday with the wash all in soak.

In the first place, he's been alone for nearly three whole weeks, the women folks all bein' abroad, and it's a new experience for him. Think of that awful calamity happenin' to a man of his size! Seems that before he was married he'd always carted mother and sister around, under the idea that he was lookin' out for them, when as a matter of fact they was the ones that was lookin' after him. Then Mrs. Jarvis, Lady Evelyn that was, takes him in hand and makes him more helpless than ever. He never mistrusts how much he's been mollycoddled, until he finds

himself with nobody but a valet, a housekeeper, and seventeen assorted servants to help him along in the struggle for existence.

His first move after the ladies have sailed is to smoke until his tongue feels like a pussycat's back, eat his lonesome meals at lunch-counter clip, and work himself into a mild bilious state. That makes him a little cranky with the help, and, as there's no one around to smooth 'em out, the cook and half a dozen maids leaves in a bunch. His head coachman goes off on a bat, the housekeeper skips out to Ohio to bury an aunt, and the domestic gear at Blenmont gets to runnin' about as smooth as a flat wheel trolley car on a new roadbed.

203

To finish off the horrible situation, Jarvis has had a misunderstandin' with a landscape architect that he'd engaged to do things to the grounds. Jarvis had planned to plant a swan lake in the front yard; but the landscaper points out that it can't be done because there's a hill in the way.

"To be sure," says Jarvis, "these are little things; but I've been worrying over them until—until — Well, I'm in bad shape, Shorty."

"It's a wonder you're still alive," says I.

"Don't!" says he, groanin'. "It is too serious a matter. Perhaps you don't know it, but I had an uncle that drank himself to death."

"Huh!" says I. "'Most everybody has had an uncle of that kind."

"And one of my cousins," Jarvis goes on, lowerin' his voice and lookin' around cautious, "shot himself—in the head!"

"Eh?" says I. And then I begun to get a glimmer of what he was drivin' at. "What! You don't mean that you were thinkin' of—of—"

He groans again and nods his head.

Then I cuts loose. "Why, look here!" says I. "You soft boiled, mush headed, spineless imitation of a real man! do you mean to tell me that, just because you've been tied loose from a few skirts for a week or so, and have had to deal with some grouchy hired hands, you've actually gone jelly brained over it?"

204

Perhaps that don't make him squirm some, though! He turns white first, and then he gets the hectic flush. "Pardon me, McCabe," says he, stiffenin' up, "but I don't care to have anyone talk to me like—"

"Ah, pickles!" says I. "I'll talk to you a good deal straighter'n that, before I finish! And you'll take it, too! Why, you great, overgrown kid! what right have you developin' such a yellow cur streak as that? You! What you need is to be laid over that chair and paddled, and blamed if I don't know but I'd better—"

But just here the door creaks, and in drifts the other one. Hanged if I ever did know what his real name was. I called him Heiney Kirschwasser for short, though he says he ain't Dutch at all, but Swiss-French; and that it ain't kirsch that's his failin', but prune brandy. He's the mop and broom artist for the buildin', some floater the janitor picked up off the sidewalk a few months back.

He wa'n't exactly a decorative object, this Heiney; but he's kind of a picturesque ruin. His widest part is around the belt; and from there he tapers both ways, his shoulders bein' a good eight inches narrower; and on top of them, with no neck to speak of, is a head shaped like a gum drop, bald on top, and remindin' you of them mountain peaks you see in pictures, or a ham set on end.

205

He has a pair of stary, pop eyes, a high colored beak that might be used as a danger signal, and a black, shoebrush beard, trimmed close except for a little spike under the chin, that gives the lower part of his face a look like the ace of spades. His mornin' costume is a faded blue jumper, brown checked pants, and an old pair of rubber soled shoes that Swifty had donated to him.

That's Heiney's description, as near as I can get to it. He comes shufflin' in, luggin' a scrub pail in one hand, and draggin' a mop in the other, and he looks about as cheerful as a worn-out hearse that's been turned into an ash wagon.

"Heiney," says I, "you're just in time. Still lookin' for a nice, comfortable place to die in, are you?"

Heiney shrugs his shoulders and lifts his eyebrows in a lifeless sort of style. He does most of his conversin' that way; but he can say more with a few shrugs than Swifty Joe can by usin' both sides of his mouth. What Heiney means is that one place is as good as another, and he don't care how soon he finds it.

"Well, cheer up, Heiney," says I; "for I've just decided to give you the use of my back room to shuffle off in. I've got comp'ny for you, too. Here's a friend of mine that feels the same way you do. Mr. Jarvis, Mr. Heiney Kirschwasser."

206

And you should have seen the look of disgust on Jarvis's face as he sizes up the specimen. "Oh, I say now, Shorty," he begins, "there's such a thing as—"

"G'wan!" says I. "Wa'n't you just tellin' me about how you was plannin' a job for the coroner? And Heiney's been threatenin' to do the same thing for weeks. He comes in here every day or so and talks about jumpin' off the dock, or doin' the air dance. I've been stavin' him off with slugs of prune brandy and doses of good advice; but if a chap like you has caught the fever, then I see I've been doin' wrong not to let Heiney have his way. Now there's the back room, with plenty of

rope and gasjets. Get on in there, both of you, and make a reg'lar bee of it!"

Heiney, he stands blinkin' and starin' at Jarvis, until he gets him so nervous he almost screams.

"For Heaven's sake, Shorty," says Jarvis, "let's not joke about such a subject!"

"Joke!" says I. "You're the one that's supplyin' the comedy here. Now Heiney is serious. He'd do the trick in a minute if he had the nerve. He's got things on his mind, Heiney has. And what's the odds if they ain't so? Compared to what you've been fussin' about, they're—Here, Heiney, you tell the gentleman that tale of yours. Begin where you was a cook in some seashore hotel in Switzerland."

207

"Not zeashore! *Non!*" says Heiney, droppin' his pail and wavin' one hand. "Eet ees at Lack Como, in ze montongs. I am ze head chef, *moi!*"

"Yes, you look it!" says I. "A fine figure of a chef you'd make! wouldn't you? Well, go on: about bein' full of prunes when they called on you to season the soup. What was it you dumped in instead of salt,—arsenic, eh?"

"*Non, non!*" says Heiney, gettin' excited. "Ze poison for ze r-r-rat. I keep heem in one tin can, same as ze salt. I am what you call intoxicate. I make ze mistak'. Ah, *diable! Deux, trois*—t'ree hundred guests are zere. Zey eat ze soup. Zen come by me ze *maître d'hôtel*. He say ze soup ees spoil. Eet has ze foony taste. Ah, mon *Dieu! Mon*—"

"Yes, yes," says I. "Never mind whether it was Monday or Tuesday. What did you do then?"

"*Mo?* I fly!" says Heiney. "I am distract. I r-r-r-run on ze r-r-r-road. I tear-r-r off my white apron, my white chapeau. Ah, *sacr-r-ré nom!* How my heart is thoomp, thoomp, on my inside! All night I speak to myself: 'You have keel zem all! Ze *belle* ladies! Ze *pauvre* shildren! All, you have poizon-ed! Zey make to tweest up on ze floor!' Ah, *diable!* Always I can see zem tweest up!"

208

"Reg'lar rough on rats carnival, eh?" says I. "Three hundred beautiful ladies and poor children, not to mention a few men, doin' the agony act on the dinin' room floor! There, Jarvis! How'd you like to carry round a movin' picture film like that in your mem'ry? Course, I've tried to explain to Heiney that nothing of the kind ever took place; that the papers would have been full of it; and that he'd been in the jug long before this, if it had. But this is Heiney's own particular pipe dream, and he can't let go of it. It's got tangled up in the works somehow, and nothing I can say will jar it loose. Poor cuss! Look at him! No doubt about its seemin' real to him, is there? And how does your little collection of fleabites show up alongside it; eh, Jarvis?"

But Jarvis, he's gazin' at Heiney as if this lump of moldy sweitzerkase was fascinatin' to look at.

"I beg pardon," says he, "but you say this hotel was at Lake Como?"

Heiney nods his head, then covers his face with his hands, as if he was seein' things again.

"And what was the date of this—this unfortunate occurrence?" says Jarvis.

209

"Year before the last, in Augoost," says Heiney, shudderin',—"Augoost seven."

"The seventh of August!" says Jarvis. "And was your hotel the Occident?"

"*Oui, oui!*" says Heiney. "*L'Hôtel Occident.*"

"Guess he means Accident," says I. "What do you know about it, Jarvis?"

"Why," says he, "I was there."

"What?" says I. "Here, Heiney, wake up! Here's one of the victims of your rat poison soup. Does he look as though he'd been through that floor tweestin' orgy?"

With that Heiney gets mighty interested; but he ain't convinced until Jarvis gives him all the details, even to namin' the landlord and describin' the head waiter.

"But ze soup!" says Heiney. "Ze poi-zon-ed soup?"

"It was bad soup," says Jarvis; "but not quite so bad as that. Nobody could eat it, and I believe the final report that we had on the subject was to the effect that a half intoxicated chef had seasoned it with the powdered alum that should have gone into the morning rolls."

"Ze alum! Ze alum! Of zat I nevair think!" squeals Heiney, flopping down on his knees. "Ah, *le bon Dieu! Le bon Dieu!*"

He clasps his hands in front of him and rolls his eyes to the ceilin'. Say, it was the liveliest French prayin' I ever saw; for Heiney is rockin' back and forth, his pop eyes leakin' brine, and the polly-voov conversation is bubblin' out of him like water out of a bu'sted fire hydrant.

210

"Ah, quit it!" says I. "This is no camp meetin'."

There's no shuttin' him off, though, and all the let-up he takes is to break off now and then to get Jarvis to tell him once more that it's all true.

"You make *certainement*, eh?" says he. "Nobody was keel?"

"Not a soul," says Jarvis. "I didn't even hear of anyone that was made ill."

"Ah, *merci, merci!*" howls Heiney, beginnin' the rockin' horse act again.

"Say, for the love of Pete, Heiney!" says I, "will you saw that off before you draw a crowd? I'm glad you believe Jarvis, and that Jarvis believes you; but hanged if I can quite swallow any such dopy yarn as that without somethin' more convincin'! All I know about you is that you're the worst floor scrubber I ever saw. And you say you was a cook, do you?"

"Cook!" says Heiney, swellin' up his chest. "I am tell you zat I was ze premier chef. I have made for myself fame. Everywhere in *l'Europe* zey will tell you of me. For the king of ze Englise I have made a dinner. *Moi!* I have invent ze sauce Ravignon. From nozzing at all—some meat scraps, some leetle greens—I produce ze dish ravishment."

"Yes, I've heard bluffs like that before," says I; "but I never saw one made good. Tell you what I'll do, though: In the far corner of the gym, there, is what Swifty Joe calls his kitchenet, where he warms up his chowder and beans. There's a two-burner gas stove, an old fryin' pan, and a coffee pot. Now here's a dollar. You take that out on Sixth-ave. and spend it for meat scraps and leetle greens. Then you come back here, and while Jarvis and I are takin' a little exercise, if you can hash up anything that's fit to eat, I'll believe your whole yarn. Do you make the try?"

Does he? Say, you never saw such a tickled Frenchy in your life. Before Jarvis and me had got nicely peeled down for our delayed boxin' bout, Heiney is back with his bundles, has got the fryin' pan scoured, the gas blazin', and is throwin' things together like a juggler doin' a stage turn.

He sheds the blue jumper, ties a bath towel around him for an apron, makes a hat out of a paper bag, and twists some of that stringy lip decoration of his into a pointed mustache. Honest, he didn't look nor act any more like the wreck that had dragged the mop in there half an hour before than I look like Bill Taft. And by the time we've had our three rounds and a rub down, he's standin' doubled up beside a little table that he's found, with his arms spread out like he was goin' to take a dive.

"*Messieurs,*" says he, "eet ees serve."

"Good!" says I. "I'm just about up to tacklin' a hot lunch. What kind of a mess have you got here, anyway, Heiney? Any alum in it? Blamed if I don't make you put away the whole shootin' match if it ain't good!"

How's that? Well, say, I couldn't name it, or say whether it was a stew, fry or an omelet, but for an impromptu sample of fancy grub it was a little the tastiest article I ever stacked up against.

"Why!" says Jarvis, smackin' his lips after the third forkful. "It's *ris de veau*, isn't it?"

"But yes, monsieur!" says Heiney, his face lightin' up. "Eet ees *ris de veau grillé, à la financier.*"

"And what's that in English?" says I.

"In Englise," says Heiney, shruggin' his shoulders, "eet ees not exist. Eet ees Parisienne."

"Bully for Paris, then!" says I. "Whatever it might be if it could be naturalized, it touches the spot. I take it all back, Heiney. You're the shiftest chef that ever juggled a fryin' pan. A refill on the riddy-voo, seal-voo-plate."

Well, what do you guess! Jarvis engages Heiney on the spot, and an hour later they've started for Blenmont, both of 'em actin' like they thought this was a good world to live in, after all.

Yesterday me and Sadie accepts a special invite out there to dinner; and it was worth goin' out to get. From start to finish it was the finest that ever happened. Afterwards Jarvis has Heiney come up from the kitchen and show himself while we drinks his good health. And say, in his white togs and starched linen cap, he's got the chef on the canned goods ads. lookin' like a hash rustler in a beanery.

As for Jarvis, he's got the pink back in his cheeks, and is holdin' his chin up once more, and when we left in the mornin' he was out bossin' a couple of hundred lab'ers that was takin' that hill in wheelbarrows and cartin' it off where it wouldn't interfere with the lake.

"Shorty," says he, "I don't know how you did it, but you've made me a sane man again, and I owe you more than—"

"Ah, chuck it!" says I. "It was curin' Heiney that cured you."

"Really?" says he. "Then you are a believer in homeopathic psychotherapeutics?"

"Which?" says I. "Say, write that down on my cuff by syllables, will you? I want to spring it on Swifty Joe."

## CHAPTER XIV

### A TRY-OUT FOR TOODLEISM

Eh? Yes, maybe I do walk a little stiff jointed; but, say, I'm satisfied to be walkin' around at all. If I hadn't had my luck with me the other day, I'd be wearin' that left leg in splints and bein' pushed around in a wheel chair. As it is, the meat is only a little sore, and a few more alcohol rubs will put it in shape.

What was it come so near gettin' me on the disabled list? Toodleism! No, I expect you didn't; but let me put you next, son: there's more 'isms and 'pathys and 'ists floatin' around these days,

than any one head can keep track of. I don't know much about the lot; but this Toodleism's a punk proposition. Besides leavin' me with a game prop, it come near bu'stin' up the fam'ly.

Seems like trouble was lookin' for me last week, anyway. First off, I has a run of old timers, that panhandles me out of all the loose coin I has in my clothes. You know how they'll come in streaks that way, sometimes? Why, I was thinkin' of havin' 'em form a line, one while. Then along about Thursday one of my back fletchers develops a case of jumps. What's a fletcher? Why, a steak grinder, and this one has a ripe spot in it. Course, it's me for the nickel plated plush chair, with the footrest and runnin' water attached; and after the tooth doctor has explored my jaw with a rock drill and a few other cute little tools, he says he'll kill the nerve.

"Don't, Doc.!" says I. "That nerve's always been a friend of mine until lately. Wouldn't dopin' it do?"

He says it wouldn't, that nothin' less'n capital punishment would reform a nerve like that; so I tells him to blaze away. No use goin' into details. Guess you've been there.

"Say, Doc.," says I once when he was fittin' a fresh auger into the machine, "you ain't mistakin' me for the guilty party, are you?"

"Did I hurt?" says he.

"You don't call that ticklin', do you?" says I.

But he only grins and goes on with the excavation. After he's blasted out a hole big enough for a terminal tunnel he jabs in a hunk of cotton soaked with sulphuric acid, and then tamps down the concrete.

"There!" says he, handin' me a drug store drink flavored with formaldehyde. "In the course of forty-eight hours or so that nerve will be as dead as a piece of string. Meantime it may throb at intervals."

That's what it did, too! It dies as hard as a campaign lie. About every so often, just when I'm forgettin', it wakes up again, takes a fresh hold, and proceeds to give an imitation of a live wire on an alternatin' circuit.

"Ahr chee!" says Swifty Joe. "To look at the map of woe you're carryin' around, you'd think nobody ever had a bum tusk before."

"Nobody ever had this one before," says I, "and the way I look now ain't chronic, like some faces I know of."

"Ahr chee!" says Swifty, which is his way of bringin' in a minority report.

The worst of it was, though, I'm billed to show up at Rockywold for a May party that Sadie and Mrs. Purdy-Pell was pullin' off, and when I lands there Friday afternoon the jaw sensations was still on the job. I'm feeling about as cheerful and chatty as a Zoo tiger with ingrowin' toenails. So, after I've done the polite handshake, and had a word with Sadie on the fly, I digs out my exercise uniform and makes a sneak down into their dinky little gym., where there's a first class punchin' bag that I picked out for Purdy-Pell myself.

You know, I felt like I wanted to hit something, and hit hard. It wa'n't any idle impulse, either. That tooth was jumpin' so I could almost feel my heels leave the floor, and I had emotions that it would take more than language to express proper. So I peels off for it, down to a sleeveless jersey and a pair of flannel pants, and starts in to drum out the devil's tattoo on that pigskin bag.

I was so busy reliev'in' my feelin's that I didn't notice anything float in the door; but after awhile I looks up and discovers the audience. She's a young female party that I didn't remember havin' seen before at any of the Rockywold doin's; but it looks like she's one of the guests, all right.

Well, I hadn't been introduced, and I couldn't see what she was buttin' into the gym. for, anyway, so I keeps right on punchin' the bag; thinkin' that if she was shocked any by my costume she'd either get over it, or beat it and have a fit.

She's one of the kind you might expect 'most anything from,—one of these long, limp, lippy, droop eyed fluffs, with terracotta hair, and a prunes-and-prisms mouth all puckered to say something soulful. She's wearin' a whackin' big black feather lid with a long plume trailin' down over one ear, a strawb'ry pink dress cut accordin' to Louis Catorz designs,—waist band under her armpits, you know,—and nineteen-button length gloves. Finish that off with a white hen feather boa, have her hands clasped real shy under her chin, and you've got a picture of what I sees there in the door. But it was the friendly size-up she was givin' me, and no mistake. She must have hung up there three or four minutes too, before she quits, without sayin' a word.

At the end of half an hour I was feelin' some better; but when I'd got into my tailor made, I didn't have any great enthusiasm for tacklin' food.

"Guess I'll appoint this a special fast day for mine," says I to Sadie.

"Why, Shorty!" says she. "Whatever is the matter?" And she has no sooner heard about the touchy tusk than she says, "Oh, pooh! Just say there isn't any such thing as toothache. Pain, you know, is only a false mental photograph, an error of the mind, and——"

"Ah, back up, Sadie!" says I. "Do you dream I don't know whether this jump is in my brain or my jaw? This is no halftone; it's the real thing."

"Nonsense!" says she. "You come right downstairs and see Dr. Toodle. He'll fix it in no time."



Seems this Toodle was the one the party had been arranged for, and Sadie has to hunt him up. It didn't take long to trail him down; for pretty soon she comes towin' him into the drawin'-room, where I'm camped down on a sofa, holdin' on with both hands.

"Dr. Toodle," says she, "I want to present Mr. McCabe."

Now, I don't claim any seventh-son powers; but I only has to take one look at Toodle to guess that he's some sort of a phony article. No reg'lar pill distributor would wear around that mushy look that he has on. He's a good sized, wide shouldered duck, with a thick crop of long hair that just clears his coat collar, and one of these smooth, soft, sentimental faces the women folks go nutty over,—you know, big nose, heavy chin, and sagged mouth corners. His get-up is something between a priest's and an actor's,—frock coat, smooth front black vest, and a collar buttoned behind. He gurgles out that he's charmed to meet Mr. McCabe, and wants to know what's wrong.

"Nothin' but a specked tooth," says I. "But I can stand it."

"My de-e-ear brother," says Toodle, puttin' his fingers together and gazin' down at me like a prison chaplain givin' a talk to murderers' row, "you are possessed of mental error. Your brain focus has been disturbed, and a blurred image has been cast on the sensitive retina of the——"

"Ah, say, Doc.," says I, "cut out the preamble! If you've got a cocaine gun in your pocket, dig it up!"

Then he goes off again with another string of gibberish, about pain bein' nothin' but thought, and thought bein' something we could steer to suit ourselves. I can't give you the patter word for word; but the nub of it was that I could knock that toothache out in one round just by thinkin' hard. Now wouldn't that peeve you? What?

"All right, Doc.," says I. "I'll try thinkin' I ain't got any ache, if you'll sit here and keep me comp'ny by thinkin' you've had your dinner. Is it a go?"

Well, it wa'n't. He shrugs his shoulders, and says he's afraid I'm a difficult subject, and then he teeters off on his toes. Sadie tells me I ought to be ashamed of myself for tryin' to be so fresh.

"He's a very distinguished man," she says. "He's the founder of Toodleism. He's written a book about it."

"I thought he looked like a nutty one," says I. "Keep him away from me; I'll be all right by mornin'."

The argument might have lasted longer; but just then comes the dinner call, and they all goes in where the little necks was waitin' on the cracked ice, and I'm left alone to count the jumps and enjoy myself. Durin' one of the calm spells I wanders into the lib'ry, picks a funny paper off the table, and settles down in a cozy corner to read the jokes. I must have been there near an hour, when in drifts the lippy young lady in the pink what-d'ye-call-it,—the one I'd made the silent hit with in the gym.,—and she makes straight for me.

"Oh, here you are!" says she, like we was old friends. "Do you know, I've just heard of your—your trouble."

"Ah, it ain't any killin' matter," says I. "It don't amount to much."

"Of course it doesn't!" says she. "And that is what I came to talk to you about. I am Miss Lee,—Violet Lee."

"Ye-e-es?" says I.

"You see," she goes on, "I am Dr. Toodle's secretary and assistant."

"Oh!" says I. "He's in luck, then."

"Now, now!" says she, just like that, givin' me a real giddy tap with her fan. "You must be real serious."

"I'm in condition to be all of that," says I. "Are you plannin' to try the——"

"I am going to help you to banish the imaginary pains, Mr. McCabe," says she. "Now first you must repeat after me the *summum bonum*."

"Eh?" says I.

"It's very simple," says she, floppin' down on the cushions alongside and reachin' out for one of my hands. "It begins this way, 'I am a child of light and goodness.' Now say that."

Say, how would you duck a proposition of that kind? There was Violet, with her big eyes rolled at me real pleadin', and her mouth puckered up real cunning, and the soft, clingin' grip on my right paw. Well, I says it over.

"That's it!" she purrs. "Now, 'Evil and fear and pain are the creatures of darkness.' Go on!"

"Sure thing!" says I. "'Evil and fear and——Ouch!"

Ever feel one of them last gasps that a nerve gives when it goes out of business? I thought the top of my head was comin' off. But it didn't, and a couple of seconds later I knew the jumpin' was all over; so I straightens my face out, and we proceeds with the catechism.

It was a bird, too. I didn't mind doin' it at all with Miss Lee there to help; for, in spite of her lippy ways, she's more or less of a candy girl. There was a good deal to it, and it all means the same as what Toodle was tryin' to hand out; but now that the ache has quit I'm ready for any

kind of foolishness.

Violet had got to the point where she has snuggled up nice and close, with one hand still grippin' mine and the other smoothin' out my jaw while she told me again how pain was only a pipe dream,—when I glances over her shoulder and sees Sadie floatin' in hangin' to Dr. Toodle's arm.

223

And does Sadie miss the tableau in our corner? Not to any extent! Her eyebrows go up, and her mouth comes open. That's the first indication. Next her lips shut tight, and her eyes narrow down, and before you could count three she's let go of Toodle as if he was a hot potato, and she's makin' a bee line for the cozy corner.

"Why!" says Miss Lee, lookin' up and forecastin' the comin' conditions in a flash. "Is dinner over? Oh, and there's Dr. Toodle!" and off she trips, leavin' the McCabe fam'ly to hold a reunion.

"Well, I never!" says Sadie, givin' me the gimlet gaze. And say, she puts plenty of expression into them three words.

"Me either," says I. "Not very often, anyway. But a chance is a chance."

"I hope I didn't intrude?" says she, her eyes snappin'.

"There's no tellin'," says I.

"It was a very touching scene!" says she. "Very!"

"Wa'n't it?" says I. "Nice girl, Violet."

"Violet! Humph!" says she. "There's no accounting for tastes!"

"Just what I was thinkin' when I see you with the timelock clutch on that freak doctor's south wing," says I.

224

"Dr. Toodle," says she, "was explaining to me his wonderful self healing theories."

"And dear Violet," says I, "was puttin' me through a course of sprouts in the automatic toothache cure."

"Oh, indeed!" says Sadie. "Was patting your cheek part of it?"

"I hope so," says I.

"Huh!" says she. "I suppose it worked?"

"Like a charm," says I. "All that bothers me now is how I can dig up another pain."

"You might have your dear Violet see what can be done for that soft spot in your head!" she snaps. "Only next time take her off out of sight, please."

"Oh, we'll attend to that, all right," says I. "This havin' a green eyed wife buttin' in just at the interestin' point is something fierce!" And that's where I spread it on too thick.

"Don't be a chump, Shorty!" says Sadie, lettin' loose a sudden giggle and mussin' my hair up with both hands. It's a way she has of gettin' out of a corner, and she's skipped off before I'm sure whether she's still got a grouch, or is only lettin' on.

By that time my appetite has come back; so I holds up the butler and has him lay out a solitaire feed. And when I goes back to the crowd again I finds Toodle has the center of the stage, with the spotlight full on him. All the women are gathered round, listening to his guff like it was sound sense. Seems he's organized a new deal on the thought cure stunt, and he's workin' it for all it's worth. The men, though, don't appear so excited over what he's sayin'.

225

"Confounded rubbish, I call it!" says Mr. Purdy-Pell.

"You ought to hear it from Violet," says I. "She's the star explainer of that combination."

But Violet seems to have faded into the background. We don't see anything more of her that evenin', nor she wa'n't in evidence next mornin'. Doc. Toodle was, though. He begins by tellin' how he never takes anything but hot water and milk on risin'; but that in the middle of the forenoon he makes it a point to put away about three fresh laid eggs, raw, in a glass of sherry.

"How interesting!" says Mrs. Purdy-Pell. "Then we must drive over to Fernbrook Farm, right after breakfast, and get some of their lovely White Leghorn eggs."

That was the sort of excursion I was rung into; so the bunch of us piles into the wagonette and starts for a fresh supply of hen fruit. When we gets to the farm the superintendent invites us to take a tour through the incubator houses, and of course they all wants to see the dear little chickies and so on. All but me. I stays and chins with the coachman while he walks the horses around the driveway.

226

In about half an hour they comes troopin' back, Toodle in the lead, luggin' a paper bag full of warm eggs. He don't wait for the others, but pikes for the wagonette and climbs in one of the side seats facin' me. We was just turnin' to back up to the block for the ladies, when a yellow kyoodle dashes around the corner after a cat. Them skittish horses was just waitin' for some such excuse as that, and before Mr. Driver can put the curb bit on 'em hard enough they've done a quick pivot, cramped the wheels, and turned us over on the soggy grass as neat as anything you ever see.

Me bein' on the low side, I strikes the ground first; but before I can squirm out, down comes Toodle on top, landin' his one hundred and ninety pounds so sudden that it knocks the wind

clear out of me. He's turned over on the way down, so I've got his shoulder borin' into my chest and the heavy part of him on my leg.

Course, the women squeals, and the horses cut up some; but the driver has landed on his feet and has them by the head in no time at all, so we wa'n't dragged around any. Noticin' that, I lays still and waits for Toodle to pry himself loose. But the Doc. don't seem in any hurry to move, and the next thing I know I hear him groanin' and mumblin' under his breath. Between groans he was tryin' to say over that rigmarole of his.

"I am a child of light—Oh, dear me!—of light and goodness!" he was pantin' out. "Evil and fear and—Oh, my poor back!—and pain are creatures of—Oh my, oh my!—of darkness! Nothing can harm me!"

"Say, something is goin' to harm you mighty sudden," says I, "if you don't let me up out of this."

"Oh, my life blood!" he groans. "I can feel my life blood! Oh, oh! I am a child of—"

"Ah, slush!" says I. "Get up and shake yourself. Think I'm a bloomin' prayer rug that you can squat on all day? Roll over!" and I manages to hand him a short arm punch in the ribs that stirs him up enough so I can slide out from under. Soon's I get on my feet and can hop around once or twice I finds there's no bones stickin' through, and then I turns to have a look at him.

And say, I wouldn't have missed that exhibition for twice the shakin' up I got! There he is, stretched out on the wet turf, his eyelids flutterin', his breath comin' fast, and his two hands huggin' tight what's left of that bu'sted paper bag, right up against the front of his preacher's vest. And can you guess what's happened to them eggs?

"Oh, my life blood!" he keeps on moanin'. "I can feel it oozing through—"

"Ah, you're switched, Toodle!" says I. "Your brain kodak is out of register, that's all. It ain't life blood you're losin'; it's only your new laid omelet that's leakin' over your vest front."

About then I gets a squint at Sadie and Mrs. Purdy-Pell, and they're almost chokin' to death in a funny fit.

Well, say, that was the finish of Toodleism with the Rockywold bunch. The Doc. didn't have a scratch nor a bruise on him, and after he'd been helped up and scraped off, he was almost as good as new. But his conversation works is clogged for good, and he has his chin down on his collar. They sends him and Violet down to catch the next train, and Sadie and Mrs. Purdy-Pell spends the rest of the day givin' imitations of how Toodle hugged up the eggs and grunted that he was a child of light.

"Not that I don't believe there was something in what he said," Sadie explains to me afterwards; "only—only—"

"Only he was a false alarm, eh?" says I. "Well, Violet wa'n't that kind, anyway."

"Pooh!" says she. "I suppose you'll brag about Violet for the rest of your life."

Can you keep 'em guessin' long, when it comes to things of that kind? Not if they're like Sadie.

---

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CASE OF THE TISCOTTS

What I had on the slate for this part'cular afternoon was a brisk walk up Broadway as far as the gasoline district and a little soothin' conversation with Mr. Cecil Slattery about the new roadster he's tryin' to Paladino me into placin' my order for. I'd just washed up and was in the gym. giving my coat a few licks with the whisk broom, when Swifty Joe comes tiptoein' in, taps me on the shoulder, and points solemn into the front office.

"That's right," says I, "break it to me gentle."

"Get into it quick!" says he, grabbin' the coat.

"Eh?" says I. "Fire, police, or what?"

"S-s-sh!" says he. "Lady to see you."

"What kind," says I, "perfect, or just plain lady? And what's her name?"

"Ahr-r-r chee!" he whispers, hoarse and stagy. "Didn't I tell you it was a lady? Get a move on!" and he lifts me into the sleeves and yanks away the whisk broom.

"See here, Swifty," says I, "if this is another of them hot air demonstrators, or a book agent, there'll be trouble comin' your way in bunches! Remember, now!"

Here was once, though, when Swifty hadn't made any mistake. Not that he shows such wonderful intelligence in this case. With her wearin' all them expensive furs, and the cute little English footman standin' up straight in his yellow topped boots over by the door, who wouldn't

have known she was a real lady?

She's got up all in black, not exactly a mournin' costume, but one of these real broadcloth regalias, plain but classy. She's a tall, slim party, and from the three-quarters' view I gets against the light I should guess she was goin' on thirty or a little past it. All she's armed with is a roll of paper, and as I steps in she's drummin' with it on the window sill.

Course, we has all kinds driftin' into the studio here, by mistake and otherwise, and I gen'rally makes a guess on 'em right; but this one don't suggest anything at all. Even that rat faced tiger of hers could have told her this wa'n't any French millinery parlor, and she didn't look like one who'd get off the trail anyway. So I plays a safety by coughin' polite behind my hand and lettin' her make the break. She ain't backward about it, either.

"Why, there you are, Professor McCabe!" says she, in that gushy, up and down tone, like she was usin' language as some sort of throat gargle. "How perfectly dear of you to be here, too!"

"Yes, ain't it?" says I. "I've kind of got into the habit of bein' here."

"Really, now!" says she, smilin' just as though we was carryin' on a sensible conversation. And it's a swagger stunt too, this talkin' without sayin' anything. When you get so you can keep it up for an hour you're qualified either for the afternoon tea class or the batty ward. But the lady ain't here just to pay a social call. She makes a quick shift and announces that she's Miss Colliver, also hoping that I remember her.

"Why, sure," says I. "Miss Ann, ain't it?"

As a matter of fact, the only time we was ever within speakin' distance was once at the Purdy-Pells' when she blew in for a minute just at dinner time, lifted a bunch of American Beauties off the table with the excuse that they was just what she wanted to send to the Blind Asylum, and blew out again.

But of course I couldn't help knowin' who she was and all about her. Ain't the papers always full of her charity doin's, her funds for this and that, and her new discoveries of shockin' things about the poor? Ain't she built up a rep as a lady philanthropist that's too busy doing good to ever get married? Maybe Mrs. Russell Sage and Helen Gould has gained a few laps on her lately; but when it comes to startin' things for the Tattered Tenth there ain't many others that's got much on her.

"Gee!" thinks I. "Wonder what she's going to do for me?"

I ain't left long in doubt. She backs me up against the desk and cuts loose with the straight talk. "I came in to tell you about my new enterprise, Piny Crest Court," says she.

"Apartment house, is it?" says I.

"No, no!" says she. "Haven't you read about it? It's to be a white plague station for working girls."

"A white—white—Oh! For lungers, eh?"

"We never speak of them in that way, you know," says she, handin' me the reprovin' look. "Piny Crest Court is the name I've given to the site. Rather sweet, is it not? Really there are no pines on it, you know; but I shall have a few set out. The buildings are to be perfectly lovely. I've just seen the architect's plans,—four open front cottages grouped around an administration infirmary, the superintendent's office to be finished in white mahogany and gold, and the directors' room in Circassian walnut, with a stucco frieze after della Robbia. Don't you simply love those Robbia bambinos?"

"Great!" says I, lyin' as easy and genteel as if I had lots of practice.

"I am simply crazy to have the work started," she goes on; "so I am spending three afternoons a week in filling up my lists. Everyone responds so heartily, too. Now, let me see, I believe I have put you down for a life membership."

"Eh?" says I, gaspin' some; for it ain't often I'm elected to things.

"You will have the privilege of voting for board members and of recommending two applicants a year. A life membership is two hundred and fifty dollars."

"You mean I get two-fifty," says I, "for—for just—"

Then I came to. And, say, did you ever know such a bonehead? Honest, though, from all I'd heard of the way she spreads her money around, and the patronizin' style she has of puttin' this proposition up to me, I couldn't tell for a minute how she meant it. And when I suddenly surrounds the idea that it's me gives up the two-fifty, I'm so fussed that I drops back into the chair and begins to hunt through the desk for my checkbook. And then I feels myself growin' a little warm behind the ears.

"So you just put me down offhand for two hundred and fifty, did you?" says I.

"If you wish," says she, "you may take out a life certificate for each member of your family. Several have done that. Let me show you my list of subscribers. See, here are some of the prominent merchants and manufacturing firms. I haven't begun on the brokers and bankers yet; but you will be in good company."

"Ye-e-es?" says I, runnin' my eye over the firm names. "But I don't know much about this scheme of yours, Miss Colliver."

"Why, it is for working girls," says she, "who are victims of the white plague. We take them up to Piny Crest and cure them."

"Of working?" says I.

"Of the plague," says she. "It is going to be the grandest thing I've done yet. And I have the names of such a lot of the most interesting cases; poor creatures, you know, who are suffering in the most wretched quarters. I do hope they will last until the station is finished. It means finding a new lot, if they don't, and the public organizations are becoming so active in that sort of thing, don't you see?"

Somehow, I don't catch it all, she puts over her ideas so fast; but I gather that she'd like to have me come up prompt with my little old two-fifty so she can get busy givin' out the contracts. Seein' me still hangin' back, though, she's willin' to spend a few minutes more in describin' some of the worst cases, which she proceeds to do.

"We estimate," says Miss Ann as a final clincher, "that the average cost is about fifty dollars per patient. Now," and she sticks the subscription list into my fist, "here is an opportunity! Do you wish to save five human lives?"

Ever had it thrown into you like that? The sensation is a good deal like bein' tied to a post and havin' your pockets frisked by a holdup gang. Anyway, that's the way I felt, and then the next minute I'm ashamed of havin' any such feelings at all; for there's no denyin' that dozens of cases like she mentions can be dug up in any crowded block. Seems kind of inhuman, too, not to want chip in and help save 'em. And yet there I was gettin' grouchy over it, without knowin' why!

"Well," says I, squirmin' in the chair, "I'd like to save five hundred, if I could. How many do you say you're going to take care of up at this new place?"

"Sixty," says she. "I select the most pitiful cases. I am taking some things to one of them now. I wish you could see the awful misery in that home! I could take you down there, you know, and show you what a squalid existence they lead, these Tiscotts."

"Tiscotts!" says I, prickin' up my ears. "What Tiscotts? What's his first name?"

"I never heard the husband mentioned," says Miss Ann. "I doubt if there is one. The woman's name, I think, is Mrs. Anthony Tiscott. Of course, unless you are really interested——"

"I am," says I. "I'm ready to go when you are."

That seems to jar Miss Colliver some, and she tries a little shifty sidestepping; but I puts it up to her as flat as she had handed it to me about savin' the five lives. It was either make good or welsh, and she comes to the scratch cheerful.

"Very well, then," says she, "we will drive down there at once."

So it's me into the Victoria alongside of Miss Ann, with the fat coachman pilotin' us down Fifth-ave. to 14th, then across to Third-ave., and again down and over to the far East Side.

I forget the exact block; but it's one of the old style double-deckers, with rusty fire escapes decorated with beddin' hung out to air, dark hallways that has a perfume a garbage cart would be ashamed of, rickety stairs, plasterin' all gone off the halls, and other usual signs of real estate that the agents squeeze fifteen per cent. out of. You know how it's done, by fixin' the Buildin' and Board of Health inspectors, jammin' from six to ten fam'lies in on a floor, never makin' any repairs, and collectin' weekly rents or servin' dispossess notices prompt when they don't pay up.

Lovely place to hang up one of the "Home, Sweet Home" mottoes! There's a water tap in every hall, so all the tenants can have as much as they want, stove holes in most of the rooms, and you buy your coal by the bucket at the rate of about fourteen dollars a ton. Only three a week for a room, twelve dollars a month. Course, that's more per room than you'd pay on the upper West Side with steam heat, elevator service, and a Tennessee marble entrance hall thrown in; but the luxury of stowin' a whole fam'ly into one room comes high. Or maybe the landlords are doin' it to discourage poverty.

"This is where the Tiscotts hang out, is it?" says I. "Shall I lug the basket for you, Miss Colliver?"

"Dear no!" says she. "I never go into such places. I always send the things in by Hutchins. He will bring Mrs. Tiscott down and she will tell us about her troubles."

"Let Hutchins sit on the box this time," says I, grabbin' up the basket. "Besides, I don't want any second hand report."

"But surely," puts in Miss Ann, "you are not going into such a——"

"Why not?" says I. "I begun livin' in one just like it."

At that Miss Ann settles back under the robe, shrugs her shoulders into her furs, and waves for me to go ahead.

Half a dozen kids on the doorstep told me in chorus where I'd find the Tiscotts, and after I've climbed up through four layers of stale cabbage and fried onion smells and felt my way along to the third door left from the top of the stairs, I makes my entrance as the special messenger of the ministerin' angel.

It's the usual fam'ly-room tenement scene, such as the slum writers are so fond of describin' with the agony pedal down hard, only there ain't quite so much dirt and rags in evidence as

they'd like. There's plenty, though. Also there's a lot of industry on view. Over by the light shaft window is Mrs. Tiscott, pumpin' a sewin' machine like she was entered in a twenty-four-hour endurance race, with a big bundle of raw materials at one side. In front of her is the oldest girl, sewin' buttons onto white goods; while the three younger kids, includin' the four-year-old boy, are spread out around the table in the middle of the room, pickin' nut meat into the dishpan.

What's the use of tellin' how Mrs. Tiscott's stringy hair was bobbed up, or the kind of wrapper she had on? You wouldn't expect her to be sportin' a Sixth-ave. built pompadour, or a lingerie reception gown, would you? And where they don't have Swedish nursery governesses and porcelain tubs, the youngsters are apt not to be so—But maybe you'll relish your nut candy and walnut cake better if we skip some details about the state of the kids' hands. What's the odds where the contractors gets such work done, so long as they can shave their estimates?

The really int'restin' exhibit in this fam'ly group, of course, is the bent shouldered, peaked faced girl who has humped herself almost double and is slappin' little pearl buttons on white goods at the rate of twenty a minute. And there's no deception about her being a fine case for Piny Crest. You don't even have to hear that bark of hers to know it.

I stands there lookin' 'em over for a whole minute before anybody pays any attention to me. Then Mrs. Tiscott glances up and stops her machine.

"Who's that?" she sings out. "What do you—Why! Well, of all things, Shorty McCabe, what brings you here?"

"I'm playin' errand boy for the kind Miss Colliver," says I, holdin' up the basket.

Is there a grand rush my way, and glad cries, and tears of joy? Nothing doing in the thankful hysterics line.

"Oh!" says Mrs. Tiscott. "Well, let's see what it is this time." And she proceeds to dump out Miss Ann's contribution. There's a glass of gooseb'ry bar le duc, another of guava jelly, a little can of pâté de foie gras, and half a dozen lady fingers.

"Huh!" says she, shovin' the truck over on the window sill. As she's expressed my sentiments too, I lets it go at that.

"Looks like one of your busy days," says I.

"One of 'em!" says she with a snort, yankin' some more pieces out of the bundle and slippin' a fresh spool of cotton onto the machine.

"What's the job?" says I.

"Baby dresses," says she.

"Good money in it?" says I.

"Oh, sure!" says she. "Forty cents a dozen is good, ain't it?"

"What noble merchant prince is so generous to you as all that?" says I.

Mrs. Tiscott, she shoves over the sweater's shop tag so I can read for myself. Curious,—wa'n't it?—but it's the same firm whose name heads the Piny Crest subscription list. It's time to change the subject.

"How's Annie?" says I, lookin' over at her.

"Her cough don't seem to get any better," says Mrs. Tiscott. "She's had it since she had to quit work in the gas mantle shop. That's where she got it. The dust, you know."

Yes, I knew. "How about Tony?" says I.

"Tony!" says she, hard and bitter. "How do I know? He ain't been near us for a month past."

"Sends in something of a Saturday, don't he?" says I.

"Would I be lettin' the likes of her—that Miss Colliver—come here if he did," says she, "or workin' my eyes out like this?"

"I thought Lizzie was in a store?" says I, noddin' towards the twelve-year-old girl at the nut pickin' table.

"They always lays off half the bundle girls after Christmas," says Mrs. Tiscott. "That's why we don't see Tony regular every payday any more. He had the nerve to claim most of Lizzie's envelope."

Then it was my turn to say "Huh!"

"Why don't you have him up?" says I.

"I'm a-scared," says she. "He's promised to break my head."

"Think he would?" says I.

"Yes," says she. "He's changed for the worse lately. He'd do it, all right, if I took him to court."

"What if I stood ready to break his, eh?" says I. "Would that hold him?"

Say, it wa'n't an elevatin' or cheerful conversation me and Mrs. Tiscott indulged in; but it was more or less to the point. She's some int'rested in the last proposition of mine, and when I adds a few frills about givin' a butcher's order and standin' for a sack of potatoes, she agrees to swear out the summons for Tony, providin' I'll hand it to him and be in court to scare the liver out of him when she talks to the Justice.

"I hate to do it too," says she.

"I know," says I; "but no meat or potatoes from me unless you do!"

Sounds kind of harsh, don't it? You'd think I had a special grudge against Tony Tiscott too. But say, it's only because I know him and his kind so well. Nothing so peculiar about his case. Lots of them swell coachmen go that way, and in his day Tony has driven for some big people. Him and me got acquainted when he was wearin' the Twombly-Crane livery and drawin' down his sixty-five a month. That wa'n't so long ago, either.

But it's hard waitin' hours on the box in cold weather, and they get to boozin'. When they hit it up too free they lose their places. After they've lost too many places they don't get any more. Meantime they've accumulated rheumatism and a fam'ly of kids. They've got lazy habits too, and new jobs don't come easy at forty. The next degree is loafin' around home permanent; but they ain't apt to find that so pleasant unless the wife is a good hustler. Most likely she rows it. So they chuck the fam'ly and drift off by themselves.

That's the sort of chaps you'll find on the bread lines. But Tony hadn't quite got to that yet. I knew the corner beer joint where he did odd jobs as free lunch carver and window cleaner. Also I knew the line of talk I meant to hand out to him when I got my fingers on his collar.

"Well?" says Miss Ann, when I comes back with the empty basket. "Did you find it an interesting case?"

"Maybe that's the word," says I.

"You saw the young woman, did you?" says she, "the one who——"

"Sure," says I. "She's got it—bad."

"Ah!" says Miss Ann, brightenin' up. "And now about that life membership!"

"Well," says I, "the Piny Crest proposition is all right, and I'd like to see it started; but the fact is, Miss Colliver, if I should put my name down with all them big people I'd be runnin' out of my class."

"You would be—er——Beg pardon," says she, "but I don't think I quite get you?"

I'd suspected she wouldn't. But how was I going to dope out to her clear and straight what's so muddled up in my own head? You know, all about how Annie got her cough, and my feelin's towards the firms that's sweatin' the Tiscotts, from the baby up, and a lot of other things that I can't state.

"As I said," goes on Miss Colliver, "I hardly think I understand."

"Me either," says I. "My head's just a merry go round of whys and whatfors. But, as far as that fund of yours goes, I don't come in."

"Humph!" says she. "That, at least, is quite definite. Home, Hutchins!"

And there I am left on the curb lookin' foolish. Me, I don't ride back to the studio on any broadcloth cushions! Serves me right too, I expect. I feels mean and low down all the rest of the day, until I gets some satisfaction by huntin' up Tony and throwin' such a scare into him that he goes out and finds a porter's job and swears by all that's holy he'll take up with the fam'ly again.

But think of the chance I passed up of breakin' into the high toned philanthropy class!

---

## CHAPTER XVI

### CLASSING TUTWATER RIGHT

Maybe that brass plate had been up in the lower hall of our buildin' a month or so before I takes any partic'lar notice of it. Even when I did get my eye on it one mornin' it only gets me mildly curious. "Tutwater, Director of Enterprises, Room 37, Fourth Floor," is all it says on it.

"Huh!" thinks I. "That's goin' some for a nine by ten coop under the skylight."

And with that I should have let it drop, I expect. But what's the use? Where's the fun of livin', if you can't mix in now and then. And you know how I am.

Well, I comes pikin' up the stairs one day not long after discoverin' the sign, and here on my landin', right in front of the studio door, I finds this Greek that runs the towel supply wagon usin' up his entire United States vocabulary on a strange gent that he's backed into a corner.

"Easy, there, easy, Mr. Poulykopolis!" says I. "This ain't any golf links, where you can smoke up the atmosphere with language like that. What's the row, anyway?"

"No pay for five week; always nex' time, he tells, nex' time. Gr-r-r-r! I am strong to slap his life out, me!" says Pouly, thumpin' his chest and shakin' his black curls. They sure are fierce actin' citizens when they're excited, these Marathoners.

"Yes, you would!" says I. "Slap his life out? G'wan! If he handed you one jolt you wouldn't stop runnin' for a week. How big is this national debt you say he owes you! How much?"

"Five week!" says Pouly. "One dollar twenty-five."

"Sufferin' Shylocks! All of that? Well, neighbor," says I to the strange gent, "has he stated it correct?"

"Perfectly, sir, perfectly," says the party of the second part. "I do not deny the indebtedness in the least. I was merely trying to explain to this agent of cleanliness that, having been unable to get to the bank this morning, I should be obliged to——"

"Why, of course," says I. "And in that case allow me to stake you to the price of peace. Here you are, Pouly. Now go out in the sun and cool off."

"My dear sir," says the stranger, followin' me into the front office, "permit me to——"

"Ah, never mind the resolutions!" says I, "It was worth riskin' that much for the sake of stoppin' the riot. Yes, I know you'll pay it back. Let's see, which is your floor?"

"Top, sir," says he, "room 37."

"Oh ho!" says I. "Then you're the enterprise director, Tutwater?"

"And your very humble servant, sir," says he, bringin' his yellow Panama lid off with a full arm sweep, and throwin' one leg graceful over the back of a chair.

At that I takes a closer look at him, and before I've got half through the inspection I've waved a sad farewell to that one twenty-five. From the frayed necktie down to the runover shoes, Tutwater is a walkin' example of the poor debtor's oath. The shiny seams of the black frock coat shouts of home pressin', and the limp way his white vest fits him suggests that he does his own laundry work in the washbowl. But he's clean shaved and clean brushed, and you can guess he's seen the time when he had such things done for him in style.

Yet there ain't anything about the way Tutwater carries himself that signifies he's down and out. Not much! He's got the easy, confident swing to his shoulders that you might expect from a sport who'd just picked three winners runnin'.

Rather a tall, fairly well built gent he is, with a good chest on him, and he has one of these eager, earnest faces that shows he's alive all the time. You wouldn't call him a handsome man, though, on account of the deep furrows down each side of his cheeks and the prominent jut to his eyebrows; but, somehow, when he gets to talkin', them eyes of his lights up so you forget the rest of his features.

You've seen chaps like that. Gen'rally they're cranks of some kind or other, and when they ain't they're toplineers. So I puts Tutwater down as belongin' to the crank class, and it wa'n't long before he begun livin' up to the description.

"Director of enterprises, eh?" says I. "That's a new one on me."

"Naturally," says he, wavin' his hand, "considering that I am first in the field. It is a profession I am creating."

"So?" says I. "Well, how are you comin' on?"

"Excellently, sir, excellently," says he. "I have found, for the first time in my somewhat varied career, full scope for what I am pleased to call my talents. Of course, the work of preparing the ground is a slow process, and the—er—ahem—the results have not as yet begun to materialize; but when Opportunity comes my way, sir—Aha! Ha, ha! Ho, ho! Well, then we shall see if Tutwater is not ready for her!"

"I see," says I. "You with your hand on the knob, eh? It's an easy way of passin' the time too; that is, providin' such things as visits from the landlord and the towel collector don't worry you."

"Not at all," says he. "Merely petty annoyances, thorns and pebbles in the pathways that lead to each high emprise."

Say, it was almost like hearin' some one read po'try, listenin' to Tutwater talk; didn't mean much of anything, and sounded kind of good. At the end of half an hour I didn't know any more about his game than at the beginning. I gathered, though, that up to date it hadn't produced any ready cash, and that Tutwater had been on his uppers for some time.

He was no grafter, though. That dollar twenty-five weighed heavier on his mind than it did on mine. He'd come in and talk about not bein' able to pay it back real regretful, without even hintin' at another touch. And little by little I got more light on Tutwater, includin' some details of what he called his career.

There was a lot to it, so far as variety went. He'd been a hist'ry professor in some one-horse Western college, had tried his luck once up at Nome, had canvassed for a patent dishwasher through Michigan, done a ballyhoo trick outside a travelin' tent show, and had given bump lectures on the schoolhouse circuit.

But his prize stunt was when he broke into the real estate business and laid out Eucalyptus City. That was out in Iowa somewhere, and he'd have cleaned up a cool million in money if the blamed trolley company hadn't built their line seven miles off in the other direction.

It was gettin' this raw deal that convinces him the seed district wa'n't any place for a gent of his



abilities. So he sold out his options on the site of Eucalyptus to a brick makin' concern, and beat it for 42d-st. with a capital of eighty-nine dollars cash and this great director scheme in his head. The brass plate had cost him four dollars and fifty cents, one month's rent of the upstairs coop had set him back thirty more, and he'd been livin' on the rest.

"But look here, Tutty," says I, "just what sort of enterprise do you think you can direct?"

"Any sort," says he, "anything, from running an international exposition, to putting an icecream parlor on a paying basis."

"Don't you find your modesty something of a handicap?" says I.

"Oh, I'm modest enough," he goes on. "For instance, I don't claim to invent new methods. I just adapt, pick out lines of proved success, and develop. Now, your business here—why, I could take hold of it, and in six months' time I'd have you occupying this entire building, with classes on every floor, a solarium on the roof, a corps of assistants working day and night shifts, and —"

252

"Yes," I breaks in, "and then the Sheriff tackin' a foreclosure notice on the front door. I know how them boom methods work out, Tutty."

But talk like that don't discourage Tutwater at all. He hangs onto his great scheme, keepin' his eyes and ears open, writin' letters when he can scare up money for postage, and insistin' that sooner or later he'll get his chance.

"Here is the place for such chances to occur," says he, "and I know what I can do."

"All right," says I; "but if I was you I'd trail down some pavin' job before the paper inner soles wore clean through."

Course, how soon he hit the bread line wa'n't any funeral of mine exactly, and he was a hopeless case anyway; but somehow I got to likin' Tutwater more or less, and wishin' there was some plan of applyin' all that hot air of his in useful ways. I know of lots of stiffs with not half his brains that makes enough to ride around in taxis and order custom made shirts. He was gettin' seedier every week, though, and I had it straight from the agent that it was only a question of a few days before that brass plate would have to come down.

And then, one noon as we was chinnin' here in the front office, in blows a portly, red faced, stary eyed old party who seems kind of dazed and uncertain as to where he's goin'. He looks first at Tutwater, and then at me.

253

"Same to you and many of 'em," says I. "What'll it be?"

"McCabe was the name," says he; "Professor McCabe, I think. I had it written down somewhere; but—"

"Never mind," says I. "This is the shop and I'm the right party. What then?"

"Perhaps you don't know me?" says he, explorin' his vest pockets sort of aimless with his fingers.

"That's another good guess," says I; "but there's lots of time ahead of us."

"I—I am—well, never mind the name," says he, brushin' one hand over his eyes. "I—I've mislaid it."

"Eh?" says I.

"It's no matter," says he, beginnin' to ramble on again. "But I own a great deal of property in the city, and my head has been troubling me lately, and I heard you could help me. I'll pay you well, you know. I—I'll give you the Brooklyn Bridge."

"Wha-a-at's that?" I gasps. "Say, couldn't you make it Madison Square Garden? I could get rent out of that."

"Well, if you prefer," says he, without crackin' a smile.

254

"And this is Mr. Tutwater," says I. "He ought to be in on this. What'll yours be, Tutty?"

Say, for a minute or so I couldn't make out whether the old party was really off his chump or what. He's a well dressed, prosperous lookin' gent, a good deal on the retired broker type, and I didn't know but he might be some friend of Pyramid Gordon's who'd strayed in here to hand me a josh before signin' on for a course of lessons.

Next thing we knew, though, he slumps down in my desk chair, leans back comf'table, sighs sort of contented, smiles a batty, foolish smile at us, and then closes his eyes. Another second and he's snorin' away as peaceful as you please.

"Well, say!" says I to Tutwater. "What do you think of that, now? Does he take this for a free lodgin' house, or Central Park? Looks like it was up to me to ring for the wagon."

"Don't," says Tutwater. "The police handle these cases so stupidly. His mind has been affected, possibly from some shock, and he is physically exhausted."

"He's all in, sure enough," says I; "but I can't have him sawin' wood here. Come, come, old scout," I hollers in his ear, "you'll have to camp somewhere else for this act!" I might as well have shouted into the safe, though. He never stirs.

255

"The thing to do," says Tutwater, "is to discover his name, if we can, and then communicate with his friends or family."

"Maybe you're right, Tutwater," says I. "And there's a bunch of letters in his inside pocket. Have a look."

"They all seem to be addressed to J. T. Fargo, Esq.," says Tutwater.

"What!" says I. "Say, you don't suppose our sleepin' friend here is old Jerry Fargo, do you? Look at the tailor's label inside the pocket. Eh? Jeremiah T. Fargo! Well, say, Tutty, that wa'n't such an idle dream of his, about givin' me the garden. Guess he could if he wanted to. Why, this old party owns more business blocks in this town than anybody I know of except the Astors. And I was for havin' him carted off to the station! Lemme see that 'phone directory."

A minute more and I had the Fargo house on the wire.

"Who are you?" says I. "Oh, Mr. Fargo's butler. Well, this is Shorty McCabe, and I want to talk to some of the fam'ly about the old man. Sure, old Jerry. He's here. Eh, his sister? She'll do. Yes, I'll hold the wire."

I'd heard of that old maid sister of his, and how she was a queer old girl; but I didn't have any idea what a cold blooded proposition she was. Honest, she seemed put out and pettish because I'd called her up. 256

"Jeremiah again, hey?" she squeaks. "Now, why on earth don't he stay in that sanatorium where I took him? This is the fourth time he's gone wandering off, and I've been sent for to hunt him up. You just tell him to trot back to it, that's all."

"But see here, Miss Fargo," says I, "he's been trottin' around until you can't tell him anything! He's snoozin' away here in my office, dead to the world."

"Well, I can't help it," says she. "I'm not going to be bothered with Jeremiah to-day. I've got two sick cats to attend to."

"Cats!" says I. "Say, what do you—"

"Oh, hush up!" says she. "Do anything you like with him!" And hanged if she don't bang up the receiver at that, and leave me standin' there at my end of the wire lookin' silly.

"Talk about your freak plutes," says I to Tutwater, after I've explained the situation, "if this ain't the limit! Look what I've got on my hands now!"

Tutwater, he's standin' there gazin' hard at old Jerry Fargo, his eyes shinin' and his thought works goin' at high pressure speed. All of a sudden he slaps me on the back and grips me by the hand. "Professor," says he, "I have it! There is Opportunity!" 257

"Eh?" says I. "Old Jerry? How?"

"I shall cure him—restore his mind, make him normal," says Tutwater.

"What do you know about brushin' out batty lofts?" says I.

"Nothing at all," says he; "but I can find someone who does. You'll give me Fargo, won't you?"

"Will I?" says I. "I'll advance you twenty to take him away, and charge it up to him. But what'll you do with him?"

"Start the Tutwater Sanatorium for Deranged Millionaires," says he. "There's a fortune in it. May I leave him here for an hour or so?"

"What for?" says I.

"Until I can engage my chief of staff," says he.

"Say, Tutty," says I, "do you really mean to put over a bluff the size of that?"

"I've thought it all out," says he. "I can do it."

"All right, blaze ahead," says I; "but I'm bettin' you land in the lockup inside of twenty-four hours."

What do you think, though? By three o'clock he comes back, towin' a spruce, keen eyed young chap that he introduces as Dr. McWade. He's picked him up over at Bellevue, where he found him doin' practice work in the psychopathic ward. On the strength of that I doubles my grubstake, and he no sooner gets his hands on the two sawbucks than he starts for the street. 258

"Here, here!" says I. "Where you headed for now?"

And Tutwater explains how his first investment is to be a new silk lid, some patent leather shoes, and a silver headed walkin' stick.

"Good business!" says I. "You'll need all the front you can carry."

And while he's out shoppin' the Doc and me and Swifty Joe lugs the patient up to Tutwater's office without disturbin' his slumbers at all.

Well, I didn't see much more of Tutwater that day, for from then on he was a mighty busy man; but as I was drillin' across to the Grand Central on my way home I gets a glimpse of him, sportin' a shiny hat and white spats, just rushin' important into a swell real estate office. About noon next day he stops in long enough to shake hands and say that it's all settled.

"Tutwater Sanatorium is a fact," says he. "I have the lease in my pocket."

"What is it, some abandoned farm up in Vermont?" says I.

"Hardly," says Tutwater, smilin' quiet. 259

"It's Cragswoods; beautiful modern buildings, formerly occupied as a boys' boarding school, fifteen acres of lovely grounds, finest location in Westchester County. We take possession today, with our patient."

"But, say, Tutwater," says I, "how in blazes did you——"

"I produced Fargo," says he. "Dr. McWade has him under complete control and his cure has already begun. It will be finished at Cragswoods. Run up and see us soon. There's the address. So long."

Well, even after that, I couldn't believe he'd really pull it off. Course, I knew he could make Fargo's name go a long ways if he used it judicious; but to launch out and hire an estate worth half a million—why he was makin' a shoestring start look like a sure thing.

And I was still listenin' for news of the grand crash, when I begun seein' these items in the papers about the Tutwater Sanatorium. "Millionaires Building a Stone Wall," one was headed, and it went on to tell how five New York plutes, all sufferin' from some nerve breakdown, was gettin' back health and clearin' up their brains by workin' like day laborers under the direction of the famous specialist, Dr. Clinton McWade.

"Aha!" says I. "He's added a press agent to the staff, and he sure has got a bird!"

Every few days there's a new story bobs up, better than the last, until I can't stand it any longer. I takes half a day off and goes up there to see if he's actually doin' it. And, say, when I walks into the main office over the Persian rug, there's the same old Tutwater. Course, he's slicked up some fancy, and he's smokin' a good cigar; but you couldn't improve any on the cheerful countenance he used to carry around, even when he was up against it hardest. What I asks to see first is the five millionaires at work.

"Seven, you mean," says Tutwater. "Two more came yesterday. Step right out this way. There they are, seven; count 'em, seven. The eighth man is a practical stone mason who is bossing the job. It's a good stone wall they're building, too. We expect to run it along our entire frontage."

"Got 'em mesmerized?" says I.

"Not at all," says Tutwater. "It's part of the treatment. McWade's idea, you know. The vocational cure, we call it, and it works like a charm. Mr. Fargo is practically a well man now and could return to his home next week if he wished. As it is, he's so much interested in finishing that first section of the wall that he will probably stay the month out. You can see for yourself what they are doing."

"Well, well!" says I. "Seven of 'em! What I don't understand, Tutwater, is how you got so many patients so soon. Where'd you get hold of 'em?"

"To be quite frank with you, McCabe," says Tutwater, whisperin' confidential in my ear, "only three of them are genuine paying patients. That is why I have to charge them fifty dollars a day, you see."

"And the others?" says I.

"First class imitations, who are playing their parts very cleverly," says he. "Why not? I engaged them through a reliable theatrical agency."

"Eh?" says I. "You salted the sanatorium? Tutwater, I take it all back. You're in the other class, and I'm backin' you after this for whatever entry you want to make."

---

## CHAPTER XVII

### HOW HERMY PUT IT OVER

What do you know about luck, eh? Say, there was a time when I banked heavy on such things as four-leaf clovers, and the humpback touch, and dodgin' ladders, and keepin' my fingers crossed after gettin' an X-ray stare. The longer I watch the game, though, the less I think of the luck proposition as a chart for explainin' why some gets in on the ground floor, while others are dropped through the coal chute.

Now look at the latest returns on the career of my old grammar school chum, Snick Butters. Maybe you don't remember my mentionin' him before. Yes? No? It don't matter. He's the sporty young gent that's mortgaged his memorial window to me so many times,—you know, the phony lamp he can do such stunts with.

He's a smooth boy, Snick is,—too smooth, I used to tell him,—and always full of schemes for avoidin' real work. For a year or so past he's held the hot air chair on the front end of one of these sightseein' chariots, cheerin' the out of town buyers and wheat belt tourists with the flippest line of skyscraper statistics handed out through any megaphone in town. They tell me that when Snick would fix his fake eye on the sidewalk, and roll the good one up at the Metropolitan tower, he'd have his passengers so dizzy they'd grab one another to keep from

fallin' off the wagon.

Yes, I always did find Snick's comp'ny entertainin', and if it hadn't been more or less expensive, —a visit always meanin' a touch with him,—I expect I'd been better posted on what he was up to. As it is, I ain't enjoyed the luxury of seein' Snick for a good many months; when here the other afternoon, just as I was thinking of startin' for home, the studio door opens, and in blows a couple of gents, one being a stranger, and the other this Mr. Butters.

Now, usually Snick's a fancy dresser, no matter who he owes for it. He'll quit eatin' any time, or do the camel act, or even give up his cigarettes; but if the gents' furnishing shops are showin' something new in the line of violet socks or alligator skin vests, Snick's got to sport the first ones sprung on Broadway.

So, seein' him show up with fringes on his cuffs, a pair of runover tan shoes, and wearin' his uniform cap off duty, I can't help feelin' some shocked, or wonderin' how much more'n a five-spot I'll be out by the time he leaves. It was some relief, though, to see that the glass eye was still in place, and know I wouldn't be called on to redeem the ticket on that, anyway.

"Hello, Snick!" says I. "Glad you came in,—I was just going. Hope you don't mind my lockin' the safe? No offense, you know."

"Can it, Shorty," says he. "There's no brace coming this time."

"Eh?" says I. "Once more with that last, and say it slower, so I can let it sink in."

"Don't kid," says he. "This is straight business."

"Oh!" says I. "Well, that does sound serious. In that case, who's your—er—Did he come in with you?"

I thought he did at first; but he seems so little int'rested in either Snick or me that I wa'n't sure but he just wandered in because he saw the door open. He's a high, well built, fairly good lookin' chap, dressed neat and quiet in black; and if it wa'n't for the sort of aimless, wanderin' look in his eyes, you might have suspected he was somebody in partic'lar.

"Oh, him!" says Snick, shootin' a careless glance over his shoulder. "Yes, of course he's with me. It's him I want to talk to you about."

"Well," says I, "don't he—er—Is it a dummy, or a live one? Got a name, ain't it?"

"Why, sure!" says Snick. "That's Hermy. Hey you, Hermy, shake hands with Professor McCabe!"

"Howdy," says I, makin' ready to pass the grip. But Hermy ain't in a sociable mood, it seems.

"Oh, bother!" says he, lookin' around kind of disgusted and not noticin' the welcomin' hand at all. "I don't want to stay here. I ought to be home, dressing for dinner."

And say, that gives you about as much idea of the way he said it, as you'd get of an oil paintin' from seein' a blueprint. I can't put in the pettish shoulder wiggle that goes with it, or make my voice behave like his did. It was the most ladylike voice I ever heard come from a heavyweight; one of these reg'lar "Oh-fudge-Lizzie-I-dropped-my-gum" voices. And him with a chest on him like a swell front mahog'ny bureau!

"Splash!" says I. "You mean, mean thing! So there!"

"Don't mind what he says at all, Shorty," says Snick. "You wait! I'll fix him!" and with that he walks up to Hermy, shakes his finger under his nose, and proceeds to lay him out. "Now what did I tell you; eh, Hermy?" says Snick. "One lump of sugar in your tea—no pie—and locked in your room at eight-thirty. Oh, I mean it! You're here to behave yourself. Understand? Take your fingers off that necktie! Don't slouch against the wall there, either! You might get your coat dusty. Dress for dinner! Didn't I wait fifteen minutes while you fussed with your hair? And do you think you're going to go through all that again? You're dressed for dinner, I tell you! But you don't get a bit unless you do as you're told! Hear?"

"Ye-e-es, sir," snuffles Hermy.

Honest, it was a little the oddest exhibition I ever saw. Why, he would make two of Snick, this Hermy would, and he has a pair of shoulders like a truck horse. Don't ever talk to me about chins again, either! Hermy has chin enough for a trust buster; but that's all the good it seems to do him.

"You ain't cast the hypnotic spell over him, have you, Snick?" says I.

"Hypnotic nothing!" says Snick. "That ain't a man; it's only a music box!"

"A which?" says I.

"Barytone," says Snick. "Say, did you ever hear Bonci or Caruso or any of that mob warble? No? Well, then I'll have to tell you. Look at Hermy there. Take a good long gaze at him. And—sh-h-h! After he's had one show at the Metropolitan he'll have that whole bunch carryin' spears."

"Is this something you dreamed, Snick," says I, "or is it a sample of your megaphone talk?"

"You don't believe it, of course," says he. "That's what I brought him up here for. Hermy, turn on the Toreador business!"

"Eh?" says I; then I sees Hermy gettin' into position to cut loose. "Back up there! Shut it off! What do I know about judgin' singers on the hoof? Why, he might be all you say, or as bad as I'd be willin' to bet; but I wouldn't know it. And what odds does it make to me, one way or another?"

"I know, Shorty," says Snick, earnest and pleadin'; "but you're my last hope. I've simply got to convince you."

"Sorry, Snick," says I; "but this ain't my day for tryin' out barytones. Besides, I got to catch a train."

"All right," says Snick. "Then we'll trot along with you while I tell you about Hermy. Honest, Shorty, you've got to hear it!"

"If it's as desperate as all that," says I, "spiel away."

And of all the plunges I ever knew Snick Butters to make,—and he sure is the dead gamest sport I ever ran across,—this one that he owns up to takin' on Hermy had all his past performances put in the piker class.

Accordin' to the way he deals it out, Snick had first discovered Hermy about a year ago, found him doin' the tray balancin' act in a porcelain lined three-off-and-draw-one parlor down on Seventh-ave. He was doin' it bad, too,—gettin' the orders mixed, and spillin' soup on the customers, and passin' out wrong checks, and havin' the boss worked up to the assassination point.

268

But Hermy didn't even know enough to be discouraged. He kept right on singsongin' out his orders down the shaft, as cheerful as you please: "Sausage and mashed, two on the wheats, one piece of punk, and two mince, and let 'em come in a hurry! Silver!" You know how they do it in them C. B. & Q. places? Yes, corned beef and cabbage joints. With sixty or seventy people in a forty by twenty-five room, and the dish washers slammin' crockery regardless, you got to holler out if you want the chef to hear. Hermy wa'n't much on the shout, so he sang his orders. And it was this that gave Snick his pipedream.

"Now you know I've done more or less tra-la-la-work myself," says he, "and the season I spent on the road as one of the merry villagers with an Erminie outfit put me wise to a few things. Course, this open air lecturing has spoiled my pipes for fair; but I've got my ear left, haven't I? And say, Shorty, the minute I heard that voice of Hermy's I knew he was the goods."

So what does he do but go back later, after the noon rush was over, and get Hermy to tell him the story of his life. It wa'n't what you'd call thrillin'. All there was to it was that Hermy was a double orphan who'd been brought up in Bridgeport, Conn., by an uncle who was a dancin' professor. The only thing that saved Hermy from a bench in the brass works was his knack for poundin' out twosteps and waltzes on the piano; but at that it seems he was such a soft head he couldn't keep from watchin' the girls on the floor and striking wrong notes. Then there was trouble with uncle. Snick didn't get the full details of the row, or what brought it to a head; but anyway Hermy was fired from the academy and fin'ly drifted to New York, where he'd been close up against the bread line ever since.

269

"And when I found how he just naturally ate up music," says Snick, "and how he'd had some training in a boy choir, and what a range he had, I says to him, 'Hermy,' says I, 'you come with me!' First I blows in ten good hard dollars getting a lawyer to draw up a contract. I thought it all out by myself; but I wanted the whereases put in right. And it's a peach. It bound me to find board and lodging and provide clothes and incidentals for Hermy for the period of one year; and in consideration of which, and all that, I am to be the manager and sole business representative of said Hermy for the term of fifteen years from date, entitled to a fair and equal division of whatsoever profits, salary, or emoluments which may be received by the party of the second part, payable to me, my heirs, or assigns forever. And there I am, Shorty. I've done it! And I'm going to stay with it!"

270

"What!" says I. "You don't mean to say you've invested a year's board and lodgin' and expenses in—in that?" and I gazes once more at this hundred and eighty-pound wrist slapper, who is standin' there in front of the mirror pattin' down a stray lock.

"That's what I've done," says Snick, shovin' his hands in his pockets and lookin' at the exhibit like he was proud of it.

"But how the—where in blazes did you get it?" says I.

"Squeezed it out," says Snick; "out of myself, too. And you know me. I always was as good to myself as other folks would let me. But all that had to be changed. It come hard, I admit, and it cost more'n I figured on. Why, some of his voice culture lessons set me back ten a throw. Think of that! He's had 'em, though. And me? Well, I've lived on one meal a day. I've done a double trick: on the wagon day times, night cashier in a drug store from nine till two a.m. I've cut out theaters, cigarettes, and drinks. I've made my old clothes last over, and I've pinched the dimes and nickels so hard my thumbprints would look like treasury dies. But we've got the goods, Shorty. Hermy may be the mushiest, sappiest, hen brained specimen of a man you ever saw; but when it comes to being a high class grand opera barytone, he's the kid! And little Percival here is his manager and has the power of attorney that will fix him for keeps if I know anything!"

271

"Ye-e-es?" says I. "Reminds me some of the time when you was backin' Doughnut to win the Suburban. Recollect how hard you scraped to get the two-fifty you put down on Doughnut at thirty to one, and how hard you begged me to jump in and pull out a bale of easy money? Let's see; did the skate finish tenth, or did he fall through the hole in his name?"

"Ah, say!" says Snick. "Don't go digging that up now. That was sport. This is straight business, on the level, and I ain't asking you to put up a cent."

"Well, what then?" says I.

Would you guess it? He wants me to book Hermy for a private exhibition before some of my swell friends! All I've got to do is to persuade some of 'em to give a little musicale, and then spring this nutmeg wonder on the box holdin' set without warnin'.

"If he was a Russki with long hair," says I, "or even a fiddlin' Czech, they might stand for it; but to ask 'em to listen to a domestic unknown from Bridgeport, Conn.—I wouldn't have the nerve, Snick. Why not take him around to the concert agencies first?"

272

"Bah!" says Snick. "Haven't we worn out the settees in the agency offices? What do they know about good barytone voices? All they judge by is press clippings and lists of past engagements. Now, your people would know. He'd have 'em going in two minutes, and they'd spread the news afterwards. Then we'd have the agents coming to us. See?"

Course I couldn't help gettin' int'rested in this long shot of Snick's, even if I don't take any stock in his judgment; but I tries to explain that while I mix more or less with classy folks, I don't exactly keep their datebooks for 'em, or provide talent for their after dinner stunts.

That don't head off Snick, though. He says I'm the only link between him and the set he wants to reach, and he just can't take no for an answer. He says he'll depend on me for a date for next Wednesday night.

"Why Wednesday?" says I. "Wouldn't Thursday or Friday do as well?"

"No," says he. "That's Frenchy's only night off from the café, and it's his dress suit Hermy's got to wear. It'll be some tight across the back; but it's the biggest one I can get the loan of without paying rent."

Well, I tells Snick I'll see what can be done, and when I gets home I puts the problem up to Sadie. Maybe if she'd had a look at Hermy she'd taken more interest; but as it is she says she don't see how I can afford to run the chances of handin' out a lemon, even if there was an op'nin'. Then again, so many of our friends were at Palm Beach just now, and those who'd come back were so busy givin' Lent bridge parties, that the chances of workin' in a dark horse barytone was mighty slim. She'd think it over, though, and see if maybe something can't be done.

273

So that's the best I can give Snick when he shows up in the mornin', and it was the same every day that week. I was kind of sorry for Snick, and was almost on the point of luggin' him and his discovery out to the house and askin' in a few of the neighbors, when Sadie tells me that the Purdy-Pells are back from Florida and are goin' to open their town house with some kind of happy jinks Wednesday night, and that we're invited.

Course, that knocks out my scheme. I'd passed the sad news on to Snick; and it was near noon Wednesday, when I'm called up on the 'phone by Sadie. Seems that Mrs. Purdy-Pell had signed a lady harpist and a refined monologue artist to fill in the gap between coffee and bridge, and the lady harper had scratched her entry on account of a bad case of grip. So couldn't I find my friend Mr. Butters and get him to produce his singer? The case had been stated to Mrs. Purdy-Pell, and she was willin' to take the risk.

274

"All right," says I. "But it's all up to her, don't you forget."

With that I chases down to Madison Square, catches Snick just startin' out with a load of neck stretchers, gives him the number, and tells him to show up prompt at nine-thirty. And I wish you could have seen the joy that spread over his homely face. Even the store eye seemed to be sparklin' brighter'n ever.

Was he there? Why, as we goes in to dinner at eight o'clock, I catches sight of him and Hermy holdin' down chairs in the reception room. Well, you know how they pull off them affairs. After they've stowed away about eleventeen courses, from grapefruit and sherry to demitasse and benedictine, them that can leave the table without wheel chairs wanders out into the front rooms, and the men light up fresh perfectos and hunt for the smokin' den, and the women get together in bunches and exchange polite knocks. And in the midst of all that some one drifts casually up to the concert grand and cuts loose. That was about the programme in this case.

Hermy was all primed for his cue, and when Mrs. Purdy-Pell gives the nod I sees Snick push him through the door, and in another minute the thing is on. The waiter's uniform was a tight fit, all right; for it stretches across his shoulders like a drumhead. And the shirt studs wa'n't mates, and the collar was one of them saw edged laundry veterans. But the general effect was good, and Hermy don't seem to mind them trifles at all. He stands up there lookin' big and handsome, simpers and smiles around the room a few times, giggles a few at the young lady who'd volunteered to do the ivory punishing, and then fin'ly he gets under way with the Toreador song.

275

As I say, when it comes to gems from Carmen, I'm no judge; but this stab of Hermy's strikes me from the start as a mighty good attempt. He makes a smooth, easy get-away, and he strikes a swingin', steady gait at the quarter, and when he comes to puttin' over the deep, rollin' chest notes I has feelin's down under the first dinner layer like I'd swallowed a small thunder storm. Honest, when he fairly got down to business and hittin' it up in earnest, he had me on my toes, and by the look on Sadie's face I knew that our friend Hermy was going some.

But was all the others standin' around with their mouths open, drinkin' it in? Anything but! You see, some late comers had arrived, and they'd brought bulletins of something rich and juicy that had just happened in the alimony crowd,—I expect the event will figure on the court calendars later,—and they're so busy passin' on the details to willin' ears, that Hermy wa'n't disturbin' 'em

276

at all. As a matter of fact, not one in ten of the bunch knew whether he was makin' a noise like a bullfighter or a line-up man.

I can't help takin' a squint around at Snick, who's peekin' in through the draperies. And say, he's all but tearin' his hair. It was tough, when you come to think of it. Here he'd put his whole stack of blues on this performance, and the audience wa'n't payin' any more attention to it than to the rattle of cabs on the avenue.

Hermy has most got to the final spasm, and it's about all over, when, as a last straw, some sort of disturbance breaks out in the front hall. First off I thought it must be Snick Butters throwin' a fit; but then I hears a voice that ain't his, and as I glances out I sees the Purdy-Pell butler havin' a rough house argument with a black whiskered gent in evenin' clothes and a Paris model silk lid. Course, everyone hears the rumpus, and there's a grand rush, some to get away, and others to see what's doin'.

"Let me in! I demand entrance! It must be!" howls the gent, while the butler tries to tell him he's got to give up his card first.

And next thing I know Snick has lit on the butler's back to pull him off, and the three are havin' a fine mix-up, when Mr. Purdy-Pell comes boltin' out, and I've just offered to bounce any of 'em that he'll point out, when all of a sudden he recognizes the party behind the brunette lambrequins.

"Why—why," says he, "what does this mean, Mr. —"

"Pardon," says the gent, puffin' and pushin' to the front. "I intrude, yes? A thousand pardons. But I will explain. Next door I am dining—there is a window open—I hear that wonderful voice. Ah! that marvelous voice! Of what is the name of this artist? Yes? I demand! I implore! Ah, I must know instantly, sir!"

Well, you know who it was. There's only one grand opera Napoleon with black whiskers who does things in that way, and makes good every trip. It's him, all right. And if he don't know a barytone voice, who does?

Inside of four minutes him and Hermy and Snick was bunched around the libr'y table, chewin' over the terms of the contract, and next season you'll read the name of a new soloist in letters four foot high.

Say, I was up to see Mr. Butters in his new suite of rooms at the St. Swithin, where it never rains but it pours. He'd held out for a big advance, and he'd got it. Also he'd invested part of it in some of the giddiest raiment them theatrical clothing houses can supply. While a manicure was busy puttin' a gloss finish on his nails, he has his Mongolian valet display the rest of his wardrobe, as far as he'd laid it in.

"Did I get let in wrong on the Hermy proposition, eh?" says he. "How about stayin' with your luck till it turns? Any reminder of the Doughnut incident in this? What?"

Do I debate the subject? Not me! I just slaps Snick on the back and wishes him joy. If he wants to credit it all up to a rabbit's foot, or a clover leaf, I'm willin' to let him. But say, from where I stand, it looks to me as if nerve and grit played some part in it.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII

### JOY RIDING WITH AUNTY

Was I? Then I must have been thinking of Dyke Mallory. And say, I don't know how you feel about it, but I figure that anybody who can supply me with a hang-over grin good for three days ain't lived in vain. Whatever it's worth, I'm on his books for just that much.

I'll admit, too, that this Dyckman chap ain't apt to get many credits by the sweat of his brow or the fog of his brain. There's plenty of folks would class him as so much plain nuisance, and I have it from him that his own fam'ly puts it even stronger. That's one of his specialties, confidin' to strangers how unpop'lar he is at home. Why, he hadn't been to the studio more'n twice, and I'd just got next to the fact that he was a son of Mr. Craig Mallory, and was suggestin' a quarterly account for him, when he gives me the warnin' signal.

"Don't!" says he. "I draw my allowance the fifteenth, and unless you get it away from me before the twentieth you might as well tear up the bill. No use sending it to the pater, either. He'd renig."

"Handing you a few practical hints along the economy line, eh?" says I.

"Worse than that," says Dyke. "It's a part of my penance for being the Great Disappointment. The whole family is down on me. Guess you don't know about my Aunt Elvira?"

I didn't, and there was no special reason why I should; but before I can throw the switch Dyke has got the deputy sheriff grip on the Mallorys' private skeleton and is holdin' him up and

explainin' his anatomy.

Now, from all I'd ever seen or heard, I'd always supposed Mr. Craig Mallory to be one of the safety vault crowd. Course, they live at Number 4 West; but that's near enough to the avenue for one of the old fam'lies. And when you find a man who puts in his time as chairman of regatta committees, and judgin' hackneys, and actin' as vice president of a swell club, you're apt to rate him in the seven figure bunch, at least. Accordin' to Duke, though, the Mallory income needed as much stretchin' as the pay of a twenty-dollar clothing clerk tryin' to live in a thirty-five dollar flat. And this is the burg where you can be as hard up on fifty thousand a year as on five hundred!

The one thing the Mallorys had to look forward to was the time when Aunt Elvira would trade her sealskin sack for a robe of glory and loosen up on her real estate. She was near seventy, Auntie was, and when she first went out to live at the old country place, up beyond Fort George, it was a good half-day's trip down to 23d-st. But she went right on livin', and New York kept right on growin', and now she owns a cow pasture two blocks from a subway station, and raises potatoes on land worth a thousand dollars a front foot.

281

Bein' of different tastes and habits, her and Brother Craig never got along together very well, and there was years when each of 'em tried to forget that the other existed. When little Dyckman came, though, the frost was melted. She hadn't paid any attention to the girls; but a boy was diff'rent. Never havin' had a son of her own to boss around and brag about, she took it out on Dyke. A nice, pious old lady, Aunt Elvira was; and the mere fact that little Dyke seemed to fancy the taste of a morocco covered New Testament she presented to him on his third birthday settled his future in her mind.

"He shall be a Bishop!" says she, and hints that accordin' as Dyckman shows progress along that line she intends loadin' him up with worldly goods.

Up to the age of fifteen, Dyke gives a fair imitation of a Bishop in the bud. He's a light haired, pleasant spoken youth, who stands well with his Sunday school teacher and repeats passages from the Psalms for Aunt Elvira when she comes down to inflict her annual visit.

282

But from then on the bulletins wa'n't so favor'ble. At the diff'rent prep. schools where he was tried out he appeared to be too much of a live one to make much headway with the dead languages. About the only subjects he led his class in was hazing and football and buildin' bonfires of the school furniture. Being expelled got to be so common with him that towards the last he didn't stop to unpack his trunk.

Not that these harrowin' details was passed on to Aunt Elvira. The Mallorys begun by doctorin' the returns, and they developed into reg'lar experts at the game of representin' to Auntie what a sainted little fellow Dyke was growin' to be. The more practice they got, the harder their imaginations was worked; for by the time Dyckman was strugglin' through his last year at college he'd got to be such a full blown hickey boy that he'd have been spotted for a sport in a blind asylum.

So they had to invent one excuse after another to keep Aunt Elvira from seein' him, all the while givin' her tales about how he was soon to break into the divinity school; hoping, of course, that Auntie would get tired of waitin' and begin to unbelt.

"They overdid it, that's all," says Dyke. "Healthy looking Bishop I'd make! What?"

283

"You ain't got just the style for a right reverend, that's a fact," says I.

Which wa'n't any wild statement of the case, either. He's a tall, loose jointed, slope shouldered young gent, with a long, narrow face, gen'rally ornamented by a cigarette; and he has his straw colored hair cut plush. His costume is neat but expensive,—double reefed trousers, wide soled shoes, and a green yodler's hat with the bow on behind. He talks with the kind of English accent they pick up at New Haven, and when he's in repose he tries to let on he's so bored with life that he's in danger of fallin' asleep any minute.

Judgin' from Dyke's past performances, though, there wa'n't many somnolent hours in it. But in spite of all the trouble he'd got into, I couldn't figure him out as anything more'n playful. Course, rough housin' in rathskellers until they called out the reserves, and turnin' the fire hose on a vaudeville artist from a box, and runnin' wild with a captured trolley car wa'n't what you might call innocent boyishness; but, after all, there wa'n't anything real vicious about Dyke.

Playful states it. Give him a high powered tourin' car, with a bunch of eight or nine from the football squad aboard, and he liked to tear around the State of Connecticut burnin' the midnight gasolene and lullin' the villagers to sleep with the Boula-Boula song. Perfectly harmless fun—if the highways was kept clear. All the frat crowd said he was a good fellow, and it was a shame to bar him out from takin' a degree just on account of his layin' down on a few exams. But that's what the faculty did, and the folks at home was wild.

284

Dyke had been back and on the unclassified list for nearly a year now, and the prospects of his breakin' into the divinity school was growin' worse every day. He'd jollied Mr. Mallory into lettin' him have a little two-cylinder roadster, and his only real pleasure in life was when he could load a few old grads on the runnin' board and go off for a joy ride.

But after the old man had spent the cost of a new machine in police court fines and repairs, even this little diversion was yanked away. The last broken axle had done the business, and the nearest Dyke could come to real enjoyment was when he had the price to charter a pink taxi and inspire the chauffeur with highballs enough so he'd throw her wide open on the way back.



Not bein' responsible for Dyke, I didn't mind having him around. I kind of enjoyed the cheerful way he had of tellin' about the fam'ly boycott on him, and every time I thinks of Aunt Elvira still havin' him framed up for a comer in the Bishop class, I has to smile.

You see, having gone so far with their fairy tales, the Mallorys never got a chance to hedge; and, accordin' to Dyke, they was all scared stiff for fear she'd dig up the facts some day, and make a new will leavin' her rentroll to the foreign missions society.

Maybe it was because I took more or less interest in him, but perhaps it was just because he wanted company and I happened to be handy; anyway, here the other afternoon Dyke comes poundin' up the stairs two at a time, rushes into the front office, and grabs me by the arm.

"Come on, Shorty!" says he. "Something fruity is on the schedule."

"Hope it don't taste like a lemon," says I. "What's the grand rush?"

"Aunt Elvira is coming down, and she's called for me," says Dyke, grinnin' wide. "She must suspect something; for she sent word that if I wasn't on hand this time she'd never come again. What do you think of that?"

"Aunty's got a treat in store for her, eh?" says I, givin' Dyke the wink.

"I should gurggle!" says he. "I'm good and tired of this fake Bishop business, and if I don't jolt the old lady out of that nonsense, I'm a duffer. You can help some, I guess. Come on."

Well, I didn't exactly like the idea of mixin' up with a fam'ly surprise party like that; but Dyke is so anxious for me to go along, and he gets me so curious to see what'll happen at the reunion, that I fin'lly grabs my coat and hat, and out we trails.

It seems that Aunt Elvira is due at the Grand Central. Never having tried the subway, she's come to town just as she used to thirty years ago: drivin' to Kingsbridge station, and takin' a Harlem river local down. We finds the whole fam'ly, includin' Mr. and Mrs. Craig Mallory, and their two married daughters, waitin' outside the gates, with the gloom about 'em so thick you'd almost think it was a sea turn.

From the chilly looks they shot at Dyke you could tell just how they'd forecasted the result when Aunt Elvira got him all sized up; for, with his collar turned up and his green hat slouched, he looks as much like a divinity student as a bulldog looks like Mary's lamb. And they can almost see them blocks of apartment houses bein' handed over to the heathen.

As for Mr. Craig Mallory, he never so much as gives his only son a second glance, but turns his back and stands there, twistin' the ends of his close cropped gray mustache, and tryin' to look like he wa'n't concerned at all. Good old sport, Craig,—one of the kind that can sit behind a pair of sevens and raise the opener out of his socks. Lucky for his nerves he didn't have to wait long. Pretty soon in pulls the train, and the folks from Yonkers and Tarrytown begin to file past.



"MOST OF AUNTIE WAS OBSCURED BY THE LUGGAGE SHE CARRIES"

"There she is!" whispers Dyke, givin' me the nudge. "That's Aunt Elvira, with her bonnet on one ear."

It's one of the few black velvet lids of the 1869 model still in captivity, ornamented with a bunch of indigo tinted violets, and kept from bein' lost off altogether by purple strings tied under the chin. Most of the rest of Aunty was obscured by the hand luggage she carries, which includes four assorted parcels done up in wrappin' paper, and a big, brass wire cage holdin' a ragged lookin' gray parrot that was tryin' to stick his bill through the bars and sample the passersby.

She's a wrinkled faced, but well colored and hearty lookin' old girl, and the eyes that peeks out under the rim of the velvet lid is as keen and shrewd as a squirrel's. Whatever else she might be, it was plain Aunt Elvira wa'n't feeble minded. Behind her comes a couple of station porters, one cartin' an old-time black valise, and the other with his arms wrapped around a full sized featherbed in a blue and white tick.

"Gee!" says I. "Aunty carries her own scenery with her, don't she?"

"That's Bismarck in the cage," says Dyke.

"How Bizzy has changed!" says I. "But why the feather mattress?"

"She won't sleep on anything else," says he. "Watch how pleased my sisters look. They just love this—not! But she insists on having the whole family here to meet her."

I must say for Mr. Mallory that he stood it well, a heavy swell like him givin' the glad hand in public to a quaint old freak like that. But Aunt Elvira don't waste much time swappin' fam'ly greetin's.

"Where is Dyckman?" says she, settin' her chin for trouble. "Isn't he here?"

"Oh, yes," says Mr. Mallory. "Right over there," and he points his cane handle to where Dyke and me are grouped on the side lines.

"Here, hold Bismarck!" says Aunty, jammin' the brass cage into Mr. Mallory's arm, and with that she pikes straight over to us. I never mistrusted she'd be in any doubt as to which was which, until I sees her look from one to the other, kind of waverin'. No wonder, though; for, from the descriptions she'd had, neither of us came up to the divinity student specifications. Yet it was something of a shock when she fixes them sharp old lamps on me and says:

"Land to goodness! You?"

"Reverse!" says I. "Here's the guilty party," and I pushes Dyke to the front.

She don't gasp, or go up in the air, or throw any kind of a fit, like I expected. As she looks him over careful, from the sporty hat to the wide soled shoes, I notices her eyes twinkle.

"Hum! I thought as much!" says she. "Craig always could lie easier than he could tell the truth. Young man, you don't look to me like a person called to hold orders."

"Glad of it, Aunty," says Dyke, with a grin. "I don't feel that way."

"And you don't look as if you had broken down your health studying for the ministry, either!" she goes on.

"You don't mean to say they filled you up with that?" says Dyke. "Hee-haw!"

"Huh!" says Aunty. "It's a joke, is it? At least you're not afraid to tell the truth. I guess I want to have a little private talk with you. Who's this other young man?"

"This is Professor McCabe," says Dyke. "He's a friend of mine."

"Let him come along, too," says Aunty. "Perhaps he can supply what you leave out."

And, say, the old girl knew what she wanted and when she wanted it, all right! There was no bunkoin' her out of it, either. Mr. Mallory leads her out to his brougham and does his best to shoo her in with him and Mrs. Mallory and away from Dyke; but it was no go.

"I will ride up with Dyckman and his friend," says she. "And I want to go in one of those new automobile cabs I've heard so much about."

"Good! We'll get one, Aunty," says Dyke, and then he whispers in my ear, "Slip around the corner and call for Jerry Powers. Number 439. He can make a taxi take hurdles and water jumps."

I don't know whether it was luck or not, but Jerry was on the stand with the tin flag up, and inside of two minutes the three of us was stowed away inside, with the bag on top, and Dyke holdin' Bismarck in his lap.

"Now my featherbed," says Aunt Elvira, and she has the porter jam it in alongside of me, which makes more or less of a full house. Then the procession starts, our taxi in the lead, the brougham second, and the married sisters trailin' behind in a hansom.

"My sakes! but these things do ride easy!" says Aunty, settlin' back in her corner. "Can they go any faster, Dyckman?"

"Just wait until we get straightened out on the avenue," says Dyke, and tips me the roguish glance.

"I've ridden behind some fast horses in my time," says the old lady; "so you can't scare me. But now, Dyckman, I'd like to know exactly what you've been doing, and what you intend to do."

Well, Dyke starts in to unload the whole yarn, beginnin' by ownin' up that he'd scratched the Bishop proposition long ago. And he was statin' some of his troubles at college, when I gets a backward glimpse out of the side window at something that makes me sit up. First off I thought it was another snow storm with flakes bigger'n I'd ever seen before, and then I tumbles to the situation. It ain't snow; it's feathers. In jammin' that mattress into the taxi the tick must have had a hole ripped in it, and the part that was bulgin' through the opposite window was leakin' hen foliage to beat the cars.

"Hey!" says I, buttin' in on the confession and pointin' back. "We're losin' part of our cargo."

"Land sakes!" says Aunt Elvira, after one glance. "Stop! Stop!"

At that Dyke pounds on the front glass for the driver to shut off the juice. But Jerry must have had Dyke out before, and maybe he mistook the signal. Anyway, the machine gives a groan and a jerk and we begins skimmin' along the asphalt at double speed. That don't check the moltin' process any, and Dyke was gettin' real excited, when we hears a chuckle from Aunt Elvira.

The old girl has got her eyes trained through the back window. Thanks to our speed and the stiff wind that's blowin' down the avenue, the Mallory brougham, with the horses on the jump to keep up with us, is gettin' the full benefit of the feather storm. The dark green uniforms of the Mallory coachman and footman was being plastered thick, and they was both spittin' out feathers as fast as they could, and the Mallorys was wipin' 'em out of their eyes and ears, and the crowds on the sidewalk has caught on and is enjoyin' the performance, and a mounted cop was starin' at us kind of puzzled, as if he was tryin' to decide whether or not we was breakin' an ordinance.

"Look at Craig! Look at Mabel Ann!" snickers Aunt Elvira. "Tell your man to go faster, Dyckman. Push out more feathers!"

"More feathers it is," says I, shovin' another fold of the bed through the window. Even Bismarck gets excited and starts squawkin'.

Talk about your joy rides! I'll bet that's the only one of the kind ever pulled off on Fifth-ave. And it near tickles the old girl to death. What was a featherbed to her, when she had her sportin' blood up and was gettin' a hunch in on Brother Craig and his wife?

We goes four blocks before we shakes out the last of our ammunition, and by that time the Mallory brougham looks like a poultry wagon after a busy day at the market, while Aunt Elvira has cut loose with the mirth so hard that the velvet bonnet is hangin' under her chin, and Bismarck is out of breath. It's a wonder we wa'n't pinched for breakin' the speed laws; but the traffic cops is so busy watchin' the feather blizzard that they forgets to hold us up. Dyke wants to know if I'll come in for a cup of tea, or ride back with Jerry.

"Thanks, but I'll walk back," says I, as we pulls up at the house. "Guess I can find the trail easy enough, eh?"

I s'posed I'd get a report of the reunion from him next day; but it wa'n't until this mornin' that he shows up here and drags me down to the curb to look at his new sixty-horse-power macadam burner.

"Birthday present from Aunty," says he. "Say, she's all to the good, Shorty. She got over that Bishop idea months ago, all by herself. And what do you think? She says I'm to have a thousand a month, just to enjoy myself on. Whe-e-e! Can I do it?"

"Do it, son," says I. "If you can't, I don't know who can."

---

## CHAPTER XIX

### TURNING A TRICK FOR BEANY

Where'd I collect the Flemish oak tint on muh noble br-r-r-ow? No, not sunnin' myself down to Coney Island. No such tinhorn stunt for me! This is the real plute color, this is, and I laid it on durin' a little bubble tour we'd been takin' through the breakfast doughnut zone.

It was Pinckney's blow. He ain't had the gasolene-burnin' fever very hard until this summer; but when he does get it, he goes the limit, as usual. Course, he's been off on excursions with his friends, and occasionally he's chartered a machine by the day; but I'd never heard him talk of wantin' to own one. And then the first thing I knows he shows up at the house last Monday night in the tonneau of one of these big seven-seater road destroyers, all fitted out complete with spare shoes, hat box, and a double-decker trunk strapped on the rack behind.

"Gee!" says I. "Why didn't you buy a private railroad train while you was about it, Pinckney?"

"Precisely what I thought I was getting," says he. "However, I want you and Sadie to help me test it. We'll start to-morrow morning at nine-thirty. Be all ready, will you?"

"Got any idea where you're going, or how long you'll be gone?" says I.

"Nothing very definite," says he. "Purdy-Pell suggested the shore road to Boston and back through the Berkshires."

"Fine!" says I. "I'd love to go meanderin' through the country with you from now until Christmas; but sad to say I've got one or two——"

"Oh, Renée tells me we can make it in four days," says Pinckney, nodding at the chauffeur. "He's been over the route a dozen times."

Well, I puts the proposition up to Sadie, expectin' she'd queer it first jump; but inside of ten minutes she'd planned out just how she could leave little Sully, and what she should wear, and it's all fixed. I tried to show her where I couldn't afford to quit the studio for two or three weeks, just at this time of year, when so many of my reg'lars need tunin' up after their vacations; but my arguments don't carry much weight.

"Rubbish, Shorty!" says she. "We'll be back before the end of the week, and Swifty Joe can

manage until then. Anyway, we're not going to miss this lovely weather. We're going, that's all!"

"Well," says I to Pinckney, "I've decided to go."

Now this ain't any lightnin' conductor rehash. Bubble tourin' has its good points, and it has its drawbacks, too. If you're willin' to take things as they come along, and you're travelin' with the right bunch, and your own disposition's fair to middlin', why, you can have a bang up time, just like you could anywhere with the same layout. Also, I'm willin' to risk an encore to this partic'lar trip any time I get the chance.

But there was something else I was gettin' at. It don't turn up until along durin' the afternoon of our second day out. We was tearin' along one of them new tar roads between Narragansett Pier and Newport, and I was tryin' to hand a josh to Renée by askin' him to be sure and tell me when we went through Rhode Island, as I wanted to take a glance at it,—for we must have been hittin' fifty an hour, with the engine runnin' as smooth and sweet as a French clock,—when all of a sudden there's a bang like bustin' a paper bag, and we feels the car sag down on one side.

"*Sacré!*" says Renée through his front teeth.

"Ha, ha!" sings out Pinckney. "My first blow-out!"

"Glad you feel so happy over it," says I.

It's a sensation that don't bring much joy, as a rule. Here you are, skimmin' along through the country, glancin' at things sort of casual, same's you do from a Pullman window, but not takin' any int'rest in the scenery except in a general way, only wonderin' now and then how it is people happen to live in places so far away.

And then all in a minute the scenery ain't movin' past you at all. It stops dead in its tracks, like when the film of a movin' picture machine gets tangled up, and there's only one partic'lar scene to look at. It's mighty curious, too, how quick that special spot loses its charm. Also, as a gen'ral rule, such things happen just at the wrong spot in the road. Now we'd been sailin' along over a ridge, where we could look out across Narragansett Bay for miles; but here where our tire had gone on the blink was a kind of dip down between the hills, with no view at all.

First off we all has to pile out and get in Renée's way while he inspects the damage. It's a blow-out for fair, a hole big enough to lay your two hands in, right across the tread, where we'd picked up a broken bottle, or maybe a cast horseshoe with the nails in it. Then, while he proceeds to get busy with the jack and tire irons, we all makes up our minds to a good long wait; for when you tackle one of them big boys, with the rims rusted in, it ain't any fifteen-minute picnic, you know.

Course, Pinckney gets out his fireless bottles and the glasses and improves the time by handin' around somethin' soothin' or cheerin', accordin' to taste. Not bein' thirsty, I begins inspectin' the contagious scenery. It wa'n't anything an artist would yearn to paint. Just back from the road is a sort of shack that looks as though someone might be campin' out in it, and behind that a mess of rough sheds and chicken coops.

Next I discovers that the object down in the field which I'd taken for a scarecrow was a live man. By the motions he's goin' through, he's diggin' potatoes, and from the way he sticks to it, not payin' any attention to us, it seems as if he found it a mighty int'restin' pastime. You'd most think, livin' in an out of the way, forsaken place like that, that most any native would be glad to stop work long enough to look over a hot lookin' bunch like ours.

This one don't seem inclined that way, though. He keeps his back bent and his head down and his hands busy. Now, whenever I've been out in a machine, and we've had any kind of trouble, there's always been a gawpin' committee standin' around, composed of every human being in sight at the time of the casualty, includin' a few that seemed to pop up out of the ground. But here's a case where the only party that can act as an audience ain't doin' his duty. So a fool freak hits me to stroll over and poke him up.

"Hey, you!" says I, vaultin' the fence.

He jerks his head up a little at that, kind of stares in my direction, and then dives into another hill of spuds.

"Huh!" thinks I. "Don't want any city folks in his'n, by chowder! But here's where he gets 'em thrust on him!" and I pikes over for a closer view. Couldn't see much, though, but dirty overalls, blue outing shirt, and an old haymaker's straw hat with a brim that lops down around his face and ears.

"Excuse me," says I; "but ain't you missin' a trick, or is it because you don't feel sociable to-day? How're the murphies pannin' out this season?"

To see the start he gives, you'd think I'd crept up from behind and swatted him one. He straightens up, backs off a step or two, and opens his mouth. "Why—why——" says he, after one or two gasps. "Who are you, please?"

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I'm just a stray stranger. I was being shot through your cunnin' little State on a no-stop schedule, when one of our tires went out of business. Hence this informal call."

"But," says he, hesitatin' and pushin' back the hat brim, "isn't this—er—aren't you Professor McCabe?"

Say, then it was my turn to do the open face act! Course, knockin' around as much as I have and rubbin' against so many diff'rent kinds of folks, I'm liable to run across people that know me

anywhere; but blamed if I expected to do it just walkin' out accidental into a potato orchard.

Sure enough, too, there was something familiar about that long thin nose and the droopy mouth corners; but I couldn't place him. Specially I'd been willin' to pass my oath I'd never known any party that owned such a scatterin' crop of bleached face herbage as he was sportin'. It looked like bunches of old hay on the side of a hill. The stary, faded out blue eyes wa'n't just like any I could remember, either, and I'm gen'rally strong on that point.

"You've called my number, all right," says I; "but, as for returnin' the compliment, you've got me going, neighbor. How do you think I'm looking?"

He makes a weak stab at springin' a smile, about the ghasstliest attempt at that sort of thing I ever watched, and then he shrugs his shoulders. "I—I couldn't say about your looks," says he. "I recognized you by your voice. Perhaps you won't remember me at all. I'm Dexter Bean."

"What!" says I. "Not Beany, that used to do architectin' on the top floor over the studio?"

"Yes," says he.

"And you've forgot my mug so soon?" says I.

"Oh, no!" says he, speakin' up quick. "I haven't forgotten. But I can't see very well now, you know. In fact, I—I'm— Well, it's almost night time with me, Shorty," and by the way he chokes up I can tell how hard it is for him to get out even that much.

"You don't mean," says I, "that—that you—"

He nods, puts his hands up to his face, and turns his head for a minute.

Well, say, I've had lumps come in my throat once in a while before on some account or other; but I never felt so much like I'd swallowed a prize punkin as I did just then. Most night time! Course, you hear of lots of cases, and you know there's asylums where such people are taken care of and taught to weave cane bottoms for chairs; but I tell you when you get right up against such a case, a party you've known and liked, and it's handed to you sudden that he's almost in the stick tappin' class—well, it's apt to get you hard. I know it did me. Why, I didn't know any more what to do or say than a goat. But it was my next.

"Well, well, Beany, old boy!" says I, slidin' an arm across his shoulder. "This is all news to me. Let's get over in the shade and talk this thing over."

"I—I'd like to, Shorty," says he.

So we camps down under a tree next to the fence, and he gives me the story. As he talks, too, it all comes back to me about the first time some of them boys from up stairs towed him down to the studio. He'd drifted in from some Down East crossroads, where he'd taken a course in mechanical drawin' and got the idea that he was an architect. And a greener Rube than him I never expect to see. It was a wonder some milliner hadn't grabbed him and sewed him on a hat before he got to 42d-st.

Maybe that gang of T Square sports didn't find him entertainin', too. Why, he swallowed all the moldy old bunk yarns they passed over, and when they couldn't hold in any longer, and just let loose the hee-haws, he took it good natured, springin' that kind of sad smile of his on 'em, and not even gettin' red around the ears. So the boss set him to sweepin' the floors and tendin' the blueprint frames on the roof.

That's the way he broke in. Then a few months later, when they had a rush of contracts, they tried him out on some detail work. But his drawin' was too ragged. He was so good natured, though, and so willin' to do anything for anybody, that they kept him around, mainly to spring new gags on, so far as I could see.

It wa'n't until he got at some house plans by accident that they found out where he fitted in. He'd go over a set of them puzzle rolls that mean as much to me as a laundry ticket, and he'd point out where there was room for another clothes closet off some chamber here, and a laundry chute there, and how the sink in the butler's pantry was on the wrong side for a right handed dish washer, and a lot of little details that nobody else would think of unless they'd lived in just such a house for six months or so. Beany the Home Expert, they called him after that, and before any house plans was O. K.'d by the boss he had to revise 'em.

Then he got to hangin' round the studio after hours, helpin' Swifty Joe clean up and listenin' to his enlightenin' conversation. It takes a mighty talented listener to get Swifty started; but when he does get his tongue once limbered up, and is sure of his audience, he enjoys nothin' like givin' off his views in wholesale lots.

As for me, I never said a whole lot to Beany, nor him to me; but I couldn't help growin' to like the cuss, because he was one of them gentle, quiet kind that you cotton to without knowin' exactly why. Not that I missed him a lot when he disappeared. Fact was, he just dropped out, and I don't know as I even asked what had become of him.

I was hearin' now, though. It wa'n't any great tragedy, to start with. Some of the boys got skylarkin' one lunch hour, and Beany was watchin' 'em, when a lead paper weight he was holdin' slipped out of his hand, struck the end of a ruler, and flipped it up into his face. A sharp corner hit him in the eye, that's all. He had the sore peeper bound up for three or four days before he took it to a hospital.

When he didn't show up again they wondered some, and one of the firm inquired for him at his old boardin' place. You know how it is in town. There's so many comin' and goin' that it's hard

to keep track of 'em all. So Beany just faded out.

He told me that when the hospital doctor put it to him flat how bad off his bum lamp was, and how the other was due to go the same way, he just started out and walked aimless for two days and nights, hardly stoppin'. Then he steadied down, pulled himself together, and mapped out a plan.

Besides architectin', all he knew how to do was to raise chickens. He figured that if he could get a little place off where land was cheap, and get the hang of it well in his head before his glim was doused altogether, he might worry along. He couldn't bear to think of goin' back to his old home, or hangin' around among strangers until he had to be herded into one of them big brick barracks. He wanted to be alone and outdoors.

He had a few dollars with him that he'd saved up, and when he struck this little sand plot, miles from anywhere, he squat right down on it, built his shack, got some settin' hens, and prepared for a long siege in the dark. One eye was all to the bad already, and the other was beginnin' to grow dim. Nice cheerful proposition to wake up to every mornin', wa'n't it?

Does Beany whine any in tellin' it, though? Never a whimper! Gets off his little jokes on himself about the breaks he makes cookin' his meals, such as sweetenin' his coffee out of the salt bag, and bitin' into a cake of bar soap, thinkin' it was a slice of the soggy bread he'd make. Keeps his courage up, too, by trying to think that maybe livin' outdoors and improvin' his health will help him get back his sight.

"I'm sure I am some better already," says he. "For months all I could see out of my left eye was purple and yellow and blue rings. Now I don't see those at all."

"That so?" says I, battin' my head for some come-back that would fit. "Why—er—I should think you'd miss 'em, Beany."

Brilliant, wa'n't it? But Beany throws back his head and lets out the first real laugh he's indulged in for over a year.

"No, hardly that," says he. "I don't care about carrying my rainbows around with me."

"But look here, Beany," says I. "You can't stay here doin' the poultry hermit act."

"It's the only thing I'm fit for," says he; "so I must."

"Then you've got to let us send you a few things occasionally," says I. "I'll look up your old boss and—"

"No, no!" says he. "I'm getting along all right. I've been a little lonesome; but I'll pull through."

"You ought to be doin' some doctorin', though," says I.

He shrugs his shoulders again and waves one hand. "What's the use?" says he. "They told me at the hospital there wasn't any help. No, I'll just stay here and plug it out by myself."

Talk about clear grit, eh! And maybe you can frame up my feelin's when he insists there ain't a thing I can do for him. About then, too, I hears 'em shoutin' from the car for me to come along, as they're all ready to start again. So all I does is swap grips with Beany, get off some fool speech about wishin' him luck, and leave him standin' there in the potato field.

Somehow I didn't enjoy the rest of that day's run very much, and when they jollies me by askin' who's my scarecrow acquaintance I couldn't work myself up to tellin' 'em about him. But all I could think of was Beany back there pokin' around alone in the fog that was settlin' down thicker and thicker every day. And in the course of two or three hours I had a thought.

"Pinckney," says I, as we was puttin' up in Newport, "you know all sorts of crackerjacks. Got any expert eye doctors on your list?"

He chews that over a minute or so, and concludes that he has, a Dr. Jason Craige, who's right here in town.

"He's the real thing, is he?" says I.

"Most skillful oculist in the country," says Pinckney, "and charges accordingly."

"As high as fifty a throw?" says I.

"Fifty!" says Pinckney. "You should see his Cliff Walk cottage."

"Let's," says I. "There's a friend of mine I'd like to have him take a look at to-morrow."

"No use," says Pinckney. "He drops his practice entirely during his vacation; wouldn't treat an Emperor then, I've heard him say. He's a good deal of a crank on that—and billiards."

"But see here, Pinckney," says I, and I goes on to give him the whole tale about Beany, puttin' it over as strong as I knew how.

"Sorry," says Pinckney; "but I know of no way in which I could induce him to change his custom. He's Scotch, you know, and as obstinate as— Hold on, Shorty! I've an idea. How strong will you back my game of billiards?"

Now of all the erratic cue performers I ever watched, Pinckney gets the medal. There's times when he can nurse 'em along the cushion and run up quite a string, and then again I've seen him play a game any duffer'd be ashamed of. But I begins to smell out his scheme.

"If it means a chance for Beany," says I, "I'll bid good-by to five twenties and let you do your worst."

"A wager of that sort would tempt Craige, if anything would," says Pinckney. "We'll try it on, anyway."

Whether it was the bluff Pinckney threw, or the insultin' way he suggests that the Doc don't dare take him up, I can't say. All I know is that inside of half an hour we was in Jason Craige's private billiard room, him and Pinckney peeled down to their shirts, and at it.

As a rule I could go to sleep watchin' the best three-ball carom game ever played; but durin' this contest I holds the marker's stick and never misses a move. First off Pinckney plays about as skillful as a trained pig practicin' on the piano; but after four or five minutes of punk exhibition he takes a brace and surprises himself.

309

No need going into details. Pinckney wins out, and the Doc slams his cue into the rack with some remark about producin' the charity patient to-morrow. Did I? I routs Renée out at daylight next mornin', has him make a fifty-mile run at Vanderbilt Cup speed, and we has Beany in the eye expert's lib'ry before he comes down for breakfast.

It takes Dr. Craige less'n three minutes to discover that the hospital hand who told Beany he was bound to lose both lamps was a fat brained nut who'd be more useful drivin' an ashcart. The Doc lays Beany out on a leather couch, uses a little cocaine in the right place, monkeys around a minute or so with some shiny hardware, and announces that after he's laid up for twenty-four hours in a dark room, usin' the wash reg'lar, he'll be able to see as well as any of us.

It's a fact, too; for Beany goes back on his old job next Monday mornin'.

"By Jove!" says Pinckney, after the trick is turned. "A miracle, Craige!"

"Miracle be blowed!" says the Doc. "You accomplished the miracle last night, Pinckney, when you ran thirty-two buttons on scratch hits."

THE END

---

## THE NOVELS OF GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's list.

GRAUSTARK. Illustrated with Scenes from the Play.

With the appearance of this novel, the author introduced a new type of story and won for himself a perpetual reading public. It is the story of love behind a throne in a new and strange country.

BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK. Illustrations by Harrison Fisher.

This is a sequel to "Graustark." A bewitching American girl visits the little principality and there has a romantic love affair.

PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK. Illustrations by A. I. Keller.

The Prince of Graustark is none other than the son of the heroine of "Graustark." Beverly's daughter, and an American multimillionaire with a brilliant and lovely daughter also figure in the story.

BREWSTER'S MILLIONS.

Illustrated with Scenes from the Photo-Play.

A young man, required to spend one million dollars in one year, in order to inherit *seven*, accomplishes the task in this lively story.

COWARDICE COURT.

Illus. by Harrison Fisher and decorations by Theodore Hapgood.

A romance of love and adventure, the plot forming around a social feud in the Adirondacks in which an English girl is tempted into being a traitor by a romantic young American.

THE HOLLOW OF HER HAND. Illustrated by A. I. Keller.

A story of modern New York, built around an ancient enmity, born of the scorn of the aristocrat for one of inferior birth.

WHAT'S-HIS-NAME. Illustrations by Harrison Fisher.

"What's-His-Name" is the husband of a beautiful and popular actress who is billboarded on Broadway under an assumed name. The very opposite manner in which these two live their lives brings a dramatic climax to the story.

*Ask for Complete free list of G. & D. Popular Copyrighted Fiction*  
GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

#### THE LIGHT OF WESTERN STARS

A New York society girl buys a ranch which becomes the center of frontier warfare. Her loyal superintendent rescues her when she is captured by bandits. A surprising climax brings the story to a delightful close.

#### THE RAINBOW TRAIL

The story of a young clergyman who becomes a wanderer in the great western uplands—until at last love and faith awake.

#### DESERT GOLD

The story describes the recent uprising along the border, and ends with the finding of the gold which two prospectors had willed to the girl who is the story's heroine.

#### RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE

A picturesque romance of Utah of some forty years ago when Mormon authority ruled. The prosecution of Jane Withersteen is the theme of the story.

#### THE LAST OF THE PLAINSMEN

This is the record of a trip which the author took with Buffalo Jones, known as the *preserver of the American bison, across the Arizona desert and of a hunt in* "that wonderful country of deep canons and giant pines."

#### THE HERITAGE OF THE DESERT

A lovely girl, who has been reared among Mormons, learns to love a young New Englander. The Mormon religion, however, demands that the girl shall become the second wife of one of the Mormons—Well, that's the problem of this great story.

#### THE SHORT STOP

The young hero, tiring of his factory grind, starts out to win fame and fortune as a professional ball player. His hard knocks at the start are followed by such success as clean sportsmanship, courage and honesty ought to win.

#### BETTY ZANE

This story tells of the bravery and heroism of Betty, the beautiful young sister of old Colonel Zane, one of the bravest pioneers.

#### THE LONE STAR RANGER

After killing a man in self defense, Buck Duane becomes an outlaw along the Texas border. In a camp on the Mexican side of the river, he finds a young girl held prisoner, and in attempting to rescue her, brings down upon himself the wrath of her captors and henceforth is hunted on one side by honest men, on the other by outlaws.

#### THE BORDER LEGION

Joan Randle, in a spirit of anger, sent Jim Cleve out to a lawless Western mining camp, to prove his mettle. Then realizing that she loved him—she followed him out. On her way, she is captured by a bandit band, and trouble begins when she shoots Kells, the leader—and nurses him to health again. Here enters another romance—when Joan, disguised as an outlaw, observes Jim, in the throes of dissipation. A gold strike, a thrilling robbery—gambling and gun play carry you along breathlessly.

#### THE LAST OF THE GREAT SCOUTS,

By Helen Cody Wetmore and Zane Grey

The life story of Colonel William F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill," as told by his sister and Zane Grey. It begins with his boyhood in Iowa and his first encounter with an Indian. We see "Bill" as a pony express rider, then near Fort Sumter as Chief of the Scouts, and later engaged in the most dangerous Indian campaigns. There is also a very interesting account of the travels of "The Wild West" Show. No character in public life makes a stronger appeal to the imagination of America than "Buffalo Bill," whose daring and bravery made him famous

Grosset & Dunlap, Publishers, New York

---

### B. M. Bower's Novels Thrilling Western Romances

Large 12 mos. Handsomely bound in cloth. Illustrated

#### CHIP, OF THE FLYING U

A breezy wholesome tale, wherein the love affairs of Chip and Delia Whitman are charmingly and humorously told. Chip's jealousy of Dr. Cecil Grantham, who turns out to be a big, blue eyed young woman is very amusing. A clever, realistic story of the American Cow-puncher.

#### THE HAPPY FAMILY



A lively and amusing story, dealing with the adventures of eighteen jovial, big hearted Montana cowboys. Foremost amongst them, we find Ananias Green, known as Andy, whose imaginative powers cause many lively and exciting adventures.

#### HER PRAIRIE KNIGHT

A realistic story of the plains, describing a gay party of Easterners who exchange a cottage at Newport for the rough homeliness of a Montana ranch-house. The merry-hearted cowboys, the fascinating Beatrice, and the effusive Sir Redmond, become living, breathing personalities.

#### THE RANGE DWELLERS

Here are everyday, genuine cowboys, just as they really exist. Spirited action, a range feud between two families, and a Romeo and Juliet courtship make this a bright, jolly, entertaining story, without a dull page.

#### THE LURE OF DIM TRAILS

A vivid portrayal of the experience of an Eastern author, among the cowboys of the West, in search of "local color" for a new novel. "Bud" Thurston learns many a lesson while following "the lure of the dim trails" but the hardest, and probably the most welcome, is that of love.

#### THE LONESOME TRAIL

"Weary" Davidson leaves the ranch for Portland, where conventional city life palls on him. A little branch of sage brush, pungent with the atmosphere of the prairie, and the recollection of a pair of large brown eyes soon compel his return. A wholesome love story.

#### THE LONG SHADOW

A vigorous Western story, sparkling with the free, outdoor, life of a mountain ranch. Its scenes shift rapidly and its actors play the game of life fearlessly and like men. It is a fine love story from start to finish.

*Ask for Complete free list of G. & D. Popular Copyrighted Fiction*  
GROSSET & DUNLAP, 526 WEST 26TH ST., NEW YORK

---

### BOOTH TARKINGTON'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

SEVENTEEN. Illustrated by Arthur William Brown.

No one but the creator of Penrod could have portrayed the immortal young people of this story. Its humor is irresistible and reminiscent of the time when the reader was Seventeen.

PENROD. Illustrated by Gordon Grant.

This is a picture of a boy's heart, full of the lovable, humorous, tragic things which are locked secrets to most older folks. It is a finished, exquisite work.

PENROD AND SAM. Illustrated by Worth Brehm.

Like "Penrod" and "Seventeen," this book contains some remarkable phases of real boyhood and some of the best stories of juvenile prankishness that have ever been written.

THE TURMOIL. Illustrated by C. E. Chambers.

Bibbs Sheridan is a dreamy, imaginative youth, who revolts against his father's plans for him to be a servitor of big business. The love of a fine girl turns Bibbs' life from failure to success.

THE GENTLEMAN FROM INDIANA. Frontispiece.

A story of love and politics,—more especially a picture of a country editor's life in Indiana, but the charm of the book lies in the love interest.

THE FLIRT. Illustrated by Clarence F. Underwood.

The "Flirt," the younger of two sisters, breaks one girl's engagement, drives one man to suicide, causes the murder of another, leads another to lose his fortune, and in the end marries a stupid and unpromising suitor, leaving the really worthy one to marry her sister.

*Ask for Complete free list of G. & D. Popular Copyrighted Fiction*  
GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

---

### GROSSET & DUNLAP'S DRAMATIZED NOVELS

#### THE KIND THAT ARE MAKING THEATRICAL HISTORY

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

WITHIN THE LAW. By Bayard Veiller & Marvin Dana. Illustrated by Wm. Charles Cooke.

This is a novelization of the immensely successful play which ran for two years in New York and Chicago.

The plot of this powerful novel is of a young woman's revenge directed against her employer who allowed her to be sent to prison for three years on a charge of theft, of which she was innocent.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MARY. By Robert Carlton Brown. Illustrated with scenes from the play.

This is a narrative of a young and innocent country girl who is suddenly thrown into the very heart of New York, "the land of her dreams," where she is exposed to all sorts of temptations and dangers.

The story of Mary is being told in moving pictures and played in theatres all over the world.

THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM. By David Belasco. Illustrated by John Rae.

This is a novelization of the popular play in which David Warfield, as Old Peter Grimm, scored such a remarkable success.

The story is spectacular and extremely pathetic but withal, powerful, both as a book and as a play.

THE GARDEN OF ALLAH. By Robert Hichens.

This novel is an intense, glowing epic of the great desert, sunlit barbaric, with its marvelous atmosphere of vastness and loneliness.

It is a book of rapturous beauty, vivid in word painting. The play has been staged with magnificent cast and gorgeous properties.

BEN HUR. A Tale of the Christ. By General Lew Wallace.

The whole world has placed this famous Religious-Historical Romance on a height of pre-eminence which no other novel of its time has reached. The clashing of rivalry and the deepest human passions, the perfect reproduction of brilliant Roman life, and the tense, fierce atmosphere of the arena have kept their deep fascination. A tremendous dramatic success.

BOUGHT AND PAID FOR. By George Broadhurst and Arthur Hornblow. Illustrated with scenes from the play.

A stupendous arraignment of modern marriage which has created an interest on the stage that is almost unparalleled. The scenes are laid in New York, and deal with conditions among both the rich and poor.

The interest of the story turns on the day-by-day developments which show the young wife the price she has paid.

*Ask for Complete free list of G. & D. Popular Copyrighted Fiction*  
GROSSET & DUNLAP, 526 WEST 26TH ST., NEW YORK

---

## THE NOVELS OF STEWART EDWARD WHITE

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

THE BLAZED TRAIL. Illustrated by Thomas Fogarty.

A wholesome story with gleams of humor, telling of a young man who blazed his way to fortune through the heart of the Michigan pines.

THE CALL OF THE NORTH. Ills. with Scenes from the Play.

The story centers about a Hudson Bay trading post, known as "The Conjuror's House" (the original title of the book.)

THE RIVERMAN. Ills. by N. C. Wyeth and C. F. Underwood.

The story of a man's fight against a river and of a struggle between honesty and grit on the one side, and dishonesty and shrewdness on the other.

RULES OF THE GAME. Illustrated by Lejaren A. Hiller.

The romance of the son of "The Riverman." The young college hero goes into the lumber camp, is antagonized by "graft," and comes into the romance of his life.

GOLD. Illustrated by Thomas Fogarty.

The gold fever of '49 is pictured with vividness. A part of the story is laid in Panama, the route taken by the gold-seekers.

THE FOREST. Illustrated by Thomas Fogarty.

The book tells of the canoe trip of the author and his companion into the great woods. Much information about camping and outdoor life. A splendid treatise on woodcraft.

THE MOUNTAINS. Illustrated by Fernand Lungren.

An account of the adventures of a five months' camping trip in the Sierras of California. The author has followed a true sequence of events.

THE CABIN. Illustrated with photographs by the author.

A chronicle of the building of a cabin home in a forest-girdled meadow of the Sierras. Full of nature and woodcraft, and the shrewd philosophy of "California John."

THE GRAY DAWN. Illustrated by Thomas Fogarty.

This book tells of the period shortly after the first mad rush for gold in California. A young lawyer and his wife, initiated into the gay life of San Francisco, find their ways parted through his downward course, but succeeding events bring the "gray dawn of better things" for both of them.

*Ask for Complete free list of G. & D. Popular Copyrighted Fiction*  
GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

---

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ODD NUMBERS \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE  
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing

Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary

Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

#### 1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.