

# Stories by American Authors, Volume 6 eBook

## Stories by American Authors, Volume 6

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## VI.

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1891

## THE VILLAGE CONVICT.

BY C.H. WHITE.

"Wonder 'f Eph's got back; they say his sentence run out yisterday."

The speaker, John Doane, was a sunburnt fisherman, one of a circle of well-salted individuals who sat, some on chairs, some on boxes and barrels, around the stove in a country store.

"Yes," said Captain Seth, a middle-aged little man with earrings; "he come on the stage to-noon. Wouldn't hardly speak a word, Jim says. Looked kind o' sot and sober."

"Wall," said the first speaker, "I only hope he won't go to burnin' us out of house and home, same as he burnt up Eliphalet's barn. I was ruther in hopes he'd 'a' made off West. Seems to me I should, in his place, hevin' ben in State's-prison."

"Now, I allers bed quite a parcel o' sympathy for Eph," said a short, thickset coasting captain, who sat tilted back in a three-legged chair, smoking lazily. "You see, he wa'n't but about twenty-one or two then, and he was allus a mighty high-strung boy; and then Eliphalet did act putty ha'sh, foreclosin' on Eph's mother, and turnin' her out o' the farm, in winter, when everybody knew she could ha' pulled through by waitin'. Eph sot great store by the old lady, and I expect he was putty mad with Eliphalet that night."

"I allers," said Doane, "approved o' his plan o' leadin' out all the critters, 'fore he touched off the barn. 'Taint everybody 't would hev taken pains to do that. But all the same, I tell Sarai't I feel kind o' skittish, nights, to hev to turn in, feelin' 't there's a convict in the place."



“I hain’t got no barn to burn,” said Captain Seth; “but if he allots my henhouse to the flames, I hope he’ll lead out the hens, and hitch ’em to the apple trees, same’s he did Eliphalet’s critters. Think he ought to deal ekally by all.”

A mild general chuckle greeted this sally, cheered by which the speaker added:

“Thought some o’ takin’ out a policy o’ insurance on my cockerel.”

“Trade’s lookin’ up, William,” said Captain Seth to the storekeeper, as some one was heard to kick the snow off his boots on the door-step. “Somebody’s found he’s got to hev a shoestring ’fore mornin’.”

The door opened, and closed behind a strongly made fellow of twenty-six or seven, of homely features, with black hair, in clothes which he had outgrown. It was a bitter night, but he had no coat over his flannel jacket. He walked straight down the store, between the dry-goods counters, to the snug corner at the rear, where the knot of talkers sat; nodded, without a smile, to each of them, and then asked the storekeeper for some simple articles of food, which he wished to buy. It was Eph.



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While the purchases were being put up, an awkward silence prevailed, which the oil-suits hanging on the walls, broadly displaying their arms and legs, seemed to mock, in dumb show.

Nothing was changed, to Eph's eyes, as he looked about. Even the handbill of familiar pattern:

*"Standing Wood for Sale.  
Apply to J. Carter, ADMIN'R,"*

seemed to have always been there.

The village parliament remained spellbound. Mr. Adams tied up the purchases and mildly inquired:

"Shall I charge this?"

Not that he was anxious to open an account, but that he would probably have gone to the length of selling Eph a barrel of molasses "on tick" rather than run any risk of offending so formidable a character.

"No," said Eph; "I will pay for the things."

And having put the packages into a canvas bag, and selected some fish-hooks and lines from the show-case, where they lay environed by jackknives, jewsharps, and gum-drops—dear to the eyes of his childhood—he paid what was due, said "Good-night, William," to the storekeeper, and walked steadily out into the night.

"Wall," said the skipper, "I am surprised! I strove to think o' suthin' to say, all the time he was here, but I swow I couldn't think o' nothin'. I couldn't ask him if it seemed good to git home, nor how the thermometer had varied in different parts o' the town where he'd been. Everything seemed to fetch right up standin' to the State's-prison."

"I was just goin' to say, 'How'd ye leave everybody?'" said Doane; "but that kind o' seemed to bring up them he'd left. I felt real bad, though, to hev the feller go off 'thout none on us speakin' to him. He's got a hard furrer to plough; and yet I don't s'pose there's much harm in him, 'f Eliphalet only keeps quiet."

"Eliphalet!" said a young sailor, contemptuously. "No fear o' him! They say he's so sca't of Eph he hain't hardly swallowed nothin' for a week."

"But where will he live?" asked a short, curly-haired young man, whom Eph had seemed not to recognize. It was the new doctor, who, after having made his way through college and "the great medical school in Boston," had, two years before, settled in this village.



“I believe,” said Mr. Adams, rubbing his hands, “that he wrote to Joshua Carr last winter, when his mother died, not to let the little place she left, on the Salt Hay Road, and I understand that he is going to make his home there. It is an old house, you know, and not worth much, but it is weather-tight, I should say.”

“Speakin’ of his writin’ to Joshua,” said Doane, “I have heard such a sound as that he used to shine up to Joshua’s Susan, years back. But that’s all ended now. You won’t catch Susan marryin’ no jailbirds.”

“But how will he live?” said the doctor. “Will anybody give him work?”

“Let him alone for livin’,” said Doane. “He can ketch more fish than any other two men in the place—allers seemed to kind o’ hev a knack o’ whistlin’ ’em right into the boat. And then Nelson Briggs, that settled up his mother’s estate, allows he’s got over a hundred and ten dollars for him, after payin’ debts and all probate expenses, and that and the place is all he needs to start on.”



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"I will go to see him," said the doctor to himself, as he went out upon the requisition of a grave man in a red tippet, who had just come for him. "He doesn't look so very dangerous, and I think he can be tamed. I remember that his mother told me about him."

Late that night, returning from his seven miles' drive, as he left the causeway, built across a wide stretch of salt-marsh, crossed the rattling plank bridge and ascended the hill, he saw a light in the cottage window, where he had often been to attend Aunt Lois. "I will stop now," said he. And, tying his horse to the front fence, he went toward the kitchen door. As he passed the window, he glanced in. A lamp was burning on the table. On a settle, lying upon his face, was stretched the convict, his arms beneath his head. The canvas bag lay on the floor beside him. "I will not disturb him now," said the doctor.

A few days later Dr. Burt was driving in his sleigh with his wife along the Salt Hay Road. It was a clear, crisp winter forenoon. As they neared Eph's house, he said:

"Mary, suppose I lay siege to the fort this morning. I see a curl of smoke rising from the little shop in the barn. He must be making himself a jimmy or a dark-lantern to break into our vegetable cellar with."

"Well," said she, "I think it would be a good plan; only, you know, you must be very, very careful not to hint, even in the faintest way, at his imprisonment. You mustn't so much as *suspect* that he has ever been away from the place. People hardly dare to speak to him, for fear he will see some reference to his having been in prison, and get angry."

"You shall see my sly tact," said her husband, laughing. "I will be as innocent as a lamb. I will ask him why I have not seen him at the Sabbath-school this winter."

"You may make fun," said she, "but you will end by taking my advice, all the same. Now, do be careful what you say."

"I will," he replied. "I will compose my remarks carefully upon the back of an envelope and read them to him, so as to be absolutely sure. I will leave on his mind an impression that I have been in prison, and that he was the judge that tried me."

He drove in at the open gate, hitched his horse in a warm corner by the kitchen door, and then stopped for a moment to enjoy the view. The situation of the little house, half a mile from any other, was beautiful in summer, but it was bleak enough in winter. In the small front dooryard stood three lofty, wind-blown poplars, all heading away from the sea, and between them you could look down the bay or across the salt-marshes, while in the opposite direction were to be seen the roofs and the glittering spires of the village.



“It is social for him here, to say the least,” said the doctor, as he turned and walked alone to the shop. He opened the door and went in. It was a long, low lean-to, such as farmers often furnish for domestic work, with a carpenter’s bench, a grind-stone, and a few simple tools. It was lighted by three square windows above the bench. An air-tight stove, projecting its funnel through a hole in one of the panes, gave out a cheerful crackling.



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Eph, in his shirt-sleeves, his hands in his pockets, was standing, his back against the bench, surveying, with something of a mechanic's eye, the frame of a boat which was set up on the floor.

He looked up and colored slightly. The doctor took out a cigarette, lit it, sat down on the bench, and smoked, clasping one knee in his hands and eying the boat.

"Centre-board?" he asked, at length.

"Yes," said Eph.

"Cat-rig?"

"Yes."

"Going fishing?"

"Yes."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"I was brought up to sail a boat," said the doctor, "and I often go fishing in summer, when I get a chance. I shall want to try your boat some time."

No reply.

"The timbers are not seasoned, are they? They look like pitch-pine, just out of the woods. Won't they warp?"

"No. Pitch-pine goes right in, green. I s'pose the pitch keeps it, if it's out of the sun."

"Where did you cut it?"

Eph colored a little.

"In my back lot."

The doctor smoked on calmly, and studied the boat.

"I don't know you," said Eph, relaxing a little.

"Good reason," said the doctor. "I've only been here two years;" and after a moment's pause, he added: "I am the doctor here, now. You've heard of my father, Dr. Burt, of Broad River?"



Eph nodded assent; everybody knew him, all through the country;—a fatherly old man, who rode on long journeys at everybody's call, and never sent in his bills.

The visitor had a standing with Eph at once.

"Doctors never pick at folks," he said to himself—"at any rate, not old Dr. Burt's son."

"I used to come here to see your mother," said the doctor, "when she was sick. She used to talk a great deal about you, and said she wanted me to get acquainted with you, when your time was out."

Eph started, but said nothing.

"She was a good woman, Aunt Lois," added the doctor; "one of the best women I ever saw."

"I don't want anybody to bother himself on my account," said Eph. "I ask no favors."

"You will have to take favors, though," said the doctor, "before the winter is over. You will be careless and get sick; you have been living for a long time entirely in-doors, with regular hours and work and food. Now you are going to live out-of-doors, and get your own meals, irregularly. You didn't have on a thick coat the other night, when I saw you at the store."

"I haven't got any that's large enough for me," said Eph, a little less harshly, "and I've got to keep my money for other things."

"Then look out and wear flannel shirts enough," said the doctor, "if you want to be independent. But before I go, I want to go into the house. I want my wife to see Aunt Lois's room, and the view from the west window;" and he led the way to the sleigh.



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Eph hesitated a moment, and then followed him.

“Mary, this is Ephraim Morse. We are going in to see the Dutch tiles I have told you of.”

She smiled as she held out her mittened hand to Eph, who took it awkwardly.

The square front room, which had been originally intended for a keeping-room, but had been Aunt Lois’s bedroom, looked out from two windows upon the road, and from two upon the rolling, tumbling bay, and the shining sea beyond. A tall clock, with a rocking ship above the face, ticked in the corner. The painted floor with bright rag-mats, the little table with a lacquer work-box, the stiff chairs, and the old-fashioned bedstead, the china ornaments upon the mantel-piece, the picture of “The Emeline G. in the Harbor of Canton,” were just as they had been when the patient invalid had lain there, looking from her pillow out to sea. In twelve rude tiles set around the open fireplace, the Hebrews were seen in twelve stages of their escape from Egypt. It would appear from this representation that they had not restricted their borrowings to the jewels of their oppressors, but had taken for the journey certain Dutch clothing of the fashion of the seventeenth century. The scenery, too, was much like that about Leyden.

“I think,” said the doctor’s wife, “that the painter was just a little absent-minded when he put in that beer-barrel. And a wharf, by the Red Sea!”

\* \* \* \* \*

“I wish you would conclude to rig your boat with a new sail,” said the doctor, as he took up the reins, at parting. “There isn’t a boat here that’s kept clean, and I should like to hire yours once or twice a week in summer, if you keep her as neat as you do your house. Come in and see me some evening, and we’ll talk it over.”

Eph built his boat, and, in spite of his evident dislike of visitors, the inside finish and the arrangements of the little cabin were so ingenious and so novel that everybody had to pay him a visit.

True to his plan of being independent, he built in the side of the hill, near his barn, by a little gravelly pond, an ice-house, and, with the hardest labor, filled it, all by himself. With this supply, he would not have to go to the general wharf at Sandy Point to sell his fish, with the other men, but could pack and ship them himself. And he could do better, in this way, he thought, even after paying for teaming them to the cars.

The knowing ones laughed to see that, from asking no advice, he had miscalculated and laid in three times as much as he could use.

“Guess Eph cal’lates ter fish with two lines in each hand and ’nother in his teeth,” said Mr. Wing. “He’s plannin’ out for a great lay o’ fish.”



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The spring came slowly on, and the first boat that went out that season was Eph's. That day was one of unmixed delight to him. What a sense of absolute freedom, when he was fairly out beyond the lightship, with the fresh swiftness of the wind in his face! What an exquisite consciousness of power and control, as his boat went beating through the long waves! Two or three men from another village sailed across his wake. His boat lay over, almost showing her keel, now high out of water, now settling between the waves, while Eph stood easily in the stern in his shirt-sleeves, steering with his knee, smoking a pipe, heaving and hauling his line astern for bluefish.

"Takes it nat'ral ag'in, don't he? Stands as easy as ef he was loafin' on a wharf," said one of the observers. "Expect it's quite a treat to be out. But they do say he's gittin' everybody's good opinion. They looked for a regular ruffian when he come home—cuttin' nets, killin' cats, chasin' hens, gittin' drunk. They say Eliphalet Wood didn't hardly dare to go ou' doors for a month, 'thout havin' his hired man along. But he's turned out as peaceful as a little gal."

One June day, as Eph was slitting bluefish at the little pier which he had built on the bay-shore, near his rude ice-house, two men came up.

"Hallo, Eph!"

"Hallo."

"We've got about sick, tradin' down to the wharf; we can't git no fair show. About one time in three, they tell us they don't want our fish, and won't take 'em unless we'll heave 'em in for next to nothin', and we know there ain't no sense in it. So we just thought we'd slip down and see ef you wouldn't take 'em, seein's you've got ice, and send 'em up with yourn."

Eph was taken all aback with this mark of confidence. He would decline the offer, sure that it sprang from some mere passing vexation.

"I can't buy fish," said he. "I have no scales to weigh 'em."

"Then send ourn in separate barrels," said one of them.

"But I haven't any money to pay you," he said. "I only get my pay once a month."

"We'll git tick at William's, and you can settle 'th us when you git your pay."

"Well," said he, unable to refuse, "I'll take 'em, if you say so."

Before the season was over, he had still another customer, and could have had three or four more, if he had had ice enough. He was strongly inclined that fall to build a larger ice-house, and although he was a little afraid of bringing ridicule upon himself in case no



fish should be brought to him the next summer, he decided to do so, on the assurance of three or four men that they would deal with him. Nobody else had such a chance, he thought—a pond right by the shore.

One evening there was a knock at the door of Eliphalet Wood, the owner of the burned barn. Eliphalet went to the door, but turned pale at seeing Eph there.

“Oh, come in, come in!” he panted. “Glad to see you. Walk in. Have a chair. Take a seat. Sit down.”



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But he thought his hour had come: he was alone in the house, and there was no neighbor within call.

Eph took out a roll of bills, counted out eighty dollars, laid the money on the table, and said, quietly:

“Give me a receipt on account.”

When it was written he walked out, leaving Eliphalet stupefied.

Joshua Carr was at work, one June afternoon, by the road-side, in front of his low cottage, by an enormous pile of poles, which he was shaving down for barrel-hoops, when Eph appeared.

“Hard at it, Joshua!” he said.

“Yes, yes!” said Joshua, looking up through his steel-bowed spectacles. “Hev to work hard to make a livin’—though I don’t know’s I ought to call it hard, neither; and yet it is rather hard, too; but then, on t’other hand, ’taint so hard as a good many other things—though there is a good many jobs that’s easier. That’s so! That’s so!

“‘Must we be kerried to the skies  
On feathery beds of ease?’

Though I don’ know’s I oughter quote a hymn on such a matter; but then—I don’ know’s there’s any partic’lar harm in’t, neither.”

Eph sat down on a pile of shavings and chewed a sliver; and the old man kept on at his work.

“Hoop-poles goin’ up and hoops goin’ down,” he continued. “Cur’us, ain’t it? But then, I don’ know as ’tis; woods all bein’ cut off—poles gittin’ scurcer; hoops bein’ shoved in from Down East. That don’ seem just right, now, does it—but then, other folks must make a livin’, too. Still, I should think they might take up suthin’ else; and yet, they might say that about me. Understand, I don’ mean to say that they actually do say so; I don’ want to run down any man unless I know—”

“I can’t stand this,” said Eph to himself; “I don’t wonder that they always used to put Joshua off at the first port, when he tried to go coasting. They said he talked them crazy with nothing.

“I’ll go into the house and see Aunt Lyddy,” he said, aloud. “I’m loafing this afternoon.”

“All right! all right!” said Joshua. “Lyddy’ll be glad to see ye—that is, as glad as she would be to see anybody,” he added, reaching out for a pole. “Now, I don’ s’pose that



sounds very well; but still, you know how she is—she allus likes to hev folks to talk, and then she's allus sayin' talkin' wears on her; but I ought not to say that to you, because she allus likes to see you—that is, as much as she likes to see anybody—in fact, I think, on the whole—”

“Well, I'll take my chances,” said Eph, laughing, and he opened the gate and went in.

Joshua's wife, whom everybody called Aunt Lyddy, was oscillating in a rocking-chair in the kitchen, and knitting. It was currently reported that Joshua's habit of endlessly retracting and qualifying every idea and modification of an idea which he advanced, so as to commit himself to nothing, was the effect of Aunt Lyddy's careful revision.



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"I s'pose she thought 'twas fun to be talked deaf when they was courtin'," Captain Seth had once sagely remarked. "Prob'ly it sounded then like a putty piece on a seraphine; but I allers cal'lated she'd git her fill of it, sooner or later. You most gin'lly git your fill o' one tune."

"How are you this afternoon, Aunt Lyddy?" asked Eph, walking in without knocking, and sitting down near her.

"So as to be able to keep about," she replied. "It is a great mercy I ain't afflicted with falling out of my chair, like Hepsy Jones, ain't it?"

"I've brought you some oysters," he said. "I set the basket down on the door-step. I just took them out of the water myself from the bed I planted to the west of the water-fence."

"I always heard you was a great fisherman," said Aunt Lyddy, "but I had no idea you would ever come here and boast of being able to catch oysters. Poor things! How could they have got away? But why don't you bring them in? They won't be afraid of me, will they?"

He stepped to the door and brought in a peck basket full of large, black, twisted shells, and with a heavy clasp-knife proceeded to open one, and took out a great oyster, which he held up on the point of the blade.

"Try it," he said; and then Aunt Lyddy, after she had swallowed it, laughed to think what a tableau they had made—a man who had been in the State-prison standing over her with a great knife! And then she laughed again.

"What are you laughing at?" he said.

"It popped into my head, supposing Susan should have looked in at the south window and Joshua into the door, when you was feeding out that oyster to me, what they would have thought!"

Eph laughed, too, and, surely enough, just then a stout, light-haired, rather plain-looking young woman came up to the south window and leaned in. She had on a sun-bonnet, which had not prevented her from securing a few choice freckles. She had been working with a trowel in her flower-garden.

"What's the matter?" she said, nodding easily to Eph. "What do you two always find to laugh about?"

"Ephraim was feeding me with spoon-meat," said Aunt Lyddy, pointing to the basket, which looked like a basket of anthracite coal.



“It looks like spoon-meat,” said Susan, and then she laughed too. “I’ll roast some of them for supper,” she added, “a new way that I know.”

Eph was not invited to stay to supper, but he stayed, none the less: that was always understood.

“Well! Well! Well!” said Joshua, coming to the door-step, and washing his hands and arms just outside, in a tin basin. “I thought I see you set down a parcel of oysters—but there was seaweed over ’em, and I don’ know’s I could hev said they was oysters; but then, if the square question hed been put to me, ‘Mr. Carr, be them oysters or not?’ I s’pose I should hev said they was; still, if they’d asked me how I knew—”



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“Come, come, father!” said Aunt Lyddy, “do give poor Ephraim a little peace. Why don’t you just say you thought they were oysters, and done with it?”

“Say I *thought* they was?” he replied, innocently. “I knew well enough they was—that is—knew? No, I didn’t know, but—”

Aunt Lyddy, with an air of mock resignation, gave up, while Joshua endeavored to fix, to a hair, the exact extent of his knowledge.

Eph smiled; but he remembered what would have made him pardon, a thousand times over, the old man’s garrulousness. He remembered who alone had never failed, once a year, to visit a certain prisoner, at the cost of a long and tiresome journey, and who had written to that homesick prisoner kind and cheering letters, and had sent him baskets of simple dainties for holidays.

Susan bustled about, and made a fire of crackling sticks, and began to roast the oysters in a way that made a most savory smell. She set the table, and then sat down at the melodeon, while she was waiting, and sang a hymn—for she was of a musical turn, and was one of the choir. Then she jumped up, and took out the steaming oysters, and they all sat down.

“Well, well, well!” said her father; “these be good! I didn’t s’pose you had any very good oysters in your bed, Ephraim. But there, now—I don’ s’pose I ought to have said that; that wasn’t very polite; but what I meant was—I didn’t s’pose you had any that was *real* good—though I don’ know but that I’ve said about the same thing, now. Well, anyway, these be splendid; they’re full as good as those cohogs we had t’other night.”

“Quahaugs!” said Susan. “The idea of comparing these oysters with quahaugs!”

“Well, well! that’s so!” said the father. “I didn’t say right, did I, when I said that? Of course, they ain’t no comparison—that is—*no* comparison—why, of course, they *is* a comparison between everything, but then, cohogs don’ really compare with oysters! That’s true!”

And then he paused to eat a few.

He was silent so long at this occupation that they all laughed.

“Well, well!” said he, laying down his fork, and smiling innocently; “what be you all laughin’ at? Not but what I allers like to hev folks laugh—but then—I didn’t see nothin’ to laugh at. Still perhaps, they was suthin’ to laugh at that I didn’t see; sometimes one man’ll be lookin’ down into his plate, all taken up with his vittles, and others that’s lookin’ around the room, may see the kittens frolickin’, or some such thing. ’Tain’t the fust time I’ve known all hands to laugh all to onct, when I didn’t see nothin’.”



Susan helped him again, and secured another brief respite.

“Ephraim,” said he, after awhile, “you ain’t skilled to cook oysters like this, I don’ believe. You ought to get married! I was sayin’ to Susan t’other day—well, now, mother, have I said an’thing out o’ the way?—well, I don’ s’pose ’twas just my place to hev said an’thing about gittin’ married, to Ephraim, seein’s—”



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“Come, come, father,” said Aunt Lyddy, “that’ll do, now. You must let Ephraim alone, and not joke him about such things.”

Meanwhile Susan had hastily gone into the pantry to look for a pie, which she seemed unable at once to find.

“Pie got adrift?” called out Joshua. “Seems to me you don’ hook on to it very quick. Now that looks good,” he added, when she came out. “That looks like cookin’! All I meant was, ‘t Ephraim ought not to be doin’ his own cookin’—that is—if you can call it cookin’—but then, of course, ‘tis cookin’—there’s all kinds o’ cookin’. I went cook myself, when I was a boy.”

After supper, Aunt Lyddy sat down to knit, and Joshua drew his chair up to an open window, to smoke his pipe. In this vice Aunt Lyddy encouraged him. The odor of Virginia tobacco was a sweet savor in her nostrils. No breezes from Araby ever awoke more grateful feelings than did the fragrance of Uncle Joshua’s pipe. To Aunt Lyddy it meant quiet and peace.

Susan and Eph sat down on the broad flag door-stone, and talked quietly of the simple news of the neighborhood, and of the days when they used to go to school, and come home, always together.

“I didn’t much think, then,” said Eph, “that I should ever bring up where I have, and get ashore before I was fairly out to sea!”

“Jehiel’s schooner got ashore on the bar, years ago,” said Susan, “and yet they towed her off, and I saw her this morning, from my chamber window, before sunrise, all sail set, going by to the eastward.”

“I know what you mean,” said Eph. “But here—I got mad once, and I almost had a right to, and I can’t get started again; I never shall. I can get a livin’, of course; but I shall always be pointed out as a jail-bird, and could no more get any footin’ in the world than Portuguese Jim.”

Portuguese Jim was the sole professional criminal of the town, a weak, good-natured, knock-kneed vagabond, who stole hens, and spent every winter in the House of Correction as an “idle and disorderly person.”

Susan laughed outright at the picture. Eph smiled, too, but a little bitterly.

“I suppose it was more ugliness than anything else,” he said, “that made me come back here to live, where everybody knows I’ve been in jail and is down on me.”

“They are not down on you,” said Susan. “Nobody is down on you. It’s all your own imagination. And if you had gone anywhere that you was a stranger, you know that the



first thing that you would have done would have been to call a meetin' and tell all the people that you had burned down a man's barn, and been in the State's-prison, and that you wanted them all to know it at the start; and you wouldn't have told them why you did it, and how young you was then, and how Eliphalet treated your mother, and how you was going to pay him for all he lost. Here, everybody knows that side of it. In fact," she added, with a little twinkle in her eye, "I have sometimes had an idea that the main thing they don't like is to see you savin' every cent to pay to Eliphalet."



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“And yet it was on your say that I took up that plan,” said Eph. “I never thought of it till you asked me when I was goin’ to begin to pay him up.”

“And you ought to,” said Susan. “He has a right to the money—and then you don’t want to be under obligations to that man all your life. Now, what you want to do is to cheer up and go around among folks. Why, now, you’re the only fish-buyer there is that the men don’t watch when he’s weighin’ their fish. You’ll own up to that, for one thing, won’t you?”

“Well, they are good fellows that bring fish to me,” he said.

“They weren’t good fellows when they traded at the great wharf,” said Susan. “They had a quarrel down there once a week, reg’larly.”

“Well, suppose they do trust me in that,” said Eph. “I can never rub out that I’ve been in State’s-prison.”

“You don’t want to rub it out. You can’t rub anything out that’s ever been; but you can do better than rub it out.”

“What do you mean?”

“Take things just the way they are,” said Susan, “and show what can be done. Perhaps you’ll stake a new channel out, for others to follow in that haven’t half so much chance as you have. And that’s what you will do, too,” she added.

“Susan!” he said, “if there’s anything I can ever do, in this world or the next, for you or your folks, that’s all I ask for, the chance to do it. Your folks and you shall never want for anything while I’m alive.

“There’s one thing sure,” he added, rising. “I’ll live by myself and be independent of everybody, and make my way all alone in the world; and if I can make ’em all finally own up and admit that I’m honest with ’em, I’m satisfied. That’s all I’ll ever ask of anybody. But there’s one thing that worries me sometimes—that is, whether I ought to come here so often. I’m afraid, sometimes, that it’ll hinder your father from gettin’ work, or—something—for you folks to be friends with me.”

“I think such things take care of themselves,” said Susan, quietly. “If a chip won’t float, let it sink.”

“Good-night,” said Eph, and he walked off, and went home to his echoing house.

After that, his visits to Joshua’s became less frequent.

\* \* \* \* \*



It was a bright day in March—one of those which almost redeem the reputation of that desperado of a month. Eph was leaning on his fence, looking now down the bay and now to where the sun was sinking in the marshes. He knew that all the other men had gone to the town-meeting, where he had had no heart to intrude himself—that free democratic parliament where he had often gone with his father in childhood; where the boys, rejoicing in a general assembly of their own, had played ball outside, while the men debated gravely within. He recalled the time when he himself had so proudly given his first vote for President, and how his father had introduced him then to friends from distant parts of the town. He remembered how he had heard his father speak there, and how respectfully everybody had listened to him. That was in the long ago, when they had lived at the great farm. And then came the thought of the mortgage, and of Eliphalet's foreclosure, and—



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“Hallo, Eph!”

It was one of the men from whom he took fish—a plain-spoken, sincere little man.

“Why wa’n’t you down to town-meet’n’?”

“I was busy,” said Eph.

“How’d ye like the news?”

“What news?”

There was never any good news for him now.

“Hain’t heard who’s selected town-clerk?”

“No.”

Had they elected Eliphalet, and so expressed their settled distrust of him, and sympathy for the man whom he had injured?

“Who’s elected?” he asked, harshly.

“You be!” said the man; “went in flyin’, all hands clappin’ and stompin’ their feet!”

An hour later the doctor drove up, stopped, and walked toward the kitchen door. As he passed the window, he looked in.

Eph was lying on his face, upon the settle, as he had first seen him there, his arms beneath his head.

“I will not disturb him now,” said the doctor.

\* \* \* \* \*

One breezy afternoon, in the following summer, Captain Seth laid aside his easy everyday clothes, and transformed himself into a stiff broadcloth image, with a small silk hat and creaking boots. So attired, he set out in a high open buggy, with his wife, also in black, but with gold spectacles, to the funeral of an aunt. As they pursued their jog-trot journey along the Salt Hay Road, and came to Ephraim Morse’s cottage, they saw Susan sitting in a shady little porch, at the front door, shelling peas, and looking down the bay.

“How is everything, Susan?” called out Captain Seth; “’bout time for Eph to be gitt’n’ in?”



“Yes,” she answered, nodding and smiling, and pointing with a pea-pod; “that’s our boat, just coming up to the wharf, with her peak down.”

## THE DENVER EXPRESS.

By A.A. Hayes.

### I.

Any one who has seen an outward-bound clipper ship getting under way and heard the “shanty-songs” sung by the sailors as they toiled at capstan and halliards, will probably remember that rhymeless but melodious refrain—

“I’m bound to see its muddy waters  
Yeo ho! that rolling river;  
Bound to see its muddy waters  
Yeo ho! the wild Missouri.”

Only a happy inspiration could have impelled Jack to apply the adjective “wild” to that ill-behaved and disreputable river, which, tipsily bearing its enormous burden of mud from the far North-west, totters, reels, runs its tortuous course for hundreds on hundreds of miles; and which, encountering the lordly and thus far well-behaved Mississippi at Alton, and forcing its company upon this splendid river (as if some drunken fellow should lock arms with a dignified pedestrian), contaminates it all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.

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At a certain point on the banks of this river, or rather—as it has the habit of abandoning and destroying said banks—at a safe distance therefrom, there is a town from which a railroad takes its departure for its long climb up the natural incline of the Great Plains, to the base of the mountains; hence the importance to this town of the large but somewhat shabby building serving as terminal station. In its smoky interior, late in the evening and not very long ago, a train was nearly ready to start. It was a train possessing a certain consideration. For the benefit of a public easily gulled and enamored of grandiloquent terms, it was advertised as the “Denver Fast Express;” sometimes, with strange unfitness, as the “Lightning Express;” “elegant” and “palatial” cars were declared to be included therein; and its departure was one of the great events of the twenty-four hours, in the country round about. A local poet described it in the “live” paper of the town, cribbing from an old Eastern magazine and passing off as original, the lines—

“Again we stepped into the street,  
A train came thundering by,  
Drawn by the snorting iron steed  
Swifter than eagles fly.

Rumbled the wheels, the whistle shrieked,  
Far rolled the smoky cloud,  
Echoed the hills, the valleys shook,  
The flying forests bowed.”

The trainmen, on the other hand, used no fine phrases. They called it simply “Number Seventeen”; and, when it started, said it had “pulled out.”

On the evening in question, there it stood, nearly ready. Just behind the great hissing locomotive, with its parabolic headlight and its coal-laden tender, came the baggage, mail, and express cars; then the passenger coaches, in which the social condition of the occupants seemed to be in inverse ratio to their distance from the engine. First came emigrants, “honest miners,” “cow-boys,” and laborers; Irishmen, Germans, Welshmen, Mennonites from Russia, quaint of garb and speech, and Chinamen. Then came long cars full of people of better station, and last the great Pullman “sleepers,” in which the busy black porters were making up the berths for well-to-do travellers of diverse nationalities and occupations.

It was a curious study for a thoughtful observer, this motley crowd of human beings sinking all differences of race, creed, and habits in the common purpose to move Westward—to the mountain fastnesses, the sage-brush deserts, the Golden Gate.

The warning bell had sounded, and the fireman leaned far out for the signal. The gong struck sharply, the conductor shouted, “All aboard,” and raised his hand; the tired ticket-seller shut his window, and the train moved out of the station, gathered way as it cleared the outskirts of the town, rounded a curve, entered on an absolutely straight line, and,



with one long whistle from the engine, settled down to its work. Through the night hours it sped on, past lonely ranches and infrequent stations, by and across shallow streams fringed with cottonwood trees, over the greenish-yellow buffalo grass; near the old trail where many a poor emigrant, many a bold frontiersman, many a brave soldier, had laid his bones but a short time before.



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Familiar as they may be, there is something strangely impressive about all night journeys by rail; and those forming part of an American transcontinental trip are almost weird. From the windows of a night-express in Europe, or the older portions of the United States, one looks on houses and lights, cultivated fields, fences, and hedges; and, hurled as he may be through the darkness, he has a sense of companionship and semi-security. Far different is it when the long train is running over those two rails which, seen before night set in, seemed to meet on the horizon. Within, all is as if between two great seaboard cities; the neatly dressed people, the uniformed officials, the handsome fittings, the various appliances for comfort. Without are now long, dreary levels, now deep and wild canons, now an environment of strange and grotesque rock-formations, castles, battlements, churches, statues. The antelope fleetly runs, and the coyote skulks away from the track, and the gray wolf howls afar off. It is for all the world, to one's fancy, as if a bit of civilization, a family or community, its belongings and surroundings complete, were flying through regions barbarous and inhospitable.

From the cab of Engine No. 32, the driver of the Denver Express saw, showing faintly in the early morning, the buildings grouped about the little station ten miles ahead, where breakfast awaited his passengers. He looked at his watch; he had just twenty minutes in which to run the distance, as he had run it often before. Something, however, travelled faster than he. From the smoky station out of which the train passed the night before, along the slender wire stretched on rough poles at the side of the track, a spark of that mysterious something which we call electricity flashed at the moment he returned the watch to his pocket; and in five minutes' time, the station-master came out on the platform, a little more thoughtful than his wont, and looked eastward for the smoke of the train. With but three of the passengers in that train has this tale specially to do, and they were all in the new and comfortable Pullman "City of Cheyenne." One was a tall, well-made man of about thirty—blond, blue-eyed, bearded, straight, sinewy, alert. Of all in the train he seemed the most thoroughly at home, and the respectful greeting of the conductor, as he passed through the car, marked him as an officer of the road. Such was he—Henry Sinclair, assistant engineer, quite famed on the line, high in favor with the directors, and a rising man in all ways. It was known on the road that he was expected in Denver, and there were rumors that he was to organize the parties for the survey of an important "extension." Beside him sat his pretty young wife. She was a New Yorker—one could tell at first glance—from the feather of her little bonnet, matching the gray travelling dress, to the tips of her dainty boots; and one, too, at whom old Fifth Avenue promenaders would have turned to look. She had a charming figure, brown hair, hazel eyes, and an expression at once kind, intelligent, and spirited. She had cheerfully left a luxurious home to follow the young engineer's fortunes; and it was well known that those fortunes had been materially advanced by her tact and cleverness.



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The third passenger in question had just been in conversation with Sinclair, and the latter was telling his wife of their curious meeting. Entering the toilet-room at the rear of the car, he said, he had begun his ablutions by the side of another man, and it was as they were sluicing their faces with water that he heard the cry:

“Why, Major, is that you? Just to think of meeting you here!”

A man of about twenty-eight years of age, slight, muscular, wiry, had seized his wet hand and was wringing it. He had black eyes, keen and bright, swarthy complexion, black hair and mustache. A keen observer might have seen about him some signs of a *jeunesse orageuse*, but his manner was frank and pleasing. Sinclair looked him in the face, puzzled for a moment.

“Don’t you remember Foster?” asked the man.

“Of course I do,” replied Sinclair. “For a moment I could not place you. Where have you been and what have you been doing?”

“Oh,” replied Foster, laughing, “I’ve braced up and turned over a new leaf. I’m a respectable member of society, have a place in the express company, and am going to Denver to take charge.”

“I am very glad to hear it, and you must tell me your story when we have had our breakfast.”

The pretty young woman was just about to ask who Foster was, when the speed of the train slackened, and the brakeman opened the door of the car and cried out in stentorian tones:

“Pawnee Junction; twenty minutes for refreshments!”

\* \* \* \* \*

## II.

When the celebrated Rocky Mountain gold excitement broke out, more than twenty years ago, and people painted “*Pike’s peak or bust*” on the canvas covers of their wagons and started for the diggings, they established a “trail” or “trace” leading in a south-westerly direction from the old one to California.

At a certain point on this trail a frontiersman named Barker built a forlorn ranch-house and *corral*, and offered what is conventionally called “entertainment for man and beast.”



For years he lived there, dividing his time between fighting the Indians and feeding the passing emigrants and their stock. Then the first railroad to Denver was built, taking another route from the Missouri, and Barker's occupation was gone. He retired with his gains to St. Louis and lived in comfort.

Years passed on, and the "extension" over which our train is to pass was planned. The old pioneers were excellent natural engineers, and their successors could find no better route than they had chosen. Thus it was that "Barker's" became, during the construction period, an important point, and the frontiersman's name came to figure on time-tables. Meanwhile the place passed through a process of evolution which would have delighted Darwin. In the party of engineers which first



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camped there was Sinclair, and it was by his advice that the contractors selected it for division headquarters. Then came drinking “saloons,” and gambling-houses—alike the inevitable concomitant and the bane of Western settlements; then scattered houses and shops, and a shabby so-called hotel, in which the letting of miserable rooms (divided from each other by canvas partitions) was wholly subordinated to the business of the bar. Before long, Barker’s had acquired a worse reputation than even other towns of its type, the abnormal and uncanny aggregations of squalor and vice which dotted the plains in those days; and it was at its worst when Sinclair returned thither and took up his quarters in the engineers’ building. The passion for gambling was raging, and to pander thereto were collected as choice a lot of desperadoes as ever “stocked” cards or loaded dice. It came to be noticed that they were on excellent terms with a man called “Jeff” Johnson, who was lessee of the hotel; and to be suspected that said Johnson, in local parlance, “stood in with” them. With this man had come to Barker’s his daughter Sarah, commonly known as “Sally,” a handsome girl with a straight, lithe figure, fine features, reddish auburn hair, and dark blue eyes. It is but fair to say that even the “toughs” of a place like Barker’s show some respect for the other sex, and Miss Sally’s case was no exception to the rule. The male population admired her; they said she “put on heaps of style”; but none of them had seemed to make any progress in her good graces.

On a pleasant afternoon, just after the track had been laid some miles west of Barker’s, and construction trains were running with some regularity to and from the end thereof, Sinclair sat on the rude veranda of the engineers’ quarters, smoking his well-colored meerschaum and looking at the sunset. The atmosphere had been so clear during the day that glimpses were had of Long’s and Pike’s peaks, and as the young engineer gazed at the gorgeous cloud-display he was thinking of the miners’ quaint and pathetic idea that the dead “go over the Range.”

“Nice-looking, ain’t it, Major?” asked a voice at his elbow, and he turned to see one of the contractors’ officials taking a seat near him.

“More than nice-looking, to my mind, Sam,” he replied. “What is the news to-day?”

“Nothin’ much. There’s a sight of talk about the doin’s of them faro an’ keno sharps. The boys is gittin’ kind o’ riled, fur they allow the game ain’t on the square wuth a cent. Some of ’em down to the tie-camp wuz a-talkin’ about a vigilance committee, an’ I wouldn’t be surprised ef they meant business. Hev yer heard about the young feller that come in a week ago from Laramie an’ set up a new faro-bank?”

“No. What about him?”



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“Wa’al, yer see he’s a feller thet’s got a lot of sand an’ ain’t afeared of nobody, an’ he’s allowed to hev the deal to his place on the square every time. Accordin’ to my idee, gamblin’s about the wust racket a feller kin work, but it takes all sorts of men to make a world, an’ ef the boys is bound to hev a game, I calkilate they’d like to patronize his bank. Thet’s made the old crowd mighty mad, an’ they’re a-talkin’ about puttin’ up a job of cheatin’ on him an’ then stringin’ him up. Be sides, I kind o’ think there’s some cussed jealousy on another lay as comes in. Yer see the young feller—Cyrus Foster’s his name—is sweet on thet gal of Jeff Johnson’s. Jeff wuz to Laramie before he come here, an’ Foster knowed Sally up thar. I allow he moved here to see her. Hello! Ef thar they ain’t a-comin’ now.”

Down a path leading from the town, past the railroad buildings, and well on the prairie, Sinclair saw the girl walking with the “young feller.” He was talking earnestly to her, and her eyes were cast down. She looked pretty and, in a way, graceful; and there was in her attire a noticeable attempt at neatness, and a faint reminiscence of by-gone fashions. A smile came to Sinclair’s lips as he thought of a couple walking up Fifth Avenue during his leave of absence not many months before, and of a letter, many times read, lying at that moment in his breast-pocket.

“Papa’s bark is worse than his bite,” ran one of its sentences. “Of course he does not like the idea of my leaving him and going away to such dreadful and remote places as Denver and Omaha, and I don’t know what else; but he will not oppose me in the end, and when you come on again—”

“By thunder!” exclaimed Sam; “ef thar ain’t one of them cussed sharps a watchin’ ’em.”

Sure enough, a rough-looking fellow, his hat pulled over his eyes, half concealed behind a pile of lumber, was casting a sinister glance toward the pair.

“The gal’s well enough,” continued Sam; “but I don’t take a cent’s wuth of stock in thet thar father of her’n. He’s in with them sharps, sure pop, an’ it don’t suit his book to hev Foster hangin’ round. It’s ten to one he sent that cuss to watch ’em. Wa’al, they’re a queer lot, an’ I’m afeared thar’s plenty of trouble ahead among ’em. Good luck to you, Major,” and he pushed back his chair and walked away.

After breakfast next morning, when Sinclair was sitting at the table in his office, busy with maps and plans, the door was thrown open, and Foster, panting for breath, ran in.

“Major Sinclair,” he said, speaking with difficulty, “I’ve no claim on you, but I ask you to protect me. The other gamblers are going to hang me. They are more than ten to one. They will track me here, and unless you harbor me, I’m a dead man.”

Sinclair rose from his chair in a second and walked to the window. A party of men were approaching the building. He turned to Foster:



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"I do not like your trade," said he; "but I will not see you murdered if I can help it. You are welcome here." Foster said "Thank you," stood still a moment, and then began to pace the room, rapidly clinching his hands, his whole frame quivering, his eyes flashing fire—"for all the world," Sinclair said, in telling the story afterward, "like a fierce caged tiger."

"My God!" he muttered, with concentrated intensity, "to be *trapped, trapped* like this!"

Sinclair stepped quickly to the door of his bedroom, and motioned Foster to enter. Then there came a knock at the outer door, and he opened it and stood on the threshold, erect and firm. Half a dozen "toughs" faced him.

"Major," said their spokesman, "we want that man."

"You cannot have him, boys."

"Major, we're a-goin' to take him."

"You had better not try," said Sinclair, with perfect ease and self-possession, and in a pleasant voice. "I have given him shelter, and you can only get him over my dead body. Of course you can kill me, but you won't do even that without one or two of you going down; and then you know perfectly well, boys, what will happen. You *know* that if you lay your finger on a railroad man it's all up with you. There are five hundred men in the tie-camp, not five miles away, and you don't need to be told that in less than one hour after they get word there won't be a piece of one of you big enough to bury."

The men made no reply. They looked him straight in the eyes for a moment. Had they seen a sign of flinching they might have risked the issue, but there was none. With muttered curses, they slunk away. Sinclair shut and bolted the door, then opened the one leading to the bedroom.

"Foster," he said, "the train will pass here in half an hour. Have you money enough?"

"Plenty, Major."

"Very well; keep perfectly quiet, and I will try to get you safely off." He went to an adjoining room and called Sam, the contractor's man. He took in the situation at a glance.

"Wa'al, Foster," said he, "kind o' 'close call' for yer, warn't it? Guess yer'd better be gittin' up an' gittin' pretty lively. The train boys will take yer through, an' yer kin come back when this racket's worked out."



Sinclair glanced at his watch, then he walked to the window and looked out. On a small *mesa*, or elevated-plateau, commanding the path to the railroad, he saw a number of men with rifles.

“Just as I expected,” said he. “Sam, ask one of the boys to go down to the track and, when the train arrives, tell the conductor to come here.”

In a few minutes the whistle was heard, and the conductor entered the building. Receiving his instructions, he returned, and immediately on engine, tender, and platform appeared the trainmen, with *their* rifles covering the group on the bluff. Sinclair put on his hat.



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“Now, Foster,” said he, “we have no time to lose. Take Sam’s arm and mine, and walk between us.”

The trio left the building and walked deliberately to the railroad. Not a word was spoken. Besides the men in sight on the train, two behind the window-blinds of the one passenger coach, and unseen, kept their fingers on the triggers of their repeating carbines. It seemed a long time, counted by anxious seconds, until Foster was safe in the coach.

“All ready, conductor,” said Sinclair. “Now, Foster, good-by. I am not good at lecturing, but if I were you, I would make this the turning-point in my life.”

Foster was much moved.

“I will do it, Major,” said he; “and I shall never forget what you have done for me to-day. I am sure we shall meet again.”

With another shriek from the whistle the train started. Sinclair and Sam saw the men quietly returning the firearms to their places as it gathered way. Then they walked back to their quarters. The men on the *mesa*, balked of their purpose, had withdrawn.

Sam accompanied Sinclair to his door, and then sententiously remarked: “Major, I think I’ll light out and find some of the boys. You ain’t got no call to know anything about it, but I allow it’s about time them cusses was bounced.”

Three nights after this, a powerful party of *Vigilantes*, stern and inexorable, made a raid on all the gambling dens, broke the tables and apparatus, and conducted the men to a distance from the town, where they left them with an emphatic and concise warning as to the consequences of any attempt to return. An exception was made in Jeff Johnson’s case—but only for the sake of his daughter—for it was found that many a “little game” had been carried on in his house.

Erelong he found it convenient to sell his business and retire to a town some miles to the eastward, where the railroad influence was not as strong as at Barker’s. At about this time, Sinclair made his arrangements to go to New York, with the pleasant prospect of marrying the young lady in Fifth Avenue. In due time he arrived at Barker’s with his young and charming wife and remained for some days. The changes were astounding. Common-place respectability had replaced abnormal lawlessness. A neat station stood where had been the rough contractor’s buildings. At a new “Windsor” (or was it “Brunswick”?) the performance of the kitchen contrasted sadly (alas! how common is such contrast in these regions) with the promise of the *menu*. There was a tawdry theatre yclept “Academy of Music,” and there was not much to choose in the way of ugliness between two “meeting-houses.”

“Upon my word, my dear,” said Sinclair to his wife, “I ought to be ashamed to say it, but I prefer Barker’s *au naturel*.”



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One evening, just before the young people left the town, and as Mrs. Sinclair sat alone in her room, the frowsy waitress announced “a lady,” and was requested to bid her enter. A woman came with timid mien into the room, sat down, as invited, and removed her veil. Of course the young bride had never known Sally Johnson, the whilom belle of Barker’s, but her husband would have noticed at a glance how greatly she was changed from the girl who walked with Foster past the engineers’ quarters. It would be hard to find a more striking contrast than was presented by the two women as they sat facing each other: the one in the flush of health and beauty, calm, sweet, self-possessed; the other still retaining some of the shabby finery of old days, but pale and haggard, with black rings under her eyes, and a pathetic air of humiliation.

“Mrs. Sinclair,” she hurriedly began, “you do not know me, nor the like of me. I’ve got no right to speak to you, but I couldn’t help it. Oh! please believe me, I am not real downright bad. I’m Sally Johnson, daughter of a man whom they drove out of the town. My mother died when I was little, and I *never* had a show; and folks think because I live with my father, and he makes me know the crowd he travels with, that I must be in with them, and be of their sort. I never had a woman speak a kind word to me, and I’ve had so much trouble that I’m just drove wild, and like to kill myself; and then I was at the station when you came in, and I saw your sweet face and the kind look in your eyes, and it came in my heart that I’d speak to you if I died for it.” She leaned eagerly forward, her hands nervously closing on the back of a chair. “I suppose your husband never told you of me; like enough he never knew me; but I’ll never forget him as long as I live. When he was here before, there was a young man “—here a faint color came in the wan cheeks—“who was fond of me, and I thought the world of him, and my father was down on him, and the men that father was in with wanted to kill him; and Mr. Sinclair saved his life. He’s gone away, and I’ve waited and waited for him to come back—and perhaps I’ll never see him again. But oh! dear lady, I’ll never forget what your husband did. He’s a good man, and he deserves the love of a dear good woman like you, and if I dared, I’d pray for you both, night and day.”

She stopped suddenly and sank back in her seat, pale as before, and as if frightened by her own emotion. Mrs. Sinclair had listened with sympathy and increasing interest.

“My poor girl,” she said, speaking tenderly (she had a lovely, soft voice) and with slightly heightened color, “I am delighted that you came to see me, and that my husband was able to help you. Tell me, can we not do more for you? I do not for one moment believe you can be happy with your present surroundings. Can we not assist you to leave them?”

The girl rose, sadly shaking her head. “I thank you for your words,” she said. “I don’t suppose I’ll ever see you again, but I’ll say, God bless you!”



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She caught Mrs. Sinclair's hand, pressed it to her lips, and was gone.

Sinclair found his wife very thoughtful when he came home, and he listened with much interest to her story.

"Poor girl!" said he; "Foster is the man to help her. I wonder where he is? I must inquire about him."

The next day they proceeded on their way to San Francisco, and matters drifted on at Barker's much as before. Johnson had, after an absence of some months, come back and lived without molestation, amid the shifting population. Now and then, too, some of the older residents fancied they recognized, under slouched sombreros, the faces of some of his former "crowd" about the "Ranchman's Home," as his gaudy saloon was called.

Late on the very evening on which this story opens, and they had been "making up" the Denver Express in the train-house on the Missouri, "Jim" Watkins, agent and telegrapher at Barker's, was sitting in his little office, communicating with the station rooms by the ticket window. Jim was a cool, silent, efficient man, and not much given to talk about such episodes in his past life as the "wiping out" by Indians of the construction party to which he belonged, and his own rescue by the scouts. He was smoking an old and favorite pipe, and talking with one of "the boys" whose head appeared at the wicket. On a seat in the station sat a woman in a black dress and veil, apparently waiting for a train.

"Got a heap of letters and telegrams there, ain't year, Jim?" remarked the man at the window.

"Yes," replied Jim; "they're for Engineer Sinclair, to be delivered to him when he passes through here. He left on No. 17, to-night." The inquirer did not notice the sharp start of the woman near him.

"Is that good-lookin' wife of his'n a comin' with him?" asked he.

"Yes, there's letters for her, too."

"Well, good-night, Jim. See yer later," and he went out. The woman suddenly rose and ran to the window.

"Mr. Watkins," cried she, "can I see you for a few moments, where no one can interrupt us? It's a matter of life and death." She clutched the sill with her thin hands, and her voice trembled. Watkins recognized Sally Johnson in a moment. He unbolted a door, motioned her to enter, closed and again bolted it, and also closed the ticket window. Then he pointed to a chair, and the girl sat down and leaned eagerly forward.



“If they knew I was here,” she said in a hoarse whisper, “my life wouldn’t be safe five minutes. I was waiting to tell you a terrible story, and then I heard who was on the train due here to-morrow night. Mr. Watkins, don’t, for God’s sake, ask me how I found out, but I hope to die if I ain’t telling you the living truth! They’re going to wreck that train—No. 17—at Dead Man’s Crossing, fifteen miles east, and rob the passengers and the express car. It’s the worst gang in the country, *Perry’s*. They’re going to throw the train off the track the passengers will be maimed and killed,—and Mr. Sinclair and his wife on the cars! Oh! My God! Mr. Watkins, send them warning!”



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She stood upright, her face deadly pale, her hands clasped. Watkins walked deliberately to the railroad map which hung on the wall and scanned it. Then he resumed his seat, laid his pipe down, fixed his eyes on the girl's face, and began to question her. At the same time his right hand, with which he had held the pipe, found its way to the telegraph key. None but an expert could have distinguished any change in the *clicking* of the instrument, which had been almost incessant; but Watkins had "called" the head office on the Missouri. In two minutes the "sounder" rattled out "*All right! What is it?*"

Watkins went on with his questions, his eyes still fixed on the poor girl's face, and all the time his fingers, as it were, playing with the key. If he were imperturbable, so was *not* a man sitting at a receiving instrument nearly five hundred miles away. He had "taken" but a few words when he jumped from his chair and cried:

"Shut that door, and call the superintendent and be quick! Charley, brace up—lively—and come and write this out!" With his wonderful electric pen, the handle several hundred of miles long, Watkins, unknown to his interlocutor, was printing in the Morse alphabet this startling message:

"Inform'n rec'd. Perry gang going to throw No. 17 off track near—xth mile-post, this division, about nine to-morrow (Thursday) night, kill passengers, and rob express and mail. Am alone here. No chance to verify story, but believe it to be on square. Better make arrangements from your end to block game. No Sheriff here now. Answer."

The superintendent, responding to the hasty summons, heard the message before the clerk had time to write it out. His lips were closely compressed as he put his own hand on the key and sent these laconic sentences: "*O.K. Keep perfectly dark. Will manage from this end.*"

Watkins, at Barker's, rose from his seat, opened the door a little way, saw that the station was empty, and then said to the girl, brusquely, but kindly:

"Sally, you've done the square thing, and saved that train. I'll take care that you don't suffer and that you get well paid. Now come home with me, and my wife will look out for you."

"Oh! no," cried the girl, shrinking back, "I must run away. You're mighty kind, but I daren't go with you." Detecting a shade of doubt in his eye, she added: "Don't be afeared; I'll die before they'll know I've given them away to you!" and she disappeared in the darkness.

At the other end of the wire, the superintendent had quietly impressed secrecy on his operator and clerk ordered his fast mare harnessed, and gone to his private office.



“Read that!” said he to his secretary, “it was about time for some trouble of this kind, and now I’m going to let Uncle Sam take care of his mails. If I don’t get to the reservation before the General’s turned in, I shall have to wake him up. Wait for me, please.”



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They gray mare made the six miles to the military reservation in just half an hour. The General was smoking his last *cigar*, and was alert in an instant; and before the superintendent had finished the jorum of “hot Scotch” hospitably tendered, the orders had gone by wire to the commanding officer at Fort——, some distance east of Barker’s, and been duly acknowledged.

Returning to the station, the superintendent remarked to the waiting secretary:

“The General’s all right. Of course we can’t tell that this is not a sell; but if those Perry hounds mean business they’ll get all the fight they want; and if they’ve got any souls—which I doubt—may the Lord have mercy on them!”

He prepared several despatches, two of which were as follows:

“MR. HENRY SINCLAIR:

“On No. 17, Pawnee Junction:

This telegram your authority to take charge of train on which you are, and demand obedience of all officials and trainmen on road. Please do so, and act in accordance with information wired station agent at Pawnee Junction.”

To the Station Agent:

“Reported Perry gang will try wreck and rob No. 17 near—xth mile-post. Denver Division, about nine Thursday night Troops will await train at Fort——. Car ordered ready for them. Keep everything secret, and act in accordance with orders of Mr. Sinclair.”

“It’s worth about ten thousand dollars,” sententiously remarked he, “that Sinclair’s on that train. He’s got both sand and brains. Good-night,” and he went to bed and slept the sleep of the just.

### III.

The sun never shone more brightly and the air was never more clear and bracing than when Sinclair helped his wife off the train at Pawnee Junction. The station-master’s face fell as he saw the lady, but he saluted the engineer with as easy an air as he could assume, and watched for an opportunity to speak to him alone. Sinclair read the despatches with an unmoved countenance, and after a few minutes’ reflection simply said: “All right. Be sure to keep the matter perfectly quiet.” At breakfast he was *distract*—so much so that his wife asked him what was the matter. Taking her aside, he at once showed her the telegrams.



“You see my duty,” he said. “My only thought is about you, my dear child. Will you stay here?”

She simply replied, looking into his face without a tremor:

“My place is with you.” Then the conductor called “All aboard,” and the train once more started.

Sinclair asked Foster to join him in the smoking-compartment and tell him the promised story, which the latter did. His rescue at Barker’s, he frankly and gratefully said, *had* been the turning point in his life. In brief, he had “sworn-off” from gambling and drinking, had found honest employment, and was doing well.



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"I've two things to do now, Major," he added; "first, I must show my gratitude, to you; and next—" he hesitated a little—"I want to find that poor girl that I left behind at Barker's. She was engaged to marry me, and when I came to think of it, and what a life I'd have made her lead, I hadn't the heart till now to look for her; but, seeing I'm on the right track, I'm going to find her, and get her to come with me. Her father's a—old scoundrel, but that ain't her fault, and I ain't going to marry *him*."

"Foster," quietly asked Sinclair, "do you know the Perry gang?"

The man's brow darkened.

"Know them?" said he. "I know them much too well. Perry is as ungodly a cutthroat as ever killed an emigrant in cold blood, and he's got in his gang nearly all those hounds that tried to hang me. Why do you ask, Major?"

Sinclair handed him the despatches. "You are the only man on the train to whom I have shown them," said he.

Foster read them slowly, his eyes lighting up as he did so. "Looks as if it was true," said he. "Let me see! Fort——. Yes, that's the—th infantry. Two of their boys were killed at Sidney last summer by some of the same gang, and the regiment's sworn vengeance. Major, if this story's on the square, that crowd's goose is cooked, and *don't you forget it!* I say, you must give me a hand in."

"Foster," said Sinclair, "I am going to put responsibility on your shoulders. I have no doubt that, if we be attacked, the soldiers will dispose of the gang; but I must take all possible precautions for the safety of the passengers. We must not alarm them. They can be made to think that the troops are going on a scout, and only a certain number of resolute men need be told of what we expect. Can you, late this afternoon, go through the cars, and pick them out? I will then put you in charge of the passenger cars, and you can post your men on the platforms to act in case of need. My place will be ahead."

"Major, you can depend on me," was Foster's reply. "I'll go through the train and have my eye on some boys of the right sort, and that's got their shooting-irons with them."

Through the hours of that day on rolled the train, till over the crisp buffalo grass, across the well-worn buffalo trails, past the prairie-dog villages. The passengers chatted, dozed, played cards, read, all unconscious, with the exception of three, of the coming conflict between the good and the evil forces bearing on their fate; of the fell preparations making for their disaster; of the grim preparations making to avert such disaster; of all of which the little wires alongside of them had been talking back and forth. Watkins had telegraphed that he still saw no reason to doubt the good faith of his warning, and Sinclair had reported his receipt of authority and his acceptance thereof. Meanwhile, also, there had been set in motion a measure of that power

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to which appeal is so reluctantly made in time of peace. At Fort——, a lonely post on the plains, the orders had that morning been issued for twenty men under Lieutenant Halsey to parade at 4 P.M., with overcoats, two days' rations, and ball cartridges; also for Assistant Surgeon Kesler to report for duty with the party. Orders as to destination were communicated direct to the lieutenant from the post commander, and on the minute the little column moved, taking the road to the station. The regiment from which it came had been in active service among the Indians on the frontier for a long time, and the officers and men were tried and seasoned fighters. Lieutenant Halsey had been well known at the West Point balls as the "leader of the german." From the last of these balls he had gone straight to the field and three years had given him an enviable reputation for *sang froid* and determined bravery. He looked every inch the soldier as he walked along the trail, his cloak thrown back and his sword tucked under his arm. The doctor, who carried a Modoc bullet in some inaccessible part of his scarred body, growled good-naturedly at the need of walking, and the men, enveloped in their army-blue overcoats, marched easily by fours. Reaching the station, the lieutenant called the agent aside and with him inspected, on a siding, a long platform on which benches had been placed and secured. Then he took his seat in the station and quietly waited, occasionally twisting his long blond mustache. The doctor took a cigar with the agent, and the men walked about or sat on the edge of the platform. One of them, who obtained a surreptitious glance at his silent commander, told his companions that there was trouble ahead for somebody.

"That's just the way the leftenant looked, boys," said he, "when we was laying for them Apaches that raided Jones's Ranch and killed the women and little children."

In a short time the officer looked at his watch, formed his men, and directed them to take their places on the seats of the car. They had hardly done so, when the whistle of the approaching train was heard. When it came up, the conductor, who had his instructions from Sinclair, had the engine detached and backed on the siding for the soldiers' which thus came between it and the foremost baggage-car, when the train was again made up. As arranged, it was announced that the troops were to be taken a certain distance to join a scouting party, and the curiosity of the passengers was but slightly excited. The soldiers sat quietly in their seats, their repeating rifles held between their knees, and the officer in front. Sinclair joined the latter, and had a few words with him as the train moved on. A little later, when the stars were shining brightly overhead, they passed into the express-car, and sent for the conductor and other trainmen, and for Foster. In a few words Sinclair explained the position of affairs. His statement was received with perfect coolness, and the men only asked what they were to do.



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"I hope, boys," said Sinclair, "that we are going to put this gang to-night where they will make no more trouble. Lieutenant Halsey will bear the brunt of the fight, and it only remains for you to stand by the interests committed to your care. Mr. Express Agent, what help do you want?" The person addressed, a good-natured giant, girded with a cartridge belt, smiled as he replied:

"Well, sir, I'm wearing a watch which the company gave me for standing off the James gang in Missouri for half an hour, when we hadn't the ghost of a soldier about. I'll take the contract, and welcome, to hold *this* fort alone."

"Very well," said Sinclair. "Foster, progress have you made?"

"Major, I've got ten or fifteen as good men as ever drew a bead, and just red-hot for a fight."

"That will do very well. Conductor, give the trainmen the rifles from the baggage-car and let them act under Mr. Foster. Now, boys, I am sure you will do your duty. That is all."

From the next station Sinclair telegraphed "All ready" to the superintendent, who was pacing his office in much suspense. Then he said a few words to his brave but anxious wife, and walked to the rear platform. On it were several armed men, who bade him good-evening, and asked "when the fun was going to begin." Walking through the train, he found each platform similarly occupied, and Foster going from one to the other. The latter whispered as he passed him:

"Major, I found Arizona Joe, the scout, in the smokin'-car, and he's on the front platform. That lets me out, and although I know as well as you that there ain't any danger about that rear sleeper where the madam is, I ain't a-going to be far off from her." Sinclair shook him by the hand; then he looked at his watch. It was half-past eight. He passed through the baggage and express cars, finding in the latter the agent sitting behind his safe, on which lay two large revolvers. On the platform-car he found the soldiers and their commander, sitting silent and unconcerned as before. When Sinclair reached the latter and nodded, he rose and faced the men, and his fine voice was clearly heard above the rattle of the train.

"Company, 'ten\_tion\_!" The soldiers straightened themselves in a second.

"With ball cartridge, *load!*" It was done with the precision of a machine. Then the lieutenant spoke, in the same clear, crisp tones that the troops had heard in more than one fierce battle.

"Men," said he, "in a few minutes the Perry gang, which you will remember, are going to try to run this train off the track, wound and kill the passengers, and rob the cars and the



United States mail. It is our business to prevent them. Sergeant Wilson” (a gray-bearded non-commissioned officer stood up and saluted), “I am going on the engine. See that my orders are repeated. Now, men, aim low, and don’t waste any shots.” He and Sinclair climbed over the tender and spoke to the engine-driver.



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"How are the air-brakes working?" asked Sinclair.

"First-rate."

"Then, if you slow down now, you could stop the train in a third of her length, couldn't you?"

"Easy, if you don't mind being shaken up a bit."

"That is good. How is the country about the—xth mile-post?"

"Dead level, and smooth."

"Good again. Now, Lieutenant Halsey, this is a splendid head-light, and we can see a long way with my night glass, I will have a—"

"—2d mile-post just passed," interrupted the engine-driver.

"Only one more to pass, then, before we ought to strike them. Now, lieutenant, I undertake to stop the train within a very short distance of the gang. They will be on both sides of the track no doubt; and the ground, as you hear, is quite level. You will best know what to do."

The officer stepped back. "Sergeant," called he, "do you hear me plainly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have the men fix bayonets. When the train stops, and I wave my sword, let half jump off each side, run up quickly, and form line *abreast of the engine*—not ahead."

"Jack," said Sinclair to the engine-driver, "is your hand steady?" The man held it up with a smile. "Good. Now, stand by your throttle and your air-brake. Lieutenant, better warn the men to hold on tight, and tell the sergeant to pass the word to the boys on the platforms, or they will be knocked off by the sudden stop. Now for a look ahead!" and he brought the binocular to his eyes.

The great parabolic head-light illuminated the track a long way in advance, all behind it being of course in darkness. Suddenly Sinclair cried out:

"The fools have a light there, as I am a living man; and there is a little red one near us. What can that be? All ready. Jack! By heavens! they have taken up two rails. Now, *hold on, all!* STOP HER!!"

The engine-driver shut his throttle-valve with a jerk. Then, holding hard by it, he sharply turned a brass handle. There was a fearful jolt—a grating—and the train's way was



checked. The lieutenant, standing sidewise, had drawn his sword. He waved it, and almost before he could get off the engine, the soldiers were up and forming, still in shadow, while the bright light was thrown on a body of men ahead.

“Surrender, or you are dead men!” roared the officer. Curses and several shots were the reply. Then came the orders, quick and sharp:

*“Forward! Close rip! Double-quick! Halt! FIRE!”*

It was speedily over. Left on the car with the men, the old sergeant had said:

“Boys, you hear. It’s that — Perry gang. Now, don’t forget Larry and Charley that they murdered last year,” and there had come from the soldiers a sort of fierce, subdued *growl*. The volley was followed by a bayonet charge, and it required all the officer’s authority to save the lives even of those who “threw up their hands.” Large as the gang was (outnumbering the troops), well armed and desperate as they were, every one was dead, wounded, or a prisoner when the men who guarded the train platforms ran up. The surgeon, with professional coolness, walked up to the robbers, his instrument case under his arm.



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“Not much for me to do here, Lieutenant,” said he. “That practice for Creedmoor is telling on the shooting. Good thing for the gang, too. Bullets are better than rope, and a Colorado jury will give them plenty of that.”

Sinclair had sent a man to tell his wife that all was over. Then he ordered a fire lighted, and the rails relaid. The flames lit a strange scene as the passengers flocked up. The lieutenant posted men to keep them back.

“Is there a telegraph station not far ahead Sinclair?” asked he. “Yes? All right.” He drew a small pad from his pocket, and wrote a despatch to the post commander.

“Be good enough to send that for me,” said he “and leave orders at Barker’s for the night express eastward to stop for us, and to bring a posse to take care of the wounded and prisoners. And now, my dear Sinclair, I suggest that you get the passengers into the cars, and go on as soon as those rails are spiked. When they realize the situation, some of them will feel precious ugly, and you know we can’t have any lynching.”

Sinclair glanced at the rails and gave the word at once to the conductor and brakemen, who began vociferating, “All aboard!” Just then Foster appeared, an expression of intense satisfaction showing clearly on his face, in the firelight.

“Major,” said he, “I didn’t use to take much stock in special Providence, or things being ordered; but I’m darned if I don’t believe in them from this day. I was bound to stay where you put me, but I was uneasy, and wild to be in the scrimmage; and, if I had been there, I wouldn’t have taken notice of a little red light that wasn’t much behind the rear platform when we stopped. When I saw there was no danger there, I ran back, and what do you think I found? There was a woman, in a dead faint, and just clutching a lantern that she had tied up in a red scarf, poor little thing! And, Major, it was Sally! It was the little girl that loved me out at Barker’s, and has loved me and waited for me ever since! And when she came to, and knew me, she was so glad she ’most fainted away again; and she let on as it was her that gave away the job. And I took her into the sleeper, and the madam, God bless her!—she knew Sally before and was good to her—she took care of her, and is cheering her up. And now, Major, I’m going to take her straight to Denver, and send for a parson and get her married to me, and she’ll brace up, sure pop.”

The whistle sounded, and the train started. From the window of the “sleeper” Sinclair and his wife took their last look at the weird scene. The lieutenant, standing at the side of the track, wrapped in his cloak, caught a glimpse of Mrs. Sinclair’s pretty face, and returned her bow. Then, as the car passed out of sight, he tugged at his mustache and hummed:



“Why, boys, why,  
Should we be melancholy, boys,  
Whose business 'tis to die?”

In less than an hour, telegrams having in the mean time been sent in both directions, the train ran alongside the platform at Barker's; and; Watkins, inperturbable as usual, met Sinclair, and gave him his letters.



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“Perry gang wiped out, I hear, Major,” said he “Good thing for the country. That’s a lesson the ‘toughs’ in these parts won’t forget for a long time. Plucky girl that give ’em away, wasn’t she. Hope she’s all right.”

“She is all right,” said Sinclair, with a smile.

“Glad of that. By-the-way, that father of her’n passed in his checks to-night. He’d got one warning from the Vigilantes, and yesterday they found out he was in with this gang, and they was a-going for him; but when the telegram come, he put a pistol to his head and saved them all trouble. Good riddance to everybody, I say. The sheriff’s here now, and is going east on the next train to get them fellows. He’s got a big posse together, and I wouldn’t wonder if they was hard to hold in, after the ‘boys in blue’ is gone.”

In a few minutes the train was off, with its living freight—the just and the unjust, the reformed and the rescued, the happy and the anxious. With many of the passengers the episode of the night was already a thing of the past. Sinclair sat by the side of his wife, to whose cheeks the color had all come back; and Sally Johnson lay in her berth, faint still, but able to give an occasional smile to Foster. In the station on the Missouri the reporters were gathered about the happy superintendent, smoking his cigars, and filling their note-books with items. In Denver, their brethren would gladly have done the same, but Watkins failed to gratify them. He was a man of few words. When the train had gone, and a friend remarked:

“Hope they’ll get through all right, now,” he simply said:

“Yes, likely. Two shots don’t ’most always go in the same hole.” Then he went to the telegraph instrument. In a few minutes he could have told a story as wild as a Norse *saga*, but what he said, when Denver had responded, was only—

*“No. 17, fifty-five minutes late.”*

## THE MISFORTUNES OF BRO’ THOMAS WHEATLEY.

By LINA REDWOOD FAIRFAX.

He is our office-boy and messenger, and, my senior tells me, has been employed by the firm in this capacity for about thirty years. He is a negro, about sixty years old, rather short and stout, with a mincing, noiseless gait, broad African features, beautiful teeth, and small, round, twinkling eyes, the movements of which are accompanied by little abrupt, sidewise turns of the head, like a bird. His manner is a curious mixture of deference and self-importance, his voice a soft, sibilant whisper, and as he was born and bred in Alexandria, Virginia, it seems almost superfluous to add that he and the letter “r” are not on speaking terms.



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He has a prominent characteristic, which always attracts attention at first sight. This is the shape of his head, which is immensely large in proportion, very bald, and so abundant in various queer, knobby excrescences about the forehead and sides, and so unnaturally long and level on top, that for some time after I made his acquaintance I could never see him without finding myself forming absurd conjectures as to whether his cranium and the hydrostatic press could ever have become acquainted at some early period of his life; and so strong is this association of ideas that, even now, his sudden appearance invariably suggests to me the study of natural philosophy. Poor fellow! his chagrin was great when this peculiar conformation of his skull was first brought to his notice. He had been telling me for some time past of the “splendid piccha” he had had “took,” and I had been promised a sight of it just as soon as it arrived from the photographer’s. I confess I had not been sanguine as to the result, although I knew a handsome portrait was confidently expected by the sitter. One morning he deposited the photograph before me.

“Hello!” I cried, taking it in my hand; “here you are, hit off to the life.”

“Do’ say *that*, Mist’ Dunkin, *do*’ say hit, seh,” he replied, in a tone of deep mortification. Then, catching a glimpse of the picture, his ire broke forth: “Nevvah wuz like *me* in de wueld,” he cried, in an elevated key; “nevvah *wuz* ha’f so ugly ez that. I’m—I’m a bettah-lookin’ man, Mist’ Dunkin. Why, look at de color of de thing,” contemptuously. “Cain’ tell de face f’om de coat I nevvah set up to be what you’d call *faih*-cumplectid, but disha things iss same is that thaih ink; jess iss same. My hade do’ look that a way, neitha. Naw, *seh*, ‘taint s’ bad ’s that.”

“Why, Thomas,” said I, “I think it a very good likeness—the complexion *is* a little dark to be sure, but do you know I particularly admire the head. Look at that forehead; any one can see that you are a man of intellect. I tell you it isn’t every one who can boast of such a forehead.”

“The—the ’mahk you make ’bout me, has been made ‘fo’; I may say, has been made quite frequent—quite frequent; on’y lass Tuesd’y fohtni’t, Sistah Ma’y Ann Jinkins—a promnunt membeh of ouh class (that is, Asba’y class, meets on Gay Street), Sistah Ma’y Ann Jinkins, she ups an’ sez, befo’ de whole class, dat she’d puppose de motion, dat Bro’ Thomas Wheatley wuz ‘p’inted fus’ speakah in de nex’ ‘Jug-breakin’ an’ Jaymiah’s Hamma,’ by de i-nanemous vote of de class. I’m clah to say I wuz ‘stonished; but ahta class wuz ovvva, Bro’ Moss tole me de ‘p’intment wuz made jes’ f’on de ‘peahunce of my hade, “Cause,” he sez, ‘no man cain’t be a po’ speakah with sich a fine intellec’ which we see expressed in de hade of Bro’ Thomas Wheatley—but, same time, I knowed all time de fus’ motion come f’om Sistah Ma’y Ann Jinkins—she’s a ve’y good friend o’ mine, Sistah Ma’y Ann Jinkins—thinks a sight o’ me; I ’scohts heh to class ev’y Tuesd’y—ev’y Tuesd’y, sine die.”



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“You do? What does your wife have to say to that?” I asked, maliciously.

He stared at me an instant, then replied:

“My wife!—oh—oh, Law bless yoh soul, seh, *she* do’ keeh. Bro’ ’Dolphus Beam, *he* sees ahta heh: you see, seh, she’s I-o-n-g way ’moved f’om Asba’y class; ’twont admit none but fus’-class ’speience-givvahs in Asba’y, an’ my wife she wa’n’t nevvah no han’ to talk; haint got de gif’ of de tongue which Saul, suhname Paul, speaks of in de Scripcheh—don’t possess hit, seh.”

“She must be a very nice person to live with,” I remarked.

“Well, y-e-es, seh,” replied Thomas, after reflecting awhile. “I hain’t got nuth’n’ ’g’in’ Ailse; she’s quite, an’ ohdaly, a good cook, an’ laundriss, an’ she’s a lady,[1] an’ all that, but sh’ ain’t not to say what you’d call a giftid ’oman.”

“Like Sister Mary Ann Jenkins, eh?”

“*Egg-zac’ly*, seh. Mist’ Dunkin, you put hit kehrec’, seh. Ailse hain’t possessed with none of the high talence, cain’t exhocht, naw sing with fehveh, naw yit lead in praieh; heh talence is mos’ly boun’ up in napkins—as Scripcheh say—mos’ly boun’ up in napkins; foh I do’ deny she kin do up all kines o’ table-linen, she kin indeed. Naw, seh, I cain’t say I got nuth’n’ ’g’in’ Ailse.”

He was, I think, the worst manager of finances that I have ever known. He cleaned all the offices in our building, and earned, as near as I could estimate, about thirty-five dollars a month. Three of his four children were self-supporting, and his wife was honest and industrious, taking in washing, and getting well paid for her work. Yet, he was perpetually in debt, and his wages were always overdrawn. Whenever I came into the office after my two-o’clock lunch, and found him seated on his wooden chair, in the corner, gazing absently out at the dingy chimneys opposite—apparently too abstracted to observe my entrance, I knew I had only to go to my desk to find, placed in a conspicuous position thereon, a very small, dirty bit of paper, with these words laboriously inscribed upon it: “Mr. Dunkin Sir cen you oblidge me with the sum of three dolers an a half [or whatever the sum might be] an deduc thee same from mi salry i em in grate kneed of thee same yours mos respectfull thomas wheatley.”

The form was always the same, my name in imposing capitals and the remainder in the very smallest letters which he could coax his stiff old fingers to make, and all written on the tiniest scrap of writing-paper. I think his object was to impress me with his humiliation, impecuniosity, and general low condition, because as soon as he received the money—which he always did, I vowing to myself each time that this advance should be the last, and as regularly breaking my vow—he would tip-toe carefully to the mantel-piece, get down his pen and ink, borrow my sand-bottle, and proceed to indite me a



letter of acknowledgment. This written, he would present it with a sweeping bow, and then retire precipitately to his corner, chuckling, and perspiring profusely. He usually preferred foolscap for these documents, and the capitals were numerous and imposing. Like the others, however, they were invariably word for word the same, and were couched in the following terms:



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“MR. DUNKIN

“SIR I have Recieved thee Sum of Three Dolers an a half  
from Your hans an I Recieve thee same with Joy an Grattetude.

“Yours respectfull

“THOMAS WHEATLEY.”

I said his applications for money were always granted. I must, however, make an exception, which, after all, will only go to prove the rule. One bright morning he met me at the office-door, his face as beaming as the weather. He hardly waited for me to doff my overcoat and hat, when he announced that he had bought a second-hand parlor organ the evening before, on credit, for seventy-five dollars, to be paid in instalments of twelve dollars and a half each. He had been very hard up for a month past, as I had abundant occasion to know, and it was therefore with a feeling rather stronger than surprise, that I received the announcement of this purchase.

“But you haven’t fifty cents toward paying for it. And what on earth can you possibly want with a parlor organ? Can you play?—can any of your family play?”

“Well, naw, seh,” scratching his head reflectively. “I cain’t s’ay they *kin* not to say *play*”—as if they were all taking lessons, and expected to become proficient at some not far distant day. “In fac’, seh, none on um knows a wued o’ music. I didn’t mean, seh, I didn’t ‘tend the—the instrument fu’ househol’ puhpasses—I—I ’tended hit as a off’in’ to ouh Sabbath-school. We—we has no instrument at present, an’—”

I am afraid I uttered a very bad word at this juncture. Thomas started, and retired in great discomfiture, and I thought I had made an end of the matter, but that afternoon I found the small scrap of paper on my desk—really, I think, with a little practice, Thomas might hope to rival the man who goes about writing the Lord’s Prayer in the space of half a dollar. My name was in larger capitals, the rest in smaller letters, than usual, and I was requested “to oblidge him with the sum of twelve dolers an’ a half.” I knew then that the first organ-instalment was due, but I think it needless to add, his application was refused. About a week afterward, I learned that the Sabbath-school was again without a musical instrument, the organ having been pawned for twenty dollars, Thomas paying ten per cent a month on the money. It was so with everything he undertook. Once he gave me elaborate warning that I must furnish myself with another messenger at once, as he was going to make a fortune peddling oranges and apples. Accordingly, he bought a barrel (!) of each kind of fruit, sold half at reasonable rates, and then, the remainder beginning to decay on his hands, he came to me, offering really fine Havana oranges at a cent apiece.

“I’m driffin’ ’em off et coss—driffin’ ’em off et coss,” he whispered, speaking rapidly, and waving his hands about, oriental fashion, the palms turned outward and the fingers twirling; this peculiar gesture seemed intended to indicate the cheapness of his wares.



“Dey coss me mo’n that; heap mo’, but I’m faih to lose um all now, en I’m driffin’ ’em off, sine die.”



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After that, some dozen or more of the large wholesale houses engaged him to furnish their counting-rooms with lunch, and he began with brilliant prospects. He brought his basket around to me for first choice. Everything was very nice; a clean new basket, covered with a white cloth, wherein lay piles of neatly arranged packages done up in letter-paper, with a strange-looking character inscribed upon each.

“What do these letters mean?” I asked, taking up one of the packages, and trying in vain to decipher the cabalistic sign upon it.

Thomas chuckled.

“Oh, that’s to show de kine of san’wich dey is, Mist’ Dunkin. You see, seh, I got th’ee kines—so I put ‘B’ on de beef, ‘H’ on de *hahm*, an’ I stahtid to put ‘H’ on de hystehs too, but den I foun’ I couldn’t tell de *hystehs* f’om de *hahm*, so den I put ‘H I’ on de hystehs.”

“Oh, I see,” said I, opening one of the “hysteh” packages. It was very good; an excellent French roll, well spread with choice butter, and two large, nicely fried oysters between. I ate it speedily, took another, and, that disposed of, asked the price.

“Ten cents, seh.”

“For two!”

“Yes, seh; fi’ cents ’piece.”

“Why, Thomas,” I exclaimed, “you mustn’t begin by asking five cents apiece; you’ll ruin yourself. These things are *worth* at least twice as much money. Why, I pay ten cents for a sandwich at an eating-house, and it doesn’t begin to have as good materials in it as yours. You ought to ask more.”

“Naw, seh; naw, seh; Mist’ Dunkin; as’ less, an’ sell mo’—that’s my motteh. I have all dese yeah clean sole out ‘fo’ two ’clock—clean sole out ‘fo’ two ’clock.”

I interrupted him, asking the cost of each article, and then proving to him by calculation that he lost money on each sandwich he sold at five cents. But I could not convince him—he received the twenty-five cents which I insisted on paying him with many expressions of gratitude, but he left me reiterating his belief in “quick sales and small profits.” “Be back yeah clean sole out by two ’clock, sine die,” he exclaimed, brightly, as he departed.

This venture brought him six dollars in debt at the expiration of a fortnight, and after that, by my advice, he abandoned peddling, condemning it as a “low-life trade,” and agreeing to stick to legitimate business for the future.



One of his famous expressions, the most formidable rival of *sine die* (which, as the reader has doubtless discovered, he intended as an elegant synonym for *without fail*), was entirely original—this was “Granny to Mash” (I spell phonetically), used as an exclamation, and only employed when laboring under great mental excitement.



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As I was proceeding homeward one evening, I spied him standing on a street corner, holding forth to a select assemblage of his own color, who were listening to him with an appearance of the profoundest respect. His back was toward me, and I stopped and caught his words without attracting observation. He had assumed a very pompous, hortatory manner, and I could well believe he held a prominent position in Asbury class. "Yes, gentlemun; yes," he was saying, "ez Brotheh Jones 'mahks, I *do* live in a ve'y *su-pee*aw at-mos-pheeh—suh-roundid by people of leahnin', with books, pens, blottehs, letteh-pess, *en* what not, ez common ez these yeah bricks which I see befo' me. But thaih hain't no trueh wued then ev'y station has its hawdships, gentlemun, en mine ah not exemp', mine ah *not* exemp'.

"Fus'ly, thaih's the 'sponsebility. W'y, this yeah ve'y mawnin' I banked nigh on to a thousan' dollehs fu' de young boss. En w'en I tell you mo'n two hundred stamps is passed my mouth this yeah blessid evenin', 't will give you some slight idee of the magnitude of the duties I has to puffawn. W'y, gentlemun, I is drank wateh, an' I is drank beeh, but my mouth hain't got back hits right moistuh yit."

The day of the 20th of July, 1877, was very quiet We had heard, of course, of the "strikes" all over the country, and the morning papers brought tidings of the trouble with the Baltimore and Ohio railroad employes at Martinsburg, but no serious difficulty was apprehended in Baltimore.

That afternoon I was detained very late at the office. I intended beginning a three weeks' holiday next morning, and was trying to get beforehand with my work. My senior was out of town, and Thomas and I had been very busy since three o'clock—I writing, he copying the letters. After five, we had the building pretty much to ourselves, and a little after half past five, the fire alarm sounded. The City Hall bell was very distinctly heard, and Thomas—who had finished his work and was waiting to take some papers to the office of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for me—took down a list of the different stations, to ascertain the whereabouts of the fire.

"1—5," he counted, as the strokes fell; "that makes fifteen, and that is," passing his finger slowly down the card, "that is Eastun Po-lice station, cawneh—naw, *on* Bank Street. On Bank Street, seh."

I listened an instant.

"1—5—1," I said, "151; it isn't fifteen."

Another five minutes elapsed, while he searched for "151" I busily writing the while.

"Hit's—w'y, Lawd-a-massy! Mist' Dunkin, hit's fu' de milinte'y."



“Let me see,” said I. “Yes, so it is; but they only want them to go to Cumberland. There’s a strike there, and the strikers are getting troublesome.”

He made no reply, and as the bells ceased ringing soon afterward, I resumed my work, which kept me busy until seven o’clock. I then placed the papers in an envelope, and took up the letters.



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“Be sure you see the Vice-President himself, Thomas,” I said. “You know him, don’t you?”

Receiving no reply, and turning to ascertain the cause of his silence, I saw he was leaning out at the open window, gazing earnestly northward toward Baltimore Street.

“Thomas! Thomas!” I shouted.

He heard me at last, and withdrawing his head, apologized for his inattention.

“I thought—I heehed sup’n nutha like a hollehin’ kine of a noise, an’—some guns, aw sup’n, an’ I wuz look’n’ to see, but thaih don’t ‘peah to be nuthin’ goin’ on.”

“They’re mending the railroad on Baltimore Street,” I said. “I suppose that is what you heard.” And I gave the papers into his hand repeating my directions: “If the gentleman is not there, don’t leave them on any account. I’ll wait here until you get back—but go first to the post-office and mail these.”

He wrapped the papers carefully in his handkerchief, placed them in his vest-pocket, and started off.

After he left, I leaned my elbow on the dusty window-sill and lounged there awhile, watching him as he trotted busily down the deserted street; then, rousing myself, I stretched my weary limbs and set about arranging my desk, closing the safe, *etc.* At last everything was put in order, and I seated myself in an arm-chair, rubbing my cramped fingers and wrist, and afterward consulting my watch, more for something to do than to ascertain the time, which the clock on the mantel-piece would have told me.

Only quarter past seven, and he might be detained until, half-past eight. I leaned back and closed my eyes. How still and hot it was! I believe I was the only human being in that whole long block of big buildings on that July evening. Everything was as quiet as the typical country churchyard. I had a lethargic sense now and then of the far-off tinkle of a car-bell. I could catch a distant rumble from a passing vehicle a block or two away. And, yes, I *did* observe the presence of a dull, continuous drone, which proceeded from the direction of Baltimore Street, but just as I sat up to hearken, some one passing whistled, “Silver Threads among the Gold,” the melody tracing itself upon the stillness like phosphoric letters in a dark room. I listened with vivid interest, but the tune presently grew fainter, faded, and was dissolved into the dusk, leaving me lonelier than before, and too sleepy to give my attention to the strange hum, of which I again became dully conscious. It is tiresome work waiting here with nothing to do, was my last drowsy thought, as I folded my arms on the desk, and rested my head upon them, to be aroused by a knocking at my door.

“Come in,” I called.



The door creaked on its hinges, and somebody entered. I waited an instant, when an adolescent voice of the colored persuasion asked:

“Do somebody name Mist’ Dunkin live here?”

“Yes. I’m here; what do you want?”



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“Dey wan’s you down-y street.”

I stretched myself, reached mechanically for a match, and lighted the gas, which disclosed a small yellow boy, standing in the doorway, some fright and a good deal of excitement in his aspect. I then detected that he had something important to tell, and that his errand was a source of gratification to him.

“Well, what is it?” I asked, after we had stared at one another.

“Ain’t yer yeared nuth’n’ ’tall?” a shade of contempt in his tone.

“No, what is there to hear?” I asked, rather irascibly.

“Dey’s a big fight down-town; de folks dey done tore de Six Reggimen’ all ter pieces, an’ dey’s wuk’n’ ’long on de Fif now.”

“Whereabouts?”

I started up, and got on my hat in an instant.

“Dey’s et Camd’ Street depot, now. Ole colored gentlemun he’s been hurtid, an’ sent me atter you.”

It did not take half a minute to lock the door and we proceeded down-stairs together.

“He’s down yere on Eutaw Street,” continued my informant. “Dey’s fightin’ all ’long dere—I come nigh gittin’ hit myself—he gimme ten cents to come tell yer—maybe he’s done dade now,” he added, cheerfully, as we gained the street, and began to walk.

“Dey fet all ’long yere,” was his next breathless remark, made some time later. We were now proceeding rapidly up Baltimore Street, as rapidly, at least, as people can who are pushing against a steady stream of agitated humanity. “Dey fawr’d a bullet clean through de Sun-paper room,” pursued the boy, “an’ dey bust up dem dere winder-glassis—”

Pausing involuntarily to look, I caught stray scraps of additional information.

“Twenty-five people killed.”

“As many as that?”

“Oh, yes; fully, I should say. The Sixth fired right into the crowd, all along from Gay to Eutaw Street.”

“Well, I hear the Sixth are pretty well cleaned out by this time, so it’s tit for tat.”



Then—

“The Fifth must be there now—”

“The Fifth?—what are they—two hundred men against two thousand?—Lord knows how it will end. I hope this old town won’t be burnt, that’s all.” The boy, listening, turned fearfully around, looking with distended eyes into mine. “Come on,” I responded, and we spoke no more until we reached Liberty Street. Then, all at once, above the street noises—the rumbling of fugitive vehicles, the jingle of street-cars, and the hum of excited voices—rose a deep, hollow roar; a horrible sound of human menace in it, which was distinguishable even at that distance. The boy pressed closer, clutching timidly at my hand.

“Is yer—is yer gwine ter keep on?” he faltered.

“De ole gentlemun, he ’lowed puticler you wa’n’t to run no resk ’count o’ him.”

“Where *is* he?” I asked. “In the thick of it?”

“No, sir; he’s lay’n’ down in a little alley—clean off d’ street.”

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“Come on, then; you’ll have to show me where it is. I won’t let you get hurt.”

When we first wheeled into South Eutaw Street, I was conscious of an almost painful stillness, more noticeable after the tumult of confused sounds from which we had just emerged. The houses either side were fast closed, doors and windows. Some of them were even unlighted, and not a vehicle was in sight. The street was partially unpaved, where new gas-pipes had been laid, and piles of paving-stones were heaped on the edge of the sidewalks. The place seemed deserted.

But presently, far down in the immediate vicinity of the depot, I perceived accumulated a dense, dark mass, like a low-hanging cloud, from which a low hoarse murmur seemed to proceed. It swayed slightly from side to side, with the inevitable motion of a large crowd, while at the same time it kept well within certain bounds. We walked quickly along, block after block, without encountering a single soul. I had been so engrossed with the dark, muttering pulsation in front, that I failed to attend to the sounds from behind, until the boy, jerking my hand, bade me listen to the drum. I heard it then plainly, as soon as he spoke, and the approaching tramp of disciplined feet was soon after distinctly audible. I turned and looked. The Fifth Regiment was marching down the middle of North Eutaw Street, having not yet crossed Baltimore Street, the drum corps in front, the colors flying, and crowding the sidewalks on either hand was a motley van and bodyguard, consisting of street loafers and half-grown boys, who had come along to see the “fun,” and whose sympathies were plainly with the rioters. The foremost of these soon reached the spot where I stood, and as I drew aside to let them pass, I heard a *gamin* say to his neighbor:

“I say, Bill, these yere putty little soldier-boys hadn’t better make ther las’ will an’ testyment—ain’t it?”

“I dunno ’bout that,” replied the other, a veteran of fourteen, who was chewing tobacco, and whom I recognized as a certain one-eyed newsboy.

“These yere men hez fought in the late war, yer see, plenty of ‘um, an’ you bet they don’t carry no bokays on *ther* bayonits.”

As the column advanced, I glanced anxiously toward the human sea down yonder. At first, no additional movement could be detected, then, as the drums approached nearer, a quick stir, like a sudden gust, struck its troubled waters; the hoarse, horrible cry tore raggedly through the summer air. And then I hastily drew the terrified child with me into the shade of a receding doorway—for the mad flood came raving over its bounds toward us.

The mob was mostly composed of men in their working-clothes, with bare arms and gaunt, haggard faces. There were some women among them—wretched, half-starved creatures—who kept shrieking like furies all the time. As the regiment, still moving

resolutely onward, approached within a few yards of them, there fell the first volley of stones, accompanied with hoots and jeers of derision.



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"Thuz only two hundred of 'um, boys," shouted a rough voice. "They'll run quick enough if you give it to 'um good," and a second shower of missiles fell into the ranks, the mob arming themselves with the paving-stones at hand.

But the little band of soldiers did not once falter, although here and there in their ranks you could discover a man leaning against a comrade, who gave him support as they moved on together. The crowd seemed a little dashed. The dispersion of the Sixth Regiment had been such a mere bagatelle, and their own number had, since then, been re-enforced by half the professional rowdies in town. They redoubled their cries, which, from jeers, now became shouts of rage and mortification.

"Wot are you 'bout? Give it to 'um *good*, I tell yer. They daresn't fire," howled the same brawny giant who had spoken before.

As they continued the attack, a pistol-shot could be heard now and then from the crowd. The regiment did not return the fire, but as the mob pressed closer, an order from the front was passed along the line.

"Fix bayonets."

The opposing parties were now only a few feet apart, and a rain of stones was falling so thick and fast as to darken the air, when all at once I saw the colonel's sword flash out, the blunt edge striking one of the rioters who was pressing on him.

"Clear the way, there!" he cried.

Then, wheeling and facing his command, his voice rang out, clear as a bugle;

"A—r—m—s, 'port! Double-time, march! Ch—ar—ge, bayonets! Hurrah! Give 'em a yell, boys, and you can do it," added the colonel.

I cannot describe the shout which followed—a clear, ringing, organized whoop; fresh and vibrant; of a perfectly distinct quality from the hoarse, undisciplined howl of the mob—sounding cool and terrible, like the cry of an avenging angel.

The mob turned and fled, appalled, melting away like wax before the blue flame of the glittering bayonets, and the regiment entered the depot.

Then I took time to breathe, and remembered Thomas.

"He ain't fur f'om yere," said the boy. "Right 'roun' d' corner."

And we passed out of the shelter of the doorway to a small, dirty alley, about twenty-five yards distant, where I found the old man resting against a lamp-post, the blood streaming down his face from a ghastly wound in the head, and his eyes closed. I



made the boy get some water, and after bathing his face for a few moments, I succeeded in rousing him.

“Is that you, Mist’ Dunkin?” he asked, faintly.

“Yes. How do you feel, Thomas?”

“Dey’s tuhibul times down-street,” he gasped. “I like to got kilt.”

A pause.

“Dey ’lowed dey wanted dem daih papehs—an’—dey didn’t git ‘um—an’—den—den dey hit me side de hade—with a brickbat—an’ I come ‘long tell I git yeah—an’ den, disha boy he come ‘long—”



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His voice was very faint and his hands very cold

“Don’t talk any more now,” I said, chafing them in mine, while I wondered perplexedly how I should get him home. Presently he spoke again:

“But de papehs is all right, seh. I hilt on to ‘um, sho’. Dey—dey couldn’t git ‘um nohow, wid all de smahtniss,” he said, with feeble triumph. “Dey’s right yeah in my wescut pocket.” Then he added, with a sudden change of tone: “But I’d like to go home, Mist’ Dunkin; Ailse’ll be oneasy ‘bout me.”

I had to leave him with the boy while I went for a doctor and a vehicle, neither of which was easy to be had, but finally a milk-wagon was pressed into service, and although the mob had gathered together again, and were besieging the depot, yet, after some delay, we succeeded in conveying him to his home. I saw him safe in bed, his hurt dressed; then, after bestowing a reward upon the colored boy, who had rendered me such efficient service, I left him in charge of the doctor and his wife.

The latter was a small, plump yellow woman, with large, gentle black eyes, and the soft voice so often found among Virginia “house” servants. After watching her as she assisted the surgeon to dress the wound, I came to the conclusion all of her talents were by no means “bound up in napkins,” and I went home assured my faithful old messenger was left in very capable hands.

Next morning, directly after breakfast, I sallied forth to inquire concerning his condition. After passing along the crowded thoroughfares, where everybody was occupied with the riot, it was a relief to find myself turning into the obscure little street where he lived.

“Here, at least, everything seems peaceful enough,” I said, aloud, as I approached the house. I was just in the act of placing my foot on the one door-step, when the door was thrown violently open, and a tall black woman bounced out, colliding with me as she passed, her superior momentum thrusting me backward across the narrow pavement into the street. She was too excited to heed my exclamation of astonishment. I don’t think she saw me, even, for she turned immediately and faced some one standing in the doorway, whom I now perceived to be Ailse, looking dreadfully frightened.

“*Good-mornin’, Mis’ Wheatley,*” said the Amazon, with withering sarcasm; “*good-mornin’, madam. I think you’ll know it the nex’ time I darkens your doors, I think you will. Served me right, though, we’en I demeaned myself to come; I might ‘a’ knowed what treatment I’d ‘eceive from you. Ef I hadn’t ben boun’ by solemn class-rules to pay some ‘tention to Brother Wheatley’s immortal soul*”—these words were uttered at the very top of her voice—“*you wouldn’t ‘a’ caught me comin’; but I’ll never come ag’in, never; so make yourself easy, Mis’ Wheatley.*”



A shade of relief passed over Ailse's features as this assurance was repeated, and I coming forward at this moment, the representative of the church militant betook herself off, while I entered and spoke to Ailse, who, fairly dazed, sank into a chair, and stared me helplessly in the face. There was a moment's silence, when she suddenly rose and offered me a seat, remarking, as she did so, that "Sisteh Ma'y Ann Jenkins ca'in' on so" made her forget her manners.



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“What is the matter?” said I.

“I dunno, seh, ‘cep’n’ she’s mad ‘cause docteh won’t leave heh stay and talk to Mist’ Wheatley; *he* made heh go, an’ I s’pose hit kindeh put heh out.”

“What was she doing?”

“Talkin’, seh; jiss talkin’ and prayin’.”

“And exciting the man into a fever,” said the doctor, entering at that moment. “I came here half an hour ago,” he continued, turning to me, “and found this woman—who really is a good nurse—turned out of her husband’s room by that termagant who has just gone, and whom I found in the act of preparing the man for death, *she* having decided his hours on earth were numbered; in fact, I actually chanced in upon a species of commendatory prayer, which, if continued another half hour—and I have every reason to think it would have been—would almost inevitably have ended the man’s life.”

“I suppose I had better not see him this morning, then,” said I.

“Oh, yes; *you* can see him; he’s doing well now, and if he doesn’t talk too much, I think the sight of a cheerful face will do him good,” and I left him giving some directions to Ailse, while I proceeded up-stairs to the room where Thomas lay. He was awake, so I walked up to his bedside, and asked him how he felt.

“I’m tollubul, thankee, seh; de medicine makes me kind o’ sleepy, that’s all.”

I seated myself beside him, there was a moment or two of silence, then he asked, fretfully:

“Whai—whaih’s Ailse? I like to see the ‘oman ‘roun’; s’haint got no speshul great gif’, but she’s kind o’ handy wen a body’s sick.”

“You don’t seem to care so much for gifted women in a sick-room, Thomas?” I remarked, somewhat mischievously, after I had summoned his wife from down-stairs.

“Well, naw, seh,” a little shamefacedly. “Not so much. You see, seh, dey—dey’s mos’ too much fu’ a body, sich times. Dey *will* talk, you’se dey will, an’ ‘livah ‘scouhcis, an’ a sick man he hain’t got de strenth to—to supplicate in kine, an’ hit kind o’ mawtifies him, seh.”

Once more there followed a silence, when I asked:

“Thomas, why didn’t you give up those papers to the mob, when they attacked you last night? Your retaining them might have cost you your life. I didn’t mean you to endanger your life for them.”



He smiled slightly, as his glance met mine.

“I dunno, seh,” he replied, with his old reflective air. “You tole me mos’ pehticaleh to hole on to ‘um, an’ ‘twouldn’t be doin’ my duty faithful to let ‘um go ’s long ez I could hole on to ‘um.”

“But suppose they had killed you?”

“Well, Mist’ Dunkin, ef dey had, I hope I’d been ready to go. I ben tryin’ to lead a godly an’ Chris’chun life, ez Scripcheh sez, fu’ fawty yeahs, now, an’ I hope I’d a foun’ dyin’ grace at de las’. You see, seh, thing hoped me mos’ was de thoughts of a tex’ Bro’ Moss preached on las’ Sund’y; ‘peached like hit hep’ on jinglin’ in my hade all time dey was jawin’ an’ fightin’ with me.”



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“What text was it?” I asked.

But he was almost asleep, and his wife signalled me not to wake him. So I was stealing away toward the door, when he opened his eyes and murmured, drowsily:

“De tex’, oh yes, seh. I fo’got—’twas a Scripcheh tex’—’Be thou faithful unto—”

He then turned over, settling himself comfortably in his pillows, and in a moment dropped asleep.

In due course of time, he made his appearance in the office again, being anxious to “resume his duties,” he said. But that blow on the head has proved to be a serious affair, affecting the old man’s memory permanently, and giving a violent shock to his system, from which it will never entirely recover. He is no longer the clear-headed messenger he was, when he was wont to assert—no idle boast either—that he could “fetch an’ cai’ eq’il to any man.” Now and then, in these latter days, he confuses things a little, always suffering the keenest mortification when he discovers his mistakes. As I said in the beginning, he is still our office-boy and messenger, although a smart young mulatto is hired to come betimes, make things tidy, and leave before the old man gets down, so his feelings mayn’t be hurt. He sometimes remarks on our being the “cleanis’ gentlemun in de wueld,” but we contrive that no whisper of the real state of the case ever reaches his ear, and he is allowed to sweep and dust a little to satisfy his mind.

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: A virtuous woman.]

### THE HEARTBREAK CAMEO.

By LIZZIE W. CHAMPNEY.

“It is a cameo to break one’s heart!” said Mrs. Dalliba, as she toyed with the superb jewel. “The cutting is unmistakably Florentine, and yet you have placed it among your Indian curiosities. I do not understand it at all.”

Mrs. Dalliba was a connoisseur in gems; she had travelled from one extremity of Europe to the other; had studied the crown jewels of nearly every civilized nation, haunted museums, and was such a frequent visitor at the jewellers’ of the Palais Royal, that many of them had come to regard her as an individual who might harbor burglarious intentions. She was a very harmless specialist, however, who, though she loved these stars of the underworld better than any human being, could never have been tempted to make one of them unfairly her own, and she seldom purchased, for she never coveted one unless it was something quite extraordinary, beyond the reach of even her



considerable fortune. Meanwhile few of the larger jewelry houses had in their employ lapidaries more skilled than Mrs. Dalliba. She pursued her studies for the mere love of the science, devoting a year in Italy to mosaics, cameos, and intaglios. And yet the Crevecoeur cameo had puzzled wiser heads than Mrs. Dalliba's, adept though she was. It was cut from a solid heart-shaped gem, a layer of pure

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white, shading down through exquisite gradations into deep green, and representing Aphrodite rising from the sea; the white foam rose gracefully, with arms extended, scattering the drops of spray from her hands and her wind-blown hair; the foamy waves were beautifully cut with their intense hollows and snowy crests; it was evidently the work of a cultivated as well as a natural artist; it was not surprising that Mrs. Dalliba should insist that it could not have been executed out of Italy.

But Prof. Stonehenge was right too; it was a stone of the chalcedonic family, resembling sardonyx, except in color; others, similar to it both in a natural state and wrought into arrow-heads, had been found along the shores of Lake Superior. This seemed to have been brought away from its associates by some wandering tribe, for it had been discovered in Central Illinois. The nearest point at which other relics belonging to the same period had been found was the site of Fort Crevecoeur, near Starved Rock, Illinois. After all, the stone only differed from the arrow-heads of Lake Superior in its beautiful carving and unprecedented size—and, ah, yes! there was another difference, the mystery of its discovery. No other skeleton among all the buried braves unearthed by scientific research at Crevecoeur had been found with a gem for a heart—a gem that glittered not on the breast, but within a chest hooped with human bone. Mrs. Dalliba had just remarked that she had never felt so strong a desire to possess and wear any jewel as now; but when Prof. Stonehenge told how the uncanny thing rattled within the white ribs of the skeleton in which it was found, she allowed the gem to slip from her hand, while something of its own pale green flickered in the disgusted expression which quivered about the corners of her mobile mouth. The cameo was a mystery which had baffled geologist, antiquarian, and sculptor alike, for Father Francis Xavier had gone down to his grave with his secret and his cameo hidden in his heart. He had kept both well for two centuries, and when the heart crumbled in dust it took its secret with it, leaving only the cameo to bewilder conjecture.

Its story was, after all, a simple one. On the southern shore of Michillimackinac, in the romantic days of the first exploration of the great lakes by the *Coureurs de Bois* and pioneer priests, had settled good Pere Ignace, a devoted Jesuit missionary. The old man was revered and loved by the Indians among whom he dwelt. His labors blossomed in a little village, called from his patron saint the mission of St. Ignace, that displayed its cluster of white huts and wigwams like the petals of a water-lily on the margin of the lake. Just back of the village was a round knoll which served as a landmark on the lake, for the shore near St. Ignace was remarkably level. On the summit of this mound the good father had reared a great white cross, and at its foot the superstitious Indians often laid votive offerings of strongly incongruous

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character. Here he had lived and taught for many years, succeeding in instructing his little flock in the French tongue, and in at least an outward semblance of the Catholic religion. Even the rude trappers, who came to trade at regular intervals, revered him, and lived like good Christians while at the mission, so as not to counteract his teaching by their lawless example. Here Pere Ignace was growing old, and even this grasshopper of a spiritual charge was becoming a burden. His superior, at Montreal, understood this, and sent him an assistant.

Very unlike Father Ignatius was Pere Francois Xavier, a man with all the fire and enthusiasm of youth in his blood—just the one for daring, hazardous enterprises; just the one to undergo all the privation and toil of planting a mission; to undertake plans requiring superhuman efforts, and to carry them through successfully by main force of will. A better assistant for Father Ignatius could not have been found. It was force, will, and intellect in the service of love and meekness; only there was a doubt if the servant might not usurp the place of the master, and the sway of love be not materially advanced by its new ally. Indeed, if the truth had been known, even the Bishop of Montreal had felt that Father Francis Xavier was too ambitious a character to reside safely in too close proximity to himself; and engrossing employment at a distance for him, rather than the expressed solicitude for Father Ignatius, prompted this appointment. The results of the following year approved the arrangement. The mission received a new accession of life; its interests were pushed forward energetically.

Father Francis Xavier devoted himself to an acquisition of the various Indian dialects, and to excursions among the neighboring tribes. Converts were made in astonishing numbers, and they brought liberal gifts to the little church from their simple possessions. Father Ignatius had never thought to barter with the trappers and traders, but his colleague did; large church warehouses were erected, and the mission soon had revenues of importance. Away in the interior Father Xavier had discovered there was a silver mine; but this discovery, for the present, he made no attempt at exploiting. He had secured it to the church by title deed and treaty with the chief who claimed it; had visited it and assured himself that it would some day be very valuable, and he contented himself with this for the present, and even managed to forget its acquisition in his yearly report sent to Montreal. Father Francis Xavier was something of a geologist; his father was a Florentine jeweller, and the son had studied as his apprentice, not having at first been destined for the church. Even after taking holy orders, Father Francis Xavier had labored over precious stones designed for ecclesiastical decoration. His specialty had been that of a gem engraver, and his long white fingers were remarkably skilful and delicate. This northern region, with all its wealth of precious stones, was a great jewel casket for him, and he became at once an enthusiastic collector.



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Before the coming of his assistant, Father Ignatius had managed his own simple housekeeping in all its most humble details. Now they had the services of an Indian maid of all work, who had been brought up under the eyes of Father Ignatius, and whom the old man regarded rather as a daughter than as a servant. Her moccasined feet fell as silently as those of spirits as she glided about their lodge. She never sang at her work, and rarely spoke, but she smiled often with a smile so childlike as to be almost silly in expression. Father Ignatius loved the silent smile, and a word from him was always sure to bring it; but it angered Father Francis Xavier more than many a more repulsive thing would have done. It seemed so utterly imbecile and babyish to him, he had got so far away from innocence and smiles and childhood himself, that the sight of them irritated him. The young Indian girl had a long and almost unpronounceable name. Pere Ignace had baptized her Marie, and the new name had gradually taken the place of the old.

One day, as she was silently but dexterously putting to order the large upper room, which served Pere Francis Xavier as study and dormitory, she paused before his collection of agates and minerals, and stroking the stones, said in her soft French and Indian patois, "Pretty, pretty." Father Xavier was seated at the great open window, looking over the top of his book away across the breezy lake. He heard the words, and knew that she was looking at him from the corner of her eye, but his only reply was a deeper scowl and a lowering of his glance to the printed page. The silly smile which he felt sure was upon her face faded out, but the girl spoke again, and this time more resolutely, determined to attract his attention. "Pretty stones. Marie's father many more, much prettier—much."

Father Xavier laid down his book. He was all attention. "Where did your father get them?" he asked.

"In the mountains climb, in the mines dig, in the lake dive, he seek them all the time summer."

"What does he do with them?"

"Cuts them like *mon pere*," and Marie imitated in pantomime the use of the hammer and chisel. "Cut them all time winter, very many."

"What does he do that for?" asked the priest, surprised.

"All the same you," replied the girl—"make arrow-heads."

"Oh! he makes arrow-heads, does he? Mine are not arrow-heads, but I should like to see what your father does. Does he live far from here?"

"Marie take you to-night in canoe."

“Very well, after supper.”

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She had often taken him out upon the lake before, for she managed their birch-bark canoe with more skill than himself, and it was convenient to have some one to paddle while he fished or read or dreamed. She rowed him swiftly up the lake for several miles, then, fastening the canoe, led the way through a trail in the forest. The sun was setting, and “the whispering pines and the hemlocks” of the forest primeval formed a tapestry of gloom around the paternal wigwam as they reached it. Black Beaver, her father, reclined lazily in the door, watching the coals of the little fire in front of his tent. He was always lazy. It was difficult to believe that he ever climbed or dug or dived for agates as Marie had said, so complete a picture he seemed of inaction. The girl spoke a few words to him in their native dialect, and he grumblingly rose, shuffled into the interior of the wigwam, and brought out two baskets. One was a shallow tray filled with the finished heads in great variety of material and color. There were white carnelian, delicately striped with prophetic red, blood-stone deep colored and hard as ruby, agates of every shade and marking, flinty jasper, emerald-banded malachite, delicate rose color, and purple one made from shells, and various crystals with whose names Father Francis Xavier was unfamiliar. There was one shading from dark green through to red, only a drop of the latter color on the very tip of the arrow where blood would first kiss blood. Father Xavier looked at it in wondering admiration, and at last asked Black Beaver what he called it.

“It is a devil-stone,” replied the Indian. “More here,” and he opened the deeper basket in which were stored the unground and uncut stones, and placed a superb gem in Father Xavier’s hand. He had ground it sufficiently to show that it was in two layers, white and green; in this there was no touch of red, but in every other respect it was the handsomer stone.

“Will you sell it to me?” asked the priest. “How much?”

The Indian smiled with an expression strangely like that of his daughter, and put it back with alacrity in his basket, saying, “Me no sell big devil-stone. No money buy.”

“What do you mean to do with it?” asked Father Xavier.

“Make arrow-head—very hungry—no blood;” and he indicated the absence of the red tint. “Very hungry—kill very much—never have enough!”

“Then you mean to keep it and use it yourself?”

“No,” said the other. “Me no hunt game—hunt stones.”

“What will you do with it?” asked the puzzled priest.

“Give it away,” said Black Beaver—“give away to greatest—”

“Chief?” asked Father Xavier.



Black Beaver shook his head.

“Friend then?”

“No,” grunted the arrow-head maker—“give away to big *enemy!*”

“What did he mean by that?” Father Xavier asked of Marie on their way back to the mission. And the girl explained the superstition that Indians of their own tribe never killed an enemy with ordinary weapons, for fear that his soul would wait for theirs in the Happy Hunting Grounds; but if he was shot with a devil-stone, the soul could not fly upward, but would sink through all eternity, until it reached the deepest spot of all the great lakes under the stony gaze of the Doom Woman.



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When he inquired further as to the whereabouts of the Doom Woman's residence he ascertained that she was only a sharp cliff among "the pictured rocks of sandstone" of the upper lake—a cliff that viewed from either side maintained its resemblance to a female profile looking sternly down at the water beneath it, which was here believed to be unfathomable. The Doom Woman still exists. Strange to say, under its sharp-cut features a steamer has since been wrecked and sunk, and its expression of gloomy fate is now awfully appropriate. Marie had visited "the great Sea Water" with her father. Nature's titanic and fanciful frescoing and cameo-cutting had strongly wrought upon her impressionable mind, and the old legends and superstitions of paganism had been by no means effaced by the very slight veneer of Christianity which she had received at the mission.

From this evening Father Xavier's manner toward her changed. Her smile no longer seemed to irritate him, and a close observer might have noticed that she smiled less than formerly. He talked with her more, paid closer attention to her studies, made her little presents from time to time, and spoke to her always with studied gentleness that was quite foreign to his nature. And Marie watched him at work over his stones, spent her spare time in rambling in search of those which she had learned he liked, and laid upon his table without remark each new discovery of quartz, or crystal, or pebble. She had been in the habit of making little boxes which she decorated with a rude mosaic of small shells, and Father Xavier noticed that these gradually acquired more taste and were arranged with some eye to the harmonies of color, while the forms were copied with Chinese accuracy from patterns on the bindings of his books or the borders of the religious pictures. Marie was developing under an art education which, if carried far enough, might effect great things. She even managed his graving tools with a good deal of accuracy, copying designs which he set her, until he wondered what his father would have thought of so apt an apprentice.

Suddenly, one morning in midsummer, Marie announced that she should leave them. Her father was going on a long expedition for stones to the head of Lake Superior, and she did not know when she might return. As she imparted this information she watched Father Xavier from the corner of her eye, and something of the old childish smile reappeared as he showed that he was really annoyed.

The summer passed profitably for the Black Beaver, and he began to think of returning to St. Ignace with his small store of valuable stones before the fall gales should set in. He was just a few days too late. When within sight of Michillimackinac a storm arose driving them out upon the open lake, and playing with their canoe as though it were a cockle-shell. When the storm abated a cloudy night had set in; no land was visible in any direction; they had completely

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lost their direction, and knew not toward which point to seek the shore. Paddling at hazard might take them further out into the centre of the lake, and indeed they were too worn with battling with the storm to do any more than keep the tossed skiff from capsizing. Morning dawned wet and gray, after a miserable night; they were drenched to the skin, and almost spent with weariness and hunger, and now that a wan and ghostly daylight had come they were no better for it, for an impenetrable fog shut them in on every side. Marie and her mother began to pray. The Black Beaver sat dogged and inert, with upturned face, regarding the sky.

The day wore by wearily; some of the time they paddled straight onward, with sinking hearts, knowing not toward what they were going, and at others rested with the inaction of despair. When the position of the bright spot which meant the sun told that it lacked but an hour of sunset, and the clouds seemed to be thickening rather than dispersing, the Black Beaver gave a long and hideous howl. His wife and daughter shuddered when they heard it, as would any one, for a more unearthly and discordant cry was never uttered by man or beast; but they had double reason to shudder; it was the death cry of their nation.

“We can never live through another night,” said he, and he covered his face with his arms.

“Father,” said Marie, “try what power there is in the white man’s God. Say that you will give Him your devil-stone if He will save us now.”

“The priest may have it,” said the Black Beaver, and he uncovered his face and sat up as though expecting a miracle. And the miracle came. The sun was setting behind them, and in front, somewhat above the horizon, the clouds parted, forming a circle about a white cross which hung suspended in the air. They all saw it distinctly, but only for a few moments; then the clouds closed and the vision vanished. With new hope the little party rowed toward the spot where they had last seen it, and through the fog they could dimly discern the outlines of the coast—they were nearing land. A little further on, and a village was visible, which gained a more and more familiar aspect as they approached. Night settled down before they reached it, but ere their feet touched the land they had recognized the mission of St. Ignace. The cross was not a vision. The clouds had parted to show them the great white landmark and sign which Father Ignatius had raised upon the little knoll.

The next day the Black Beaver unearthed his devil-stone, and fastening a silver chain to it, was about to carry it away and attach it to the cross, which was already loaded with the gifts of the little colony; but Marie took it from his hand. “I will give it to the good priest myself,” she said. “He may see fit to place it on the image of the Virgin in the church.”

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A few days later Marie placed the coveted stone in Father Xavier's hand; but what was his bitter disappointment to find that she had marred the exquisite thing by a rude attempt at a delineation upon it of the vision of the cross. She had carefully chiselled away the milky white layer, excepting on the crests of some very primitive representations of waves, and within the awkwardly plain cross in the centre of the gem. All his hopes of cutting a face upon this lovely jewel were crushed; it was ruined by her unskilful work. Father Xavier was completely master of his own emotions. He took the stone without remark, and hung it, as Marie requested, about the neck of the Madonna. Each day as he said mass the sight of the mutilated jewel roused within him resentful feelings against poor, well-wishing little Marie. He had been very kind to her since he had first seen the stone in the possession of her father, but now it was worse than before. He avoided her markedly, for the smile which so annoyed him still lighted her face whenever she saw him, and there was in it a reproachful sadness which was even more aggravating than its simple childishness had been.

One day Father Xavier, in turning over his papers, came across an old etching of Venus rising from the sea. The figure, with its outstretched arms, suggested a possibility to him. He made a careful tracing of it, took it to the church, and laid it upon the stone. All of its outlines came within the white cross; there was still hope for the cameo. All that winter Father Xavier toiled upon it, exhausting his utmost skill, but never exhausting his patience. His chief trial was in the extreme hardness of the stone, which rapidly wore out his graving tools. At last it was finished, and Father Xavier confessed to himself, in all humility, that he had not only never executed so delicate a piece of workmanship, but he had never seen its equal. Every curve of the exquisite-hued waves was studied from the swell that sometimes swept grandly in from the lake on the long reef of rocks a few miles above St. Ignace. The form of the goddess was modelled from his remembrance of the Greek antique. It was a gem worthy of an emperor. What should he do with it?

As the spring ripened into summer, ambitious thoughts flowered in Pere Francis Xavier's soul. What a grand bishopric this whole western country would make with its unexplored wealth of mines, and furs, and forest! Why should he be obliged to make reports of the revenue which his own financiering had secured to the mission, to the head at Montreal? Why should not his reverence the Lord Bishop Francis Xavier dwell in an episcopal palace built somewhere on these lakes, with unlimited spiritual and temporal sway over all this country? To effect such a scheme it would be necessary for him to see both the King of France and the Pope. He was not sure that even if he could return to Europe immediately, he had the influence necessary in either quarter, but



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the cameo was a step in the right direction. Something of the same thought occurred at the same time to the Bishop of Montreal. Father Xavier's reports showed the mission to be in a flourishing condition. The first struggles of the pioneer were over. Father Xavier must not be left in too luxurious a position. The Chevalier La Salle was now fitting out his little band designed to explore the lakes and follow the Mississippi from its source to the Gulf. A most important expedition; it would be well that the Jesuit fathers should share in the honors if it proved successful, and if the little party perished in its hazardous enterprise Pere Francis Xavier could perhaps be spared as easily as any member of his spiritual army.

And so, in the summer of 1679, the Chevalier sailed up the Lac du Dauphin, as Lake Erie was then called, into the Lac d'Orleans, or Huron, carrying letters in which Pere Francis Xavier was ordered to leave his charge for a time in order to render all the assistance in his power to the explorers. The Bishop of Montreal could never have guessed with what heartfelt joy his command was obeyed. Father Xavier was tired of this peaceful life, tired of "the endless wash of melancholy waves," of the short cool summers, and long white blank of winter; tired of inaction, of the lack of stimulating surroundings, of the gentleness of Father Ignatius and Marie's haunting smile. Here, too, might be the very occasion he craved of making himself famous and deserving of reward as an explorer. It was true that he started as a subordinate, but that was no reason that he should return in the same capacity. Marie had served the noble guests with pleasant alacrity, passing the rainbow-tinted trout caught as well as broiled by her own hand, and the luscious huckleberries in tasteful baskets of her own braiding, and Tontz Main de Fer, the chivalric companion and friend of La Salle, was moved like Geraint, served by Enid, "to stoop and kiss the dainty little thumb that crossed the trencher." The salutation was received with unconscious dignity by little Marie; once only was Pere Francois Xavier annoyed by the absence of a display of childish pleasure in an ever-ready smile.

History tells how trial and privation of every kind waited on this little band of heroic men; how hunger, and cold, and fever dogged their steps; how the Indians proved treacherous and hostile; how, having reached central Illinois, after incredible exertion, they found themselves in the dead of winter unable to proceed further, and surrounded by tribes incited against them by some unknown enemy. A fatality seemed to hang over them; suspicious occurrences indicated that they had a traitor among their number, but he was never discovered. La Salle did not despair or abandon the enterprise; but when six of his most trusted men mutinied and deserted, he lost hope, and became seized with a presentiment that he would never return from his expedition. Father Xavier was



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his confidant as well as confessor, but he seems not to have been able to disperse the gloom which settled over the leader's mind. Perhaps he did not endeavor to do so. Hopeless but still true to his trust, La Salle constructed near Peoria a fort which he named Crevecoeur, in token of his despondency and disappointment. Leaving Tontz Main de Fer in command here with the greater part of his men, he set out with five for Frontenac, on the 2d of March, 1680, intending to return with supplies to take command again of his party, and to proceed southward. It was at this point that the most inexplicable event of the entire enterprise occurred. Before the party divided *some one* attempted to poison the Chevalier La Salle. The poison was a subtle and slow one, similar in its effects to those used by the Borgia family; the secret of its manufacture was thought to be unknown out of Italy. Fortunately he had taken an under or overdose of it, and the effects manifested themselves only in a long illness. He was too far on his journey from Fort Heartbreak when stricken down to return to it, and was mercifully received and nursed back to health by the friendly Pottawottamies.

While the leader was lying sick in an Indian lodge, the knightly Tontz, ignorant of the fate of his friend, was having his troubles at the little fort of Heartbreak. Pere Francois Xavier had remained with him, and aided him with counsels and personal exertions; he had made himself so indispensable that he was now lieutenant; if anything should happen to Tontz, he would be commander. He was secretary of the expedition, drew careful maps, and made voluminous daily entries in a journal, which was afterward found to be a marvel of painstaking both in the facts and fictions which it contained. Scanty mention was there of La Salle and Tontz Main de Fer, and much of Pere Francois Xavier, but it was clear, explicit, depicting the advantages of an acquisition of this territory to the crown of France in glowing terms, and strongly advising that the man who had most distinguished himself in the difficulties of its discovery should be appointed as governor, or baron, under the royal authority.

While Father Xavier was compiling this remarkable piece of authorship, the Iroquois descended in warlike array upon the somewhat friendly disposed Illinois Indians, in whose midst Fort Crevecoeur had been built. The suspicious Indian mind immediately connected the advent of their enemies with the building of the fort, and regarded the little garrison with distrust. Tontz, at the instance of Father Xavier, presented himself to their chief, and offered to do anything in his power to prove his friendly intentions. The chief accepted his services, and sent him as ambassador to inquire into the cause of the coming of the Iroquois. This mission had nearly been his last, for Tontz was received with stabs, and hardly allowed to give the message of the chief. His ill-treatment at the hands of their enemies did not reassure the suspicious Illinois, who ordered Tontz to immediately evacuate the fort and return with his forces to the country whence he had come. In his wounded condition such a journey was extremely hazardous, and it must have been with grave doubts as to his surviving it that Father Xavier took temporary command of the returning expedition.



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It was in the spring of 1681. Father Xavier had been absent nearly two years. Father Ignatius missed him sadly—all the life and fire seemed have gone out of the mission. Even Marie moved about her work in a listless, languid way, which contrasted markedly with her once lithe and rapid movements. They had not once heard from the explorers, and Father Ignatius shook his head sadly, and feared that he would never see his energetic colleague again. The Black Beaver had slept through the last months of winter, and, as with the general awakening of spring the bears came out of their dens, and the snakes sunned themselves near their holes, he too stretched himself lazily and awoke to a consciousness of what was passing around him. In the first place something was amiss with Marie. When she came to the wigwam it was not to chat merrily of the affairs of the mission. She did not braid as many baskets as formerly, and no longer showed him new patterns in shell mosaic on the lids of little boxes. He was a curious old man, and he soon drew her secret from her. Marie loved Pere Francois Xavier, and he had gone.

The Black Beaver went down to the mission one evening and had a long talk with Father Ignatius. He ascertained first that Pere Francois Xavier really meant to return; then, with all the dignity of an old feudal baron, he offered Marie as a bride for his spiritual son. Very gently the good Pere Ignace explained that Romish priests were so nearly in the kingdom of heaven that the question of marrying and giving in marriage was not for them to consider. The Black Beaver went home, told no one of his visit, and for several days indulged in the worst drunken spree of which he was capable. When he came out of it he announced to his wife and Marie that he was going away on his annual trip for stores, but that they need not accompany him.

Marie knelt as usual in the little church on the evening of the day on which her father had gone away. Pere Francois Xavier had replaced the cameo on the Virgin's breast before he went; it was a safer place than the vault of a bank would have been, had such a thing existed in the country. There was no one in the island sacrilegious enough to rob the church. Marie had gazed at the stone each time that she repeated the prayer which he had taught her. She looked up now, and it was gone.

Half way upon their northward route, Tontz's band were struggling wearily on when they were met by a solitary Indian, who, though he carried a long bow, had not an unfriendly aspect. He eyed the little band silently as they passed by him in defile, then ran after them, and inquired if the Pere Francois Xavier, of Mission St. Ignace, was not of their number. He was informed that the reverend father had remained a short distance behind to write in his journal, but that he would soon overtake them; and he was warmly pressed to remain with them if he had messages for the priest, and give them to him when he arrived; but



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the Indian shook his head and passed on in the direction in which they told him he would be likely to meet Father Xavier. The party halted and waited hour after hour for the priest, but he did not come. Finally two went back in search, and found him lying upon the sod with upturned face—the place where he had written last in his journal marked by a few drops of his heart's blood, and the long shaft of an arrow protruding from his breast. They drew it out, but the arrow-head had been attached as is the custom in some Indian tribes, by means of a soft wax, which is melted by the warmth of the body, and it remained in the heart. Father Xavier had been dead some hours. They buried him where they found him, and proceeded on their march. Tontz recovered on the way. They reached Michillimackinac in safety, where they were joined two months later by La Salle; and the world knows the result of his second expedition.

Little Marie learned by degrees to smile again, and in after years married another arrow-head maker, as swarthy and as shaggy as the Black Beaver. There is no moral to my story except that of poetic justice. Pere Francois Xavier had sown a plentiful crop of stratagems, and he learned in the lonely forest that "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Meanwhile to all but you, my readers, the Crevecoeur cameo remains as great a mystery as ever.

### MISS EUNICE'S GLOVE

By Albert Webster.

#### I.

For a long time blithe and fragile Miss Eunice, demure, correct in deportment, and yet not wholly without enthusiasm, thought that day the unluckiest in her life on which she first took into her hands that unobtrusive yet dramatic book, "Miss Crofutt's Missionary Labors in the English Prisons."

It came to her notice by mere accident, not by favor of proselyting friends; and such was its singular material, that she at once devoured it with avidity. As its title suggests, it was the history of the ameliorating endeavors of a woman in criminal society, and it contained, perforce, a large amount of tragic and pathetic incident. But this last was so blended and involved with what Miss Eunice would have skipped as commonplace, that she was led to digest the whole volume—statistics, philosophy, comments, and all. She studied the analysis of the atmosphere of cells, the properties and waste of wheaten flour, the cost of clothing to the general government, the whys and wherefores of crime

and evil-doing; and it was not long before there was generated within her bosom a fine and healthy ardor to emulate this practical and courageous pattern.

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She was profoundly moved by the tales of missionary labors proper. She was filled with joy to read that Miss Crofutt and her lieutenants sometimes cracked and broke away the formidable husks which enveloped divine kernels in the hearts of some of the wretches, and she frequently wept at the stories of victories gained over monsters whose defences of silence and stolidity had suddenly fallen into ruin above the slow but persistent sapping of constant kindness. Acute tinglings and chilling thrills would pervade her entire body when she read that on Christmas every wretch seemed to become for that day, at least, a gracious man; that the sight of a few penny tapers, or the possession of a handful of sweet stuff, or a spray of holly, or a hot-house bloom, would appear to convert the worst of them into children. Her heart would swell to learn how they acted during the one poor hour of yearly freedom in the prison-yards; that they swelled their chests; that they ran; that they took long strides; that the singers anxiously tried their voices, now grown husky; that the athletes wrestled only to find their limbs stiff and their arts forgotten; that the gentlest of them lifted their faces to the broad sky and spent the sixty minutes in a dreadful gazing at the clouds.

The pretty student gradually became possessed with a rage. She desired to convert some one, to recover some stray, to reform some wretch.

She regretted that she lived in America, and not in England, where the most perfect rascals were to be found; she was sorry that the gloomy, sin-saturated prisons which were the scenes of Miss Crofutt's labors must always be beyond her ken.

There was no crime in the family or the neighborhood against which she might strive; no one whom she knew was even austere; she had never met a brute; all her rascals were newspaper rascals. For aught she knew, this tranquillity and good-will might go on forever, without affording her an opportunity. She must be denied the smallest contact with these frightful faces and figures, these bars and cages, these deformities of the mind and heart, these curiosities of conscience, shyness, skill, and daring; all these dramas of reclamation, all these scenes of fervent gratitude, thankfulness, and intoxicating liberty—all or any of these things must never come to be the lot of her eyes; and she gave herself up to the most poignant regret.

But one day she was astonished to discover that all of these delights lay within half an hour's journey of her home; and moreover, that there was approaching an hour which was annually set apart for the indulgence of the inmates of the prison in question. She did not stop to ask herself, as she might well have done, how it was that she had so completely ignored this particular institution, which was one of the largest and best conducted in the country, especially when her desire to visit one was so keen; but she straightway set about preparing for her intended visit in a manner which she fancied Miss Crofutt would have approved, had she been present.



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She resolved, in the most radical sense of the word, to be alive. She jotted on some ivory tablets, with a gold pencil, a number of hints to assist her in her observations. For example: "Phrenological development; size of cells; ounces of solid and liquid; tissue-producing food; were mirrors allowed? if so, what was the effect? jimmy and skeleton-key, character of; canary birds: query, would not their admission into every cell animate in the human prisoners a similar buoyancy? to urge upon the turnkeys the use of the Spanish garrote in place of the present distressing gallows; to find the proportion of Orthodox and Unitarian prisoners to those of other persuasions." But beside these and fifty other similar memoranda, the enthusiast cast about her for something practical to do.

She hit upon the capital idea of flowers. She at once ordered from a gardener of taste two hundred bouquets, or rather nosegays, which she intended for distribution among the prisoners she was about to visit, and she called upon her father for the money.

Then she began to prepare her mind. She wished to define the plan from which she was to make her contemplations. She settled that she would be grave and gentle. She would be exquisitely careful not to hold herself too much aloof, and yet not to step beyond the bounds of that sweet reserve that she conceived must have been at once Miss Crofutt's sword and buckler.

Her object was to awaken in the most abandoned criminals a realization that the world, in its most benignant phase, was still open to them; that society, having obtained a requital for their wickedness, was ready to embrace them again on proof of their repentance.

She determined to select at the outset two or three of the most remarkable monsters, and turn the full head of her persuasions exclusively upon them, instead of sprinkling (as it were) the whole community with her grace. She would arouse at first a very few, and then a few more, and a few more, and so on *ad infinitum*.

It was on a hot July morning that she journeyed on foot over the bridge which led to the prison, and there walked a man behind her carrying the flowers.

Her eyes were cast down, this being the position most significant of her spirit. Her pace was equal, firm, and rapid: she made herself oblivious of the bustle of the streets, and she repented that her vanity had permitted her to wear white and lavender these making a combination in her dress which she had been told became her well. She had no right to embellish herself. Was she going to the races or a match, or a kettle-drum, that she must dandify herself with particular shades of color? She stopped short, blushing. Would Miss Cro——. But there was no help for it now. It was too late to turn back. She proceeded, feeling that the odds were against her.



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She approached her destination in such a way that the prison came into view suddenly. She paused, with a feeling of terror. The enormous gray building rose far above a lofty white wall of stone, and a sense of its prodigious strength and awful gloom overwhelmed her. On the top of the wall, holding by an iron railing, there stood a man with a rifle trailing behind him. He was looking down into the yard inside. His attitude of watchfulness, his weapon, the unseen thing that was being thus fiercely guarded, provoked in her such a revulsion that she came to a standstill.

What in the name of mercy had she come here for? She began to tremble. The man with the flowers came up to her and halted. From the prison there came at this instant the loud clang of a bell, and succeeding this a prolonged and resonant murmur which seemed to increase. Miss Eunice looked hastily around her. There were several people who must have heard the same sounds that reached her ears, but they were not alarmed. In fact, one or two of them seemed to be going to the prison direct. The courage of our philanthropist began to revive. A woman in a brick house opposite suddenly pulled up a window-curtain and fixed an amused and inquisitive look upon her.

This would have sent her into a thrice-heated furnace. "Come, if you please," she commanded the man, and she marched upon the jail.

She entered at first a series of neat offices in a wing of the structure, and then she came to a small door made of black bars of iron. A man stood on the farther side of this, with a bunch of large keys. When he saw Miss Eunice he unlocked and opened the door, and she passed through.

She found that she had entered a vast, cool, and lofty cage, one hundred feet in diameter; it had an iron floor, and there were several people strolling about here and there. Through several grated apertures the sunlight streamed with strong effect, and a soft breeze swept around the cavernous apartment.

Without the cage, before her and on either hand, were three more wings of the building, and in these were the prisoners' corridors.

At the moment she entered, the men were leaving their cells, and mounting the stone stairs in regular order, on their way to the chapel above. The noisy files went up and down and to the right and to the left, shuffling and scraping and making a great tumult. The men were dressed in blue, and were seen indistinctly through the lofty gratings. From above and below and all around her there came the metallic snapping of bolts and the rattle of moving bars; and so significant was everything of savage repression and impending violence, that Miss Eunice was compelled to say faintly to herself "I am afraid it will take a little time to get used to all this."

She rested upon one of the seats in the rotunda while the chapel services were being conducted, and she thus had an opportunity to regain a portion of her lost heart. She



felt wonderfully dwarfed and belittled, and her plan of recovering souls had, in some way or other, lost much of its feasibility. A glance at her bright flowers revived her a little, as did also a surprising, long-drawn roar from over her head, to the tune of "America." The prisoners were singing.



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Miss Eunice was not alone in her intended work, for there were several other ladies, also with supplies of flowers, who with her awaited until the prisoners should descend into the yard and be let loose before presenting them with what they had brought. Their common purpose made them acquainted, and by the aid of chat and sympathy they fortified each other.

Half an hour later the five hundred men descended from the chapel to the yard, rushing out upon its bare broad surface as you have seen a burst of water suddenly irrigate a road-bed. A hoarse and tremendous shout at once filled the air, and echoed against the walls like the threat of a volcano. Some of the wretches waltzed and spun around like dervishes, some threw somersaults, some folded their arms gravely and marched up and down, some fraternized, some walked away pondering, some took off their tall caps and sat down in the shade, some looked toward the rotunda with expectation, and there were those who looked toward it with contempt.

There led from the rotunda to the yard a flight of steps. Miss Eunice descended these steps with a quaking heart, and a turnkey shouted to the prisoners over her head that she and others had flowers for them.

No sooner had the words left his lips, than the men rushed up pell-mell.

This was a crucial moment.

There thronged upon Miss Eunice an army of men who were being punished for all the crimes in the calendar. Each individual here had been caged because he was either a highwayman, or a forger, or a burglar, or a ruffian, or a thief, or a murderer. The unclean and frightful tide bore down upon our terrified missionary, shrieking and whooping. Every prisoner thrust out his hand over the head of the one in front of him, and the foremost plucked at her dress.

She had need of courage. A sense of danger and contamination impelled her to fly, but a gleam of reason in the midst of her distraction enabled her to stand her ground. She forced herself to smile though she knew her face had grown pale.

She placed a bunch of flowers into an immense hand which projected from a coarse blue sleeve in front of her; the owner of the hand was pushed away so quickly by those who came after him that Miss Eunice failed to see his face. Her tortured ear caught a rough "Thank y', miss!" The spirit of Miss Crofutt revived in a flash, and her disciple thereafter possessed no lack of nerve.

She plied the crowd with flowers as long as they lasted, and a jaunty self possession enabled her finally to gaze without flinching at the mass of depraved and wicked faces with which she was surrounded. Instead of retaining her position upon the steps, she gradually descended into the yard, as did several other visitors. She began to feel at



home; she found her tongue, and her color came back again. She felt a warm pride in noticing with what care and respect the prisoners treated her gifts; they carried them about with great tenderness, and some compared them with those of their friends.



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Presently she began to recall her plans. It occurred to her to select her two or three villains. For one, she immediately pitched upon a lean-faced wretch in front of her. He seemed to be old, for his back was bent and he leaned upon a cane. His features were large, and they bore an expression of profound gloom. His head was sunk upon his breast, his lofty conical cap was pulled over his ears, and his shapeless uniform seemed to weigh him down, so infirm was he.

Miss Eunice spoke to him. He did not hear; she spoke again. He glanced at her like a flash, but without moving; this was at once followed by a scrutinizing look. He raised his head, and then he turned toward her gravely.

The solemnity of his demeanor nearly threw Miss Eunice off her balance, but she mastered herself by beginning to talk rapidly. The prisoner leaned over a little to hear better. Another came up, and two or three turned around to look. She bethought herself of an incident related in Miss Crofutt's book, and she essayed its recital. It concerned a lawyer who was once pleading in a French criminal court in behalf of a man whose crime had been committed under the influence of dire want. In his plea he described the case of another whom he knew who had been punished with a just but short imprisonment instead of a long one, which the judge had been at liberty to impose, but from which he humanely refrained. Miss Eunice happily remembered the words of the lawyer: "That man suffered like the wrong-doer that he was. He knew his punishment was just. Therefore there lived perpetually in his breast an impulse toward a better life which was not suppressed and stifled by the five years he passed within the walls of the jail. He came forth and began to labor. He toiled hard. He struggled against averted faces and cold words, and he began to rise. He secreted nothing, faltered at nothing, and never stumbled. He succeeded; men took off their hats to him once more; he became wealthy, honorable, God-fearing. I, gentlemen, am that man, that criminal." As she quoted this last declaration Miss Eunice erected herself with burning eyes and touched herself proudly upon the breast. A flush crept into her cheeks, and her nostrils dilated, and she grew tall.

She came back to earth again, and found herself surrounded with the prisoners. She was a little startled.

"Ah, that was good!" ejaculated the old man upon whom she had fixed her eyes. Miss Eunice felt an inexpressible sense of delight.

Murmurs of approbation came from all of her listeners, especially from one on her right hand. She looked around at him pleasantly.

But the smile faded from her lips on beholding him. He was extremely tall and very powerful. He overshadowed her. His face was large, ugly, and forbidding; his gray hair and beard were cropped close, his eyebrows met at the bridge of his nose and overhung his large eyes like a screen. His lips were very wide, and, being turned



downward at the corners, they gave him a dolorous expression. His lower jaw was square and protruding, and a pair of prodigious white ears projected from beneath his sugar-loaf cap. He seemed to take his cue from the old man, for he repeated his sentiment.



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“Yes,” said he, with a voice which broke alternately into a roar and a whisper, “that was a good story.”

“Y-yes,” faltered Miss Eunice, “and it has the merit of being t-rue.”

He replied with a nod, and looked absently over her head while he rubbed the nap upon his chin with his hand. Miss Eunice discovered that his knee touched the skirt of her dress, and she was about to move in order to destroy this contact, when she remembered that Miss Crofutt would probably have cherished the accident as a promoter of a valuable personal influence, so she allowed it to remain. The lean-faced man was not to be mentioned in the same breath with this one, therefore she adopted the superior villain out of hand.

She began to approach him. She asked him where he lived, meaning to discover whence he had come. He replied in the same mixture of roar and whisper, “Six ndered un one, North Wing.”

Miss Eunice grew scarlet. Presently she recovered sufficiently to pursue some inquiries respecting the rules and customs of the prison. She did not feel that she was interesting her friend, yet it seemed clear that he did not wish to go away. His answers were curt, yet he swept his cap off his head, implying by the act a certain reverence, which Miss Eunice’s vanity permitted her to exult at. Therefore she became more loquacious than ever. Some men came up to speak with the prisoner, but he shook them off, and remained in an attitude of strict attention, with his chin on his hand, looking now at the sky, now at the ground and now at Miss Eunice.

In handling the flowers her gloves had been stained, and she now held them in her fingers nervously twisting them as she talked. In the course of time she grew short of subjects, and as her listener suggested nothing, several lapses occurred; in one of them she absently spread her gloves out in her palms, meanwhile wondering how the English girl acted under similar circumstances.

Suddenly a large hand slowly interposed itself between her eyes and her gloves, and then withdrew, taking one of the soiled trifles with it.

She was surprised, but the surprise was pleasurable. She said nothing at first. The prisoner gravely spread his prize out upon his own palm, and after looking at it carefully, he rolled it up into a tight ball and thrust it deep in an inner pocket.

This act made the philanthropist aware that she had made progress. She rose insensibly to the elevation of patron, and she made promises to come frequently and visit her ward and to look in upon him when he was at work; while saying this she withdrew a little from the shade his huge figure had supplied her with.



He thrust his hands into his pockets, but he hastily took them out again. Still he said nothing and hung his head. It was while she was in the mood of a conqueror that Miss Eunice went away. She felt a touch of repugnance at stepping from before his eyes a free woman, therefore she took pains to go when she thought he was not looking.



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She pointed him out to a turnkey, who told her he was expiating the sins of assault and burglarious entry. Outwardly Miss Eunice looked grieved, but within she exulted that he was so emphatically a rascal.

When she emerged from the cool, shadowy, and frowning prison into the gay sunlight, she experienced a sense of bewilderment. The significance of a lock and a bar seemed greater on quitting them than it had when she had perceived them first. The drama of imprisonment and punishment oppressed her spirit with tenfold gloom now that she gazed upon the brilliancy and freedom of the outer world. That she and everybody around her were permitted to walk here and there at will, without question and limit, generated within her an indefinite feeling of gratitude; and the noise, the colors, the creaking wagons, the myriad voices, the splendid variety and change of all things excited a profound but at the same time a mournful satisfaction.

Midway in her return journey she was shrieked at from a carriage, which at once approached the sidewalk. Within it were four gay maidens bound to the Navy-Yard, from whence they were to sail, with a large party of people of nice assortment, in an experimental steamer, which was to be made to go with kerosene lamps, in some way. They seized upon her hands and cajoled her. Wouldn't she go? They were to sail down among the islands (provided the oil made the wheels and things go round), they were to lunch at Fort Warren, dine at Fort Independence, and dance at Fort Winthrop Come, please go. Oh, do! The Germanians were to furnish the music.

Miss Eunice sighed, but shook her head. She had not yet got the air of the prison out of her lungs, nor the figure of her robber out of her eyes, nor the sense of horror and repulsion out of her sympathies.

At another time she would have gone to the ends of the earth with such a happy crew, but now she only shook her head again and was resolute. No one could wring a reason from her, and the wondering quartet drove away.

## II.

Before the day went, Miss Eunice awoke to the disagreeable fact that her plans had become shrunken and contracted, that a certain something had curdled her spontaneity, and that her ardor had flown out at some crevice and had left her with the dry husk of an intent.

She exerted herself to glow a little, but she failed. She talked well at the tea-table, but she did not tell about the glove. This matter plagued her. She ran over in her mind the various doings of Miss Crofutt, and she could not conceal from herself that that lady had never given a glove to one of her wretches; no, nor had she ever permitted the smallest approach to familiarity.



Miss Eunice wept a little. She was on the eve of despairing.

In the silence of the night the idea presented itself to her with a disagreeable baldness. There was a thief over yonder that possessed a confidence with her.



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They had found it necessary to shut this man up in iron and stone, and to guard him with a rifle with a large leaden ball in it.

This villain was a convict. That was a terrible word, one that made her blood chill.

She, the admired of hundreds and the beloved of a family, had done a secret and shameful thing of which she dared not tell. In these solemn hours the madness of her act appalled her.

She asked herself what might not the fellow do with the glove? Surely he would exhibit it among his brutal companions, and perhaps allow it to pass to and fro among them. They would laugh and joke with him, and he would laugh and joke in return, and no doubt he would kiss it to their great delight. Again, he might go to her friends, and, by working upon their fears and by threatening an exposure of her, extort large sums of money from them. Again, might he not harass her by constantly appearing to her at all times and all places and making all sorts of claims and demands? Again, might he not, with terrible ingenuity, use it in connection with some false key or some jack-in-the-box, or some dark-lantern, or something, in order to effect his escape; or might he not tell the story times without count to some wretched curiosity-hunters who would advertise her folly all over the country, to her perpetual misery?

She became harnessed to this train of thought. She could not escape from it. She reversed the relation that she had hoped to hold toward such a man, and she stood in his shadow, and not he in hers.

In consequence of these ever-present fears and sensations, there was one day, not very far in the future, that she came to have an intolerable dread of. This day was the one on which the sentence of the man was to expire. She felt that he would surely search for her; and that he would find her there could be no manner of doubt, for, in her surplus of confidence, she had told him her full name, inasmuch as he had told her his.

When she contemplated this new source of terror, her peace of mind fled directly. So did her plans for philanthropic labor. Not a shred remained. The anxiety began to tell upon her, and she took to peering out of a certain shaded window that commanded the square in front of her house. It was not long before she remembered that for good behavior certain days were deducted from the convicts' terms of imprisonment. Therefore, her ruffian might be released at a moment not anticipated by her. He might, in fact, be discharged on any day. He might be on his way toward her even now.

She was not very far from right, for suddenly the man did appear.

He one day turned the corner, as she was looking out at the window fearing that she should see him, and came in a diagonal direction across the hot, flagged square.



Miss Eunice's pulse leaped into the hundreds. She glued her eyes upon him. There was no mistake. There was the red face, the evil eyes, the large mouth, the gray hair, and the massive frame.



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What should she do? Should she hide? Should she raise the sash and shriek to the police? Should she arm herself with a knife? or—what? In the name of mercy, what? She glared into the street. He came on steadily, and she lost him, for he passed beneath her. In a moment she heard the jangle of the bell. She was petrified. She heard his heavy step below. He had gone into the little reception-room beside the door. He crossed to a sofa opposite the mantel. She then heard him get up and go to a window, then he walked about, and then sat down; probably upon a red leather seat beside the window.

Meanwhile the servant was coming to announce him. From some impulse, which was a strange and sudden one, she eluded the maid, and rushed headlong upon her danger. She never remembered her descent of the stairs. She awoke to cool contemplation of matters only to find herself entering the room.

Had she made a mistake, after all? It was a question that was asked and answered in a flash. This man was pretty erect and self-assured, but she discerned in an instant that there was needed but the blue woollen jacket and the tall cap to make him the wretch of a month before.

He said nothing. Neither did she. He stood up and occupied himself by twisting a button upon his waistcoat. She, fearing a threat or a demand, stood bridleing to receive it. She looked at him from top to toe with parted lips.

He glanced at her. She stepped back. He put the rim of his cap in his mouth and bit it once or twice, and then looked out at the window. Still neither spoke. A voice at this instant seemed impossible.

He glanced again like a flash. She shrank, and put her hands upon the bolt. Presently he began to stir. He put out one foot, and gradually moved forward. He made another step. He was going away. He had almost reached the door, when Miss Eunice articulated, in a confused whisper, "My—my glove; I wish you would give me my glove."

He stopped, fixed his eyes upon her, and after passing his fingers up and down upon the outside of his coat, said, with deliberation, in a husky voice, "No, mum. I'm goin' fur to keep it as long as I live, if it takes two thousand years."

"Keep it!" she stammered.

"Keep it," he replied.

He gave her an untranslatable look. It neither frightened her nor permitted her to demand the glove more emphatically. She felt her cheeks and temples and her hands grow cold, and midway in the process of fainting she saw him disappear. He vanished



quietly. Deliberation and respect characterized his movements, and there was not so much as a jar of the outer door.

Poor philanthropist!

This incident nearly sent her to a sick-bed. She fully expected that her secret would appear in the newspapers in full, and she lived in dread of the onslaught of an angry and outraged society.

The more she reflected upon what her possibilities had been and how she had misused them, the iller and the more distressed she got. She grew thin and spare of flesh. Her friends became frightened. They began to dose her and to coddle her. She looked at them with eyes full of supreme melancholy, and she frequently wept upon their shoulders.



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In spite of her precautions, however, a thunder-bolt slipped in.

One day her father read at the table an item that met his eye. He repeated it aloud, on account of the peculiar statement in the last line:

“Detained on suspicion.—A rough-looking fellow, who gave the name of Gorman, was arrested on the high-road to Tuxbridge Springs for suspected complicity in some recent robberies in the neighborhood. He was fortunately able to give a pretty clear account of his late whereabouts and he was permitted to depart with a caution from the justice. Nothing was found upon him but a few coppers and an old kid glove wrapped in a bit of paper.”

Miss Eunice’s soup spilled. This was too much, and she fainted this time in right good earnest; and she straightway became an invalid of the settled type. They put her to bed. The doctor told her plainly that he knew she had a secret, but she looked at him so imploringly that he refrained from telling his fancies; but he ordered an immediate change of air. It was settled at once that she should go to the “Springs”—to Tuxbridge Springs. The doctor knew there were young people there, also plenty of dancing. So she journeyed thither with her pa and her ma and with pillows and servants.

They were shown to their rooms, and strong porters followed with the luggage. One of them had her huge trunk upon his shoulder. He put it carefully upon the floor, and by so doing he disclosed the ex-prisoner to Miss Eunice and Miss Eunice to himself. He was astonished, but he remained silent. But she must needs be frightened and fall into another fit of trembling. After an awkward moment he went away, while she called to her father and begged piteously to be taken away from Tuxbridge Springs instantly. There was no appeal. She hated, *hated*, HATED Tuxbridge Springs, and she should die if she were forced to remain. She rained tears. She would give no reason, but she could not stay. No, millions on millions could not persuade her; go she must. There was no alternative. The party quitted the place within the hour, bag and baggage. Miss Eunice’s father was perplexed and angry, and her mother would have been angry also if she had dared.

They went to other springs and stayed a month, but the patient’s fright increased each day, and so did her fever. She was full of distractions. In her dreams everybody laughed at her as the one who had flirted with a convict. She would ever be pursued with the tale of her foolishness and stupidity. Should he ever recover her self-respect and confidence?

She had become radically selfish. She forgot the old ideas of noble-heartedness and self-denial, and her temper had become weak and childish. She did not meet her puzzle face to face, but she ran away from it with her hands over her ears. Miss Crofutt stared at her, and therefore she threw Miss Crofutt’s book into the fire.

After two days of unceasing debate, she called her parents, and with the greatest agitation told them *all*.



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It so happened, in this case, that events, to use a railroad phrase, made connection.

No sooner had Miss Eunice told her story than the man came again. This time he was accompanied by a woman.

“Only get my glove away from him,” sobbed the unhappy one, “that is all I ask!” This was a fine admission! It was thought proper to bring an officer, and so a strong one was sent for.

Meanwhile the couple had been admitted to the parlor. Miss Eunice’s father stationed the officer at one door, while he, with a pistol, stood at the other. Then Miss Eunice went into the apartment. She was wasted, weak, and nervous. The two villains got up as she came in, and bowed. She began to tremble as usual, and laid hold upon the mantelpiece. “How much do you want?” she gasped.

The man gave the woman a push with his forefinger. She stepped forward quickly with her crest up. Her eyes turned, and she fixed a vixenish look upon Miss Eunice. She suddenly shot her hand out from beneath her shawl and extended it at full length. Across it lay Miss Eunice’s glove, very much soiled.

“Was that thing ever yours?” demanded the woman, shrilly.

“Y-yes,” said Miss Eunice, faintly.

The woman seemed (if the apt word is to be excused) staggered. She withdrew her hand, and looked the glove over. The man shook his head, and began to laugh behind his hat.

“And did you ever give it to him?” pursued the woman, pointing over her shoulder with her thumb.

Miss Eunice nodded.

“Of your own free will?”

After a moment of silence she ejaculated, in a whisper, “Yes.”

“Now wait,” said the man, coming to the front; “nough has been said by you.” He then addressed himself to Miss Eunice with the remains of his laugh still illuminating his face.

“This is my wife’s sister, and she’s one of the jealous kind. I love my wife” (here he became grave), “and I never showed her any kind of slight that I know of. I’ve always been fair to her, and she’s always been fair to me. Plain sailin’ so far; I never kep’ anything from her—but this.” He reached out and took the glove from the woman, and spread it out upon his own palm, as Miss Eunice had seen him do once before. He



looked at it thoughtfully. “I wouldn’t tell her about this; no, never. She was never very particular to ask me; that’s where her trust in me came in. She knowed I was above doing anything out of the way—that is—I mean—” He stammered and blushed, and then rushed on volubly. “But her sister here thought I paid too much attention to it; she thought I looked at it too much, and kep’ it secret. So she nagged and nagged, and kept the pitch boilin’ until I had to let it out: I told ’em” (Miss Eunice shivered). “‘No,’ says she, my wife’s sister, ‘that won’t do, Gorman. That’s chaff, and I’m too old a bird.’ Ther’fore I fetched her straight to you, so she could put the question direct.”



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He stopped a moment as if in doubt how to go on. Miss Eunice began to open her eyes, and she released the mantel. The man resumed with something like impressiveness:

“When you last held that,” said he, slowly, balancing the glove in his hand, “I was a wicked man with bad intentions through and through. When I first held it I became an honest man, with good intentions.”

A burning blush of shame covered Miss Eunice’s face and neck.

“An’ as I kep’ it my intentions went on improvin’ and improvin’, till I made up my mind to behave myself in future, forever. Do you understand?—forever. No backslidin’, no hitchin’, no slippin’-up. I take occasion to say, miss, that I was beset time and again; that the instant I set my foot outside them prison-gates, over there, my old chums got round me; but I shook my head. ‘No,’ says I, ‘I won’t go back on the glove.’”

Miss Eunice hung her head. The two had exchanged places, she thought; she was the criminal and he the judge.

“An’ what is more,” continued he, with the same weight in his tone, “I not only kep’ sight of the glove, but I kep’ sight of the generous sperrit that gave it. I didn’t let *that* go. I never forgot what you meant. I knowed—I knowed,” repeated he, lifting his forefinger—“I knowed a time would come when there wouldn’t be any enthoosiasm, any ‘hurrah,’ and then perhaps you’d be sorry you was so kind to me; an’ the time did come.”

Miss Eunice buried her face in her hands and wept aloud.

“But did I quit the glove? No, mum. I held on to it. It was what I fought by. I wasn’t going to give it up, because it was asked for. All the police-officers in the city couldn’t have took it from me. I put it deep into my pocket, and I walked out. It was differcult, miss. But I come through. The glove did it. It helped me stand out against temptation when it was strong. If I looked at it, I remembered that once there was a pure heart that pitied me. It cheered me up. After a while I kinder got out of the mud. Then I got work. The glove again. Then a girl that knowed me before I took to bad ways married me, and no questions asked. Then I just took the glove into a dark corner and blessed it.”

Miss Eunice was belittled.

A noise was heard in the hallway. Miss Eunice’s father and the policeman were going away.

The awkwardness of the succeeding silence was relieved by the moving of the man and the woman. They had done their errand, and were going.



Said Miss Eunice, with the faint idea of making a practical apology to her visitor, "I shall go to the prison once a week after this, I think."

"Then may God bless ye, miss," said the man. He came back with tears in his eyes and took her proffered hand for an instant. Then he and his wife's sister went away.

Miss Eunice's remaining spark of charity at once crackled and burst into a flame. There is sure to be a little something that is bad in everybody's philanthropy when it is first put to use; it requires to be filed down like a faulty casting before it will run without danger to anybody. Samaritanism that goes off with half a charge is sure to do great mischief somewhere; but Miss Eunice's, now properly corrected, henceforth shot off at the proper end, and inevitably hit the mark. She purchased a new Crofutt.



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### BROTHER SEBASTIAN'S FRIENDSHIP.

BY HAROLD FREDERIC.

I, who tell this story, am called Brother Sebastian. This name was given me more than forty years ago, while Louis Philippe was still king. My other name has been buried so long that I have nearly forgotten it. I think that my people are dead. At least I have heard nothing from them in many years. My reputation has always been that of a misanthrope—if not that, then of a dreamer. In the seminary I had no intimates. In the order, for I am a Brother of the Christian Schools, my associates are polite—nothing more. I seem to be outside their social circles, their plans, their enjoyments. True, I am an old man now. But in other years it was the same. All my life I have been in solitude.

To this there is a single exception—one star shining in the blackness. And my career has been so bleak that, although it ended in deeper sadness than I had known before, I look back to the episode with gratitude. The bank of clouds which shut out this sole light of my life quickened its brilliancy before they submerged it.

After the terrible siege of '71, when the last German was gone, and our houses had breasted the ordeal of the Commune, I was sent to the South. The Superior thought my cheeks were ominously hollow, and suspected threats of consumption in my cough. So I was to go to the Mediterranean, and try its milder air. I liked the change. Paris, with its gloss of noisy gayety and its substance of sceptical heartlessness, was repugnant to me. Perhaps it was because of this that Brother Sebastian had been mured up in the capital two thirds of his life. If our surroundings are too congenial we neglect the work set before us. But no matter; to the coast I went.

My new home was a long-established house, spacious, venerable, and dreary. It was on the outskirts of an ancient town, which was of far more importance before our Lord was born than it has ever been since. We had little to do. There were nine brothers, a handful of resident orphans, and some three-score pupils. Ragged, stupid, big-eyed urchins they were, altogether different from the keen Paris boys. For that matter, every feature of my new home was odd. The heat of the summer was scorching in its intensity. The peasants were much more respectful to our cloth, and, as to appearance, looked like figures from Murillo's canvases. The foliage, the wine, the language, the manners of the people—everything was changed. This interested me, and my morbidness vanished. The Director was delighted with my improved condition. Poor man! he was positive that my cheeks had puffed out perceptibly after the first two months. So the winter came—a mild, wet, muggy winter, wholly unlike my favorite sharp season in the North.



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We were killing time in the library one afternoon, the Director and a Swiss Brother sitting by the lamp reading, I standing at one of the tall, narrow windows, drumming on the panes and dreaming. The view was not an inspiring one. There was a long horizontal line of pale yellow sky and another of flat, black land, out of which an occasional poplar raised itself solemnly. The great mass below the stripes was brown; above, gloomy gray. Close under the window two boys were playing in the garden of the house. I recall distinctly that they threw armfuls of wet fallen leaves at each other with a great shouting. While I stood thus, the Brother Servitor, Abonus, came in and whispered to the Director. He always whispered. It was not fraternal, but I did not like this Abonus.

“Send him up here,” said the Director. Then I remembered that I had heard the roll of a carriage and the bell ring a few moments before. Abonus came in again. Behind him there was some one else, whose footsteps had the hesitating sound of a stranger’s. Then I heard the Director’s voice:

“You are from Algiers?”

“I am, Brother.”

“Your name?”

“Edouard, Brother.”

“Well, tell me more.”

“I was under orders to be in Paris in January, Brother. As my health was poor, I received permission to come back to France this autumn. At Marseilles I was instructed to come here. So I am here. I have these papers from the Mother house, and from Etienne, Director, of Algiers.”

Something in the voice seemed peculiar to me. I turned and examined the new-comer. He stood behind and to one side of the Director, who was laboriously deciphering some papers through his big horn spectacles. The light was not very bright, but there was enough to see a wonderfully handsome face, framed in dazzling black curls. Perhaps it looked the more beautiful because contrasted with the shaven gray poll and surly features of grim Abonus. But to me it was a dream of St. John the Evangel. The eyes of the face were lowered upon the Director, so I could only guess their brilliancy. The features were those of an extreme youth—round, soft, and delicate. The expression was one of utter fatigue, almost pain. It bore out the statement of ill-health.

The Director had finished his reading. He lifted his head now and surveyed the stranger in turn. Finally, stretching out his fat hand, he said:

“You are welcome, Brother Edouard. I see the letter says you have had no experience except with the youngest children. Brother Photius does that now. We will have you



rest for a time. Then we will see about it. Meanwhile I will turn you over to the care of good Abonus, who will give you one of the north rooms.”

So the two went out, Abonus shuffling his feet disagreeably. It was strange that he could do nothing to please me.

“Brother Sebastian,” said the Director, as the door closed, “it is curious that they should have sent me a tenth man. Why, I lie awake now to invent pretences of work for those I have already. I will give up all show of teaching presently, and give out that I keep a hospital—a retreat for ailing brothers. Still, this Edouard is a pretty boy.”



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“Very.”

“Etienne’s letter says he is twenty and a Savoyard. He speaks like a Parisian.”

“Very likely he is seminary bred,” put in the Swiss.

“Whatever he is, I like his looks,” said our Superior. This good man liked every one. His was the placid, easy Alsatian nature, prone to find goodness in all things—even crabbed Abonus. The Director, or, as he was known, Brother Elysee, was a stout, round little man, with a fine face and imperturbable good spirits. He was adored by all his subordinates. But I fancy he did not advance in favor at Paris very rapidly.

I liked Edouard from the first. The day after he came we were together much, and, when we parted after vespers, I was conscious of a vast respect for this new-comer. He was bright, ready spoken, and almost a man of the world. Compared with my dull career, his short life had been one of positive gayety. He had seen Frederic le Maitre at the Comedie Francaise. He had been at Court and spoken with the Prince Imperial. He was on terms of intimacy with Monsignori, and had been a protege of the sainted Darboy. It was a rare pleasure to hear him talk of these things.

Before this, the ceaseless shifting of brothers from one house to another had been indifferent to me. For the hundreds of strangers who came and went in the Paris house on Oudinot Street I cared absolutely nothing, I did not suffer their entrance nor their exit to excite me. This was so much the case that they called me a machine. But with Edouard this was different. I grew to love the boy from the first evening, when, as he left my room, I caught myself saying, “I shall be sorry when he goes.” He seemed to be fond of me, too. For that matter most of the brothers petted him, Elysee especially. But I was flattered that he chose me as his particular friend. For the first time my heart had opened.

We were alone one evening after the holidays. It was cold without, but in my room it was warm and bright. The fire crackled merrily, and the candles gave out a mellow and pleasant light. The Director had gone up to Paris, and his mantle had fallen on me. Edouard sat with his feet stretched to the fender, his curly head buried in the great curved back of my invalid chair, the red fire-light reflected on his childish features. I took pleasure in looking at him. He looked at the coals and knit his brows as if in a puzzle. I often fancied that something weightier than the usual troubles of life weighed upon him. At last he spoke, just as I was about to question him:

“Are you afraid to die, Sebastian?”

Not knowing what else to say, I answered, “No, my child.”

“I wonder if you enjoy life in community?”



This was still stranger. I could but reply that I had never known any other life; that I was fitted for nothing else.

“But still,” persisted he, “would you not like to leave it—to have a career of your own before you die? Do you think this is what a man is created for—to give away his chance to live?”



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“Edouard, you are interrogating your own conscience,” I answered. “These are questions which you must have answered yourself, before you took your vows. When you answered them, you sealed them.”

Perhaps I spoke too harshly, for he colored and drew up his feet. Such shapely little feet they were. I felt ashamed of my crustiness.

“But, Edouard,” I added, “your vows are those of the novitiate. You are not yet twenty-eight. You have still the right to ask yourself these things. The world is very fair to men of your age. Do not dream that I was angry with you.”

He sat gazing into the fire. His face wore a strange, far-away expression, as he reached forth his hand, in a groping way, and rested it on my knee, clutching the gown nervously. Then he spoke slowly, seeking for words, and keeping his eye on the flames:

“You have been good to me, Brother Sebastian. Let me ask you: May I tell you something in confidence—something which shall never pass your lips? I mean it.”

He had turned and poured those marvellous eyes into mine with irresistible magnetism. Of course I said, “Speak!” and I said it without the slightest hesitation.

“I am not a Christian Brother. I do not belong to your order. I have no claim upon the hospitality of this roof. I am an impostor!”

He ejected these astounding sentences with an energy almost fierce, gripping my knee meanwhile. Then, as suddenly, his grasp relaxed, and he fell to weeping bitterly.

I stared at him solemnly, in silence. My tongue seemed paralyzed. Confusing thoughts whirled in a maze unbidden through my head. I could say nothing. But a strange impulse prompted me to reach out and take his hot hand in mine. It was piteous to hear him sobbing, his head upon his raised arm, his whole frame quivering with emotion. I had never seen any one weep like that before. So I sat dumb, trying in vain to answer this bewildering self-accusation. At last there came out of the folds of the chair the words, faint and tear-choked:

“You have promised me secrecy, and you will keep your word; but you will hate me.”

“Why no, no, Edouard, not hate you,” I answered, scarcely knowing what I said. I did not comprehend it at all. There was nothing more for me to say. Finally, when some power of thought returned, I asked:

“Of all things, my poor boy, why should you choose such a dreary life as this? What possible reason led you to enter the community? What attractions has it for you?”



Edouard turned again from the fire to me. His eyes sparkled. His teeth were tight set.

“Why? Why? I will tell you why, Brother Sebastian. Can you not understand how a poor hunted beast should rejoice to find shelter in such an out-of-the-way place, among such kind men, in the grave of this cloister life? I have not told you half enough. Do you not know in the outside world, in Toulon, or Marseilles, or that fine Paris of yours, there is a price on my head?—or no, not that, but enemies that are looking for me, searching everywhere, turning every little stone for the poor privilege of making me suffer? And do you know that these enemies wear shakos, and are called gens d’armes? Would you be pleased to learn that it is a prison I escape by coming here? *Now*, will you hate me?”



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The boy had risen from his chair. He spoke hurriedly, almost hysterically, his eyes snapping at mine like coals, his curls dishevelled, his fingers curved and stiffened like the talons of a hawk. I had never seen such intense earnestness in a human face. Passions like these had never penetrated the convent walls before.

While I sat dumb before them, Edouard left the room. I was conscious of his exit only in a vague way. For hours I sat in my chair beside the grate thinking, or trying to think. You can see readily that I was more than a little perplexed. In the absence of Elysee, I was director. The management of the house, its good fame, its discipline, all rested on my shoulders. And to be confronted by such an abyss as this! I could do absolutely nothing. The boy had tied my tongue by the pledge. Besides, had I been unsworn, I am sure the idea of exposure would never have come to me. It was late before I retired that night. And I recall with terrible distinctness the chaos of brain and faculty which ushered in a restless sleep almost as dawn was breaking.

I had fancied that Brother Edouard would find life intolerable in community after his revelation to me. He would be chary of meeting me before the brothers; would be constantly tortured by fear of detection. As I saw this prospect of the poor innocent—for it was absurd to think of him as anything else—dreading exposure at each step in his false life, shrinking from observation, biting his tongue at every word—I was greatly moved by pity. Judge my surprise, then, when I saw him the next morning join in the younger brothers' regular walk around the garden, joking and laughing as I had never seen before. On his right was thin, sickly Victor, rest his soul! and on the other puffy, thick-necked John, as merry a soul as Cork ever turned out. And how they laughed, even the frail consumptive! It was a pleasure to see his blue eyes brighten with enjoyment and his warm cheeks blush. Above John's queer, Irish chuckle, I heard Edouard's voice, with its dainty Parisian accent, retailing jokes and leading in the laughter. The tramp was stretched out longer than usual, so pleasant did they find it. At this development I was much amazed.

The same change was noticeable in all that Edouard did. Instead of the apathy with which he had discharged his nominal duties, his baby pupils (for Photius had gone to Peru) now became bewitched with him. He told them droll stories, incited their rivalry in study by instituting prizes for which they struggled monthly, and, in short, metamorphosed his department. The change spread to himself. His cheeks took on a ruddier hue, the sparkle of his black eyes mellowed into a calm and steady radiance. There was no trace of feverish elation which, in solitude, recoiled to the brink of despair. He sang to himself evenings in his dormitory, clearly and with joy. His step was as elastic as that of any school-boy.



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I often thought upon this change, and meditated how beautiful an illustration of confession's blessings it furnished. Frequently we were alone, but he never referred again to that memorable evening, even by implication. At first I dreaded to have the door close upon us, feeling that he must perforce seek to take up the thread where he had broken it then. But he talked of other things, and so easily and naturally that I felt embarrassed. For weeks I could not shake off the feeling that, at our next talk, he would broach the subject. But he never did.

Elysee returned, bringing me kind words from the Mother house, and a half-jocular hint that Superior General Philippe had me much in his mind. No doubt there had been a time when the idea of becoming a Director would have stirred my pulses. Surely it was gone now. I asked for nothing but to stay beside Edouard, to watch him, and to be near to lend him a helping hand when his hour of trouble should come. From that ordeal, which I saw approaching clearly and certainly, I shrank with all my nerves on edge. As the object of my misery grew bright-eyed and strong, I felt myself declining in health. My face grew thin, and I could not eat. I saw before my eyes always this wretched boy singing upon the brow of the abyss. Sometimes I strove not to see his fall—frightful and swift. His secret seemed to harass him no longer. To me it was heavier than lead.

The evening the Brother Director returned, we sat together in the reading-room, the entire community. Elysee had been speaking of the Mother-house, concerning which Brother Barnabas, an odd little Lorrainer who spoke better German than French, and who regarded Paris with the true provincial awe and veneration, exhibited much curiosity. We had a visitor, a gaunt, self-sufficient old Parisian, who had spent fourteen days in the Mazas prison during the Commune. I will call him Brother Albert, for his true name in religion is very well known.

"I heard a curious story in the Vaugirard house," said the Brother Director, refreshing himself with a pinch of snuff, "which made the more impression upon me that I once knew intimately one of the persons in it. Martin Delette was my schoolmate at Pfalsbourg, in the old days. A fine, studious lad he was, too. He took orders and went to the north where he lived for many years a quiet country cure. He had a niece, a charming girl, who is not now more than twenty or one-and-twenty. She was an orphan, and lived with him, going to a convent to school and returning at vacations. She was not a bad girl, but a trifle wayward and easily led. She gave the Sisters much anxiety. Last spring she barely escaped compromising the house by an escapade with a young *miserable* of the town named Banin."

"I know your story," said Albert, with an air which hinted that this was a sufficient reason why the rest should not hear it. "Banin is in prison."



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Elysee proceeded: "The girl was reprimanded. Next week she disappeared. To one of her companions she had confided a great desire to see Paris. So good Father Delette was summoned, and, after a talk with the Superioress, started post-haste for the capital. He found no signs either of poor Renee or of Banin, who had also disappeared. The Cure was nearly heart-broken. Each day, they told me, added a year to his appearance. He did not cease to importune the police chiefs and to haunt the public places for a glimpse of his niece's face. But the summer came, and no Renee. The Cure began to cough and grow weak. But one day in August the Director, good Prosper, called him down to the reception-room to see a visitor.

"There is news for you," he whispered, pressing poor Martin's hand. "In the room he found—"

"In the room he found—" broke in Albert, impertinently, but with a quiet tone of authority which cowed good Elysee, "a shabby man, looking like a poorly-fed waiter. This person rose and said, 'I am a detective; do you know Banin—young man, tall, blonde, squints, broken tooth upper jaw, hat back on his head, much talk, hails from Rheims?'

"Ah,' said Delette, 'I have not seen him, but I know him too well.'

"The detective pointed with his thumb over his left shoulder. 'He is in jail. He is good for twenty years. I did it myself. My name is so-and-so. Good job. Procurator said you were interested—some woman in the case, parishioner of yours, eh?'

"My niece,' gasped the Cure.

"O ho! does you credit; pretty girl, curly-head, good manners. Well, she's off. Good trick, too. She was the decoy. Banin stood in the shadow with club. She brought gentleman into alley, friend did work. That's Banin's story. Perhaps a lie. You have a brother in Algiers? Thought so. Girl went out there once? So I was told. Probably there now. African officers say not; but they're a sleepy lot. If I was a criminal, I'd go to Algiers. Good biding.' The detective went. Delette stood where he was in silence. I went to him, and helped carry him up-stairs. We put him in his bed. He died there."

Brother Albert stopped. He had told the story, dialogue and all, like a machine. We did not doubt its correctness. The memory of Albert had passed into a proverb years before.

Brother Albert raised his eyes again, and added, as if he had not paused, "He was ashamed to hold his head up. He might well be."

A strange, excited voice rose from the other end of the room. I looked and saw that it was Edouard who spoke. He had half arisen from his chair and scowled at Albert,



throwing out his words with the tremulous haste of a young man first addressing an audience:

“Why should he be ashamed? Was he not a good man? Was the blame of his bad niece’s acts his? From the story, she was well used and had no excuse. It is he who is to be pitied, not blamed!”

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The Brother Director smiled benignly at the young enthusiast. "Brother Edouard is right," he said. "Poor Martin was to be compassioned. None the less, my heart is touched for the girl. In Banin's trial it appeared that he maltreated her, and forced her to do what she did by blows. They were really married. Her neighbors gave Renee a name for gentleness and a good heart. Poor thing!"

"And she never was found?" asked Abonus, eagerly. He spoke very rarely. He looked now at me as he spoke, and there was a strange, ungodly glitter in his eyes which made me shudder involuntarily.

"Never," replied the Director, "although there is a reward, 5000 francs, offered for her recovery. Miserable child, who can tell what depths of suffering she may be in this moment?"

"It would be remarkable if she should be found now, after all this time," said Abonus, sharply. His wicked, squinting old eyes were still fastened upon me. This time, as by a flash of eternal knowledge, I read their meaning, and felt the ground slipping from under me.

I shall never forget the night that followed. I made no pretence of going to bed. Edouard's little dormitory was in another part of the house. I went once to see him, but dared not knock, since Abonus was stirring about just across the hall, in his own den. I scratched on a piece of paper "Fly!" in the dark, and pushed it under the door. Then I returned to walk my chamber, chafing like a wild beast. Ah, that night, that night!

With the first cock crow in the village below, long before the bell, I left my room. I wanted air to breathe. I passed Abonus on the broad stairway. He strode up with unwonted vigor, bearing a heavy cauldron of water as if it had been straw. His gown was tumbled and dusty; his greasy *rabat* hung awry about his neck. I had it in my head to speak with him, but could not. So the early hours, with devotions which I went through in a dream, wore on in horrible suspense, and breakfast came.

We sat at the long table, five on a side, the Director—looking red-eyed and weary from the evening's unaccustomed dissipation—sitting at the head. Below us stood Brother Albert, reading from Tertullian in a dry, monotonous chant. I recall, as I write, how I found a certain comfort in those splendid, sonorous Latin sentences, though I was conscious of not comprehending a word. I dreaded the moment they should end. Edouard sat beside me. We had not exchanged a word during the morning. How could I speak? What should I say? I was in a nervous flutter, like unto those who watch the final pinioning of a criminal whose guillotine is awaiting him. I could not keep my eyes from the fair face beside me, with its delicately-cut profile, made all the more cameo-like by its pallid whiteness. The lips were tightly compressed. I could see askant that the tiny nostrils were quivering with excitement. All else was impassive on Edouard's face. We two sat waiting for the axe to fall.



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It is as distinct as a nightmare to me. Abonus came in with his great server laden with victuals. He stumbled as he approached. He too was excited. He drew near, and stood behind me. I seemed to feel his breath penetrate my skull; and yet I was forced to answer a whispered question of Brother John's with a smooth face. I saw Edouard suddenly reach for the milk glass in front of his plate, and hand it back to Abonus with the disdain of a duchess. He said, in a sharp, peremptory tone:

"Take it away and cleanse it. No one but a dirty monk would place such a glass on the table."

Albert ceased his reading. Abonus did not touch the glass. He shuffled hastily to the side-board and deposited his burden. Then he came back with the same eager movement. He placed his fists on his hips, like a fish-woman, and hissed, in a voice choking with concentrated rage—

"No one but a woman would complain of it!"

The brothers stared at each other and the two speakers in mute surprise. But they saw nothing in the words beyond a personal wrangle—though even that was such a novelty as to arrest instant attention. I busied myself with my plate. The Director assumed his harshest tone, and asked the cause of the altercation. Abonus leaned over and whispered something in his ear. I remember next a room full of confusion, a babel of conflicting voices, and a whirling glimpse of uniforms. Then I fainted.

When I revived I was in my own room, stretched upon my pallet. I looked around in a dazed way and saw the Brother Director and a young gendarme by the closed door. Something black and irregular in the outline of the bed at my side attracted my eyes. I saw that it was Edouard's head buried in the drapery. As in a dream I laid my numb hand upon those crisp curls. I was an old man, she a weak, wretched girl. She raised her face at my touch, and burned in my brain a vision of stricken agony, of horrible soul-pain, which we liken, for want of a better simile, to the anguish in the eyes of a dying doe. Her lips moved; she said something, I know not what. Then she went, and I was left alone with Elysee. His words—broken, stumbling words—I remember:

"She asked to see you, Sebastian, my friend. I could not refuse. Her papers were forged. She did come from Algiers, where her uncle is a Capuchin. I do not ask, I do not wish to know, how much you know of this. Before my Redeemer, I feel nothing but pity for the poor lamb. Lie still, my friend; try to sleep. We are both older men than we were yesterday."

There is little else to tell. Only twice have reflections of this episode in my old life reached me in the seclusion of a missionary post at the foot of the Andes. I learned a few weeks ago that the wretched Abonus had bought a sailor's cafe on the Toulon wharves with his five thousand francs. And I know also that the heart of the Marshal-

President was touched by the sad story of Renee, and that she left the prison La Salpetriere to lay herself in penitence at the foot of Mother Church. This is the story of my friendship.