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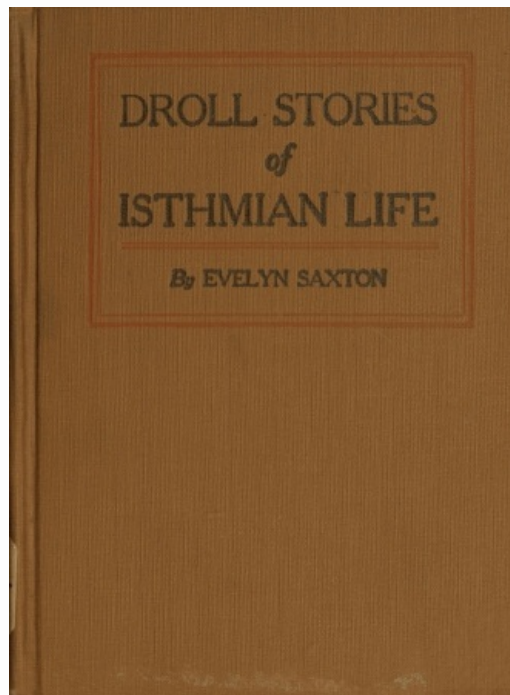
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## DROLL STORIES OF ISTHMIAN LIFE

By EVELYN SAXTON



1914

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## ARRIVAL AT PANAMA NINE YEARS AGO.

### (PART I.)

**N**INE years have passed since the ship which brought me from New York to Panama pulled out of its dock at the foot of Twenty-seventh Street. It was a bitter cold day in February and the great "Iron City" appeared very grey and forbidding as I took a last look at it before going below. A glance at my fellow passengers revealed to me a motley crowd. A number of tourists were on board bound for West Indian ports, for at that time none of them would have dreamed of stopping off at Panama, and among them were to be found the young and handsome, the old and ugly, the lame, the halt and the blind. There were more than a hundred artisans and clerks bound for the Panama Canal. There were several trained nurses for the American hospitals on the Canal Zone, several mining engineers who were on their way to New Mexico, to Peru, and a millionaire, also from New Mexico, who, to use his own words, "owned the whole engineering outfit." There was also a well-known United States Army surgeon, his wife, and the wives of several doctors who were already on the Isthmus. In addition, there were several newspaper men, three San Blas Indians, a general, an admiral, a Panamanian, who subsequently became President of Panama, and lastly myself.

As my readers may imagine, the passengers were more or less divided. The medical ladies felt themselves of such high degree in the profession as to positively refuse to occupy state-rooms in that part of the ship where the nurses had been assigned. They refused to eat at the same table with them, and never, by any chance, would they sit in company. The general and the admiral were the most democratic persons on board, and divided their time equally among us all. It was a delightful trip. Every night we assembled in the waist of the ship and danced to the music of two violins under rhythm of the waves.

The general and the admiral looked on approvingly and forgot their dignity to so great an extent as to keep time to the music with their feet, as on-lookers are apt to do in forgetfulness when they are lifted above their every-day surroundings by strains of sweet music. The poor surgeon looked longingly toward the way we made merry, but he was too hemmed in by conventionalities to join us, and he feared his thin-voiced little wife, who was, as Charles Dickens would say, in an interesting condition, and who ruled him with a rod of iron. The ladies of his atmosphere lowered their eyes in token of disapproval whenever he happened to venture in our midst, and on us they bestowed black looks. But we didn't care; we had music, good fellowship, laughter, love and tropical moonlight, and, being a mixed assembly, we were carrying out to the letter that spirit of delightful democracy which is the proudest boast of the good old U. S. A.

But I digress. As I said before, we danced, and once the surgeon, his wife being seasick, made a break and danced with us. He was a good dancer, and, tell it not in Gath, he tried to flirt a little, but "we" were as much afraid of the thin voice of his little wife as were the good doctors themselves. "We" started with fear when "we" heard her calling him. Every girl on board was engaged in a delightful flirtation, and one young girl—a nurse—was engaged in good faith to the millionaire. They were to be married at Panama as soon as they landed, and she was going on with him to Peru. She now became a person of consequence, because she had captured the only millionaire on board. Even the medical ladies began to look upon her as a possible person, and the proudest one among them, an F. F. V. deigned to converse with her, remarking that she thought she had met her before somewhere; that she must have come of a good family, etc.

All too soon the delightful trip was about to end. We were in Colon harbor. Already a line of cocoanut palms had burst upon our view, and the captain said that the pretty town in the distance was Cristobal. Every one was shaking hands preparatory to going ashore. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon and the last train had gone to Panama, so we were obliged to spend the night at a Colon hotel.

I shall never forget with what feelings of disgust I went up the dirty stairs to the bedroom which had been assigned to three of the nurses and myself. There were broad verandas, around the hotel, and they were littered with all kind of rubbish. The walls and floor of the bedroom were bare and dingy, but the beds really looked clean. We did not sleep that night because of the noise in the room next to ours. A disreputable character occupied it, and she spent the night in a drunken revel with some friends. In the morning I caught a glimpse of her, and I was amazed to see that she was a notorious character who had been tried for bigamy, she having married two young men, sons of wealthy parents, within the space of a few months.

The New York yellow journals had featured her scandalous behavior, and she finally dropped out of sight. On seeing her, a gloom settled on my very soul, and a feeling of loathing for Colon came into my mind.

I was glad when the train which was to take us to Panama pulled out of the station. As it sped on, we were charmed with the wild beauty of the country. The luxurious tropical verdure was truly delightful, and helped to cheer us after our depressing experience of the night before.

The train was dirty and the service bad. The conductor came and set down beside me with the ease and freedom of a dear brother. He asked me questions about myself and talked freely of his own past as follows:

"I came from the Far West, and I ain't ever intending to go back. I been a conductor on a railroad for nigh on fifteen years, an' I tell you what, I been a high flyer. I stole \$30,000, killed a man who robbed me of my girl, an' then just lit out. Panama ain't got no terrors for me," he continued, "though I will say that it is the doggondest place for crooks that I ever struck."

He chewed tobacco vigorously, and he spat through the open window in a noisy sort of a way that was as amusing as it was disgusting.

"I'd like to marry a good, nice girl from the States," he went on, "but good ones from there is goldarned scarce. Some of the boys is taken up with wenches, but I'm kind of particular about myself. Though I ain't been no saint, the woman I marry'll have to be purty free from the dark spots on her soul, an' her skin'll be white if I have me eyesight. I'm gittin' \$211 a month, an' the system is so goldurned bad that a feller could knock down twice as much as that. I do want to be honest, but with a system like this it's purty hard fer a feller to be strictly on the square."

I looked into his face as he said this, and I was impressed with its honesty. He had rather a likeable personality, and his kindly blue eyes would have a tendency to inspire one with confidence. He had a strong face, too—a face that might belong to one's most respected friend—and yet I felt my flesh creep at the thought that he was a self-

confessed thief and murderer. After a pause he resumed:

"All the folks that come in on this train'll be measured for their coffins as soon as they land at Panama. Folks is dyin' like sheep here now with yellow fever, and the place ain't fit for Americans to live in."

"Only a few persons have died from yellow fever," I corrected.

"Is that so?" he retorted. "Folks that jest land think they know it all."

At this juncture he was called by a collector, who appeared much perturbed, and I concluded that something had gone wrong.

"Wal, let them rip; ain't there a policeman out there?" The man looked disgusted and went out grumbling.

The conductor restated himself, took a new chew of tobacco, and said:

"If I had no more brains than a collector I'd go to live in Panama, git measured for me coffin, take yellow fever an' die."

This speech sent a shiver through me, as we were nearing Panama, and my husband already lived there.

"The architect of the Canal Zone died yesterday, and the chief of the Panama police died a few days ago," went on my tormentor. "It ain't no place for ladies, an' I wonder that the government lets them land. We'll be there in five minutes now. I'd be glad to see you again; an', say! if ever you go broke let me know an' I'll be Johnny-on-the-spot with some dinero for you, fer I ain't the kind of a man that'ud let a lady go broke. Not with the lax system of the Panama railroad," he concluded, with a crackling sort of laugh that was truly funny.

We were at the station now. The nurses were being helped into omnibuses; the medical ladies were helped into waiting victorias, which were drawn by handsome black horses, and in a few minutes I, of all the new arrivals, stood on the station platform alone. There was no one to meet me. A lump gathered in my throat and my heart beat loudly. There were negroes hurrying to and fro, but not a white person to be seen anywhere. Finally I was approached by a young man, evidently a Panamanian, who took off his hat and respectfully asked me if I would like him to get a coach for me. "I do not know where I am to go," I said simply. "I expected my husband would meet me."

"He must be ill," said the young man, after a pause, "else he would not have had you wait for him. It will be better for you to take a coach and ride to the hospital at Ancon. The doctor at the gatehouse will know whether your husband is sick or not."

"Perhaps I ought to wait here a little longer," I replied. "He might have been detained."

"It is hardly likely that he would have let anything except sickness detain him," said the young man. "You really must take a coach, because there are rough Americans about who would not hesitate to insult you."

"I do not fear them," I said, "I am an American myself."

"Ah, yes," he replied, "but the Americans I know about Panama are not of your class. They are here in great numbers, and they are very rough and vulgar."

I felt resentful, but at the same time grateful to him for his courtesy, and I allowed him to call a coach and help me in. When I got to the gatehouse of Ancon Hospital I was told that my husband had been admitted to the yellow fever ward the night before. There were several men suspected of having yellow fever, and he was among them. I was told that it would be impossible to see him, as he was very ill and would not recognize me.

## ARRIVAL AT PANAMA NINE YEARS AGO.

(PART II.)

**T**HAT'S what I call hard luck," said the doctor in charge. "Where are you going to stop? You'd better go to the Central. There's American women down there." He then gave me some quinine and bade me take care of myself, after which I entered the cab and was driven to the Central Hotel in Panama, where I engaged a room. It was up one flight and overlooked the Cathedral Plaza. The furniture consisted of two broken chairs, a broken table, a rickety desk of drawers, with pieces of string attached for handles, and a mirror very dim from age. There was no rug on the dirty floor, and there did not appear to be any means of lighting the place. The walls and ceilings were festooned with cobwebs, and the grime of many years completely covered the paint, which one might guess had once been an unsightly green. There were two small beds in the room, and on examining them I found them to be very clean. They were incongruously draped within white net, such as is used by milliners. The servant told me that the net was used to keep mosquitoes from biting the sleepers. For this disreputable apartment, with two meals and a cup of very bad coffee, I was to pay \$5.00 gold per day. There was no bell in the room, and no one looked in to see if I might need anything. When I shut the door and put a chair against it I felt as much alone as if I was on a desert island. There was a little balcony outside the door, which looked out upon the street, and I sat on this the whole afternoon, as the gloom and dampness of the room depressed me terribly. When night came a negro brought me a candle stuck in an old black bottle. He also brought my dinner, although I had intended to go into the dining-room, which was well lighted, as I thought I might meet some American women there.

Day after day I sat on my little balcony and looked upon the plaza. I was too perturbed to read. Sometimes I went downstairs and entered the peaceful Cathedral, where I knelt before graven images and offered up Protestant prayers for my husband's safe recovery and for my own peace of mind. In the hotel dining-room I noticed some women whom I thought might be Americans. They were bulging-browed, loud-voiced, unsocial to one another, and unfriendly to me. They were well groomed, however, and wore good jewels. Every day they rode horseback astride, and shouted to one another in nasal tones, but all my efforts to get acquainted with them were in vain. They looked at me as if to say: "Gee! but you do represent the gloomy side of Panama." I subsequently learned that these women were the wives of contracting engineers and railroad men from the Far West. They were the only women in evidence in Panama at that time. I occasionally saw a sad-faced woman, carefully wrapped in a black shawl, on her way to the Cathedral to pray; an occasional Sister of Charity and negro workmen. The Panamanian ladies were in their camps in the country and at Taboga Island, and if there were any in the city they were timid about going into the streets, as Panama was filled to overflowing with adventurers from all over the world, for it was the reconstruction period, and the Isthmus was in a state of chaos. I had never seen such a variety of men. There were men who rode fine horses, looking like cavaliers of olden times. There were men who wore boots a la Meddowbrook, and other toggery not unlike those of the Meddowbrook Hunt Club. There were slick, fat, cheerful looking Chinamen who rode horseback at breakneck speed in the early morning hours and in the late hours of the afternoon. There were negroes of every hue, from shiny-black to that peculiar red-brown shade that denotes the dividing line. There were numbers of coaches drawn hither and thither filled to overflowing with men, black, white and brown. I had been looking at them from my balcony for several days, and at last I made up my mind to go into the street among them. I would sally forth in the late hours of the afternoon, and would usually walk to Ancon to make enquiries about my husband, and, unless I happened to be fortunate enough to find a coach that was not engaged, I walked back, "a foolhardy thing to do in those days," said the hotel clerk in tones which denoted that he considered me very much under his protection. At first men leered at me, but after a time they passed me with averted gaze. They not infrequently got out of coaches and invited me to get in. They knew that the demand for coaches was greater than the supply, and it became generally known that I was alone and that my husband was ill in the Ancon Hospital. I soon began to learn who were Americans, because, no matter how drunk they appeared to be, whenever I met them on the streets of Panama they showed me some courtesy, which plainly said: "We're with you, and we feel sorry for you."

Negroes worked slowly in the streets under a broiling sun. They were paving Panama's streets with brick at this time. It seemed a hopeless task, as viewed through a woman's eyes. Mr. Durham had begun the work, but made slow progress, because of the restrictions imposed upon him. However, he must have been a man of courage to undertake such a work at that time. Mr. J. G. Holcomb subsequently brought the work to a successful completion. Something more impelling than a desire to earn \$6,000 or \$7,000 a year must have prompted these men to undertake to remodel the misshapen city of Panama, where the filth of three hundred years had accumulated. When the work was about finished, Mr. Holcomb was coolly discharged. The Panamanian Government, however, retained him, for the Panamanians knew how much they were really indebted to him. Colombia had never done anything for Panama, and most of the city's streets were mere zigzag mounds of unwholesome red clay. The common people had never formed habits of cleanliness, and it was an interesting sight to see the sanitary squad at work cleaning out their houses. I often paused in my rambles to watch them. Two great wagons, containing barrels filled with oil and disinfectants, were drawn up to the doors of the houses which were to be cleaned. A rubber hose would be attached to the street hydrant and, after the rooms were carefully prepared with disinfectants, the water would be turned on and a number of men would proceed to scrub the ceilings, walls and floors. Then the oil would be sprinkled upon the spots outside which were thought might be breeding-places for mosquitoes. That rubbish, which is so dear to the heart of every housekeeper in the world, and which is to be found in a greater or less degree in the house of the banker and laborer alike, when discovered in the houses of the poor Panamanians, was confiscated by order of the head of the sanitation department and conveyed outside of the city and burned. In this way Panama was converted into the clean, well-ordered city it is to-day, and to Colonel Gorgas is due the credit of having made it so.

One afternoon while on my way to Ancon Hospital I met a man whom I had known in Boston during my schooldays. He was then a manufacturer of rubber goods, and apparently successful. Now he was a member of Colonel Gorgas' sanitary squad. He told me that two men had been taken from the Central Hotel that morning, and it was found that they were suffering from yellow fever. "You will not be allowed to stay there now," he said. "But what shall I do?" I exclaimed. "There is no other place to live." "I know a man named Martin Luther," replied my informant. "Did you ever hear of him? He's from Boston. He used to be a labor agent, a milkman, a real estate man, a

street car conductor, a preacher, a theatrical manager, and a walking delegate. Now he is superintendent of construction at Ancon. He'll fix you up all right. How would you like to live in a tent among the boys on Ancon Hill?" "I should like it," I said, "but it would be a little irregular, wouldn't it? A lone woman to live in a tent among men?" "Oh, shucks! That's the best place for you. I'll see Martin Luther about it this afternoon, and you'll be moved soon. Martin Luther has a tender heart, even if he does swear a blue streak sometimes."

Together we walked back to the hotel, to find the sanitary squad at work cleaning out the house. When I entered my room I hardly knew it. It had an odor redolent of disinfectants that delighted me. The walls and the ceilings had been cleaned, and the color of the paint was quite visible. The color had been thoroughly soaked with the disinfecting fluid, and, sad to relate, the mirror was of no further use as a reflector of my freckled beauty, for the last vestige of quicksilver had disappeared, and only the glass remained, with its wooden back showing through it. I began to like the place now, and I decided to go out on the morrow and buy a new looking-glass. I decided, too, to unpack my books and pictures, and I began to speculate on the coziness of my room when I should have it furnished with my own belongings. The thought of it all gave me the first comfortable feeling I had experienced since my arrival at Panama. On the following morning I went out early and bought a pretty tea set at a Chinese store, and I actually forgot my uneasiness of mind in the thought of the pretty tea table I was to set up. On my return to the hotel I was doomed to disappointment, for a communication awaited me suggesting that I prepare to leave the hotel. But where am I to go? I thought. I spent a disquieting afternoon speculating what was to become of me. The hotel had been closed, and, as far as I knew, it was now quite sanitary, so I wondered why I had been ordered to move in such a peremptory manner. Late in the afternoon a cart came from the construction department at Ancon for my trunks, and a negro handed me an envelope, with "I. C. C." on one of its corners. This startled me, it had such an official appearance, so, with a beating heart and trembling hand, I opened it and read as follows:

"Dear Madam: Give your trunks to this nigger. At eight o'clock to-night a cock-eyed Dutchman, with bowlegs, will call for you. You are to live in your husband's tent, which has been remodeled for you.

MARTIN LUTHER, Etc."

On reading this I did not know whether to laugh or to cry. My anxiety had been somewhat relieved, and presuming that the tent was among those on Ancon Hill "among the boys," I should be near to the hospital. Still it seemed rather irregular for a lone woman to live among men, and in a tent, I reflected. However, I sent the trunks away, and awaited the arrival of the "cock-eyed Dutchman."

My sense of the aesthetic was somewhat outraged that such a person should be picked out to escort me from the hotel, especially as Panama was filled to overflowing with stalwart Americans. At eight o'clock my escort arrived, and did not present too bad an appearance. He was a clean-looking little fellow with reddish hair, and rather a scholarly type of face. He wore glasses, so that his eyes appeared to be straight, but his legs might have been a little bit straighter. However, he was very gallant, and we were soon on our way to Ancon. The tent was unlike any other that I have seen, as it was hemmed in on all sides by mosquito netting. It had a hardwood floor, and was comfortably furnished. It had a tiny veranda, too, which commanded a fine view of the Pacific. On all sides of me there were tents. The tent of Martin Luther was at the head of the line, and I was quite taken with him, for he brought me a gun and told me that the boys would be ready and willing to protect me with their very lives. This I subsequently found to be quite true. The boys were all Americans, and ranged in age from 29 to 50 years. The most of them were veterans of the Spanish-American War, and had been knocking about in the tropics since that interesting period, so they looked upon a young white woman, clothed in white, as an ethereal being. My presence among them must have imposed a strain, for they talked in lowered voices, and even played poker in rather a silent manner. After a time the strain became so great that the poker playing was done in the tent that was farthest away from mine, and my evenings thereafter were very lonely. I was the first woman that had ever lived on that part of the hill; at least, that is what Maitland said. I made the acquaintance of Maitland on the morning after my arrival on Ancon Hill. I awoke early, feeling very hungry, and, looking out, saw, close to the wire netting, an old black face. Never had there been a more welcome sight, as I had no means of procuring breakfast.

"Good morning, mistress," said the voice of Maitland; "I hope you slept well." "Good morning," I returned, with more cordiality than one would be likely to show under other circumstances. "My name is Maitland, an' my business is to look after the tents for the boys, see that the niggers don't steal their clothes, an' to keep the tents clean." "Do you ever have any spare time?" I asked. "Oh, yes, mistress, lots of it, an' I'll work for you if you will give me something to eat." "But I am suffering myself for something to eat," I replied. "Well, that's too bad," said Maitland, "but if you have some money, I'll bring you some beautiful breakfast from Eduardo's, for they sho' do cook things fine." So I gave him some money, and ordered hire, to bring two breakfasts. He soon returned with the food, as disgusting a mess as was ever served to a human being. I was unable to eat it, but Maitland sat on the doorstep and devoured it with relish. He expressed some concern that I did not eat, and made some practical suggestions. One was that I get coffee from the Commission Commissary at Cristobal, and an oil stove in Panama. Later he found a Jamaican woman, who cooked the meals for me. These he would bring to the door, and I really enjoyed them. He helped me to stain the floors and hang my pictures and flags, so, like Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday, I settled down to the life with resignation, and began to feel as much a part of it as if I had always lived this way.

The tent was one of the most picturesque habitations in Panama, and almost every day something new was added to its adornment. It had an old brass lamp which had been brought from France, Second Empire style, very beautiful to look at, but very useless as a bestower of light. I had an old mahogany desk which had been in use in De Lesseps' own home, in the old French days. Some good engravings, relics of my palmy days in New York, and some real Persian rugs and velvet portiers gave the place the look of an Arab shiek. Every day I sat alone on the tiny veranda and wrote or read. I never saw a woman, and the men passed the tent with averted gaze. Martin Luther usually stopped for a moment to inquire if I was all right, and if Maitland had been sober. If anything unusual occurred he would shout it to me. In this way I kept a line on the world outside of the tent. I seldom went to the city, but whenever I did go Maitland walked behind me at a respectful distance. One morning I awoke feeling faint and sick. I found that I had been bitten on my right foot by some insect. I naturally concluded that it was a tarantula. As the foot was terribly swollen, I called to Maitland, who came in breathless, and declared that I had but a short time to live. "Go for a doctor," I gasped, and in my fright I began to feel the chill, cold hand of death at my heart.

Maitland vanished, and soon returned with a little old man, who carried a green carpet-bag that appeared to be

filled with something heavy. The little old man walked as if he was very tired, and as he knelt down beside my chair he heaved a long, tired sigh. His hands were small, but very much knotted, and his eyes were a pale, sad blue. He sat back upon his heels and looked critically at the swollen foot, pinching it from time to time, and sighing sadly.

"Was the lady bit by a tarantula, Doctor?" asked Maitland anxiously.

"Ah, yes," sighed the little man, kindly stroking my foot.

"Then I shall not live much longer?" said I, with a choking lump in my throat.

"You'll live just twenty-four hours, unless you have your foot taken off," he uttered.

The sincerity of his tone convinced me that I must be near the end of my life. I had always heard that the bite of a tarantula was fatal, so I advised Maitland to go for Martin Luther. He would have me sent to the hospital, and I would have my foot cut off. I wrote a few words of farewell to friends and sat, frightened and still, while the doctor bathed my foot with a concoction of stuff, the ingredients of which were vinegar, ether, pickle and linseed oil.

"That will take the venom out of it," said the doctor, with another sigh, as he opened the bag and drew forth a number of old, rusty instruments. These he wiped carefully on his old blue overalls.

Now Maitland returned with Martin Luther, who grinned as he beheld the doctor at work on my foot.

"Well, I'll be goldurned," said he, throwing his hat upon the floor. "What in thunder are you doing, Moll? For the love of Mike, don't go to poisoning her foot with that old rusty needle."

"These instruments cost my father a small fortune."

"Yes, a hundred years ago," answered Martin Luther, with a disgusted look.

"Tie up her foot, Moll, and we'll send her to the hospital," said Martin Luther; "and you'd better be getting back on the job, or you'll be fired."

"All right," answered the little man, with a weary sigh, as he picked up his green carpet-bag and bade me good morning. Meantime Maitland had discovered that I had been bitten by a young scorpion.

"That ain't anything," said Martin Luther. "I get bit every night, and I feel better for it. Moll would have cut your foot off if I hadn't come."

"Is he attached to the hospital?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Martin Luther, with a chuckle, "he works for me in the carpenter shop. He used to be a doctor, but he cut a feller's toe off in Cuba with one of them old rusty knives, and blood poison set in and the feller died, so the medical society won't let him doctor any more. He made a mighty good carpenter, but the poor old devil has wheels. Maitland, if you call that old guy again when any one is sick or hurt, I'll have you fired."

"He cured me of that evil eye that the girl gave me that time, an' he's the best doctor in the world," said Maitland.

One morning it was announced that a new official had arrived to dwell in one of the three real cottages on the hill. It was a short distance from the line of tents. A barbed wire was the dividing line between the tent ground and the aristocratic residential section. The residents of both sections kept well within their respective bounds. The wife of the official must have caught a glimpse of me in the distance on the day of her arrival, for she wrote a note that night to Martin Luther, which read something like this:

"Sir—You will please send to my house to-morrow morning the woman who lives in the tent beside yours. I have not been used to black servants, and I can't bear to have them wait upon me. I will give her fifty cents, gold, a day, and her meals, and she can have a room on my back veranda. I shall need her at six o'clock in the morning. I hope her character is good."

This was kept from me, but a consultation was held, and one of the tent dwellers, who had been a lawyer in the days before the Spanish-American War, dictated a pungent letter to the wife of the official, which enlightened her as to the respective classes to which both she and I belonged. She was told in part that the woman in the tent was a graduate of Wellesley College, and had never been obliged to even wait upon herself.

The official and his lady were invited to come to my tent and to size me up and see for themselves whether the woman in the tent was the sort of a person who would make a fancy laundress or not.

On the morning following Mrs. Official paid me a visit, and not only sized me up to her heart's content, but asked me questions until I thought myself on a witness stand on trial for my life. Then, after offering to buy from me, at her own price, the pretty furnishings in the tent, she departed, and I have never seen her since.

One morning news was brought to me that the little old doctor was arrested and was sent to Chiriqui prison. Maitland burst out crying when I asked him about it, and declared that, as there was a God, the doctor would soon be again free to cure the evil and all the other ills to which black humanity is heir.



## ARRIVAL AT PANAMA NINE YEARS AGO.

### (PART III.)

**T**HE new official and his wife, to whom I have already alluded, had both been in Cuba during the war between the United States and the Spaniards. The woman had some years before the war had a manicuring and shampooing establishment at Havana, but when the American troops came pouring in she decided to turn her parlors into a barber shop. So she shaved troops with much success, and married a Rough Rider in T. R.'s famous troops of cavaliers.

When T. R. became President of the U. S. A. he gave this particular Rough Rider the only position that he could fill. He was an illiterate man, but he was imbued with a social bug, and he had a dream of becoming a prominent social lion on the Isthmus. The fair barberess was good-looking, vivacious, a good dancer, and a lady of good style. Judge of the surprise of the official pair upon their arrival on Ancon Hill to find that virgin spot was dotted with tents in which lived the soldiers of fortune whom the lady had shaved in the dreaming old war days.

"We sure are in bad," said the official. "Here's the whole bunch of chumps that used to be in Havana."

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the lady; "what shall we do? Even old Dr. Moll is here. Now he'll tell every one that I was a barber and that he lovingly called me the little shaver."

"If he does I'll have the old devil put in jail," said the official.

The presence of the old-time acquaintances had been made known to the official pair by Martin Luther, upon their request to have me sent to them as a servant.

"What—what do you suppose?" said the little old doctor to Martin Luther. "Mike is here, and is now an official. We were all awfully fond of her when she used to shave us. I wonder will she notice us now."

"Not on your life," answered Martin L.

The lawyer, who occupied one of the tents, and who was regularly employed as a timekeeper in one of the nearby offices, gave the doctor some good advice, as follows: "If you pretend that you ever knew Mike and the little shaver in the old war days, you'll find yourself floating around at high tide in Chiriqui prison, for you know that Mike was a snob, and now that he has this official position, he'll put it all over us, even though we all fared alike in the corral in Havana."

"She was always good and nice to me, and when I told her once that I loved her she was real sorry that she was in love with Mike instead of me."

"So you told her you loved her, did you? Well, I see your finish. Mike will never allow a man to live that once was a suitor for the hand of the little shaver, especially a man who is working in the carpenter shop."

"She'll be glad to see us all," said the little doctor, with the conviction that every one on earth had a nature as simple and noble as his own.

Two days later he was arrested for stealing one thousand dollars from his room mate, who had the money tied up in the sleeve of an old coat, which was kept in a trunk in one corner of the tent in which the two men lived. The official measured carefully the ground on which the tent stood, and found that the part of the trunk in which the coat lay was on Panamanian territory. He therefore turned the poor little old doctor over to the Panamanian authorities, and the gentle little old man was handcuffed to a negro murderer, and, while the crowds looked on and jeered, he was led through the streets of Panama to Chiriqui prison, where he was kept for five months, until a kind-hearted Panamanian lawyer investigated the matter and learned that the money had been found three days after the little old man had been committed.

Then the little old doctor was liberated from Chiriqui prison and resumed his occupation in the carpenter shop, with bowed head and broken spirit. His old comrades endeavored to cheer him, but, in spite of the gentleness of his nature, he nursed the terrible wrong until it became a nightmare. He had a fear that the official called Mike was plotting against his life, and he began to have dreams that he thought came true. Each evening he sought his best friends and told them that he had not long to live. He would conjure up a picture for them of his mother and father, who were dead about twenty years, and of an old sweetheart called Betty, whose father, away back in old Virginia, was not only a colonel, but a judge as well. He would stand in the center of a group of his friends and tell them that he could close his eyes and see his dead loved one. "There they are now," he would say. "There's little Betty, like a pink and white carnation, and there's the judge and colonel sitting beside Betty and looking lovingly at her like he used to when I used to go to court her. Ah, see, she loves me still, and I'll soon be with her, boys." At first the men tried to soothe him, but after a time they decided to agree with him that his end was at hand, and this, as Martin L. put it, "made the wheels go round faster," and the little old man became quite ill in anticipation of his coming demise. Then he was sent to Taboga to recuperate, and there he fell madly in love with a young nurse, and became, as a result, quite restored to his normal frame of mind.

Meantime Mike and the little shaver were leading society by the nose, as the tent lawyer tritely put it. They had moved into a more palatial dwelling house and were entertaining foreign ministers and their ladies, while their old-time friends of the dreamy old war days spent their waking hours of leisure playing poker.

I had lived in the tent five months, and the time for me to depart to the United States was drawing to a close. Every day for five months I had sat on the piazza and gazed upon the lovely Pacific in all its splendor. Every night during that time I listened to the quiet games of poker that were being played about me, and I heard the exultant shouts of the revellers as they cheered the performers in the cantina of Edmardillo, as they bounded to the fandango and wriggled to the bolero. In all the five months no woman ever called upon me, and I can safely say that never in my life have I had so long a period of perfect peace. Finally the day came when I was to sail away to the U. S. A., and I impartially distributed the furnishings of the tent among the other tent residents. The little doctor declined to accept anything of commercial value, but he begged to be allowed to take as a souvenir a lock of my hair. He finally consented taking a photograph which some one of the tent dwellers had taken of me as I sat reading on the tent piazza. On the ninth of July, with a sad heart, I left the hill to go to New York. The tent dwellers accompanied me to Colon and stood in a group, waving their handkerchiefs until the ship was out of sight. With the exception of three, I have never seen them since. When I returned two years later I found that they were scattered far and wide. Many

are now in California, in Ecuador, in Brazil, in Peru, in Alaska, and many of them are dead. But the most pleasant experience of my life was the months in the tent on Ancon Hill, and I shall always remember with gratitude the chivalry and kindness with which I was treated by the poor soldiers of fortune when I was alone, friendless and a stranger in Panama.

Two years later I alighted from a train at Panama and was driven to the Tivoli Hotel. There was to be a ball there that night, and I sat in the lobby and watched the smiling throng passing from the dining-room to the ballroom and balconies.

Men and women in correct evening dress stood about in groups and chatted with an expectant air, as if some one of consequence was yet to arrive. Soft lights glowed in the ballroom, and there was good music.

The revellers were beginning to consult their programs, and in less than five minutes I would be alone in the lobby. I felt a sadness steal upon me, and I began to wonder where I was, when, lo! who should come downstairs but Martin Luther.

My heart leaped. He was clad in khaki and leather leggins, and carried his cowboy hat in his hand.

"Well, so you're back again. What do you think of this?" said he, by way of greeting.

"It is like a scene in fairyland," I replied. "What does it mean, and who are all these people? What hotel is this?"

"Don't you know any of 'em?" he asked.

"No, not one," I replied.

"Well, some of them are the main guys, an' many of 'em are just carpenters, plumbers, steam-fitters, steam-shovel men and powder men, and the washed-out, conceited-looking guys are \$125 doctors and clerks. They were all here in your time, but they didn't buck up to this gait then."

"But what hotel is this?" I asked.

"Why, it's the Tivoli, and this is the Tivoli Club that's dancing. They were just going to start this building when you were here two years ago."

"It is all very wonderful," I replied.

"Well, wait till you hear all about it. Bates, he's a carpenter; and Barrett, a policeman; and Norman, a guy that shins up electric light poles and is a cousin of Shanklin, the American Consul—he's here to-night. Awhile ago they got their heads together, an' they thought 'twould be a good idea to get their best girls an' have a dance here every Saturday night. They are all getting good pay, so they sent to the States for swallowtail suits an' they started. Well, they hired musicians in Panama, and the girls looked so swell that some other guys got in.

"Notices got in the papers in Panama, and the highbrows began to get interested, so they tried to get the ballroom away from the fellows that started the thing, and when that didn't work they came right along to the dances without saying 'By your leave,' and here they are, dancing to beat the band, and as bold as brass."

"Where are the men who used to live in the tents?" I asked.

"They've gone away to Brazil, to Peru, to Ecuador and to Alaska. They didn't like this civilized business; they'd rather be in some new country, where there ain't no style. Them fellows were men of the world.

"Catch on to that little man with the whiskers on his chin? He's the guy that has the soft snap. He's running a little paper about the size of a postage stamp, and he has seven other guys, probably relatives, assisting in the editing of it. He has the finest house on Ancon Hill, a pair of horses, two carriages, two saddle horses, one for himself and one for his daughter, and twelve thousand a year. Looks like a slick guy, don't he? He's got his first dollar, an', what do you think? His house stands right where your tent used to stand. The hill is covered with beautiful houses now."

So Martin Luther chatted on as I watched, fascinated, the late comers.

"Suppose we go to the ballroom and watch 'em caper—see the snobs an' the two-cent nobodies, eh? I ain't in a swallowtail coat, but every one knows me, and they know that I've been up in the roof tryin' to stop a leak."

I followed him into the ballroom, and he gallantly offered me his arm and led me to a seat.

Each man danced with his wife, daughter or sweetheart, and if he happened to be without either he sat and looked on with arms folded upon his breast. Elderly ladies sat straight against the wall, their hands folded, and a patient smile upon their faded faces. An iciness clutched my very soul as I sat mute while Luther talked.

"There's Bates, the best carpenter I have, and he's rigged up like a scarecrow. Look at the white shoes and red stockings and red necktie—things that no one but a fool would wear with a swallowtail suit. There's Mike Lyman, wearing a yellow soft shirt, when he ought to wear a boiled one, and, doggone it, look at Dodson. He's got on a blue tie, russet shoes and a watch chain with a shark's tooth mounted on it that would moor a ship. Wait till to-morrow when I see them guys. I'll have some fun with them. Catch on to Red Mike and the little shaver. And there's Garibaldi and Major Brooks. They are the real thing, but Garibaldi can't get any one to dance with him, because he don't put on lugs; he's just a simple chap, but he's good-looking, ain't he? He's a grandson of that old general who put the Pope in prison, or something like that.

"Some fellows tried to tell me that Garibaldi was only the name of a race horse on Long Island. Well, anyway, no one has anything to do with him but Major Brooks.

"Do you see that old guy over there with the glassy bald head that looks like a cross between a barn door and a wooden leg? Well, he's another guy that's got a soft snap. He lives on the hill, and his house stands right where my tent used to be. He got in trouble here in the Tivoli once because he was fresh with the black chambermaids."

While all this gossip was being poured into my ear I sized up the ensemble, which was a pleasant picture. When supper was served there was a grand rush for the dining-room that seemed like the sort of stampede one might see at a bargain sale on Sixth Avenue, New York. A more motley crew never blended together at any function. Every craft and profession had a representative, and there were at the Tivoli that night one or more persons from every nation in the world.

## MR. COMSTOCK'S ARRIVAL.



R. COMSTOCK'S arrival at Panama created almost as much stir as did the arrival of the much beloved and respected T. R., for it was rumored among Americans on Ancon Hill that John Drew was in town. "Well, say, the theatrical business must be on the bum," said the veterans, one to another. "Surely he is not going to play at Edmarrillos." The subject of their comments—the man who looked like John Drew—had recently come to the Isthmus to work in the timekeeping office at Ancon. "Good morning, Mr. Drew," said a young clerk, as Mr. Comstock appeared, ready for induction into the mysteries of his new position. "My dear young man," he replied, "my name is not Drew. I am Arthur Algernon Comstock, of London, of the Surrey Comstocks, grandson of Lord Algernon Percival Fillbois, and nephew of Percival Gibbon Comstock, Lord Bishop of Hounslow."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Comstock," said the clerk humbly. "We thought you were John Drew, because you look exactly like him." "Dear me! How very singular," replied Mr. Comstock. "Why, it is nothing short of libel to compare a brute like myself to such a well-behaved chap as John Drew, and it is iniquitous and unnatural that a Comstock, of Comstock Lodge, Surrey, should even resemble an actor. I am quite amazed, really I am. Dear! dear! how my aunt, the Lady Maria Derald Fillbois, would laugh if she were to know that these Yankee chaps were calling me Mr. Drew. Fastidious chap, John Drew. Here, my dear fellow, have a smoke," handing the young man his ivory cigar case, lined with gold. It was well filled with cigars of a better quality than were to be found at that time at Panama, and it bore the Comstock coat of arms.

It soon became generally known that there was a lord, or duke, or something of the sort, working in the office of the chief timekeeper, who was a good old sport, likeable, and democratic in his ways, just like an American, only his expressions of speech were a bit queer. From time to time fragments of anecdote were related to me as having come from the well-stored mind of Mr. Comstock. This plainly told me that he was a man of some erudition. There was a very clever toast which he was in the habit of giving when in his cups. It appears to have been written by one Sir Fitzhugh Clavering Comstock, and was said to be both brilliant and mirth-provoking. The most humble of the Americans on Ancon Hill had a copy of it, but, strange to say, I was never permitted to hear the words, and am, therefore, unable to give them to my readers.

It became a popular diversion to listen to the story of Mr. Comstock's life, as told by himself, and it ran about as follows: "My mother was the Lady Elizabeth Howard Derald Fillbois, a beautiful but delicate woman, and my father was James Percival Comstock, brother of the present Lord Bishop of Hounslow. My father was a perfect devil for sport, poor chap. He, it seems, neglected to cherish my mother, and soon after my birth she died, her family said, of a broken heart. Then my father went to travel on the Continent, and never returned to England again. He died a few years ago, poor old chap. He had many affaires d'amour, poor chap. It quite saddens me to think of them. Really, I wonder how he ever came out of some of them without losing his honor. I became acquainted with him when I myself traveled on the Continent, and I became quite fond of his society. His family and friends got on his nerves, and he abominated his own country people, the English. My brother and myself were taken at the time of my mother's death by my aunt, the Lady Maria Howard Derald Fillbois, my mother's only sister, who was a very strong-minded but fascinating woman, and who took a notion to forsake her lover at the altar in the presence of half of the aristocracy of England.

"She was a kindly woman, with a strong sense of humor, but was horribly stingy with us boys. The village folk loved her.

"Well, she had kennels filled with the finest dogs in the United Kingdom, and, oh, horrors! she obliged my brother and myself to pick the fleas from the brutes in order to earn spending money. An old Irishman named Tim Burden stood over us and counted the fleas, for each one of which we received a ha'penny.

"At one time we became so outraged at the indignity that we wrote to our father and complained to him. He, boulder that he was, treacherously sent our letter, with a very complimentary one inclosed, to the Lady Maria. 'If it were not for the Deceased Wife's Sister Prohibitive Marriage Law,' wrote he, 'I should ask you for your hand and heart in marriage, for your way of managing my sons, the Comstock boys, not only proves you to be a woman of deep penetration, but one with a most logical mind and most practical sense of humor. It is no wonder that you have always been considered to be a female far above the other silly members of your sex.'

"The dogs were named after my aunt's favorite characters in history, viz., Abraham Lincoln, Lord Byron, Napoleon, Beau Brummel, Nell Gynn, Martha Washington and George Washington, respectively. There were, too, many others whose names I forget.

"We were so keen about earning half-pennies that we spent the greater part of each day hunting fleas, and the dogs, thinking us unselfish in ridding them of such torment, grew to be inordinately fond of us, and it looked at times, indeed, as if the pests were becoming extinct, for we often hunted for them for hours in vain. This last was a discouraging development for us, and we induced old Tim Burden to report for us and complain to our aunt, in the hope that she would give us a few pennies as a token of gratitude, but she would merely look solemn and say: '\$1 'Is it not good to know that a Comstock has really earned some money by the sweat of his brow, and, in addition, relieved a fellow-being of torment?' 'Then you compare us to brutes,' said my brother on one occasion, he having observed the comparison. 'No! no!' replied she, 'a Comstock could never be compared with nobility to my magnificent, well-bred dogs. Abraham Lincoln is the most noble animal in England. I named him after Lincoln because he saved a little negro child from drowning at Brighton Beach.'

"I subsequently learned that the Comstocks were devils for all kinds of sport. The fire was in my blood at an early age, too, and the Lady Maria knew the symptoms. As we became expert at flea-catching it became less repugnant to us, and in the end we developed an interest in the little pests that quite pleased my aunt. We began to discern the difference in their social and physical habits to a degree which threatened to affect our future. Our aunt now hinted at our becoming naturalists, and, strange to say, my brother actually became one, and to-day is considered an authority not only on the flea, but every variety of insect as well. What a disgusting occupation!

"At the age of 16 I was placed in the counting-house of an American banking firm in London. The banker was a decent fellow, fastidious and all that, not a bit crude, and he had the greatest admiration for the Lady Maria. At 18 I had an affair with a village girl named Anna Shakespeare. She was a very good-looking girl, of a magnetic temperament, and my aunt was rather fond of her. Though of tender years, my young ideas had been shooting rather

promiscuously for some time. The girl had taken to the affair ad libitum, and I was making plans to have her come to lodgings in London, as there had been quite some talk in the village at home, which had upset my aunt terribly. Anna was to leave the village secretly, after which we were to repair to our future home. I was delighted with the prospect of having the girl with me, and I went to the meeting place with my heart filled with delightful emotions, when, what do you think? I was met by the bouncer of a banker, the Lady Maria, and my uncle, the then Rev. Percival Gibbon Comstock. I was astounded, and stood rooted to the spot, as the novelists say. The perspiration rolled from my forehead in the most disgusting profusion, and I was unable to speak. Lady Maria advanced and held out her hand, upon which I bestowed a clammy kiss. There was a light in her eyes as they met mine. At this moment Anna entered, flushed and excited, but, on finding that my relatives were with me, started to withdraw, when my aunt caught her and held her firmly. 'You will kiss your sweetheart, Arthur,' said she, in a bantering tone. I hung my head and looked furtively at Anna. 'We have come to witness your marriage to Anna,' said my uncle. 'Upon my word, you have not,' said I, waking up. 'Oh, yes, we have,' put in my aunt. 'You have hurt Anna's character, and, in consequence, she has been made to feel very unhappy. She has lost her young man, and the village folk have slandered her.' 'Your under gardener, William,' I put in, 'is very anxious to marry Anna.' 'That will be better,' said my Uncle Percival. 'The time has gone by,' said my aunt, 'when under gardeners feel it incumbent upon them to shoulder the responsibilities of their masters.' The situation was becoming intolerable, when the American laughingly said: 'Perhaps the young lady has something to say about the matter.' As he spoke he eyed Anna's trim form approvingly, and, by Jove! I felt jealous. 'Arthur sent for me to come up to London, and I came just to see things, and to have a good time. He didn't say anything about getting married,' added Anna. 'What did he say?' asked the Lady Maria, with calmness. 'He said he'd always be a friend to me, and that he'd love me almost to death,' replied Anna. 'The boy is not unlike any other English boy of his class,' declared my Uncle Percival. 'It is hopeful and wholesome in him to develop a fondness for the opposite sex at his age. I was not a saint myself,' he confessed, with a slight cough. 'The Comstocks,' he continued, 'were always a hot-blooded set of men, and terrific wine-drinkers for centuries, but we have been ever careful to marry with females of our own degree.' 'The Shakespeares came from Adam, or whatever other sort of animal was responsible for our being, and so did the brutal and licentious Comstocks,' said the Lady Maria, with flashing eyes, 'and what is most needed in the family is blood that has been toned down by buttermilk and water.' 'Why, Maria—er—my dear girl, I am astonished at such an outburst from you,' quoth my uncle. 'Anna will not have many years to live if she marries Arthur,' continued my aunt, and as she said this she laid her hand affectionately upon Anna's arm. 'Are you willing to marry Arthur, and die while you are still young, Anna?' 'Yes, ma'am,' answered the girl in a low tone. 'Do you not see that Arthur is horribly ugly; that his nose is out of all proportion to the rest of his face; that his chin denotes innate selfishness, and that his one eye is deformed as a result of the unsightly monocle?' asked my aunt, with a bubbling sort of a laugh. 'Arthur is all right,' said Anna. 'I think he is very handsome, and I love him very much, and so does your Ladyship.' 'Now, Arthur, it is up to you,' laughed the banker. 'Marry Anna, and I'll give you a better job, with more pay.'

"I was silent. The girl's words had a strange effect upon me. I looked at my aunt, and observed that her eyes were filled with tears. 'I want to marry Anna,' I finally said. 'I love Anna.' Well, we were married and went to lodgings. My Uncle Percival tied the knot with much reluctance, but he was too much afraid of my aunt's tongue to seriously object. Lady Maria bought and furnished for us a beautiful little house in a most exclusive quarter, and we lived happily for three years, but at that time Anna died, leaving a boy baby three weeks old. I had just then inherited my mother's fortune of forty thousand pounds, and I went the way of all the Comstocks. I was intoxicated with the joy and freedom that forty thousand pounds can give a man. I lived on the Continent, spent some time with King Edward, when he traveled as the Earl of Chester, and spent money like water on actresses, and all that sort of thing. For twenty years I was drunk with the freedom that money gives a dissolute man. I courted the beauties of foreign courts, and of course, I was flattered and fooled accordingly.

"About a year ago, while traveling through India, I received a communication from my lawyers to the effect that I was a bankrupt. I hastened back to London, to find myself indeed a beggar. The Lady Maria met me, with Hugh, my son. I had not seen him since he was eight weeks old. My heart went out to him, he looked so much like his mother, my poor, unselfish Anna. He showed his dislike for me, but what could I expect from the child whom I had abandoned when a tiny infant? Ah! my fellows, a licentious youth brings a sad old age, as the saying is. I began to think how to come in touch with my surroundings, as it were, for the first time in twenty years. I wondered what I should do with myself, with old age creeping on, for, on account of having lived a devil of a life for twenty-two years, I felt prematurely old. 'You have nothing left,' said my aunt to me one day. 'Nothing but a few paltry hundred pounds and my clothing and trinkets,' I replied. 'You will have to roll up your sleeves and go to work at something,' she said. 'Remember, you will have to support yourself for the remainder of your life.' 'How, in the name of God, shall I do it?' I asked. 'I'm sure I cannot tell,' answered she. 'I shall have to take some time to think about it,' I said, whereupon my aunt only laughed.

"A month later she came to me with a letter which she had just received from her old admirer, the American banker, for whom I had worked when a boy. He advised my aunt that he had procured a billet for me at Panama with the Isthmian Canal Commission. 'Where is that?' I asked. 'Somewhere in South America,' she replied. 'How shall I go about getting there?' I queried, with some exasperation. Then who should happen in but my Uncle Percival, whom I had not seen since the day of my marriage. He had, in the meantime, become Lord Bishop of Hounslow, and had become fat and horribly ugly. Nevertheless, I was glad to see him. 'What does this Isthmian Canal Company do over at Panama?' asked my aunt, handing him the letter. 'Why,' replied his Lordship, 'it is an iniquitous company organized by the iniquitous Yankee government to continue to dig that infamous canal, which was commenced by the thieving French, and left unfinished by them.' 'Panama is in South America,' said my aunt. 'Central America,' corrected my uncle. 'What is the object of the canal?' I asked. 'Why,' said my uncle fiercely, 'its object is to permanently hurt the shipping interests of Great Britain. It is the greatest piece of iniquity that the Yankees have ever been guilty of, and no Comstock should lend himself to the work in any capacity.' 'It is Arthur's last chance to earn an honest living,' said the Lady Maria calmly, 'and if it is, as you say, such a piece of iniquity, it may have the effect of holding him, since iniquity is as necessary to a Comstock as is food and drink. You will sail in two days, Arthur,' she said.

"Well, here I am in this beastly Panama, unloved, unhonored, and seedy, endeavoring to exist on the paltry sum of thirty-five pounds a month. The only gratifying recollection of my whole career is the look of understanding and gratitude which I saw in the eyes of the poor dogs, as I labored to rid them of the horrible and tormenting flea for the

paltry pennies of my stingy aunt, the Lady Maria.”

## THE DERELICT.

**I** am quite upset, really I am. This is an iniquitous world—a world of beastly sorrow and sin, by Jove!”

“What is the trouble now, Mr. Comstock?” I asked.

“Why, my dear lady, my dear old friend Beebe is lying dead, and I’m trying to have him buried decently; but really I can’t get a soul interested—the beastly cads. Ah, but it is a long story, my dear lady, and I fear I will bore you. At any rate, if you will listen, I will tell you a part of it. I shall be obliged to speak plainly, and, really, I fear that you will not like to hear of such things.

“Beebe is not, or rather was not, an ordinary person. Poor old Beebe! He was a poet, you know, and all that sort of a thing, and a perfect fiend for sport, poor old chap! He came to the Isthmus in the ‘early days’ to get away from his wife, who, I believe, was a perfect Tartar. She made his life miserable, poor chap, by always enjoining economy upon him, and bothering him about practical things. For a chap of his temperament, she was not the right sort, you know. At first, poor old Beebe had a good billet, and made a great deal of money—fifty pounds a month with lodgings and coals. Fancy! Of course, being what you Americans call ‘a good mixer’ (I used to think that a ‘mixer’ was American for barman), he was very popular, and was apparently doing very nicely, until he met a girl with whom he became enamored, and she, seemingly, took quite a fancy to him. She was a fine musician, and, of her sort, rather pretty.”

“White?”

“Oh, dear, no. She was one of those brown-skinned charmers who make chaps of every clime forget their home ties, their country, and, often as not, their God. Well, as I said, poor old Beebe fell in love with her, and right there began his downfall. The creature ruled him with a rod of iron. He gave her all the money he could get. He actually gave her diamonds, by Jove! and the Lord knows what else. Well, the hussy wasn’t satisfied, but wanted more dinero, et cetera, and poor old Beebe was at his wits’ end. Finally, she had the beastly cheek to threaten to leave him for a bounder of a Frenchman who sold sausages, or something of that sort. The wretched creature! In short, she bluffed the poor chap, for he came to me one day and said that he could not bear the thought of giving her up, and that if she wanted more money he would try to get it for her. I advised him to give her up, but he left me, shaking his head sadly.

“Well, Beebe visited all his friends in town, and ‘touched’ each one for more or less, according to his salary. In this way he realized quite a sum, which he gave to the girl, who immediately turned it over to the beastly sausage chap, and began clamoring for more. Now, poor old Beebe wrote to his friends in the States, and, although he hated to tell a lie (truthful chap, Beebe), he, of course, had to say that he was ill. Well, at any rate, he received quite a goodly sum from home. His wife was good enough to send him twenty pounds. I presume she felt sorry for having been so severe with him in the days that were gone. Now, Beebe took to drinking harder (very fond of B. and S., was Beebe), and the girl left him for the bounder. Also, his friends, at about this time, began to dun him for the money he had borrowed. The poor fellow was simply bothered to death, and drank more and more every day; and finally lost his position. What, ill-luck? The poor chap had at last reached the lowest depths of poverty and degradation, and would probably have died long ago had he not fallen in with another girl. This one was a different sort. Good-hearted, and all that, you know. Not a bit mercenary. She was as faithful as a dog. Went out to work every day, and saw that he wanted for nothing—even to several ‘nips’ each day, without which the poor chap could now hardly live. Beebe didn’t take much interest in life, however. I fancy he was grieving for the hussy, who had made such an ass of him. My word! he used to steal off secretly at night to plead with her.

“Well, he’s dead now, poor fellow, and there are none so poor as to do him reverence; but he was a good sort, a very clever chap, and many the Scotch we’ve had together. But I won’t moralize, my dear lady. He drank more and more. Heaven knows where he got it. I believe there must be some special Providence, whose business it is to see that the thirsty never languish too long. Beebe began to neglect his personal appearance, and, his liver being a little congested, his nose became a bit red. It altered his looks horribly. I felt quite sorry for him. He had been warned often enough by the district physicians (very humane chaps), but poor Beebe took no notice, not caring, I presume. At last he got in the habit of drinking some beastly stuff they sell in the Chino shops. Last night he took an overdose of the poison. He died to-day at 12 o’clock. I have been trying to get him an American flag for a winding sheet. Did I get one? No, indeed, my dear lady. I have asked numbers of his former friends, but not one of them seemed to care. They had no sympathy for him, nor could they condone his mode of life, and its squalid ending. But I am different, you know. I’ve been a devil of a fellow in my time, even though I do come from a long line of clergymen. My word! we Comstocks are the very devils. You see, Beebe’s motto is mine also: ‘As we journey through life, let us live by the way,’ and I may add: ‘Never put up the night’s share for the morning.’ I went to one of poor Beebe’s friends, who just laughed, and said. ‘You’d better put the wench’s petticoat on him for a shroud.’ Another one said he had too much respect for the flag to ‘see that mutt’ wrapped in it. The brutes!

“Would you like to come with me and view the remains? Then we’d better go right along, or those bounders will have buried the poor chap. You will buy him a winding sheet? How good of you! Poor old Beebe would have appreciated that.”

Beebe’s kind-hearted friend led me through many winding streets to a most dismal neighborhood in that region of the city which, until lately, had been known as the underworld; and in a dingy tenement above a Chino shop I was shown the remains of “poor Beebe.” In a cheap, rough coffin, laid upon boards stretched between two barrels, he looked very handsome in his peacefulness. There was no evidence now of his nose ever having been red. The hand of death had eliminated the disfigurement, which his friend had so deplored. He was clothed in a striped shirt, with a collar and red tie. Something white covered the lower part of his body. After a minute I discerned that it was a woman’s voluminous petticoat. “Why! what iniquity is this?” said Mr. Comstock, tugging at the unseemly garment. “Why, Beebe would turn in his grave if he was buried in this! My word! How he would laugh if he were here looking at some one else. Beebe, old boy, you’re in a better world now—a world where you’ll be understood,” he continued, as he divested the silent Beebe of the objectionable covering.

Meantime, several persons came into the room and stood about as though waiting for something to happen. There were several swagger black men in long black coats, carrying tall hats, and some white men rather shabbily dressed, very seedy and with very red noses—derelicts in this black Sargasso Sea. One of the negroes brought a box and asked me to sit down, but the black women looked upon me with evident displeasure, plainly showing that they

regarded me as an intruder, until a boy arrived with the shroud for the dead man. Then they smiled upon me, and set to work to prepare it. Now, a young man, who might have been Irish, came into the room and asked for Comstock. "Here I am," said the Englishman, stepping forward, and bowing courteously. "What do you wish?" " 'Blinky' says he ain't got no American flag, but he sends you this, an' he says that it will be good enough, an' too good for the likes o' him." So saying, he threw down a green bundle into the lap of one of the women. "My word! It's an Irish flag!" exclaimed Comstock, "and Beebe had no use whatever for the Irish. It was his only prejudice. What irony?"

Judging from Beebe's face, there was no doubt but what he had descended from a long line of New England ancestors, all of whom had a fine scorn, doubtless, for everything Irish. The white shroud was now wrapped about "poor Beebe," and then, ye shades of the Pilgrim Fathers! the coffin was draped in the folds of what once had been Erin's glory.

"The harp that once through Tara's halls,  
The soul of music shed,"

quoted Mr. Comstock, as he arranged the folds so that the golden harp would show in bold relief on Beebe's breast. It was the only touch of respectability in Beebe's last earthly trappings; and a drop of Irish stirred somewhere within me and burned hot at the thought that the flag was considered of no better use than to cover the remains of an outcast, who had disgraced his own flag.

A black clergyman now arriving, a hush fell upon the little gathering. The black men tiptoed into positions behind the white mourners, who tried their best to look solemn. The minister ("a blooming Dissenter," whispered Mr. Comstock to me), carrying a prayer-book and a Bible, advanced in a most reverential manner. He opened the Bible and read as follows:

"Malachi, fourth chapter, first verse: 'For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedness, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts; that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.' "

He then repeated the regular burial service. As he raised his eyes from the prayer-book they fell upon a woman who hung over the silent form of Beebe. In her arms she held a pretty, golden-haired child, whose wistful blue eyes looked in wonderment at the motley group about her. "Who is this?" asked the minister, closing the book and pointing to the child. "This is the woman and child," answered Mr. Comstock. "Do you mean his wife?" "Well—so to speak, sah," said the woman between her sobs. The minister sighed, and continued with calmness: "I knew that this man had died from drink, but I did not know that he had left this curse behind him. All you white men and black women mark well what I am about to say." The white men looked uneasily at each other. The black ones retreated to the background, while the women stared at the speaker with mouths wide open. "Do you know," said he "that the crime which this man has committed cries to God for vengeance? Look at that beautiful, golden-haired, blue-eyed child, who is fated to be an outcast on the face of the earth. Think of what her future must be, with the Caucasian in her veins running riot with the African! Oh, you white men and black women who abide together in sin, and bring these innocent ones into the world—the curse of God is upon you."

Some of the white men turned pale at this, and several of the women sank upon their knees and cried aloud for mercy. It appeared that "poor Beebe" was not the only one who was married, "so to speak."

"Let us pray," said the minister. The men fell upon their knees and echoed the words which fell from the lips of God's anointed. While they were praying, the black woman cried aloud, and I noticed with some horror that her tears fell upon the golden head of the child. "May God have mercy upon your soul," said the minister, as the last of "poor Beebe" was borne from the room. He appeared to be true to his calling and to feel with intensity the enormity of that crime which, if not checked, will eventually result in a widespread corruption of both races. I came away. The last I saw of it was Mr. Comstock trudging behind the hearse, which was now bearing "poor Beebe" to an unnamed pauper's grave marked only by a number.

\* \* \*

Not long ago, during a conversation with Beebe's faithful friend, he confided in me that the clergyman's religious sincerity had not only caused him to alter his own mode of life, but had changed his ethical view of Beebe's conduct to his wife and friends and to his unfortunate child.

## THE BOUNDER.



HAT abominable bounders there are, to be sure! And what shocking conditions must exist to produce them and to tolerate them. Really, I am amazed at times, to think that I, a scion of the house of Comstock (the Surrey Comstocks, my dear lady), should know so many of the blighters. As you know, my ancestors were great churchmen, and, although we Comstocks of the present generation are perfect devils, especially my Uncle Percival, there are times when a little voice within me speaks up rudely, and I am carried back in fancy to the long-regretted days of my innocent youth in dear, charming old Chickingham. My word! Fancy the Bishop of Hounslow seeing his own nephew in the company of such cads. You cannot imagine how dreadfully difficult it is for a chap to keep in the straight and narrow path of rectitude; even if he is a bounder he will find it difficult to resist some of the temptations.

"Every day of my life I am brought into contact with chaps who are always lamenting their pasts, and making excuses for their present way of living, but have fallen too low to ever return to the old life, and will, I have no doubt, come to an end like poor old Beebe's. Some of these chaps are a good sort; others are quite likely to be bounders.

"I have just heard something quite distressing. You have heard of Skilford, no doubt? No? How remarkable! I fancied everybody knew him. At all events, he is a countryman of yours—a Yankee chap. He came from Georgia, I believe. Well, the poor fellow is in quod at New Orleans, all on account of being a bit too good-hearted. Like the rest of us, he was a bit wild while here on the Isthmus, and was a great favorite with his boss, who was a married man; also, a great bounder, sly as a red Indian, and horribly unprincipled. But, just wait until I have finished, and you will fairly gasp for breath.

"This other Johnnie—the married one—it seems, was liv—er, er—excuse me, my dear lady; it's terribly embarrassing—in fact, he had a sort of semi-detached alliance with a young female from Martinique, an Afro-Franco, as it were. By Jove! What a bally combination! The young Afro-Franco, however, was not at all bad-looking, and, as only natural in those times, (the alliance was formed in the early days,) she was much 'sought after,' as they say in the provincial journals when describing the marriage of the village belle to the leading grocer's son. The chaps, you see, were lonely in those days, and were not to be blamed so much, you know, for having fancies they would never dream of at home. Really, now, I must confess, I almost succumbed to her charms myself. Fancy! I, grandson of the Dean of Oldtop, Shropshire."

"You are moralizing again, Mr. Comstock."

"Upon my word, so I am, my dear lady. A thousand pardons. We Comstocks are all great moralizers. Well, then, as the Afro-Franco would say, 'revenous le mouton.' She preferred the beastly married cad to whom I have already alluded. The blooming ass fancied he had made a conquest, and flaunted her in our eyes. Spent more money than he could really afford, to buy finery for her. Things went on so for quite a time, until he wearied of her, and, as his holiday was about due, he resolved to go home, when, bless your eyes, the blooming Bacchante coolly announced to him that he would take a vacation over her dead body. Now, the bounder was in a quandary—fairly stumped. He really needed a vacation, and wished to take it to prevent his wife, a very estimable woman, from communicating with Culebra, which he fancied she might do, which would be the means of his losing his job. He had a very good job. Fear of exposure quite upset him, and what do you think the bounder did? The little brute! He actually came to me, Algernon Comstock, of Comstock Lodge, Surrey. 'Algy,' said he (the infamous vagabond), 'how would you like to earn five hundred dollars gold?' 'I should like it very much,' I replied, quite innocently. 'Come with me,' said he. I followed the blighter, and what do you think? He took me to the lodgings he had provided for the Afro-Franco, and very hospitably set out some excellent cognac (the Comstocks are all great chaps for the B. and S.), and after we had some little conversation the scoundrel had the effrontery to suggest to me, in an insinuating way, that I make myself agreeable to the hussy—he, in the meantime, to absent himself, to return at an opportune moment, create a scene, and then, having 'something on her,' as it were, he expected to screw up courage enough to drive the baggage from him. He was most assuredly afraid of her, and knew that, lacking friendly moral support, he could never have it out with her in any way satisfactory to himself. What a serpent! I was struck quite dumb—speechless with indignation, and for reply I gave the bounder a blow that sent him sprawling. Then, with a heavy heart—the affair had given me quite a turn—I went to my quarters and sat down to think. I marveled at myself for having sunk so low. Fancy me being asked to take part in such an iniquitous scheme!

"Well, I fully expected to lose my berth over the affair, as the cad was supposed to have considerable influence. In the event of my dismissal I would have nothing but my personal effects, as I had lived up to every penny paid for my services. However, don't be alarmed, my dear lady; I was not fired for that. Some other time I'll tell you how I happened to be 'let out.' Just now I was in one of my periodically penitent moods, and resolved, on the spot, after earnestly praying, to lead a better life, a life more worthy of a Comstock. I did, upon my word! I reasoned that I must have appeared low in the eyes of the bounder, else he would not have asked me to help him trick such a creature. As I thought thus, my dear lady, the old Comstock blood fairly boiled in every blooming vein in my body. Really, I wished to die."

"But who is Mr. Skilford, Mr. Comstock, and what has he to do with the case? And who is this old bounder—the married one?" I asked.

"Wait, I am coming to that presently," replied Mr. Comstock, as he lighted his pipe, which went out a great many times when he grew excited. "Skilford is a good chap—nothing but a boy, extremely good-natured, honest, and all that—well liked, you know—but utterly without that fine discrimination which should always prevent a Comstock from doing anything off-color. He worked under the other one. The bounder was an elderly cad, a noisy brute when in his cups, which was very often, I can assure you. Very common sort. Loves to sit in a tap-room, pounding the table, telling every one who will listen what a clever chap he is—Poor old Beebe knew him well. I remember one night we were carousing at the 'Oriole,' Beebe and I at one table and the bounder with his audience at another nearby. He was a bit squiffy, as usual, and seemed in rare form. Beebe was quite vexed at the brute, and what do you suppose he did? Blessed, if he didn't call for pad and pencil and scratch off some doggerel which, I fancy, pretty well describes the bounder. Poor Beebe was clever at that sort of thing. The first verse went something like this:



“ ‘At every midnight session,  
Or surreptitious spree,  
Wherever Gringoes gather  
For discussion loud and free;  
Where eloquence is measured  
By capacity for sound—  
A raucous voice insistent,  
Is heard for blocks around.’

“Then, old Beebe had a lot more verses describing the bounder’s antics. Really, I’m getting very forgetful. It’s the beastly climate, I fancy; but one other verse went on thus:

“ ‘Then he fiercely pounds the table  
And glares around the room,  
In his eye a waiting challenge,  
Which none there dare presume  
To accept, for they are thirsty—  
These gents are always dry.  
To neglect the fellow’s ego,  
Might cut off their supply.’

“I cannot remember any more, but some day I will let you have a copy of the thing.

“Well, at any rate, my beating the brute did not deter him from making the same proposition to others, as is well known, but all refused, until he approached young Skilford. He fell. Not for the money. Oh, dear no! He’s too decent a sort for that. As you may have already surmised, Skilford was a rather weak, complacent sort of a chap; and then, perhaps, the bounder, being his boss, influenced him in a way. At any rate, Charley agreed to his proposal, and the scene was set as before, with a new villain in place of your humble servant. This time, however, everything came off as prearranged. Charley went through his part beautifully. You see, he didn’t have to act very hard; in fact, the situation quite pleased the silly fellow, and he played up to the bounder’s leads marvelously. The bounder, being pretty well primed up when he burst upon the scene, did not have to strain for effect, either. As to the Afro-Franco, she, strangely enough, did not seem a bit upset. My word, what a farce! The bounder got shut of her and departed on his holiday with a light heart, unmolested, save for a few patois curses, which he didn’t understand, and poor Skilford, victim of his own good nature, stayed on to carry out in earnest the part he had essayed to act for a few minutes only, in order to oblige his boss.

“The bounder never returned. His wife saw to that, I fancy. Charley seemed quite infatuated with the little brown parley-vousz, and she thought a great deal more of him than she had of the bounder. My word! She used to swear ferociously that she would cut his heart out if he ever tried to leave her. What a savage! But it’s laughable, too, if it were not so sad. Mind you, all of this time Charley was engaged to a fine young woman in the States. Before long, the infatuation wearing off, and wishing to leave the Isthmus for good, anyway, he began to cast about for ways and means (like the bounder) of getting away alive. He was mindful of the hussy’s threats, and dared take no chances. However, with the connivance of friends, he was enabled (as he fancied) to make his plans for departure without the hussy’s knowledge. When everything was ready, transportation procured, etc., and she all the while happily unconscious (as he fancied), he told her he was being sent down the line for a few days to do a little job. She said nothing, and Charley started off, as usual, in his working clothes. He took no luggage, of course. The poor chap sacrificed everything—everything but his Canal medal, which she allowed him to carry attached to his dollar watch.

“I went to Colon to see him off, and we had a few nips on board in the smoking-room. I breathed a great sigh of relief as the ship pulled out from the wharf, and on Charley’s face was a most beatific expression. The old chap waved his hand to me, when—oh, horrors! What did I see? The girl. I grew sick at heart as I beheld her. She laid one of her hands upon Charley’s shoulder. I saw him turn quietly, and then they passed out of sight. It made me quite ill. As it now appears, she had ‘beaten Charley to it,’ as it were, and had booked a passage for herself to New Orleans. Poor Charley, to avoid a scene, had quieted her, by the Lord knows what promises. At any rate, they say that there was no disturbance on the trip up. The denouement came when the ship berthed at New Orleans. There, waiting to welcome him home, were his parents and the young lady to whom I alluded. Imagine the poor chap’s position. Well, to make a long story short, while Charley was being fondly welcomed by his intended, the brown girl rushed into the midst of the little group, flourishing a revolver and screaming at the top of her voice that she was Charley’s wife. Charley grabbed her, they say, to wrest away the revolver. During the scuffle the gun went off, and the creature was shot through the lungs. Poor Charley’s locked up, temporarily, of course; the Afro-Franco’s in the hospital, going to recover, I believe. And the poor young lady. Ah, my dear lady, it is indeed shocking. I wonder how many poor young ladies there are at home? Iniquitous!

“Well, good-day. I must really go and have a B. and S.”

# HIGGINS' LADY.

## (PART I.)



MIND the day," said the story-teller, "when Higgins blew into Havana. We was workin' in the corral then, an' the troops was nearly all mustered out, an', say, there was as fine a bunch of guys there as you'd find in a day's walk. But, anyhow, Higgins was not of their class, we could all see that; and, say, his name wasn't Higgins any more than mine is Daniel Webster.

"He was as good-lookin' young chap as ever lived, and, say, couldn't he sing, and play, and act, and recite pieces of poetry to beat the band! Well, sir, he went to board with a young, so to speak, married couple, an' that was the end of his peace of mind. The woman was a darn fool and the man was a darn brute. He was a French Haitian, and she was the daughter of a Cuban woman, who was then married to an American man. Well, the husband used to get drunk and beat her up, to beat sense into her head, but it didn't do much good. All she cared about was clothes and flattery.

"Several of the fellers kind a took a shine to her, but she always tricked 'em in some way; if she didn't get money out of 'em she'd frame up some story about 'em to her man, and he'd come around with a shotgun and 'ud scare the wits out of 'em. So, after a while, they let the baggage alone. Young Higgins, however, kep' her at arms' length, but he used to take her part whenever she was bein' badly used by the man she was livin' with. Well, once Higgins rolled up his sleeves and gave the brute a beating such as he never got before. His face looked like a jellyfish when Higgins got through with him. We all stood around in a ring and watched to see fair play. The bully was big enough to eat Higgins, but he sure got the worst of it. When 'twas all over he was removed to the hospital, and the woman's father came forward and told Higgins that the man was goin' back to Hayti and never intended to live with his daughter again; that she would have to go on the town, etc. Well, anyway, it fell upon Higgins to take care of her, and he did it like a man. But there was no love business. Higgins signed an agreement that he would take care of the woman until such time as she would get a man who would marry her, because she wasn't really married to the Haitian, anyway.

"Soon after this Higgins left Havana and came here to the Isthmus. He sent her a check every month, and she lived with her mother and father, and was respectable; but I'm doggoned if she didn't come to the Isthmus last week, and she's now living in Panama, while Higgins is gone to the other end of the line to live. She's a fine lookin' woman, but she ain't got a grain of sense, and she's stuck on herself, an' I come around to ye fellers to see if ye couldn't do somethin' to get her took off of Higgins' hands."

"I know Higgins, an', with his fine notions of right and wrong, he'd never stand for any scheme against a woman," said one of the listeners. "Why, Higgins wouldn't let us fellers talk about a woman. When we'd start to talk, he'd start to play the fiddle, an' then, of course, we'd shut up."

"But why not get a line on her and send some soft guy around who'll fall for her, an' that'll let Higgins out?" asked the story-teller. "And, if she don't fall, why, there would be no harm done."

"Two sleuths were sent out to sound Higgins and two were sent out to get a line on the lady, and, after a week, the four made a report as follows: Higgins is morose and peevish; refused to talk of the lady. Lady is a good-looker, but is lonesome and needs a home. Never sees Higgins, and says that if it was not for him she'd still be in with her husband."

"Well, doggone her!" exclaimed Higgins' friends in chorus.

"I'll tell ye, boys," said one of the oldest men present. "I know a man that'll take her for better or worse on sight if she's a good-looker, and I'll bring him around in a few minutes, and we'll get to talkin' her up to him—kind of advertisin' her."

"The friends, very much interested, agreed, and the man departed in search of Bill Wiley, for that was the name of the unsuspecting man who was so soon to be made a victim on the altar of the Higgins. Bill Wiley's sentiments were well known to the men in that bachelor house. If he had a weakness in the world it was for ladies that were, from his stand-point, good-lookers, large, florid, beefy, ladies that showed their keep. Bill made two hundred and twenty-five dollars a month, and was lonesome for a mate and a home. He was not handsome nor elegant, but he had a taking way with him, a bank account of ten thousand dollars and a house and twenty acres of land in Florida. A note was made of this for the lady's benefit, and when Bill came to the house that night, being led there by John Hogan, each man made a mental note that Higgins would be soon a free man.

"'What do you think of the Goethal's gateway?' asked John Hogan, as he handed Bill a cigar.

"'It's a good idea.'

"'The finest lookin' woman that ever came to the Isthmus,' floated to Bill's ears, 'an', as for style, she beats any one you ever saw.'

"'I guess I'll go over there an' hear about that girl the fellers are talkin' about,' said Bill. 'Who is she?'

"'She's a widow lady that lives in Panama an' complains of being lonely.'

"'Poor thing,' said Bill, 'I know what that means. I'm lonely myself most of the time.'

"'She's a fine woman,' said John Hogan, in a musing tone. 'I wish to gawd she'd care for me. She's pink an' white, with black hair and black eyes, and is nice and plump.'

"'Maybe she'd care for you,' said Bill.

"'Not likely; she said she wouldn't marry the best man that ever lived unless she loved him, and even then he'd have to have ten thousand dollars.'

"'You might give a fellow an introduction to her,' said Bill Wiley at the mention of this sum, which he possessed."

# HIGGINS' LADY.

## (PART II.)



WHEN Bill Wiley again presented himself before his friends he was very much changed as to personal appearance. His face was clean and smooth, his hair carefully brushed, he wore a shining pair of shoes and a new white duck suit.

"You'll make a hit," said John Hogan, looking him over critically.

"If she's as good looking as you say she is, I'll marry her right away, if she'll have me," said Bill, with a faraway look in his eyes.

"She'll have you," said several men in chorus.

"Well, I think we'd better be goin'," said Bill. "I'd like to get the meeting over."

One of the sleuths was detailed to conduct Bill to the house of the fair lady, and there was much speculation as to whether the lady would take to Bill, or whether Bill would take to the lady. About midnight the sleuth and Bill returned. They were both overjoyed at the reception which they received from Higgins' lady.

"She certainly is a sweet lady," said Bill, with fervor, "so round and plump and rosy. It must be an awful thing for a man to have to die and leave a woman as sweet as that alone in the world."

The listeners coughed in a meaning way, but said nothing.

"Well, I guess I'll be goin'. I sure do thank ye for puttin' me next to the lady."

"Don't mention it," said John Hogan. "We feel sorry for people that are lonely. I know. I meself believe that every one should have a mate in this world. I want some one to love me, meself, but I haven't ten thousand dollars, like you, Bill."

"Well, I guess I'll be goin' home to go to bed," said Bill. "I'll take a little run over to-morrow night, and I'll have to get some rest to-night. Good-night, boys."

"Good-night, Bill," said the boys in chorus.

Bill ran down the steps, whistling, and until his footsteps died away in the distance no one spoke. Finally the sleuth said:

"Poor Bill; the poor devil."

"He fell," said the story-teller.

"Fell worse than Adam did," answered the sleuth. "I first got her ear and told her about Bill's job, and the ten thousand dollars, an', say, you'd ought to see the way she fawned upon him. Bill swallowed it all, and gave away that he was stuck on her, the blamed fool. Say, a man is a funny animal. He can be as sensible as the colonel himself in everything; as hard as nails when dealin' with men, but be as mushy as a tallow candle with some darned woman that ain't got more character than a mosquito. That woman'll have Bill inside of a month, an' when she bleeds him good an' proper she'll light out with some other guy that she'll love, an' leave poor Bill in the lurch."

"Now, boys," said the story-teller, "I want to give ye a tip. Ye all know Higgins' fine, high feelings about honor, an' if he hears that Bill Wiley is goin' around to see his lady he'll come to Bill an' tell him the truth about her, an' it'll be all off. Bill ain't goin' to marry a woman that lived with a man that she wasn't married to. I know Bill."

"Yes, you know Bill, but you don't know human nature," said John Hogan. "If Higgins goes to Bill an' tells him about that woman's past, Bill'll think that Higgins wants the woman himself, an' it'll make him, more keen to marry her. He knows that he isn't a circumstance to Higgins on looks, an' he knows that Higgins is a real lady's man; so, anyway, you take it, poor Bill is doomed."

Bill was doomed. In less than a week he had showered presents of silk garments, necklaces, diamond rings, bracelets and other articles of adornment to the value of a thousand dollars upon Higgins' lady. He refurnished her rooms in fine style and gave her five hundred dollars for pocket money. It was at this juncture that Higgins called upon Bill Wiley and asked him all about it.

"I love the lady; I adore her," said Bill, in ecstasy.

It was then that Higgins told him of the woman's past. They sat together on the veranda of the bachelor house, while John Hogan, the sleuths, the story-teller and some other bachelors sat huddled together awaiting the outcome. All believed that Bill would give the woman up, except John Hogan. He knew men, and, as he predicted, Higgins' revelation made Bill more determined than ever to become attached to the lady by the bonds of holy wedlock. So, when the boys heard Bill say to Higgins, "Man, you're only sore," they coughed in unison.

"It's none of your business. You're a liar. You're jealous," etc.

"Poor Higgins is gettin' it in the neck," said the story-teller, "and it serves him darn well right."

"Yes, here are us fellers, trying to get her took off his hands, an', because of his fine notion of honor, he can't keep his mouth shut. 'Tis goin' to hurry things up, an' in a week the lady will be tied up to Bill. Bill'll be as happy as a big sunflower, an' we'll have young Higgins back with his fiddle and banjo to make things a bit lively for us."

# HIGGINS' LADY.

## (PART III.)

**A**BOUT a week after Higgins had had his heart-to-heart talk with Bill Wiley a wedding took place, which was attended by the story-teller, the sleuths, young Higgins and John Hogan. It was he who gave the bride away. When the final words were spoken which made Anita Calafain Mrs. William Wiley a sigh of relief went up from the assembled witnesses. Higgins' face was alight with joy as he handed the bride into a carriage. Bill Wiley was a benedict. The bride wore a white satin gown, trimmed with Italian lace, and a very beautiful white hat that had been imported at much cost for the occasion of the wedding. They were whirled away to the strains of a full string band, and then Higgins said something that was strange for him to say. "Boys," said he, "there is a God, after all, and he has heard my prayers. I have paid dearly for one hour's frolic in my life, but I am glad to-night that I have done the right thing, according to my code, for that vain, miserable, wretched woman. I tried to save Bill, but he wouldn't listen, so I have done everything according to the dictates of my conscience."

"Bill is the happiest man alive, so what matter what will turn up later?" said John Hogan.

"Something will surely turn up," said Higgins, "for that woman was born to torment her fellow-beings."

"She'll lead Bill around by the nose, poor devil, and he won't know a thing about what will be going on when his back is turned," said one of the sleuths.

"What the eyes can't see, the heart can't feel," said the story-teller.

"Come, boys," said Higgins, with sudden hilarity, "let us get drunk. I have never been drunk in my life, so I want to feel what the sensation is like."

So young Higgins got drunk for the first time in his life, and Bill Wiley, on wings of love, went on his honeymoon. Six weeks later the big bachelor house was in a blaze of light. Every one was happy. It was Saturday night, and pay-night. The village ladies and their husbands wandered through the quiet streets, especially near to the house where the bachelors dwelt, for Higgins was playing the violin, and that meant something to that village.

"My! What a change there has been in the lad since that baggage got married," whispered the story-teller to one of the sleuths.

"Looks like a different man," put in John Hogan.

"I wonder how poor Bill is making out with her?" asked the story-teller.

"Gawd to tell," said the sleuth.

"I bet she's leadin' him a devil of a race," said the other sleuth.

"They ought to be here now. They went away six weeks ago to-day," said John Hogan.

Just now Bill Wiley entered that bachelor quarter and walked slowly and painfully toward the group of men that were talking about him.

"Speak of the devil, and he'll appear," said John Hogan.

"Why, you're looking all in, Bill," said the story-teller.

"All in?" echoed Bill. "I'm worse than that, boys."

"How is the lady?" asked one of the sleuths.

"I don't know how she is now, and I don't care."

"You don't care? You don't?" said the group, in chorus.

"Why, Bill, what's happened?"

"Why, that lady is a she-devil. She and her brother fleeced me of five thousand dollars. I ain't had a night's rest since I left the Isthmus with her. She never give me a lovin' word nor a lovin' look, nor a minute's peace of mind."

"And where is she now, Bill?" asked John Hogan.

"Gawd knows. I lit out and left her with the man that she said was her brother in Havana."

"What sort of a looking man was he?" asked Higgins, becoming interested.

"He was the goldurndest lookin-pirate that I ever seen in all my life," answered Bill, becoming very red in the face.

"Tell us all about it, Bill," said Higgins, drawing his chair very near, and speaking in a kindly tone.

"Well, the night we left ye fellers and went to Colon, the pirate showed up for the first time, an' he come with us to the hotel; so the lady said that she wanted a room all to herself, an' I took a room for myself. In the morning I went and paid the bills, but I didn't pay his, and he pulled a gun on me; he carried four all ready for use. Then I went an' bought our ticket an' she said she wouldn't go unless I took her dear brother; so, for peace sake, I bought a ticket for him. Then she said she wanted her dear brother to have a stateroom next ours, an' for peace sake I had to let him have it. Well, sir, they treated me like a nigger waiter during the trip, an', for peace sake, I couldn't say nothin'. All the men on the ship was in love with her, but they said that the pirate wan't her brother at all; that he was a guy that she was in love with, an' I had to stand for it. They said I was a fool for puttin' up with things the way I did, an', say, I sure was; but what could I do, when that guy had a gun in every pocket an' didn't think it was any more harm to use one on me than if I was a rat? Well, to make a long story short, they got me in a room in the hotel in Havana the night before I left, an' they cleaned me out of every cent I had, then he pointed a gun at me an' told me to leave the hotel without sayin' anythin', or he'd riddle me with bullets. I pretended to swallow the diamond ring, an' they fell for that bluff, so I pawned it the next day to pay my passage down here; an' here I am. Five thousand of me money is gone, an' all me clothes, me gold watch and chain, an' I'm feelin' like a damn fool. My stomach ain't workin' any more, an' the first thing I'll have to do will be to see Dr. Deeks, for I'm feelin' bum."

During this narration the group exchanged meaning glances. Higgins looked like a man dazed, and beads of perspiration fell from his forehead. For five minutes there was silence, and then the story-teller said, with calmness: "No good ever yet come out of a man bein' as honorable as Higgins. It ain't right. If he hadn't been so darned honorable about that lady he'd a sent her about her business, an' poor Bill wouldn't be in this mess."

"My life is spoiled," said Bill, with a sob. "I never could trust another lady in this world, an' besides, I'm married to her now, anyway. Here's the situation: I'm a ruined an' broken man, an' it's all on account of Higgins."

"Yes, you're right, Bill," said Higgins. "I'm the cause of all your troubles. The lady put it all over us for fair. She got about three thousand dollars out of me, and her bluff prevented me from marrying the best little girl in the U. S. A."

" 'Tis no use talkin', a woman can make a monkey of a man," said John Hogan.

"But life is no good without 'em," said the story-teller.

"I don't see how I'm goin' to live without her," said Bill. "I can't forget her."

"You will have to, I'm afraid," said Higgins, "for that man whom she called her brother was the fellow she used to call husband in the old war days."

Some months later Bill Wiley was called to the great tribunal at Culebra. When he arrived there he was requested to support his wife, whom he had wilfully abandoned in Havana. Complaint had been made by the American Consul that the wife of Bill Wiley, of the Canal Zone, was suffering for the necessities of life.

"Well, here's where I'll take a hand," said Higgins. "Gawd bless you," said Bill Wiley, "for I sure am in bad."

So Higgins took passage for Havana, and, some few days after, Bill Wiley received the following cablegram:

"Our lady and the pirate are in the penitentiary.

"HIGGINS."

## THE GANG IN NUMBER 10.



THE highbrows of Number 10 were having an argument as they sat in the dim light of the veranda of the big bachelor house.

It was Saturday night, and the less intellectual inmates were in the city seeing the sights.

"I guess I'll play a tune," said Higgins, who was one of the group.

That was just what had happened every Saturday night since fate had brought the men together.

Iky Gillstein, who had formerly been a Jew, but who now read Schopenhauer and quoted him on every occasion, and John Hogan, who read such books as A. Kempis' "Life of Christ," and who quoted him whenever Iky quoted his favorite philosopher, had the argument, as was their custom, and when Higgins found that it had gone far enough he played his violin until the Celtic and Semetic tempers had cooled down to normal.

In the gang were Bill Wiley, who had been disappointed in love, and, later, in marriage, and had taken to reading deep books as an antidote for the poison of love, and George Toby, who read the books that John Hogan read, in order to criticize and argue about them; then there was Fuller, who stepped in with a final word that always put an end to the argument.

Fuller was, according to John Hogan, the "most knowledgable" man on the Isthmus of Panama, except, of course, the Colonel himself.

The men of Number 10 were nicknamed "The Highbrows" because of their studious habits and intellectual conversation. Higgins had reorganized that bachelor house and brought peace and harmony out of chaos. The clerks, or penpushers, he had segregated to one end of the building, and the men who were engaged in work of a more strenuous nature he placed farthest from the dude clerks, and because of this there was less ill-feeling than in most other habitations of the kind on the Isthmus.

As I said before, the highbrows were smoking on the dimly lit veranda, and Higgins had just started to play the violin.

"I'm glad to see you all, boys," said a voice from somewhere outside. "Who's that?" asked John Hogan, peering through the wire netting.

" 'Tis only me, boys," answered the voice.

"It's that damm fool Percy again," said Iky, under his breath.

"Come in, Percy," said Higgins, in a cordial tone.

"Well, she's gone for good this time, boys, and I'm all in." The listeners groaned.

"Have you tried to get her back?" asked Higgins.

"I've tried in every way, but she hides from me, and says she hates me. Oh, God! What shall I do? I can't get along without my queen. I love her, boys. I love her more than my soul, and God knows I treated her well," said Percy, dropping into a chair and mopping his brow; "but I won't live long, boys. I feel the last string of my heart giving way. I'm a goner. I don't want to live. I have a little bottle of poison in my pocket right now, and if my heart don't break soon, I'll take it and shuffle off."

"How long have you been married to the lady?" asked John Hogan.

"Three years," said Percy, with a long-drawn sigh.

"You ought to be pretty tired of her by this time," said Iky Gillstein. "If I had a woman around the house with me for three years I'd be darned glad to get rid of her."

"You're a brute, Iky," said Bill Wiley, "and you ain't got no more heart than a woman. I kin put myself in your place, Percy; I've been through it, boy. Why, when that lady that I married throwed me down, two years ago, I couldn't eat, sleep, nor think. If it hadn't been for Higgins an' Hogan, I'd 'a' gone mad, an' took poison, an' God knows I had poison enough in my system. What's love but poison?"

"Love is a loco germ, Bill," said Percy dramatically, "an' when it enters a fellow's system it ain't any use squirmin'. He might as well take his medicine."

"Love left many a man in a darned bad stew," said John Hogan, "an' a guy that 'ud fall in love twice ought to be put in the bughouse."

"I've been there many a time," said Percy. "That time I was in the Jameson raid in South Africa. I wouldn't have been in it if I hadn't been bad stuck on a girl that threw me down." The listeners coughed and exchanged glances. They had heard many times of the Jameson raiders from Percy, and they had even seen the marks on his feet where he had been tied up by his heels.

"Schopenhauer says that women are—" "Shut up about that old Dutch heathen, for God's sake," said John Hogan, testily.

"There is a good deal of truth in what he says about women," put in Toby.

"How in God's name could a heathen tell the truth?" asked Hogan, as he refilled his pipe.

"Do you know," said Fuller, "that I've been reading A. Kempis' 'Life of Christ,' and it is the best life of Him that I ever read. He was a humorist, wasn't He?"

"He was that, as well as every other thing," said John Hogan, approvingly.

"I have never heard Him spoken of as a humorist before," put in Higgins. Iky Gillstein grunted.

"Wasn't it humorous of Him that time the Sheenies were going to stone that Merry Widow to death, when He said, 'Prepare,' and they all got ready with their little pile of rocks, and they stood scratching their heads, waiting for Christ to speak, and when He spoke He said, as the Merry Widow knelt at His feet, 'Let ye that are without fault throw the first stone,' and the devil a rock they threw, and the Merry Widow went her way in peace and behaved herself ever after?"

"The Merry Widow gave the gang the wink," said Iky, cynically.

"That's like something the Colonel would do," said Percy. "In fact, he done something slick like that to me once. It was when I was living at Empire with my first wife, before she got the divorce and I married my darling that has just left me."

"I was an inspector then, and my job was to look after women that were supposed to be a little bit shady. My wife was jealous of me, and I had to pretend that I didn't like the work.

"Well, anyway, there was one particular woman who was a little beauty, and I got kind of stuck on her, but there was nothing doing with me. She loved the guy that her husband was suspicious of, but she gave me an introduction to a woman who was almost as good-looking, but who didn't have her charms.

"About this time her husband went on night duty, and he sent in to Culebra to have his wife watched, so I was sent out to do the watching. I prolonged the case all I could, and reported that I couldn't find any clew, while all the time I was havin' a howling time at her house nights. She used to have stuff to drink, and she and the guy I was supposed to shadow and the woman that she introduced me to would eat and drink, play cards and love.

"Finally the neighbors began to catch on, and I was afraid that they might come around with some other gumshoe man who'd report, and then the jig would be up, so I sent in a report that there was nothing wrong in the conduct of the woman.

"A copy of this letter was sent to her husband, and he was so tickled and so sorry that he had suspected her that he told her that she might have a vacation for three months, and he gave her five hundred dollars, and she went away to her home in the South; and the petted gink who didn't have a cent to his name went on the next boat, met her in Kansas City, and they went to Quebec and stayed there till the five hundred was used up. Then she wrote to her husband that she couldn't live any longer away from him, so he sent her a couple of hundred more to bring her back to the Isthmus.

"Meantime my affair was hot stuff with the other one, and I used to meet her in town three times a week. I was kept pretty busy, because the women were cutting up scandalously all along the line, and we deported a lot of them.

"To make a long story shorter, I had made a date to meet my loving kid in town one Saturday, but my wife said that she wanted to come in with me. I telephoned a guy who knew everything about me, a friend he was, and he sent me a telegram and signed it with the name of the Captain of Police. When my wife saw that she said she'd wait and go some other day, because she didn't want to interfere with my duty.

"Right then a message came from the Colonel stating that he wanted to see me. I suspected that it was another case for me to go out on, so I hurried down to the station, jumped on to a hand-car and got to Culebra in time to have the interview over and catch the 1 p. m. train for Panama.

"I'll never forget the look in the Colonel's eyes when I went in and stood before him.

" 'What cases have you on hand now?' says he, looking me over, from the crown of my head to the tops of my shoes.

" 'Women cases, Colonel,' says I.

" 'That's well,' says he, kind of mild, and he gave me that funny look again. 'You like to hunt them down?'

"I didn't like his voice, but he turned away and began to sign some papers. He had said it, however, in that calm, even tone of his, and I thought he meant it, so I said, 'I try to do my duty, Colonel.'

"Then he gave me a very funny look, and, says he, with awful calmness, as he picked up a big, fat envelope from the desk, 'Take this and report to me Monday afternoon.'

"He turned again to his papers, and I tiptoed out. There was something strange about the atmosphere of that office that affected me, but I put the envelope in my inside pocket, and as I had to run like mad to catch the train, I forgot all about it.

"It wouldn't be fair to the woman to tell about the good time I had in town that afternoon, and I didn't get back home that night till the last train. The wife was waiting up for me, and she had some good grub ready for me to eat, a club sandwich, some salad and a bottle of cold beer. She chatted and laughed and said she was getting a new dress made and she wanted a couple of dollars to buy some lace for the sleeves and neck, but I told her I couldn't give her any more money until after next pay day. When I told her that she gave me a funny look that made me feel like I felt when the Colonel looked at me in such a queer way that forenoon. She didn't say another word, but went off to bed, and I took the envelope from my pocket and tore it open. I was going to read what was inside that night, but the lights went out and didn't come on again, so I laid it on the sideboard in the dining-room, and turned in myself.

"In the morning I got up to eat my breakfast, but there was no breakfast ready, no wife in sight, and no fire. Thinks I, I'll go to the mess hall an' get my breakfast, so I went to put on my coat, and I found the big envelope pinned to the sleeve. When I opened it my wife's wedding ring fell out. Tied to this was a bit of paper, and on this was written, in my wife's handwriting, 'If you had been honorable about the secrets of others, your own secrets would not have been betrayed to me.'

"I sat down then and read the papers. Everything that I had ever done on the Isthmus since I came was known to the Colonel.

" 'My God!' says I to myself, 'what am I going to do? There's going to be about ten husbands around with shotguns, so I'd better get away.'

"I went to Culebra on Monday, though I hated to do it. I saw it was all over with me, so I put on a bold front when I went into the Colonel's office. 'Well,' I says, when I was inside the door, 'I guess I'm through.'

" 'Yes,' says the Colonel calmly, 'your wife will go to-morrow afternoon. Better prepare to follow her soon.'

"Well the wife went, and I have not seen her since. She got a divorce from me, and then I married my queen, who is gone astray now."

The listeners coughed, and Gillstein, who had listened attentively during the whole of the recital, said: "But you didn't tell us how you got back here."

"I never went away," said Percy. "I resigned from the Commission, but after a time I went to the Colonel again and told him I was hard up and my wife was sick in the States, and he gave me, for her sake, the dump foreman's job. It was after that that I married again."

"Where did you meet your second wife?" asked John Hogan.

"Suppose we change the subject," said Higgins quickly.

Gillstein winked at Hogan, and there was a pause, which was finally broken by Percy, who said calmly: "I met her in a resort on Cash Street, Colon, and I'm afraid she'll go back there now, and that's what's eatin' my heart

out.... Well, I must go out to Panama now. It's nearly ten o'clock. I spend my nights watching her. Good night, fellows. Thanks for talking to me and trying to cheer me up."

"Good night," said the Highbrows in chorus.

Percy tiptoed out softly, and his stealthy footsteps had died away in the distance before the silence was broken, again by Gillstein, who said: "It can't be true, after all, that all men are just dead, and that there's no more about 'em. There's a special little Hell somewhere for Percy Beckle."

"Now you're talking like a Christian," said John Hogan. "Play us 'The Wearing of the Green,' Higgins."



## THE MAN FROM NUMBER 9.



he fellows in Number 9 are all upset over that new man," said Bill Wiley, as he filled his pipe and prepared to settle himself to read "Three Weeks," a book that very much interested him.

"What new man?" asked John Hogan.

"A new man that the Colonel sent over. He's a timekeeper, and is getting only about \$75 a month," answered Bill.

"What's the matter with him?" quickly asked Higgins.

"The fellers say that he's been a jailbird, an' they don't want him in the house. Some of 'em telephoned to the Colonel, but he did not give 'em any satisfaction, only said that he desired the man to stay in Number 9; that he sent him to Balboa, and that if any of the men complained about living with him they could get out themselves."

"That's just like the Colonel," said Higgins. "What business is it of that bunch of mutts if the poor devil has been in jail, if he's behaving himself now?"

"Schopenhauer says that all men are—" began Ikey.

"For the love of Mike, don't spring him on us again," said Wiley. "I thought you had given up reading his book, anyway," he continued.

"He says some darn good things," said Ikey.

"But not about his fellow-creatures, an' the person under discussion is a man, an' not a dawg," said Hogan, tersely.

"Let's hear more about this new man, Bill," said Higgins.

"He's a sickly-looking guy that drags one leg after him when he walks, an' he's got a funny habit of looking over his shoulder whenever he goes to speak about anything. He's got a dry sort of cough that gives me the creeps, and the boys say he's always a prayin' when he's in his room."

"Poor devil, he's got all the marks of the jailbird about him. I wonder what he was in for," mused Hogan, more to himself than to the others. "I'll send 'A. Kempis' down to him; it might give him some consolation."

"I don't believe he'll get a chance to read it," said Bill, "because the fellers say that there's a gang goin' in town to-night to get drunk, an' they're goin' to put him out, bag and baggage, when they come back. In the morning no one will know who done it, an' the Colonel can't fire them all, for there's about ninety of them in the house."

There was silence now, but Hogan looked at Ikey, Ikey looked at Higgins, and a glance full of meaning passed between the three men.

"What's the man's name?" asked Higgins, breaking the silence at last.

"I didn't ask his name," answered Bill. "I only know what the boys have been telling me. I'm glad the mutt ain't in this house."

"Why?" asked Hogan. "What would a roughneck like you be afraid of?"

"Well, I have some good clothes an' a fine gold watch, some few trinkets an' little things that I'd like to keep," he replied.

"Who'd take 'em?" asked Hogan.

"Ignorance is an awful thing," put in Ikey. " 'Twould do you good to read Schopenhauer."

"Pon me soul, it would," agreed Hogan, with spirit.

"I'm going out for a few minutes," suddenly exclaimed Higgins, and he glanced meaningly at Ikey.

"I'll move that trunk out," said Ikey, "and put up that other bedstead, an' then I'll only have one mattress to sleep on, but that's more than many people have."

"True enough," said Hogan. "Why don't the Colonel put a guy like that off in a place by himself, and build a little house for him? It wouldn't cost the Commission much, an' it would save the men a lot of trouble," put in Bill.

"If the Colonel was to build a house for all the jailbirds on the Isthmus," said Ikey, "it would cost the Commission more than the diggin' of the canal."

At this point in the conversation Higgins put on his hat and went out, and Ikey went to his room. Hogan walked restlessly to and fro, while Wiley, stretching himself luxuriously, once more picked up "Three Weeks" and became deeply interested. More than an hour passed, during which time not a word was spoken by the men on the veranda.

Finally Ikey came back and sat down, with the air of a man who has been working, and in a few minutes Higgins came in, whistling. Accompanying Higgins was a tall, gaunt man, who had wild, staring eyes, a pale, refined face, and white hair.

"Mr. Frayer, meet Mr. Hogan, Mr. Wiley and Mr. Gillstein," said Higgins, leading the man forward.

Bill Wiley nodded his head coldly and grunted, but Hogan and Ikey extended their hands, and then they pushed forward toward the stranger a rocking-chair.

"Mr. Frayer is tired," said Higgins, as he himself sat down. "He has been on the Isthmus only two weeks, and he has had very little sleep since he came."

"I have the bed all ready for him," said Ikey. "It's got clean sheets on it, and he can turn in whenever he likes."

"Thank you," said the man, quietly, "but I'd rather sit here and smoke a little before turning in."

"Help yourself," said Hogan, pushing a box of tobacco toward him; "and here's matches."

For some moments the men smoked in silence, Bill Wiley eyeing the stranger meanwhile.

"You men are mighty civil to me," suddenly spoke up the stranger. "I did not think there was any one on the Isthmus that had any heart. I'll take that back, though, for there is one man who has been pretty nice to me. He had trouble himself once, poor fellow."

"They used you purty rough over in 9, didn't they?" asked Bill Wiley, speaking for the first time.

"They surely did. They didn't let me sleep nights. My roommate would not let me stay in the room nights with him. When I'd manage to doze off for a few minutes he would throw things at me and wake me up.

"I've seen some rough men in the course of twenty-five years in Sing Sing, but none of them could beat that

crowd for viciousness and general all-around cussedness.

"For a while I lived on the stuff I could get from the Chinese shops, because they said that I would not be allowed to go into the mess hall, but when my little hoard of money was used up I went hungry."

"Poor devil," muttered Hogan, under his breath.

"How did you happen to get into Sing Sing?" asked Bill Wiley, suspiciously.

"I was convicted of killing a girl," said the man from Number 9, with a shudder.

"But you didn't do it, I know," said Ikey, who had been an interested listener to the conversation which had gone on before.

"Since you men are so kind as to take me in, I will tell you about it if you will listen," said the new man, hesitatingly.

"Go ahead," said Wiley. "I'm anxious to hear about it. I came near killing a lady myself once."

The men filled their pipes, drew their chairs close to the man from Number 9, and waited expectantly.

"I was sentenced to be hanged twenty-five years ago for murdering a girl who is to-day alive and happy," he began. As he spoke, he dropped his voice to a low, intense whisper, and looked over his shoulder in such a horrified way as to make Higgins and Hogan each grasp one of his hands and hold it firmly.

"Why didn't they hang you?" asked Ikey, childishly.

"While I was in the death house," went on the man, as though he had not heard the question, but answering it, nevertheless, "some women got interested in me, and they engaged one of the best criminal lawyers in New York State to take up my case, and he finally had the sentence commuted to life imprisonment.

"To go back," he went on, "I was a printer by trade, and when my father died he left me enough money to buy a little printing plant that would have made me independently rich. It was in one of the biggest towns in the western part of New York State, and I was making money.

"I had a fine saddle horse, and in summer I used to ride out about twenty miles to a cottage that my father bought before he died. It was in a very lonely place, with nothing about it but woods.

"About three miles away from the cottage was the summer home of some people from New York City, and five miles away the Sheriff lived. My habit was to ride out to the house, sleep there all night on a cot bed, and ride back to town in the morning about sunrise.

"I used to meet a girl on horseback sometimes when riding in the early mornings, and she would ride along with me to a branch road, where she would turn and leave me.

"I met her every morning that was fine for about three months, and at times she would chat and laugh pleasantly, but she never allowed me to become very well acquainted with her. I told her all about myself, but when I would ask her her name and something about herself, she would frown and turn the conversation.

"Finally I found myself in love with her, and one morning I told her so. Then she looked very serious, and said she was sorry, but she loved another man, and that her love for the man had brought nothing but trouble into her life. When we came to the cross-roads she reached out her hand to me and said, 'Goodbye.'

"I felt something like a shot in my side, right under my heart, as I turned away from her, and the touch of her hand thrilled me, so I stopped the horse and looked after her.

"She had a peculiar, mysterious face that appealed strangely to me that morning, and although I felt hurt and resentful, I galloped after her, overtook her, and said: 'Girl, if you ever need a friend, call on me,' and I handed her a card, which had my town address on it. The only answer she made was to rein in her horse and look searchingly into my face.

"I could see that something was moving her strangely, and I said: 'What is the matter? I feel that you are in some trouble. What can I do to help you now?'

" 'Give me the keys to your cottage,' she said finally, 'and don't ride out here for a few days. I want to hide there until my husband comes for me.'

" 'You have a husband?' I blurted out in surprise.

" 'Yes,' said she, 'I was married a year ago, but no one must know it now. I live with my father and stepmother.'

"While she was speaking the tears were running down her cheeks, and I was too hurt to speak, but I handed her the key, and rode away as quickly as I could. I never saw her again until three months ago.

"Two weeks later I was arrested for having murdered her. I was in my office one morning, when the sheriff came and took me to view the spot where the deed was supposed to have been committed. She was supposed to have been killed by me while in her bed. The cottage door was locked, and the key to it was in my vest pocket. I had had two keys to the front door of the place, the one I gave her and the one which helped to convict me.

"Her trinkets were found in a bedroom, some clothing, a pair of slippers, and my business card. There was blood on the straw matting in the bedroom which the girl had occupied; there was blood on the chairs, on the dresser, and on the stairs; in the front hall as far as the front door, and on the front porch, as if some one bleeding had walked or had been carried down the stairs and out upon the front veranda. Every door and window was carefully bolted, so it was evident that the murderer had entered through the door with the help of a key, and had carefully locked the door behind him in going out. A sheet had been torn to shreds, and some of it was missing.

"I told my story, but it had no weight in court. The girl had never been away from home, according to her father and the servants, except mornings for a short ride, when it was proven that she had met me. More than twenty people testified that I had been to the cottage every night. They had seen me riding out, according to my custom, and they had seen me ride back in the morning.

"As a matter of fact, I had taken a ride on horseback every night and every morning, but never in the direction of the cottage while she was there.

"At the trial there were people who testified in my behalf, and many people believed in my innocence. Among them was a black servant, who said that the lady had had a secret lover before she ever saw me, and the girl's stepmother testified that the girl had acted queerly for many months; that she used to ride to the postoffice every morning and night, because she feared that her letters would fall into the hands of her father.

"In spite of all this, my guilt was made to appear perfectly clear, and the jury brought in a verdict of murder in

the first degree, and, as I told you before, I was sentenced to be hanged.

"The Sheriff had had a horse taken a few nights before when they searched my cottage, and when his dogs had begun to bark and give the alarm, he said to the court, he had fired the contents of his shotgun at a man who was galloping away from his barn. He told the court that the man he had fired at was me. In the morning the horse was found in the Sheriff's field, with blood on its side and mane. The prosecuting attorney brought out at the trial that the horse was used to convey the body of the murdered girl to the place which I had secured as a grave for her.

"No motive was ever given for my having killed her. If I had ruined her, there would even then have been no motive, as the girl was of a higher class of society than I, and as her father had lots of money, it would have been to his advantage to hush the matter up, rather than to try to make trouble for me.

"That was the argument of my lawyer. He showed that I had everything to gain by having the girl alive, if she had liked me well enough to meet me in that lonely cottage, and I had everything to lose by making away with her."

"A darned queer thing. I remember readin' all about it," interrupted John Hogan, while the man from Number 9 moistened his dry lips with his tongue, and looked over his shoulder in the frightened way he had.

"Well," said Bill Wiley, "if the woman was alive, why didn't she show up and clear you? If it was in the papers, she should have seen it."

"It was in the papers," said Hogan, "and a picture of him was in the New York World."

"I have that right here," said the man, touching his breast.

"How did you get out of Sing Sing after twenty-five years, when you got life?" asked Ikey, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"The woman came back, I suppose," put in Higgins.

"Look at these," said the man from Number 9. The four men bent eagerly forward, each with his hand outstretched to take the packet of papers which the man held in his trembling hands. "Look at this postmark—'1885, Panama.'"

John Hogan gently took the yellow letter and unfolded it, while the other men bent forward, their eyes fairly bulging from their sockets. It read: 'My Dear Mr. Frayer; Please forgive us for the condition in which you found your house. My husband came for me on the night of the 21st of September, and he stopped to take a horse for me to ride from the Sheriff's place. The Sheriff shot at him, and he was wounded in the arm—a very bad scratch. Did you think that some one had been killed? The wound bled a great deal, but I bound it up so well that he was all right until he could see a doctor in New York City. He says I would make a good surgeon. We left New York on the following Monday and came on one of the Panama Railroad steamers to Panama. Our destination is Chile. Please accept this trifle from my husband and me.'

"This is it," said the man, with a harsh laugh, and he drew from the faded envelope a slip of paper.

"A check for one thousand dollars," said the four listeners in turn, and as each man looked at the check the man from Number 9 gave another harsh laugh.

"This is the key to the cottage," said he, drawing from the envelope a rusty Yale lock latchkey. Then John Hogan read on: "I trust to you to keep my whereabouts a secret. I am never coming back to New York again. Let us hear from you. We expect to live at No. 12 Sacramento Street, Valparaiso, Chile.

"I know my people will make a search for me, but I feel sure that you will keep silent about me. I am very happy. Your grateful friend, Ada Bermugues."

John Hogan threw the letter to Ikey and looked into space for some time, while the man from Number 9 drew a table toward him and placed upon it some other papers which he took from the inside pocket of his coat. The four men bent forward and watched him as, one by one, he unfolded the various letters and papers which were in some way connected with the story of his life. One was a pretentious-looking document with two red seals. It was his acquittal from the Governor of New York for the crime he had never committed, and was dated May 1st, 1910. Another was the petition which Ada Bermugues had presented to the Governor in behalf of the man who had been imprisoned for her supposed murder. There was not a word spoken while the papers were being perused. One would read a letter or newspaper clipping, and in silence hand it to another, until all were read and reread. The men made a weird picture in the soft moonlight, as they sat, with anxious, set faces. "You see," the man from Number 9 continued, when the last paper was read and folded by Higgins, from whose forehead great beads of perspiration dropped, "the woman came back after a few years and lived in New York City. She didn't know that I had ever been put in jail, because she never went about any one she had ever known before. About three months ago her father died, and she read of his death in the newspapers. Then she went to their family lawyer and made herself known to him, and when he told her about me she went straight to the Governor and had the case opened, and, after a lot of red tape, I was released. I found that letter which she wrote me from Panama twenty-five years ago in the pocket of the rain coat that I wore just before the sheriff arrested me. As I look back now, I remember that these three letters were handed to me just before the Sheriff put his hand on my shoulder to tell me I was under arrest."

The man from Number 9 picked up the three letters indicated. "One," he went on, "is, you will see, a bill from a horseshoer; one is from a tailor, and the other from her. I left the raincoat in my office that morning and forgot all about the letters. When I was let out of Sing Sing a cousin of mine took me to his home in my old home town. He told me that he had all the things that were in the office at the time of my arrest, and among them was the raincoat, with the letters in the pocket that might have gained me my freedom. My cousin had never looked in the pockets, and, therefore, didn't know that they were there."

"My God!" said John Hogan; "and the Bible says that not even a sparrow shall fall to the ground without His knowledge." "Bible, your foot!" grunted Ikey. "If God knows everything, why didn't he make this man think about the three letters in the pocket of the rain coat? Why didn't He put it into the Sheriff's mind to hunt for evidence the way they do in the story-books? He never did anything to God that most other men ain't doing every day. He tried to do a good act. There was a girl in some trouble, and he helped her out by giving her the key of his house. It helped her, because she got away from her folks. They must have been cussed mean, like mine were when I got away from them. God can't give back to this man his youth and health. He can't give him the sons and daughters that he might have had if he had been left his freedom. He can't give him anything now that will compensate for the twenty-five years in Sing Sing." "But there's another life," said the man from Number 9 with awful calmness. "I have had visions of it, and have prayed to God on my bare knees, and asked Him to bring the girl back, and He brought her, didn't He?"

"Yes," said John Hogan, "He did after twenty-five years." "I prayed that she'd come back and tell me that she regretted that she hadn't loved me, and she did." "And she just said that because she thought it would make you feel good. She was sorry for you. Women can feel sorry for their worst enemies if they are in trouble," said Ikey, cynically. "I prayed to God for peace, and He gave me peace; and I got used to Sing Sing, and would have been content to live there the rest of my life, if the girl hadn't come back," went on the man from Number 9.

"God can't do more for a man than give him contentment, and I had that for many years. I had no desires like I used to have when I was a young man. I had nothing to lose. There was nothing around me that I would want to covet. I envied no human being, and no one envied me. Why, I used to lie in my narrow cell at night and wonder to myself why I was ever foolish enough to covet the silly things that I used to covet before I went to jail, and gradually everything that was most dear to me became only a memory, and the simple things of my prison life became dear to me. I was a sort of leader among the prisoners, and the worst ones among them believed that I was innocent." "That was the potency of right and truth," said Higgins, interrupting him for the first time.

"Schopenhauer says that truth is the only God there is, and that's all I believe in," said Ikey.

"After what we guys heard to-night," said John Hogan, "I'm beginning to think that old Schuppy was more of a prophet than we give him credit for." "You have invited me over here from Number 9," said the man, "and I must ask you men not to say things that might have a tendency to kill my faith, because that's all I have left." "You have more than we have," said Higgins, "and we are going to try to strengthen your faith, rather than weaken it."

"We'll try to," said Ikey. "Better go to bed now," said John Hogan; "you look tired. Ikey's room is the coolest in the house. Show him his bed." "Good night. Thank you for your kindness, men," said the man from Number 9, as he followed Ikey to his room. "Good night," said Higgins and Hogan. "Poor devil!" said Bill Wiley, as the man disappeared into Ikey's room.

"He's got the right dope on religion," said John Hogan, "and is happy in it." "He bears no ill-feeling for the woman who ruined his life," said Higgins. "Why pity him? He's happy because he believes in a living God." "That check he's got must be worth good money by now," said Ikey, returning. "Why don't the darn fool cash it in?"

## THE CANAL ZONE ARCHITECT'S WEDDING



IN Germany, before the days of the American occupation at Panama, there lived with her mother a beautiful, golden-haired, blue-eyed girl named Hulda Schneider. The Schneiders were very poor, but they had held their own, for they had been fighters. But of what use are fighters there nowadays, except as bodyguards to the Kaiser's numerous off-spring? Hulda had tastes inherent in such people, and, having no means of gratifying them, she chafed in her environment. "I'll tell you what to do," said a sophisticated girl friend, who had lived for a time at Hoboken, N. J. "Put an ad in a New York City newspaper, saying that you are young and pretty and just dying to make some good American happy."

"Shall I get a millionaire, do you think?" asked the innocent Hulda.

"You may," said her adviser. "If you don't, you may get a Jew, and that's almost the same thing."

"But I don't want a Jew," said Hulda. "I want an American who is rich, young and handsome."

Accordingly, an advertisement was sent to a New York Sunday paper announcing that a good-looking girl in Germany was pining to marry a rich American. Meanwhile, blue-eyed, golden-haired Hulda settled down to await a reply.

Now we must go back about seven hundred years, to the time when the Danes invaded Ireland. There was one Dane in particular, named Vickenstadt, who married a descendant of Brian Boru. It so happened that a descendant of this Dane and the great Brian read Hulda's advertisement and decided to answer it. He was an ambitious man, of temperate habits and aesthetic tastes. He studied hard, for he was wont to say, "If there's one thing in the world that I like better than another, it is intelligence." He was a draftsman by profession, but he called himself "architect of the Canal Zone." To use his own words, he was "well fixed," and what he most desired was a golden-haired, blue-eyed, slender young girl to share his fortune and his ancient name. As a matter of fact, his name had undergone some radical changes during the intervening years, and was now written Brian McVickins. His associates called him "Mickey" Vickens for short, and by this cognomen he was generally known. He was an American citizen, but first saw the light of day in a little town in County Clare fifty years before the incidents in this story occurred.

'Tis a far cry from Hulda's home town on the Rhine to Ancon, C. Z., but the finger of fate is ever pointing this way and that, else "Mickey" Vickins would never have seen her advertisement on that unlucky Sunday morning. "Be jabbers," said he, "here's the last thing I want now. I'll answer this ad this very day, or my name is not Brian Boru Vickingstadt. If the others object to me Irish accint, divil a bit the difference 'ill this one know, and by the toime she gets to know the ropes she'll be so attached to me that she'll hate to leave me. The German wimmin do be that way. I'll write under me right and proper name, an' shure they'll know I'm Danish anyway." So he sat down and wrote that he was of Danish descent, an architect, an American, well fixed financially, and thirty-four years of age.

"I'd better tell her what sort of a complected man I am whilst I'm about it," so he wrote, "dark-complected, with blue eyes an' fair skin." "Me hair is turnin' fast," said he to himself, as he gazed at his reflection in the looking-glass, "but," he added, "if she objects, a bit of dye will fix that all right." He told her that it would be six months before he would be able to procure "married quarters," and he advised her to go to school where English was being taught so that she might be able to converse with him should she decide to accept him as her future husband. "An' bedad! I haven't been with the Jews in Chicago for nothing," said the scheming wooer, "an' me plan ought to be to ask her to give me the address of the schoolmaster, an' I'll send the old blaguard the money in checks. Thin I'll have a hold upon the creature in case she has some young lads to meet her. Shure a man can never be after thinkin' what a young heifer might be havin' in her mind." At length the letter was finished and was duly dispatched to the waiting Hulda. There was a clipping enclosed which read that Brian Boru Vickingstadt had lectured to a large audience on the Panama Canal at Hoboken, N. J. There was a postscript added, to the effect that the writer wished to communicate with the mother of the fair Hulda. That he had persuasive powers may be inferred from the fact that Hulda's mother answered the letter as soon as it was received. The schoolmaster wrote that Hulda could begin her studies at once, and that great pains would be taken to fit her to become the wife of so prominent a person as the "architect of the Canal Zone." There was a picture of the girl included.

"I like the man already," said Hulda's mother. "He is too old," said Hulda. "Just think, thirty-four, while I am only twenty." "It is the right age, just," said the mother. "The husband should have the age already when the wife is that young and foolish like you are." Hulda, however, had sent her picture and a long letter to another applicant. He wrote that he was a farmer, and lived near Montclair, N. J.; that he had one thousand dollars saved, was twenty-six years old, sober, and a church member.

After some weeks the schoolmaster received twenty-five dollars from the "architect of the Canal Zone" for Hulda's instruction, and Hulda's mother received a sum of money, all of which was duly acknowledged in the most legal manner on legal-looking paper. Now the Vickingstadt exulted in having won the prize. He took the girl's picture and visited the places where "the boys" were in the habit of assembling. "What do ye think of that for a colleen?" asked he of one and all. "By Jove, she is a perfect Juno," said one. "Say! she's all right; a good-looker, and some style," spoke up another. "Where did you pick it up?" queried a third. "That picture does not belong to none of your relatives," another boldly asserted, "she's too refined-lookin'." "Divil a bit," acknowledged the "architect;" she's the gurrl I'm goin' to marry whin I go on me vacation in September. Shure, that's why I come across the Isthmus. I'm gittin' a house here to bring me bride to." "How could an old mug like you get a good-looker like that to marry you? 'Mickey Vickins' is a romancer," declared one of the highbrows. "That must be the picture of some young lady in whose family he worked when he first came from Ireland," spoke up another highbrow. And so the matter furnished food for discussion for some time. The "architect" was now living at Cristobal, where he had an extensive acquaintance among "the boys." He knew every one of the dry-dock gang by name, and to each one in turn he showed the picture of the fair Hulda. The members of the dry-dock gang became greatly interested in the Vickingstadt's wooing, and discussed the affair among themselves in the following manner: " 'Mickey Vickins' is goin' to be married, all right." "Shure thing; got his name in for married quarters! An' say, she shure is a peach." "Yes, he'll bring some old biddy down with him from New York. No one else would marry an old mutt like him." "He stole that picture from one of them penpushers that he used to room with over at Ancon," etc., etc.

Meanwhile the "architect" winked foxily and tucked away the letters from Hulda's mother and the schoolmaster with his choicest treasures, which consisted of his discharge from the United States Army and his correspondence school diploma. Unknown to her mother, Hulda received money from two other men, which she acknowledged in the

following manner:

"I received your letter and its contents. I long to see you. I know I shall love you, and I hope to make you a good wife. Good night, sweetheart."

She had a dream of her landing at New York that was very rosy. She decided to have her three lovers meet her at the dock; she could then pick out the one she liked best, and say "Guten nacht" to the others. She did not know, poor girl, with what she would have to contend on arriving in the "land of the free and home of the brave." Neither did two of the applicants for her hand. The Vickingstadt knew, however, from past experience, and he said to himself: "I'm goin' about it in the right way, for many's the young heifer from the ould dart I've helped to get out of the pin on Ellis Island."

# THE CANAL ZONE ARCHITECT'S WEDDING.

## (PART II.)



WHEN the big liner docked which brought Hulda from the port of Hamburg one might have seen three anxious-looking men standing on the pier. Hulda had been the pet of the ship during the trip. She booked a passage second class, but, because of her good looks and varied accomplishments, she was invited to the saloon to play and sing. There was a halo of romance about her, as she was on her way to New York to become a bride, and it was said that a young scion of a wealthy family or board had fallen desperately in love with her—a circumstance which greatly enhanced her importance in the minds of the other passengers.

Hulda appeared on the dock a few minutes after the big steamer had tied up, with two trunks filled to overflowing with finery and \$8 in her pocket-book. Like the majority of the fair sex, Hulda, when questioned by the immigration inspector, fibbed about her age, saying she was but 17, instead of 20. This at once led to complications, for, when two of her lovers lined up to claim her, each was confronted with a grave problem. Neither of them knew how to get a 17-year-old girl past the immigration authorities. The farmer from New Jersey was first to assert his claim to the fair Hulda, but he did not come prepared to have the knot tied; he brought no aged mother or aunt, so his claim was disregarded. He shook his head sadly and said, "Well, here's where I'm out \$284, but perhaps 'tis just as well, for I think she is a little too fine for a farm in Jersey, anyhow."

The next applicant, a Southern gentleman from Savannah, now stepped forward. He showed many letters he had received from Hulda and displayed an earnestness, too, which would have helped him anywhere in the world except on that pier. It was evident that Hulda admired him greatly, and when he told the interpreter he had property which had been valued for taxes at \$60,000 it was with difficulty that the girl could keep herself from running into his arms. But he was obliged to leave without her, and Ellis Island stared her in the face.

It was at this juncture that the "architect of the Canal Zone" came forward to claim her. "I think this young lady belongs to me," he told the immigration inspector, with a thin little smile. "I have been taking an interest in her for several months, and I've her mother's consent to marry her." The papers were carefully examined, and the interpreter told Hulda that this was the man who had the proper claim upon her. "According to your mother's letters," he said, "he is your guardian, and if you do not marry him he has the right to send you back to Germany."

"Gott in Himmel! I must go back now?" said poor Hulda, bursting into tears.

"The neighbors would say that the man in New York didn't like you and turned you down," said the wily interpreter, "so if I were you I'd stay and marry this nice, clean-looking old man. He has a good position down where the Americans are digging the canal, and I bet you he has plenty of money. Get some of it away from him, and in a few weeks, if you want to, you can get a divorce. Over here in America, if a man and his wife can't agree, they go to a judge and get a divorce."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Hulda, her face brightening, "I'll go up to the big city of New York with him and will then run away."

"Oh, but you will have to marry him right here in the presence of these men, and I shall have to stay and interpret the ceremony."

During this conversation the "architect" stood apart, quietly awaiting the verdict. There were many interested spectators, who gazed admiringly upon the graceful girl and wondered what it was all about.

Hulda wept copiously, and, the heart of the Vickingstadt being touched, he made an attempt to console her, saying, "Darling thrish, I'll make you happy. I'll give you jewels and laces galore. What makes you take on so?"

"Go away, you old devil," said Hulda. "If you attempt to kiss me I'll jump into the water."

"The Lord be praised and glorified," ejaculated the Vickingstadt, taken all aback. "Is that the English that was taught you by the blaguard schoolmaster, after me payin' me good money for you?"

Hulda, red in the face, showed plainly that the fighting blood of the Schneiders was up. The interpreter interposed and said to Hulda, "You must smile and look pleased, or you will be sent back. The minister is waiting, and you will have to look as if you were tickled to death over it."

Thereupon he took Hulda by the arm and led her to where the "architect" stood with the Lutheran clergyman.

"Shall I have to say to him I love him?" queried Hulda of the interpreter.

"You sure will," was the rejoinder.

"I can't," said Hulda, "it will be a lie; I hate him already," she added desperately.

In the end, however, they were married, and in accordance with the rites of the Lutheran Church, to which Hulda belonged.

It will have been noticed that she did not like to swear to a lie, which was a point in her favor. It will also be seen that the holy institution of matrimony was being used for fraudulent purposes. If it had been the United States mail that had been used in a like manner Hulda, the "architect," the interpreter and all concerned would have been found guilty of a misdemeanor, and the immigration authorities would have had to account for compounding a felony. Both of the contracting parties swore to unseemingly lies, and the Lord's anointed was in attendance to see that no word was left out or substituted to make the lies less patent. The bridegroom swore to endow Hulda with all his worldly goods, when, as a matter of fact, he only intended to give her a few dollars now and then. The bride swore, between sobs, that she would love, honor and obey her husband until death should them part, notwithstanding that the uppermost thought in her mind was to run away from him as soon as she should enter the city. Hulda's feelings can better be imagined than described when the final words were said. She was married according to the laws of the universe and to the satisfaction of the immigration authorities.

It is certain that fate plays strange pranks with some people, for, no sooner than Hulda and the Vickingstadt had been pronounced man and wife, than there appeared on the scene the man from Savannah, accompanied by two prominent New Yorkers and the German Consul.

"Too late," said a bystander.

"That's a damn shame," said a sailor, who had witnessed the whole tragedy.

Hulda was so overwhelmed by the turn of events that when she saw her true beloved return she ran to him, clasped him about the neck and then fainted. The young man naturally looked embarrassed, but he, with others, assisted her to regain consciousness. The bridegroom adopted a martyr-like pose, and when the girl had recovered sufficiently to sit in a chair he addressed the interpreter as follows:

"Tell that crazy gurl that it is a very ondutiful wife she is after makin' herself. Tell her that from now until the ind of me life she must cut all feelin's of love from her heart for that man or any other man. Tell her that I have houses in three cities and property in Panama. Tell her that my income is \$3,000 gold a year, besides what I make by me lectures. Tell her that I neither drink, smoke nor chew. An', thin, in the name of Hivin! what more does she want? Tell her I'll take her to Colon to-morrow, there be a ship sailin'."

This was related to the bewildered girl, and she was requested to go with her husband.

"Be jabbers, 'tis a policeman that I'll be after gittin' to watch her to-night," he said to himself as he half led, half pulled her to a coach. "If I don't, 'tis elope she will with that blaguard Southern gintleman. An', after me spindin' so much money upon her, an' 'tis ashamed I'd be to show me face on the Zone if I didn't take the colleen back with me."

After much discussion and interpreting, Hulda was prevailed upon to accompany her husband to a hotel. Here people were paid to watch her, while the bridegroom went to dispatch a telegram to the steamship agency, which read: "reserve bridal soute on ship sailing to-morrow for Colon."

When Hulda was taken on board the next day she had been outwardly appeased by a present from her husband of a diamond ring and \$100 in bright gold pieces, but a fire of hatred, fed by a vanquished purpose, smoldered in her breast.



# THE CANAL ZONE ARCHITECT'S WEDDING.

## (PART III.)

**I**T was a Sunday afternoon when the ship on which this ill-assorted pair took passage reached its dock at Cristobal. "The boys" were out in force to see what "Mickey" Vickins' bride looked like. There was a murmur of suppressed admiration when she walked down the ladder, and each took a long breath when he saw the "architect" walking behind the fair girl with every appearance of ownership. "The Vickingstadt has put it all over us," said one man, laughing. "She certainly is a beautiful girl," exclaimed another. "'Mickey' Vickins' never told the truth before, but he told it this time," said one of the dry-dock gang, "so I am out \$25, for I bet a feller last night that 'Mickey' 'ud bring back a kitchen mechanic. The joke is on me, all right."

And then "the boys," with one voice, shouted, "What's the matter with 'Mickey' Vickins? He's all right!"

They gave three hearty cheers for "Mickey" Vickins and his bride, and then something happened. The much-admired Hulda, not understanding what it was all about, and in her haste to get ashore, did not notice where she was going, and ran into the arms of a man from her own country, who, upon looking at her closely, embraced her and tenderly kissed her.

"God be praised and glorified! What am I up against now?" exclaimed the astounded and disgusted Vickingstadt. The man proved to be Hulda's brother-in-law, who, when her sister had died, left Germany for parts unknown.

"Who is that old man?" he asked fiercely, pointing to the unfortunate "architect." Hulda talked at some length in her own tongue, wrung her hands, cried and begged her brother-in-law to take her away from her husband.

"Come, darlint," said the unsuspecting "Mickey" Vickins, "come along. Shure, I'm not understanding what you do be sayin' to your Dutch friend, but I won't have the dry-dock gang hear it, or they'll harrish the life out of me, the blaguards."

"Go away, you old devil!" said Hulda, in very good English, which was readily understood by the crowd.

"Praises be, 'tis call the polis I'll be after doin' if you don't come with me to our beautiful home that's all ready for us."

"You scoundrel, you kidnapped her from her own lover on the dock in New York City," shouted the brother-in-law.

"I did not," said the husband.

"You did," said Hulda.

At this the little man became angry and tried to pull her away from her countryman. In the meantime, the crowd having closed in about the angry trio, shouted, "Go to it, 'Mickey,'" when several policemen interfered.

"'Mickey' kidnapped her, all right," said one of his friends, laughing.

"Who'd ever thought it?" said another.

"He'll have to go to jail for it, poor devil," smilingly spoke a third.

Meanwhile, the "architect" was busy showing his marriage certificate to a policeman, who, upon examining it, ordered Hulda to go home with her husband, at the same time telling the brother-in-law to go about his business or he would arrest him. Then the Vickingstadt seized the arm of the sulky Hulda and, amid cheers of the crowd, walked off the dock in triumph.

\* \* \*

One Sunday morning about three months after her arrival Hulda ordered her servant to prepare sauerkraut for dinner. "Mickey" Vickins ordered corned beef and cabbage, and threw the sauerkraut out with his own hands. After Hulda had given the order she went for a walk, and came back with an appetite for the good old German dish, to find the Irish substitute awaiting her. She flew into a rage at once, and, unknown to the Vickingstadt, sent for her brother-in-law. When he arrived she poured the whole terrible tale of woe into his willing ear. After the "architect" had finished his nice boiled dinner he tiptoed to his wife's bedroom and found it deserted. "The Lord be praised," he said to himself, "where did the colleen go to?"

A small window opened from Hulda's room on to the back veranda, and he was just in time to witness the condolences of the brother-in-law, along with certain other little tendernesses which made him feel sick at heart. As this is not a novel, I must refrain from summing up his feelings, and shall confine myself to facts. I happened to look through my window just as he tiptoed from his front door, after having looked at his wife conversing with her brother-in-law. He looked as if he wished me to speak, and I bade him a "good morning."

"I am your neighbor beyant, ma'am," said he, coming close to the window and speaking in a whisper. "I want for you to come with me an' see a sight that'll freeze the blood in your veins, if you're an honest woman, which I think ye are."

Without saying a word I opened the door and stepped lightly upon the sidewalk beside him.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"Somethin' fierce," he replied. "Shure the blood is curdlin' in the veins of me; but don't open your mouth, for I don't want the blaguards disturbed."

"Ah! there are thieves in your house," said I, in a whisper.

"Worse nor that," said he.

A shiver went through me. "Has some one been murdered?" I queried, halting at the threshold of his door.

"Yis," he answered in a husky voice, and relapsing completely into the vernacular, "the sowl in me is murthered."

I walked behind him mechanically. He entered the bedroom on tiptoe, and bade me follow him. It did not occur to me then that I had, rather unconsciously, been lured from my own domicile to the bedroom of a man to whom I had never spoken before. It seemed perfectly proper that I should follow this little old man, just as if it had been a

little old white-haired woman. He tiptoed to the little window and pointed to something outside. I fully believed that I was to see something awful, so I closed my eyes, almost involuntarily, it would seem, as I walked to where he stood. When I opened them they looked upon the lovely Hulda and the brother-in-law. Her cheek was close to his cheek; she was looking into his eyes, and both were smiling. I smiled, too, and looked on approvingly, for I had believed for three months that my neighbors were father and daughter.

"Isn't that purty conduct for a well-brought-up Dutch gurl, an' the wife of as good a man as ever wore shoe leather?" he asked. His voice sounded hollow and strange. At the word "wife" I turned and fled, for the full significance burst upon me.

"Come back," he called, "an' tell me what you think of it."

I paid no attention to the request, and gained my own apartment very much out of breath, but in a few minutes the little man returned and said that the girl was having a fit. So I followed him again. This time there was no mystery; I knew only too well that there had been a quarrel. When I returned to the bedroom the fair Hulda lay stretched upon the floor in what appeared to be a swoon. There was a black girl bathing her forehead with bayrum, and all about was dire confusion.

"You had no right to tell me to cook that cabbage, and you had no right to throw away that sauerkraut," said the negro servant, as she helped me to lift her mistress from the floor to the bed.

"Shure, there's nothing in the world as bad for a woman in her condition as sauerkraut," answered the little man, meekly.

On hearing the words "sauerkraut" Hulda became quite hysterical and began to kick and to abuse the "architect."

"What am I to do at all, at all?" said he, as he endeavored to stroke her head, in return for which she pinched and tried to bite him. "God be praised and glorified," ejaculated the husband. "I thry to plaze the creature, an' she has everything that I can get for her. Say, Hulda, is it your brother-in-law you want?"

# THE CANAL ZONE ARCHITECT'S WEDDING

## (PART IV.)



At this point there came an interruption in the person of the doctor who had been called. He was very red in the face, and as he prepared to take Hulda's temperature he asked of her husband, "What is all this ruction about? How many more times must I witness these scenes? Why don't you give the girl up? Some day she'll stick a knife in your back, and then she will be sent to prison for life."

"Glory be to God!" shouted the "architect". "Ain't the woman me wife?"

"You ought to be ashamed to tell it," said the doctor. "You, with one leg in the grave and the other on the brink. I am going to send her to the hospital now, and you are to leave her there. The girl is too young to be married to an old fellow like you."

"I'm only 34," replied the Vickingstadt.

"You're a cheerful idiot of a liar," retorted the doctor.

In the end two men came with a stretcher, and Hulda was taken from her husband's house, never to return to live with him again. The medico followed, banging the door behind him.

"He's of me own race," said "Mickey" Vickins, "an' he do be mad to see how young me wife is, because 'blood is thicker than water' an' he hates to hear the lads laughin' at me misfortunes. We of the Irish race do be very outspoken with each other, an' that's why we get the name of being such fighters; but I observe that we can't beat the Dutch, bad luck to them. Well, she's gone, and 'tis a rest I'll be after havin' now," said he, "for the floor is that hard that me bones ache."

He had peace in his home after this, but he received letters from Culebra telling him he must support his wife. One day Hulda returned and rifled his boxes in the hope of procuring the deeds to his property, but, instead, she found his citizenship papers, correspondence school diploma and an honorable discharge from the United States Army. These she tore into shreds and left them where her husband could readily find them. She had taken up her residence at the home of her brother-in-law in Colon, and many evil tongues were wagging. The "boys" teased the Vickingstadt, and he was terribly crushed as a result, for he disliked to hear Hulda criticised. "God forgive her," he would say, "I tried to be an ideal man. I was lovin', an' she said I was too lovin'. I never tasted a drop of liquor, an' she said that wasn't natural. I never smoked or chewed tobacco, an' she said she'd rather have me do both, because smokin' and chewin' was good for the breath. Now, what do you think of that? 'Tis a hard thing to understand the ladies, bad cess to them. I never could understand them."

I had been given an opportunity to review this international marriage exhaustively, and I decided that neither Hulda nor the "architect" were to blame. It was poverty that forced the girl to seek a husband in a foreign land, and it was an undeveloped sense of the artistic and romantical that lured the Vickingstadt from his proper sphere. Circumstances helped, as you will have perceived. Hulda's one aim now was to have her husband dismissed from the service, so she wrote letters to Culebra accusing him of having starved her. He sent canceled checks to prove that he gave her more money than the average man gives his wife, and it became necessary for an inspector to investigate the affair for the good of every one. The latter was wise in his day and generation, and he reported to Culebra that Mrs. Brian McVickins did not love her husband. Two clerks had been kept busy attending to the contradictory reports of the pair, and, in order to lighten expenses for the Canal Commission, Brian McVickins was requested to resign.

About this time he came to me and informed me that he was the father of a little girl. "But, shure, 'tis pots and pans they threw at me whin I wint to see the little creature. May the Lord forgive them. The doctor tells me that she's the dead spit of me, an' 'tis take her away I would, only poor Hulda won't have anything else to love after I'm gone."

He spoke with that assurance with which married men are apt to speak when referring to their wives, and he appeared to think that I thought him much beloved by Hulda. He hated to acknowledge defeat in the game of love, because he possessed the vanity common to his sex. I made no comment, and he rambled on: "The law doesn't expect me to do anything for her at all, at all, but I'll always be after sindin' a little money for the poor child, an' 'tis glad I am that she looks like me, instead of like the Dutch, bad luck to them. It's the Lord that will bless you for the kind words you said about the matter, and 'tis never a word you said against the poor, misguided gurl. The poor gurl ain't been to blame at all, at all; 'twas the vanity of me in middle age wantin' a young colleen with golden hair and a slim figure for a wife. May the Lord forgive me."

With that, he thanked me for the counsel I had given him, which, as a matter of fact, he had never taken, and, after wringing my hand until it hurt, went his way with bowed head. Six months before, he was a dapper little man, with a quick, light step, and he did not look a day older than fifty, but now his eyes were sunken, his cheeks were wrinkled, and he had the general air of a man who was terribly tired. I have not heard from him since.

Soon after this, Hulda departed for the United States. Unaccompanied and carrying her baby and a suitcase, she walked up the steamer's ladder with tired tread and an air that suggested trouble. Friends of her husband who stood upon the pier shook their heads and said sadly, " 'Tis a goldurned shame, for she shure was a good-looker when "Mickey" brought her down."

Her eyes were now red and tired-looking, her cheeks were hollow and her mouth had the expression of bitterness that comes from disappointment. One might easily picture her looking for a cheap room and having the rooming-house women conjecture that she had never been married. She would look for work, too, and, notwithstanding her accomplishments, she would probably find it in some one's kitchen. In her shabby maternity dress of cheap gingham she was a sorry contrast to the gay passengers who ran hither and thither, frantically waving farewells to their friends on the dock. She alone sat apart and hugged her child to her breast. "A tragic figure," observed a man with a pitying smile. As the ship pulled out, a kindly sunbeam fell upon her, and for a moment lighted up the golden tints in her still beautiful hair.



FEW years ago, on one of the dingy streets of Panama, I occupied a room furnished with a canvas cot, a chair, a very shaky little table for the kerosene lamp, and a dry goods box, which I used for a desk. One day a young widowed friend, who was employed by the Canal Commission, called upon me and invited me to visit her. She lived in a beautiful house, with other female employees, some distance from the city. "I have a large room," she said, "and if you can succeed in keeping the 'gumshoe' men from knowing that you are there, you will be able to save a great deal of money by it. Think of it! Fifty dollars in two months! You will be able to get that picture hat which you wanted so badly, and we shall be glad to have you with us."

After giving the matter some serious thought I decided to accept the invitation of my kind-hearted friend, the young widow. The inmates of the house consisted of five young girls, my friend, the young widow; a still younger widow, and a widow by courtesy. I was assigned to a small bed in a corner of the widow's room, and warned by all to 'ware the "gumshoes." The local sleuth was described to me circumstantially, and I was enjoined to explain my presence—should such a person come prowling around—by pretending that I was a seamstress.

Except for the fear of the above-mentioned gentleman, my life at this time was very peaceful. The atmosphere of the house was almost heavenly, the ladies appearing to live in the utmost amity—until the arrival of the man—not the "gumshoe," but one from Rockland, Maine, named Luther M. Pettingill, called "Pet" for short. He came to court the fairest of the younger girls, Adelaide, who could cook fish-cakes a la Bangor, and other Down East delicacies in a way calculated to touch the toughest Yankee heart. Though "Pet" was not handsome, Adelaide grew to be very fond of him, and in time she announced that they were engaged. This announcement took, the household rather by surprise, naturally, and one night while the lovers were out riding the matter was discussed at length in the widow's room. It then first became apparent to me that "Pet's" visits—who came morning, noon and night—were not greatly relished by the other girls. It appeared that he came around early, not only to eat breakfast, but to help prepare it. Before his advent, Sunday morning was a time of delightful relaxation, when the ladies would sit around in their kimonos and "just talk." Every one helped in the preparation of the breakfast and indulged in pleasantries while they worked, which greatly lightened the labor. Now, all this was changed. The table in the dining-room (fixed up with the widow's things) would be spread for Adelaide and her lover, and they sat long over the fish-cakes and beans, while we waited on the veranda like "hired help." They would talk at great length of the folks "down our way"; of "Pet's" Uncle Henry; of old Cap'n Eli; of the "Grange," and many other thrilling topics, to say nothing of Aunt Patience, who, it seemed, had taken Mr. Pettingill when he was a cute little darling and had raised him to man's estate. It appeared as though the lovers were absolutely unconscious of the fact that eight half-starved females were waiting to break their fast.

I tried my best to smooth things over; for, on account of my own peculiar position in the household, I had a fellow-feeling for "Pet." Some of the younger girls proposed going to the Quartermaster and demanding that Mr. P. be requested, through his chief, to discontinue his visits to the house. But the others did not approve of this course, because there were other beaux who came and went at reasonable hours, and who might cease their visits altogether on account of the utter tactlessness of Mr. Pettingill. So, it was decided to suffer in silence. This pleased me immensely, as my graft from the taxpayers of the U. S. A. would most likely end if an investigation was made into the affairs of that household. Then, too, there were casual escorts to Saturday-night dances, who also might be affected if an inquiry was called for.

Meanwhile Adelaide continued to produce her culinary masterpieces, with the able assistance of "Pet," who waxed fatter and merrier, happily unconscious of the storm that was brewing. Adelaide had now engaged the services of a young female from Jamaica who, in appropriate livery, held sway in the kitchen, almost to the exclusion of all others. Gwendoline (for that was her name) waited upon the lovers in the most approved fashion, while we—when we were given the chance—waited upon ourselves in a way that was truly Bohemian. In procession, we conveyed the various dishes to the table, and between courses we laid the plates on the crex-covered floor. Gradually my fear of detection wore away, as the time approached when I was to realize my dream of a picture hat.

On the last Monday of my stay with the young ladies my hat was brought home. This day also marked a radical change in the affairs of the household, "graft," and in Mr. Pettingill, who was obliged to seek a new course of diet among his less favored bachelor acquaintances. On this morning the girls went about their business as usual. "Pet" had breakfasted, as was his wont, and had departed whistling, as his digestion was good and his heart light in consequence. I spent some time "trying on" the hat, and, naturally, failed to observe the doings of Gwendoline, until at almost eleven o'clock I noticed that the clothes-lines were filled to overflowing with snow-white garments. I noted some dainty lingerie dresses, but I was too busy with my own thoughts to take particular interest in a mere clothes-line. Soon, however, I was startled by my friend, the young widow, who burst into the room like a cyclone. She threw herself upon the couch and burst into tears.

"What is the matter?" I asked in bewilderment.

"Why, we're the laughing stock of the whole town," she replied. "Those men over there in the bachelor quarters are laughing to kill themselves, and making all kinds of jokes at our expense. Adelaide is an awful girl to bring this ridicule upon us."

Just then the young widow and two of the girls burst in. "Isn't that a disgraceful exhibition?" questioned one of them. "Why, one of those awful men asked me who owned them, and then all the others laughed. I'm ashamed to pass by them on the way to the office this afternoon."

Having now a hint at the cause of the tempest, I took a good look through the window at the clothes-line—and, lo! there burst upon my view an array of faded khaki trousers, gingham shirts and balbriggan undergarments—all in an advanced state of patches—merrily dancing to the light tropical zephyrs which filled them and caused them to act in quite a human manner.

"Did you ever see anything so disgusting?" asked the young widow. Of course, I tried to make light, and suggested to the ladies a picture of Aunt Patience patiently patching the offensive garments, but they shook their heads in disgust and chided me for my levity. Adelaide was called in and requested to take the horrid things from the line. She listened to what the ladies had to say, and then, without replying, turned to leave the room.

"If the clothing was not so terribly patched it would not seem so vulgar," said one of the girls.

"I cannot imagine anyone of refinement caring for a man who could wear such rags," said the younger widow. "My husband never wore anything but silk."

Adelaide heard the comments in silence and quietly left the room.

"I am going to complain about this," said the young widow.

"You had better use the telephone," said some one. "You can say more that way."

She dashed down to the telephone and the following dialogue took place, afterward repeated to me by a friend:

Widow—"Hello! Is this the Quartermaster?"

Q. M.—"Yes. What can I do for you?"

Widow—"Please send a man over to take the clothes in."

Q. M. (stuttering)—"Wha-at?—what's the matter with the clothes?"

Widow—"Just take a look at the line—LOOK at it."

Q. M. (after a pause)—"I don't see anything wrong with it—it looks good to me."

Widow—"Heavens! But look at those awful clothes on the line, will you?"

Q. M.—"There DOES seem to be a discordant note in that line, but I can do nothing for you. If I were seen monkeying around that finery I might be deported."

Widow—"Well, you needn't make fun of me."

Q. M.—"I would like to oblige you, but I cannot meddle with such matters."

Widow—"Well, perhaps you can tell me this: Have such clothes any right on our line?"

Q. M.—"Certainly not. They look terribly out of place, as the house is a home for young lady employees and charming widows like yourself."

Now, this was more than the widow could stand, and, hanging up the receiver, she rushed back to us with many complaints of the Q. M.'s discourtesy.

"We'll take it up with Culebra," chorused the girls, whereupon I proceeded to pack my suitcase, thinking the time propitious for my departure. But, too late. The news of the flutter in the dovecote had already reached the ears of a certain vigilant person, whose business it was to report on and to adjust all matters of such weighty importance. This gentleman now appeared before us and gravely proceeded to question each one in turn. His manner was solemn and ponderous, as to almost make us fancy ourselves on the witness stand in a murder trial. Adelaide, the offending one, was questioned last, and, strange to say, culprit though she was, bore the inquisition with less embarrassment than any of the others, fortified, perhaps, by the knowledge of the steadfast affection of the husky Mr. Pettingill. At any rate, she came through the ordeal with much credit to herself, without adding any laurels to the brow of her inquisitor.

"Pending the verdict of Culebra," he said pompously, as he finished his notes, "I would suggest that the gentleman cease his visits for a while." He also suggested that the clothes be removed from the line. This was done immediately by Gwendoline, amidst the jeers of the bachelors next door. After these directions were given he stalked out with measured, judicial tread, and a sigh of relief went up as the door closed behind him.

At six o'clock that night I came away with a deep feeling of regret. As I was riding to the station I observed the disconsolate form of "Pet" seated upon the steps of his quarters, with his face buried in his hands, the setting sun forming a lustrous halo about his bowed head, while faintly on the evening air was wafted o'er him, unnoticed, the distant rattle of the knives and plates of the I. C. C. Hotel.

## THE STORY OF VERE DE VERE.



WE know not in our poor philosophy what hidden chords are touched by unseen hands.

More than a hundred years ago there lived in the Sunny South a handsome cavalier, who was noted for his riches, daring and cruelty. It is recorded that, whenever a man opposed him, he coolly ran him through with his broadsword; and whenever a female repulsed him he disgraced her, if he had an opportunity, or else some one who was near and dear to her.

The greatest artist of his time painted his portrait, and it hangs to-day in one of the public institutions of his native State. Tradition has it that he once killed a gypsy lad who happened to win the love of a young gypsy girl with whom he imagined himself to be in love, and that a gypsy woman cursed him for the deed and wrote his horoscope with the blood of the murdered youth as follows: "That his line would cease with one girl, who would live long enough to disgrace his name; that many years of her life would be spent in a vile prison among negroes in a foreign land for a crime like the one he had then committed."

This view behind the curtain seems to have had a strong effect upon the cruel cavalier, for he decided to marry and settle down like the people around him. His wife was a woman of gentle character, and her influence wrought a great change in the morals of her husband, for it was said that he became quite religious, and, when a little girl was born to him, with many tears and prayers he dedicated the child to God.

Meantime the years rolled on. The cavalier died, and, as daughter after daughter was born of his line, his name became extinct. Then, too, poverty, the great leveler, had come upon the family. His portrait, his signature to a famous document, and the tale of the gypsy's curse were all that remained of the cavalier. Those who watched for the fulfillment of the curse died and were forgotten; and at last a daughter was born, fifth in line from him. Her mother departed this world at her birth; her father, some months later, and it devolved upon the neighbors to care for the orphaned child. As she grew to womanhood people remarked that she bore a strong resemblance to the portrait of her great-grandfather on her mother's side, and by a special act of the Legislature she was given his name.

At 17, being pretty, gracious, sensible and womanly, with a genius for music, a great future was predicted for her; but, in the parlance of the day, "she went wrong." Her betrayer was the son of one of the most opulent families in the State, and, at his mother's request, the girl was sent to a distant Southern city. Here, after a few months, necessity compelled her to take up a residence in the underworld, and the friends of her childhood thenceforth knew her no more. She had been the ward of every one at home, and was, therefore, the ward of no one; and her disappearance was only a nine days' wonder.

In spite of her degraded calling, men admired her, and, because of a certain haughtiness in her bearing toward them, she was called "Vere de Vere," and it was known that she was sought with honest intention by men who declared that they loved her for her womanliness and the music of her laugh. The creatures of the world stood in awe of her, because of her dignity, and they feared her because of her violent temper. So, she lived her scarlet life, apparently without regret, until one day an old man from her native State happened in and amused his listeners by telling weird stories which, he said, had been told him by his grandmother. He related the story of Vere de Vere's ancestor, without knowing that one of his listeners was the only person upon whom the curse might fall. Nor did he know that when Vere de Vere fainted he had touched a chord of sensibility rarely found in the nature of women of her sort.

On the morning of the following day Vere de Vere told her associates that she desired to go to work and earn an honest living. "This is not the right life for me," said she to her incredulous auditors. "I was born to a higher life. I shall be good; I shall marry, and I shall have children," with which announcement she left them, to begin life anew.

How fresh and beautiful the morning seemed to her as she hurried toward a park! What do you know of fresh, green, delightful mornings? she said to herself as she sat down and took a deep breath. A bird twittering in a branch above her head, and a pair of squirrels playing in the grass beside her, made her smile and forget. A man in passing leered at her and attempted to speak, but she checked him abruptly with the information that he had made a mistake. "I shall wear black for a time," she thought. Then she began to wonder what she could do. She could sew beautifully. A light came into her eyes at the thought of the creations that she had designed for her underworld revels. She could embroider, paint china and play the violin.

She bought a newspaper and looked through the list of advertisements. The following attracted her attention:

"WANTED—A lady violinist and seven other lady musicians to make up a lady orchestra for a first-class hotel in Panama."

Her heart leaped for joy. "This is my chance. I shall go to Panama. It is far away, and no one will recognize me there," said the poor girl as she hastened to answer the advertisement.

At noon on the following day she was standing on the ship's deck on her way to Colon, and as New Orleans receded from view her lips moved in prayer; she was asking God to give her strength to lead a better life.

The man who had engaged her had complimented her upon her skill at playing. "You may not like Panama," said he, "for the life down there is rough, and I see you are a lady."

In a few days she was walking the streets of Colon in glorious freedom. Men eyed her furtively from some safe retreat, but no one ventured to accost her. There was no one to lift an eyebrow or to give a scornful glance. "Safe, thank God!" she said. "I shall not be the victim of that curse." She was thinking of what she should wear that night. A simple white muslin dress; a white rose in her hair. No paint, no jewelry, no more bright colors. "I shall save my money and buy a little home," she thought.

"It is time to dress," said one of her girl friends, breaking in upon her reverie. "We are to go to the hotel at seven." But it was not an hotel—it was a barroom where employes of the Canal Commission and the riff-raff of God's great universe assembled nightly to drink to excess and discuss the slanderous gossip of the Isthmus.

When Vere de Vere arrived at the entrance she faltered and refused to go in. "It is a low barroom," said she to her companions, "and there are drunkards inside who will say vile things to us."

"But we must play there, or else we won't be able to live," said one of the girls.

So they walked in, single file, through the rows of leering men, leaving the frightened girl on the sidewalk.

"Aw, come on in, kid," said the manager, whose name was "Blinkey." "This is an all-right place; the best in town. There ain't no first-class hotels in this God-forsaken place. What 'ud support 'em? Not the I. C. C. roughnecks an' P. R. R. pen-pushers. Not on your life, kid. Why did I say that the place was a first-class hotel? Because I'm a liar, of course. Come on in."

"I want to live a good life," replied the girl, with the calmness of despair in her voice.

"Well, that's up to you, my girl. I ain't askin' you not to lead a good life. You can be as good as Saint Cecelia an' play here every night. The better you are, the greater attraction you'll be for this joint, for good ladies are doggoned scarce on the Isthmus. I'll tell the boys all about you, an' when I get through I bet you they'll respect you. You must play that 'Good Night' solo when you see that they're about half-shot. Come on in; I'll lead you. My! you are shiverin' an' your hand is as cold as ice. You bet the boys'll know when they see a real lady. You look like a little girl in that simple white dress."

So she allowed "Blinkey" to lead her by the hand into the reeking barroom, and onto the balcony, where her girl companions awaited her. Then the manager announced, in the unmistakable voice of the professional barker: "Gentle-men: I wish to introduce to your favorable notice Miss Merriam Leigh, the famous violinist. She has medals which were presented to her by the Emperors of Germany, Austria and Japan; medals that are worth a fortune, and the little lady is too modest to wear 'em. This is the lady who entranced with her violin solos the late King Edward the Seventh, and made him exclaim, a few moments before he died, 'To endow with such genius a poor human being, there must be a God!' I presume you have all read of the rope of pearls that he gave to this little lady before he died; an account of 'em was in all the papers. I presume you all read about when Queen Alexandra wanted to keep her in her household to play for her in her widowhood. This is the modest little lady who comes here to-night to let the P. R. R.'s and the I. C. C.'s hear her play. You can see that she's a lady. Treat her as such."

"Come forward, now," said "Blinkey," in an aside that only the girl could hear, "and bow to the blokes while there's a sentimental fit on 'em, an' you'll be a darned sight safer here than you'd have been in old King Eddie's quarters."

The harangue was news to the poor girl, and the humor of it made her smile as she stepped forward to bow to the waiting throng. Each man raised his glass to toast the celebrity, when a harsh voice somewhere among the drinkers said: "Well, I'll be gorldurned if it ain't Vere de Vere, from Mixed Ale Lizzie's place in N'Yawlins."

Vere de Vere heard the ominous words, and felt a faintness overpower her, but, with that spirit for which men had admired, she seized her violin and played, while her cheeks flamed and her eyes sparkled, "Lead, Kindly Light, Lead Thou Me On."

"She's mad, all right," said a maudlin voice in the crowd.

"That makes a feller think of things that Gawd has to do with," spoke up another.

A hush fell upon the assembly, and the black waiters stood still and bowed their heads. The bartender, an old tropical tramp, used his towel to wipe his teardrops from the marble. The last time he had heard that hymn it was being sung at the funeral of his wife away back on the farm in Missouri. There were many wet eyes as the girl frantically played to the finish. Then, with one wild bound, she rushed through the reeking saloon, out into the street to a nearby park, where she sat down and cried it out.

No one spoke after she had left the barroom, but one by one the men tiptoed out, leaving unfinished glasses on the tables behind them. At nine o'clock the place was deserted and the doors were closed. Habitues, who came too late, said to one another, "I wonder what's the matter with 'Blinkey's' place. He advertised a lady orchestra and a big night to-night."

"Say, ain't he the liar, though?"

"Well, he ain't doin' business, that's a cinch. Wonder what's up."

One man remained in "Blinkey's" place; it was the informer. He told the manager all he knew of the violinist; it was, that he had seen her in a disreputable house in New Orleans.

"You're a pretty rotten specimen of manhood to go giving her away like that," said "Blinkey." "If you had any sense you might have known that she was trying to do right, the poor little devil. 'Twas a rotten deal to hand out to me; spoiled a good night's business, an' made a liar of me."

"But half of 'em didn't hear what I said," protested the offender.

"No," said "Blinkey," "they didn't hear you, but she did, an' she played that to get 'em to thinkin' of their pasts as she was made to remember hers. I bet every man of 'em left off livin' right soon after the last time they heard that played; I know I did. 'Twas when poor Maggie died, Gawd rest her soul! There's ginger in that girl; there's soul an' feelin' in her, an' pride. I had to coax her to come in, an' she said somethin' about wantin' to lead a good life."

"That's the way in this darned old world," put in the bartender. "Step a little bit askew, an' down you go; but, when you try to buck up, some gink comes along that hain't got sense enough to get in when it rains, an' he blows on you an' every one'll believe him, an' you either get in jail or into a crooked poker game. I know; I been there. That girl'll either commit suicide or go back to the life that she's been tryin' to git away from now."

"Yes," said "Blinkey," shaking his head. "An' I'll have it all on my soul, and Gawd knows I have enough to answer for now. I'll get out of this business, by heck; I will."

"Well, I guess I'll be goin'," said the informer. "I'm fed up on moralizin'. I'm sorry I squealed on the merry widow. Good-night, boys. I guess you're troublin' more about it than she is."

"Say! you didn't tell any of 'em on the q. t., did you?" asked "Blinkey," anxiously.

"A couple of 'em, but they were too darned drunk to remember," the informer replied.

"Well, say! you'd better tell them fellers to-morrow night that you made a mistake; that she ain't the one you thought she was," said "Blinkey," in a persuasive tone.

"If I think of it," said the informer, as he walked leisurely through the doorway with the air and manner of one with nothing to regret.

"All the fire in purgatory wouldn't clean up that feller's soul," said the bartender, as the door closed behind the man.

"That mut ain't got no soul. 'Lead, Kindly Light,' wasn't wrote for such spawn as him. I guess I'll take a ride out into the savannahs to get a breath of Gawd's pure air, for, I'll tell you what, the stink of this booze joint is gittin' on my nerves," said "Blinkey," in disgust.

On the following day Vere de Vere looked for work, but failed to find it, and at night she went back to the barroom and played, without looking at the drinkers. When her violin solo was finished she sought a remote corner of the balcony and hid herself behind the other players.

"That girl is afraid of us fellers," said a man, laughing.

"It takes some nerve for a young lady like her to play in a place like this for a bunch of roughnecks like us," said another man, in a kindly tone.

"Better lookout, girl, you'll lose your virtue here among us fellers," said the informer of the night before, in a high-pitched voice. This coarse jest was greeted with roars of laughter.

"Put that mut out!" shouted "Blinkey" to the negro attendants, "an' if he puts up a kick, call in the 'spiggotty' police and tell 'em that he's a crook, and let 'em put the guy in jail."

The informer was led to the street, but it was too late. The habitues of "Blinkey's" place knew that the pretty violinist had led a disreputable life in a low resort in New Orleans. Several of the less hardened didn't believe the story, and one young business man of Colon was very much in love with her and said that he would marry her; so now it was rumored that there was going to be a wedding, and that free drinks were to be served gratis on that night at "Blinkey's" place.

The story of Vere de Vere became generally known and was freely discussed, even in that quarter of the city known as "the district." The rumor reached the ears of a woman of ill-repute who had designs upon Vere de Vere's lover. Jealousy is a destructive element, when it takes root, in the most respectable bosom, and surely, when in force in the disordered mind of an outcast woman, it must be doubly dangerous. This one, it seems, had known Vere de Vere in New Orleans, and there was an old score that she was anxious to settle, so she circulated a horrible story of the girl's past, which not only shocked Vere de Vere's lover, but the hardest characters at "Blinkey's" place.

All this greatly distressed poor Vere de Vere, for it seems there are depths of degradation to which some women of the underworld refuse to sink, and there are crimes so abhorrent as to shock even their paralyzed sense of morality.

"I shall see that girl," said poor Vere de Vere. "I used to know her, and she was not a bad-hearted person." So, while her companions went to "Blinkey's" place as usual, she made her way to the house of her slanderer. When she entered, the wretched woman came toward her, staggering and hiccoughing; she was followed by a negro porter.

"Beat her up," she shouted, "she's trying to take my man from me."

The negro advanced threateningly, and the defenceless girl, seeing a be-ribboned dagger hanging on the wall above her head, seized it. The negro, in a sudden frenzy, threw the drunken woman upon the weapon, and in a moment she fell to the floor fatally injured.

"It is the curse," said Vere de Vere, as she rushed from the house. Her white dress was spattered with blood, and, unconsciously, she held the dagger clutched tightly in one hand while she ran through the streets of Colon to "Blinkey's" place.

"What in the name of God have you been doin', kid?" asked "Blinkey," as he took the blood-stained dagger from her hand.

"It is the curse," she moaned; and "Blinkey" afterward said that the hurt look in the girl's eyes made him feel ill. To the bewilderment of the awe-struck drinkers, Vere de Vere took her violin in her blood-stained hands and played "Dixie." Amid a tumult of applause the police came in and tore her from her violin.

"And the sins of the parents shall be visited upon the children," said the girl, as she was led to the street, where a hooting mob stood ready to offer her indignities.

So the last descendant of a great cavalier leads the life of a malefactor among negroes in the penitentiary at Panama, and the curse written in the life-blood of the poor gypsy boy has had its fulfillment.



## AN AWFUL MYSTERY.



THE Fairfaxes were married at Trinity Church, Boston, and the Bishop of Boston performed the ceremony. The Governor of Massachusetts gave the bride away, and there was no one present at the affair but Mayflower descendants and a few noblemen from Europe, who came by way of Washington to grace the affair.

The Boston newspapers were filled to overflowing with accounts of the wedding, a description of the presents and the life history of the contracting parties. They told in detail the genealogy of both the bride and groom.

The bride was an heiress in a moderate way, but the groom, who was an F. F. V., was poor, so that he positively refused to have his wife touch a penny of the money she inherited. "I am going to work," said he to the relatives and friends of the bride. "I have secured a position as a clerk on the Panama Canal, and we shall sail to-morrow."

"Bravo!" said every one.

Mrs. Fairfax packed her costly wedding presents away and stored them among other family treasures in the attic of her great-aunt in Cambridge, and with only about twelve trunks of dainty clothing and household things she departed with her wedded love.

She was a graduate of Wellesley College, and she had, in addition, studied domestic economy, so she gave out for publication that she intended doing her own housework on the Canal Zone.

"A sensible and model woman," said the newspapers. Mothers talked about the model Mrs. Fairfax to their daughters, in the hope that it would influence their own futures; so, you see, gentle reader, what a heroine Mrs. Fairfax was in her native city.

Among Mrs. Fairfax's wedding presents was one of such a kind as to preclude all possibility of its being left at home in the attic on Brattle street, so a ticket was purchased for it and, attached to a silver chain, this present was led by Mrs. Fairfax to the Pullman palace car which was to convey the newlyweds to New York, from which they embarked for Colon. "Ferdinand De Lesseps" was the name of the present. It was the finest of bull terriers, and Mrs. Fairfax was almost as proud of it as she was of her new husband.

On the ship there were, from the Fairfax point of view, a strange assortment of persons who did not speak the English language as it was spoken in the world to which the pair belonged, but who, strange to say, considered themselves as good, if not better, than the young couple.

It is needless to say that both had led a most sheltered life, and their knowledge of common people was limited to persons of the domestic servant class and railroad porters. Being just out of college, they, of course, knew it all, and did not see that a wider experience was being thrust upon them. They were very exclusive, and before the ship arrived at port they had shown such antipathy for their fellow-passengers that they were anything but popular.

When the ship docked there was no one to meet them, although Mr. Fairfax had sent a wireless message to the man who was to give him information regarding his new position in some office or other on the Zone.

They were, therefore, obliged to find a room for themselves on a dingy street in Panama, and in a house where many negroes lived. No one appeared to know that the blooded ones had arrived.

After many weeks of disgusting hardships, through the influence of Mr. Fairfax's boss, a vulgar, unlettered man who had been a simple carpenter in Boston, the young couple were assigned to two non-housekeeping rooms in one corner of a big house occupied by a Swedish family named Svenska, and, although Mr. Svenska had only been in the United States long enough to acquire a knowledge of railroading and citizenship papers, his privileges and wages far exceeded those of Mr. Fairfax, who was a descendant of a cavalier who had signed the Declaration of Independence.

It was the proud boast of the Swedish lady that she had landed at Ellis Island in her bare feet five years before, and when Mrs. Fairfax was a sweet undergraduate, shining as a drawing-room butterfly, Mrs. Svenska was dusting drawing-rooms.

Now, she kept a hired girl, and had A No. 1 furniture, while Mrs. Fairfax had the sort that was specially brought to the Isthmus for clerks who received only \$100 a month.

The Svenska wash was always hanging on the front porch, and the mangy cur dog of the Svenskas was ever seeking social intercourse with the blooded terrier of the Fairfaxes.

Mr. and Mrs. Svenska always addressed Mrs. Fairfax as Mrs. Penpusher—a term which Mrs. F. could not understand.

Being a newcomer and unsophisticated, Mrs. Fairfax decided to move into the pretty cottage across the way, which had been vacant since her arrival. Accordingly, one day she started for the Quartermaster's office to arrange for a transfer. The Quartermaster, however, saw her coming, and very prudently withdrew, leaving his assistant to deal with her. This gentleman, after hearing Mrs. Fairfax's complaints and request for new quarters, indignantly replied: "You ain't got no kick coming. Why, them quarters you want belong to two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar men. They ain't for no one-hundred-dollar people."

"Why, what do you mean?" said poor Mrs. Fairfax, aghast. "I shall see that you are reported for your insolence. My husband's grandfather was a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court."

"That don't cut no ice down here," was the reply. "If he was the son of the Colonel himself, he wouldn't get them quarters with his salary. You're in the same house now with a high-priced man, so I don't see what yer kickin' about."

"It is evident you don't know what you're talking about," said Mrs. Fairfax in bewilderment. "Why, the people who occupy the other part of the house are common—positively vulgar. I must get another house; I cannot live there. I shall come again when the Quartermaster is in."

So, without even a good-afternoon, she hurried home to find that "Prosit," Svenska's dog, had picked a quarrel with "Ferdinand De Lesseps," the Boston terrier. In the combat the plebian "Prosit," having no fine sense of honor nor any regard for the rules of war, had treacherously nipped off "Ferdinand's" tail. "Ferdinand," though a courageous beast, could not bear this indignity, so had left the field in possession of his vulgar antagonist. Then, too, Mrs. Svenska's much-patched clothing was hanging, as usual, on the porch. There was an array of socks of huge dimensions, hickory shirts and piebald khaki trousers, all of which greatly offended the aesthetic taste of the dainty

Mrs. Fairfax. So she sought Mrs. Svenska, and requested that lady to take her clothing from the line and to chain up that brute "Prosit." "I beg pardon," began Mrs. Fairfax, when her neighbor appeared at the door, "that dog of yours has bitten off my dog Ferdinand's tail."

"Veil," answered Mrs. Svenska, "dat bane a gude yob. My Oscar, he bane pay two dollar gold to a faller in Sout' Brooklyn fer trimmin' up our own bulldog's tail. Such dogs ain't in style mid tails. Anyhow, vy you not stay home an' mind yer dog? You ain't got no bizness in dese quarters—your man is nuttin' but a penpusher mit a hundred dollars, and my Oscar, he make two hundred, an' you tink you are better as we are."

As Mrs. Svenska finished speaking she shook her fist in Mrs. Fairfax's face, which belligerent gesture so frightened the latter that she rushed from the door and fell on her own doorstep in a dead faint. This, of course, attracted the attention of a passer-by, and soon a curious crowd assembled. In the crowd there chanced to be one of that slick class of individuals known as "gumshoe" men. He stood and looked on and said nothing, but what he thought would fill a big book. Mrs. Svenska did not appear to make an explanation, and no one in the crowd made a move to help the unfortunate woman. The "gumshoe" man pulled a little notebook from his inside pocket and jotted down the following: "Woman found on doorstep of House No. — in stupefied condition \* \* \*."

Now, the district physician put in an appearance, and in a few minutes Mrs. Fairfax had revived sufficiently to sit up and take notice. Her first thought was of her poor maimed dog, and she said, with what voice she could muster: "Oh, where did he go?"

"Who?" said the "gumshoe" man, stepping forward eagerly.

" 'Ferdinand,' " weakly replied the poor woman, sinking down upon the step and bursting into sobs.

The physician, with a sad expression on his face, ordered an officer to escort Mrs. Fairfax to her rooms, and the "gumshoe" man wrote: "Drugged by some one named 'Ferdinand'—a lover, probably—drinking together. Husband, clerk—decent fellow. Mystery here—woman needs watching—got no friends among the women—keeps to herself."

Carefully tucking his little book in the inside pocket, near his heart (for there is nothing dearer to these gentry than to get "something on" a married woman), he joined the policeman as the latter came from the house, shaking his head mysteriously.

All this had its due effect on the bystanders, and each one went on his or her way with an idea that Mrs. Fairfax had some awful secret. Each man cautioned his wife to have nothing to do with her, because she had a sweetheart unknown to her husband—a guy named "Ferdinand," an Eytalian or a dago of some kind. So, as a matter of course, the village people went out of their way and took special pains not only to shun Mrs. Fairfax, but to let her see that she was being shunned. The "gumshoe" man's notes were now being put into circulation through the medium of one of his confidants, a notorious male gossip whose calling took him almost daily to every village on the line. This mode of disseminating slander is equalled, perhaps, only by the New York yellow journals.

Meantime Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax took their evening walks together, happily unconscious of the awful slander that threatened to engulf them. Mrs. Svenska kept "Prosit" chained up, so that he could not play with the Fairfax dog, fearing that people would think that she was friendly with Mrs. Fairfax. The Quartermaster's assistant held his head high, in a way which plainly said, "Nothin' doin'," when the lady went to the office for anything. Even the dusky commissary attendants tossed their woolly heads when she gave them an order. Then a rumor was started that Mr. Fairfax was not married to Mrs. Fairfax. This story gained in popularity from day to day, and at last assumed such truthful proportions that an agent was sent out to investigate the matter. This gentleman's name was Gilhooly, a descendant, so 'tis said, of one of the royal lines of Erin. He was a native of Boston.

He started his investigation with the knowledge that he was to hunt down a cultivated woman. After a couple of weeks Gilhooly sent his notebook to the great tribunal of justice. Were you so fortunate as to get a glimpse of this little book the following might attract your eye:

"Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax are married, all right, tho' you'd never think it from the loving way they live. When Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax are at home they hold hands and they read Shakespeare and Thomas a Kempis. When Mr. Fairfax ain't at home Mrs. Fairfax does her housework, except the washin' and scrubbin', which ain't in her line. When she ain't doin' her housework she's paintin' pictures and writin' for college papers. The lad 'Ferdinand' is not a dago, at all, but an ugly brute of a Boston bull terrier with a pedigree. He loves his mistress, and it was on account of Svenska's 'mutt' havin' chewed off his tail that the ruction started. Let them that are without fault throw the first stone. So, I guess it is up to the Colonel himself to set matters right."

## A NIGHT OFF.



SEE by the papers that the government of the 'Land of the free and home of the brave' has made another law. It is that no contract be given for government work to any firm that compels its employes to work more than eight hours a day, an' the government has turned down a shipbuildin' firm's bid on the two new battleships because the firm didn't have the eight-hour law in force in its shipyard. Now, wouldn't that jar you, when right here on this government job there's five hundred men that work from twelve to sixteen hours a day an' never get a cent of overtime pay, not even a 'thank you'?

"Who are the twelve-and sixteen-hour men? We are. I'm one of 'em. Am I a steam-shovel man? No; not on your life. If I was I'd be curlin' my mustache an' polishin' my finger-nails right now. But, instead of that, I'm hustlin' into the mess hall to swallow a bite of cold grub before they shut the doors for the night. It's now three hours after knockin'-off time. I'm a marine engineer, an' I've seen as much of this terrestrial globe as any man of my age on this job, an' I can say with conviction that this is the blamedest job for workin' overtime that I ever struck, or ever expect to strike.

"You say that you thought we all worked eight hours down here. Not the floating equipment, no, m'am; but, say! a more intelligent or finer bunch of fellows never struck the Isthmus than they are. Why, some of 'em are veterans of the Spanish-American War. They done the work that got the glory for Dewey an' that beauty Hobson, when the petted darlin's of the Commission—the steam-shovel men, the shop guys and the like—were milkin' cows an' feedin' hens down on the farm. But, wait, we'll come in handy again some day, maybe right here, where we're sweatin' away from four to six hours a day for nothin'. Here in Balboa we ain't got no more gumption than a bunch of dog-robbers. Why, in Cristobal, they have formed an association to fight for back pay for overtime since the Canal started, an' for an eight-hour day.

"A committee of ten of 'the boys' waited upon a bunch of hayseeds that were down here lookin' around an' botherin' the Colonel. 'Twas last fall an' they stopped at the Tivoli. The Colonel attended the meetin' himself, an' showed the fellers that he was with them for a square deal. He's always on deck when there's need of justice, the Colonel is. Well, anyhow, old Uncle Joe was in the gang from the U. S. A., smilin' from ear to ear an' smokin' a big cigar that made him look top heavy. He told 'the boys' that he was feelin' fine; that he was gittin' to be a bit overfed, an' that he was just pinin' to do something for the floating equipment of the Canal Commission; but when a couple of 'the boys' told him that they had nearly \$9,000 for back pay comin' to 'em his face froze, the cigar fell from his lips an' he looked as if he was goin' to drop dead. I was there lookin' on an' takin' it all in.

"I attended the association supper at Cristobal after that, an', say! it was some feast. It looked more like a meetin' of the floating equipment of the New York Yacht Club than it did of the overworked and underpaid live ones of the Isthmian Canal Commission. Every man was dressed to kill in correct evening togs except me, but, of course, I didn't count, bein' from Balboa, an' not bein' a member, nohow. Anyway, I enjoyed myself an' drunk it all in. Did I get drunk? Yes, I think I did get drunk. A saint would have got drunk there. The first sight that met the eye on entering the hall was—what do you think? Twelve barrels of beer all packed in ice an' ready to quench thirst. There was all kinds of whiskies and wines, and even champagne.

"How did they get away to get to the supper? Oh, they just struck. 'Where are you fellers goin' to?' said the boss that night, when the last of the gang was walkin' off the dock to go home an' dress. 'We are goin' to get drunk,' spoke up old Cap. Bartin, who isn't so old, but is as sassy as they make 'em. 'Get drunk?' said the boss, in amazement; 'well, you've got your nerve with you.' 'You bet,' replied the Captin; 'if I didn't have considerable nerve I wouldn't have been able to keep up an' work all of this overtime. Me an' the boys,' said he, 'need to wet our whistles this blessed Sunday night, after workin' from twelve to eighteen hours a day for the past week.' 'You can't get off now,' said the boss, 'because there's that derelict out there that's got to be attended to.' 'I ain't responsible for the derelict,' retorted the Captain; 'why don't you get your launch an' go out an' hang a dinner bell on it, or else get a couple of niggers to rig up a jury mast for it? The boys an' me have an important engagement,' an' he winked at his friends in a foxy way. 'I'm through with the briny deep until Monday mornin'.' 'You'll lose your job for this,' said the boss, tryin' to keep a straight face. 'Hurrah!' said Captin Bartin, 'back to the Bowery for mine. There's a few boats sailin' in and out around old Liberty. Do you know where Liberty is? We have almost forgot, we get so little of it in this outfit.' After dancin' a few steps of the 'Sailors' Hornpipe' he marches off the dock, followed by the fellows, all of them singin', 'We Won't Go Home Till Mornin'.'

"Just after the boys had gone, a time inspector hove into sight an' the boss said to him, in that dry way of his, 'There ain't nothin' for you to do to-night. The bunch has quit, an' I don't blame 'em. They're havin' a banquet.' 'You don't say,' said the inspector. 'Sure,' said the boss, 'an' 'tis kind of tough on me. I've got to go out to that derelict an' hang a scarecrow on it to keep the mosquitoes from breedin' in it. I'm blamed if I know what else to do with the darned thing.' 'Nor I,' says the time inspector. 'I been on a farm in Connecticut all my life, an' it makes me sicker'n a dog to go out in that launch to take the men's time. This ain't no job for me, nohow. I' guess I'll write to Ma an' tell her to see our Congressman, an' tell him to have me transferred to some inland place out of sight an' smell of this blamed old ocean.' 'Yes,' said the boss, dryly, 'you're too good a farmer to be fussin' about this dock. Suppose,' he went on, 'we go over to Buildin' Number One an' watch the boys gittin' drunk.' 'I'm on,' said the inspector, without hesitancy. 'You may,' said he, 'meet one of 'em that's half soused an' good-natured, that 'ud go out in the launch with you an' show you what to do with that machine you have jest been talkin' about.' 'Well, say, you are a farmer from Jones's woods,' replied the boss, laughin', an' walkin' off the dock.

"Well, sir, I walked off that dock and follered 'em, for I had been there takin' it all in. When we got to that hall, say! of all the fun and good fellowship! There was Captin Bartin dancin' the Highlan' Fling to the tune of 'Lass of Killiecrankie.' Every one was feelin' good, an' I was welcomed as heartily as the boss an' the inspector, though they didn't know any of us from Adam, they were so drunk. But, anyhow, I soon felt at home, an' it seemed as if I had known the bunch all my life. The place was decorated with palms an' plants an' flags, an' the supper tables showed up fine, with cut glass an' silver from Major Falstaff's own house an' the houses of the married members, for the committee said they wouldn't stand for three-pronged forks an' black-handled knives from the I. C. C. mess hall (they call it an hotel over there), not at that spread.

"Well, I met an old friend, an' he pointed out the different ones that were the leaders. A merry-lookin' little devil got up to make a speech, an', say! he sure could talk. Bryan, as an orator, couldn't hold a candle to him. 'Who's the

orator?' I asked. 'He's one of the fleet,' said my friend. 'He's German, but an American citizen.' 'He's away up on English,' said I. 'Yes,' said he. 'Shorty is a bright fellow, a graduate of Heidelberg, an' his brother is a professor there right now.' 'Why,' I spoke up, 'this is not only a dredgin' outfit you have here, but 'tis a floatin' university as well.' He was tickled to death at this, an' said, 'We fellows ain't nobody's fools over here. Do you see that good-lookin', inoffensive-appearin' chap over there?' he asked, pointin' toward a youngster that sure did look inoffensive. 'Yes,' I says, 'who is he?' 'He's the real thing in the manly art of boxin',' was the reply. 'He could lick any man in this hall to-night. The boys call him the Prince.' 'He looks like a kid,' I says. 'We call him that, too,' said he. 'The feller he's talkin' to is a Danish nobleman, with an Eytalian name; he was once an officer in the Danish Navy.' 'By gum!' said I, 'we guys at Balboa never'll get in on this association. We ain't grand enough.'

"At this point the voice of the orator rang out loud and clear. 'You men of the floatin' equipment are just as important to the great work of buildin' this Canal as those whose professions are of a higher order an' whose education is of the higher criticism. English, German, Danish and Scotch by descent, your veins reek with the wholesome blood of the Viking.' Then Captin Barton yelled, 'Come along, all ye Irish that ain't in on that Viking blood, an' we'll hit up the whiskey.' Then there were cheers, an' maybe we didn't! Well, we ate an' we drank, an' told stories; some of 'em was true an' some of 'em darned lies, but we all felt good an' noble an' brave, an' along toward mornin' an Eytalian Prince came in to take the photograph of the bunch. I was in it, though I hadn't ought to be, seein' I belong in Balboa, where we ain't got more gumption than a lot of dog-robbers, because we're afraid of Tam O'Shanter, as canny a Scot as ever sailed out of Glasgow.

"I been told since that when the gang showed up on the dock Monday mornin' to go to work the boss was fit to be tied. 'Why didn't you fellers show up yesterday?' said he. There was no response, but all grinned kind of sheepish. 'And you,' he said to Captin Bartin, 'you didn't show up yesterday. Were you sick?' The Captin took three steps to the right an' three steps to the left, an' broke down two or three steps of the 'Sailors' Hornpipe.' Then he said in the boss' ear, 'I was drunk.' 'Drunk?' said the boss, in amazement. 'Well, say! you've an awful nerve. Give me your doctor's certificate,' he added, with a sigh. 'Shure, you wouldn't have me compound a felony like that, would you?' said the Captin. Then the boss coughed kind of funny and said, 'Get aboard an' stop chewin' the rag.'

"An' me. I got back to Balboa half an hour too late to get on the job, and, thinks I, there's other jobs in the universe, so I'm goin' to take a day off an' get some rest. An' maybe I got the rest. Not on your life, for old Tam O'Shanter was on the job lookin' me up. He gumshoed up to my room, an' hearin' me snorin', yelled out, 'Hoot, mon, get ye up and pit on yer cloes an' come down on the job the noo.' I was savage. 'To h—l with the job,' I says, 'I'm sick.' 'Dinna ye fash wid yer clatter, or I'll pit me fist in yer eye,' says he. Well, I got up an' dressed an' went on the dredge, an' I'm on it yet. Tam O'Shanter likes me about as well as the devil likes holy water, but I don't care a rap for that old kilt, for he's one Scot with a yellow streak runnin' right through him from the top of his head to the top of his toes. He says there ain't talent enough in the U. S. A. to hold down his job, an' that's why he got it. It must be so; he ain't got no citizenship papers; if he has, they ain't bona fidy. See! Well, I'll have to be gittin back to the dock, or he'll be around peepin' an' reportin' that I have an affinity. So long, lady; I'm glad to have met you. The boys here in Balboa are all right, only they're a little short on gumption, that's all."

## THE DISTRICT QUARTERMASTERS.



IF the vast number of men employed on the Isthmus in an official way, no men have quite as much to endure as the District Quartermasters. They are the men who keep their hands on the pulse of things. They know what's what and who's who, regardless of the fact that the grandson of a Chief Justice of the United States takes second place in precedence to some horny-handed immigrant who, a few years ago, landed at Ellis Island. If you want to see human nature in its most primitive and unadorned vulgarity, just take a look in at the District Quartermaster's office any morning, or take a back seat and look on. Mrs. Jones has three children and she would like to move away from House 642 into the house across the way, because Mrs. Rickey has an affinity and she doesn't want that example for her children.

"The house across from you is assigned," says the Quartermaster.

"But what difference is that? The people that you gave it to can get assigned to ours," Mrs. Jones answers.

"We can't do that now," says the Q. M. "The people wouldn't like it."

"All right. I'll see the Colonel."

So Mrs. Jones goes out, and in comes Mr. Smith. You can tell that he is important, for his trappings are the most up-to-date mode, a la Canal Zone. He wants to move into class quarters. His salary is two dollars and eighty cents more than Higam's, and Mrs. Higam laughed at Mrs. Smith this morning and said, as she rolled her eyes, "You're not moving, I see."

"That woman ain't goin' to lord it over my wife, let me tell you. I'm sick to death of this business of favoritism, an' my wife'll have it fixed up this afternoon," says Smith. After which speech he goes out, caressing that mounted shark's tooth.

The Quartermaster sighs and looks resigned.

Now comes in a sunbeam of radiance, dressed in coolie lace and all the other coolie adornment. The Quartermaster looks attentive.

"Prout," she begins, exactly in a Mrs. Princely Belmont tone, "I want my kitchen painted. To-morrow morning they will start working at it."

"It was painted last winter," says the Quartermaster, getting red in the face, and you see that he is stung by the impudent tone of the woman's voice.

"Well, I want it done again, an' I don't want to have to come here another time to talk about it. I'm not used to dirt."

"You can be as clean as you like, but you can't get that done again this year."

"Then I want a married dresser. The one I have is a bachelor one."

"How is that?" gasps the Quartermaster. "Haven't you been here two years? Why haven't you told us before? Melbourne," he calls, and a shiny black gentleman appears promptly. "Why hasn't this lady been given a married dresser, when single ones are so scarce? She says she has only a single one. Didn't I tell you last week to round up all the single dressers and give the married folks married ones?"

"She didn't have room for the married one, so she said, sir," said Melbourne. "She's got three that she brought from the States with her, an' she said she is tryin' to sell 'em."

"Take a married dresser to that lady's house to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock. Good morning, madam."

"I want a new garbage can, a larger ice chest and two old rockers taken away and new ones put in their place."

"It will be impossible to make all those changes, madam. You will have to keep the rockers until later. We are short on rockers."

"Short on rockers?" echoes the coolie-clad lady, "and you gave that thing next door two rockers, but I'm of better family than she is, and I have to go without rockers."

"Her rockers were broken," says the Q. M.

"You're a liar," says the coolie-clad lady.

At this the Quartermaster makes a hasty retreat and the coolie-clad lady leaves to take the next train to Culebra.

Next comes a quiet little lady with a soft voice and engaging manners, who says that she would like to move into the pretty cottage across the street from her house. The Quartermaster has vanished with a hurt heart, and his assistant has taken his place, with a keen edge on for business for crisp females. "What's the trouble?" he asks, with a terrifying squint in his eye.

"Oh, my gracious! It will be impossible for me to live in the house with my neighbors."

"Why, what's the matter with 'em?"

"They are simply impossible. I cannot endure them. The woman hangs her clothes on the front porch to dry, and I feel horribly ashamed whenever my friends come; and it is extremely disagreeable to walk in and out under them."

"Well," says the assistant, "the lady must hang her clothes where they'll dry. Is that all?"

"The woman is horribly insulting, and refers to me as Mrs. Penpusher. I shall have to move into the little cottage, I fear."

"That's a good, cool house that you're in, and them people are first class."

"Oh, you are mistaken; they are Swedish peasants. It is a mistake that we were ever put into the house with such people. My husband's father is a Supreme Court Judge."

"That don't cut no ice down here; if he was the son of the Colonel himself he couldn't get them quarters with his salary. Why, them is \$225 quarters, and your husband is only a penpusher, like myself, an' only gettin' \$100 per, with a small ice chest an' wooden-seated chairs in the dinin' room. The quarters you're after is class quarters."

"What class, for pity sake?" asks the lady.

"Class of Canal Zone, of course," grinned the assistant, "an' that's sayin' something. Ferinstance, the people you're tryin' to get away from are class, with a big C. He gits \$250 per, an' he ought to have that house to himself, anyway."

The little woman, struggling to keep back her tears, left the place, after having bowed gracefully to the

assistant.

"There," said that gentleman, "that's what I call the cream de la cream of gentility, an' she's stuck in a house with a bunch of rough devils that ain't got no use for her. Say, ain't this class quarter business the limit, though? That lady is a graduate of Vasser College, an' the one she's in with is a squarehead. She used to be a porters in a Kansas City hotel. She has a voice on her like the sound of the drunk special, and when she wants anything she cusses us out for fair. I have her measured to an inch, and I sure feel sorry for that little lady that just went out. But what can we do?"

Now, there enters class, if there ever was class in this world. A woman clad in old rose satin, over which is draped black Spanish lace. Her hat and accessories are perfect. She is the wife of a carpenter and is about fifty years old. She tells in a calm, even voice that she wishes to move into class quarters, and that a woman whom she knows and likes wants the same house. They have decided to see the Quartermaster, and, as one is as much entitled to the house as the other, they'll leave it to the Quartermaster to decide.

"He ain't goin' to decide any more things to-day; he's fed up on quarters. I guess you folks had better go to Culebra. Where's the other one?"

"She's coming now," said the woman, whereupon there burst upon our vision the most Juno-like woman that we had ever seen. Tall and stately was she, with a figure that 'ud put Lillian Russell in the shade, with a pair of eyes that were not made for the good of the souls of Quartermasters' assistants, either.

"I mean to get that house," said she, smiling, and showing a set of beautiful white teeth. "My husband was on the Isthmus seven days before hers," said the Juno.

"He was not!" said the lace and roses.

"I know better!" said Juno, hotly. "There's only two of you, and a Type 14 house is good enough for you; but we have got to have a larger one, because our family is larger."

"Well, there, don't fight about it," said the Quartermaster's assistant. "Go to Culebra, and it'll be settled all right by the Colonel."

"That's what I'm going to do," said Juno. "This ain't no place to get justice."

"Well, you will have to hurry," said the assistant, looking at his watch. "Better run now; the train is coming."

Both women ran, and snarled at each other as they reached the street.

"The tall one'll get the house, if I know human nature," said the assistant. "And, say! ain't she the grandest thing that ever came down the pike!"

The Quartermaster came in, flustered, and said, as he dropped into his chair, "Those damned class quarters will be the death of us all. Branigan, you'll have to stay here to-morrow and face the bunch. I'm all in."

\* \* \*

Q. M. Branigan was luxuriously smoking what, from its aroma, might be called a good cigar; his office chair was tilted backward and his neat white canvas shoes were resting on the orderly desk. He wore a flaring red necktie, and that was the only note not in harmony with the peace prevailing in that calm, cool emporium. A look over his shoulder revealed the fact that he was reading "Barrack Room Ballads." It was twenty minutes before the time for opening. But a timid knock on the door, which was repeated many times, caused Mr. Branigan to frown and call out in a rather gruff tone, "What do you want?"

"To come in, of course," said a sweet voice through the keyhole. At this, Q. M. B. dropped the book and sprang to his feet, saying as he did so, with the sweetest smile imaginable, "Say, 'tis her, all right, and this is where I get it put all over me for fair." He smoothed his hair, pulled down his cuffs and, straightening his necktie, he hastily brushed the wrinkles out of his trousers. Then, and not until then, did he open the door. The audience felt a bit flustered, too, for who could enter that office but the Juno?

"Good morning," said she, with a merry flash of her fine eyes and a brilliant smile.

"Good morning," said Q. M. B. with a short cough.

"Did they telephone from Culebra that I was to be moved to-day?"

"Yes, indeed," said Q. M. B. "They telephoned that I was to put you into the most comfortable quarters in town."

"Class quarters, I suppose?"

"Well, no; 'er not now, but later you'll get 'em all right, if I'm on the job."

"But at Culebra they said I was to get them," stormed the Juno, getting very red in the face.

"Well, there, don't go to gettin' fussy about it. You ain't the only one that's got to put up with a house that ain't good enough; but, I'll tell you what: you won't have to go without it long, for I'll see to that."

"Oh, shucks!" said the Juno disgustedly, "you're a big bluff, that's what you are."

"My Gawd! I'm a bluff, am I?" exclaimed Q. M. Branigan, getting red in the face. "Well, say, the way I've worked for you about that class house is a caution."

"You can't bluff me; I'm on to you," answered the Juno, drawing on her gloves.

## OLD PANAMA'S RENAISSANCE.



OLD Panama is again becoming a scene of romance. Nothing can be more delightful than an automobile trip by moonlight to the scene of Morgan's piratical invasion. When your machine rounds the corner on the road to the ocean a warm wave is wafted to you on the breezes from the seawall. You take your fan and you fan and you fan yourself vigorously, but, as you draw nearer, the air becomes still warmer. The ruins stare you in the face, and your mind wanders back to the days when black-eyed señoritas strolled upon the bridge and through the lanes and byways, now overgrown with jungle weeds. You think to yourself, as the machine speeds on, how deserted the lovely spot is in the weird moonlight. You are nearing the beach, and, oh! the warmth, the delightful breeze, the moonlight, the odor of tropical lilies, and then your eyes behold a scene that makes you feel young again. Hand in hand, strolling in pairs, you behold lovers in the ecstasy of abandonment on the white sands. Lovers are kissing each other, right under your middle-aged eyes. Lovers are sitting on the sands holding hands, cheek to cheek, without any apparent fear of criticism.

"There's an automobile full of old folks," says a masculine voice, "so I guess I'd better let go of your hand."

"Who cares?" says the sweet voice of a girl. "We're not in Panama now. Let the old frumps stare."

There is a merry hum of voices, and a clinking of glasses under the rustic shed. Two men are busy making sandwiches, two others are busy serving cool drinks, the young people, and some that are not so awfully young, wander to and fro, arms entwined, or else they sit in the shadow of a rock and spoon. Dapper couples, black, white and brown, meander around in that warm, affectionate atmosphere without getting in the way of one another, because each couple is so absorbed in itself that it has no eyes for its neighbor. You look on approvingly, even though you are old, almost grey, and unloved. You forget your neighbors, who are like yourself, up in years and alone.

There are men swearing under their breath and mending tires that have been punctured on the rocky, unfinished roads of the Zone. There are voices singing "Casey Jones." There are voices singing "I Love You, I Love You, I Love You." There are voices singing "In the gloaming, oh, my darling, when the lights are dim and low," and this song of songs takes you back to a sea beach that is far away, to where "rosy dreams were dreamed when everything was what it seemed and every dream came true."

You hate to tear yourself away, but it is almost midnight and the machine is hired by the hour. So you step in and are whirled back to Panama, where the atmosphere is cooler, the scenes far less romantic, and where you are rudely awakened from your balmy dream in a sudden realization of fast-fleeting time by the price the garage empresario says you must pay. But, after all, the dream was worth the time, and money is of secondary consideration in a trip by moonlight to Old Panama.

## ABE LINCOLN'S FOUNDLING.



SOME months ago some American prospectors, while traveling in the interior of Panama, found, at some distance from human habitation, a pretty Indian boy. He appeared to be about three and a half years of age. The gentlemen asked him questions, but it appeared that he was unable to speak. Upon arriving in Panama they bought a goodly supply of clothing for the little lad, and before taking their departure for some other part of the interior they found a home for him with a native woman in the Chiriqui district, to whom they gave enough money to provide for the child until they should return, at which time it was thought that some one of the men would return to the States with the child and would put him in a school for mutes in New York. Physicians who were consulted agreed that the child was deaf and dumb, and plans were formulated to have him instructed in the language of the deaf and dumb by a competent teacher right away.

He was named Abe Lincoln, on account of a certain brightness of expression about his eyes, which reminded his benefactors of the great martyr. They had become very fond of the child, and had taught him many little tricks, which he would display for their amusement.

One of the gentlemen persisted in saying that the boy was not a mute, but that he had been twisted up in the English and Spanish languages; that he had been accustomed to some unknown patois, etc. The persons laughed at this who had declared the boy was unmistakably a deaf mute, and a teacher worked diligently, and with good results. The boy, being imitative, soon knew the motions of the mute alphabet, and his foster mother was so delighted that she went about telling every one of the neighbors.

The child is a general favorite, and has been playing with American children as much as with the Spanish boys of the neighborhood. Yesterday afternoon Abe was sitting on the door-step, whittling a stick, and, being bothered by a fly which hummed about his head, he said, with calmness, "Darn that fly!"

His adopted mother ran and called the other inmates of the house to hear Abe talk, and with delight a boy who spoke English said that he was talking Gringo, all right. On being asked if he was speaking English, he said, in clear accents, "I guess so. Sure!"

To-day scores of people are going back and forth to see the wonder. The physicians who pronounced the boy a mute appear to look upon him as a phenomenon, and one of the men, who rather likes the little chap, said to him, "Who taught you to speak?" The boy answered, "Americans. Sure!"

Hurrah! Much excitement prevails in the neighborhood, and Abe Lincoln is the hero of the hour.



## STRANGER THAN FICTION.



THIRTY-five years ago a whaling ship dropped anchor in the Bay of Panama and the captain and crew came ashore to see the sights. The mate of the ship, one Cyrus Pratt, a native of New Bedford, Mass., fell in love with a beautiful senorita named Marie Bennares. They were married, and soon after this Cyrus was obliged to sail away. With many tears and much love, the couple parted, with vows to become reunited in the near future. Cyrus intended to leave the ship at San Francisco and come back in haste to his darling Marie. But circumstances played strange freaks with the pair. In less than a year Cyrus returned, with a light of expectation in his eyes and love of a burning sort in his heart.

Marie had gone to live with relatives in Bogota. He set out for that distant city, but fell ill with fever and spent many months among Indians, who were kind to him and nursed him through the period of weakness incidental to such an illness. When he reached Bogota it was to find that Marie had gone to Jamaica. He followed, to find that she had returned to Panama. Then he followed her to Panama, to find that his sweet Marie had gone to Darien to live with an aunt. By about this time he was "broke," so he shipped on a barque that was bound for San Francisco. On arriving in that city he was obliged to take a ship bound for China, where he fell in with Chinese pirates. In one way and another he was tossed about the world, but by no possible chance did he get anywhere near Panama until a few weeks ago, when a ship on which he had taken passage from Rio de Janeiro cast anchor in the harbor of Colon. He crossed the Isthmus on the wings of love, to again pursue the bride of his youth. She had taken so strong a hold upon his imagination that he still pictured her as the winsome girl whom he married thirty-five years ago.

On arriving at Panama he wended his way to the old dwelling in the Chiriqui district, where the lovely Marie used to live. He found the house exactly as it looked in the old days. A large, good-natured, smiling, unkempt matron lounged in the doorway. She was surrounded by many children who played about her knees, and upon whom she smiled indulgently. Cyrus Pratt looked at the house from a safe retreat, in the hope of seeing his beautiful Marie emerge, at some time or other, when he expected to clasp her to his bosom, etc. He was sure that the stout woman in the doorway was Marie's aunt, who had grown larger and fatter in the days that had gone. Day after day he paced at a distance from the dwelling and anxiously watched for his old-time love. Toward evening he observed that a rather dark-skinned man would take a seat near the stout woman, who sat eternally in that doorway. The man would smoke and smoke in silence. At last Cyrus decided to address the smoker and make inquiries about his Marie. He was greeted coolly by the smoker, and on throwing out some hints he discovered that his Marie and the ample unkempt female who sat with folded arms amid the ninas were one and the same.

"Everything happens for the best," said Cyrus, as he hastened away from the spot. "Who would ever think that my beautiful Marie would look like that at fifty years? How in thunder will she look at sixty?"

"She thinks I died," said Cyrus to a friend; "or did she think at all?"

"I guess she didn't think much about you," consoled his confidante.

Cyrus, unlike Enoch Arden, is having a good time in Panama, and is happily forgetful of that awful tragedy that would have engulfed most men. Marie believes that the husband of her girlhood is dead, and she is happy in the thought that she has another man, that she is the mother of five children and the grandmother of ten. So, after all, every one is in the right. Cyrus at fifty-seven years is apparently in the prime of life; he has \$10,000 in his pocket or near at hand, and he is seeing the sights, and incidentally inspecting the balconies, in the hope of seeing another senorita who resembles the lost love of his youth. He says he will take another venture, and his friends are anxiously watching for the event, for Cyrus says that in all his rambles about the world he has never seen any girls as beautiful as the senoritas of Panama.

## FACTION FIGHTS.



It is proverbial that the Irish and Scotch will quarrel whenever they happen to cross the path of each other, just as they quarreled at the battle of the Boyne. There is less bloodshed, of course, but a fierce fire of antagonism burns in the breast of each, and words are exchanged that mean nothing beyond the out-pouring of that temperamental lava for which both races are justly renowned. There has been friction many times between the Irish and Scotch on the Isthmus, especially at Balboa, where, according to rumor, two men, bold, brave and strong, are ever "at it."

In this particular case the Scotchman is forever crossing the border into the territory over which the Irishman holds sway, and vice-versa. The men on the job have no little amusement listening to the faction fight. "Bad luck to him; he's been dumpin' his truck right here in me way agin. Go over an' tell him to have that road cleared or I'll be after callin' up Culebra, so I will," says the Irishman.

"Go back and tell him that I'll have it cleared the noo if he'll keep his muts from sassin' me when I'm talkie' to 'em for their own good when they put them piles right where I have to go down to the boat," answers the Scotchman.

It is needless to say that these messages lose nothing while being carried back and forth. Sometimes verbal messages, when repeated, sound something like this:

"Go over an' tell that fellow not to fash me wi' his clather, that I'm takin' no back talk, the noo from the Irish. May the duvvil take 'em!"

The message heatedly flashed back reads this way: "Ah tell him that 'tis only a man of Irish discint that he's tryin' to bully, a man that was born under the Stars and Stripes an' knows no other flag; a man that fought for the government that he's now workin' under."

And the Scotchman wittily replies: "He'd melt like a snowball in heaven if he was fightin' under some flags."

"Say! when is it ever goin' to stop?" ask their respective clans. "You'd ought to see that Irishman's eyes rollin' when he was spittin' fire this morning. And the Scotchman's hair was standin' on end an' he talked some lingo that no one could understand."

"That was broad Scotch, sir," puts in an English subject who knows something of the British Isles.

Sometimes they meet face to face, and the scrap is heated and amusing. With their factions ranged behind them trying to suppress their mirth at so much free fun, they jaw each other to their heart's content.

"What are all them niggers running for?" asked a man a few days ago. "Are they blasting up there?"

"No, there ain't no blastin up there. The niggers like to take a run down to the dock to hear the jaw, and, say, they're eatin' each other up to-day."

"Say, boss, the Colonel's car is comin'," says a trusted African to his Scottish chief.

"Wull, let it come, an' dinna ye bother me."

But an observing person can see that the lava ceases to flow as the noise of the wheels reach the ears of the warring ones.

"Get busy, there, ye fellows, an' move them piles. Don't ye see that the Colonel'll be along here in a minute? There he is now."

## SECOND PART

## THE WOES OF THE MANLY ONES.



AY! it's a limit, the way a guy has got to get through this life;  
He gets in a scrape if he's single, and it's hell to get on with a wife.  
I'm just like one of a thousand that are into a tangle now,  
I'd like to get out of it, Gawd knows, yes, but really I don't know how.  
In two little rooms on Fourteenth street, things are away askew,  
Two little brown kiddies their daddy meet, an' a brown girl white clear  
through,

Wait at the door and wonder why I ain't like I used to be,  
While on my heart there's an awful load, that I try not to let her see.  
The Colonel says that we guys must go; we ain't needed here no more;  
Dredges now are doin' the work that the shovels done before.  
An' I ain't got a cent of the money saved; I sent it all to the wife,  
Who went out West with a guy she loved; 'twas that one blighted my life.  
Five years ago I landed here; I was broke an' feelin' sick,  
An' the brown girl took an' loved me up, an' stuck to me like a brick;  
An' now I find it an effort to stick to her likewise;  
Say! any kind of a female is better than us male guys.  
Say, lady! don't you remember them words that Shakespeare said  
About a feller's sex settin' boldly on his head?  
Why didn't Gawd make us different when He put us here below;  
Why did He give me a conscience? That's what I'd like to know.  
There's Loring, an' Ives an' Phelan, in the same sort of mess as me;  
Loring is handsome an' bad clear through, an' he laughs an' says it's a spree.  
He laughed last night when he came to the park, an' sat with me on a bench,  
An' he said: "Cut out that mopin', kid; she's only a nigger wench."  
"But what about them kids?" says I, "ain't they part of my flesh and blood?"  
"It's been that way with us guys," says he, "since the time of the ark an' flood.  
If you take the bunch to New Orleans, you'll all get landed in gaol  
For a crime that ain't no crime at all, an' ye can't get out on bail.  
Leave her on Fourteenth street," says he, with a laugh that was loud an' rude,  
"An' some old Dutch guy will blow in some day an' will take care of the whole darn brood."  
But I know that she'll curse me if I go, an' I know that them curses fall;  
God knows in my life there's enough of woe; an' she's human, after all.

## THE FLIGHT OF THE MANLY ONES.



ORING and Ives and Phelan went off to Colon last night,  
And the women on Fourteenth street are sad, and the kids are filled with  
fright!

At eight last evening Loring came to bid his child "good-bye";  
He picked her up and he kissed her, and you ought to hear him sigh.  
"Gee! you're a pretty kid," says he, in a tone of voice that was sad;  
"Your lips and your skin are mighty good; it's a pity your hair is bad."  
Then he looked in the baby's eyes a while, and he says in a voice of despair:  
"I hate to leave this poor little child; there's my mother's image there!"

The brown one was crying to beat the band,  
And Loring, he looked wild,  
And says he to her, a kind of off-hand,  
"Woman! look after your child!  
This is no time for sentiment; bring the money you've kept for me;  
And God help you if you have it spent," says he, as he winked at me.

He counted the money out to her—five hundred and forty-five,  
And says he, "If you divvy this up with a guy I'll come and skin you alive.  
Take the kid from this place of stench, for I'm coming back some day—  
Not to see you, you doggone wench—to take my child away."

Two Voodoos were sitting and looking on; they intended to give him some dope  
That would make him sleep till the train had gone, After that there'd be little hope  
That he'd ever wake to things again—that are wholesome and clean and good.  
He'd thirst for low life without twinge of pain, if the Voodoos got dope to his blood.

Well, then we went out to Corozal, where the others were taking the train,  
And a white girl waited for Loring there, and her tears fell down like rain.  
He didn't seem to mind it at all; in fact, he looked rather proud,  
When a married woman ran up to him and kissed him before the crowd.  
Then Phelan and Ives, in an awful fright, got into the train mighty quick,  
For their women from Fourteenth street were there, and each had a gun and a brick.  
Gee! it's the limit, the way we guys will tamper with women's lives,  
When we have nothing in mind but to leave them behind, like Loring and Phelan and Ives.

## A WORD TO THE SLANDERED ONES.



EE! girl, you're looking sad, but it's hardly worth your while;  
You've heard the slander; it's mighty bad, but hold up your head and  
smile.

Keep cool, lest your hair turns grey; no matter how keen your sorrow,  
The man who slandered you so to-day will slander some other to-  
morrow.

He is only a tiny atom of dirt, like the rest of his kind of earth;  
His slanderous words may rankle and hurt, but 'twas envy that gave  
them birth.

If you have no brother or kindred man, why expect to see fun?

Seek your retreat where no vultures meet, and lead your life like a nun.

You're only a sex, and your presence vex the things that as man you know;

You've lost your good name, though you're not to blame—a vulture would have it so.

More than two thousand miles away is the class into which you were born;

The class where a man is a man each day, and your kind is not subject of scorn.

The things called men, who bandied your name over their glasses of booze,

Who made you the butt of their poker game, have nothing themselves to lose.

They of female kind, whom they happen to meet, do not belong to your sphere;

And most of the guys that you see on the street are subject to fits that are queer.

## MRS. WITH'S AFFINITY.



Man named Mike Maginity  
Was Mrs. With's affinity,  
And Mrs. Brown moved out of  
town,  
Away from that vicinity.

Then a mut named Jim O'Flarity,  
In a burst of fool garality,  
Told Mr. With there was no mith  
In Mrs. With's hilarity.

Mr. With was watchful then;  
He polished up his gun, and when  
The soul mate came he fired to maim,  
Like many other foolish men.

With is in the penitentiary,  
Without the least retrenchery,  
And calm and still, on Monkey Hill,  
Poor Mike will spend the century.

Mrs. With, in fetch array,  
And many kinds of wretchery,  
Was sent away one summer day—  
Deported home through treachery.

## THE TANGO SKIRT AND THE WOMAN.

**W**E had a jolly holdup in the Central house last night, and the way that Tango skirt was hung put the women in a fright. A preacher took a snapshot of that violent expose, and sent it off to Comstock, to New York, U. S. A. 'Twas fun to see the women steer their husbands out the door, and Murtha said, "We'll be doggoned if we'll dance here any more." --- bowed his head and blushed, and wore a look of shame, and the management felt awful, and said we're not to blame. The captains and lieutenants said that Tango was a sin, while the roughnecks and the vultures sat 'round and wore a grin. The learned judges from the Zone to the balconies went to look, and the only baldhead not around was that of Colonel Took. Poor Deeps and Jimmy Terry came in to take a squint; the dancers acted merry, but finally took a hint that their dancing was unseeming, as the females all were hurt, and Deeps put on his glasses to diagnose that skirt. He said 'twas sixteen inches wide, and just above the knee there's nothing but horizon, as every one can see; there's not a bit of cotton cloth, nor a tiny bit of lace—nothing but the electric light a-shining through the space. Then he turned to order drinks up, for the waiter came to him, and Terry he got busy and diagnosed a limb. There were shouts and shrieks of feeling and echoes of applause; men were drunk and reeling, went forth with loud haw-haws. The persons we call human, when all is said and done, at the antics of a woman looked on and called it fun.



## AN EPIC OF THE ZONE.

**P**ERCY BECKLE went out walking in the silent hours of night; the neighbors all were talking, and his wife was filled with fright. She would sit beside the window, her lone watch to keep, and would tell her friends and children he was walking in his sleep. She married him in Pottsville, for better or for worse; he was a hard-shell Baptist, and didn't smoke or curse; but he entered in the service of the U. S. Government, passed examination and to Panama was sent.

When the doctors looked him over it was found he had no brain, so they put him as a gumshoe on an early morning train, and there he met a charmer whose skin was very brown; for a year she took his coin away, and then she turned him down.

He then became a Redman, a thing he shouldn't do, and later thought it better to become a Kangaroo. He started chasing petticoats wherever one he saw, and the Kangaroos got after him; 'twas so against their law(?). Meantime his wife was hungry and his babies had no shoes; the Redmen took and threw him out, he didn't pay his dues; his poor wife took to drinking, to while the time away, and Mrs. C. L. E. sent her to Brooklyn, U. S. A.

Now, Percy kept the chase up for nigh another year; his business was to ascertain if females acted queer. The women feared to speak or look, they hated him so much, but Percy knew them like a book, being Pennsylvania Dutch.

He would go to Sam's on Sundays, and to the Central, too, and would sit and tell the vultures of the many things he knew. If he saw a female passing he would bow and scrape and smile, and if she turned her nose up he would criticize her style. (The brute!)

At last he went and sickened, he was feeling very sad; the plots he made had thickened, and the women all were mad. Decks said he had nephritis. They all pronounced him ill. But he died of feminitis, and he lies on Money Hill.

## THE VULTURES ON THE ZONE.

**T**O all the jolly roughnecks and pushers of the pen, a short and pungent lecture I will give. Just take this bit of doggerel, and read it if you're men, and use it as a lesson while you live. If you go to Sam's on Sunday, and you meet a smirking guy with commissary silk hose on his feet, if he smiles from ear to ear, make up your mind to hear a story that is anything but sweet. He will say I met last night Bill Smith's wife, that's right, an', say, that woman, she just follers me around, while poor Bill is all alone, for she never is at home, and any guy can get her if he's sound. If your blood is red, my son, you will take and draw your gun, and aim it at the gizzard of the brute, or you'll punch his booby head till he wishes he was dead and make of him a spectacle that's cute.

A chump that talks of women is nothing that is human; make up your mind he's just a low-down liar, who wouldn't stand a chance to win a passing glance from women who just live for men to hire. By the hundreds on the Zone this class of vultures roam; they are ever on the watch to pick a flaw; they covet neighbors' wives who are living decent lives, and to save their coin they'd break the moral law.

Now I hope you all are wise to the lying, boastful spies, who criticize their betters in the street, who pretend they're looking sly and who wink the other eye at every decent woman that they meet. When some vulture tries this chaff, just say, "You make me laugh," and hold him up to ridicule, the guy; you may bet your bottom dollar 'tis some gink that doesn't holler, that gets the precious favors on the sly.

## A FAKER'S FAREWELL.

**F**AREWELL, O thou land of sweet sunshine, where I walked with non-sweatable pace; I was fed, I was clothed, and I humbugged; my lady I decked out with grace. From the cake with sugary frosting all covered with raisins I go, to the land where the natives are often addicted to shoveling snow, where I shan't have a coon right before me to run when I bid for a thing, I go from the land of sweet loafing, where our Uncle George is the king.

Farewell, thou dear land of the Aztec, O, pulga, farewell, to thy sting, to the hum of the social mosquito, that Gorgas could trap while a-wing. Farewell to the nights of gay doing, to the mirth which I had on the sly, some kinds that I now am a-rueing, while our uncle just winked on the sly. When into a new job I sidle, somewhere in Nebraska's broad space, I ain't got enough to live idle, but I pray that the Lord give me grace, to find such a cinch unmolested, where no dictator ever shall say: "Your job I'm about to have vested, in a man who will work for his pay." O! politics, where are the graces the Irish have seen in thy wake? I've dropped into many soft places, and was ousted out just for your sake. But no job was ever as downy as this one, the truth here I tell. My bald brow is wrinkled and frowny; dear land of the Aztec, farewell!

## IT'S GOT 'EM.

**I**T'S got 'em, yes, it's got 'em; they're loco, one and all. There has never been as many since the time of Adam's fall. The man that lives across the way, the loved one of your soul; the guy who owes you money, all are loco on the whole. Yes, it's got 'em. Some are off on trotting, and some on love and wine; some are off on politics, and some are off on coin. It's got 'em; yes, it's got 'em, in many different ways; the women's skirts like trousers are, the men are wearing stays. It's got 'em.

While alighting from the train at night in your grimy khaki pants, don't wince to see your heart's delight all togged out for a dance; don't raise your eyes to look at her; be workmanlike and meek. She smiles on Major Dickelfer, she fears you're goin' to speak. For it's got her.

You'll find your kids a-cryin' 'round the brown-skinned hired girl, the neighbors all a-pryin', and your cassa in a whirl; with rats and bits of finery, with old stockings and old shoes. Don't go to geetin' squiffy; 'twas just the thing you choose. And it's got you. Don't fret and fume about it; take your commissary book, go down and get your groceries, and bring them to the cook. Then take your kids an' wash 'em up an' change their little frocks; see they get their suppers, then mend your pants and socks. And don't let it get you.

If your wife throws cups and saucers about your head at night, don't shriek and call the neighbors in to put 'em in a fright. Don't call on poor Johannes, and put him in a rage, but fold your arms about your breast, like a hero on the stage. She's got it.

If your neighbor's wife is flirting, don't run to call police, just flirt a little bit yourself or go your way in peace. Don't go to Sam's and sit and tell the vultures all she said when you took her for the auto ride to Panama with "Red." Or she'll get you.

## IT'S HELL.

**I**NGERSOLL said that hell would be where men played tag and harps all day, but just a few lines here will tell about some miseries that made a hell. When you work like a brute from morning to night, the result but another man's joy and delight; when your wife growls late and early, too, and never speaks well of what you do: That's hell!

When she runs away with another man, though she knows you are doing the best you can, you know it's because your pay ain't high, but you make up your mind that it's best to lie; so when folks ask you the reason why, you say her old mother is going to die. Then, lo! the old woman turns up that night, and your neighbors say: "He's a liar, all right." That's hell.

When some one you wouldn't let wipe your feet tells to the vultures in the street that to gain your affections they needn't try, that he's the petted gink on the sly, and some old gossip who this has heard comes round and tells you every word, your mind and soul are filled with dismay, but because you're a lady there's nothing to say. And it's hell.

When your dress and your hat cost you five, and you sewed on them nights when half alive, but when you wear them the neighbors smile, and say to each other, "just see that style—catch on to the Paris gown and hat; where did she get coin to dress like that? That rig is a mighty costly one—and I wonder her husband don't catch on." You smile as you trip through the merry throng, smarting under an awful wrong. And it's hell!

When you marry some mother's angel pet, who away from coddling you cannot get, just make up your mind to find a way to bear your burden day by day. And when his misdoings are laid to you, you'll say this old world is all askew. And it's hell!

## THE LOCO GERM.

**W**HEN it enters your system, don't try to squirm; just take your medicine, it's a loco germ. It may not come till you're old and gray, but every guy takes it on some day. It cuts no ice if her feet are big, and if in your heart you don't like her rig; if her hands are coarse and a little bit red, and horse-hair rats are in her head. You will see the defects and will says, "By Jove! She's the one for me." You're in love.

She'll be indifferent, it's just their way; a little bit selfish, a little bit gay, but she touched your hand and she makes you thrill; then lookout, old chap, you are losing your will. You'll notice the paint if she uses such, but you'll never think she has on too much. You'll see she ain't real, where she ought to be, and a thousand other defects you'll see. But, no matter, you only think of the bliss, of getting from her the fatal kiss. You're in love.

All your traditions are quite upset; what your mother taught you, you'll quite forget; you'll get suspicious of those you knew, and you'll think your pals are in love with her, too. You'll spend your coin, and you'll spend it well, on the richest things the Chinks have to sell, and you'll lay them down on the floor at her feet, and your heart will throb when her glance you meet. You're in love.

You may have cherished a grand ideal all your former days, but there's nothing real; the ones you knew in the days gone by will fade from your mind, and you will not sigh. The loved one's voice may be rather strong, her chin may be weak and her nose too long; her manners, too, are a little crude, and she isn't herself when she plays the prude. The grammar she uses is not in tone with the district school ma'am away back home. You're in love.

You are caught in a net she has woven for you—a net from which have escaped a few; and if on the whole she offends your taste, being forty-five inches about the waist, and if you don't fancy that seven shoe, never mind; she's the one for you. You'll forget and forgive if she has a past; you think you're her first real love, and her last. You are hot all over, your heart beats fast. You're in love.

## AN ISTHMIAN WOOPER.

**S**AY, girl, I admire your shape, an' I want to take you to ride. I'm goin' to get a coach closed in, so they won't know who's inside. An', say, I wish you lived down the line, but you live like a speakitty. Wouldn't you like a little time with a lovin' guy like me? Straight goods, I like your style; I told a feller so; I admired you for quite a while, an' I bet you didn't know. I said to a guy, "I'm goin' around an' I'll bet I'll make a hit." I won't never breathe a dog gone sound—let me love you up a bit. How could I squeal, when I have a wife that thinks me the finest thing that ever drew the breath of life, an angel without a wing? I'd like to bring you a bottle of jam, some day from the commissary, livin' alone without a man.

Say, kid, ain't you free to marry? Class! What's that got to do with us? Say, that puts me on the bum. Education, your foot! Don't make such a fuss; see, I brought you some chewin' gum. You're just a little too touchy, see! I don't understand your way. The wimmin I know are easy an' free, an' just a little bit gay. If I was just a man about town, don't you believe I'd look it? I like you, girl; don't wear such a frown! Do you think I'm a guy that's crooked? I'm not of your class? Oh, that's it, eh? Some chump that pushes a pen, that gets but a hundred a month for pay, is more in your line of men. Do you know what the Colonel said to me? an' I think he's always right. Education ain't worth a darn, says he; 'tis a man that puts up the fight. Well, so long, kid, since you prefer a guy that pushes a pen, who has his little hundred per, but ain't my class of men.

## PRESERVED PEACHES.

**T**HE chumps in Panama were glad to do the turkey trot, and other stunts not quite so bad that folks call tommy rot. When Morton with his peaches came, the cavaliers made bids, preserved them up in dry champagne, and acted just like kids. A banker now is bankrupt, and the guy in the Elite is selling out his socks and pants to put him on his feet. Raul E. has a broken limb, he capered so each night. The peaches all looked up to him because his heart was light.

We hoary heads came from the Zone, in force, to see it done, and spent our coin, lest it be thought we didn't like the fun. Our wives and mothers thought that we were at a mission church, listening to a sermon by the Rev. Baldhead Birch. And when we sought our peaceful homes with sanctimonious airs, and knelt beside our babies' cots and taught them little prayers, we felt a sort of sneakish, like other hypocrites, and worried lest our wives hear, and have a thousand fits. But now these spasms are all gone; we're quite ourselves again; our wives have never yet caught on, and therefore have felt no pain. The Morton Peaches were so wise, they took our coin away, and told us we were silly guys, like those along Broadway.



## EUGENICS.

**C**ATCH on to the girl with a dog on a string—a dog that was bred for the eye of a king—and she a pathetic figure to see, is proud that the mut has a pedigree. She studied eugenics for many a year, and lectured on institutions queer, but she was poor, and she feared to get old, so she sold herself for a pot of gold.

Ain't that life?

She married a guy whose toes turn in, when he opens his mouth he has no chin, no lobes to his ears and he stutters some, and chews on opium as if 'twas gum. But she says she is proud to be that man's wife, and calls him her dearest—

Say! Ain't that life?

On a little farther a chap you'll see, who is just as straight as a poplar tree; his chin is normal, his forehead is high; see, his face turns red as he passes her by, for down in his heart there's a tiny spot, where her image will ever lie unforgot, and a restless longing has he for her. If the neighborhood knew it he'd be called a cur.

Ain't that life?

As they pass each other they never speak. He looks indifferent, while she looks meek. And they drop their eyes when they chance to meet, and look at each other from some retreat. And she pretends that she doesn't care, though in her face you can see despair. Her heart beats high; it's an awful sin, but she'd like a son the image of him.

Ain't that life?

In her home there's a bundle of bone and skin; it has its father's ears and chin, and the neighbors say, with voices glad, "Isn't he cute? He looks like his dad!" But on her heart there's an awful load, for she sees that her baby's legs are bowed. She sees in his eyes a peculiar light, that keeps her awake in the dead of night. And she kneels on her knees and she breathes a prayer, for she knows that old Nature has gotten square.

That's life!

## TABOGA.

**T**HE latest order given out has made the chumps feel blue; they don't know what it's all about, but let me tell you, they've lost their graft, for when they go to the Isle across the bay they have to take their wallets, because they have to pay.

Some blame it all on Uncle Sam, and some on Uncle George, and others say he's not to blame, because his heart is large; but a guy told me, in confidence, who seldom ever speaks, that he isn't blaming any one but poor old baldhead Meeks.

Before that guy came back, said he, we could spend a little more on drinks and turkey trottings at Jones's by the short. There's one good thing about it, though, if you get a little tight, you're not an orphan chap no more; you can stay away all night. And if you stay out after nine, your time they cannot dock, since we began to pay our way we stay till twelve o'clock.

But, say! the wife won't let me go to the Isle across the bay, because she says we can't afford to pay two plunks a day. Should hubby rest, the wife will stay to mend the socks and pants; it cost too much to go with hub to learn the latest dance. To give good coin for rent and light and rest she can't endure; the future isn't looking bright, our graft is slipping sure.

## OUR UNCLE GEORGE.

**O**UR Uncle George is wide awake to things that are not so; he's weeding out for pity's sake the guys that ought to go. The vultures all are talking, they say he's acting queer, because he's on to faking ones that passed for highbrows here.

Our little faker daddy, with the whiskers on his chin, has gone to get a better job; now, isn't that a sin? He was the king of fakers, all whiskers and no soul; he didn't fake a single day when Uncle got control.

We hear that in Nebraska some folks are sawing wood that used to live in splendor here when faking times were good. If it was not for our Uncle they'd all be living still, in mansions fit for harem girls on Slyvan Ancon Hill. They say his nerve is getting weak, but he's only getting wise; he's handing out a line of dope that takes them by surprise. He has his wits about him yet, and his love for all things just, so when he says get up and get, the fakers know they must. Our Uncle has the helm, and he's steering mighty well; he fears no politicians, they all can go to heaven.

The fawners and the cringers think the Zone is all askew, but Uncle never did have use for that that was not true.

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\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DROLL STORIES OF ISTHMIAN LIFE \*\*\*

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