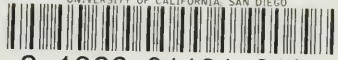


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# What Happened to Johnston



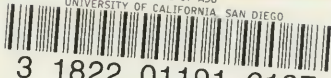
A Sequel to  
"Twenty Years  
of Hus'ling"

By  
J.P. JOHNSTON

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Yours truly  
J. P. Johnston

# What Happened to Johnston

By J. P. JOHNSTON

Author of

"Twenty Years of Hus'ling"  
and  
"The Auctioneers' Guide"



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The personal experiences of a man, who in the making and losing of one large fortune, and many smaller ones, never gives up, but with indefatigable energy and undaunted courage, and with an indomitable will, once more climbs to the top round of the ladder.

A Sequel to "Twenty Years of Hus'ling"

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Illustrated by Howard Heath

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THOMPSON & THOMAS  
1904.

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## MY APOLOGY.

Since the publication of "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," I have received over ten thousand personal letters from its readers, from all quarters of the globe, many of whom expressed a desire for another book, while others were anxious to know "What had happened to Johnston," hence this volume.

To my dear friend, Mrs. Eva Whinery Mertz, whose valued services were rendered in the editing of its contents, I respectfully dedicate this volume.

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# WHAT HAPPENED TO JOHNSTON.

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## CHAPTER I.

In the Wholesale Jewelry and Optical Business—Originator of the Exchange System Selection Package Scheme—A Great Success—Carrying Out the Bluff—How I Kept in the Game—Express Charges from Five Hundred to One Thousand Dollars per Day—Business Booming—A Frightened Eastern Salesman.

Readers of my book entitled "Twenty Years of Hus'ling" will remember that at the time of its completion I was engaged in the wholesale jewelry and optical business at No. 243 State street. Chicago.

At that time there was no reason on my part to suspect for a single moment that the time would ever come when I should again see the need of a dollar.

An inventory of my books showed a balance of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in my favor, in merchandise on hand, outstanding accounts, real estate, personal property and cash in bank, after deducting the amount of my liabilities, which exceeded one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

A few years before this I had originated what was known as the "selection package exchange system

plan," which did away entirely with the employing of traveling salesmen.

The plan was to make up an assorted lot and send it, express prepaid, to every general store merchant, druggist or jeweler, who had a satisfactory mercantile rating, without soliciting his order or consulting him in any way. A letter, of course, was sent apprising him of the fact that a package had been forwarded to him by express, and requesting him to receive it, open it up, place it on sale in his show case for ten days, and at the expiration of that time he could simply pay for what he had sold, or possibly selected, and return the balance at my expense. If, however, he should desire to purchase the entire package outright, he could do so on terms set forth pertaining to my new and original exchange plan.

From the very start it was a grand success, which, however, necessitated the carrying of an immense stock of goods, and the employment of a large force of clerks, stenographers and book-keepers.

Since I had (with but forty-two dollars' worth of jewelry) made my start as a wholesaler, delivering goods to the merchants for cash, I was not in a financial position to order and pay cash for the large quan-

tities of goods necessary to make my scheme a big success.

I had, during my few years' stay in Chicago, established and carefully guarded a very good credit amongst the Eastern manufacturers, but now had come a time when, to make money quickly, on a plan which I had fully demonstrated was a success, required some thought, considerable tact and a whole lot of nerve.

As before stated, I had established a very good credit with the manufacturers, with which I could have run along in the regular routine way and fashion of the over-cautious man, and no doubt eventually developed a fairly prosperous business.

But life seemed too short to think of letting things drag; besides there was in my mind the fear of the ever-present "Ape," the imitator, who always stands ready to profit by the ideas of others, and realizing that there was a danger of some one of my employes divulging the secret of my plan to outsiders, I decided to act at once.

The first thing I did was to rent three extra rooms, connecting with the one I was occupying as an office, and began knocking down the thick wall partitions.

When this was done I put up thin board partitions, so that no one could see, but could hear almost everything that was going on upon the inside, and then placarded the doors "*No Admittance.*"

I then instructed the few employes I had to take special pains to make all the noise and hubbub possible while billing and calling off goods, after which I announced I had the biggest scheme on earth for unloading jewelry without the use of traveling salesmen.

When representatives of Eastern manufacturers called on me I looked wise, ordered lots of goods and made no apologies.

I never had a single manufacturer refuse to ship, and as soon as the goods began piling in I increased my office force, and kept increasing it until it reached over two hundred employes.

The business began booming immediately after the first big lot of packages were sent out.

Our records showed that over sixty per cent of all goods consigned were kept, and the largest part paid for on a ten days' basis.

This, of course, gave me plenty of ready money, and as I was buying my goods on four and six months'

time, I was enabled to surprise many of my creditors with remittances long before their bills were due.

I made no pretense of keeping a bank account, but fired all my surplus cash into the coffers of the manufacturers.

This was the best lubricator in the world.

The machinery was now running as smooth as oil; every fellow was at his post; salesmen came thicker and faster, and it seemed to me that everybody in Chicago wanted to hire out to me.

Every day brought forth better results; things kept getting hotter and hotter; my scheme was the talk of the town, and just to keep up the interest I bought a handsome pair of horses and a fine carriage.

Observing what a salutary effect this had on every one, I soon purchased another pair of fine Kentucky saddlers.

My wife being a Southern woman, accustomed to horseback riding and driving, we were not only in a position to keep up the interest, but were enabled to enjoy a much needed exercise and recreation.

Mrs. Johnston, since our marriage, was, and had been, my most able assistant in the management of every detail of my business; therefore I had regarded

her as my business partner, and no man ever had a better one.

When a salesman whom I had the slightest idea was skeptical about my financial standing came to town, I took him a whirl down the boulevard behind as fine a pair of horses as any man drove, and if he carried a line of goods such as I needed, I had no trouble in buying.

Of course, I didn't forget to keep reminding my employes of the importance of keeping up the noise and racket when billing and shipping out goods, and cautioned them in particular about doing so when Eastern salesmen were around.

I realized that my salvation was to make the bluff go, and as I had the most implicit confidence and faith in the scheme, and no other thought in my mind but to pay one hundred cents on the dollar for every dollar's worth of goods ordered, I knew that apologies and explanations would only cripple my cause, and therefore determined to carry out the thing with a bold front and a grand flourish of trumpets.

One day, when I first began my scheme, several Eastern salesmen were waiting out in the hall for their turn to show me their samples, when I happened to



step into the shipping-room, and, noticing that about fifty packages were ready for shipment, I hastily called to me five young men who were employed as stock clerks, shipping clerks, office boys, etc., and instructed each to fill his arms with packages and at intervals of one minute march out past the waiting salesmen, down one flight of stairs, enter our office in the rear unseen, and to keep on repeating the act until told to stop.

After a few minutes I opened the door of my private office and with a great deal of gusto invited the whole "bunch" of salesmen inside.

They all seemed much excited, and as they entered, one big fellow by the name of Kingman said: "Gee whiz! Johnston, you must be doing a devil of a business. My sakes! Your pay-roll must be something awful. Why I counted ninety fellows passing out, all loaded with packages just while I stood there, and they are still at it."

"Well, yes," said I, "it does make a big pay-roll; those youngsters you saw are my office boys; you ought to see the force of men and women I employ."

Another thing I did to give a better aspect to the business was to have a huge sign made and hung the entire length of the immense building in which was

my office. It contained the lettering, "J. P. JOHNSTON, WHOLESALE JEWELER," in very large letters.

I then had the building photographed with my sign as one of the most conspicuous features.

Next, I had a cut made from it which I used on my letterheads and all my advertising.

This not only gave confidence to the Eastern manufacturers, but to the merchants to whom I was catering for business.

Judging from the general appearance of the big sign, one could easily imagine that I occupied the whole building.

It was not long until I instructed my employes to make it their business to send out one thousand packages a day, and as the express charges were all prepaid, in addition to paying the express on all packages returned, it can readily be seen that my daily expense, on this item alone, was no trifling affair.

The records of the Adams, American, United States and Wells-Fargo Express Companies will show that during those busy times these expenses, altogether, amounted to from five hundred to one thousand dollars per day; but as a large percentage of the goods

were kept and the money kept pouring in, why should I worry over these expenses? The more goods shipped out the higher expenses and likewise the greater the sales. The only question was to get the goods in large enough quantities to keep up the good work. To do this the manufacturer must have his money, and with a correspondence numbering thousands of letters and receiving hundreds of remittances daily, it was getting easier and easier every day.

In making up this great number of packages it was necessary to buy in exceedingly large quantities, and in this connection there were many amusing little things happened.

One day a representative of an Eastern manufacturer of solid gold goods called, and about the first thing he showed me (a pair of ear-drops) was just what I had been looking for, for a special purpose, and in fact was the only thing he had among his samples that I cared for or wanted. They were listed at thirty-six dollars per dozen. After getting his very best discount, which was one-third and ten per cent off, I said:

“You may send me twelve gross.”

“Why, no! you don’t—you don’t mean twelve gross, you mean—you mean twelve pair.”

“No I don’t,” said I, “I mean just what I say—twelve gross.”

The poor fellow turned pale and gasped for breath, and fairly clung to the railing on the counter to keep from staggering, and, on recovering sufficiently, looking toward the clock and under apparent excitement, said:

“Say, by Jove! I have an engagement at ten o’clock with a man down to the Palmer House, and I’ll run down and see him and come back again.”

“All right,” said I, “but are you going to ship those ear-drops?”

“We will fix that when I come back,” he yelled as he flew out, and the look of satisfaction on his face as he passed out of the door and made good his escape was indeed amusing to me.

In about two hours Horace Steere, who represented Fred I. Marcy & Co., of Providence, R. I., came in laughing fit to kill, and said:

“Say, Johnston, was there a fellow up here this morning showing you some gold goods, and had to leave suddenly to meet a man at the Palmer House?”

Well, sir, as I came into the hotel a few moments ago he came rushing up to me and said: 'Say, what do you think? I called on a certain wholesaler this morning and the first darn thing he laid his hands on was a pair of solid gold ear-drops at thirty-six dollars a



*"Say, by Jove, I have an engagement with a man down at the Palmer House."*

dozen, and dang me if he didn't order twelve gross, or over three thousand dollars' worth, right off the reel, and you bet I made an excuse that I had an engagement with a man at the Palmer House at ten o'clock and skipped out.'

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. Steere, “I understand, and I can tell you who the wholesaler is, too; it’s J. P. Johnston. Now, then, you go right back and take his order for all the goods he will buy. I have sold him three bills of over ten thousand dollars each, in sleeve buttons alone, and he owes our house twenty-one thousand dollars right now, and can owe us three times that amount if he wants to.”

Later in the day the fellow came back with a pleasant smile and a cordial “How d’ do?”

But I told him it would be impossible for me to look his line over again, as I had an engagement with a man at the Palmer House.

## CHAPTER II.

Helping an Old Schoolmate Through College—Giving Him a Send-off as a Practitioner—"Bread Cast Upon the Water"—Striking a Bonanza in a Dakota Farm—Two Bright Laddies Worsted—How I Got Their Money—Trading Dakota Real Estate in Chicago—A Deal for Twenty-one Fine Horses—Selling Them at Auction—How I sold a Pair of Colts for Twelve Hundred and Twenty-five Dollars—Had Offered Them for Four Hundred and Fifty Dollars Three Hours Before—A Unique Letter from the Klondike.

I mentioned in "Twenty Years of Hus'ling" my experience with an old friend whom I nicknamed Dr. Frank, in consequence of his success while on our trip selling the Incomprehensible furniture and piano polish, in setting a sprained ankle for an old lady living near Lima, Ohio, who had fallen down stairs.

I also mentioned how, many years afterward, I had paid his expenses through the Hahnemann Medical College, of Chicago, where he graduated with high honors. His full name was Frank Hassler. He had been raised at Attica, Seneca County, Ohio, which was an adjoining county to Sandusky, where I was raised, and we had been friends from boyhood. I was es-

pecially proud of his fine record as a student, and overjoyed with the fact that I had been able to render him the necessary financial aid to accomplish what he had so ambitiously set out for.

A few days after his graduation I bought him a number of surgical instruments, several books for his office, a new suit of clothes, an outfit of linen and toilet articles, a ticket for Pierre, Dakota, and gave him a twenty-dollar gold piece as a little surplus.

The very first day of his arrival there a little child of the landlord with whom he was stopping had been given up to die by three of the very best physicians in the city, and as he had an old school-mate practicing law there, by the name of Harry Ernst, who recommended him highly, the case was immediately turned over to him, and inside of twenty-four hours he had the child completely out of danger; and before he had time to hang out his shingle business had begun in earnest, and in no time he had the practice of the city.

But practicing was one thing, and collecting accounts was another.

No one seemed to have a dollar, and for five years he was kept busy every day, but was seldom ever able to collect enough to pay his hotel bills.



His indebtedness to me was over one thousand dollars.

He was anxious to pay me, but unless collections should get better the prospects would not be flattering.

During his stay there he had managed to get possession of a hundred and sixty acres of land, twelve miles from Pierre, and one day I received a letter from him saying he had a chance to trade it for another hundred and sixty acres right near Pierre, and if I would pay the one hundred and forty dollars "boot" money demanded, he would turn over the whole quarter section to me to liquidate his indebtedness, and as times were very close there, with little prospect of his being able to pay me the cash, he believed it the best thing for me to do.

I likewise accepted his offer, and aside from keeping the taxes paid every year, I gave the matter no thought whatever, until one day, while on a business trip to St. Paul, I noticed squads of men at different times and places in the city, loaded with baggage, apparently about to leave for other parts.

I asked a man with whom I was having some business what it all meant.

He said they were on their way to Pierre, Dakota.

where a big boom was on, on account of that city having recently been made the capital of South Dakota.

I then remembered having read something about it, and immediately wired my wife to forward to me my deed and power of attorney to sign her name, and decided to take a whack at the boom myself.

As soon as my papers arrived I started forthwith.

The entire train was crowded with men of all nationalities. Among others with whom I soon became acquainted were two young men from Wisconsin, sons of wealthy lumber dealers.

They were, to use a slang phrase, "very fresh," the "Mr. Jolly" sort of fellows.

No one in our end of the car escaped them, and after they had a whole lot of fun with several elderly gentlemen, they turned to me and began amusing themselves by opening their purse, and while exposing several thousand dollars in drafts and certificates of deposit, offered me first forty dollars for my quarter-section, and then eighty dollars, and finally offered to throw in a yellow dog, and at last added a three-blade, bone-handle jack-knife as a special inducement.

I took the thing seriously, not allowing them to think for a moment that I thought they were joking.

In consequence of their unusually "fresh" methods, I, like all others, took a decided aversion to both of them, and made up my mind that it would be a



*"I took the thing quite seriously, not allowing them to think I was joking."*

splendid lesson for them to get their eye-teeth cut as soon as possible.

Although Dr. Frank had left Pierre, I knew that our old friend, Harry Ernst, was still there in the law and real estate business; therefore, when the train

stopped one day for dinner, I took a quick lunch and then slid out to the telegraph office and wired Mr. Ernst, saying:

“Will arrive there at six o'clock to-morrow (Saturday) evening with two ‘freshies.’ Don't recognize me, but locate my Hassler land when I ask you to do so and offer me one hundred dollars per acre for it.”

On returning to the train I set to work to win the good graces of the two “funny” men, and very soon had an understanding with them that we were all to stop at the same hotel at Pierre.

Arriving there, I helped them carry their baggage, as I had only a small hand-bag, and thereby kept them company on the way up town.

I kept my eye skinned for Harry Ernst's sign, and finally came upon it, and, as if being suddenly struck with the idea, I stopped and said:

“Say, let's go into this real estate office and see what they say about my land.”

“All right, all right,” they sang out in a chorus, “let's do.”

As we stepped in I found Mr. Ernst sitting at his desk and said:

“Can you locate a piece of land for me, sir?”

“ Well, yes.” he replied; “ I can if you have a description of it.”

I produced the deed, and instantly he said: “ Ah, ah! Well I think I can locate it, and very quickly, too, sir. Here it is (pointing on the map), and fronting right on the river, and as handsome a quarter-section as you ever laid eyes on. What will you take for it?” he asked with apparent excitement.

“ Well,” I replied, “ I’m sure I don’t know what it’s worth. How much will you give me?”

“ Well, sir,” said he. “ I’ll give you sixteen thousand dollars for it.”

“ In cash?” I asked.

“ No, not all cash,” he answered.

“ Well,” said I, “ I guess I’ll keep it.”

By this time my two friends were “ way up in the air.”

I took the matter very coolly. We started for the hotel, and before reaching there they were both “ red hot ” for a deal for a half interest.

“ Now,” said I, “ I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I know no more about this property than you do, and if you want to buy a half interest in it, without either you or me making any further inquiries about it or its lo-

cation, I'll let you have it for eight thousand dollars, provided you close the deal within thirty minutes. You to agree to pay the surveyor for platting into town lots."

Then they began to tell about sixty-two lots in some small town in North Dakota and a quarter-section of land in Iowa, and another quarter in Nebraska, which they owned and figured as being worth five thousand five hundred dollars, and which they offered with two thousand five hundred dollars in cash for a half interest in my property.

I took them up before they had time to take another breath, and immediately took them to a notary public.

There the papers were made out and drafts and certificates of deposit to the amount of twenty-five hundred dollars were turned over to me.

We then called upon a surveyor and arranged to have him plat them in twenty-five-foot front lots of forty-eight in a block. He was to color the blocks alternately red and blue. I was to own the blue ones and they the red.

On leaving the surveyor I threw him down fifty dollars and told him to make my papers out extra

fine and send them to me at Chicago as soon as possible.

I then sought out the associated press reporter, and through the influence of my lawyer friend had no trouble in interesting him in sending a press report of the entire transaction as follows:

“THE LUCK OF A CHICAGO MAN.

“J. P. Johnston, of Chicago, well known as the author of ‘Twenty Years of Hus’ling,’ arrived in Pierre this evening at six o’clock, and before ten o’clock had disposed of a half interest in a quarter-section of land for eight thousand dollars.

“He had owned the land for several years, having taken it for debt, and hardly considered it worth the taxes. The property will be sub-divided into city lots.”

By the time I reached Chicago every trader and speculator in the city was ripe for a deal.

The first man to call was a book publisher, who offered to print me two thousand dollars’ worth of “Twenty Years of Hus’ling” for a block of forty-eight lots.

Then came several cash buyers for from one to ten lots, all anxious to get on the ground floor.

Finally one of the best known and most notorious traders in the United States, John Hughes, of Crown

Point, Ind., came in. I had known him for several years, and knew that with him it was a big deal or nothing.

When he asked to see my property I handed him the plat and blue prints, and after studying them carefully for a few moments, he said:

“ Say, Johnston, this is as fine a piece of property as I have seen for a long time.”

“ But,” said I, “ you haven’t seen the property. All you have seen is the papers.”

“ Yes, I know,” he replied, “ but fine papers make fine property, and this is surely fine.”

Inside of an hour I had dealt him a number of blocks and received from him twenty-one head of horses at Crown Point, two western farms of a quarter-section each, two equities in houses and lots in Chicago, and one thousand dollars in cash.

I took his word for the description he gave of the horses and traded the same as he did for the lots, without having seen them.

He told me that, with but two exceptions, the horses were all first-class, and the only surprising thing about the deal was that when I came to see



them they were all far superior to what I had expected. In fact, they were a fine lot.

I shipped them to Chicago and immediately advertised in all the leading daily papers, to sell them, together with four other horses, at auction at the Palmer House livery barn, I to act as my own auctioneer.

Among the lot of Crown Point horses were a pair of Nutwood four-year-old colts, half brothers, and foaled on the same day. They were an exceptionally handsome pair, perfectly sound, gentle and well broke, quite speedy and well matched.

On the morning of the day of the sale I called on the manager of the Palmer House stable, Mr. Moon, and, after explaining to him that I dreaded the thoughts of offering the Nutwood colts at auction, in the fear of having to sell them at a great sacrifice, offered them to him for four hundred and fifty dollars.

He scoffed at the idea and offered me two hundred and fifty dollars for them, which I indignantly refused.

Leaving him in disgust, I went directly to the Grand Pacific Hotel, where I had an office for the sale and exhibition of car seats, which I was at that time in-

terested in manufacturing as a side line from my wholesale jewelry business.

I had scarcely been there ten minutes when Donald McLean, president of the Pacific Short Line Railroad, a man with a salary of twenty-four thousand dollars a year, came in and said:

“ Say, J. P., you are quite a horseman, tell me where I can find a handsome pair suitable to present to a lady friend of mine at Stamford, Conn.”

“ Well, sir,” I replied, “ you needn’t look any further; just come with me; I’ll show you just what you are looking for.”

I ’phoned over to the stable to have the colts hitched up and in fifteen minutes more we were on the boulevard. Mr. McLean was doing the driving and before we had gone a mile he said:

“ Well, I’ve been a lover and owner of horses all my life, but I never have seen or driven a nicer pair than this. What do you want for them, Johnston?”

“ Fifteen hundred dollars,” was my prompt reply.

Instantly raising his index finger, he said: “ I’ll give you a thousand-dollar bill for them.”

Had he held up the thousand-dollar bill where I could have easily said, “ All right,” and reached for



"I CALLED MY LAST BID TO HIM AND HE RAISED IT TO \$850.00".



it, I should have been too glad to have taken him up, but I fully realized that it might prove rather disastrous to fall five hundred dollars without a first-class opportunity to nip the thing in the bud and close the deal instantly, so I refused the offer with scorn, but finally said:

“Now, I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I am going to make an auction sale of this team and twenty-three other horses to-day, and if you want to offer one thousand dollars as a starter, I’ll protect them to that amount.”

“All right,” said he, “I’ll do it.”

When the sale opened I sold all the other horses first and then began on one of the Nutwood colts, the better one of the two, and after getting my first bid of two hundred and fifty dollars ran him up on twenty-five dollar bids until I had reached eight hundred dollars.

At this moment Mr. McLean came walking in the barn, when I called my last bid to him and he raised it to eight fifty, then suddenly all the other bidders quit, and not another bid could I get. At last I knocked him off to Mr. McLean.

I then started the other one which Mr. McLean also

bid in, but at three hundred and seventy-five dollars, making a total of twelve hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Stepping up to my wife, who was standing near by, he gave her the thousand-dollar bill he had previously offered me, and two one hundred dollar bills and a twenty and a five besides.

As soon as the purchase was made Mr. McLean asked me to show him to a first-class harness store, which I did.

He purchased a very handsome light harness, for which he paid one hundred and seventy-five dollars.

And to show how it often happens that when a man gets things to coming his way, it never lets up:

Three months after this transaction when my wife and I had just arrived home from an extended trip, I called at this same harness store, and after purchasing a riding whip, was about taking my departure when the foreman of the place said:

“Say, Johnston, just wait a minute.” Then, stepping up to the cashier and receiving a roll of money, came up and handed it to me, saying:

“Here is fifty dollars we placed to your credit as

commission on that harness we sold to your man, McLean.”

Up to this time I had had about seven years of as smooth sailing as any man could wish for. Everything I had touched, except the car seat business, had invariably turned into money, and this little incident was but one of many illustrations of what seemed to be more good luck than good management.

My auction sale was a grand success and immediately thereafter I set to work to dispose of my various pieces of real-estate which I had received for the Pierre lots, and in the general wind-up I found that after deducting all expenses, I had cleared over fourteen thousand dollars on the quarter-section.

Having never seen the land, and as I had made no inquiries about it while at Pierre. I hadn't the slightest idea how far from the city it was located. Whenever the question was asked me, I evaded it by pointing to the map and saying:

“Why, can't you see? Here it is fronting right on the river.”

About three years after I had cleared out all of the lots, I received a letter from a man 'way up in the Klondike, saying he owned a nice lot in J. P. John-

ston's sub-division in the city of Pierre, South Dakota, which he would trade to me for jewelry, and that he would leave it entirely with me how much jewelry I'd give him for it. He gave a glowing description of the property, and wound up by saying that he had seen it and would vouch for its being a nice lot.

I immediately answered his letter and enclosed a fifty-cent scarf pin, saying:

"My Dear Sir:—Your proposition to trade me a lot in J. P. Johnston's sub-division to the city of Pierre, Dakota, for jewelry, leaving the amount to me, has been received and I hereby accept your offer.

"Enclosed find a scarf pin, the retail price of which is fifty cents.

"Kindly make out your deed and mail it to me at your earliest convenience, and oblige, etc., etc."

A few weeks later I received the deed and a letter, saying:

"I am highly pleased with your liberality and herewith enclose deed as requested.

"I have already sold the scarf pin for thirty-five dollars.

"As you may some day wish to visit your property, perhaps I might give you some little information as to how to reach it. When you get to Pierre, take the first train out in the morning, get off at the first station east and walk eight miles, in almost any direction, till you come to a man herding sheep and he will tell you where to find it."





Enclosed find scarfpin, the retail price of which is fifty cents.

When on a visit to one of the largest cities in Kansas a few years ago, I found a Chicago acquaintance there in charge of a street railway, and learned that the former owners had traded the entire plant, railroad franchise and equipment, for a block of forty-eight of these lots, and seemed to be happy in the thought of having made a "Cracker Jack" deal.

When Dr. Frank reads this book, if he ever does, it will be the first information he has ever had, at least from me, as to how I came out with the land deal.

After leaving Pierre he went to Detroit, Michigan, where he married and began the practice of medicine and surgery, and I am in receipt of a letter the very day this chapter was written, saying that he had been one of the chief promoters of a Canadian Electric Railway, by which he has cleared for himself, during the past eight months, fifty thousand dollars in cash. So, hurrah for Dr. Frank!

## CHAPTER III.

Manufacturing Car Seats—How I Got In—How I Got Out—Easy, but Expensive—Buying a Summer Home at LaPorte, Indiana—Our First Few Weeks' Experience There—Lots of Fun Trading Horses—Back to Chicago in the Fall.

At the time of my Dakota land deal I was interested in manufacturing a reclining car seat, in addition to my wholesale jewelry and optical business.

My better judgment had always told me that concentration to the one principal object was essential to the average man's success, and while I had always adhered to the principle, and believed in it most thoroughly, yet I allowed two inventors, one a relative of mine, who had invented a new thing in car seats, to persuade me to advance sufficient money to build the first sample seat, which would cost about three hundred dollars, in consideration of which I was to have a third interest.

No sooner had the first sample been completed than one of them came forward with an improvement, which not only necessitated considerable expense in attorney's fees in getting it patented, but called for an-

other three hundred dollars for a sample, and to my great surprise, by the time this was completed, the other inventor had a still greater improvement. Of course, we saw the necessity of adopting every improvement, and as I had unconsciously been drawn into the business, as its principal backer, there was but one thing to do, and that was, keep spending my money for improvements in the hope of getting it back sooner or later, with possibly a good profit added.

This experimental scheme kept going on until at last I woke up one morning to find that I had about five thousand dollars invested in a single sample car seat and its patents.

About this time one of the inventors received an order from the C., B. & Q. R. R. Company for several thousand dollars' worth of seats, and giving me every assurance that the filling of that order would clear us at least four thousand dollars, I gladly furnished the money to build them.

When completed and the cash received for them, we took an inventory and discovered we had, or rather I had lost six thousand dollars.

How this could be was a mystery. However, I accepted their explanation that it was because everyone

connected with the concern, mechanics and all, were new in the work.

About this time we received an order for fifty thousand dollars' worth from the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, and twenty-seven thousand dollars' worth from the Pullman Palace Car Company. I felt certain that to go ahead and complete these orders would surely pull me out, and therefore immediately set the ball to rolling.

More orders came pouring in, requiring still more money. Finally we ran up against a very serious obstacle. These seat ends were made of malleable iron, and there being but one concern in the country where we could procure them, and they having received so many orders that they could not possibly get our orders out for us, we were delayed in the completion of our seats, and consequently "held up" from making our deliveries and getting our pay from the various companies.

This very soon began to ~~tell on~~ my bank account, and I found it necessary to arrange for a loan to carry me through. This I found no trouble in doing, after showing my order books to the president of the bank,

and in no time found myself indebted to my bank for sixty thousand dollars.

By this time we had a fully equipped factory with over three hundred employes.

Finally, there came a lull in business enabling us to fill all orders, and after receiving our cash for them, paying up my bank loans and taking an inventory, I found that instead of retrieving my losses, I was now twenty-seven thousand dollars "in the hole," and being obliged to close down the factory and let our experienced men go, it was plain to be seen that when we received more orders we would be obliged to repeat our former experience of engaging green men, with another severe loss, as we had learned that after two men had worked together six weeks on the seats, they could get out three seats, where they could get out but one in the beginning.

To overcome this trouble, I was anxious to add to our business that of manufacturing furniture, by which we could keep our woodworkers and upholsterers constantly employed and therefore always ready to take up the car seat work whenever orders should come in.

By this time, however, we had had our company incorporated under the laws of Illinois, and when it

came to a question of this kind it had to be voted on, and although I was the sole loser, I was at the mercy of the other members, and was voted down on my furniture proposition.

To make a long story short, I began to skirmish around for a buyer for my stock, and was successful in closing out and cleaning up with a total loss of just fifteen hundred dollars.

During this experience, my wholesale jewelry and optical business had been suffering.

I had always, throughout my whole life, been opposed to anything like a partnership business. I had always had an abhorrence to being handicapped in any shape or form by the opinion of others, and this car seat affair convinced me, more than ever, that I had always been right, and to this day there is nothing that any "fool" can do to rouse my ire more than to call on me with some promoting or partnership scheme. These fellows always have an axe to grind, and are looking for some pushing, wide-awake man with money to lose, to grind it for them.

It doesn't take me long to straighten those fellows out nowadays when they come to see me, and the woods are full of them all the time.

I now gave my personal attention to my wholesale jewelry and optical business.

During the many years that I had been in Chicago, I had confined myself closely to business and unwisely refused to take my summer vacations, the result of which was that I was now suffering from a severe nervous strain and very much in need of rest; besides I had grown exceedingly tired of the busy, noisy hubbub of city life. I felt that a log hut, located a thousand miles from nowhere, as the saying is, with a cow, a pig, a horse and a dozen chickens, would be an ideal life to live, and my wife joined me in this belief. Anything to get away from the turmoil of city life.

I had been raised on a farm, and while I had readily adapted myself to city life and customs for the sake of advantages in business, yet when at last feeling the need of a change, the free country farm life was what I longed for.

About this time an old friend told me one day of an ideal country home of ten acres of land, near LaPorte, Ind., which he knew was for sale, and described as being one mile out of that city, containing two and one-half acres of front yard, with sixty varieties of trees, all of which had been growing for



twenty years, an eleven-room house, bank barn and fruit trees of all kinds.

I took the first train for LaPorte and bought the place for six thousand five hundred dollars in less than two hours after my arrival on the premises.

I had always heard of this city as being one of the most citified, up-to-date towns of its size in the country.

It had the reputation of being the wealthiest city of its size in the United States, therefore when we got ready to move to our new country house, that same year in July, without giving the matter a second thought, I shipped our entire outfit of eight very fine horses, a fifteen hundred dollar victoria, a twelve hundred dollar lady's phaeton, with rear rumble for footman, a fine Gladstone surrey, a closed coupe, and a handsome canopy top buckboard, and harness to correspond, together with a very fine pair of high-bred greyhounds. We had one pair of Kentucky combination driving and saddle horses, of a handsome cream-color, with white mane and tail, well matched and very handsome also.

Another pair of black mares, evenly matched, but an inexpensive team which Mrs. Johnston drove to her

phaeton. These with four others of different colors, white, sorrel, bay and brown, made up a nice bunch for general use, and by matching and cross matching in the many different ways possible, I could come out every day with a new combination, and as we were there for rest and pleasure, to remain only during the hot season, we, of course, naturally enjoyed the country air, fine roads and excellent fishing.

This was the first year of the publication of my book "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," and a canvassing agent had been to LaPorte a few months before we moved there and sold about two hundred copies by subscription.

Many of the citizens had read it, and as soon as I had registered at the hotel on my first day's arrival there to look at the property, the clerk recognized the name, and asked if I was the man who wrote the book.

I told him that I was.

As soon as he learned that I had bought a summer home there, he imparted the fact to the newspapers, and in no time it became known that I was soon to become a citizen of their city.

When I shipped my horses and carriages, I arranged

with a liveryman to receive them and care for them until I should arrive.

He had all the carriages bunched together in one part of the barn, and likewise the horses, occupying a space by themselves.

I reached LaPorte in the afternoon of the day they had arrived, and immediately went to the barn to see about them. As I turned down the street leading from the hotel to the barn, I noticed a big crowd of men and boys in front of the barn, and on arriving there found the barn full.

I asked a young man standing by, on the outside, what the excitement was.

He said he guessed a circus had struck town er suthin' else.

On entering the barn I found the crowd inspecting my horses and carriages; employes of the barn were leading the horses to and fro.

I took in the situation without exposing my identity, and was very much amused with the different comments and suggestions offered by those present and many new comers.

The first man came rushing in with, "What is this, a circus?"

“No,” came the reply from one of the attendants. “This stuff belongs to Mr. Johnston, the feller ‘et wrote the book ‘Twenty Years of Hus’ling.’ He’s goin’ to move here.”

“Great Heaven!” replied the questioner, “I should think he had already moved by the looks of things.”

“Say,” another man said, “I wonder if he made all of this property selling the Incomprehensible Furniture and Piano Lustre?”

“I reckon he traded some feller patent rights for most of it,” said a young man who said he had just finished reading the book and didn’t believe a dern word of it.

Another man said he had read the book, and if there was any truth in it he’d bet some one got “soaked” for all them horses and rigs, either with patents or cheap jewelry.

A well dressed, middle aged gentleman stood by and said he had read the book also, and he didn’t see that Johnston had done anything that almost anyone else would not have done to get three meals a day, and he’d like to meet the feller darn well.

At this I stepped forward and extending my hand, said:

“ Well, sir, here’s your chance. I am the man, and we will just have a pair of these horses hitched to my little road wagon, and I’ll take you a drive.”

So saying, I had my favorite pair hitched, and he and I took a drive round the lakes.

He proved to be Henry Morrison, President of the First National Bank of LaPorte, and from that day on he was one of my best friends.

He was quite a trader, and we had some rather amusing deals at different times during my stay there.

Owing to the reputation the town bore as being a strictly up-to-date and citified place, I supposed, of course, that my horses and vehicles would be quite ordinary as compared with those belonging to some of the millionaires there. In this I was greatly mistaken. The prevailing popular conveyance there was the two-seated open surrey, to which was driven the family horse. When the ladies made their afternoon calls, one of the four occupying the surrey did the driving, and held the horse while the other three made the calls.

This was a novel method, and to say the least, an economical one, and to me was an illustration of one

of the many methods by which they had nearly all become millionaires.

It had always been my policy that "when in Rome do as Rome does," but in this case it was too late.

We realized right in the start that we were "in for it," and consequently must make the best of it.

After getting settled in our country home, we arranged to have a half dozen Chicago friends come to visit us.

The next day after their arrival we hitched up two of our best turnouts and took them around the city.

This being our first day out upon the streets, everyone seemed filled with curiosity and interest.

Wherever we made a short stop at a grocery store, postoffice or market, crowds gathered in numbers, some appearing pleased, while others looked down their noses with apparent envy or disgust.

The first day was rather interesting to us and we had about concluded that all was well and would end well.

The next day, however, when we again appeared on Main street, we noticed most of the men had turned their backs to the street with their hands behind them,

looking up at the buildings as though something unusual had happened.

On arriving home that evening, and while at dinner, I made mention of my observation of this, when all the guests and Mrs. Johnston declared that they had also noticed this queer action of so many of the men, and wondered what interested them.

The following day we changed our driving outfits entirely and started down street for another afternoon's ride, and to our amazement, not only most of the men, but many of the women were still interested in gazing at the buildings.

While making a stop at one of the groceries, a gentleman whom I had met was standing on the street, taking in the situation.

I asked him what was interesting the people so much in the buildings all along the streets. He smiled blandly and said:

“Well, I heard one of those fellows remark, as he noticed you approaching, that he wouldn't be guilty of lookin' at sich durn fools, and thus saying, instantly followed suit and turned his back with the rest of the disgusted ones.”

**This was more fun than I had had in many a day and**

thereafter I took special pains to come out with something new, by cross matching my horses and changing from one vehicle to another every time I was out.

Then, again, we often appeared on horseback with a pair of finely gaited Kentucky saddlers and our greyhounds accompanying us.

For several days it was a question with us whether the people were really mad, or just playing mad. At any rate we didn't lose any sleep over the matter; so long as it didn't affect the fishing, and the roads remained good, we were all right.

We remained there the balance of the Summer.

During this time I had still continued by acquaintance with my friend Mr. Morrison, and through him we met all the members of his family and several relatives and friends, all of whom we found to be thoroughly up-to-date and of the wide-gauge sort.

During the Summer Banker Morrison had expressed a desire to purchase my wife's pair of black mares.

I allowed him to take them to his own barn and keep them and use them for three weeks. He was well enough pleased with them, but thought six hundred dollars was too much to pay for a team that had no



more speed than they had, therefore the deal was off and I took them back to my barn.

As soon as cold weather set in, we began to arrange to leave the Summer home and return to the city.

I had sold one pair of my horses to an Eastern buyer during the Summer, leaving six on my hands, and decided to try to sell two pair, leaving the pair of cream-colored Kentucky saddlers to take back to the city.

One morning at the breakfast table, I said to Mrs. Johnston: "Now, I am going to sell two pair of these horses to-day. The pair of black mares we will invoice at just what they cost me in Chicago (two hundred and fifty dollars) and I am going to sell them to-day to Henry Morrison at some price; if I sell for less than two hundred and fifty dollars, we will figure our day's losses at whatever the amount is less than the invoice price, and if I sell them for more than that amount, whatever that amount is, we must figure it as so much made to-day."

Then I invoiced the other team at a very low price (one hundred and seventy-five dollars), as the best one of the two had gotten slightly sore in his front feet and shoulders. After breakfast we had the black mares hitched to the light road wagon. Mrs. Johnston ac-

accompanied me and we drove directly to Mr. Morrison's bank. On inquiring we learned that he had just gone over to a livery barn which he was the owner of. We drove there directly and found Mr. Morrison standing in front of the barn. On our way there Mrs. Johnston asked me if I would hesitate long and try to get more, should Mr. Morrison offer me my invoice price, two hundred and fifty dollars.

"No," I replied, "I would take him up before he had time to change his mind."

Finding him standing in front of the barn I said: "Mr. Morrison, I am going to sell this pair of mares to you to-day."

"Well, I'll bet you won't," was the reply.

"But I will, and you will own them before noon, so get to talking."

"Well, I guess I won't talk. You will not sell them to me, you can bet on that. I have a barn full of horses eating their heads off now."

"But," said I, "you haven't as nice a pair as these, anyhow, there is no need for an argument; this team will belong to you before noon. Now talk, and talk quickly, and to the point. Come now, say something."

I was on the verge of telling him that I was de-

terminated to sell them, and would make him a cash price that would scare him, when he said :

“ See here, you tell in your book, ‘ Twenty Years of Hus’ling,’ about your many horse trades. Now, I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I have a six-year-old gray horse in the barn that I’ll trade you for this pair. Come, now, let’s see if you have any stuff in you.”

“ Bring him out,” I replied.

He did so and I said :

“ How much will you give to boot? ”

“ Three hundred dollars,” was his offer.

“ No, sir,” said I, “ make it three fifty and we’ll trade.”

“ I’ll split the difference,” said he.

“ All right, it’s a trade.”

He immediately drew me his check for the amount, when I said : “ Now, what shall I do with this gray horse? ”

“ Well,” said Mr. Morrison, “ there stands an old German right across the street, who just offered me seventy-five dollars for him, but my price was one hundred and twenty-five.”

“ Call him over,” said I.

He did so, and addressing him, I said :

“Do you want to buy this horse?”

“Vell, yes; vor seventy-five dollars.”

“All right,” said I, “give me the money,” which he did, making me four hundred dollars for my two hundred and fifty inventory.

I immediately hitched up the other team and called upon a couple of men, partners in a livery business, one of whom had spoken to me about buying them.

I said to them, “Gentlemen, I am going to sell you this team to-day.”

“O, I guess not,” replied one of them.

“But I am, and you will own them before five o’clock this eve, so get to talking, say something and we will do business in mighty short order.”

Instead of talking, they each got their jack-knives out and closing their mouths like clams went to whittling.

I tried all the different methods I could think of to draw them out, and said and did everything I could think of to impress them with the idea that the cash would buy them exceptionally cheap, expecting that if they should become enough interested to ask the price, to make a flat offer to sell them for one hundred and



*“Well, have you got a cur dog, a rat-trap, or any old thing that you would be willing to trade for this team?”*

seventy-five dollars; but no, I couldn't budge them; they kept on whittling and I did all the talking.

At last I said:

"Well, have you got a cur dog, a rat trap, or any old thing that you would be willing to trade for this team?"

At this one of them had the courage to remark that they each had a three-year-old colt which they would like to trade in, and pay the difference in cash.

"Where are your colts?" I asked.

"One of them," they said, "was six miles out in the country and one only a mile out."

I asked them to describe them, which they did.

I then said: "Now, one of you get in and we will go and see the one a mile out, and if he fills the description given, I will take your word for the other one."

So saying, one of them accompanied me to the pasture, where we found the colt, and I announced that I was perfectly satisfied.

On returning to the barn they wanted to know how I would trade.

I asked two hundred dollars to boot.

They offered me one hundred and fifty.

We then agreed to split the difference and they paid me my invoice price, one hundred and seventy-five dollars to boot.

I shipped the colts to Chicago and sold them to Mr. Leroy Payne, proprietor of the Palmer House livery barn, for two hundred and fifteen dollars.

When ready to leave in the fall, we hired a man and his wife to take care of the premises and look after some stock and a number of fine chickens, and we returned to Chicago, and again resumed the management of our wholesale jewelry and optical business.

Both Mrs. Johnston and myself had been greatly benefited by this Summer's outing and took hold of the work with renewed energy and vigor.

## CHAPTER IV.

Trading Watches for Horses—A Half Interest in the Livery Business in Chicago—Traded for a Kicker—A Providential Runaway of a Horse—How I Settled for an Uprooted Tree—A Narrow Escape on Derby Day—Giving a Newsboy a Job—How He Came to the "Top"—A Smooth Man on Slippery Streets—An Amusing Meeting with a Witty Woman—An Unconscious Elopement—Visited by a Country Cousin—A Tip-up and Mix-up—Just How It All Happened.

There seemed to be just enough Yankee in me to always to be trading and trafficking, and the very first punishment I ever received, or the first I remember of, was for trading a brand new pocket knife for an old broken handled one, with only half of a blade left, and receiving two cents to boot.

Being in the jewelry business and handling watches, silverware, diamonds and many other things that almost anyone who had a horse to trade would be apt to deal for, I always made it a part of my business every fall, when I knew that any number of people would be glad to get rid of their horses rather than winter them, to put an ad in the papers, offering to trade a watch, diamond or something else for a horse.



I had an old barn rented in the suburbs of the city and when spring came, I always had a lot of horses for sale, besides I would often trade for carriages and single and double harness and almost anything that I thought I could turn into cash.

The fall that we came back to Chicago from La-Porte I again began my trading and by spring I had enough stock to start a fairly respectable livery barn. This, however, I had no thought of doing, but expected to make my usual auction sale as soon as pleasant weather came.

About this time, an old acquaintance, formerly a resident of Clyde, Ohio, my old boyhood town, came there from Cheboygan, Michigan, to look for a location to open a livery barn.

Being a stranger and not accustomed to the ways of a large city, he declared that he hadn't nerve enough to tackle it alone, so I offered to turn in the stock I had, as a half interest, which amounted to about thirty-five hundred dollars, he to take the exclusive management of it, with the privilege of buying me out at any time, with a profit of ten per cent per annum to me on the amount of my investment.

While making these trades for horses, I received a

letter from a man near Grand Crossing, saying that if I would bring a lot of watches out there, he would give me any kind of a trade I wanted, as he had a barn full of horses.

The next day I loaded up my pockets with watches, chains and charms and went out.

He was a hard man to deal with, but at last I traded a watch and chain for a fairly good looking switch tail mare and light buggy and harness.

One of the things I had always declared I would not own was a balky or kicking horse and especially the latter, because the person behind such an animal is entirely at its mercy, therefore I was always very particular about making inquiries as to the possibility of an animal having these faults, and I did so in this case, when the fellow assured me that the horse was perfectly kind and gentle.

I started back to the city, driving along congratulating myself that I had made a good deal, when suddenly, biff! bang! came his heels against the dashboard, sending the pieces in every direction, then he began to run, and just as we were passing Grand Crossing he blazed away again, both heels flying in the air. Again he grabbed the bit and I soon found

that I might as well try to hold a locomotive, then suddenly he kicked again. As he did so, I gave a quick jerk, landing him on his haunches just long enough for me to jump out and throw the lines over the dashboard, when I yelled, "Git out of here, you old villain."

The way he went down the street was a caution. I couldn't begin to count the number of times he kicked, but in each instance he kicked so high that he came nowhere near striking the buggy.

The last I saw of him he was still running and kicking, still hitched to the buggy and having a high time all to himself.

I then started for the depot, close by, and approaching a man who had been standing on the platform witnessing the performance, I asked:

"What time does the next train go to the city?"

"In about ten minutes," he replied, and then asked:

"Don't that rig belong to you?"

"Not much!" I answered. "It was mine, but not now. I wouldn't own such an outfit."

I returned home on the cars, and just for curiosity, watched the papers, and the next morning read a

notice that a runaway horse and part of the harness could be found in charge of a west side police station.

I said nothing, preferring to make the city a present.

While interested in the livery business I kept my private team there, and one day I had a runaway with one of my Kentucky horses that made my hair kink.

This horse had suddenly taken to scaring at bicycles and while out riding in a single top carriage I had just turned from Michigan boulevard on 24th street when the horse scared at three bicycles. He lurched forward and when suddenly I drew up the line, the rubber bit broke and the bridle stripped over his head, and if anyone thinks that Kentucky horses can't run, they should have seen this one going down the street with me sitting in the buggy, wholly and entirely at his mercy.

I instantly determined to take the matter as coolly as possible. He was going directly toward the lake, and realizing the great danger of having my brains dashed out when he should turn a corner, going either north or south (which he must necessarily do), I decided that I would be safer on his back than in the buggy, and instantly reached for the crupper of the harness, and no sooner had I done so than the horse

turned toward the sidewalk. A small maple tree standing on the curbing, in some mysterious way, how I never could imagine, got tangled up in the buggy wheels and was jerked right out by the roots and thrown with a vengeance clear over in the owner's yard.

The next thing we struck was a dooryard gate, which happened to be standing half open. Just about as mysteriously the front wheel caught it and jerked it off of its hinges and I don't know but it's going yet, for I never did learn what became of it.

The next instant we were heading for a very large maple tree.

I braced myself in readiness for the final collapse, and while approaching the tree, among a million other things I thought of, was the story of the old Irishman who fell from the twenty-three-story Masonic Temple building in Chicago, and as he was about to land on the pavement below, he shouted, "Now for a d—— good bump."

And sure enough, it was a d—— good bump. The felloes and spokes flew in every direction. The whiffletree and holdback straps broke and the horse ran down the street about twenty rods, when he stopped

and turning facing the wreck, dropped his head as if ashamed of what he had done, and waited to be led back.

When the carriage struck the tree, being braced for the collision, I stepped out on the ground without as much as receiving a jar.

After employing an expressman to remove the carriage and horse to the barn, I was about to start for a car, when I heard the voice of a lady calling :

“ Mistah, Mistah, will you please step this way? ”

I discovered at once that she was sitting on the porch of the house in front of which had stood the small maple tree.

As I walked up to the porch, she said, in a sort of hesitating way: “ Allow me to congratulate you on making your escape from instant death. I certainly expected to see your brains dashed out.”

I thanked her, and when about to take my departure, she said :

“ Ah—by the way,—how about that maple tree you pulled out by the roots? ”

“ By Jove! ” said I, “ that’s so! Now, this is a bad thing. Why, do you know, that when I left home it never occurred to me, not for a single instant, that a

thing of this kind was going to happen, and I never brought a single, solitary tree along with me?"

She gave a sickly sort of smile and said:

"Well, then, we will just let it go and I'll speak to my husband about it when he comes home, and I guess he'll fix it."

This accident occurred on Friday. The next day was Derby day at Washington Park, and my wife and I had two lady friends engaged to accompany us in our Gladstone surrey, to which I was to drive my high-spirited pair of Kentucky horses. I had always used rubber bits in all my driving, but on arriving at the barn after this accident I instructed the man who had the care of my horses to change the rubber bits of my double harness to steel ones, which he did at once, and while doing so one of them actually came apart while unbuckling the strap. On investigating we found that in one place a small piece of the rubber had rotted out, and in this vacant space the piece of steel which ran through the rubber had rusted clear through and broken apart.

On Derby days the boulevards were literally thronged with vehicles of every kind and description, and one can imagine what might have been the conse-

quences had that bit broken on such a day with a pair of high-spirited horses. I have always regarded that accident as providential.

The most trifling incident often changes the course of a man's whole life.

One day I had an appointment with a man at 22nd street, and was waiting for an approaching street car, when I discovered that I hadn't a cent of money with me. At that instant a newsboy came rushing up calling "Papers, papers," when quickly turning to him, I said:

"Kid, loan me ten cents."

As quick as a flash he handed me a dime.

I, in turn, gave him my business card and said:

"Come to that address to-morrow, and I'll give you fifty cents."

The next morning he was on hand, and after making my promise good, I began making inquiries about his family and future prospects.

I had been forcibly impressed with his generous, liberal manner, and was now more impressed with his pleasing countenance and frankness, and offered him a position as an office and errand boy, provided he would attend evening school at my expense for a few months.

He accepted the position and in no time was pro-





*As quick as a flash he handed me a dime.*

moted to the shipping room, and from there to the stock room and then to the billing department, where he began showing a decided talent for penmanship and eventually became one of our most valued employes.

The last I heard of him he wrote me that he had a fine position with a New York wholesale jewelry house, was married, had a nice family, owned a home of his own and had a nice bank account.

One cold winter morning I started for my office and found the streets literally covered with ice and sleet.

The first man I met, a tall, heavy built, ministerial looking gentleman, came around the corner, slipping and sliding, and on the verge of landing on his back, when instantly I yelled, "Whoa!" at the top of my voice.

He instantly came back on his feet, but had no sooner started off again than he slipped and slid in every direction as before.

Once again I yelled "Whoa!" and again he landed squarely on his feet and made another start, only to begin again to slide about, if anything, worse than ever, when for the third time I yelled "Whoa!" and for the third time he pulled himself together and after



"IS THIS TO BE A WALTZ OR A SCHOTTISCHE?" SHE ASKED.



taking a careful survey of things, started off on safe footing, and turning to me, without cracking a smile, said:

“Thank you,” and passed on.

I had not gone two blocks, when I met a stylishly dressed and a very handsome young lady. The streets were crowded, and as I turned to the right to pass her, she turned to the left, and then began a regular side step act, one to the right, the other to the left. Six months' practice could not have made us better. Suddenly both came to a standstill, face to face, each staring at the other, then identically as before both started in, one to the right and the other to the left.

By this time many pedestrians had stopped and were taking in the performance, when once more both came to a standstill at the same instant, then with a twinkle in her eye and a smile overspreading her countenance, she asked:

“Is this to be a waltz or a schottische?”

One evening my wife and I went to a restaurant for dinner and when passing out with many others, some one took me by the arm. I supposed, of course, it was my wife.

Passing out to the sidewalk we had gone possibly

a half a block, when I felt her hand in my outside overcoat pocket.

Wondering what kind of a joke she was playing on me, I asked:

“What are you doing with your hand in my pocket?”

Instantly there came a shriek from a strange voice, and the next instant she was scrambling for my overcoat pocket, and yelling, “Give me my purse. Heavens! I thought you were my husband. Give me my purse, please, please give it to me.”

Placing my hand in the pocket, sure enough, there I found her purse tucked away for safe keeping.

As she and I turned back, there stood her husband and my wife, both fairly craning their necks and their eyes almost popping out of their heads in a vain endeavor to understand what we were up to.

One day, after having my baggage delivered at the Chicago and Northwestern depot, preparatory to making a trip to Oconto, Wisconsin, I started to walk to the depot, as I had just about time enough to make my train.

I was always a very fast walker and on my way north on Clark street a lady coming west on East

Madison street and myself brushed up close enough together so that one of the buttons on my long linen ulster got caught in her open work, lace overskirt.

Of course, before either knew what had happened we were brought to a sudden standstill.

Dropping my small hand valise, I set to work to unravel the mixup, but manlike, only made a worse job of it.

Then she tried and failed.

I began to get nervous about my train and said:

“By Jove! I’m afraid I’ll miss my train.”

“What train?” she asked.

“The Chicago and Northwestern,” I answered.

“Well, for gracious sakes!” she yelled, “then come on. That’s the very train I want to catch.”

And the way we piked it down that street together in our mix-up and tangle was a caution.

The more we thought of it the more ridiculous it seemed.

We both laughed until we became so exhausted as to almost fall to the street.

On reaching the depot we bought our tickets together, checked our baggage together, entered the car

together and took a seat together before attempting to unravel.

We introduced ourselves and soon learned that she was on her way to Green Bay, Wisconsin, to visit friends, who were also friends of mine.

In "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," I mentioned having worked eleven days for a farmer in Branch County, Michigan, for a dollar a day and my board.

I really think that of all the men I ever met in all of my many experiences, this farmer was actually the stingiest, the most tricky, the worst dressed, the most poorly fed, and the wildest eyed specimen of humanity, for a rich man, that I ever laid eyes on.

I think a visit from the devil and six imps would have pleased me ten times better than a visit from this man and his family.

By some hook or crook he had learned of my whereabouts in Chicago and about my success in the wholesale jewelry and optical business.

One summer afternoon who should come stamping into my store but this freak accompanied by his wife and sixteen-year-old daughter.

They were certainly a sight to behold.

He, six foot two, with his long jet black hair sleeked





THEY WERE CERTAINLY A STUDY TO THE STUDENT OF  
HUMAN NATURE.



down over his ears and reaching almost to his shoulders, a narrow pointed chin and his long, stinky nose, the two almost meeting, a fringe of whiskers extending from ear to ear, just between the neck and chin; an old-fashioned roundabout coat, with sleeves reaching half way between the wrists and elbow, no cuffs, a pair of cotton trousers, reaching within about four inches of his instep, a pair of stogy boots, with about a pound of tallow spread over them.

His wife and daughter were dressed correspondingly.

As they made their appearance, hands and arms filled with bundles, baskets, bottles, cheap pasteboard boxes and telescope cases, they were certainly a study to the student of human nature.

The instant they entered, the store-room became filled with the odor and fumes of stale bread and butter, dried herring, onions, garlic and Swiss cheese

After taking plenty of time to pile their baggage in a heap, Mr. ———, after making a general survey of the surroundings, sauntered up to the book-keeper's desk, and in his backwoods, yeahawk twang, asked:

“Is Perry in?”

“Perry; Perry?” repeated the bookkeeper, and turning to his assistants, asked:

“Have we anyone working here by the name of Perry?”

“Not that I know of,” they cried in chorus.

“Haint this his store?” asked Mr. ———, his eyes almost popping out of his head from fright and disappointment.

“What sort of a looking chap is this man Perry?” asked the bookkeeper.

“Gosh! I haint saw him fer twenty years. When I knowed him he had red hair and worked fer me on a farm in Michigan.”

“Well, then,” said the bookkeeper, “I guess this isn’t the man you are looking for.”

“Whose store is this?” he then queried.

“This is Mr. Johnston’s store.”

“Well, but haint it Perry Johnston’s store?” he asked, his face lighting up.

By this time all of the hundred and fifty employes were interested listeners and business had come to a standstill.

At his last suggestion several of the employes cried:

“ Oh, yes! yes, Mr. Johnston’s given name *is* Perry, sure enough.”

“ Gosh a’mighty! I feel better. Is he in?” asked Mr. ———, greatly elated.

Stepping to the door of my private office, the book-keeper said:

“ Mr. Johnston, there is a gentleman and two ladies out here who wish to see you.”

The moment I entered the room I recognized him.

My first impulse was to give him the cold stare and a frosty welcome.

My next thought was that I’d better make the best of it, and at the same time teach my employes a lesson in “gratitude,” although I realized that to do so I must play the hypocrite, and play it well. Therefore, instead of “turning them down,” I rushed up to him and extending both hands, grabbed hold of him and swung him around once or twice, then shaking him by the hand, again slapped him on the back affectionately and repeated many times over how glad I was to have him visit me.

After receiving an introduction to his newly wedded second wife and daughter, I hus’led them into my private office, and quickly returning to the store room

said in a very high pitched voice: "My conscience! I wouldn't have missed having that man visit me for a thousand dollars. Why, do you know, he did me a favor twenty years ago that I shall never forget, and a thousand times since I have wondered if I should ever be able to repay him, and this is my opportunity. I shall certainly give him a good time."

One of my employes, B. T. Wales, a former Clyde boy who had charge of the billing department, afterward told me that when I had finished this little speech and had left the store room, several of the young men and women in his department said:

"Say, isn't J. P. the stuff?"

"Holy Mackinaw! I wouldn't be caught on the streets with that bunch for a million dollars," said one young man.

"Yes, but J. P. is made of better stuff than that," said Mr. Wales.

"You bet he never forgets a friend," chimed in another youngster.

And so it went. None of them could quite understand, however, how I could possibly have the courage to be caught in the dark with such an outfit.

My wife had gone to an afternoon matinee and it

so happened that on her return to the office she and I met in the store room, when I explained that some very dear friends of mine from Michigan had come to visit us, and were waiting in my office.

To quietly pave the way, I pointed to the heap of bundles, baskets and boxes and said:

“ See! There’s their baggage.”

She gazed at the pile a moment and asked:

“ What kind of people are they? Indians from the north woods? Where does that awful odor come from? Do for gracious sakes let me see them. Are they to go to our house tonight? ”

I replied that they were right up-to-date people, at any rate they were good enough for me to associate with.

I then told her about how this man had done me an everlasting favor twenty years before, and how glad I was to be able to reciprocate.

“ Well,” she remarked as we were about to enter my office where they were bunched together, “ if that’s the case we must give them a good time.”

As we passed in they all jumped to their feet.

After the introduction, I stepped back to my desk, leaving Mrs. Johnston to entertain them.

I don't think she ever came nearer sinking to the floor than on that occasion. However, she was equal to the emergency and although her black eyes fairly snapped and her fingers twitched nervously, and for a moment she seemed to be confused and talking at random, she very soon came to her senses and made them feel quite at ease.

We took them to our home at Woodlawn Park, and the next morning with the understanding that Mrs. Johnston should go along and sit in the front seat with me, I hitched a pair of horses to the Gladstone surrey, i. e., a surrey with two seats, backs together.

We put the three freaks on the rear seat and started out.

Everything went well until while crossing the river on our way back from the north side, the bridge turned to allow several large vessels to pass.

While we were waiting an Italian peanut, fruit and popcorn vender came up with his two wheeled cart and backing it right up to the rear of our surrey, left it there and stepped back to the railing of the bridge.

No sooner had he done so than all three of our guests jumped from their seat and turning about facing



the river, began pointing out different things and talking very loud and under much excitement.

Mrs. Johnston and myself both cautioned and almost pleaded with them to sit down, but the excitement was too great for them and in just about a second both horses stepped forward suddenly, when the whole bunch landed on their heads right on top of the rear end of the peanut vender's go-cart.

Of course the weight up-ended the thing, when popcorn, peanuts, fruit and taffy candy went in every direction and certainly made a bad enough mixture, but what made it still worse, the Italian had placed in the front of the cart a tin bucketful of melted butter which he used as seasoning for his popcorn.

The biggest part of this landed fairly and squarely on top of Mrs. ——— glossy head of black hair, enough, however, went spattering over all of them, which, when mixed with the poor vender's stock in trade, made a sorry looking spectacle of the entire outfit.

Of course the Italian wanted pay for his ruined stock, and I thought he ought to have it.

I attempted to argue with Mr. ——— that he

should settle with the poor fellow, but no, sir; he couldn't see it in that light.

He said I was to blame for not holding the horses and failed to see how he could be blamed.

The women folks were furious at the merest suggestion of their being responsible.

Two policemen soon came up and about forty Italians gathered around.

I once more tried to convince Mr. ——— that he was to blame and told him there would very likely be more or less trouble if he didn't do something at once, but no, sir, not a cent would he give up, because they were not in any way to blame.

The excitement kept growing as more Italians congregated, and I was the one they all looked to for a settlement.

I was certain that if we didn't all get in jail, I'd be mobbed unless something was done and done quickly.

I therefore began to negotiate for a settlement. I had the whole gang to deal with. Some of them wanted fifty dollars, others thought twenty-five would be about right. The owner decided to take twenty.

I offered ten and after a few moments' parley, com-

promised at fifteen dollars, which I gladly paid, myself, and we hurriedly made our escape.

Would anyone suppose that this wolverine would stand by and let me pay this bill?

That was just what he did do, nor did he offer to pay any part of it, and as I was counting out the cash he remarked that it didn't pay to have such fractious horses.

I drove directly to my office and after learning that they had nothing but light baggage and no clothing, I showed them that their clothes were literally ruined and unfit to wear, when they decided to let me take them to a good place where they could purchase new outfits.

Before starting out with them, I called up, by telephone, three different departments of a well known store, the managers of which I was well acquainted with, and told them what had happened and how I had been "strung," and asked them to charge from twenty-five to fifty per cent extra for every purchase they made, and give it to me as a commission.

Mrs. Johnston and myself accompanied them and when we got through with them, there had been quite

a transformation scene, at an expense of about eighty dollars to Mr. ———.

We used tact enough to get rid of them very soon, in fact they took a train for home that evening.

A couple of days later I called for my commission, which amounted to twenty-seven dollars.

CHAPTER V.

A Trip to California—A Practical Joke on a Hebrew—A Threadbare Story—A Sporty Old Dutchman—Summer in the Morning, Winter at Noon—The Sandwich Story.

In the interest of the Car Seat Company, of which I was president, I made a trip to California, my wife accompanying me, for the pleasure of the trip.

About this time, my book "Twenty Years of Husling," was having its biggest sale.

I had spent ten thousand dollars in cash, advertising it in newspapers and on street cars throughout the United States before putting it on the market at all, and for many months its sale averaged a thousand copies per day.

The newsboys on trains were reaping a harvest from its sales and while the paper edition was supposed to retail at fifty cents, many of the train boys were getting as high as a dollar and a half for it.

The first day out on this trip one of the newsboys handed me a copy of it and said:

"Here is a very humorous and instructive book,

and this is the last edition that will ever be printed of it, because the plates were destroyed by fire and the author of it is dead and they can never print any more."

"How much?" I asked.

"A dollar and fifty cents," he replied.

"So the plates have been burned and the author is dead?"

"Yes, sir," said he.

I asked if it hadn't occurred to him that the publishers might, in such an event, make up another set of plates from one of the remaining copies of the book.

He replied that he hadn't thought of that. Anyhow, that was the way it had been explained to him.

A gentleman, directly across the aisle from us, bought a copy, and after reading awhile, began to laugh occasionally at incidents related.

Finally, I went over and sat down by him and asked him to read aloud, which he did.

He very soon came to another story, which he laughed heartily over, but I could see nothing funny about it and told him so.

Then a moment later he came to another incident that amused him.



*"He began to laugh occasionally."*

I, as before, declared that I couldn't see anything funny about that either.

Then the third and fourth time it was the same,

and at last he quit reading aloud, and apparently disgusted, partially turned his back on me and read to himself.

Then once more he began to laugh, when I said:

“Read aloud, let’s see if there is anything in that book that is really funny.”

“Funny! Funny!” he repeated. “Caesar’s ghost! I don’t believe you have the slightest appreciation of anything funny. I think your vein of humor is mighty small for as big a man as you are.”

Among others on our car who had been reading it was a shrewd little Hebrew on his way to San Francisco.

That evening I stepped into the smokers’ compartment and there found the little Hebrew, the gentleman whom I had urged to read aloud, and four other men, two of whom had also been reading the book during the day.

They were in turn relating personal experiences.

When an opening came, I started in and related one of the stories in the front part of the book as one of my own experiences.

The effect was at once noticeable.





'NOT VONE OF DOES STORIES VAS YORN OWN PEARSONAL EXPERIENCE.  
NO SIR, NOT .VONE '.



Glances went from one to the other, as much as to say, "How is he for a liar?"

After each had told another story, I gave them one more from the book, after which I made an excuse to go to the water tank for a drink.

From the little I could hear and see, when glancing back into the smoking room, convinced me that they were having a whole lot of fun at my expense, and when I returned, all eyes were on me, and an incredulous smile was on every countenance.

At the first opportunity I told still another which the book contained.

This was too much for the little Hebrew, and what surprised me most was that he had the courage to almost call me a liar, for he said:

"Mine friendt, you should not tell such stories as your own pearsonal experience. Not vone of does stories vas your own pearsonal experience. No, sir; not vone."

"Well," said I, indignantly, "I guess I know whether they are or not, and I'll bet you the wine for the crowd that they are and I can prove it."

"Vell," said he, "I'll joust bet you and I'll prove dey are not."

So saying, he shook hands and he said:

“You wait a minute till I bring a book,” which he did, and on opening it up with a flourish, said:

“Now, mine friendt, every story you told as your own personal experience is in this book by J. P. Johnston.”

“Yes, I know,” said I. “I don’t deny that, but I am J. P. Johnston, the man who wrote the book.”

“Oh, ho! you vas, eh!” cried the Hebrew. “Vell, I guess nit.”

“But,” said I, “I’ll show you my name on my limited ticket. Besides look at the frontispiece and see if it isn’t my picture.”

The crowd gathered about as he turned to it, and instantly the little Hebrew said:

“Holy Moses! another vone of your d—— practical jokes. Bring us de vine, Mr. Porter, bring us de vine.”

One particularly amusing observation we made on this trip was that as soon as we reached the Rocky Mountains, it didn’t matter how large or how small a mountain peak happened to be, if we asked any of the people there how far it was to this one or that one, the answer came, “Eighteen miles,” and so it con-

tinued throughout the trip. Everything was eighteen miles distant.

As soon as we struck this mountainous region, every one would explain why long distances looked so short by saying it was the exceedingly clear atmosphere, and then they would tell the story of two men starting for a mountain peak which to them seemed not over a half mile away, and after having traveled about fourteen miles they came to a stream of water not over two feet wide, when one of them began to disrobe and his companion asked him what he was going to do.

“Why,” he answered, “I am going to swim this river.”

“River?” replied his companion. “Why, my dear man, this is only a two-foot ditch.”

“No, indeed! it is not; this is a river and it’s three miles wide.”

I don’t think we met a new comer during the entire trip who failed to tell us this ditch story and on all occasions, every mountain or object of any kind was eighteen miles distant.

One day the train stopped at a small town twenty minutes for supper.

Mrs. Johnston and I had eaten in the dining car



*"This is a river and it's three miles wide."*

that evening, and while waiting I stepped out on the platform and there towering away above the town was an immense mountain.

It actually appeared to be not more than twenty minutes' walk distant, but when I asked a young man standing by how far away it was, he said:

"Eighteen miles."

"Oh, pshaw!" said I, "you are mistaken. I can walk from here there and back in thirty minutes."

"How much will you bet on that," he asked.

"I'll bet you five hundred dollars."

"Well, you just wait a minute and I'll get a man who has the cash, and will bet you"

So saying he started off.

A few minutes later he came rushing up followed by a big German, who under apparent excitement, was carrying his hat in one hand and a big roll of money in the other.

Approaching me, he said:

"You vant to bet you can valk by der mountain and back in dirty minutes? Vell, youst put up your vive hundredt dollars."

"Very well," said I, "but you wait until I see the conductor. I want to arrange with him to hold the

train till I get back. I know I can make it in thirty minutes."

He became more excited and said:

"You vas a d—— fool. You have no vive hundredt dollars, and I'll bet you be traveling on a pass and aint got not vive cents to your name, you big, red-headed lobster."

We stopped off at Salida, Colorado, over night, that we might leave there at eight o'clock the next morning and go over Marshall pass in the day time.

An interesting feature of this day's experience was, that when we left Salida at eight o'clock on a beautiful April morning the inhabitants were up and out, cultivating flowers, making gardens, etc.

At eleven thirty that same day we landed on top of Marshall pass, to find fourteen feet of snow on a level and icicles three feet long on the snow sheds.

There were three sections to our train, and three engines to each section.

We were in the observation car of the second section, but on account of the skillful engineering in the construction of this wonderful piece of railroad it would have been impossible for us to have told which section we were on. In our view from the window,





*"I'll bet you be traveling on a pass and ain't got not five cents to your name, you big, red-headed lobster."*

as we were making the ascent, one time our section would appear to be taking the lead, and in ten minutes later the two other sections were to all appearances ahead of ours. Then again we would be the second or middle section, just as we had started out in the morning.

Of course the trip over the Rocky Mountains and through the Royal Gorge was grand.

On arriving at Salt Lake City we decided to remain a few days, and just as I had registered at the hotel an old friend, a Chicago newspaper man who had recently taken charge of a newspaper there, came up, shook hands with me and a few minutes later introduced me to Congressman Cannon, and then interceded in having the congressman's nephew show us around.

By his courtesy we entered and went to the top of the unfinished Mormon temple, a privilege seldom granted to gentiles.

Salt Lake City struck me as being an ideal western city, strictly up to date, and a flourishing, enterprising place.

There was nothing of special interest on our trip westward, except that we passed over the Sierra Ne-

vada mountains in a terrific snow storm and through snow drifts ten feet deep, and arrived two hours later at Sacramento, California, in a city of roses and sunshine.

If there was a residence in that city the front of which was not literally covered with beautiful roses, I failed to see it.

One of the first things that attracted our attention, on alighting from the train, was an orange tree loaded with oranges, standing on the property of the railroad company, directly in front of the depot.

The weather was balmy and summerlike and the air fragrant with the perfume of flowers.

This, contrasted with our experience of two hours before, was something we had heard of, but never before seen.

After leaving Sacramento we visited San Francisco and Los Angeles, remaining several days in each place.

I had always felt that I should like to live in some large western city, and although I was favorably impressed with all the different places we had visited, yet somehow this trip satisfied me that thousands of East-

ern people, in going west, had left behind them far better and wider fields for business.

On our trip home, via the Santa Fe railroad, we had an amusing experience with a colored porter in charge of a buffet car.

Having made a couple of stops in New Mexico, one morning we boarded a buffet car for a day's journey before making another stop. It so happened that we were the only passengers aboard during the first half of the day.

At noon time we ordered luncheon, and among other things I ordered was a chicken sandwich, and instructed the waiter to spread the bread with butter and put a few slices of pickle in with the chicken.

After a tedious wait of nearly an hour he came sauntering in with our lunch.

My sandwich was certainly the curiosity of all the curiosities we had seen on our trip.

Two thick slices of bread, with no butter, between which was a chicken leg and a wing and a large pickle. The top piece of bread was toppling about and on the verge of falling off as he passed it to me.

For the instant I felt like "wringing his neck," but

when viewing the ridiculous side I was greatly amused, and said to him:

“Why, man alive, haven’t you any string?”

“String? string?” he muttered; “I doesn’t know what you mean by de string.”

“Well,” said I, “you wouldn’t serve a chicken sandwich without a string tied around it, would you?”

“Now,” I went on, “just look at this sandwich; can’t you see how rickety it is and that the top piece of bread is almost falling off? Where under the heavens did you learn to make chicken sandwiches? Are you from the north or the south?”

“I’s from de souf, sah, and dis am de fust trip I’s ebeh made on de buffet car.”

“Well,” said I, “you are mighty lucky that it was I, instead of some of the officials of this road, to whom you served a chicken sandwich without a string tied around it, and don’t ever do it again.

He said, “Well, mistah. I don’t know if I’s got any string or not, but I’ll look and see.”

“Never mind,” said I, “just bring me some butter, and this time I’ll eat mine without any string.”

About one thirty in the afternoon two gentlemen,

one a very tall man, boarded the car together and immediately called for the bill of fare.

For fear that neither of them would order a chicken sandwich, I entered into conversation with them by asking a few questions about the country and then told them that we had just had our lunch and that about the only real good thing they had on the bill of fare was the sandwiches, especially the chicken sandwiches. The tall man ordered a chicken sandwich.

When the darkey left for the buffet with his order I followed him out and said:

“By Jove! do you know that that tall man is one of the officials of this road? Have you got plenty of string to tie around his sandwich?”

Reaching to one of the shelves he produced a small piece of common string.

“No,” said I, “that won’t do; it isn’t stout enough.”

Looking into a market basket, he found a long piece of what we used to call wool twine.

“That,” said I, “is exactly what you want.”

“Now, have you more chicken legs, and wings, and a nice large pickle?”

He said that he had.

“One thing more,” said I; “you should cut your

bread thicker than you did mine and then take this string and wind it two or three times around the sandwich, sidewise, and then as many times lengthwise, and, after tying it in a nice bow knot, cut the ends off and serve, and mind what I tell you, you will make a hit with that official, as sure as fate."

I then returned to my seat and awaited developments.

At last he made his appearance, the chalky part of his eyes and his pearly teeth showing as his face fairly beamed with delight.

He served every other part of their order first, keeping back the chicken sandwich till the last, and if I were to live a thousand years I am sure I should never forget the look on that tall man's face as the little darkey put that thick, bunglesome sandwich, with about eight yards of heavy twine wrapped around it, down by his plate.

"Great heavens!" the man shouted, as he jumped to his feet in a rage and almost frothing at the mouth, "what the devil is this, and where did you get it?"

Then, raising it from the table and scrutinizing it a little closer, again asked:

“What in thunder is this, anyhow, can you tell me?”

“Yes, sah,” said the darkey, half bewildered; “dat sah, am de chicken sandwich.”

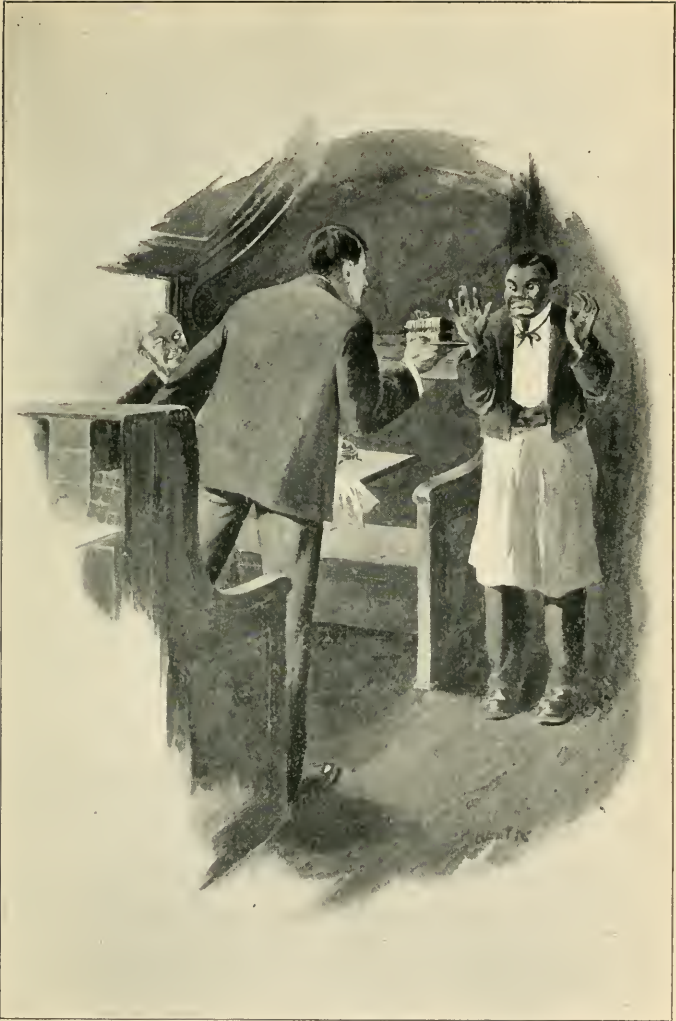
After another general survey of the thing, both the tall man and his companion burst out laughing, and finally the tall man said:

“Young man, where, under the light of heavens, did you learn to make chicken sandwiches? Tell me, do tell me where you learned the business.”

The darkey, fairly quaking in his shoes, said:

“I learned to make de sandwich in de souf, but de gemman across de way told me about de string.”





"WHAT IN THUNDER IS THIS ANYHOW, CAN YOU TELL ME"?



## CHAPTER VI.

The World's Fair Panic Approaching—Selling Out My Wholesale Jewelry and Optical Business—Opening a Retail Jewelry Store in LaPorte, Indiana—A Newspaper Fight—Selling Out the Retail Store—Selling Our Summer Home—Owner of a Grocery and Meat Market—Delivering a Lecture at LaPorte—Horse-trades too Numerous to Mention.

About the time of our arrival home from California the question of having the World's Fair held in Chicago had been settled.

No sooner had this announcement been made than the bottom seemed to have fallen completely out of the wholesale jewelry business in that city.

An opportunity presented itself by which I was enabled to sell out my wholesale business, and this I took advantage of.

I paid all of my eastern and other obligations and had a nice surplus left, and thousands of dollars in outstanding accounts and notes due me besides.

The coming fall and winter, when cold weather began to set in, I had a severe attack of neuralgia, and, after suffering terribly for several weeks and getting

no relief from physicians or patent medicines, we decided to go to our La Porte, Indiana, country home and see if the change would help me.

Mrs. Johnston telegraphed to the man in charge of the premises to prepare for our coming and meet us at the train that evening.

The altitude of La Porte is about three hundred and eighty feet higher than that of Chicago, and when we reached what is known as the summit on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railroad, between Chesterton and La Porte, my neuralgia left me completely and has never since returned.

Had I made a trip to Florida, at an expense of several hundred dollars, as one of my physicians advised, and had gotten the same relief, I no'doubt would have thought that no other place could have given such results.

After a week's stay in La Porte, I decided to remain there, if for no other reason than for my general health.

I had always been afflicted with throat and catarrhal troubles while in Chicago, and had never remained away from there, in any other climate, ten days without getting relief, therefore, I decided to start a retail

jewelry store in La Porte and make it my permanent home.

No sooner had I rented my storeroom and begun fixing it up than one or two of the retail jewelers there began to attack me through the newspapers, not by what I considered fair, square and open methods, but by sly little hints and insinuations.

Of course I at once realized that a downright, "open and above" newspaper fight would be a good advertisement, and therefore decided to force it to this sort of an issue if possible.

One firm, the name of which was Bagley and Oberich, I attacked through the newspapers as Hagley and Blowheight.

I thought I gave them a pretty good drubbing in my first attempt, and I am sure I did, but I soon discovered that I had awakened a mighty lively adversary.

Each of the papers set aside certain space and we took it, turn about, from one issue to the other, and when we wound up with our Christmas trade that year I had in my employ fifteen clerks and had had an immense business.

At a New Year's ball that winter I personally met

Mr. Oberich for the first time and found him to be a pleasant, courteous gentleman and a mighty good fellow.

He declared that of the many years his firm had been there they had never before been blessed with any such business.

We shook hands and called the fight off for the time being.

I ran the retail business until the next fall, when I sold out, clearing about twenty-five hundred dollars in the transaction.

I had sold my wholesale business in Chicago to a relative and former employe and had taken judgment notes for nineteen thousand dollars back payments.

His business kept dropping off gradually. Every month's business showed a loss instead of a gain. He was unable to meet any of his payments due me, and at last I was obliged to foreclose and take possession.

Inasmuch as I had recommended him very highly to the eastern manufacturers for credit, when I took the stock back I felt morally responsible for the payment of these bills; besides he had been a considerable loser, therefore I very foolishly assumed all of his

eastern indebtedness, amounting to over forty thousand dollars.

I say foolishly, because it was a purely business transaction, and from this standpoint I should have taken what simply belonged to me and let the other fellow take care of himself.

I had always kept my name and credit good, and, as I had sold out to a relative and recommended him to the manufacturers for credit, and then taken the business back, I realized that the transaction might appear, in the eyes of the creditors, as rather unsavory, and therefore voluntarily assumed his obligations.

I was now nicely settled in La Porte and was enjoying the best of health, and therefore decided to move my wholesale jewelry business to that point.

In looking about for suitable rooms, I found them hard to get, and decided to put up a building of my own at my summer home a mile out.

While it was being built I replenished the stock by the purchase of over a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of new goods, and when the building was completed I was ready for business.

I had a heavy covered wagon built, with a long body and a seating capacity of about twenty persons.

and every morning my man would call down town for the employes and return to town with them in the evening.

We began shipping out packages by the hundreds to our old and new customers, all over the United States.

For a time everything went smoothly, but nowhere near as it had in the palmy days of selection packages in Chicago.

The very first obstacle (and a very serious one) we encountered was that hundreds of wholesale jewelers in all parts of the country had gone into the selection package business; many of them not understanding how to manipulate the business so as to sell their goods outright, had been sending them broadcast on six and eight months' consignments.

This, of course, was a great handicap, especially when considering the immense amount of my old and new liabilities, the greater portion of which must be settled from the proceeds of stock on hand.

However, I pushed the business to the very utmost.

In less than six months after erecting the new store building I had on offer of ten thousand dollars for my country home, three thousand five hundred dollars in cash and a grocery store and meat market on Cot-



tage Grove avenue, Chicago, invoiced at fifteen hundred dollars, the balance on time.

I accepted the offer, retaining the store building, which I very soon moved to a vacant lot down town.

By this transaction my profits on the summer home were just what I had received in cash, as first payment, three thousand five hundred dollars.

I then made an auction sale of all of my household furniture and utensils, live stock and everything except one pair of horses and a carriage for personal use, when my wife and I took quarters at the hotel.

One day I called at the office of the La Porte Daily Herald, when the editor, Mr. Maloy, bantered me to deliver a lecture at the opera house, the subject to be "Twenty Years of Hus'ling."

I replied that I would if he and the other papers would do the advertising free, and also arrange to get the opera house free.

He agreed, and as I left his office I said:

"I'll be ready in two weeks, so you make the arrangements accordingly."

At the expiration of that time I was ready, and the night that I delivered it the house was filled.

The object of such a lecture or talk was merely to

entertain, to make the audience laugh, and to ascertain how well I succeeded one of my employes kept a record of the hearty laughs and applauses during the evening, which amounted to nearly fifty.

My previous experience in talking to the public as an auctioneer had served me in good stead on this occasion; at any rate I was not affected with stage fright, and I never had been very bashful, so I really surprised my most intimate friends and myself as well.

The papers gave me splendid notices; in fact, two and three columns were devoted to giving a full account of the lecture in all the papers, consequently it was but a few days when I began to receive calls from many different clubs and organizations to give it under their auspices.

I had no trouble in contracting with those who became interested for a stipulated fee of from thirty-five to one hundred dollars per night.

This gave me quite a new experience, and nothing I ever did gave me more pleasure or satisfaction; but one thing was evident right in the start, and that was that an hour and thirty minutes' talk would invariably

aggravate my bronchitis, therefore I could not expect to make that my permanent business.

The Slayton Bureau of Chicago was anxious to book me, but, following my physician's advice, I decided not to bind myself under any contract, but keep free and make occasional outside dates with lodges, etc.

I one time had an experience of "The overrated man." It was at Adrian, Mich.

I was dated to give this lecture at the opera house there, under the auspices of the Knights of the Maccabees.

They had taken a whole page in each of two or three daily papers, in which they had used a large number of small cuts of a funny man in as many different attitudes, and had exploited J. P. Johnston as absolutely the most excruciatingly funny man in the world—the king of all entertainers, no one ever equaled him.

A few moments before I was to appear on the platform the mayor of the city, who was to introduce me, showed me one of these papers and instantly I said:

"I shall never be able to satisfy this audience tonight, because I have been over advertised and they will expect too much."

He laughed and said he guessed it would be all right, and when he introduced me he did not mend matters much, because he lauded me to the skies, and I thought for a time that he would never quit.

When he sat down and I was ready to begin, every person in the audience held his breath and, placing his hand behind his ear, leaned forward as much as possible to catch the first sound of my voice.

I would have given four hundred dollars to have been four hundred miles away at that moment.

In an instant I felt the cold perspiration starting out all over my face and body, then I said to myself, "This won't do; I must go after these people as if I knew they had never heard of me." Then spotting a large, fleshy, good-natured looking man in the audience, I never took my eyes off of him during the whole evening, and very shortly had him shaking with laughter, when I felt better and more sure of my footing.

With this subject for a starter, I soon had the entire audience just where I wanted them, and ended my talk that evening with the most responsive encore I had ever received.

During our stay on the farm I had many amusing little experiences in making trades of all kinds.

My Yankee intuition for "swapping" made my place the center of attraction to every trader or speculator for miles around.

One day two men came in La Porte with a drove of wild, Montana horses.

Some one down town told them that if they had any trade in them they could do business with me, and directed them to my place.

They started forthwith, driving the entire bunch into my barnyard.

When we got through, they had two watches, a shotgun, a cutter road wagon and a single harness, while I owned eight of these wild, white-eyed, spotted horses or ponies.

The first thing I did was to try my skill in breaking one of them, a handsome little mare and the wildest of all wild animals I ever saw.

With the assistance of my two men, we corralled her and, after putting a halter and bridle on her, with a long rope we hobbled her, after which we turned her loose, one of the men hanging to the end of the rope with instructions to throw her as quickly as possible the moment she started to run, which he did, and the instant she landed broadside on the ground I used

the whip on her just enough to let her know what it was for, and then, after petting her a few moments, repeated the performance twice more, after which I took hold of the halter strap and switched her front legs with the whip only a few seconds, when she humbly came walking up to me. And after one more hour in training her to follow me and to come to me when I cracked my whip, we removed the hobble and, throwing the strap over her neck, she followed me around the yard like a pet dog, and ever afterward, when I went to the pasture and cracked my whip, while every other animal would scamper to the far end of the field, she never failed to come to me in the most docile and affectionate manner, and eat shelled corn out of my hand, which I never failed to carry to the field with me, a practice I had begun at the very first lesson I gave her.

In a short time I sold her to a Chicago man for his young son, for a good round sum, and really felt sorry to part with her, as she had become such a pet and so great a favorite with me.

Our experience in breaking the next one we tackled was quite different.

Selecting the largest one of the lot, we had no

sooner gotten a rope around her neck, while under a shed in the rear of the barn, than in her frenzy she deliberately backed away as far as possible and with a lunge landed head foremost against the high brick walls, dashing her brains out in an instant.

The next day I sold a young dare-devil of a fellow his pick of two of the six remaining unbroken ones.

After picking out and roping the two he wanted, he and a friend of his took them out in the road and, unhitching the team they were driving, with the help of my two men harnessed and hitched these ponies to an old buggy, after which they both piled in and began yelling like Comanche Indians.

On seeing what they intended doing, I had saddled one of my stable horses and was mounted ready to witness the fun.

First one of them made a lunge, then stopped; then the other did likewise, and for the first ten rods it was a case of see-saw, first one and then the other lunging and stopping; then they both started down the road under a dead run, both men yelling at the top of their voices.

After running about two miles, they began to fag out, and before going another mile had settled down



*Began yelling like Comanche Indians.*



to an old-fashioned trot, as natural as a pair of well-broken stage horses, but with the sweat fairly running off of them.

The driver kept urging them on, at the same time giving them all the practice possible in guiding them with the reins from one side of the road to the other.

This was all he ever did in breaking them, except to teach them to stop at the command "Whoa!" and to start when clucking to them.

I noticed, though, that he kept them on the go every day, and eventually had a well-broken team.

This was "a new one on me" in the art of horse training. However, I had no desire nor inclination to try the system, and very soon sold off the other four ponies to a fairly good advantage, without breaking them.

About the worst "soaking" I got while in La Porte was the making of three successive trades with a young man by the name of Abe Summerfield, whose business was that of a wholesale dealer in scrap iron and making an occasional horse-trade.

Abe had always had a great admiration for my handsome, oak-finished Studebaker buckboard wagon,

for which I had originally paid three hundred and fifty dollars.

He and I had been trying for some time to get together on a trade of some kind, and at last succeeded in making a shift of several horses and vehicles in a single trade, among which I let him have my buckboard.

In about three days, having entered into the spirit of the thing, we made another trade, and inside of a week still another.

I noticed thereafter that whenever and wherever I met Abe he invariably had a broad grin on, as much as to say, "Come again, Johnston."

I hadn't as yet taken the time to figure on how I had come out in my dealings with him and concluded that I'd better do so.

After a careful inventory, I found that Abe had just "done" me out of my buckboard, slick and clean, in the three trades.

The last I heard of the little "rascal" he had married one of the most popular young ladies in the town and was running the best and most up-to-date livery barn in northern Indiana, and why not!

Within six months after selling my country home,

the man who bought it failed in business and on payment of fifty dollars he deeded it back to me, and in the spring we moved back for the summer.

By employing competent help I had successfully conducted the grocery business in Chicago, until I



*"Invariably had a broad grin on."*

found a buyer, when I sold out for just what it had been invoiced to me; therefore the five thousand dollars received was all profit, but the money soon went in the payment of eastern bills.

By this time it had been pretty thoroughly demon-

strated that the wholesale jewelry business in and around Chicago was in an unhealthy condition.

For five hundred miles in any direction out of Chicago the retail jewelry business was absolutely dead, and had been from the time it was first announced that the World's Fair would be held there.

Jewelers everywhere complained that all their customers were tightening up on their purse strings, preparatory to visiting the fair, and those who had contemplated buying a watch, diamond or piece of jewelry of any value were waiting to make their investment at that time.

As a result of this condition of affairs, it was not only the next thing to impossible to collect old or new accounts, but positively beyond the question when it came to selling goods. Therefore, as can readily be seen, to use a slang phrase, "I was up against it."

My indebtedness at this time was about one hundred and forty thousand dollars in the east and nearly fourteen thousand dollars at the First National Bank, La Porte.

All of the latter had been secured by possibly thirty-five thousand dollars' worth of commercial paper.

While the eastern manufacturers were, as a whole, very liberal with me; in fact, exceedingly so, there were a few Jew firms who had to be handled with gloves.

My idea was to hang on as long as possible, not only with a view to reducing my liabilities as much as possible, but with a lingering hope that "something might turn up" to avert the apparently coming, inevitable collapse.

Shortly after I had ordered and received the large quantity of goods to replenish my stock at La Porte, developments plainly showed that we were on the verge of a panic.

About this time three old-time friends of mine, who always traveled together, and who were among my heaviest creditors, called on me one day and in the course of our conversation one of them asked me how many creditors I had and how much I owed.

I explained that my liabilities would exceed a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and that I hadn't over thirty creditors, and further explained that, with the exception of but one firm, to whom I owed only one thousand dollars, all of the rest of the accounts would

run from about four thousand to possibly ten thousand dollars each.

He asked me who the firm was that I owed but a thousand dollars to.

I told him and explained that it wouldn't be due for four months.

"Well," said he, "that is the meanest Jew firm in the east and the moment the bill comes due they will jump on to you."

And then he inquired if I had ever dealt with them before.

I replied that I had not.

"Well," he asked, "how do you think that you can satisfy them?"

I simply answered, "You needn't worry at all."

Before these gentlemen had left LaPorte I went to the telegraph office and wired the Jew firm to duplicate last order and rush.

Every three weeks thereafter, for nine weeks, I wired to duplicate again and send immediately.

The fact of the matter was that this firm's goods were among our best sellers and had been from the time we began handling them. I had been in need of more of them to help sort up packages and thereby

enable me to send out quantities of goods that were lying in the safe because of a lack of variety.

I had refrained from ordering, hoping that times would brighten, but now decided to order all I needed to even up my stock, which I did, and which resulted in the closing out of a large quantity of surplus stock that otherwise would have remained idle.

Three months later, when these eastern traveling men called on me again and asked how I had come out with the Jew firm, I replied that I was now in very much better shape with them than when they were here before.

“How so?” they asked.

“Well,” I explained, “they feel very kindly toward me now, as I have been doing a lot of business with them lately,” and showed up my books.

None of the three men made any comments, but seemed to be perfectly satisfied that with the friendly relations existing there would be no trouble.

Another Jew firm of Providence sent one of their firm here to try and get a settlement for a claim of nearly five thousand dollars, and during his stay a number of my employes and myself had a lot of fun

out of it and managed to keep him in a position where he did the "floor walking," if there was any done.

Immediately on his arrival in town I called to me several of my most trusted employes and explained to them that evidently he had come to force a settlement, and instructed them that, should he and I at any time get to talking together confidentially, one of them should call me over to his or her desk, and that we must always manage to take up an hour or two in looking over some very important matter.

This plan was followed to the letter.

Whenever things got monotonous I would turn to him and in the most jovial way say:

"Let's see, I haven't taken you out to such and such place, or this or that lake, have I? Well, then, I will take you out." So saying, I would be sure to hitch up to a two-seated conveyance and have my wife and some friend of hers accompany us, thus obviating any possibility of his having any sort of a private conversation with me.

During his four days' stay there we hadn't given him the slightest opportunity to mention business at all, and when three or four of my young men employes and myself escorted him to the train, on his departure,



he looked more like a dead man than a live one, but was game enough to say that he had always wanted to make me a visit and was glad he came, as he had had a splendid time.

In reply I said:

“Well, send your brother out and we’ll give him a good time, too, won’t we boys?”

## CHAPTER VII.

A Trip to Hot Springs, Arkansas—My First Fox Hunt—How I Procured the Use of a Fine Saddle Horse Free—Winner of the "Brush"—My Excursion Into the Scantily Settled Portion of Arkansas—Swimming the Washita River on Horseback—Camping Out—Good Luck in Hunting—Shooting My First Wild Turkey—Trading a Watch for a Rifle—An Interesting Conversation Between Two Natives of Arkansas.

A few weeks later my wife had a relapse of inflammatory rheumatism, an affliction with which she had suffered off and on for years.

This time the doctors insisted that she should be taken to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

There was no business to speak of, everything having come to a standstill, and as I was able to procure free transportation there and back, through a railroad official who was an old friend, we decided to take the physician's advice.

The second day following our arrival at Hot Springs there was to be a big fox hunt, and every one in the city was preparing to join it.

On account of her affliction, Mrs. Johnston could not leave her room, but after placing her in the care

of trained nurses I decided to join the chase, provided I could hire a suitable horse for the occasion.

Of over a dozen stables at which I called, every saddle horse had been engaged.

Finally the proprietor of one stable said he had the best Kentucky saddle horse in the state, but he was so fractious and such a terror that no one dared to "tackle" him.

I told him that I had my own saddle and bridle with me and that I had never seen a horse that I was afraid of or couldn't handle, and that I understood Kentucky saddlers especially well.

He said if I would agree in the presence of witnesses to take my own chances should I get killed or injured, he would let me try the horse, and if I could handle him he would charge me nothing for the use of him for two weeks, provided I would ride him every day, rain or shine, and give him plenty of it.

This I readily agreed to, and sent to the express office for my equipment.

When they brought the horse out of his box stall, head and tail up, nostrils distended and his big eyes bulging from their sockets, he was certainly a picture.

I spent five or ten minutes leading him back and forth in the barn, patting him on the neck, now and then, and talking to him kindly.

With the assistance of one of the barn men, with much difficulty I succeeded in getting my saddle securely buckled on him, then leading him in the middle of the street I quietly put my foot in the stirrup and mounted him before he knew what had happened.

The next instant he was standing straight up on his hind feet.

The moment he struck the ground with his fore feet I eased up on the rein and, giving it a slight twitch with the left hand, such as I knew would be familiar to the average Kentucky saddler. He instantly started off on a fox trot.

Ten rods away I gave the slightest pressure on the side of the neck with the rein, when he turned about like a flash, then raising my right hand and pointing upward with the index finger, he started back under the most graceful canter one could imagine.

Then, with the different maneuvers of the rein, of which both the horse and myself were familiar, I gave the liveryman and a large crowd of bystanders an

exhibition of a well-broken saddle horse which astonished them.

The owner of the horse said that he would have been glad to have taken a hundred and fifty dollars for him, but now five hundred was the very least that would buy him.

Dynamite (as I named him) and I were the best of friends from that day on.

The next day, Saturday, which was always my lucky day, was the day for the fox hunt, and by one o'clock one hundred and eighty men and women were mounted ready for the chase.

A wild fox had been turned loose in the woods about seven miles distant, at about three o'clock that morning.

An old darkey, mounted on a mule with a cowbell around its neck and he carrying a tin horn, was master of hounds, of which there were about twenty.

The entire crowd followed the pompous gentleman and his assistant, and when within a mile of the spot where the fox had been turned loose they stopped and, turning the heads of their mules toward the crowd, and standing side by side, just far enough apart so that one person on horseback could pass between them,

the master of hounds took off his hat and, holding it in his hand, beckoned the crowd to come on, and as each one of the hundred and eighty hunters passed through a dollar was dropped into the hat.

This was my first experience as a fox hunter, and, being a "tenderfoot," I asked an old-timer to lay down the rules to me.

He explained that as soon as the hounds reached the point where the fox had been liberated and had taken up the scent and started in pursuit that the game was to turn loose with your horse and follow them as closely as possible, with a view to being the first man in at the death, and that the first person there would be entitled to the "brush," or the fox's tail, which meant of course the winning of the honors of the day, and if a gentleman should be the winner he must, out of courtesy, present the "brush" to some one of the ladies who had been in the chase.

On reaching the point where the fox had been liberated the hounds were turned loose, and such baying, barking and yelping I never heard.

Every man and woman plunged into the woods with a vengeance.

If my horse hadn't been "in the game" before, then he was extremely apt and clever for a new beginner.

Everything was excitement and every fellow was for himself, and the "devil take the hindermost."

There wasn't a log too big, a fence too high, nor a ditch too wide for my horse to go over.

He instinctively followed the hounds and took the lead from the start.

As for myself, I was kept busy staying in the saddle.

How far they ran I have no idea, but it was the most exciting, most hazardous and most fascinating sport I had ever indulged in.

At last we all lost trace of the hounds and gathered in a bunch on a high knoll overlooking a ravine.

Suddenly we heard the baying of the hounds and waited to learn, if possible, which direction they were running.

By this time all of our horses had gotten their second wind and were eager for more sport.

At this moment the poor fox came out in the clearing, with the dogs in close pursuit.

Of course every rider put spurs and started for the death.

Dynamite needed no spur. He just took the bit in his mouth and it didn't seem to me that he touched the ground anywhere. Stumps, bogs, logs and ditches were as nothing to him, and to his credit he landed me first at the death.

When I arrived, every one of the twenty dogs were in a circle, each clinging to his portion of the dead fox.

When the master of hounds came up, it being conceded all around that I was first there, he forthwith cut the tail off and gave it to me, and, on returning to the starting point of the chase, where all had gathered, I, in turn, presented the "brush" to what I considered the handsomest, black-eyed girl in the "bunch."

This, of course, meant more laurels for Dynamite, his owner immediately raising his price to seven hundred and fifty dollars.

My wife's rheumatism began to improve right from the start and, being assured by the physicians and nurses in attendance that my presence was not necessarily needed, I decided upon a two weeks' trip on horseback to "the wilds of Arkansas."

On referring to the map I found that from Little



Rock one railroad ran to the northwest and another to the southwest, leaving a vast territory directly west of Hot Springs with no railroad and settled with but few towns and villages; besides I had heard a great deal about the natives and settlers of this portion of Arkansas, and of their crude methods, and decided to take at least a two weeks' trip of roughing it, if for nothing more than rest and recreation.

Giving due notice to the owner of the horse that he possibly might not see me for two weeks, and perhaps three or four, I began making preparations for what proved to be a very interesting and exciting four weeks' excursion.

First I purchased two small handbags, large enough, however, for a change of underwear and three extra shirts, collars, handkerchiefs, etc., and taking them to a saddler, had him arrange them into a pair of saddlebags.

I then purchased a horse blanket, a large woolen blanket and a rubber coat, all of which I tied in a roll behind my saddle, and, after packing my satchels or bags, was ready for the start.

My first exciting experience (at least exciting to me) was the fording and swimming on horseback

across the Washita river, about twelve miles from Hot Springs.

On reaching the river I found two men busily engaged in repairing the ferry boat, and was told that it would require at least a half day to complete it.

As I did not relish the idea of losing so much time, I made inquiries about the possibility of fording the river and was told that in crossing the horse would have to swim about five rods.

When I came to think it over I recalled to mind the fact that in all of my experiences I had never yet swam a horse, and decided at once to take advantage of this opportunity.

The horse, as usual, was ready for any emergency, and without the slightest urging piled into the stream with a bound.

The current was very swift, and not a thought had I given to anything like danger until suddenly we struck a channel of very deep water, when the poor animal went in clear out of sight, half submerging me, and not until he came up, snorting, struggling and blowing water in every direction, did it occur to me that I couldn't swim a stroke, and for the instant I thought of doomsday, judgment day and the day of

resurrection, but, thanks to the horse, he was equal to the occasion, for, after the first struggle, he proved himself an adept swimmer and landed me safely on the west shore.

About two miles farther on I stopped at a farm



*"For the instant I thought of Doomsday, Judgment Day and the Day of Resurrection."*

house, took dinner with them and dried out my blankets and clothing, leaving there about two o'clock in the afternoon.

The weather was fine and the roads were excellent, and the one thing that especially attracted my

attention was the wonderfully large number of movers.

Immense canvas-covered wagons, with one, two and three yoke of scrawny-looking oxen or steers, as they called them, hitched to them, were traveling in every direction.

In two cases a mule and an ox were hitched together, and in one instance a man had made a pair of shafts for an ox, and then hitched a mule on one side of him and a horse on the other.

Whenever I met, or in any way came in contact with these movers, I managed to get into conversation with them, and soon learned that, with scarcely an exception, they had become dissatisfied with their lot and had simply packed up and started out.

Some of them had, or claimed to have, an objective point, while others were aimlessly traveling about, camping out nights and really having an enjoyable time.

Their diet consisted solely of hoecakes, bacon and tea.

Those who drove oxen fed them on cottonseed and hay, while the mule and horse teams were provided with corn and hay.

Socially, they were a pleasant, agreeable lot, always ready and willing to extend a favor and never willing to take pay for it.

About four o'clock on my first day out I came across two men camping on a beautiful spot on the bank of a small stream and on the edge of a large tract of timber.

They had been traveling all day and had just settled down for the night.

I asked permission to join them for the night and to take supper and breakfast with them and have my horse fed, explaining that I had my own blankets and was willing to pay my way.

They seemed glad of my company, but explained that I would have to put up with hoecakes, bacon and tea, as that was all they carried.

I assured them that I was out to rough it and that sort of diet was just what I needed and craved. Anything for a change.

A few moments later I discovered that they had with them a half dozen pieces of firearms, among them an almost new, breech-loading, repeating rifle.

I asked what kind of game they found in that

country and was told that squirrel was about all they had tried to kill.

I then remarked that if they would postpone supper for a while and loan me that fine rifle I'd go over in the woods and bring back a mess of squirrel, if any could be found.

They agreed and I started out.

Entering the woods, I found an ideal hunting ground for squirrel, just enough underbrush to afford splendid hiding places.

After traveling about three-quarters of a mile I selected an ideal place, where, by cutting a few limbs and bushes to be used as a covering, I secreted myself and remained as quiet as possible.

In about ten minutes I picked my first big grey squirrel from the top of a big oak, and in less than an hour I had seven fine fellows scattered around on the ground.

Then there came a lull of about twenty minutes and I was just thinking about gathering up my game and starting for camp, when I heard the rustling of leaves and, peering out, I saw, to my utter surprise and delight, a flock of about twenty-five or thirty wild turkeys.

They were moving slowly and the leader, an immensely big gobbler, kept looking up towards the tree tops, and every few steps would crouch down to the ground as if looking for a roosting place, and as if about to fly up in the trees, and so they kept straggling along until they got within excellent shooting distance.

I was lying flat on the ground, with my gun resting over a small limb and pointing directly toward them, therefore it was not necessary for me to move a muscle, and if I ever came anywhere near having "buck fever" it was then and there.

In my boyhood days I had encountered several flocks of wild turkey while out hunting, but had never before been skillful enough to come anywhere near getting a shot at one.

Here was the opportunity of my life, and how to make the best of it and kill my first wild turkey was the thought uppermost in my mind.

First I aimed at the body of the big black leader, then I thought to myself, "I have been hunting and practicing target shooting with a rifle for five years, and if I can't hit that turkey in the head I'll lose him, besides it's unfair to the turkey to give him no chance

at all." So I changed my aim to that of the head and banged away.

In an instant the woods were full of turkeys, scattering and flying in every direction, but the old gobbler was flopping on the ground, and to my delight I had at last killed a wild turkey.

On returning to camp my two newly made companions were delighted and surprised.

We were not long in skinning that old turkey and preparing him for a feast.

We sliced him up, and, fastening the pieces on the pointed ends of long sticks, after seasoning well, held them over the fire until roasted.

We agreed that we hadn't had a better meal for months, although I am of the opinion that had a first-class hostelry served me with as tough a piece of turkey, I'd have fairly "kicked the roof off the house."

After supper I began negotiating for that fine rifle.

I had, as usual, brought with me several gold-filled watches, with Elgin movements and filled chains and charms, and was not long in trading one of these outfits for the gun.

That night I made a bed under one of their wagons, with a bunch of hay and a sheet they loaned me, and,





*"I had at last killed a wild turkey."*

using my saddle for a pillow and my woolen blanket and rubber coat for covering, I retired for the night with my new gun by the side of me.

I never slept more soundly nor felt better than on awakening the next morning.

We had broiled squirrel, fried bacon, hoecakes and tea for breakfast, and tea, hoecakes, fried bacon and broiled squirrel for dinner.

About one o'clock in the afternoon I bade my new friends good-by.

They journeyed east, while I continued my course to the northwest.

About three o'clock I came to the home of a very rich farmer of whom I had heard considerable while on the road.

He owned an immense tract of land, was a big stock raiser, had four or five barns and many well-filled corn cribs, but lived in an old log house.

All of his immense droves of cattle, horses, hogs and a flock of over a thousand head of sheep, were sleek and fat.

This was a great contrast to that of his neighbors and of every other farmer I had met.

As I approached he was standing out in front of

one of his stables, and as was my custom I stopped and entered into conversation with him.

He was a typical Southerner, wearing a slouch hat, almost a counterpart to the one I was wearing and always have worn, big stogy boots, with the bottom of his trousers tucked in the top, and wearing a large leather belt.

An immensely big silver watch chain and a large silver watch constituted his outfit of jewelry.

His hair and whiskers, which completely covered his face, were as black as jet, with piercing black eyes.

His dialect was extremely Southern.

He seemed to view me suspiciously, was very reticent, and he could hardly take his eyes off of my horse.

I kept firing questions at him, however, and leading him on from one step to another, until at last he warmed up a little, and just as I was about to get a little history of his life, there came driving up a big, rickety old mover's wagon, drawn by three yoke of the poorest, scrawniest-looking steers I ever saw, and loaded principally with tow-headed children.

As it approached us the driver, a tall, lean, lank individual with scarcely enough wearing apparel to cover

his limbs and body, with long, flowing auburn hair and scraggy beard, yelled "Whoa!"

The oxen came to a stop, he climbed to the ground and, approaching the farmer, said:

"How dew yew dew?"

"Howdy," answered the farmer.

Then began, in their native dialect, the following conversation:

Mover—"Kain yew sell me a couple bushels con? I think them aire cattle orter hev som con, don't yew?"

Farmer—"Well, I think maself they orter hev som co'n, that is fact, but I don't think I care tew sell any my co'n just at present time; fact is, I don't think yew'd care tew pay me what I kin get at a Springs."

Mover—"How much is co'n at a Springs?"

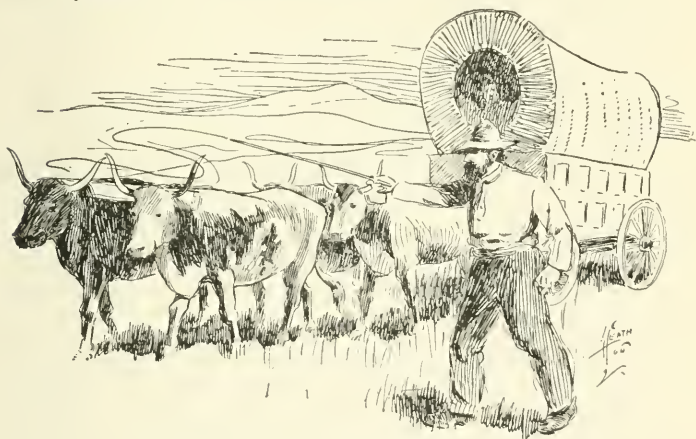
Farmer—"Well, last I sold, I got fifty-five cents fer, but I reckon it's 'bout seventy cents at a present time."

Mover—"Say, how much yew ask me fer thet ar wagon stan'in' on yon bridge, just fenence yon tree?"

Farmer—"Well, I'll sell yew thet ar wagon fer from fifteen tew twenty-five dollars. All-fired stout

wagon, been hauling on it with mules fer six months. I reckon it's mighty cheap wagon at thet price."

Mover—"Too much fer secon'-hand wagon. Say, dew yew know of 'bout fifteen or twenty acres good land where I could move on fer 'bout year-en-half er two years?"



*"Back up, there, Blue, an' straiten yewself 'round, yew old hypocrite."*

Farmer—"Wall, I got some mighty fine land down here on a river bottom; hain't hed spec fertilizer fer nigh on ter twenty years, and kin raise anything yew want'er plant."

Mover—"Yes, but I don't keer tew live on a river bottom; lived on a river 'bout two years. Almighty

onhealthy. I got 'bout 'leven caows and two hundred cheakins eighty miles back, where I come from. Thought I'd like tew move down by a Springs and make some money out of caows and cheakins. Say, kin you sell me couple bushels co'n?"

Farmer—"No, I don't think I care to sell any co'n jes' at present time.

Mover—"Good day, sah."

Farmer—"Good day."

At this juncture one of the mover's big white steers became unruly, and, bringing the whiplash down over his forehead he yelled:

"Back up there, Blue, an' strai'ten yewself 'round, yew old hypocrite."

I asked how he came to call that white ox "Blue."

"Well, sah," he courteously answered, "I know thet ar ox: he jes' 'bout as white as white kin be, but dew yew know that the skin down under thet ar ox's hair is jes' as blue as whetstone."

And he called him "Blue."

## CHAPTER VIII.

An Interesting Character—An Evening With a Rich Arkansas Farmer—Delineating Character by Phrenology—How it Paid—Camping Out at Night—A Funeral on My Hands—Conducting the Burial Services.

After listening to the amusing conversation between the mover and the rich farmer, I once more entered into conversation with the latter, and found him to be a very interesting character.

He had run away from his home in Kentucky when a small lad, after an altercation with his father, and had accompanied a small colony to Arkansas.

One of his strictest rules was, and always had been, economy. He declared that he couldn't remember of ever having spent a single penny foolishly.

He had begun when quite young by investing his savings in different kinds of stock, and when twenty-one years of age rented a large tract of land and began stock raising, and now owned the very land he first rented, and hundreds of acres besides.

He said that the largest city he had ever visited

was Hot Springs, and that he had never eaten a meal at a hotel or restaurant.

When he visited the Springs he paid forty cents per day for "yarding" his team and the privilege of cooking his meals and sleeping in "the barracks."

He had never done a day's manual labor since he rented his first land, but had always been an employer.

His achievements fully demonstrated what an educated, "brainy" man can accomplish.

The phrenologist would have delineated his character about as follows:

Brain very large, as also the following organs: Inhabitiveness, continuity, acquisitiveness, firmness, calculation, individuality and human nature, with all others small or medium.

I asked him if he believed in phrenology and if he had ever had his "bumps" examined.

He said he hadn't, but seemed at once interested.

I had, when quite young, received instructions in the work, and had always been more or less interested in it, and told him I considered myself quite proficient in delineation, and if he wanted me to I'd tell him something about himself.





WHEN I STRUCK HIS BUMP OF BENEVOLENCE. I WONDERED AT MY  
EVER GETTING HIM TO GIVE UP HIS DOLLAR.



I had no intention of making a charge, until he asked me how much it would cost.

I told him two dollars was the customary price the world over.

He shook his head and said that he wouldn't give over a dollar.

"All right," said I, "I'll do it for a dollar."

By this time his two sons and three hired men had come in from their work, and all listened with much interest.

One of the employes, a bright sort of a fellow, said he used to have one of Fowler's books on the subject, and was very much interested in it.

As I progressed in the examination and seemed to strike him just right from one thing to the other, they all became more and more enthusiastic on the subject.

When I struck his bump of benevolence I wondered at my ever getting him to give up his dollar.

Before I had finished with him one of the sons asked my price.

I explained that the regular price was two dollars, but I had agreed to examine his father's head for a dollar.

As soon as I had finished with the father, this son

wanted me to examine his head, for which he would, also, give a dollar.

Before I got through I discovered I had struck a regular bonanza, and wound up with having delineated the characters of all six, and having received that many dollars.

This was a new proposition to me, and one I hadn't thought of, and I was at once sorry that I hadn't brought with me a supply of Fowler's blank charts.

They all agreed that I had struck every one of them with almost absolute accuracy, and each gave up his dollar freely.

The farmer then suggested just what I wanted him to, that I should put out my horse and stay all night, and if I'd examine his little grandson's head and "meby the old woman's," that would pay the bill.

After supper I "fixed up" the boy and the farmer's wife, after which I entertained them with my old-time auction talk, and then told them about my books, "The Auctioneer's Guide" and "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," and related a few stories from the latter.

The next morning one of the hired men handed me two dollars, the price of the "Auctioneer's Guide,"

and one of the farmer's sons gave me fifty cents for the "Hus'ler," both books to be sent by mail.

I gave them my address and assured them that I would be responsible for their safe delivery by mail, and should they not reach them within two weeks to let me know.

This farmer was an exception among those of that section of the country as regards providing for his table. He simply had the best of everything, and his wife was a splendid cook and an ideal housekeeper.

They had a brand new organ in the house and one of the men had traded for an old violin.

I tuned up the latter as best I could and played the only tune I had ever learned to play when I owned one, "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and as I could play "Tommy, Don't Go," on the organ and could sing one song, a Chinese one entitled "My Name Hasing," and play the accompaniment on the organ, I managed to wake things up pretty lively, and we didn't go to bed until after midnight.

By the way the sons and the three hired men seemed interested I was afraid they would each want to saddle a horse the next morning and journey with me.

I had explained that I was out for recreation and a

little business on the side, and when ready to take my departure they all made me promise to stop over night with them again on my way back.

As I continued my trip that day there was nothing of interest transpired.

About five o'clock that evening I came upon another camping party, and, as the weather continued fine, arranged to join them. Besides, I had enjoyed the previous night's sleep and the plain rough mode of living when camping, and was anxious to repeat it.

The usual hoccake, bacon and tea was the bill of fare for supper and breakfast.

I slept on the ground, wrapped in my blankets, under a beech tree that night, and enjoyed, as before, a sound, refreshing sleep.

I kept my course, principally westward, and while journeying along the next day, about ten o'clock, an elderly man and two women came out of an old, rickety, barn-like house and watched me intently.

As I approached them the man raised his hand, indicating that he wished me to stop, which I did, and the first question he asked was if I was a preacher.

I laughingly replied that I had done almost every-

thing but preach, and inquired why he asked the question.

“Well,” said he, “I am not joking; you look like a preacher, and I didn’t know but that you might help us out with a little advice, as my oldest daughter has just died with consumption and we are here, miles away from anyone and in bad shape for money, and don’t know what to do.”

Readily understanding the seriousness of the case, I dismounted and offered, not only any advice I might be able to give, but my services as well.

He led the way to his house and confirmed his statement by showing me the remains of his daughter.

I asked him what he wanted to do, and about the condition of his finances, etc.

At this he told me his story of how he and his wife and his wife’s sister and their three daughters had moved there from southern Indiana a few years before.

He had purchased the forty acres of land upon which they were living before leaving Indiana and without having seen it.

He told of their repeated loss of horses, until the last one had died, and of their many failures of crops,

and almost constant sickness in the family, and ended the story by saying that one dollar and fifty cents was all the money they possessed, and they were anxious to hold funeral services in a certain church, several miles distant, and to bury the remains in the cemetery at the same place.

They hadn't a relative or an intimate or close friend in the state, and owed a considerable amount of money for which they had given a mortgage on their farm as security.

All in all, here certainly was a pitiful condition of affairs, such as no man could easily turn his back upon.

The parents of the dead girl were as children looking for sympathy and advice, and were utterly at a loss to know which way to turn.

I asked them why it wouldn't be a good idea to select as nice a spot as possible, on some remote part of their farm, and there bury the remains, and if they wished to remove them at some future time, when they were in a better financial condition, they could do so.

This suggestion reminded the mother that the daughter had once pointed out a spot over in the grove



where she would like to be buried; therefore it was quickly agreed upon by both parents that the body should be buried there, but the next question was, What about a casket? There was no regular undertaker for many miles distant, but an acquaintance living eleven miles away was a wagon maker and owned a repair shop, and his wife ran a country store, and they believed he would make the casket and bring it over and wait for his pay if they could manage to send word to him.

I consented to making the trip, and assured them that if he refused to trust them I'd pay the bill myself, and as for engaging a minister to conduct a short service I'd do the best I could for them.

After taking the proper measurement for the casket, arranging about the shroud and taking an inventory of their meat and grocery supply, I started on my gruesome errand, which took me directly north.

About a mile and a half distant I came to their nearest neighbor and informed them of the death of the girl, as I did three other families on my way, and asked them to try and be present at the burial at two o'clock the coming Friday.

These four families lived in "shacks or sheds," as

we Northerners would have called them. The parents and children were half clad, and their pinched, pale faces showed a lack of nourishing food.

The faces of children ten years of age looked almost the age of forty.

One family of five children and the parents lived in one small room, in which they cooked, ate and slept, and with only one bed—at least only one in sight.

They all looked as though they were ready to drop into their graves.

On arriving at my destination I found a settlement of about five families.

The wagonmaker, or undertaker, as I called him, and his wife, who ran the store and kept postoffice, were agreeable, pleasant and intelligent people, but their neighbors were poverty-stricken to the extreme.

It was a mystery to me how they could keep up their business, until they explained that three miles farther north was a large settlement of farmers, from which they drew a splendid patronage.

When I explained my mission to Mr. Francis, the wagonmaker, he demurred about trying to make the coffin, as he had never attempted such a thing, and if he did he must have his pay, as Mr. Rathbun, the

man whose daughter had died, was in very poor financial circumstances, although an honest, upright man.

I consented to pay the bill if he would undertake and carry out the task as quickly as possible and deliver the casket at Mr. Rathbun's home.

He said that he owned a horse and also a light wagon, but had loaned the latter to his brother to make a fifty mile trip and back, and he would not return for four or five days.

"Well, then," said I, "make it out of as light material as possible, and of boards as thin as you dare to, and you and I will manage to take it there on horseback by riding side by side and letting one end rest on the withers of my horse and the other end on your horse."

So saying, we both went to work from a pile of fine whitewood lumber.

We worked until eleven o'clock that night and finished it the following evening.

We lined it with white muslin and stained it cherry color, and when completed we were both very proud of the job.

While we were at work on the casket, Mrs. Francis and her sister made a shroud of white cambric, and,

after purchasing a few pounds of smoked ham, three pounds of crackers and some coffee and sugar, we placed them inside of the casket and after screwing on the cover were ready for an early morning's start.

There was no preacher living nearby, and that evening I remarked that Mr. and Mrs. Rathbun would be disappointed in not having some one to conduct funeral services. Mrs. Francis remarked that I could very easily conduct a short service myself.

I assured her that she would very quickly change her mind if she knew how "shy" I was on Scripture and the little experience I had had in that line.

That, she declared, didn't matter; she could select a chapter in the Bible for me to read, as also a prayer from her prayer book.

I could open with a short sketch of the young woman's life and close by reading these selections, which, in her opinion, would prove a great solace and comfort to the family.

"Very well," said I, "you go ahead and select them, and loan me your Bible and prayer book for the occasion and I will get to practicing right away."

So saying, I began to "frame up" a sort of program.



*"Very well," said I, "loan me your Bible."*

The first obstacle I encountered was the need of some one to sing a hymn or two, when Mrs. Francis, pointing to her husband, said :

“ There is your man ; he will just fill the bill.”

I suggested that he should also conduct the services.

He replied that he would do his part, and I should do mine.

He then seated himself at the organ and demonstrated what he could do, by playing and singing several hymns, which surprised me.

This gave me quite an inspiration, as I remembered having seen an old-fashioned melodian in the Rathbun home, and before retiring that night, Mr. Francis and I, with a few suggestions from Mrs. Francis, gave three rehearsals.

The one thing lacking was a few fitting remarks at the grave, and I immediately set to work to write something, with a view to familiarizing myself with it, and with the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Francis, was able to prepare, what we all considered a quite appropriate eulogy.

We were up, ready for our journey, bright and early the next morning.

We partially filled two grain bags with bran and

oats, and threw one across the withers of each of the horses, upon which to rest the ends of the casket.

When first starting out, the horses were somewhat excited over their new experience, and naturally raised their heads very high, when we found the space, between their necks and our saddles, rather narrow to make room for the casket, but as soon as they became quiet, and began walking along with their heads down, we found no difficulty in making the trip all right.

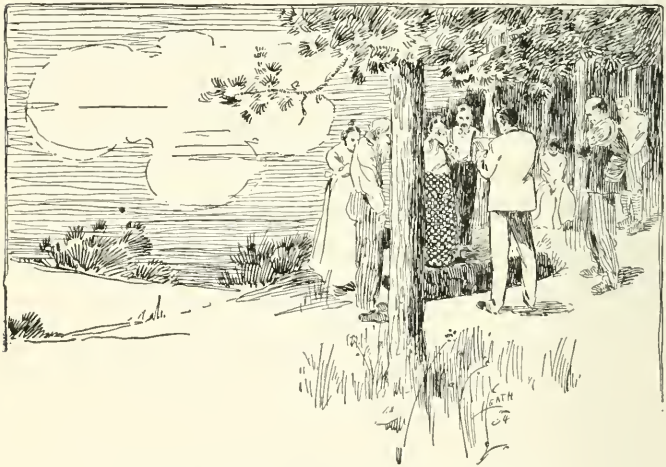
Arriving at Mr. Rathbun's about eleven o'clock, on Friday, he told us he had visited four or five families, living in another direction from where I had been, and they promised to be present at the funeral.

I explained that I could not find a minister, but that Mr. Francis and myself would, if they so desired, conduct a short service in memoriam of the deceased.

The family was pleased with this suggestion, and after procuring from Mr. Rathbun some information regarding the date and place of birth of his daughter, together with a sketch of her life, I made a memorandum of it and Mr. Francis and I went out where the grave had been dug, and gave another rehearsal.

By half past one o'clock, several persons had arrived to attend the services.

At the appointed hour, two o'clock, I opened the services by stating that I was not a minister of the gospel, but, in the absence of one, I had consented to try and conduct a simple, short service in memory of the deceased, and then went on with a sketch of her



*“Delivered my formerly prepared eulogy.”*

life, after which the singing and playing on the melodian by Mr. Francis, and the reading of the prayer and the chapter in the Bible by myself, were successfully carried out.

In closing, I announced that the burial would take place on the premises, and that those who wished to



view the remains could do so by passing by the casket, and out at the side door.

Six men bore the remains to the burial spot, and after lowering it into the grave, I delivered my formerly prepared eulogy, after which, in the absence of the usual rough box, the casket was quickly covered, and the grave filled. So ended my first and last experience of this kind, and although, I dare say, I had been told a hundred times in my life that I looked like a preacher, and should have been one, it had never, until this experience, occurred to me that possibly I might have missed my calling. Everything went off so smoothly, and in such a funereal way, that I almost forgot that I wasn't a real preacher, and although I had stated right in the beginning that I was not a minister, yet, after the services, I repeatedly heard men and women asking who the preacher was, and where he was from.

After settling with Mr. Francis, and presenting Mr. and Mrs. Rathbun with ten dollars to bridge them over a little, I bade them goodby and made another start, twenty-five dollars poorer in purse, but richer in experience.

## CHAPTER IX.

Meeting an Old Acquaintance of Boyhood Days—A Queer Coincidence—The Biggest True Fish Story on Record—Selling Out Catch at Auction—Conducting an Auction Store—Fitting Spectacles—The Witty Tow-headed Boy.

After leaving the Rathbun home, I continued my course to the southwest, reaching a small town of about two hundred inhabitants, just at nightfall.

On making inquiries for a place to remain over night, I was directed to a small building, with a weather-beaten sign, "Tavern," over the door.

On entering, I asked the lady in attendance, if they had a register.

She said she didn't know what I meant.

When I explained that it was a book, usually kept by hotels, in which guests wrote their names and addresses, she laughed and said, that they didn't "hev no kinder book like thet, but if I wanted ter write my name real bad, I could write it in the Bible."

"Very well," said I, "give me the Bible," which, sure enough, she did, and I wrote "J. P. Johnston. Galetown, Ohio."

Not wishing to be annoyed by answering questions about Chicago, I thought I'd register from the little "four corners" in Ohio, where I was raised.

While I was at the barn looking after my horse, the landlord came in from a hunting trip, and his daughter, who was acting as landlady, asked him if it wasn't Galetown, Ohio, where he used to live, and showed him my name and address.

He grew much excited and wondered if it could be his old Galetown Corners, where he had lived three years, and knew everybody.

When I returned from the barn, he asked me what county in Ohio my Galetown was in.

I replied, "Sandusky County."

"Do you mean Galetown Corners?" he asked.

"I do," I replied, "I was raised there."

"Well, then," he excitedly asked, "did you know Mike Keefer?"

"I should think I ought to," I answered, "he was my step-father."

"The Dickens, you say! You ain't that little red-headed, freckled faced, fighting cuss, aire you? Why, I used to run that blacksmith shop, nigh on ter forty years ago, when you wuz 'bout five or six years old."

“Well then,” said I, “your name is Heilman, Iz Heilman.”

“Yes, sir; yes, sir; that’s my name.”

“And,” said I, “I can remind you of an incident that occurred when I was between five and six years of age. It was this way: My step-father had an old mare that had been ruptured, and being of no value, he had you take her down in the woods——”

“And shoot her,” he yelled.

“Yes, sir,” said I, “and you tied her to a tree and your first shot missed, and she broke away and ran to the lower end of the woods. We followed, and when she turned her head toward us, we were about ten rods away, you put a bullet through her brain, and, by the way,” I went on, “I have in my possession an identification pocket-piece, made from a tooth from that old mare’s lower jaw.” And explained that a few years before, I had visited my old home, and while squirrel hunting in the woods, had found the skull near where she was killed, and removing this tooth, had had it polished down, and my initials and address put on it.

This, to the old man, seemed one of the queerest coincidences of his life, and he became so interested and excited over it, that I gave it to him.

This was enough to make us old friends, and nothing in town was too good for me, and my end of the table was never lacking for the best in the market.

That evening, the landlord and I called upon the leading merchant in the town, and in the course of our conversation, he said he wished he could sell out his stock of goods, so he could go back to "God's country," as he termed it.

I suggested that he make an auction sale, and let me do his auctioneering.

Observing that he seemed a little doubtful about the feasibility of the thing, and possibly about my ability as a salesman, I gathered a few articles together, and placing them on the counter, gave him a little demonstration of what I could do, by first opening up a paper of pins and rattled on at lightning speed, as follows:

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, the first article I am going to offer for your inspection, this evening, is the old-time adamantine pin, with solid heads and needle points. The heads are riveted on, the points are riveted in. There are nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand four hundred and eighty-two pins in each and every paper. They are stuck all up; they are stuck all down; they are stuck in the center and all around;

they are stuck in the middle; they are stuck in the flop; they are stuck in the bottom; they are stuck in the top; they are stuck all out; they are stuck all in, till there isn't room to stick a pin, and I'll stick 'em into you stingy devils, to-night, at ten cents a paper. I'll tell you what I will do, just to see if there is a God in Israel. I'll wrap you up two papers for twenty cents, three for thirty, four for forty, and five for half a dollar. Take them along for forty-five, forty, thirty-five, thirty. Here I am, like a barrel rolling down hill. I never know when to stop. I'll wrap up these five papers for twenty, fifteen, nine, eight and a half. There, ten cents will buy the entire lot, 'kit and caboodle,' and if that isn't enough for your money, step right up and help yourselves. Who will have this lot for ten cents? Sold for ten cents; not sold, but morally and Christianly given away. Where Christians dwell, blessings freely flow. Would it make any difference to you, sir, if I should give you five more papers in the bargain? All right, sir; here they are, here they are. You can't give in vain to a good cause. Remember, God loveth a cheerful giver."

From this I went on through his stock, giving a full line of talk on everything I picked up, and when fin-

ished, he was ready to do business, and we were not long in arranging a sale, he to pay me the usual ten per cent commission.

One of his neighbors had a hand printing press, and after writing up an advertisement, we had a thousand circulars run off, announcing the beginning, on the coming Wednesday, and distributing them in the village and among the farmers, of which there were quite a number in the vicinity.

The next Sunday, I learned that two of our hotel boarders, on Monday, were going up the stream, which bordered the town, in a canoe, for a two-days' fishing trip, to what they called the inlet or basin, and, as they were going to camp out, I became anxious to join them. and making the fact known, had no trouble in arranging matters.

While we were getting our boat ready at the landing, a small tow-headed lad came down and talked almost incessantly about the great luck he and his father and brother had, while out fishing, three days before.

At last, looking up at him, I said:

“ Say Kid, do you know what's the matter with me? ”

He hesitated a moment and said :

“ No ; I don't know what's the matter with you.”

“ Well,” I replied, “ I talk too much.”

He didn't seem to catch the point and instantly began talking as rapidly as ever.

A few moments later, I again said :

“ Say Kid, do you know what's the matter with me? ”

“ No,” he replied.

“ Well, I talk too much,” I again answered, and still he kept talking away, telling his fish stories ; when the third time I said :

“ Say, do you know what's the matter with me? ”

He replied, “ No, I told you.”

“ Well, as I said before, I talk too much.”

At this he became very quiet and seemed to be trying to think out what I was driving at.

The two men and myself made the trip and met with unusual success in bass fishing, that afternoon, and had a most enjoyable night, camping at the inlet.

The next morning, one of the men arose very early, and on going to the landing, discovered, when looking into the clear water, an enormous number of perch, and came back to notify us.



We were out and ready for business in a very few moments, but discovered that in some way we had lost our big can of bait. The men said they would cut up a fish for bait, and while doing so, I took my hook and line and went where the perch were so thick, and noticing an old red flannel shirt hanging over the corner of the fence, I tore off a small piece, fastened it to my hook and threw it into the water. In an instant, it seemed to me that a million fish darted for it, and instantly, I hauled in a beauty, and to make sure that they would come again, I tried it once more, with the same result.

Having a large supply of hooks and lines, I said nothing, but took possession of the flannel shirt, and quietly returning to camp, I fastened eleven more hooks to my line, one above the other, on a short line, about six inches apart, and baited each one, with a piece of the red flannel, and hid the rest, and returning to the landing, I called to the men to watch me just a moment, and witness the greatest feat in fishing on record. So saying, I dropped my twelve hooks in, and in a jiffy, hauled out twelve fine perch.

The men came running up, and under great excitement, asked for some of the red flannel.

I told them I was very sorry there wasn't any more, and suggested that I could keep them both busy unhooking my fish, and they went to work, and if I never tell another fish story, I want this one to go down in history as the biggest true fish story on record.

I stood there for a whole hour, and not in a single instance did I drop in those hooks that I didn't instantly bring forth twelve fine fish.

The only regret I had was that I didn't have three just such outfits for myself, and the two men to unhook them, so that I could keep one set of hooks in the water all the time.

At last, the fish suddenly quit biting. Whether or not they had gotten "onto my game," I don't know, but not another bite could I get.

The ground was literally covered with fish, and one of the men suggested that we put most of them back into the water, as we couldn't use them.

"Well, I guess not," I replied. "If we can't eat them, we will sell them."

"Yes we will. I'd like to see you sell anything in our town," remarked one, and said, if I'd give him what he wanted for his family, he'd take fifty cents for his share of all we had.

“So will I,” retorted the other.

“Very well,” said I, “here is your money,” and handed each of them their price, with the understanding that they were to help load them into the boat.

One peculiarity about the people in this country was, that they placed little or no value on their work, and seemed to be devoid of judgment, as regards values. They were always ready and willing to do something for nothing, were nearly all devout Christians and strong temperance people.

Having satisfied our ambition for fishing, we pulled for town, and on arriving at the landing, I arranged with the drayman of the town to put my fish into three or four boxes and drive up on the street with them, and cutting a lot of my fish lines up into small pieces, I put the drayman and two other men to stringing the perch, six and twelve in a bunch, and the bass, three and six together; and when completed, I mounted the wagon, and with the hotel dinner bell in hand, started around the little burg with the drayman as driver, and I did a good job of what the street man would call “Ballahooing,” ringing the bell, and announcing in a loud voice, that a large supply of nice fish would be

sold at auction to the highest bidder, and incited every one to turn out and to come quick, and get first choice.

By the time we had driven around the town, and returned to the main street, the whole population had turned out en masse, with baskets, pails, dishpans and milkpans, ready to do business.

In five minutes, I was selling the perch off, first, in bunches of eighteen, then twelve, and at last six, and the fine bass in lots of six and three, and no one ever saw fish sell faster.

Before I had finished, I sold to several of the first buyers, a second lot, at a lower price than at first.

After figuring up, I found I had cleared a little over eight dollars; better than to throw them away—besides, I needed the money.

That evening, in the big store, which I had arranged to sell out at auction, a large crowd had gathered, and I was relating with great gush, my phenomenal fish story, when suddenly the tow-headed boy came upon the scene. He watched and listened intently to my repetition of the wonderful luck I had had, when, just as I had “let up” for a second, he said:

“Say, Mr., do you know what’s the matter with me?”



THE FISH AUCTION—THE WHOLE POPULATION TURNED OUT ENMASSE,  
READY TO DO BUSINESS.



“Why, no,” I replied, “I don’t know what’s the matter with you.”

“Well, sir,” said he, “I talk too much.”

## CHAPTER X.

A Combination that Paid—On the Road with a Lucrative Business—Trading for Anything, from a Cambric Needle to a Grindstone—A Queer Turkey Deal—Trading for an Ox-team and Wagon—Another Trade for a Mule—A Regular Caravan in Appearance—Selling the Outfit at Auction—Giving a Lecture to a Full House—Killed My First and Only Bear—How it Happened—Selling the Carcass to a Butcher—A Valuable Lesson in Salesmanship—My Return to Hot Springs—Posing as a “Crack” Shot—How I Asked the Blessing.

In arranging for the auction sale, the merchant followed my advice and brought out all rubbish and shop-worn goods to be disposed of first, leaving the better class of goods for the last.

While going through his stock I found any quantity of spectacles and eye-glasses, and several small boxes containing gold-filled and solid gold spectacle frames, and a large number of lenses. When I asked him how he had been doing his fitting of glasses he brought forth an almost new Hardy Optometer, with revolving disk and several test charts and said he'd like to sell out his entire spectacle stock and testing outfit, as he wasn't a success as an optician.



I traded him a gold-filled Elgin watch and filled chain and charm for his entire spectacle outfit, and immediately arranged a place for fitting glasses in the back of his store-room, as this privilege was a part of the deal.

On Wednesday evening we opened our first auction sale, with the most flattering success.

The people in Arkansas, I discovered, were no exception to the rule, when it came to buying old rubbish at auction and paying more for it than they would for the best and newest goods.

When arranging the goods for sale I found on one of the back shelves a part of an old revolver.

The hammer and the cylinder in which the cartridges were placed, when loading, were missing, and carefully wrapping it in a piece of tissue paper and placing it in a small pasteboard box, I laid it away, remarking that I'd have a little fun with it in the opening of my sale.

There was a large crowd, the big store-room being packed, as this was the first auction sale ever held in the town; besides, many of them had never attended an auction sale before.

After making my introductory talk I picked up the old piece of revolver and said :

“ The first article I shall offer for sale is this old-fashioned, rusted out and worn out weapon,” and holding my hand over the part where the hammer and cylinder once had been, I said :

“ It has no cylinder nor hammer and isn't worth carrying home, but how much am I bid for it? Who will give two dollars to start it? Who will give a dollar? Who will start it for fifty cents?”

“ I will,” shouted a big fellow, away back in the rear.

With this as a starter, I ran it up on ten cent bids to one dollar and thirty cents and sold it. As the buyer passed up the cash I handed it to him, saying :

“ Now, sir, if I have misrepresented this old piece of firearms in any way I'll give back your money.”

After he had looked it over carefully I asked if I described it correctly and he said I had, and after the crowd had had a laugh over it, I told him I wouldn't give back his money, as it was bad luck to give back money, but I'd allow him what he paid for it in trade.

This pleased him and made a good customer of him.

and made every one in the audience feel good, and our first sale netted over a hundred and fifty dollars cash.

When the sale was about half over I took up nearly twenty minutes explaining that I was from Chicago, where I had resided for many years, and was engaged there in the optical business and understood the art of fitting glasses to perfection, and that I was traveling through that country on horseback for health and recreation and had by mere chance taken charge of that auction sale; that when a young man I had followed the business of auctioneering and this was the first sale I had made for many years.

I then began a talk on the anatomy of the eye, its defects, etc., and how structural defects would cause headache, dizziness, sick stomach and nervousness, and wound up by saying that I was prepared to give free tests and examinations of eyes in the back part of the room, and could always be found there when not selling at auction.

This talk, which I repeated at every sale, was better than all the advertising I could have done in newspapers or with circulars, and during my entire stay there I was kept busy fitting glasses when not auctioneering.

My old friend Heilman, the landlord, never failed to put in a good word for me, saying :

“ I have knowed him ever since he was three years old, and will vouch for anything he says or does, by gum ! ”

Not being provided with the proper instruments to do what is known as compound work, I was obliged to confine myself to spherical work alone.

In all the bad cases I frankly explained that I was not prepared to fit them correctly, and charged accordingly, and simply did the best I could with the facilities I had.

Old Nelson Sizer, of New York, the greatest phrenologist of his day, examined my “ bumps ” when he was eighty-four years of age, and when filling out my chart, he said :

“ It’s as natural for you to do business as it is for a duck to swim, and you can’t get away from it and never will, if you live a hundred years. ”

While in the midst of this auction and optical business I recalled to mind what he had said and reflected that I had started out on a trip for recreation and pleasure, exclusively, and here I was, in business up to my ears, and also had my first experience as a fish

peddler, in that same town. "Anyhow," I argued to myself, "why should I, or any one in the vigor of health, throw away the slightest opportunity for making a few dollars, when they are always so handy to have? Why not turn everything possible into money, and then have the fun of spending it, rather than not make it at all?"

We had nine evenings and five afternoons of auction sales there. People came from a distance of twenty-five and thirty miles and camped out for two and three days, to attend the sale.

The total auction receipts were a trifle over fourteen hundred dollars. My commission was one hundred and forty; besides, I had taken in over one hundred and fifty dollars for spectacles.

When I came to pack up my optical stock I found that I had a bulky lot of goods to carry, and decided to try and trade for a light vehicle of some kind and a single harness with which I could drive, instead of traveling on horseback, and could occasionally, no doubt, fit a pair of glasses. Therefore, I was not long in trading my rifle for a light huckster wagon and single harness and a double-barrel shotgun, and on the

following Monday morning, after closing the auction sale, was ready to resume my trip westward.

When I first arranged for a few days' auction sale in this berg I had written to my wife, explaining my various experiences, and requested an immediate reply, which I received the Saturday upon which we made our last sale, saying she was getting over her rheumatism and would be ready to leave there in about ten days, or two weeks.

With this cheerful news I started out with renewed interest and found, in no time, that it was very hard to pass a house without stopping and introducing my spectacles.

Realizing that cash was not always available with many of the natives, and knowing that eggs and butter were plentiful, I purchased, at the first small town I passed through, a tin can with a cover to it, a pair of scales and a shoe box, which I filled with oats and bran, and after posting myself on the market prices of almost every farm product, including sheep pelts and coon skins, I started out.

The very first house at which I stopped, after thus equipping myself, I fitted the man and his wife, each, with a pair of spectacles and took my pay, ten dollars

and fifty cents, in eggs, live chickens and a smoked ham.

Wherever I found people over forty years of age I had no trouble to do business.

Any number of young, as well as elderly people were suffering with severe headaches and stomach troubles, all of which, with but very few exceptions, I found were due to eye strain. Telling them so, however, was one thing, and convincing them, another, though I was successful in converting a few of these, and fitted them with glasses no doubt, with perfectly satisfactory results, as the overcoming of these troubles with glasses had for a long time been my specialty and hobby, and I considered myself fairly competent in giving proper corrections, and always took pains, when among strangers or others, to be as careful and painstaking as possible in my examinations in all of these headache cases.

I left my address with them and requested them to write me in a few weeks and let me know about results, and afterwards received four letters, informing me that three cases had been entirely relieved and the fourth had been benefited but the trouble not entirely overcome.

To this person, after referring to the record of her frame dimensions, strength of lenses, etc., which I always made a practice of keeping, I sent another pair with stronger lenses, and about three weeks later received a letter saying that her headache had entirely disappeared; that she had followed instructions to the letter, about wearing her glasses every hour of the day, and wouldn't dispense with them for any amount of money. Therefore, although I always charged good prices, I felt that my trip through that God-forsaken country had not been devoid of some good, aside from the real pleasure and fun I derived from it, as well as having profited somewhat, financially.

One man, fifty years of age, whose eyes were badly in need of glasses for reading and close work, but who had never worn them, became greatly excited when I fitted him and showed him the wonderful improvements.

I charged him seven dollars and fifty cents. He hadn't but fifty cents, so I asked him what he had to trade in the way of farm products, sheep pelts or anything marketable.

He said his wife had some butter and eggs and he had some coon skins, a fox skin and a few sheep pelts.



After agreeing on the prices of these things, and figuring it up, we found he was still short a dollar and a half, for which I offered to trust him, and let him send it to me later on, but under no circumstances would he go into debt for a penny's worth. However, he happened to think that he had two grindstones and offered me my choice of them for the dollar and fifty cents.

“All right,” said I, “it's a deal,” and we loaded the truck into my “cracker wagon” and I pulled out. Here was an experience that amused me immensely, as it brought me back to my very first business venture, when I started out buying butter, eggs, chicken and sheep pelts, when but sixteen years of age.

I dare say that had I, from necessity, engaged in the business, it would have seemed different, but the fact that I had started out with no thoughts of anything of the kind, and had simply drifted into it without the slightest effort, and, too, met with such flattering success, made it the more interesting to me, and as I was driving along with this load I thought to myself that the one thing I had lacked on my first boyhood venture was a stock of spectacles.

On entering the first small town, after starting out

with the wagon, I was loaded to the brim with butter, eggs, chickens, sheep pelts, coon skins, three turkeys, a yellow dog and the grindstone, and in addition to all this truck, I had taken in twenty-five dollars.

I had no trouble in disposing of everything I had, and at a slight advance over what I had allowed for it, until it came to the grindstone and the yellow dog.

Quite a large crowd had gathered around my wagon, while selling out to the merchants, and as there seemed to be no prospect of finding a buyer for the dog and grindstone, I announced that I would sell them to the highest bidder, which I did, and got a dollar and eighty-five cents for the grindstone and thirty cents for the dog.

“Everything was fish that came to my net,” so I arranged with one of the merchants there to give free examinations of eyes in his store, after which I got up in my wagon and, calling together all the men in the town, gave them a thirty-minute lecture on the eye and its defects, and announced that if any of them wished to have their eyes examined, free, to just step inside the store, and no one need to feel under the least obligation to buy glasses.

In this way I sold four pairs for the cash and again started on my way, rejoicing.

That night I took quarters with a very well-to-do farmer, and fitted himself and wife with reading glasses and one of their daughters with glasses, to overcome headache.

The next morning, at breakfast, the wife reminded her husband that they were to have company that day, and wanted him to kill a rooster for dinner.

I remarked that I had a shotgun with me, and would like the fun of shooting the chicken.

They agreed, and the farmer and myself started for the barn, followed by the whole family, as the shooting of a chicken was an event not to be overlooked.

The back barn door was open, and as we looked out in the barnyard we spied a fine big rooster, directly in front of me; three fine turkeys were to my right, and two to my left.

As we appeared at the door they all, including the chicken, straightened up and were apparently on the verge of running away, when I quickly took aim at the chicken and blazed away. The old gun exploded like a magazine and kicked like a Confederate mule, and I landed on a bunch of hay on the barn floor.

When I regained consciousness the whole family was in an uproar. I had shot the chicken's head off and killed five turkeys.

The farmer wanted to know what sort of an infernal machine I had there, anyhow, and asked me to explain how in thunder I could kill all the poultry on the farm with one shot.

I couldn't explain it, and told him so. His wife was furious, and forthwith demanded five dollars for the turkeys, as settlement, which I paid, without an argument, and so sooner had I paid the money over, than one of the turkeys jumped up and, flapping its wings, began, "Quit! Quit! Quit!" and being surrounded by the family outside, ran into the barn.

Instantly realizing that the concussion from my old gun had simply stunned them and knocked them senseless, I gathered up the other four, and after procuring some twine and tying their legs, we captured the other one and served him likewise.

When I asked the woman which she wanted to do, keep the five dollars or the turkeys, she reckoned she'd rather have the money than five half dead turkeys, so I loaded them into the wagon, and started out, and had



*"The farmer wanted to know what kind of an infernal machine  
I had there, anyhow."*

not traveled three miles, when I met a man out buying poultry and sold him my five turkeys for seven dollars.

One day I drove up to where a farmer and a mover were having a conversation.

The mover's wife was driving a pair of horses hitched to a covered wagon, while he was driving an ox team and was trying to sell the wagon and oxen to the farmer.

He said he was moving out into "civilization," and wanted to get some cash out of the ox team; besides, they were so much slower than the horses that it was very annoying to travel with them.

The farmer said he had no use for them, so I struck up a deal and gave the mover a gold-filled watch and chain and fifteen dollars in cash for the outfit.

After making the deal I turned to the farmer and tried to hire him to drive the ox team to a little town, six miles distant, where I thought I might dispose of them.

He said he couldn't possibly leave home, as his wife was very sick and was not expected to live, and I thought myself, "I'd better dig out of this before I get another funeral on my hands," and as I had it all to do myself, I hitched my horse behind the covered

wagon, and taking up the ox whip, gee'd them around and started, and as one of them was a white ox I called him "Blue."

About three miles from where I traded for the oxen I came up to a cheap farmer, who asked me if I was out swapping.

I replied that I made a deal now and then, and asked him what he had.

He said he had a "darn" nice big mule that he'd swap for anything I had, as he had never owned a mule before and wasn't used to them.

I found that he hadn't money enough to pay the difference between the mule and my oxen outfit, so I showed him my shotgun, and after testing his wife's and his eyes, I gave them each a pair of spectacles and the shotgun for the old mule and harness.

I then gave him fifty cents for a whiffletree and his wife's clothesline, which I used to lengthen the lines and for the novelty of the thing I hitched the old mule in front of the oxen and started on.

I thought of how I would enjoy meeting my wife and some of our Northern friends about that time, and was in hopes that I would have an opportunity to have the entire outfit photographed before disposing of it,

which, however, I was unable to do, as I made short work of selling the mule, oxen and wagon at auction, on arriving at the little berg.

Calling together every one in town, I explained how I had come in possession of the mule and oxen, and then announced that I was going to sell them at auction to the highest bidder.

Two or three men wanted me to sell them all in a bunch together, but experience had taught me to do right the opposite. Therefore, I first sold the mule's harness for two dollars, then the mule for twelve, and when it came to the oxen, I separated them and first sold the yoke for three dollars and fifty cents, then the white ox for seventeen dollars, and the other for twenty-one and closed the wagon out for an even ten dollar bill, and was ready to make another start with Dynamite and the cracker wagon.

When I called at a little drug store for a small purchase, I noticed, lying on a shelf, a copy of my book, "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," and noticing that the druggist kept a few different kinds of books for sale, I asked if he sold many of the "Hus'ler."

He said that he should think that he had, that he



didn't think he had sold less than fifty altogether, and that all the farmers and every one in town had read it.

I then said :

“ Well, I suppose if the author of this book was to give a lecture here, he could get a fairly good crowd, couldn't he? ”

“ I should say he could, ” was the reply. “ Is he out giving lectures? ”

“ Well, now, I'll tell you, ” said I, “ I am the author of this book, and I have a lecture that I have given many times and have never failed to make it a success, although I haven't given it for some time. ”

He looked me over pretty carefully, and as I had purchased and was wearing a long linen coat, as a duster, and hadn't shaved myself for a few days, I was looking rather rough, and could see that he was inclined to doubt my word. Therefore, I showed him a letter from my wife, addressed to myself, and a few other credentials, when he became very enthusiastic and said he owned the only hall in town, suitable for entertainments, and if I'd give him a little specimen of the lecture, and if he thought it was all right, he would work up a nice crowd and give me sixty per cent of the gross receipts.

I gave him about ten minutes of my lecture, when he threw up his hands and said: "All right, all right, I am in for it, and we will have it next Saturday evening, as on that day and evening all the farmers for miles around will be here, and, having read your book, they will all attend."

So saying, he went to work with a vim and put up large, hand-printed bulletins in every place in town, and sent word in every direction regarding the lecture.

We gave no intimation whatever to any one that I was the man, and I took quarters at the only boarding-house in the town and began a quiet rehearsal of the lecture.

By Saturday noon, the whole town and many farmers were going to the lecture, but all were wondering when, wherefrom and how Johnston was to get there.

The druggist assured them that they needn't worry, that the lecture would come off all right.

When the doors of the hall were opened that night it was a question with me where upon the face of the earth all the people came from.

The hall was packed with children at fifteen cents, and grown persons at twenty-five, and I never had a more appreciative audience.

The receipts for the night were eighty-five dollars, of which my share was fifty-one, and so the good work kept up.

The following Monday I made a new start, taking an almost direct southern course.



*"Put up large, hand-printed bulletins in every place in town."*

I found money rather more plentiful in this direction; yet was obliged to do a little trading now and then to keep up the excitement.

I fitted one man and his wife, each, with a pair of glasses, for which I took a fine six-weeks old calf, and with another farmer I traded for a big, fat sheep.



*"I took both the calf and sheep alive to the nearest town and sold them to a butcher."*

I took both the calf and sheep, alive, to the nearest town and sold to a butcher. I made it a rule never to miss a sale, where it was possible to trade for anything, no matter what it was, just so I could load it into my wagon and try and find a market for it.

One Sunday in one of these small inland towns, about ten o'clock in the morning a small boy came running up to my boarding-house, or tavern as they called them in that country, and under great excitement, and all out of breath, told the landlord that his father and himself had a bear treed about a mile from town in the woods.

The landlord first scoffed at the idea, and was inclined to think that the lad was crazy, when I said: "If you have a gun, let's go and see." At this, he grabbed his rifle and started off, following the boy, and myself and the whole town, men, women and children following him.

The lad had spread the news broadcast, on his way to get the landlord, whom he knew to have a good rifle.

By the time we reached the woods I had been outwinded and nearly every one was ahead of me.

When I came to where the boy's father and brother



*"The whole town—men, women and children following him."*

were still watching the big tree, the landlord and the whole crowd were looking straight up into the tree, trying to locate the bear.

Noticing this, I stopped about eight or ten rods distant and peered up into the tree, where, in plain view, was a two-thirds grown black bear, with his fore legs spread from one limb to another, and looking down directly at me.

At this instant, I heard the cracking of limbs behind me, and looking back, there came a big, tall fellow with an old-fashioned, smooth-bore rifle.

As he approached me, I turned quickly and said :

“ Give me your gun.”

Intuitively he did so, and in a jiffy I put a bullet through the bear's head, and as he came down through those limbs with a crash, like a thousand of brick, such a scattering and screaming and scrambling and falling over each other to escape with their lives, I never saw before, and I guess some of them are running yet.

The landlord was the worst frightened of them all.

He had just spied the bear and had cocked his gun, when the climax came, and the next instant, in his wild scramble to escape, he fell headlong on the ground

and, to add to the excitement and confusion, his gun was accidentally discharged, and in his second scramble, after having partially regained his footing, he fell once more, this time with his full weight on the gun, breaking the stock from the barrel and raising havoc in general.

A worse scared man I never saw, nor a madder one, after the excitement had subsided.

He didn't speak to me from that time until I left, the next day, when he did condescend to tell me how much I owed him, and to say "goodby."

The butcher of the town was present and wanted to know what I'd take for the dead bear.

I hadn't the slightest idea what it was worth, but being open for business, I told him I'd take ten dollars for him.

He offered five dollars, and I didn't dicker a minute, but sold out on the spot. I gave the man and his two sons, who treed the bear, and the man from whom I borrowed the gun, each a dollar and kept the other dollar myself.

The next morning we, and I guess every one in town, had bear steak for breakfast, and it was very tender and nice.



Wondering what would happen next, I made another start the next morning, and inside of two hours had traded two pairs of spectacles for three geese and a nice fat pig.

My next trade was for a bag of cotton seed, of the



*"A worse scared man I never saw."*

value of which I knew nothing, and a crazy quilt, which the woman had just finished, and parted with for a pair of solid gold spectacles. This quilt I still have in the house.

I was now in a richer and better settled portion of the country and had, therefore, made some very fine

cash sales, in addition to the many unique trades; yet, in this more civilized portion of the country, my trip was less interesting and I headed for the nearest railroad town, where I marketed my truck, packed up my stock in trade and shipped it home; sold my wagon and harness at auction, and headed for Hot Springs, on horseback, the same as I had started out, and no one knew better than myself "What happened to Johnston" on this inland trip.

I have always said, since making this trip, that from one standpoint, in particular, it was of much value to me.

I had started out with plenty of money in my pocket, and knew where to get more, if I needed it, so the sole object of the trip was for recreation and amusement, and when I found myself almost unconsciously deluged with business I looked upon it as a part of the fun, and, therefore, when it came to making trades, and especially when selling a pair of spectacles, I naturally had an air of absolute indifference about me. I simply explained my theory of the case and in the most independent, off-hand manner, left it, more to the judgment and inclination of the patient than I

would have done had I started out on a purely business proposition.

I very soon discovered that this indifferent, independent manner was just what caught the people, "where the people were weak," and I played it for all it was worth and to the limit, and have always practiced and advocated that principle of salesmanship ever since.

For instance, were I to make an examination of the eyes of some person more or less illiterate and very much set in his way of thinking, and should find he had a defect that would surely cause headaches, and should tell him so, and he should attempt to take issue with me on the subject, I would say to him: "All right, sir, I have passed the experimental stages of my business and know exactly what I am talking about and have no time to argue with skeptics. Therefore, whenever you become far enough advanced in this work and know enough of me so that you can believe in me and my theories, please call again. Until then you and I will not be apt to do business, as I am not arguing with, coaxing nor urging any one to do business with me. I don't have to, as I have plenty of business without it."

Usually the man or woman, to whom this sort of talk "has been handed," will yield up and lay down the cash, with profuse apologies.

On arriving at Hot Springs I found my wife entirely cured of her rheumatism and in the best of health, and throwing a roll of money into her lap that almost took away her breath, I explained that I had had lots of fun making it, while she was being cured of her suffering and pain, and now she could have lots of fun spending it.

The next day after my arrival we went out for a walk and stopped at a shooting gallery where they had a large swing constantly moving from one side to the other, with eight glass bottles for targets, and they were using the Stevens eight-cartridge rifles, the same with which Mrs. Johnston and I had been practicing almost every day for five years.

There was a big crowd present, and handing her a rifle, I asked her to try it, and as fast as she could shoot she broke five bottles, one after the other, then missed one and hit the next two amidst shouts from all present; then after new bottles had been placed, I took the same rifle and surprised myself by breaking

the entire eight bottles in succession, amidst another round of applause.

Turning to Mrs. Johnston, I said :

“ Let’s get out of here while our credit is good.”

And, so saying, laid down the money, when the proprietor said :

“ Your bill is paid, and any time you folks come here it will cost you nothing to shoot all you want to.”

However, we made no further visits to this gallery, preferring to leave the impression that we were “ crack shots,” and let it go at that.

When relating the experiences of my trip to Mrs. Johnston, I mentioned that I had made fifty dollars delivering my lecture in a small town, and this reminded her that two ladies from Arkadelphia, Arkansas, had been stopping at the hotel and had told her they believed nearly every person in that town, of over three thousand inhabitants, had read “ Twenty Years of Hus’ling.”

“ Well, then,” said I, “ after I rest here a few days we will go over there and deliver the lecture.” And so we did.

The following Monday, I arranged with the Methodist school, a preparatory school for theological stu-

dents, to give it in the auditorium, and then began advertising it thoroughly.

Not being able to procure satisfactory accommodations at the hotels there, I looked up a boarding house, kept by a widow who was a devout Christian, and who had five of these theological students boarding with her.

At meal time these five students occupied seats directly opposite Mrs. Johnston and myself, while the landlady was seated at the head of the table, with her daughter and grandson at the other end.

One of these young men, a clean-cut, smooth-faced, tow-headed chap, always asked the blessing, and this is the way he did it :

Bowing his head reverently, as did all the rest, he would mumble in a nasal tone of voice, "Heavenly Father, Yum, Yum \* \* \* Christsave, Amen,"

I asked my wife the second day if she could tell me what the fellow said between the start and finish of his blessing.

She said she had tried to make it out, but couldn't, as it was always the same.

The morning after I had delivered the lecture and

the day we left there this young man was absent from breakfast, and to my consternation, the landlady, after gazing steadily at me for a moment, in her typical southern dialect drawled out :

“ Mistah Johnston, will yew please say grace? ”

I hadn't sense enough to excuse myself right in the start, and not realizing how far out of my line I was getting, I tried my best to think of something to say, but, for the instant, was taken with genuine stage fright and simply “ lost my head and went all over the track,” as the old sport would say.

The four young men sat there waiting and starving, with their heads bowed, the daughter and grandson also waiting, and the old lady with her forehead resting on her hand, all waiting for me.

After taking in the situation, I looked pleadingly at my wife, and noticed that her face was wreathed in smiles.

At last, coming to my senses, and happening to think of the absent young man, I quickly bowed by head, and, with exactly the same nasal twang, mumbled out :

“ Heavenly Father, Yum, Yum, \* \* \* Christ-sake, \* \* \* Amen.”

Everybody laughed, but myself, and the old lady said:

“Well, I declare, Mistah Johnston, I’m suah you did jus’ about as well as the othe’ fellow, anyhow.”



## CHAPTER XI.

Arrival Home from Arkansas—Business Getting Worse Every Day—A Trip Down East—Procuring a Year's Extension from Creditors—A Mix-up in Boston—A Unique Real Estate Deal—The Professor and His Bad Hand Shake—How He "Did the Town"—Trading Our Summer Home for Tennessee Property.

On our arrival home from the Arkansas trip, we found business about as we had left it, very nearly at a standstill.

When taking an inventory that year, we found that we had, in outstanding, open accounts due from merchants, scattered about in nearly every state in the Union, over one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, in promissory notes, of which many were long past due; one hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars and one hundred and twenty thousand dollars worth of goods and merchandise at first cost from manufacturers, and some real estate.

My liabilities were about one hundred and forty thousand dollars.

The one difficulty was that my indebtedness was all past due. However, I felt that with this showing, if

times should improve a little, I might be able to pull through and pay a hundred cents on the dollar, even though I did not save anything for myself, and with this object in view, I made a trip to New York, Providence and Boston, to interview my creditors, and if possible, arrange for a year's extension, which, by the way, I had no difficulty in doing.

When I left Providence for Boston, a friend advised me to stop at Young's Hotel, while there, as it was centrally located, and a first-class place.

Arriving there, I engaged a carriage at the depot, to take me to Young's, and supposed, of course, he had done so.

Without noticing the name of the hotel, I registered, and took supper, after which, I decided to see Boston for the first time.

I had always heard that this was the easiest city in the United States to get lost in, and therefore concluded to make no pretensions of trying to keep my bearings, but just go and keep going, see all I could, and when ready to go to my hotel, to enquire the way.

About midnight, I asked a policeman to direct me to Young's hotel.

“ Right there it is, sir, just ahead of you.”

And, with the pleasant thoughts of enjoying a good night's rest, after an evening of sightseeing, I entered the place to find everything absolutely strange to me.

I asked if that was Young's hotel, and was assured that it was.

I then inquired if there were two Young's hotels in Boston, and was told that there were not.

I explained my predicament to the clerk, who really acted as though he was glad of it.

My baggage was at some hotel, where, I didn't know, and as for giving a description of the place where I had registered, and taken supper, it was simply out of the question. In fact, I had stopped at so many different hotels in my lifetime, that, to me, they were like colored folks, "all looked alike."

Finally, the clerk warmed up sufficiently to offer me a little advice.

He suggested that I employ a certain tall, slim, good-natured, elderly cabman, who had been around those "diggings" all his life and knew almost everything.

After engaging him, he said:

"Now, describe the place."

“Indeed,” said I, “that’s where you ‘fall down.’ Could I describe it, I’d have been there long ago.”

“Would you know the place, if you should see it?” he asked.

“Well, hardly,” I answered. “I really don’t think I would, but I might.”

“Well, sir,” said he, “I guess you are lost.”

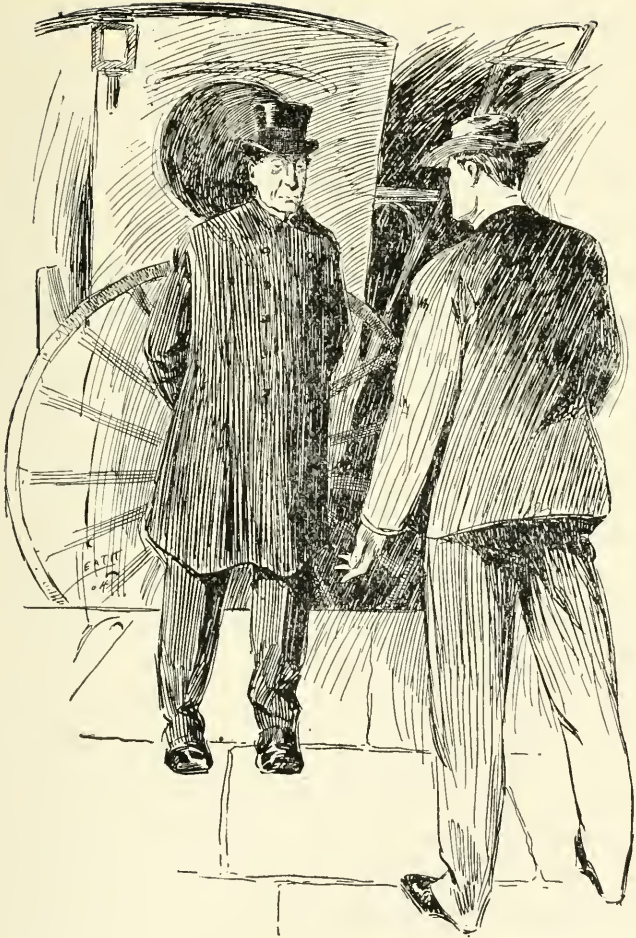
“But,” said I, “I have hired you to find me, so begin at once.”

We started out and stopped at every hotel in the city but the right one, taking up the balance of the night, and returning to our starting point in time for breakfast, the next morning.

After breakfast, we were preparing to make another search, when I happened to think that at the time I went to the cloak room for my overcoat, the night before, the check that called for it, was very old and badly bent up, and had the name “Quincy” on it.

I explained this to the cabman and asked if that furnished him with any sort of a clue.

“Well, I should say so,” he indignantly answered, “and why in Blixen didn’t you tell me this story last night. You are stopping at the old ‘Quincy House,’ one of the oldest, but one of the best hotels in Boston.”



*"But," said I, "I hired you to find me, so begin at once."*

Returning home with a promise of an extension of a year's time, from my creditors, I felt certain that in that time I could, at least, reduce my indebtedness sufficiently to reward them for their generous and liberal treatment in my behalf, and went to work with renewed vigor and energy.

Although in gaining this time I had been successful, even beyond my expectation, yet times kept getting worse, instead of better, and at the expiration of my year's extension, things had come to an absolute standstill.

Collections were so slow that we could scarcely get in cash enough to meet expenses.

I still maintained a large force of help, as it was out of the question to let our stock accumulate and lie idle, and therefore kept it moving.

One Saturday morning (Saturday being pay-day), I found myself in need of a hundred and fifty dollars more than I had in the bank to meet my pay-roll.

Three days before this, I had been telling my friend, Henry Morrison, of eighty acres of land I owned in the Kankakee marsh, and he told me of sixty acres he owned in Porter County, Indiana.

Being in need of this pay-day money, I said to my

wife, " You get me the deed of that marsh land and I am going to sell it this morning to Henry Morrison for one hundred and fifty dollars, so don't forget that one hundred and fifty dollars is my invoice price. If I take less, it's a loss, and if I get more it's a profit." So saying, Mrs. Johnston and I started out. Whenever I wanted a sure thing, I always took her along as my "Mascot," and seldom ever failed on a deal, when I did so.

We found Mr. Morrison standing on the sidewalk in front of the bank, and driving up close by, I stopped my team and said :

" Say, Henry, you remember that eighty acres of land I told you about the other day ? "

" Yes, that Kankakee marsh land," he answered.

" Well," said I, " I am going to sell that to you to-day."

" Well, I guess you won't."

" Well, I guess I will, and you will own it inside of two hours. Now, say how much you will give for it, and say quick."

" But, I don't want your old land, and would hardly take it as a gift. I have all the land I want, now."

" No matter, sir, no matter," I insisted. " You will

own more before noon to-day. So get to talking, hurry up, hurry up. I have no time to fool away."

"Then, drive on, you 'Bulldozer,' I haven't asked you to spend your valuable time with me. So, go on, I tell you, go on," he persisted.

"But, that isn't the idea," said I. "You are to own that land before noon to-day. So, speak up and say what you will give for it."

At last, after giving me a sort of disgusted look, he said:

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll trade you my sixty acres in Porter County for your eighty."

"Very well," said I. "I'll trade with you, if you will pay the difference."

"How will you trade?" he asked.

"Well, sir," said I, "I'll trade with you on a basis of ten dollars an acre, and as I own twenty acres more than you do, I want two hundred dollars in cash 'to boot'."

"All right," said he, "come into the bank and make out the papers and get your money."

And I nearly fell out of my buggy.

Now that I had barely made my escape, in procuring enough money to pay my week's salary list, I made



up my mind to bring things to a climax, as soon as possible.

It was plain to be seen that I had made a great mistake, in not making an assignment, for the benefit of my creditors the year before, instead of procuring an extension of time from them.

During the year, I had paid up most of my indebtedness at the bank, and secured the balance with a mortgage on our summer home, and had paid about forty thousand dollars of other indebtedness.

Had I made an assignment, the year before, the forty thousand dollars collected and paid on accounts would have settled all of whatever compromise I might have made with my creditors, thus leaving me in fairly good shape, to continue on, in business.

As it was, I had paid out all of my available cash, in reducing my indebtedness, only to find myself in a worse predicament than ever, for the reason that now there was absolutely no sale for the goods I was carrying, and only a slight chance to collect, even a portion of what was due me, and still with a heavy indebtedness on my shoulders.

Just at the time when I was having my worst struggle with the panic, there came a man to LaPorte, Prof.

———, who announced his intention of starting one of the greatest business colleges in the country, at that point.

The town was wild with delight, and one or two business men took the Professor in hand, and “totting” him about, from one store to another, introduced him to every business man in the city.

After I had shaken hands with him, and conversed with him five minutes, I met Mr. R. E. Morrison, cashier of the First National Bank, a half hour later, when he asked me if I had met the Professor, and what I thought of him.

“Well, Rob,” said I, “you know I have often told you that all I asked, was the privilege of shaking hands with a man, and a five-minutes conversation, to decide whether he was an honest man or a rogue, and if that old fellow isn’t worse than a horse thief, I shall never again pass judgment on anyone. Now, remember what I have told you, and when he has ‘skinned’ the town ‘good and plenty,’ you will give me credit for knowing something about men.” and went on to say that while I couldn’t, to save me, describe how I could judge a man by his hand-shake, yet there were two things about the Professor which were also against

him; and that was, in the first place, he couldn't look you in the eye, and the other was, that he mumbled his words and talked under his breath half the time, when conversing.

Bob laughed heartily over my "diagnosis," as he humorously termed it, and said:

"We'll see."

Inside of a week the Professor had rented spacious rooms, and had announced, through the papers, the opening of his college, and had imported two experienced canvassers, to sell scholarships at from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars each, on six months' time, taking promissory notes, without interest, giving it out that he would rather have notes than cash, as he didn't need the money, just then.

Inside of three weeks he began to establish the habit of running in to this merchant, and that one, and borrowing from one to three hundred dollars and paying it back promptly, in ten days, accompanied by a neat little present of some kind for the wife of the man who had accommodated him.

Finally, one day, he tried it on me for three hundred dollars.

Without mincing matters, I said:

“Not I, Professor, not I.”

“Why, J. P., can’t you spare it?” he asked in his smooth, suave manner.

“Oh, yes, oh, yes, Professor, but that isn’t it. I have money ‘to burn;’ but none to loan,” and then said:

“Professor, it’s a queer coincidence that two ‘sharks’ like you and I should have struck such a small town as this, at the same time, and it’s too bad, too, because the town is scarcely large enough for one.”

He looked down his long pointed nose, with the only eye he had, and in the most serious manner, mumbled out something, and sneaked away.

Ten days later, I sold him a nice saddle mare for his lady bookkeeper, for three hundred and fifty dollars.

One day I went to his office and told him that I had come over to sell him my store building, as it was just what he wanted for his college, and was more room than I now needed.

He laughed at the idea and said he’d have to think it over.



"PROFESSOR, IT'S A QUEER COINCIDENCE THAT TWO "SHARKS" LIKE YOU AND I SHOULD HAVE STRUCK SUCH A SMALL TOWN AS THIS, AT THE SAME TIME".



“Not at all,” said I, “I am going to sell it to you inside of an hour, so get to talking.”

“Now, see here,” he said, “I have heard of your methods, and won’t ‘stand’ for them. You can’t sell me that building on an hour’s notice.”

“Yes, I can and will,” and said :

“In the first place, you need that building to inspire confidence, if nothing else. The people here are suspicious of you, because you don’t own a cent’s worth of property in the town, and to buy this building will show them that you mean business, and as it will only cost you two thousand dollars, with the ground rental very low ; it will be a fine investment for you.”

While I was talking, he was thinking, and when I had finished with :

“Now, go ahead and say something,” he asked upon what terms I would sell it.

I offered to take one thousand dollars down and one thousand in six months.

He offered me five hundred dollars cash and five hundred every three months, secured by chattel mortgage, and I took him up in a second.

We called on an attorney, who made out the papers, and he gave me a check for the five hundred dollars,

with the understanding that I was to vacate inside of thirty days.

Three days later he sent his office boy over to my place, with a note, asking for a temporary loan of four hundred and fifty dollars.

I wrote on the bottom of the note the words "Nixy, Jim." and after signing my initials, returned it.

That same day I met my friend Morrison, the cashier, and asked him how he stood with the Professor.

"Well," said he, "he owes us eight hundred dollars, secured, of course, and might have owed us more, but I have been a little shy of him, and intend calling these loans in at once, and straightening up with him," and then asked if I still had the same opinion of him.

I replied that I certainly did, and was looking for something to "drop" any day.

In just two weeks from the day that I sold him my building, he came up missing.

Not a soul about his place knew where he went, how he went, or where he went, and not one word has ever been heard of him from that day to this.

As soon as it had become a settled fact, that he had disappeared, several of the moneyed men of the town began to look up the notes they had bought from him.



at liberal discounts, and it was soon discovered that the notes had all been drawn on very fine transparent paper, and for every note he had taken, he had made from two to three extra ones, by tracing the signatures, and then had discounted one each, to as many different men of money, who were only too glad to buy them, besides, at the last moment he had successfully played his "rush act" for temporary loans among those whose confidence he had gained, and thereby secured several hundred dollars more.

It was said that his manipulation of the notes, alone, netted him about twenty-seven thousand dollars.

So, I still contend that the handshake is the best guide I have in quickly judging human nature, and I really can't remember when I have made a mistake in it.

One thing on which I complimented myself was, that I had not only not allowed him to "touch me," but I was the only man in town who had gotten any money, to speak of, out of him, all of which amounted to eight hundred and fifty dollars. Of course, my wife didn't get any presents, but we didn't mind that.

A few days after the final "explosion," I called on

Cashier Morrison, at the bank, one morning, and asked him how he came out.

He said they had gotten all but eighty dollars, and that was secured, and also said:

“ J. P., whenever I am in doubt about a man, after this, I will bring him around and let you shake hands with him, and ‘ tip him off ’ to me.

I remained in the building I had sold, until the first three months’ note was due, when I foreclosed my mortgage, and got it back again.

The whole town was so badly shaken up over this affair, that it took several days for the losers to realize that the “ bird had flown,” and as none of them were inclined to throw good money after bad money, they seemed to go on, in a sort of daze, not allowing the whereabouts of the forger to give them any concern whatever, although, from his description, he would have been the easiest man in the world to run down.

About this time, I traded my equity in our summer home, to a man by the name of Stillwell, for his equity in a house and lot and store building in Harriman, Tennessee, thereby relieving myself of a heavy encumbrance on the LaPorte property, and assuming only about six hundred dollars on the Harriman property.

With the many unfavorable conditions staring me in the face, there was but one thing to do, and that was to "throw up the sponge," make an assignment forthwith, and, if possible, make a settlement with my creditors, and continue on, with a view to saving something from the wreck, or, if I couldn't make a compromise, then to turn over to them the "whole ball of wax," and, if necessary, fall back on the "Incomprehensible" furniture and piano polish, of which I made mention so frequently in "Twenty Years of Hus'ling."

## CHAPTER XII.

Making an Assignment for the Benefit of Creditors—Paying Home Obligations—Forcing Creditors to Take Their Pay—A Few Business Men Taught Some Wisdom—My Settlement With Creditors—An Expensive Experiment—The Pick-out Scheme—How it was Worked—A Novel Plan to Decoy Customers—Worked to a Charm—The Kalamazoo Authorities Outdone.

Realizing that it was useless to prolong the struggle, as conditions all over the country seemed to be growing worse instead of better, I decided to make an assignment for the benefit of my creditors, and began making arrangements accordingly.

My home or local indebtedness amounted to nineteen hundred and seventy dollars.

As before stated, my obligations at the LaPorte Bank had been taken care of, and my eastern liabilities were in the neighborhood of one hundred thousand dollars.

The thought uppermost in my mind was to pay my home indebtedness in full before the day of assignment, and arrange to borrow the necessary amount

from E. H. Scott, city mayor, giving as security a chattel mortgage on a large safe and its contents.

I had chosen for my assignee Robert E. Morrison, cashier of the First National Bank. With his assistance, my lawyer had prepared the necessary papers, and the day before they were to be filed, I started out with the cash in my pocket, to liquidate all of my home obligations.

My first call was at the office of The LaPorte Daily Herald, where I owed a four hundred and sixteen dollar advertising bill.

When I asked the bookkeeper to make out my bill, he said that he couldn't possibly do so, that day, but would have it ready two days later.

"No, sir," said I, "I want that bill to-day, and must have it, and have the cash with me to pay you."

"But," he insisted, "I just can't make it out to-day, We are moving our office and everything is torn up and you will have to wait."

As it was necessary to keep, as a secret, my intention of making an assignment the next day, and, as it was necessary that the printing company should get their cash that day, or be obliged to come in with the east-

ern creditors, under the assignment, the next day, I was placed in a peculiar predicament, and finally said:

“Now, sir, here is the cash (showing him the money), and if you are not smart enough to take money when it is offered to you, you ought to lose



*“But,” he insisted, “I just can’t make it out to-day.”*

every cent of it, and if you won’t take it now and should never get it, don’t blame me. So, now, do as you see fit.”

At this, he dropped everything else, and white with rage, made out the account, and looked daggers at me

as he handed me a receipted bill. As I counted out the cash to him, I said :

“ You will feel better over this by to-morrow.”

And, sure enough, when I called the next morning, a half hour after having filed my papers, and told them the latest news, to the effect that J. P. Johnston had just made an assignment, the bookkeeper nearly had a fit.

I said to him: “ Moral—Always take money when you can get it.”

I not only had a sharp controversy with the gas man, but with three or four creditors, as well, all of whom were too busy to make out bills at any other time than on the first of the month, as was their custom.

Several of them afterwards acknowledged that this little experience had taught them some wisdom, and three months later, when another LaPorte merchant made an assignment, and followed my plan of paying all home indebtedness, the day before, he found no drones among his creditors ; they were all up and doing and only too glad to accommodate him by taking his money.

One peculiarity about this failure was that, at no

time, not for a single instant, was there a key turned, or a door of my place of business closed, during business hours, in consequence of it. Business went on just as if nothing had happened; the stock was officially invoiced, without disturbing business.

Mr. Morrison, my assignee, had acted in a similar capacity several times before, and knew just how to go about it.

One act of his, in particular, gave me much satisfaction, and aided me materially in my settlement with eastern creditors; it was the writing of a letter to the president of the jewelers' board of trade at Providence, Rhode Island, in which he stated that he had been assignee for several firms, who had failed, but this was one where there was absolutely "no hole," and everything was straight and upright in every respect.

The contents of this letter were explained to me by one of my largest creditors and were commented on as having been of great help to me, in making a settlement.

Inside of thirty days after filing my assignment papers, I had made a trip to North Attleboro, Massachusetts, where a meeting of creditors was held and a



settlement made at twenty cents on the dollar, I to give my individual notes, without security, for the entire amount, in three payments, six months apart.

Now came the "tug of war." What course to pursue to get the money out of my notes, outstanding accounts, and stock on hand, was a question hard to solve.

My assignment was made in the fall of the year, and my first move was to send out as many selection packages as possible, for the holiday trade.

This, as a first move, was all right, inasmuch as the average dealer could always use more or less goods in my line for his Christmas trade, and by this method I got about half enough cash in, to meet my first instalment of notes.

After the holidays, I devoted my time for several weeks, to forcing or trying to force, collections, and found that it was almost impossible to collect enough to pay for the postage stamps used, to say nothing of clerk hire and other expenses.

When time for the usual spring trade came, I advertised in the Chicago papers for twenty-five experienced salesmen—none but competent, skilled salesmen need apply—and very soon had this number of men

out, each with a big stock on hand, with which to deliver goods on the spot, for cash, and instructions to sell at any price, to get the money.

This experiment cost hundreds of dollars, in the purchasing of sample cases, traveling expenses, and salaries, and not one out of the entire twenty-five salesmen could sell enough goods to pay his traveling expenses, so inside of two weeks they came straggling in from every direction, declaring that it was almost impossible to give the goods away.

One bright young man, whom I had drilled considerably on my ideas and methods of selling goods, and whom I had sent into Ohio, wrote me from Lima, saying that he had tried my methods and failed, and then had adopted ideas of his own, all of which had failed, and to satisfy myself that the goods could not possibly be sold, he wished that I would come there and make a trip with him, which I did.

Arriving there, we hired a man with his team and carriage to visit small towns.

The very first town we struck, I sold the first merchant we called upon, thirty-six dollars' worth, and crossing the street to another store sold thirty-five dollars' worth—all for cash.

The young man was fairly beside himself, and declared that he had watched every act and listened to every word I had spoken, and he couldn't think of a thing that I had done, that he hadn't also done in his eagerness to sell a bill of goods, but during the entire two weeks that he had been out, not one dollar had he taken in.

Naturally enough, this little experience would lead me to suspect that salesmanship was the only thing needed, and I had every confidence in the world that our week's trip would end up with plenty of sales and considerable cash.

But imagine how the conceit had been taken out of me when, after the hardest kind of work, during the entire balance of the week, I had not even sold a penny's worth, nor could I scarcely blame the young man for being almost hilarious over my ultimate failure.

This experience convinced me that I had on my hands an unusual task in the converting of this immense stock of goods into cash.

Every day the styles were growing older, and the constant handling of them was depreciating their value more and more.

Returning to LaPorte, I set to work to figure out, if possible, some new plan, and finally hit upon what I termed the "pick out" scheme.

The first town in which I tried it, was Sturgis, Michigan.

Renting a large store-room, I had racks made against the wall clear around the room, just wide enough for two ordinary jewelry trays, and on an angle of forty-five degrees. On each side of the store-room I divided the space, and placed a large assortment of goods in trays, to be sold at twenty-five cents, fifty cents, one dollar and two dollars and fifty cents, each.

The whole question had settled down to one thing, and that was in order to realize on the goods at once, a great sacrifice from the original cost must be made, and on this plan, the consumer would be benefited. For instance, we sold the R. F. Simmons best rolled gold plate curb vest chains, in single strands, for one dollar each, the retail price of which was from three fifty to six dollars, and almost everything in stock was sold accordingly.

In the center of the room, I arranged a small platform from which I delivered an occasional short talk,

describing how the goods were made in the factories, and how they came to be placed on the market at these low prices, etc.

Near the front entrance of the room I had a booth constructed, in which stood a man surrounded with a large quantity of goods, giving nitric acid tests, thus proving, without a question of doubt, their superior quality.

This plan was the most feasible of any we had tried, and immediately caught the public and brought in the ready cash, although at a great sacrifice of goods.

After finishing Sturgis, we visited several towns and cities in southern Michigan, and northern Indiana, meeting with very fair success, after which we went to Jackson, Michigan.

On my arrival I rented a spacious room in the heart of the city, and after paying a month's rent in advance, and expending nearly two hundred dollars for advertising and carpenter work, the authorities gave me notice that I would have to pay twenty-five dollars per day license as a transient merchant.

I was advised by one of the best lawyers in the state that although such an ordinance was without

doubt unconstitutional, yet it would not pay me to contest the matter, and I therefore pulled up stakes and went to Kalamazoo.

In this city I found a similar ordinance exacting ten dollars per day license, and knowing that it was unconstitutional, determined to place the authorities in a position where I could defy them.

The first thing I did was to advertise in the daily papers that J. P. Johnston, the well known, former wholesale jeweler, of Chicago and LaPorte, Ind., and better known as the author of "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," was about to locate in the retail jewelry business in that city, and pending the selection of a suitable room in which to locate, he would temporarily occupy the large rooms on South Burdick street, formerly known as "The Fair store."

I then wrote to a Chicago show case manufacturer, with whom I had considerable dealings, asking him to write me a certain letter regarding the making of store fixtures, which he could not complete under six weeks or two months.

With this letter in my possession, I opened up with an immense stock, in a room fifty feet wide and one

hundred and fifty feet long, and began advertising extensively in every paper in the county.

The arrangement of the store and the manner of displaying the goods, were so different from the methods of others that people would stop on the streets, and after gazing in for a few minutes, would pass on, apparently of the opinion that there was something wrong about the whole outfit.

To get the people inside seemed almost impossible, and there we sat for three days without a soul coming in to look at our goods.

Of course something had to be done. I had already spent over a hundred dollars in the newspapers, besides having distributed several thousand circulars from house to house, but all to no avail.

I saw the necessity of making a radical change of some kind, and hit upon a plan that worked like a charm.

I put an advertisement in the papers wanting to hire twenty-five young men and women, as clerks, and the next day the store was filled with applicants.

I employed twenty-six, mostly young women, at one dollar per day; six of them I kept in the store and instructed the other twenty to keep on their shawls,

wraps and hats and to keep coming in and going out of the store all day long.

Leaving the store, he or she would go around one or two blocks and back into the store again, and after looking over the goods, would make another trip.

On this plan twenty persons kept things pretty well stirred up, and gave the appearance of a live business.

By four o'clock in the afternoon of the first day we tried this scheme, we had a large crowd of buyers in the store, and in three days more the big room was packed every day from three o'clock in the afternoon until eleven o'clock at night, and all of my twenty-six clerks were kept busy wrapping up goods, and taking in the cash.

Just as things had gotten under headway, the chief of police came in to inquire about the license. I showed him my letter from the show case manufacturer, and with an air of absolute indifference, walked away and went on with my business.

A few moments later he handed me the letter, saying:

“I don't know about this; can you furnish me with any further proof that you intend locating here?”

“Well,” I replied, “if I could, I wouldn't turn my



hand to convince you; I am located now, and don't propose to let an ordinance that is unconstitutional drive me out of town, and if you interfere with me I will bankrupt your city before I get through with you." So saying I walked away, and heard no more about it.

I remained there six weeks and had an immense business, closing on Christmas eve.

At eleven o'clock that night I had three drays at the back door waiting to convey my goods to the freight house, and closing the doors I called all of my help together, and after paying them off, authorized each one to select from the stock any piece of jewelry desired as a Christmas present, after which I wanted all of the goods packed and ready for shipment inside of an hour.

This was the signal for as busy an hour as thirty live, wide-awake people could make it, and by twelve o'clock that night the entire stock was in the hands of the railroad company ready for shipment, and at six-thirty the next morning we had taken our departure from the city with enough cash to make up the necessary amount to meet my first installment of notes with my creditors.

While at Kalamazoo I had had a cheap, gold filled

watch stolen from one of the show cases, and had reported the same to the authorities, giving the number of the case and movement, and a full description of the engraving, etc.

A few days later I received a nice letter from the chief of police saying they had arrested a colored man who had the watch in his possession, and were anxious for me to come and prosecute him.

I replied that I was very busy in Indiana just then, and couldn't possibly spare the time to visit Kalamazoo.

In answer to this letter I received another, still urging me to come on, and saying that unless I did so they would be obliged to open the jail doors and let the thief go.

I replied that I thought it would be better for the thief to get out of jail than for me to get in, and I'd just remain where I was.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Pick-out Scheme in Chicago—Trading Jewelry for Five and Ten Cent Stores—Disposing of These Stores—A Big Business in a Small Room—What Location Means in Business—An All-night Business—Squeezed by High Rents—In the Lecture Field—Broke Again—How I Made a Raise.

This "pick out" scheme having proven a success, I decided to try it in Chicago, and rented a suitable room on Sixty-third street, Englewood, for that purpose.

Our experience in getting the people to visit us was quite different from that of Kalamazoo.

The very first evening the room was packed with sight-seers and purchasers.

The third day after opening this store a gentleman came in and offered to trade me three "five and ten cent" stores in Chicago and suburbs for a stock of jewelry, and, after taking four days' time in which to invoice his stock, we closed a deal and I found myself with three busy stores on my hands and immediately began to push them by advertising extensively.

I also opened two more jewelry stores and, as they,

as well as the "five and ten cent stores," were very successful, I had no trouble in finding something to do.

I traded one of these ten-cent stores for a livery barn, a suburban lot and a cigar store; another I exchanged for a stock of drug sundries, a pair of road horses, harness and carriage and five hundred dollars in cash; the third one I traded for one hundred and ten head of sheep, five cows and two hundred dollars in cash.

The horses, cattle, sheep and town lot I sold for cash and disposed of most of the other things at auction, trading the balance here and there, wherever I could see anything in it, and altogether I pulled out in very good shape.

While passing the Great Northern Hotel, corner of Dearborn and Jackson streets, one day, I noticed a vacant room with a rent sign up, and, on making inquiries, learned that it had been vacant for nearly two years and could be rented at a low price.

The proprietor agreed to let me have it as long as I would pay one hundred and fifty dollars per month for it, and I immediately paid a month's rent and took possession.

This was one of the best locations in Chicago for

a retail business, and the one object I had in view was the establishing of a permanent retail jewelry business here should I be able to settle up my compromise indebtedness and have enough left to go on with.

After having followed my usual plan of putting up racks for the display of goods, one of my employes and myself were working late on a Saturday evening, to get ready to open on Monday morning; crowds kept gathering on the outside, and, after looking through the window at us for awhile, many of them would try to open the door to get inside.

At just twelve o'clock at night, when we had gotten about half of the goods in shape, I threw open the door and in ten minutes the little store room was filled with people, and for two hours we were kept busy passing out goods and taking in the cash, which amounted to sixty-five dollars.

The next Monday morning we opened with a large crowd waiting outside, and a livelier place for its size I never saw. We had three prices only: twenty-five cents, fifty cents and one dollar.

Our first day's receipts were three hundred and eighty dollars, and for several days they ran from two to four hundred dollars per day.

I now saw the necessity of replenishing the stock with new styles and patterns in order to attract the people and work off the old stock. This was the one drawback, inasmuch as it would require a considerable cash investment, and naturally enough buyers would select new styles in preference to "out of date" shop-worn ones.

As an illustration of what a good location means in conducting a retail business, I want to relate an experience I had while running this store under the Great Northern Hotel.

Just one and a half blocks away from this store I found a vacant room of about the same size, on Adams street, where at least twenty persons passed, to every one who passed on Dearborn street. The rent was the same, one hundred and fifty dollars per month, and to all appearances the advantages and prospects for large crowds and a big trade on Adams street far excelled that of the Great Northern location. Therefore, I lost no time in renting it, and, after arranging it exactly the same for displaying goods, I stocked it with almost a duplicate of what we had in the Great Northern store and used exactly the same display in the show windows and for outside advertising, and

opened up in great anticipation of a wonderful rush of business.

The first day not a single person entered this store; throngs of people would alight from the street cars on State street and pass by the place in a perfect rush. The second day we took in two dollars; the third about six and the fourth a dollar and fifty cents, and so it went for thirty days, during which time eight dollars was the most we took in on any one day. All this time the Great Northern store, less than two blocks away, was doing an immense business.

On Adams street it seemed that the people were always in a hurry; in a great rush for some objective point, and trooped right by our store without seeing us or knowing we were there, while on Dearborn street everyone seemed to be at leisure and on a sight-seeing tour, with plenty of time to take in everything and nothing to do but to spend their money.

At the end of thirty days I closed the Adams street store and continued on with the other, remaining there, altogether, eleven months.

As soon as the proprietor of the hotel discovered that my business was good he began raising the rent, first to two hundred per month, then to two fifty and

at last to three hundred. At no time could I obtain a lease from him for any specified time, and was therefore completely at his mercy.

During our stay here we were constantly annoyed with street beggars and tramps.

One day a typical, all-around tough came in and, addressing one of the clerks, said:

“Is de high mark in?”

“The who?” asked the clerk.

“De main guy—you knows what I means; de geeser what owns de joint—de guy wid de dough—de main squeeze; don’t yer know? De mug wid de coin.”

“Oh! you mean the proprietor?”

“Yes, yes, de main spoke; is he in?”

One evening I left the store rather early, leaving one of my clerks in charge, and forgetting to leave a key with him he (not knowing my home address), had no alternative but to remain all night.

The next morning when I entered the store I found him as busy with customers as when I left him the evening before.

He was tired and worn out, and declared that he had been busy all night long waiting on customers,





*"Yes, yes, de main spoke; is he in?"*

and as an evidence of the truth of his statement, showed me forty-five dollars which he had taken in, and said there hadn't been an hour during the whole night that he did not do business.

This illustrated the fact that many people in a large city simply turn night into day, and this all-night trade, as the clerk explained, was not confined to men alone, but to women, also, who seemed to enjoy the novelty of doing their shopping in the "wee sma'" hours of the night.

With a promise from the landlord that I should have a permanent lease within sixty days, I had a lot of fixtures made especially for the "pick-out" business, and expected to remain there permanently.

During the holiday trade that year my business, considering the extremely small room I occupied, was something marvelous.

Christmas that year came on Tuesday, and the Saturday before we took in seven hundred and sixty dollars; on the Monday before Christmas the sales were nine hundred and nine dollars.

When taking into consideration the fact that this amount of business was done in a room fourteen feet wide and twenty feet long, and no sale amounting to

over a dollar, it can readily be seen that we were kept pretty busy.

After the holidays there came another raise of fifty dollars per month on the rent, with no prospect of obtaining a lease. I decided to close out the stock to some dealer and get out of the business.

Most of the goods from the original wholesale stock had been sacrificed, and those that were still on hand had been handled so much that they were almost worthless. Therefore, to keep the little store on an up-to-date basis required the constant replenishing of stock, with often only a small margin in order to confine our prices to sales of not more than one dollar.

I therefore sold the fixtures and advertised the goods to be disposed of in bulk, and very soon had several would-be purchasers, with one of whom I closed a deal, receiving about fifty cents on the dollar for the new goods and possibly ten cents on the dollar for the old ones.

After using what cash I had for the further liquidating of debts, I not only found myself in rather close financial straits, but entirely out of business.

During my stay in Chicago, while conducting the Great Northern store, I had given my lecture under

the auspices of several different organizations and societies and had made the mistake of having it illustrated at a heavy cost so as to give it with a stereopticon, and I therefore concluded to make a trip through Michigan to give the new plan a trial.

The first thing I discovered was that the pictures and talk didn't work well together. The one detracted from the other; besides, instead of having a lecture I had a show, as people called it, and, not having any too much money to start out with, it took about ten days to reduce my finances to where I had just money enough to pay car fare for Mrs. Johnston, my son and myself from Hillsdale, Michigan, to my old home, Clyde, Ohio.

I had always said that the worst place on earth to be "broke" was among friends. The only reason why I went there at all was that I had received a letter from home telling me that a Mr. —— was there on a thirty days' visit, and as he owed me over two hundred dollars, borrowed money, I felt that I might collect at least a portion of it.

In this, however, I was sorely disappointed, and was once more in my life completely stranded.

Had Mr. Keefer, my step-father, been alive, so I

could have explained to him "just how it all happened," there would have been no trouble in making a raise, nor would I have hesitated for a single moment to ask him for assistance, but to make my circumstances known to other relatives and friends, even though they were all well fixed, was quite a different proposition, and for about twenty-four hours I devoted my time to thinking, and how to go about it to make a dollar where every one knew me and where I knew almost every one.

One evening while walking down the street I met the mayor of the town, Mr. Sprague, who, after shaking hands with me, asked about my lecture and wanted to know if I was going to give it in Clyde.

I replied that I had no intention of doing so, and quoted the old saying about the prophet in his own country.

"Oh, Pshaw!" said he, "you are greatly mistaken; your book has been read here by every one, and you can fill our hall and do it easily," and then suggested that I give it under the auspices and for the benefit of the G. A. R. boys, to raise money for Decoration day; they to furnish the hall, do the ad-

vertising and sell tickets for a percentage of the proceeds.

This I agreed to do, provided he could make such arrangements, which he had no trouble in doing.

On the evening of the lecture, sure enough, the hall was filled, and, although it was one of the most trying experiences of my life, yet I had "my nerve with me" and mounted the platform, facing men and women whom I had known all my life.

My mother, sisters, cousins and aunts were there to see me "break my neck," but I didn't break it. I just made up my mind that this proposition beat being "broke" among friends and relatives and, vowing never to let it occur again, I went at them "hammer and tongs," and although I was sorry and afterwards regretted that I had continued to use the old stereopticon, yet I made it go to what appeared to be a fairly enthusiastic audience, and carried away my share of the proceeds, amounting to about seventy-five dollars.

With this money I made my escape in short order, and only hoped that if I were ever again destined to be broke, it would be many miles from Clyde.

When a man has had the ups and downs in life that I have experienced and has handled as many dollars

as I have handled, and then finds himself stranded, he had better go to any stranger for assistance than to friends, and especially relatives, for the reason that they always think that he has just run his last race and will never make another rise; besides, as is often the case, these relatives have accumulated their wealth by penurious economy, not by really making money in the true sense of it, but by hanging on to every penny and denying themselves the pleasures, comforts and luxuries of life that a man with confidence in himself to make a dollar wouldn't think of doing; therefore, they can't understand why he hasn't been doing the same as they have.

I have always contended, and still contend, that if I have to get right down to hard pan and deprive myself of the ordinary comforts of life in order to save a dollar, then I'll lose the dollar and take chances on making another.

I love a generous man, a man who can hand out the cash as fast as he can get it in if necessary, for the comforts of those depending upon him; on the other hand I can "sit up nights" and hate a stingy, penurious, miserly man, whose sole ambition is to hoard up money, and whose whole life has been spent in educating himself and family to all sorts of denials.

I surely don't believe in useless extravagance, nor improvident methods. In my opinion every man should think of the rainy day proposition, but not to the extent of anything bordering on penuriousness.

I despise a stingy man as I despise a thief, and have no more use for a lazy man than I have for a liar.

I dislike a spendthrift, but if a man has a dollar to spend I say spend it like a prince.

People often say to me :

“Wouldn't it have been better never to have had anything than to have had so much and then lost it all?”

I say “No, emphatically no.”

I have seen the time when I was making money so fast (from fifty to sixty thousand dollars a year) that it simply became a question as to how my family and myself should get the most good out of it.

I don't think that my son ever asked for a dollar that I didn't give him two, nor did my wife ever ask for five that I didn't give her ten, and if my days are to end in pauperism I don't believe I shall ever regret having done so.

I have never been ambitious to become a million-



aire. I love to make money for the fun of making it, and I love to spend it for the pleasure there is in it, and I have no fear of ever coming to actual want.

Whatever I undertake to do I do it with all my might.

If it were only to sell pins and needles I should procure for my stock in trade none but the best, and at as low a figure as possible, and should sell for all I could get; either make a good profit or quit the business, but try to give my patrons their money's worth in quality.

My own experience has been that I was happier while making money than after I had accumulated it, and if by the turning of my hand I could procure Rockefeller's wealth and was to be burdened with its care and the responsibilities connected with it, I should prefer to keep right on "Hus'ling," as I am now obliged to.

A moderate income, with just enough responsibility to keep one's mind occupied, and not be a man of leisure, would be to me an ideal life and one by which I should be glad to round out my life's career.

## CHAPTER XIV.

A Profitable and Interesting Lecture Tour—Tangled in My Lecture—Escaped by Telling an Amusing School-boy Experience—My Experience with a Brother K. of P.—Dr. Johnson and His Millionaire Sweetheart—The Street Doctor and His Stomach Cure—How it Cured Him.

After my lecture at Clyde I discarded the stereopticon, and my wife and I started out with an experienced advance agent, giving the lecture in both large and small towns in northwestern Ohio, and through Michigan.

What the people wanted was a lecture and not a show, and as my books had had an extensive sale in nearly every town we visited, there was but little trouble in getting audiences.

I had often heard of the humiliating experiences of public speakers when some trifling incident would occur to attract their attention to a different subject, thereby causing a general mixup and often a complete failure, but had never had anything of the kind happen me until this trip.

The opera house in a small town where I was giving

the lecture stood close to the railroad tracks, and when I had about half finished, a freight train came in and about twenty minutes were spent switching cars.

While I was telling one of my most amusing stories, one that never failed to make a big laugh, and just as I was about to come to the climax, the old engine, right under the window where I was speaking, shrilled out "Hoot, Toot." In an instant I had forgotten where I was or what I was doing; as for the story and its climax I hadn't the slightest recollection of either; I didn't know whether I had just begun, or was ending up the lecture. There I stood, staring and Aheming! and Hawing! while the audience looked on with apparent pity. The more I tried to think of "where I was at," the more I got mixed up.

My wife, who had been selling tickets at the door, discovered my awful predicament and tried to come to my rescue by reminding me of where I had left off, but I was too "rattled" to catch on, and finally, pulling myself together, decided to kill time by taking a drink of water. While doing so, I happened to think of a little episode of my schoolboy days and said:

"This little flurry reminds me of an exciting experience I had one time when a youngster.

“ My mother decided to send me to Green Springs, Ohio, to school, and I began about four weeks after the fall term had commenced.

“ The first day the teacher came to me and showed me the spelling lesson, and explained that my class was competing for a first and second prize, and suggested that I should take a special interest in it and try and win a prize.

“ While studying the lesson I came to the word ‘ olfactory,’ and it immediately occurred to me that some one in the class would be very likely to spell the first syllable ‘ all’ instead of ‘ ol,’ and charged my mind in particular about it.

“ Being my first day, I, of course, took my place at the foot of the class.

“ In the class were two girls, both ‘ crack ’ spellers, one a cousin of mine Gena Finch, and Abbie Lischy. My cousin was at the head and Miss Lischy next to me, having left head the evening before.

“ The word that I had ‘ spotted ’ was given to Miss Finch, at the head, and was missed by her, as was also the case clear down the line of twenty-three scholars, each having had the second trial and all having missed, just as I had predicted. By the time it reached

Miss Lischy and was missed by her I was almost in a state of collapse. I was just ready to land with a single bound at the head of the class, and began: 'O-l' —' That's right,' shouted the teacher; 'go on, go on;' 'f-a-c,' I continued. 'Go ahead, go ahead.' 'T-o-r-a-p-h-y,' I blurted out, and everybody laughed but me."

By the time I had finished relating this little story, which brought a hearty laugh, I had "gotten my head" once more, and began where I had left off in the lecture, coming out triumphantly in the end.

After a fairly successful trip through Ohio, we started through Michigan, where many of the scenes of my book were laid, and where it had had an immensely large sale.

Just before leaving Chicago on this lecture trip, I had joined the Knights of Pythias and, like most new members, was wearing a K. of P. badge.

Ludington, Michigan, was our first town, and on account of a delay in receiving advertising matter we were obliged to remain there ten days.

No sooner had we gotten nicely settled than a fine looking gentleman stopping at the same hotel, who was also a K. of P., took special pains to get acquainted

with me, and was quite profuse in calling me " Brother Johnston " when addressing me.

The only secret organization I had ever belonged to, before this one, was that of the " Patriotic Order of Sons of America," which I had joined several years before while in Chicago. At that time I was half owner of a livery barn, and was right in the zenith of my glory in the wholesale jewelry and optical business, and inside of two weeks after I had joined this society my dear brother members were in debt to me for livery hire, gold watches and chains and borrowed money to the extent of nearly two hundred dollars. When I came to look up their financial standing I discovered that those I had trusted were a lot of dead-beats and paupers, and immediately sent my resignation to the secretary, saying that if I wanted to mix up with a band of horse-thieves I could do so without joining a secret organization. As I had never collected a cent from any of them I had no occasion to change my mind, and, although I felt confident that the Knights of Pythias were of an entirely different class of men, yet I had determined to keep my " eye skinned " and take no chances until I positively knew what I was doing.

Therefore, when my newly made friend and brother K. of P. at Ludington became so much interested in me I told my wife that I'd bet he would strike me for a loan inside of three days, and determined to have a little story all fixed up for him in case he did, so I made up one that came about as near being a "whopper" as one could possibly imagine and still keep in the straight and narrow path.

We had arrived there on Wednesday, and on Saturday morning he came to me with a message from his wife in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, saying that their daughter was sick and she had mailed a fifty-dollar draft to him which he should get on Saturday morning, which would enable him to leave on the two o'clock steamer from Ludington to Milwaukee.

He explained that he had just been to the postoffice and found no letter there, and as it was then about noon wanted to borrow twenty-five dollars with which to pay his hotel and laundry bill and buy a ticket home.

I had my story so well learned and was so certain that I had "nipped in the bud" the plans of a dead-beat that I shot it at him in such a manner as to apparently elicit his sympathy for my sad predicament, and afterwards congratulated myself on being "wise"

for once in my life and of ridding myself of an impostor.

My wife asked: "How about his handshake?"

I replied that he had a good handshake, but that I'd have to treat handshakes as I once heard a Republican politician treat Democrats, when he said that all Democrats were not drunkards nor thieves, but that all thieves and drunkards were Democrats, and just so with the bad handshake. I had known men who had a good handshake and were still dishonest, but I had never known one with a bad handshake who had turned out to be honest.

Instead of the steamer leaving Ludington at two p. m., it was announced that it would not leave until seven p. m.

That afternoon my brother K. of P. came to me with a broad grin on his face and, slapping me on the knee, said:

"Say, Brother Johnston, I am all right. I just came from the postoffice and there found my letter with the fifty-dollar draft," and then he explained that a farmer of the identical name, of his initials and all, had sent his son to the postoffice in the morning and had gotten the letter and, upon opening it and dis-



covering that it belonged to someone else, had returned it at once.

“Now,” said he, “Brother Johnston, I don’t need but twenty-five dollars of this, and I want you to take the other twenty-five and use it until you get out of your bad plight. I will leave you my address and you can send it to me whenever you find it convenient to do so.”

In all of my life, with all the experiences I had had, I never felt as I did on this occasion, and vowed then and there never to distrust another K. of P.; nor have I, and not in a single instance have I had occasion to regret having taken that stand.

I actually felt as though I might find relief and comfort to my feelings if I could go off by myself somewhere and weep awhile.

I assured him that I always took a great deal of pride in working my way out of close quarters without borrowing, and, thanking him most profusely for his generous, manly offer, declined to accept it.

At this same town, Ludington, my wife and I were out for a walk one evening when we noticed a short distance away a street man selling medicine; approaching closer, I discovered that it was a St. Louis physi-

cian, Dr. Anselem, an old acquaintance of mine, who had gotten up a patent medicine and had started out with two colored minstrels to help entertain the crowds, and two white men to distribute and make sales after his lecture.

The next day, Sunday, I called at his hotel and learned that he would remain there two weeks and possibly longer.

While we were talking his two salesmen came in from a long walk. He had just finished telling me about their peculiar ways and general makeup. One of them was very tall (over six feet) and very thin, while the other was also very thin, but not quite five feet tall. Both had very high pitched, squeaky voices, feminine in their looks and appearance. Each wore a silk hat, with cutaway or full-dress suit, red neckties, diamonds galore (and good ones too), and each sported a gold-headed cane.

As they passed us the doctor said:

“Now I want you to listen to their talk.”

They seated themselves directly back of us, and the taller one, who styled himself Dr. Johnson, in an extremely high pitched feminine voice kept up a con-



HIS TWO SALESMEN CAME IN FROM A LONG WALK,



versation that they had evidently been engaged in while out walking, which ran about as follows:

“Oh, my heavens! you ought to have seen that beautiful creature, with her lovely dark hair and eyes, her rosy cheeks and elegant teeth, and was worth a million dollars: yes, sir, a million dollars, and she wanted me to marry her; yes, sir, me. But no, sir, I wouldn't marry her when I didn't love her; no, indeed! Not me, Doctor Johnson (referring to himself). I wish you could have seen her beautiful jewels, her elegant mansion and horses and carriages. Yes, sir, and all hers, too, all hers, and not a soul to divide with. Yes, sir, she was the most beautiful woman I ever saw, and she wanted me to marry her; yes, sir, me—Dr. Johnson; but do you think I'd marry her when I didn't love her? No, sir, not me—Dr. Johnson, not me—Dr. Johnson.”

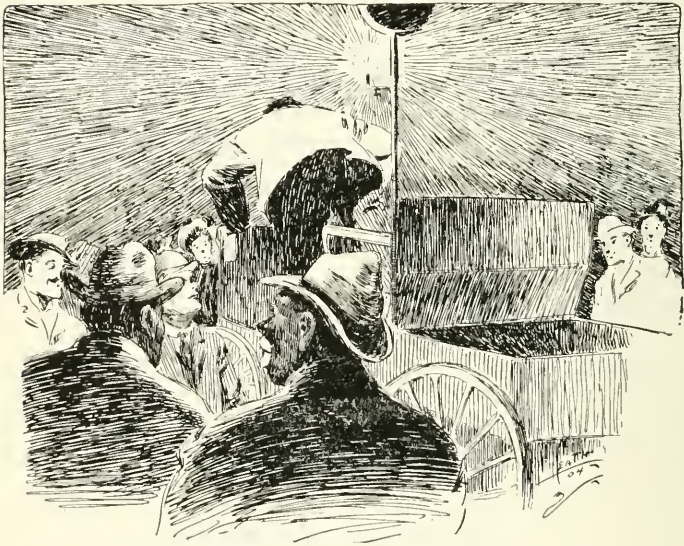
Right here the little fellow, with his squeaky, high pitched voice, interrupted with:

“Say, Dr. Johnson, don't you think you were a d—— fool?”

Dr. Anselem had employed a big husky colored man, a resident of Ludington, to act as a handy man while in that city. This colored man had taken a

particular liking to the doctor, he being a very liberal man and a good paymaster, and was therefore always ready to champion the doctor's cause.

The handy man had a chum, another big colored



*"Every healthy man belches."*

man, and every evening they would hang around the doctor's carriage while he delivered his lecture.

One evening I went out upon the square where an immense crowd was gathered to hear the doctor talk, and eventually came up to the carriage.

Just at this time the doctor was right in the midst of extolling the wonderful merits of his medicine as a stomach remedy, and made an exceedingly long and effective talk of its wonderful cure of weak stomachs.

Noticing that I was standing by he lowered his head and in a low voice said :

“ I am as sick as a horse at my stomach and will have to heave up Jonah inside of a minute, and right on top of all of this stomach medicine talk, too. Great heavens, what shall I do? ”

“ Why,” said I, “ there is nothing to do but let her go.”

And, leaning over the dash-board, he did “ let her go.”

The big colored handy man and his pal stood there. The latter, almost paralyzed, said :

“ Foh de lawd sake! what you think of dat ar man stan'in' up dar and tellin' de folks all 'bout how dat ar medicine cures de stomach, an' pukin' like dat? ”

“ Whatch you talkin' 'bout, whatch you talkin' 'bout, you big nigga? ” cried the handy man: “ dat man ain't pukin', dat man's jest belchin': every healthy man belches.”

## CHAPTER XV.

A Bad Man in a Small Town—Settled With Him Without an Argument—The Audience Surprised and Pleased—The Landlord and His Early Riser—No Changing Minds in His Hotel—A Bad Case of Insomnia—Went Sound Asleep While Lecturing—A Terrible Experience—Owned a Boat and Acted as Captain for One Day—Sold Out at a Profit—Mark Twain and His Lecture—Buying and Selling a Grocery—An Interesting Newspaper Report of my Lecture—Delivering the Lecture to a One Man Audience.

My lecture at Ludington was in every way a success, and from there we began taking in the smaller as well as the larger towns.

One thing particularly noticeable was, that the larger the town, the easier it was to entertain the audiences and stories and incidents that seemed excruciatingly funny to an audience in a large town would often be received with absolute silence in a small one.

One evening, in a small town, I had a very small audience seated on one side of the hall, with the exception of one man, who sat alone on the opposite side.

I started out with my usual enthusiasm and finally,



after relating three or four of my best and most laughable stories without causing the slightest amusement, began to feel that I was "up against a hard proposition," when finally I tried another one on them, with the same result, and had passed on, when suddenly the man sitting alone on the opposite side of the hall from the others "let go" with a laugh that fairly took the roof off the building.

Stopping quickly and turning to him I said:

"If I catch you laughing again I'll have you arrested."

Then he let go with another, and thereafter the entire audience laughed and cheered at almost every incident related.

In another small town where the hall was packed I had just gotten under headway with the lecture when a burly-looking fellow in the rear interrupted me by saying that I was an impostor, as the man who wrote "Twenty Years of Hus'ling" was a very much older man than I, and that he was personally acquainted with J. P. Johnston and had been all his life, and knew what he was talking about.

I reminded him that in the beginning of the book I had stated that I was born in 1852, and, therefore,

this being the case, the author, whoever he was, could not possibly be a very old man, and suggested that if he would call on me after the lecture I could easily convince him that I was no impostor.

I then attempted to proceed with my talk, when in a boisterous way he again interrupted me.

I asked him to remain quiet while I finished, and then tried once more, only to be ridiculed by him the third time.

Calling to Mrs. Johnston, I asked her to refund his money and request him to leave the hall.

She did so, but he refused to take his money back, and with an oath declared that there were not enough men in the hall to put him out.

I then asked if there happened to be an officer in the audience, and, receiving no response, addressing my audience, said :

“Ladies and gentlemen, I have just one request to make of you; I ask that, during the next two minutes, not a single one of you shall leave your seat, and inside of that time I promise you that that loafer will be put out of the hall and I will be back here talking as if nothing had happened.”

So saying, I stepped down off of the platform and,

walking directly up to him (he was now backed up against the wall in the rear of the room), without stopping to argue a second I landed right and left good and hard on both his stomach and face, and in less time than it takes to tell it he threw up both hands and pleaded for mercy; his face looked like a pounded beefsteak, and the last I saw of him was when he struck on his head out on the ground in front of the building.

I quickly closed and locked the door and had a full half minute to spare when ready to resume my talk.

At this juncture an old, gray-headed and gray-whiskered man arose from his seat and said:

“ Mr. Johnston, before you begin your talk again I want to say a few words. I have been a resident of this town and vicinity all of my life, and I want to assure you that that ruffian is not a sample of our citizens. Where he came from I don't know, but since he entered our community, about six months ago, he has always been looking for a scrap, always trying to bully some one, and I guess this is the first time he ever found anyone willing to accommodate him, and I am very sure if he has ever read your book, as I have, he is convinced by this time that you are the



*"Struck on his head in front of the building."*

man who wrote it, and I believe I express the sentiment of the entire audience when I tell you that I heartily congratulate you on your prompt and decisive way of disposing of such a character."

When the old gentleman sat down everybody shouted and clapped their hands, and when I had finished and stepped down from the platform everyone wanted to shake hands and congratulate me.

During all of my years of experience in dealing with the people, I had always made it a point to avoid scenes of this kind, if possible to do so without showing cowardice.

In almost every small town can be found one or two so-called bullies, whose ambition is to attack some stranger, knowing full well that he is unprotected by friends and must fight his battles alone.

In cases of this kind I never resorted to anything like an argument. An argument is just what such fellows expect and desire; their idea is to carry out a good strong bluff by cowing the stranger and then gloat over it for another year.

My idea always was to "lick 'em" first and argue with them afterwards, if it really had to be done, and

I don't remember of ever having very much of an argument afterward.

At Fremont Center, Michigan, we stayed at a hotel kept by an old friend of mine, Johnny ———.

The afternoon of the day we arrived there, Johnny had let his night clerk go because business was very dull.

That evening an old Jew traveler registered and said:

“Landlord, I vant you to call me by der two o'clock train in der mornin'.”

“All right,” said Johnny, and turning to me said in a low voice, “There you are: I have had a night clerk here for six months and not a soul has asked to be called for that two o'clock morning train, and now I am doomed to sit up all night to drag him out.”

That night the Jew occupied a room directly across the hall from ours, and in the “wee sma'” hours of the night I was awakened (as was also the whole house) by pounding on the Jew's door and incessant calls for him to get up.

Then came a lull, when an instant later came more pounding and Johnny yelling, “Git up! Git up!

Are you up? Time for the two o'clock train. Git up, I tell you. Are you up? Are you up?"

"No, I am not up yet," came a faint response.

"Well, then, git up! It's time for your train. Are you up? Are you up?"

"Vel, no," came another faint reply. "I have changed my mind," and so saying turned over in bed for another nap.

"You have changed your mind, did you say?" and more pounding by Johnny.

"Vel, yes, I have changed my mind."

"Well, you haven't changed your mind, d—— if you have!" shrieked Johnny. "You git out of here, and git out mighty quick, before I break this door in. Are you up? Are you up?"

"Vel, yes, I am up."

"Well, open the door," yelled Johnny; "I want to know that you surely are up."

As the door opened Johnny stepped inside the room and said:

"You're a d—— nice man, aren't you? Perhaps you think I never sleep. I suppose this is your way of getting your money's worth. Now get dressed and get out of this in short order. I've been up all night

to wait on you. If you had changed your mind, why in thunder didn't you tell me so last night, so I could get a little rest, too?"

"Vel," whined the Jew, in a high pitched voice, "but I didn't change my mind till you call't me."

About this time our advance agent was taken sick and went to a hospital, leaving me in bad shape.

I picked up two or three inexperienced men on the road, none of whom could fill the position. At last, rather than to lie idle, I adopted a new plan and did all the work myself, in addition to delivering the lecture. This was done on the plan of getting into a town in the morning and flooding it with circulars and bulletin advertising announcing the lecture that evening.

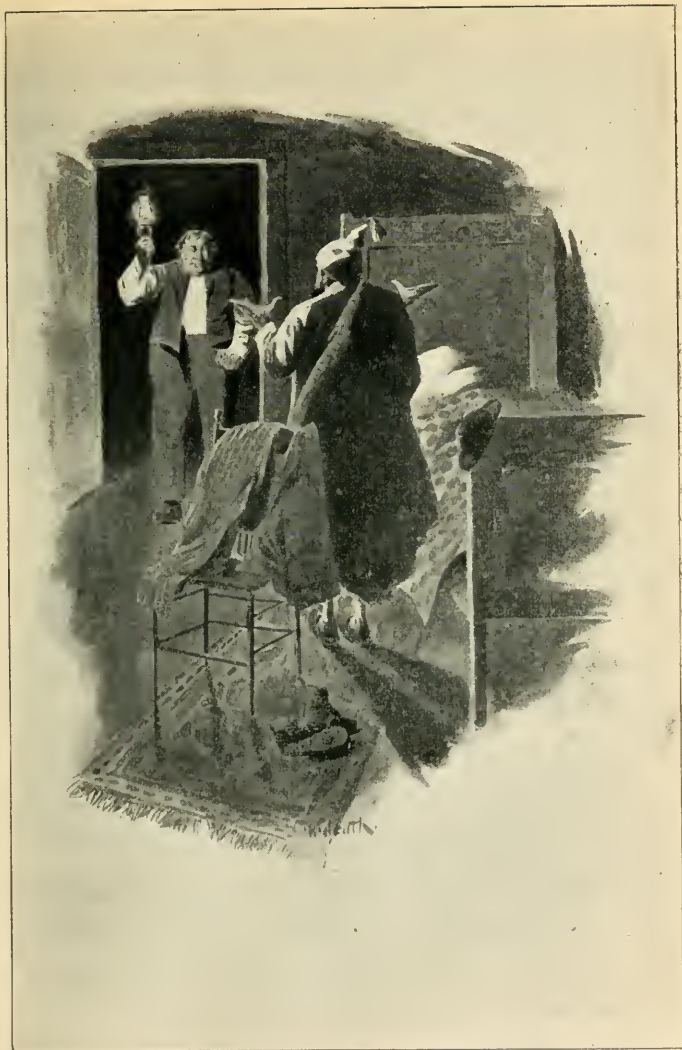
While we didn't get as large audiences as before, yet the expenses were considerably less and the profits equally as good, but I was simply working myself into a nervous wreck.

At Manistee, Michigan, I arranged to give it under the auspices of the W. C. T. U. at the opera house.

For five days and nights I had been suffering from insomnia and hadn't slept a minute.

The night of the lecture we had a fine audience and,





'VELL', WHINED THE JEW, "BUT I DIDN'T CHANGE MY MIND TILL YOU CALL'T ME".



after working very hard all day, I went upon the platform to deliver it, and when about half through I suddenly lost all consciousness and went sound asleep.

When I came to it seemed to me that I had been sleeping for an hour, and, realizing that I had kept right on talking, I wondered what I had been saying; where to begin over I didn't know, but finally started in again, and instantly lost myself and went sound asleep again, and still kept on talking or mumbling away as before.

When I rallied the second time, I said :

“Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know how many of you have ever suffered with insomnia, but I haven't slept a wink for five days and nights, until just now, right here on this platform, twice I have been sound asleep, and if you know what I have been talking about you know more than I do, and if any of you have ever had insomnia you know how terrible it is.”

At this many of the audience responded by the clapping of hands, and, after offering to refund their money at the box office, I closed the lecture; but not a single one called for their money.

After resting a few days at Manistee we continued our trip northward, on the west shore of Michigan,

and took our time for it in working up business rather than rush matters as we had been doing.

The first place where I gave my lecture after leaving Manistee was a small town located on an inland lake, which was frequented by summer resorters.

The morning after the lecture I took a short walk after breakfast and, stopping at the boat landing, I met and got into conversation with the owner of a naphtha launch.

He was a summer visitor there and wanted to sell the boat because he had ordered a very fine new one, which would be there inside of a week.

Without the slightest thought of buying it I inquired what his price was.

He said he had been holding it at four hundred dollars and asked how much I'd give for it.

"Well," said I, "I haven't any use for a boat, but I will give you two hundred dollars spot cash for it."

"All right," said he, "give me your money." And I counted it out to him.

Returning to the hotel I told Mrs. Johnston that I had bought a boat, and suggested that we make a trip around the lakes that day, and let me try my hand as captain.

The man from whom I bought the boat had in his employ two young men, one who understood the running of the engine and the other as an all-around man.

I arranged to keep them, and inside of a half hour we had started out, and took in during the day all the different landings and small towns on the lakes, returning to our starting point about five o'clock in the evening.

On reaching the hotel the landlord informed me that a party of summer resorters had arrived that day and wanted to charter my boat for ten days or two weeks, and a few moments later introduced me to the gentleman in charge of the party.

When asked how much I would charge for the use of the boat for ten days, I remarked that it was for sale very cheap, and that it would pay him better to buy it than to charter it.

"What will you take for it, cash in your fist?" he asked.

"Three hundred dollars," I replied.

"I will give you two hundred and fifty," said he.

"All right, it's a go; give me your money." And he counted it out.

I had had the honor of being captain of a boat and

had made fifty dollars that day, and was ready to try something else.

A few days later I gave my lecture at Charlevoix to a good-sized audience, and there learned that Mark Twain was to lecture at Petoskey the following evening, and, being anxious to hear him, Mrs. Johnston and I, accompanied by several Charlevoix people, made the trip to Petoskey expressly to hear him.

Special boats and special trains came into Petoskey that day and evening from every direction, loaded with people for the lecture.

About half past seven over fifty guests of the hotel where we were stopping had congregated in the parlors preparatory to starting for the opera house, and just before leaving I said to them:

“ Now, before we start out, I want to make a prediction, and that is that every one of you, and every person who attends this lecture to-night, will leave the opera house more or less disappointed, for the simple reason that everyone is expecting too much, and more than any mortal being can possibly give. I don't mean that the lecture will not be good, but that it cannot possibly come up to their expectations, and

all because of Mark Twain's great reputation as a humorist."

Nearly every person present seemed almost disgusted at my audacity, and a few used plain talk in expressing their opinion of my foolish suggestion.

"Very well," said I, "but after the lecture I wish you would all meet here in the parlor and let each one speak for himself or herself, and now, remember what I tell you, the lecture will be good and would be most highly appreciated by everyone were it delivered by some person of less notoriety."

The opera house was packed and I don't believe any man ever made a finer and more striking appearance on the platform than Mark Twain did on that occasion, and the lecture was immensely entertaining, at least to Mrs. Johnston and myself—not what he said, altogether, but the way he said it.

We had read in his books almost every story he told, but that, in my estimation, made them better because of his extremely humorous and original way of relating them.

During the entire evening there was not a hearty laugh or applause given by over a dozen persons in the whole audience, and on our way to the hotel we

could hear comments on all sides criticising the lecture.

When the crowd gathered at the hotel parlors I asked for a verdict. A bright-looking lady stepped forward and said:

“ I acknowledge that I am sorely disappointed, but I don't think I can give you credit for having made the suggestion you did, because I am quite sure that you had heard him before and knew what you were talking about.”

I assured her that I had never seen Mark Twain before and knew absolutely nothing of his lecture, and, as I had regarded him as only human, and incapable of doing more than might be expected from a human being, I had been highly entertained, and in my opinion the appearance of the man alone was worth the dollar admission fee. However, there were but few in the parlor that evening who agreed with me, as nearly all were greatly disappointed.

It was a plain case of the people overestimating and expecting more than a human being could possibly give them, for I am sure that no man could have been more entertaining and interesting.

The day following Mark Twain's lecture, while



walking down the street in Petoskey, I noticed a sign in a grocery and notion store which read:

“Stock and fixtures for sale cheap.”

Stepping inside and taking a general glance at things, I asked for the proprietor and inquired his reasons for wanting to sell out, and if there were any incumbrances on the stock.

His answer being satisfactory, and believing him to be honest in his statement, I asked his price.

He said the actual original cost of the stock and fixtures was seven hundred and fifty dollars and he would sell out for five hundred and fifty, and would prove to me that there were no incumbrances and that everything was all right.

I offered him four hundred and, to excite his avarice, showed him a good-sized roll of money, and inside of five minutes he had the cash and I had taken possession.

I immediately hired four men and women to help clean up, and, locking the door, everyone went to work with a vim and gave the store such a cleaning as it never had before.

I retained the services of the two young clerks and immediately ordered from a wholesale house in Grand

Rapids, two hundred dollars' worth of new goods, and put a big sign up on the front of the store that it would be reopened inside of a week by its new owner with a fresh, new stock at cut prices.

By the time the store and stock had been thoroughly cleaned and renovated and the new goods had arrived I had the town flooded with circulars announcing the grand opening.

The morning of my opening the old gentleman from whom I had purchased the store came in and declared that he wouldn't have known it was the same place, and seemed almost heart-broken that he hadn't done the same as I had, and kept up a nice, clean, up-to-date store, instead of putting his money away and letting his stock run down and his trade get away from him, and wanted to know what I'd take and let him have it back. I told him if he would pay me back what I had paid for the new goods and pay me what it had cost to renovate and advertise and one hundred and fifty dollars more than I paid him for the store, he could have it, if he would take it inside of thirty minutes, but that under no circumstances was it a standing offer.

He offered me a hundred dollars profit, which I refused.

Inside of two hours the people began pouring in. I hired the old gentleman to help out, and employed three other men as clerks.

A slight reduction in the prices on a few leading staples resulted in bringing patrons from every direction.

About noon the old gentleman came to me and said he guessed he'd take me up at my offer.

"Oh, no," said I. "not now; you let the half hour go by and therefore lost your opportunity. If you want it now it will cost just twenty-five dollars extra, and I will give you thirty minutes to decide in."

He shook his head and went on waiting on customers.

During the afternoon the store was crowded and the cash kept pouring in, and about three o'clock the old gentleman came to me and said:

"Well, Johnston, I'll take that offer."

"What offer?" I asked.

"Why, to pay twenty-five dollars extra, as you agreed to at noon."

"But," said I, "you didn't decide inside of the

thirty minutes, so you see you keep getting deeper and deeper into the mire all the time. Now it will cost you fifty dollars extra with thirty minutes to decide in; which altogether means two hundred dollars clear for me, you to refund to me all that I have paid out and meet all bills contracted for, clerk hire and everything, and the receipts of the day to go to you." Again he shook his head and walked away, and once more we settled down to business.

When the old gentleman concluded to buy me out at three o'clock in the afternoon he admitted that he never thought such a business could be worked up at that store, but the amount of the business done from about four until ten o'clock that night almost set him crazy, and when ready to close up for the night he said:

"Well, I guess you and I will have to make a deal; I'll take it as you offered this afternoon."

"Oh, no, you won't," said I; "you very foolishly let that half hour pass again, and this time it will cost you fifty dollars more."

He said that he couldn't understand why that should make any difference, and hardly thought I was dealing fair with him.

At this I took occasion to give him a little lecture about the importance of keeping a clean, tidy, well-stocked and up-to-date store, instead of hoarding up his money, and scored him good for his old foggy ideas about carrying on business without advertising and letting people know that he was on earth and where on earth he could be found; and explained to him that I wasn't out demonstrating to merchants what could be done with a petered out business, and getting nothing for it; and if he had an idea that I was going to take all the chances in showing what a good thing there was in his store and then hand it back to him he was mistaken, because I wasn't doing business for glory.

"Now," said I, "if you want to give me what I offered to take at three o'clock this afternoon and fifty dollars of to-day's receipts besides, you and I can do business; otherwise we will close the store and there will be no harm done."

Concluding that he had better nip it in the bud before another raise of twenty-five or fifty dollars had been placed on it, he decided to accept my offer, and we very quickly closed the deal, leaving me two hundred and fifty dollars to the good.

My wife suggested that we drop the lecture, as it was a hard life to lead, and make it our business to go into a town and buy out the run-down stock of some old fossil, who didn't believe in advertising and whose only theory was to take in money and never pay any out, and, after renovating, replenishing, rearranging and advertising the stock and demonstrating what a little life and activity would do, then sell it back to the original owner for a good profit and try another town.

I partially agreed with her that we might make a regular business of it, but decided that we would at least give two more lectures, one at Cadillac and the other at Mt. Pleasant, before giving it up, as we already had some advertising matter sent to those towns.

At Cadillac we gave the lecture under the auspices of the W. C. T. U. in the opera house.

The day of the lecture I called upon a lawyer of the town, whom I knew by reputation as having been in the lecture field, and introduced myself and gave him some complimentaries.

In the course of our conversation he remarked that my lecture, being of a humorous character, would not go in that town.

I replied that about all the pretensions I made was that of amusing and entertaining the people for the time being, and that when I made them laugh I had accomplished all I set out for.

He said I was going up against the coldest audience I had ever confronted and I wouldn't be able to make a single laugh during the whole evening; he had delivered lectures there and knew exactly the kind of an audience I would have to contend with.

The afternoon before the lecture, upon the streets, I met a hotel man with whom I had stopped many times when I traveled in the northern part of the state, years before.

He informed me that he was running a hotel in Cadillac and, knowing that I was staying at a hotel there which was in close competition with him, tried to persuade me to leave there and come to his house.

This I refused to do, saying it would be unfair to my landlord, whereupon he showed his temper to some extent.

Before going to the opera house that night I told Mrs. Johnston what the lecturer had told me about the cold, unappreciative audience I would have, and suggested that she keep tab on the number of laughs

and applauses, just for the satisfaction of the thing, as it was my intention to make them laugh, and more than once, too.

The opera house was filled, and just as I walked upon the platform I noticed the lecturer, the landlord who wanted me to move to his hotel, and the editor of one of the papers there, with whom I had had a controversy about an overcharge for advertising.

Something I said, out of the ordinary, that evening in the opening of my lecture, took the entire audience (except these three) by storm and evoked an unusually hearty laugh before I had spoken a dozen words.

This naturally put me at my best and prepared the audience for a good evening's entertainment.

If there was ever anything I enjoyed, it was to entertain a wideawake, appreciative audience, and before I had talked twenty minutes I realized that I had never had a more appreciative one than this.

I instantly set my wits to work to drag out all the good things I could think of, some of which I had never before used in the lecture, which resulted in almost constant rounds of applause and laughter.

I was so well pleased myself that I felt like return-



ing them their money and giving the lecture over again.

I kept my eye on the trio before mentioned and observed that they were absolutely the only ones who didn't laugh. That part of it, however, I enjoyed much more than if they had shown appreciation, as it



*"Absolutely the only ones who didn't laugh."*

only acted as an incentive to keep me spurred on, and I finished with a round of applause that was flattering in the extreme.

From Cadillac we went to Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, and remained there a few days prior to giving the lecture.

The summer or outing season had come on and

Mt. Pleasant was almost deserted by its better class of citizens. However, we went ahead with out advertising, having arranged to give the lecture at the opera house.

During our entire trip we had not failed to receive excellent press notices in every town or city we visited, and before leaving Cadillac, Mrs. Johnston had remarked that we must not fail to procure a copy of the papers there, as we would get some nice notices.

I had told her of our three silent visitors at the lecture, one of whom was a newspaper man, and suggested that his notice would probably be a little off color.

Two days after our arrival at Mt. Pleasant the leading druggist of Cadillac came to town and registered at our hotel and assured me that I had made a great mistake in not remaining at Cadillac and giving the lecture the next night, as every one with whom he had talked was highly pleased, and many people were sorry they hadn't attended.

The next day I called at one of the Mt. Pleasant newspaper offices and asked to see their Cadillac exchanges.

The only one they had was the one edited and pub-

lished by the newspaper man who was one of the three in attendance at my lecture.

The notice read:

“J. P. Johnston, author of ‘Twenty Years of Hus’ling,’ gave his humorous lecture at the opera house last Monday evening to what appeared to be a very appreciative audience, but for the life of us we can’t understand what good such a lecture does. It was like going to a circus where everybody but the clown was laid off, and one can get too much clown sometimes. Evidently Johnston is out on the road with the idea that the public likes to be skinned and proposes to deal out his share of the medicine.”

To my notion, this was a splendid notice. The tone of it showed malice on the part of its writer, and yet he was forced to admit all we claimed for the lecture, which was simply to entertain and amuse.

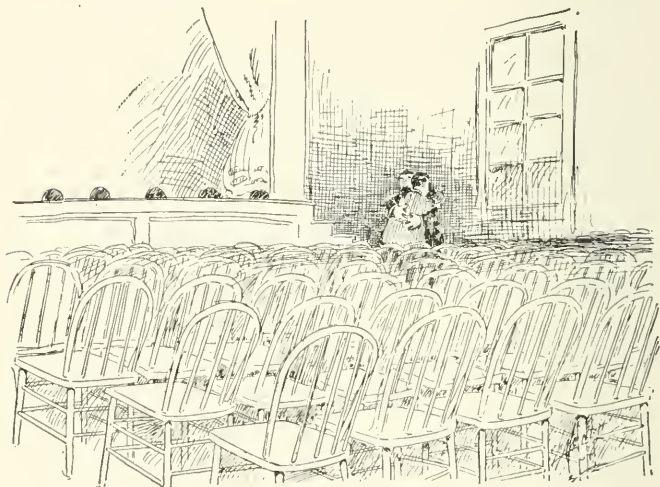
Mrs. Johnston was highly incensed and declared that I should never give the lecture again after the one I was to give at Mt. Pleasant.

“The idea,” she said, “of getting such a notice, after having an audience who showed the enthusiasm that they did at Cadillac, was ridiculous.”

The advance sale for the lecture at Mt. Pleasant was but eighteen dollars.

The evening of the lecture it began to rain at seven o'clock. It came down in torrents for over two hours.

When it was time for me to appear on the platform



*"The entire audience came forward and embraced me."*

there was just one man present as an auditor. I waited a half hour beyond the regular time and, this man being the only person present, the manager of the opera house offered him his money back, saying that we would not give the lecture.

The man refused the money, remarking he had read

Johnston's book and insisted upon hearing the lecture.

"Well," I replied, "I can stand it if you can, and as I have nothing else to do, why, here goes." And went at it.

My first thought was that I'd even up with him by cutting it short, but he was so thoroughly appreciative and made so much noise in his enthusiasm that it turned out to be about as much of an entertainment for me as it was for him, and I gave him the benefit of the whole of it.

When I had finished and had left the platform he came up and, after shaking hands, embraced me and declared that if I'd stay and give it the next night he would come again and bring all of his friends.

From that day until this I have never gotten through telling my friends about the lecture I gave up in Michigan, where the entire audience came forward after I had finished and shook hands with and embraced me.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Back to Chicago—How I Lost a Thousand Dollars—An Unexpected Find—In the Street Auction Business—Cornering the Show Business on an Indiana Fair Ground—Over Six Hundred Dollars Profit in Three Days.

The hot summer season having come on, we left the lecture field and went to Chicago.

I had, as a result of this two months' trip, just a thousand and twenty-five dollars.

On reaching Chicago we were undecided what to do until the lecture season would open again, but concluded to spend a few days in the city and see what might turn up.

The second day after our arrival there I met an old friend who said he was on his way to the Palmer House to attend a meeting of a few friends, and explained that they were going to pool together and put in a thousand dollars apiece to go into the market and sell Chicago Gas, as they had received a tip right from the fountain head, and nothing was more sure than that they would make a fortune in three days.

He then asked me if I wouldn't like to go up to the meeting, as he himself had instigated it and would like to have me attend.

Including my friend, there were just ten men present, and in a very short time arrangements were made for each to put in a thousand dollars and let one of the ten manipulate the funds.

It looked so good to me that, although I had never bought or sold a dollar's worth of stock of any kind, nor speculated in that way, I expressed a desire to take a thousand dollars' interest in their pool myself, if they would let me in.

This they agreed to, and I counted out the cash.

On the strength of the "dead open and shut" proposition I telephoned to a friend at LaPorte to come to the city and bring some of his friends and plenty of cash and take a hand in this "sure thing game."

He promised to do so, and that evening six of them came, and I met them at the Great Northern Hotel.

They read the papers carefully and made other investigations, and decided to "copper" my proposition, i. e., to buy Chicago Gas instead of selling it, which they did, and each one of them went home with

his pockets filled with money, while our party lost every dollar in the pool inside of three days.

This, to me, was a clear case of playing another man's game, something I had always talked against to my friends and had refused to do a thousand times.

Had my friend, or any member of his pool, invited me, or attempted to persuade me to join them, I am sure I should have left in disgust. As it was, there was nothing to call forth an argument and consequently nothing to set a fellow to thinking about it, except to just put your money in and draw it out again in two days with a big surplus added.

As soon as it became a settled fact that I had lost the entire thousand dollars I told my wife about it, when she said that she had always thought that I would make a good board of trade, or stock speculator, and asked what I would do next, now that we only had about ten dollars left.

The following morning, as I was preparing to go down town, Mrs. Johnston asked if I didn't think things looked rather gloomy with only ten dollars on hand, and in a big city, without a business.

I replied that I never felt better in my life, and that nothing gloomy had appeared to me, while on the con-



trary, everything seemed bright and cheerful, and to be candid about it, I rather enjoyed the situation, as I always had been a firm believer in the theory that the "Devil takes care of his own," and was confident something good would turn up very soon.

That afternoon, after having called upon several old friends and acquaintances, I had started to take the elevated cars to go back to where we were staying, when I happened to think that I never had a full settlement with a certain news company, to whom I had for years been consigning thousands of copies of "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," and as I was only a block away, thought I would call and see if I might not possibly have ten or fifteen dollars coming.

The book had had its big sale, and although I knew this company had quite a large number of books consigned to them several months before, yet I expected to find a large number of them on hand to be returned.

Imagine my surprise when the manager, after conferring with the bookkeeper, brought forth a statement, showing a balance of three hundred and seventy-five dollars due me, and asked me to receipt it, saying he would pay me the cash, which he did.

When I showed my wife a nice, big, fat roll of

greenbacks that night, she said she hadn't worried at all, and didn't intend to.

The following morning I went down town again, with a view to reconnoitering a little, and if possible hit upon something in which to invest my small capital.

My wife and I had discussed the possibility of going on the road fitting glasses, but inasmuch as nearly every small town had its optician, especially in the thickly settled portions of the country where we would care to travel, we were somewhat doubtful as to the feasibility of attempting it just at that time.

That afternoon I called upon a big wholesale notion firm, and after laying out a route through Indiana, I purchased a nice stock of Yankee notions, jewelry, etc., and ordered packages sent to several different towns, as was my old time custom that I might not get short of stock, and two days later Mrs. Johnston and I started out in the street auction business.

This experience brought me back to twenty-five years before.

We started in with good results right from the beginning, and had smooth sailing all summer.

We were not making a fortune, but were gaining

ground every day, and getting acquainted with the people.

Early in the fall season, when the country fairs began to open, there was little trouble to make money.

My plan was to hire four well matched horses hitched to a two-seated carriage, and with my own fancy horse blankets and plumes, drive out on the fair grounds during the day, and upon the streets down town in the evening.

Naturally enough, people would suppose I was driving my own outfit, which of course gave me more or less prestige, and helped business to a great extent.

At one of these fairs, the very first day a man opened up with a kangaroo, trained to throw balls at the wooden nigger babies.

He used the animal merely to draw a crowd, after which he would induce the people to play his game, but so long as the animal was even in sight it put every other man on the ground out of business.

Another man had a large show tent, but a poor show—the wild man from Borneo, the bearded woman, etc., while still another had a good show and no tent, and all of them were stranded, financially.

The man with the show and no tent had an educated

pig, a half dozen trained dogs and two trained ponies, a baboon, two rabbits, a guinea-pig and a squirrel.

As the weather was fine and large crowds usually attended this fair, I set to work to form a combination of these three shows.

My first object was to get rid of the kangaroo, by putting him under a tent where only those who paid an admission fee could see him, and my next object was to make some money out of the scheme, if possible.

My first step was to see what I could hire the man, his two freaks and the big tent for, during the three days.

Then I called upon the kangaroo man and arranged for his whole outfit for the three days, after which I hired the man with the show and no tent.

By noon of the first day we had the three shows under one tent.

I had a local painter draw a large picture of a kangaroo throwing a ball at a row of wooden niggers, and stretched it in front of the tent and made this exhibition the leading feature of the show.

I was not long in writing up a talk for the "barkers" to use on the outside.

I then hired a band of three Italians with a mandolin, guitar and piccolo, who had been playing on the streets the night before and, all considered, I had "framed up" a fair show, with a very good prospect.

Business was light the first day, only about thirty dollars in receipts, but it gave us a chance to arrange our program and shape things up.

The first thing I discovered was that my employes were inclined to "cut" the show, thereby giving the people as little for their money as possible.

I very soon put a stop to this and made it plain that nothing less than a full program, and the best they had, would satisfy me, and insisted that unless my orders were carried out, no salaries would be paid.

I made it a point to locate my auction wagon right near the tent.

The second day, by ten o'clock in the morning, the fair ground was crowded.

First, I had my musicians come outside on a platform and play their liveliest pieces, after which the kangaroo was brought out and gave a two or three-minute exhibition of ball throwing.

As soon as he had finished and was taken back into

the tent my "barkers" would begin telling of the marvelous exhibition upon the inside.

All the showmen declared that nothing but a ten-cent show would go there, but I insisted that if they would give a good show, such as I knew they were capable of giving, and a charge of twenty-five cents for adults and fifteen cents for children was made, I was sure the people would be willing to pay it, and at any rate, it would give a semblance of being a high-class show, and would therefore be patronized by a better class of people, who would pass by a ten-cent show without noticing it.

In no time my theory was demonstrated as being correct.

Whenever the kangaroo made his appearance and was taken back into the tent the people fairly fell over each other to get inside.

As soon as the tent was filled the show would begin, and the moment they were dismissed and began passing out, I would mount the auction wagon and devote fifteen minutes of rapid talk, disposing of goods at a lively rate. Having thoroughly exhausted this crowd, the music and then the kangaroo were again brought

forth to attract another crowd, and so we kept it up for two days, or until the close of the fair.

Everybody seemed more than pleased, and no one complained of the show, or the price of admission.

The second day of the fair a man with a snake show (but stranded) came up to one of my "barkers" and wanted to know who was running that show.

I was pointed out as the man, when, stepping up to me, he said:

"Just outside of the fair ground I have a large platform wagon with a pit made in the center, in which I have a large number and variety of snakes, principally wild rattlesnakes. Around this pit is a railing with a platform on the outside, and with steps leading to the platform. I have an ideal way of giving an exhibition. My son enters the den of snakes and fearlessly handles them, while the audience stands up by the railing and witnesses the performance down in the pit."

He then explained that he had hired a man, with his team, to bring the wagon forty miles across country. Besides, the man was to collect a small hotel bill, and it would take thirty-five dollars to pay these bills and pay his license for exhibiting there, and if I would

advance him the price he would give me a half interest during the balance of the fair.

I told him I would advance the money, provided I could take charge of the show, and I was also to have the first thirty-five dollars taken in, to reimburse me, after which we would run the thing together and divide the balance of the proceeds.

This he agreed to, and I paid his bills and had the snake show hauled in close to the show tent, and near my auction wagon.

A young man of the town, whom I had hired to watch my auction goods when I was away at intervals, was anxious to take charge of the snake show in my behalf, and I set him to work and hired another chap to watch the auction goods.

The snake man's price of admission was five cents. I insisted that ten cents was cheap enough and assured him that the snakes would look bigger at ten than at five cents admission.

He reluctantly consented, but shook his head and declared that it would bankrupt him.

The snake man was a good talker, and whenever I appeared on the auction wagon I never failed to put



in a word for the snakes, and in no time we had a corner on the show business.

The ten cent pieces rolled in so fast that the snake man wanted to go and get drunk, and would have done so had I not given him a temperance lecture, when he asked me if I wouldn't like to take a "smile" with him, from a bottle he had in his valise.

By noon that day I had my thirty-five dollars back, and by six o'clock that night the snakes had taken in a hundred and two dollars more, one-half of which was "velvet" to me.

The second day, the big show, as I called it, took in four hundred and thirty dollars, and my auction sales were over a hundred and twenty-five.

When I drove to the hotel that night, with two big pasteboard boxes full of money for my wife to count, she asked me if I couldn't find anything else for her to do but to count money.

I replied that the only thing we needed to complete the outfit was a Gypsy fortune teller to occupy a small tent in the big show, and I'd give her three dollars a week and "find her," if she would make up for the character and take the job.

The next day the snakes took in ninety dollars; the

big show, three hundred and forty, and my receipts were seventy dollars.

I had paid the man with the tent sixty-five dollars for the three days; the kangaroo man, sixty-five, and the one with the big show, one hundred dollars, besides the small incidentals, leaving me nearly six hundred and fifty dollars as a profit for the show venture, alone.

I tried to hire the entire outfit to take in another fair with me, but my success had settled that question, and once more it was a case of each " feller " for himself.

CHAPTER XVII.

Visiting a Book Auction in Indianapolis—Employing an Assistant Auctioneer—A Case of Clothes Not Making the Man—A Transformation Scene—Money Well Invested—A Disastrous Trip to the South—A Barefooted Audience—Everything Sold but Soap—Returning North Nearly Stranded—A Grand Bluff With Empty Boxes our Financial Salvation.

With the additional funds from the proceeds of the show venture we looked forward with much satisfaction to the opening of a nice auction store in some large city, and with this object in view we went to Indianapolis, hoping to find a storeroom in a suitable location, in which we might open up.

On arriving there we found that the only room that could be rented for that purpose was occupied by a large book auction concern.

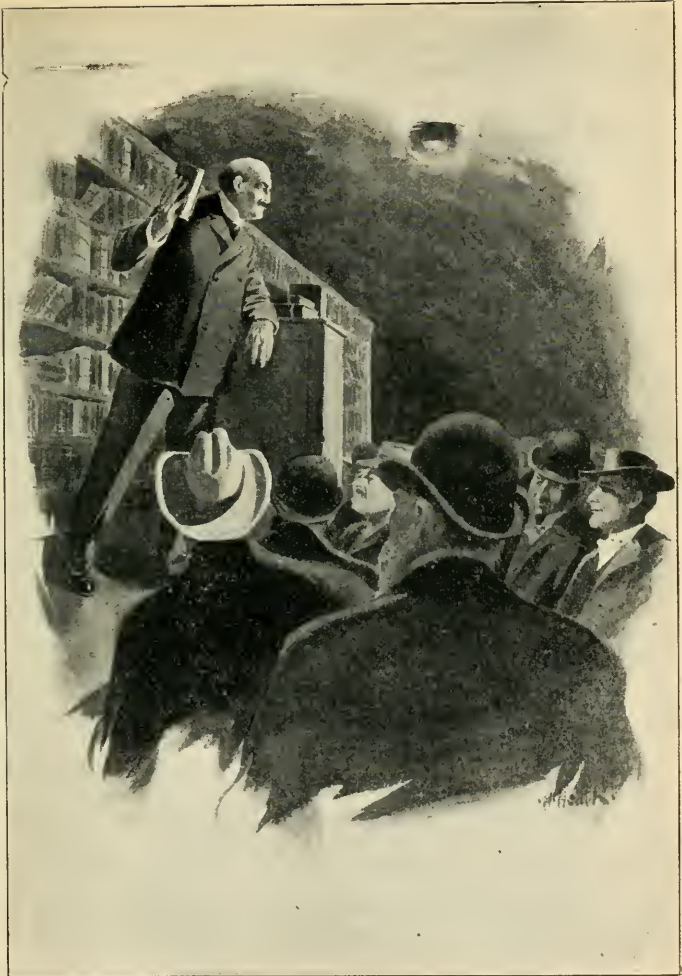
On the first evening of our arrival there we attended the auction sale, accompanied by an acquaintance whom we had met at the hotel, and who told us of the interesting and amusing talk the auctioneers were accustomed to make when introducing and selling my book.

We had been in the store possibly twenty minutes, when the auctioneer picked up a copy of the book and began:

“Ladies and gentlemen, here is a book that is so well known that it really needs no introduction: J. P. Johnston’s “Twenty Years of Hus’ling,” the funniest, the most instructive and most interesting book published to-day. This book is worth five dollars to any man to read, and it is worth ten dollars to any man to take home and let his son read. Mr. Johnston started out in life a green country bumpkin, but he was not born to blush unseen. He tried first one thing, and then another, meeting with successes and reverses, but finally struck his lead and made a fortune in Chicago in the wholesale jewelry and optical business, and only recently died in Cincinnati, Ohio, worth ten millions of dollars.”

He then called for a bid, and when a man yelled twenty cents he closed the book, and with an intensely disgusted look on his face, said:

“Think of it! Think of it! Only twenty cents, the paltry sum of twenty cents offered as a starter for this wonderful book. Why, my friends, if J. P. Johnston knew that his book had been offered at public auction



'ONLY TWENTY CENTS; THE PALTRY SUM OF TWENTY CENTS FOR  
THIS WONDERFUL BOOK'.



and only twenty cents bid for it, he would turn over in his grave."

At this, the gentleman who had accompanied us stepped up to the auctioneer and said:

"Excuse me, sir, but will you permit me to set you right by introducing you to J. P. Johnston, the author of that book, and the liveliest dead man in the United States to-day?"

The auctioneer reached down from the platform and grabbing me by the hand, said:

"Get right up here, Johnston, and tell this audience 'just how it all happened,' and then write your autograph in one of the books and sell it to the highest bidder."

This I did, after making a little talk in which I related a couple of stories, and succeeded in selling it for two dollars and fifty cents, although sixty cents was the usual price.

As soon as I had finished and gotten back among the crowd a tall, rather heavy-set man came elbowing his way through the crowd and, approaching me, said:

"Mr. Johnston, I am an old-time auctioneer and I want to shake hands with you."

I at once noticed that he had a bright face, fine ad-

dress and spoke with more than ordinary intelligence, but was dressed like the worst type of tramp, and as I was anxious to employ an assistant, was not long in asking for an explanation.

He told me of how he had started out early in the spring with an inexperienced farmer boy, with a capital of one hundred and fifty dollars, and with the idea of curtailing expenses, carried a tent along with them, in which they camped out and sold Yankee notions on the streets, afternoons and evenings.

It had been a case of too small a business for two men, and with him from the very first it was like the man who had the bull by the horns and dare not let go. He had a wife to support and the rough camping life had ruined his only suit of clothes, and with barely enough profit to eke out an existence from day to day he had hung on like a dog to a root, hoping in vain that each day would bring better results.

The first thing that I did was to accompany him to his wife, where I found things exactly as he had pictured them. I then had him give me a sample of his auction talk and methods of conducting sales, all of which were above the average.

The next day I arranged to take him along with me,



at a salary of twenty dollars per week and expenses, to start with.

I gave him fifty dollars in advance for household expenses and to get his wife in more comfortable circumstances, after which I spent seventy-five dollars more for an outfit of wearing apparel for him, and such a transformation scene I never witnessed before.

A bath, a shave, a hair cut, a manicure, a new silk hat, new up-to-date shoes, linen shirts, collars, and silk tie with a fine Prince Albert suit of broadcloth made him look and feel like a new man, and a better investment I never made.

He had traveled every inch of Indiana, while I had not, and he knew just what the license was in each town and how and where to have goods shipped to advantage.

He was always a gentleman, thoroughly temperate and faithful and honest to a fault, and a more careful man with his clothes and personal appearance I never met.

As soon as we began operating indoors, we ordered a nice stock of books to combine with the notions, and made it a point to conduct our business in such a way

as to command the respect and patronage of the better class of trade in every town we visited.

One of my mottoes was, and always had been, to handle a line of goods that didn't have to be misrepresented in order to sell them; never to misrepresent nor handle shoddy goods, but never to sell them without a good, round profit, and in this my new man heartily agreed with me, and we were not long in stirring things up generally.

In order to successfully carry on a business of this kind one must be able to calculate on about the length of time he will be able to remain in each town before the people are supplied with his line, and then order goods from the wholesaler to be sent ahead, in accordance with calculations made.

My new man, Mr. Axtel, assisted me in this work, and we ordered quantities of goods sent ahead to several different places, known to him as first-class auction towns.

My wife, having been raised in the south, had never been satisfied with the severe northern winter climate, and had for years been trying to get me to go south, as soon as cold weather set in.

On Saturday, when we were holding our last day's

sale in Nobleville, Indiana, my wife came to me with a newspaper in her hand and read to me the low priced excursion rates from that point to St. Louis, Missouri, and urged that we pack up at once and take the eleven o'clock train that night and work the balance of the fall and winter through Missouri, where it would be summerlike all winter, and anxious to please her, on account of her failing health, and without stopping to think for a single moment about the importance of having goods sent ahead, with which to replenish our stock, I consented to the trip, and in no time we had the goods packed and into the freight depot and shipped to DeSoto, Missouri.

None of us even thought of what we were going to do for goods to replenish our stock until we were inside the city limits of St. Louis, the next morning, when I happened to "wake up" to a realization of what a foolhardy thing we had done; besides, it hadn't occurred to us that our goods might be forever and a day in reaching the Missouri town by freight. In fact, Mrs. Johnston's enthusiasm and my desire to gratify her wishes took me so unawares that I didn't stop to think of anything else but just to get there as soon as possible, and in all our many years of experiences to-

gether I don't think I ever knew Mrs. Johnston to feel quite so badly over anything as she did over this move.

Mr. Axtel and myself tried to persuade her that it was I, and not she, that was to blame, as I was supposed to be managing the business, and to have head enough on me to do so.

Had it not been for the fact that we had sent our goods by freight from Nobleville, we would have taken our back tracks for Indiana, but there we were, nearly all the money I had was invested in goods which were out of our hands and there was nothing to do but lay out a new route, order more goods sent ahead, and then wait, with no income, but a constant outgo of cash confronting us.

At last, when our goods arrived, we opened up in a nice storeroom, and in a splendid location, but with such an audience I never before came in contact.

The men were all dressed alike; a checkered shirt, pair of overalls, one home-made suspender and a dinky hat, and everybody barefooted with a "chew of tobacco" as big as they could possibly cram into their mouths.

We sold a very little of everything but soap.

Before opening up we had called on the authorities



*"We sold a very little of everything but soap."*

and paid our city license, as we had always done before, and supposed of course that was all that was necessary. However, the second day an officer called and demanded a township tax, which I paid, rather than argue the question.

The next day another officer called, with instructions to collect a county tax, which I also paid, after which another official called upon me for a state tax. This I paid, the same as the others, and asked the officer if they had any laws there permitting them to collect a United States tax from an outsider.

It was a case of losing money from the very start; no income, and all outgo.

Money was a thing unheard of in that section of the country, and when some one did happen to get hold of a dollar he was unable to decide what to do with it. For instance, a regular ragamuffin came in one day and said:

“ I got a dollah and I wanter buy somethin’ fer it.”

“ What do you want? ” asked Mr. Axtel, as we were not then selling at auction.

“ O, I don’t care much—whatcher got? ”

We took in a number of towns, hoping with each move we made to find an improvement, and not until

we had run behind and lost nearly everything we had, did we decide to go back north, and ship what little we had left to Illinois.

By this time spring had come again, and with our small stock we were able to go out upon the streets, on pleasant days, which helped us out considerably.

When we first opened in Illinois we rented a large room at Mt. Vernon, and, with our very small stock of goods, were unable to make any kind of a showing.

We had sold off our books and hadn't money enough to replenish them. Therefore, the only thing we had for sale was Yankee notions.

A gents' furnishing goods man had just moved out of a storeroom adjoining ours, and had left behind a large number of very nice boxes, upon which were the labels of different kinds of goods, such as socks, underwear, etc., and we were not slow in taking advantage of the opportunity to make good use of these.

When ready to open up, the shelves of our store were filled with these boxes.

We then built a high counter in front of the auctioneer, and so high that no one could see what we had on top of it, and there we placed the few goods we had and went to work, and always laid particular

stress on the fact that we hoped to sell at least twenty thousand dollars' worth of goods in that town.

We had taken the precaution to have a number of small packages sent to this town, and as fast as the cash came in we would take out a new package, and thereby keep the ball constantly rolling.

Our success in the town was remarkable and our stock grew quite fast. However, when we left there for the next town we took the empty boxes along, and continued to do so until we had goods enough to fill the shelves without them.

We stayed in Illinois all summer and until late in the fall, meeting with fairly good success.

During the fall, at Greenville, Illinois, I met William Jennings Bryan. He stopped at the same hotel that we did (the Adams House), for nearly a week, while making free silver speeches in that city and vicinity, for ex-Congressman Lane.

Although I had never taken any special interest in politics and had paid no particular attention to financial questions, I, nevertheless, became considerably interested in Bryan's inflated, wind-bag ideas, and after listening to one of his long, tiresome, two-hour speeches, one day, I told him that evening at the sup-



per table that he would see the day when he would be ashamed that he had ever advocated such a hollow, nonsensical theory.

Of course, I didn't know at the time that Bryan was such a great man, and never even mistrusted it, until he afterwards received the nomination for President of the United States. Had I known it I should have taken a better look at him, and would possibly have been rather more reserved in my denunciation of his theories.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Getting Back Into Indiana—An Interesting Interview With a Newspaper Man—How I Got His Money—Buying and Selling Second Hand Furniture—Bad Friday at Seymour, Indiana—Skunked for the First Time—A Combination Auction Sale—Patent Rights a Side Issue—Closing out the Auction Stock.

From Illinois we worked back into Indiana. By this time we were carrying a nice stock and having a fine business.

When ready to go to a new town it was customary for one of us to go ahead and arrange for a storeroom, license, etc., before moving the stock.

Washington, Indiana, was considered a good town, and Mrs. Johnston and I went there and arranged to locate for a few weeks, and wired Mr. Axtel to ship the goods.

The evening of the first day of my arrival there, while sitting in the hotel office, conversing with several traveling men and boarders, I happened to mention to the landlord that one of the druggists in Washington, Walter Jackson, was from the town where I

was raised, Clyde, Ohio, and that I had known him from boyhood.

At this a smooth-faced, keen looking young man, who had just told me that he was a newspaper man, asked me if I knew J. P. Johnston, formerly of Clyde, Ohio, who wrote "Twenty Years of Hus'ling."

"Well, I should think I ought to know him," I replied. "I am about his age."

"What do you think of his book?" he asked.

"Oh, I think it's a pack of lies; at least I suppose it is. Of course I have never read it, and wouldn't care to, after knowing the man."

"What do you know about him that is so terribly bad?" he asked.

"Well, in the first place, he is a man that is out for the money. He would trade his interest in heaven for a jack-knife rather than not trade at all, and I don't like a man like that."

"So you think he is a liar, do you?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, now let me ask you if you ever knew Frank Welker, who runs the Empire House at Clyde, and was one of the principal characters mentioned in Johnston's book?"

“Of course I knew him, and he’s a prime good fellow, too; a mighty fine fellow.”

“Do you think he is a liar, too?”

“Oh, no; Frank is all right.”

“Well,” said the young man, “I stopped with Welker for six weeks there in Clyde, a year ago, and I had many a talk with him about Johnston and his book, and Welker says that all the stories relating to his experience with Johnston are true, so what are you going to make of that?”

“At any rate, I have said, more than once, that it’s the only book I ever paid fifty cents for that I thought I had gotten fifty dollars’ worth of good out of.”

“Well,” I answered, “I wouldn’t care to read it after knowing the author so well.”

“But, d—— it,” he went on, almost in a rage, “why don’t you show us wherein the man is bad? You are simply prejudiced. I presume you are ‘hot under the collar’ because Johnston has turned things over while you have been dozing.”

“One thing,” I ventured, “what little I have in the world I have made honestly, anyhow.”

“Have you ever heard of Johnston’s making a dollar in a way that you or I wouldn’t have made it in

the very same way if we had the chance?" he howled, in a passion.

"Yes," said I; "just think of that Incomprehensible furniture and piano lustre that he used to sell; do you think that was honest?"

"Of course I think it was honest. Besides, every fool couldn't sell it."

"What about that patent right business?" I asked. "Would you sell patent rights?"

"I would if I knew enough, and so would you," he answered, in a huff.

"And about his running that hotel up in Michigan at Pontiac, or 'Pocahontas,' as he called it; do you think that was all right?"

"Of course it was all right. What did he do there that wasn't all right? Oh, thunder! It's jealousy, petty jealousy; that's what ails you."

"Indeed," I replied, "it's not jealousy. Would you have the nerve to get up on the street corner and sell Yankee notions at auction, as he did?"

"Indeed I would, if I knew how, and would consider it all right, too."

"Do you think Johnston's wholesale jewelry and optical business in Chicago was all right?" I asked.

“Why not?” he yelled, “why not? D—— it. Hadn’t he as much right in that business as any man, and is there any reason why he couldn’t run it in a legitimate way, the same as anyone else?”

“Then,” said I, “look at that livery business that he was interested in, in Chicago. Do you think an honest man would do that?”

“Great Heavens!” he yelled. “You are crazy. I thought you had never read the book. You know a mighty sight about it for a man that has never read it. Say,” said he, “I want to tell you one thing; I have read that book through twice and am going to read it again, and I’d give a dollar to see the man that wrote it.”

“Now, see here,” said I, “you wouldn’t give a dollar, nor even ten cents to see him, and you know it.”

“Yes, I would: yes, I would. I’d give a dollar right now to see him.”

“Now,” said I, “just to prove to these people that you wouldn’t do anything of the kind, I will make you a proposition, and if you mean business you will accept of it.

“Now, then, I will put a dollar in the landlord’s hands and you do the same, and if I produce Johnston

inside of two minutes the dollar that you put up belongs to me; if I don't, my dollar belongs to you."

"All right," said he, "here goes," and each gave the landlord a dollar.

I then asked him to look on the register, and see if J. P. Johnston wasn't registered there, and have the landlord point him out.

He did so, when the landlord, pointing to me, said: "Right there is your man, sir."

I spent the dollar treating the crowd to cigars.

At Washington we had an exceedingly large room in which to conduct our auction sale, and I immediately put an "ad" in the paper, to buy for cash, or sell on commission, second-hand furniture.

The second day after the advertisement appeared a man came in and wanted me to go with him to look at his entire household of furniture. He wanted to go south, and would sell cheap if I would buy it all.

After satisfying myself that there were no encumbrances on it, I looked the things over and made a deal to buy the entire outfit for sixty-five dollars.

His wife consented and showed a great deal of interest in effecting the sale.

After they had given me a receipted bill of sale his



*"Right there is your man, sir."*



wife began looking about, and first selecting the sewing machine, declared that she couldn't possibly let it go, because it was a present from her father, and after she had shed a few tears I gave it back to her. A further search and she found a rocking-chair that her mother had given her, and a large vase that her sister had sent her, and two nice pictures that she had earned herself, and a rug that was hers before they were married; none of these she could possibly let go.

"Well," said I, "is there anything else you want? Suppose I give it all back to you and let you select a chair or a bed quilt or something of that kind, and give to me for my sixty-five dollars, how would that please you?"

She took the matter in earnest, and said:

"Oh, pshaw! We would give you more than that, wouldn't we John?"

At first I was half inclined to give her back the few things she had selected, but convinced that they were playing a game that they had previously planned, I gave her the sewing machine and sent down town for a mover's wagon, and saw that everything was taken out of the house before I left it.

After placing the furniture on the floor of our store,

in nice shape, I advertised the entire lot at auction, the coming Saturday, beginning at nine o'clock in the morning, and closed it out at a profit of a hundred dollars (almost to a penny), after deducting drayage and advertising expenses.

From that time on, for four weeks, we did a thriving business, buying and selling anything and everything that was offered for sale, in addition to our regular notion and book auction sales.

About this time my assistant, Mr. Axtel, had a most excellent partnership proposition made to him to go into the exclusive book auction business: he to manage the business and do the selling, as an offset to the capital invested.

While I had raised his salary and disliked to lose his most valuable services, I advised him, by all means, to accept the offer, and was obliged to insist upon his doing so, for his own interest, before he would leave me.

His had proved to be a clear case of the old saying that "clothes don't always make the man."

Clad as he was when I first met him in that glossy, dirty, wornout suit of clothes, with soiled linen, run-over shoes, unkempt hair and bearded face, he was,

nevertheless, a man; a man worthy of the name and worthy of every confidence; a loyal husband, generous to a fault, and honest to the last penny, with not a lazy hair in his head, and a conscience that would not stretch an inch.

I have since heard of him only indirectly, but have been told that he is on the high road to success.

After Mr. Axtel left us we kept our course eastward through Indiana, taking in every town of importance.

By the time we had reached Seymour our stock was in fine shape, and we were carrying a big line of notions, books and blankets of almost every description, besides a fine line of table silverware and a few watches.

I rented a nice storeroom in this city, for which I paid forty dollars cash, in advance, for thirty days, and after paying twenty-five dollars for a thirty-days' license, I found myself without a penny left, but with a fine stock of goods and a Friday evening before me to make my opening sale.

When we came to look after our lights we found that it would cost three dollars to have a gas meter put in, for which we were expected to pay cash, but in an offhand sort of way I said to the gas man:

“Well, go on and put it in to-night and present your bill in the morning,” which he did.

“Suppose,” said Mrs. Johnston, “that it so happened that you didn’t sell three dollars’ worth to-night and that man should call in the morning with his bill, what would you do?”

I replied that such a thing couldn’t be possible, with that fine stock of goods on hand, even though it was unlucky Friday.

I always said that I was not one bit superstitious. However, I never cared to begin anything new on Friday, nor on the thirteenth of the month, and didn’t like to see the new moon over my left shoulder the first time, nor fall over a black cat up a dark alley, on a stormy night, nor hear a donkey bray before breakfast; yet little did I dream what this particular Friday had in store for me in the opening of my sale in Seymour.

The large room was crowded with what looked to be a substantial lot of buyers; therefore I opened with a great deal of confidence.

No matter how high up I piled the goods, nor how cheap I offered them, not a sale could I make.

I went through the entire stock once, twice, three times with not a penny in sight.

Seeing the utter uselessness of trying further, I told them that it didn't matter to me, anyhow. I had plenty of money; in fact, more than I knew what to do with, that I was merely traveling as a public benefactor.

Just at this juncture, a merchant, occupying a room adjoining mine, came in and, stepping up to me, asked if I would change a five dollar bill for him.

I told him that I was sorry, that the very smallest I had was a fifty dollar bill, as I scarcely ever had any small money about me. The crowd half saw the point, and seemed to enjoy the situation greatly.

I then said: "Ladies and gentlemen, we will remain here all day to-morrow, at least, and would be pleased to see you again, but please bring your pocket-books. This will conclude our evening's sale."

At this, a big, awkward appearing fellow got another laugh on me by blurting out:

"Gosh! I been here all the evenin' and haint seen ye sell anything yet."

Of the many ups and downs that Mrs. Johnston and I had experienced together, this was the first time I

ever knew her to weaken. After we had closed the store, I noticed tears standing in her eyes, and asked what it meant.

She said she had no fears of the next day's results, but was afraid that the gas man would present his bill before we took in enough to pay it, in which case it would be very embarrassing, and didn't see how I could explain it.

I tried to console her by assuring her that I was not in the least worried over the matter, and that someone, at that very moment, no doubt, had the cash in his pocket, ready to hand it over the next morning; that we had no other intentions but to do exactly as we had agreed with the gas meter man, and that there would be a way out of it, and too, without suffering the slightest humiliation, and suggested that it was too small a matter to worry over, anyhow.

It was the smallness of the matter, she explained, that made it look bad. Had it been three hundred, instead of three dollars, there might be an excuse for not having the money.

When we were at Mt. Vernon, Illinois, a tall, husky, energetic young man came to me one day and said he had fifty dollars saved up and wanted to invest it in

Yankee notions and peddle among the farmers, provided I would sell them cheap enough.

He had gotten his inspiration from reading "Twenty Years of Hus'ling" and if I was going to travel from one town to another, he would follow me and make his headquarters in the town where I was located, thus enabling him to replenish his stock every day, if necessary.

I sold him what he needed, at an advance of ten per cent above cost, and as I bought them in quantities and at bottom prices, he was able to realize a good margin.

Up to the time of our stay in Seymour, he had been following us for six months, with splendid results, but for some reason we hadn't seen him for three weeks and began to feel that he had deserted us.

The next morning after our failure in the auction sale, I started for the store about eight o'clock, and arriving there, found this young man waiting at the door, and inside of an hour had sold him fifty dollars' worth of goods, for cash.

The meter man called a few moments later, and at that instant Mrs. Johnston also came in. As he presented his bill she seemed bewildered enough, until I

drew from my pocket a good sized roll of small bills, and with the promptness of a millionaire, said :

“ Just receipt your bill, sir ; here is your money.”

We sent out a boy with a bell, crying “ auction,” and got together a fine crowd in the forenoon, and had



*“Auction!”*

a sixty dollar sale. In the afternoon we took over eighty dollars, and at our Saturday evening sale nearly a hundred.

We remained there the thirty days, meeting with excellent success.

From there we went to ————, Indiana.



On reaching there we learned that two young who were managing a big dry goods store for another man had advertised to sell the goods at auction, the sale to begin the following Saturday.

I called upon them and asked why we couldn't arrange to work together, and made them a proposition to put in my Yankee notions, jewelry and tableware, and I would sell thirty minutes on their goods, and thirty on my own.

They had engaged an auctioneer, whose specialty was farm implements and stock, but after I gave them a little specimen of my work, they quickly arranged with me.

One day there came to the hotel where we were stopping, a man with a patent self-heating flat iron. He was the patentee, and was out selling county and state rights.

Our hotel was run by the wife of a dry goods merchant, his storeroom adjoining the hotel.

The morning after the arrival of the patent right man I was sitting in the hotel office, reading the morning paper, when I overheard the patent right man say to a man with whom he was trying to make a sale that the landlady's husband had offered him fifty dol-

lars' worth of anything in his store for Marion county, Indiana.

I instantly went to the landlord and said :

“ Landlord, what do you think of that self-heating flat iron? ”

“ Well, sir,” said he, “ I think it's a fine thing, and if I could close out my store I would like to go into it.”

“ What will you give for a good county,” I asked, “ in case I am able to deal for some territory? ”

“ I will give fifty dollars' worth of anything in my store, at first cost, or wholesale price, for Marion county,” was his reply.

Returning to the hotel office I took from my pocket a brand new brass watch, the cost of which was two dollars and sixty cents, and showing it to the patent right man, said :

“ I will give you this watch for Marion County in your patent, and will allow you just two minutes in which to decide. Say yes or no, and I don't care the snap of a finger whether you trade or not. Say quick, do you want to trade or not? ”

“ All right, it's a 'go,' ” said he, and stepping into the store, I ascertained the full name of the merchant, and when about to make out the papers, I said :

“Just make this deed out to the landlady’s husband; I have traded the county to him.”

“Great Caesar!” he yelled, “I was intending to sell him a county, myself. How did you come to do business with him?”

Inside of an hour I had selected fifty dollars’ worth of dry goods, all of which I sold at the auction sale, and for which I received about seventy-five dollars.

The man who owned the big stock of dry goods and clothing that we were selling out, lived in the northern part of the state, and had come down there to attend the auction.

I soon discovered that he was of a speculative turn of mind, owned lots of property, had plenty of cash; in fact, was a capitalist, and was always open for business.

I therefore set to work to make a deal between him and the patent right man.

In a rear room of the store was a lot of old-style, shop-worn clothing, such as had been accumulating for years, all of which was almost absolutely worthless.

In another room in a large showcase was an im-

mense stock of cheap fire-gilt jewelry, all old styles and badly tarnished.

First, I went to the patent right man and explained that I might be able to trade for a stock of clothing and jewelry and get some cash difference, if he would give me half of whatever we got out of it, which he agreed to, and I instructed him to call at the store when we were not selling at auction and to bring his samples, and while doing some shopping, to set them on the counter near where the owner of the store and I might be talking.

He followed my instructions, when I picked up the flat iron and, showing to the capitalist, said:

“ This is something new, and looks to me like a good seller.”

He was at once taken with it, when I remarked that I believed I could trade off that lot of clothing in the back room for some county rights, if he thought it was a good thing, and was willing to invest some cash, besides.

He said he would be glad to make some such a deal, and would give me a half interest in whatever territory he traded for if I would put the thing through.

I at once discovered that the two young men who

were managing the store were awake to the fact that something was going on, and unless "I fixed them" I would feel them an obstacle in my way, and was therefore not long in arranging to give each of them a quarter of whatever I got out of both sides of the deal, provided they would work with me. That settled it, and in no time the patent right man had taken the stock of clothing at seventeen hundred dollars and received eight hundred dollars in cash for twenty-five counties in northern Indiana.

As soon as this deal was consummated, I set to work to trade the stock of cheap jewelry to the patent right man for more county rights.

I told the capitalist that I felt certain that if he would take ten counties more at a hundred dollars each he could turn that show case of jewelry in at six hundred dollars.

Of course while these deals were pending the two young managers were working for a better proposition for their employer, but at last advised him each time to nip them in the bud and close the deals before the other fellow backed out.

The closing of the second deal left me with a half interest in thirty-five county rights.

One-half of my interest was to go to the two managers.

I then received half of the twelve hundred dollars in cash which the capitalist had paid over, one-half of which I handed over to the two managers, leaving me three hundred dollars in money, besides I still owned a half interest in the stock of clothing and the show case of jewelry, to be divided with the two young men.

The amusing part of this transaction was that the patent right man, who had never had the least experience in business, had traded for the clothing and jewelry, presuming that the two stocks combined were worth something like twenty-three hundred dollars.

He wanted me to make him an offer for his half of these goods.

“No,” said I, “you have suggested selling out, now you make me an offer to give or take.”

He said he wouldn't begin to give what we had taken it in for, and would take a good deal less than that for his half.

“Well,” I insisted, “make me an offer to give or take.”

He thought it over for a moment and said:

“ I think I'd be willing to take four hundred dollars in cash for my interest, and will give you that amount for yours, so you can buy or sell.”

“ I will sell,” I quickly answered, and he counted out the cash; two hundred of which I counted out to the young men.

As soon as the patent right man had packed up his jewelry and clothing and shipped them to York state, and had taken his departure, I set about selling my half interest in the thirty-five county rights to the capitalist, and with the assistance of his managers succeeded in trading them for ten town lots in a small town in northern Indiana, taking them at his price, one hundred and fifty dollars each, or a consideration of fifteen hundred dollars.

As a half interest in these lots belonged to the young men, I suggested that they make me an offer to buy or sell, when a few moments later they offered to give or take two hundred dollars spot cash.

“ Very well,” said I, “ I will sell,” and closed out, making a clean cash transaction of the whole deal so far as I was concerned.

In the meantime we had been conducting successful auction sales, afternoons and evenings, and remaining

there four weeks longer, I closed out my entire stock of goods, converting them all into cash, and decided to locate in some good live town, in a permanent retail jewelry and optical business.



## CHAPTER XIX.

An Interesting Trip to Tennessee—Investigating Real Estate at Harriman—Two Quick Deals—On to Chattanooga—The Small Boy and the Frogs—Assuming to be Stranded, With Plenty of Cash on Hand—A Unique Experiment—The Jew and His Socks.

With enough money to start a small business in almost any town or city up to twenty thousand inhabitants, and anxious on account of Mrs. Johnston's poor health to locate permanently in some good town, I suggested that we take a trip to Harriman, Tennessee, and take a look at the house and lot and store building in which we owned an equity, having taken it in exchange for our summer home at LaPorte, Indiana, a few years before.

I had never paid any of the taxes, nor the interest on the mortgage, and had no intention of doing so until I should see the property and become convinced that it was worth protecting.

A young attorney of Harriman, who acted as agent for the property, had written me several times that both the house and store room were rented, but I never

received a dollar from him, nor any one else, for any of the rental, so we decided to take a trip down there and look it over.

The morning following our arrival there we inquired of the landlord where the Stilwell property was located, and were directed to the very outskirts of the city.

Arriving there we found an ideal little cottage with a good sized lot and garden spot, and a modern built store room on an adjoining lot.

The house was vacant, but the store was occupied with a stock of drug sundries, attended by a small boy.

I asked him who the stock belonged to. He said it was owned by a down town druggist, Mr. ———.

I asked him how long they had occupied it, and he said he guessed about three years, and thought that five dollars per month was the rental.

When I asked him how much he took in a day, he smiled and said it was hardly enough to make mention of.

The property had been built right near the rolling mills and when they shut down about nine out of every ten families moved away, and there was scarcely a

vacant house that a stone hadn't been thrown through every pane of glass.

As we started back down town, I said to Mrs. Johnston, "I am going to sell my equity to that druggist to-day if I don't get over twenty-five dollars for it and if I can't get that I will make him a present of my interest in it rather than keep it and be bothered with it."

When I called upon the druggist, I said to him, "My name is J. P. Johnston. I own an equity in that Stilwell property where you have a small drug sundry stock, and I am going to sell it to you, to-day."

"Well," said he, "I guess you will hardly do that."

"But I shall; you will own it before the five o'clock train leaves here for the south this evening, so you might as well get to talking. How much will you give for it, and you assume all encumbrances?"

"Why, sir," said he, "we are not taking in enough money here to pay our water tax, and don't know that we ever will."

I argued that there was talk of a new boom in the town, and that when it came and the rolling mills opened up again that property would be valuable, and said:

“Now, then, you and I might as well get together, first as last, for I am going to sell it to you to-day, or trade it to you for something, because you are the man who should own it.”

He looked me over carefully for a moment and then asked where I was from.

I replied that Chicago had been my home for a number of years.

“And that is the way they do business in Chicago, is it?—just do business anyhow, whether the other fellow is willing or not.”

“Well,” I answered, “that’s what I am here for to-day, and you and I will do business before five o’clock. What have you got to trade, anyhow? You must have a jack knife or a dog or something, haven’t you?”

“Now, see here,” said he, “I have a lot up here on the hill. It’s a fifty-foot front, by about a hundred and forty in length, and lies between the Baptist church and Judge ———’s tenement house, and I will give you that lot, which is clear of all encumbrances, for your equity in the Stillwell property.”

“All right, sir, it’s a trade,” said I. “Go and get your papers. Mine are at the hotel.”

“Don't you want to see it,” he asked, “before you trade for it?”

“Why, no,” I answered, “I don't care to see it. You say it's there, and unless you think the wind will blow it away or something of that sort, then I don't care to see it.”

As he was about to go home for his papers, I asked him to show me where the judge lived who owned the tenement house he spoke of.

Pointing from his store window he said:

“That house away across the field is his and he is in the yard making flower beds now.”

As the druggist started for his papers I started for the judge's home. Arriving there I introduced myself, and said:

“Judge ———, I own that Stillwell property down by the rolling mills, and have just traded it to Druggist ——— for that lot that lies between your tenement house and the Baptist church, and I am going to sell the lot to you to-day, because you are the man who should own it, and will own it before five o'clock to-night, so we might as well get to talking.”

The judge was a large, fleshy, good natured man, and at my last declaration he straightened up, and

throwing back his head and shoulders, let go a good, hearty laugh and said:

“ Well, I like your style, anyhow. So you are going to sell it to me to-day, are you? Well! Well! I am obliged to you for taking the pains to consult me about it. Hadn't you better mention it to my wife before you make out the papers? Where are you from?” he asked.

“ I am from Chicago,” I answered.

“ From Chicago, eh? Well, I guess that's the way they do business there. When will this transaction take place, anyhow?” he inquired.

“ Well,” said I, “ within the next two hours at least, and no joking, sir: it should belong to you, and will be yours in a very short time.”

“ How much do you want for it?” he asked.

“ Well,” said I, “ I thought two hundred dollars would be very cheap.”

“ I will give you a hundred dollar bill for it,” said he.

“ All right, sir,” I answered, “ it's a go. Come right down town and get your papers.”

When the druggist was ready to transfer his property, I said to him:



"WELL, I LIKE YOUR STYLE ANYHOW", SAID THE JUDGE.





“ You can just make out your papers direct to Judge \_\_\_\_\_, as I have sold the lot to him.”

“ Great Caesar ! ” cried the druggist, “ had I known that there was a man in this city with a dollar in money and speculation enough about him to buy a lot, I never would have traded this one off for cats and dogs.”

We left Harriman for Chattanooga on the five o'clock train that evening, and on our way there the train stopped at a small station where the air resounded with the croaking of frogs. This, in midwinter, was to us something new, and raising my car window I said to three little colored boys standing by :

“ Say, boys, how long have the frogs been hollering down in this country ? ”

As if disgusted by the question, they looked from one to the other for a moment, when the smallest of them turned to me and said :

“ What's de matter wid ye? Dey's allus bin hollerin'.”

On our way to Chattanooga Mrs. Johnston remarked that it would be an interesting experience to put what money we had away, and play that we were landing in Chattanooga without a penny, and that it was an absolute necessity that I should get out, and without

any possible outlook for making a dollar, try and raise enough in some way to meet our expenses.

“All right,” said I, “we will try it,” and remarked: “Now, from the moment we get off the cars we are supposed to be broke; not one penny are we supposed to have for at least twenty-four hours. Our baggage, of course, would be sufficient to entitle us to hotel accommodations, but under no circumstances were we to spend a penny unless I should in some way make some money.

The very first demand for money, after reaching the hotel, was when the transfer man wanted a dollar for bringing our trunks from the depot.

Turning to the clerk of the hotel, I said:

“Pay this man a dollar and charge it to my account, please,” and passed out.

That evening about nine o'clock a traveling man came in the hotel with a couple of big leather sample cases, and setting them down said:

“I'll bet the man doesn't live that can sell a bill of goods in this infernal town.”

“What is your line?” I asked.

“Collar buttons and sleeve buttons,” he answered,



*"I'll bet the man doesn't live that can sell a bill of goods in this  
infernial town."*

“and the finest line on earth, but you can’t give them away in this city.”

“Oh, pshaw!” said I, “it’s because you don’t know how.”

I then went on to tell him of my many years’ experience in handling that class of goods, and of the immensely large bills I used to sell in northern Michigan, and how I delivered the goods on the spot and got the cash.

He said that that was his plan exactly; he delivered as he went along, and sold for cash exclusively.

He was from Providence, Rhode Island, and had bought his goods direct from the manufacturers, and after I had mentioned the names of over twenty manufacturers there with whom I had had lots of dealings, he showed me his line, which was very fine, and explained that the goods had cost him a uniform price of forty cents per dozen for collar buttons, and one dollar and twenty cents per dozen for sleeve buttons. His price to the retail dealer was one dollar per dozen for collar buttons and three dollars per dozen for sleeve buttons, but he insisted that no man could sell them in this town.

I laughed at the idea, and remarked that I would like to try it the next morning.

“Very well,” said he, “I will be here until one o’clock to-morrow, and if you wish to try it, you may have all you can make over and above the manufacturer’s cost.”

“I will be ready to start to-morrow morning at eight o’clock,” said I, “so don’t fail to be around.”

The next morning I started out, and the first three dealers I called upon could not be induced to look at the goods under any circumstances; the fourth man bought a dozen collar buttons at one dollar and sixty cents, and a dozen sleeve buttons at four dollars, making me a cash profit of four dollars.

As I stepped into the fifth store at which I called, the proprietor, a little Jew, surprised me by saying:

“Vell, by Jiminy! if here ain’t J. P. Johnston. Vell, vell, how you vas, and where ’bouts you come from?”

I at once recognized him as a former customer of mine, Mose ———, from Greenville, Michigan.

“Now,” said Mose, “Mr. Johnston, I am mighty glad to see you, but don’t show me any goods, nor try to sell me any, for I don’t need them.”

“But, Mose,” said I, “I must show you ——”

“Not a bit of it; not a bit of it,” he interrupted. “I will not look at your goods; I will not, I will not.”

“But, Mose,” I went on, “you cert——”

“No, indeed! I certainly will not look at dem goods. I know you, Mr. Johnston, and I vondt look at dem; I know better.”

Anxious to change the subject for a moment and noticing a large quantity of cheap socks piled upon the counter, I said:

“Mose, what are you doing with so many of one brand of socks?”

“I do some jobbing,” he answered.

“Well, sir,” said I, “I expect I have sold more of that particular brand of socks in my day than you could pack away in this big store room.”

“I suppose so, to hear you tell it,” cried Mose, with an incredulous smile, and then said:

“Say, Johnston, I’ll tell you vat I’ll do. I’ll trade you a dozen socks for a dozen collar buttons, and remember, now, a dozen collar buttons is all I vant.”

“All right,” said I, “I will trade with you (only too anxious for an excuse to open up); how much are your socks a dozen, Mose?”

“One dollar and twenty cents,” he answered.

After displaying the jewelry nicely, I said:

"Mose, how foolish you are to job a lot of socks to peddlers at such a small margin, when you could invest the same amount of money in collar buttons and sleeve buttons and make twice as much on the investment," and then quoted him his choice of collar buttons at one dollar and sixty cents per dozen, and sleeve buttons at four dollars per dozen.

I then selected one gross of sleeve buttons, assorted styles, and twenty dozen collar buttons and undertook to sell them to him.

After looking them over carefully for a moment, he said:

"I'll tell you vat I'll do; if you take all der socks, forty-eight dozen pairs at one dollar and twenty cents per dozen, I take der jewelry."

"All right, Mose, it's a trade," said I. "Therefore you owe me eighty dollars for the jewelry and I owe you fifty-seven dollars and sixty cents for the socks, leaving a balance due me of twenty-two dollars and forty cents."

"All right, here is your money," and he counted it out.

I then said, "Mose, these socks cost you about

eighty-seven and a half cents per dozen, or ten dollars and fifty cents per gross, and as I don't need them, I will sell them back to you for eighty cents per dozen."

"Vell, now," said he, "I told you vat I do, I take 'em at nine dollars a gross and pay you der cash."



*"You Mumzer Benhandedy, you got dose socks for nothing."*

"All right," said I, and received the money.

"Now," said he, "you think you know so much aboutt der cost of der socks; I tell you vat I do. I will mark on der piece of paper what der socks cost me, if you vill mark on another piece of paper vat der jewelry cost you."



“ All right, Mose, go ahead and mark,” I replied.

As he marked his cost price, “ ten dollars per gross,” I marked on my paper, “ sleeve buttons one dollar and twenty cents per dozen, collar buttons forty cents, total twenty-two dollars and forty cents.”

He turned his paper over with a broad grin on his face, but it instantly turned to a death-like pallor when he caught sight of my figures, especially the amount total, at which he threw up both hands and said :

“ You Mumzer Benhanedy! I pay you twenty-two dollars and forty cents to boot, and you got dose socks for nothing.”

## CHAPTER XX.

A Visit to the Inman Mines—Releasing a Prisoner on a Writ of Habeas Corpus—My Extraordinary Experience With the Convict—A Visit to the Mines and the Stockades—Our Visit to the Battlefields of Chickamauga and Lookout Mountain—Returning to the North—A Business Venture in Indiana—Wiped Out of Business by a Fire—Stranded Once More—How I Made a Raise—A Stirring Week's Business—The Fake Doctor and His Weak Patient.

When I returned to the hotel and handed the traveling man twenty-four dollars, with a statement of what I had done, he was much surprised, and asked if I had sold the goods at cost, in order to make a record.

I showed him four ten dollar bills as my profit, but didn't explain the last transaction.

That afternoon I happened to recall the fact that a lawyer from near my old home in Ohio was living in Chattanooga, and called upon him at his office. After a half hour's visit with him, during which time I explained that my wife and I were there, merely to look around and to take a few days' vacation, he asked me if I wouldn't like to take a two or three days' trip over to the Inman mines for a lady client of his,

whose brother was a convict there; it would be a rare experience and as there would be my expenses and twenty-five dollars in cash in it, perhaps I had better take it.

I had been reading in one of the leading magazines of the day a harrowing description of convict life in these very mines, and was therefore doubly interested in making the trip.

The lawyer explained that they were trying to get their man released, under a law recently enacted, allowing good time for good behavior, and the object of sending a man there was to take to the sheriff of Marion County a writ of habeas corpus, authorizing him to produce the prisoner in the Chattanooga courts.

The following morning I started for Jasper, the county seat of Marion County, with the papers to be turned over to the sheriff.

On arriving at Jasper and alighting from the train I enquired of a bystander where I would be likely to find the sheriff, and was told that he had gone to Inman on the early morning train.

With this information I again boarded the train and went on to Inman.

Arriving there about three o'clock in the afternoon

I was informed that the sheriff had returned to Jasper on the train leaving an hour before.

As there was no train leaving until the next day, I determined to first wire the sheriff to come to Inman and then try and witness, if possible, some of the horrors of that terrible prison life.

Before sending my telegram I called upon the warden of the prison and in the course of our conversation mentioned the fact that I had in my possession a writ of habeas corpus for one of his prisoners.

He asked to see it, and after looking it over in a careless sort of way, said:—

“All right, I will send a man over to the mines for him.” So saying, he called one of his deputies and instructed him to bring the man from the mines to the stockades, where, after securing his few personal effects, he should be turned over to me.

While I felt in my own mind that this was a peculiar transaction, yet, being ignorant of the laws, and supposing that the warden knew what he was doing, I could see nothing else for me to do but to take the prisoner and start back, and to avoid delay I arranged with the owner of a team of horses and a lumber wagon, to take the prisoner and myself across coun-

try from Inman to Jasper, the county seat, where I could see the sheriff and place the prisoner in his care.

When the deputy warden started for the mines I asked and gained permission to accompany him.

After entering the mines we walked a long distance in a stooping position before reaching the gang where our man was working.

About four out of five of these convicts were negroes of the blackest type, and I should judge that at least three hundred of those miserable creatures were there, all working in a stooping position from morning until night.

The ceilings of these mines were too low to permit a man to stand erect and, as my prisoner afterwards told me of the cruelty and domineering spirit of the overseers in keeping them almost constantly at work, I could easily understand what a terrible life it meant.

The stockades, where the prisoners were housed and fed, was built of logs, with rough looking guards standing at each corner.

Upon reaching these stockades with the prisoner I asked permission of the deputy to visit the inside.

This was granted and I accompanied the prisoner

to a large room where at least two hundred of the prisoners slept and spent their spare time.

For beds, immense ticks made of what was once white muslin, but was now black with dirt and filth and stuffed with straw, were used.

These straw ticks were each large enough for six or eight men and, as my prisoner explained, whites and blacks were obliged to sleep together. He himself, a refined, educated man, had more than once slept with a black negro on each side of him, and at no time was there ever such a thing thought of as cleaning day.

While he was packing his scanty effects I made a pretty thorough investigation, and raising one of the great straw ticks about two feet from the floor, I was almost panic stricken with the sight of all kinds of vermin scattering in every direction.

I asked the prisoner if he knew of this condition of affairs.

“Oh, yes,” he replied, “but we don’t mind a little thing like that.”

While the prisoner was waiting for his supper I again called upon the warden and arranged to take supper with him,

As I paid for it, I presume I have a right to criticise it.

My prisoner had taken time to explain that their diet, three meals a day, the year round consisted of tainted bacon and corn cake, neither of which was ever more than half cooked.

The only difference between the meals described by the prisoner and the one furnished me by the warden, was that we had a cup of weak tea, with neither cream nor sugar; butter seemed to be a thing unheard of by the warden's household.

After supper, and just at nightfall, we started by team across country to Jasper, and a more interesting narrative I never listened to than that of the prisoner relating his terrible experiences of thirteen years of convict life in Tennessee.

He had been convicted of robbery and murder, but according to his statement he had shot a man in the heat of passion and had no thoughts of robbery, but was sentenced for twenty-one years.

On arriving at Jasper I took the prisoner to the hotel and left him, while I went in search of the sheriff. On explaining to him what I had done he laughed heartily and explained that I had no rights whatever

to the possession of the prisoner and that the warden had no authority to turn him over to me.

However, as the blunder had been made through ignorance, he said he would allow me to go on to Chattanooga the next morning with the prisoner, while he would go over to Inman with the papers and fix up the matter with the warden in a legal way.

This plan was carried out, much to the amusement of my lawyer friend, whose client gladly paid me the twenty-five dollars and expenses.

This little experience of clearing sixty-five dollars in three days in a strange town went far toward strengthening Mrs. Johnston's belief that come what would, I would always be able to provide her with three meals a day and a comfortable bed.

After visiting Lookout Mountain and the battlefield of Chickamauga, we decided to return north, where, as it seemed to us, money was more plentiful and business more brisk.

We had two different towns in mind of which we had heard a great deal as possible coming business points; one was Lorain, Ohio, and the other Montpelier, Indiana.



We decided to visit Lorain first, and if prospects looked favorable, to start a retail jewelry store.

On arriving there we found a booming, wide-awake town with not a store room to be had, and from there went to Montpelier, Indiana, where we rented a fine store room in a good location, and went to Chicago to buy stock.

When once in the market I soon saw the need of more money than we had in order to carry the line I desired, and took a run to LaPorte, Indiana, where I had an interview with my friend, Robert E. Morrison, who had acted as my assignee.

I explained to him that I had something over two thousand dollars in cash, but needed another thousand to start the kind of store that I wanted to open at Montpelier.

“Well,” said he, “of course I can’t let you have the bank’s money unless you furnish security, but I will loan you a thousand dollars from my own private funds.” This he did, and I returned to Chicago and made my purchases, after which I went back to Montpelier, and arranged my store fixtures, preparatory to receiving the goods.

As soon as my stock arrived I called upon an in-

insurance agent to have it insured, and was told that all the insurance companies were withdrawing their policies in Montpelier because the town had no fire protection, but assured me that within a space of three weeks' time everything would be adjusted so that he could insure it for me.

This was on Saturday, and the very next night at eleven o'clock the fire bells rang and the first discovery I made, on inquiring, was that the block in which was my store had been almost burned to the ground before a single effort had been made to save it.

This town being a natural gas and oil town, there seemed to be no end to the number of fires there, the result of which was that the insurance companies had quit the town.

There wasn't a dollar's worth of any of my goods saved; I had just ninety cents in my pocket, and owed a dry bill of seven dollars and a half.

But I didn't sit down on the curbstone and cry my eyes out; on the contrary, I just looked the world fairly and squarely in the face, shook hands with myself and said:

"Well, Mr. Hard Luck, here I am again ready for another round," and then I thought of the story that

Abraham Lincoln used to tell of the boy who stubbed his toe and said it hurt too much to laugh, but he was too d—— big to cry.

The next morning while on the way to the post-office I met a stranger who questioned me about the fire, and my loss, and then said:

“By the way, Mr. Johnston, according to your book, you used to be an auctioneer,” and then he asked if I could still sell at auction.

I replied that I thought I could if I had anything to sell.

“Well,” said he, “I have a nice lot of furniture and have two friends who also have a lot of furniture to sell. Why can't you sell it for us to-day here on the public square?”

“Certainly,” I answered. “Bring it out and I will sell it on commission for you.”

He agreed that by ten o'clock he would have enough on hand for a big sale.

This agreement suggested to me the idea of possibly inducing a few merchants in town to “dig up” a lot of remnants and shop-worn goods and let me make an auction sale of them.

Inside of twenty minutes I had made a proposition to

one of the leading merchants, who readily fell in with the plan and agreed to furnish a good big lot for an outdoor auction sale.

At the hotel where we were staying was a bright young man of about twenty-five years of age, who had been stranded in the town by the collapse of a show company of which he was a member.

I knew he was anxious for something to do, and hired him to assist me, agreeing to pay him two dollars and fifty cents per day as long as I had business for him.

I instructed him to look around and try to rent, for a day or two, three or four long tables, to be placed in the square, upon which we could place the different kinds of merchandise furnished by the dealers.

While he was searching for the tables I was making arrangements with other merchants for more shop-worn stock, and very soon had the promise from several to furnish all they could find.

By the time I returned to the public square my assistant had half a dozen long tables ready to receive the merchandise.

At ten-thirty I began the sale on the furniture and met with the most flattering success.

During the day one person after another came to me, each explaining that he had a horse, cow, pig or piece of furniture for sale, and wanted to arrange for me to sell them.

I, of course, advised them to bring on whatever they had, and I would sell it on commission.

One man drove up with a wagon load of bee-hives, and said he had delivered them that morning to a man who had bargained for them, but who failed to carry out his agreement to pay cash for them, and he wanted me to sell them for him.

I explained that there would quite likely be but little, if any, demand for them, and I didn't care to waste my time on them.

At this he produced a cheap, gold plated watch and said he would give it to me for attempting the sale, and would pay me my regular commission besides, should I succeed.

There was a greater demand for bee-hives than anything else that day, and we had no trouble in closing them out at a good price.

Inside of thirty minutes after disposing of them a man came along leading a big sway-backed horse.

I asked him if he wanted to sell the animal at auction.

He said he thought not, as he was going to have the blacksmith shoe him and trade him off, or sell him at private sale.

I showed him the watch that the bee-hive man had just given me, and asked him how he would trade.

I asked him ten dollars to boot, and he offered to trade even.

“All right,” I replied, “it’s a go,” and he took the watch, and I sent the horse to the livery barn with instructions to have him clipped and shod.

By the time I had finished closing out the furniture, my assistant had one of the long tables filled with goods of almost every kind and description.

Every few moments during the day, I would explain to the crowds that I would be there all the week closing out remnants and shop-worn goods belonging to the different merchants, and invited them to bring anything they had to sell, and I would close it out on commission.

I wound up my first day’s business with fifty dollars in my pocket, after having paid my assistant two dol-

lars and fifty cents, and my indebtedness of seven dollars and fifty cents to the drayman.

Before retiring that evening, I mailed a letter to a wholesale firm in Chicago ordering an assortment of Yankee notions to be sent by express at once.

The next morning opened bright and pleasant with a good-sized crowd present, and, as I was obliged to confine my sales principally to goods belonging to merchants, business was by no means as brisk as the previous day.

The third day, after we had begun to exhaust our supply of shop-worn goods, people began bringing in anything and everything they had to dispose of—horses, cows, wagons, harness, pieces of furniture, carpets, rugs, etc., etc., all of which kept my assistant and myself pretty busy.

One man offered a light spring wagon and single harness which I bid in myself, and immediately set a wagonmaker to work arranging it into an auction wagon, and ordered more goods to be sent at once, with which to stock it.

My order of Yankee notions arrived Thursday evening, and Friday morning I was out upon the streets

supplying the people with Yankee notions galore from a dry goods box.

Saturday afternoon I appeared upon the streets with my own horse, harness and wagon, and a nice assortment of goods, and wound up the week's business with this outfit, and a hundred and two dollars in cash, after paying my assistant fifteen dollars for his salary and every penny I owed in the town besides.

On Saturday evening I had a little competition in my efforts to hold the crowd, as a patent medicine doctor had arrived at our hotel a day or two before and had advertised a great balloon ascension and fireworks upon the street the coming Saturday evening, and at the same time advertised his wonderful restorative remedy.

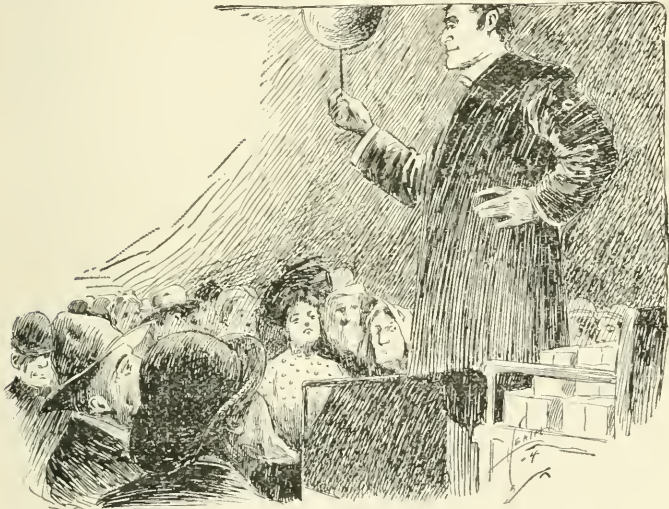
His three-sheet posters, circulars and newspaper notices attracted large crowds. He delivered his lecture from a two-seated carriage, and he announced that he would be at the hotel all the next week making a free diagnosis of all cases.

He would mention every few minutes that at the close of his talk he would give a display of fireworks and the balloon ascension as advertised.

At last, when he had finished, he reached down into



the bottom of the carriage, and producing a single fire-cracker, lighted it and held it in his fingers until it exploded: then said with a smile, "This concludes our fireworks," and picking up a small toy balloon, and



*"And now we will have the balloon ascension."*

holding on to the short string, said: "And now we will have the balloon ascension," and let it go.

Of course he had succeeded in holding a large crowd till the close of his talk, but how he could expect to gain their confidence by such methods was more than I could understand; however, he had all the business

he could take care of for a week or ten days, as I afterwards heard.

The next morning (Sunday) about ten o'clock I called upon the doctor at his rooms, and learned that he had already had several callers, and while talking with him a rap came at the door, and with alertness, the doctor, a big, burly man weighing two hundred and fifty pounds, with a large, red mustache, long, sandy hair, with a florid complexion and brusque manner, opened the door and courteously invited his visitor inside.

I, of course, started to leave the room, when the doctor urged me to stay.

I quickly perceived that he was overly anxious to have me see his quick and efficient way of diagnosing cases and separating people from their money.

The caller was a tall, thin, cadaverous looking man, with immensely long hands and claw-like fingers, and scarcely able to raise his feet from the floor, shuffled along in a dazed sort of way.

Between breaths, in a thin, piping voice, he said:

“ Good morning, doctor, I thought I'd come in and have you look me over and see what you thought of me.”

With a single bound, the doctor pounced upon that poor, frail specimen of humanity like a tiger on a jay bird, and throwing the lapels of his coat back, pounded the poor fellow on the breast with sledge hammer blows, and after placing his ear down against the fellow's vest, as if listening to his breathing, raised up and said in his intensely brusque way and lion-like voice: "Let me see your tongue," and then gouging his thumb and fingers into his eyes, pulled the lids down, and shouted at the top of his voice:

"I can cure you, sir, I can cure you if you will take my medicine, but I can't cure you if you set it on the clock shelf and leave it there."

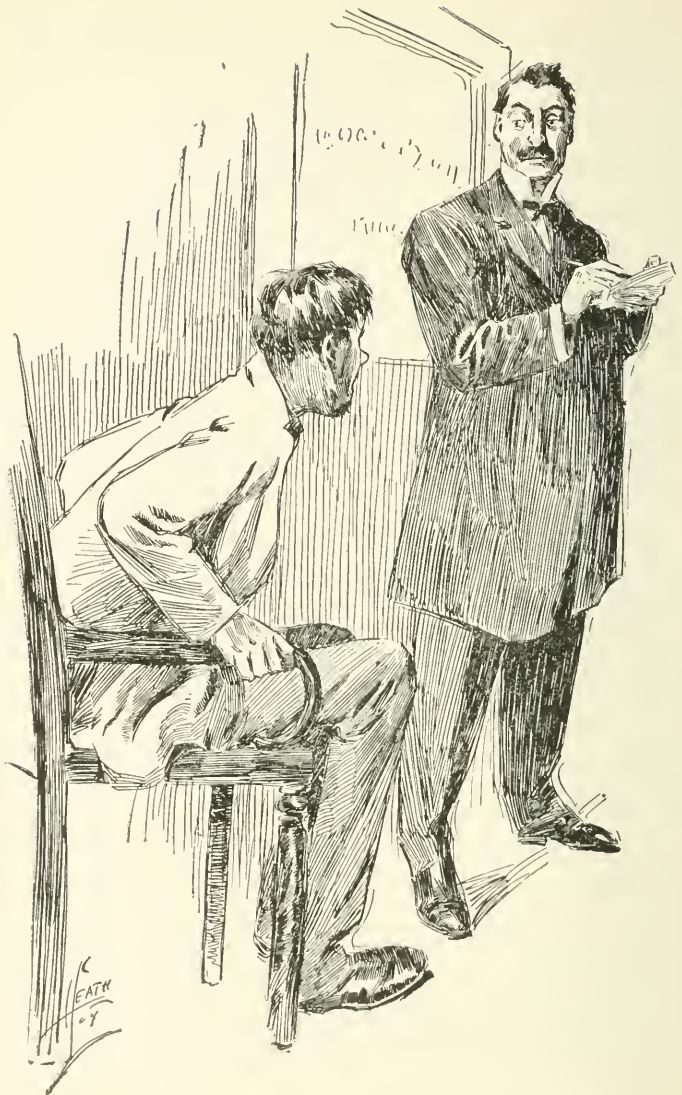
"How much will it cost, doctor?" came the weak, frail, piping voice.

Grabbing up a tablet and pencil, the doctor stood erect, figuring away for possibly a half minute, when he shouted:

"It will cost you eighty-four dollars and ninety-six cents for medicine enough to last you as long as you live."

"Great Heavens!" piped the victim, "I can't afford that."

"All right," yelled the doctor, "then go home and



*"It will cost you eighty-four dollars and ninety-six cents."*

die—go home and die.” And opening the door as if the parlors were filled with waiting people, again yelled at the top of his voice, “Next, Next?”

By this time the poor invalid had about collapsed, but still had life enough to say:

“Doctor, did you say that that would give me medicine enough to last me a lifetime?”

“Yes, sir,” shouted the doctor.

“Well,” ventured the patient, “unless you give quality instead of quantity, any man ought to live a good many years to get his money’s worth at that price” and then asked, “Doctor, what is the trouble with me?”

This question seemed to stagger the doctor for a moment, as evidently from his flustered manner he had not yet given the subject any thought, but with rare presence of mind said:

“Well, sir, you have ‘plumpetous.’”

“Plumpetous, plumpetous; what’s that, doctor?”

“Well,” yelled the doctor, in a flurried sort of way, “your heart is in the wrong place.”

An instant later the poor consumptive raised quietly from his chair, dragged along till he got to the door, and after opening it wide enough so that he evidently

felt confident of making his escape, turned to the doctor and piped out :

“ Doctor, I suppose if I'd leave you my pocketbook, my heart would be in the right place, wouldn't it? ” and passed out.

As the door closed, the doctor, with a silly, depressing sort of look, said :

“ The d—— fool.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

A Friend in Need was Friend Indeed—A Few Suggestions—Our Departure With the Sway-back Horse and Auction Wagon—A Breakdown and a Back-up—How We Surprised a Blacksmith—Mrs. Johnston's Departure for Chicago—I Continue Through Indiana—An Early Morning Sale—How I Surprised the Natives—How the Natives Fooled Me—Six Auction Sales in One Day—Decided to go Into the Optical Business—How I Went About It—The Meeting of a Former Protégé—A Few Remarks About Moralizing.

The Monday after the fire which burned up my stock of goods in Montpelier, I sent my mother one of the daily papers containing an account of my total loss, and the following Monday I received a letter from her containing a draft for one hundred dollars, as a loan, until I could get on my feet.

This, although too late to catch me "off my feet," was nevertheless a touching incident of my life, as it was the first time in many a moon that she had "thawed out," yet it was a splendid demonstration of the truth of the old adage, "A friend in need is a friend indeed," and that a mother's love never forsakes her child.

In my earlier experiences I could scarcely understand how or why she had been so persistent in refusing me aid, and in trying to influence my stepfather, Mr. Keefer, to desist from loaning me money when I would arrive home broke, and explain "just how it all happened."

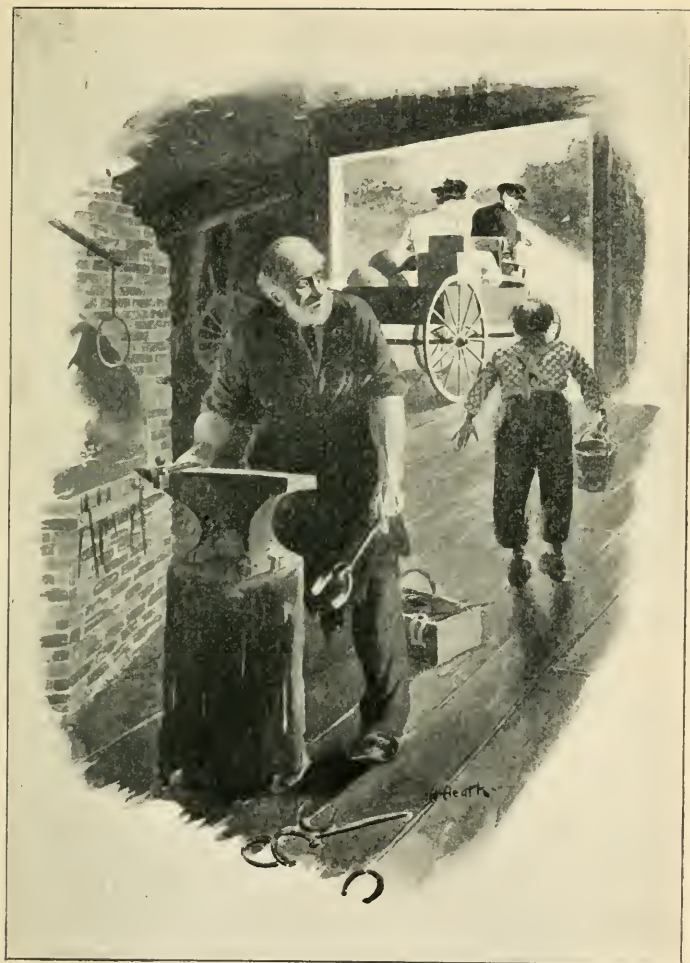
In later years, when I had become the father of a son growing to manhood, and whom many people declared was a "chip off of the old block," I began to change my opinion and see things differently, and realized that my mother's head had been pretty level all these years.

Her idea was that to ascertain the true metal of the boy it was necessary to put him absolutely on his own resources; that to hand out money to him whenever he was in need of funds was making life too easy for him.

I now believe, with her, that almost every indolent man has more or less latent energy, which if properly handled at the proper time, could be brought out and developed, making a more stirring, enterprising person.

Making things too easy for him has been the downfall of many a young man.





'AT FIRST THOUGHT THAT ONE OF THEM AIRE AUTOMOBILES HE'D  
BEEN READIN ABOUT, HAD ARRIVED'.



An observation that I have made during my many years' experience with human nature is that it is not always the boy at the head of the class who "turns the world over." It is too often the case that these bright, intellectual youngsters, who mature so early, are very apt to decay correspondingly early, while the boy with the abnormally large head and undeveloped brain is slow to grasp things generally, and to master his studies, but is nevertheless slowly but constantly growing until he develops into the hard-headed, broad-gauged, successful man.

When ready to leave Montpelier with the old sway-back horse and auction wagon, I explained to Mrs. Johnston that in order to carry our goods and baggage it would be necessary to place the seat on the front of the wagon, with our feet hanging over the dashboard, regular peddler's style, and suggested that she had better go to her folks in Chicago for a few weeks until I could make a few trades and procure a better and more up-to-date outfit.

This she indignantly refused to do, saying that what was good enough for me was good enough for her, and that all that was needed was a lap blanket, and

that her place was with me, and there she would stick as long as her health permitted.

When ready to start, sure enough she was equal to the occasion, and took her seat by my side, as described, and without a falter or a murmur.

A few miles out of Montpelier, at the foot of a steep hill, we came to a blacksmith shop, the double doors of which were thrown wide open.

After passing the shop and almost at the top of the hill the iron clip that held one side of the shafts broke, letting that side of the shaft fall to the ground.

The moment the wagon lurched, the other clip also broke, and the wagon immediately began backing down hill.

I instantly let go of the reins, leaving the old horse and the shafts in the middle of the road, and in no time we were backing down that hill at a terrific speed.

Just as we reached the front of the blacksmith shop, one of the wheels struck a small rock, causing the wagon to turn quickly, and the next instant we had landed with a crash, "right side up, with care," in that old blacksmith shop.

The proprietor, who was busy in the rear at the

time, said that he first thought that "one of them aire automobiles" he'd been readin' about had arrived.

The blacksmith's boy went after the horse and shafts and Mrs. Johnston and I remained in the wagon until the blacksmith had repaired the clips, when the boy hitched up the old horse and we made a new start.

My business was fairly successful, but nothing to boast of.

We had laid out a route through the gas belt and had ordered goods sent ahead, but the terrible odor of gas was so prevalent as to cause Mrs. Johnston much suffering from nausea, and at the expiration of two weeks she concluded to return to her folks in Chicago, where she would be able to place herself under the care of a competent physician.

I continued on, visiting one town after another, and bantered every man I met for a horse trade, but not a Hoosier could I find that was on the swap.

The roads in central Indiana were all macadamized, and I soon discovered that my old horse was capable of making exactly six miles an hour, no more, and no less.

In a small town where I stopped over night the heat was so intense and mosquitoes so annoying that

I arose at three o'clock in the morning and started for my next town, a distance of twelve miles.

When I reached there, the town was filled with the teams of farmers, possibly twenty-five or more being strung along at the hitching posts.

I immediately removed my baggage to the sidewalk, and mounting the wagon with my auction bell in hand, stood up and drove about the town ringing the bell and yelling at the top of my voice :

“ Auction! Auction! on the Main street! Everybody come a running! Come out! Come out! Everybody come out!”

In a jiffy windows were being raised, and doors thrown open in every house, and people invariably appeared in their sleeping attire; everyone seemed excited and disgusted and at a loss to understand what was going on, but they understood me about as well as I understood them, as it was a mystery to me why they should not be dressed like other people and up and doing business.

As I drove back on Main street, and was about to open my sale to a crowd of farmers, who had gathered, I asked what class of people they had in that town and

why they should not be up and dressed like other folks.

In answer to my question, one of the men remarked that most of them were in the habit of sleeping nights, and not accustomed to being called up in the midst of their slumbers to attend an auction sale.

“But,” I replied, “this isn’t night, is it?”

“Well, not far from it,” he replied, “as it’s only a little after five o’clock in the morning.”

I could scarcely believe it, and didn’t until I looked at my watch, and then asked how it happened that so many farmers were out so early in the morning.

One of them explained that during that season of the year they came to market when it was cool in the morning, and returned home in time to put in a full day’s work.

Not accustomed to rising so early, and the sun appearing so high, I was sure, when I started out “balla-hooing” the town, that the forenoon was half gone.

Before I had finished my sale, many men and a few women residents of the town had appeared, half clad, with frowzy hair and a disturbed, sleepy appearance, half of them yawning and stretching their arms and some of them cursing the man who had gall enough

to open a street auction in the middle of the night without leave or license.

The farmers were good buyers, and when I had finished my early morning sale I had been well rewarded for my efforts, and had learned that five o'clock in the morning was the time to reach the farmers at that season of the year, and thereafter I was one of the "early birds" on that trip through Indiana, and never failed on a pleasant morning to have a nice sale before breakfast.

On the day of my first early morning sale I made six sales altogether, in as many different towns.

As I was about to close my sale at eleven o'clock that night, an old-time Chicago optician drove up with a horse and buggy, near where I was selling, and asked if I wasn't J. P. Johnston. I replied that I was.

With much surprise, he asked how in the world it happened that I was traveling about in that business, as he supposed I was in Chicago and worth possibly a million dollars, if not more.

I replied that it was easily explained, but would take a little more time than I had to spare just then.

He put up at the same hotel that I did that night,



and told me of the fine success he has having fitting glasses among the farmers.

I could scarcely comprehend how an entire stranger could accomplish so much in a community where local opticians were so numerous, and at once decided to close out my auction business and make the optical business a specialty.

I had always taken an interest in the business and had taken a course in a leading Ophthalmic Institute of Chicago, and felt that with practical work and a little time spent in brushing up on new methods and systems, I could make the work a grand success, and it would be something with which I could, some day, locate permanently in some large city and establish a fine business.

From the little town where I had met my optician friend I made my way into Illinois, making my first stop at St. Anne.

From there I went to Chicago by train, leaving my horse and wagon and auction stock in the care of a liveryman.

I purchased a nice stock of optical goods and an outfit for testing eyes, and after buying a new Prince Albert coat and a plug hat returned to St. Anne.

I hired a well known man there to make a few trips in the country to introduce me, using my old horse and a hired light buggy as a conveyance, wearing my new coat and hat as a professional proposition, and returning at evening, would don my sack coat and Stetson slouch hat and driving out upon the street, with two big gasoline lamps, would make auction sales.

The first day I cleared fourteen dollars selling spectacles, the second day, nine dollars, and the third, twenty-six, and so on, and also met with very good success at auctioneering, evenings and Saturdays.

I kept the combination up long enough to demonstrate that the optical business was all right, when I determined to close out the notions, as the combined work was more than any one man could endure physically.

My last sale of notions was at Lowell, Indiana, just across the state line of Indiana and Illinois.

Twenty-five years before this I had stopped four weeks in this little town selling government goods, such as guns, saddles, harness, and soldiers' clothes that the government had had left over after the war.

Along with my notions I had kept in stock a supply of my book, "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," of which I

sold a large number, and that evening the moment I introduced the book to a large crowd, and mentioned that I was the man who wrote it, a bright faced, well dressed gentleman stepped forward, and said:

“Were you ever in this town before?”

“Yes, sir,” I replied, “I was here twenty-five years ago and made a sale of government goods, and stayed at a hotel that used to stand right over there,” pointing to the place.

“That’s right,” said he, “and at that time I was a boy about eight years of age, without parents, or a home, and when you found this out you asked me why I didn’t get a shoe blacking outfit, and shine the traveling men’s shoes as they would come and go, and when I told you that I had no money to buy it with, you gave me the necessary amount, and then gave me ——”

“Ten cents,” I interrupted, “to shine my shoes” (as I distinctly recalled the incident).

“Yes, sir,” said he, “and that was the first ten cents I had ever earned, and from that minute I have always supported myself, and I want to shake you by the hand.

He then explained that he had read my book, in which I had narrated my experience of selling govern-

ment goods, and of my visit to Lowell, and he had many times related the incident of his first start in business, and that the moment I mentioned being the author of the book, he didn't feel that he could wait until after my sale to speak of the episode.

He further explained that he had a wife and family and owned a home in Lowell, and had been for years a traveling representative for a large wholesale establishment of Chicago, with an advance of salary at regular intervals.

During all of my many years' experience I have never failed to take more or less interest in boys and youngsters with whom I have come in contact, especially those who were out of money and position, and who have ambition enough to want to do something for themselves, and in this connection, without wishing to flatter myself, I have the satisfaction of knowing that of the many youngsters whom I have taken more or less interest, in starting out, either as an employe, or with a small financial backing, or a few suggestions, not a single one that I know of has failed to do well and several that I know of are now better fixed for this world's goods than myself.

One of my mottoes is, and always has been, no

matter how awkward, or stupid, or dull a boy is, never to hint or suggest to him that he is other than a bright, interesting chap with a splendid prospect for the future.

Another thing I always avoided was too much moralizing. I believe that parents are apt to moralize too much with their children, especially with their sons.

The sort of man that a boy likes to come in contact with is a practical, worldly man; and almost any boy will listen to advice given by such a man, whereas he would regard the advice of the moralist as a sort of every-day, matter-of-fact proposition.

The average boy would likely heed the advice of the man who would agree with the noted Hoosier poet, J. Whitcomb Riley, in one of the verses of his noted poem, "An Old Sweetheart of Mine," where he says: "In fact to speak in earnest, I believe it adds a charm, To spice the good a trifle with a little dust of harm."

My observation is that the boy who is, and always has been, so very susceptible to strictly moral advice, is likely to turn out to be one of those "mamma's boys" of the real goody-goody kind—the namby-pamby sort of man, whose stock in trade is morality,

and who usually keeps his friends busy watching his various sides.

Teach your boy to keep the truth on his side, to be candid, sincere, energetic and upright in his dealings, but to always drive a shrewd bargain for the money there is in it, and not to do business for glory.

Teach him good manners (table manners above all), and to be gentlemanly, obliging and courteous, but don't moralize too much with him; don't try to make him too good.

Should he, in your presence, or should you hear of his violating the fourth commandment, don't take him to task about it right on the spur of the moment, as though you expected to see him land head foremost into Hades for his terrible sin, but watch for an opportunity to let him know in an indirect way that you do not approve of such things; impress him with the idea that you expect him, with his superior mind, to fall in with your ideas, without attempting to frighten him into it.

Should you by accident find him while in the act of imbibing in a social drink, you better ask him to take one with you than reprimand him on the spot or show the slightest concern about the matter, and then watch

for the favorable opportunity to show him indirectly your view of the matter.

As soon as your boy is able to understand tell him that no matter what sort of trouble he might get into, you want him to come to you first, and tell you all about it, and if he ever does so, don't reprimand him, but sympathize with him and show an interest in trying to help him out, no matter what he has done, and then watch for the favorable opportunity.

Make him know that you are his friend, as well as his father, and a better friend than any other he has; get his confidence and keep it, point out his mistakes, but don't moralize.

Teach him that no matter how many times in life he may become financially embarrassed or poverty stricken, never to use the expression, "I am a poor man"; tell him that if he ever gets a family and should be poorer than "Job's turkey," never to allow a member of his family to use the expression, "we are a poor family."

This acknowledgment, in my estimation, is enough to keep any family "threadbare" all the balance of their lives.

I might be "broke" or financially stranded forty

times a year, and have no hesitancy in saying so, but never would I acknowledge that I was a "poor man."

Good health, with a whole hat, and a whole pair of shoes, a presentable suit of clothes, clean linen and sufficient soap and water to take a bath and keep my face clean, and I should never feel that I was a "poor man," though I hadn't a cent on earth.

Never suggest to any boy that you doubt his ability to succeed in life; on the contrary, even at the risk of stretching your conscience a little, you had better try and encourage him with the idea that his future looks bright.

If your boy is unruly, punish him by shaming him; if he has no pride and can't be shamed, then he has no manhood, and is to be pitied.



## CHAPTER XXII.

Closing Out the Auction Stock—Embarking in the Exclusive Optical Business—Back to LaPorte, Indiana—A Trip to Ohio—The Optical Business a Success—A Few Amusing Incidents—Dealing With a Few Prevaricators—The Difference Between a Liar and a Prevaricator—The Coal Dealer and His Hundred Dollar Bill.

After closing out my auction stock at Lowell. Indiana, I traded my wagon for a light buggy and embarked in the exclusive optical business and headed for LaPorte, Indiana, where I rented a suite of rooms for light housekeeping and, after furnishing them, sent for Mrs. Johnston.

Her health was now very poor, and we were anxious to place her under the care of Dr. Fahnstock, who had previously done more for her than any other physician.

During the remainder of the summer I fitted many people in and around LaPorte with glasses, although I was obliged to devote a great portion of my time to the care of Mrs. Johnston.

I still owed my friend, Robert E. Morrison, the

thousand dollars borrowed money, the interest on which I had kept up, but was thus far unable to do more.

This being the year that Bryan and McKinley ran for the presidency, I found considerable amusement from time to time in making curbstone talks in favor of McKinley.

The Bryanites were always demanding more silver, and one day, noticing a large crowd congregated on a corner and knowing that they were talking politics, I elbowed my way in, thinking I would take a hand in the controversy myself.

When I had almost reached the men who were doing the talking I happened to glance down at the ground and noticed a silver dime lying there with dried mud on it and slightly bent from having been stepped on.

Without picking it up or paying the slightest attention to it, I entered into the argument and finally said:

“ You Democrats are all the time howling for more silver. Your continual cry is for more silver, more silver, when the truth is, there is too much silver now; in fact there is so much of it that I have no trouble in finding silver money lying around on the streets almost any place.”

At this statement the whole crowd yelled and laughed vigorously. I then said:

“I will bet any silverite a dollar, and put up the money, that I can start out right where I now stand, and before I reach the next corner I will find lying on the ground one or more pieces of silver money, with the mud dried on it and bent and battered, where you fellows have been walking over it.”

No sooner had I made this statement than several men said, “Oh, that’s a bluff, you know you wouldn’t make that bet.”

“But,” I insisted, “here is my money; who wants to bet?”

In a jiffy six men each had a dollar up, and I took them all in and put the money in the hands of a bystander.

I then said, “Now, gentlemen, everyone step back and let me do the looking.” As they did so I turned around and, looking about me for a moment, pointed to the ground and said:

“There! What’s that lying there but a silver dime?”

I picked it up with a piece of dry mud still sticking to it, and badly bent. Another shout went up as the

stakeholder passed the twelve dollars to me, six of which were my winnings, and were the more appreciated because they were all good Democratic silver dollars and helped out on a poor day's optical business.

When winter set in Mrs. Johnston's health was greatly improved, and as I had heard that business was better in Ohio than in any other state I became anxious to go there, but on account of having been handicapped by Mrs. Johnston's sickness I was in need of more cash than I had, and immediately called upon Mr. Morrison and said :

“ Rob, I owe you a thousand dollars, which I am sure I will be able to pay now that Mrs. Johnston's health is much improved, and as one good turn deserves another, I want you to let me have another hundred dollars, so I can go down in Ohio to work, where they tell me times are good.”

“ All right, J. P.,” said Rob; “ here is a hundred, and if anything serious happens you, wire me.”

The principal part of this hundred dollars was soon spent in paying up a few small accounts and making a few necessary purchases, and the following Monday morning we started for Holgate, Ohio, arriving there

at four o'clock in the afternoon, with one dollar and fifty cents in cash, but with a fine stock of optical goods.

My first arrangements were with the proprietor of the hotel, to provide us with a comfortable room and board for not less than three weeks, after which we settled down for the night.

The next morning we were up at six thirty, making ready for me to start out on a house to house canvass.

When Mrs. Johnston raised the window curtain that morning and saw without a raging snowstorm, with snowdrifts several feet high in places, she said:

“Horrors! Look outside; you will not be able to do a thing to-day.”

“Indeed I will,” I replied; “this is just the day to find everyone at home, and eight o'clock will find me kicking my way through those snow banks in search of some one in need of spectacles.” And, sure enough, at eight o'clock I was out and after them in hot pursuit, even though on a cold, blustering, stormy day, and succeeded in taking twelve dollars at the very first house at which I called.

I spent the entire forenoon in two houses, and returned to the hotel for dinner with twenty-two dollars

in cash, and did nine dollars' worth of business in the afternoon.

I remained in this little town for six weeks and had a nice business every day.

In our opinion the proper way to conduct an optical business on the road was to engage suitable rooms at the hotel and advertise extensively and have the people come to us, rather than for me to go to them, but, as it required considerable money back of such a proposition, and there being more or less risk in it, we felt that until we could pay up our indebtedness to Mr. Morrison and my mother we had better continue on a sure footing, and therefore decided to stick to the small towns and to the house to house canvas for the time being.

Ohio proved just what it had been represented to me; business of all kinds was good; money more plentiful and sales brisk.

Our plan was to hire a man of good reputable standing in each town, a man not less than sixty years of age, whose face was familiar to every man, woman and child, and have him accompany me and introduce me to the people. As his compensation we would pay him one dollar per day and a commission on all sales.

By so doing, he became an interested partner in the business and was ever on the alert for an opportunity to make sales.

In these house to house canvasses, day in and day out, it would naturally follow that many amusing incidents would take place, only a few of which space will now permit of relating.

One day an elderly lady had purchased a pair of glasses from me and had paid me ten dollars for them. As my man and I were about to take our departure she discovered that her new glasses were missing, and naturally enough made the fact known.

We searched the rooms high and low, but no glasses could be found.

Thinking that it was possible that I had packed them away with my stock, we opened my cases and made a careful, vigorous search without finding any trace of them.

By this time she was thoroughly convinced that I had put them in my pocket, and that this was my plan of operating.

I remained perfectly calm over the matter and tried to convince her that they had simply been mislaid and would turn up all right very shortly.



*"We searched the rooms high and low, but no glasses could be found."*



A little grandson took delight in spreading the news among the neighbors, many of whom called, and a general demand was made for the return of the money, which I refused to do for two reasons: first, to give back the money would be, virtually, an admission of guilt; and second, I would not give it back because it was too hard to get.

Then they wanted me to submit to being searched, which I refused to do, saying that as an innocent man I would not suffer any such humiliation and subject myself to such an indignity; that if they wanted to search me they should call an officer and provide him with the necessary papers to make the search in a legal manner, all of which would give me recourse when my time came.

In a short time the house and door-yard were filled with neighbors and friends of the family.

The fact that I stubbornly refused to submit to being searched was about all the evidence they wanted that I was the culprit.

I assured them that I was perfectly willing to remain right there until they should prepare the papers and call an officer, but under no other conditions or circumstances would I submit to being searched.

As I was comfortably occupying the big rocking chair I took things coolly and let them do the worrying, and in the midst of all of this hubbub and turmoil the oldest daughter of the family jumped to her feet and said:

“Mother, when you went to the woodshed for some wood, didn’t you take your glasses with you?”

“No, indeed, I didn’t,” came the answer; “I left them lying right here on the table.”

“Well, I think you took them with you.” And so saying the daughter started for the woodshed, followed by a half dozen neighbors, and immediately returned with the glasses, having found them just where her mother had laid them while picking up the wood.

Of course everyone was sorry but me; I was glad it happened, as I readily saw a grand opening for business, and, after graciously accepting the profuse apologies of the family, and especially of the old lady, I asked permission to use their sitting room to make a few examinations of persons who had gathered and who had expressed a desire to purchase glasses, and the balance of the day I was kept busy looking after friends and neighbors of theirs, whom they almost knocked down and dragged in to get business for me.

My sales that day were over a hundred and thirty dollars—better than canvassing from house to house; besides, through this incident I had become pretty well established in the town and did all kinds of business there for several weeks. At any rate, before leaving there I had sent my friend Morrison five hundred dollars to be credited on my note.

In one of my little towns I hired an old gentleman, nearly seventy years of age, by the name of Snodgrass, to introduce me. He was a devout Christian and an earnest, hardworking man.

One day we sold a lady a pair of glasses for five dollars; she said she had worn her old glasses for four years without a change and was delighted with the pair I let her have.

When ready to leave the house she said I would have to call at her husband's coal and lumber office for my pay.

While on the way to his office I remarked to Mr. Snodgrass that, under all probability, we would have to sell them all over again before we would get our money.

“Not at all, not at all,” he answered; “this man is

a member of our church and superintendent of our Sabbath school and can be relied on in every way."

As we entered his office and Mr. Snodgrass introduced me, I said:

"Mr. —, I am out fitting spectacles——"

"Well," he interrupted, rubbing his hands vigorously, "you are too late; an optician from Cincinnati fitted my wife and I in good shape about ten days ago."

"Indeed," said I, "he might have fitted you, but you are certainly mistaken about his having fitted your wife——"

"Oh, no, I am not; oh, no, I am not——"

"Indeed you are, sir," I insisted; "because I just came from your house, where I fitted your wife with a pair of glasses, which she says is the only pair she has had in four years, and she sent me here to get the money for them, the price of which was five dollars."

By this time he had taken a seat at his desk and, plainly greatly flustered, he began in a nervous, excited way by picking up the ink bottle and setting it over on one side of the desk and then setting it back again, and then went through the same performance with paperweight and various articles; in the mean-

time he kept stammering away, evidently trying to think of something to say, and finally blurted out:

“Well, I will not pay for any glasses until I know for sure that she can see to read with them after lamp-light.”

“Very well,” said I; “then if you will be at home this evening at eight o’clock I will call and see about it.”

He agreed to this, and we made another start.

Mr. Snodgrass was grieved and shocked at what had happened and, upon reaching the street, asked me if I didn’t think the man was crazy.

“Indeed, I do not,” I replied. “I have seen too many of that kind in my travels. That man is simply a hypocrite and a liar—not a prevaricator, but a liar.”

“But think of it,” lamented Mr. Snodgrass; “he is a member of my church and the superintendent of our Sabbath school. What am I to think of such a man?”

“Well,” I replied, “in this case you must not think; just think you are thinking and let it go at that.”

I then gave him some consolation by declaring that Christians were by no means all hypocrites, but that it would be most natural for a hypocrite to don the

cloak of religion, and that that was one of the unfortunate things that the Christian would always have to contend with.

I then said, "Mr. Snodgrass, do you know that the average person is unconsciously a prevaricator, regardless of sex, creed and religion?"

"How so?" he asked.

"Well," said I, "in a million ways, but I have one particular way of introducing my business by which the average person, no matter how much they need glasses, will unconsciously prevaricate in order to get rid of me. Now," I continued, "I want you to take notice that, after you have introduced me and in an abrupt way I say, 'Madam, I am out selling spectacles: do you need anything in that line?' invariably the answer will come, 'No, sir; I don't need anything in that line,' but when I change from my abrupt manner and tone of voice to a more courteous manner and a modulated voice, and say, 'Madam, I am giving free tests and examinations of eyes and never urge any one to buy,' she will invariably, right on the verge of having said that she didn't need them, acknowledge that she has poor glasses and bad eyes. What else can you make of this but prevaricating?" I asked.

Mr. Snodgrass wanted me to define the difference between a liar and a prevaricator.

I explained that about the only difference was that one was a liar and the other a liar.

As we were about to enter the next house, after this little discussion, Mr. Snodgrass said:

“Now, here lives a woman that I’d like to have you try your plan on, and I don’t think that you can make it work, for I have known her for many years and know that she is too candid and honest to be caught in that way.”

After being introduced I said in a cold-blooded sort of way, “Madam, are your spectacles perfectly satisfactory to you? I am out selling glasses.”

“O, yes,” she replied: “I don’t need any new glasses; no, no, indeed, I don’t.”

I then said, “My examinations are free and I never feel that any one should buy glasses because I examine their eyes. Let me see your glasses.”

Holding them up to an object and looking through them, I asked:

“Why, madam, do these glasses fit you?”

“Well, no,” she replied: “they do not and never did, and I am afraid they are ruining my eyes.”

As I glanced toward Mr. Snodgrass he shook his head slightly, as much as to say, "Well, it does beat the devil," as Mr. Keefer would have said.

After having sold this lady a pair of glasses, she remarked that the wife of Rev. —— needed glasses, and we started forthwith to try and make the sale.

On the way there I asked Mr. Snodgrass what minister it was, and he said it was the minister of his church, and that I'd not catch him napping.

The moment I was introduced to him I said:

"Are any of you in need of glasses here? I am out selling spectacles and eye glasses."

"Oh, no," he quickly answered; "none of us wears glasses here."

"But are any of you in need of glasses?" I urged.

"Well, no; we are all right on the spectacle question," he answered.

I then explained that I was giving free examinations and urged no one to buy, and would willingly put up my time against theirs should they wish to have their eyes looked after.

At this suggestion he excused himself and, stepping from the parlor into the sitting room, leaving the door slightly ajar, we heard him say to his wife:



“Mary, there is a gentleman in the parlor with Mr. Snodgrass, who is out giving free examinations of eyes. You have been having so much trouble and talking so long about needing glasses, perhaps you had better let him examine your eyes.”

Another glance at Mr. Snodgrass was enough to convince me that he was about ready to resign his job in disgust.

After selling a pair of glasses to the preacher's wife, and while on our way to dinner, I asked Mr. Snodgrass which he thought was the worse, a liar or a prevaricator.

He scarcely smiled as he shook his head and walked on in silence, but afterwards declared that his experience in the spectacle business had shaken his confidence in human nature more than all of the experiences of his sixty-five years.

That evening I called at the home of the coal and lumber dealer at eight o'clock, as agreed upon, and, as I expected, found him away.

His wife was reading by lamplight with her new spectacles, and assured me that they were all right.

I asked if her husband had explained that I was to

call at eight o'clock for my pay for the glasses. She said he had not mentioned the matter.

I at once saw through his little game, and decided to remain there, if necessary, until twelve o'clock or midnight, rather than let him evade me. I therefore made myself as entertaining as possible to his wife and daughter and when, out of politeness, I once or twice proposed to go, they urged me to remain longer, feeling sure that he would return very soon.

It was eleven o'clock when he appeared. I immediately mentioned that his wife had been reading by lamplight with the glasses and was well pleased with them.

After sitting there for fully twenty minutes he reached down into his pocket three or four times, as if about to withdraw his purse, when suddenly he would remove his hand from his pocket and wait another ten or fifteen minutes before making another motion toward his purse. At last, as if under a terrible strain he drew his purse from his pocket and said:

“Well, I can pay you, but you will have to change a hundred dollar bill.”

“All right, sir,” said I, and when I began counting out his ninety-five dollars change he said:

“By the way, I guess I have about five dollars in change in my vest pocket.”

“Never mind,” said I, as I piled his lap full of currency and silver; “this hundred dollar bill just suits me, as it will make a fine wrapper for my roll.”

While buying our tickets at the depot, when leaving this little town, I overheard with amusement a conversation between the ticket agent and a farmer, both of whom stammered painfully.

As the farmer laid down his money and said, ‘G-g-g-give me a t-t-ticket t-t-to C-C-C-Columbus and return.’”

The agent said, “S-s-say, you ought t-t-to c-c-call on Doctor French.”

Farmer: “W-w-w-what t-t-the devil d-d-d-do I want t-t-t-to call on D-D-Doctor French for?”

Agent: “H-h-h-he can c-c-cure you from s-s-stuttering.”

Farmer: “T-t-the hell he c-c-can!”

Agent: “W-w-well, h-h-he c-c-cured me, by gosh!”

This incident reminds me of an episode of my boyhood days, when I visited an uncle, Darias Finch, and other relatives in Illinois for the first time.

This uncle was my mother’s brother, and was one

of the richest farmers in LaSalle county, Illinois. He was a very energetic man, thoroughly honorable and upright in all his dealings, but somewhat inclined to use swear words on state occasions, and he had been afflicted with the stuttering habit from the time he began to talk.

He had a brother, Briggs, who was inclined to take the world easy, was a devout Christian, had a very large family, was poorer than Job's turkey and lived in an old, rented, ramshackle house fourteen miles distant.

For many years Uncle Darias had never failed to load up a lot of vegetables, flour, etc., together with a quarter of beef and a dressed pig at butchering time, and take them over to Uncle Briggs.

On the occasion of this visit there I accompanied him on his annual visit to Uncle Briggs, with a large sleigh loaded to the brim.

Arriving at our destination we found the gates and fences all down, as might be supposed, and, under a full trot, we drove right up to the front of the house and, with a single step, landed on the porch.

In an instant Uncle Briggs, his wife and the entire



"NOW MY DEAR BROTHER, CAN YOU DOUBT THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER"?



family of, I don't know how many children, came pouring out.

After introducing me, Uncle Darias pointed to the loaded sleigh and said, "B-B-Briggs, I-I-I brought you o-o-over a p-p-porker a-a-and s-s-s-some other things."

At this Uncle Briggs stepped forward and, affectionately putting his arms around Uncle Darias' shoulders, said, "My dear brother, how kind of you, but do you know that this is the Lord's answer to my prayer?"

"W-W-When d-d-did you p-p-pray for it, Briggs?" asked Uncle Darias.

"Why, brother," came the answer, "we had eaten our last morsel of food for breakfast this morning and were all on our knees and I was praying the Lord to provide, when we heard the sound of sleighbells and you came driving up with this bountiful supply. Now, my dear brother, can you doubt the efficacy of prayer after this?"

With a look of utter disgust, Uncle Darias said, "W-w-why, Briggs, d-d-d-don't you know I-I-I left home with this load t-t-t-two hours b-b-b-before you c-c-c-commenced to pray at all, you d—— fool!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Our Trip to Fremont, Visiting Relatives—An Interesting and Amusing Experience With a Typical Irish Woman—Mrs. Johnston's Advent in the Optical Business—Our First Hotel Experience in Fitting Glasses—A Long Wait, but a Successful Ending—A Few Suggestions About Advertising—Local Opticians as Heavyweight Advertisers—A Few Suggestions About Spectacle Peddlers.

About the times of my experience with Mr. Snodgrass and his prevaricating neighbors my wife and I decided to make a trip to Clyde and Fremont for a few days' visit with relatives.

While visiting an aunt at Fremont we put an advertisement in the papers stating that I would give free examinations of eyes at her residence.

One afternoon a typical old Irish woman, accompanied by her daughter Mary, called on me. The weather was intensely hot, and I was making my examinations on the large veranda which almost surrounded the house.

As they came up on the porch I stepped forward and asked what I could do for them.





"JUST LOOK AT THAT MARY, I CAN SEE DE BIRDS' ON DE TOP OF DE TELEGRAPH POLES".



In response the old lady said:

“ I want to git me eyes tested.”

“ Very well,” said I, “ I will give you a distant test first and then fit you for reading and close work.”

“ I don’t care a d—— what you give me,” she replied, “ jes’ so I git me eyes tested.”

After having finished the distance test and finding that she needed glasses for constant wear, I put a pair of suitable lenses in a trial frame and placed them before her eyes; as she had very poor sight they made a wonderful improvement for seeing off and taking in the sights up and down the streets. With loud exclamations in her Irish brogue, she cried out, “ Oh, heavens! Mary, I never did see the likes of this before. Oh, my! my! I can see way down the streets ever so far. Just look at that, Mary, just look at that. I can see de birds on top of de telegraph poles. How much be dem glasses, Mr. Johnston? ”

“ Three dollars for the lenses put into your frame,” I replied.

“ All right, I take dem,” she assured me.

As I was about to put them in her frame her daughter Mary asked:

“How much did you say these were, Mr. Johnston?”

“Three dollars,” I replied.

“Three dollars!” she ejaculated; “why, I hope you don’t charge three dollars for them two little pieces of glass.”

“How much did you say dey was?” chimed in the old lady.

“Three dollars,” I repeated.

“Thra dollars? What you tank of that, Mary? Thra dollars for dem two d—— little pieces of window glass? I’ll not pay it; indade I’ll not.”

By this time I had put them in her frame and, placing them before her eyes, said:

“Now see how nice these are.”

As she gazed down the street she said:

“Mary, I can’t see one d—— thing; indade, I can’t see de hitchin post right there. Oh, my! dem glasses is no good, Mary; I can’t see one d—— thing wid dem.”

My aunt then suggested that I fit her with a pair of bifocal glasses such as she was wearing.

“Yes, yes,” cried the old Irish woman; “give me de befocals.”

I then said: "To fit you with bifocals it will be necessary to also fit you with a new frame, as yours is about worn out," and I offered to trade her a new gold-filled frame even up for her old solid gold ones, which I would take as old gold and charge three dollars and fifty cents for the lenses.

"All right," said she, "I will do that."

When I had finished fitting her and had put up the lenses in a new frame and had taken her old frames in exchange, I put the new pair of glasses on her face, when she started off without paying for them, and when I mentioned the fact she said:

"I pay you to-morrow."

"Oh, no," said I, "you must pay me now."

"I have no money," she answered, and started again.

"But," I insisted, "you must pay me for those glasses or leave them until you get the money." Which she decided to do, agreeing to call for them the next day.

As soon as she and her daughter had left I said to Mrs. Jolinton:

"Now, if I am a judge of human nature, in order to clinch this sale and at the same time avoid telling a falsehood when she returns to-morrow, the thing for

us to do is to send her old frames off to the smelter to-night with what other old gold we have, and when she calls to-morrow and wants to back out we can truthfully tell her that we have sent her old frames to Chicago to be melted up, thereby compelling her to stick to her bargain."

Sure enough, the next day when she and her daughter called she folded her hands in a pious sort of way and said:

"Mr. Johnston, I am going to come to you in about thra months and have you fit me with a good pair of glasses."

"Do you mean that you are not going to take these glasses to-day?" I asked.

"I do," she replied, "and I want me old frames back."

"Well, I hardly see how you can get them back; I sent them to Chicago, to the refiners, last night."

"Sent them to Chicago! Sent them to Chicago! What you tank of that, Mary? Dem frames were not your frames; dey belongs to my Moike."

"No, indeed, they don't belong to your Mike," I answered, "they belonged to me, as I traded for them yesterday."

“Who traded 'em to you?” she asked.

“You did, and you know it,” I answered.

“Indade, I never traded dem to you, did I, Mary?”

Mary made no answer.

“Did I, Mary?” she insisted.

“Yes, mother, you did trade them to him.”

“I did not,” she persisted, “and you know d—— well, Mary, that I never traded 'em to him.”

“No matter,” I went on, “I sent them to Chicago last night.”

“Sent them to Chicago, did you? Well, you sent them d—— quick, didn't you?”

“Yes,” I replied, “and I have got you on a limb, too.”

“On a limb, eh?”

“Yes'm, on a limb, and all I've got to do is to saw you off.”

“Saw me off, eh? Saw me off? What you tank, Mary, me on a limb? He saw me off.”

“All right, I am satisfied, if you are. They are worth two dollars, so I am that much ahead, anyhow.”

“Dat's what you mane by 'on de limb and saw me off,' eh? I'll go home and tell my Moike, and he'll come and saw you off on a limb.”

At this she and Mary left in high dudgeon and inside of ten minutes Mary returned with the money and took the glasses.

While at Fremont, Mrs. Johnston decided that inasmuch as her health was greatly improved, she would like to take a course in optics in a Chicago Ophthalmic College, with a view to joining me in the work, when I should begin advertising and fitting in the hotel parlors.

She began at once, stopping with her parents, who were living in Chicago, until she had taken the full course, after which she joined me at Wellington, Ohio.

It was at this flourishing little city that we made our first attempt at hotel work.

When I called at the old American House there and asked for rates for at least a three weeks' stay, the landlord showed me some desirable rooms, but declared that we would not be there over three days, when we would pack up and leave, the same as every other optical man had done, and insisted upon a rate of two dollars per day each.

I then made him a proposition to pay him four dollars a day each if we stayed less than a week, with the understanding that if we remained a week or more we



should pay him ten dollars per week for room and board for both of us.

He agreed to this, and I wrote up my ads and arranged with the semi-weekly paper there for all the space I could get.

We, of course, would naturally expect some business the first week, but in this we were disappointed, but looked forward to a good beginning the second week.

At the close of the first week one of the leading ladies of the town came in to have her spectacle frames straightened, and expressed great surprise at our even attempting to fit glasses there, because Wellington was the home of Dr. Ed. Rust, whose reputation was excellent, both as a citizen and as an oculist.

I then remembered of having heard a great deal of him, and his splendid reputation and regretted that we had overlooked the fact that this was his home town.

By the time the second week came around, without having done a penny's worth of business, we began to feel that we were liable to make a complete failure, but determined not to be thwarted in our first town in an effort to do a hotel business. We kept piling the advertisements into the paper, and very soon demon-

strated what perseverance and sticktoitiveness will often do in surmounting an obstacle.

On Tuesday of the third week of our stay there a wagon load of people called upon us, four of whom bought glasses, and before they left, the rooms were filled with people wanting their eyes examined; and for six weeks we were busy from morning until night, and left there with a roll of money large enough, as the hotel clerk expressed it, "to choke an ox."

From Wellington we went to New London, then Shelby and from there to Kenton, Ohio, meeting with splendid success.

Mrs. Johnston, always an enthusiastic and energetic worker in whatever she undertook, proved to be an expert optician, and an excellent saleswoman, possessing rare tact and genius in expediting her work and closing sales, therefore she was of inestimable help to me on all occasions. As an illustration, when we were at Kenton, I advertised to be at Mt. Blanchard, a small town a few miles away, on Saturday.

On that day I left her in charge of the hotel office at Kenton, while I filled this date.

When I returned that night she anxiously inquired

how business was, and offered to bet me a box a candy that she had done more than I had.

I made the bet and with every assurance that I had more than discounted her, I proudly stated the amount I had taken in, which was one hundred and seven dollars.

“Well,” she replied, “you may go and buy the candy, as I took in one hundred and eleven dollars.”

From Kenton we went to Upper Sandusky.

Wherever we went we filled the newspapers, dailies and weeklies, with advertising, always taking all the space they would give us, and never attempted to curtail a single penny's worth.

Whenever a good thought or idea came to us on the subject of optics, into the papers it went, always closing our eyes to the cost and looking for results to pay the bills.

Past experience had caused me to believe in exclusive newspaper advertising (excepting always a booklet or catalogue of your own).

Circulars, banners, theatre programs, and the hundreds of other side schemes, such as souvenirs, etc., are, to my idea, poor methods, and nearly always ex-

pensive, as compared with newspapers, in results attained.

With but few exceptions, wherever we would locate and begin our extensive advertising, after we had been there about two or three weeks, and had gotten things to humming, some one of the local opticians would suddenly wake up and with his "club" would go into the newspapers and give us a boost by trying to "knock" us.

They nearly all have one, and the same idea of saying funny things, and then "rubbing it in."

The narrow-gauged fellows haven't had experience enough, and haven't seen enough of the world to know that the advent of a stranger in their town, spending hundreds of dollars in advertising advanced ideas in optics, will bring almost, if not fully as much, new business to them as to the advertiser.

Many opticians learned this in towns where we located for three and four months at a time, but they never could have been made to believe such a thing, had they not experienced it themselves.

The local optician scarcely ever spends over thirty cents a year advertising and educating his townspeople

and the farming community to the use of glasses in the overcoming of headaches, nervousness, nausea, etc.

When the stranger, who knows how, comes along and does it for them, there are hundreds of people in the community who will visit and patronize the advertiser, while there are hundreds of others who for the first time in their lives have been enlightened on the subject of eye strain, and who will not stop to consider that the stranger who had educated them through his advertisements might be a more skilled fitter of glasses than their local dealer, and will therefore go to the latter for their glasses.

Of course it is rather hard for a local optician in a small town to stand by and see a stranger come in and carry off a lot of money, but I never knew it to fail in any of the towns we visited that these dealers didn't more than double their business from two to three weeks after we had arrived in the town up to six weeks after we had left, and I have many times had a heart to heart talk with them on our return trips, when they would admit it, and would acknowledge that they were glad to see us back again, and to know that we were going to stir things up once more.

For years, in almost every state, the optical asso-

ciations have been setting up a hue and cry against the spectacle peddlers, declaring that a law should be passed prohibiting them from following their vocation. In this they do not stop to consider that they are standing in their own light.

No man can be a successful peddler of spectacles unless he is thoroughly wide awake, energetic and persevering. Such a man will do more in one day toward educating the public to the need of glasses than a dozen ordinary local opticians will accomplish in a week, and where a peddler sells one pair of glasses, he has had an effective talk with possibly three persons who were not prepared to buy, and whom he leaves for some else to sell to, after he has gotten the idea into their heads, and so it goes, "a wheel within a wheel."

I wish I knew that there were a thousand opticians going out of my town every Monday morning to peddle spectacles from house to house during the week.

I should consider that they were out doing missionary work for me, no matter how much they did for themselves.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Another Long Wait at Upper Sandusky—How They Came at Last—A Narrow-minded Optician with a Narrow-minded Proposition—Almost Stranded in Southern Ohio—Our Return North—Big Success at Warren, Ohio—Locating in Cleveland—Methods Which Led to Success—Building a Residence in Cleveland—Purchased an Automobile—How I Forgot to Stop It—The Ducky and the Automobile.

At Upper Sandusky we had another waiting experience similar to the one at Wellington.

After I had made my contract with the different newspapers for advertising space, the editor and proprietor of "The Chief" came to me and said:

"Mr. Johnston, I know you are a liberal advertiser, and will be likely to get business, if there is any to be had, but I don't want to see you lose money in our town, therefore my advice would be to "cut it out," as we have a very queer, conservative people here, who are always suspicious of strangers and in favor of patronizing home people."

"Very well," I replied, "if they are conservative, so much the better; it will take me a little longer to get

them started, but when they do come, they will pile in thick and fast.

The first week not a soul came near us. We kept the papers full of advertising. The second week three women called and had examinations and went home to talk it over with their husbands.

Still, we kept up the advertising, and as we were doing our fitting in the parlor, which was adjoining the hotel office, traveling men and persons passing by could see that we were doing no business, and quite frequently the landlord or some of his employes would express sympathy for our ill luck.

The editor of "The Chief" was a daily visitor, and one of our principal sympathizers, and almost hesitated about taking our money for advertising when we settled with him on Saturday evenings.

One of the principles we followed when on the road, as well as since opening and establishing a permanent business, was never to put a pair of glasses on any person who didn't need them, and if we found on examination that a person was wearing glasses that we couldn't improve, to tell them so.

The third week in Upper Sandusky we had a number of callers for examinations, a few of whom we told they



did not need glasses, while others were told that their glasses did not need changing. Those who did need them promised to call again.

The week passed without an order having been taken until Saturday, when Mrs. Johnston "broke the ice" by selling a cheap pair.

The week, however, hadn't been spent in vain, for the report scattered broadcast that the Johnstons were not "fakirs," inasmuch as they had actually told several people that they did not need glasses, etc., etc.

Monday morning they began piling in—men, women and children—and before the week was over, the parlor and hotel office were filled almost constantly from morning until night, and we remained there two months longer, doing a fine business.

We visited Bucyrus, Fostoria, Tiffin and Marion, doing our fittings in hotels and meeting with flattering success.

At Marion I sent my mother the hundred dollars I owed her, and also the balance I owed my friend Morrison at LaPorte, and took up the notes.

Finding the need of more help in our work, after the rush came at Upper Sandusky, we arranged with my wife's sister of Chicago, Miss Bertha Emmert, to

take a course in optics and join us in the work, which she did, and the three of us worked together, advertising as Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Johnston and Miss Emmert, of Chicago.

At Mt. Vernon we ran across one of those local opticians who had never spent a cent to advertise his own business, but who unhesitatingly took all the space there was left in the newspapers to help advertise us.

We were not very much surprised at his actions until he called at the hotel where we were stopping, and proposed to the landlord that he refuse to accommodate us, that by so doing, we would be unable to procure suitable rooms in which to do our fitting and would be obliged to leave town.

The landlord, Mr. Aikenhead, who was a new-comer there, and in fact had opened the hotel on the day we arrived, had formerly been in the hotel business in both Cleveland and Toledo, and being a man of broad ideas, was thoroughly disgusted at the proposition made by the local optician.

“How about my business?” asked Mr. Aikenhead. “Who is going to support this hotel if I turn people away to please you? Are you willing to bring your family here and pay, even one-half the rates that Mr.

Johnston pays? If so, I will comply with your request."

"Oh, no," the answer came. "I can't afford to do that, but I should expect to lend my influence in your behalf."

"Influence be hanged!" said Mr. Aikenhead. "I can't draw my check against your influence; what I want is a bank account."

The day that Mr. Aikenhead told me of this interview, he said:

"Johnston, I am ready to sell out. I don't care to live in a community where such 'pin heads' reside."

And before we left there he had sold out, and shortly afterwards moved to Buffalo.

We worked toward the southern part of the state, and encountered a very poor business, so poor that we began running behind, and came nearly being stranded once or twice.

We worked back north as far as Circleville, where I left Mrs. Johnston and her sister, and I started for the Western Reserve.

Before leaving Circleville, I wired a friend of mine, Burt Ramsay, who was engaged in the retail jewelry business in the Colonial Arcade, Cleveland, Ohio, that

I would be at his store at nine o'clock that night, and asked him to wait for me.

Mrs. Johnston's health had begun failing again and we were very anxious to locate in some large city as soon as we were financially able to do so.

The moment I stepped foot inside of the Colonial Arcade I determined, if possible, to rent a room there and hold it until I was able to furnish it and begin business.

Mr. Ramsay informed me that there was just one vacant room left, at fifty dollars per month.

The next morning he and I looked at the room and then called upon the owner, when I rented it for one year, and paid twenty-five dollars down, with the promise of sending twenty-five more in a few days.

This left me with not more than twenty-five dollars in my pocket, and that afternoon I started for Warren, Ohio.

Arriving there, I first made arrangements for rooms at the Elliott House, and then called upon the different newspapers and contracted for all the space I could get.

I also contracted for all the space I could get in surrounding towns in that county, and advertised to begin

giving free examinations the following Monday morning.

Before noon on Monday I had taken in sixty dollars, and immediately wired Mrs. Johnston and Miss Emmert to come on there and help out.

When they arrived the rooms were packed with people, waiting to have their eyes examined.

Almost every one needed glasses and every one seemed to have the money to buy them with.

We took every pains to fit them right and to treat them right, and by the middle of the second week we couldn't take care of the callers.

Suffice to say, that at the end of just four weeks, after paying all of our advertising bills, hotel bills and all other expenses, and cost of prescription work, Mrs. Johnston and I returned to Cleveland, with twelve hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and opened up with beautifully furnished and equipped rooms and with a two and three column advertisement in the different papers.

We left Miss Emmert in Warren, and she sent us one hundred dollars per week profit on her work for eight successive weeks.

Occasionally an acquaintance would step in when we

were furnishing up our rooms, and almost invariably would suggest that it would be better to begin with cheaper furniture, and on a less expensive scale, until we could determine whether or not it would be a success.

We explained that we were going into it to succeed, with no thoughts of failure, and that our idea was, to make a good first impression upon all callers.

Business began to come right in the start, and by the time Miss Emmert's eight weeks had expired at Warren, we were having business enough to keep us all busy.

Although my office was overrun with agents, representing all sorts of advertising schemes, I adhered strictly to newspaper advertising and instead of using small space, I adopted the plan of using large space, though less frequently, and always used a photo engraving of myself as a sort of trade mark.

Of course, as might be expected, as soon as our big ads began to appear in the daily papers, a general howl of "fakirs" went up from numerous opticians, in and around Cleveland, most of them contending that no firm of opticians could possibly stand up under such enormous advertising expenses without cheating the

people, and every day we could hear the report coming from some of our so-called competitors, that we intended to remain in Cleveland only long enough to scoop in a lot of money and then skip out.

While all kinds of reports were being circulated by these people we were driving ahead, as though nothing had been said, and, on all occasions, took the utmost pains to give as perfect corrections as possible, realizing that results attained, together with a liberal method of advertising and letting the people know who and where we were, would win the day, in spite of all obstacles.

Whenever a person called, whose eyes needed medical treatment, or an operation, instead of glasses, we told them so, and advised them to go to an oculist. If their glasses didn't need changing, or if their eyes were not defective, they were told so, and no charges were made for the information.

When, however, we found glasses were needed and that we were able to give a first class correction, we had no hesitancy in charging a good round price for our work, always, however, giving a printed agreement that we would stand ready to make any necessary re-corrections or changes of lenses, free, any time within two years.

Our motto was "Good work, good pay and good results."

As soon as our so-called competitors became aware of the fact that our business was and had been constantly increasing from the day we opened our office and that our prices were higher than theirs, the howl "robbers, robbers," went up.

As soon as we learned that they were using this as a weapon against us, we not only advocated good work and good prices to patients, but came out boldly in the newspapers and acknowledged that although we were the highest priced opticians in the United States, we were nevertheless the busiest, and had been for years, all of which was a demonstration of the one fact, that results attained were what the people wanted, and were willing to pay for.

This bold assertion in the papers was hailed with delight by the "sore heads," as they were certain that it would drive people away, and close our doors in no time.

On the contrary, our business increased, and although we had then in our employ my son, Frank, who had taken up the work, and two extra opticians, we kept adding to our staff until we had, altogether,



seven of the highest salaried opticians in the country, and although eight and ten thousand dollars a year in an exclusive refracting optical business is considered good, our business that year exceeded fifty thousand dollars.

One day I called upon an old established optical firm in the city, which had the reputation of doing a big business. As I entered, a lady patient of theirs passed out, and the optician who had waited on her said to me: "Well, I soaked her for two dollars."

"What do you mean by 'soaking' her?" I asked.

"Well," said he (with a wise expression of countenance, as if certain that I would approve of the transaction), I changed her lenses for her, and gave her exactly the same as she had been wearing and got her little two dollars in cash."

I said to him, while his employer stood by: "Young man, you, like many other opticians of this city, are evidently under the impression that because we advertise and get good prices that we are 'faking' the people. but I want to say this to you, that if you were in my employ, and I should know of your doing a trick of that kind, I would discharge you as quickly as I would if you had reached your hand in my pocket and stolen a

ten dollar bill, and I now regard you as no better than a thief. I believe," I continued, "in good prices, 'making those who dance pay the fiddler,' but as I belong to no church and have no creed, my religion is 'a shrewd bargain, but a square deal.' "

Soon after we located in Cleveland Mrs. Johnston's health became so impaired as to compel her to give up her work, and as we were tired of boarding and restaurant life, we went to housekeeping, having bought a hundred foot front lot at Mayfield Heights, a suburb of Cleveland, upon which we built an eight-room house with the latest improvements and furnished completely with modern furniture, carpets, etc. We found ourselves once more enjoying the luxuries of a home of our own.

About this time I found myself in a highly nervous condition, as a result of overwork and many sleepless nights in attendance upon Mrs. Johnston.

As rest, recreation and fresh air were recommended by our physicians for both of us, I purchased an automobile, and took my first and only lesson in running it, after which I started out alone.

I had no sooner reached the busy part of the city than a woman leading a small child got in my way and



*"Great Caesar, get out of the way!"*

seemed determined to be run over. In my excitement I forgot that I could stop the thing at all, and yelled at the top of my voice (attracting the attention of every one on the street), "Get out of the way! Get out of the way, there! Great Caesar, get out of the way!" Then it suddenly occurring to me that it could be stopped, I threw the lever back and came to a standstill. The woman and child had disappeared, a large crowd had gathered, every one was excited, but no one knew what it was about.

My next effort resulted in my running into and knocking down an old colored man.

I instantly brought the machine to a halt, and turning quickly in my seat, cried out, "Look out there, sir!"

By this time the old darkey had recovered himself, and while knocking the dust from his hat and rolling the chalky part of his eyes toward me, said:

"Well, fo' de lawdy sakes, I hope yo' haint comin' back agin, is ye?"



"WELL FOR DE LAWDY SAKE, I HOPE YO' AINT COMIN BACK  
AGAIN, IS YE"?



## CHAPTER XXV.

Annoyed by Impostors—How We Ran One Down—It Cost Him Over Five Hundred Dollars—How Other Opticians Copied Our Advertising—Mrs. Johnston's Death—My Mother and I Living Under the Same Roof for the First Time in Thirty-five Years—The Circumstances Which Led to My Writing "What Happened to Johnston."

One of the annoyances we were constantly experiencing after we had become established in Cleveland, was that men of all calibre and nationality were traveling about the country in every direction representing themselves either as J. P. Johnston or as his agent, and giving poor fits and cheap glasses at enormous prices.

Scarcely a day passed that one or more persons didn't call at our office with a pair of glasses that they supposed they had purchased either from Mr. Johnston himself or his brother or agent, anxious to have them changed for glasses that would fit them better.

Letters came pouring in from every direction, some from over a hundred miles distant, complaining of their glasses, and demanding immediate settlement.

We sent out thousands of circulars and offered a re-

ward in all the city papers for the capture of any one representing himself as our agent, as we had no such agent out. Yet complaints kept coming in, and one of the worst cases we ever had to contend with, and which shows how very unreasonable people can be, was where a woman brought in a pair of these glasses which she had broken, and after explaining that she had bought them from a man whom she had since learned was an impostor, and who had represented himself as Mr. J. P. Johnston, wanted to know what we proposed to do about it.

“Why,” I asked, “what is there for us to do? What can you expect of us? Are we to blame because you allowed a stranger to swindle you, or can you blame us because your glasses are broken?”

“Well,” she insisted, “you had no right to allow such a man to run around the country telling people that he was you, besides, the glasses are no good or they wouldn’t have broken.”

Because we wouldn’t repair them for nothing, she vowed that she would take them somewhere else to be fixed, which she did.

At last the time came when we ran down one of these impostors.



One of our patients 'phoned us one day from New London, saying that a man had been making his headquarters there for three days traveling among the farmers and representing himself to be J. P. Johnston's brother, of No. 37 Colonial Arcade, Cleveland, and he was selling glasses as high as forty dollars a pair on the strength of that.

I took the first train, arriving there about four o'clock in the afternoon, and about six o'clock the liveryman, who had driven him to the country, returned alone, saying that his man had taken a train at a small station, stating that he was going to Cleveland.

My first thought was that this was a ruse on his part to avoid being traced, and that I would be apt to find him at Wellington, the next station from where he boarded the train.

I therefore hired the liveryman to drive me over to Wellington, where I found the gentleman registered at the hotel.

He had retired for the night, and as he had made arrangements with one of the liverymen there to drive him to the country the next morning, I had no trouble, after explaining my cause, to arrange with the liveryman what direction he should take him, and that I

should be kept posted by telephone (as nearly every farmer had a 'phone), and notified as to whether or not he represented himself as me, my brother or as our agent, and just where I could capture him, with an officer.

The plan worked like a charm, and before noon an officer and myself, armed with a state warrant, had overtaken and placed him under arrest.

We had no sooner landed him in the office of the justice of the peace than he began to weaken, admitting that he had done wrong and wanting to make a compromise.

I explained that the matter was in the hands of the law, but if he wanted to hand over to me a thousand dollars to cover the expenses I had in running him down, pay my attorney's fees and other local expenses, and sign papers to leave the state and never return in the optical business, I would let him go, provided the authorities were willing, but I would not agree not to prosecute him.

He plead poverty, saying he had lost all he had six months before he had started out on this scheme, and could not pay more than five hundred dollars and local

expenses, which he would be glad to do, and I agreed to this.

Inside of two hours from the time we made the agreement he had telephoned to his wife in Detroit, Michigan, and she had telegraphed five hundred and fifty dollars to the leading bank at Wellington, and I had the cash in my pocket ready to leave for home.

Another annoyance we experienced was the copying of our advertisements by opticians in towns and cities within a radius of three hundred miles from Cleveland.

We got out a small booklet, setting forth our plans and methods, and describing the different eye defects and their relation thereto, and had it copyrighted.

A few months afterwards some one sent me a small booklet, which had been gotten out by an optician in Alliance, Ohio, and whoever sent it had marked several paragraphs as copied from J. P. Johnston's booklet.

Sure enough, on reading it, I saw that he had copied, word for word, many paragraphs and had copied several of my testimonials, only adding to them the names and addresses of his patients.

I immediately called him up by 'phone and advised him to come to Cleveland for an interview with my lawyer, as my booklet was copyrighted.

He paid no attention to the matter until I had placed it in the hands of my attorney, whose letter brought him to terms, when he was only too glad to pay the price demanded, as damages.

One of the ideas for which I have always contended is, that if a man is a competent fitter of glasses and understands the theory and science of refraction, he ought to be capable of writing his own advertising, at any rate, I hope I may never be tempted or obliged to resort to the unscrupulous method of copying or imitating others, nor be obliged to hire someone to write them for me.

As previously stated, Mrs. Johnston's health had been greatly impaired for several years. There was scarcely a town or city which we had visited for the past ten years where one or more physicians had not been called in to try to diagnose her case and prescribe for her.

Not in a single instance, however, as was ultimately shown, did one of them make the proper diagnosis, although one or two were successful in partially restoring her health.

She kept growing worse after we located in Cleveland, and was up one day and down the next, until, on

the 5th of May, 1903, a young physician was called, and after a day's hard labor, in trying to locate her trouble, decided that she had appendicitis, and calling an expert who agreed with him on his final diagnosis, with her consent and wishes, she was removed to the Huron Street Hospital, when on the following morning an operation proved that she had had chronic appendicitis for years.

She rallied from the operation and seemed much improved for a day or two, with every prospect of recovery, but on the following Saturday blood poison set in, and at four o'clock Sunday morning, May 10th, she passed away.

A truer, better wife no man ever had, and the many ups and downs experienced during our nineteen years of married life fully demonstrated her ability to continue in prosperity and adversity alike—never a complainant in adversity, generous and charitable in prosperity, a woman of refinement and rare personality, with unusual talent for art and music, and a kindly, amiable disposition, with exceptional tact in the management of domestic affairs. All these qualities made her a lovable companion and a devoted wife.

A few weeks after her death I broke up housekeep-

ing, sold out a portion of my household furniture at auction, and began boarding at a family hotel, with the result that three months were sufficient to convince me that housekeeping was the only satisfactory way to live in Cleveland.

My mother, now a widow, consented to come to Cleveland and take charge of my household, if I wished to return to housekeeping, an offer which I readily accepted, and for the first time since I was sixteen years of age we are living under the same roof; she is a well preserved woman of seventy-three years, in appearance not over sixty, with all her faculties, and a mind as clear as a bell.

On the last day of December, 1903, I received a telegram from Chicago stating that one of my favorite aunts, my father's sister, Frances E. Owens (author of *Mrs. Owens' Cook Book*) and her daughter Amy had been killed in the terrible Iroquois Theatre fire.

My trip there in attendance at the funeral resulted in my calling upon the publishers of my book, "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," who informed me that, although it had been seventeen years since its first publication, instead of decreasing in its sale, it had for several years past been steadily increasing, and as over a million and

a half copies had been sold they believed a new book on the same line, or as a sequel to "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," would prove a big seller, and made me a flattering offer to begin at once, with the agreement that it must be completed by July 1st, 1904, hence "What Happened to Johnston."









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