50 pages

I

The Gift of the Magi

ONE DOLLAR AND EIGHTY-SEVEN CENTS. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies were saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheek burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letterbox into which no letter would go and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name 'Mr. James Dillingham Young.'

The 'Dillingham' had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of 'Dillingham' looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above, he was called 'Jim' and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Delia finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for

months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had

mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street. Where she stopped, the sign read: 'Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.' One flight up, Della ran and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, and chilly, hardly looked like the 'Sofronie.' 'Will you buy my hair?' asked Della.

'I buy hair,' said Madame. 'Take your hat off and let's have a look at the looks of it.' Down rippled the brown cascade.

'Twenty dollars,' said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

'Give it to me quick,' said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of the Watch. As soon as she saw it, she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch, Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home, her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look

wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

'If Jim doesn't kill me,' she said to herself, 'before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?'

At seven o'clock the coffee was made, and the frying pan was on the back of the stove, hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a

moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered, 'Please God, make him think I am still pretty.'

The door opened, and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat, and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

'Jim, darling,' she cried, 'don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say "Merry Christmas!" Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you. "You've cut off your hair?' asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

'Cut it off and sold it,' said Della. 'Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, aren't I?'

Jim looked about the room curiously.

'You say your hair is gone?' he said with an air almost of idiocy. 'You needn't look for it,' said Della. 'It's sold, I tell you—sold.

and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,' she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, 'but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?'

Out of his trance, Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference?

A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

'Don't make any mistake, Dell,' he said, 'about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package, you may see why you had me going awhile at first.'

White and nimble fingers tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy, and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoiseshell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say, 'My hair grows so fast, Jim!'

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, 'Oh, oh!'

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

'Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it.'

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

'Dell,' said he, 'let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em awhile. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on.'

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days, let it be said that of all who give gifts, these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.

II

A Cosmopolite in a Café

At midnight the café was crowded. By some chance the little table at which I sat had escaped the eye of incomers, and two vacant chairs at it extended their arms with venal hospitality to the influx of patrons.

And then a cosmopolite sat in one of them, and I was glad, for I held a theory that since Adam no

true citizen of the world has existed. We hear of them, and we see foreign labels on much luggage, but we find travellers instead of cosmopolites.

I invoke your consideration of the scene—the marble-topped tables, the range of leather-upholstered wall seats, the gay company, the ladies dressed in demi-state toilets, speaking in an exquisite visible chorus of taste, economy, opulence, or art, the sedulous and largess-loving garçons, the music wisely catering to all with its raids upon the composers, and the mélange of talk and laughter—and, if you will, the Würzburger in the tall glass cones that bend to your lips as a ripe cherry sways on its branch to the beak of a robber jay. I was told by a sculptor from Mauch Chunk that the scene was truly Parisian.

My cosmopolite was named E. Rushmore Coglan, and he will be heard from next summer at Coney Island. He is to establish a new 'attraction' there, he informed me, offering kingly diversion. And then his conversation rang along

parallels of latitude and longitude. He took the great, round world in his hand, so to speak, familiarly and contemptuously, and it seemed no larger than the seed of a maraschino cherry in a table-d'hôte grapefruit. He spoke disrespectfully of the equator, he skipped from continent to continent, he derided the zones, and he mopped up the high seas with his napkin. With a wave of his hand, he would speak of a certain bazaar in Hyderabad. Whiff! He would have you on skis in Lapland. Zip! Now you rode the breakers with the Kanakas at Kealaikahiki. Presto! He dragged you through an Arkansas post-oak swamp, let you dry for a moment on the alkali plains of his Idaho ranch, then whirled you into the society of Viennese archdukes. Anon he would be telling you of a cold he acquired in a Chicago lake breeze and how old Escamila cured it in Buenos Aires with a hot infusion of the chuchula weed. You would have

addressed the letter to 'E. Rushmore Coglan, Esq., the Earth, the Solar System, and the Universe' and have mailed it, feeling confident that it would be delivered to him.

I was sure that I had at last found the one true cosmopolite since Adam, and I listened to his worldwide discourse fearful lest I should discover in it the local note of the mere globe-trotter. But his opinions never fluttered or drooped; he was as impartial to cities, countries, and continents as the winds or gravitation.

And as E. Rushmore Coglan prattled of this little planet, I thought with glee of a great, almost cosmopolite who wrote for the whole world and dedicated himself to Bombay. In a poem he has to say that there is pride and rivalry between the cities of the earth and that 'the men that breed from them, they traffic up and down, but cling to their cities' hem as a child to the mother's gown.' And whenever they walk 'by roaring streets unknown,' they remember their native city, 'most faithful, foolish, fond, making her mere-breathed name their bond upon their bond.' And my glee was roused because I had caught Mr. Kipling napping. Here I had found a man not made from dust, one who had no narrow boasts of birthplace or country, one who, if he bragged at all, would brag of his whole round globe against the Martians and the inhabitants of the Moon.

Expression on these subjects was precipitated from E. Rushmore Coglan by the third corner to our table. While Coglan was describing to me the topography along the Siberian Railway, the

The orchestra glided into a medley. The concluding air was 'Dixie,' and as the exhilarating notes tumbled forth, they were almost overpowered by a great clapping of hands from almost every table.

It is worth a paragraph to say that this remarkable scene can be witnessed every evening in numerous cafés in the City of New York. Tons of brew have been consumed over theories to account for it. Some have conjectured hastily that all Southerners in town hie themselves to cafés at nightfall. This applause of the 'rebel' air in a Northern city does puzzle a little, but it is not insolvable. The war with Spain, many years' generous mint and watermelon crops, a few long-shot winners at the New Orleans racetrack, and the brilliant banquets given by the Indiana and Kansas citizens who compose the North Carolina Society have made the South rather a 'fad' in Manhattan. Your manicure will lisp softly that your left forefinger reminds her so much of a gentleman's in Richmond, Va. Oh, certainly, but many a lady has to work now—the war, you know.

When 'Dixie' was being played, a dark-haired young man sprang up from somewhere with a Mosby guerrilla yell and waved frantically his soft-brimmed hat. Then he strayed through the smoke, dropped into the vacant chair at our table, and pulled out cigarettes.

The evening was at the period when reserve is thawed. One of us mentioned three Würzburgers to the waiter; the dark-haired young man acknowledged his inclusion in the order by a smile and a nod. I hastened to ask him a question because I wanted to try out a theory I had.

'Would you mind telling me,' I began, 'whether you are from—'

The fist of E. Rushmore Coglan banged the table, and I was jarred into silence.

'Excuse me,' said he, 'but that's a question I never like to hear asked. What does it matter where a man is from? Is it fair to judge a man by his post-office address? Why, I've seen Kentuckians who hated whisky, Virginians who weren't descended from Pocahontas, Indianians who hadn't written a novel, Mexicans who didn't wear velvet trousers with silver dollars sewn along the seams, funny Englishmen, spendthrift Yankees, cold-blooded Southerners, narrow-minded Westerners, and New Yorkers who were too busy to stop for an hour on the street to watch a one-armed grocer's clerk do up cranberries in paper bags. Let a man be a man, and don't handicap him with the label of any section.'

'Pardon me,' I said, 'but my curiosity was not altogether an idle one. I know the South, and when the band plays "Dixie," I like to observe. I have formed the belief that the man who applauds that air with special violence and ostensible sectional loyalty is invariably a native of either Secaucus, N.J., or the district between Murray Hill Lyceum and the Harlem River in this city. I was about to put my opinion to the test by inquiring of this gentleman when you interrupted with your own—larger—theory, I must confess.'

And now the dark-haired young man spoke to me, and it became evident that his mind also moved along its own set of grooves.

'I should like to be a periwinkle,' said he, mysteriously, 'on the top of a valley, and sing too-ralloo-ralloo.'

This was clearly too obscure, so I turned again to Coglan.

'I've been around the world twelve times,' said he. 'I know an Eskimo in Upernavik who sends to Cincinnati for his neckties, and I saw a goatherder in Uruguay who won a prize in a Battle Creek breakfast-food puzzle competition. I pay rent on a room in

Cairo, Egypt, and another in Yokohama all year round. I've got slippers waiting for me in a teahouse in Shanghai, and I don't have to tell them how to cook my eggs in Rio de Janeiro or Seattle. It's a mighty little old world. What's the use of bragging about being from the North, or the South, or the old manor house in the dale, or Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, or Pike's Peak, or Fairfax County, Va., or Hooligan's Flats, or any place? It'll be a better world when we quit being fools about some mildewed town or ten acres of swampland just because we happened to be born there.'

'You seem to be a genuine cosmopolite,' I said admiringly. 'But it also seems that you would decry patriotism.'

'A relic of the Stone Age,' declared Coglan warmly. 'We are all brothers—Chinamen, Englishmen, Zulus, Patagonians, and the people in the bend of the Kaw River. Some day all this petty pride in one's city or state or section or country will be wiped out, and we'll all be citizens of the world, as we ought to be.'

'But while you are wandering in foreign lands,' I persisted, 'do not your thoughts revert to some spot—some dear and—'

'Nary a spot,' interrupted E. R. Coglan flippantly. 'The terrestrial, globular, planetary hunk of matter, slightly flattened at the poles, and known as the Earth, is my abode. I've met a good many object-bound citizens of this country abroad. I've seen men from Chicago sit in a gondola in Venice on a moonlight night and brag about their drainage canal. I've seen a Southerner, on being introduced to the King of England, hand that monarch, without batting his eyes, the information that his grandaunt on his mother's side was related by marriage to the Perkinses of Charleston. I knew a New Yorker who was kidnapped for ransom by some Afghanistan bandits. His people sent over the money, and he came back to Kabul with the agent. "Afghanistan?" the natives said to him through an interpreter. "Well, not so slow, do you think?" "Oh, I don't know," says he, and he begins to tell them about a cab driver at Sixth Avenue and Broadway. Those ideas don't suit me. I'm not tied down to anything that isn't 8,000 miles in diameter. Just put me down as E. Rushmore Coglan, citizen of the terrestrial sphere.'

My cosmopolite made a large adieu and left me, for he thought that he saw someone through the chatter and smoke whom he knew. So I was left with the would-be periwinkle, who was reduced to Würzburger without further ability to voice his aspirations to perch, melodious, upon the summit of a valley.

I sat reflecting upon my evident cosmopolite and wondering how the poet had managed to miss him. He was my discovery, and

I believed in him. How was it? 'The men that breed from them, they traffic up and down but cling to their cities' hem as a child to the mother's gown.'

Not so E. Rushmore Coglan. With the whole world for his—

My meditations were interrupted by a tremendous noise and conflict in another part of the café. I saw above the heads of the seated patrons E. Rushmore Coglan and a stranger to me engaged in a terrific battle. They fought between the tables like Titans, and glasses crashed, and men caught their hats up and were knocked down, and a brunette screamed, and a blonde began to sing 'Teasing.'

My cosmopolite was sustaining the pride and reputation of the Earth when the waiters closed in on both combatants with their famous flying wedge formation and bore them outside, still resisting.

I called McCarthy, one of the French garçons, and asked him the cause of the conflict.

'The man with the red tie' (that was my cosmopolite), he said, 'got hot on account of things said about the bum sidewalks and water supply of the place he comes from by the other guy.'

'Why,' said I, bewildered, 'that man is a citizen of the world—a cosmopolite. H e - '

'Originally from Mattawamkeag, Maine, he said,' continued McCarthy, 'and he wouldn't stand for any knocking of the place.'

III

Between Rounds

The may moon shone bright upon the private boarding house of Mrs. Murphy. By reference to the almanac, a large amount of territory will be discovered upon which its rays also fell. Spring was in its heyday, with hay fever soon to follow. The parks were green with new leaves and buyers for the Western and Southern trade. Flowers and summer-resort agents were blowing; the air and answers to Lawson were growing milder; hand organs, fountains, and pinochle were playing everywhere.

The windows of Mrs. Murphy's boarding house were open. A group of boarders were seated on the high stoop upon round, flat mats like German pancakes.

In one of the second-floor front windows Mrs. McCaskey

awaited her husband. Supper was cooling on the table. Its heat went into Mrs. McCaskey.

At nine Mr. McCaskey came. He carried his coat on his arm and his pipe in his teeth, and he apologized for disturbing the boarders on the steps as he selected spots of stone between them on which to set his size U, width Ds.

As he opened the door of his room, he received a surprise. Instead of the usual stove lid or potato masher for him to dodge, came only words.

Mr. McCaskey reckoned that the benign May moon had softened the breast of his spouse.

'I heard you,' came the oral substitutes for kitchenware. Ye can apologize to the riff-raff of the streets for setting your unhandy feet on the tails of their frocks, but you'd walk on the neck of your wife the

length of a clothesline without so much as a "Kiss me fut," and I'm sure it's that long from rubbering out the windy for ye and the victuals cold, such as there's money to buy after drinking up your wages at Gallegher's every Saturday evening, and the gas man was here twice today for his. "Woman!' said Mr. McCaskey, dashing his coat and hat upon a chair, 'the noise of you is an insult to my appetite. When ye run down politeness, ye take the mortar from between the bricks of the foundations of society. 'Tis no more than exercising the acrimony of a gentleman when ye ask the dissent of ladies blocking the way for stepping between them. Will ye bring the pig's face of yours out of the window and see to the food?'

Mrs. McCaskey arose heavily and went to the stove. There was something in her manner that warned Mr. McCaskey. When the corners of her mouth went down suddenly like a barometer, it usually foretold a fall of crockery and tinware.

'Pig's face, is it?' said Mrs. McCaskey, and hurled a stewpan full of bacon and turnips at her lord. Mr. McCaskey was no novice at repartee. He knew what should follow the entree. On the table was a roast sirloin of pork, garnished with shamrocks. He retorted with this and drew the appropriate return of a bread pudding in an earthen dish. A hunk of Swiss cheese accurately thrown by her husband struck Mrs. McCaskey below one eye. When she replied with a well-aimed coffee pot full of a hot, black, semi-fragrant liquid, the battle, according to courses, should have ended.

But Mr. McCaskey was no 50-cent table d'hôte. Let cheap Bohemians consider coffee the end, if they would. Let them make

that faux pas. He was foxier still. Finger bowls were not beyond the compass of his experience. They were not to be had in the Pension Murphy, but their equivalent was at hand. Triumphantly he sent the granite-ware washbasin at the head of his matrimonial adversary. Mrs. McCaskey dodged in time. She reached for a flatiron, with which, as a sort of cordial, she hoped to bring the

gastronomical duel to a close. But a loud, wailing scream downstairs caused both her and Mr. McCaskey to pause in a sort of involuntary armistice.

On the sidewalk at the corner of the house, Policeman Cleary was standing with one ear upturned, listening to the crash of household utensils.

'Tis Jawn McCaskey and his missus at it again,' meditated the policeman. 'I wonder, shall I go up and stop the row? I will not. Married folks they are, and few pleasures they have. It will not last long. Sure, they'll have to borrow more dishes to keep up with it.'

And just then came the loud scream below-stairs, betokening fear or dire extremity. ' 'Tis probably the cat,' said Policeman Cleary, and walked hastily in the other direction.

The boarders on the steps were fluttered. Mr. Toomey, an insurance solicitor by birth and an investigator by profession, went inside to analyze the scream. He returned with the news that Mrs. Murphy's little boy, Mike, was lost. Following the messenger, out bounced Mrs. Murphy—two hundred pounds in tears and hysterics, clutching the air and howling to the sky for the loss of thirty pounds of freckles and mischief. Bathos, truly; but Mr. Toomey sat down at the side of Miss Purdy, milliner, and their hands came together in sympathy. The two old maids, Misses Walsh,

who complained every day about the noise in the halls, inquired immediately if anybody had looked behind the clock.

Major Grigg, who sat by his fat wife on the top step, arose and buttoned his coat. 'The little one lost?' he exclaimed. 'I will scour the city.' His wife never allowed him out after dark. But now she said, 'Go, Ludovic!' in a baritone voice. 'Whoever can look upon that mother's grief without springing to her relief has a heart of stone.' 'Give me some thirty or sixty cents, my love,' said the Major. 'Lost children sometimes stray far. I may need car fares.'

Old man Denny, hall-room, fourth floor back, who sat on the lowest step, trying to read a paper by the street lamp, turned over a page to follow up on the article about the carpenters' strike. Mrs. Murphy shrieked to the moon, 'Oh, ar-r-Mike, for God's sake, where is my little bit of a boy?'

'When'd you see him last?' asked old man Denny, with one eye on the report of the Building Trades League.

'Oh,' wailed Mrs. Murphy. It was yesterday, or maybe four hours ago! I dunno. But lost he is, my little boy Mike. He was playing on the sidewalk only this morning—or was it Wednesday? I'm so busy with work 'tis hard to keep up with dates. But I've looked the house over from top to cellar, and he's gone. Oh, for the love of Heaven—'

Silent, grim, and colossal, the big city has ever stood against its revilers. They call it hard as iron; they say that no pulse of pity beats in its bosom; they compare its streets with lonely forests and deserts of lava. But beneath the hard crust of the lobster is found a delectable and luscious food. Perhaps a different simile would have been wiser. Still, nobody should take offense. We would call no one a lobster without good and sufficient claws.

No calamity so touches the common heart of humanity as does the straying of a little child. Their feet are so uncertain and feeble; the ways are so steep and strange.

Major Griggs hurried down to the corner and up the avenue into Billy's place. 'Gimme a rye high,' he said to the servitor. 'Haven't seen a bow-legged, dirty-faced little devil of a six-year-old lost kid around here anywhere, have you?'

Mr. Toomey retained Miss Purdy's hand on the steps. 'Think of that dear little babe,' said Miss Purdy, 'lost from his mother's side—perhaps already fallen beneath the iron hoofs of galloping steeds—oh, isn't it dreadful?'

'Isn't that right?' agreed Mr. Toomey, squeezing her hand. 'Say I start out and help look for um!' 'Perhaps,' said Miss Purdy, 'you should. But oh, Mr. Toomey, you are so dashing—so reckless—suppose in your enthusiasm some accident should befall you, then what—'

Old man Denny read on about the arbitration agreement, with one finger on the lines.

On the second floor front, Mr. and Mrs. McCaskey came to the window to recover their second wind. Mr. McCaskey was scooping turnips out of his vest with a crooked forefinger, and his lady was wiping an eye that the salt of the roast pork had not benefited. They heard the outcry below and thrust their heads out of the window.

"Tis little Mike is lost,' said Mrs. McCaskey in a hushed voice, 'the beautiful, little, trouble-making angel of a gossoon!'

'The bit of a boy mislaid?' said Mr. McCaskey, leaning out of

the window. 'Why, now, that's bad enough, entirely. The children, they are different. If 'twas a woman, I'd be willing, for they leave peace behind them when they go.

Disregarding the thrust, Mrs. McCaskey caught her husband's arm.

'Jawn,' she said sentimentally, 'Missis Murphy's little boy is lost.' Tis a great city for losing little boys. Six years old he was. Jawn, 'tis the same age our little boy would have been if we had had one six years ago.'

'We never did,' said Mr. McCaskey, lingering on the fact.

'But if we had, Jawn, think what sorrow would be in our hearts this night, with our little Phelan run away and stolen in the city nowheres at all.'

'Ye talk foolishness,' said Mr. McCaskey. "Tis Pat he would be named, after my old father in Cantrim.'

'Ye lie!' said Mrs. McCaskey, without anger. 'My brother was worth ten dozen bog-trotting McCaskeys. After him would the bye be named.' She leaned over the window sill and looked down at the hurrying and bustle below.

'Jawn,' said Mrs. McCaskey softly, 'I'm sorry I was hasty with you.'

"Twas hasty puddin', as ye say,' said her husband, 'and hurry-up turnips and get-a-move-on-ye coffee.' Twas what you could call a quick lunch, all right, and tell no lie.'

Mrs. McCaskey slipped her arm inside her husband's and took his rough hand in hers.

'Listen at the crying of poor Mrs. Murphy,' she said. "Tis an awful thing for a bit of a boy to be lost in this great big city. If 'twas our little Phelan, Jawn, I'd be breaking my heart.'

Awkwardly, Mr. McCaskey withdrew his hand. But he laid it around the nearing shoulders of his wife.

'Tis foolishness, of course,' said he, roughly, 'but I'd be cut up some myself if our little Pat was kidnapped or anything. But there never were any children for us. Sometimes I've been ugly and hard with you, Judy. Forget it.'

They leaned together and looked down at the heart-drama being acted below.

Long they sat thus. People surged along the sidewalk, crowding, questioning, and filling the air with rumors and inconsequential surmises. Mrs. Murphy plowed back and forth in their midst, like a soft mountain down which plunged an audible cataract of tears. Couriers came and went.

Loud voices and a renewed uproar were raised in front of the boarding house. 'What's up now, Judy?' asked Mr. McCaskey.

"Tis Missis Murphy's voice,' said Mrs. McCaskey, harking. 'She says she's after finding little Mike asleep behind the roll of old linoleum under the bed in her room.'

Mr. McCaskey laughed loudly.

'That's your Phelan,' he shouted sardonically. 'Divil a bit would a Pat have done that trick if the bye we never had had strayed and stolen, by the powers, call him Phelan, and see him hide out under the

bed like a mangy pup.'

Mrs. McCaskey arose heavily and went toward the dish closet, with the corners of her mouth drawn down.

Policeman Cleary came back around the corner as the crowd dispersed. Surprised, he upturned an ear toward the McCaskey apartment, where the crash of irons and chinaware and the ring of hurled kitchen utensils seemed as loud as before. Policeman Cleary took out his timepiece.

'By the deported snakes!' he exclaimed, 'Jawn McCaskey and his lady have been fighting for an hour and a quarter by the watch. The missus could give him forty pounds in weight. Strength to his arm.'

Policeman Cleary strolled back around the corner.

Old man Denny folded his paper and hurried up the steps just as Mrs. Murphy was about to lock the door for the night.

IV

The Skylight Room

First mrs. parker would show you the double parlors. You would not dare to interrupt her description of their advantages and of the merits of the gentleman who had occupied them for eight years. Then you would manage to stammer forth the confession that you were neither a doctor nor a dentist. Mrs. Parker's manner of receiving the admission was such that you could never afterward entertain the same feeling toward your parents, who had neglected to train you up in one of the professions that fitted Mrs. Parker's parlors.

Next you ascended one flight of stairs and looked at the second floor back at $8. Convinced by her second-floor manner that it

was worth the $12 that Mr. Toosenberry always paid for it until he left to take charge of his brother's orange plantation in Florida near Palm Beach, where Mrs. McIntyre always spent the winters that had the double front room with a private bath; you managed to babble that you wanted something still cheaper.

If you survived Mrs. Parker's scorn, you were taken to look at Mr. Skidder's large hall room on the third floor. Mr. Skidder's room was not vacant. He wrote plays and smoked cigarettes in it all day long. But every room-hunter was made to visit his room to admire the lambrequins. After each visit, Mr. Skidder, from the fright caused by possible eviction, would pay something on his rent.

Then—oh, then—if you still stood on one foot with your hot hand clutching the three moist dollars in your pocket and hoarsely proclaimed your hideous and culpable poverty, nevermore would Mrs. Parker be a cicerone of yours. She would honk loudly the word 'Clara,' she would show you her back, and march downstairs. Then Clara, the colored maid, would escort you up the carpeted ladder that served for the fourth flight and show you the Skylight Room. It occupied 7 by 8 feet of floor space at the middle of the hall. On each side of it was a dark lumber closet or storeroom.

In it was an iron cot, a washstand, and a chair. A shelf was on the dresser. Its four bare walls seemed

to close in upon you like the sides of a coin. Your hand crept to your throat, you gasped, and you looked up as from a well and breathed once more. Through the glass of the little skylight, you saw a square of blue infinity.

'Two dollars, suh,' Clara would say in her half-contemptuous, half-Tuskegeenial tones.

One day Miss Leeson came hunting for a room. She carried a typewriter made to be lugged around by a much larger lady. She was a very little girl, with eyes and hair that kept on growing after she had stopped and that always looked as if they were saying, "Goodness me, why didn't you keep up with us?"

Mrs. Parker showed her the double parlors. 'In this closet,' she said, 'one could keep a skeleton or anesthetic or coal—'

'But I am neither a doctor nor a dentist,' said Miss Leeson with a shiver.

Mrs. Parker gave her the incredulous, pitying, sneering, icy stare that she kept for those who failed to qualify as doctors or dentists and led the way to the second floor back.

'Eight dollars?' said Miss Leeson. 'Dear me! I'm not Hetty if I

do look green. I'm just a poor little working girl. Show me something higher and lower.' Mr. Skidder jumped and strewed the floor with cigarette stubs at the rap on his door.

'Excuse me, Mr. Skidder,' said Mrs. Parker, with her demon's smile at his pale looks. 'I didn't know you were in. I asked the lady to have a look at your lambrequins.'

'They're too lovely for anything,' said Miss Leeson, smiling in exactly the way the angels do. After they had gone, Mr. Skidder got very busy erasing the tall, black-haired heroine from his latest (unproduced) play and inserting a small, roguish one with heavy, bright hair and vivacious features.

'Anna Held'll jump at it,' said Mr. Skidder to himself, putting his feet up against the lambrequins and disappearing in a cloud of smoke like an aerial cuttlefish.

Presently the tocsin call of 'Clara!' sounded to the world the state of Miss Leeson's purse. A dark goblin seized her, mounted a Stygian stairway, thrust her into a vault with a glimmer of light in its top, and muttered the menacing and cabalistic words, 'Two dollars!'

'I'll take it!' sighed Miss Leeson, sinking down upon the squeaky iron bed.

Every day Miss Leeson went out to work. At night she brought home papers with handwriting on them and made copies with her typewriter. Sometimes she had no work at night, and then she would sit on the steps of the high stoop with the other roomers. Miss Leeson was not intended for a skylight room when the plans were drawn for her creation. She was gay-hearted and full of tender, whimsical fancies. Once she let Mr. Skidder read to her three acts of his great (unpublished) comedy, 'It's No Kid; or, The Heir of the Subway.'

There was rejoicing among the gentlemen roomers whenever Miss Leeson had time to sit on the steps for an hour or two. But Miss Longnecker, the tall blonde who taught in a public school and said 'Well, really!' to everything you said, sat on the top step and sniffed. And Miss Dorn, who shot at the moving ducks at Coney every Sunday and worked in a department store, sat on the bottom step and sniffed. Miss Leeson sat on the middle step, and the men would quickly group

around her.

Especially Mr. Skidder, who had cast her in his mind for the star part in a private, romantic (unspoken) drama in real life. And

especially Mr. Hoover, who was forty-five, fat, flushed, and foolish. And especially very young Mr. Evans, who set up a hollow cough to induce her to ask him to leave off cigarettes. The men voted her 'the funniest and jolliest ever,' but the sniffs on the top step and the lower step were implacable.

•••••

I pray you let the drama halt while Chorus stalks to the footlights and drops an epicedian tear upon the fatness of Mr. Hoover. Tune the pipes to the tragedy of tallow, the bane of bulk, and the calamity of corpulence. Tried out, Falstaff might have rendered more romance to the ton than Romeo's rickety ribs would have to the ounce. A lover may sigh, but he must not puff. To the train of

Momus are the fat men remanded. In vain beats the most faithful heart above a 52-inch belt.

Avaunt, Hoover! Hoover, forty-five, flush, and foolish, might carry off Helen herself; Hoover, forty-five, flush, foolish, and fat, is meat for perdition. There was never a chance for you, Hoover.

As Mrs. Parker's roomers sat thus one summer's evening, Miss Leeson looked up into the firmament and cried with her little gay laugh:

'Why, there's Billy Jackson! I can see him from down here, too.'

All looked up—some at the windows of skyscrapers, some casting about for an airship, Jackson-guided.

'It's that star,' explained Miss Leeson, pointing with a tiny finger. 'Not the big one that twinkles—the steady blue one near it. I can see it every night through my skylight. I named it Billy Jack, son.' 'Well, really!' said Miss Longnecker. 'I didn't know you were an astronomer, Miss Leeson.'

'Oh, yes,' said the small stargazer, 'I know as much as any of them about the style of sleeves they're going to wear next fall on Mars.'

'Well, really!' said Miss Longnecker. 'The star you refer to is Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia. It is nearly of the second magnitude, and its meridian passage is—'

'Oh,' said the very young Mr. Evans, 'I think Billy Jackson is a much better name for it.

'Same here,' said Mr. Hoover, loudly breathing defiance to Miss Longnecker. 'I think Miss Leeson has just as much right to name stars as any of those old astrologers had.'

'Well, really!' said Miss Longnecker.

'I wonder whether it's a shooting star,' remarked Miss Dorn. 'I hit nine ducks and a rabbit out of ten in the gallery at Coney Sunday.'

'He doesn't show up very well from down here,' said Miss Leeson. 'You ought to see him from my room. You know you can see stars even in the daytime from

the bottom of a well. At night my room is like the shaft of a coal mine, and it makes Billy Jackson look like the big diamond pin that Night fastens her kimono with.

There came a time after that when Miss Leeson brought no formidable papers home to copy. And when she went in the morning, instead of working, she went from office to office and let her heart melt away in the drip of cold refusals transmitted through insolent office boys. This went on.

There came an evening when she wearily climbed Mrs. Parker's stoop at the hour when she always returned from her dinner at the restaurant. But she had had no dinner.

As she stepped into the hall, Mr. Hoover met her and seized his chance. He asked her to marry him, and his fatness hovered above her like an avalanche. She dodged and caught the balustrade. He tried for her hand, and she raised it and smote him weakly in the face. Step by step she went up, dragging herself by the railing. She passed Mr. Skidder's door as he was red-inking a stage direction for Myrtle Delorme (Miss Leeson) in his (unaccepted) comedy to 'pirouette across stage from L to the side of the Count.' Up the carpeted ladder she crawled at last and opened the door of the skylight room.

She was too weak to light the lamp or to undress. She fell upon the iron cot, her fragile body scarcely hollowing the worn springs. And in that Erebus of a room, she slowly raised her heavy eyelids and smiled.

For Billy Jackson was shining down on her, calm and bright and constant through the skylight. There was no world about her. She was sunk in a pit of blackness, with but that small square of pallid light framing the star that she had so whimsically, and oh, so ineffectually, named. Miss Longnecker must be right; it was Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia, and not Billy Jackson. And yet she could not let it be, Gamma.

As she lay on her back, she tried twice to raise her arm. The third time, she got two thin fingers to her lips and blew a kiss out of the black pit to Billy Jackson. Her arm fell back limply.

'Good-bye, Billy,' she murmured faintly. 'You're millions of

miles away and you won't even twinkle once. But you kept where I could see you most of the time up there when there wasn't anything else but darkness to look at, didn't you? . . . Millions of miles Good-bye, Billy Jackson.'

Clara, the colored maid, found the door locked at ten the next day, and they forced it open. Vinegar, the slapping of wrists, and even burnt feathers proved of no avail; someone ran to the phone for an ambulance.

In due time it backed up to the door with much gong-clanging, and the capable young medico, in his white linen coat, ready, active, and confident, with his smooth face half debonair, half grim, danced up the steps.

'Ambulance call to 4U,' he said briefly. 'What's the trouble?'

'Oh yes, doctor,' sniffed Mrs. Parker, as though her trouble that there should be trouble in the house was the greater. 'I can't think what can be the matter with her. Nothing we could do would bring her to. It's a young woman, a Miss Elsie—yes, a Miss Elsie Leeson. Never before in my house—'

'What room?' cried the doctor in a terrible voice, to which Mrs. Parker was a stranger.

'The skylight room. It - '

Evidently the ambulance doctor was familiar with the location of skylight rooms. He was gone up the stairs, four at a time. Mrs. Parker followed slowly, as her dignity demanded.

On the first landing she met him coming back bearing the astronomer in his arms. He stopped and let loose the practiced scalpel of his tongue, not loudly. Gradually Mrs. Parker crumpled like a stiff garment that slips down from a nail. Ever afterwards there remained crumples in her mind and body. Sometimes her curious roommates would ask her what the doctor said to her.

'Let that be,' she would answer. 'If I can get forgiveness for having heard it, I will be satisfied.' The ambulance physician strode with his burden through the pack of hounds that follow the curiosity chase, and even they fell back along the sidewalk abashed, for his face was that of one who bears his own dead.

They noticed that he did not lie down upon the bed prepared for it in the ambulance or the form that he carried, and all that he said was, 'Drive like hell, Wilson,' to the driver.

That is all. Is it a story? In the next morning's paper I saw a little news item, and the last sentence of it may help you (as it helped me) to weld the incidents together.

It recounted the reception into Bellevue Hospital of a young woman who had been removed from No. 4U East Street, suffering from debility induced by starvation. It concluded with these words:

'Dr. William Jackson, the ambulance physician who attended the case, says the patient will recover.'

V

A Service of Love

When one loves one’s art, no service seems too hard.

That is our premise. This story shall draw a conclusion from it and show at the same time that the premise is incorrect. That will be a new thing in logic and a feat in storytelling somewhat older.

than the Great Wall of China.

Joe Larrabee came out of the post-oak flats of the Middle West.

pulsing with a genius for pictorial art. At six he drew a picture of the town pump with a prominent citizen passing it hastily. This effort was framed and hung in the drugstore window by the side of the ear of corn with an uneven number of rows. At twenty he left for New York with a flowing necktie and a capital tied up somewhat closer.

Delia Caruthers did things in six octaves so promisingly in a pine-tree village in the South that her relatives chipped in enough in her chip hat for her to go 'North' and 'finish.' They could not see her, but that is our story.

Joe and Delia met in an atelier where a number of art and music students had gathered to discuss chiaroscuro, Wagner, music, Rembrandt's works, pictures, Waldteufel, wallpaper, Chopin, and Oolong.

Joe and Delia became enamored of one another, or each of the other, as you please, and in a

short time we were married—for (see above), when one loves one's art, no service seems too hard. Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee began housekeeping in a flat. It was a lonesome flat—something like the A-sharp way down at the left-hand end of the keyboard. And they were happy, for they had their art and they had each other. And my advice to the rich young man would be—sell all thou hast and give it to the poor—janitor for the privilege of living in a flat with your art and your Delia.

Flat-dwellers shall endorse my dictum that theirs is the only

true happiness. If a home is happy, it cannot fit too close—let the dresser collapse and become a billiard table; let the mantel turn to a rowing machine, the escritoire to a spare bedchamber, and the washstand to an upright piano; let the four walls come together, if they will, so you and your Delia are between. But if home be the other kind, let it be wide and long—enter you at the Golden Gate, hang your hat on Hatteras, your cape on Cape Horn, and go out by Labrador.

Joe was painting in the class of the great Magister—you know his fame. His fees are high; his lessons are light—his highlights have brought him renown. Delia was studying under Rosenstock—you know his repute as a disturber of the piano keys.

They were mighty happy as long as their money lasted. So is everyone—but I will not be cynical. Their aims were very clear and defined. Joe was to become capable very soon of turning out pictures that old gentlemen with thin side-whiskers and thick pocketbooks would sandbag one another in his studio for the privilege of buying. Delia was to become familiar and then contemptuous with music so that when she saw the orchestra seats and boxes unsold, she could have a sore throat and lobster in a private dining room and refuse to go on the stage.

But the best, in my opinion, was the home life in the little flat—the ardent, voluble chats after the day's study; the cozy dinners and fresh, light breakfasts; the interchange of ambitions—ambitions interwoven each with the other's or else inconsiderable—the mutual help and inspiration; and—overlook my artlessness—stuffed olives and cheese sandwiches at 11p.m.

But after a while Art flagged. It sometimes does, even if some switchman doesn't flag it. Everything going out and nothing coming in, as the Vulgarians say. Money was lacking to pay Mr. Magister and Herr Rosenstock their prices. When one loves one's art, no service seems too hard. So, Delia said she must give music lessons to keep the chafing dish bubbling.

For two or three days she went out canvassing for pupils. One evening she came home elated. 'Joe, dear,' she said gleefully, 'I've a pupil. And, oh, the loveliest people! General A. B. Pinkney's daughter—General—on Seventy-first Street. Such a splendid house, Joe—you ought to see the front door! Byzantine, I think you would call it. And inside! Oh, Joe, I never saw anything like it before.

'My pupil is his daughter Clementina. I dearly love her already. She's a delicate thing—always dresses in white and is the sweetest.

simplest manners! Only eighteen years old. I'm to give three lessons a week; and, just think, Joe!

$5 a lesson. I don't mind it a bit, for when I get two or three more pupils, I can resume my lessons.

with Herr Rosenstock. Now, smooth out that wrinkle between your brows, dear, and let's have a nice supper.'

'That's all right for you, Dele,' said Joe, attacking a can of peas with a carving knife and a hatchet, 'but how about me? Do you think I'm going to let you hustle for wages while I philander in the regions of high art? Not by the bones of Benvenuto Cellini! I guess I can sell papers or lay cobblestones and bring in a dollar or two.'

Delia came and hung about his neck.

'Joe, dear, you are silly. You must keep on at your studies. It is not as if I had quit my music and gone to work at something else. While I teach, I learn. I am always with my music. And we can live as happily as millionaires on $15 a week. You mustn't think of leaving Mr. Magister.'

'All right,' said Joe, reaching for the blue scalloped vegetable dish. 'But I hate for you to be giving lessons. It isn't Art. But you're a trump and a dear to do it.'

'When one loves one's art, no service seems too hard,' said Delia.

'Magister praised the sky in that sketch I made in the park,' said Joe. 'And Tinkle gave me permission to hang two of them in his window. I may sell one if the right kind of moneyed idiot sees

them.'

'I'm sure you will,' said Delia sweetly. 'And now let's be thankful for General Pinkney and this veal roast.'

During all of the next week the Larrabees had an early break.

fast. Joe was enthusiastic about some morning-effect sketches he was doing in Central Park, and Delia packed him off breakfasted, coddled, praised, and kissed at seven o'clock. Art is an engaging mistress. It was most times seven o'clock when he returned in the evening.

At the end of the week Delia, sweetly proud but languid, triumphantly tossed three five-dollar bills on the 8 by 10 (inch) center table of the 8 by 10 (foot) flat parlor.

'Sometimes,' she said, a little wearily, 'Clementina tries me. I'm afraid she doesn't practice enough, and I have to tell her the same things so often. And then she always dresses entirely in white, and that does get monotonous. But General Pinkney is the dearest old man! I wish you could know him, Joe. He comes in sometimes.

When I am with Clementina at the piano—he is a widower, you know—he stands there pulling his white goatee. "And how are the semiquavers and the demi-semiquavers progressing?" he always asks.

'I wish you could see the wainscoting in that drawing room, Joe! And those Astrakhan rug portières. And Clementina has such a funny little cough. I hope she is stronger than she looks. Oh, I really am getting attached to her; she is so gentle and high-bred.

General Pinkney's brother was once minister to Bolivia.'

And then Joe, with the air of a Monte Cristo, drew forth a ten, a five, a two, and a one—all legal tender notes—and laid them beside

Delia's earnings.

'Sold that watercolor of the obelisk to a man from Peoria,' he announced overwhelmingly.

'Don't joke with me,' said Delia—'not from Peoria!'

'All the way. I wish you could see him, Dele. Fat man with a

woollen muffler and a quill toothpick. He saw the sketch in Tinkle's window and thought it was a windmill at first. He was game, though, and bought it anyhow. He ordered another—an oil sketch of the Lackawanna freight depot—to take back with him. Music lessons! Oh, I guess Art is still in it.'

'I'm so glad you've kept on,' said Delia heartily. 'You're bound to win, dear. Thirty-three dollars! We never had so much to spend before. We'll have oysters tonight.'

'And filet mignon with champignons,' said Joe. 'Where is the olive fork?'

On the next Saturday evening Joe reached home first. He spread his $18 on the parlor table and washed what seemed to be a great deal of dark paint from his hands.

Half an hour later Delia arrived, her right hand tied up in a shapeless bundle of wraps and bandages.

'How is this?' asked Joe after the usual greetings. Delia laughed, but not very joyously.

'Clementina,' she explained, 'insisted upon a Welsh rabbit after

her lesson. She is such a queer girl. Welsh rabbits at five in the afternoon. The General was there. You should have seen him run for the chafing dish, Joe, just as if there wasn't a servant in the house. I know Clementina isn't in good health; she is so nervous. In serving the rabbit, she spilled a great lot of it, boiling hot, over my hand and wrist. It hurt awfully, Joe. And the dear girl was so sorry! But General Pinkney! - Joe, that old man nearly got distracted. He rushed downstairs and sent somebody—they said the

furnace man or somebody in the basement—out to a drugstore for some oil and things to bind it up with. It doesn't hurt so much now.'

'What's this?' asked Joe, taking the hand tenderly and pulling at some white strands beneath the bandages.

'It's something soft,' said Delia, 'that had oil on it. Oh, Joe, did you sell another sketch?' She had seen the money on the table.

'Did I?' said Joe. 'Just ask the man from Peoria. He got his deposit today, and he isn't sure, but he thinks he wants another parkscape and a view of the Hudson. What time this afternoon did you burn your hand, Dele?'

'Five o'clock, I think,' said Dele plaintively. 'The iron—I mean the rabbit—came off the fire about that time. You ought to have seen General Pinkney, Joe, when—'

'Sit down here a moment, Dele,' said Joe. He drew her to the couch, sat down beside her, and put his arm across her shoulders.

'What have you been doing for the last two weeks, Dele?' he asked.

She braved it for a moment or two with an eye full of love and stubbornness and murmured a

phrase or two vaguely of General Pinkney, but at length down went her head and out came the truth and tears.

'I couldn't get any pupils,' she confessed. 'And I couldn't bear to have you give up your lessons, and I got a place ironing shirts in that big Twenty-fourth Street laundry. And I think I did very well to make up both General Pinkney and Clementina, don't you?

Joe? And when a girl in the laundry set down a hot iron on my hand this afternoon, I was all the way home making up that story about the Welsh rabbit. You're not angry, are you, Joe? And if I hadn't gotten the work, you might not have sold your sketches to that man from Peoria.'

'He wasn't from Peoria,' said Joe slowly.

'Well, it doesn't matter where he was from. How clever you are, Joe—and kiss me, Joe—and what made you ever suspect that I wasn't giving music lessons to Clementina?'

'I didn't,' said Joe, 'until tonight. And I wouldn't have then, only I sent up this cotton waste and oil from the engine room this afternoon for a girl upstairs who had her hand burned with a smoothing iron. I've been firing the engine in that laundry for the last two weeks.'

'And then you didn't—'

'My purchaser from Peoria,' said Joe, 'and General Pinkney are

both creations of the same art—but you wouldn't call it either painting or music. And then they both laughed, and Joe began:

'When one loves one's art, no service seems—'

But Delia stopped him with her hand on his lips. 'No,' she said—'just "When one loves."'

VI

The Coming-out of Maggie

Every saturday night the Clover Leaf Social Club gave a hop in the hall of the Give and Take Athletic Association on the East Side. In order to attend one of these dances, you must be a member of the Give and Take—or, if you belong to the division that starts off with the right foot in waltzing, you must work in Rhinegold's paper-box factory. Still, any Clover Leaf was privileged to escort or be escorted by an outsider to a single dance. But mostly each give-and-take brought the paper-box girl that he affected, and few strangers could boast of having shaken a foot at the regular hops.

Maggie Toole, on account of her dull eyes, broad mouth, and left-handed style of footwork in the two-step, went to the dances with Anna McCarty and her 'fellow.' Anna and Maggie worked side by side in the factory and were the greatest chums ever. So Anna always made Jimmy Burns take her by Maggie's house every Saturday night so that her friend could go to the dance with them.

The Give and Take Athletic Association lived up to its name. The hall of the association in Orchard Street was fitted out with muscle-making inventions. With the fibers thus built up, the members were wont to engage the police and rival social and athletic organizations in joyous combat. Between these more serious occupations were the Saturday night hops with the paper box.

Factory girls came as a refining influence and as an efficient screen. Sometimes the tip went round, and if you were among the elect that tiptoed up the dark back stairway, you might see as neat and satisfying a little welterweight affair to a finish as ever happened inside the ropes.

On Saturdays Rhinegold's paper-box factory closed at 3 p.m. On one such afternoon Anna and Maggie walked homeward together. At Maggie's door, Anna said, as usual, 'Be ready at seven, sharp, Mag, and Jimmy and I'll come by for you.'

But what was this? Instead of the customary humble and grateful thanks from the non-escorted one, there was to be perceived a high-poised head, a prideful dimpling at the corners of a broad mouth, and almost a sparkle in a dull brown eye.

'Thanks, Anna,' said Maggie, 'but you and Jimmy needn't bother tonight. I have a gentleman friend that's coming 'round to escort me to the hop.'

The comely Anna pounced upon her friend, shook her, and chided and beseeched her. Maggie Toole catches a fellow! Plain, dear, loyal, unattractive Maggie, so sweet as a chum, so unsought for a two-step or a moonlit bench in the little park. How was it? When did it happen? Who was it? 'You'll see tonight,' said Maggie, flushed with the wine of the first grapes she had gathered in Cupid's vineyard. 'He's swell all right. He's two inches taller than Jimmy and an up-to-date dresser. I'll introduce him, Anna, just as soon as we get to the hall.'

Anna and Jimmy were among the first Clover Leafs to arrive that evening. Anna's eyes were brightly fixed upon the door of the hall to catch the first glimpse of her friend's 'catch.'

At 8:30 Miss Toole swept into the hall with her escort. Quickly her triumphant eye discovered her chum under the wing of her faithful Jimmy.

'Oh, gee!' cried Anna. 'Mag has made a hit—oh, no! Swell fellow? Well, I guess! Style? Look at them.

'Go as far as you like,' said Jimmy, with sandpaper in his voice. 'Cop him out if you want him. These new guys always win out with the push. Don't mind me. He doesn't squeeze all the limes, I guess. Huh!'

'Shut up, Jimmy. You know what I mean. I'm glad for Mag. First fellow she ever had. Oh, here they come.'

Across the floor Maggie sailed like a coquettish yacht convoyed by a stately cruiser. And truly, her companion justified the encomiums of the faithful chum. He stood two inches taller than the average Give and Take athlete; his dark hair curled, and his eyes and his teeth flashed whenever he bestowed his frequent smiles. The young men of the Clover Leaf Club pinned not their faith to the graces of person as much as they did to its prowess, its achievements in hand-to-hand conflicts, and its preservation from the legal duress that constantly menaced it. The member of the association who would bind a paper-box maiden to his conquering chariot scorned to employ Beau Brummel airs. They were not considered honorable methods of warfare. The swelling biceps,

The coat straining at its buttons over the chest, the air of conscious conviction of the super-eminence of the male in the cosmogony of creation, and even a calm display of bow legs as subduing and enchanting agents in the gentle tourneys of Cupid—these were the approved arms and ammunition of the Clover Leaf gallants. They viewed, then, the genuflections and alluring poses of this visitor with their chins at a new angle.

'A friend of mine, Mr. Terry O'Sullivan,' was Maggie's formula of introduction. She led him around the room, presenting him to each newly arriving Clover Leaf. Almost pretty was she now, with the unique luminosity in her eyes that comes to a girl with her first suitor and a kitten with its first mouse.

'Maggie Toole's got a fellow at last,' was the word that went round among the paper-box girls. 'Pipe Mag's floor-walker'—thus the Give and Takes expressed their indifferent contempt.

Usually at the weekly hops Maggie kept a spot on the wall warm with her back. She felt and showed so much gratitude whenever a self-sacrificing partner invited her to dance that his pleasure was cheapened and diminished. She had

even grown used to noticing Anna nudge the reluctant Jimmy with her elbow as a signal for him to invite her chum to walk over his feet through a two-step.

But tonight the pumpkin had turned to a coach and six. Terry O'Sullivan was a victorious Prince Charming, and Maggie Toole winged her first butterfly flight. And though our tropes of fairyland be mixed with those of entomology, they shall not spill one drop of ambrosia from the rose-crowned melody of Maggie's one perfect night.

The girls besieged her for introductions to her 'fellow.' The Clover Leaf young men, after two years of blindness, suddenly perceived charms in Miss Toole. They flexed their compelling muscles before her and besought her for the dance.

Thus she scored, but to Terry O'Sullivan the honors of the evening fell thick and fast. He shook his curls; he smiled and went easily through the seven motions for acquiring grace in your own room before an open window ten minutes each day. He danced like a faun; he introduced manner and style and atmosphere; his words came trippingly upon his tongue, and he waltzed twice in succession with the paper-box girl that Dempsey Donovan brought.

Dempsey was the leader of the association. He wore a dress suit and could chin the bar twice with one hand. He was one of 'Big Mike' O'Sullivan's lieutenants and was never troubled by trouble. No cop dared to arrest him. Whenever he broke a pushcart man's

head or shot a member of the Heinrick B. Sweeney Outing and Literary Association in the kneecap, an officer would drop around and say:

'The Cap'n would like to see you round to the office in a few minutes when you have time, Dempsey, me boy.'

But there would be sundry gentlemen there with large gold fob chains and black cigars, and somebody would tell a funny story, and then Dempsey would go back and work half an hour with the six-pound dumbbells. So, doing a tightrope act on a wire stretched across Niagara was a

safe terpsichorean performance compared with waltzing twice with Dempsey Donovan's paper-box girl. At ten o'clock the jolly round face of 'Big Mike' O'Sullivan shone at the door for five minutes upon the scene. He always looked

in for five minutes, smiled at the girls, and handed out real perfectos to the delighted boys.

Dempsey Donovan was at his elbow instantly, talking rapidly. 'Big Mike' looked carefully at the dancers, smiled, shook his head, and departed.

The music stopped. The dancers scattered to the chairs along the walls. Terry O'Sullivan, with his entrancing bow, relinquished a pretty girl in blue to her partner and started back to find Maggie. Dempsey intercepted him in the middle of the floor.

Some fine instinct that Rome must have bequeathed to us caused nearly every one to turn and look at them—there was a subtle feeling that two gladiators had met in the arena. Two or three Give and Takes with tight coat-sleeves drew nearer.

'One moment, Mr. O'Sullivan,' said Dempsey. 'I hope you're enjoying yourself. Where did you say you lived?

The two gladiators were well matched. Dempsey had, perhaps, ten pounds of weight to give away. The O'Sullivan had breadth with quickness. Dempsey had a glacial eye, a dominating slit of a mouth, an indestructible jaw, a complexion like a belle's, and the coolness of a champion. The visitor showed more fire in his contempt and less control over his conspicuous sneer. They were enemies by the law written when the rocks were molten. They were each too splendid, too mighty, and too incomparable to divide preeminence. One only must survive.

'I live on Grand,' said O'Sullivan insolently, 'and it's no trouble to find me at home. Where do you live?'

Dempsey ignored the question.

'You say your name's O'Sullivan,' he went on. 'Well, "Big Mike" says he never saw you before.'

'Lots of things he never saw,' said the favorite of the hop.

'As a rule,' went on Dempsey, huskily sweet, 'O'Sullivans in this district know one another. You escorted one of our lady members here, and we want a chance

to make good. If you've got a family tree, let's see a few historical O'Sullivan buds come out on it. Or do you want us to dig it out of you by the roots?'

'Suppose you mind your own business,' suggested O'Sullivan blandly.

Dempsey's eyes brightened. He held up an inspired forefinger as though a brilliant idea had struck him.

'I've got it now,' he said cordially. 'It was just a little mistake. You're no O'Sullivan. You are a ring-tailed monkey. Excuse us for not recognizing you at first.'

O'Sullivan's eye flashed. He made a quick movement, but Andy Geoghan was ready and caught his arm.

Dempsey nodded at Andy and William McMahan, the secretary of the club, and walked rapidly toward a door at the rear of the hall. Two other members of the Give and Take Association swiftly joined the little group. Terry O'Sullivan was now in the hands of the Board of Rules and Social

Referees. They spoke to him briefly and softly and conducted him out through the same door at the rear.

This movement on the part of the Clover Leaf members requires a word of elucidation. At the back of the association hall was a smaller room rented by the club. In this room personal difficulties that arose on the ballroom floor were settled, man to man, with the weapons of nature, under the supervision of the Board. No lady could say that she had witnessed a fight at a Clover Leaf hop in several years. Its gentlemen members guaranteed that.

So easily and smoothly had Dempsey and the Board done their preliminary work that many in the hall had not noticed the checking of the fascinating O'Sullivan's social triumph. Among these was Maggie. She looked about for her escort.

'Smoke up!' said Rose Cassidy. Weren't you on? Demps Donovan picked a scrap with your Lizzie-boy, and they've waltzed out to the slaughter-room with him. How's my hair look done up this way, Mag?'

Maggie laid a hand on the bosom of her cheesecloth waist.

'Gone to fight with Dempsey!' she said breathlessly. 'They've got to be stopped. Dempsey Donovan can't fight him. Why, he'll—he'll kill him!'

'Ah, what do you care?' said Rosa. 'Don't some of them fight every hop?'

But Maggie was off, darting her zigzag way through the maze of dancers. She burst through the rear door into the dark hall and then threw her solid shoulder against the door of the room of single combat. It gave way, and in the instant that she entered, her eye caught the scene—the Board standing about with open watches; Dempsey Donovan in his shirt-sleeves dancing, light-footed, with the wary grace of the modern pugilist, within easy reach of his adversary; and Terry O'Sullivan standing with arms folded and a murderous look in his dark eyes. And without slacking the speed of her entrance, she leaped forward with a scream—leaped in time to catch and hang upon the arm of O'Sullivan that was suddenly uplifted and to whisk from it the long, bright stiletto that he had drawn from his bosom.

The knife fell and rang upon the floor. Cold steel drawn in the rooms of the Give and Take Association! Such a thing had never happened before. Everyone stood motionless for a minute. Andy Geoghan kicked the stiletto with the toe of his shoe curiously, like an antiquarian who has come upon some ancient weapon unknown to his learning.

And then O'Sullivan hissed something unintelligible between his teeth. Dempsey and the Board exchanged looks. And then Dempsey looked at O'Sullivan without anger, as one looks at a stray dog, and nodded his head in the direction of the door.

'The back stairs, Giuseppi,' he said briefly. 'Somebody'll pitch your hat down after you.' Maggie walked up to Dempsey Donovan. There was a brilliant spot of red in her cheeks, down which slow tears were running. But she looked him bravely in the eye.

'I knew it, Dempsey,' she said, as her eyes grew dull even in their tears. 'I knew he was a Guinea. His name's Tony Spinelli. I hurried in when they told me you and he were scrapping. Them

Guineas always carries knives. But you don't understand, Dempsey. I never had a fellow in my life. I got tired of coming with Anna and Jimmy every night, so I fixed it with him to call himself O'Sullivan and brought him along. I knew there'd be nothing doing for him if he came as a Dago. I guess I'll resign from the club now.'

Dempsey turned to Andy Geoghan.

'Chuck that cheese slicer out of the window,' he said, 'and tell them inside that Mr. O'Sullivan has had a telephone message to go down to Tammany Hall.'

And then he turned back to Maggie.

'Say, Mag,' he said, 'I'll see you home. And how about next Saturday night? Will you come to the hop with me if I call around for you?'

It was remarkable how quickly Maggie's eyes could change from dull to a shining brown. 'With you, Dempsey?' she stammered. 'Say—will a duck swim?'

VII

The Cop and the Anthem

On his bench in Madison square, Soapy moved uneasily. When wild geese honk high of nights, and when women without sealskin coats grow kind to their husbands, and when Soapy moves uneasily on his bench in the park, you may know that winter is near at hand.

A dead leaf fell in Soapy's lap. That was Jack Frost's card. Jack is kind to the regular denizens of Madison Square and gives fair warning of his annual call. At the corners of four streets he hands his pasteboard to the North Wind, footman of the mansion of All Outdoors, so that the inhabitants thereof may make ready.

Soapy's mind became cognizant of the fact that the time had come for him to resolve himself into a singular Committee of Ways and Means to provide against the coming rigor. And therefore he moved uneasily on his bench.

The hibernatorial ambitions of Soapy were not of the highest. In them were no considerations of Mediterranean cruises, of soporific Southern skies, or of drifting in the Vesuvian Bay. Three months on the island was what his soul craved. Three months of assured board and bed and congenial company, safe from Boreas and bluecoats, seemed to Soapy the essence of things desirable.

For years the hospitable Blackwells had been his winter quarters. Just as his more fortunate fellow New Yorkers had bought their tickets to Palm Beach and

the Riviera each winter, so Soapy had made his humble arrangements for his annual hegira to the Island. And now the time had come. On the previous night three Sabbath newspapers, distributed beneath his coat, about his ankles, and over his lap, had failed to repulse the cold as he slept on his bench near the spurting fountain in the ancient square. So the island loomed large and timely in Soapy's mind. He scorned the provisions made in the name of charity for the city's dependents.

In Soapy's opinion, the law was more benign than philanthropy. There was an endless round of institutions, municipal and eleemosynary, on which he might set out and receive lodging and

food accordant with the simple life. But to one of Soapy's proud spirit, the gifts of charity are encumbered. If not in coin, you must pay in humiliation of spirit for every benefit received at the hands of philanthropy. As Caesar had his Brutus, every bed of charity must have its toll of a bath, every loaf of bread its compensation of a private and personal inquisition. Wherefore it is better to be a guest of the law, which, though conducted by rules, does not meddle unduly with a gentleman's private affairs.

Soapy, having decided to go to the island, at once set about accomplishing his desire. There were many easy ways of doing this. The pleasantest was to dine luxuriously at some expensive restaurant and then, after declaring insolvency, be handed over quietly and without uproar to a policeman. An accommodating magistrate would do the rest.

Soapy left his bench and strolled out of the square and across the level sea of asphalt, where Broadway and Fifth Avenue flow together. Up Broadway he turned and halted at a glittering café, where are gathered together nightly the choicest products of the grape, the silkworm, and the protoplasm.

Soapy had confidence in himself from the lowest button of his vest upward. He was shaven, and his coat was decent, and his neat black, ready-tied four-in-hand had been presented to him by a lady missionary on Thanksgiving Day. If he could reach a table in the restaurant, unsuspected success would be his. The portion of him that would show above the table would raise no doubt in the waiter's mind. A roasted mallard duck, thought Soapy, would be about the thing—with a bottle of Chablis, and then Camembert, a demi-tasse, and a cigar. One dollar for the cigar would be enough. The total would not be so high as to call forth any supreme manifestation of revenge from the café management, and

yet the meat would leave him filled and happy for the journey to his winter refuge.

But as Soapy set foot inside the restaurant door, the head waiter's eye fell upon his frayed trousers and decadent shoes. Strong and ready hands turned him about and conveyed him in silence and haste to the sidewalk and averted the ignoble fate of the menaced mallard.

Soapy turned off Broadway. It seemed that his route to the coveted island was not to be an epicurean one. Some other way of entering limbo must be thought of.

At a corner of Sixth Avenue, electric lights and cunningly displayed wares behind plate glass made a shop window conspicuous. Soapy took a cobblestone and dashed it through the glass. People came running round the corner, a policeman in the lead. Soapy stood still, with his hands in his pockets, and smiled at the sight of brass buttons.

'Where's the man that did that?' inquired the officer excitedly.

'Don't you figure out that I might have had something to do with it?' said Soapy, not without sarcasm, but friendly, as one greets good fortune.

The policeman's mind refused to accept Soapy even as a clue. Men who smash windows do not remain to parley with the law's minions. They take to their heels. The policeman saw a man halfway down the block running to catch a car. With drawn club, he joined in the pursuit. Soapy, with disgust in his heart, loafed along, twice unsuccessful.

On the opposite side of the street was a restaurant of no great pretensions. It catered to large appetites and modest purses. Its crockery and atmosphere were thick; its soup and napery were thin. Into this place, Soapy took his accusative shoes and telltale trousers without challenge. At a table he sat and consumed beefsteak, flapjacks, doughnuts, and pie. And then to the waiter he betrayed the fact that the minutest coin and himself were strangers.

'Now, get busy and call a cop,' said Soapy. 'And don't keep a gentleman waiting.'

'No cop for you,' said the waiter, with a voice like butter cakes and an eye like the cherry in a Manhattan cocktail. 'Hey, Con!'

Neatly upon his left ear on the callous pavement two waiters pitched Soapy. He arose, joint by joint, as a carpenter's rule opens, and beat the dust from his clothes. Arrest seemed but a rosy dream. The island seemed very far away. A policeman who stood before a drugstore two doors away laughed and walked down the street.

Five blocks Soapy travelled before his courage permitted him to woo capture again. This time the opportunity presented what he fatuously termed to himself a 'cinch.' A young woman of a modest and pleasing guise was standing before a show window gazing with sprightly interest at its display of shaving mugs and inkstands, and two yards from the window a large policeman of severe demeanor leaned against a water plug.

It was Soapy's design to assume the role of the despicable and execrated 'masher.' The refined and elegant appearance of his

victim, and the contiguity of the conscientious cop encouraged him to believe that he would soon feel the pleasant official clutch upon his arm that would ensure his winter quarters on the right little, tight little isle.

Soapy straightened the lady missionary's ready-made tie, dragged his shrinking cuffs into the open, set his hat at a killing cant, and sidled toward the young woman. He made eyes at her, was taken with sudden coughs and 'hems,' smiled, smirked, and went brazenly through the impudent and contemptible litany of the 'masher.' With half an eye, Soapy saw that the policeman was watching him fixedly. The young woman moved away a few steps and again bestowed her absorbed attention upon the shaving mugs. Soapy followed, boldly stepping to her side, raising his hat, and saying,

'Ah there, Bedelia! Don't you want to come and play in my yard?'

The policeman was still looking. The persecuted young woman had but to beckon a finger, and Soapy would be practically en route for his insular haven. Already he imagined he could feel the cozy warmth of the station house. The young woman faced him and, stretching out a hand, caught Soapy's coat sleeve.

'Sure, Mike,' she said joyfully, 'if you'll blow me to a pail of suds. I'd have spoken to you sooner, but the cop was watching.'

With the young woman playing the clinging ivy to his oak, Soapy walked past the policeman, overcome with gloom. He seemed doomed to liberty.

At the next corner he shook off his companion and ran. He halted in the district where, by night,

are found the lightest streets, hearts, vows, and librettos. Women in furs and men in greatcoats moved gaily in the wintry air. A sudden fear seized Soapy that some dreadful enchantment had rendered him immune to arrest. The thought brought a little panic upon him, and when he came upon another policeman lounging grandly in front of a resplendent theater, he caught at the immediate straw of 'disorderly conduct.'

On the sidewalk, Soapy began to yell drunken gibberish at the top of his harsh voice. He danced, howled, raved, and otherwise disturbed the welkin.

The policeman twirled his club, turned his back to Soapy, and remarked to a citizen,

'Tis one of them Yale lads celebrating the goose egg they gave to the Hartford College. Noisy, but no harm. We've instructions to leave them be.'

Disconsolate, Soapy ceased his unavailing racket. Would never a policeman lay hands on him? In his fancy the island seemed an unattainable Arcadia. He buttoned his thin coat against the chilling wind.

In a cigar store he saw a well-dressed man lighting a cigar at a swinging light. His silk umbrella he had set by the door on entering. Soapy stepped inside, secured the umbrella, and sauntered off with it slowly. The man at the cigar light followed hastily.

'My umbrella,' he said sternly.

'Oh, is it?' sneered Soapy, adding insult to petty larceny. 'Well, why don't you call a policeman? I took it. Your umbrella! Why don't you call a cop? There stands one at the corner.'

The umbrella owner slowed his steps. Soapy did likewise, with a presentiment that luck would again run against him. The policeman looked at the two curiously.

'Of course,' said the umbrella man, 'that is—well, you know how these mistakes occur—I—if it's your umbrella, I hope you'll excuse me—I picked it up this morning in a restaurant—if you recognize it as yours, why—I hope you'll—'

'Of course it's mine,' said Soapy viciously.

The ex-umbrella man retreated. The policeman hurried to assist a tall blonde in an opera cloak across the street in front of a streetcar that was approaching two blocks away.

Soapy walked eastward through a street damaged by improvements. He hurled the umbrella wrathfully into an excavation. He muttered against the men who wear helmets and carry clubs. Because he wanted to fall into their clutches, they seemed to regard him as a king who could do no wrong.

At length Soapy reached one of the avenues to the east, where the glitter and turmoil were but faint. He set his face down this way toward Madison Square, for the homing instinct survives even when the home is a park bench.

But on an unusually quiet corner, Soapy came to a standstill. Here was an old church, quaint and rambling and gabled. Through one violet-stained window a soft light glowed, where, no doubt, the organist loitered over the keys, making sure of his mastery of the coming Sabbath anthem. For there drifted out to Soapy's ears sweet music that caught and held him transfixed against the convolutions of the iron fence.

The moon was above, lustrous and serene; vehicles and pedestrians were few; sparrows twittered sleepily in the eaves—for a little while the scene might have been a country churchyard. And

The anthem that the organist played cemented Soapy to the iron fence, for he had known it well in the days when his life contained such things as mothers and roses and ambitions and friends and immaculate thoughts and collars.

The conjunction of Soapy's receptive state of mind and the influences about the old church wrought a sudden and wonderful change in his soul. He viewed with

swift horror the pit into which he had tumbled, the degraded days, unworthy desires, dead hopes, wrecked faculties, and base motives that made up his existence.

And also in a moment his heart responded thrillingly to this novel mood. An instantaneous and strong impulse moved him to battle with his desperate fate. He would pull himself out of the mire; he would make a man of himself again; he would conquer the evil that had taken possession of him. There was time; he was comparatively young yet; he would resurrect his old eager ambitions and pursue them without faltering. Those solemn but sweet organ notes had set up a revolution in him. Tomorrow he would go into the roaring downtown district and find work. A fur importer had once offered him a place as a driver. He would find him to-morrow and ask for the position. He would be somebody in the world. He would—

Soapy felt a hand laid on his arm. He looked quickly around into the broad face of a policeman. 'What are you doing here?' asked the officer.

'Nothing,' said Soapy.

'Then come along,' said the policeman.

'Three months on the island,' said the magistrate in the police court the next morning.

VIII

Memoirs of a Yellow Dog

I don't suppose it will knock any of you people off your perch to read a contribution from an animal. Mr. Kipling and a good many others have demonstrated the fact that animals can express themselves in remunerative English, and no magazine goes to press nowadays without an animal story in it, except the old-style monthlies that are still running pictures of Bryan and the Mont Pelée horror.

But you needn't look for any stuck-up literature in my piece.

such as Bearoo, the bear, and Snakoo, the snake, and Tammanoo, the tiger, talk in the jungle books. A yellow dog that's spent most of his life in a cheap New

York flat, sleeping in a corner on an old sateen underskirt (the one she spilled port wine on at the Lady Longshoremen's banquet), mustn't be expected to perform any tricks with the art of speech.

I was born a yellow pup; date, locality, pedigree, and weight are unknown. The first thing I can

Recollect: an old woman had me in a basket at Broadway and Twenty-third, trying to sell me to a fat lady. Old Mother Hubbard was boosting me to beat the band as a genuine Pomeranian-Hambletonian-Red-Irish-Cochin-China-Stoke-Pogis fox terrier. The fat lady chased a V around among the samples of grosgrain flannelette in her shopping bag till she cornered it and gave up. From that moment I was a pet—a mamma's own wootsey squidlums. Say, gentle reader, did you ever have a 200-pound woman breathing a flavor of Camembert cheese and Peau d'Espagne pick you up and wallop her nose all over you, remarking all the time in an Emma Eames tone of voice, 'Oh, who's um oodlum, doodlum, woodlum, toodlum, bitsy-witsy skoodlums?' From a pedigreed yellow pup, I grew up to be an anonymous yellow cur looking like a cross between an Angora cat and a box of lemons. But my mistress never tumbled. She thought that the two primeval pups that Noah chased into the ark were but a collateral branch of my ancestors. It took two policemen to keep her from entering me at Madison Square Garden for the Siberian bloodhound prize.

I'll tell you about that flat. The house was the ordinary thing in New York, paved with Parian marble in the entrance hall and cobblestones above the first floor. Our flat was three fl—well, not flights—climbs up. My mistress rented it unfurnished and put in the regular things—a 1903 antique upholstered parlor set, an oil chromo of geishas in a Harlem tea house, a rubber plant, and a husband.

By Sirius! There was a biped I felt sorry for. He was a little man with sandy hair and whiskers, a good deal like mine. Henpecked? - Well, toucans and flamingoes and pelicans all had their bills in him. He wiped the dishes and listened to my mistress tell about the cheap, ragged things the lady with the squirrel-skin coat on the second floor hung out on her line to dry. And every evening while she was getting supper, she made him take me out on the end of a string for a walk.

If men knew how women pass the time when they are alone, they'd never marry. Laura Lean Jibbey, peanut brittle, a little almond cream on the neck muscles,

dishes unwashed, half an hour's talk with the iceman, reading a package of old letters, a couple of pickles and two bottles of malt extract, one hour peeking through a hole in the window shade into the flat across the air shaft—that's about all there is to it. Twenty minutes before time for him to come home from work, she straightens up the house, fixes her rat so it won't show, and gets out a lot of sewing for a

ten-minute bluff.

I led a dog's life in that flat.' Most of the day I lay there in my corner watching the fat woman kill time. I slept sometimes and had pipe dreams about being out chasing cats into basements and growling at old ladies with black mittens, as a dog was intended to do. Then she would pounce upon me with a lot of that drivelling poodle palaver and kiss me on the nose—but what could I do? A dog can't chew cloves.

I began to feel sorry for Hubby, dog my cats if I didn't. We looked so much alike that people noticed it when we went out, so we shook the streets that Morgan's cab drives down and took to climbing the piles of last December's snow on the streets where cheap people live.

One evening when we were thus promenading, and I was trying to look like a prize St. Bernard, and the old man was trying to look like he wouldn't have murdered the first organ-grinder he heard play Mendelssohn's wedding march, I looked up at him and said, in my way:

'What are you looking so sour about, you oakum-trimmed lobster? She doesn't kiss you. You don't have to sit on her lap and listen to talk that would make the book of a musical comedy sound like the maxims of Epictetus. You ought to be thankful you're not a dog. Brace up, Benedick, and bid the blues begone.'

The matrimonial mishap looked down at me with almost canine intelligence in his face.

'Why, doggie,' says he, 'good doggie. You almost look like you could speak. What is it, doggie—cats?'

Cats! Could speak!

But, of course, he couldn't understand. Humans were denied the speech of animals. The only common ground of communication upon which dogs and men can get together is in fiction.

In the flat across the hall from us lived a lady with a black-and-tan terrier. Her husband strung it and took it out every evening.

But he always came home cheerful and whistling. One day I touched noses with the black-and-tan in the hall, and I struck him for an elucidation.

'See, here, Wiggle-and-Skip,' I say, 'you know that it isn't the nature of a real man to play dry nurse to a dog in public. I never saw one leashed to a bow-wow, yet that one didn't look like he'd like to lick every other man that looked at him. But your boss comes in every day as perky and set up as an amateur prestidigitator doing the egg trick. How does he do it? Don't tell me he likes it. "Him?' says the black-and-tan. 'Why, he uses Nature's Own Remedy. He gets spifflicated. At first when we go out, he's as shy as the man on the steamer who would rather play pedro when they make them all jackpots. By the time we've been in eight saloons, he doesn't care whether the thing on the end of his line is a dog or a catfish. I've lost two inches of my tail trying to sidestep those swinging doors.'

The pointer I got from that terrier-vaudeville—please copy—set me to thinking.

One evening about six o'clock my mistress ordered him to get busy and do the ozone act for Lovey. I have concealed it until now, but that is what she called me. The black-and-tan was called 'Tweetness.' I consider that I have the bulge on him as far as you could chase a rabbit. Still, 'Lovey' is something of a nomenclatural tin can on the tail of one's self-respect.

At a quiet place on a safe street, I tightened the line of my custodian in front of an attractive, refined saloon. I made a dead-ahead scramble for the doors, whining like a dog in the press dispatches that let the family know that little Alice is bogged while gathering lilies in the brook. 'Why, darn my eyes,' says the old man, with a grin, 'darn my eyes if the saffron-colored son of a seltzer lemonade isn't asking me in to take a drink. Lemme see—how long has it been since I saved shoe leather by keeping one foot on the footrest? I believe I'll—'

I knew I had him. He took hot Scotches, sitting at a table. For an hour he kept the Campbells coming. I sat by his side rapping for the waiter with my tail and eating free lunch such as

Mamma in her flat never equaled her homemade truck bought at a delicatessen store eight minutes before Papa comes home.

When the products of Scotland were all exhausted except the rye bread, the old man unwound me from the table leg and played me outside like a fisherman plays a salmon. Out there he took off my collar and threw it into the street.

'Poor doggie,' says he; 'good doggie. She won't kiss you anymore. It's a darned shame. Good doggie, go away and get run over by a streetcar and be happy.'

I refused to leave. I leaped and frisked around the old man's legs, happy as a pug on a rug.

'You old flea-headed woodchuck-chaser,' I said to him, 'you moon-baying, rabbit-pointing, egg-stealing old beagle, can't you see that I don't want to leave you? Can't you see that we're both Pups in the Wood, and the missus is the cruel uncle after you with the dish towel and me with the flea liniment and a pink bow to tie on my tail? Why not cut that all out and be pards forevermore?' Maybe you'll say he didn't understand—maybe he didn't. But he kind of got a grip on the hot Scotches and stood still for a minute, thinking.

'Doggie,' says he finally, 'we don't live more than a dozen lives on this earth, and very few of us live to be more than 300. If I ever see that flat anymore, I'm a flat, and if you do, you're flatter, and that's no flattery. I'm offering 60 to 1 that Westward Ho wins out by the length of a dachshund.' There was no string, but I frolicked along with my master to the Twenty-third Street ferry. And the cats on the route saw reason to give thanks that prehensile claws had been given them.

On the Jersey side my master said to a stranger who stood eating a currant bun, 'Me and my doggie, we are bound for the Rocky Mountains.'

But what pleased me most was when my old man pulled both of my ears until I howled and said, 'You common, monkey-headed, rat-tailed, sulphur-colored son of a doormat, do you know what I'm going to call you?'

I thought of 'Lovey,' and I whined dolefully.

"I'm going to call you 'Pete,'" says my master, and if I'd had five tails, I couldn't have done enough wagging to do justice to the occasion.

IX

The Love-Philtre of Ikey Schoenstein

The blue light drug store is downtown, between the Bowery and First Avenue, where the distance between the two streets is the shortest. The Blue Light does not consider that pharmacy is a thing.

of bric-a-brac, scent, and ice-cream soda. If you ask it for a painkiller, it will not give you a bonbon.

The Blue Light scorns the labor-saving arts of modern pharmacy. It macerates its opium and percolates its own laudanum and paregoric. To this day pills are made behind its tall prescription desk—pills rolled out on its own pill-tile, divided with a spatula, and rolled with the finger and thumb.

dusted with calcined magnesia and delivered in little round, pasteboard pillboxes. The store is on a corner about which coveys of ragged-plumed, hilarious children play and become candidates for the cough drops and soothing syrups that wait for them inside.

Ikey Schoenstein was the night clerk of the Blue Light and the friend of his customers. Thus it is on the East Side, where the heart of pharmacy is not glazed. There, as it should be, the druggist is a counselor, a confessor, an adviser, and an able and willing missionary and mentor whose learning is respected, whose occult wisdom is venerated, and whose medicine is often poured, untasted, into the gutter. Therefore, Ikey's corniform, bespectacled nose and narrow, knowledge-bowed figure were well known in the vicinity of the Blue Light, and his advice and notice were much desired.

Ikey roomed and breakfasted at Mrs. Riddle's, two squares away. Mrs. Riddle had a daughter named Rosy. The circumlocution has been in vain—you must have guessed it—Ikey adored Rosy. She tinctured all his thoughts; she was the compound extract of all that was chemically pure and officinal—the dispensary contained nothing equal to her. But Ikey was timid, and his hopes remained insoluble in the menstruum of his backwardness and fears. Behind his counter he was a superior being, calmly conscious of special knowledge and worth; outside, he was a weak-kneed, purblind, motorman-cursed rambler, with ill-fitting clothes stained with chemicals and smelling of socotrine aloes and valerianate of ammonia.

The fly in Ikey's ointment (thrice welcome, pat trope!) was Chunk McGowan.

Mr. McGowan was also striving to catch the bright smiles tossed about by Rosy. But he was no outfielder as Ikey was; he picked them off the bat. At the same time, he was Ikey's friend and customer and often dropped in at the Blue Light Drug Store to have a bruise painted with iodine or get a cut rubber-plastered after a pleasant evening spent along the Bowery.

One afternoon McGowan drifted in in his silent, easy way, and

sat, comely, smooth-faced, hard, indomitable, and good-naturedly, upon a stool.

'Ikey,' said he, when his friend had fetched his mortar and sat opposite, grinding gum benzoin to a powder, 'get busy with your ear. It's drugs for me if you've got the line I need.'

Ikey scanned the countenance of Mr. McGowan for the usual evidence of conflict but found none.

'Take your coat off,' he ordered. 'I guess already that you have been stuck in the ribs with a knife. I have many times told you those Dagoes would do you up.'

Mr. McGowan smiled. 'Not them,' he said. 'Not any Dagoes. But you've located the diagnosis all right enough—it's under my coat, near the ribs. Say! Ikey—Rosy and I are going to run away and get married tonight.'

Ikey's left forefinger was doubled over the edge of the mortar, holding it steady. He gave it a wild rap with the pestle but felt it not. Meanwhile, Mr. McGowan's smile faded to a look of perplexed gloom.

'That is,' he continued, 'if she keeps the notion until the time comes. We've been laying pipes for the gateway for two weeks. One day she says she will; the same evening she says nixy. We've

agreed on tonight, and Rosy's stuck to the affirmative this time for two whole days. But it's five hours yet till the time, and I'm afraid she'll stand me up when it comes to the scratch.'

'You said you wanted drugs,' remarked Ikey.

Mr. McGowan looked ill at ease and harassed—a condition opposed to his usual line of demeanor. He made a patent-medicine almanac into a roll and fitted it with unprofitable carefulness about his finger.

'I wouldn't have this double handicap make a false start tonight for a million,' he said. 'I've got a little flat up in Harlem already, with chrysanthemums on the table and a kettle ready to boil. And I've engaged a pulpit pounder to be ready at his house for us at 0.30. It's got to come off. And if Rosy doesn't change her mind again!'— Mr. McGowan ceased, a prey to his doubts.

'I don't see yet,' said Ikey shortly, 'what makes it that you talk of drugs, or what I can be doing about it.'

'Old Man Riddle doesn't like me a little bit,' went on the uneasy suitor, bent upon marshalling his arguments. 'For a week he hasn't let Rosy step outside the door with me. If it wasn't for losing a boarder, they'd have bounced me long ago. I'm making $20 a week, and she'll never regret flying the coop with Chunk McGowan.

'You will excuse me, Chunk,' said Ikey. 'I must make a prescription that is to be called for soon.' 'Say,' said McGowan, looking up suddenly, 'say, Ikey, isn't there a drug of some kind—some kind of powder that'll make a girl like you better if you give it to her?'

Ikey's lip beneath his nose curled with the scorn of superior enlightenment, but before he could answer, McGowan continued:

'Tim Lacy told me once that he got some from a croaker uptown and fed them to his girl in soda water. From the very first dose he was ace-high, and everybody else looked like thirty cents to her. They were married in less than two weeks.'

Strong and simple was Chunk McGowan. A better reader of men than Ikey was could have seen that his tough frame was strung upon fine wires. Like a good general who was about to invade the enemy's territory, he was seeking to guard every point against possible failure.

'I thought,' went on Chunk hopefully, 'that if I had one of those powders to give Rosy when I see her at supper tonight, it might brace her up and keep her from reneging on the proposition to skip. I guess she doesn't need a mule team to drag her away, but women are better at coaching than they are at running bases. If

the stuff will work just for a couple of hours, it'll do the trick.' 'When is this foolishness of running away to be happening?' asked Ikey.

'Nine o'clock,' said Mr. McGowan. 'Supper's at seven. At eight Rosy goes to bed with a headache. At nine old Parvenzano lets me through to his backyard, where there's a board off Riddle's fence next door. I go under her window and help her down the fire escape. We've got to make it early on the preacher's account. It's all dead easy if Rosy doesn't balk when the flag drops. Can you fix me one of those powders, Ikey?'

Ikey Schoenstein rubbed his nose slowly.

'Chunk,' said he, 'it is of drugs of that nature that pharmacists must have much carefulness.

To you alone of my acquaintance would I entrust a powder like that. But for you I shall make it, and you shall see how it makes Rosy to think of you.'

Ikey went behind the prescription desk. There he crushed to a powder two soluble tablets, each containing a quarter of a grain of morphine. To them he added a little sugar of milk to increase the bulk and folded the mixture neatly in white paper. Taken by an adult, this powder would ensure several hours of heavy slumber without danger to the sleeper. This he handed to Chunk.

McGowan, telling him to administer it in a liquid, if possible, and received the hearty thanks of the backyard Lochinvar.

The subtlety of Ikey's action becomes apparent upon recital of his subsequent move. He sent a messenger for Mr. Riddle and disclosed the plans of McGowan for eloping with Rosy. Mr. Riddle was a stout man, brick-dusty of complexion and sudden in action.

'Much obliged,' he said briefly to Ikey. 'The lazy Irish loafer! My own room's just above Rosy's; I'll just go up there myself after supper and load the shotgun and wait. If he comes in my backyard, he'll go away in an ambulance instead of a bridal chaise.'

With Rosy held in the clutches of Morpheus for a many-hours' deep slumber and the bloodthirsty parent waiting, armed and forewarned, Ikey felt that his rival was close, indeed, upon discomfiture.

All night in the Blue Light Store he waited at his duties for chance news of the tragedy, but none came.

At eight o'clock in the morning the day clerk arrived, and Ikey started hurriedly for Mrs. Riddle's to learn the outcome. And, lo! As he stepped out of the store, who but Chunk McGowan sprang from a passing streetcar and grasped his hand—Chunk McGowan with a victor's smile and flushed with joy.

'Pulled it off,' said Chunk with Elysium in his grin. 'Rosy hit the fire escape on time to a second, and we were under the wire at the Reverend's at 11:30.' She's up at the flat—she cooked 4 eggs this Mornin' in a blue kimono—Lord! How lucky I am! You must pace.

up some day, Ikey, and feed with us. I've got a job down near the bridge, and that's where I'm heading for now.'

'The—the powder?' stammered Ikey.

'Oh, that stuff you gave me!' said Chunk, broadening his grin. 'Well, it was this way. I sat down at the supper table last night at Riddle's, and I looked at Rosy, and I said to myself, "Chunk, if you get the girl, get her on the square—don't try any hocus-pocus with a thoroughbred like her." And I keep the paper you give me in my pocket. And then my lamp falls on another party present, who, I say to myself, is failing in a proper affection toward his coming son-in-law, so I watch my chance and dump that powder in old man Riddle's coffee—see?'

moment immovable. For this odor belonged to Miss Leslie; it was her own, and hers only. The odor brought her vividly, almost tangibly, before him. The world of finance dwindled suddenly to a speck. And she was in the next room—twenty steps away.

'By George, I'll do it now,' said Maxwell, half aloud. 'I'll ask her now. I wonder why I didn't do it long ago.'

He dashed into the inner office with the haste of a short trying to cover. He charged upon the desk of the stenographer.

She looked up at him with a smile. A soft pink crept over her cheek, and her eyes were kind and frank. Maxwell leaned one elbow on her desk. He still clutched fluttering papers with both hands, and the pen was above his ear.

'Miss Leslie,' he began hurriedly, 'I have but a moment to spare. I want to say something in that moment. Will you be my wife? I haven't had time to make love to you in the ordinary way, but I really do love you. Talk quick, please—those fellows are clubbing the stuffing out of Union Pacific.

'Oh, what are you talking about?' exclaimed the young lady. She rose to her feet and gazed upon him, round-eyed.

'Don't you understand?' said Maxwell restively. 'I want you to marry me. I love you, Miss Leslie. I wanted to tell you, and I snatched a minute when things had slackened up a bit. They're calling me on the 'phone now. Tell them to wait a minute, Pitcher. Won't you, Miss Leslie?'

The stenographer acted very queerly. At first she seemed overcome with amazement; then tears flowed from her wondering eyes; and then she smiled sunnily through them, and one of her arms slid tenderly about the broker's neck.

'I know now,' she said softly. 'It's this old business that has driven everything else out of your head for the time. I was frightened at first. Don't you remember, Harvey? We were married last evening at eight o'clock in the Little Church Around the Corner.'

XVI

The Furnished Room

Restless, shifting, and fugacious as time itself is a certain vast bulk of the population of the redbrick district of the lower West Side.

Homeless, they have a hundred homes. They flit from furnished room to furnished room, transients forever—transients in abode, transients in heart and mind. They sing 'Home Sweet Home' in ragtime; they carry their lares et penates in a bandbox; their vine is entwined about a picture hat; a rubber plant is their fig tree.

Hence the houses of this district, having had a thousand dwellers, should have a thousand tales to tell, mostly dull ones, no doubt; but it would be strange if there could not be found a ghost or two in the wake of all these vagrant ghosts.

One evening after dark a young man prowled among these crumbling red mansions, ringing their bells. At the twelfth, he rested his lean hand baggage upon the step and wiped the dust from his hatband and forehead. The bell sounded faint and far away in some remote, hollow depths.

To the door of this, the twelfth house whose bell he had rung, came a housekeeper who made him think of an unwholesome, surfeited worm that had eaten its nut to a hollow shell and now sought to fill the vacancy with edible lodgers.

He asked if there was a room to let.

'Come in,' said the housekeeper. Her voice came from her throat; her throat seemed lined with fur. 'I have the third floor back, vacant since a week back. Should you wish to look at it?'

The young man followed her up the stairs. A faint light from no particular source mitigated the shadows of the halls. They trod noiselessly upon a stair carpet that its own loom would have forsworn. It seemed to have become vegetable, to have degenerated in that rank, sunless air to lush lichen or spreading moss that grew in patches on the staircase and was viscid under the foot like organic matter. At each turn of the stairs were vacant niches in the wall. Perhaps plants had once been set within them. If so, they had died in that foul and tainted air. It may be that statues of the saints had stood there, but it was not difficult to conceive that imps and devils had dragged them forth in the darkness and down to the unholy depths of some furnished pit below.

'This is the room,' said the housekeeper, from her furry throat. 'It's a nice room. It isn't often vacant. I had some most elegant people in it last summer—no trouble at all, and they paid in advance to the minute. The water's at the end of the hall. Sprowls and Mooney kept it three months. They did a vaudeville sketch. Miss B'retta Sprowls—you may have heard of her. Oh, that was just the stage name. Right there over the dresser is where the marriage certificate hung, framed.

The gas is here, and you see

There is plenty of closet room. It's a room everybody likes. It never stays idle long.' 'Do you have many theatrical people rooming here?' asked the young man.

'They come and go. A good proportion of my lodgers are connected with the theaters. Yes, sir, this is the theatrical district. Actors never stay long anywhere. I get my share. Yes, they come and they go.'

He engaged the room, paying for a week in advance. He was tired, he said, and would take possession at once. He counted out the money. The room had been made ready, she said, even to towels and water. As the housekeeper moved away, he put, for the thousandth time, the question that he carried at the end of his tongue.

'A young girl—Miss Vashner—Miss Eloise Vashner—do you remember such a one among your lodgers? She would be singing on the stage, most likely. A fair girl, of medium height and slender, with reddish gold hair and a dark mole near her left eyebrow.'

'No, I don't remember the name. Those stage people have names they change as often as their rooms. They come and they go. No, I don't call that one to mind.'

No. Always no. Five months of ceaseless interrogation and the inevitable negative. So much time spent by day in questioning managers, agents, schools, and choruses; by night among the audiences of theaters from all-star casts down to music halls so low that he dreaded to find what he most hoped for. He who had loved her best had tried to find her. He was sure that since her

pearance from home, this great water-girt city held her somewhere, but it was like a monstrous quicksand, shifting its particles constantly, with no foundation, its upper granules of today buried tomorrow in ooze and slime.

The furnished room received its latest guest with a first glow of pseudo-hospitality, a hectic, haggard, perfunctory welcome like the specious smile of a demirep. The sophistical comfort came in reflected gleams from the decayed furniture, the ragged brocade upholstery of a couch and two chairs, a foot-wide cheap pier glass between the two windows, one or two gilt picture frames, and a brass bedstead in a corner.

The guest reclined, inert, upon a chair, while the room, confused in speech as though it were an apartment in Babel, tried to discourse to him of its diverse tenantry.

A polychromatic rug like some brilliant-flowered, rectangular

A tropical islet lay surrounded by a billowy sea of soiled matting. Upon the gay-papered wall were those pictures that pursue the homeless one from house to house—The Huguenot Lovers, The First Quarrel, The Wedding Breakfast, and Psyche at the Fountain. The mantel's chastely severe outline was ingloriously veiled behind some pert drapery drawn rakishly askew like the sashes of the Amazonian ballet. Upon it was some desolate flotsam cast aside by the room's marooned when a lucky sail had borne them to a fresh port—a trifling vase or two, pictures of actresses, a medicine bottle, and some stray cards out of a deck.

One by one, as the characters of a cryptograph become explicit, the little signs left by the furnished room's procession of guests developed a significance. The threadbare space in the rug in front of the dresser told that lovely woman had marched in the throng. Tiny fingerprints on the wall spoke of little prisoners trying to feel their way to sun and air. A splattered stain, raying like the shadow of a bursting bomb, witnessed where a hurled glass or bottle had splintered with its contents against the wall. Across the pier glass had been scrawled with a diamond in staggering letters the name 'Marie.' It seemed that the succession of dwellers in the furnished room had turned in fury—perhaps tempted beyond forbearance by its garish coldness—and wreaked upon it their passions. The furniture was chipped and bruised; the couch, distorted by bursting springs, seemed a horrible monster that had been slain during the stress of some grotesque convulsion. Some more potent upheaval had cloven a great slice from the marble mantel. Each plank in the floor owned its particular cant and shriek as from a separate and individual agony. It seemed incredible that all this malice and injury had been wrought upon the room by those who had called it for a time their home, and yet it may have been the cheated home instinct surviving blindly, the resentful rage at false household gods that had kindled their wrath. A hut that is our own we can sweep and adorn and cherish.

The young tenant in the chair allowed these thoughts to file, soft-shod, through his mind, while there drifted into the room furnished sounds and furnished scents. He heard in one room a tittering and incontinent, slack laughter; in others the monologue of a scold, the rattling of dice, a lullaby, and one crying dully; above him a banjo tinkled with spirit. Doors banged somewhere; the elevated trains roared intermittently; a cat yowled miserably upon a back fence. And he

breathed the breath of the house—a dank savor rather than a smell—a cold, musty effluvium as from

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 odor 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 odor clung to him and wrapped him about. He reached out his arms for it, all his senses for the time confused and commingled. How could one be peremptorily called by an odor? 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 odor that she had loved and made her own—whence came it?

The room had been but carelessly set in order. Scattered upon the flimsy dresser scarf were half a dozen hairpins—those discreet, indistinguishable friends of womankind, feminine of gender, infinite 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 theater program, a pawnbroker's card, two lost marshmallows, and 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 femininity'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 matting on his hands and knees, rummaging through the mantel and tables, the curtains and hangings, and the drunken cabinet in the corner for a visible sign, unable to perceive that she was there beside, around, against, within, and above him, clinging to him, wooing him, and 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 color and love and outstretched arms in the odor of mignonette. Oh, God!

Whence that odor, and since when have odors had a voice to call? Thus he groped.

He burrowed in crevices and corners and found corks and cigarettes. 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 not 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,ir. 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

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

'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

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

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.'

'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.'

'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.

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.'

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

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.

'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 '7U. 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 $U50 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 $U50 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.

'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 $U50 in this valise, and I come down from old Ulster to see the sights. Know where a fellow could get action on about $U 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

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,

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. To 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.

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!

XL1X

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.

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. Volney 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

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.'

'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. W h y 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.