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underground vaults mingled with the reeking exhalations of linoleum and mildewed and rotten woodwork.

Then, suddenly, as he rested there, the room was filled with the strong, sweet odour of mignonette. It came as upon a single buffet of wind with such sureness and fragrance and emphasis that it almost seemed a living visitant. And the man cried aloud, 'What, dear?' as if he had been called, and sprang up and faced about. The rich odour clung to him and wrapped him about. He reached out his arms for it, all his senses for the time confused and commin- gled. How could one be peremptorily called by an odour? Surely it must have been a sound. But, was it not the sound that had touched, that had caressed him?

'She has been in this room,' he cried, and he sprang to wrest from it a token, for he knew he would recognize the smallest thing that had belonged to her or that she had touched. This enveloping scent of mignonette, the odour that she had loved and made her own - whence came it?

The room had been but carelesslyset in order. Scattered upon the flimsy dresser scarf were half a dozen hairpins - those discreet, indistinguishable friends of womankind, feminine of gender, infi- nite of mood and uncommunicative of tense. These he ignored, conscious of their triumphant lack of identity. Ransacking the drawers of the dresser he came upon a discarded, tiny, ragged handkerchief. He pressed it to his face. It was racy and insolent with heliotrope; he hurled it to the floor. In another drawer he found odd buttons, a theatre programme, a pawnbroker's card, two lost marshmallows, a book on the divination of dreams. In the last was a woman's black satin hair-bow, which halted him, poised between ice and fire. But the black satin hair-bow also is feminin- ity's demure, impersonal, common ornament, and tells no tales.

And then he traversed the room like a hound on the scent, skimming the walls, considering the corners of the bulging mat- ting on his hands and knees, rummaging mantel and tables, the curtains and hangings, the drunken cabinet in the corner, for a vis- ible sign unable to perceive that she was there beside, around, against, within, above him, clinging to him, wooing him, calling him so poignantly through the finer senses that even his grosser ones became cognizant of the call. Once again he answered loudly, 'Yes, dear!' and turned, wild-eyed, to gaze on vacancy, for he could not yet discern form and colour and love and outstretched arms in the odour of mignonette. Oh, God! whence that odour, and since when have odours had a voice to call? Thus he groped.

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He burrowed in crevices and corners, and found corks and ciga- rettes. These he passed in passive contempt. But once he found in a fold of the matting a half-smoked cigar, and this he ground beneath his heel with a green and trenchant oath. He sifted the room from end to end. He found dreary and ignoble small records of many a peripatetic tenant; but of her whom he sought, and who may have lodged there, and whose spirit seemed to hover there, he found no trace.

And then he thought of the housekeeper.

He ran from the haunted room downstairs and to a door that showed a crack of light. She came out to his knock. He smothered his excitement as best he could.

'Will you tell me, madam,' he besought her, 'who occupied the room I have before I came?'

'Yes, sir. I can tell you again. 'Twas Sprowls and Mooney, as I said. Miss B'retta Sprowls it was in the theatres, but Missis Mooney she was. My house is well known for respectability. The marriage certificate hung, framed, on a nail over- '

'What kind of a lady was Miss Sprowls - in looks, I mean?'

'Why, black-haired, sir, short and stout, with a comical face. They left a week ago Tuesday.'

'And before they occupied it?'

'Why, there was a single gentleman connected with the draying business. He left owing me a week. Before him was Missis Crowder and her two children, that stayed four months; and back of them was old Mr. Doyle, whose sons paid for him. He kept the room six months. That goes back a year, sir, and further I do not remember.'

He thanked her and crept back to his room. The room was dead. The essence that had vivified it was gone. The perfume of mignonette had departed. In its place was the old, stale odour of mouldy house furniture, of atmosphere in storage.

The ebbing of his hope drained his faith. He sat staring at the yellow, singing gaslight. Soon he walked to the bed and began to tear the sheets into strips. With the blade of his knife he drove them tightly into every crevice around windows and door. When all was snug and taut he turned out the light, turned the gas full on again and laid himself gratefully upon the bed.

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It was Mrs. McCool's night to go with the can for beer. So she fetched it and sat with Mrs. Purdy in one of those subterranean

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retreats where housekeepers foregather and the worm dieth seldom.

'I rented out my third floor back, this evening,' said Mrs. Purdy, across a fine circle of foam. 'A young man took it. He went up to bed two hours ago.

'Now, did ye, Mrs. Purdy, ma'am?' said Mrs. McCool, with intense admiration. 'You do be a wonder for rentin' rooms of that kind. And did ye tell him, then?' she concluded in a husky whisper, laden with mystery.

'Rooms,' said Mrs. Purdy, in her furriest tones, 'are furnished for to rent. I did not tell him, Mrs. McCool.'

' 'Tis right ye are, ma'am; 'tis by renting rooms we kape alive. Ye have the rale sense for business, ma'am. There be many people will rayjict the rentin' of a room if they be tould a suicide has been after dyin' in the bed of it.'

'As you say, we has our living to be making,' remarked Mrs, Purdy.

'Yis, ma'am; 'tis true. 'Tis just one wake ago this day I helped ye lay out the third floor back. A pretty slip of a colleen she was to be killin' herself wid the gas a swate little face she had, Mrs. Purdy, ma'am.'

'She'd a-been called handsome, as you say,' said Mrs. Purdy, assenting but critical, 'but for that mole she had a-growin' by her left eyebrow. Do fill up your glass again, Mrs. McCool.'

**XVII**

***The Brief Debut of Tildy***

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW Bogle's Chop House and Family Restau- rant it is your loss. For if you are one of the fortunate ones who dine expensively you should be interested to know how the other half consumes provisions. And if you belong to the half to whom waiters' checks are things of moment, you should know Bogle's, for there you get your money's worth - in quantity, at least.

Bogle's is situated in that highway of *bourgeoisie,* that boulevard of Brown-Jones-and-Robinson, Eighth Avenue. There are two rows of tables in the room, six in each row. On each table is a castor-stand, containing cruets of condiments and seasons. From the pepper cruet you may shake a cloud of something tasteless and melancholy, like volcanic dust. From the salt cruet you may

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'A very sad one,' says he, laying the points of his manicured fin- gers together. 'An utterly incorrigible girl. I am Special Terrestrial Officer the Reverend Jones. The case was assigned to me. The girl murdered her fiancéand committed suicide. She had no defence. My report to the court relates the facts in detail, all of which are substantiated by reliable witnesses. The wages of sin is death. Praise the Lord.'

The court officer opened the door and stepped out.

'Poor girl,' said Special Terrestrial Officer the Reverend Jones, with a tear in his eye. 'It was one of the saddest cases that I ever met with. Of course she was - '

'Discharged,' said the court officer. 'Come here, Jonesy. First thing you know you'll be switched to the pot-pie squad. How would you like to be on the missionary force in the South Sea Islands - hey? Now, you quit making these false arrests, or you'll be transferred - see? The guilty party you've got to look for in this case is a red-haired, unshaven, untidy man, sitting by the window reading, in his stocking feet, while his children play in the streets. Get a move on you.'

Now, wasn't that a silly dream?

**XXXIII**

***The Last Leaf***

IN A LITTLE DISTRICT west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called 'places.' These 'places' make strange angles and curves. One street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a 'colony.'

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. 'Johnsy' was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine, the other from California. They had met at the table d'hôte of an Eighth Street 'Delmonico's,' and found their tastes in

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art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy finger. Over on the East Side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown 'places.'

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gen- tleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by Californ- ian zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, grey eyebrow.

'She has one chance in - let us say, ten,' he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. 'And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopœia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?'

'She - she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day,' said Sue.

'Paint? - bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice - a man, for instance?'

'A man?' said Sue, with a jews'-harp twang in her voice. 'Is a man worth - but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind.'

'Well, it is the weakness, then,' said the doctor. 'I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten.'

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into

Johnsy's room with her drawing-board, whistling ragtime.  
Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she

was asleep.  
She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to

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illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting - counting backward.

'Twelve,' she said, and a little later, 'eleven'; and then 'ten,' and 'nine'; and then 'eight' and 'seven,' almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half-way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

'What is it, dear?' asked Sue.

'Six,' said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. 'They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now.'

'Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie.'

'Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?'

'Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,' complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. 'What have old ivy leaves to do with your get- ting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were - let's see exactly what he said - he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street-cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork- chops for her greedy self.'

'You needn't get any more wine,' said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window.

'There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go too.'

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'Johnsy, dear,' said Sue, bending over her, 'will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out of the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow. I need the light or I would draw the shade down.'

'Couldn't you draw in the other room?' asked Johnsy coldly.

'I'd rather be here by you,' said Sue. 'Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves.'

'Tell me as soon as you have finished,' said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, 'because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves.'

'Try to sleep,' said Sue. 'I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move till I come back.'

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mis- tress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in anyone, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly-lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

'Vass!' he cried. 'Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I vill not bose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der prain of her? Ach, dot poor little Miss Yohnsy.'

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'She is very ill arid weak,' said Sue, 'and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old - old flibberti-gibbet.'

'You are just like a woman!' yelled Behrman. 'Who said I vill not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf peen trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go avay. Gott! yes.'

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

'Pull it up! I want to see,' she ordered, in a whisper.  
Wearily Sue obeyed.  
But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had

endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, but with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.

'It is the last one,' said Johnsy. 'I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time.'

'Dear, dear!' said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow; 'think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?'

But Johnsy did not answer. The lonesomest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

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When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.  
Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to

Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.  
'I've been a bad girl, Sudie,' said Johnsy. 'Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and - no; bring me a hand-mirror first; and

then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook.'

An hour later she said -  
'Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples.'  
The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go

into the hallway as he left.  
'Even chances,' said the doctor, talking Sue's thin, shaking hand

in his. 'With good nursing you'll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is -- some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable.'

The next day the doctor said to Sue: 'She's out of danger. You've won. Nutrition and care now - that's all.'

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, con- tentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

'I have something to tell you, white mouse,' she said. 'Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and - look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece - he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell.'

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Presently Thomas moved tentatively in his seat, and thoughtfully felt an abrasion or two on his knees and elbows.

'Say, Annie,' said he confidentially, 'maybe it's one of the last dreams of the booze, but I've a kind of a recollection of riding in an automobile with a swell guy that took me to a house full of eagles and arc lights. He fed me on biscuits and hot air, and then kicked me down the front steps. If it was the *d t's,* why am I so sore?'

'Shut up, you fool,' said Annie.

'If I could find that funny guy's house,' said Thomas, in conclusion, 'I'd go up there some day and punch his nose for him.'

**XLVII**

***The Poet and the Peasant***

THE OTHER DAY a poet friend of mine, who has lived in close communication with nature all his life, wrote a poem and took it to an editor.

It was a living pastoral, full of the genuine breath of the fields, the song of birds, and the pleasant chatter of trickling streams.

When the poet called again to see about it, with hopes of a beefsteak dinner in his heart, it was handed back to him with the comment:

'Too artificial.'

Several of us met over spaghetti and Dutchess County chianti, and swallowed indignation with the slippery forkfuls.

And there we dug a pit for the editor. With us was Conant, a well-arrived writer of fiction - a man who had trod on asphalt all his life, and who had never looked upon bucolic scenes except with sensations of disgust from the windows of express trains.

Conant wrote a poem and called it 'The Doe and the Brook.' It was a fine specimen of the kind of work you would expect from a poet who had strayed with Amaryllis only as far as the florist's windows, and whose sole ornithological discussion had been car- ried on with a waiter. Conant signed this poem, and we sent it to the same editor.

But this has very little to do with the story.  
Just as the editor was reading the first line of the poem, on the

next morning, a being stumbled off the West Shore ferryboat, and loped slowly up Forty-second Street.

The invader was a young man with light blue eyes, a hanging

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lip, and hair the exact colour of the little orphan's (afterward dis- covered to be the earl's daughter) in one of Mr. Blaney's plays. His trousers were corduroy, his coat short-sleeved, with buttons in the middle of his back. One bootleg was outside the corduroys. You looked expectantly, though in vain, at his straw hat for ear-holes, its shape inaugurating the suspicion that it had been ravaged from a former equine possessor. In his hand was a valise - description of it is an impossible task; a Boston man would not have carried his lunch and law books to his office in it. And above one ear, in his hair, was a wisp of hay - the rustic's letter of credit, his badge of innocence, the last clinging touch of the Garden of Eden lingering to shame the goldbrick men.

Knowingly, smilingly, the city crowds passed him by. They saw the raw stranger stand in the gutter and stretch his neck at the tall buildings. At this they ceased to smile, and even to look at him. It had been done so often. A few glanced at the antique valise to see what Coney 'attraction' or brand of chewing-gum he might be thus dinning into his memory. But for the most part he was ignored. Even the newsboys looked bored when he scampered like a circus clown out of the way of cabs and street-cars.

At Eighth Avenue stood 'Bunco Harry,' with his dyed mous- tache and shiny, good-natured eyes. Harry was too good an artist not to be pained at the sight of an actor overdoing his part. He edged up to the countryman, who had stopped to open his mouth at a jewellery store window, and shook his head.

'Too thick, pal,' he said critically - 'too thick by a couple of inches.I don't know what your lay is; but you've got the properties on too thick. That hay, now - why, they don't even allow that on Proctor's circuit any more.'

'I don't understand you, mister,' said the green one. 'I'm not lookin' for any circus. I've just run down from Ulster County to look at the town, bein' that the hayin's over with. Gosh! but it's a whopper. I thought Poughkeepsie was some punkins; but this here town is five times as big.'

'Oh, well,' said 'Bunco Harry,' raising his eyebrows, 'I didn't mean to butt in. You don't have to tell. I thought you ought to tone down a little, so I tried to put you wise. Wish you success at your graft, whatever it is. Come and have a drink, anyhow.'

'I wouldn't mind having a glass of lager beer,' acknowledged the other.

They went to a caféfrequented by men with smooth faces and shifty eyes, and sat at their drinks.

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'I'm glad I come across you, mister,' said Haylocks. 'How'd you like to play a game or two of seven-up? I've got the keerds.'

He fished them out of Noah's valise - a rare, inimitable deck, greasy with bacon suppers and grimy with the soil of cornfields.

'Bunco Harry' laughed loud and briefly.

'Not for me, sport,' he said firmly. 'I don't go against that make-up of yours for a cent. But I still say you've overdone it. The Reubs haven't dressed like that since '79. I doubt if you could work Brooklyn for a key-winding watch with that lay-out.'

'Oh, you needn't think I ain't got the money,' boasted Hay- locks. He drew forth a tightly rolled mass or bills as large as a teacup, and laid it on the table.

'Got that for my share of grandmother's farm,' he announced. 'There's $950 in that roll. Thought I'd come into the city and look around for a likely business to go into.'

'Bunco Harry' took up the roll of money and looked at it with almost respect in his smiling eyes.

'I've seen worse,' he said critically. 'But you'll never do it in them clothes. You want to get light tan shoes and a black suit and a straw hat with a coloured band, and talk a good deal about Pitts- burg and freight differentials, and drink sherry for breakfast in order to work off phony stuff like that.'

'What's his line?' asked two or three shifty-eyed men of 'Bunco Harry' after Haylocks had gathered up his impugned money and departed.

'The queer, I guess,' said Harry. 'Or else he's one of Jerome's men. Or some guy with a new graft. He's too much hayseed. Maybe that his - I wonder now - oh no, it couldn't have been real money.'

Haylocks wandered on. Thirst probably assailed him again, for he dived into a dark groggery on a side-street and bought beer. Several sinister fellows hung upon one end of the bar. At first sight of him their eyes brightened; but when his insistent and exagger- ated rusticity became apparent their expressions changed to wary suspicion.

Haylocks swung his valise across the bar.

'Keep that awhile for me, mister,' he said, chewing at the end of a virulent claybank cigar. 'I'll be back after I knock around a spell. And keep your eye on it, for there's $950 inside of it, though maybe you wouldn't think so to look at me.'

Somewhere outside a phonograph struck up a band piece, and Haylocks was off for it, his coat-tail buttons flopping in the middle of his back.

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'Divvy? Mike,' said the men hanging upon the bar, winking openly at one another.

'Honest, now,' said the bartender, kicking the valise to one side. 'You don't think I'd fall to that, do you? Anybody can see he ain't no jay. One of McAdoo's come-on squad, I guess. He's a shine if he made himself up. There ain't no parts of the country now where they dress like that since they run rural free delivery to Providence, Rhode Island. If he's got nine-fifty in that valise it's a ninety-eight-cent Waterbury that's stopped at ten minutes to ten.'

When Haylocks had exhausted the resources of Mr. Edison to amuse he returned for his valise. And then down Broadway he gal- livanted, culling the sights with his eager blue eyes. But still and evermore Broadway rejected him with curt glances and sardonic smiles. He was the oldest of the 'gags' that the city must endure. He was so flagrantly impossible, so ultra-rustic, so exaggerated beyond the most freakish products of the barnyard, the hayfield and the vaudeville stage, that he excited only weariness and suspi- cion. And the wisp of hay in his hair was so genuine, so fresh and redolent of the meadows, so clamorously rural, that even a shell- game man would have put up his peas and folded his table at the sight of it.

Haylocks seated himself upon a flight of stone steps and once more exhumed his roll of yellow-backs from the valise. The outer one, a twenty, he shucked off and beckoned to a newsboy.

'Son,' said he, 'run somewhere and get this changed for me. I'm mighty nigh out of chicken feed; I guess you'll get a nickel if you'll hurry up.'

A hurt look appeared through the dirt on the newsy's face.

'Aw, watchert'ink! G'wan and get yer funny bill changed yerself. Dey ain't no farm clothes yer got on. G'wan wit yer stage money.'

On a corner lounged a keen-eyed steerer for a gambling- house. He saw Haylocks, and his expression suddenly grew cold and virtuous.

'Mister,' said the rural one. 'I've heard of places in this here town where a fellow could have a good game of old sledge or peg a card at keno. I got $950 in this valise, and I come down from old Ulster to see the sights. Know where a fellow could get action on about $9 or $10? I'm goin' to have some sport, and then maybe I'll buy out a business of some kind.'

The steerer looked pained, and investigated a white speck on his left forefinger nail.

'Cheese it, old man,' he murmured reproachfully. 'The Central

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Office must be bughouse to send you out looking like such a gillie. You couldn't get within two blocks of a sidewalk crap game in them Tony Pastor props. The recent Mr. Scotty from Death Valley has got you beat a crosstown block in the way of Eliza- bethan scenery and mechanical accessories. Let it be skiddoo for yours. Nay, I know of no gilded halls where one may bet a patrol wagon on the ace.'

Rebuffed again by the great city that is so swift to detect artifi- cialities, Haylocks sat upon the kerb and presented his thoughts to hold a conference.

'It's my clothes,' said he; 'durned if it ain't. They think I'm a hayseed and won't have nothin' to do with me. Nobody never made fun of this hat in Ulster County. I guess if you want folks to notice you in New York you must dress up like they do.'

So Haylocks went shopping in the bazaars where men spake through their noses and rubbed their hands and ran the tape line ecstatically over the bulge in his inside pocket where reposed a red nubbin of corn with an even number of rows. And messengers bearing parcels and boxes streamed to his hotel on Broadway within the lights of Long Acre.

At nine o'clock in the evening one descended to the sidewalk whom Ulster County would have forsworn. Bright tan were his shoes; his hat the latest block. His light grey trousers were deeply creased; a gay blue silk handkerchief flapped from the breast pocket of his elegant English walking-coat. His collar might have graced a laundry window; his blond hair was trimmed close; the wisp of hay was gone.

For an instant he stood, resplendent, with the leisurely air of a boulevardier concocting in his mind the route for his evening pleasures. And then he turned down the gay, bright street with the easy and graceful tread of a millionaire.

But in the instant that he had paused the wisest and keenest eyes in the city had enveloped him in their field of vision. A stout man with grey eyes picked two of his friends with a lift of his eyebrows from the row of loungers in front of the hotel.

'The juiciest jay I've seen in six months,' said the man with grey eyes. 'Come along.'

It was half-past eleven when a man galloped into the West Forty-seventh Street police-station with the story of his wrongs.

'Nine hundred and fifty dollars,' he gasped, 'all my share of grandmother's farm.'

The desk sergeant wrung from him the name Jabez Bulltongue,

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of Locust Valley Farm, Ulster County, and then began to take descriptions of the strong-arm gentlemen.

When Conant went to see the editor about the fate of his poem, he was received over the head of the office boy into the inner office that is decorated with the statuettes by Rodin and J . G. Brown.

'When I read the first line of "The Doe and the Brook," ' said the editor, 'I knew it to be the work of one whose life has been heart to heart with nature. The finished art of the line did not blind me to that fact. T o use a somewhat homely comparison, it was as if a wild, free child of the woods and fields were to don the garb of fashion and walk down Broadway. Beneath the apparel the man would show.'

'Thanks,' said Conant. 'I suppose the cheque will be round on Thursday, as usual.'

The morals of this story have somehow gotten mixed. You can take your choice of 'Stay on the Farm' or 'Don't write Poetry.'

**XLVIII**

***The Thing's the Play***

BEING ACQUAINTED WITH a newspaper reporter who had a couple of free passes, I got to see the performance a few nights ago at one of the popular vaudeville houses.

One of the numbers was a violin solo by a striking-looking man not much past forty, but with very grey, thick hair. Not being afflicted with a taste for music, I let the system of noises drift past my ears while I regarded the man.

'There was a story about that chap a month or two ago,' said the reporter. 'They gave me the assignment. It was to run a column and was to be on the extremely light and joking order. T h e old man seems to like the funny touch I give to local happenings. Oh yes, I'm working on a farce comedy now. Well, I went down to the house and got all the details; but I certainly fell down on that job. I went back and turned in a comic write-up of an east side funeral instead. Why? Oh, I couldn't seem to get hold of it with my funny hooks, somehow. Maybe you could make a one-act tragedy out of it for a curtain-raiser. I'll give you the details.'

After the performance my friend, the reporter, recited to me the facts over the Würzburger.

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racking, petitionary music of a violin. The hag, music, bewitches some of the noblest. The daws may peck upon one's sleeve with- out in injury, but whoever wears his heart upon his tympanum gets it not far from the neck.

This music and the musician called her, and at her side honour and the old love held her back.

'Forgive me,' he pleaded.

'Twenty years is a long time to remain away from the one you say you love,' she declared, with a purgatorial touch.

'How could I tell?' he begged. 'I will conceal nothing from you. That night when he left I followed him. I was mad with jealousy. On a dark street I struck him down. He did not rise. I examined him. His head had struck a stone. I did not intend to kill him. I was mad with love and jealousy. I hid near by and saw an ambu- lance take him away. Although you married him, Helen- '

*'Who are you?'* cried the woman, with wide-open eyes, snatching her hand away.

'Don't you remember me, Helen - the one who has always loved you the best? I am John Delaney. If you can forgive- '

But she was gone, leaping, stumbling, hurrying, flying up the stairs toward the music and him who had forgotten, but who had known her for his in each of his two existences, and as she climbed up she sobbed, cried and sang: 'Frank! Frank! Frank!'

Three mortals thus juggling with years as though they were bil- liard balls, and my friend, the reporter, couldn't see anything funny in it!

**XLІX**

*A Ramble in Aphasia*

MY WIFE AND I PARTED on that morning in precisely our usual manner. She left her second cup of tea to follow me to the front door. There she plucked from my lapel the invisible strand of lint (the universal act of woman to proclaim ownership) and bade me take care of my cold. I had no cold. Next came her kiss of parting - the level kiss of domesticity flavoured with Young Hyson. There was no fear of the extemporaneous, of variety spicing her infinite custom. With the deft touch of long malpractice, she dabbed awry my well-set scarf-pin; and then, as I closed the door, I heard her morning slippers pattering back to her cooling tea.

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When I set out I had no thought or premonition of what was to occur. The attack came suddenly.

For many weeks I had been toiling, almost night and day, at a famous railroad law case that I won triumphantly but a few days previously. In fact, I had been digging away at the law almost without cessation for many years. Once or twice good Doctor Volney, my friend and physician, had warned me.

'If you don't slacken up, Bellford,' he said, 'you'll go suddenly to pieces. Either your nerves or your brain will give way. Tell me, does a week pass in which you do not read in the papers of a case of aphasia - of some man lost, wandering nameless, with his past and his identity blotted out - and all from that little brain-clot made by overwork or worry?'

'I always thought,' said I, 'that the clot in those instances was really to be found on the brains of the newspaper reporters.'

Dr. V olney shook his head.

'The disease exists,' he said. 'You need a change or a rest. Court-room, office and home - there is the only route you travel. For recreation you - read law books. Better take warning in time.'

'On Thursday nights,' I said defensively, 'my wife and I play cribbage. On Sundays she reads to me the weekly letter from her mother. That law books are not a recreation remains yet to be established.'

That morning as I walked I was thinking of Doctor Volney's words. I was feeling as well as I usually did - possibly in better spirits than usual.

I awoke with stiff and cramped muscles from having slept long on the incommodious seat of a day coach. I leaned my head against the seat and tried to think. After a long time I said to myself: 'I must have a name of some sort.' I searched my pockets. Not a card; not a letter; not a paper or monogram could I find. But I found in my coat pocket nearly $3,000 in bills of large denomination. 'I must be someone, of course,' I repeated to myself, and began again to consider.

The car was well crowded with men, among whom I told myself, there must have been some common interest, for they intermingled freely, and seemed in the best good-humour and spirits. One of them - a stout, spectacled gentleman enveloped in a decided odour of cinnamon and aloes - took the vacant half of my seat with a friendly nod, and unfolded a newspaper. In the intervals between his periods of reading, we conversed, as travellers will, on current

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affairs. I found myself able to sustain the conversation on such sub- jects with credit, at least to my memory. By and by my companion said:

'You are one of us, of course. Fine lot of men the West sends in this time. I'm glad they held the convention in New York; I've never been East before. My name's R. P. Bolder - Bolder & Son, of Hickory Grove, Missouri.'

Though unprepared, I rose to the emergency, as men will when put to it. Now must I hold a christening, and be at once babe, parson and parent. My senses came to the rescue of my slower brain. The insistent odour of drugs from my companion supplied one idea; a glance at his newspaper, where my eye met a conspicuous advertisement, assisted me further.

'My name,' said I glibly, 'is Edward Pinkhammer. I am a drug- gist, and my home is in Cornopolis, Kansas.'

'I knew you were a druggist,' said my fellow-traveller affably. 'I saw the callous spot on your right forefinger where the handle of the pestle rubs. Of course, you are a delegate to our National Convention.'

'Are all these men druggists?' I asked wonderingly.

'They are. This car came through from the West. And they're your old-time druggists, too - none of your patent tablet-and-gran- ule pharmashootists that use slot machines instead of a prescription desk. We percolate our own paregoric and roll our own pills, and we ain't above handling a few garden seeds in the spring, and carry- ing a sideline of confectionery and shoes. I tell you, Hampinker, I've got an idea to spring on this convention - new ideas is what they want. Now, you know the shelf bottles of tartar emetic and Rochelle salt Ant. et Pot. Tart. and Sod. et Pot. Tart. - one's poison, you know, and the other's harmless. It's easy to mistake one label for the other. Where do druggists mostly keep 'em? Why, as far apart as possible, on different shelves. That's wrong. I say keep 'em side by side so when you want one you can always compare it with the other and avoid mistakes. Do you catch the idea?'

'It seems to me a very good one,' I said.

'All right! When I spring it on the convention you back it up. We'll make some of these Eastern orange-phosphate-and-mas- sage-cream professors that think they're the only lozenges in the market look like hypodermic tablets.'

'If I can be of any aid,' I said, warming, 'the two bottles of - er- '

'Tartrate of antimony and potash, and tartrate of soda and potash.'

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'Shall henceforth sit side by side,' I concluded firmly.

'Now, there's another thing,' said Mr. Bolder. 'For an excipient in manipulating a pill mass which do you prefer - the magnesia carbonate or the pulverized glycerrhiza radix?'

'The - er - magnesia,' I said. It was easier to say than the other word.

Mr. Bolder glanced at me distrustfully through his spectacles. 'Give me the glycerrhiza,' said he. 'Magnesia cakes.'  
'Here's another one of these fake aphasia cases,' he said,

presently, handing me his newspaper, and laying his finger upon an article. 'I don't believe in 'em. I put nine out of ten of 'em down as frauds. A man gets sick of his business and his folks and wants to have a good time. He skips out somewhere, and when they find him he pretends to have lost his memory - don't know his own name, and won't even recognize the strawberry mark on his wife's left shoulder. Aphasia! Tut! Why can't they stay at home and forget?'

I took the paper and read, after the pungent headlines, the fol- lowing:

'DENVER, June 12. - Elwyn C. Bellford, a prominent lawyer, is mysteri- ously missing from his home since three days ago, and all efforts to locate him have been in vain. Mr. Bellford is a well-known citizen of the highest stand- ing, and has enjoyed a large and lucrative law practice. He is married and owns a fine home and the most extensive private library in the State. On the day of his disappearance, he drew quite a large sum of money from his bank. No one can be found who saw him after he left the bank. Mr. Bellford was a man of singularly quiet and domestic tastes, and seemed to find his happiness in his home and profession. If any clue at all exists to his strange disappear- ance, it may be found in the fact that for some months he had been deeply absorbed in an important law case in connection with the Q. Y. and Z. Rail- road Company. It is feared that overwork may have affected his mind. Every effort is being made to discover the whereabouts of the missing man.'

'It seems to me you are not altogether uncynical Mr. Bolder,' I said, after I had read the despatch. 'This has the sound, to me, of a genuine case. Why should this man, prosperous, happily married and respected, choose suddenly to abandon everything? I know that these lapses of memory do occur, and that men do find themselves adrift without a name, a history or a home.'

'Oh, gammon and jalap!' said Mr. Bolder. 'It's larks they're after. There's too much education nowadays. Men know about aphasia, and they use it for an excuse. The women are wise, too.

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When it's all over they look you in the eye, as scientific as you please, and say: "He hypnotized me." '

Thus Mr. Bolder diverted, but did not aid me with his com- ments and philosophy.

We arrived in New York about ten at night. I rode in a cab to an hotel, and I wrote my name 'Edward Pinkhammer' in the regis- ter. As I did so I felt pervade me a splendid, wild, intoxicating buoyancy - a sense of unlimited freedom, of newly attained possi- bilities. I was just born into the world. The old fetters - whatever they had been - were stricken from my hands and feet. The future lay before me a clear road such as an infant enters, and I could set out upon it equipped with a man's learning and experience.

I thought the hotel clerk looked at me five seconds too long. I had no baggage.

'The Druggists' Convention,' I said. 'My trunk has somehow failed to arrive.' I drew out a roll of money.

'Ah!' said he, showing an auriferous tooth, 'we have quite a number of the W estern delegates stopping here.' He struck a bell for the boy.

I endeavoured to give colour to my rôle.

'There is an important movement on foot among us Western- ers,' I said, 'in regard to a recommendation to the convention that the bottles containing the tartrate of antimony and potash, and the tartrate of sodium and potash, be kept in a contiguous position on the shelf.'

'Gentleman to three-fourteen,' said the clerk hastily. I was whisked away to my room.

The next day I bought a trunk and clothing, and began to live the life of Edward Pinkhammer. I did not tax my brain with endeavours to solve problems of the past.

It was a piquant and sparkling cup that the great island city held up to my lips. I drank of it gratefully. The keys of Manhattan belong to him who is able to bear them. You must be either the city's guest or its victim.

The following few days were as gold and silver. Edward Pinkhammer, yet counting back to his birth by hours only, knew the rare joy of having come upon so diverting a world full-fledged and unrestrained. I sat entranced on the magic carpets provided in theatres and roof-gardens, that transported one into strange and delightful lands full of frolicsome music, pretty girls and grotesque, drolly extravagant parodies upon humankind. I went here and there at my own dear will, bound by no limits of space,

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time or comportment. I dined in weird cabarets, at weirder tables d'hôte to the sound of Hungarian music and the wild shouts of mercurial artists and sculptors. Or, again, where the night life quivers in the electric glare like a kinetoscopic picture, and the millinery of the world, and its jewels, and the ones whom they adorn, and the men who make all three possible are met for good cheer and the spectacular effect. And among all these scenes that I have mentioned I learned one thing that I never knew before. And that is that the key to liberty is not in the hands of Licence, but Convention holds it. Comity has a toll-gate at which you must pay, or you may not enter the land of Freedom. In all the glitter, the seeming disorder, the parade, the abandon, I saw this law, unobtrusive, yet like iron, prevail. Therefore, in Manhattan you must obey these unwritten laws, and then you will be freest of the free. If you decline to be bound by them, you put on shackles.

Sometimes, as my mood urged me, I would seek the stately, softly murmuring palm-rooms, redolent with high-born life and delicate restraint, in which to dine. Again I would go down to the waterways in steamers packed with vociferous, bedecked, unchecked, love-making clerks and shop-girls to their crude plea- sures on the island shores. And there was always Broadway - glis- tening, opulent, wily, varying, desirable Broadway - growing upon one like an opium habit.

One afternoon as I entered my hotel a stout man with a big nose and a black moustache blocked my way in the corridor. When I would have passed around him, he greeted me with offensive familiarity.

'Hallo, Bellford!' he cried loudly. 'What the deuce are you doing in New York? Didn't know anything could drag you away from that old book den of yours. Is Mrs. B. along or is this a little business run alone, eh?'

'You have made a mistake, sir,' I said coldly, releasing my hand from his grasp. 'My name is Pinkhammer. You will excuse me.'

The man dropped to one side, apparently astonished. As I walked to the clerk's desk I heard him call to a bell-boy and say something about telegraph blanks.

'You will give me my bill,' I said to the clerk, 'and have my bag- gage brought down in half an hour. I do not care to remain where I am annoyed by confidence men.'

I moved that afternoon to another hotel, a sedate, old-fashioned one on lower Fifth Avenue.

There was a restaurant a little way off Broadway where one

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could be served almost *alfresco* in a tropic array of screening flora. Quiet and luxury and a perfect service made it an ideal place in which to take luncheon or refreshment. One afternoon I was there picking my way to a table among the ferns when I felt my sleeve caught.

'Mr. Bellford!' exclaimed an amazingly sweet voice.

I turned quickly to see a lady seated alone - a lady of about thirty, with exceedingly handsome eyes, who looked at me as though I had been her very dear friend.

'You were about to pass me,' she said accusingly. 'Don't tell me you did not know me. Why should we not shake hands - at least once in fifteen years?'

I shook hands with her at once. I took a chair opposite her at the table. I summoned with my eyebrows a hovering waiter. The lady was philandering with an orange ice. I ordered a *crème de menthe.* Her hair was reddish bronze. You could not look at it, because you could not look away from her eyes. But you were con- scious of it as you are conscious of sunset while you look into the profundities of a wood at twilight.

'Are you sure you know me?' I asked.  
'No,' she said, smiling, 'I was never sure of that.'  
'What would you think,' I said, a little anxiously, 'if I were to

tell you that my name is Edward Pinkhammer, from Cornopolis, Kansas.'

'What would I think?' she repeated, with a merry glance. 'Why, that you had not brought Mrs. Bellford to New York with you, of course. I do wish you had. I would have liked to see Marian.' Her voice lowered slightly - 'You haven't changed much, Elwyn.'

I felt her wonderful eyes searching mine and my face more closely.

'Yes, you have,' she amended, and there was a soft, exultant note in her latest tones; 'I see it now. You haven't forgotten. You haven't forgotten for a year or a day or an hour. I told you you never could.'

I poked my straw anxiously in the *crème de menthe.*'I'm sure I beg your pardon,' I said, a little uneasy at her gaze. 'But that is just the trouble. I have forgotten. I've forgotten

everything.'  
She flouted my denial. She laughed deliciously at something she

seemed to see in my face.  
'I've heard of you at times,' she went on. 'You're quite a big

lawyer out West - Denver, isn't it, or Los Angeles? Marian must

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be very proud of you. You knew, I suppose, that I married six months after you did. You may have seen it in the papers. The flowers alone cost two thousand dollars.'

She had mentioned fifteen years. Fifteen years is a long time.

'Would it be too late,' I asked somewhat timorously, 'to offer you congratulations?'

'Not if you dare do it,' she answered, with such fine intrepidity that I was silent, and began to crease patterns on the cloth with my thumb-nail.

'Tell me one thing,' she said, leaning toward me rather eagerly - 'a thing I have wanted to know for many years - just from a woman's curiosity, of course - have you ever dared since that night to touch, smell or look at white roses - at white roses wet with rain and dew?'

I took a sip of *crème de menthe.*It would be useless, I suppose,' I said, with a sigh, 'for me

to repeat that I have no recollection at all about these things. My memory is completely at fault. I need not say how much I regret it.'

The lady rested her arms upon the table, and again her eyes dis- dained my words and went travelling by their own route direct to my soul. She laughed softly, with a strange quality in the sound - it was a laugh of happiness yes, and of content - and of misery. I tried to look away from her.

'You lie, Elwyn Bellford,' she breathed blissfully. 'Oh, I know you lie!'

I gazed dully into the ferns.

'My name is Edward Pinkhammer,' I said. 'I came with the del- egates to the Druggists' National Convention. There is a move- ment on foot for arranging a new position for the bottles of tartrate of antimony and tartrate of potash, in which, very likely, you would take little interest.'

A shining landau stopped before the entrance. The lady rose. I took her hand, and bowed.

'I am deeply sorry,' I said to her, 'that I cannot remember. I could explain, but fear you would not understand. You will not concede Pinkhammer; and I really cannot at all conceive of the - the roses and other things.'

'Good-bye, Mr. Bellford,' she said, with her happy, sorrowful smile, as she stepped into her carriage.

I attended the theatre that night. When I returned to my hotel, a quiet man in dark clothes, who seemed interested in rubbing his

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finger-nails with a silk handkerchief, appeared, magically, at my side.

'Mr. Pinkhammer,' he said casually, giving the bulk of his atten- tion to his forefinger, 'may I request you to step aside with me for a little conversation? There is a room here.'

'Certainly,' I answered.

He conducted me into a small, private parlour. A lady and a gentleman were there. The lady, I surmised, would have been unusually good-looking had her features not been clouded by an expression of keen worry and fatigue. She was of a style of figure and possessed colouring and features that were agreeable to my fancy. She was in a travelling-dress; she fixed upon me an earnest look of extreme anxiety, and pressed an unsteady hand to her bosom. I think she would have started forward, but the gentleman arrested her movement with an authoritative motion of his hand. He then came, himself, to meet me. He was a man of forty, a little grey about the temples, and with a strong, thoughtful face.

'Bellford, old man,' he said cordially, 'I'm glad to see you again. Of course we know everything is all right. I warned you, you know, that you were overdoing it. Now, you'll go back with us, and be yourself again in no time.'

I smiled ironically.

'I have been "Bellforded" so often,' I said, 'that it has lost its edge. Still, in the end, it may grow wearisome. Would you be will- ing at all to entertain the hypothesis that my name is Edward Pinkhammer, and that I never saw you before in my life?'

Before the man could reply a wailing cry came from the woman. She sprang past his detaining arm. 'Elwyn!' she sobbed, and cast herself upon me, and clung tight. 'Elwyn,' she cried again, 'don't break my heart. I am your wife - call my name once - just once! I could see you dead rather than this way.'

I unwound her arms respectfully, but firmly.

'Madam,' I said severely, 'pardon me if I suggest that you accept a resemblance too precipitately. It is a pity,' I went on, with an amused laugh, as the thought occurred to me, 'that this Bellford and I could not be kept side by side upon the same shelf like tartrates of sodium and antimony for purposes of identifica- tion. In order to understand the allusion,' I concluded airily, 'it may be necessary for you to keep an eye on the proceedings of the Druggists' National Convention.'

The lady turned to her companion, and grasped his arm. 'What is it, Doctor Volney? Oh, what is it?' she moaned.

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He led her to the door.

'Go to your room for awhile,' I heard him say. 'I will remain and talk with him. His mind? No, I think not - only a portion of the brain. Yes, I am sure he will recover. Go to your room and leave me with him.'

The lady disappeared. The man in dark clothes also went out- side, still manicuring himself in a thoughtful way. I think he waited in the hall.

'I would like to talk with you a while, Mr. Pinkhammer, if I may,' said the gentleman who remained.

'Very well, if you care to,' I replied, 'and will excuse me if I take it comfortably; I am rather tired.' I stretched myself upon a couch by a window and lit a cigar. He drew a chair near by.

'Let us speak to the point,' he said soothingly. 'Your name is not Pinkhammer.'

'I know that as well as you do,' I said coolly. 'But a man must have a name of some sort. I can assure you that I do not extrava- gantly admire the name of Pinkhammer. But when one christens one's self, suddenly the fine names do not seem to suggest them- selves. But suppose it had been Scheringhausen or Scroggins! I think I did very well with Pinkhammer.'

'Your name,' said the other man seriously, 'is Elwyn C. Bellford. You are one of the first lawyers in Denver. You are suffering from an attack of aphasia, which has caused you to forget your identity. The cause of it was over-application to your profession, and, per- haps, a life too bare of natural recreation and pleasures. The lady who has just left the room is your wife.'

'She is what I would call a fine-looking woman,' I said, after a judicial pause. 'I particularly admire the shade of brown in her hair.'

'She is a wife to be proud of. Since your disappearance, nearly two weeks ago, she has scarcely closed her eyes. W e learned that you were in New York through a telegram sent by Isidore Newman, a travelling man from Denver. He said that he had met you in an hotel here, and that you did not recognize him.'

'I think I remember the occasion,' I said. 'The fellow called me "Bellford," if I am not mistaken. But don't you think it about time, now, for you to introduce yourself?'

'I am Robert Volney - Doctor Volney. I have been your close friend for twenty years, and your physician for fifteen. I came with Mrs. Bellford to trace you as soon as we got the telegram. Try, Elwyn, old man - try to remember!'

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'What's the use to try!' I asked, with a little frown. 'You say you are a physician. Is aphasia curable? When a man loses his memory, does it return slowly, or suddenly?'

'Sometimes gradually and imperfectly; sometimes as suddenly as it went.'

'Will you undertake the treatment of my case, DoctorVolney?' I asked.

'Old friend,' said he, 'I'll do everything in my power, and will have done everything that science can do to cure you.'

'Very well,' said I. 'Then you will consider that I am your patient. Everything is in confidence now - professional confidence.'

'Of course,' said Doctor Volney.

I got up from the couch. Someone had set a vase of white roses on the centre table - a cluster of white roses freshly sprinkled and fragrant. I threw them far out of the window, and then I laid myself upon the couch again.

'It will be best, Bobby,' I said, 'to have this cure happen sud- denly. I'm rather tired of it all, anyway. You may go now and bring Marian in. But, oh, Doc,' I said, with a sigh, as I kicked him on the shin - 'good old Doc - it was glorious!'

**L**

***A Municipal Report***

The cities are full of pride, Challenging each to each -

This from her mountainside,  
That from her burthened beach.

Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee! There are just three big cities in the United States that are 'story cities' - New York, of course, New Orleans, and, best of the lot, San Francisco. - FRANK NORRIS.

EAST IS EAST, and W est is San Francisco, according to Californi- ans. Californians are a race of people; they are not merely inhabi- tants of a State. They are the Southerners of the West. Now, Chicagoans are no less loyal to their city; but when you ask them why, they stammer and speak of lake fish and the new Odd Fellows Building. But Californians go into detail.

R. KIPLING.

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Of course they have, in the climate, an argument that is good for half an hour while you are thinking of your coal bills and heavy underwear. But as soon as they come to mistake your silence for conviction, madness comes upon them, and they picture the city of the Golden Gate as the Bagdad of the New World. So far, as a matter of opinion, no refutation is necessary. But, dear cousins all (from Adam and Eve descended), it is a rash one who will lay his finger on the map and say: 'In this town there can be no romance - what could happen here?' Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and McNally.

NASHVILLE. - A city, port of delivery, and the capital of the State of Ten- nessee, is on the Cumberland River and on the N.C. & St. L. and the L. & N. railroads. This city is regarded as the most important educational centre in the South.

I stepped off the train at 8 p.m. Having searched the thesaurus in vain for adjectives, I must, as a substitution, hie me to comparison in the form of a recipe.

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20 parts; dewdrops, gathered in a brickyard at sunrise, 25 parts; odour of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix.

The mixture will give you an approximate conception of a Nashville drizzle. It is not so fragrant as a moth-ball nor as thick as pea-soup; but 'tis enough - 'twill serve.

I went to an hotel in a tumbril. It required strong self-suppres- sion for me to keep from climbing to the top of it and giving an imitation of Sidney Carton. The vehicle was drawn by beasts of a bygone era and driven by something dark and emancipated.

I was sleepy and tired, so when I got to the hotel I hurriedly paid it the fifty cents it demanded (with approximate lagniappe, I assure you). I knew its habits; and I did not want to hear it prate about its old 'marster' or anything that happened 'befo' de wah.'

The hotel was one of the kind described as 'renovated.' That means $20,000 worth of new marble pillars, tiling, electric lights and brass cuspidors in the lobby, and a new L. & N. time table and a lithograph of Lookout Mountain in each one of the great rooms above. The management was without reproach, the atten- tion full of exquisite Southern courtesy, the service as slow as the progress of a snail and as good-humoured as Rip Van Winkle. The food was worth travelling a thousand miles for. There is no

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other hotel in the world where you can get such chicken livers *en brochette.*

At dinner I asked a negro waiter if there was anything doing in town. He pondered gravely for a minute, and then replied: 'Well, boss, I don't really reckon there's anything at all doin' after sundown.'

Sundown had been accomplished; it had been drowned in the drizzle long before. So that spectacle was denied me. But I went forth upon the streets in the drizzle to see what might be there.

It is built on undulating grounds; and the streets are lighted by electricity at a cost of $32,470 per annum.

As I left the hotel there was a race riot. Down upon me charged a company of freedmen, or Arabs, or Zulus, armed with - no, I saw with relief that they were not rifles, but whips. And I saw dimly a caravan of black, clumsy vehicles; and at the reassuring shouts, 'Kyar you anywhere in the town, boss, fuh fifty cents,' I reasoned that I was merely a 'fare' instead of a victim.

I walked through long streets, all leading uphill. I wondered how those streets ever came down again. Perhaps they didn't until they were 'graded.' On a few of the 'main streets' I saw lights in stores here and there; saw street-cars go by conveying worthy burghers hither and yon; saw people pass engaged in the art of conversation, and heard a burst of semi-lively laughter issuing from a soda-water and ice-cream parlour. The streets other than 'main' seemed to have enticed upon their borders houses consecrated to peace and domesticity. In many of them lights shone behind discreetly drawn window shades; in a few pianos tinkled orderly and irreproachable music. There was, indeed, little 'doing.' I wished I had come before sundown. So I returned to my hotel.

In November, 1864, the Confederate General Hood advanced against Nashville, where he shut up a National force under General Thomas. The latter then sallied forth and defeated the confederates in a terrible conflict.

All my life I have heard of, admired, and witnessed the fine markmanship of the South in its peaceful conflicts in the tobacco- chewing regions. But in my hotel a surprise awaited me. There were twelve bright, new, imposing, capacious brass cuspidors in the great lobby, tall enough to be called urns and so wide- mouthed that the crack pitcher of a lady baseball team should

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have been able to throw a ball into one of them at five paces dis- tant. But, although a terrible battle had raged and was still raging, the enemy had not suffered. Bright, new, imposing, capacious, untouched, they stood. But shades of Jefferson Brick! the tile floor - the beautiful tile floor! I could not avoid thinking of the battle of Nashville, and trying to draw, as is my foolish habit, some deductions about hereditary markmanship.

Here I first saw Major (by misplaced courtesy) Wentworth Caswell. I knew him for a type the moment my eyes suffered from the sight of him. A rat has no geographical habitat. My old friend, A. Tennyson, said, as he so well said almost everything:

'Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the rat.'

Let us regard the word 'British' as interchangeable *ad lib.* A rat is a rat.

This man was hunting about the hotel lobby like a starved dog that had forgotten where he had buried a bone. He had a face of great acreage, red, pulpy, and with a kind of sleepy massiveness like that of Buddha. He possessed one single virtue - he was very smoothly shaven. The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a man until he goes about with a stubble. I think that if he had not used his razor that day I would have repulsed his advances, and the criminal calendar of the world would have been spared the addi- tion of one murder.

I happened to be standing within five feet of a cuspidor when Major Caswell opened fire upon it. I had been observant enough to perceive that the attacking force was using Gatlings instead of squirrel rifles; so I side-stepped so promptly that the major seized the opportunity to apologize to a non-combatant. He had the blabbing lip. In four minutes he had become my friend and had dragged me to the bar.

I desire to interpolate here that I am a Southerner. But I am not one by profession or trade. I eschew the string tie, the slouch hat, the Prince Albert, the number of bales of cotton destroyed by Sherman, and plug chewing. When the orchestra plays Dixie I do not cheer. I slide a little lower on the leather-cornered seat and, well, order another Würzburger and wish that Longstreet had - but what's the use?

Major Caswell banged the bar with his fist, and the first gun at Fort Sumter re-echoed. When he fired the last one at Appomattox

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I began to hope. But then he began on family trees, and demon- strated that Adam was only a third cousin of a collateral branch of the Caswell family. Genealogy disposed of, he took up, to my dis- taste, his private family matters. He spoke of his wife, traced her descent back to Eve, and profanely denied any possible rumour that she may have had relations in the land of Nod.

By this time I began to suspect that he was trying to obscure by noise the fact that he had ordered the drinks, on the chance that I would be bewildered into paying for them. But when they were down he crashed a silver dollar loudly upon the bar. Then, of course, another serving was obligatory. And when I had paid for that I took leave of him brusquely; for I wanted no more of him. But before I had obtained my release he had prated loudly of an income that his wife received, and showed a handful of silver money.

When I got my key at the desk the clerk said to me courteously: 'If that man Caswell has annoyed you, and if you would like to make a complaint, we will have him ejected. He is a nuisance, a loafer, and without any known means of support, although he seems to have some money most the time. But we don't seem to be able to hit upon any means of throwing him out legally.'

'Why, no,' said I, after some reflection; 'I don't see my way clear to making a complaint. But I would like to place myself on record as asserting that I do not care for his company. Your town,' I continued, 'seems to be a quiet one. What manner of entertain- ment, adventure, or excitement have you to offer to the stranger within your gates?'

'Well, sir,' said the clerk, 'there will be a show here next Thurs- day. It is - I'll look it up and have the announcement sent up to your room with the ice water. Good night.'

After I went up to my room I looked out of the window. It was only about ten o'clock, but I looked upon a silent town. The driz- zle continued, spangled with dim lights, as far apart as currants in a cake sold at the Ladies' Exchange.

'A quiet place,' I said to myself, as my first shoe struck the ceil- ing of the occupant of the room beneath mine. 'Nothing of the life here that gives colour and variety to the cities in the East and West. Just a good, ordinary, humdrum business town.'

Nashville occupies aforemostplace among the manufacturing centres of the country. It is the fifth boot and shoe market in the United States, the largest candy and cracker manufacturing city in the South, and does an enormous wholesale dry goods, grocery and drug business.

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I must tell you how I came to be in Nashville, and assure you the digression brings as much tedium to me as it does to you. I was travelling elsewhere on my own business, but I had a com- mission from a Northern literary magazine to stop over there and establish a personal connection between the publication and one of its contributors, Azalea Adair.

Adair (there was no clue to the personality except the handwrit- ing) had sent in some essays (lost art!) and poems that had made the editors swear approvingly over their one o'clock luncheon. So they had commissioned me to round up said Adair and corner by contract his or her output at two cents a word before some other publisher offered her ten or twenty.

At nine o'clock the next morning, after my chicken livers *en bro*- *chette* (try them if you can find that hotel), I strayed out into the drizzle, which was still on for an unlimited run. At the first corner I came upon Uncle Cæsar. He was a stalwart negro, older than the pyramids, with grey wool and a face that reminded me of Brutus, and a second afterwards of the late King Cetewayo. He wore the most remarkable coat that I ever had seen or expect to see. It reached to his ankles and had once been a Confederate grey in colours. But rain and sun and age had so variegated it that Joseph's coat, beside it, would have faded to a pale monochrome. I must linger with that coat for it has to do with the story - the story that is so long in coming, because you can hardly expect anything to happen in Nashville.

Once it must have been the military coat of an officer. The cape of it had vanished, but all adown its front it had been frogged and tasselled magnificently. But now the frogs and tassels were gone. In their stead had been patiently stitched (I surmised by some sur- viving 'black mammy') new frogs made of cunningly twisted common hempen twine. This twine was frayed and dishevelled. It must have been added to the coat as a substitute for vanished splendours, with tasteless but painstaking devotion, for it followed faithfully the curves of the long-missing frogs. And, to complete the comedy and pathos of the garment, all its buttons were gone save one. The second button from the top alone remained. The coat was fastened by other twine strings tied through the button- holes and other holes rudely pierced in the opposite side. There was never such a weird garment so fantastically bedecked and of so many mottled hues. The lone button was the size of a half-dollar, made of yellow horn and sewed on with coarse twine.

This negro stood by a carriage so old that Ham himself might

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have started a hack line with it after he left the ark with the two animals hitched to it. As I approached he threw open the door, drew out a leather duster, waved it, without using it, and said in deep, rumbling tones:

'Step right in, suh; ain't a speck of dust in it - jus' back from a funeral, suh.'

I inferred that on such gala occasions carriages were given an extra cleaning. I looked up and down the street and perceived that there was little choice among the vehicles for hire that lined the kerb. I looked in my memorandum book for the address of Azalea Adair.

'I want to go to 861 Jessamine Street,' I said, and was about to step into the hack. But for an instant the thick, long, gorilla-like arm of the old negro barred me. On his massive and saturnine face a look of sudden suspicion and enmity flashed for a moment. Then, with quickly returning conviction, he asked blandishingly: 'What are you gwine there for, boss?'

'What is that to you?' I asked a little sharply.

'Nothin', suh, jus' nothin'. Only it's a lonesome kind of part of town and few folks ever has business out there. Step right in. The seats is clean - jes' got back from a funeral, suh.'

A mile and a half it must have been to our journey's end. I could hear nothing but the fearful rattle of the ancient hack over the uneven brick paving; I could smell nothing but the drizzle, now further flavoured with coal smoke and something like a mixture of tar and oleander blossoms. All I could see through the streaming windows were two rows of dim houses.

The city has an area of 10 square miles; 181 miles of streets, of which 137 miles are paved; a system of waterworks that cost $2,000,000, with 77 miles of mains.

Eight-sixty-one Jessamine Street was a decayed mansion. Thirty yards back from the street it stood, outmerged in a splendid grove of trees and untrimmed shrubbery. A row of box bushes over- flowed and almost hid the paling fence from sight; the gate was kept closed by a rope noose that encircled the gate-post and the first paling of the gate. But when you got inside you saw that 861 was a shell, a shadow, a ghost of former grandeur and excellence. But in the story, I have not yet got inside.

When the hack had ceased from rattling and the weary quadrupeds came to a rest I handed my jehu his fifty cents with an

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additional quarter, feeling a glow of conscious generosity as I did so. He refused it.

'It's two dollars, suh,' he said.

'How's that?' I asked. 'I plainly heard you call out at the hotel: "Fifty cents to any part of the town." '

'It's two dollars, suh,' he repeated obstinately. 'It's a long ways from the hotel.'

'It is within the city limits and well within them,' I argued. 'Don't think that you have picked up a greenhorn Yankee. Do you see those hills over there?' I went on, pointing toward the east (I could not see them, myself, for the drizzle); 'well, I was born and raised on their other side. You old fool nigger, can't you tell people from other people when you see em?'

The grim face of King Cetewayo softened. 'Is you from the South, suh? I reckon it was them shoes of yourn fooled me. There is somethin' sharp in the toes for a Southern gen'l'man to wear.'

'Then the charge is fifty cents, I suppose?' said I inexorably.

His former expression, a mingling of cupidity and hostility, returned, remained ten minutes, and vanished.

'Boss,' he said, 'fifty cents is right; but *I needs* two dollars, suh; I'm *obleeged* to have two dollars. I ain't *demandin'* it now, suh; after I knows whar you's from; I'm jus' sayin' that I *has* to have two dollars to-night, and business is mighty po'.'

Peace and confidence settled upon his heavy features. He had been luckier than he had hoped. Instead of having picked up a greenhorn, ignorant of rates, he had come upon an inheritance.

'You confounded old rascal,' I said, reaching down into my pocket, 'you ought to be turned over to the police.'

For the first time I saw him smile. He knew; *he knew;* HE KNEW .

I gave him two one-dollar bills. As I handed them over I noticed that one of them had seen parlous times. Its upper right-hand corner was missing, and it had been torn through in the middle but joined again. A strip of blue tissue-paper, pasted over the split, preserved its negotiability.

Enough of the African bandit for the present: I left him happy, lifted the rope and opened the creaky gate.

The house, as I said, was a shell. A paint-brush had not touched it in twenty years. I could not see why a strong wind should not have bowled it over like a house of cards until I looked again at the trees that hugged it close - the trees that saw the battle of Nashville and still drew their protecting branches around it against storm and enemy and cold.

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Azalea Adair, fifty years old, white-haired, a descendant of the cavaliers, as thin and frail as the house she lived in, robed in the cheapest and cleanest dress I ever saw, with an air as simple as a queen's, received me.

The reception-room seemed a mile square, because there was nothing in it except some rows of books, on unpainted, white-pine bookshelves, a cracked, marble-top table, a rag rug, a hairless horse- hair sofa and two or three chairs. Yes, there was a picture on the wall, a coloured crayon drawing of a cluster of pansies. I looked around for the portrait of Andrew Jackson and the pine-cone hanging basket, but they were not there.

Azalea Adair and I had conversation, a little of which will be repeated to you. She was a product of the old South, gently nur- tured in the sheltered life. Her learning was not broad, but was deep and of splendid originality in its somewhat narrow scope. She had been educated at home, and her knowledge of the world was derived from inference and by inspiration. Of such is the precious, small group of essayists made. While she talked to me, I kept brushing my fingers, trying, unconsciously, to rid them guiltily of the absent dust from the half-calf backs of Lamb, Chaucer, Hazlitt, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne and Hood. She was exquis- ite, she was a valuable discovery. Nearly everybody nowadays knows too much - oh, so much too much - of real life.

I could perceive clearly that Azalea Adair was very poor. A house and a dress she had, not much else, I fancied. So, divided between my duty to the magazine and my loyalty to the poets and essayists who fought Thomas in the valley of the Cumberland, I listened to her voice, which was like a harpsichord's, and found that I could not speak of contracts. In the presence of the Nine Muses and the Three Graces one hesitated to lower the topic to two cents. There would have to be another colloquy after I had regained my commercialism. But I spoke of my mission, and three o'clock of the next afternoon was set for the discussion of the business proposition.

'Your town,' I said, as I began to make ready to depart (which is the time for smooth generalities), 'seems to be a quiet, sedate place. A home town, I should say, where few things out of the ordinary ever happen.'

It carries on an extensive trade in stoves and hollow ware with the West and South, and its flouring mills have a daily capacity of more than 2,000 barrels.

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Azalea Adair seemed to reflect.

'I have never thought of it that way,' she said, with a kind of sin- cere intensity that seemed to belong to her. 'Isn't it in the still, quiet places that things do happen? I fancy that when God began to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have leaned out one's windows and heard the drop of mud splashing from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills. What did the noisiest project in the world - I mean the building of the tower of Babel - result in finally? A page and a half of Esperanto in the *North American Review.'*

'Of course,' said I platitudinously, 'human nature is the same everywhere; but there is more colour - er - more drama and movement and - er - romance in some cities than in others.'

'On the surface,' said Azalea Adair. 'I have travelled many times around the world in a golden airship wafted on two wings - print and dreams. I have seen (on one of my imaginary tours) the Sultan of Turkey bow-string with his own hands one of his wives who had uncovered her face in public. I have seen a man in Nashville tear up his theatre tickets because his wife was going out with her face covered - with rice powder. In San Francisco's Chinatown I saw the slave girl Sing Yee dipped slowly, inch by inch, in boiling almond oil to make her swear she would never see her American lover again. She gave in when the boiling oil had reached three inches above her knee. At a euchre party in East Nashville the other night I saw Kitty Morgan cut dead by seven of her schoolmates and lifelong friends because she had married a house painter. The boiling oil was sizzling as high as her heart; but I wish you could have seen the fine little smile that she carried from table to table. Oh yes, it is a humdrum town.

Just a few miles of redbrick houses and mud and stores and lumber yards.'

Someone knocked hollowly at the back of the house. Azalea Adair breathed a soft apology and went to investigate the sound. She came back in three minutes with brightened eyes, a faint flush on her cheeks, and ten years lifted from her shoulders.

'You must have a cup of tea before you go,' she said, 'and a sugar cake.'

She reached and shook a little iron bell. In shuffled a small negro girl about twelve, bare-foot, not very tidy, glowering at me with thumb in mouth and bulging eyes.

Azalea Adair opened a tiny, worn purse and drew out a dollar bill, a dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn in

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two pieces and pasted together again with a strip of blue tissue- paper. It was one of the bills I had given the piratical negro - there was no doubt of it.

'Go up to Mr. Baker's store on the corner, Impy,' she said, handing the girl the dollar bill, 'and get a quarter of a pound of tea - the kind he always sends me - and ten cents worth of sugar cakes. Now, hurry. The supply of tea in the house happens to be exhausted,' she explained to me.

Impy left by the back way. Before the scrape of her hard, bare feet had died away on the back porch, a wild shriek - I was sure it was hers - filled the hollow house. Then the deep, gruff tones of an angry man's voice mingled with the girl's further squeals and unintelligible words.

Azalea Adair rose without surprise or emotion and disappeared. For two minutes I heard the hoarse rumble of the man's voice; then something like an oath and a light scuffle, and she returned calmly to her chair.

'This is a roomy house,' she said, 'and I have a tenant for part of it. I am sorry to have to rescind my invitation to tea. It was impos- sible to get the kind I always use at the store. Perhaps to-morrow Mr. Baker will be able to supply me.'

I was sure that Impy had not had time to leave the house. I inquired concerning street-car lines and took my leave. After I was well on my way I remembered that I had not learned Azalea Adair's name. But to-morrow would do.

That same day I started in on the course of iniquity that this uneventful city forced upon me. I was in the town only two days, but in that time I managed to lie shamelessly by telegraph, and to be an accomplice - after the fact, if that is the correct legal term - to a murder.

As I rounded the corner nearest my hotel the Afrite coachman of the polychromatic, nonpareil coat seized me, swung open the dungeony door of his peripatetic sarcophagus, flirted his feather duster and began his ritual: 'Step right in, boss. Carriage is clean - jus' got back from a funeral. Fifty cents to any- '

And then he knew me and grinned broadly. ' 'Scuse me, boss; you is de gen'l'man what rid out with me dis mawnin'. Thank you kindly, suh.'

'I am going out to 861 again to-morrow afternoon at three,' said I, 'and if you will be here, I'll let you drive me. So you know Miss Adair?' I concluded, thinking of my dollar bill.

'I belonged to her father, Judge Adair, suh,' he replied.

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'I judge that she is pretty poor,' I said. 'She hasn't much money to speak of, has she?'

For an instant I looked again at the fierce countenance of King Cetewayo, and then he changed back to an extortionate old negro hack-driver.

'She a'n't gwine to starve, suh,' he said slowly. 'She has reso'ces, suh; she has reso'ces.'

'I shall pay you fifty cents for the trip,' said I.

'Dat is puffeckly correct, suh,' he answered humbly; 'I jus' *had* to have dat two dollars dis mawnin, boss.'

I went to the hotel and lied by electricity. I wired the magazine: 'A. Adair holds out for eight cents a word.'

The answer that came back was: 'Give it to her quick, you duffer.'

Just before dinner 'Major' Wentworth Caswell bore down upon me with the greetings of a long-lost friend. I have seen few men whom I have so instantaneously hated, and of whom it was so dif- ficult to be rid. I was standing at the bar when he invaded me; therefore I could not wave the white ribbon in his face. I would have paid gladly for the drinks, hoping thereby to escape another, but he was one of those despicable, roaring, advertising bibbers who must have brass bands and fireworks attend upon every cent that they waste in their follies.

With an air of producing millions he drew two one-dollar bills from a pocket and dashed one of them upon the bar. I looked once more at the dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn through the middle, and patched with a strip of blue tissue-paper. It was my dollar bill again. It could have been no other.

I went up to my room. The drizzle and the monotony of a dreary, eventless Southern town had made me tired and listless. I remember that just before I went to bed I mentally disposed of the mysterious dollar bill (which might have formed the clue to a tremendously fine detective story of San Francisco) by saying to myself sleepily: 'Seems as if a lot of people here own stock in the Hack-Driver's Trust. Pays dividends promptly, too. Wonder if- ' Then I fell asleep.

King Cetewayo was at his post the next day, and rattled my bones over the stones out to 861. He was to wait and rattle me back again when I was ready.

Azalea Adair looked paler and cleaner and frailer than she had looked on the day before. After she had signed the contract at eight cents per word she grew still paler and began to slip out of her chair.

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Without much trouble I managed to get her up on the antediluvian horsehair sofa and then I ran out to the sidewalk and yelled to the coffee-coloured Pirate to bring a doctor. With a wisdom that I had not suspected in him, he abandoned his team and struck off up the street afoot, realizing the value of speed. In ten minutes he returned with a grave, grey-haired and capable man of medicine. In a few words (worth much less than eight cents each) I explained to him my presence in the hollow house of mystery. He bowed with stately understanding, and turned to the old negro.

'Uncle Cæsar,' he said calmly, 'run up to my house and ask Miss Lucy to give you a cream pitcher full of fresh milk and half a tum- bler of port wine. And hurry back. Don't drive - run. I want you to get back some time this week.'

It occurred to me that Dr. Merriman also felt a distrust as to the speeding powers of the landpirate's steeds. After Uncle Cæsar was gone, lumberingly, but swiftly, up the street, the doctor looked me over with great politeness and as much careful calculation until he had decided that I might do.

'It is only a case of insufficient nutrition,' he said. 'In other words, the result of poverty, pride, and starvation. Mrs. Caswell has many devoted friends who would be glad to aid her, but she will accept nothing except from that old negro, Uncle Cæsar, who was once owned by her family.'

'Mrs. Caswell!' said I, in surprise. And then I looked at the contract and saw that she had signed it 'Azalea Adair Caswell.'

'I thought she was Miss Adair,' I said.

'Married to a drunken, worthless loafer, sir,' said the doctor. 'It is said that he robs her even of the small sums that her old servant contributes toward her support.'

When the milk and wine had been brought, the doctor soon revived Azalea Adair. She sat up and talked of the beauty of the autumn leaves that were then in season, and their height of colour. She referred lightly to her fainting seizure as the outcome of an old palpitation of the heart. Impy fanned her as she lay on the sofa. The doctor was due elsewhere, and I followed him to the door. I told him that it was within my power and intentions to make a reasonable advance of money to Azalea Adair on future contributions to the magazine, and he seemed pleased.

'By the way,' he said, 'perhaps you would like to know that you have had royalty for a coachman. Old Cæsar's grandfather was a king in Congo. Cæsar himself has royal ways, as you may have observed.'

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As the doctor was moving off I heard Uncle Cæsar's voice inside: 'Did he git bofe of dem two dollars from you, Mis' Zalea?'

'Yes, Cæsar,' I heard Azalea Adair answer weakly. And then I went in and concluded business negotiations with our contributor. I assumed the responsibility of advancing fifty dollars, putting it as a necessary formality in binding our bargain. And then Uncle Cæsar drove me back to the hotel.

Here ends all the story as far as I can testify as a witness. The rest must be only bare statements of facts.

At about six o'clock I went out for a stroll. Uncle Cæsar was at his corner. He threw open the door of his carriage, flourished his duster and began his depressing formula: 'Step right in, suh. Fifty cents to anywhere in the city - hack's puffickly clean, suh - jus' got back from a funeral- '

And then he recognized me. I think his eyesight was getting bad. His coat had taken on a few more faded shades of colour, the twine strings were more frayed and ragged, the last remaining button - the button of yellow horn - was gone. A motley descen- dant of kings was Uncle Caesar.

About two hours later I saw an excited crowd besieging the front of a drug store. In a desert where nothing happens this was manna; so I edged my way inside. On an extemporized couch of empty boxes and chairs was stretched the mortal corporeality of Major Wentworth Caswell. A doctor was testing him for the immortal ingredient. His decision was that it was conspicuous by its absence.

The erstwhile Major had been found dead on a dark street and brought by curious and ennuied citizens to the drug store. The late human being had been engaged in terrific battle - the details showed that. Loafer and reprobate though he had been, he had been also a warrior. But he had lost. His hands were yet clenched so tightly that his fingers would not be opened. The gentle citi- zens who had known him stood about and searched their vocabu- laries to find some good words, if it were possible, to speak of him. One kind-looking man said, after much thought: 'When "Cas" was about fo'teen he was one of the best spellers in school.'

While I stood there the fingers of the right hand of 'the man that was,' which hung down the side of a white pine box, relaxed, and dropped something at my feet. I covered it with one foot qui- etly, and a little later on I picked it up and pocketed it. I reasoned that in his last struggle his hand must have seized that object unwittingly and held it in a death-grip.

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At the hotel that night the main topic of conversation, with the possible exceptions of politics and prohibition, was the demise of Major Caswell. I heard one man say to a group of listeners:

'In my opinion, gentlemen, Caswell was murdered by some of these no-account niggers for his money. He had fifty dollars this afternoon which he showed to several gentlemen in the hotel. When he was found the money was not on his person.'

I left the city the next morning at nine, and as the train was crossing the bridge over the Cumberland River I took out of my pocket a yellow, horn, overcoat button the size of a fifty-cent piece, with frayed ends of coarse twine hanging from it, and cast it out of the window into the slow, muddy waters below.

*I wonder what's doing in Buffalo!*

**LI**

***Compliments of the Season***

THERE ARE NO MORE Christmas stories to write. Fiction is exhausted; and newspaper items the next best, are manufactured by clever young Journalists who have married early and have an engagingly pessimistic view of life. Therefore, for seasonable diversion, we are reduced to two very questionable sources - facts and philosophy. We will begin with - whichever you choose to call it.

Children are pestilential little animals with which we have to cope under a bewildering variety of conditions. Especially when childish sorrows overwhelm them are we put to our wits' end. W e exhaust our paltry store of consolation; and then beat them, sob- bing, to sleep. Then we grovel in the dust of a million years, and ask God why. Thus we call out of the rat-trap. As for the chil- dren, no one understands them except old maids, hunchbacks, and shepherd dogs.

Now come the facts in the case of the Rag-Doll, the Tatterde- malion, and the Twenty-fifth of December.

On the tenth of that month the Child of the Millionaire lost her rag-doll. There were many servants in the Millionaire's palace on the Hudson, and these ransacked the house and grounds, but without finding the lost treasure. The Child was a girl of five, and one of those perverse little beasts that often wound the sensibili- ties of wealthy parents by fixing their affections upon some vulgar,

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'P-pardon, lady,' he said, 'but couldn't leave without exchangin' comp'ments sheason with lady th' house. ' 'Gainst princ'ples gen'leman do sho.'

And then he began the ancient salutation that was a tradition in the House when men wore lace ruffles and powder.

'The blessings of another year- '  
Fuzzy's memory failed him. The Lady prompted:  
' - Be upon this hearth.'  
'- The guest- ' stammered Fuzzy.  
'- And upon her who- ' continued the Lady, with a leading

smile.  
'Oh, cut it out,' said Fuzzy ill-manneredly. 'I can't remember.

Drink hearty.'  
Fuzzy had shot his arrow. They drank. The Lady smiled again

the smile of her caste. James enveloped Fuzzy and re-conducted him toward the front door. The harp music still softly drifted through the house.

Outside, Black Riley breathed on his cold hands and hugged the gate.

'I wonder,' said the Lady to herself, musing 'who - but there were so many who came. I wonder whether memory is a curse or a blessing to them after they have fallen so low.'

Fuzzy and his escort were nearly at the door. The Lady called: 'James!'

James stalked back obsequiously, leaving Fuzzy waiting unsteadily, with his brief spark of the divine fire gone.

Outside, Black Riley stamped his cold feet and got a firmer grip on his section of gas-pipe.

'You will conduct this gentleman,' said the Lady, 'downstairs. Then tell Louis to get out the Mercedes and take him to whatever place he wishes to go.'

**LII**

***Proofof the Pudding***

SPRING WINKED a vitreous optic at Editor Westbrook, of the *Min- erva Magazine,* and deflected him from his course. He had lunched in his favourite corner of a Broadway hotel, and was returning to his office when his feet became entangled in the lure of the vernal coquette. Which is by way of saying that he turned eastward in

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Twenty-sixth Street, safely forded the spring freshet of vehicles in Fifth Avenue, and meandered along the walks of budding Madison Square.

The lenient air and the settings of the little park almost formed a pastoral; the colour motif was green - the presiding shade at the creation of man and vegetation.

The callow grass between the walks was the colour of verdigris, a poisonous green, reminiscent of the horde of derelict humans that had breathed upon the soil during the summer and autumn. The bursting tree-buds looked strangely familiar to those who had botanized among the garnishings of the fish course of a forty-cent dinner. The sky above was of that pale aquamarine tint that hall- room poets rhyme with 'true' and 'Sue' and 'coo.' The one natural and frank colour visible was the ostensible green of the newly painted benches - a shade between the colour of a pickled cucum- ber and that of a last year's fast-back cravenette raincoat. But, to the city-bred eye of Editor Westbrook, the landscape appeared a masterpiece.

And now, whether you are of those who rush in, or of the gentle concourse that fears to tread, you must follow in a brief invasion of the editor's mind.

Editor Westbrook's spirit was contented and serene. The April number of the *Minerva* had sold its entire edition before the tenth day of the month - a newsdealer in Keokuk had written that he could have sold fifty copies more if he had had 'em. The owners of the magazine had raised his (the editor's) salary; he had just installed in his home a jewel of a recently imported cook who was afraid of policemen; and the morning papers had published in full a speech he had made at a publishers' banquet. Also there were echoing in his mind the jubilant notes of a splendid song that his charming young wife had sung to him before he left his uptown apartment that morning. She was taking enthusiastic interest in her music of late, practising early and diligently. When he had complimented her on the improvement in her voice she had fairly hugged him for joy at his praise. He felt, too, the benign, tonic medicament of the trained nurse, Spring, tripping softly adown the wards of the convalescent city.

While Editor Westbrook was sauntering between rows of park benches (already filling with vagrants and the guardians of lawless childhood) he felt his sleeve grasped and held. Suspecting that he was about to be panhandled, he turned a cold and unprofitable face, and saw that his captor was - Dawe - Shackleford Dawe,

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dingy, almost ragged, the genteel scarcely visible in him through the deeper lines of the shabby.

While the editor is pulling himself out of his surprise, a flash- light biography of Dawe is offered.

He was a fiction writer, and one of Westbrook's old acquain- tances. At one time they might have called each other old friends. Dawe had some money in those days, and lived in a decent apart- ment-house near Westbrook's. The two families often went to theatres and dinners together. Mrs. Dawe and Mrs. Westbrook became 'dearest' friends. Then one day a little tentacle of the octopus, just to amuse itself, ingurgitated Dawe's capital, and he moved to the Gramercy Park neighbourhood, where one, for a few groats per week, may sit upon one's trunk under eight- branched chandeliers and opposite Carrara marble mantels and watch the mice play upon the floor. Dawe thought to live by writ- ing fiction. Now and then he sold a story. He submitted many to Westbrook. The *Minerva* printed one or two of them; the rest were returned. Westbrook sent a careful and conscientious per- sonal letter with each rejected manuscript, pointing out in detail his reasons for considering it unavailable. Editor Westbrook had his own clear conception of what constituted good fiction. So had Dawe. Mrs. Dawe was mainly concerned about the constituents of the scanty dishes of food that she managed to scrape together. One day Dawe had been spouting to her about the excellences of certain French writers. At dinner they sat down to a dish that a hungry schoolboy could have encompassed at a gulp. Dawe commented.

'It's Maupassant hash,' said Mrs. Dawe. 'It may not be art, but I do wish you would do a five course Marion Crawford serial with an Ella Wheeler Wilcox sonnet for dessert. I'm hungry.'

As far as this from success was Shackleford Dawe when he plucked Editor Westbrook's sleeve in Madison Square. That was the first time the editor had seen Dawe in several months.

'Why, Shack, is this you?' said Westbrook somewhat awk- wardly, for the form of this phrase seemed to touch upon the other's changed appearance.

'Sit down for a minute,' said Dawe, tugging at his sleeve. 'This is my office. I can't come to yours, looking as I do. Oh, sit down - you won't be disgraced. Those half-plucked birds on the other benches will take you for a swell porch-climber. They won't know you are only an editor.'

'Smoke, Shack?' said Editor Westbrook, sinking cautiously

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upon the virulent green bench. He always yielded gracefully when he did yield.

Dawe snapped at the cigar as a kingfisher darts at a sunperch, or a girl pecks at a chocolate cream.

'I have just- ' began the editor.

'Oh, I know; don't finish,' said Dawe. 'Give me a match. You have just ten minutes to spare. How did you manage to get past my office-boy and invade my sanctum? There he goes now, throwing his club at a dog that couldn't read the "Keep off the Grass" signs.'

'How goes the writing?' asked the editor.

'Look at me,' said Dawe, 'for your answer. Now don't put on that embarrassed, friendly-but-honest look and ask me why I don't get a job as a wine agent or a cab-driver. I'm in the fight to a finish. I know I can write good fiction and I'll force you fellows to admit it yet. I'll make you change the spelling of "regrets" to "c-h-e-q-u-e" before I'm done with you.'

Editor Westbrook gazed through his nose-glasses with a sweetly sorrowful, omniscient, sympathetic, sceptical expression - the copyrighted expression of the editor beleaguered by the unavailable contributor.

'Have you read the last story I sent you - "The Alarum of the Soul"?' asked Dawe.

'Carefully. I hesitated over that story, Shack, really I did. It had some good points. I was writing you a letter to send with it when it goes back to you. I regret- '

'Never mind the regrets,' said Dawe grimly. 'There's neither salve nor sting in 'em any more. What I want to know is why. Come, now; out with the good points first.'

'The story,' said Westbrook deliberately, after a suppressed sigh, 'is written around an almost original plot. Characterization - the best you have done. Construction - almost as good, except for a few weak joints which might be strengthened by a few changes and touches. It was a good story, except- '

'I can write English, can't I?' interrupted Dawe.  
'I have always told you,' said the editor, 'that you had a style.' 'Then the trouble is the- '  
'Same old thing,' said Editor Westbrook. 'You work up to your

climax like an artist. And then you turn yourself into a photogra- pher. I don't know what form of obstinate madness possesses you, Shack, but that is what you do with everything that you write. No, I will retract the comparison with the photographer. Now

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and then photography, in spite of its impossible perspective, man- ages to record a fleeting glimpse of truth. But you spoil every denouement by those flat, drab, obliterating strokes of your brush that I have so often complained of. If you would rise to the liter- ary pinnacle of your dramatic scenes, and paint them in the high colours that art requires, the postman would leave fewer bulky, self-addressed envelopes at your door.'

'Oh, fiddles and footlights!' cried Dawe derisively. 'You've got that old sawmill drama kink in your brain yet. When the man with the black moustache kidnaps golden-haired Bessie you are bound to have the mother kneel and raise her hands in the spotlight and say: "May high heaven witness that I will rest neither night nor day till the heartless villain that has stolen me child feels the weight of a mother's vengeance!" '

Editor Westbrook conceded a smile of impervious complacency.

'I think,' said he, 'that in real life the woman would express her- self in those words or in very similar ones.'

'Not in a six hundred nights' run anywhere but on the stage,' said Dawe hotly. 'I'll tell you what she'd say in real life. She'd say: "What! Bessie led away by a strange man? Good Lord! It's one trouble after another! Get my other hat, I must hurry around to the police-station. W h y wasn't somebody looking after her, I'd like to know? For God's sake, get out of my way or I'll never get ready. Not that hat - the brown one with the velvet bows. Bessie must have been crazy; she's usually shy of strangers. Is that too much powder? Lordy! How I'm upset!"

'That's the way she'd talk,' continued Dawe. 'People in real life don't fly into heroics and blank verse at emotional crises. They simply can't do it. If they talk at all on such occasions they draw from the same vocabulary that they use every day, and muddle up their words and ideas a little more, that's all.'

'Shack,' said Editor Westbrook impressively, 'did you ever pick up the mangled and lifeless form of a child from under the fender of a street-car, and carry it in your arms and lay it down before the distracted mother? Did you ever do that and listen to the words of grief and despair as they flowed spontaneously from her lips?'

'I never did,' said Dawe. 'Did you?'

'Well, no,' said Editor Westbrook, with a slight frown. 'But I can well imagine what she would say.'

'So can I,' said Dawe.

And now the fitting time had come for Editor Westbrook to play the oracle and silence his opinionated contributor. It was not for an

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unarrived fictionist to dictate words to be uttered by the heroes and heroines of the *Minerva Magazine,* contrary to the theories of the editor thereof.

'My dear Shack,' said he, 'if I know anything of life I know that every sudden, deep and tragic emotion in the human heart calls forth an apposite, concordant, conformable, and proportionate expression of feeling? How much of this inevitable accord between expression and feeling should be attributed to nature, and how much to the influence of art, it would be difficult to say. The sub- limely terrible roar of the lioness that has been deprived of her cubs is dramatically as far above her customary whine and purr as the kingly and transcendent utterances of Lear are above the level of his senile vapourings. But it is also true that all men and women have what may be called a subconscious dramatic sense that is awakened by a sufficiently deep and powerful emotion - a sense unconsciously acquired from literature and the stage that prompts them to express those emotions in language befitting their impor- tance and histrionic value.'

'And in the name of seven sacred saddle-blankets of Sagittarius, where did the stage and literature get the stunt?' asked Dawe.

'From life,' answered the editor triumphantly.

The story-writer rose from the bench and gesticulated elo- quently but dumbly. He was beggared for words with which to formulate adequately his dissent.

On a bench near by a frowsy loafer opened his red eyes and perceived that his moral support was due to a down-trodden brother.

'Punch him one, Jack,' he called hoarsely to Dawe. 'Wat's he come makin' a noise like a penny arcade for amongst gen'lemen that comes in the Square to set and think?'

Editor Westbrook looked at his watch with an affected show of leisure.

'Tell me,' asked Dawe, with truculent anxiety, 'what especial faults in "The Alarum of the Soul" caused you to throw it down.'

'When Gabriel Murray,' said Westbrook, 'goes to his telephone and is told that his fiancée has been shot by a burglar, he says - I do not recall the exact words, but- '

'I do,' said Dawe. 'He says: "Damn Central; she always cuts me off." (And then to his friend): "Say, Tommy, does a thirty-two bullet make a big hole? It's kind of hard luck, ain't it? Could you get me a drink from the sideboard, Tommy? No; straight; nothing on the side." '

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'And again,' continued the editor, without pausing for argu- ment, 'when Berenice opens the letter from her husband inform- ing her that he has fled with the manicure girl, her words are - let me see- '

'She says,' interposed the author: ' "Well, what do you think of that!" '

'Absurdly inappropriate words,' said Westbrook, 'presenting an anti-climax - plunging the story into hopeless bathos. Worse yet; they mirror life falsely. No human being ever uttered banal colloquialisms when confronted by sudden tragedy.'

'Wrong,' said Dawe, closing his unshaven jaws doggedly. 'I say no man or woman ever spouts highfalutin talk when they go up against a real climax. They talk naturally, and a little worse.'

The editor rose from the bench with his air of indulgence and inside information.

'Say, Westbrook,' said Dawe, pinning him by the lapel, 'would you have accepted "The Alarum of the Soul" if you had believed that the actions and words of the characters were true to life in the parts of the story that we discussed?'

'It is very likely that I would, if I believed that way,' said the editor. 'But I have explained to you that I do not.'

'If I could prove to you that I am right?'

'I'm sorry, Shack, but I'm afraid I haven't time to argue any further just now.'

'I don't want to argue,' said Dawe. 'I want to demonstrate to you from life itself that my view is the correct one.'

'How could you do that?' asked Westbrook in a surprised tone.

'Listen,' said the writer seriously. 'I have thought of a way. It is important to me that my theory of true-to-life fiction be recog- nized as correct by the magazines. I've fought for it for three years, and I'm down to my last dollar, with two months' rent due.'

'I have applied the opposite of your theory,' said the editor, 'in selecting the fiction for the *Minerva Magazine.* The circulation has gone up from ninety thousand to- '

'Four hundred thousand,' said Dawe. 'Whereas it should have been boosted to a million.'

'You said something to me just now about demonstrating your pet theory.'

'I will. If you'll give me about half an hour of your time I'll prove to you that I am right. I'll prove it by Louise.'

'Your wife!' exclaimed Westbrook. 'How?'  
'Well, not exactly by her, but with her,' said Dawe. 'Now, you

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know how devoted and loving Louise has always been. She thinks I'm the only genuine preparation on the market that bears the old doctor's signature. She's been fonder and more faithful than ever, since I've been cast for the neglected genius part.'

'Indeed, she is a charming and admirable life companion,' agreed the editor. 'I remember what inseparable friends she and Mrs. Westbrook once were. We are both lucky chaps, Shack, to have such wives. You must bring Mrs. Dawe up some evening soon, and we'll have one of those informal chafing-dish suppers that we used to enjoy so much.'

'Later,' said Dawe. 'When I get another shirt. And now I'll tell you my scheme. When I was about to leave home after breakfast - if you can call tea and oatmeal breakfast - Louise told me she was going to visit her aunt in Eighty-ninth Street. She said she would return home at three o'clock. She is always on time to a minute. It is now- '

Dawe glanced toward the editor's watch pocket.

'Twenty-seven minutes to three,' said Westbrook, scanning his timepiece.

'We have just enough time,' said Dawe. 'We will go to my flat at once. I will write a note, address it to her and leave it on the table where she will see it as she enters the door. You and I will be in the dining-room concealed by the portieres. In that note I'll say that I have fled from her for ever with an affinity who understands the needs of my artistic soul as she never did. When she reads it we will observe her actions and hear her words. Then we will know which theory is the correct one - yours or mine.'

'Oh, never!' exclaimed the editor, shaking his head. 'That would be inexcusably cruel. I could not consent to have Mrs. Dawe's feelings played upon in such a manner.'

'Brace up,' said the writer. 'I guess I think as much of her as you do. It's for her benefit as well as mine. I've got to get a market for my stories in some way. It won't hurt Louise. She's healthy and sound. Her heart goes as strong as a ninety-eight-cent watch. It'll last for only a minute, and then I'll step out and explain to her. You really owe it to me to give me the chance, Westbrook.'

Editor Westbrook at length yielded, though but half willingly. And in the half of him that consented lurked the vivisectionist that is in all of us.

Let him who has not used the scalpel rise and stand in his place. Pity 'tis that there are not enough rabbits and guinea-pigs to go around.

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The two experimenters in Art left the Square and hurried east- ward and then to the south until they arrived in the Gramercy neighbourhood. Within its high iron railings the little park had put on its smart coat of vernal green, and was admiring itself in its foun- tain minor. Outside the railings the hollow square of crumbling houses, shells of a bygone gentry, leaned as if in ghostly gossip over the forgotten doings of the vanished quality. *Sic transit gloria urbis.*

A block or two north of the Park, Dawe steered the editor again eastward, then, after covering a short distance, into a lofty but narrow flathouse burdened with a floridly over-decorated façade. To the fifth story they toiled, and Dawe, panting, pushed his latch-key into the door of one of the front flats.

When the door opened Editor Westbrook saw, with feelings of pity, how meanly and meagrely the rooms were furnished.

'Get a chair, if you can find one,' said Dawe, 'while I hunt up pen and ink. Hallo, what's this? Here's a note from Louise. She must have left it there when she went out this morning.'

He picked up an envelope that lay on the centre-table and tore it open. He began to read the letter that he drew out of it; and once having begun it aloud he so read it through to the end. These are the words that Editor Westbrook heard:

DEAR SHACKLEFORD, -  
'By the time you get this I will be about a hundred miles away

and still a-going. I've got a place in the chorus of the Occidental Opera Co., and we start on the road to-day at twelve o'clock. I didn't want to starve to death, and so I decided to make my own living. I'm not coming back. Mrs. Westbrook is going with me. She said she was tired of living with a combination phonograph, iceberg and dictionary, and she's not coming back, either. We've been practising the songs and dances for two months on the quiet. I hope you will be successful, and get along all right. Good-bye.

'LOUISE.'

Dawe dropped the letter, covered his face with his trembling hands, and cried out in a deep vibrating voice:

*'My God, why hast Thou given me this cup to drink? Since she is false, then let Thy Heaven's fairest gifts, faith and love, become the jesting bywords of traitors and friends!'*

Editor Westbrook's glasses fell to the floor. The fingers of one hand fumbled with a button on his coat as he blurted between his pale lips:

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*'Say, Shack, ain't that a hell of a note? Wouldn't that knock you off your perch, Shack? Ain't it hell, now, Shack - ain't it?'*

**LIII**

***Past One at Rooney's***

ONLY ONTHE LOWER East Side of New York do the Houses of Capulet and Montague survive. There they do not fight by the book of arithmetic. If you but bite your thumb at an upholder of your opposing house you have work cut out for your steel. On Broadway you may drag your man along a dozen blocks by his nose, and he will only bawl for the watch; but in the domain of the East Side Tybalts and Mercutios you must observe the niceties of deportment to the wink of an eyelash and to an inch of elbow- room at the bar when its patrons include foes of your house and kin.

So, when Eddie McManus, known to the Capulets as Cork McManus, drifted into Dutch Mike's for a stein of beer, and came upon a bunch of Montagues making merry with the suds, he began to observe the strictest parliamentary rules. Courtesy forbade his leaving the saloon with his thirst unslaked; caution steered him to a place at the bar where the mirror supplied the cognizance of the enemy's movements that his indifferent gaze seemed to disdain; experience whispered to him that the finger of trouble would be busy among the chattering steins at Dutch Mike's that night. Close by his side drew Brick Cleary, his Mercutio, companion of his perambulations. Thus they stood, four of the Mulberry Hill Gang and two of the Dry Dock Gang minding their P's and Q's so solicitously that Dutch Mike kept one eye on his customers and the other on an open space beneath his bar in which it was his custom to seek safety whenever the ominous politeness of the rival associations congealed into the shapes of bullets and cold steel.

But we have not to do with the wars of the Mulberry Hills and the Dry Docks. We must to Rooney's, where, on the most blighted dead branch of the tree of life, a little pale orchid shall bloom.

Overstrained etiquette at last gave way. It is not known who first overstepped the bounds of punctilio; but the consequences were immediate. Buck Malone, of the Mulberry Hills, with a Dewey-like swiftness, got an eight-inch gun swung round from his