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BY
KONRAD BERCOVICI

BONI & LIVERIGHT
NEW YORK 1919

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Printed in the United States of America

Acknowledgment is hereby made to the New York World, for permission to reprint a number of the stories included in this volume.

TO
JOHN O'HARA COSGRAVE

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DUST OF NEW YORK

THERESA THE VAMP

New York is an orchestra playing a symphony. If you hear the part of only one instrument—first violin or oboe, 'cello or French horn—it is incongruous. To understand the symphony you must hear all the instruments playing together, each its own part, to the invisible baton of that great conductor, Father Time.

But the symphony is heard only very rarely. Most of the time New York is tuning up. Each voice is practising its part of the score—the little solos for the violins to please the superficial sentimentalists, and the twenty bars for the horn to satisfy the martial spirit in men.

But don't, oh sightseers, don't think you know New York because you have sauntered through a few streets and eaten hot tamales in a Mexican restaurant, or burnt your tongue with goulash in some "celebrated Hungarian palace." Only to very few privileged ones is it given to hear the symphony—and they have to pay dearly for it. But it is worth the price.

They called her the Vampire, or Vamp for short. Her name was Theresa, and she was born somewhere on Hungarian soil in Tokai, where flows the dark blue water of the Tisza, not far from the Herpad Mountains on which grows the grape for the luxurious Tokai wine.

Now, when and why Theresa came to New York nobody knew. But all were glad she was here ... here, at a little table in a corner of the "Imperial" on Second Avenue. When one met a friend on the street and asked: "Anybody at the 'Imperial?'" and the answer was "Nobody there to-night," it simply meant that the Vamp was not there. The other two hundred or more guests did not count.

She spoke very little. She smoked all the time, and her fiery dark eyes hid behind the thin smoke curtain from her cigarette. Young men had no chance at her table. They seldom came near her at all. They were afraid of her. Only married men dared approach her, relying on their experience to extricate themselves when in danger.

And yet there was no danger! At some hour after midnight Theresa brushed the ashes off her waist from the "last" cigarette, arranged her hair a bit, and announced to the company "I am going."

It always was irrevocable. A newcomer was known by the fact that he offered to see her home. The habitués would then answer in chorus, "I can find my way alone," and laugh and tease the unfortunate who did not know that Theresa went home alone.

After Theresa's departure her friends would scatter to different tables and take up cudgels for this or that or the other, always with the conscience that on the street the question would be: "Anybody there?" and the answer would be the inevitable "Nobody there." So most of them would leave the place soon after Theresa—dispersing over the city, each to his home, bringing there the secret emptiness that was in him.

"Ferenczy is here," a friend greeted me one day.

"Ferenczy who?" I asked.

"Ferenczy, the great painter, man!"

I did not know much about the great Hungarian artist, but my friend knew, and urged me to come and see him. I found him at the "Imperial."

Tall, thin, dark, passionate, the picture of the painter as portrayed in novels. He spoke about art like a true artist. Some of the ladies, usually placidly sipping their coffee, became very self-conscious as he declaimed a bit too loudly about beauty of line and harmony of color. Even the two fighting musical critics, old Newman and Dr. Feldys, forgot the nightly squabble over the merits of modern music, when Ferenczy talked.

In the midst of all appeared Theresa. She went straight to her table. From different sections of the café men rose, and after making their apologies to the other guests, walked up to where the Vamp was waiting for some one to help her take off her coat.

Ferenczy turned about to see who caused such a stir. A few minutes later he was sitting opposite her, the two oblivious of everybody else. He was her fellow countryman, was born at the foot of the same mountains, the Herpads.

And we were all surprised when she did not say "I can find my way alone," two hours after midnight, and allowed Ferenczy to see her home.

When Ferenczy entered the café the next evening there were two different camps. One hated him because he took the Vamp home, and one admired him because he had succeeded where everybody else had failed.

When Ferenczy entered the café there were two different camps.

He went straight to Theresa's table, which was usually vacant until she came, and ordered something from the astonished waiter. They had not realized before how boisterous a mustache can be, and not one guest felt comfortable in his workaday garb facing the immaculately black and white Ferenczy.

The other guests broke precedent that evening and came to sit at the Vamp's table before she had arrived. Every time the door opened all the heads turned in its direction, still maintaining or arguing about something. And thus guests, perfect strangers, felt the weight of words hurled at them as from a cannon's mouth.

And the door was never still. The Imperial was the home of all the disappointed, disabused men of the East Side; men and women from the four corners of the earth. Former poets who studied dentistry to earn a living, and who are now completely swallowed up by their profession, came nightly, to hear themselves mock the former music composer who is now a physician, and over the ears in real estate transactions. This physician once gave to a patient a prescription as follows: "60 pounds of nails, fourteen window panes, 3×4, 12 pounds of putty and 80 pounds of lime."

Former sculptors, former painters, former dancers, former men, former women, all gather in the café of the might-have-beens, and all invite every newcomer to witness in them his own doom. Some go to concerts to hear music which they might have composed, others read poetry which they might have written, criticise a play the thought of which had lingered in their own minds for years without coming to utterance. Disabused socialists now owning factories, and great, great chemists now clerking in some drug store of the vicinity, assemble there.

Theresa came that night. Ferenczy helped her with the coat, and lit her cigarette and ordered her coffee, and they talked earnestly in their mother tongue the rest of the evening. One by one the other guests left the table until the two were alone. It was after 2 A. M. when they left the place. They were almost the last guests. He saw her home.

The following evening Theresa's former friends discussed Ferenczy. His work, while having a certain charm which appealed to the uninitiated, was worthless as art, they decreed.

He never did anything worth while. He was just good enough for America; to make magazine covers. And Andrasky, the journalist, remembered that an art critic in the Budapest Hirlap called Ferenczy "Muncaczy's Monkey."

A few days later one of the Magyar papers had a derogatory article about Ferenczy, in which the "Budapester" critic was cited.

The painter himself was not seen at the Imperial for a few evenings, neither was Theresa. Scouts went out to find them. It was inconceivable that the Vamp should not be out every evening!

At the café they began to accuse one another with writing the article, which was anonymous. That vacant table near the wall stood like the altar of a deserted shrine.

One day Fuller, the musician, met Andrasky around Tenth Street, going in the opposite direction from the Imperial.

"Whereto, Andrasky?"

"Just for a walk."

And because he did not ask "Anybody there?" Fuller suspected that he knew. He followed the journalist at a distance and discovered them, the three of them, in a little Russian restaurant on Tenth Street.

In a week all the Imperial guests had gone over to the Tenth Street café. Neither service nor food was as good as in the old place, but they all professed to like the new one. They did not know whether it was because of Ferenczy or because of Theresa. She paid no attention at all to them.

In the following few months some of the might-have-beens tried to resurrect themselves. One of the former poets wrote a long poem. Another had a play accepted. The composer tried his fingers again on the keyboard.

The tables at the Imperial were vacant. The waiters were asleep on their feet. It lasted throughout the winter. In the spring the proprietor went into bankruptcy.

"Anybody there?" is still a question on Second Avenue after midnight. Only the "there" is somewhere else, and nobody knows who the "Anybody" is—not even Theresa, because in the new place her former admirers read their poetry and plays, try their songs and hang their pictures on the walls. Even her table is not exclusively HER table any longer.

THE TROUBLES OF A PERFECT TYPE

Walk through Grand Street from Third Avenue to Clinton Street, which is not a long distance, and you have the types of the whole world before you. They are not in concentrated form; they are diluted. But if you analyze, even hurriedly, you will soon be able to know the components of each one of them.

A remote Tartar ancestor of one of the pushcart peddlers is plainly seen in the small sunken black eyes. In another the straight line of the back of the head tells you that his mother, or his grandmother, had lived once in Hungary. In another one the Slav type, the flat fleshy nose, is mixed with the Wallachian strong chin. Some Teuton blood calls out through the heavy cast of an otherwise typical Austrian Jew. A Spanish grandee, as if come out from a page of Cervantes, is selling shoe laces and cuff buttons. And a Moroccan prince, ill at ease in his European garb, is offering to the passer-by some new Burbankian fig-plum-orange combination.

The vendors call out their wares in what seems at first a tongue all their own. But a trained ear soon discovers that it is English, or rather that English is the essential component of the chemistry of their language; the rest being words of their own creation, or scraps from a dozen other languages which stuck to the people of woe in their two thousand years peregrination from land to land.

They needed a Jewish type in producing a screen drama. Not one of the actors, semi-actors or hanger-ons of the company fitted the demands of the omniscient director; so he set out to find the type himself. Seated in a large touring car, he traversed every street of lower Manhattan, carefully scanning the faces of men. For a full week he thus busied himself without much success, unable to discover what he wanted.

The beginning of the second week found the director roaming through the east side on foot. He stocked up more cigarettes than his pockets could hold, visiting the innumerable little shops on

every street, and drank tea in a dozen obscure cafés without locating his man, the counterpart of his imagination. But on the fourth day of the second week his patience and perseverance were rewarded.

As he was sipping a glass of tea in a little coffee house the door opened and a tall, lanky fellow appeared as if drawn by the magic power of the director's desire.

He sat down at the first table and ordered something to eat. The director could not take his eyes off him. That spare, long, black beard, undulating to midway between chin and belt, those side locks, the drooping mustache that hardly covered the long thin upper lip, that misty something over the whole countenance, and the garb in which the man was wrapped up! It was as he wanted, and better. It was the ideal type for which he had searched the whole city in vain, and now, suddenly, when least expected, the man had come by himself.

Mr. Cord was too anxious to realize his plans to be bold and direct. After deliberating with himself as to the best method, he did what he had seen done in the movies years ago. He called the waiter, tipped him liberally and asked information about the man sitting at the corner table.

"That fellow there? It's Samuelson, from the candy store on the corner."

"Is he making much money?"

"Him?" the waiter sighed. "Selling four sticks of gum and three packages of cigarettes a day."

Mr. Cord began to see his line of action.

"Is he a clever fellow?"

"He plays chess with the boss and beats him every time."

Meanwhile the bearded fellow got through with what was before him, wiped his mouth with the back of his sleeve, and was ready to go, when the director called out:

"I say, Mr. Samuelson, can I see you for a few minutes?"

"What do you want to see me for?" the man asked, hesitatingly approaching Mr. Cord's table.

"Would you not sit down and have a glass of tea with me? Waiter! two more teas and some cake, please."

A few minutes later the two men were engaged in earnest conversation. The director wanted to draw him out and did not know how to do it, while Samuelson scented that the other one needed him, and decided to be on his guard until he should know more definitely what it all was about.

Has he ever gone to the theatre? Sure enough. He has seen every play in the Jewish theatres, and Libin the playwright, bought his cigarettes from him every day.

Has he seen the movies? Sure enough. When it was very cold in the store, and on Saturdays. What warmer place was there than the movie theatre on the street! And cheap too, five cents, including war tax.

Does he like them? Of course! What a question!

How would he like to be seen in the movies? Well, that was a different question. He could not do any of the stunts the movie actors do. Leaping from a galloping horse, falling down a precipice, or walking over from one side of the street to the other on a telephone wire a hundred feet from the ground, was not exactly his profession or to his liking. But what a director wants cannot be denied. This one talked long and convincingly, ordered tea after tea and cigar after cigar, and got Samuelson so excited that at the end of their conversation the candy store keeper was convinced a greater actor than himself had never yet trod the earth. To clinch the bargain the director gave Samuelson twenty dollars on account of a promised fifty dollars a week contract, and it was agreed that the store keeper was to present himself ready for duty a week later.

And now, to preserve the flavor of what happened, I will tell the story in Samuelson's own words —or rather, I will use as many of Samuelson's own words as possible.

"And when that feller Cord, or what's his name, when he walked away and I remain alone with twenty dollars in my fist—like that—what do I do but sit and think what a great country this is.

"In Russia I have been a tailor twenty years, and nobody saw that I was a great actor, not even myself. I met thousands of people. They saw me at work and at prayer. They saw me every week day and every Sabbath. My own wife in Russia has never seen that I was a great actor. And here comes a man I have never seen and who never saw me before and offers me tea and cake and gives me twenty dollars and a contract for fifty dollars a week, and who tells me I am a great

actor! So of course I am a great actor.

"So this is a great country, I said to myself! And now that I am such a great actor, why should I have such a little store that don't even pay for coals in the winter? Why should I? Why? So I goes out to Mendel the waiter and he calls by the telephone a jobber and I sell him the whole store, and the shelves, and the show case, and the sign over the door, and even sell him the big lamp I bought on payments. He gives me two hundred dollars for everything. I know he cheats me, but what do I care! Am I not a great actor?

"And I go out and watch the great actor, Adler, come out of the theatre, and I see how he goes dressed up and with a high hat. So I say to myself, this is how you have to be dressed up. And I go in a store and buy a what you call, a full dress suit and a high hat and white shirts and collars and neckties and patent leather shoes. And I go to a barber and tell him: This is a great country and I am a great actor. And when I got up from his chair I looked almost like Adler. The hairs cut nicely and no beard, no moustache, no sidelocks.

"When I am through I go to the office of the movie company.

"When Mr. Cord sees me all dressed up and with no beard he gets terribly excited and throws me out of the office.

"What have you done with your beard and side locks?" he yelled, and he nearly wanted to murder me.

"And now I have to sit and wait until my beard and mustache will grow back. I am ashamed to go to the café house. The boss will laugh, the waiter and everybody will laugh, and with a high hat how can I go to look for work at my trade? And my hairs grow so slowly!

"What kind of a country is this?"

HOW THE IBANEZES LOVE

If you ever find yourself on Thirty-fourth Street near Seventh Avenue, don't fail to hunt up a certain Spanish table d'hote restaurant. This section of New York is like a border town on the lower Pyrenees in France. People speak French with the Spanish accent and Spanish with the singsong of Southern France.

Sitting on the broad steps of the fine old massive brown stone houses of the district, children of old Catalonia, Dons and Donas from Madrid and Barcelona, using a latinized English all their own, exchange stories and opinions with their French neighbors.

Chords struck on a guitar, to accompany a subdued voice, high colors on the window curtains, a mixed odor of garlic, incense and heavy-scented perfumes, suggest something indefinably Moorish, Alhambresque; slow yet passionate, like cold fire.

And lo! the mirage vanishes! You are out of the district. The modest warm curve of the Orient has disappeared, the arrogant cold straight line of the Occident stares at you. You are in the heart of busy old New York.

But if you are hungry, hungry for good, hunt up the Ibanez place. Four two-seat tables, two three-seat ones, and two big tables of elastic capacity in the centre. The wall paper is red, the shade on the lamps brown, the ceiling is golden, the lady is fair, the food is good, and the wine....

The Ibanezes have a daughter, Juanita. She was twenty when I last saw her. Her hair fell over the forehead like foam from an overful glass of liquid amber. Altogether she reminded one of molten gold and fire and honey.

Pablo Cortez, the Cuban poet, was in love with Juanita at that time. She was not indifferent to his attentions; yet like a real Spanish dona she allowed him to woo her in his own fashion.

The last clients had departed. Cortez, myself and Madame Ibanez were drinking coffee. Juanita was not well. Pablo had brought some of his latest poems which he wanted to read to all of us. Madame Ibanez thought them beautiful, but she became very serious when the poet told her they were dedicated to her daughter.

Her smile vanished, the face and body became taut, and her eyes, like two big search-lights, seared through to the man's heart. After a while she relaxed, lit a cigarette, brought some more coffee and seating herself between us two she said:

"You two have been talking the whole evening. I too, want to tell a story.

"There was a young couple I knew twenty-five years ago. They were both artists. She was a pianist and he was a singer. He had the most beautiful voice I ever heard—and I have heard a lot of good voices. Her father was a rich merchant and had planned differently for his daughter, but she fell in love with Pedro and eloped with him.

"At Boulogne they took a steamer for Havana and landed there penniless, absolutely penniless. Another piece of sugar, Don Pablo? non? Well, they landed penniless. But he had some friends there who bestirred themselves, and in ten days they had arranged the first concert in the largest hall of Havana. It was more than a success, it was a triumph. She acted as his accompanist.

"That night they vowed one to another that he would never sing with another accompanist, and she would never play the accompaniments to another singer.

"His voice and her playing pleased the Cubans so much the couple had to appear in concert several times a week. Money flowed in from all sides. The young wife sometimes longed for home and hers, she loved her people very much. But Pedro kissed away her worries—sang away her longings. They were very happy.

"A manager got hold of them and pretty soon they had engagements from San Francisco all the way to New York.

"When they arrived in San Francisco it was spring. Pedro had a slight cold, and went to see the doctor his manager recommended to him. It was the first time he had ever been out alone since they eloped from Madrid. She was too tired to accompany him. He had to return the next day, and the next, for treatment.

"On the fourth day was the concert. A phenomenal success. Pedro sang better than ever. His wife sitting at the piano felt the envy of a thousand women. And she was proud of her Pedro. His voice rose and fell and rippled, and between the folds of sound were jewels of all colors.

"Still, on the next day he went to see the doctor. When he returned he was irritable, quarrelsome, and refused to even go out with her.

"She cried. What else can a woman do? He quieted her soon, and made her beg forgiveness. The reason for his irritability was, he said, the condition of his throat, as the doctor had explained it to him. It made her sit up the whole night. What if her Pedro should lose his golden voice?

"The next morning she made herself ready to go with him to the doctor. It was an Italian who knew French well. She would try to get him to tell her the truth about her husband's voice. But Pedro insisted that she must remain home. She did not have proper street wear to conceal her state. He talked and talked until she gave in and remained home.

"No sooner was he gone and she regretted to have let him go alone. Why! in a taxi she could be there without being much seen by any one!

"She dressed hurriedly and was soon at the medical man's door. She heard Pedro's voice. He sang to a piano's accompaniment. The voice was as clear as a bell, the 'tessatura' as firm as rich velvet.

"She rang the bell. A servant came out. 'No, the doctor was not in town.'

"'He has not been in town the last two days. He was always away on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of every week.'

"'Who's playing? who's singing?'

"'The great tenor and the doctor's wife'——

"And the door closed with a bang.

"Pedro came home a few hours later.

"'Pedro, what did the doctor say?'

"'He said I must see him at least three times a week—on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays—all the time we shall be here.'

"Then they went down to the restaurant to dine. He was very gay, very well disposed when they returned to their apartments. They sat down to drink Spanish lemonade which only she knew how to prepare exactly to his taste.

"There was only one cry—the rest was only guttural noise. A few drops in the drink and his vocal chords were destroyed forever—he never sang again to another woman's accompaniments."

"And the woman, Madame Ibanez? What happened to the woman?"

"She kept her vow. She never played accompaniments to another man's singing. She opened a restaurant, Don Pablo; her man became the cook. And now a poet thinks he loves their daughter."

Like silver crystals detaching themselves from onyx flames, two tears rolled down the parched cheeks of the woman.

"Pablo Cortez must know how the Ibanezes take love, and think twice before he dedicates his poems."

Some gruntlings were heard from the other side of the partition. Madame Ibanez stood up.

"It's best you gentlemen leave now. Poor Pedro must be very tired."

Pablo Cortez returned to Cuba on the next steamer.

If you ever are hungry while in the neighborhood of Thirty-fourth Street and Seventh Avenue, look up the Ibanezes place. Juanita serves the new guests.

THE LITTLE MAN OF 28TH STREET

Some people call him Signor, but he is better known as "Unique" and many more people call him "Signor Unique." He is a bent little man in a long green Prince Albert coat that was once black. A short gray beard frames a pale face in squashed folds on which squats a flat nose. Bushy, low-arched eyebrows shade two little eyes which move rapidly up and down and in and out of their orbs as move scared little mice in their hole. Such is the appearance of Signor when you meet him in his musty shop littered with bric-a-brac.

On the street his gait is so irregular it suggests that he is vociferating with his legs; that the two limbs are quarreling with the jerking arms and that the four limbs argue each separately with the pavement and the curb stones about things we simple mortals will never understand.

From where and when he came here nobody knows. But all the antiquarians on 28th Street swear —and some of these gentlemen are much older than the antiques they sell—that Signor was there before any of them was born, that his shop is the oldest on the street.

They also assure you that he can "smell" a fake antique from a distance. In fact, they maintain, this sixth sense of Signor has been his undoing. He could not "guarantee" the genuineness of an article. He knew too much.

Most of the others guaranteed in good faith and ignorance thousands of pieces, and made fortunes, where Signor only shook his head derisively.

They have sold "genuine" Memlings to collecting millionaires, swords of Gaspard Olivares and statues of Osiris as well as Chinese porcelains and Buddhas, the origin of which they refused to know, while Signor maintained that the real things still on the market would not fill a good sized shoe.

On the dusty shelves in Signor's store are pieces in brass, pewter, glass and iron of no particular artistic value, but the origin of each thing is guaranteed by the dusty old man.

He will tell you the whole history of every bit of metal in his shop. And if you think him stark mad when he announces the price of the iron hinge on which once hung the principal door of the Amiens Cathedral, or of the brass lantern which once adorned the nuptial chambers of the Moor King Mambrin of Don Quixote fame—if you are stunned by Signor's prices he will tell you that all these things are "unique."

Signor never owned or sold a thing which was not unique. He has investigated that Cathedral door hinge and convinced himself that the upper hinge on which now hangs the door is a new one. As to the brass lantern, he has a hundred authorities to strengthen his allegation.

One must know that Signor does not deal in things that have their counterpart somewhere on this planet.

But above all, Signor has always been proud of his collection of stamps. Among the philatelists the world over he is listed as the owner of the most searched for stamps.

There are standing offers of thousands of dollars for some of the little colored squares of paper Signor is tucking safely away in his heavy safe every sundown. Bent over his little desk in a corner of his darkened shop, the old man is daily examining his stamp collection.

He looks them over again and again; treats them, where there is suspicion of decay, nurses them back to health, using medicines from labelled bottles or by exposing them to the air after mid-day, when the rays of the sun no longer affect color and tissue.

No living thing ever had his care. To these square pieces of paper he has devoted all his life. To obtain them he has schemed and worried and worked and lived.

Of all the stamps in his collection, Signor had one which had given him the greatest trouble and

which he had nursed for years. It was the only postage stamp left of a first emission of one of the Bahama Islands.

For some reason or other this stamp was perforated and the edge around the holes in the paper was thinning away with a rapidity which frightened the old philatelist.

He loved that stamp as a father loves a sick child of genius. There was not another one like it in the world. Not another bit of carmine paper with a five-cornered crown and a small cross a little off centre.

There was a standing offer for the stamp by a philatelist of London who had tried for years to induce Signor to part with it, but the bent little man prized and loved the stamp even more, when he knew how much the other man across the waters wanted to have it.

Out of sheer perversity, he occasionally wrote to London to find out whether James Bolton would not offer a bigger price. With each increase the other offered, he grew in Signor's estimation. But to part with the "Bahama" was another question!

And suddenly, through some other philatelist, Signor learned that there existed in Mexico City another "Bahama," just like his own. At first he pretended that he did not believe the report. He was so sure that the one he had was unique!

But little by little the suspicion of such possibility wormed itself into him and undermined his confidence. He looked at the stamp, questioningly, as one would at the corpse of a dead woman, whose faithfulness was just impugned, but there was no answer.

A few days later, unable to live in doubt, Signor was en route to Mexico City.

After manœuvering for a week he found out that Don Garaye had once possessed such a stamp, but had sold it to a house in Lisbon, Portugal. There was no more impatient man on the boat than the Signor.

The expanse of water and sky was nothing to him. The thousands of horse power of the big engines harnessed did not work fast enough and the possible quest of every one on the boat dwindled to meaninglessness before the importance of his own.

Without a night's rest he hurried from Havre to Paris and fumed and fretted the few hours he had to wait for the Madrid express. After three days travel in the train, crossing France and Spain, Signor reached the city of Lisbon. But lo, the stamp, exchanged for a collection of other things, was now in Italy. The old Raspiegli of Rome, Italy's oldest philatelist, had acquired the much sought for unique "Bahama."

News of sudden inquiries travels fast among antiquarians and philatelists and the frequency of such inquiries raises the value of the thing inquired for.

Giuseppe Raspiegli of Rome knew all about Signor's travels ere that gentleman crossed the frontier of Italy. When an old man in a Prince Albert coat, casually visited his shop and inquired about a perforated Bahama stamp the Rome philatelist just as casually answered that the little thing was somewhere in Italy and that he could procure it if—if Signor was serious enough. Signor answered that he wanted to see it, but when he heard the price Raspiegli asked, he threw his hands up. It was double the amount he ever dared to ask for his Bahama.

For weeks at a stretch Signor secluded himself in his little attic room overlooking the Tiber. For hours and hours he looked at his own Bahama, he had believed so many years to be unique.

Raspiegli demanded such an enormous sum for his stamp! It was in much better condition than the one Signor owned. Time had been kindlier to its color and tissue. But the price was an enormous one. It was almost all he possessed. It meant ruin.

The old philatelist could neither eat nor sleep. His limbs grew even more quarrelsome with one another and his bent shoulders now frequently entered the argument.

Raspiegli was made of adamant. He had fixed his price and would not relent.

He had sized up his customer and knew that sooner or later the little man would open his wallet and pay.

Meanwhile Signor starved himself to death. When he had finally decided to pay the price to Raspiegli he had just enough left to carry him home on the next boat.

That last night in the attic room overlooking the Tiber was one of great suffering. He cried. He tore his hair. He bit his nails.

But early morning found him at the door of Raspiegli, money in hand.

"It is all I possess Maestro Raspiegli," he muttered.

"Which shows you are a real philatelist," the Italian answered suavely as he counted the money.

From the deepest recess of the safe he brought out the little square of carmine paper. Signor looked at it again. No doubt it was in a better state of preservation than his own, but he felt no warmth, no intimacy, no kinship with it.

"You will probably yet make a profit on it," Raspiegli disturbed the old man's contemplation.

"A profit! A profit! I did not buy it to make a profit. I only wanted that my own Bahama should be the only one of its kind."

As he spoke he lit a match and before Raspiegli had time to interfere the ashes of the other "Bahama" mixed with the dust on the floor.

For Signor things had to be unique to be worth keeping.

THE NEWLY-RICH GOLDSTEINS

The Goldsteins were destined for light work and comfort. "Middle Class" was stamped on their faces and radiated from their speech and movements. Every stitch of clothing proclaimed that they belonged to the happy, contended-with-what-God-gives middle class.

"H. Goldstein & Co., Embroidery," occupied the first floor of a dilapidated building on St. Mark's Place near Third Avenue. The two daughters, Sophy and Leah, were the working force of the firm. H. Goldstein himself was the salesman, bookkeeper, deliverer, collector and buyer. Four sewing machines near the rear windows, a table, an assortment of cardboard boxes and a few shelves in a corner were all the machinery of the factory.

But the Goldsteins were a contented lot. They lived in a five-room apartment on Tenth Street, had good old soft chairs to sit on; Mrs. Goldstein prepared fine meals, and on Saturday as the factory was closed each one of the family had his own private joys. H. Goldstein went to the synagogue to meet his old friends and discuss the Talmud. Mrs. Goldstein visited all her relatives on the Sabbath. Sophy was out with her beau, Joseph Katz; and Leah strolled on Second Avenue on the arm of Maurice Feldman.

The factory just covered house expenses and a small dollar or two for a rainy day saved by Mrs. Goldstein from table money. But they were independent, in business for themselves, as befits the Goldsteins the whole world over, and not hired workers. At the synagogue, Hirsh Goldstein was respected for his learning and piety; and though his contributions were not very large, still they were never beggarly.

When America entered the war the embroidery business took a jump. The Goldsteins obtained orders for shoulder straps, epaulets, chevrons, hat bands and a lot of other paraphernalia absolutely necessary to soldiers and officers to go over the top. The Goldsteins added four more machines and hired half a dozen Italian girls for the work. Soon even this enlarged force could not cope with the orders. Another floor was hired, six more machines fixed up, and Joseph Katz, Sophy's beau, became the bookkeeper. Three months later the factory moved to a Bond Street loft and sixty machines, power driven and of the latest model, were installed. Little by little the Sabbath was neglected. The rush orders forced them to work seven days a week, seven days and seven nights. Maurice Feldman, Leah's beau, was engaged as assistant bookkeeper.

"Reb Goldstein, we missed you last Saturday," friends questioned him at the synagogue.

"The Talmud says, 'The welfare of the country you live in stands higher than your own rites,'" was all he answered.

Though people knew that his translation of the passage was a bit loose, they did not interfere.

After the factory had moved over to Bond Street Sophy and Leah remained at home. Their presence in the factory was no longer needed.

Mother Goldstein argued that it ill-befitted the daughters of so big a manufacturer to be working. Goldstein was making money faster than he could count it. The girls were flattered and adulated wherever they went, and they began to think the Tenth Street apartment and the district they lived in entirely out of keeping with their new station in life. They had rich clothing now, and

thought themselves too good for their former friends.

A large contribution to a charitable undertaking brought the young ladies an invitation to a party given by some wealthy people on Riverside Drive. It was the first time they had seen such living quarters. It sharpened their appetites to the pomps and vanities of the world. It made them feel the people living downtown were dust or dross.

Maurice Feldman and Joseph Katz were the first to feel the changed attitude. Sure enough! The young ladies were not going to marry their father's bookkeepers!

Riverside Drive became the ideal of the two sisters. At first the father refused even to hear of it. But when fortune had favored him and he made a lump sum in some side speculation, he half gave his consent.

At the synagogue he was seldom seen, and if he happened to come once in a while he was not as warmly greeted as formerly. He had offended several members of the congregation, had humbled them, by giving a donation of a hundred dollars when they had only given ten.

When the two sisters had won over their mother to the Riverside Drive plan the father could no longer resist. Soon an interior decorator was busy garnishing the nine-room two-bath apartment, with brand-new highly polished furniture. Gold-tinted hangings and gold painted chairs, bookcases filled with de luxe sets in red and blue, an Oriental room, a Louis XV. piano, and "real" oil paintings. Sophy and Leah were all the time buying new things. The visits to the great stores did not improve taste, but it pricked ambition. When the bustle ended, the Goldsteins had spent a young fortune on the Riverside apartment. The rooms were well filled with whatever could be bought, with all the Goldsteins could afford; and they could afford a good deal, because Hirsh Goldstein was making more money than he had ever dared to dream.

The war had to be won, and it could not be done without the assistance of "H. Goldstein & Co."

The first few days the Goldsteins enjoyed their acquisitions so much they had no time to think of anything else. Then they joined a fashionable temple. The daughters became members of charitable societies, the membership of which was composed of older parvenues. The downtown crowd and old associations were forgotten in the whirl. When some of the relatives came to visit the Goldsteins, they felt so outclassed and outdistanced that they never returned again.

But after the girls had wearied somewhat of their furniture and things, they began to notice that the new acquaintances made no friendly overtures. A feeling stole over them that their new friends laughed behind their backs. Whenever they happened to be in the company of the new aristocracy, the others spoke of things they knew nothing about. The others, college bred most of them, mentioned names of authors and artists the Goldsteins had never heard of before. The others had tapering fine finger-nails, slender wrists, thin ankles, and wore the simplest clothes with distinction.

Sophy and Leah felt that the young men of the new set avoided them. They were always courteous, but cold—cold to the invaders. But of course they could not think of marrying the firm's bookkeepers—twenty-five-dollar-a-week men! Yet they despaired ever to find mates from amongst those other people.

Once a collection was made to cover some minor expense of a children's party. Sophy gave a hundred dollars. She surprised the others laughing, and never knew whether she had given too much or too little. Hirsh Goldstein did not fare any better. The German Jews he met at the synagogue were nice and polite, but patronizing to an exasperating degree. Though they accepted his gifts for the synagogue and other charities, they looked down upon him. When he gave a small amount he was criticized as a miser, when he gave a big sum he was a parvenu. He missed his old cronies. He had no chance to exhibit learning to those "new people."

Mrs. Goldstein wandered about the rooms, as if in a prison. It was seldom that anybody ever visited the family now. They were reputed to be so rich! Joseph and Maurice came once to Sophy's birthday party, but they found there other guests, and felt lonesome. The Goldsteins had not learned how to be idling busily.

The two sisters now lacked a certain freedom of movement, surety of action. Sophy began to long for the firm grasp of Maurice's hand. Leah longed to hear Joseph's simple songs. The house with all its new wealth was not their home. It was too cold, too new, too clean. The men and women they met were not of their kind. The Goldsteins felt daily that they were only tolerated by them.

This situation lasted six months.

Then Hirsh Goldstein returned to his old synagogue on Hester Street. He went there in his old coat. To make up with his old friends he gave only five dollars when he was called to read from the holy book.

"Hirsh is down from his high horse," they whispered, when he returned the next week bringing his wife also to the synagogue. She too came in her second best wraps.

A few weeks later the news spread that the Goldsteins had lost most of their fortune or all of it. Sophy and Leah came downtown to a party to which former friends invited them, just to show that it mattered not. And it was so nice and friendly! Everybody was so familiar and intimate.

"If you want any one to speak to you, leave all the junk here," Sophy told Leah, who had put on

the greater part of her jewelry for the occasion.

The Goldsteins rented an apartment on Tenth Street, but this time the old people furnished it. They bought good soft chairs, the kind they had had before, and a multicolored carpet for the floor of the front room, and a red settee which did not look severe and stylish, but inviting. It was just one step ahead in point of comfort and luxury from the one they had had before the adventure on the Drive. It was home again.

The Drive apartment was sublet, all furnished. Maurice came back to Sophy, Joseph to Leah, and every time one of the family bought clothes or jewelry great care was taken not to overdo—not to scare away old friends, not to soar too high with the first wind. Every time some expensive dress was suggested by some friends they exclaimed in chorus.

"We can't afford it. Times are hard."

But they were happy again.

ALL IN ONE WILD ROUMANIAN SONG

Some day some one should chart New York—some one who does not know a thing about statistics, who will study every section just for the love of it, without even thinking of selling the story to a newspaper. To this some one I will give some valuable points of which very few are aware.

In the hope that I may tempt such a one, I will give out the points one by one. Here is the first one:

The map of Europe is reproduced in New York by the different nationalities living here; each nationality having as neighbor the same that it has in Europe. Thus, the Greeks, Turks, Syrians and Italians are close neighbors in Europe, and also here. The same thing applies to the Russians, who are neighbors with the Roumanians, the Poles, the Austrians and the Germans. And one must not think that love attracts them. They hate one another as whole-heartedly as only neighbors can hate one another. Perhaps this mutual hatred attracts them: Hatred is not as bad as we have been taught to think. One can, and generally does, love lower than himself, but no one hates lower than himself. Hence:

The Roumanian quarter of New York is perhaps the most interesting one. It really starts at Delancey Street and the Bowery, and is bounded by Houston Street, north of which is Hungary and east of which are Bulgaria, Serbia and a group of other Balkanic peoples.

What distinguishes the Roumanian quarter is the people's carefree way of living. Cafés, amusement places, pastry shops, everywhere. And you can hear music streaming out from every window. The sound from a grand piano on which some one is essaying Beethoven's "Appassionata," or Sarasate's undying and hackneyed "Gypsy Airs," played on a violin to a very inadequate accompaniment. Song, music and color, whichever way you turn.

But you only get the fringe of it, until you come down to Moskowitz's cellar on Rivington Street. And though the wine there is not as good as the music, the place is always full—to the glory of the Roumanians who know that no wine could be so good as to surpass the quality of the music one hears there.

The place is literally filled every night. You see, the real difference between the Russians and the Roumanians is—the Russians talk politics, literature and philosophy when they come together, while the Roumanians like to hear good music and drink wine in company. So they come, whole parties, whole families, children and all, to Moskowitz's.

And Moskowitz himself presides over his instrument, the cimbalon, and striking the tense wires with two little wooden sticks he draws out from them the weirdest sounds, the saddest chords, dissolving into the wildest dances. Of course Moskowitz plays regular stuff also; hits and misses of the popular repertoire of the vaudeville, etc., but he does this only when his guests are eating—orders from Mrs. Moskowitz, you know, who does not want food compared with her husband's Roumanian music.

Marco, the young Roumanian painter, was in love with Fay Roberts, a gifted American girl from up-State, who had made Greenwich Village her abode. She was so gifted in many directions that she was a failure at everything—except being loved. In this she had succeeded very well. A dozen artists and two dozen business men were in love with this possessor of a beautiful head from which brains mirrored through two blue eyes.

Of all the men Marco loved her best and most truly. She knew it. She liked him. But he was dull. He cut no figure anywhere. He took no part in discussions. He never cited Dostoiewsky. He never tiraded against the lack of understanding of the people. He once angered everybody by saying that the people, the plain common ordinary people, were the creators of everything worth while. She hated him for saying that. He had a way of his, of burying his bushy head in his pipe and looking from underneath his eyebrows, that angered her very much.

He loved her, he adored her, and as time went by, he became more dull. Some people's tongues

are loosened by love as by wine, and others are stricken dumb.

Marco lost speech whenever he faced Fay, lost it more and more as his love for the girl grew.

"What's the matter with your Roumanian savage?" friends asked the girl.

"I don't know. He is getting duller every day," the girl answered.

Then, one day, as Fay and a party of friends planned a merry evening, Marco flared up enthusiastically.

"Come with me, somewhere."

"Where?" they all asked.

"With me, to a place I know."

And thus it was that a dozen American young men and women descended the stairs of Moskowitz's cellar.

It was too early; Moskowitz was not yet playing. Fay did not like the food, and her grumbling became contagious. They all mocked and derided Marco. Thompson and Carlisle, both in love with Fay, and Mary and Lucy, both in love with the two men, never ceased for a moment to taunt poor Marco. And though he ordered the best wine, Fay declared that "this Roumanian monstrosity was the worst ever."

The painter's eyes became moist; he pleaded, but Fay's eyes were as cold as steel.

"You are dull, you are stupid," she cried.

Then the music started. A thousand tripping feet descending lightly from Heaven—a million voices lifting themselves to the gods, the wedding of everything earthly to everything celestial, the whole universe dancing—man, woman and beast, mountains, oceans and stars—singing the joy of creation.

It was music, the kind of which Fay never heard before—interlaced songs, each one grown out of the hearts of millions of people through thousands of years, songs breathing life, as different from the music she had heard to then as a photograph is to the object it tends to portray. The water going down hill, the trees of the forest spreading their wings, the wheat actually swaying like golden waves.

Her own life passed before her as she heard the music; from early childhood to the very minute of her thought. How had she ever dared to insult Marco?

How had she dared bunch him together with her other admirers? She looked at him and her eyes pleaded forgiveness, but Marco was oblivious to everything.

And as the music continued Fay saw Marco's eyes brighten. Every line of his face became full with an inner life she had never seen before in any one.

Suddenly he started to sing a song as sad as the world's woes.

From the cimbalon rose chords that spoke of understanding. No one dared even move, lest it might disturb the perfect communion between singer and accompanist. Little by little another soul was carried in.

How dull the others were, sitting at the table disputing the quality of the food. How was she ever so blind and stupid as not to see!

Marco now got up from the table, put both his hands on the musician's shoulders, and sang on—and as he sang he grew bigger and bigger.

The place went wild when he finished. Moskowitz kissed him, and Fay could plainly see that at least fifty pairs of lips longed to do likewise.

"Marco, Marco, why have you never brought me here before?" cried Fay in joy, as she kissed the happy man.

And now, nightly at Moskowitz's, a bushy Roumanian is drinking his bottle in company of a pretty American girl, who dreams of the day when she will see the country from which such songs, and such men, come.

EXPENSIVE POVERTY

It is no longer permitted to be poor; still less to appear poor. It is not yet a legal crime but a social one. It is comparatively easy to evade punishment for legal crimes, but punishment for a social crime is as swift as it is merciless. No defense is possible because the prosecutor and judge is invisible. There is no defense and no appeal. No higher court to reverse judgment on technical or constitutional grounds. Accusation alone is equivalent to condemnation.

"There was a time when the poor of the land were an institution, as respectable as they were part of the scheme which recognized them. The poor did not have to dress like the rich, did not have to live like the rich, act like the rich, and be buried like the rich.

"But those times are gone. A fifteen dollar a week clerk is supposed to dress in clothes as expensive as his superior who receives four times the amount. He is not considered "ambitious" if he does not starve himself to appear spick and span every day of the week. Sinkers and coffee for lunch after a breakfast-less breakfast, to buy a neat silk necktie. No lunch at all to have a suit pressed. Dinnerless dinners to buy new shoes or a new hat. The shoemakers have forgotten how to put patches on shoes. The mothers have forgotten how to patch up a worn-out seat or a threaded elbow. It is no longer done."

The above is the beginning of an essay on poverty I found among the papers of the deceased Italian poet Gagliano. Where the impetus of thought of such a beginning would have led him is difficult to follow. He never finished the essay. I am inclined to think that Gagliano did not have the heart, though he had the mind, to pursue the logical sequence of thoughts of his theory. He was a poet, a sweet singer, and he hated and avoided what was engendered by bitterness.

He had been poor so many years that it was becoming to him. Poverty fitted him as well as his worn coat and greenish sombrero. Should Gagliano have suddenly exhibited signs of prosperity it would have scandalized every one.

Daily, for years his long, thin legs kicked open the door of the spaghetti joint at noon. Until food was brought by the old waiter, he wiped his eyeglasses, stroked his beard and brushed back his long hair with the flat of his hand. While eating he read a book or a magazine. His skilled fork wound the long paste round itself and carried it automatically to the mouth without the slightest splurging generally attending the eating of the Italian national dish. But it is not of Gagliano's skilled spaghetti eating that I want to speak. I want to tell how Gagliano lost his job with Rinaldini the banker. It had kept him alive for years. He had counted pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters until his finger tips were calloused. He had written rhymed advertisements and jingles to pay for the little food and the few books in which better things were written by more fortunate though not more talented brothers of the pen. He starved with clock-like regularity, although his poems appeared in the "better" magazines of his language.

Rinaldini the banker, his employer, was a bluff, ignorant man who had won the confidence of his countrymen. It was his only stock and capital. He payed interest to one, from the capital of another. He had done that for years. He loaned money to pay the expense of Christenings, and great festive weddings. Most of the pompous burials of the district were financed by Signor Rinaldini on a ten per cent weekly payment after a generous interest was charged on the total. From these things and commissions from undertakers, music leaders and confectioners, Rinaldini made a living. What other expenses he incurred was from capital deposited in his bank by the credulous customers. Rinaldini liked Gagliano. He was proud to have such a man in his employ. Whenever some one was pleased with some of Gagliano's rhymes in the papers the banker accepted the praise good-naturedly; and the "fratellis" of the different lodges and societies to which he belonged, of most of which he was the founder and treasurer, never knew that another one wrote the "Poesia" they liked so much.

When Italy entered the war a hundred different Italian charities were trumpeted over the city. Several bankers were in line competing for the treasureships. Rinaldini then started a campaign of his own. He started the work by giving to all charities lavishly. If Postarnelli, another banker, had given hundred dollars, he gave thousand. When Pallorie, one of the richest bankers in the district, gave thousand dollars to a charity fund, Rinaldini strained himself to double the amount. It impressed everybody and drew customers. Rinaldini moved out of the Mulberry district into a more fashionable one and began to entertain lavishly. He fitted out his home with costly furniture and even became a patron of the arts. A celebrated Italian sculptor received the commission for the banker's bust and a painter did him in lively colors.

At those entertainments, Gagliano's presence was frequently requested. He wrote out the speeches which the banker delivered. Many of the "notabiles" were astounded by the exhibition of so much learning. Petrarc, D'Anunzio and Negri furnished the best lines. They were like written for the occasion. So much learning and so high a patriotism was never expected from Rinaldini. A movement was soon on foot to call the attention of the Italian King to Rinaldini's great devotion. The banker anticipated being ennobled and became even more fastidious and luxurious. The old bachelor began seriously to think of wedding bells with some lady of nobility. He became an authority on art and literature and his opinions were quoted by newspapers.

Gagliano, the poet, was worked harder and harder. He grew bitter and frequently made caustic remarks. He also grew thinner and thinner. He made real contributions, money from his own pocket, to the innumerable war charities. The prices of food advanced in the restaurants.

On an evening as the whole cream of the colony was assembled at Rinaldini's, the banker, to make an impression on his guests, began to brag about his possessions.

"That chandelier in the vestibule cost me a thousand dollars. Yonder carved table costs five hundred. Some of the bric-a-brac on the mantelpiece costs thousands." And, pointing to a guitar standing in a corner of the room, he remarked: "For that guitar I paid a hundred dollars."

"That is not so much! Mine comes much higher than that!" interrupted Gagliano lightly. Every one turned and looked at him. Every one knew how poor he was.

"You see," Gagliano explained, "originally I paid for it only twenty dollars. But in the six years I worked for Signor Rinaldini, I have pawned it every Tuesday and redeemed it every Saturday so as to have it for Sunday, and the interest and the fixed charge of twenty-five cents, the usurer from the pawnshop forces me to pay, has brought up the cost of the guitar to way beyond a hundred dollars."

Gagliano's words iced the enthusiasm and admiration for Rinaldini. The poet lost his job. Rinaldini never received the coveted medal. Treasureship of many societies was withdrawn. In six months he was bankrupt. Gagliano died some months later.

WHY HER NAME IS MARGUERITE V. L. F. CLEMENT

Voila! Here is France—France in New York and the France of to-day. One could forgive the Boche all the crimes he has committed but the one that he has robbed the French of their gayety, of their lightness of heart. Dark gray has taken the place of happy rose and green. Sparkling eyes have been dulled and the gay ribbons pleated in the hair of women have disappeared. A small black band on the sleeve tells the reason why. One hears laughter no longer from the open windows and on the street.

Voila! American and Canadian soldiers pass on the street and are cheered. Little boys and girls shake their hands. A young woman drops her marketing bag, claps her hands and cries "Vive l'Amerique," to which one gallant boy in khaki answers with "Vive la France!" Windows and doors open. Women and children bend over the sills as much as they dare. A hundred, a thousand hands applaud, a hundred, a thousand voices cheer, from a dozen phonographs "The Marseillaise" is heard.

Voila! you are in New York, in the French quarter, on Eighth Avenue between Twenty-eighth and Thirty-sixth Streets.

In the evenings the neighborhood still gathers at Clement's. Papa Baviele still holds the floor, only he no longer tells the stories of the Commune, while Blanchard and Clero are discussing the merits of a Packard engine or of a Bleriot versus a Curtiss airplane.

The war is the topic and Clement speaks with authority, for he has been in it, in 1870.

"We would have beaten them then, only we had a sleepy Emperor and a coward or a traitor—in the end it amounts to the same—as a general."

"Père Clement is right," said old Bideaux. "Foch was born fifty years too late. Look here, how many of us are missing? Bernard, Duval, Chuffot, Denure, Carreaux, Henry—all the young ones gone to France. La Vielle Mamma Clement, a little more wine—to forget."

"Where is Marguerite?" Papa Clement asked his wife.

Marguerite, the young wife of Clement's son, Bernard, had been living with them since her husband returned to France to do his duty. Six months after she had come over to this country with her widowed father, Bideaux, the mechanician, the war broke out. But in these six months she had loved and married Bernard.

"Ma petite," he said to her on the second day of August, "I shall go and see my consul." And when he came back he told her, "I am going to fight the Boches."

And he went.

She went to work. Her nimble fingers and developed sense for beauty of line found employment in a dress shop. And each week she sent something to her Bernard, somewhere in France, to supplement the four sous a day the Government was paying him. Every evening, returning from work, she asked, "Any news?"

Bernard wrote frequently and well. Twice they had had bad news. Wounded at the Aisne. Wounded on the Verdun front. "But Marguerite's husband won't die before he has again kissed her and told her all about the savage Boche. Tell papa I don't want ever to see Hans Seidel at our table again. His Socialism was only masquerade. I can swear I saw him in one of the Aisne attacks. We must learn not to forget our wounds even after they have healed."

Hans Seidel had never left New York, and was still a frequent guest at Clement's, where his Alsatian French amused everybody. But after Bernard's letter he was gently told his company was no longer desired.

"Marguerite will soon be here, père."

There was a ring at the door. Mamma Clement ran to open.

"Marguerite Clement?" a voice asked, and a uniformed boy stepped into the room.

"She not here—but I am ze father."

And Clement's shaking hands stretched for the envelope the boy held between his fingers.

"Ne pleure pas, don't cry. A million sons of other mothers have paid the price. Be brave."

He did not cry. "Be French, quoi!"

But the mother cried. Clement seemed to have aged ten years in ten minutes. The other men present withdrew to the remotest corners of the room. Only old Bideaux emptied his glass, muttering a terrible oath.

"He has sold his life dearly—friends. The letter says we shall soon receive his Croix de Guerre and his Legion d'Honneur medal. What a son I had! What a son we had!"

"A brave son," they all said.

Mamma Clement was in the other room crying softly. The men tried to console the father.

Suddenly they all stopped talking. Steps were heard on the stairway. They looked one at the other.

"That's Marguerite's step," said her father.

The crying of the mother ceased. Was it because she realized the other woman's pain? Was it because she wanted to be brave, or because she wanted to postpone the news?

The men regrouped themselves around the table. A key was turned in the latch. The door opened wide and radiantly Marguerite floated into the room.

"Bonsoir, papa, Bonsoir, mes amis. Good news! Very good news!"

She kissed every one present as she spread a newspaper on the table.

"Yesterday the Bulgars asked for peace, to-day St. Quentin is French again."

She took her father's hand and started to dance.

"What's the matter, quoi? Why don't you dance? Come quick, the Marseillaise—Allons enfants de la patrie——"

But no one moved. Mamma Clement came out from her room. "Oh, Marguerite!" she wanted to cry, but checked herself in presence of so much exuberance.

"We can't dance, Marguerite; it's—after ten o'clock—it's New York. People want to sleep."

"Ah! voila! you are old, all of you, that's the reason."

A group of boys passed in the street, singing. Marguerite threw open the window, applauded and yelled at the top of her voice "Bravo!" And the gayer she grew the sadder the men looked. It made their situation ever so harder.

"Sure, you drink wine all alone—give me some, too—and who gives me a glass? Oh, I want to be happy—the war will soon end. The Boche gets his due. Why do you sit like undertakers?"

She had one look at all of them. It sobered her.

"It is about Bernard. What is it? Come, tell me, what it is."

None present dared say a word. They all stood up. Her thin voice had changed to a deep alto. Her frivolous little head suddenly became as stern as the image of vengeance.

Her father, old Bideaux, was the first to recover.

"Give her the letter, Clement."

In a glance she took in all the contents. Bernard was dead. The rest was not important.

Her eyes closed. Her muscles stiffened as she gripped the edge of the table. It looked as though she was going to faint. She remained so for a few minutes, then she threw her head back and with all her strength she yelled at the top of her voice:

"Vive la France! Vive la France! Vive la France!"

And the mother and the father of the dead soldier repeated the cry with tears in their eyes, as loudly as they could, to dull the edge of their cutting pain, to drown their sorrow.

"You said, Bideaux, I had a brave son. But how much braver is your daughter!"

"What is your name, please?" Mr. Lauders asked the young Frenchwoman in mourning applying for the position of designer in his dressmaking shop.

"My name is Marguerite V. L. F. Clement."

"Full name, please?"

"Marguerite Vive la France Clement——"

And every time Marguerite's pain is too sharp to bear she cries out: "Vive la France!"

It's now more than four years since the Boche invaded New York through the French quarter. Gray and black are the dominant colors of what was the most joyous district of our city.

LULEIKA, THE RICH WIDOW

You hear people talk about the disadvantages of living in New York. Personally, I cannot think of greater happiness than being in this great metropolis, if only for the reason that I can be all over Europe in one night. Five cents carfare lands you in the French district. Five more minutes reading of the "Subway Sun" lands you in Hungary; from whence you can tramp in fifteen minutes to Italy or Greece or Turkey, as the spirit moves you or inclination dictates. You can eat your breakfast in a Russian restaurant on East Fifth Street, have caviar and Bolshevik talk; go for lunch in China, on Mott Street, where they will serve you tea grown on the highest mountain of Asia; for dinner you can have your choice between Persian, French, Hindu or Greek menus, and still have the cuisines of a dozen other foreign nationalities to choose from if you are alive the next morning.

And now, in case you ever intend going down to the Syrian Quarter for supper and atmosphere, I will acquaint you with the story of Luleika, as it was told to me by Malouf the jeweler, who is a Mohammedan gentleman, born in Constantinople. Malouf believes in the glory of Allah. His face is as dry as smoked parchment, and he touches the ground with his forehead twice a day, at sunrise and sundown, as it is commanded in the Koran. Malouf lives on Washington Street, which is at a stone's throw from the Statue of Liberty in the Bay of New York.

"And it is written in the Koran: 'For whosoever sells his soul for gain, shall suffer in his flesh, and whosoever sells his flesh for gain shall suffer in his soul.'

"But you, my listener, are either a Christian Giaour or a Yehudi Kepek, and know nothing about the Koran.

"And Luleika was young then, in her twenty-fifth year, and the Koran was only a name to her and not the fountain of wisdom which it really is.

"She was young and beautiful when her brother, Ali, who was a rich dealer in rugs, brought her here, to this pork-eating country. Her brother was very proud of her. Not one woman in a thousand could wear a diamond-studded comb in her hair as well as Luleika could; not one in a million could carmine her nails as well; and not another in the whole world could make the lines of her mouth harmonize so well with the curves of her eyebrows.

"I loved Luleika. But I was poor and her brother was rich, and richer yet were the friends he had. So Ali set up a store, not far from the Christian church around the corner, in which he sold rugs to the rich of this country. And in the store he put up a little cage in which sat Luleika like an imprisoned bird. Men came to buy rugs and smile at the girl. Ali became richer every day. As his gold piled up he forgot the good teachings of the holy book and ate pork and drank wine. And Luleika did as he did.

"Then my mother sent word through Mustapha Hogea, the priest, that I should come home that she might see me before joining her father in Allah. And I answered: "I have bread here a-plenty, and there is a woman my heart holds my eyes on, and you may die in peace, for I shall follow the words of the Koran and end my daily prayers with Allah il Allah, Mohammed rassul Allah."

"She must have died peacefully.

"Daily, under some excuse or other, I went to see Luleika. She changed her dress little by little as she learned the language of this country. Her beautifully woven bournous was replaced with a white waist which looked as if made out of tissue paper, and her heavy pantaloons, cut from goods brought on a camel's back from Damascus, were exchanged for a flimsy skirt, the like of which is worn by the women of the land of the Francs.

"And one day, when I no longer could wait, I spoke to her of my love. She listened to the end and then she said: 'Thou art young and strong. A woman could love thee. But thou art poor, and I am afraid of poverty. I shall therefore marry Kurguz Mehmed, the partner of my brother Ali.'

"'But Mehmed is dreadfully old!' I cried.

"'I wish he were older,' she told me.

"Luleika married Kurguz Mehmed. He was so old he could not walk without a cane. Kurguz had become very rich in this country, rich and dissolute. He was the shame of his people.

Luleika and old Kurguz walked through Washington Street

"Ali knew, Luleika knew, yet she married him, because he was rich.

"And I, I worked myself tired and cried myself to sleep. Twice the soul of my mother stayed my hand from murder. Thousands of rings and brooches in silver and gold I have made for men and women, and in them I have engraved all the tortures of my soul and flesh. I have put sapphires and rubies in the eyes of the engraved serpents on the brooches and pale green topazes in the mouths of the carved monsters on the rings I made.

"And every day I took an oath afresh never to see her again.

"Then one day her last words to me rang in my ears: 'I wish he were older.'

"But Kurguz Mehmed got stronger and younger every day now. I saw him pass the street without leaning on his cane.

"Five years later, one morning, Luleika suddenly appeared at the door of my place.

"'That you make for me a brooch, Malouf,' she said, 'a brooch as beautiful as you ever made.'

"I looked at her. My heart grew cold, my mouth burned. Was this the same Luleika? She was still beautiful, but her flesh had lost its firmness, and the corners of her mouth drooped.

"And as I worked at her brooch I cooled the white-heated golden wires with my tears, yet I dared not speak to her of my love, for she was the wife of another man. She must have known I still loved her; women always do.

"Kurguz Mehmed lived on and grew richer every day. He lived on five more years, and then five more and then some more. The last two years he lay, with no use of limbs and eyes on his bed, and allowed not that she leave him alone. He was still her master.

"Then he died.

"She was left alone and rich, oh very rich. Every rug sold in this country had added something to her riches. But she was no longer young when Kurguz died. She was no longer young and she knew it.

"My soul was dead to her. My flesh burnt to cold cinders. She came for a ring one day. I spoke nothing at all to her save of the ring—nothing of love.

"But there were other men, men of our people who have come here in the last fifteen years. Young men wooed her, swore love to her. She never believed. Was she not ten times as rich as Kurguz was when she married him for his wealth?

"What she herself had done was the measure by which she weighed what others may do. She would have believed the young men, ten years ago, should Kurguz have died when she expected him to. But now, her mirror told her: 'What else do men see to love in thee except thy gold?'

"As she grew richer she believed still less. She bedecked herself with the costliest jewels, yet she

always knew they wouldn't bring back youth.

"Go now, you my listener, to the store of Luleika, Kurguz Mehmed's rich widow. Buy rugs. The richer she will become the greater her punishment will be. It will poison her mind and poison the souls of her wooers.

"Because her sin was so great Allah prolonged the life of even so great a sinner as Kurguz Mehmed.

"I shall live my days engraving this sad story in gold and silver. Believers and infidels, rich and poor, in the thousands are near it without knowing."

Malouf finished his story. For the time being I thought myself somewhere in the Orient—in Constantinople or Salonica, where roving packs of dogs howl day and night and no soul cares about the infernal noise—somewhere near Turkish giamies topped by the crescent moon—somewhere where men sit with their feet in the gutter and smoke from long pipes, while veiled women walk near the walls.

But when I walked out of Malouf's store, boys were just lighting the paper lanterns for a block dance. Across the street hung a big war poster with famous sayings penned underneath.

As if lit by a huge flying glow-worm, the torch of the Lady of Liberty in bronze pointed to the flitting stars. Dark-eyed men and women returned home, to the Orient from the Occident. Night was coming.

A few men on the street, facing the setting sun, bowed very low as they said their short prayers to Allah, who is here, there and everywhere.

BECAUSE COHEN COULD NEITHER READ NOR WRITE

Isaac Cohen came from Russia ten years ago. He left there his wife and two children and came here, where he had a rich uncle who was in the real estate business.

His uncle took him to his home, had him rest up, bought him a new suit of clothes and began to Americanize the nephew by telling him that he would have to make a living.

"Did you believe, uncle, that I have come here to watch my beard grow? I, who have a wife and children to support," Cohen answered.

The answer pleased his uncle very much, because he knew how easily some forget their duties when at a distance.

"Isaac, I shall try my best to get you something. Let's call in your aunt and ask her advice."

Aunt Sarah came into the room, and folding her bejewelled hands, she began to think.

"The best would be, my husband, if your nephew would tell us at what he would like to work," she finally said.

"Well, Isaac, what do you say?"

Isaac Cohen's face lit up. He had his dreams, like all mortals. His greatest desire was to be a beadle in a synagogue.

"Nothing easier," the uncle explained. "In the synagogue of our own congregation such a position is now vacant."

And the uncle phoned up to the President of the congregation, who was delighted to immediately receive the applicant at his home.

Was Isaac Cohen happy? Was there ever a happier man than he was as he walked with his uncle from Second Avenue to Rivington Street?

During the whole voyage he had dreamed of getting a position as a beadle—and now, suddenly, it was being realized. The silken blouses he saw spread out between bunches of radishes and beets on the pushcarts of Orchard Street were now almost within his grasp. He would buy one for his wife with the first money he earned. On another pushcart were toys, leftovers, seconds from last Christmas. He would buy a horse for his little son. All those luxurious things he saw in the windows of the stores were to be for him also. And a three-room flat, with water from faucets, a dumb-waiter, and other new world wonders.

A beadle! Was there ever a higher position in life?

"Isaac," his uncle suddenly cut in on his dreams, "if Mr. Rosen, the President, asks you how much you want, you should answer that you will be satisfied with the same amount as the former beadle received." And before Cohen had time to say a word the uncle continued—"and here we are—second floor front. Let's hope for the best."

"Amen," said Cohen.

Mr. Rosen, the President of the Odessa Synagogue, was a very fine old gentleman. He had come to New York twenty years before Cohen, and prospered in the insurance business. He was a member of at least twenty societies. Half of his income was paid in dues to the organizations to which he belonged. Half of the Jewish population were his "brothers." Of course they were all insured through him.

Brother Rosen received Cohen very nicely, and Isaac Cohen made a very good impression on him.

"A nephew of yours is certainly a very desirable asset to our community, I am sure, brother Cohen. The position of beadle in our synagogue is a very honorable one."

The President then turned his attention to the applicant who was nonplussed by the riches of the house. Velvet on every chair. Big brass chandeliers and a world of photographs depicting the host in all his glory as President of twenty lodges. Rosen watched the effect on the newcomer, then he spoke.

"You could enter upon your duties even to-day. I am sure you know all about them. The beadle about to leave us will instruct you and show you all the details of the work. He is a very good man, old Reb Baruch, Mr. Cohen, only we always had trouble with him on account of his handwriting. You know he has to enter in the book names and dates of births, marriages and deaths. Well, nobody can read his handwriting, not even himself; and on account of this we had a lot of trouble."

Isaac Cohen paled. He almost fainted there.

"What is the trouble?" the two men asked.

"I can't—write—never learned—to write," Isaac stammered.

And so the dream of being the beadle of the Odessa Synagogue or any other synagogue was shattered.

On returning to his uncle's home he was given a lecture by his aunt. He had to make a living. The long and short of it was that they gave him a twenty-dollar bill and told him to go and shift for himself.

A week later Isaac Cohen was peddling matches, garters and suspenders on Hester Street. A month later he was the owner of a pushcart on which he sold stockings, combs and toothbrushes. At night he learned knee-pants making. A year later he had a little shop and two machines were working for him.

His family was brought over here, and the wife helped what she could in the shop, living in the rear of the store. It was not as easy as it sounds when read, but two years later ten machines were grinding out knickerbockers in Isaac Cohen's factory. Ten years after his arrival in New York the firm of Cohen & Co. was known as the biggest of its kind. Two factories in Brownsville, one in New York, four hundred machines in all and twenty travelling salesmen selling his wares.

But he had never forgiven his uncle and aunt for having so abruptly turned him out of their house, for not having helped him realize his dream over here, and assisted him until he learned how to write.

One day old Mr. Rosen suddenly remembered to ask Brother Cohen about the nephew.

"Why, Mr. Rosen, don't you know? He is the firm Isaac Cohen & Co."

"He, the same fellow?" Rosen asked astounded.

Cohen did not care to say much about him, and old Rosen understood something was wrong between the two.

Early next morning Mr. Rosen went to see Isaac Cohen at his office. The rich manufacturer recognized him immediately. Before long he agreed to take a policy of $25,000 from Mr. Rosen's insurance company. But when the old man gave him the application to sign Isaac Cohen said:

"What is that?"

"An application, Mr. Cohen—just write down your name—you know—here at the bottom——"

"But, Mr. Rosen, if I had ever learned to write I would be a beadle in a synagogue to-day."

THE MARRIAGE BROKER'S DAUGHTER

If you don't know Mr. Leib Aaronson, permit me to introduce him. Leib Aaronson is the marriage broker of Harlem. He was in the "Schatchen" business in Harlem when there were only two synagogues for the whole community and both of them were half empty even on holidays. They were built on speculation with an eye to the future development of the section. Such ancient residenceship in Harlem cannot be boasted by many, and it is therefore regarded with great respect. It is Mayflowery, so to speak.

Leib Aaronson's couples have grandchildren now, and he keeps track of all of them as future prospects. In his notebook he has three divisions—Men, Women and Widows. A three-days-old boy is entered in the section Men, with date of birth and fortune of parents; and when one of his couples, the Abrahams, invite him to the christening of their daughter, he enters the little child in the section Women. Near each name are figures which Mr. Aaronson changes frequently in the course of years. If the figures are near a name in the Men section, it means a dowry he is worthy of. Figures near the name of a woman mean what dowry her father is able to give. A line across the whole stands for death, marriage or—and for this last act Mr. Aaronson is always very angry—love-marriage for which no fee was delivered.

Should Mr. Aaronson hear that Mr. Goldberg made a pile of money on some real estate transaction, the figures near Miss Sady Goldberg are raised accordingly. When Baruch Levinsohn was bankrupt the ten thousand dollars dowry marked for his daughter on the marriage broker's notebook dwindled to almost nothing—just enough for a tailor, or lucky if she could get anything with it.

That little notebook of Leib Aaronson contains the history of all the Harlem fortunes; and the lines drawn across—as they occurred more frequently in the last few years, and Aaronson is not yet a rich man from brokerage fees—stand for only one thing; the modernization of Harlem; the love matches Mr. Aaronson is so much against.

Now that I have acquainted you with the marriage broker and his methods, I will tell you the story of his daughter.

A more beautiful girl than Leah Aaronson was never seen in Harlem. Even while a child the neighborhood called her "Beautiful Leah"; "two eyes like big prunes, lips like cherries, and cheeks like a red apple," was the verdict of the fruit man on the corner.

And a more dutiful daughter never lived. She almost never attended any of the parties. Her mother was an invalid, so she attended to everything about the apartment. It was always spick and span. Her father invited people to his home to talk business, and just to make them feel at home that old-time samovar was set on the table. And did the brass shine? Did it? Why, the whole house was kept so clean one could pass a white handkerchief over the floor and not find a speck of dust on it.

Her own dress, her mother's old black silk gown and her father's clothes, were always like just brought home from the tailor. It was all Leah's work.

But all that did not help Leah to get a husband. She was nowhere on her father's book. She was already sixteen, and her father had never given a thought to her future. Why should he? There was no fee in it.

Then something happened.

Leib Aaronson had invited Abraham Goldberg to his home for tea and arranged that Mrs. Fahler should casually come in to see Mrs. Aaronson! Mrs. Fahler had inherited an insurance policy and two houses from her dead husband.

But when Abraham Goldberg saw Leah it almost spoiled the match with the widow. It took three months to get the deal through, and then only when Goldberg was on the verge of bankruptcy.

"When Goldberg comes to see me, I don't want you to be much around, Leah, or you will spoil the deal. It's four hundred dollars, you understand!"

Leah understood. Four hundred dollars was a great fortune.

But when was she to get married? The invalid mother thought of that many a time, and spoke about it to her husband.

"In about two years from now, Dora Summer will be ready; she is fifteen now. By that time Rabinowitz's son will just come out of college and will need money to establish himself—so it will be a sure deal. My fee will be about two thousand dollars. Summer, the butcher, is making money so fast he can't count it. Then, I will not forget my daughter," Leib Aaronson explained.

"Yes, Leib, but suppose——"

"That can't be, woman. Dora Summer will not make a love match; she's cross-eyed."

"I did not mean that. But suppose Rabinowitz gets on his feet himself—you know yourself what good family he comes from—will he then let his own son marry a butcher's daughter?"

"Suppose nothing! A butcher in America is as good as a rabbi if he has money. Believe me, Summer will give all he has for a doctor as a husband for his cross-eyed daughter."

It was all so certain, as Mrs. Aaronson later on explained to Leah, that the girl began to look at Dora Summer as her benefactress. Dora was a walking dowry for her. The whole Aaronson household was interested in Dora's welfare and in her fast growing fortune.

Aaronson made some money, a small fee here and there, while waiting for the big deal to get ripe—but that time was not to be.

Cross-eyed Dora met a cousin from Philadelphia and married him just when Rabinowitz's son

obtained his degree. And to spoil every other plan, this young fool actually married a Christian girl he had known in college.

Leah was eighteen. She decided to look out for herself.

There was a young bookkeeper, a brother of her only girl friend, Fanny Shuman. He was nice to look at. He was also very ambitious. After she had met him at the Shumans' house he fairly invited himself for a Sunday evening at the Aaronsons'. Fanny Shuman whispered in Leah's ear "catch him. I hate Gussy Schwartz."

Things went on pretty well but slowly. Leah arranged and timed the visits of the young man in such a way that he should come when her father was absent. Yet on the third week Leib Aaronson met the visitor.

"Hello, Isaac Shuman! Look what a big man he is! How old are you, now?"

"Twenty-four, Mr. Aaronson."

"Twenty-four! Wait—I think you are older." And out he took that fatal little notebook. "You will be twenty-six, my boy, next month."

After a few minutes' silence, Leib Aaronson, the marriage broker, said to his daughter. "Make the samovar and leave us alone, please. I have something to talk to Mr. Shuman."

Leah trembled and cried as she went to the kitchen. When she returned to the front room she heard her father say to the young man:

"Fanny is nearly twenty-five. She has to marry. Without a dowry—it's a sin unto Israel. She is your sister!"

Leah cried. But Leib Aaronson could not lose a double fee. Besides the dire need, Aaronson was also urged by professional pride to turn such a clever deal and make the same money pay a double fee.

Gussy Schwartz's dowry was four thousand dollars. Out of this money Isaac Shuman gave one thousand toward his sister's dowry, who was married through Aaronson to a newly established paper box manufacturer. Both marriages took place on the same day. This was some inducement to the young manufacturer of paper boxes travelling on thin ice at his bank. It cut the wedding expenses in half.

The few hundred dollars Aaronson got as fees from that deal just put the family over the holy days.

Midwinter found Leah acquainted with a nice young fellow who studied dentistry in the day time and worked as a waiter at night. He was not from the district, consequently nowhere in her father's notebook. He had already gone so far as to kiss Leah's hand, although she said "Please don't," when Aaronson got hold of him quite accidentally at Shuman's house. Aaronson always visited his couples frequently the first year of their marriage. Back of his mind he had a notion that he guaranteed his sales for a year, as are some dollar watches.

In two weeks the future D. D. S. was convinced by the marriage broker that marriage was a more honorable profession than night work in a restaurant, and the deal was clinched. For a year's board and lodging and a promise of one thousand dollars when the young man should finish his studies, Schwartz bought a doctor for his second daughter. There was some argument as to the fee. Aaronson claimed that a year's board was worth $1,000, consequently they owed him brokerage on $2,000. But it was all settled amiably.

The Schatchen had to buy a new coat for himself. Rent was also overdue and he had no cash.

Leah was twenty-one. Leah was twenty-two, and Leah was twenty-three. And the best husbands of the district were given away by her father to other girls; one for two months' rent, one for a winter coat, one for a long overdue bill at the grocers'.

Leah's cheeks were now a little pale, her lips a little drawn. As the shoemaker's children walk barefooted, so was Leah left without a husband because her father was a marriage broker. There was not much hope for a dowry. The best matches fizzled out because of that modern institution —love. It was Aaronson's greatest enemy. No matter how much he combatted it by saying that all love matches were failures, love matches multiplied daily.

A new element invaded old Harlem. Men without reverence for old customs. People whose antecedents nobody knew. They lit no candles on Friday night and rode in cars on Saturday. Girls and young men walked arm-in-arm on the street and laughed aloud immodestly.

Aaronson complained bitterly. His time-honored profession was no longer needed.

"Leib, what about our daughter?"

"Bother with your daughter! There are no Jewish nunneries. With God's help she too will marry."

He had an eye on a certain young widow with a little money, and a young man who needed money. He invited the young man for tea and Mrs. Adler was to come in casually on a visit to Mrs. Aaronson. That old samovar was to do duty again.

Leah was watching. She was wise now. That young man was to be hers.

She placed her chair facing the young man and sat near the widow to give him a chance to compare between them. The young man was very bashful, so the widow also simulated bashfulness. But Leah was in her best mood, and actually sang as she poured tea for the company. She made Mrs. Adler look twenty years older by comparison, and angered the young widow so much that she left the table with tears trembling on her eyelashes.

The deal with the widow fell through. He did not like her. She was too old.

Two months later Leah married the young fellow. She swept him off his feet behind her father's back.

Aaronson was studying his little notebook for a suitable match for the man, when the young couple came into the room and announced that they were just married by the Alderman of the district.

The marriage broker could not forgive his daughter. Not only had she robbed him of a possible fee, but she had completed the ruin of his business. People will point at him and say:

"A marriage broker, and his daughter made a love match!"

THE NEW SECRETARY OF THE PRETZEL-PAINTERS' UNION

The Pretzel-Painters' Union had emerged victoriously from their last strike. The Pretzel eating population of the city had refused to eat Pretzels that were not glazed by the expert hand of a capable expert in the art of pretzel painting—the beer-drinking population refused to drink beer in saloons where dull pretzels were offered and capital had to yield to labor. Organized labor was triumphant. The pretzel painters who had worked fourteen hours a day for ten dollars a week before the strike, won a ten-hour day, an increase of two dollars a week, as well as official recognition of their Union.

The Union consisted of twenty members, all of whom, except one, were officials of the organization. The officials numbered a president, two vice presidents, a recording secretary and a financial secretary, a treasurer, three controllers, a house committee of five, an organizer and three trustees. The total income of the Union from dues never amounted to more than three dollars a week, but this was supplemented by the income from the yearly Pretzel-Painters' concert and ball every winter, and from the picnic every summer.

After the strike was won the members felt the necessity of solidarity more than ever. This feeling brought them together twice every week to discuss Union matters and matters of private concern. But after a while, when they had exhausted all possible subjects and the Union was running smoothly, the organizer had difficulty getting even the legal quorum together once every second week. The organizer knew from experience what such negligence caused.

The collection of dues had already diminished perceptibly. Some of the members were in arrears with five and six weeks. Fifteen cents a week is comparatively easy to pay, but when the sum is over a dollar and the pay is twelve dollars a week—it's a different story! The Pretzel-Painters' Local was in great danger.

The organizer began to feel that non-union pretzel-painters were shining the beer drinkers' delicacy. He called meeting after meeting and described passionately to the four or five old men present the great fight between Labor and Capital in general and the battle their own Union had won; the high price paid for what they already had gained through solid organization, but it was all in vain; the others did not come. They owed too much for dues and fines.

Finally the organizer hit upon a great idea. "The Pretzel-Painters' Union has to be reorganized," he wrote to all the members.

It was a new thing, that word "reorganized." It was something worth while finding out about. "We must reorganize or our organization goes to pieces," he wrote to them. That Wednesday evening was a gala evening. The financial secretary had never taken in so much money at once; twenty-six dollars in one evening! They all paid up to the minute; because it was explained in the letter that only members with paid-up dues had a vote in the reorganization of the mighty Pretzel-Painters' Union.

The Pretzel-Painters' Union was not without its inner dissensions. There was a group of Galician Jews and a group of Russian Jews always fighting one another; and both groups fought whatever the group of Roumanian Jews proposed. There were also two old Portuguese Jews; and whatever they wanted carried through was sure to be defeated by the above-mentioned three groups.

But the Russian group was always the deciding factor. By themselves alone they were the majority of the organization.

After the secretary had announced that everybody was present and paid up to the minute, the chairman, Mr. Bindzel, opened the meeting and asked the organizer to explain the cry of distress.

"Mr. Chairman and brothers," the organizer began, "we must reorganize or we go to pieces. Already the Hinshel Company employs two non-union pretzel painters. If we don't reorganize they will break our Union. We must uphold the rights of labor or the heel of capitalism will crush us——"

He spoke well into the night and urged them with tears in his eyes and a proper catch in the voice to stand by the flag of their class.

The silence was very impressive when the organizer finished and sat down to wipe his perspiring face. No one spoke a word. The chairman did not want to break the silence. He felt the greatness of the moment.

Finally brother Kessler said:

"Mr. Chairman!"

"Brother Kessler has the floor."

Brother Kessler, of the Galician group, seldom took the floor. So everybody was astonished that he of all others should want to speak.

"Mr. Chairman and Brothers.... Mr. Chairman. Of course, we want to reorganize, but we don't know how to do it."

"Well said! Go ahead Brother Kessler!" several voices were heard at once.

Kessler took heart.

"We are Pretzel Painters. We are proud of our Union, are strong for our Union, and we want to protect it. Let Brother Kirshen, our organizer, tell us how."

"Sure, Kessler is right. Let Brother Kirshen tell us how," came voices from everywhere.

"Order, please!" the chairman called. "This is an important meeting. On it depends the battle between Labor and Capital. Order, please. Brother Kirshen has the floor."

Brother Kirshen, aglow from his recent triumph, took the centre of the platform.

"The first thing to do to reorganize our Union is to elect new officers. I make therefore a motion that we elect new officers."

"Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman," several called out.

"That's a political trick," called out the Roumanian group in one voice.

"Order, please!" yelled the chairman. The heavy gavel came down upon the table.

Everybody was soon seated.

"I make an amendment to the motion," Kessler said.

"Sit down, Brother Kessler, we must proceed regularly. The Pretzel-Painters' Union has a constitution. We will proceed according to its constitution. The constitution of the Pretzel-Painters' Union says that when a motion is put before the house, it is first voted upon before any amendments are discussed. Does anybody want to speak on the motion?"

"Then, I propose that the motion be voted upon without debates because it is late and they will soon put out the lights in the house," said Kessler.

"Politics, politics," the Portuguese group cried. "Traitor, traitor," came from another group. But when Kessler's proposal was voted upon he had a majority. The Russian group voted with him. And so it happened that the nineteen officers of the Pretzel-Painters' Union were shifted around.

The chairman became the treasurer and so forth. But when it came to vote upon the secretaryship, Kessler, who had hitherto been the twentieth of the Union, the only member who had been without an office, was elected Secretary of the Pretzel-Painters' Union, because he was backed by the Russian group.

The following evening Kessler was the first to appear at the local of the Union. A little later the dethroned official appeared. They did not even greet one another. Kirshen, the organizer, was the third man to come.

"Brother Grumberg," he said to the former secretary, "would you please give over the books to brother Kessler and show him what he has to do?"

Grumberg took out from a drawer the two books of the Union and was ready to explain the work.

"But by God! In God's name! What do you want me to do with these books?" Kessler cried.

"Record the meetings, brother Kessler, write down what takes place," Grumberg said.

"What?" the new Secretary called out horror-stricken. "I—write? How should I write? I don't write—I don't know how to write—never did. What do you want with my life—what?"

"For God's sake, Kessler! If you cannot read and write why did you accept the nomination for the secretaryship?" the organizer asked angrily. But Kessler was defiant.

"Well, how and from where did you want me to know that a secretary must know to read and write?"

Kessler's resignation and the election of a new secretary brought the organization on the brink of ruin. And if it would not have been for the superior generalship of organizer Kirshen the Pretzel-Painters' Union would have been crushed under the heel of capitalism.

THE GYPSY BLOOD THAT TELLS

One does not expect to meet anything out of the ordinary at West Farms to break the monotony where the big city fringes out. The old wooden shacks lean on the brick tenements, and one does not know whether the city invades the peaceful country or the country tries to catch up with the city. The outskirts of New York always brings to me the memory of a certain gentleman in silk hat and dress suit, but with the ends of his trousers in fringes and his shoes down at the heel. But—as a wise man once said—if one stands in one place long enough he sees the whole world pass before him as in a kaleidoscope. Thus also my frequent visits to West Farms were repaid when I saw one morning a gypsy tribe camped there.

Six wagons back of the road, a dozen horses neighing as they rubbed their noses on the shafts; a few tents with the flaps undulating windward; a few patches of color on the dress of the women. What a change it made in the dreary place, how stolid old West Farms was transformed when the curling smoke rose from the stovepipes of the camp wagons!

I expected to hear the usual noise attending camping; song and laughter, as only gypsies can sing and laugh.

It was a Roumanian gypsy tribe; one of many that have come over to this country in the last decade. But the people went about in the quietest possible way, which I knew was not at all their custom.

"Have they taken on manners?" I wondered.

Children of the neighborhood, and even grown-ups, began to assemble around the wagons. They stood at a distance. A mother warned her over-curious little boy:

"Don't go too near, dearie! Gypsies steal children."

As the woman spoke two little boys of the tribe climbed out from one of the camp wagons.

"Look at these white children!" exclaimed several people.

"Surely, stolen children."

The features of the children were distinctly of a Roumanian cast. A young gypsy woman followed the little ones to a tent.

From inside the wagon broke out a loud cry that was drowned in the wails and groanings of the people in every wagon and tent. The curious throng assembled about the camp now widened the circle. The gypsy litany of the dead was officiated.

In funeral rhythm the dead one's virtues were enumerated one by one, while others made incantations to chase the evil spirit.

"Leave us! If thou hast come through the chimney, leave through the chimney; and if through the door, evil one, leave the same way!"

"That thou be fed burning stones from now until eternity. That thy thirst be quenched only with the blood of thy own kin."

The same incantations were repeated for more than a half hour. They ceased abruptly, at the sound of a gong. The evil one had departed. Slowly, in single file, the gypsies descended the steps of the wagon and bowed very low westward, to the setting sun of an early autumn day, before going each one to his own tent.

The circle of the curious neighbors had widened very much when I approached an old gypsy and asked him who had died. He turned full face as he said:

"Our Chief, Yorga, our Chief. We would want to bury him under a tree near a river—but can we do as we please in this country? Tell me, stranger."

Like the drippings from a burning candle the tears fell from the man's eyes as he spoke to me.

On the wooden cross over Yorga's grave I have carved with my pen-knife the name of the dead

one. In the fall of every year his tribe comes to the burial grounds, and each one cuts out a piece of cloth from his best garment and leaves it there as an offering to the dead Chief.

And the old gypsy told me: "A great man was Yorga. A king among men. His mother was killed by her father when Yorga was born, because she was the daughter of a great Roumanian boyar, and the child, fruit of a secret love, was the son of a gypsy. But the child was allowed to live, so beautiful was he.

"When Yorga was six years old, his grandfather, the old boyar, who had no other children, took the boy from the servant quarters into the house and called a special teacher to show him the letters. Later on Yorga was sent to school, and grew to be a learned man. All this time he did not know who his father was, and did not know that the hand he kissed good-night was the one that had murdered his mother.

"But there was a restless spirit in the boy; a spirit that made him roam from city to city whenever he had an opportunity. And thus he wandered all over the world. In search of learning, it was thought. Because no one realized the yearning of the gypsy in this stately youth.

"When Yorga was twenty-five his grandfather married him to another boyar's daughter. The following year the old man died, leaving his land and fortune to his grandson.

"Yorga was not happy in his marriage, not because the 'Conitza' was not a beautiful and good wife, not because she did not love him. Neither did his great fortune bring him happiness. It only tied him down to one place. Yorga began to go to the city once a month, and usually came home drunk. Then once every week. Later on he was seldom seen at home.

"The usurers first took away part of his land, then some of his oxen. His wife cried. One and then another child was born to them. Yorga made resolutions to better himself—cried and beat his heart and asked for forgiveness. A few days, a few weeks, or a few months of strenuous work, and then again back to the riotous life, to dissipation—and again home a repentant sinner. The land he owned shrunk daily. And the cattle he owned were either taken away or died in neglect—because 'the eye of the master fattens the cows.' And Yorga was careless. He had no ambition in life. He wanted nothing, he desired nothing. Even his carouses no longer had any distraction for him.

"Then one day our tribe camped near his grounds. At once he left wife, children, land and home, and came to live with us. For twenty years he guided our ways. There was no day that he thought not and labored not for us. He no longer thought of carouses and drinks. He bade us dress cleanly and live healthful lives, and we were respected wherever we came. It was he who guided us here over strange lands and great seas, and his wisdom is still guiding us."

"But," asked I, "what about the white children I saw in your tents?"

"They are of Yorga and his gypsy wife—and with them we have great trouble, for our ways are not their ways. Their souls are like the soul of Yorga's mother, the boyar's daughter. Some day they will run away and settle in some village—stolid, stale peasants."

"And what about Yorga's first children?" I asked again.

"They roam the world; are celebrated musicians. And the sun never finds them where the moon put them to sleep. They have the father's blood," the old man answered as he took with his bare fingers a piece of burning charcoal to light his freshly stuffed pipe.

"What's born of a cat runs after mice."

WHEN STARK'S CAFÉ WAS CLOSED

"Impossible, impossible, impossible," said everybody when the news passed around that Stark's Café was closed and that the house was being demolished.

Stark's Café on Houston Street was a celebrated landmark of New York. It was there that the playwrights, from the most pretentious to the humblest, closed contracts with managers. A special table at the upper end of the place was reserved for this purpose, and when a manager was sitting at that table with a playwright it meant business. "Charlie" the lawyer, would then loom up from somewhere and draw up the "funeral papers." Stark's Café! Why, Jewish actors in Alexandria, Egypt, made appointments with their London acquaintances to "meet at Stark's." It was not necessary to add "in New York."

Stark's was the stage mart of the world. The first tables near the door, just ordinary wooden tables, were apportioned for the ushers, ticket speculators and supers. Next to these tables were a few better ones, marble topped, at which were seated the provincial actors on visit in the metropolis. After those, there were a few which belonged to musicians and the writers of vaudeville jingles. But the round centre tables and those near the windows toward Houston Street were reserved for stars of both sexes, managers and successful playwrights. Stark's head waiter put it very clearly: "These tables are reserved for gentlemen who at least occasionally put on a silk hat."

And now, this place, this rendezvous of the two hemispheres was closed and being torn down.

Old Samuels, one of the oldest Jewish actors, complained bitterly about it.

"You understand," he said, "it's now twenty years that I never missed a day from Stark's. In the morning, after breakfast, I'd shave, dress and go to Stark's. Maybe, who knows! and after lunch I'd return there. To save carfare we moved not far from the place. After supper I was again there, and after the show—maybe—maybe."

Samuels's nickname was "Samuel Maybe," because it's now more than twenty years since he came from London, where he was a success, to play here, and it's still "Maybe." But he has never been faithless to his art. Oh, no! This was chiefly due to the fact that his wife and daughter were excellent dressmakers.

"You see for yourself what a calamity the tearing down of Stark's place is," old Samuels continued, as he wiped a tear from his eye. "All my hopes are blasted. There can be no 'maybe' any longer—I am doomed. What will I do every morning, every afternoon, every evening? Where will they come to look for me when they will need me?"

I must tell here that this conversation took place in a new café on 10th Street; whereupon some kind-hearted companion suggested to the weather-beaten veteran of the Jewish stage that he should make this place his steady abode. But the old man straightened his bent back, his eyes flashed fire and his thin hands shot out from his white cuffs in a dramatic sweep. "Here, in this place? I, Samuels, the man who created 'Kean' Shylock? No, never! Even if I starve to death. In a place without atmosphere, without traditions—never! never!"

One minute later he looked up at the clock on the wall and began to make hasty excuses: His wife was waiting for him with supper.

Samuels's past contained one of the greatest dramas. It ruined his life. It wiped the floor with him, so to say. Here is what had happened to him twenty-odd years ago:

There were only two Jewish theatres worthy of the name in the whole world. One was in London, and the other on the Bowery, New York—the old Thalia Theatre. The theatre in the Bowery had the greater reputation because of the genius of the lamented playwright, Jacob Gordin, presiding there, and the host of actors he had developed. It was the ambition of every London actor to play in New York. One of Samuels's confreres had already achieved fame on the Bowery when Samuels, who like all actors knew in his heart of hearts that he was better than any other living actor, decided to try his luck over here. In London he was already famous in certain classic rôles.

Ten days after his decision was taken, he and his grip landed at Stark's Café.

"From London? How is London? What's the new play there?"

Samuels had his best clothes on, and was admitted to the centre tables. It brought him in contact with stars and managers. His confrere, who had preceded him here, sat enviously at one of the minor tables. He only had a small part in a play, for which he received pay in "pasteboards" (tickets), which he himself peddled or sold to the brood of speculators. In those days Jewish actors did not own ten-thousand-dollar automobiles. Samuels's initial success, the ready admittance to the centre tables, made his former friend, Kashin, green with envy.

It so happened that Gordin, the dramatic manager, saw Samuels, liked his face, and engaged him immediately for a new play they were then rehearsing.

That same evening a cable was flashed to London to the actor's wife: "Pack up and come with baby." It brought Esther here two weeks later—just in time for the opening night of the new show.

Samuels's rôle was the one next to the star. Kashin had but a very minor rôle—as a body servant to Samuels, who was stalking about in flowing Oriental robes back stage from one end to the other.

Samuels waited in the wings for his cue. He had to come in with majestic steps and utter his decision to leave his faithless spouse to her lover. Oh how he chafed, waiting for his cue! It was to take the house by storm. He was to outshine even the star.

And—the cue was given, Kashin near him—everything in order. But just as he opened the door, Kashin gently but firmly stepped on poor Samuels's corn—on the little toe.

The pain was so terrible that the actor stumbled and limped on the stage with one foot in his hands. Mechanically he said his lines. Instead of using a stentorian voice with face to the gallery, he drawled them out in a plaintive tone, like a whimpering dog, looking at the stage door, with his back to the audience.

It was so funny that the audience roared with laughter and could not be brought to its senses. The heroine cried and pleaded, but it did not help. The gallery continued to laugh. When the

curtain went down Kashin had disappeared from the theatre. The actors almost mobbed poor Samuels. The playwright, Gordin, could have killed him. "Even if they should have cut your head off you should still have been acting your rôle properly," he said. As soon as the poor actor appeared again in the next act, the people shook with laughter. It could not be suppressed.

When the manager came out before the curtain and explained to the people what had happened, it became even worse. It was impossible to go on. It killed the show—a good play which was revived ten years later with great success—and it killed Samuels.

Esther, a practical wife, opened a dressmaking shop. Samuels spent the next year or so explaining what had happened.

The first few weeks after the occurrence Samuels receded from the centre tables at Stark's to the side tables, and actors in good humor coaxed him into telling his story over and over again. It became a tradition to coax Samuels—and Samuels was easily coaxed into telling the story.

But he could get no place on the stage. From a character player he became a character. It became a habit with every manager to promise him a part in the next play. Some pretended it brought good luck to do so. When a play went to smash it was, they said, "Because Samuels did not believe you."

Thus the Jewish stage grew under his eyes with the doors closed to him, because some one had stepped on his corn. He became "Maybe"—"maybe" in the next play.

"Don't refuse Samuels," the manager would whisper to the playwright when the contract was drawn at the big table. "Don't refuse him; it brings bad luck."

Samuels would certainly have his eye on the proceedings, and come up to shake hands and bid good luck.

"And will I have a part?"

"I hope so, Samuels."

"Esther, I have a part in Ash's new play."

Esther had heard that same phrase twenty years thrice a day. Like all actors Samuels had but a poor vocabulary of his own. Relying on other men to supply them the tools of expression, actors are poor word finders.

Then, the night of the first performance, Samuels would warm up near some one, and as the "rôle" appeared he would sadly say, "My rôle, look what he is making with my rôle."

Twenty years of daily hopes and daily disappointments. A whole world grew up before him. He knew nothing of it at all. Stark's Café was New York, America. The whole world was comprised between his home and this place. His hair turned gray, the corners of his mouth drooped, his eyes dimmed, his shoulders stooped. His wife grew old, his daughter bloomed into youth and withered from overwork. There came the Boer War, several earthquakes, the Balkan War, and now this Great War. All this left Samuels cold and indifferent. All those years he was waiting at Stark's Café for an engagement.

"Maybe to-day."

And this haven of hope has disappeared.

BECAUSE OF BOOKKEEPING

"Nominations for treasurer are now in order. Nominations!"

"Moishe Goldberg"—"Moishe Goldberg"—"Moishe Goldberg," called out every one present at the yearly election of the Roumanian Sick Benefit Society.

"Any other nominations?" the Secretary asked.

"No, no, go ahead; it's Moishe Goldberg again, Mr. Secretary."

"He's good enough, good enough, Mr. Secretary."

And so Moishe Goldberg was elected Treasurer of the Society by acclamation. It was a yearly performance—since the last twenty years.

And this was not the only society for which Moishe Goldberg was Treasurer—there were a dozen. Every Jewish-Roumanian Society of New York wanted to have him act as Treasurer. Once he promised to accept the nomination, no other man would care to run against him, and the yearly election was merely a formality turned into flattery as far as he was concerned. His probity and financial responsibility were above par. His charity was proverbial.

At thirty he came from Roumania with his wife and two little girls. With the few dollars he had brought with him he opened a little grocery store on Clinton Street which prospered and developed into a bigger store on Rivington Street. Of a religious, old-fashioned turn of mind, he followed old Jewish traditions. His store closed Friday night, it remained so over Saturday; he also kept closed every Jewish holiday. He let his beard grow, and went regularly to the synagogue near Forsythe Street.

When he heard that some one chided him about his religious punctiliousness, he said: "I came here because I wanted religious freedom—what I have I want to use."

"Moishe Goldberg, money is needed for a new scroll."

"Put me down for a third of what it costs to get one."

When a woman bought less food than usual, Goldberg would ask, "What's the matter?"

"Husband is out of work."

"Well, do you want to starve him he should have no strength to look for work? Foolish woman! Take what you need; when he will work you will pay me up." And he would accept no thanks, Moishe Goldberg.

In spite of all he gave, his business grew. In a few years he had four stores, branched out in some leather finding business, and sold wholesale to smaller groceries in East New York and Brownsville.

His promptitude made the wholesalers vie with each other as to who should sell him most. His good nature attracted customers from everywhere. He signed no notes and demanded none. Every one trusted him and he trusted everybody. He had a little note book in which he wrote down what was necessary. For the rest he had an excellent memory.

Thus the business went on for years, and as the Jewish-Roumanian population grew on the east side his fame spread. By accident he became the owner of a few tenement houses. Rents were never due. People generally paid, and when they did not, because a husband was on strike or a child sick, it was soon forgotten.

Each evening he would take together all the moneys and checks of the day and put them in a leather handbag. The next morning the whole was deposited in the bank.

If a bill was due the same or the next day and there was not enough money in the bank, all he had to do was to 'phone up to one of his hundred wealthy friends and ask a check of two or three thousand dollars for a few days. On occasion it was reciprocated.

His home life was an ideal one. He lived in the district. His wife was as good and old-fashioned as her husband, and though the girls went through high school, all they had modernized themselves was to use a little cold cream, against which the father protested.

At twenty the older girl married a well-to-do furrier, to whom Moishe Goldberg gave a check of ten thousand dollars, after having promised only five, as dowry.

The whole affair was carried along old-fashioned lines, through a marriage broker. The wedding was an event. Members from twenty societies brought wedding gifts worth into the thousands.

But right at the wedding, Sofia, the younger daughter, fell in love with a cousin of her sister's husband, a young bookkeeper.

There was nothing against the young man. He came from a good family, was well educated in Hebrew. Of course he shaved. But Moishe Goldberg was tolerant enough to understand. To his wife's objections he answered, "It's better a Jew without a beard than a beard without a Jew."

There was only one serious objection. The young man was making very little money—twenty a week. But Sofia loved him. She was the only one now.

"And after all," Moishe Goldberg said to his wife, "maybe it's better so. I will take him into the business. Why should my son-in-law work elsewhere? Sofia will continue to live with us. There is plenty room in the house."

And Sofia agreed, and the young man agreed. The wedding of the first daughter took place in the spring, and that of the second daughter late in the fall.

In three different synagogues dinners for the poor were served at Moishe Goldberg's expense for a full week.

And because he gave no dowry, he sent checks to every charitable institution. He agreed to forget the monthly rent due from a dozen tenants. Many an old account was torn out. All the people working for him got a raise in their wages.

After the wedding the young couple went on a honeymoon to Chicago, where the first daughter now lived.

When they returned Moishe Goldberg took his son-in-law down to the store and showed him the new sign, "Goldberg & Waldman, Wholesale and Retail Grocers."

There was not much to be said. The two men kissed each other in sight of all the people on the street. The young man entered the store.

"This is your new boss," Goldberg said to his employees. "I will begin to sleep a little longer every morning from now on."

Waldman greeted the men, shook hands with some. His father-in-law showed him the back of the store, packed with boxes and barrels and bags. He brought him down the cellar where the herring barrels were deposited.

"Ephraim, my son, I will tell Sofia to make you an apron. I will make a regular grocer out of you."

The next day the young man saw merchandise come and go, checks come and checks go, with no order, no billing, Moishe Goldberg only noting down in his book an item here and there.

"And where are your books, father?"

"What books; who needs books, who?"

"Why, father, how can you carry on such a business without books?"

"You are as silly as all the other young chaps. I am twenty years in business and never saw the need of books. What I am afraid I won't remember I note down here—that's good enough for me. Have a look at my check book and see."

Ephraim Waldman went home a worried man that evening. It was Friday night, and the best fish ever cooked, for which Mrs. Goldberg was so famous, was not good enough to relieve his mind. Even Sofia's kisses were thrown away.

"What's the matter with Ephraim?" the mother asked.

"He wants books." Moishe Goldberg laughed aloud as he patted his daughter. "You can see he is a bookkeeper; without books he can't even eat fish."

Waldman wanted to expostulate, but his father-in-law cut him short.

"At home, and especially on Saturday, I don't allow business talk. If you can't be merry, go to your rooms with your wife."

"No use being so cross with him," Goldberg's wife said after the young people had retired.

"I don't want him to spoil my holiday, the young smut-nose-know-everything. Goes two years to school and thinks that even God owes him an accounting. He must remember that he is in Moishe Goldberg's house."

Saturday passed quietly. Sofia's eyes were a little red, but her husband seemed to want to make up for past misdeeds, and was very merry. At the synagogue he comported himself beautifully. Moishe Goldberg was especially proud of his son-in-law's reading from the scroll.

"Well, what do you say to my American? He reads from the Holy Scroll like a charm." And everybody complimented him.

Sunday was a half holiday, but on Monday when the business started agoing, Waldman could not stand it.

"Father," he said in the evening, "it can't go on that way. We must have some books. No business is carried on that way."

"Books! bosh; don't bother about books. Attend to business."

"But how can you know anything, father?"

"Not being a bookkeeper, I know my business. The best proof that bookkeepers are not business men is that they are working for somebody else."

The next day, and the next, and the next, Sofia's eyes were red from crying.

"What should be the matter with her?" Mrs. Goldberg asked her husband.

"The Talmud says, that a young couple are like a new wagon and a new horse. They must adjust themselves," was his answer.

But the mother was not satisfied with the answer, and she got her daughter's confidence.

"Ephraim wants to look for a position. He says he can't understand a business which has no bookkeeping. No modern business is carried on that way."

The long and short of the story was that Moishe Goldberg was browbeaten by the two women. He gave his little notebook to his son-in-law who undertook to make an inventory of all the assets of Goldberg & Waldman.

The old merchant had the fun of his life to watch the young man enter everything in his books. But the laughter died on his lips when this same young man told him that the assets were some sixty thousand dollars less than the liabilities.

"It's a stupid lie! Only a silly fellow with a bookkeeping mania could say such a foolish thing."

But the old man could not sleep that night. A few days later he was short of a couple of thousand dollars to pay a bill. He lacked the old-time courage to ring up one of his business friends. He could have gotten the money from his bank, but there too his courage failed him.

Little by little, yet rapidly enough, it was whispered about that the wealthy grocer was not as solid as had been thought. Six months after the wedding of his second daughter the red flag of the auctioneer hung in front of the store for the benefit of the creditors.

"But how did it all happen?" asked his first son-in-law, the furrier when he arrived from Chicago, at the news of the calamity.

Broken down, old, worn, sick, Moishe Goldberg moaned:

"Because my daughter married a bookkeeper."

THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAK

The Mastodon has disappeared but we are still pestered by flies.

The whole story could be told in one paragraph, nay, in one statement contradicting bluntly a biological law, the survival of the fittest. But these laws are so pliable one is as much afraid to contradict as the promulgators were afraid to establish them. So I am to tell the story as gently and as objectively as the matter on hand will permit.

Many, many years ago Hans Burgmiller, a plumber, came over here from Germany and established himself in business on what is now St. Mark's Place. You can still see the name "Burgmiller, Plumber," over the door of the old place. The original black letters stick out from underneath a dozen coats of paint, as though the old man would from his grave cry out and fight against effacement.

I don't know what plumbing there was to be done at that time in the district. But Hans Burgmiller prospered in his own way. A few years after his establishment he surrendered himself to the joys of fatherhood and little Anton Burgmiller became the idol of the Burgmiller household in the back of the shop. When Anton was twelve he was his father's helper. A little square-headed, square-shouldered, blue-eyed boy in his father's old overalls went along wherever plumbing was to be done and carried a heavy bag of tools, fittings and pipes on his back.

When little Anton was sixteen he was a full-fledger plumber. Though Hans Burgmiller never acknowledged anybody to know the trade better than he did he accepted the superiority of his son when modern plumbing methods first appeared in the district.

Water was piped up to every apartment on every floor, and baths and other modern conveniences were installed. That was a bit too complicated for Hans Burgmiller but Anton took to it like a duck to water. Soon after that the household was removed from back of the shop to the first floor, to make place for the extension of business, and over the letters of the firm were painted other letters in red that made the whole thing read "Burgmiller & Burgmiller, Plumbers." In due time, perhaps a little prematurely because of hard work, old man Hans died and was buried. But Anton had meanwhile married and a little son was soon born to him. He named him Hans in memory of his father and as he expected him to continue in the business his grandfather had established he left the lettering over the door.

What was the use taking it off when he will have to letter it again in a few years? Perhaps this item of economy entered into the christening of the little boy, because the mother wanted the boy christened after her father. But she was overruled.

Hans went to school with a lot of Irish boys. They teased him about his Dutch name and twisted it so until it became a horror to the little boy. The result was that when the time came to have a little say of his own in the business the last two syllables from the name were smeared over with yellow paint and the firm's name became "Burg & Burg." When such an expense as stationery became necessary Hans was proud that it read so beautifully "Burg & Burg, Plumbers and Fitters."

The building trade was very active. The upper floor was transformed into a sort of office in which Hans's young sister presided behind a desk on which stood letter files reserved for bills and receipts. The clinkety clink of the typewriter helped the song of the hammer a floor below. On the shelves, nuts and bolts and shiny faucets. On the floor-space, leaning on the walls, white enameled bath tubs and grey slab wash tubs. And hanging from the ceiling, a multitude of chandeliers in brass and oxidized tin.

The firm of Burg & Burg now owned a horse and wagon. Several workingmen expected and obtained regularly a pay envelope every Saturday afternoon.

At twenty-five Hans figured that he was entitled to a family of his own. Especially so because his sister had married a year before one of his workingmen who set up for himself in another district and needed her help. The firm needed a capable office woman. His mother helped him look around for a capable wife. They were successful. Ana Hirtenmayer pledged her troth to Hans Burg. The wedding took place in the spring and on the first of January a little boy was born and they named him Anton. But notwithstanding her household duties the billing and the books of the firm was kept in order by Mrs. Burg even if she had to work until after midnight.

It seemed for a while that the Burgmiller race was to rotate eternally around the two Christian names, Hans and Anton, but on the third year another son was born to them. They christened him Peter; because he came to life on St. Peter's Day.

Years passed. The family received several additions one after another at a year's interval, all girls, and then again a boy whom they christened Louis. Women folks never counted at all in the Burgmiller family. They were regarded as reproducing animals only, in spite of all other services they rendered.

Anton and Peter grew rapidly and were in overalls before they had reached their fourteenth year. The girls, strong and fleshy, helped keep the house in order and prepare the meals for the whole family. Hans Burg was proud of them.

But little Louis, the youngest of the brood, did not develop like his brothers and sisters. His chest was narrow. His muscles flabby. His legs thin. He could not lift any weight to speak of. A change of weather threw him in bed. After he was doctored by the mother with roots and herbs the medicus was called in. It happened at least twice a week. His bills were even larger than a plumber's. There never was a week in which Louis did not cause a large extra expense. As little and small as he was, he was the dead weight that dragged them all down. They had to economize for his sake. Leberwurst became a luxury instead of a staple article on the table of the Burg family. And just because Louis was so puny and weak the mother and the father loved him more than any of the other children. It was as if the whole family lived for nothing else than to expiate the sin of Louis's ailments.

When Louis was fourteen years old, he did not don overalls. He continued school. He had the best of clothes and the best of foods. In summer time he was sent to the mountains with his mother to take care of him. Louis entered High School. Anton, his oldest brother, married but remained with the firm, drawing a weekly salary—a smaller one than he could have gotten elsewhere. Then Peter married and began to draw a weekly salary. But neither Anton nor Peter were as husky and strong as they might have been. They had worked a little harder and fed a little less well than it was good for them. They had started work too soon and endured too many privations because of Louis's continual expensive existence.

From High School Louis, still nurtured and doctored, entered college. He was still too weak to work. His older sisters, rosy, carnate Gretchens, withered away working hard and living loveless lives because of the expense of Louis's upkeep.

Louis, as a college man, began to look down upon all of them. In natty suit and clean linen, supplied with money, as much as he wanted because they dared not contradict the "poor sick boy," he associated only with the gentlemen of the college. His brothers were just ordinary workingmen; ill mannered and ignorant. The time came when father Hans was called to his Maker. The Burgmillers were not of a long-living stock. And when the will was opened, everything belonged to the "poor weak Louis, who was not able to work like his strong brothers."

"Poor weak Louis" became the owner of the Burg & Burg establishment founded on the sweat of four generations. And because he was too weak to work himself, his broad shouldered brothers had sunken cheeks, bent backs, while Louis, the prosperous Louis Burg, exhibits his flashy clothes and his learning.

SOCIALISTS! BEWARE OF MRS. ROSENBERG

A mistaken idea floats about that the whole east side is socialistic. I made a special investigation to find out how it stood. I found some men who were still Socialists, some who had been, some who still pretended to be, some still clinging to it as a profession.

But nowhere did I find any one hating the doctrine so profoundly as on Third Street and Second Avenue, where lives Mrs. Rachael Rosenberg. She rents out furnished rooms. The first thing she asked me when I applied for a room was:

"Are you a Socialist? If you are, I don't want you. If you are not, we will talk business."

"I am not a Socialist," I told her. "Still, I never heard of people refusing them as boarders!"

"I suppose you know all about Socialism from books," Mrs. Rosenberg put in sneeringly. "But I tell you one never knows anybody or anything until you come in close contact with 'em. I will only go and see that the stew does not burn, and after I will tell you what I know."

And this is the story as she told it to me:

"My husband's name is Moritz Rosenberg. We came here in President Cleveland's time—which is more than you and many others could say. At home he was—what's the use to tell you what! Here he became a cloak operator. After the Cleveland financial crisis, when men died of starvation, I decided to help out my Moritz. We lived on Catharine Street, near the river, in two rooms only. I put out a shingle 'Boarders Wanted,' and got two the same day. I bought a double bed for them. Each one paid four dollars a month, so my whole rent cost me two dollars. And that was not all. I gave them breakfast and supper for two dollars a week. Things were cheap then. I actually earned our food.

"Why shouldn't a woman help her husband especially if God has not given her any children? Well, after a while we moved out to a bigger apartment on Monroe Street, four rooms with bath and all other conveniences. So I rented two more rooms to four more people. It gave me a lot of work, but we saved all my Moritz earned and more.

"He had a steady job at Kuntzman's and worked there year in, year out. He had started with Kuntzman's and worked there—yes, strike or no strike, good season, slack season, fourteen dollars a week every week.

"I treat my boarders well, so that once moved in no one moves out, unless his wife comes from Europe or he marries, if he is a single man. I shall live many years for each dollar I made as a marriage broker—and every couple as happy as could be.

"Well, one day I lost a boarder. He had his foot caught in a machine. They took him to the hospital at noon, and in the evening he was dead.

"It was too bad. He was a nice fellow. But I, who was I to mourn him? I paid sixteen dollars rent. So I put out a shingle the same day 'Boarders wanted.' On the next day I got a new boarder. I was not particular then. Especially when I saw a nice clean young man, with teeth as white as grains of polished rice; and a voice he had like silk, like pure silk, so soft and nice. He did not bargain, he did not talk. Five dollars a month, five dollars. I asked him what time he had to get up in the morning, because if he had to get up later than the other bedfellow, he should sleep near the wall, not to be disturbed, or if he had to get up earlier the other will sleep near the wall. He did not care. It was all fixed up and in the evening he brought his trunk. It was as heavy as stone—full of books.

"After supper my other boarders used to sit at a game of cards. Not that they were gamblers, but what else should they have done? They drank tea, soda water, a can of beer sometimes. Sometimes my Moritz sat with them for a while—just to make them feel at home. Believe me, I did not lose at them. They paid for tea and sugar. Why shouldn't they? Was I their mother? In America one has to pay for everything.

"But that new boarder I got, he wouldn't play cards and wouldn't drink beer. He sat in a corner and read books till late at night.

"Then after a few weeks the others, too, stopped playing cards. They all sat up late in the night and talked. The new boarder was explaining all the time how their bosses got richer every day. Every night the same thing. He was a Socialist.

"My husband was very busy, worked overtime, Sundays, whole nights. It was already fourteen years that he worked for Kuntzman, and we had put aside a nice little sum of money.

"One evening my Moritz came home very angry. Kuntzman had engaged a new foreman, an Italian fellow, and the two of them, my husband and he, couldn't agree. After supper, I told him to go to sleep, but he did not want to. He went in to talk with the boarders. I went to bed. Late at night Moritz came in.

"'You sleep,' he said.

"'What is it?'

"'You know, that new boarder is perfectly right in what he says about bosses!' Moritz said to me.

"'What do you mean?' I asked.

"'Them bosses are making piles of money,' he explained to me as clear as day; 'they make on the men at least fifty per cent. Look at Kuntzman,' he said. 'He started out with two machines, now he has four hundred. That Socialist is right; the bosses are getting rich.'

"I told him to go to sleep and not bother about other people's fortune, but my Moritz could not

sleep the whole night.

"The next evening he went again in the boarders' room to hear the Socialist talk. When he came in to sleep he told me:

"'That Socialist is absolutely right. He proved by his books. Peshe! do you know what I will do?'

"'What?' I asked.

"'Since bosses are getting rich, I will become a boss. The Socialists are right.'

"With the money we had both worked so hard to save, Moritz Rosenberg opened a shop with a partner, also one of our boarders who put in his money. And in one year we lost all we had.

"He had to go and beg Mr. Kuntzman to take him on again. I am again taking boarders.

"But no Socialist liar will ever cross my threshold, and if I lay my hands on that one—if ever I see him, with his flowing necktie and book under his arm, going around to poor people to tell them such lies! Fourteen years of our work gone on account of him—fourteen years."

A sharp chocky odor of burning meat, her stew on the stove, drove her to the kitchen. I tiptoed out of the room, ran down the stairs and kept on running for blocks and blocks, for fear of Mrs. Rosenberg.

A CONFLICT OF IDEALS

In matters musical Silvio Romano is the authority of Mulberry Street. His two hundred and fifty pounds of flesh add weight to his opinion. When there are no customers in his shop, when he is not busy honing or stropping his razors, he is sitting on two chairs, guitar in hand, playing and singing to his heart's content.

Mulberry Street, "Little Italy" of the down town east side, is a very busy street—so busy, indeed, it makes one suspicious. Young men walk up and down the sidewalk, calling to each other; the pastry shops, wine shops and cafés are always full of people talking about everything, and the "barbieri" are, as they have always been, the centers of art, literature and politics.

After Angelo, Silvio Romano's son, was drafted into the army, the father felt the loss threefold—the son, the helper, and the flutist. Angelo was all these to him. As a son, there was none more dutiful than the boy. As a barber, people came from uptown to have their hair cut by Angelo Romano; he was a real artist in his line. But as a flutist he surpassed himself in all other qualities. All musical disputes were quickly settled by Romano's calling upon his son to illustrate the particular passages in dispute, of "Lucia de Lammermoor" or "Il Barbiere de Sevilla." And Angelo would leave the half-shaved customer in the chair to do his filial duty—to uphold the older Romano's authority.

The duos father and son played together were the joy of the neighborhood, ten blocks around. The select ones—Luigi the banker, Marino the olive oil dealer, and other "notabiles"—sat inside the shop smoking their cigars, while ordinary folk stood outside near the window. Young couples sat on the door sill, holding hands and humming softly the tunes played inside. The duo finished, Mulberry Street applauded generously. And when Mulberry Street applauds, even the Manhattan Bridge shakes from the concussion.

Angelo gone, Romano suffered tremendously. But he had to engage help. There was none to be found, so he inserted the following advertisement in an Italian daily newspaper:

"Artist barber wanted in a first-class tonsorial parlor. One with musical talents preferred."

A week later, Salvatore Gonfarone, disliking to return to his former shop because he was exempted from military service on account of an infirmity of which he had not previously been aware, applied for the job.

The place made no impression on him. It was not like the one he had abandoned. He would not have accepted it; but while he was talking with his prospective employer, Rosita, Silvio's daughter, entered the shop. Salvatore's heart was struck. Thumb and forefinger of the left hand rose to curl his little black mustache, while the right palm met the open hand of Romano. "Sta bene, signore!" And there and then he donned the newly laundered white jacket which Angelo used to wear.

Rosita only came to see whether any mail had arrived. She disappeared as quickly as she came. Romano sat in the chair to give Salvatore a trial. It was a dream! or, as Romano himself said to his wife about the new helper's razor hand, "as light as a gentle breeze." Indeed, he was so pleased with the young man's work that he forgot to inquire about his musical abilities.

Silvio Romano was due for a surprise; that same evening Salvatore sang in a most beautiful mellow baritone voice an aria from "Rigoletto." Romano's fingers struck the tense strings of his

guitar with vigor. The old Italian was happy.

Banker and grocer and the other "notabili" came again, and the sidewalk was so crowded with people the policeman on the beat thought Mulberry Street feuds were aflame.

But the greatest triumph of Salvatore was yet to come. Rosita in her best blue silk dress, and Madame Romano herself, entered the shop. The young girl stood timidly in a corner, the Latin impulsiveness checked by her American training. The introduction was not slow to come, and in a few well-chosen words Salvatore paid his compliments to both mother and daughter.

In a few days the news of Romano's great find spread all over town. The two men got to be so busy there was no time to sing and play during the day. Rosita, red flower in her thick raven hair, visited the shop quite frequently. Her black eyes spoke quite distinctly, and once Salvatore even thought she mimicked a kiss to him. But there was no chance to say a word. Silvio Romano began to make plans for a third chair.

The evenings were gorgeous. Salvatore sang "like a god."

Springtime in Mulberry Street is like nowhere else. It finds there a most receptive mood, and there is no sweeter perfume in any flower than the odor wafted by human happiness—as though every inhabitant carried in his bosom the gardens of Tuscany. It is primavera—the primavera of the Italy of Parma violets and lush red roses.

Salvatore Gonfarone pined away in his desire to speak to Rosita. But youth, love and luck are on very friendly terms.

Silvio Romano took sick one day—nothing very serious, a toothache. Salvatore was not going to lose his chance. When Rosita came to the shop he kissed her.

"Oh, Salvatore!"

"Oh, Rosita mio!"

It was just two weeks after they had first seen each other. Rosita made it her business to come ten times that day. A few cuts on the faces of customers bore witness to the young man's distraction.

The next day Romano, feeling much better, was in the shop again.

Toward noon there was an idle hour, and the two men sat down to talk music. It soon developed into a quarrel. Romano was an admirer of the old Italian school of Rossini and Donizetti; Salvatore Gonfarone bowed at the shrine of Verdi and Puccini.

"Pah! Rossini was nothing but a——"

"Basta, Signor! Rossini was the greatest master. Your Puccinis are nothing but noise makers."

"And you love Rossini only because you can play his things on the guitar."

It was a very insolent remark! Silvio Romano checked himself with difficulty. To dispute his musical authority so sneeringly was the height of impudence. But Salvatore was such a good barber! Romano let go a cutting answer:

"And you love Puccini because he gives you the opportunity to shout stupid arias."

Some customers interrupted the dispute.

During the next few hours Salvatore thought how to evade a disaster with the father of Rosita. He loved the girl; yesterday's kisses were still on his lips. Yet he could not, on account of that, change his musical opinions! The idea of the old wire plucker! Let him stick to his Rossini and Donizetti as much as he wants to, but not impose such ideas on him, on Salvatore Gonfarone, who knew more about music than a hundred Romanos!

It was a hard battle between love and artistic ideals.

Silvio Romano was terribly incensed. Several times he made up his mind to tell the youth they had reached the parting point. To dare sneer at Rossini! Rossini, the greatest master of them all—the god of music! let alone Donizetti—it was nothing less than sacrilege.

After those thoughts had had their sway, more practical ones presented themselves. Romano thought of the difficulty to find another man. Salvatore was such a good barber!

A hard battle between business and artistic ideals, indeed!

There was no music that evening, because there was no harmony between the two.

The banker and the other "notabili" came, in vain.

Salvatore took his hat and cane, and saying very politely, "Buona sera," he left the shop.

"What's the trouble with Salvatore?" they all asked.

"He is crazy," Romano answered. They understood something had gone wrong between the two, so the talk was switched on the war.

Rosita came and turned pale when she did not see the young man. The absence of his hat and cane caused the girl despair.

Said the banker to Romano at parting:

"If it's a question of a few dollars more a week, I would advise you——"

"Nothing of the kind, banchiere. Money means nothing to me. I have ideals, high ideals, which this impudent——Think of that! To dare sneer at Rossini! Il grande maestro! The compositore of the 'Barbiere de Sevilla,' and many another capo d'opera. He will have to apologize, or I never want to see him again!"

"Yes, yes," the banker insisted—"youth is impudent, but Salvatore's razor hand and his voice bring business."

"It means nothing to me. He will have to apologize if he wants to work in my shop."

The next day, Saturday, the two artists were too busy to talk music. Fire hung between them. Rosita came in early, all flushed, and sent Salvatore a meaning-full glance. Romano ordered her out very gruffly. Salvatore was mad with anger. How dare this Rossini fanatic speak to Rosita, to his beautiful Rosita, in such a way!

She did not return the whole day.

In the evening Salvatore again made ready to go. He had planned to leave definitely, and find some "sub rosa" way to speak to Rosita. Yet he changed his mind at the last minute. There was danger. He could not lose the girl. He decided to bide his time.

He had hardly started to take off the white jacket when Romano spoke to him.

"Young man, you will have to apologize or leave my shop for good. It is true you are a very good barber, an artist, and I was ready to increase your wages of my own good will. But I have ideals. You have insulted my masters—my great masters——"

Romano's voice quivered with emotion. His eyes were moist. He was deeply grieved. It touched Salvatore as nothing ever did. Throwing both arms around the old man's neck, he kissed him, crying:

"Silvio Romano, soul of an artist! amo d'artiste! I love you, I honor you. But I too have artistic ideals. I love Rosita—but you will not permit that I debase myself, that I lie to you for her sake?"

Both men cried.

They never again talked about the different masters; instead, they played their music nightly. And after a time, they occasionally bowed each at the other's shrine.

THE HOLY HEALER FROM OMSK

From Fourth Street to the confines of 14th Street below First Avenue and the East River is one of the Russian districts in New York. It is inhabited to a great extent by Russian laborers. The Russian "Inteligentsia" of New York is so busy talking *about* the people, the "narod," it has had no time to go and see and talk *with* the people.

The odor of cooked cabbage and burned fats dissolves into the stronger odors of the oiled high boots and the numerous Russian steam baths of the district. Ah, these steam baths! From the looks of them and the smell one comes to think of them more as sewers than baths. A hundred little "Cuchnias," restaurants with their vapored windows and sawdust floors proclaim the fact that most of the inhabitants of the district are here without their families and therefore thrown upon the ill-smelling and meanly-cooked foodstuffs of those eating places.

The whole week the streets and houses are very quiet; only the occasional quarrel between two restaurateurs and their wives disturbs the peace. The tired workers sleep. But on Saturday night the Russian temperament breaks loose. The windows of every front room are lit and from the street one sees plainly the decorations on the walls; red and blue serpentines cross the ceiling and are wrapped around the chandeliers; a few pictures in color, cut out from some illustrated paper or magazine; a few gayly colored hand embroidered towels are fixed with pins on the wall above the mantelpiece on which are a few pieces of cheap glassware in that milkish green held in so much affection by the Lithuanians. And inside the rooms, to the creaking sound of a concertina, the Russians dance and sing their national songs. Here and there some American song breaks loose, but this only happens early in the evening when things are yet on their surface. Later in the night when drink has sobered and deepened the children of the Volga they sing only dirges, linking one to another until the whole district is permeated in an undulating melancholy for which no God and no man could account.

In this district lived Stephan Ivanoff. Stephan came to New York with a reputation. People said he

had escaped from Siberia by flight, and people also said that he was sent to Siberia because of the jealousy of a doctor. Stephan was not a doctor; he was a healer.

Stephan was a big, heavy dark bearded man with two shrewd little eyes in his head and a mouth which always looked as though it just finished eating some savory morsel. He kept to his Russian custom and went every Saturday night to the Russian bath. In the intimacy of the common bathroom he told stories and anecdotes which elicited broad laughter and made many friends to the newcomer from Siberia.

Incidentally Stephan Ivanoff gave some health hints to his friends. "First of all, don't eat eggs; don't eat any eggs," he said, "they are just poisoning your blood. If you have eaten even one egg in the last four, five years, it will come out some day in a swelling of the neck or in some other boil on the legs and arms."

And one day Vasilenko, the owner of one of the restaurants of the district, had such a swelling on the neck. His wife called a doctor, a regular M. D., who prescribed rest, hot water applications and other such truck. It did not help very much and Mrs. Vasilenko complained to a customer.

"A swelling on the neck?" the customer said as he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, "why, poor Vasilenko is poisoned!"

Several other customers approached Serzei's table and Serzei explained with even greater details all he knew, all he had heard from the mouth of Stephan Ivanoff, that mysterious man who had escaped from Siberia where he had had the great fortune to meet a holy man from Omsk who taught him all about diseases and foods and their poisons.

The upshot of it all was that they went scurrying for Stephan Ivanoff and brought him to the bedside of Vasilenko. Stephan looked the sick man over, held his pulse for quite a while, then declared that Vasilenko was poisoned. He ordered all the bottles of medicine thrown away in his very presence before he would start anything.

"The case is a very serious one," he said, "but I will try to use whatever gifts I have," and he started immediately the old process of dry-cupping the patient. One after the other the little cupping glasses applied to the swollen part filled with the brown blue flesh they sucked in. The patient groaned but Ivanoff assured him it was better than death and tortured him the rest of the night. In the morning Stephan obtained a few particularly active and hungry leeches which he posed to suck out the "bad blood" from Vasilenko's arms and legs. After eight days and eight nights he restored Vasilenko to health and guaranteed that not a drop of poisoned blood had remained in the man's body.

The news spread that Ivanoff had saved Vasilenko's life, and the reputation of the quack grew daily. According to Ivanoff's theory, almost everybody's blood was poisoned. They were all sick people. He took the pulse of every one, listened carefully and then dropped the hand with a little eloquent gesture that set one despairing more than if the death penalty had been pronounced.

"Stephan Ivanoff, what is the matter with me?"

"Alexis Vasilewitch, your pulse tells me that you are a very sick man."

"It's true Stephan Ivanoff that I feel a little tired, but I thought that it was hard work."

Stephan never insisted. It was his trick never to insist. He knew human nature too well to insist. He just made a little gesture and passed on to pleasanter topics, but he was sure that Alexis Vasilewitch, or whoever it was, would come around at the end of the conversation at the dinner table at Vasilenko's and ask: "Stephan Ivanoff, what shall I do?"

And the next day, or on Saturday the man was dry-cupped, blood-sucked, massaged and given to drink strange-tasting mixtures brewed over an alcohol lamp. A few weeks' treatment and the man was healed.

Stephan Ivanoff had saved another life.

Things went on in such a way for years. The several doctors established in the district starved and Stephan Ivanoff became rich. From Vasilenko's restaurant spread tales of marvellous recoveries from all kinds of diseases which the healer discovered as soon as he felt the man's pulse. It was as if the holy man from Omsk had himself sent Stephan Ivanoff to New York to save all the poisoned men. And when a man was very severely ill Stephan spoke mysteriously of occult communications with the man "out there" and gave a brew of special herbs grown on the tombs of holy men and ordered Chinese leeches and dry-cupped in a special way until the man was saved.

Stephen Ivanoff furnished his apartment with all the Russian things he could get in order to

impress the increasing number of his visitors.

The priest came to see him one day to admonish him about a little scandal with Vasilenko's wife.

Stephan Ivanoff kissed the hand of the old man and as he held it between the pointer and the thumb he exclaimed "Father, don't move!" Silently, attentive, with the hand of the priest limply between his fingers he said: "Father Anton Fevdoroff, you are a sick man."

"My son, I have come to speak to you about other things." The priest, essaying his unctuous voice, tried to set things right.

Vasilenko had gone to Russia to visit his parents, and his wife, the rumor spread, fell to the healer's spell. Stephan Ivanoff, the healer, listened to the priest's admonition to the end and as he did so his face radiated happiness; as though some wonderfully clear visions were descending from the heavens upon him.

"What have you to say, son?"

"That God's wisdom is seen in the ways of life; that he taketh care of man and worm, and that no action and no thought can come but that He had willed it," answered Stephan Ivanoff, in religious transport.

"But why does my son speak now about godliness, when I come to censure him about his immorality?"

"In Omsk, father, I met a holy man who taught me many things before I came here. In five years I have not met you once. And because you are also a holy man God willed that Vasilenko go to Russia and I be exposed to false accusations so that you should come to me. You are a sick man, Anton Fevdoroff—your pulse tells me you are a very sick man, that you have been poisoned."

Father Anton Fevdoroff maintained that he was not a sick man but the thumb and the forefinger of Stephan Ivanoff on the pulse of the man knew better. A few days later the priest sent word to the healer that he should come to see him. Father Fevdoroff was ill. The doctor had prescribed something which did not seem to help and the priest's wife was despairing. Brought up in a little village in Russia her confidence in leeches and cupping was much stronger than in the official medicine. Stephan's methods suited her and as the priest's health improved under his treatment, Mother Fevdoroff went into ecstasies over the holy man from Omsk:

On the fourth day Ivanoff said to the priest:

"Little father, your pulse is wonderful to-day. There is not a drop of bad blood left in your body."

"Little Father, your pulse is wonderful to-day."

Father Fevdoroff thereafter dropped the Vasilenko affair. Ivanoff shrewdly refused payment for his cure. Mother Fevdoroff spread the news of the wonderful cure so well that the healer actually

overworked himself every day feeling the pulses of his patients.

Hard work and heavy eating began to tell on Stephan. After a particularly heavy meal on a Christmas Eve he had an attack of indigestion in the house of a friend.

"Should we call a doctor, Stephan Ivanoff?"

He refused at first. Had he not denounced all the doctors as fakers! But when the cramps almost killed him he made no answer as the suggestion to call a doctor was made again.

The old practitioner of the district was brought to the well known quack's bedside. The doctor hoped that the news "the quack called a doctor when ill" might loosen the healer's hold on the people.

Ivanoff was breathing heavily. The doctor took the sick man's hand to feel the pulse. Suddenly the healer snatched his hand away, and with all the energy at his command exclaimed:

"Stop! You know who I am? *Don't we know that there isn't such a thing as a pulse?*" and he refused to be treated.

That indigestion killed Stephan Ivanoff.

The neighborhood says: Because there was not another man in New York who had met that holy man from Omsk.

HIRSH ROTH'S THEORY

The Bronx, between Claremont Parkway and Bronx Park, has known Hirsh Roth of the firm of Hirsh Roth & Co., wholesale and retail liquor dealers, for the last twenty years. He was there, a believer in the Bronx, when it was yet all rocks and farms, with a few scattered wooden shacks. He was there when the downtown people moved to the Bronx because the doctor said they needed country air and higher ground.

Roth saved up a few dollars sewing pants the whole day and eating herring with bread at night. His wife died of tuberculosis on such a diet after she gave birth to a man child, to Joseph, who is now the anonymous "& Co." of the father's business. Hirsh Roth moved to the "country" to save his own and the child's life. But, as he is a man with proselyting tendencies, he came downtown to the local of his union every Saturday night to persuade people to move to the Bronx.

He was at that time affiliated with a real estate firm, and sold lots and parcels to his former friends and co-workers. Many a fashionable house is now raised on ground he sold. Former pants operators own them. Half of Bathgate Avenue and Brook Avenue was populated by Hirsh Roth's efforts—ere he formulated a new theory: "The Bronx was becoming too populated." He then changed his business from selling real estate to selling liquor.

Many a man changes his business for material interest only. Not so Hirsh Roth. He always requires a theory. He went into the family liquor business to prevent drunkenness. "When a man has a little something at home he does not go to a saloon, that's the idea."

And all those years he boarded with his child in the house of a friend, a house builder. Hirsh Roth did not remarry; he had a theory for that also. "Marriage is a foolish thing a man should commit only once."

The builder, Feldman, had a daughter the same age as Joseph, Roth's son. Before either of the tots could utter an intelligible word, the parents had already affianced them. Dowry and everything else was settled between the two men, and a special glass of wine drunk to the health and happiness of the future couple. Then each went about his business with the feeling of a man who has cleared his mind of earthly cares.

The Bronx grew up in his arms, so to say. Early mornings he went to see how his "baby" developed. Every house was built under his eye. It mattered not whether it was his building or not. If he thought the style or the material was not what it ought to be he gave no peace to the owner or the builder. Many an architect's blue print had to be changed at his insistence. The depth of a foundation or a brick not properly fired had caused him many a sleepless night.

"Mazel Tow, Feldman; Josephson's house is finished"; or "They broke ground to-day on Berger's lot near Washington Avenue," were frequent greetings when he came home.

Fanny Feldman and Joseph Roth grew up together like brother and sister. They fought and quarrelled, and Mrs. Feldman made no distinction between her own and the stranger when she administered a deserved spanking. Then came the period when the high school boy hated even to speak to a girl. Joseph Roth refused to be seen with Fanny on the street, "because I am not a sissy," and thereupon received a beating from his father.

On some such an occasion he learned that Fanny was to be his wife.

"We are not in Russia!" he cried. "I am an American. We are in a free country. What do you mean by choosing for me a girl?"

He got another beating for his defiance. As he lay on his cot one night he made plans how to run away to the West and become a cowboy or something.

Fanny was a beautiful and clever girl. Though Joseph's behavior was very insulting to her, she agreed with the spirit of his revolt.

Of course Joseph was not to be compared with some of the young fellows she knew. There was young Reisin, who played the violin so beautifully; and that long-haired, almond-eyed Berger boy, who had several poems printed in newspapers—all the girls were after him. Joseph had no such qualities. He was not artistic. But she admired his spirit—in an abstract sense. It was so manly of him not to submit to the will of his father. He was an American, lord and master of his own actions, and not a slave or hireling.

Then one day Joseph disappeared from the house. The whole night the police of the Bronx and Manhattan were kept busy trying to find the sixteen-year-old boy. The next day his picture was in all the papers. On the third day he was brought back from Philadelphia, still an unrepentant sinner.

Did he get a beating? No, but on the next day his father took him to the store.

"No more school. You will help serve the customers."

Joseph was strong and willing, and was soon managing the business. But there was no day in which his name was not in some way linked up with Fanny's. For so many years Hirsh Roth had considered the matter of his son's marriage settled, that the unsettling of this plan was a calamity —as if a sure deal for a corner lot had fizzled out, or as if the very Bronx had failed in some way. The more he insisted the more the boy was steeled in his decision. He wouldn't even sit near the girl at table. He never even smiled to her; he snarled.

One day they were alone.

"Fanny," he told her, "they want to force me to marry you, and I don't want to—you hear, I don't want to, Fanny. I was never asked at all whether I want to marry you or not!"

"You are perfectly right, Joseph. They have no right to do that. We are in America. We are not in Russia. I like you, we will stick to our guns." And Fanny put out a warm little hand.

This short interview made Joseph happy. He had at least one ally; he could stand his father's importunities much more easily, though the parent presented the same stubborn opposition to his plans.

Then suddenly, Hirsh Roth told his son, "We are moving out from the Feldmans'. To do what he did to me, after all I did for him in all these years! I never again want to see a Feldman in my life," moaned the old man disconsolately.

That very night father and son moved in to Mrs. Josephson's.

For the first time Joseph did not feel at home. The Josephsons were very friendly people; Josephson never forgot he owed his fortune to Hirsh Roth's advice. But they were strangers. They called Joseph "Mr." Roth. Even the hot soup lacked warmth after that.

Hirsh Roth went to a meeting of his lodge. Joseph went out for a walk. He saw Fanny on the opposite side of the street. She was strolling leisurely with the young poet Berger.

He saluted her, but as he did so he remembered his father's moanings about the Feldmans. It made him feel very sinful.

The next few days Joseph surprised himself frequently thinking of Fanny; how she had shaken hands with him and become his ally on a certain proposition. The following evenings his father kept him busy in the store till late in the night. For a full month Hirsh managed to keep his son under his eye. He even took him to a lodge meeting. Joseph began to suspect he did it purposely to keep him away from Fanny.

He met her on the Elevated one afternoon as he had to go downtown on business.

"Hello, Miss Feldman."

"Oh! Mr. Roth, glad to see you again," she responded cheerily.

And they shook hands like old friends that have not met in a long time. They traveled together. He even went with her to a department store where she bought some notions. They talked about many things, and she managed to sell him a ticket for the next musicale of the synagogue.

"Will you be there, Miss Feldman?"

"Of course."

All through the winter they met here and there, and every time they learned to know each other better. It was enough that she should look friendly-like at another young man for his heart to beat faster and the blood to rise and rush.

Hirsh Roth never relaxed his vigilance over his son. Many an appointment with Fanny could not be kept on account of the older man. He wanted to know where his son went and from whence he came. From time to time he spoke about Feldman as of one who had betrayed him in the most rascally way.

Every meeting with Fanny now necessitated diplomacy, and was frequently espaced by weeks. The elder Roth grew thin and irritable as the spring approached. Joseph Roth planned many a time to ask details about Feldman's betrayal, hoping to patch up the quarrel. But he was afraid to complicate matters, to arouse suspicion.

One evening, late, as Joseph entered his room at the Josephson's he found his father waiting for him. The old man abused the boy in the most vehement way. It had been brought to his ears that Joseph had danced with Fanny Feldman at the last musicale.

"My son, my own son, danced with Feldman's daughter!"

It was more than Joseph could stand. How long was he to be bossed like that? His father had once chosen who was to be his wife, and now he was abusing him for dancing with whom he pleased. To his mind Miss Feldman was not at all the Fanny of a few months ago. Miss Feldman was the woman he loved, admired—the one he had chosen himself. Why should his father's dislike of her father interfere with his plans?

And it did not. He eloped with her a week later—eloped to Philadelphia on a paltry twenty-dollar bill, a week before the Easter holiday season began.

"We are married, Fanny and Joseph," he wired to his father two days later.

"Come home immediately, Mazel Tow," was the answer returned as fast as the wires could take it.

At the Josephsons' the young couple were told Hirsh Roth had again gone to live with the Feldmans. There Joseph found his father in the highest possible spirits.

"But why didn't you do it sooner, you silly boy? I almost ruined my stomach eating at the Josephsons. The thought of missing the good things Mrs. Feldman cooks during the Holy days almost drove me mad."

And turning to the beaming Feldman:

"Well, did I win a hat? Free choice, old friend, we have to give free choice to the world. But I almost died of a sick stomach waiting for the theory to work."

THE TRAGEDY OF AFGHIAN'S LIVING RUG

Somewhere between Madison and Fifth Avenues, close to the hubbub of Forty-second Street—the thoroughfare which is like a river flowing in many directions at the same time—you will find the store of Afghian, Mestre Afghian, the rug dealer and Oriental art collector.

Afghian would surely take offense at having his place called a "store," the chief objection to this word being his aversion to Occidental business methods—the system by which things are appraised in their dollar-and-cents value.

Afghian also is a business man. But to him rugs and topazes are rugs and topazes first, and do not represent so many gold pieces. He thinks and feels in terms of rugs, as did his ancestors hundreds of years ago on the plains of Afghanistan and Turkestan when they exchanged the product of their labor and love for the pearls brought to them by the poachers of Bahrein.

In the dimly lit square room hang beautiful examples of the work of the Tadjiks and Chiites, some in riotous colors suggestive and voluptuous, and others as though woven by hands of saints who had banished all earthly joy from their hearts.

And for every rug Afghian has a story, a story which he reads out of the web and colors, deducing the strangest possible details from the feel of the wool in a certain spot, and embroidering upon it till one thinks of the fabric as a living thing, freighted with a thousand passions and burdened with hatreds and prejudices as we all are—each one of us a stitch in the web of the universe woven by the great master on the loom of eternity.

On an afternoon I found Afghian seated in a corner and fingering some topazes. He was not alone. A portly man and a young lady were looking at the rugs displayed on the four walls.

I heard the two Americans speak about room measurements and color harmony with the furniture they possessed. They looked like sure buyers, and their appearance left no doubt of their ability to pay for what they wanted. As I looked at them I remembered the powerful car waiting outside—the liveried chauffeur and the footman in their gold bespangled coats fairly shouting the riches of their master.

Yet why was Afghian so cold? Why was he not at the elbows of his rich customers, persuading them, telling them stories, explaining values, demonstrating, cajoling?

He sat in a corner polishing some green-blue stones on the sleeves of his coat—his small eyes ablaze, the thin dry lips drawn inside, coiling himself like a serpent before the spring.

A few minutes after I had come in, the gentleman pointed with his cane to a large rug on the wall and said:

"What's the price of this one?"

"It's sold," answered Afghian, without lifting his eyes. And he continued to polish the topazes on his sleeve.

"And what's the price of this one?" the lady asked, pointing her white-gloved hand to a rug that I hoped to possess some day.

"Sold, also—belongs to this gentleman," he answered, pointing at me.

The two looked me over for an instant and left the store without the usual murmured apology from the dealer.

"Why did you say that the rug they wanted was sold? and why did you tell them that the other one belonged to me?"

"Because I don't want to sell them any rugs," he answered sharply.

"Why, have they not the money to pay?"

"Oh, yes, they have. They have gold enough to pave all the Avenue. I know how rich he is. But I would not sell him any of my rugs, for the same reason that you would not sell your work to serve as reading matter for a herring advertisement. As to the Turkestan rug, I was not lying. Some day, some day we will talk more about it."

I knew Afghian too well to press for further information. But it turned out he was willing himself to go on and talk without my having to urge him.

"Several years ago this young lady came to buy a rug. She was so beautiful that I could not think of anything good enough to lay under her feet.

"I have loved once; Yousouf Afghian has loved once, many, many years ago when I still bathed in the River Atrek in summer and climbed the mountains in winter. I loved a Circassian girl, and for her I had woven myself, of the best silk and young wool, a little carpet. The Afghians have woven carpets ere the rest of the world knew that there was such an art as carpet weaving; and of all the Afghians, I, it was said, could weave the finest.

"And in the carpet for my maiden I embroidered stories from Hafiz and Omar, the like of which have never reached the rest of the world. I hoped to see my work sanctified by the touch of Kizil's bare feet. But it was not to be so.

"God had willed that I should shed the blood of my own brother for her. God had willed that the curse of my mother should rest on my head. God had willed that I should flee my parental home and fields.

"When Kizil begged that she should follow me, I refused. My sins were too great. Should God choose to visit upon me His punishment, I meant to be alone to suffer.

"Every day I feed another man beside myself. And from this man I exact no labor and no thanks. And because I have deprived the Just One of his due I say the prayers for my brother twice a day. And to my mother I send compensation for my dead brother's labor. If I love you, a stranger, not of my own faith, it is because you remind me of my brother Kenghus—my dead brother.

"One day this young American lady came to buy a rug. And she seemed to carry with her the odor of Kizil, and her face was as soft-looking as Kizil's, and her eyes as warm and her feet as small. And all the modern clothes she wore could not cover the Orient that was in her. And there was that tang in her speech which comes only to the Levantine.

"It was the first time in all those years that God permitted me to forget Kenghus was dead.

"I went to the trunk and took out the carpet I had woven for Kizil. I feared she might refuse to buy it, so I offered her another rug and gave her Kizil's rug as a present.

"We shook hands, and at her touch I was young again, living again. As though the Eternal had in His greatness forgiven me my great sin.

"The following nights I lay awake thinking that her bare feet were pressing the young wool on the carpet I had given her; that she arose in the morning and read the stories I had woven for her, my own story between the wonders of Hafiz and Omar. It was as if I myself had lain under her feet.

"I hoped to see her again, hoped that she might want to see again the stranger who gave her such a carpet. And every time the door opened my heart sank. What would I not have given her to see her again! She had only to ask, or I only to guess. If I love topazes to-day, it is because of her eyes. And if you sensed an odor of violets and narcissus, it is because of her who reminded me so much of Kizil."

Afghian became very nervous. His hands trembled and his thin nostrils quivered like the wings of a wounded bird. He paced the room for a while, then putting his hands on my shoulders he cried out:

"Why should a man trade in the things he likes best? For generations the Afghians have woven rugs. At Pasargrades, in the tomb of Cyrus, lives the handiwork of one of the Afghians. Rugs and carpets run in our blood. You don't know what they mean to us when you buy them. We love rugs. We make them because we love them. Who can't make a rug should not have one. It takes five and ten years to make one. I remember how my father worked twenty years for what was to be the crown of his life. He offered daily prayers to the Eternal to allow him to live long enough to finish the work. Twenty years from a man's short life! Twenty years continual thought woven into one long unbroken thread. The limbs grow weaker, the hair turns gray, kings are unseated, and a man sits and spins and spins. Can such a thing afterwards be bought by another man?

"And therefore, I, who love rugs, I should trade in shoes and combs, in grains and sackcloth. How wise that learned man of your faith who made a living polishing glasses!

"Years passed, and I did not see the young lady again. Then, when I was least expecting it, her father came to me about a big rug that needed some repairs. It is long since I have woven myself, but I wanted to see her who reminded me of Kizil. I wanted to see my carpet. So I said it was necessary that I should go and see for myself what the damage was.

"Trembling I stood before her. I asked her about my gift to her. She looked even more like Kizil than when I first saw her. She stared at me for a few moments—she had forgotten all about it. Then she remembered something—yes, yes, she remembered that it did not harmonize well with the colors on the walls of the vestibule——

"I found Kizil's rug used as a doormat at the servants' quarters. A thousand heavy boots left their rub and dirt on it. On the beard of Omar, grease spots, and one eye of Hafiz burned out by the fire from a cigarette, as if done in jest. All my dreams a miserable looking rag—a few tatters.

"It was a lie! she never resembled Kizil in the least. It was the beginning of my punishment. Take, friend, those topazes from me, or I shall throw them into the street."

Youssuf Afghian kneeled down before an icon in the corner of the room and prayed fervently. Once for himself, and once for the brother he killed many, many years ago on the shores of the River Atrek.

BABETA'S DOG

She was only a little puppy when she was brought to Babeta's restaurant. And because Babeta has a literary turn of mind, he renamed her Ophelia when Sonori, the tenor, who knew more about dogs than about literature, said she was a Dane.

It was due to Ophelia that Babeta, the anarchist-communist philosopher, became very much interested in dogdom and learned to distinguish an Airdale from a Bulldog and a Spaniel from a Dane. They ceased talking about music and philosophy at Babeta's, and, though the Goyescas almost created a stir in the musical world and Bergson had delivered a lecture in Rumfold Hall, Babeta and his artist guests neglected such transcendental interests because of the change brought about in the direction of their thoughts by a dog, because of a little puppy they had named Ophelia.

Sonori discovered that Shakespeare, and not Verdi, was the author of "The Moor of Venice," and when the talk turned about the Scandinavians, many another musical celebrity heard for the first time the name of Ibsen or of Bjornson. And there was even a lonely man in the crowd who had read a story by Knut Hamsun, that greatest of all Scandinavian writers, whose tales have no equal in the world's literature.

In what strange surroundings Ophelia was destined to live!

Near Eighth Avenue, before Fortieth Street. The smell of garlic and tomato sauce warns the passer-by that the inhabitants are from Piedmonte, but on the street one hears the Irish brogue. The bales of cotton in front of the warehouses and the smoke from the chimneys reek after Liverpool, but the smell of rope, tar and fried smelts that comes from the wharves near by remind one of Fiume and Marseille, as the swaying masts and the spread-out sails outline themselves against the glowing sky.

And in such surroundings, back of one of the numerous saloons in which stale beer is served to drunken sailors and dust-covered longshoremen, is the celebrated restaurant of Babeta.

I have said already that Babeta is a philosopher, and were I to write about him and not about his dog, I could tell you some good stories about the interminable scientific discussions at a certain table in a corner, and the marvelous feasts at the tables reserved there for the two thousand dollar a night tenors and three thousand dollar a week sopranos. A book could be written about the decorations and friezes of the place, and only ignorance of culinary art would put a stop to what I could say about the food served at Babeta's. As to the wine—well, it's Chianti or Lacrima

Christi, if that means anything to you.

But I have promised Prosper to tell the story of Ophelia. Prosper knows a lot about science and still more about art, but, because he is neither scientist nor artist, he is interested in human beings and dogs.

We all admired Ophelia. She was gliding graciously between the tables, and as she grew bigger she was frequently a medium of friendship between old and new guests. Hands met hands stroking her beautiful fur, and after an "excuse me," or a "pardon, signorina," the new guest asked the old one the name of the dog—followed an introduction, an invitation to the other table, after which Ophelia was slightly forgotten and Dante or Puccini was discussed for a little while. But Ophelia's steady place was near Babeta's table at the door.

In less than a year Ophelia was the personality of the place. She was big and stately. Her short morning walk was taken on the leash, one end of which was in her master's hand. Any casual courtesy paid to her by another dog during those walks was firmly and instantly checked by Babeta. She was a Dane, a pure blue Dane, and Babeta, the anarchist, the enemy of aristocracy, did not allow his dog to meet the common people, the free, common people of dogdom. Ophelia pulled at the leash once or twice, but, after severe reprimands, she made a virtue of necessity and passed haughtily by unobservant of any amorous advances.

It was Prosper who brought the great news. Ophelia was to be mated to a pure Dane owned by a captain, who promised to bring "Prince" on his next trip from Europe. And the news spread. People that had neglected the spaghetti and Chianti for weeks suddenly got a hankering after Babeta's place. Ere the week was over the unborn puppies were promised to two hundred people. Babeta had been shown the pedigree of Prince and was satisfied on this score.

I have already said that Ophelia was the personality of the place, but after Babeta told the story of her future mate, and promised pups to all that would listen to him, she became the most venerated personality. Sopranos with two hemispheres at their feet fed Ophelia the best sweets of the continent, and a justly celebrated baritone brought her a collar of pure silver, lined with costly fur. Nothing was too good for Ophelia, nothing too expensive for her.

From the river, a few hundred feet away, came the fog blasts of transport ships carrying thousands of men to a vortex of blood in which millions of men had already been crushed, pulverized and liquified to check the rule of aristocracy, but back of that saloon near Eighth Avenue, Babeta, the anarchist-communist philosopher, was expounding the virtues of pure blood as exemplified in Ophelia and Prince, the Dane to which she was to be mated.

Many were the bottles of wine drunk to her health and the health of her offspring. Babeta actually experienced the joys of fatherhood when he made arrangements with a veterinarian, the best in town, for the great day. In the most comfortable corner of the kitchen a place was reserved for Ophelia's litter. A new soft mattress and warm woolen covers were prepared and only the privileged ones were shown all those preparations.

"I want a male puppy," said Sonori, "because I want to call it Hamlet."

"And I want a female one and I will call it Flora," said Mlle. Marienta, the great lyric soprano.

Babeta was happy. Thanks to his dog, he had obtained higgedly-piggedly more flattery than he ever craved for his famous food or for his philosophical discourses.

"Ophelia, you good girl, come for a walk," and master and dog went early every morning to breathe fresh air.

But spring was near. As the days went by it seemed to Babeta that Ophelia was gradually losing her haughtiness towards the common people, ordinarily along the wharves.

The hundred and one mongrel dogs roving there followed Ophelia and her master and she pulled at the leash with more insistence from day to day. Once she allowed one of the dogs to come so near that Babeta felt the fangs of the mongrel as he drove him away with a kick. And Ophelia stood meekly by. Homewards she bent her head in shame as the master censored her.

"Shame, Ophelia."

Ophelia was ashamed. She nestled close to Babeta as he sat down to bandage his leg and looked up to him and whined. Only when the whining threatened to turn into a howl did Babeta give a forgiving sign. The following days the morning walks were taken along the avenue; the leash was brought up shorter, as a precaution, and all was peaceful again. But during the day Ophelia showed signs of uneasiness, and Babeta watched the door because she tried twice to slink out.

"What's the matter with Ophelia? She has refused chocolate!" asked one of the guests.

"She has probably had enough sweets," answered Babeta offhandedly, but his heart sunk.

A few days later, a street dog slunk in through the door of the restaurant. Ophelia got up from her corner to meet the stranger. Her master sprung up and kicked the intruder so violently the dog's howl could be heard from the street.

"You treat the common people pretty roughly, Babeta!" observed Prosper.

Babeta was angry with Ophelia.

"Shame," he cried, "shame," and drove her to the kitchen. "Away from me, away."

In vain Ophelia tried to make up to him. Her eyes begged forgiveness. But when it was not given she turned about and barked and howled in righteous indignation as it just occurred to her that she was unjustly treated.

"Wherein have I sinned?" she seemed to question.

Sonori and others wanted to pat her, but she gave fair warning by snarling and snapping in the air.

"What's the trouble with Ophelia?" Sonori asked.

"To the kitchen, go, go," and Babeta pushed her away.

That night, after the guests were all gone, the master spoke to the dog.

"I am ashamed of you, Ophelia. You behaved miserably. You a pure Dane to permit and accept the courtship of a low down street dog!—I am ashamed of you! Prince will soon come from Europe, and you want to associate with nondescripts that feed from garbage cans!"

Ophelia cried and whined and begged forgiveness, and was happy again only when Babeta allowed her to take the nightly piece of sugar from between his lips.

Yet Ophelia felt the misery of aristocratic loneliness. That streak of the dark blue sky she saw between the shutters at night and the snarling, howling and fighting of the dogs at the wharves caused her sleepless nights. It was early spring; the time when life asserts itself; when dog and man howls to the moon and snaps at each falling star.

That dog Babeta had kicked out so violently from the restaurant came nightly under the window of his belle and called, begged, serenaded and pleaded in even more heartrending tones than the tenor in Bizet's "Pecheur des Perles." And it was Prosper again who brought the astonishing news "Ophelia was stolen!"

It was Babeta's version of what had happened. The lattices of the shutters were smashed, the window broken and the dog gone. Babeta was the most disconsolate of men.

"Put in an ad and offer a reward. Announce to the police. Go to the depot of S. P. C. A."

Such were the advices. But he cared not. He remembered the pulling at the leash, the meeting on the wharf, the dog he kicked out, and he despaired. He had promised pure blue puppies. He had been so good to Ophelia. He had given her the best there was to be had. But she left him, ran away like a thief in the dead of night.

Babeta could not touch any food the whole day. That night, when the tenors and sopranos came to eat, they cried and mourned the great loss.

"Dio, mio, oh. Dio, mio!" they all groaned.

Babeta found Ophelia the following morning. He recognized her from a distance. His attention was drawn to a pack of dogs fighting over something or other. There were two different groups, and Ophelia, not definitely attached to either of them, was keeping on the outskirts of the skirmish, snapping and snarling at individuals of both parties. Oh, what a glorious free time she had! Her wriggling tail expressed the joy of life and its mastery. They were all afraid of her. She was stronger than any of them, and she was so happy—so happy and free!

"Ophelia!" rang Babeta's voice. The dog turned about and, seeing the master, she started in the opposite direction, tail between hind legs and head down.

"Ophelia!" he called again. She took a few steps toward him, and as he approached nearer she laid down in the mud, closed her eyes and turned her head aside. Babeta had not taken the leash along, but he held on to the silver collar to bring her home.

Babeta hoped against hope that he would still be able to give pure Dane pups to his friends, but in a few weeks the shame could no longer be hidden. He opened his heart to every one and told where he had found her and in what company. The guests who had patted her and fed her the best sweets no longer looked at her. She was pushed away from near the table. With bowed head she nestled close to her master, her sole protector and friend, but he repulsed her. He did not understand. He did not sympathize.

"Fui, fui, get away, shameless creature, to the kitchen."

The ones that were promised pups became harsh to her and everybody scolded. And one of them remarked:

"Look, she is eating from the floor."

It was the most evident sign of her downfall. Before her escapade she had never eaten but what was given to her in a plate; and never the rests from the tables, but food especially prepared for her by Babeta himself.

"Shame," they all yelled, "shame, shame."

When she lifted her pleading head to her master, Babeta, in a fit of anger, spat at it. "Fui, fui!"

In vain she waited for forgiveness. She longed for the nightly piece of sugar from the lips of her master. She stretched her neck when he passed her by in his inspection of the kitchen. But he did not even look at her. What terrible thing had she done! If he were willing to forgive her she would feel as guilty as he wanted, but since he was so harsh and insulting she felt only his cruelty and not her shame.

Outside her friend was serenading again. The door was not even closed. The master no longer cared with whom she associated. Among humans no friend was left—she understood that—the door was wide open. She could do as she pleased. She had lost her master. He will only scold and never pat again. She understood that, too.

"Where is Ophelia?" Sonori asked the next evening.

"She has run away and committed suicide!" Babeta announced. "Actually committed suicide. She understood she was disgraced. I called and called, but she ran away—she surely committed suicide!" and he was flattered that Ophelia cared enough for him to commit suicide because she had lost his friendship. Only Prosper knows.

"She has gone to the dogs," he said. "The day of aristocracy is over. It's the people now. You are either with them; howling, fighting, getting ruffled and bitten, or you have to isolate yourself on an island at the mercy of much worse—like that other great aristocrat—and Ophelia understood and made her choice."

At Babeta's table they talk again about molecular physics, phonolites, christalloids, music and art.

Dogs and Scandinavian literature are taboo. And every time Prosper enters the place Babeta feels uneasy, as though he owes him an explanation.

THE PROFESSOR

Orchard Street beams on Houston Street and ends on Canal Street, near the Manhattan Bridge. But this street is better known to our foreign population than any other thoroughfare, not excluding Fifth Avenue or even Broadway.

The reason for such renown is to be found in the reputation of Orchard Street as a market for everything under the sun. From before sunrise to late in the night both sides of the street are lined with double rows of pushcarts from which all sorts of wares are sold to the passer-by. From Houston to Rivington Street the space is exclusively reserved for edibles; meat, fish, vegetables, bread and fruit is sold in the open air by howling venders to bargaining customers, each one yelling his offer on the top of his voice; quarreling, disputing, cursing, using what is most spicy in the gutters of the street lingo.

There are also stores on Orchard Street, but they are used only as storage houses and for rainy days. Otherwise the owner of the store displays his merchandise on the width of the sidewalk, just leaving a goatpath for the customers, as they do in Calcutta, in Constantinople, or in Nijni Novigorod since all times. But the market of edibles ends on the corner of Rivington Street. From there to Canal Street, Orchard pushcarts carry merchandise of a different character. On one pushcart are four hundred dollar fur coats, water-bottles and furniture polish, and on the next one is a medley of all kinds of ten-cent jewelry sold for "only a penny a piece." And you never can tell what may be on the next pushcart. One day, silk shirts and the next day rubber boots or marble statues. At some other time "genuine" cut glass and a day later Syrian rugs, old coats, pants, socks, watches, soap, a phonograph, or, for a diversion, a player-piano is brought on the sidewalk and tried in the open. It is the good old Bazaar so dear to Eastern people the world over; the Bazaar which gives an opportunity to outwit, outbargain, and outcheat one another. The vender always swears by the heads of his wife and children that the merchandise costs him more than he asks for, and there is play and sport to let the customer go away and watch and recognize in his gait and the way he holds his head whether he expects to be called back. It is sport to watch him stop and turn his head to offer a few cents more. Then, the merchant makes believe he does not hear him. Sure that he had reached the bottom, the customer returns to the pushcart, fingers over the thing he wants to buy, pays, and is happy. One cannot purchase such happiness in a one-price store.

On Orchard Street lived Solomon Berman and his wife. They had no children. He was a Hebrew teacher. This does not mean that he knew Hebrew more than to read the prayers. But he knew enough to teach the children of the neighborhood the holy characters; enough to enable them to enter the common of men at the age of thirteen and become Jews among Jews; enough to keep them in the clan and retard the crumbling of the great rock of Israel.

In the neighborhood, Berman had a reputation as a very conscientious teacher and as a loving

husband. It was said that he fasted two days a week, not because he was *so* religious, but because he wanted his wife to have more food those two days. She was very thin and ailing!

Early every morning Berman, in his long coat and slipper shoes, went into the street to do the marketing for the day. There was no pleasure in it for him; he never bargained. But surely no merchant ever made a penny profit on what Reb Berman bought—it was known how poor they were. The poverty of a Hebrew teacher is proverbial. Still, has that not always been so? Was it not even forbidden to take money for teaching? A teacher was only entitled to compensation for the time he spent with the pupil, but not for the knowledge he imparted.

Things went on nicely enough until Mrs. Berman took to her bed, meaning, that one morning she could not leave the bed. Her husband was the only one to attend her. They had no friends. The women of the neighborhood are helping their men till late at night and have no time for friendship, even on Saturday. The whole of the Sabbath is given to make up for lost sleep.

Reb Solomon Berman called the physician of the neighborhood. The young medicus advised the sick woman should be taken to a hospital, but Mrs. Berman would not hear of it. "What? Separate from my husband after thirty years' life under one roof!"

"But, dear, dear," pleaded halfheartedly Solomon Berman. "Leah, dear, maybe, maybe——"

Mrs. Berman used woman's most convincing argument: tears, and the hospital was no longer spoken of. The doctor returned a few days later. The condition of the woman had become worse. The house was untidy and there was no fire in the stove.

"Only in a hospital could she be saved," he told the distracted husband. But the sick woman would not hear of it.

"If I have to die, I want to die in my house, Solomon."

Meanwhile the pupils had a happy time. The teacher dismissed them as soon as they came in in the afternoons, after their school hours.

Reb Berman discovered that there were more than two fasting days in a week for a truly religious man. The druggist charged full prices.

The visiting physician was touched by the devotion of the old couple. He visited them twice a day and when he had a little more time he took off his coat and helped tidy up the house, and built a fire in the kitchen stove. He had no idea how poor they were, because as far as Mrs. Berman was concerned she always had what he prescribed for her. The young man did not know of the Sabbath clothes that were pawned and of the new fast days Reb Berman had discovered. He had refused to take fee for every time he came, but once or twice he had accepted a dollar bill Solomon Berman pressed in his hand.

He thought Reb Berman's heightened pallor was due only to worry and the physician exercised everything he knew, and even more, to get the sick woman on her feet. It took a long time; it took the whole winter to get the woman out of bed and danger. But the young physician was happy to have saved the woman's life.

Meanwhile Reb Berman's earning capacity had fallen to zero.

At first the parents of the pupils knew nothing of the daily dismissal by Reb Berman. When they finally noticed that the children were not forging ahead, they decided that the teacher had become slack in his methods. Thus the offspring of Orchard Street was sent to some other tutor, and Orchard Street always acts as a unit.

When the news had finally gone out about the teacher's wife's sickness, Mrs. Goldman was very sorry and Mrs. Schwartz sighed deeply, but Jewish children had to be taught Hebrew under all circumstances. It was the sacred duty of parents——

True, his wife was getting better, but Solomon Berman began to question himself whether he was doing all in his power for her!

That doctor who came daily, fee or no fee, to visit the sick one, was he really a good doctor? Was he not a little like Reb Solomon Berman himself? was it not possible that the physician knew as much about medicine as he, Reb Berman, knew Hebrew? just enough for the children of the poor? If he were a good physician would he not be in great demand, charge a big fee and have no time to come daily and help tidy up the room and build the fire? The old man's imagination was sharpened by hunger and worry. When his wife was finally permitted to leave the bed he drew a deep breath.

The doctor, who had meanwhile scented the terrible poverty, dared not offend the Rabbi by offering help. But when Mrs. Berman was convalescing, he called the husband aside and said to him: "She is all right now. All she needs is proper care, strengthening food. I know you can't give it to her. Here is twenty dollars. I want you to spend the money only for her, and may God help you." The doctor was so afraid of a refusal he hurried out of the room ere the old man had had time to think or speak.

About a week later the physician went to see his patient again. He found her in a terrible condition of weakness due especially to lack of proper nourishment.

"Man, what did you do with the money?"

"With that money, doctor, I called a bigger doctor, a Professor, a gentile, from uptown."

THE PURE MOTIVE

Down the East Side when one says "meet me at Grienberg's," he does not have to give street and number. To a certain class of people the place is as well known as the Waldorf or the St. Regis is to the rest of the population. Grienberg's food and wine needs no praise. Should one dare doubt the quality of the victuals the proprietor points out a few old men sitting at a corner table and remarks: "These men have eaten the same kind of food here for the last thirty years; and they are still alive."

But good food and good wine is not the only attraction of the place. Its main feature is that the brains and the heart of the East Side has formed a year-long habit to congregate there. The philosophies and the religions of the world are dissected nightly at a dozen tables. Between two sips of tea the literature of a century is ruled out of existence, or some tenth-rate poet is crowned as the world's unequalled singer. Editors of dailies discuss yesterday's editorial with their political antagonists and give their verbal verdicts to story writers about a manuscript read between the soup and the dessert. The very latest in the world's politics is pressed through the finest of sieves at every table. In such discussion the office boy of the newspaper, Joe, the waiter, and the owner of the place have equal rights with the editors and philosophers.

Meanwhile the musicians play Roumanian melodies, the latest vaudeville successes, snatches from operas, or some composer tries on the piano his latest melody while the poet, to whose words the music was set, leans on his elbow and listens attentively. The verdict is given on the spot and if it is liked, Katz, the music publisher, sends the manuscript to the printer the following day.

In such an atmosphere lived for the last ten years Joseph Horn. Up to five years ago he was the editor of a Yiddish radical weekly. His word was feared by every one. He smashed to pieces the pretentions of many a young writer. Many a play was taken off the boards of the East Side theaters because Horn happened not to like it. He attacked the strongest reputations and became strong himself by taking sides with the weak. But suddenly something terrible happened. He became blind. Superstitious people said it was God's punishment. His fiancée, a beautiful young Russian girl, took care of him during the first days. For a while he dictated to her his articles. But the fighting editorials of yore grew milder from week to week. He began to compromise. Began to see "honest differences of opinions," where he formerly saw only corruption and crookedness. He no longer attacked the strong. He ridiculed the weak. So he lost his job. The radical group owning the paper had no scruples about Horn's future; they had principles to defend and maintain which stood higher than the mere well-being of a lonely blind man. Horn, too, rose to the occasion and broke off the engagement with the girl. He was not going to keep her to share his misfortune. For a while he tried to write, to contribute to radical papers. But having lost the fighting quality, his articles were of no value at all.

He took a room not far from the café and came there early every day and left when the last guest had left. A brother of his, a street car conductor, who now supported him, usually brought him there and took him home. The psychological change in favor of the strong was so complete that one was almost sure which side Horn would take in a controversy. He was always with the strong. All the fighting ability he had once possessed became transmuted into a faculty for intrigues. Like a bee flying from one flower to another, Horn hopped from one table to the other, cross polinating what one man told and the other answered. He became a nuisance and was disliked by everybody. Yet no one dared say anything or lift his voice in anger. Since he had lost his sight his hearing had sharpened considerably. He could keep track of three or four conversations going on at the opposite end of the room from where he sat, seemingly engaged in conversation with the cat under the table. To the guests he criticized the quality of the food, to the editors the news writers. Five minutes later he urged the same writers to ask an increase in salary because the editor said they were indispensable. From his brains like from the body of a spider emanated daily a web of intrigues which enveloped every one the moment he entered the place. And everybody cursed fate that the man was blind.

Then one day a rich uncle of Feldman, the vers libre poet, died and left to the nephew a considerable fortune: five thousand dollars. A hundred friends counseled Feldman how to spend his money usefully. Some urged a new paper, others a new café. Old friends urged him to become their publisher and some public men wanted him to donate at least part of it to charity. Horn arrogated to himself the right to counsel the poet because Feldman had married his former fiancée. Horn was continually at Feldman's elbows. Whatever proposition was brought to the poet Horn ridiculed or explained away.

One day Feldman gave a banquet to all his friends. Among them were a few physicians, and one of them was an eye specialist. This man had once expressed an opinion that Horn's eyesight could be restored through an operation. When the gathering was at its merriest Feldman got up and pledged two thousand dollars to the physician who would restore to Horn his eyesight. The eye specialist accepted and named a great surgeon who would operate for the price. Every one congratulated the blind man and wished him good luck.

I knew how much Feldman had always hated Horn. Horn also had a strong aversion for the formerly poor poet. After the banquet I called the host to a corner of the room and inquired what had prompted him to such a charitable act; to spend half of his fortune on that scoundrel!

"Why, haven't you guessed? Man alive, it's now five years that I am burning with desire to punch Horn's face for a turn he has done me. But he was blind and therefore immune. I shall not be able to sleep until the operation is over. And if God is good to me I will wait for Horn at the door the first day he comes out from the hospital and punch him black and blue. You understand? I want to have the first privilege."

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