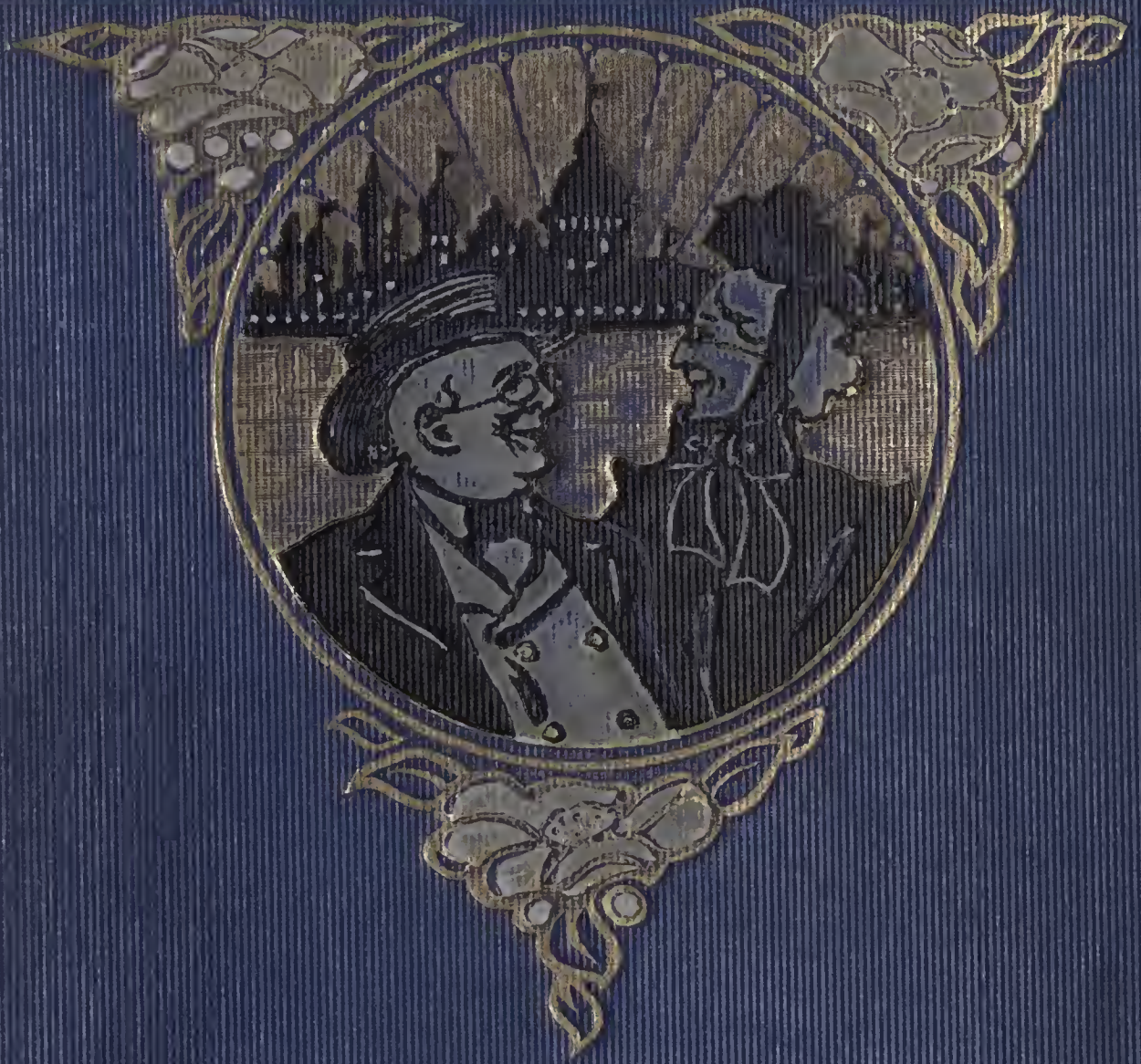
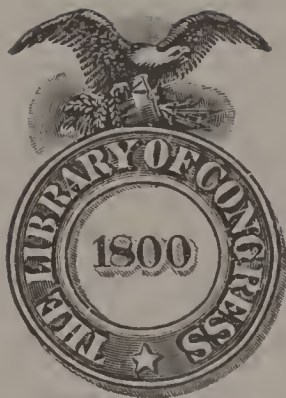


UNCLE BOB AND AUNT BECKY'S  
STRANGE ADVENTURES  
AT  
★ THE WORLD'S EXPOSITION ★



RURAL CHARACTERS  
TRUE TO LIFE





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THE ODDEST CHARACTERS ON THE PIKE.

# Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky's Strange Adventures

AT THE

## WORLD'S GREAT EXPOSITION

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BY

HERSCHEL WILLIAMS

---

TRIP FROM SKOWHEGAN  
THROUGH MANY CITIES TO THE GOAL OF THEIR AMBITION  
THE MARVELOUS EVENT OF THE CENTURY

---

Quaint old couple leave home in ox-cart, return in automobile—Uncle Bob's inspiration to see the world — A journey of exciting experiences bubbling over with sparkling fun—How they witnessed the gorgeous sights, and wonderful displays —The most remarkable discussion of actual scenes and incidents ever recorded — Fascinating and charming romance of Ruth and Tom

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*105 striking pen and ink sketches especially  
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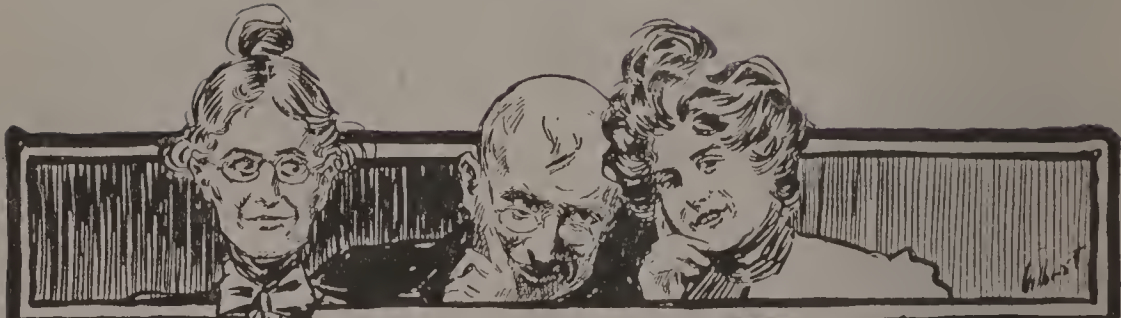
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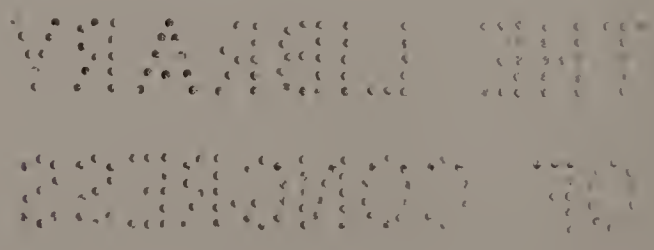
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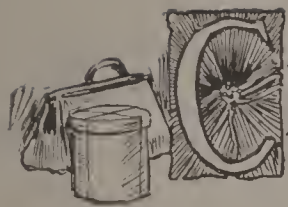
The Beautiful Ivory City Extends Greetings  
to all Nations and Tribes



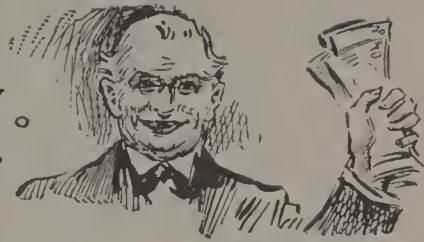
By the Father of the Waters,  
In the sunniest of lands,  
Crested with a thousand pennants,  
Lo! the magic city stands.

In her streets and parks and fountains,  
On her buildings new and vast,  
Rest a stateliness and grandeur  
That have never been surpassed.

All the world in admiration,  
Views the palaces of gilt  
In this matchless, dazzling city,  
Which Columbia has built.



## CHAPTER · I ·



### Bound for the World of Wonders.

**I**T WAS a bright April morning, and Aunt Becky Springer, having finished her household tasks, hastened to the barnyard, tin pail in hand, to feed her feathered family, who quickly flocked about her.

She was a tall, angular woman, with a florid complexion and sandy hair, and on this occasion she wore a calico dress, pinned high enough to reveal her striped stockings and a pair of oilcloth slippers. In response to the familiar call, a brood of high-bred, fat Partridge Cochins, Plymouth Rocks, a solitary Shanghai rooster and a few quacking ducks and geese flew to greet her, for to them Aunt Becky was a gracious queen, whose bounty never diminished.

To the left was the low frame farm-house, covered with straggling vines and guarded by apple trees and luxuriant shrubbery, which stretched their long branches toward the blue sky; to the right, fringed with a dense forest, were the barren fields



of the Springer farm; while in the distance the foothills shimmered in a purple haze.

“Becky! Becky!” shouted an excited masculine voice, and in a moment Uncle Bob Springer, who had passed his sixtieth milestone, still hale and hearty, with keen eyes, a round, ruddy face, and a wide girth that bespoke a love for the comforts of life, rushed through the old swinging gate, startling the fowls and causing them to scatter in every direction.

“For goodness sake, Bob, what’s the matter!” cried Aunt Becky. “What on earth ails you? Have you got one of your cranky spells again?”

“See, Becky! Hi Pratt gave me a book that tells all about the ‘World’s Fair’ at St. Louis,” he continued, pulling from his pocket a highly-embellished pamphlet, which he began to read aloud.

“Don’t believe everything you see in print, Bob,” interrupted Aunt Becky, with her usual skepticism. “You know we never went to a circus yet that was advertised big, that we didn’t get fooled on it. I hope you haven’t sot your mind on going. Remember that Skowhegan, Maine, is a good many miles from old St. Louis, and it’ll cost a heap to get there.”

“It don’t make a bit of difference. I’ll go if I have to mortgage the farm and every old hen, pig

and elderberry bush on the place. I know you think I'm powerful extravagant, and leetle by leetle I've let my property slip through my fingers, till I only have one hundred and forty acres left, and not half of that improved; but, by the big horn spoon, if my life is spared, I'll come back and harvest a crop this summer that'll pay for all the fun we'll have."

"But, like as not, we'll get mangled in a railroad wreck, or held up by robbers, or mebbe get there just in time to wind up in a conflagration," protested Aunt Becky, seating herself upon an inverted keg.

"Yes, but in spite of them risks, there are several reasons why we ort to go. They say the hull world is going to be there," persisted Uncle Bob, and then a look of pain settled upon his face, as he added, tremulously: "And who knows but that our poor boy, Tom, who left home twenty years ago this month, will be there too?"

"Don't talk nonsense, Bob. The good Lord allus does everything at the right time, and I reckon if our son is alive and it is His will for him to be there, nothing can keep him away," said Aunt Becky, wiping the tears from her eyes with the corner of her gingham apron. "I don't believe the poor boy's living now. It was all my fault that he left home. I kept nagging at him from morning till

night, like an old Cossack, because he didn't amount to more, and at last he got tired of it and said he'd leave home, never to return until his fortune was made. I understand now how many well-meaning women have drove their sons and husbands and everybody else around 'em right into the clutches of Old Satan by their continual nagging."

"Now, Becky, don't get to worrying again about Tom, for you tried to do your dooty and he'll fetch up here all right one of these days. I know he will—I feel it," said Uncle Bob, patting the bowed head of his faithful wife.

The conversation growing more intense, she unconsciously dropped the pail, filled with corn and oats, and walking to the old frame house they seated themselves upon a rustic bench. As Aunt Becky looked at the pamphlet, with its realistic pictures of the beautiful buildings and statuary representing the fourteen states of the Louisiana Purchase, her faded eyes glowed with unusual eagerness as she continued to delve deeper into its contents.

"La sakes, Bob, them buildings must be grand!" she finally exclaimed, in delight. "There's one with a cupalo big enough to cover the hull county fair at Skowhegan—live stock exhibit and all."

"Yes, and it says that \$33,227,986 have been ap-



propriated so fur and there's more to foller, and the grounds cover 1,240 acres," added Uncle Bob, bending over her and turning the leaves with his clumsy fingers.

"Ruth would enjoy it, wouldn't she?" said Aunt Becky thoughtfully.

"Yes, that's another reason why we ort to go," responded her husband promptly. "We've educated her in the Skowhegan school and bought her a pianner and a fiddle and everything else a gal ort to have, and she's to settle down to teaching school in the fall. We ort to put the finishing touches on her education by takin' her to see the grand show. She told me the other day she'd die if she couldn't get out of Maine for a few weeks and see a leetle of the world. This is the Louisianny Purchase Fair, they call it, and Ruth was born in Louisianny, and she ought to go, and we would not be doing our duty not to take her."

"That's so," responded Aunt Becky with alacrity. "You can mortgage the farm if you want to and we'll trust to Providence to git out of debt. Just think, Bob, Ruth's been with us ever since she was about a year and a half old, and she'll be eighteen in August. Land knows, the poor child hain't seen very much. Still, when we come to think of it, it was a providential thing that she fell into our

hands. When the boss at the poor-house told how the poor young mother ran away from a cruel and shiftless husband way down in Louisianny, and came here tryin' to get as fur away from him as she could, it made my heart ache. To think that poor woman didn't have no money, and that little puny baby likely to die any minute! How anyone could have resisted her pitiful appeal is more than I can understand. I never have blamed her for wantin' to go back to her folks. I am sure, Bob, that neither of us have or ever will regret our promise to that poor, misguided, dying mother."

Again the florid, time-worn face was buried in the gingham apron, and sobs shook the bent, gaunt form; but Uncle Bob, equal to any emergency, changed the conversation.

"Now, Becky, don't take on so. You've done your part and the Lord won't ever hold up anything ag'in you. Ruth is purtier than her mother. She's too tarnation good for any of them Skowhegan bumpkins—Lige Knaggs, for example."

"La sakes, Bob! I'd rather see her dead than married to such an apology of a human being as Lige Knaggs," cried Aunt Becky, in alarmed disgust, forgetting her previous sorrow.

"She's the purtiest gal in these parts," he added, his eyes flashing brightly. "I was looking over her

collection of fancy pictures yisterday, and blamed if I could find her equal when it came to looks. The Countess Topeka—or whatever her name is—looks like an Indian cigar sign beside her. You can have



*The Skinny Stanslaw Girl.*

your Stanslaw gals, with their snub noses, and your Gibson gals, with their stuck-up chins and broom-handle necks; but give me a Burton gal every time. When I seed her out feeding the chickens t'other day, with that Shanghai rooster perched on one shoulder and her pink sun-bonnet on, with a dish-pan in her hands, I thought to myself, how much more artistic and nearer to nature a picture like that would be,

than a gangly society gal, fiddling with a dinky tea-pot."

"Uncle Bob! Uncle Bob!" shouted a sweet, girlish



*"I'll go, Becky, if I have to mortgage the farm, every cow and old hen on the place."*



voice, which seemed to be the dominating chord of spring-time.

He turned quickly, his mouth spreading and his eyes beaming in happy expectation, for the object of his apostrophe was approaching—a trim, little lass, in a spotless blue frock.

She was bareheaded and stray ringlets rebelliously peeped from the dark coil that rested upon her neck; her face was fair and exquisitely flushed with the exuberance of youth and early spring; deep dimples, a perfect mouth, and an adorable chin added to her charms. Her large, animated, brown eyes with their sweeping lashes and delicate, arched brows compelled one to admit that Ruth Burton was truly as beautiful as the Psyche of some immortal painter.

“Oh, Uncle Bob, what have you got? Something about St. Louis? Oh dear, how I wish we could go. Can’t we, Uncle Bob? Why can’t we all go to the Exposition? Neither you nor Aunt Becky have been out of the county since you were married.”

“Wal, child, it does seem as though you were takin’ the wind out of our sails. That is just what me and your Aunt Becky were talkin’ about. Yes, we are goin’, and you kin depend upon it. We’re goin’ to Bosting, too, and we’ll see the quaint people that don’t eat nothin’ but baked beans and brown bread;



*Ruth's Favorite Pastime.*

and then we are going to New York, and see Tammany Hall, the statues and other old relics, and the other big towns between here and St. Louis. No more seven-up, with a bar'l of hard cider on the side, in Hi Pratt's barn for me, for a right smart spell."

"Oh, I'm so glad—so very happy!" cried the girl, throwing her arms about her guardian's neck and impartially extending her caresses to Aunt Becky. "But where will you get the money, Uncle?"

"Oh, I'll attend to the financial part of it, leetle gal, and all you need to do is to get ready," replied the old man evasively.

"But what shall we wear?"

"Just like a woman! That's the first thing that comes in her head, no matter whether she's going to a picnic or a funeral. You kin fix up just as smart as you please, and mebbe you kin give some pointers to Becky about dressing. Git her to make over that China silk with the purple roses that she's had laying away in moth-balls for three years, for there might be some big doings out there, and as I expect to run on the Republican ticket for county drain commissioner next fall, we're liable to git bids. If I was you, Becky, I'd wear a few extry underskirts or that pair of hoops you have stowed away in the garret. They're coming in style ag'in;



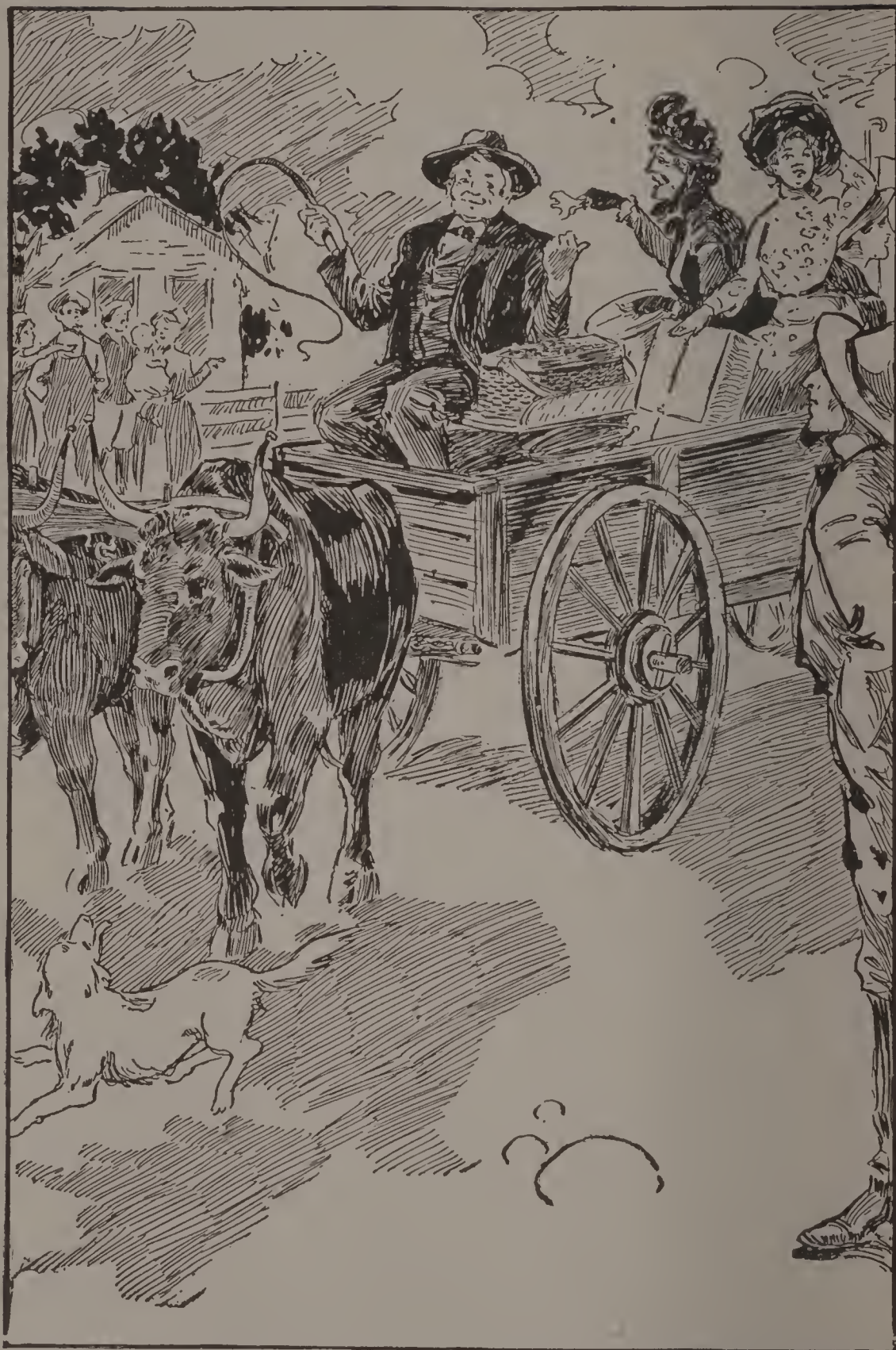


or else a polenay or something that flares out, just to build out your figger a leetle more, and—wal, I hope you'll git a new hat, for you've worn that best one of yours, with the brown feather reared up, till it's become one of the landmarks of Skowhegan."

"Yes, and if I was you, Bob, I'd slick up a leetle bit, too, unless you want to be a scarecrow to keep off them vultures and other birds of prey that'll be hovering over the big circus," said Aunt Becky. "I sha'n't delude anybody into thinking that I'm a society belle, and if one of them kodak fiends, I hear so much about, strikes off a picture of us, unbeknown to me, I'll give him a piece of my mind."

The morning for the departure dawned a week later. After a hearty breakfast, piling the baggage into an old farm ox-cart, amid the shouts and well-wishes of some of the neighbors, who had gathered to bid them bon voyage, with a crack of the whip, Buck and Bright pulled out, seemingly willing to do their part to give them a good start.

"Folks won't think we're stuck-up when they see how 'umble we look now," said Aunt Becky, who feared ostentation. "Widder Slant said yisterday that she expected we would be too big-feeling to look at common folks when we get back from that old Missouri town, way out yonder, after mingling with all the big-bugs in the country."



*Bidding the neighbors farewell, they leave for the World's Great Fair—  
a scene of Beauty and Splendor.*

“We don’t care a rap what Widder Slant says or thinks,” snapped Uncle Bob sharply. “She’s allus talking about her neighbors and hurting everybody’s feelings. If you want to git a rumor in circulation, all you need to do is to tell it to her confidentially. She’s a gossip, if there ever was one, and she looks like she’d taken laughing-gas for erisipelas, and never got over the effects of either, with her red, simpering face. Don’t worry about her back-biting, Becky. We’re going to stick close to nature.”



“Here’s Rover following us,” exclaimed Ruth, giving vent to a tuneful laugh. “Wouldn’t it be great fun to take him along?”

“It’s most all we kin do to look after ourselves, without being pestered with a dog,” protested Aunt

*“Widow Slant looks like she’d taken laughin’ gas for erisipelas.”*



Becky. "The idea! Takin' that animal along will make people talk."

"I don't care what they say; we're going for comfort," put in Uncle Bob, with emphasis. "That dog has been in our family a great many years, and he's been more loyal than a lot of our professing friends. I'm going to take him along and let him have a good time. I see by the circular that they're going to



*"Here's Rover following us."*

have special days for everything at the Fair—one day for Injianny, two days for Illinois, three days for Missouri, and mebbe they'll have dog days, too."

Rover, a very unlovely mongrel, of uncertain genealogy, was summoned and lifted into the wagon, amid shouts of laughter from Ruth and expostulations from Aunt Becky, who sarcastically suggested that they had better take Buck and Bright, the oxen, along, too, so as not to show partiality.



Although it was early in the morning, quite a delegation from Skowhegan and vicinity awaited them at the depot to bid them God-speed. Among the number were Lige Knaggs, a raw, ungainly fellow, with bow-legs, who slipped into Ruth's hands a package of peppermint and cinnamon drops, and a bundle containing a celluloid work-box of startling handicraft, tied with pink baby ribbon; Mrs. Hoskins and her six youngest children; some members of the Band of Hope Temperance Society, to which Aunt Becky belonged; Rube Wattles and his daughter, Mahala Ann; and even Widow Slant, who was the most gracious of the party.

"It's real moving to see how the people do respect us. I don't believe the President ever had such a send-off," said Aunt Becky, pressing her kerchief to her eyes and sniffing gently.

"Maybe they're glad we are going to leave,"



*Bow-legged and freckle-faced Lige Knaggs.*

laughed Ruth, giving her benefactors a little hug, as she jumped from the wagon to meet the delegation on the platform.

“It’s powerful good in our neighbors to leave their work and turn out to see us off,” said Aunt Becky, after she had shaken hands all around. “I feel something like the Queen of Sheba must have felt before she was led forth on parade in a triumphal procession. Where’s Bob gone to?”

“Here I be,” replied her spouse, as he emerged from the depot, with a broad smile encircling his genial face. “I got Rover tied, and paid a dollar to git him sent from here to Bosting in the baggage car. They wanted to argue me out of taking him, but I’m that dod-gasted set in my head, a pile-driver couldn’t make no impression on me. Now, since the dog’s provided fur, I’ll go ’round and speak to the folks.

“Good morning, Mis’ Hoskins; how be you and the children? Good morning, Widder Slant; you’re looking as fresh as usual. If I run across an old widower that’s suitable for you, I’ll box him up with Rover and bring him back.”

The train whistled, and the last farewells were spoken; the satchels, band-boxes and other packages were thrown aboard; Rover, yelling and snapping viciously, was unceremoniously tossed into the

baggage-car, and Uncle Bob, Aunt Becky and the prettiest girl in Skowhegan waved adieu from the rear platform.

Mahala Ann Wattles sang the chorus of "We'll Never Say Goodbye in Heaven," but her cracked voice was drowned by the blank cartridges fired by Hi Pratt; the women waved their hands and kerchiefs, and a few politicians shouted loyally:

"What's the matter with Uncle Bob Springer!"

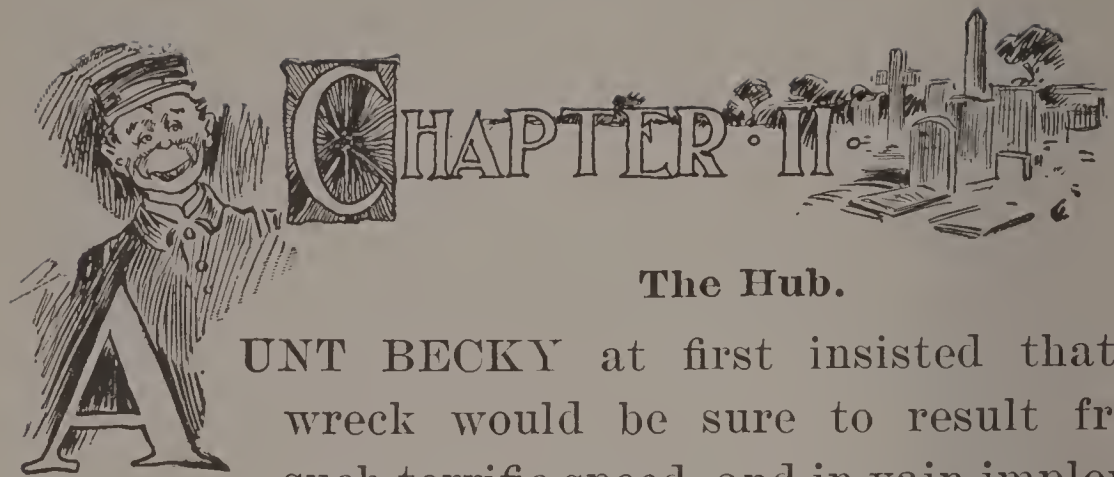
"He's all right!" was the hearty response.

"And—and pretty Ruth Burton's all right, too!" stammered Lige Knaggs, blushing furiously; but the peals of derisive laughter were lost in the roar and whistle of the train as it pulled out from the little station on its rapid flight to Boston.



*"Peals of laughter were lost in the roar of the train as it pulled out of the little station."*





### The Hub.

**A**UNT BECKY at first insisted that a wreck would be sure to result from such terrific speed, and in vain implored the conductor to slow up, but finally she regained her composure; and Ruth amused herself watching the rail fences and scattered hamlets flit by them, too happy to chatter away as usual.

Uncle Bob, who had made his way through the long train, at the risk of breaking his neck, to ascertain if Rover was being treated with due consideration, finally approached his wife and said, loud enough for everybody in the car to hear:

“I’ve got a surprise for you, Becky. I didn’t expect to tell you till we got to St. Louis, but it’s too good to keep. I got an invitation from the management of a big hotel there, built in the fair grounds, telling me to bring my family and all my friends to stay with ’em as long as we wanted to. It must have been sent by some one that knew I was a politician, about to run for county drain commissioner.”



“There must be some kind of a hoax about it,” said Aunt Becky, dubiously. “Like as not, it’s a den of iniquity, and they’ll git us in there and strip us of our belongings, and then kick us out the back door without even a change of linen or an umberell. I’ve heard of ’em doing sich things in them big cities.”

“Of course you’d have to be skeptical, Becky, and that kind of people are allus the ones that git buncoed, you know,” replied Uncle Bob, somewhat irritably. “They say this hotel has 1,000 rooms, and I s’pose they heard I was coming and sent us the invitations. You know an enterprise is never a success unless the big bugs endorse it, and I s’pose they want to use my influ’nce in Skowhegan. I had a notion to bring all our neighbors along, to help fill up the rooms, but I didn’t want to be bothered with the responsibility of looking after them and the dog, too.”

“I wish we could have brung’ Mis’ Hoskins,” said Aunt Becky. “Mebbe President Roosevelt would have sent her a pass, since he has sich an admiration for big families. You know she has the biggest raft of young uns in the county.”

“The invitation said the hotel was run on both the European and American plans,” resumed Uncle Bob.

“And which are you going to take?” asked Ruth.

“American, of course. Do you s’pose I’d let anybody think I was a foreigner and git gulled out of my eye teeth? The American plan is good enough for me and there’s less danger of an honest farmer gitting robbed of his money, if he sticks to that system.”

“Mebbe you’ll change your tune when you’ve seen more of Americky,” said Aunt Becky, with an exasperating smile of superiority.

Boston, the great Hub of the Universe, was finally reached, and Uncle Bob began to scramble for his satchels and bundles, elbowing people right and left in his attempt to get out of the car.

“For mercy sake, Becky, hurry up; we’ll be left sure!” he shouted excitedly.

“This is as far as we go, so you needn’t trample all the passengers under foot,” said the conductor in a tone of authority.

“At Skowhegan the train stops two minutes, and that’s a rather slow town; so I s’posed you only waited here about a minute,” said Uncle Bob, somewhat confused.

“Say, Mister, ain’t you going to pay for them novels, horehound candy and salted peanuts I gave you,” said the train boy, interrupting the speaker.

“Why, sich principle!” exclaimed Aunt Becky in



"Here, old man, if you don't pay that \$1.15, I'll have you arrested."



disgust. "He gave 'em to us and I thanked him, and handed him three doughnuts and a piece of dried apple pie, and now he wants us to give him some money."

"I'll be dodgasted if I'll do it!" shrieked Uncle Bob, looking as if he would like to crush the little chap in uniform to unrecognizable pulp. "Give him back his trash. No decent person would eat sich stuff anyway."

"But I did eat 'em—Ruth and me," said Aunt Becky. "I wish to the land I could give 'em back to him. I put the books in my telescope."

"Yer bet cher boots, I'll git the police after yer if you don't pay the \$1.15 you owes me," shouted the boy.

"Wal, take your money, but I must say this is a new way of doin' business," vociferated Uncle Bob, tossing him the change, and hastening out to get Rover.

"Want your baggage transferred! Bus to the hotel! Cabs!" cried a long line of men in deafening competition at the exit of the depot.

"Don't speak to 'em, Becky, or it'll cost you a quarter, mebbe," said Uncle Bob, striding along with the frightened dog at the head of the procession.

"Do you want a cab, madam?" said one of the



husky shouters, approaching Aunt Becky and tipping his hat.

"I hain't no use fer a cab, sir. Walkin' is good enough fer us. We don't believe in all these fan-dangled notions you city people have," she replied with withering scorn as she dutifully followed her liege lord.

After a long walk, during which their bundles were frequently piled upon the sidewalk while they rested, Uncle Bob spied a hotel, and, with a chuckle of glee, made for it as fast as possible.

"Is this on the European plan?" he asked the dapper young clerk at the desk.

"No, sir; American."

"Then I'll stay. I like everything that's American," declared the old gentleman, with a sigh of relief.

"I wouldn't stay here, even if it was one of them hotels where you git entertained fur nothing," said Aunt Becky, nervously pulling his sleeve. "This tavern faces a grave-yard, and it's the worst kind of a sign to set in a room looking out over a burying-ground."

"Then you kin set with your back to the winder," said Uncle Bob tartly.

But his wife remained inexorable, and knowing how useless it was to resort to any kind of strategy

when her superstitions were involved, he left the hostelry, and in a quarter of an hour they found a similar hotel, and were about to come to terms,



*“For land sakes, Bob Springer, there’s another grave-yard.”*

when Aunt Becky cried out again in terror:

“For land sakes, Bob Springer, there’s another grayeyard across the street! The Bosting people

must be nearly all dead! I shan't stay here neither—come along, Ruth."

"Wal, it seems to be a sort of a dead place. I don't think myself that burying-grounds are very good signs to advertise hotels with, but mebbe it's the style in Bosting," said Uncle Bob. "However, Becky, I don't propose to spend all my time and vitality dodging grave-yards, and I'm going to stay."

"Nearly every hotel in Boston looks out upon a cemetery. People coming here from New York rather like it," said the clerk, smiling broadly. "Will you register, sir?"

"No, sir; don't put my name to no paper," declared Uncle Bob, bringing his fist down upon the desk with drastic emphasis. "If that's your way of doing business, we'll go over in the grave-yard and have lunch there. Everybody is supposed to be honest over there."

"Perhaps, then, you want me to register for you," continued the clerk, smiling brightly at Ruth, who modestly cast down her eyes, blushing at Uncle Bob's delusion.

"Wal, if it's necessary. Didn't know this was a sort of a primary election business," said the old man.

"What are your names?" inquired the clerk, taking a pen and waiting respectfully.

“Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky Springer of Skowhegan, Maine, and our adopted daughter, Miss Ruth Burton, born in Louisianny—all on our way to the great World’s Fair, way out yonder in old Missouri.”

“Thank you,” said the clerk, writing rapidly.

“Becky is 62 and I am 60, and Ruth is—”

“He didn’t ask our ages, you blockhead!” screamed Aunt Becky. “You’d tell everything you knowed and more, too, if a person wouldn’t shut you off like a cook-stove damper every few minutes.”

“Shall we send your baggage up to your room?” said the clerk, who would have giggled outright had it not been for something in Ruth’s dark eyes that demanded his respectful courtesy.

“Wal, you look honest and I reckon you might as well take it up,” said Uncle Bob, after a moment’s reflection. “Don’t believe you could wear any of our paraphernalia anyway, unless it was my socks.”

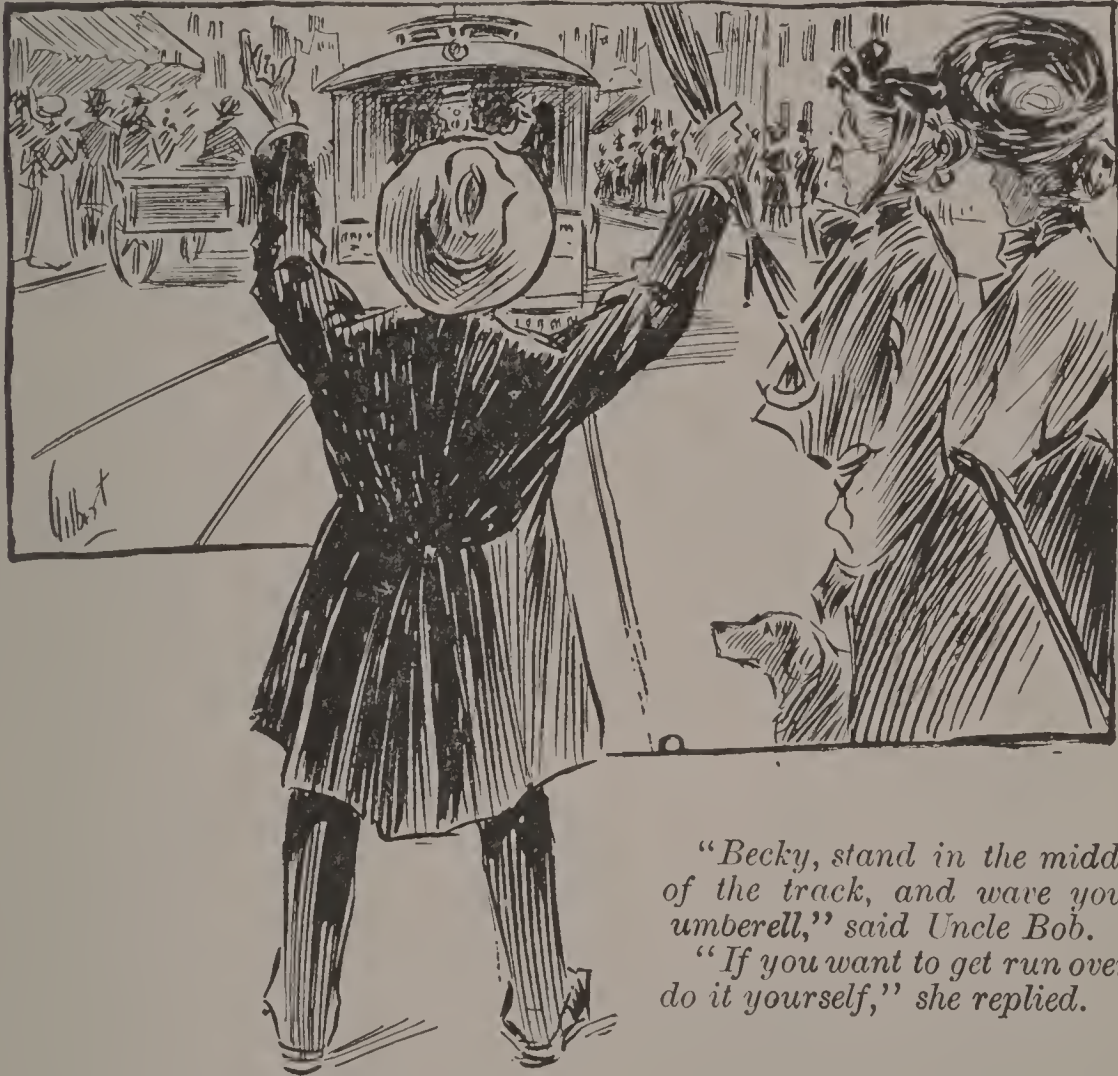
“I feel like I ort to lay down and stretch out, but we mustn’t lose any time,” said Aunt Becky, yawning and rubbing her eyes.

“I ’spect them grave-yards make you drowsy,” said Uncle Bob mischievously. “Say, young man, can you tell us the place of biggest interest to visit?”



"Most people want to see Bunker Hill, one of the city's old landmarks," replied the clerk.

"Oh yes, I've heard tell of that place many a time before," said Uncle Bob, with enthusiasm. "It's



*"Becky, stand in the middle of the track, and wave your umberell," said Uncle Bob.*

*"If you want to get run over, do it yourself," she replied.*

located in a sooburb called Charleston and we kin go and see the monument and famous old battle-ground for ourselves."

"Just go over to that corner and take the car

coming from the east," directed the clerk, giving Ruth a farewell smile.

"Here comes one of them cars, Becky! Git right out on the track and wave your umberell!" commanded Uncle Bob, his excitement prevailing as usual at the least provocation.

"Say, Bob Springer, wouldn't I cut a figger, standing out there going through sich exercises?" protested Aunt Becky scornfully.

Without making a reply, her husband wrested the cotton umbrella from her grasp and waved it in the air.

The car stopped and Uncle Bob scrambled on board, followed by Aunt Becky and Ruth.

"Wait a minute—the hull family ain't on yet! Here, Rover!" he shouted, reaching down for his trusty canine.

"Beg pardon, but dogs are not allowed on this car," said the conductor.

"Are you fellows so dod-gasted stuck-up nowadays that you won't let a dog ride with the family which has taken care of him ever since he was a pup so high," said Uncle Bob, struggling to get one foot on the car. "You won't get no money out of us unless you let Rover ride too. Rears to me he's jest as respectable lookin' as some of your passengers

that set there gigglin', and perhaps a blame sight more so."

"Now Bob, don't raise another scene here, for mercy sake," said Aunt Becky, seizing her indignant husband by the coat sleeve and ineffectually trying to draw him down to a sitting posture. "Rover kin run along behind. Don't you remember how he took after Libbie Jones and chased her nearly to Skowhegan, one day when she stole his bone just to tease him?"

"She was sich a shadder, like as not the dog thought she was the bone and chased her," snapped Uncle Bob.

"Wal, so long as you keep up his interest, he'll foller. Take this piece of bologna and wave it at him and encourage him along and he'll run as fast as any race hoss you ever seen."

Aunt Becky pulled from her reticule a link of bologna, a remnant of their train lunch, and Uncle Bob seized it with avidity. For six miles the prospective county drain commissioner gesticulated wildly, waving the alluring bait in the air and shouting with all his might.

"Here Rover! Come on—that's a good feller! Don't give up! Courage, old boy! Come on—catch 'em, Rover!"

The poor dog manipulated his short bow-legs with





Rover's hard luck.—“But he kept in sight of his master and the sausage.”



amazing dexterity. Never did an Athenian of the olden days, sprint harder for the coveted crown of laurel than did Rover for his beloved master and the bologna. He closed in a few moments after the car arrived at Bunker Hill, fire flying from his green eyes and his tongue lolling out, snorting like a chemical engine, while the spectators cheered and laughed till their sides ached.

“You’re a plumb good one, old boy, and here’s your reward! If them Britishers had made for Bunker Hill with half the zeal you showed, they’d have tuk it sure,” said his proud master, presenting him the bologna as he stooped to pat him upon his shaggy head; but Rover was too exhausted to enjoy his reward, and for a while lay upon the ground, unable to go further.

“Wal, here’s the Bunker Hill grounds,” continued Uncle Bob, gaping all about him. “It’s surely worth all the trouble we had to git here.”

“I’m sort of disappointed,” admitted Aunt Becky, placing her spectacles and gazing above her at the vacant sky. “I don’t see as its a bit purtier than our common at home.”

“You do beat any female I ever seed,” declared Uncle Bob, in disgust. “You allus have to wet-blanket everything. It ain’t any purtier, but it’s historical. Don’t you know what that signifies? If

you went to see the Garden of the Gods, you'd be sore if you couldn't see the deities. If you went to Paradise, you'd find fault with Saint Peter because the hull celestial city didn't turn out to sing anthems of welcome and throw flowers and squirt cologne on you through the city fire hose, and mebbe you'd git put out for your mulishness. Oh these women "

A tall stranger in a natty spring suit, stood watching them in amusement, so that Aunt Becky did not retort as usual, although she darted a look of disapproval at her husband and assumed an injured expression.

"Be you a stranger in these parts?" queried Uncle Bob.

"Not exactly. I live near the city and come quite often to see the spot where our forefathers fought so bravely," said the man politely.

"Good fur you," said Uncle Bob, giving him a sharp slap on the shoulder. "I thought mebbe you imagined I was the monument, the way you was sizing me up. My ancestors came to this country in the ship called the Mayflower, which landed in Plymouth in 1620. My grandfather fit on this very spot, June 19, 1775. Becky and I and leetle Ruth are going to that place they call the Ivory City, and thought it wouldn't be right to go through Bosting

without coming here and honoring the spot where our forefathers fit and won the great victory from the British."

"You seem to be well posted," ventured the stranger, smiling kindly at Ruth, who, looking reverentially at the monument, failed to see her eccentric guardian's queer maneuvers.

"Wal, I read other papers beside the Skowhegan 'Express,' and I ain't no fool when it comes to arguing, although I hain't traveled very much," replied the patriotic old man, his good humor completely restored.

When it was time to return to the hotel, Rover was still too fatigued to resume his journey, and again Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky racked their resourceful brains to devise a scheme to get him back.

"Mebbe you could wrap him up in your shawl and the conductor would think it was a baby. He's too tired to bark," suggested Uncle Bob.

"I'd arouse suspicion right away. It's unusual to see a woman 62 years old with a baby, and it would be jist my luck to be arrested for kidnapping. I don't see why you had to tell my age at the hotel fur," replied his wife, with fine sarcasm. "If you didn't tell it folks wouldn't know anything about it," she added.

“Here comes a vehicle,” said Ruth, giggling in spite of her stoic resolve to be respectful.

“That’s a hansom-cab,” cried Uncle Bob. “You have read ‘The Mystery of the Hansom-Cab,’ haven’t you Becky?”

“I heard the neighbors talk about it some years ago, but I don’t see anything very handsome about that machine.”

“Say, young man, what will you charge to take Rover, Ruth, Becky and me to the hotel near the Boston and New York depot?” asked Uncle Bob in a loud voice, as the cab drew near.

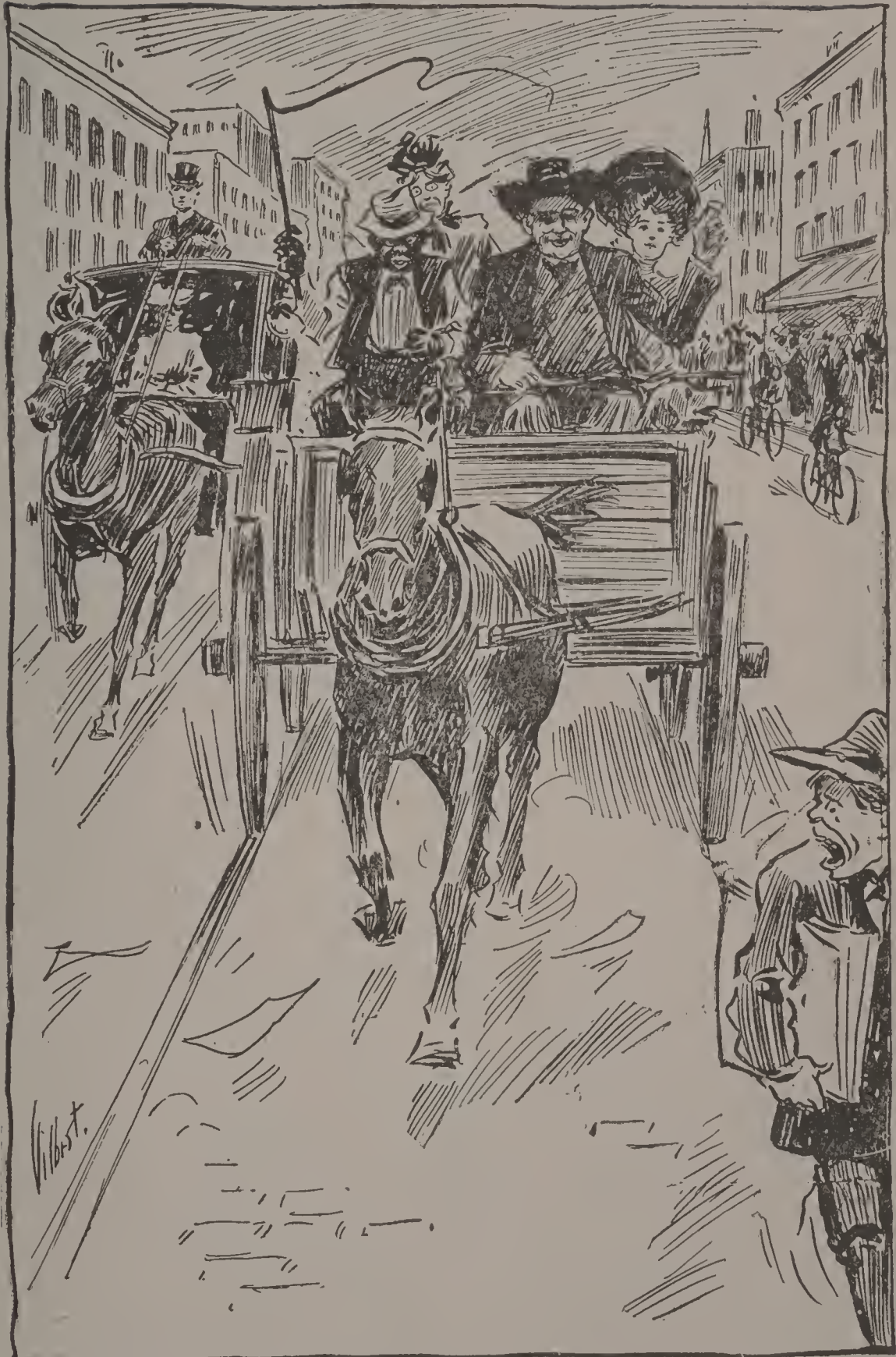
“I don’t carry dogs!” yelled the driver, pulling rein and smiling disdainfully at the discomfited farmer.

“Oh, you’re one of them nice, high-toned fellers, too! I guess you’d better move along,” said Uncle Bob, with an emphatic gesture. “Here comes an express wagon! Say, Mister, what’ll you charge to take we four to the hotel near the Boston and New York depot?”

“Six dollahs, sah,” replied the driver, who was a colored man with a fine assortment of ivory teeth that displayed themselves to advantage behind the broad smile he wore.

“Do you think I’m one of them bloated bond-





*"I'm not chargin' you nothin' for the wagon and myself; besides I don't usually carry dogs, sah."*

holders on Wall street?" asked Uncle Bob, almost breathless with surprise.

"No sah, that's cheap. I am really chargin' you nothin' for the wagon and myself; only enough to cover the expense of the horse."

"Wal I am glad to run across one humane person in this town that has any consideration fer his dumb beast. It's a bargain. Pile in, Becky. The Bostonians so fer as I have seen 'em seem swelled up because they are the hub of the universe. Now, anyone with sense knows that a hub ain't worth a hang without spokes and a tire. The outside rural population may be fur remote but it constitutes the necessary tire, and this old hub couldn't move a peg without it."

"Now, Uncle, don't be too hard on Boston for we have only spoken to a hotel clerk, a street car conductor, a cab driver and an expressman," admonished Ruth, as she climbed into the express wagon with the ease and grace of a country girl, determined to take everything as it came, and make the best of her experiences. "Besides," she added, "there are a good many handsome young men here."

"Then this town must be made up of that class of people, and the wise kind that wear spectacles are gitting as scarce as edifying conversation at a carpet-rag sewing," snarled Uncle Bob as they jolted back to the hotel, the cynosure of all eyes.

"I don't s'pose this here hotel has many of its customers sent here by express," remarked Aunt Becky, as she watched the wagon diminishing in the distance. "Let's hurry in and look after our belongings, fur like as not somebody's been rummaging through 'em. I wouldn't put nothing past that smart feller at the counter that took our descriptions."

They entered the hotel, but another clerk was in charge and Aunt Becky's suspicion was immediately aroused.

"We must be in the wrong tavern!" she gasped.

"I think not," replied the clerk, chuckling audibly, as he looked over the register. "You are Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky Springer and Miss Burton of Skowhegan, Maine."

"You're right, but where did that squinty-eyed man go that wrote our names down in that big autograph album?"

"He left an hour ago and I am relieving him," said the clerk.

"I'll warrant that feller has been meddling with our things, too," said Aunt Becky, turning crimson with indignation. "Young man, you bring our property right down to this room immediately or I'll report you to the town marshal."

"Certainly," said the clerk, affably. He pressed



an electric button and gave the order to a bell boy, who soon returned with the satchels, bundles and packages of the Skowhegan delegation.

“Becky’s jest a leetle bit suspicious,” apologized Uncle Bob, “and she’s got good reasons to be for she’s allus gettin’ takin’ in by these dodgasted sharpers. Outside o’ that, she’s a rattlin’ smart ole gal. What time does the train leave fer New York?”

“The fast express leaves in two hours.”

“Then we’ll have a leetle supper here and put out fur the depot,” said Uncle Bob decisively.

“But Uncle, I know Aunt Becky must be dreadfully tired and sleepy,” said Ruth, confronting her guardian.

“She kin sleep in the train if she wants to,” replied Uncle Bob, chucking her under the chin with his middle finger. “Any woman that’s got the ambition to fly off in sich a tantrum without any reason, can scrape up a leetle extry energy to use in an emergency. What do you charge fur taking care of our traps, young man, while we were at Bunker Hill?”

“Nothing whatever, sir.”

“Much obleeged to you. You’re the first man that done us a service since we left home, without charging all the way from a quarter to six dollars. I’m sorry Becky had to get up her Skowhegan dander.



We'll all be back in a few weeks and if you want us to stop at this here tavern you must move that 'ere graveyard, and tell them 'ere street car conductors



*"Heaven help me! Bob Springer, my band-box is gone!"*

they may be all fired fast, but they should remember that even a dog has some rights that must be respected."

After eating a hearty supper they set out for the Old Colony Depot to take the fast express to New York, accompanied by one of the bell boys who saw them to the train, and soon they were speeding towards the great money-center, the Empire City.

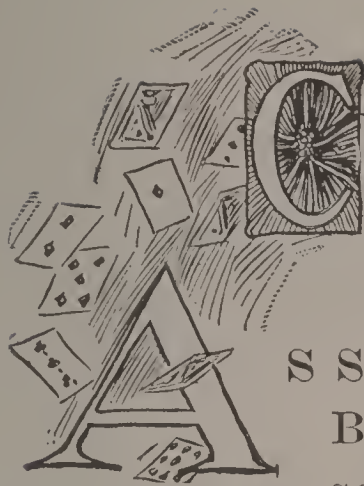
Hardly had they started, when Aunt Becky, who had been invoicing her possessions, suddenly arose in the seat, with her eyes distended and her bony hands, encased in black cotton mitts, spread out in the air, as if she were going to fly.

“Heaven help me, Bob Springer! my bandbox with my \$2.50 bonnet is gone. It had that old snuff box that I have had these twenty years, my tooth brush, a pair of stockings, my knit garters, my bustle, my nightgown and other unmentionables in it, too.”

“Maybe you made a mistake in counting up the traps,” said Uncle Bob, fumbling among the luggage. “Why land of Goshen, you have got your bustle on. I reckon you’re a little rattled, Becky.”

“No I ain’t, it’s gone,” gasped the terror stricken woman. “That good-for-nothing, low lived clerk stole it. Stop the train.”

“Wal, if he did, he must have purty poor taste,” said Uncle Bob, spreading his hand over his mouth and chuckling to himself. “Mebbe he wanted a souvenir to remember you by—eh Becky!”



## CHAPTER · III ·

At Gotham.



AS SOON as they entered the car Uncle Bob settled himself in one of the cane seats for a nap, but Aunt Becky was too much provoked to do anything but threaten vengeance upon the hotel clerk, charged with stealing her millinery and other personal effects.

“I bet if I knowed who the mayor was, I’d write him a letter and have that dishonest tavern-keeper put behind the bars,” she burst forth impetuously.

“But Auntie, it would only be an added expense and a loss of time. If I were you, I’d go and buy the articles I needed, to replace the ones which were stolen, and make Uncle pay the bill. It would serve him right for making fun of you,” said Ruth consolingly, as she laid her tired head upon Aunt Becky’s shoulder.

“I don’t care about the things so much as I do the low principle the feller showed. I’ll never forget this place they call the Hub as long as I live,” continued the old lady spitefully. “If Bosting is what you call a cultured place, I don’t wonder that



author-feller—Howells, and all them air best writers move to New York.”

“But we saw very little of Boston, Auntie,” said Ruth. “I’ve often heard that the Bostonians speak purer English than the people of any other American city.”

“Then the Lord help the English language, if that’s what they call the best,” scornfully replied Aunt Becky. “You, yourself, know that it hain’t so. I never heard such dialect in my life as they use there. Anybody with good common sense would know that i-d-e-a don’t spell i-de-ar, and c-a-r-d ain’t pronounced ‘cod’. I guess I have right smart book-learning myself, and know a thing or two besides milking cows, peeling taters and feeding our old hens, chickens and ducks.”

Ruth was about to make a rejoinder, when a bold-faced chap, with pimples on his nose, who sat in the seat across the aisle, lighted a cigarette and gave a tantalizing puff in their direction.

“So, there’s another peart, impudent youngster from Bosting!” said Aunt Becky, with bitter sarcasm. “Do you take this for a smoke-house, sir?”

“It’s the smokin’-car, all right, and you’d better go back in the hind car before the conductor puts you out. Ladies not allowed in here,” was the quick, impolite reply.



“I believe he is right, Auntie; there are several men smoking. Let’s get out as quickly as possible. Uncle Bob can sleep here till we get to New York,” implored Ruth, as she began to gather up the bundles.

“La, I never seen such embarrassing predicaments in all my born days,” said Aunt Becky, in disgust. “Like as not we’ll have to go through a saloon, too, before we’ll get where the decent people are.”

Hardly were they comfortably arranged in the passenger car, when the door was dashed open and Uncle Bob staggered in, pale to the lips, his eyes and mouth wide open in consternation.

“Why, Bob Springer—what on earth’s the matter! Have you got cramps ag’in?” cried Aunt Becky in alarm, endeavoring to rush to his assistance; but the car gave a sudden lunge and the poor woman was thrown back upon the seat, her hat assuming an unusual pose over her left ear.

“Oh Becky! Ruth! I’m so glad you hain’t fell overboard!” cried the poor old man, throwing his arms around his wife and giving her a series of bear-like embraces, in spite of her angry protests.

“You didn’t want us to set there in the smoking-room and git all smelt up with that horrid poisonous tobacco, did you?” asked Aunt Becky, still hardened

towards him, for his lack of sympathy when she lost her two-dollar-and-a-half bonnet.

“I was sleeping like a lamb, when somebody fell over my big Skowhegan feet in the aisle and I woke up and—and you was gone!” continued Uncle Bob, regardless of the amusement he was creating among the gaping spectators. “Some smart dude setting there said that he saw you flirting with an old codger—probably a corn doctor—and that you got off and gave me the slip.”

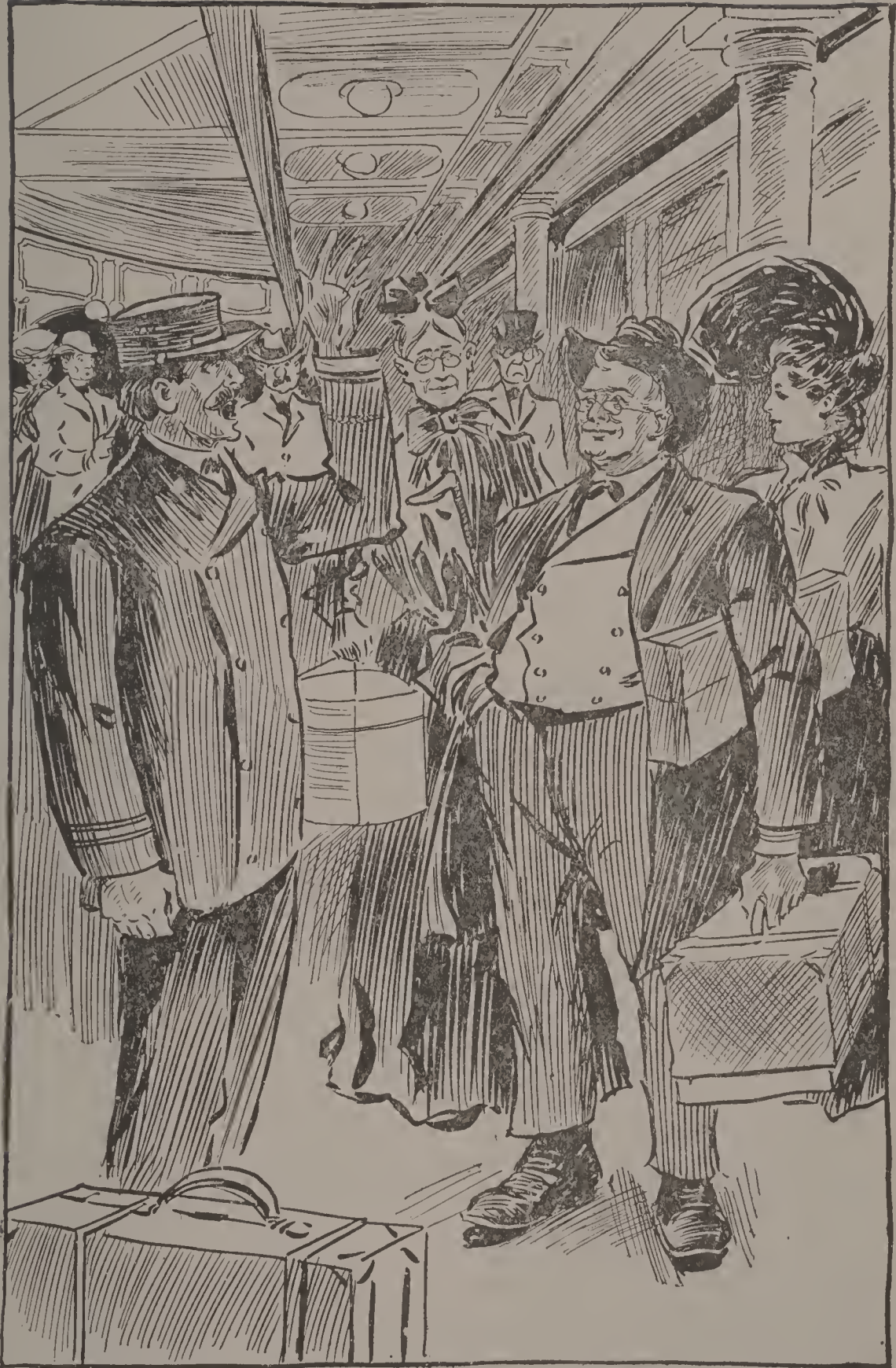
“And did you believe that, Bob Springer? Whose been a truer wife to you all these forty years than me?” replied Aunt Becky, too indignant to speak with her usual volubility.

“Oh Uncle, Auntie, please don’t say any more!” begged Ruth, for the first time displaying her vexation. “Everyone is laughing at us, and after all it was only a slight mistake. Please Uncle, sit down and go to sleep again.”

The exhausted triumvirate were finally composed and they managed to take a long nap before they arrived at their destination. Uncle Bob was snoring loudly, when the conductor shouted:

“New York Central Depot! Pass out this way!”

There was a general confusion for a few moments and the Skowhegan party summarily collected its luggage and was ushered into the spacious waiting-



*The Skowhegan party leaving the train, start to see the Empire City.*



room, from which Uncle Bob soon found an exit into the noisy city.

Without stopping to find a hotel, they at once went sight-seeing on Broadway, with its ever-changing throng of hurrying humanity. Aunt Becky was bewildered and ardently wished herself back at Skowhegan, but Uncle Bob and Ruth were exhilarated by the strange, new atmosphere and fascinated by the unusual surroundings.

At Battery Park their attention was attracted by a dense crowd of people, who pushed and scuffled to get aboard a capacious steamer, decorated with flowing flags and pennants.

"Come on, folks, let's foller the procession," said Uncle Bob, unmindful of the heavy burden he was carrying.

"Where is this ship bound for?" he asked a policeman, who was striving to repress the surging, good-natured multitude.

"It goes to Bartholdi Statue—the Goddess of Liberty," was the curt reply. "All aboard."

"That sounds patriotic," said Uncle Bob, approvingly, as he fumbled in the pocket of his trousers for change to pay for the tickets. "We'll go along and mebbe have a chance to learn something."

He was about to step upon the gang plank, when





“We may learn something; let us go too,” said Uncle Bob.

*W. T.*

an officious man in an ornamental cap pushed him back, saying:

“No dogs allowed.”

“Wal, I declare,” gasped the farmer in astonishment. “I wonder if they’re going to keep up that tune all along the line. Mister, this dog has been in our family a great many years and I allus take him wherever I go. I’m willing to pay fur it.”

“Let’s leave him at the place where they check articles,” suggested Ruth, whose quick eyes had discovered an egress from the dilemma. “Don’t stop to argue, Uncle.”

“How much will it cost to leave Rover?” asked the old man of the boy who was in charge of the check-room.

“One dollar.”

“Why, young feller, do you think Becky and me manufacture coin on our hundred and forty acres?”

“That’s our price for taking care of dogs.”

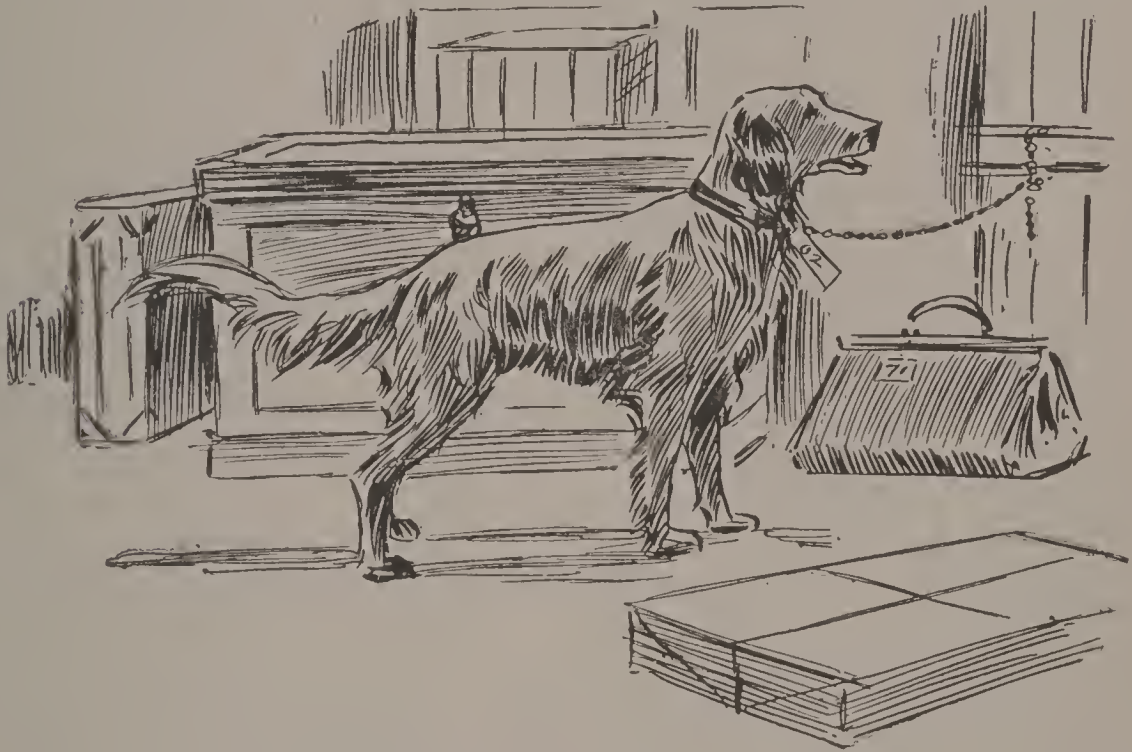
“Wal, then, here’s your money. Don’t let him chaw your woodwork or git tangled up in his tail.”

In a few moments the steamer pulled out and the granger and his family were soon absorbed in the many interesting but unfamiliar things upon land and water. When they arrived at the great statue, which is the mecca of all tourists who visit the metropolis, Uncle Bob was the first to cross the

gang-plank. For a moment he stopped to gaze about him, but the keeper gruffly shouted:

“Go ahead, old man, or get out of the way! They’ll stamp you down like a herd of buffaloes, if you stop. Move along, old man.”

As they ascended the narrow stair-way, the crowd surged more violently, and Uncle Bob and



*Rover failed to see the Statue of Liberty.*

Aunt Becky, hand in hand, the latter clutching Ruth with death-like tenacity, were almost lifted from their feet. In vain they protested, but they were as so many feathers to the crowd below and they were not permitted to rest until they had reached the summit.

“I don’t believe Elijah went up in his chariot of



fire as sudden as we did. I'm mighty glad we left Rover with the checker," wheezed Uncle Bob.

"Oh, Bob Springer, I'm too awful tired to enjoy it," gasped Aunt Becky, wiping her perspiring face. "I wish I was back home."

"What a gorgeous view of the city and the ocean!" cried Ruth in delight. "What a magnificent monument this is and how grand and stately the Goddess must look with that flambeau in her hand lighting up the harbor at night! It is indeed a symbol of liberty."

"I kin imagine now how the Lilliputians felt when they got the first squint at Gulliver," said Uncle Bob, craning his neck out of proportion. "Wouldn't it be a terrible thing to have a woman of that size, laying for you with a torch to light you off to bed some night when a feller comes home late?"

"I wish some certain men had sich women," retorted Aunt Becky, who never lost an opportunity to give her better half a thrust when it was for his own good. "There wouldn't be so much hard cider guzzling and other iniquities in Hi Pratt's barn at Skowhegan, I guess."

"There you go again, you're always ready to fly off the handle, Becky. I reckon there wouldn't be any men left if you and Widder Slant and a few others grew to be that size," retaliated Uncle Bob.



At the sound of the gong the sight-seers descended to *terra firma* to take the steamer for the city. Uncle Bob stretched himself gratefully as he looked up at the ample blue sky, saying:

“Wal, after all, the best liberty a feller kin have is freedom.”

Rover was overjoyed when they returned and barked and frisked merrily about to prove it.

Again they joined the cosmopolitan concourse, bent upon seeing all they could of the vast city. They had not progressed very far, when a young man, attired in a light suit of clothes, with a bright red tie, which was made all the more conspicuous by a diamond stick pin of vulgar size, stepped forward, saying:

“Are you Mr. Bob Springer?”

“That’s my name, but you’ve got the best of me, I never seen you before, I reckon,” replied the old man, looking incredulously at the garish creature, whom he mistook for a city dude.

“I am the young man who called to see you several times, but you were not at home.”

“Wal, you see me now, I reckon. What kin I do fur you?”

“I saw by the morning paper that you and your wife arrived today, and knowing that you were strangers, I thought I would offer my services,

which would enable you to see the sights quicker.”

“Have them blasted quill-drivers got me and Becky in the papers so quick?” cried Uncle Bob in surprise, although his face beamed with gratification.



*“There ain’t a man in Skowhegan that kin beat me at card tricks,”  
said Uncle Bob.*

“You know its quite an honor to be recognized with the other prominent people,” laughed the stranger in a way that completely disarmed the old gentleman’s suspicion.

For a few moments they carried on a brisk con-

versation, Uncle Bob ascertaining the principal points of interest and thanking the stranger repeatedly for his courtesy; Aunt Becky and Ruth, followed by Rover, sauntered off towards Broadway, not noticing that their protector was gradually lagging behind.

"I've been out of the city for some little time and just returned," said the stranger. "By the way, I took part in a very clever game last night that netted me a good deal of money. I think it is the simplest and best trick I ever knew."

"What is it? There ain't a man in Skowhegan that kin beat me doing card tricks. We generally play over in Hi Pratt's barn on rainy days and I'd be mighty glad to show 'em something new," said Uncle Bob, who was pining to enjoy an occasional little game, but could not escape from his wife's rigid surveillance.

The young man led him into an out-of-the-way place, where he took from his pocket three playing cards, and one containing the picture of a pretty girl. These he placed upon a bench about six inches apart.

"Now pick out the picture card," requested the stranger.

"What do you take me fur, anyway? That's no trick at all. Here it is," said Uncle Bob, bending

over with difficulty and producing the correct card.

“You’re pretty sharp-sighted, old fellow,” said the city chap, somewhat nonplussed, as he deftly shuffled the cards again. “Now I’ll bet you ten dollars you can’t pull out the picture card again. Of course this is just a trick. You’ll get your money back all right. You look like a sure-winner.”

Uncle Bob hesitated for a moment, but his inherent love for speculation bubbled up as it did in the days of his youth, and without saying a word, he flashed a ten dollar bill from his vest pocket and covered the stranger’s money. Then he drew a card which turned out to be the duce of spades. The stranger laughed good-naturedly, but Uncle Bob was too disgusted to see the joke.

“Now let’s each put up twenty dollars and if you win, you’ll get back not only the ten dollars you lost, but will be thirty dollars ahead of the game,” said the sharper laughing sarcastically.

“Young feller, I don’t know much about New York mathematics, but your way of stating the problem makes me a sure winner, so here goes.”

“Now keep your eyes open, old man. You see the picture card, don’t you. Now all you have to do is to pick it up,” said the trickster, at the same time giving the cards a sly twist, too quick to be observed by Uncle Bob’s untrained eye.



"I've got her this time all right," he replied, stooping so suddenly his waistband nearly gave way. His smile of exultation, however, turned to chagrin, when he produced, not the pretty girl, but—the nine spot of spades.

The bunko-steerer pocketed the money and noticing a policeman, without even a farewell, disappeared through an alley, leaving the farmer to stare all about him in stupefied amazement.

"Wal, I see how it's done all right, dodgast the luck," he hissed as he followed in the direction Ruth, his better half and Rover had taken a few minutes before. He soon found them, however, looking into a display window on Broadway.

"Where under the sun have you been!" impatiently exclaimed Aunt Becky, with a peculiar look upon her face.

"I just paid out thirty dollars for a leetle bit of common sense," replied Uncle Bob, still dazed. "That smooth young feller that told me all the places of interest and claimed to know all the Vanderbilts and Goelets and Burdens and J. Pierpont Morgan and Russell Sage, stole thirty dollars out of my vest pocket."

"The Lord have mercy on us!" shrieked his provident wife, throwing her hands above her head, as was her custom when painfully surprised. "You

need a guardian appointed, if anybody ever did. The idea of a man of your age letting a feller git his fingers in his vest pocket in broad daylight!"

She continued to upbraid him, as they strolled along until they came to City Hall Square, where the immense postoffice and other mammoth buildings struck them dumb with overpowering awe.

"Gee! but don't that postoffice make ours look like an ant hill in a barley field!" exclaimed Uncle Bob, throwing back his head and opening his eyes and mouth to their utmost capacity, as he gazed at its summit. "Some of them buildings are so tarnal near heaven, they put me in mind of the Tower of Babel. Look at 'em, Becky."

They finally strolled into the Bowery, which next to Wall street, is the most discussed of all New York thoroughfares. As they were curiously looking at the quaint stores and people from every country on the globe, Ruth suddenly discovered that Rover was missing and cried out in alarm:

"Oh Uncle, Rover has disappeared!"

"Rover! Rover! Where is my dog Rover!" shouted Uncle Bob in a frenzy of excitement; but no faithful bark responded to the summons.

A policeman who happened to be passing, stopped and said gruffly:

"What's the matter, old man?"

“I’ve lost my dog Rover, my old companion that’s slept under our roof for a great many years. Tell me how to find him,” wailed Uncle Bob.

“I’d advise you to put a notice in one of the papers. Give a description and offer a reward of ten dollars for his return. You’ll get him back all right, if he’s in the city—now move on!” said the policeman, with a peremptory wave of his club.

“Do look at that winder with the blue calico in it, advertised at only four cents a yard!” said Aunt Becky, a few minutes later, as she stopped in front of a cheap store. “I’d like to take Jane Buck enough to make her baby a dress.”

She adjusted her glasses to get a good view of the gaudy fabric, when quick as a flash, her reticule disappeared from her hand and the front of her alpaca dress was torn as if a chance bolt of lightning had struck it.

“What was it, Bob!” she gasped, after she had uttered a piercing shriek and looked wildly about her in all directions.

“You’ve been attacked by one of those ‘moll-buzzers’,” said a clerk, who was standing in the doorway. “They’re very prevalent in this part of the city.”

“A ‘moll-buzzard!’—what on earth’s that?” she cried.

“They are cowardly men and boys, schooled to rob women and girls of their pocket-books, and it is almost impossible to catch them.”

“He tuk my bag!” groaned Aunt Becky; on the verge of a collapse. “It had my purse with a dollar



and fifty-seven cents, a kerchief, my lower false teeth and other treasures.”

“Wal, Becky, it ’pears like you’re old enough to keep from getting held up right in broad daylight,” said Uncle Bob, with trying sarcasm. “A feller might jist as well try to embrace that big Goddess of Liberty statue as to try to find your bag, so let it go.”

*“Moll-buzzers” - ever on the watch for the unsuspecting.*

After considerable inquiry and much unnecessary perambulation, they found a plain but respectable hotel on Sixth Avenue, where Uncle Bob secured accommodations for the night. Early in the evening he wrote the following indefinite announcement, which he sent by a boy to a newspaper office:



“Lost, strayed, or stolen, my dog Rover, bow-legged, bushy tail and hair on nose. Anybody returning same will be paid ten dollars, and no questions asked.”

After a hearty supper they repaired to the rotunda to enjoy an hour of pleasant conversation and to read the newspapers.

“It beats all how the society people are allus looking for something outlandish to do,” said Uncle Bob, throwing down his paper in disgust. “I’ve jest been reading how they’re going to have their hats trimmed with cherries and real currants and mebbe watermelons, this summer. We used to be thankful to have enough to eat by our old fashioned fire-places at home, but now they’re not satisfied with their elegant dining-rooms, and one man started the fashion of giving tea parties on horse-back in a stable and another big-bug had his company climb up a greasy pole in swimming suits—old women and all—to see who could git the little bag of molasses candy at the top. What is the world coming to anyway? Who was that young feller that captivated Newport, because he had the face to wade in a public fountain in his bare feet and carry a rag doll down the main street and made it popular to wear a parrot on the left shoulder when making calls? He did so many cute things, he finally captured a beautiful widder with ten

million dollars, and is now the bell-sheep of the national six hundred."

"I believe his name was Lear—King Lear," said Aunt Becky promptly.



*Carried a parrot on the left shoulder  
when making calls.*

settle down and be a real good citizen," said Aunt Becky charitably.

"More likely he'll pull the house down on himself and perish the way Samson did, too, if he keeps on with his doodle-shines," said Uncle Bob.

"No, it was Harry Lehr," corrected Ruth. "I read all about it and I didn't think it was nice for the papers to make so much fun of him. Maybe his critics would give their eye-teeth to be in his shoes. He must be shrewd and clever anyway, or he couldn't sway the most exclusive set in New York as he does."

"Mebbe he'll git tired of cutting up capers for the public, like Samson did in the Bible, and

“Wal, at any rate, Samson’s friends perished with him in the big smash-up, so they couldn’t crow over him,” interposed Aunt Becky. “You remember Hank Baxter used to be jist such a cut-up as that, but after he’d been married ten years to Huldy Perkins and had an operation performed for lumbago, he sobered down and went into the ministry.”

“If a feller has the right sort of a Delilah around, to keep him trimmed, it ain’t necessary for him to have an operation or study for the ministry either.” said Uncle Bob. “Wading in public fountains bare-footed and carrying rag dolls around might be all right for people of that ilk, but if any plain American citizen did sich a thing as that, they’d say he was crazy and pen him up. Why, if Becky and me gave a supper on horseback in our barn, no one in Skowhegan would come but Dean Jones, who is allus willin’ to go any place where he can get a good square meal for nothin’, but I reckon, even he would not have much of an appetite to eat in the barn.”

“It’s no wonder they have so much trouble gitting help,” said Aunt Becky. “When I looked at that big Sloane residence to-day—a regular sky-scraper—my heart bled fur that poor hired girl.”

A half hour later they retired to their rooms and

were soon lost in the enjoyment of nature's great restorer—sweet sleep.

Uncle Bob was aroused the following morning by a loud rap at the door.

"Who's there?" he responded.

"The porter."

"What do you want?"

"Did you advertise for a lost dog?"

"Wal I should say I did. Have you got him?"

"There are about twenty men and boys downstairs with dogs, waiting for you since four o'clock this morning."

"Good heavens! I only wanted one and that was Rover," replied Uncle Bob, performing a very incomplete toilet and hastening down-

stairs. When he reached the office he found that the number of people with dogs, of all sizes, colors and conditions, had increased to thirty, and the air was filled with discordant barks and shouts of laughter. The proprietor of the hotel walked back and forth behind the desk, too enraged to utter a protest. Uncle Bob's amazement was forgotten



*He rapped at Uncle Bob's door at 5 o'clock the next morning.*





*Rover's strange experience—Redeemed by his master.*

when he discovered Rover in the arms of a hare-lipped Italian.

“Where did you find Rover?” he asked in delight, while the dog at the mention of his name, squirmed and yelped pathetically to reach his master once more.

“The paper say, ‘ten dollars paid—no questions asked.’ I want my money, Signor,” replied the Italian.

“Wal I’d pay most any price to git that dog back, so here’s your ten dollars,” said Uncle Bob, producing another bill from his wallet. The man bowed his thanks and freed Rover, who barked joyously and straightway attempted to demolish his benefactor’s coat-tail.

“Hold on, old gent, we want pay for our dogs, too—see!” mumbled a tough specimen, with a slouch hat drawn down over his eyes, as he stepped in front of Uncle Bob, who was hurrying upstairs with his treasure.

“I don’t owe you anything. I only advertised for my dog Rover,” was the astonished reply.

“Yes, but the ‘ad’ said ‘dog with bushy tail and hair on nose’ and we’ve come in accordance wid dat description and don’t expect to be bamboozled out of our pay, do you understand?”

An officer, whom the proprietor had summoned to

disperse the crowd, after hearing the particulars, stepped up and said authoritatively:

“You’d better give each one of the men a dollar for the expense and time they have squandered in bringing the dogs here, and after this make your advertisement more explicit. Maybe it would be a good idea to leave your mongrel out on the farm the next time you come to the city.”

“Wal, this advertising business is purty expensive, but I want to do the right thing. It beats all how these city folks set up all night to do Becky and me up,” said Uncle Bob, scratching his head.

In the course of a half hour the thirty men with their dogs and dollars departed, leaving Uncle Bob forty dollars poorer than when he left Aunt Becky upstairs putting on her switch; but to him the safe return of Rover and the additional experience was worth even more.

After eating a hearty breakfast and paying their bills, they set out for the Cortland street ferry, en route to the great west. Being absorbed in the hurly-burly of noise and confusion all around them, they wandered into Wall street, the great mart of the American continent. Its tall buildings, standing compactly together, seemed a formidable phalanx on either side and filled them with awe.

“What a drop in a bucket a feller is, when he gits



on Wall street, where all the nabobs and speculators of the country gather to control finances," said Uncle Bob. "Them bloated sharks are too smooth fur plain, honest people like me and you, Becky."

"Yes, let's hurry on, for if they find we have got any money with us, we will never leave while there is a cent in our pockets," said Aunt Becky, clutching her remaining bundles tightly.

In the midst of this colloquy, Uncle Bob suddenly turned, and, behold! the dog had disappeared—and this time for good. In vain the frantic old man shouted and inquired of passing pedestrians if they had seen a dog with a bushy tail and bow legs. The heartless throng only laughed at his perturbation and a policeman threatened to arrest him if he did not move on.

"This whole town, what they call the great Empire City, is a nest of thieves!" cried the farmer, shaking his fist in uncontrollable rage. "I know now by actual experience that Wall street is a cess-pool of iniquity, to prey upon the innocent that git inside of its clutches. No wonder they call it a big octopus. It's tarnal mean in them to steal my dog Rover that's been a member of our family fur so many years. I'll be glad when we git to Philadelphia where they claim to have brotherly



love. Truly, Bosting is Sodom and New York is Gemorry.”

“La, Bob, I told you that Rover had better stay to home, but you would have your own way, and I reckon you’ve paid dearly fur your stubbornness. It’s awful unlucky to travel with a dog—most as bad as setting thirteen to a table,—or that many eggs under a hen,” croaked Aunt Becky, her eyes filling with tears.

“I must have Rover! I can’t go without him!” persisted Uncle Bob.

“Uncle, we must not delay any longer, it’s nearly time for the boat to leave for Jersey City,” urged Ruth.

“Yes, we’d best go. We don’t want no more bad luck,” said Aunt Becky.

The hearts of the old couple were anything but peaceful as they resumed their journey to the ferry, where they crossed to Jersey City, too perturbed by the loss of their pet to notice anything about them. When they stepped from the boat, the guards guided them to the waiting train for Philadelphia, and in a few minutes they were speeding towards the goal of their ambition, the World’s Fair.

“This state is the home of them dodgasted mosquitoes. I have heard that they grow so large that many of them will make a pound and when

desperately hungry, if they cannot get at their victims in the daytime, will hunt them up at night with lanterns," said Uncle Bob.

"And I presume this is where the first Jersey cows came from," laughed Ruth.

"Yes, and Lily Langtry, the Jersey Lily was raised here," added Aunt Becky.

"I've allus heard tell that Jersey was the'r worst place in the Universe fer mud, and every one knows it takes mud to make good lilies."

"I reckon that if all is true what they say about her, she is a pretty good pond lily," replied Uncle Bob.

It is hardly fair to make so much fun of New Jersey. The state has a good many redeeming qualities," said Ruth. "I am sure her strawberries, peaches and sweet-potatoes are noted all over the country, as well as her famous sea-side resorts and important manufacturing establishments."

"Yes, and some big beer breweries too," said Uncle Bob.

"I'll warrant you always know where the beer is made, Bob Springer," said Aunt Becky. I wish it was all emptied into the Delaware River, and set on fire."

"Don't be discouraged, Becky, it takes barley to make beer. I reckon the poor farmer wouldn't like to have his revenue go up in smoke," replied Uncle Bob.



## CHAPTER · IV ·

### From the Quaker City to the City of Smoke.

**I** WISH we could have had time to take in Washington, and see the capitol and spend a day or so at the White House, with the great man of the people, the gallant Rough Rider," said Uncle Bob, as they neared Philadelphia.

"It wouldn't be right to go to the White House without first droppin' Mrs. Roosevelt a postal card," said Aunt Becky. "The poor woman must have her hands full with so many children; but the President believes everybody should have a big family; Alice, though, must be old enough now to be a help to her mother."

"I'd like to see Buffalo where the Pan-American Exposition was held and Niagara Falls, the most interesting spot in the United States," said Ruth.

"I never thought much of Buffalo since I heard so much about their overbearing street-car conductors," said Aunt Becky. "When Elvira Dingle was there to the Exposition, they didn't put her off at

the fair grounds and she had to pay another fare to git back."

"Like as not she was talkin' as usual and wouldn't have known it if a bolt of lightnin' had hit her. I'd rather go to Baltimore whar they have such tarnal purty women," said Uncle Bob.

"Well, I am glad we won't go there because you always make a goose of yourself whenever a purty female comes near you," said Aunt Becky with an insulted air.

They had hardly completed their luncheon when they arrived at Philadelphia, the city whose future fame and prestige, William Penn, perhaps, never dreamed of. Collecting their baggage they hastened out into the open air and passed a long line of cabmen and express drivers, who were lined up for business.

"This place don't seem so noisy as Boston or New York," said Aunt Becky, as they turned into Chestnut street.

"Wal, I allus heard Philadelphy was a slow-going town, especially jist after gitting over the effects of Lent; but its plenty brisk enough fur me," declared Uncle Bob. "We'll have to git a leetle move on us, as we only have a few hours to stay here. What do we want to see first?"

"Independence Hall," said Ruth.



“That’s the very place! Hello, stranger, kin you tell us how fur it is to Independence Hall?” said Uncle Bob, grabbing a passer-by and suddenly bringing him to a halt.



*“You go to thunder. Anybody would know you are a hayseed,” said the stranger.*

“I don’t know,” was the crusty reply.

“Mebbe you haven’t seen the men that signed that wonderful document, the Declaration of Independence.”

“Never.”

“Like as not you don’t know the father of your country.”

“You go to thunder! Anybody would know that you are a hayseed,” retorted the angry stranger as he turned and suddenly vanished in the crowd.

“These pesky city fellers hain’t got much bringing up. Everything is going at sich a rapid pace, that all they know is zip—sizzle!—and all’s over,” complained Uncle Bob. “In Skowhegan, the neighbors will give their pedigree from A to Z, and a good deal more. Sometimes they’ll talk all day and if they don’t git through the same day they’ll come back next day and finish. There is Widder Slant—she often comes and brings her lunch and sometimes stays all day. Here comes another man that looks as if he knew a leetle something. Say, mister, where is Independence Hall?”

“Well, really, I can’t just tell you where to find it, but it’s in the city all right,” said the man vaguely.

“Wal, wouldn’t that paralyze you!” exclaimed Uncle Bob, in surprise. “You’re sure they hain’t moved it to Washington, ain’t you? You must be one of them fellers that thinks the Fourth of July is a day set apart for picnics and drinking red lemonade and shooting off fire-crackers and all kinds

of cussedness. Don't you know it was the place where our forefathers risked their necks to sign the Declaration of Independence which announced our freedom from Great Britain?"

"Well, I believe I did hear something about it," stammered the stranger. "It's a terrible-looking old building, though."

"The older and more turrible it gits, the more you ort to venerate it, young man. The old bell that rang out the glad news of freedom is dusty and cracked now; but isn't your old mother's voice more precious to you than if she was a leetle, simpering gal? I bet you can't even sing our national air, The Star Spangled Banner," said Uncle Bob dramatically.

"I must confess that I can't," said the stranger, blushing deeply.

"Not one in nine-hundred and ninety-nine kin, and it's a burning shame, too. There ain't a person even in Skowhegan that kin sing more than four lines of it, except Mahala Ann Wattles, and she don't put any spirit into it, so that it sounds more like 'Hark from the Tomb a Doleful Sound.' It looks to me as though young Americans were losing their patriotism and it's a dodgasted pity."

The third man they met knew where the old landmark was situated, and thus received Uncle Bob's

thanks instead of a scathing lecture. He directed them to it and refused to take the fifty cents Uncle Bob offered him. The old building did not look as pretentious as some of its neighbors, but the old farmer's face was illumined as he entered its portals, to where so many great men had convened and planned to guide the "Ship of State" through an impending crisis.

"This hall was begun in 1732 and completed in 1741; the tower was built in 1750," said a guard, whom they met at the entrance. "Of course you know the Declaration of Independence was signed July 4, 1776. You are at liberty to go through the building and see the old historical relics for yourself."

"Here is the statue of George Washington, the Father of our Country," said Ruth, with enthusiasm, as they halted before the colossal figure and admirably examined it from the noble brow to the base of the massive pedestal.

"I think they might have a statue of Mrs. George Washington, too," said Aunt Becky. "Anybody knows that a man never amounts to much who hasn't a good wife to cook him good meals and keep his socks darned, and she deserves a pedestal as big as her husband's any day."

The gallery containing the portraits of the brave



men who signed the Declaration of Independence was likewise curiously inspected.

“Here’s Thomas Jefferson and John Adams and Roger Sherman and Robert A. Livingston and Benjamin Franklin—all of whom signed the Declaration!” cried Ruth in delight. “They were surely heroes and should have fresh flowers placed on their portraits every day.”

“That’s Robert Morris, the wealthy banker, who furnished funds when the government needed the money, and this is Alexander Hamilton,” said a bystander, who was obviously pleased with Ruth’s charming enthusiasm. “And that is William Williams, a Welshman, also one of the signers.”

“And there is Charles Carroll, of Carrolton, another signer, who was an Irishman. I’ve heard tell of him. Hurrah for the Irish!” cried Uncle Bob. “He was the last one to sign the Declaration, but that was because he was polite—not afraid.”

“And there’s the Marquis de Lafayette, who represented the French nation, and a great help he was, too,” said the stranger.

“I like the looks of Benjamin,” said Uncle Bob with emphasis. “His father was a common soap boiler and Ben was an ideal, manly feller—a whole-hearted American from the working people, and not

a stuck-up dude that couldn't do anything but look dainty and play tag with the women folks."

"Yes, but here is another signer, equally as brave, who was a son of luxury—John Hancock," said the bystander. "He was the leader in the Philadelphia and Boston smart set and gave musical entertainments, parties, balls and dinners where the choicest wines were served. His clothes were perfumed and embroidered in gold, and he rode in a magnificent carriage. During the siege of Boston, when General Washington consulted Congress as to the advisability of burning the city to the ground, it was Hancock, this petted darling, who said: 'All my property is in Boston, but if my country demands that it be burned, let them blaze away!'"

"Bully for John Hancock!" cried Uncle Bob. "He was a good American, too, and—wal I suppose a feller can't help his raising."

After they had completed their profitable tour of the building, they went out to see the great public structures that adorned the heart of the city, and for some time gazed in wonderment at the city hall, which covers more space than any other municipal building in the United States, and has a tower five hundred and ten feet high.

Returning to the depot they took the lightning Express for Pittsburg, feeling that they had been

amply repaid for the time spent in the city of Brotherly Love. As the train shot from the station like a cannon ball, Aunt Becky's old horror of railroad wrecks returned, but Uncle Bob was extremely happy and bubbling over with mirth.

"Gee whizz!" he shouted. "If all the trains in the country move at this gait to St. Louis in old Missouri, it won't take long to haul all the people out there."

"But where would we go if the train went off the track," excitedly asked Aunt Becky.

"Wal, I s'pose Heaven would be our next stop," said Uncle Bob, laughing fearlessly.

They arrived in Pittsburg early the following morning before the city had time to don her daily mantle of sombre black smoke. Uncle Bob saw a man standing in front of a livery stable, close to the depot and asked him where he might find the points of greatest interest. At that moment a telephone-bell rang and the liveryman ran in to answer it, followed by the Skowhegan tourists.

"Gosh! that's one of them machines that talks at both ends," said Uncle Bob, who had never seen a telephone before. "I understand they're going to have a rural telephone system in our parts and of course they will come to our old homestead, and I'd





*“Switch-board? Becky, wears a switch but I never knowed she had a board in it.”*



like to learn how to use 'em. What's in the other side of that infernal she-bang anyway?"

"You can come and talk into it for yourself, if you want to," smilingly replied the man with a twinkle in his eye.

He explained to Uncle Bob which was the receiver and which the transmitter and told him to call up Jones & Smith's Feed Store and order two bales of hay. He did as directed and immediately a shrill voice responded: "What number?"

"Gosh, Becky, this is a wonderful enterprise! Hey! who are you?" chuckled the old man.

"I am the girl at the switch-board," a voice replied.

"Switch! My wife, Becky wears a switch; but if she's got any sticks or boards in it, I never seen 'em. She don't operate it either; she just wears it; but if you can give her any pinters on the latest styles, she'll be powerful obliged to you."

"You don't understand," replied the girl. "All I do is to call the person you want to talk with."

"Oh, I see. You are the gal that gives them bulls and bears on Wall street pointers that enables them to force the price of wheat and corn up and down—anything to freeze the poor farmer out. If Rockefeller and Morgan have money to burn, I wish you'd

send one of 'em down to buy my old homestead farm near Skowhegan!"

"Oh, I see—you are a jay!" shouted the telephone girl.

"Here young lady, don't you git fresh! Me and Becky and Ruth have traveled from tother side of the country and I reckon we know a thing or two. Our dog Rover has seen more of the world than you have. It's better to be asleep at the switch than too gay," retorted Uncle Bob, throwing down the receiver highly disgusted.

The liveryman, who had enjoyed himself hugely at the farmer's expense, diverted his wrath by telling him that the principal things of interest to be seen were the Carnegie Public Library and great steel works and directed them how to go there.

After a long walk they found themselves at one of the immense mills owned by Andrew Carnegie, proprietor of the largest iron and steel-making plants and the greatest philanthropist the world has ever known.

"Gee! but ain't this a whopper!" exclaimed Uncle Bob, as they entered one of the stupendous foundries where thousands of men were hard at work, apparently deaf to the distracting noise of modern mill machinery.

"Jist think of the thousands of poor people who

have toiled themselves to death to make Carnegie's millions!" shouted Uncle Bob.

"Yes, Uncle Bob, think of the thousands who are glad to have the work to do and how he has helped to make Pittsburg and all the surrounding territory a bee-hive of industry," replied Ruth. "Most millionaires leave their wealth for their immediate family to quarrel over and squander."

"I don't believe in one man having so much money," said Uncle Bob.

"No man can control so much wealth without doing some good to his fellow man. Most of these wealthy men start in a small way and by judicious management increase their business each year. It cannot help grow and they are nearly all entitled to what they make out of it," declared Ruth.

"Did you know that the United States put out 18,000,000 tons of iron last year; 9,202,703 tons of pig iron and 14,277,071 tons of steel?" asked the foreman. "Pennsylvania did most of this work, Pittsburg being the leading city and Carnegie the prime mover."

"It beats all what a country this is, anyhow, and what a man Carnegie is to make money," said Uncle Bob, almost overwhelmed.

From there they walked to Schenley Park to see the Carnegie Library, the philanthropist's

\$1,100,000 gift to the city of Pittsburg. All three uttered cries of delighted amazement, when they caught the first glimpse of the imposing structure of Cleveland gray sandstone, with its dome-like roof of red tiles, its two campanile towers 175 feet high, its triple arches, its balconies, and a frieze containing the names of the world's greatest men. Over the library entrance was the motto: "Free to All People," and Uncle Bob's rosy face beamed joyously, as he said:

"Wal, at last we've struck something that's free. Let's go in and examine it."

They opened a massive mahogany door and entered a wide corridor with staircases of pink marble. The building throughout was luxuriously furnished and included a great music hall equipped with a pipe organ, an art gallery, and a museum, in addition to a library too prodigious to be imagined by one so unsophisticated as Uncle Bob.

"What public benefactor could be inspired by a nobler conception than this great institution, where rich and poor, old and young, black and white, the respected and the downtrodden, may shut out the cares of their busy routine of daily toil and feast from this wide-spreading tree of knowledge," said Ruth, trembling with emotion.

"I never seen anything like it in all my life!"



declared Uncle Bob again and again. "Surely Carnegie is a wonderful man, and has done more for the American public than any nabob I ever heard tell of. If he ever comes to Skowhegan, I'd be glad to shake hands with him. If he wants a leetle bit of honor out of life before he dies, let him have it, for he deserves it. Poor Mark Hanna wasn't appreciated until he died, and now they want to name the Panama Canal after him. The American people



*"Everyone has coal specks on their faces in Pittsburg. I wonder if Hobson enjoyed them," said Uncle Bob.*

seem to be getting ficker every day. When Dewey came home victorious, the people wallered around in the dust before him and hollered and waved red, white and blue buntings at him. People named their babies after him and those that didn't have babies, christened their horses and cattle and dogs in his honor. They wined and feasted him from coast to coast, and then turned around and knocked him because he married and deeded his property

to his wife. It's jist sich mutton-heads as that who don't appreciate the men who have done the most for their country."

As they continued their journey through Pittsburg, and watched the rolling water of the Monongahela river in the distance, Uncle Bob remarked:



"Everybody's got coal specks on their noses. Did you ever see sich a smoky place and so many dirty faces? I wonder if Hobson treated the Pittsburg girls as affectionately as he did them in the cleaner towns, where big daubs of soot are not fallin' in the air every minute."

As their time was rapidly drawing to a close, Uncle Bob became alarmed and asked a street urchin what he would charge to conduct them to the depot.

"It would be worth two dollars," said the boy, laughing mischievously; "you're awful fur out of the way."

*"The boy has an honest face, Bob.  
Better pay him the \$2.00,"  
said Aunt Becky.*

“Do you take me for a trust magnate?” asked the old man sharply.

“Well, strangers git lost here every day and often land in the hands of swindlers,” said the boy, apparently indifferent.

“Bob, the boy has an honest face and I think you’d better take him,” said Aunt Becky.



*The boy grinned mockingly as he ran down the street.*

Uncle Bob finally paid the amount asked for and started for the station; Uncle Bob holding the arm of the boy on one side and Aunt Becky on the other, with Ruth following closely behind. They reached the station after a walk of a block and a half. After



telling them that they were at the place they wanted, the boy stuck out his tongue at them, and grinned mockingly as he ran down the street.

“Becky, this whole country is after money and I see now that by staying on our farm all these years, we’ve lost millions of dollars,” thundered Uncle Bob, realizing that he had again been a target for dishonest humanity.

The train was an hour late, so they ate a lunch in the depot and were quite jubilant when they pulled out for Cleveland, the Ohio metropolis.



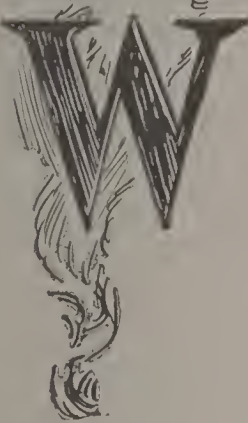
*“Becky this whole country is after money.”*



A decorative header for Chapter V. On the left, a woman is shown from the chest up, wearing a large, ornate hat with a veil and a high collar. To her right, the word 'CHAPTER' is written in a stylized, outlined font, with a large, decorative letter 'C' at the beginning. To the right of 'CHAPTER' is the Roman numeral 'V', followed by a small illustration of a steamship on the water.

## CHAPTER V.

### Forest City and the City of the Straits.

A large, decorative initial letter 'W' in a stylized, outlined font, positioned at the start of the first paragraph.

WHEN they arrived at Cleveland, Uncle Bob was again surprised at the massive public buildings and American air of thrift, and enterprise. After they had emerged from the crowded depot and walked along one of the busy streets to a vantage ground, where they could see Lake Erie, scintillating like a silver mantle at the foot of the city, he stopped short and exclaimed:

“Wal, I’ll be dodgasted if I ever expected to see a town like this in the West. Just think of it, Becky, while you and me have been slumbering on our leetle farm away down East all these years, great cities have sprung up, and the Lord only knows how big they’ll grow, fur they’ve got unlimited room. I wonder what them British people think when they come to this country from leetle restricted England, and travel hundreds and hundreds of miles, passing though prosperous cities that dot the country like musheroons after a rain-storm.”

"It must make 'em feel lonesome," said Aunt Becky, whose patriotism was not so easily aroused. "I s'pose it will take a good many centuries to make a London here in Americky, though."

"Mebbe, but no matter where an American goes in this big, broad United States—whether he's in Skowhegan or Bosting, or Atlanty or Oshkosh, or Kankakee, he's sure to feel happy when he realizes that the same old stars and stripes protects him no matter what part of the country he may be in.

"I s'pose this town was named after Ex-President Grover Cleveland, and that is the pond he used to fish in," said Aunt Becky, pointing towards the lake with her umbrella.

"Wal, we mustn't stand here idly ruminating like Napoleon Bonaparte did, for time is precious, and we have to take the ship fur Detroit this afternoon," said Uncle Bob, turning into a side street, where they discovered a restaurant sign, which whetted their appetites and temporarily routed their thirst for sight-seeing.

A number of men and boys were seated upon high stools in front of a lunch counter, devouring griddle-cakes, doughnuts and other morning indigestibles. Uncle Bob seated himself in the long line of a motley crowd, who paid no attention to correct table manners. Aunt Becky, with some difficulty,



*"I suppose this is the pond Grover Cleveland used to fish in."*



mounted the stool beside him, Ruth standing by her side.

"There is a room reserved for ladies," said the proprietor, smiling at the unusual spectacle of an old lady sitting at the lunch counter.

"I haven't eat or slept away from my husband for nigh on to forty year, and what's good enough for him will satisfy me," said Aunt Becky firmly. "Give us some ham and eggs and a cup of strong coffee."

"And some apple sass, too," added Uncle Bob.

"Bob, you might just as well learn to say 'apple sauce' right here in Cleveland, for it's wonderful poor manners to say 'apple sass,' and I'd be bored to death if you'd say it at some big doings in St. Louis," corrected Aunt Becky, dipping her knife into a bowl of horse-radish and swallowing a good mouthful.

"Wal, you needn't cry and git hysterical about it," said her husband testily, as the poor woman coughed and wiped her eyes, shouting for a "tin-cup of water."

"La, I thought that was mashed turnips, but it's horse-radish or some other hot stuff, and I got some of it in my throat," she sputtered apologetically; but Uncle Bob, shocked and disgusted, ignored her sufferings and turned to the proprietor.

"Mebbe you'll tell us the principal points of in-



terest in this here town," he said. "We only have a few hours to spend here."

"Well, I'd advise you to go to that corner and take a car coming in this direction and you'll be able to



*Aunt Becky makes a mistake, and takes horse-radish for turnips.*

see the famous Euclid Avenue and the home of the Rockefellers. You can ride for miles and miles, and then return the same way and get off close to the

dock, where you can get the boat for Detroit," said the man politely.

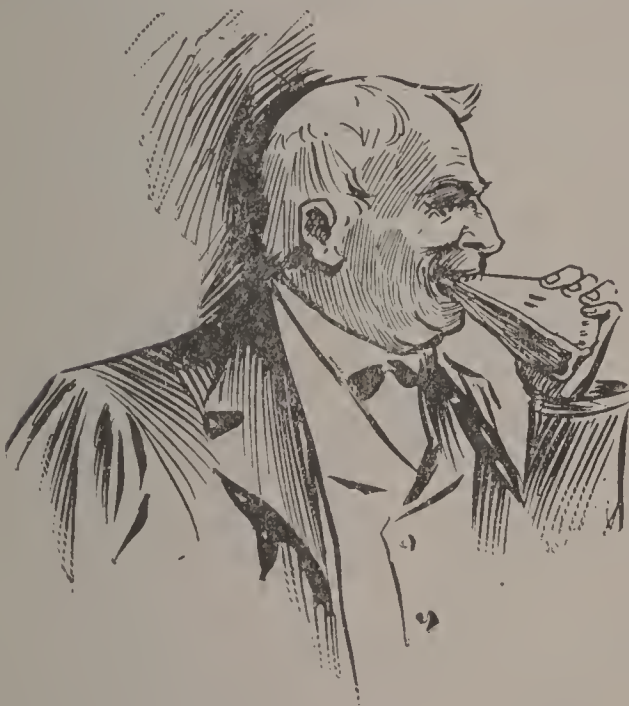
"So this is the town where John D. Rockefeller lives—the man who is worth \$300,000,000!" exclaimed Uncle Bob, in a mocking tone. "Some people say he made it out of oil, but I say he made every cent of it out of the people. The country is three hundred million times poorer on account of his existence. That's plain, authentic, good common hoss sense."

"But, Uncle Bob, there are always two sides to every story," said Ruth. "Only a few days ago I heard you tell Auntie that you remembered when oil was sold for one dollar a gallon, and you were thankful to get it at that price, because at that time its use was an innovation in lighting houses—one that could not be dispensed with. I read in this morning's paper that oil is now ten cents a gallon. That would make it ninety cents cheaper than it formerly was, and if Mr. Rockefeller has made this great amount of wealth from the sale of oil, the public has saved even a greater sum. Every time we buy a gallon of oil, we save ninety cents."

"It beats all what a head for figgers that gal has," declared Uncle Bob admiringly. "A feller can't very well argue on a subject when somebody's allus ready to fire figgers and statistics at him.

Wal, mebbe he hain't no happier with his millions than I be with my old homestead and hundred and forty acres, and a trusting wife that's a good cook, and a smart, purty, leetle darter."

"You have a nice town here," observed Aunt Becky to the proprietor, while Uncle Bob made a voracious onslaught upon a piece of apple pie.



*Uncle Bob eats Cleveland apple pie with a relish.*

"Yes, it's the largest city in Ohio, although Cincinnati is going to tack on some of her big suburbs and try to beat us at the next census. Cleveland is growing almost as fast as Chicago."

"Chicago! Why I thought that town was burnt up in 1871!" cried Uncle Bob.

"So it was; but when a city burns down in the West a still handsomer one grows up over its hot ashes apparently in a day," said the man with a look of pride.

"I'm mighty glad we stopped at Cleveland," said Uncle Bob, gathering his bundles. "It's a city with a marvelous future."

“According to statistics, it had only twelve families during the Revolutionary War, and four old bachelors,” said the proprietor. “With such a start and one-fourth of the men bachelors, I think the growth of the city has been wonderful.”

“There were two brothers named Hicock,” continued the proprietor, “and one of them changed his name to Henderson so there wouldn’t be two families of the same name in Cleveland. They’d surely run out of names if they tried that now. The town increased four souls in 1796, fifteen in 1797, seven in 1800, and so on until in 1866 when it increased to 67,500. At the present time it has over 400,000 inhabitants.”

At that moment Aunt Becky’s eagle eye ran across a sign at the side of the room, which contained the words: “To the Bar.”

“I’d like to look into a court of equity,” she interrupted. “Do you admit women to the bar here, Mister?”

“Yes, pass on in,” answered the proprietor, somewhat puzzled.

She opened the door and looked into the adjoining apartment, but closed it with a crash, screaming in terror: “It’s a saloon! Here we’ve been eating in the front part of a saloon and I never knowed it! What would the Skowhegan Temperance Society



say if they knowed their recording secretary had been in a saloon. Oh what shall I do?"

"Jist keep it under your hat, Becky, and they'll never know it," said Uncle Bob, laughing until his face displayed symptoms of apoplexy, as he followed her into the street.

They took a car as directed, saw Euclid Avenue at its best, and rode to the end of the line. They then returned and were soon at the D. & C. wharf, where Uncle Bob purchased transportation on the City of Cleveland, for Detroit.

In an hour the great steamer appeared, and Uncle Bob and his charges moved laboriously along with the crowd across the gang-plank to the spacious lower deck, with its highly-polished brass and woodwork, as neat and spotless as a New England kitchen.

"I was allus afeerd of the water; but it's clean. That's something many of the cities we have visited would do well to pattern after," said Aunt Becky venomously. "I have heard how they inviggle people into them tur'ble saloons in big cities, and now I kin see how easily a innocent woman kin be led astray."

"You needn't ever be afraid, Becky. Nobody would ever molest you, unless you had your reticule along," said Uncle Bob, laughing until his life part-

ner declared that he was not only a fool, but crazy in the bargain and far from being a gentleman.

Finally the gang-plank was put in place, the whistle sounded, and the City of Cleveland began her trip to beautiful Detroit, the City of the Straits.

So exhilarating was the breeze that stole over the deck from the rolling waters of the blue lake, and so deliciously novel the motion of the steamer and the throbbing of the engine, Aunt Becky was soon her natural self, and arm in arm the three tourists from Maine explored the beautiful boat from bow to stern.

“It’s just like a fairy palace!” exclaimed Ruth, as she sank back in one of the luxurious chairs in the salon and gazed at the gilded ceiling, studded with artistic electroliers. “It is a city in itself and there are no accommodations it does not possess.”

“It’s jist as grand as the barge which that brazen Cleopatra sailed down the river in to meet Mark Antony. I allus felt so sorry for poor Susan B. Antony, after Mark acted so scandalous,” said Aunt Becky from another comfortable chair.

“They’ve even got a barber shop and saloon,” said Uncle Bob unconsciously.

“A saloon!” shrieked Aunt Becky, suddenly sitting erect and staring as if a ghost had confronted her. “If I had knowed they run a saloon on this

ship I'd never have come. They must be fearful drinkers in this wild West country. If it wasn't that we was in sich a hurry, I'd make 'em turn right around and take me back."

"Wal, I guess it won't hurt you any. You got over your saloon experience in Cleveland all right," laughed Uncle Bob. "It's way down on the first floor under the water and you're as safe as when you used to go and set a hull afternoon at a stretch with Elvira Dingle next door to a saloon. Besides they don't call it a saloon here—they call it a buf-fet. I thought mebbe it might be a kind of a museum or a place where they played hand-ball or wrestled, and so I peeped in and, sure enough, it was a saloon."

"I'll warrant fur you, Bob Springer! If there was an old cork that had the smell of brandy on it, hid away in the cellar, under a bin of pertaters, you'd be sure to find it and haul it out to git a sniff at it. Jist let me catch you going down stairs to that buf-fet—or whatever you call it, and you'll be sorry. Giving an iniquity a French name don't make it any more virtuous in the eyes of upright, Christian people."

"Here's a piano, and while nobody is about, we can have a little music. Come on, Uncle, and sing us a song," said Ruth, who always made it a point to





*Ruth plays while Uncle Bob amuses the passengers singing "Tyranty."*



prevent the numerous arguments between the old people from becoming too heated.

With light, graceful touch her shapely fingers skimmed the keys once or twice and then launched forth upon a tune so old that it might be considered one of the folk-lore ballads of certain portions of Maine.

Uncle Bob's eyes sparkled as he walked to the piano and, clearing his throat, sang with much feeling:

"Where have you been, Tyranty, my son?

Where have you been, my sweet little one?"

"I have been to Grandmother's, Mother, make my bed soon,  
I am sick to the heart and tired to lie doon."

The pathos of the song appealed to the passengers, many of whom crowded around Uncle Bob, urging him to continue. It did not take much urging, however, and pleased with the attention shown him, he continued:

"What'd you have for your supper, Tyranty, my son?

What'd you have for your supper, my sweet little one?"

"Striped eels fried in butter, Mother, make my bed soon,  
I am sick to the heart and tired to lie doon."

"Where'll you have your bed made, Tyranty, my son?

Where'll you have your bed made, my sweet little one?"

"In the corner of the churchyard, Mother, make my bed soon,  
I am sick to the heart and tired to lie doon."

"That sounds like home—sweet home," said Aunt Becky, with tears in her eyes. "Even if we do live at Skowhegan, we have sympathetic hearts, and I

hope we'll never have to leave the dear old homestead."

Ruth softly closed the piano and they went out on the deck, where the purser, who had become interested in the whole-hearted old people, but more so in their beautiful ward, showed them many things of interest.

"I'm so glad you've got a hurricane deck, Mister," said Aunt Becky. "Don't furgit to let us know if a storm comes up, so we can run up there and be safe. In Skowhegan we allus go down cellar when it storms. I'm glad you hain't got the hurricane deck down stairs close to that pernicious saloon, for I'd be mortal afeard that the heavens would blast us."

Their supper in the cafe was also a great treat to them and they were all tranquil and happy when they returned to the upper deck, where Uncle Bob went to the writing-room and wrote a postal card to Hi Pratt, heading it, "Lake Erie, U. S. A."

When they were shown their state-room, Aunt Becky's surprise again overleaped restraint.

"For the land sake, do you call this a state-room? I don't see nothing stately about it," she burst forth. "There ain't a thing in it but two shelves fur beds, a wash basin and three pegs. This bunk looks as heathenish as Mis' Pratt's spare bed and I can't fur

the life of me see how a person kin keep from rolling out. Why, if Bob fell off that top shelf, he'd be liable to break his collar bone."

"When I crawl in you kin pile all our traps on t'other side and pen me in," suggested Uncle Bob, scratching his bald spot as if he, too, were puzzled.

"We can't stay in this pigeon-hole all night," vigorously declared Aunt Becky.

"Maybe you could sleep down in the salon on those easy chairs," said the boy who had conducted them to the state-room.

"None of your impudence, young man, or I'll have you reported," threatened Aunt Becky, too angry to speak coherently. "I'd rather sleep out in the gutter than in a saloon. Do I look like a saloon bum?"

"I s'pose the boy thought if you could eat in a saloon, it wouldn't hurt you to sleep in one either," chuckled Uncle Bob.

"Auntie, the boy didn't say the 'saloon,' but the 'salon'—the nice big room where the piano is," explained Ruth.

"La, we can't stay here anyway," continued the old lady, her rage somewhat mollified. "How on earth could three people ever git ready fur bed without gitting all tangled up? You know, Bob, it takes a hull ten-acre field fur you to git your trousers off,

and I don't propose to have my eye kicked out while you're doing it."

"Wal, rather than have so much fuss about it, I'll take the room next door," said Uncle Bob. "Like as not Becky'll be restless anyway and roll and holler all night."

"The lower berth in the next room is occupied, but I'll see if you can have the upper one," said the boy accommodatingly.

"Wal, I'd rather risk my neck there than to have Becky on that trundle-bed shelf underneath me, reading the riot act to me all night 'cause she lays hard," said Uncle Bob peevishly, and in a few moments he was deposited in the upper berth in the adjoining room where he soon fell asleep.

In the middle of the night, the whistle blew a thrilling blast and some gigantic force began a bombardment at Aunt Becky's door. Almost helpless with fright, she opened it and beheld a spectacle that forced from her a series of blood-curdling shrieks. It was Uncle Bob, in a scant robe de nuit, wearing his hat and holding his luggage, with a life-preserver encircling his well filled, corpulent form.

"Becky! Becky! Git yer things and don't stop to dress. The biler's busted and the ship's on fire or



else stranded. Hurry up! Where is the fire escape!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

Two Dayton, Ohio, girls across the way, peered out of their room in alarm, but when they saw frightened Uncle Bob they screamed and slammed



*Grabbing the other fellow's pants, Uncle Bob shouted, "Becky, Ruth, don't stop to dress! The biler's busted!"*

the door, preferring to die in the seclusion of their stuffy apartment, than to reach a place of safety in his company. Other excited passengers peeped at the frantic old couple, but a panic was averted

by the opportune appearance of the captain, who bawled out:

“What in the world is the matter?”

“That’s just what we want to know,” said Uncle Bob. “We heard that dodgasted distressful whistle and was jist gitting ready to pile out of the ship.”

“Every time a vessel meets another, it blows a signal—didn’t you know that? What do you mean by stirring up such an uproar—eh? There isn’t a particle of danger!” roared the captain, his habitually stern face relaxing into a smile for the first time in many days.

“You’ll be the death of me yet, Bob Springer,” gasped Aunt Becky. “Like as not you had one of them nightmares ag’in. Do take that boa-constrictor from around your stomach. It looks fur all the world like one of Widder Slant’s doughnuts.”

“I never put in sich a gormed night in all my life,” wailed the old man. “That person on the lower shelf laid so still, I got it into my head it was a woman, and I couldn’t go to sleep. Jist as I was fixing to take a leetle peep to satisfy my curiosity, that dodgasted whistle blew off and I fell sprawling on the floor and struck my head on that marble sink. The person on the lower shelf was a man, and although I hollered and made a heap of noise,

thinking I was saving his life, he never even rolled over or woke up."

"It serves you right fur being so curious," retorted Aunt Becky wrathfully. "You're allus running on me fur being so narvous, and yet you're allus gitting into hot water with your rambunctiousness. Everybody on this ship saw me without my switch on and I'm bored to death. I'm going to dress and set up on the shelf the rest of the night. Ruth is curled up there under the covers, laughing to kill herself. I never seen sich recklessness in all my life!"

"Say, old man, if you don't bring back my clothes and gold watch and pocket-book, I'll have you put in chains!" shouted Uncle Bob's room-mate, a giant, with hard, cruel features. "I've been in the detective business for thirty odd years, but I never saw a man with as much gall as you've got."

"Forgive me, Mister, I thought they was mine," stammered Uncle Bob, shaking worse than ever as he delivered back the goods, and collected his own belongings in dire haste.

"I guess I'll go back to Becky's room and git on the top shelf. I'd lots rather hear her carry on than risk my life with one of them fellers that hunt down human souls," he said as he walked away.

In a few moments more he was sound asleep in his wife's state-room, in spite of the fact that she'

abused him at intervals of fifteen minutes all night long for making them objects of ridicule and shortening her life ten years by the scare.

Shortly after sunrise the boat turned into the Detroit River and the three New Englanders repaired to the lower deck, where they viewed the enchanting scenery on either side, too much delighted to dwell upon the embarrassing circumstances of the night before. The water was filled with craft of every description, and from the pavilions in the distance bright-colored pennons fluttered in the breeze. Nature smiled propitiously when they landed at the beautiful City of the Straits and threaded their way through a mass of vehicles to Jefferson Avenue, where a cabman shouted:

“Here’s a comfortable hack to any part of the city! Get right in.”

“Where would you advise us to go so we kin rest up a leetle before doing the town?” inquired Uncle Bob.

“Windsor is a good place to rest. I’ll take you to the ferry for fifty cents apiece,” replied the man.

“Wal, I guess we’ll try it,” replied Uncle Bob, storing away his goods in the cab.

A short ride brought them to the foot of Woodward Avenue, where crowds of people were passing



in and out of what seemed to them a low, frame shed.

“The summer kitchen must be in the front part of the house,” said Uncle Bob, as he proceeded towards the open doorway.

But again their dismay knew no bounds when two men of sour visage, attired in uniforms, rushed upon them and seizing their bundles, carried them into an office, where they began to tear them open. Uncle Bob’s valise, which was in a dilapidated condition, although it had been fastened with carpet-rags, gave a tremendous yawn and all his paper collars and other wearing apparel rolled out upon the floor.

Aunt Becky screamed as usual and Uncle Bob, having recovered his senses, assumed the aggressive and seized the offender by the throat, but fell backwards over a table covered with parcels, losing his hat in the confusion.

“How dare you hold a man up in broad daylight!” he yelled, crimson to the roots of his hair, as he awkwardly scuffled to his feet. “I’ll have the law on you as sure as you’re a sneaking reprobate!”

A younger man simultaneously attempted to rip open Aunt Becky’s remaining band-box, but she brought down her cotton umbrella upon his head with drastic violence.

“What in the dickens is the matter with you people?” rasped Uncle Bob’s antagonist, halting to re-adjust his neckwear. “Aren’t you going over to Windsor?”

“I was going to the Windsor, but if they have hired hands stationed outside to rob their customers before they git in, I don’t want to patronize it. I don’t see how they do very much business if they go through people’s traps that way. Now if you want any of them dirty clothes of mine, you’re welcome to ’em, but don’t git fresh with Becky’s things.”

“You know you have to pay duty on everything that crosses the Detroit River, for Windsor is a Canadian town,” said the young fellow whom Aunt Becky had recklessly attempted to flay.

“Gee whizz! I thought Windsor was a hotel!” replied Uncle Bob, again surprised. “Of course we don’t want to go over to Canady. We’re American citizens and our feet shall never tread furreign soil. If they ever annex Canady, we’ll probably go over on a leetle visit, providing the officers don’t strip our clothes off before we git a chance to buy tickets.”

“Windsor looks like a pretty place from here—very romantic and distinguished,” said Ruth. “I should like to see the King’s subjects and wish we could go over there.”

“You’ll see more of the King’s subjects on this side than you will over there,” said an interested bystander. “They’ll all be living on this side in a few years more. The Canadians look similar to the Yankees. They generally carry their noses higher, walk a little bit straighter and are more inclined to toe in, however. Whenever you hear a man say ‘a-boat’ for ‘about,’ put it down in your note-book he’s from Canada, and when one says, ‘I see him clim a tree yesterday,’ ten chances to one he’s from Michigan.”

“I s’pose every state has strange expressions, but they sound powerful queer to people that’s allus lived in Maine,” said Uncle Bob. “Come on, Ruth, we ain’t going to pay dooty jist to go over to see Windsor Castle. Becky, you’re allus talking about doing your dooty and I’ll be hanged if you ever use that word ag’in I’ll fight, as sure as the Sabbath comes on Sunday.”

They strolled up Woodward Avenue to the City Hall, the heart of the municipality, where they stopped and looked about them for a few minutes.

“The streets of this town put me in mind of a crazy quilt,” said Uncle Bob. “I don’t believe I could go more than a hundred yards without losing my bearings.”

“The city is laid out according to an old French

grant," exclaimed a man who was waiting for a car.

"The American people seem to take a delight in imitating the French," said Uncle Bob in disgust. "I don't see why they wanted to make them streets run every which way like streaks of lightning jist 'cause the French do it. They're enough to make a Skowhegan man, that's used to following in one straight and narrow way, dizzy."

"Cadillac and his French comrades founded Detroit, you know," said the stranger. "The English seized the town from the French and afterwards the Poles took possession of it."

"I heard that Detroit had a very interesting history," said Ruth. "It has an individuality all its own, like Philadelphia, and I'm favorably impressed with its beauty."

"Just go over to the City Hall and say that to Mayor Maybury and he'll pay all your expenses while you're in town," said the man, with a look of pride, which indicated that he too was a Detroiter. "When the Municipal Art League gets to work, there won't be a signboard in the city or a bunch of fennel as big as a Canadian penny, and any man will be arrested that strikes a match on a brick wall. They're going to work hand in hand with the Social Purity Movement and a fellow will have to



go over to Walkerville to get a beer or say 'Pooh.' ”

“I'm glad there is one city that is elevating the tastes and morals of its people,” said Aunt Becky, very much pleased.

“I've heard Detroit was so clean that a person could almost eat lunch on the street,” said Ruth.

“A person would have had to possess a strong stomach to do that last winter, when the streets were torn up for months and months,” laughed the stranger. “The town isn't so clean as it was during Pingree's administration—for one thing the people have found out that it's cheaper to burn soft coal.”

“That big building across the way looks like it had been steeped in soft coal smoke for a good many centuries,” said Uncle Bob.

“That's the City Hall,” said the Detroiter, with commendable modesty. “Whenever they have a convention here they stick out an electric welcome sign to jolly the strangers a little. You see the text to-day is: ‘Welcome Cut Rate Ticket Brokers.’ ”

“I see,” said Uncle Bob, squinting with all his might to get a good view.

“They're going to have the city hall enlarged so there will be more room to make ‘welcome’ displays,” added the man sarcastically.

“Then I guess I'd better tell Mahala Ann Wattles not to hold their re-union here until the building is

completed," said Uncle Bob, with a broad smile. "She is president of the Skowhegan Amalgamated Co-Operative Federation of the Secular and Scholastic Societies for the Scientific Study of the Transmission of Tuberculosis by Library Circulation."

"You'd better call and see the Mayor," urged the Detrouiter, laughing heartily. "He's very cordial to strangers and makes more speeches than any other mayor in the United States. He is also a bachelor, and you will find him a pleasant, intelligent and social gentleman."

"Wal, I'm a politician myself and I'd jist as soon go as not," said Uncle Bob, crossing the street and entering the building, where he soon found the Mayor's office. His private secretary was out, so Uncle Bob, followed by Aunt Becky and Ruth, entered the inner sanctum, where they discovered a man in a Prince Albert coat poring over a copy of "Paradise Regained." He was short and corpulent, with an irregular nose, a round, good-natured, rosy face, and shrewd, sparkling eyes, sheltered by massive eyebrows that denoted admirable executive ability.

"Be you the Mayor of Detroit?" asked Uncle Bob, forgetting to remove his hat.

"I am," was the brief but polite reply.

"I am Uncle Bob Springer, of Skowhegan, Maine,

and this is my wife, Aunt Becky Springer, and Ruth Burton, my adopted darter. We're on our way to the St. Louis Fair in old Missouri, and we thought



*“Be you the mayor of Detroit?”*

we'd jist drop in and tell you that Detroit is the finest town we've ever seen next to Portland, Maine.”

He gave the Mayor's plump little hand a pump-

handle shake that made their faces glow with the unwarranted exertion.

“That is very kind of you,” replied the Mayor, smiling blandly. “Will you have chairs?”



*“I never saw so many dod-gasted pretty gals.”*

“No, I reckon we’d better keep our shanks moving if we want to do Detroit properly,” replied Uncle Bob. “If we set down we’ll git to talking and never know when to cut it out.”



“It takes several days to see all the beauties of Detroit,” said the Mayor pleasantly.

“Wal, we’ve seen the City Hall and the Mayor and them’s the principal ones,” said Uncle Bob, with a polite bow. “I can’t understand why you live in single blessedness, with so many tarnal purty gals everywhere. I thought to myself—but I didn’t tell Becky—that I never seen so many dodgasted likely-looking gals in my life as I’ve seen on my way from the ship to this here town hall.”

“Detroit is famed for handsome women, as well as for its beautiful streets and avenues,” said the Mayor proudly.

“Then you either must be turrible hard to please or else hain’t got no heart at all,” said Uncle Bob playfully. “But you’ve got a good, honest, pleasing face, and if you’ve got any subjects that don’t like you, it’s mebbe ’cause they’re jealous of you. You can’t fool this down East Yankee on human nature. Wal, if you’ll kindly tell us a few places to go, we’ll set out.”

“You might visit the Federal building and Grand Circus Park, and take a car to Belle Isle, the greatest natural pleasure ground in the world,” said the Mayor. “Anyone will tell you where to find the most interesting places, for our citizens are very accommodating to strangers.

“We thought they were in New York, too,” replied Aunt Becky, grimly. “But we were mightily disappointed—”

“Wal, I’m much obleeged to you, and I’d be glad to have you come to Skowhegan on a wedding tour and make my old homestead your headquarters. The people are very sociable there, jist your style of folks—goodbye,” said Uncle Bob, again wringing the hand of the first man of Detroit and shuffling out of the comfortable apartments.

“I should think he’d have offered you his rig, after all that spread of yours, Bob,” said Aunt Becky reprovingly.

“He’s a mighty fine feller and not a bit stuck-up,” declared Uncle Bob earnestly. “He’d be just the kind of a husband Libbie Jones would enjoy. My, wouldn’t she strut around like a turkey in buck-wheat clover, if she got to be the Mayoress of Detroit!”

They soon found the magnificent Federal Building and tramped along through its wide halls and corridors, delighted at everything they saw. On the judicial floor they met a colored man, who seemed to be in authority, and he kindly showed them the United States Circuit Court Room, said to be the finest in America.

“This room is only kept for display,” said another

Detroiter, who was expatiating upon the merits of the building to some visiting friends. "It's a marvelous work of art, but its acoustic properties are so bum a fellow can fire off a cannon at the rear of the room and the judge couldn't hear it."

"I don't see nothing commendable about a place that ain't useful," declared Uncle Bob. "They ort to turn the room into an amateur music hall."

"This is the United States Marshal's office, and that man with the gray hair is the Marshal," said the colored man, as they moved down the gallery.

"He looks a heap better than old Bill Schwartz, our marshal at Skowhegan," declared Aunt Becky, covertly admiring the distinguished-looking official. "He must be a purty husky man or he'd wear himself out making arrests in a big town like this."

"And this is the United States District Attorney's office. The man without any hair is the main guy, and the one with specs on is his assistant; the little black-eyed fellow is the head clerk and knows everything from all the technicalities of an admiralty case down to the necessary ingredients for a chop-suey."

They must be smart fellows or they couldn't hold their jobs," said Uncle Bob admiringly. "Now I guess we've seen everything but the garret, and we'd better go. Thank you very much, Mister."

They left the imposing structure and, as directed, turned north, where they soon came to a large building, which Uncle Bob learned was the famous Hotel Cadillac.

“That must be a very old boarding-house, if Cadillac used to run it,” said Uncle Bob.

“Oh, Uncle, see the park with the beautiful fountains and flower-beds, as far as the eye can reach,” interrupted Ruth, her face lighting up with keen pleasure.

A short walk brought them to the Grand Circus Park, where Aunt Becky again showed her disappointment.

“I don’t see no animals and any fool knows there can’t be a grand circus without monkeys and elephants and alligators and sich,” she snapped.

“Wal, some of them individuals setting along there on them benches don’t look as if their monkey ancestors were very fur remote,” said Uncle Bob, with a grin. “It’s a kind of a big two-ring circus after all. I s’pose the people out of jobs keep them seats warm in the day time, and the people that want to make dates take possession of ’em in the evening.”

“Well, anyway, it’s more respectable than loafing around on store-boxes and whittling like they do in Skowhegan,” said Aunt Becky. “It’s a purty place,



and if I lived here I'd set by that founting all day long and patch and darn."

"A tramp who was smoking a cob-pipe, close to a bed of yellow tulips, told them how to get to Belle Isle, and before long they were seated upon



*Weary Willy directed them to Belle Isle.*

the smoking seat of a trailer on their way to the most charming spot in the Wolverine state. Jefferson Avenue, with its pretty homes, its expansive lawns, and venerable trees, drew forth admiring exclamations from Ruth, and by the time they

reached the Belle Isle Approach her vocabulary was exhausted.

They engaged a carriage and were driven across the great bridge to Belle Isle, where for two hours they rode through park and glade, through picnic grounds and tangled forest, by artificial lakes, and across babbling brooks, with the bracing air from



*“There aint any more pisen ivy here than there is Floridy moss. Look out there, you, and stop your spoonin’; can’t you read that pisen ivy sign?”*

the shining waters beyond, filling them with manifold ecstacies.

“It’s a wonderful place and there’s room for all the people in Detroit and Skowhegan, too, to spend a day here and wrastle around just as if they was in the country, and not be crowded, either,” said Uncle Bob. “You don’t see any ‘keep off the grass’ signs and everything seems to be fur the accom-

modation of the people. A feller don't feel afeard to cough out loud if he wants to. The only prohibitory signs I seen were the ones that say, 'Beware of the Poison Ivy.' My eyes are sharp enough to see that there ain't any poison ivy here any more than there is Floridy moss, and my intellect is sharp enough to comprehend that the foxy authorities use them signs fur a blind. They should read: 'This is a nice place to spoon, but don't do it, fur you might git caught.' "

At the suggestion of one of the park tenders, they took the ferry and returned to the city, getting off at the foot of Third Street, satisfied that they had seen Detroit's chief attractions.

When they reached the Michigan Central Depot, they found the general confusion that follows the arrival and departure of trains. People were bidding one another goodbye, trucks heaped high with trunks and valises were being wheeled to the baggage-car, and the transfer men were shouting as if to drown the clamorous omnibus drivers and cabmen in waiting outside.

"This way to the Chicago train! Everybody show tickets!" shouted the tall, wiry gate man.

Uncle Bob, who imagined the curt command was prompted by a desire to awe the travelers with the speaker's superiority, playfully attempted to



push through the iron enclosure into the station yard; but the gate-keeper pulled him back, saying:

“You can’t go through till you show your ticket!”

“Mister, I bought my ticket at Skowhegan, which takes me and Becky and Ruth to the great show way out yonder in old Missouri,” drawled Uncle Bob.

“That don’t make a bit of difference; you must show your ticket.”

“You fellers are gitting so tarnal officious you’ll git your heads battered out of shape some day. You’re uncommonly bossy and look as if you hain’t had a thing to eat fur a week. If you was down to my old homestead, I’d give you all the pork and beans and pertaters you could eat.”

“Will you please move along, sir, and let the people pass? It’s only two minutes till the train pulls out,” said the man, having descended from his lofty pedestal of authority.

“Yes, and all the sweet-milk and butter-milk and fresh butter you want from our old Jersey cow.”

“If you don’t move along, I will be compelled to call a policeman and have you arrested,” said the man in despair.

“Yes, and all the fresh eggs you can eat—real hen’s eggs,” continued Uncle Bob.

By that time the impatient crowd had pushed



them through the gate, and a colored porter pointed out the coach they were to take.

“Everybody and everything seems to be impatient to git to that Wonder City; even the iron hoss to this here train is puffing and snorting as though she didn’t want to wait fur us. Here we be, conductor—let her go!” cried the farmer from the old Pine Tree State.

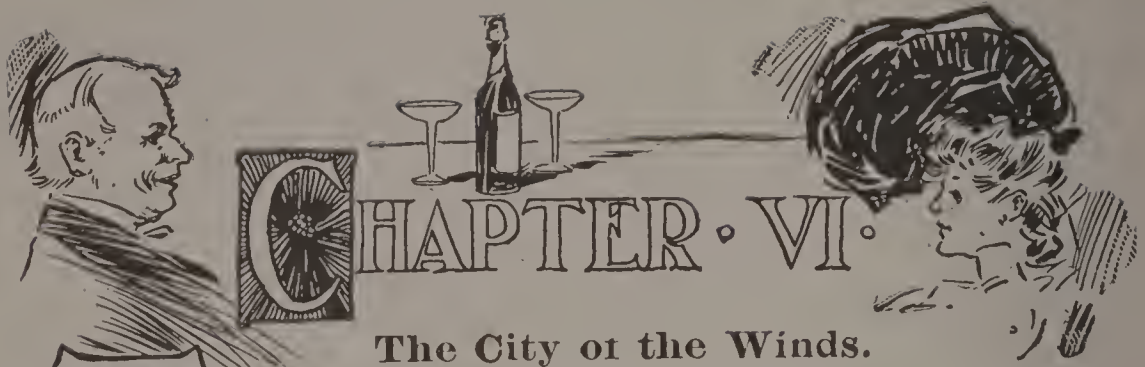
“Bob, it was a shame the way you treated that poor man at the gate,” said Aunt Becky, fixing herself comfortably in one of the seats.

“It served him right,” replied Uncle Bob. “The idee of him being so inquisitive as to make us show our tickets. I hope we don’t look like we’d steal a ride on this here train, do we?”

“You do act so foolish sometimes,” continued his wife, with a distressed look. “Pray don’t work yourself up to a fever heat or people will think you’ve never been away from home till now.”

“Wal, I reckon they won’t have to look at you but once to tell that, Becky,” laughed the old farmer, with playful sarcasm, as happy as a schoolboy who is about to leave for a long summer vacation.

A sharp whistle from the engine, and the train was soon speeding towards the enterprising metropolis of the Great West.



**T**HE monotony of the long trip, however, became perceptible in an hour or two, and it was Ruth who attempted a diversion.

“Say, Uncle, are you good at conundrums?”

“Wal, yes,—that’s my long suit,” was the ready reply.

“Why didn’t they play cards in the ark?”

“Oh, that’s easy! ’Cause Adam set on the deck.”

“Bob Springer, ain’t you ashamed. Adam was never in the ark. It was Noah that set on the deck. I should think you’d be ashamed to make fun of sacred things,” was Aunt Becky’s caustic reproof.

“Becky can’t ever see the point of a joke,” said Uncle Bob, shaking his fat sides with boisterous laughter. He knew that his wife’s views of rectitude were uncommonly rigid, and if mildly attacked would lead to a warm argument, so he continued:

“Say, Becky, who was the first man to have a seasonable joke played on him?”

"I don't know, and I don't want to know."

"It was Lot, when his wife was turned into a pillar of salt."

"Say, Uncle, why is it silly for a young man to be ashamed to rent a dress suit?" propounded Ruth.

"Give it up."

"Didn't Job, one of the wealthiest and most powerful men of his time, rent his clothes?"

"That ain't bad," replied Uncle Bob. "Say, Becky, what would you have to do in order to become a beast of burden suitable for the Sahara Desert?"

Aunt Becky gave him a vindictive glance and glared out of the window.

"You'd have to git a leetle hump on you," laughed Uncle Bob, wiping his eyes with a red bandana kerchief.

Well, Bob Springer, I never heard sich nonsense in all my life," declared the long-suffering woman, unable to control herself longer. "The idee of comparing your companion to a camel!"

"She ain't got as much sense of humor as a slaw-cutter," laughed Uncle Bob. "Some people are color blind to humor and they're allus the ones that git old the quickest, and their mouths draw down and git green in the corners."

"Let's stop our fooling, Uncle, for it vexes



Auntie," suggested Ruth, her dark eyes dancing with mirth.

"Jist one minute," insisted her guardian. "Say, gals, in what month do women talk the least?"



*"The idee of comparing your companion to a camel. I haint got no hump, Bob Springer."*

"I s'pose in January, when the men are laying around the house all the time, 'cause there ain't much to do; a woman don't git much chance to git a word in edgeways then," snapped Aunt Becky.



“Wrong, Becky. They talk less in February, ’cause it’s the shortest month.”

“I don’t believe in them conundrums at all. None of ’em are so and it’s specially wicked to make slighty allusions to the Bible,” flared Aunt Becky. “Don’t you remember in the Scriptures, how two she-bears came out of the bushes and eat up forty-two children fur saying irreverent things to Elisha?”

“Yes, but they eat the kids up fur calling Elisha a ‘baldhead,’ ” replied Uncle Bob glibly. “According to that, it must be a dreadful sin to make fun of a baldheaded man and you’d better be careful, Becky.”

“We must be half way to Chicago,” said Ruth, changing the subject.

“I dread Chicago,” replied Aunt Becky, shuddering as if her spine were being exposed to a needle spray. “Deacon Jones told me that New York City was an Epworth League in comparison to that wicked town. Bob, you must hold one hand on your hip pocket to guard your purse and the other on your Waterbury watch. Thieves hang around the depot like blue jays in a cherry tree and a person is apt to git murdered in their bed and never know anything about it.”

“Wal, don’t borry trouble, Becky. Never worry

about the measles till your face breaks out," said Uncle Bob, a trifle uneasily.

"When Chicago was burnt down, thirty-three years ago, I remember Deacon Weaver said that it was a judgment sent on the wicked city and that the Lord had wiped it off the face of the earth like he did Sodom. You know Sodom never even sprouted a blade of grass after the big fire there," croaked Aunt Becky.

"Chicago has doubled her population a number of times since the fire, thus beating the world's record as a growing city, which shows conclusively that she wasn't destroyed for her wickedness," said Ruth.

"I wish we could see a leetle of old Injianny," broke in Uncle Bob abruptly.

"Now, I expect we'll see all we want to of it at the World's Fair," said Aunt Becky, slightly elevating her nose.

"Indiana is a grand old state and has a romantic history. I should like to pass through it, too," said Ruth.

"Ruth allus had a liking fur that state ever since she read 'The Gentleman from Injianny,'" said Aunt Becky. "Of course, we don't know anything about the state, only what we've read, and like as not there may be many good Hoosiers too."

“Injianny is the biggest hot-bed of politics in the Union,” argued Uncle Bob. “If it wasn’t fur politics and quinine and the discovery of natural gas, that commonwealth would have been nothing but a malarial swamp by this time. They have their court-houses enclosed in public squares, and hitching-racks strung all around, so that a feller can’t git into the building until he goes through a sort of a barnyard. It’s a fickle old state and allus jiggles along like it was stringhalt. It didn’t know whether to secede or not until the Civil War broke out, and it had to do one or t’other. Although it give one of its noble sons, Ben Harrison, a turrible boost and sent him to the White House, it turned right around and gave its support to Grover Cleveland at the next election, and left Ben with his head in the mud and his feet bubbling up. If it’s sich a romantic state, its surprising that everybody wants to move out of it, and that when a man does git out he fights if you call him a Hoosier.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said a commercial traveler, who sat with his back towards Uncle Bob. “I happen to come from that unjustly maligned state and I’m proud of it. It looks like a cramped-up place on the map, but it has nearly 200,000 more people than the great state of Michigan, Upper Peninsula and all, and twice as many daily papers.

“Oh, I didn’t mean to run down the Hoosiers,” apologized Uncle Bob. “I was jist trying to start an argument. The state certainly has a number of bright sons and daughters, and is making wonderful advancement.”

“The Indiana people are not rough, although the sobriquet ‘Hoosier’ suggests barbarian bullyism,” resumed the man, ignoring Uncle Bob’s apology. “They always sit back and laugh in a superior manner when outsiders twit them about their peculiar twang and manners, for they well know that it was their early writers who first held them up to ridicule. Now a score or more of younger Hoosier writers are attempting to lift the veil of obloquy that rests upon their people and in so doing have made Indiana one of the acknowledged seats of literature. No one but a prejudiced or ignorant person makes fun of the Hoosiers any more and it’s quite the fad for aspiring literary geniuses to claim that they were born in old Indiana, the fourth state in the Union in educational standing and the fifth in wealth. Many of its families in Vincennes and other historic towns were old and respected when some of the new cities of surrounding states were barren patches. Indianapolis is the largest city in America not situated upon navigable water, and it is a model of beauty and refinement. Laugh at the



Hoosier if you will, but whatever locality you visit, where there is progress and prosperity, you will find that Hoosier brawn and brains helped to build it. Indiana boasts of an old aristocracy. It is the home of Lew Wallace, James Whitcomb Riley and several other prominent writers."

"Ain't it funny that sich big guns as them want to live in a cabbage patch?" said Uncle Bob. "It beats all what taste American people have anyway. Wal, I can't argue with you, young man," continued Uncle Bob helplessly. "You're too well posted on jeography. What's the name of this town we're pulling into now?"

"It's Kalamazoo, the greatest celery belt in the world, which supplies the markets of every civilized nation on the globe. Of course all Kalamazoo celery doesn't come from Kalamazoo; sometimes it is raised in Kansas and other remote states."

"Do tell," said Uncle Bob, rather mystified. "It don't look much like a big field to me, but I expect they have other industries as well."

"Oh yes, it is quite a manufacturing city."

When they reached the first suburb of Chicago---the Garden City, Uncle Bob prepared to get off, saying that he would prefer to walk down town, as his legs were quite stiff from sitting so long in the car.

“Your old farm propellers will be so stiff when you reach your destination you won’t be able to walk for a week,” said the commercial traveler. “Why, man alive, it’s miles and miles to the heart of the city!”

“You don’t say!” exclaimed the old man in amazement. “This city must have built up wonderfully since the great fire. I remember how people all over the world, even little Japan, sent money and provisions to help the sufferers.”

“Yes, our mite society gave a doings at the school-house, and it turned out to be a grand success,” said Aunt Becky, with pride. “Hi Pratt made a speech on ‘Irrigation in Colorado;’ Phoebe Summer-set read an essay on ‘Birds;’ Widder Slant, who was then single, played several tunes on the organ; and the school children spoke dialogues and pieces. I was in one of the red tableaux and represented a Spartan mother giving her son a shield and sword and sending him forth to battle, telling him to return either with the shield or on it. I wore a white sheet and a crown of paper roses and peacock feathers, and we couldn’t git a shield, so we used a wash-biler lid. Don’t you remember, Bob, how lettles Mose Packer, the one who was to represent my warrior son, got skeered at the noise the fuse made and run off the platform bawling? I never was so

plagued in my life. "Well, we contributed nearly eight dollars and sent a bar'l of provisions besides. I remember I made a pound cake and put in a paper of prunes and three hats I trimmed myself."

"That was very kind in the Skowhegan people," said their new acquaintance, exchanging an amused glance with Ruth. "The stricken city needed all the help she could get, as 100,000 people were rendered homeless. Nearly 17,000 buildings and \$290,000,000 worth of property was destroyed. Fifty-six insurance companies were ruined and no one ever knew how many lives were lost. Still, the great fire was what gave Chicago its tremendous boom and advertising. People who could not afford to build and who still held titles to their property, sold their land at good prices; but in many cases squatters poured in and claimed land where the legitimate owners had no documents to prove that they were the owners. In a year's time the city was rebuilt. Yes, the people all over the country were good to the Chicago sufferers, just as they were to the Johnstown and Galveston survivors."

"And all that misery was caused by old Mrs. O'Leary, who went out to milk the cow that kicked over a lamp. I don't believe there ever was a big calamity that some female wasn't at the bottom of it," said Uncle Bob, looking slyly at Aunt Becky.

“Didn’t the man jist git through telling you, Bob, that the Chicago fire was providential and give the town a tremendous boost?” quickly rejoined Aunt Becky. “Nothing great has ever been accomplished that some member of the weaker sect wasn’t entitled to part of the honor, whether she got it or not. Say, Mister, did the poor cow perish in the flames?”

“I don’t believe I ever heard, Madam. You see there were so many incidents of greater moment to record, historians neglected to give a complete biography of the cow,” replied the stranger.

“Didn’t the Indians kill nearly all the Chicago people at one time?” asked Ruth.

“Yes, the early citizens had dreadful trouble with the red men,” was the response. “In 1673 the French visited the spot where Fort Dearborn was afterwards built. This was the germ that developed into the big Windy City. From 1700 to 1770 the Indians made the place an abhorrent spot for the whites, and few people were willing to risk their scalps by settling there. Very frequently the United States troops from Detroit were summoned and there was no end of butchering and torturing. In 1833, just seventy-one years ago, Chicago had only two hundred inhabitants. During that year a little school-house was built to accommodate twenty-five children. A newspaper was established, and



a log jail was built, which was the greatest necessity of all. In 1837 Chicago was incorporated as a city, and in 1839, the first brewery was established. In 1844 the population had increased to 12,000, and when October 8th to 10th, 1871, mighty flames swept over the entire territory between the river and the lake, the population numbered 300,000 people. Her growth has been so remarkable that the whole world points to her as the ideal American city, notable for her indomitable ambition and enterprise; she has nearly 2,000,000 people and in another quarter of a century will doubtless double the number."

"Wal, it 'pears to me that any city would be monstrous big if they took in all the surrounding country fur miles and miles in order to count noses. I have an idee Indianapolis might hustle her a leetle fur size, if she tacked on her gas belt," said Uncle Bob.

When they arrived at the depot, their ears buzzed with the multitudinous noises of the great city, and the same tremor they had experienced upon reaching New York stole over them. The dingy, iron staircase leading to the waiting-rooms rose before them, but a colored man stood at the foot to direct them to a place of exit.

"What a black, awful place it is, and how scared

I am!" gasped Aunt Becky, her startled eyes corroborating her assertion. "It sounds like all the thunder and locomotives and ship-whistles and lumber wagons in the universe was turned loose and running wild."

"There's something American about it, though, and it thrills a feller," declared Uncle Bob, from an opposing standpoint. "It makes a man feel as though he had an aim and was willing to make a bold dash to win his crown."

At that moment a gust of wind took off his hat and hurled it to the other side of the street. He scrambled awkwardly after it, but every time he stooped to pick it up the exasperating gale, too swift for one so corpulent as our hero from the Old Pine Tree state, gave it another toss, rolling and blowing until Michigan Avenue had been reached before he could recover it.

Say, Bob, since you've won your crown, I s'pose you kin set back on your laurels and take it a leetle easy," said Aunt Becky, laughing immoderately, as she overtook him, carrying the luggage he had dropped in the gutter.

"We'll sew a rubber to your hat and snap it around your chin," laughed Ruth.

"I was bound I'd get that dod-gasted hat if I had to run the whole length of the main street," said



*Uncle Bob trying to rescue his hat from a gust of wind.*



Uncle Bob, breathing heavily, and wiping the mud from his battered crown. "It's strange how helpless and unrespectable a man feels without the thing on his head called—hat."

"Especially if the top of his head is as bare as a loaf of home-made bread," spoke Aunt Becky, still laughing.

"I'd rather have a bare head that was my own than an artificial one made out of somebody else's hair," sarcastically replied Uncle Bob. "You'd better watch out, Becky, or the she-bears will git you. Anyway a bald head don't reflect so much on a man as it does on his wife."

"Yours is bare and shiny enough to reflect most anything. In fact, it's more shiny on the surface than it is inside," retaliated Aunt Becky. "If your manners was as polished as your old bald pate, you'd be a heap better off."

"You're dead right, and I might have married one of them Vanderbilt gals instead of Becky Brindle, too. You may put it down as a fact, Becky, you never saw a bald-headed fool."

"Now, Uncle and Auntie, let's don't stop to match wits, for we are all tired and hungry and should find a hotel," interrupted Ruth, when a suitable climax had been attained.

After wandering for another half hour through



the heart of the city, where Uncle Bob commented upon the sky-scrapers and the elevated railways, they found a hotel in Dearborn Street, where accommodations were engaged for the night.

Aunt Becky and Ruth retired early, but Uncle Bob begged to be permitted to enjoy a smoke in the office. Three times he re-filled his corn-cob pipe and smoked with greedy satisfaction; but for once that comforter of his restless meditations proved inefficient. He longed to sniff the mysterious atmosphere that enveloped the vast city, and, although he had been assured by the clerk that careful men did not wander about in the streets of Chicago late at night, his youthful daring seized him like a breeze from Lake Michigan and carried him out to the sidewalk in front of the hotel.

A tall woman in black, wearing a picture hat covered with flame-red poppies, swept from the ladies' entrance at the same time and came straight towards him. His heart palpitated pleasurably, for she came close enough for him to admire the vivid roses that bloomed on her cheeks and the artistic pencil strokes that made her eyebrows strikingly symmetrical. A delicate odor of perfume filled his nostrils, and the rustle of silken skirts added to the hallucination that she was some woman of exalted position.

“Will you please step out here a moment, sir? Those horrid men sit there in the windows with their feet on the sills and stare so at women, one really hates to pass by,” said the siren, in soft, seductive tones.



*“You don’t remember me, do you?”*

Uncle Bob obeyed as promptly as if it were Aunt Becky who gave the order.

“You don’t remember me, do you?” asked the woman, placing her gloved hands upon the lapel of his coat and giving it a playful twitch. “Of course you don’t you old dear. I was such a mere baby when I left your place.”

“What! do you mean Skowhegan?” cried

Uncle Bob, delighted that such a beautiful creature had trodden his native soil.

“Certainly; my father was a Skowhegan man.”

“You don’t say so!” exclaimed the old man. “What was his name?”

“Don’t you remember the man that moved away from there about eighteen years ago?”

The farmer scratched his head and then replied thoughtfully:

“People that are born in Skowhegan generally die there, too. Oh, yes! I believe Zachary Tompkins moved away about that time.”

“The very man—he was my father,” said the woman, her voice faltering as if reminded of some unhappy incident.

“That’s a lettle queer,” continued Uncle Bob. “Zachary Tompkins was a confirmed bachelor and a clubfoot.”

“He was married to my mother during one of his visits to Boston, and he basely deserted her,” was the affecting reply, as she took from her chatelaine bag a miniature lace kerchief, with which she gingerly wiped her eyes.

“I allus allowed that there was something crooked about Zachary Tompkins besides his feet.” “How did you happen to pick me out so quick,” he said?

“Oh, mother took me to—to Skowhegan once to hunt for Father, when I was a baby, and we spent a week there. Don’t you remember how we ate dinner with you over sixteen years ago?”

“You must have been a tarnal wise baby to remember so fur back,” said the quaint old man.

"I'm a wise baby yet," replied the woman archly; but Uncle Bob only stared uncomprehendingly at her.

"It beats all how these city women age," he drawled. "You don't look like you could be more than five years younger than Zachary."

"You horrid man! You always were such a frank, interesting old character. Won't you please walk a block or two with me? I'm so afraid along Dearborn and South Clark Streets, and I'm anxious to get home to poor mamma. She is an invalid and I am supporting her by teaching music and playing minor roles in opera. I've just been to a rehearsal."

"You don't mean to say you're one of them stage actresses!" exclaimed Uncle Bob.

"Yes, I expect to do a great stunt some day, providing I can get a pull with some good, hustling manager who will know how to advertise me in all the papers and magazines; that goes a long ways towards one's success."

"Wal, I'd advise you to git a good place as a waiter in a hotel or something else, where you wouldn't be beset with temptations. I'd rather see leetle Ruth take in washings than be the best stage performer that ever lived."

"You're just like all country people, who know little of city life," laughed the woman good-



naturedly. "A girl is beset by the same temptations everywhere nowadays and the stage is becoming more popular every day."

"Sallie Wilkins was stage-struck, and if she'd have been lightning-struck it wouldn't have made half as blasted an idiot out of her," said Uncle Bob, noting how gracefully his companion switched along, holding her skirts in one hand and a music roll in the other. "She did everything to git a start—hollered in a mob scene behind the curtain; filled up in the back row of a chorus in salmon-colored tights, although her figger was pore and she couldn't sing a note; posed as a living fountain in a garden scene; mended hose and other garments for the actors; and rang the bell for the boy to hist the curtain. Finally she got promoted and she got the swell-head so bad she was ashamed to own her birth-place, although she made a lovely bluff every time she saw any of the people who always knowed her. She changed her name to Saliva Wilkinsho, or some sich outlandish furreign name and thought she was in the National Six Hundred. Wal, jist as she was going to flash out as a star, another luminary riz up and crowded in ahead of her and Sallie was labeled 'Back Number' and put on a lower shelf. Lord knows where she is now!"

"Here is such a nice restaurant. I'm almost dying

of hunger," interrupted the woman in black, looking longingly at the show-window, which was filled with lobsters, crabs, game and generous clusters of lettuce and water-cress.

"Land, child, you don't want to eat at this time of night, do you? It's 'most ten o'clock and you'll dream of your great-grandmother," said Uncle Bob, looking at his Waterbury watch.

"I haven't had a thing to eat to-day, won't you come in and treat me to a meal?" she said, so wistfully that Uncle Bob's generous heart was touched.

"Wal, we'll go in and have a leetle bite together," said he, as he led the way. "I don't s'pose Becky would like it, but like as not she's sweetly sleeping in the arms of Orpheus and won't ever know it."

A waiter in full dress seated them at a little round table protected from vulgar gaze by a Japanese screen, where the woman began to look over the bill of fare.

"What will you have, Uncle?" she asked somewhat absent-mindedly.

"Wal, I guess I don't keer for much," he replied, ashamed to acknowledge his ignorance of French names and looking in vain for the ubiquitous ham and eggs. "I think I'll try some corn-cakes and coffee and some of this Chinese stuff—what do you call it?"

He placed his finger upon the name and the woman read with facility:

“Pommes de terre a la Chemise.”

“It sounds like it might be purty good,” said Uncle Bob.

“They’re simply potatoes with the jackets on,” laughed his companion.

“Baked pertaters!” cried the old man in disgust. “I can go anything better than baked pertaters. It’s a shame how they gull people in these places with them French names. I’ll jist have some corn-cakes, coffee and a few radishes.”

“Oh, let me order for both of us; we will eat and be merry,” said the woman, who was artfully entrapping poor innocent Uncle Bob. Please bring us some fresh Cotuits and Strained Gumboen Tasse, Pim Olas, Imported Maquereaux a l’Huile, Souffle of Parmesan Cheese and Royal a la Bordelaise; and for the fish course, two Boiled Lobsters a la Victoria and Filet of Pompan, Marquery, some Turkey Livers saute, Piemontaise et en brochette, Filet Mignon Bijou, Sweetbread Patties a la Creme, Diamond Back Terrapin, Compote de Versailles Squab, Chiffonade Salad with Mayonaise, Asparagus Cardon a la Moelle, Spaghetti a l’Italienne, Macaroni au gratin, Creme Renversee au Caramel, Meringue Chantilly, Biscuit Tortoni,

Parfait au Cafe and Pistache, Special Demi-Tasse; also some Gorgonzola with small coffees, some Creme de Menthe and Claret for the meat course. Also bring a bottle of Champagne—Mumm's Extra Dry, at once."

The waiter, as well as Uncle Bob, seemed staggered and the latter exclaimed:

"Gee whizz! you've got an appetite like a thrasher."

"I haven't had a square meal for a week and I shall never be able to repay you for your kindness," replied the girl, tears springing to her dark eyes, which were carefully removed with the lace kerchief that was again produced from the chatelaine bag.

"Don't mention it, leetle gal. Jist eat till you founder and then lay awake all night if you want to. You must come and see Aunt Becky and me at our old homestead near Skowhegan, and we'll feed you till you're as sleek and fat as one of our shotes. You and Ruth would have a fine time together," said the old man, his generous heart beating in sympathy with the girl's apparent distress.

"You are very kind to a poor orphan girl," said the fair banqueter gratefully.

The woman sat contentedly drinking champagne



while Uncle Bob, afraid to show his ignorance of city life, took an occasional sip.

At the close of the sumptuous feast, the woman said with a fine display of modesty:

“Oh, Uncle, I want to ask a favor of you that makes me tremble with shame; but it’s a case of necessity,”—and Uncle Bob really imagined that her rosy cheeks were intensified by blushes.

“Poor, dear mamma and I have to pay our rent or be evicted, and if you will just loan me twenty dollars, I will pay it back in a month, and be your everlasting friend. I’ll send it to you sure if you give me your address.”

“I am not a bloated bond-holder; but I never turn down a person in need, and if you say you will send it, here goes.” Thrusting his hand in his trousers pocket, he took out an old flat wallet, containing several good-sized bills, and with a smile on his face, he handed her the amount. “My address,” he continued, “is Uncle Bob Springer, Skowhegan, Maine. You don’t need to pinch yourself to pay it all back at once.”

In the midst of their conversation, while the supposed Miss Tompkins was thanking him profusely for his generosity, the waiter presented him with a bill amounting to thirty-three dollars.

The old man was too dumbfounded to speak for



"\$33.00!" Uncle Bob exclaimed. "Dodgast the luck, I won't pay it."

a few moments, and he looked as if he were dying of heart failure; then his omnipresent spunk bubbled to the surface, as was always the case, whenever he felt that he had been imposed upon.

“Thirty-three dollars!” he cried. “This is another holdup game! Why, you kin live in Skowhegan a year on thirty-three dollars! Dodgast these dishonest, unprincipled fellers! The idea of taking advantage of a man just ’cause he has a gal with him. I’ll be tarred and feathered and drawed and quartered before I’ll pay it!”

He brought his heavy fist down upon the table with such violence, all the glasses took a sudden leap in the air, while his guest gave a little scream and grabbed the champagne bottle to rescue it.

“Why, Uncle, that’s not very much to pay in a city like Chicago,” she said in a soft, wheedling voice, “you will certainly have to pay it or the management will get you into trouble. It’s customary to tip the waiter, too.”

“I’ll pay the money rather than be arrested, but I’d like to give the nagur a tip that would send him into the middle of next Christmas. Nary a cent will I give him,” growled Uncle Bob, producing his wallet and counting out the money.

“Massa, I’m not to blame, sah; you must repote



to de office,” said the waiter, beginning to be frightened.

“It would bust a feller up to board at this place. I could give a tarnal sight better meal than this in Skowhegan and wouldn’t have the face to charge a cent fur it,” he continued angrily, as he followed his stately charmer out upon the street.

The revivifying champagne soon routed his righteous spleen and shortly they were chatting gaily as they sauntered along. They met a policeman on the corner and Uncle Bob, suddenly wheeling about, said to him:

“Say, mister, won’t you tell us the best place to take in the sights?”

The policeman took him by the arm and pulled him to the edge of the curb, saying in a low voice:

“It seems to me that you’re getting taken in yourself. Do you know that woman?”

“She’s an actress—an old friend of mine,” replied Uncle Bob, staggering with apprehension.

“If you have any place to go, you’d better go at once and not let that harpy pull your leg or get you into trouble that may cost you dearly. She’s the most notorious blackmailer and adventuress in Chicago, and that’s saying a good deal.”

Uncle Bob slowly turned around, but the so-called



daughter of Zachary Tompkins had taken the cue and had vanished.

Thanking the man on the beat, he set out for his hotel, mumbling wrathfully to himself: "I guess Becky is right when she says there's no fool like an old one. That female bandit would have picked and singed me like a chicken and tied me up by both feet. I'm mighty lucky to git out of it as well as I did, any way."

It was two hours before he found the hotel he wanted, and it was with a sheepish look that he entered the office, where the clerk seemed rejoiced to see him.

"You've given your wife a terrible scare, old man, and you'd better git right upstairs and tell her you are still living," said the clerk. "She insisted in putting advertisements in all the papers and begged me to have all the bells in the city rung and get out a searching party; but I saw you leave with a nice-looking lady and I thought it would be too bad to spoil your good time, so I simply threatened her with the police to keep her still."

"And you—you didn't tell her about that woman!" cried the old man, his hair standing erect.

"I should say not. A great majority of the married men that visit Chicago, are up to these 'high jinks', and it's not policy to interfere."

“Here’s a five-dollar bill, mister. I’m very much obliged to you and I reckon I’d better run up and have it out with Becky,” said Uncle Bob, his mind quickly running the gamut of plausible excuses.

He found his wife dressed, even to her hat and gloves, setting upon the bed, with an expression upon her face that bespoke volumes of distrust and reproach.

“Wal, Becky, you’re trigged out as if you was going to a tea party. Why ain’t you in bed?” broke forth Uncle Bob with an air of jolly bravado.

“I was jist going to send Mayor Harrison out after you—you deceiving, red-faced, pussy, old muskrat! You ain’t fit to live in a respectable community and you can’t be trusted any more than that profligate, old Barnabas Sykes, with a wooden leg, who used to take up the collection Sunday mornings, and thrash his wife during the week. I only wish you had a pewter leg, so I could yank it off and beat you nigh to death,” she continued as she disrobed.

“Mebbe your switch would do jist as well,” suggested Uncle Bob, dodging a false pass.

“You evil-minded, notorious, pernicious, foxy, old billy-goat! You ort to be led around with a halter all the time! Where have you been, and what have you been doing?”

“Wal, Becky dear, I didn’t expect sich a warm

reception. I was out getting the lay of the town a lettle and met a business man from Portland, who took me to a swell church on—on South Clark street, and—”



*“You unprincipled, blear-eyed sot! You Mormon! I’ll not stay in the room with you!”*

“How dare you stand up there and prevaricate that way to a woman of my sense? Don’t you s’pose I kin smell the hard cider on your breath—

you inebriated, unprincipled, blear-eyed, Poland-China sot!"

Uncle Bob clung tenaciously to his corner, while his infuriated wife continued her railing in a loud voice, hurling at him startling, mixed metaphors and appellations thought to be highly appropriate for the occasion. Just as he believed there would be a lull in the storm, and that Aunt Becky would collapse and seek refuge in tears as usual, something fell from his pocket, which proved to be the lace kerchief that Zachary Tompkins's alleged daughter had entrusted to him for safe keeping.

"Oh you wretch!" cried the woman, pouncing upon the perfumed fabric and reading the name neatly worked in one corner. "So you've been out with Lizzie—sweet Lizzie—some bold-faced trollop, too low to associate with sheep, but twicet too good fur you! I can't find words to express my contempt fur sich a pusillanimous, old weasel as you be!"

"Wal, you're doing very nicely, Becky, I hain't heard nothing like it since I heard Carrie Nation going fur the saloon-keepers. When you git cooled off I kin make satisfactory explanation," returned Uncle Bob.

"Of course you kin. You kin make excuses if you have plenty of time, but I've knowed you long



enough to realize that your oath is not worth a snap!"

"I don't know how I ever got that handkerchief, unless I picked it up in the church, or on the street when we was talking politics and discussing important events of the day. I wonder who it belongs to."

"Well, you deceiving, untruthful reprobate of a Judas Iscariot—you cloven-footed vampire! Didn't the hotel clerk tell me you went out walking with old Liz Spicer, the worst old tartar that walks the streets of Chicago, who makes a living from soft, old fools like you! You kin stay here all night and sleep with your conscience. I'm going to git in with Ruth. I'd rather make my bed in a nest of scorpions and tarantulas and suffer with nightmares all night than breathe the same air with a contaminated old Mormon," terminated Aunt Becky, as she swept from the room, banging the door behind her.

"Ain't a feller clean daffy that thinks he kin deceive a woman by prevaricating? As it is now, I'll never hear the last of it, and that dod-gasted woman—that infernal Liz! that tarnal dishonest clerk that giv ther whole thing away!" groaned Uncle Bob, as he rolled into bed, half-dressed. "That's allus the way—the feller that tries to do

the most fer others, raises the most suspicion and gits the hardest kicks in the end."

For some time he kicked around in bed, regretting that he had been led into eating a midnight supper. Gradually his unrest became intensified until man-like, he began to groan and mumble to himself in a low voice.

Whether Uncle Bob's suffering was real or pretended, probably will never be known; but it is safe to say, however, that he carried his point.

Aunt Becky, who, in the adjoining apartment, occupied by Ruth, had likewise been wakeful, hastened to her husband's bedside.

"What's the matter, Bob? Is it your conscience that's wrastlin' with you?" she asked with some satisfaction.

"No, no, it's that red-backed, irregular shaped, pinch jawed animal and it's gnawin' at my internals," he moaned as he tossed and tumbled about.

"Great sakes alive, Bob, what kind of an animal is it? They told me they didn't have a bedbug in the house," said Aunt Becky, beginning to make a systematic search for the unwelcome guest.

"It's somethin' I have eat. Great guns! I'm afraid I'm goin' to die," whined Uncle Bob. "Oh, if I had only stayed with you!"

“Like as not that woman Lizzie gave you some poisoned candy. They’re up to them tricks; the papers are full of it. What kind of an animal was it?”

“I believe it was something they call a ‘lobster,’ ” said Uncle Bob.

“Shall I get the peppermint, or call for a hot water bottle, or have the doctor bring up a stomach pump—Oh, Bob, what is the matter!”

“That’s always the way with women. If you only keep quiet awhile, Becky, maybe I can get to sleep. Here, Becky, quick! I believe the dod-gasted thing is comin’ up! Hurry, Becky, I’m almost gone!”

Aunt Becky, reaching for her traveling bag, quickly took out a bottle. “Here, Bob Springer, I hain’t goin’ to have you sick on my hands. Turn over this minute and take this.”

“What is it?” feebly gasped the old man. “I am goin’ to know hereafter what I take into my insides.”

“Doctor Horehound’s Specific for the Externals and Internals, Warranted to Stop the most Severe Pain,” answered Aunt Becky, pretending to read the label on the bottle.

“Let her go then,” he said, opening his mouth widely, while Aunt Becky administered a liberal dose, which the old man swallowed reluctantly.

“To her amazement, Uncle Bob suddenly turned upon his pillow and sunk into a deep slumber, which was measured off by healthy snores that assured her he was not dead. She looked anxiously at him for a few moments and then giving him a gentle



*“I am goin’ to die. Hurry, Becky, I’m almost gone!”*

kiss upon the forehead, the faithful old wife, who had shared his bed and board unremittingly for forty years, crept in beside him and also soon fell asleep.

At breakfast, Aunt Becky’s wrath seemed to be



completely covered with the mantle of charity and she did not allude to the scene of the night before, believing that Uncle Bob's conscience had been goaded enough to keep him straight for several weeks. When they had finished their meal, they set out to see the city and were soon fairly well accustomed to the incongruous sights, sounds and smells that at first had distracted them.

"Somehow I allus thought a good deal of this town, 'cause it's in the state where Abraham Lincoln lived," said Uncle Bob loyally. "You know he emancipated the slaves and did more to make this a united country than any other man. He represented all that was good, noble and true; he was allus near the common people, fur the common people and by the common people."

"Now, Bob, don't stop to quote history, fur we are in the most wicked and progressive city in the world, and must keep movin'," insisted Aunt Becky.

"I never saw so many broad-shouldered, six-footers in my life as I have since I arrived in Illinois," said Ruth.

"Jist think of it, Becky, our leetle Ruth is beginning to notice the men folks," chuckled Uncle Bob. "Wal, they are a purty likely-looking lot on the whole, and I don't blame her. But while you are looking for broad shoulders, Ruth, I am sizing up

the women's feet. They don't seem to be backward about showing 'em either. I can't see that they're any bigger than the ones we saw in other cities, and I'm anxious to see how they'll compare with them at St. Louis."

"Now, Bob Springer, you could employ your time better than to be lookin' at women's feet, and smilin' at every female that comes along," said Aunt Becky, "and you should follow out the motto of our church society at home, and 'look up, not down.'"

"That's just what I'm tryin' to do, Becky; but sometimes you can't always do it," said Uncle Bob.

"Bob, an old man like you with one foot in the grave, and t'other just outside ought to be thinkin' of the future."

"Maybe, but when the world was made, everything was created for man's enjoyment, and as woman was the grandest, most beautiful of all, I think it is man's duty to smile whenever he has a chance."

The Masonic Temple, the Auditorium, the Monadnock, the Rialto and other great buildings filled them with amazement, and Uncle Bob stood for several minutes before each one, counting the stories with the assistance of his wife's umbrella.

"There's the Iroquois Theater," said Ruth, with a

shudder, as they halted before the massive, ornate structure, cold and deserted, which is still an object of abhorrence to Chicago citizens and a magnet for the curious visitor.

“Six hundred precious lives extinguished in a few moments—most of ’em trusting children and girls and women—all because of carelessness. It’s the saddest thing in modern history,” said sympathetic Aunt Becky, her eyes filling with tears. “I wish I could have done something to help ’em.”

“Let’s not look at it any longer,” said Ruth. “That stone Indian that projects his head from above the arch, stern and unrelenting, looks as if he were inwardly gloating—as if he were one of the old chiefs who used to fight the early palefaces in Chicago, and had succeeded in his mission of bringing about a terrible revenge.”

They finally turned on La Salle street and came to the Board of Trade, a large, granite building, through whose great portals scores of men and boys passed in eager haste. Uncle Bob, having obtained a good view of its imposing front, was anxious to go inside.

“Don’t go in; Bob, for you know how you used to speculate, and it may be the ruination of you,” remonstrated Aunt Becky, trying to restrain him; but he was determined to learn something of its intri-

cate mechanism, and at last he prevailed upon them to accompany him.

They ascended one of the twisting, iron flights of stairs at the side of the entrance and soon found themselves in a spacious corridor, leading to the floor of the greatest grain market in the world.

“Have you got a ticket?” asked a man in uniform, who stayed their progress.

“I didn’t know you had to buy a ticket. How much are they?” said Uncle Bob.

“You are evidently not a member nor a broker,” replied the man with a cynical smile, “go up those stairs to the visitor’s balcony and satisfy your curiosity from there.”

From this point of vantage, which was filled with curious spectators from all parts of the country, they could look down upon the vast floor, teeming with excited men and fleet messenger boys, all of whom departed themselves in a manner that suggested to Aunt Becky the possibility that they had entered an insane asylum by mistake. To the left were the two circular grain pits, crowded to their utmost capacity, and to the right were the provision pits, hardly so densely packed, but equally as noisy. On the east side of the spacious hall were long rows of marble-top tables, where brokers sold grain by sample, and on the west side was an immense rec-



tangle, containing scores of telegraph operators who kept the wires warm, communicating with every prominent city in the country—five being required to look after the New York business alone.

Placed in convenient nooks were bulletin boards and the weather forecast, while the center of the room contained chairs for speculators, many of whom were the heads of firms, represented by a dozen or more brokers. An adjoining room was partially filled with influential plungers who smoked in quiet seclusion, rather than undergo the noise and publicity of the main floor. The clock opposite the visitor's gallery pointed to noon. It was still an hour before the gong should announce that the business of the day was at an end, and within that brief space of time fortunes might be made and lost.

"Ain't it funny how they all git out on that round platform and holler and go through all kinds of crazy antics? I never seen sich manners in my life," said Aunt Becky, in disgust. "It puts me in mind of a swarm of blow flies in a fresh apple pie."

"That's the grain pitfall, Becky," explained Uncle Bob. "It's the principal business center, and the one across the way is the meat pit. I s'pose the fellers that snort and stamp around the wheat pit are the bulls and them that make fur the meat pit are the bears."

"Oh, no," interrupted a visitor to the city, who had received a ticket from an influential friend, but had lost it, and thus had been barred from participating in the active whirl, "the bears are the ones who depress the value of stocks and the bulls are those who boost it up."

"I didn't know this was sich an overwhelming spectacle," declared Uncle Bob, looking wistfully down at the shouting men, who were waving slips of paper and fairly tearing their clothes in their excitement. "It's a big, blatant bedlam, if there ever was one and Belial reigns supreme. I wouldn't mind taking a chance myself if I wasn't afeard that between the bulls and the bears I'd come out without a square inch of linen to my back. It ain't the place for a fat man with rheumatiz like me."

"It's a regular gambling business and ort to be suppressed," said Aunt Becky.

"Speculation is gambling, of course," said the stranger; "but the Americans accumulate their wealth by speculation, and that is what makes our nation a prosperous one. Ninety per cent. of all the transactions here are purely speculations—trades made by persons who do not expect to receive or deliver a kernel of grain. The Chicago market rules the world, and without a Board of Trade the grain business would crumble to pieces in North America, and all cereals raised would have less value. Chicago receives over 300,000,000 bushels of grain and 15,000,000 head of live stock annually. New York is tame in comparison. During the working hours of this vast enterprise, fabulous quantities of grain are bought by a sign and delivered by a piece of paper in the form of a warehouse receipt. You can see with what facility they work. If the gallery spectators only knew the value of the deals made, they wouldn't wonder at the intense excitement."

"It's just like a play," said Ruth.

"Yes, miss, with the exception that at a play the

galleries make all the noise, and here they're as quiet as the grave," said the stranger politely.

"It's really curious," said Ruth with a little laugh.

"The Board of Trade is governed by very just laws and is powerfully organized. A seat sometimes cannot be bought for less than \$4,000."

"Fur mercy sake!" exclaimed Aunt Becky, "and they're sich uncomfotable-looking, stiff-backed seats, too. I never saw the beat. It seems as foolish fur a man to pay that price fur a seat as it did fur a society woman in New York to pay \$80,000 for a picture of a nude baby."

"I'd like to chance a leetle money," whispered Uncle Bob to the speaker, while a strange twinkle kindled in his eye. "I've got only a leetle bit left, but I'm anxious to make some more. I was allus lucky at speculating. In fact, I won my wife by speculation. Zeke Stokes and me was both trying to win her, and a rich old farmer, named Ab. Skinner offered a span of mules to the one that landed her. It was a hard scuffle and I had to give up chawing terbaccer and go to revival meetings every night all winter long to do it; but I was the successful candidate. Mebbe Becky wasn't rabid when she heard about it. She said she'd rather run the risk of being an old maid than be throwed in with a span of mules to keep house fur a gambler."

"I know where there is a reliable broker close by, and he'll be glad to do the business for you. I shall be pleased to have you meet him—ccme on," said the stranger *sotto voce*.

"Here goes," declared the old man, his eyes shining as if he had suddenly been seized by a raging



fever. "Becky we'll be back in a few minutes. I want to meet a feller down there."

The two men hastened down the stairs, three steps at a time, leaving Aunt Becky and Ruth sorely perturbed. It was only a walk of a few minutes to the headquarters of the Central Valley Stock and Grain Company, where the stranger pushed Uncle Bob into a large room with an office at the further end. Two clerks were writing down quotations upon the blackboards, which covered the walls of the room, and the click of tickers was heard above the voices of the petty players, who lolled around upon chairs and benches, smoking and expectorating freely.

Uncle Bob was introduced to a fat, red-faced man, who said in a business-like way:

"Did you want to buy or sell, Mr. Springer?"

"Sell? Wal, I hain't got nothing to sell jist now, as my crops were no good last year, but I expect to have plenty this fall," replied Uncle Bob.

"Oh, you don't understand," said the man laughing. "We don't mean actual grain. This business is done in margins. How much have you to invest?"

"I'll only put up one hundred and fifty dollars, and if that goes I can't spare a cent more, as we are on our way to the World's Fair at St. Louis, in old Missouri, and I don't want to git left among strangers."

"May wheat is a good risk and you can put up that amount of margin on it. Let's say ten thousand bushels of May wheat," said the broker. "You're liable to double your money."

"Good," said the old farmer, pulling from his pocket the money. The old gentleman with an anx-



ious expression on his face stood up against the wall, waiting and hoping that every moment would bring news of his success.

"My friend, I am sorry to say that May wheat's gone down a half cent," announced the man who had brought him to the bucket shop.

"Perhaps this is another hold-up game," said Uncle Bob. "Dodgast the luck!"

"It's a risk of course," replied the broker, "but if you try your luck again you might win out."

"Wal, maybe it will go up again," philosophically said Uncle Bob.

"By jinks, it has gone down again another cent," explained his friend, apparently much exercised.

"Wal, it will probably take a jump in a minute," said Uncle Bob, lighting his corn-cob pipe. "You know there's a re-action to every action."

"Mister, your margin is all eaten up," said the fat broker, advancing towards him from the office.

"Yes, I s'pose them dod-gasted operators there eat it up," flared Uncle Bob, angrily. "Am I to be flattened out ag'in the wall now?"

"I'd advise you to stay in the game, as the market is bound to go up," said the broker encouragingly. "Put up another fifty dollars and see if I'm not right. You see the market on all good things fluctuates."

"Wal, I'll put up another fifty dollars, but I'll be blanked if I'll venture another cent," said Uncle Bob, reluctantly producing the money.

Only the man who has had a similar experience in a bucket shop, run upon dishonest principles, can appreciate the feelings experienced by the old man during the exciting hour that followed. Being



"I'll put up another \$50 00; but not another dod-gasted cent."

unfamiliar with the technical terms and the *modus operandi* employed, he could only blindly follow the suggestions of his acquaintance, the broker, who recommended him to buy and sell and hedge, stirring him with false hopes and skillfully filching additional greenbacks from his wallet, until he realized that he was three hundred and fifty dollars poorer than when he entered the place.

"I ain't going to put up another penny!" he cried, as he tottered to his feet, pale and excited. "Anybody's a fool that'll play see-saw with May wheat, and I'm going to quit. There ain't no room fur leetle fish in this great, reaking cess-pool of iniquity; all the whales eat up the suckers. The Board of Trade is a low-down, corrupt twin brother of old Wall street, and I've learned a lesson that will last me the rest of my life."

"But this is not the Board of Trade; this is a bucket shop," said the ever present victimizer.

"Wal, whatever it is, it's scurvy mean anyway. Somehow or other, when I don't listen to Becky, I'm a loser. She's got a heap of good hard common hoss sense, even if she is homely, and the only way I kin be safe is to cleave unto her apron strings and let the game of chance alone."

When he had finished his denunciation of the Board of Trade and bucket shops, to which nobody paid the slightest heed, so common was such an occurrence, he returned to his family, trying hard to smile and appear at ease. The great gong had just announced that it was one o'clock, and a corps of clerks was already checking up the business of the day.

"Where have you been, Bob?" inquired his wife



in alarm. "I allowed mebbe you'd gone down to one of them pits and either been tossed by the bulls or had your pocket-book hugged and smashed to smithereens by the bears."

"Nonsense, Becky, you allus look on the improbable side of things. I went down to see a man who gave me a few valuable pointers on this big shebang, and I don't thing much of it. It puts me in mind of that sign over Si Tucker's shop at Skowhegan: 'All sorts of twistin' and turnin' done here.' Let's get out of the dod-gasted place, fur the stampede is over now and we ain't so liable to git our backs broke."

The street was unusually congested with pedestrians, many of them running and deporting themselves in a wildly-excitabile manner, so that Uncle Bob was filled with a new misgiving.

"Say, mister, is this town going to be destroyed by fire ag'in?" he asked of a man who was rushing along with a bag of cream puffs in one hand.

"Not that I know of—why?" replied the man, stopping suddenly.

"Where's the fire?"

"What fire?"

"Don't you see people running to break their necks in all directions, as if they were trying to escape from some terrible calamity?"

"There isn't any fire. The people are going to lunch and it's this way every day here. Chicago people move and act quickly, you know; we have to. If you look in at one of those lunch counters you will see men taking in a piece of pie, three chocolate eclairs and a cup of coffee at one gulp, while others stand around ready to grab their seats as soon as



they git out of the way. You must be a hayseed.”

“Wal, I may be a hayseed, but I wouldn’t be dunce enough to ruin my digestive apparatuses like you do here in Chicago. No wonder you people out here die before the time.

After a quiet lunch at a Madison street restaurant, Uncle Bob, who had always been interested in reading of the Chicago Stock Yards, inquired the way to that renowned spot and thither they proceeded on a South Halsted street car.

Reaching Thirty-ninth street, they passed under the great arched entrance, when they found themselves upon a wide busy thoroughfare, flanked by stores of every description. Men in broad brimmed hats and top boots wandered about from place to place. Cattle rangers upon mettlesome steeds and laborers in soiled denim gave the place a frontier aspect.

Occasionally, business men, decidedly eastern in dress and manners; Southerners, less conventional, but with characteristic sharpness of eye and dignity of bearing; and Westerners from the great plains and mountains beyond, loud and jovial, with ruddy, wholesome faces and fine physiques—all men of means and influence, participated in the ever-changing pageant; while herdsmen, shouting and cracking their whips, drove immense herds of cattle and flocks of sheep along the street to their temporary pens.

“Gee whizz! This is a town all by itself!” exclaimed Uncle Bob, in delighted surprise. “There are boot and shoe stores, dry-goods stores, restaurants, saloons and a newspaper office, and the buildings are all first class, too. A feller could live in

this here Swineville and be contented. It's the most comfortable, homelike place I've seen since we left Skowhegan."

"Yes, but sich a terrible stench!" ejaculated Aunt Becky, placing her kerchief firmly against her nostrils.

"Say, mister, kin you tell us where to go to see 'em slaughter?" asked Uncle Bob of a pompous, Texas cattle dealer, who was enjoying a pipe near-by.

"Keep straight ahead and watch out for signs," replied the man placidly. "You can't lose the way, if you follow their directions. You'll soon find yourself inside the visitor's waiting-room at one of the great concerns, where you can amuse yourself until the guide comes to show you through the building."

"Say, mister, will you be kind enough to tell me what them big spires are over there? Surely they hain't got a meeting-house in the stock yards," said Aunt Becky.

"Those are water towers, madam," replied the man, greatly amused. "They hold thousands of gallons of water. The reservoirs in these grounds hold 8,000,000 gallons, and on hot days nearly 7,000,000 gallons are consumed. There are ninety miles of water pipe lines and over 10,000 hydrants."

"Cracky! That beats anything I ever heard tell of!" exclaimed Uncle Bob. "I'd hate awfully to have to do all the pumping here."

"If all our streets were placed in a straight line, it would be twenty-five miles long," continued the stranger, impressively, pleased at the interest his statistics excited. "There are 475 commission offices inside the grounds, 13,000 pens, 250 miles of

railroad tracks and fifty miles of electric light wires."

Uncle Bob looked incredulous and said rather impertinently:

"Say, mister, I've heard there were all kinds of tales about this here place, but I never heard any—wal—quite so tarnal strange as yours."

"What I tell you is the gospel truth," replied the man irritably. "Just attempt to take a stroll through the grounds and you will believe my assertions. Last year nearly 3,500,000 head of cattle, 7,400,000 hogs and 4,600,000 sheep were received here."

"Like as not he wants me to invest in stock," whispered Uncle Bob to his wife, and then turning to the stranger, who had been courteous enough to quote the various items of chief interest, he said:

"Wal, your story sounds very good; but I never heard any that sounded so much like a western cyclone yarn. It beats all how it blows in Chicago, though—don't it?" said Uncle Bob.

"I can quote you some more statistics if you wish," replied the cattle dealer, turning very red. "I just read that there are 11,000,000 asses in the world and most of them come from the rural portions of North America. Good day, sir."

"Thank you, mister, I'm glad to know your nationality. You have quite a fetching way of introducing yourself," flashed Uncle Bob, with wilting sarcasm, as he resumed his stroll.

"Oh, Uncle, I believe the man meant to be courteous and you were very rude," said Ruth, much embarrassed.

"I tell you what, Ruth, I've had my leg pulled so



much, I kin tell a bunco man as fur as I kin see him. You know there is an old saying that 'experience teaches even fools.' Mebbe I was a leetle testy, but I hate to hear a feller blow and I wanted to pick him a leetle, jist as a boy does a toy ballon to see it go to pieces."



*"There are 11,000,000 asses in the world, and you must be one of them," said the stranger.*

"If people have pride in an institution or town in which they are interested, it is natural and quite commendable for them to point out its merits to strangers. Who blows any more than you do about Skowhegan, and yet you call that patriotism!" said Ruth rather severely.



"I guess that's so, but I didn't like the way the feller giggled at Becky and smiled at you. Cattle men get so they look at women jist like they do at sows and size 'em up according to the same schedule."

They at last reached the visitor's entrance to Swift's great establishment and found themselves in a very neat and elegant waiting-room, in company with a dozen others. A guide, in uniform, soon descended in the elevator, over which was the large gilt inscription: "This way to the hog killing."

The visitors were huddled into this conveyance and had begun their ascent, when Aunt Becky cried:

"My land! do they take all the swine up in this elevator?"

Some of the passengers looked daggers at her, but the guide, understanding her perplexity, explained:

"No, ma'am that would be a very difficult task, as there are thousands of hogs killed every week. You follow me and we'll go to a place where we can look down at the killing."

They stepped from the elevator and out upon a roof, where they were conducted to a long row of windows that projected upward from an adjoining building, from whence they heard' the most unearthly squeals and an odor of pork, too pronounced to please even Uncle Bob's rural predilection.

"It sounds like 'Dante's Infernal,'" he said, hastening to one of the windows, and bending over with great difficulty to obtain a good view.

"It's more like the purgatory scene in 'Faust' that our village amateur dramatic club gave at the schoolhouse last winter," said Aunt Becky, almost

suffocating under her kerchief, as she stood near an adjoining window.

A brawny German, with bare arms, lashed the poor, fat hogs into a narrow pen, where they squealed lustily, as if imploring deliverance from the fate that awaited them. A Swede of herculean build, seized each one in turn and fastened one of its hind legs to a pulley, which was attached to a circular disk—something like a Ferris wheel. The poor animal was lifted in the air, going through extraordinary contortions and emitting yells that sounded like the howling of a hyena in distress. Round and round it went, finally sliding out upon a rope, tautly stretched, like a clothes line, and when sufficiently near the ground, another muscular man plunged into its throat the fatal knife.

The red fluid spurted out upon the gory floor, and the poor animal, thus deprived of its ability to kick, followed by its ill-fated companions, slid along a slowly moving incline towards the vat.

It's barbarous, isn't it?—the poor animals!" cried Ruth, withdrawing from the window and refusing to look down into the sanguine arena again.

"Wal, they can't very well give 'em chloroform," said Uncle Bob, laughing at the hogs dangling in mid air. "I don't see how they could have devised a scheme more humane."

"Just think how you'd feel, Bob Springer, to be treated that way!" said Aunt Becky, also drawing back.

"I'd willingly have met a fate like that last night and smiled when I seen the knife coming—after that experience with Lizzie and that dodgasted lobster," replied Uncle Bob, ceasing to grin.

"I thought your conscience would trouble you and I'm powerful glad it did," said Aunt Becky, softening somewhat.

"It wasn't my conscience that bothered me so much as it was my stomach," he replied with startling candor. "I eat a chunk of that claw fish lobster and I could feel it crawling all night. You know they cook 'em alive and I don't believe the brute's dead yet. If a feller wants to escape the goadings of a guilty conscience, when he goes to bed I'd advise him to make a supper on a lobster."

The guide next ushered them down a flight of stairs, where they followed the butchered hogs, which were slowly moving along the wires, still hanging by one hind leg.

"Gee whizz! but this is wonderful," commented Uncle Bob with surprise. "We kin foller a hog from the time he gits his throat cut, till he comes out a mess of backbones, sausage and lard. Here are hundreds of men standing in line to peel their hides off and others to chop 'em up, and so on till their's nothing to do but put 'em in a car and ship 'em. Say, Mister Guide, why does that feller set there and tickle every hog's throat as they pass by?"

"He's one of the government inspectors," replied the guide. "We have a large number of 'em and they are experts in detecting diseases."

In like manner they saw scores of sheep driven into close pens, slaughtered and prepared for shipment; also cattle, which were first stunned by blows upon the head from a sledge.

"Every time that guide ushers us into a tight place, I feel narvous," complained Aunt Becky. "I

expect every minute he'll grab hold of one of our feet and elevate us in the air on a wheel like they did the other animals. Let's git out."

They descended to the main floor, where they passed through the cooling room and out the back way to the immense canning factory of Libby, McNeil and Libby, where Ruth quickly regained her usual cheerful expression.

In a tidy apartment on the second floor, a woman and a girl, in white caps and aprons, stood behind a counter, which was loaded with dishes of pressed meats and other delicacies garnished with parsley, ready to demonstrate the various foods.

"That oldest one must be Libby and I'm going to tell her that I wish she'd use her influence to have them hogs killed in a more genteel manner," said Aunt Becky, trying to jostle past those in front of her.

"Oh, Auntie, Libby is a man, of course! That woman is one of his employes. Don't say anything about it now," implored Ruth.

"By gosh! this is a supper fit fur an alderman," declared Uncle Bob, smacking his lips with relish. "It reminds me of Skowhegan. I bet a quarter I'll eat my fill."

The woman, whom Aunt Becky took for Libby, gave a lengthy talk concerning the merits of their canned goods, and the girl placed the bottled goods in a similarly favorable light, but none of the tempting viands were passed around and Uncle Bob's lower jaw began to sag in a disappointed manner.

"Now, my friends, I hope, since you have learned about the superiority of our goods, that you will give them a trial. You can get them at any grocery



store, and they are guaranteed to give satisfaction," terminated the woman.

"Wal, we'll take your word fur it, Missus, but there's an old saying that the proof of the puddin' is in the eating of it," grumbled Uncle Bob.

"Oh, certainly," replied the woman good-naturally, as she handed each of the visitors a slice of dried beef and a wafer, just as the guide prudently called them away to follow him to another part of the building.

"That put me in mind of Mahala Ann Wattles's party," said Aunt Becky, in disgust. "After she got back from Normal School she had some purty high idees, so she sent out bids to a five o'clock tea. I never was to one before, so I expected something big. I didn't eat a mouthful of dinner, so I could enjoy a square meal when I got there. The house was so crowded I had to stand under the stairway with my head bent down till I had a stitch in my neck fur a week. All in the world she give us to eat was a little sprig of lettuce, a cracker and a thimbleful of tea in a child's cup and saucer. I was so hungry when I got home I put on a mess of spare-ribs and cabbage and eat like a starved plough horse. Some of the women was so mad at Mahala Ann Wattles they never went to see her afterwards; but I'm sort of furgiving and I don't hold nothing agin her."

Much was seen by the Skowhegan tourists in this building that interested them and each process drew forth admiring exclamations and curious conjectures.

"It beats all how a piece of tin begins at one end of the factory and in a few minutes comes out the

other end, made up into a can decorated and labeled and filled with pressed meat, ready for the market," said Aunt Becky.

"I s'pose that's what they mean when they speak about rushing the can," suggested Uncle Bob innocently; but his wife took him literally and no rebuke was provoked.

"Well, you can't make me believe that Libby is a man any more than you kin make me think Armour is a coat of mail," said she presently. "If she was a man, he couldn't keep things so clean and every other feller you'd see would have a corn-cob pipe and dirty finger nails."

It was dark when they ceased their investigations, although they had seen but few of the vast establishments and Uncle Bob was reluctant to tear himself away.

The car that took them back to their hotel was so crowded, Aunt Becky and Ruth had to try the novel experience of holding on to straps, much to their discomfort.

"I notice the men don't give up their seats here to the women folks, unless they want to," said Aunt Becky pettishly. "I feel fur all the world like one of them live stock, hanging to this pulley, and my arm will be yanked clean out of the socket before we git back."

"Wal, mebbe the fellers ain't to blame. They'd have better manners if the women had. I jist seen an old man give his seat to a smart-dressed, young woman, and she never even looked at him or bowed an acknowledgement," replied Uncle Bob, who was a loyal defender of his sex. "It seems like street car manners is gitting purty fuzzy in Chicago and

that they correspond beautifully with the old rattle-trap cars themselves."

They were tired and dusty when they reached the hotel, and after resting an hour they ate dinner and repaired to their rooms to spend the evening in quietude.

"What is the matter with you, Bob? You seem to be worrying over something," said Aunt Becky, as they were getting ready to retire.

"Becky, you know we've allus heard in the East that they hang a man in Chicago every morning before breakfast. I was jist thinking I'd like to git up to-morrow in time to see the show."

"My goodness sakes alive, Bob, if you want to see sich wicked cruelty, you'll have to go alone!" cried Aunt Becky, horrified at her husband's strange depravity:

"I am here to see the sights, and I am goin' to take it all in." He then turned out the gas carefully, and seeking his couch, slumbered peacefully until daybreak.

His first act, when he awoke, was to shake his wife, who rubbed her eyes in a startled manner and mumbled sleepily:

"What's happened now? Did the biler bust ag'in?"

"There's no use talking, Becky, I'm going out to see the hangin', and if you don't want to go, you kin go to sleep ag'in," he said, as he hastily donned his garments.

"All right, if you're so sot in your heart, I don't s'pose it will do any good fur me to object," replied Aunt Becky submissively. "Like as not you'll be

the one to git hung and you'd best stay in till after breakfast."

"I'm willing to risk it. I'm out fur fun and I'm going to see everything, no matter how wicked it is," replied her spouse, hastily completing his toilet.

He hurried out of the building and stopped at

the nearest lamp post, imagining that he saw, in the early morning mist, a corpse dangling from its summit.

"Some hold-up has got his everlasting," he said aloud to himself. "It serves him right; but I wonder if the man was really guilty."

He soon found himself on South Clark street; but the queer sights had no charm for him. His mind was too bent on witnessing an execution.

He stopped a moment, however, to look at a sign in a Chinese restaurant, which a native seemed very much interested in deciphering.

"Melican man eat beef-steakee; no likee chop-suey," said the Chinaman to him.

"I'll be dodgasted if I don't think you're right."



"Melican man no likee chop-suey."





*“Where did the hangin’ take place this morning?” asked Uncle Bob.*

Just then a policeman came along and Uncle Bob shouted:

“Good day, Mr. Officer, where did the hangin’ take place this morning?”

“Hanging!” exclaimed the big, square-shouldered man in the blue uniform. “What are you talking about?”

“Don’t they hang a man every morning before breakfast in this here town?”

“Oh, I see, it’s down by the next corner where you will find it. I think the hanging is to take place there today,” replied the policeman who, strange as it may seem, had received similar inquiries from rural strangers.

Walking until he came to the next corner, and repeating the question to a second policeman, who seemed to comprehend the joke at once, Uncle Bob was directed to go another block, and he was assured that he would then see the object of his search. Chagrined and disappointed, he failed as before to find the dead man, but he purposed to die game, and made the round of all the corners, completing the entire circuit between the river and the lake.

His legs growing stiff and his face glowing and perspiring, he decided he was the victim of a huge practical joke, and returned to the hotel, where Aunt Becky and Ruth awaited him.

“Gosh, it’s all a dodgasted lie,” he excitedly exclaimed, “Chicago ain’t so blamed wicked after all,” he mumbled, wiping his forehead and fanning himself with his hat. “There is plenty of people hanging around lamp-posts and the like to do

people, but so far as I kin learn, no one has been histed up since the great fire."

"Uncle, we have seen the Board of Trade and the Stock Yards and the great marts of commerce, and you musn't think that Chicago is all wickedness. Like all cities, she has her good as well as her bad sides," said Ruth, in time to head off Aunt Becky's reproaches. "I hear that she will soon be the greatest educational center in the new world and, although money can't buy the prestige of ancient history, it can secure the best instruction. I wish we could visit the Chicago University, for it will be an assistance to me, as I am going to teach this winter."

"Alright, Ruth, we'll go out to see the big building. From what I have heard I guess it's even bigger than our State Normal School," acquiesced her guardian, glad that the laugh which followed his unsuccessful quest of the hanging had subsided.

In another hour they had taken the Illinois Central suburban train for Fifty-ninth street, where they alighted and, following the directions of a fruit vender, soon reached the famous old "Midway," where the gray buildings of the University and its vast, undulating campus filled them with respectful awe.

"Will you please tell me which one of them big houses is the Chicago University?" asked Uncle Bob of a student wearing a slouch hat.

"They are all included in the varsity," replied the young man, shifting his books under his arm and looking over the broad, gray and green expanse with student pride. "You can walk till you have bunions and backache enough to last the rest of



your days and then you can't see half of it, and in five years' time there will be twice as many buildings. There is no limit to the possibilities of the Chicago University."

"I wish they had the different buildings placarded, so a feller could tell what he is looking at," said Uncle Bob.

"I am 'cramming' for an 'exam,' as I don't want to 'flunk,' but I'll spend an hour showing you around a little," said the student, catching step with Ruth and agreeably assuming the role of guide. "I've been here three years and am pretty well conversant with its history. In the first place the value of the buildings and grounds is estimated at \$8,000,000 or more and it covers about one hundred acres. Had it not been for the generosity of our western citizens this place might still be a swamp, for the propagation of ague germs, instead of the site of a great institution, fostering and developing science, philosophy, literature and a score of other useful things. John D. Rockefeller has donated considerably more than \$10,000,000, and is the greatest benefactor of the University."

"Did you hear that, Uncle? John D. Rockefeller, whom you criticised at Cleveland the other day, is mainly responsible for the growth of this institution."

"Wal, I never heard that before. I knowed he was interested in Bible classes, but I didn't s'pose he cared much about education," replied Uncle Bob. "Why didn't he start a university at Cleveland, his own town, with that money? Charity allus begins at home, you know, and if I had his wealth I'd make Skowhegan the prize town of the state. I'd have



town pumps and water-troughs on every corner, with statues of Abraham Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin on 'em, and a town clock on all the principal buildings."

"How providential that you don't possess his wealth!" laughed Ruth. "Such men as Rockefeller and Carnegie are too broad minded to confine their benevolent operations to one locality. They invest their money where it will do the public most good," said Ruth, confident that she had scored a point.

"Miss Helen Culver also donated \$1,026,000," continued the student, smiling at the futility of Uncle Bob's argument. "Among the scores of larger contributors, who were anxious for the Northwest to have an all-comprising University for the benefit of what will soon be the most densely populated locality on the continent, were Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly, Martin A. Ryerson, Marshall Field, Mrs. Annie Hitchcock, A. C. Bartlett and Charles T. Yerkes, and large sums were received from the Reynolds and Ogden estates."

"It is certainly an ideal place," said Ruth. "When the trees develop a little more and a few finishing touches have been added, she will make a more alluring Alma Mater. At present she awes me with her cold, severe stateliness."

"Yes, but Jackson and Washington Parks are sufficiently close for those who are fond of the romantic," replied their guide. "I have heard people say that our institution lacks the noble grandeur and classic dignity of Northwestern University, located at Evanston, and the sylvan repose and other amenities of Ann Arbor; but in a few years more there will be nothing that Chicago University lacks

to make it the peer of any college in the new world. There is nothing impossible in Chicago, you know, for she lives up to her motto, 'I will.' "

"It's beginning to blow a leetle ag'in," chafed Uncle Bob, turning up his coat collar; but the young man continued to grow more and more enthusiastic as he pointed out to them the scores of capacious buildings, made of gray Bedford rock, whose Gothic exteriors suggested unity and fraternity.

"Uncle Bob, you may go back to the stock yards, since you said that was your element; but let me stay here as long as I live, for a city of learning and culture is more to my liking," said Ruth, with a wistful little laugh.

"Much credit is due to our president, William Rainey Harper, Ph. D., D.D., LL. D., who has worked indefatigably to make the institution what it is today," said the student respectfully.

"I should think the people would be terrible liable to pronounce his name wrong, with so many letters at the tail end of it," said Aunt Becky.

"Oh, they seldom use the full title," replied the young man with a mischievous laugh. "Some of the boys here say 'Prexie' and a few of the wags call him 'Harpy.' "

"Wal, the pore feller must have his hands full and I don't see fur the life of me how he kin hear all them classes without collapsing. I jist wish I could git him to take a leetle vaction on our old homestead farm, near Skowhegan, fur a few weeks, and give him a rest from arithmetic, algebray and spellin' fur a while," said Uncle Bob.

"We also have a fine journal, called the University Weekly, edited by and for students; crack foot-

ball, baseball and tennis teams, an excellent band and a glee club that can't be beat anywhere."

"It's beginning to blow harder," interrupted Uncle Bob, pulling his hat down over his ears.

"Mahala Ann Wattles belonged to a tennis team when she was to the State Normal," said Aunt Becky, glaring reproachfully at her consort. "She made a specialty of grammar and took lessons in tennis, painting and vocal singing."

"Yes, that schooling did Mahala more harm than good, too," said Uncle Bob emphatically. "She couldn't even make a bed when she got home, 'cause her back was weak, yet she could polky to beat a yearlin' calf. Her dad said once, he hoped she would git better so she could help him fence up the clover field, and she got boiling mad. Seems like youngsters won't put their knowledge into practice nowadays. She could fence all day long at school and never mind it at all, but she couldn't help her pore old dad."

"I've walked till I'm well-nigh spavined. Ruth, you hain't got a bit of mercy on us old critters," complained Aunt Becky. "It would take a week to see everything, and that young boy had better go back to his studies or he might git a lickin'."

"Fortunately, they don't allow corporal punishment in our school," said the young man laughing heartily.

"I reckon it wouldn't hurt them if they had a real, old fashioned, down-east thrashing occasionally, such as Bob and I used to get when we were youngsters."

"Uncle, we certainly must go back," said Ruth blushing charmingly. "We will miss the train for



St. Louis, if we spend much more time here. This young man has certainly been very kind to us and we appreciate it."

Uncle Bob, who had grown accustomed to giving tips, automatically thrust his hand into his pocket and produced a half dollar, which he offered the



*The student declined to accept fifty cents from Uncle Bob.*

guide; but the young man flushed painfully and refused the money, so that the old man substituted the usual invitation for him to visit them at Skowhegan.

After returning to the hotel where they had lunch, they set out for the depot with glad faces, eager to



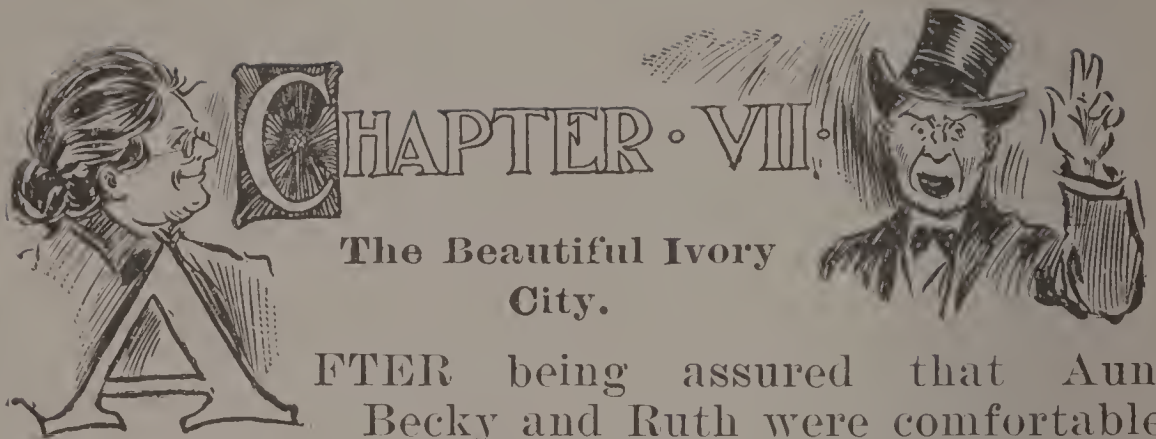
take the train for the city that would attract the attention of the whole world, at least for the next seven months.

They were escorted to their coach by a colored porter, where they found that not a solitary bundle had been pilfered in the wicked city they had so much dreaded above all others. As the train pulled out, Uncle Bob joyously shouted:

“Hurrah fur the big fair now! Hurrah fur St. Louis in old Missouri, and the great congress of nations!”



*Hurrah for the Big Fair!*



The Beautiful Ivory  
City.

AFTER being assured that Aunt Becky and Ruth were comfortable, Uncle Bob sought the smoking-car, which was almost filled. He selected a seat by a smooth-faced, beneficent-looking man, whose manner suggested that he might be drawn into an argument, and presently he paved the way with the remark:

“Chicago is a wonderful city, ain’t it?”

“Quite remarkable,” replied the stranger. “There’s nothing like it in the country; but it always gives me the headache and makes me lonesome. Truly the poet was right when he said that a great city was a great solitude.”

“It’s a great repository for all the money, too,” persisted Uncle Bob. “The poor farmer ain’t got a bit of show any more and some day he’ll be crowded into a reservation, jist like the Indians were. He’s gitting poorer all the time and Wall street and the Trusts are rolling and swimming in wealth.”

“When they cripple the farmer so that he will not be able to continue his great work, then the country will crumble like a piece of loaf sugar in a cup of hot coffee,” said the stranger, looking somewhat surprised. “By close observation I have noted that

the thrifty farmers who understand their business are getting richer every minute, and some day people will flock to the farm just as they now do to the city, for there is gold in the soil. The American farmer is the very life blood of the country and upon his prosperity depends the welfare of the nation."



*"Chicago is a wonderful city, ain't it?" said Uncle Bob.*

"You couldn't make any of them stuck-up city fellers believe that," said Uncle Bob, swelling with pride, when he realized that he, too, was a factor in the agricultural field.

"If they study the industrial phases of the



country and read the daily papers, they will see how erroneous are their impressions and how ungrounded are their prejudices," continued the man. "The farmer who wants and complains of his condition, is one who is behind the times in the science of his vocation—one who does not read, experiment and keep abreast of the day. The agricultural outlook is Utopian compared to any other. Why, the income from the leading monopolies is a drop in a tobacco patch compared with what the farmers bring in every year. This is the presidential year and estimates made at this time are hardly representative; by close investigation I found that a year or so ago our farm exports amounted to more than \$900,000,000—just think of it! No wonder that the great states west of the Missouri have paid off nearly all mortgages placed upon their farms by eastern banking concerns, and are now independent and prosperous."

"Wal, I never noticed much prosperity around Skowhegan," said Uncle Bob, querulously. "Most of the farmers complain of hard times."

"Oh, it's natural for some farmers to complain," impatiently replied the orator. "If they would exercise the same judgment and business sagacity that the ordinary merchant uses, they would be far better off. I venture to say, if you will take the pains to look into the matter when you go back, you will see that nine-tenths of the complaining farmers in your neighborhood have allowed their soil to become impoverished by not giving it the proper nourishment in the way of fertilizers. A few of our western farmers will wake up some day to find that the same conditions exist out here.





*Settling the fate of the nation in the rural districts.*

The farmer who understands his soil, like the physician does the human body he diagnoses, will nearly always be successful. Complaining farmers are the ones who lack judgment and thrift; they leave their machinery out in the rain to rust and rot, instead of giving it the proper housing in the barn or shed; they permit their fences to decay and ditches to get out of order, and sit and complain and talk politics when they should be at work; they are the old-time farmers, and will continue to retrograde until they awaken to the fact that primitive farming belongs to the past, and to succeed they must transform themselves into scientific, twentieth-century farmers. With the advancement of the Department of Agriculture, staples are being raised in this country now that were formerly confined to other zones. The Federal Government passed a law several months ago to form a system of irrigation covering thirteen western states. By this process, land which was considered worthless will be made arable, and our Great American Desert will some day bloom like a tropical garden and our agriculturists will reap fortunes untold. They have not yet reached the heyday of their highest achievements, but the horizon is beginning to glow in the sunlight of dawn. The time is coming when to be a farmer will be an honor, and you and I may live to see it."

"I wish I could," said Uncle Bob, fervently, his complacency momentarily increasing. "I believe if I was young I'd take Horace Greeley's advice and go West, and start out on a big scale."

"Our annual wheat crop reaches over 600,000,000 bushels a year, worth nearly \$400,000,000, and the



value of all the gold and silver in the United States and all the gold mined in the world did not equal it by \$100,000,000 in 1902. The corn crop is more than twice as large as the wheat crop, and brings in annually a billion dollars. Then we have our cotton and our oats and our sugar beets, and scores of other staples, including new ones that are being added annually, so that the income can hardly be estimated. It is really too fabulous to look well in figures."

"My friend, your arguments make my blood tingle," said Uncle Bob.

"I am an Illinois farmer with 1,200 acres of land, which, ten years ago could not have been sold for more than forty dollars an acre, but it is now worth from one to one hundred and thirty-five dollars an acre, and I'm independent of everything and everybody," continued the speaker, puffing his pipe with happy satisfaction. Our home contains a big library and a music room, and my large family of boys and girls earn their bread by honest toil and enjoy the best things of life at the same time. I consider that I am as well informed as the average city man, even though I do not enjoy so many extravagant luxuries and English grand operas. I have made my work as much of a science as the chemist who delves sixteen hours a day in the laboratory to ascertain the composition of substances."

"That's good," interpolated Uncle Bob.

"You down-east Yankees don't realize what a great change has taken place in the life of the farmer during the past ten years. Just think of it!"

"Splendid," said Uncle Bob; "go ahead."

"I can sit in my library and feel the pulse of

the market any hour by telephone. I have a thousand advantages my father never had. And say, old man, don't ever get it into your head that our cities are absorbing all our brains and capital, for they only have a small part of them and the farmers are responsible for the prosperity of the city and the nation as a unit."

"Wonderful!" said Uncle Bob, who could hold in no longer. "I like to hear you talk. I'm mighty glad to know you are a farmer. Shake on it. I'm one myself, living near Skowhegan, Maine, and I'm proud of it instead of being ashamed. Like as not them city fellers would be jist as green as I am in the city if they came out to the country, and I s'pose we'd make jist as much fun of 'em. Your talk done me a pile of good and I'm glad I met one of them up-to-date, hale, optimistic men who lives right close to Nature's heart and don't know nothing about fine airs and false fronts."

"I had no idea you was a farmer," said the other in evident surprise. "I have studied Mother Nature for years, but Human Nature is puzzling to me, and I thought you might be a city man."

"For the land sake!" laughed Uncle Bob. "You're the fust man in history that ever took me fur a city chap."

"All city fellers don't wear Raglan coats and patent leather boots. Some of them are very queer dressers," replied the farmer. "I judged from the style of your hat that you might be from Philadelphia."

"Wal, that's a good one," said Uncle Bob, still laughing. "If you could have seen Becky's hat you'd have knowed the exact latitude and longitude



we live in. I've traveled so extensively lately that it's probable that I am getting a sort of a city air about me."

"I'm very glad that I met you, sir," said the Illinois farmer, submitting gracefully to Uncle Bob's ferocious handshake.

"I am on the shady side of life, but if our Tom, who left home many years ago to grow up with the West, was only living, me and Becky and Ruth would be tempted to pull up stakes and come to this great broad western land of prosperity and plenty," he said.

"You can have just as great success and happiness in the East if you know how to go about it," said the farmer, cheerily.

"Wal, you come to Skowhegan and visit us, and I'll show you a model farm—providin' you don't come till I get a chance to—to—what do you call it?—diagnose my soil."

"Analyze, you mean; find out the chemical composition of the soil," explained the stranger.

Shaking hands again, fired with new ambition and encouraged with the prospects for the future, Uncle Bob returned to Aunt Becky and Ruth.

They reached St. Louis at 7 A. M. and filed into a depot, the magnitude and elegance of which excelled anything in that line they had ever seen.

"Wal, I see we're going to be surprised in St. Louis, too," said Uncle Bob. "This place looks a good deal like Chicago."

"It's a southern town, though," said Ruth, with pride.

"Yes, it's a southern town made up of northern people, but I guess it's a hummer, too, and jist at

this time full of hold-ups and confidence men, so cleave to your packages, Becky, and smite the fust feller dumb with your umberell that looks at you suspicious."

They were besieged by a long reception line of



*"Say, Hackman, can you tell me where the Inside Out Hotel is?"*

hackmen, who shouted in the customary confusing manner.

"Say, Mister, kin you tell us where the Inside Out Hotel is?" asked Uncle Bob, to one of unmistakable Hibernian origin.

"Faith, sor, I never heard of sich a hotel," was the ready response.

"The idee of you, a liver in St. Louis, not knowing where the Inside Out is," rebuked Uncle Bob.

"You might git in and I'll hunt the place fur ye, sor."

"Can't we walk there?"

"Shure not; it's minny moiles and the town is full of pickpockets and anarchists, sor."

"How much do you charge to ride in that covered rattle-trap?"

"Rates have gone up now, sor, and I'm gitting three dollars an hour."

"That's perfectly outrageous!" piped Aunt Becky.

"Wal, we've got to git there and I don't s'pose it'll take him more than a half hour if he drives fast," replied Uncle Bob. "We ort to drive up to the Inside Out rather stylish anyway. Pile in and let's start at once. Now, Mister Driver, you keep on going till you find that Inside Out Hotel and be spry about it."

"It seemed to the tired travelers an interminable ride, and in fact it was three hours before they stopped. Finally they became aware that they were traveling among palaces of princely splendor, which even their most aesthetic flights of imagination had never reached.

"I'll be tarred and feathered if I ever seen sich a magnificent city in my born days. The people in St. Louis must have wings and gold crowns in order to correspond with their architecture," declared the old man.

"Say, Bob Springer, didn't you say t'other day that the hotel was called the Outside Inn?" asked Aunt Becky, sleepily.

"Why, of course I did! Here the fool's hunting



around fur the Inside Out and there ain't no sich place. Hey, Mister! Mister! open up this infernal collection box!"

The cab stopped and the Irish driver craned his neck to hear Uncle Bob's explanations.

"I made a mistake, Mister. It's the Outside Inn I want. Do you know where that is?"



*Cab driver takes advantage of the opportunity—"If you want to go any further, you will have to pay \$15.00 or walk."*

"Niver heard of it, sor; but I'll kape on makin' inquiries around the fair grounds till I find it."

"It's a wonder you couldn't remember that sooner, Becky" said Uncle Bob, as he leaned back again



in his easy seat. "You're generally nimble enough at picking me up when I make mistakes."

They had ridden two hours longer, when the cabman halted and shouted down to the anxious down-eastern passengers.

"Shure, I was jist thinkin' that p'raps ye mint the Inside Inn instid of the Inside Out or the Outside Inn."

"Of course that's the place, you infernal, pop-eyed blockhead! Dod-gast your torpid liver anyway!" cried Uncle Bob, in a towering rage.

"I know right where it is, yer honor, but divil a sthep further will I take ye without the coin. I ain't goin' to be chated out of me pay and I've worked sthiddy fur five hours, sor. It's six moiles to the place and ye'll pay me the fifteen dollars in advance or ye'll have to git out here and run the risk of being held up, and I'll complain to the Union and they'll make it warrum fur ye."

The altercation that followed would be unsuitable for publication, but Uncle Bob, in spite of Aunt Becky's expostulations, paid the fifteen dollars and in less than five minutes they stopped before the Inside Inn. Another exchange of abusive epithets followed between Uncle Bob and the cabman, whose brilliancy of repartee far exceeded his quickness of comprehension.

They entered the hotel and Uncle Bob approached the clerk, saying politely:

"Howdy-do, sir. I am Uncle Bob Springer, and this is my wife, Aunt Becky Springer, and our adopted daughter, Ruth Burton, of Skowhegan. We've come to stay several weeks at your tavern."

“Did you send in your application?” asked the clerk, somewhat amused.

“No, we thought we’d jist come in and surprise you, so you wouldn’t go to any bother. All we want is a nice clean room that hain’t got any bed-bugs or cock-roaches, and plenty to eat.”

“European or American plan?”

“American, of course. Do I look like one of them furreigners?”

“Our rates vary according to location. Would you like a bath?”

“That ain’t none of your business, if you please. There ain’t any cleaner people living than we be.”

“Shall I book you for a room at about three dollars apiece per day?”

“Why, great guns, Mister, I got a special bid from the manager of this tavern, to come and bring my friends, and it ain’t to cost us a cent! Do you s’pose I’m going to pay, and do you know who I be?”

“Let me see the invitation,” requested the clerk.

Uncle Bob produced the little red pamphlet and handed it to him with a look of triumph, saying:

“Mebbe you think I never got an invite before and don’t know one when I see it. Read fur yourself.”

“Why, my dear sir, this is only a circular, stating our terms and plans for accommodation; we sent out thousands of them,” said the clerk, giggling outright. “You surely didn’t expect to be lodged and fed here free of charge just because you received a circular!”

“Wal, I’ll be dod-gasted if I ever seen so many fake concerns in my life. They’re stretched clean across the continent from New York to the Golden



*“Great Guns, mister! I’ve got an invitation to stay at this here tavern as long as I want without paying a dod-gasted cent!”*



Gate beyond," cried Uncle Bob, too surprised to be really indignant. "If I had the money I'd begin suit ag'in you, as sure as my name is Bob Springer."

The clerk turned away to hide his amusement, while Uncle Bob, who had banked from the start upon the free hospitality of the Inside Inn, began to make lightning mental calculations. He turned



*Uncle Bob writes a letter to Lige Knaggs for more money.*

his back upon his wife and ward and made a hasty inventory of his pocket-book, to find that he had less than \$100 left—not enough to get them back home. For a moment he was staggered, but his ready philosophy helped him to frame an immediate course of action, and he decided to seek a cheaper boarding-house and write to Lige Knaggs, to send him an extra hundred or two.



“We’ll not stay here, Becky,” said the disappointed old man. “We can’t afford to do it if we want to see the Fair in proper manner. Let’s go out and inquire the way up town and git in a more reasonable tavern. I never seen any institution yet that was satisfactory when it was half European and half American—not even matrimony.”

Some one directed them to a cheap boarding-house on Humphrey Street and told them what car to take to get there. In another half hour they found the very humble quarters and by that time they were all tired and discouraged. Mrs. Blumen-schmidt, the landlady, a corpulent, oily-skinned woman with a slight moustache, but very courteous and considerate, showed them to their rooms, and after a rather oppressive meal with a number of queer, uncongenial people, they retired to their rooms, where Uncle Bob wrote the following letter to Lige Knaggs before getting ready for bed:

Saint Louie, June —, 1904.

— Humphrey street,

dear friend, Elijah——

i take my pen in hand to wright you a few lines, we air all well but tired and dun up and hope you air the same. i hope you aint lost any more chickens with the gaps, i cant begin to tell you all the sites we seen fur if i did you wood say i was lying. i had my eyes opened so many times by wonderful rev-  
villations they are gitting as set and stairing as old widder Slants, we miss you soarly and often speak of you. Ruth run across a pictur the other day in a paper. i spose it was a funny story of some kind and the name of it was Before and after Taking. she said the fust one looked like you and the other one like Jessie James so you can appresheate the contrast and swell up and bust with the Big head if you want to. i have bin as equanomical as i could under the sarcumstances but i am running a little short of money and if you kin loan me another 200 i will pay you back when i have the Oppurtoonity and that will be when i gather in my crop of pertaters and chickens and other garden truck. please send it by return male as a feller cant git trusted for a dodgasted sent in this town out here. i could tell you of the good times i have had but your snoopy sis-

ter Liddy might see it and tattle to Becky and as my life inshurance has run out it might be embearising all around and so when i get back ile tell you all about it in our club room at Hi Pratts barn. i wish u could arrainge to be with us and help us carry our traps. Becky set on the selluloyd box you give Ruth and spiled its shape and Ruth through it away, hoping to here from you to once i will now wind up my letter with regards to all from all,

yours fraternally,

Uncle Bob Springer.

p. s. Rover was Kidnaped in New York, dont tell it around as it might cause exsitement, peeple in little towns allus make Volkanos out of aunt Hills when they have the chanst.

P. S. No. 2. I want ter tell you, Lige, that a fellow's got to travel if he wants to get his wits sharpened. I have heard some of the most dodgasted yarns since I left. Just wait till I get back and we meet at Hi Pratt's barn! Here's one a fellow just told me——

Two Irishmen were discussing the Bible; Noah and the flood seemed to be the subject that interested them the most.

'Now,' said Pat, 'I hear them say that Noah took two of every kind into the big boat, but I never heard of him taking in the Irish.'

'Oh, well,' replied Mike, 'The Irish at that time were very rich and had private boats of their own.'

The following morning as Uncle Bob was eating his soft-boiled eggs, he paused and broke forth earnestly:

"I'd like to see a leetle of this town of Saint Louis. The streets run zig-zag like they do in Boston and I'm afeard we wouldn't make much headway alone."

"St. Louis, like Detroit, was founded by the French," said a real estate man named Watson, who sat at the same table.

"That accounts fur it," said Uncle Bob churlishly. "I never seen a town the French had anything to do with that was straight."

"The cities that have the irregular streets are always the most beautiful," replied Watson. "They afford so many places for pretty little parks and picturesque nooks. St. Louis has very few streets, Mr. Springer; they are nearly all avenues."

"I s'pose the French had something to do with that, too," said Uncle Bob.

"Perhaps," said the real estate man with a broad smile. "Although much of the old aristocracy is of French descent here, there are less than 2,000 Frenchmen in this great city of 650,000 inhabitants and one-fourth of that number were Canadian born. The greater per cent. of its population are natives of this country and in many respects it is a typical American city. It is bound to become the great financial and business center of the New World on account of its favorable location and its solid foundation. Just think of a city in the Southwest with annual bank clearings reaching three billion dollars! St. Louis exports immense quantities of shoes, dry goods, groceries, tobacco, cigars and beer. The latter commodity alone brings into the city from fifteen to twenty million dollars a year."

"It blows a leetle in St. Louis, too, don't it? May be it is another one of them cyclones on the way," snickered Uncle Bob.

"Why! I don't think it adds any to the credit of St. Louis to crow over the amount of beer guzzled every year," said Aunt Becky, fiercely.

"There are many things the city can crow over, however," said Watson with calm assurance. "She has a water supply, lighting system, police department and sewer arrangement second to none in the world; has fifty-four colleges, seminaries and universities, sixty-one asylums and orphans' homes, forty-six monasteries and convents, ninety-two public schools, one hundred and twenty social and business clubs, and almost as many sporting, pleasure and political clubs, and nearly three hundred churches, so you can see that St. Louis has other



points to recommend her besides her great beer industry, Mrs. Springer."

"You seem to be purty well posted," said Uncle Bob, rather skeptically.

"Yes, you will find that the St. Louis people have everything on their tongues' ends, for they have pledged themselves to entertain their guests in regal manner. At other great fairs held in this country there was considerable complaint about the citizens not knowing where to direct strangers. St. Louis is large enough to accommodate all the visitors and there will be no stampeding and overcrowding and sleeping out on the sidewalks as some of the larger cities have predicted."

"Please tell us about the earlier history of St. Louis. I have run across no one that knows anything about it," said Ruth. "I asked Mrs. Blumenschmidt, who has always lived here, and she said the town was founded by a saint named Louis, who drowned himself in the Mississippi River because an Indian girl named Hiawatha refused to marry him."

"I am afraid Mrs. Blumenschmidt's history is purely the gleanings of a very fertile imagination," said Watson, laughing heartily. "It was such speculative people who circulated the well-established theory that Los Angeles means 'Home of the Angels.' St. Louis was named in honor of the patron saint of Louis the Fifteenth of France, (Louis Ninth). The settlement was due to the shrewdness of Pierre de Laclède. In 1762 a New Orleans business firm of which Pierre was one of the younger members, received from the Governor General of Louisiana a grant giving them exclusive control of the fur trade with the Missouri and other tribes of



Indians along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Pierre and his voyageurs made a perilous expedition to select a point near the mouth of the Missouri River for a depot for merchandise, and selected this site, which he named in honor of Louis the Fifteenth. On St. Valentine's Day, 1764, preparations were made to build shanties and on the following day the first trees were felled and the first pulsation of the building enterprise was felt. Prior to that time De Soto, Marquette and La Salle passed through this region, but left no permanent landmarks. It was Laclède who founded St. Louis."

"And did they have terrible times with them heathenish Indians, too?" asked Uncle Bob, who thirsted for tragedy.

"Yes, in 1780, on the day of the feast of Corpus Christi, the town was attacked by Indians and many lives were taken," replied the man whose name was Watson. "And in 1849 the city had a disastrous conflagration, caused by the sparks from the steamer White Cloud setting fire to the river shanties, spreading rapidly towards the heart of the city, destroying nearly seven million dollars worth of property."

"Truly out of much adversity springeth great things," quoted Aunt Becky.

"St. Louis and New Orleans are the only two American cities which felt both the French and Spanish yokes before yielding to the Constitution of the United States," said the Missourian, folding his napkin. "That portion of Louisiana west of the Mississippi had been ceded to Spain by Louis the Fifteenth before the little French colony knew it. In 1770 a small body of Spanish troops under Don Pedro Piernas, the new governor, took posses-

sion of the town of St. Louis. In 1800 the Territory of Louisiana was ceded by Spain to France, and the Jefferson purchase of the territory occurred a century ago, formal possession being granted the

United States government, represented by Capt. Amos Stoddard, March 10, 1804."

"Everyone should know the early history of so important a city as St. Louis, and we are greatly obliged to you, sir," said Ruth, smiling sweetly.

They rose from the table and proceeded for the World's Fair grounds, stopping as directed at the points of greatest interest to St. Louis visitors; Tower Grove Park, a bower of bloom and beauty in the summer time, and the Missouri Botannical Garden, bequeathed by Henry Shaw to the city, which next to the celebrated Kews Garden in England contains



*Uncle Bob buying a Pocket Guide and Time Saver.*

more species of plants than any other place of the

kind in the world. They then walked to the King's-Highway Boulevard and finally came to Forest Park, with its stately trees and well-kept swards and its 'zoo' containing a great variety of animals, where they rested for a few minutes to partake of the lunch which Mrs. Blumenschmidt had prepared for them.

It was high noon when they paid their admission, bought a Standard Pocket Guide and Time Saver and passed through one of the great north gates of the World's Fair grounds. Before them lay the vast new city, dazzling white in the sunlight of day, but steeped in limpid gold when illumined by thousands of electric lights at night.

For a moment they all three stood rapt in silent admiration, Uncle Bob being the first to recover the use of his tongue.

"All our trouble and worry in gitting here, Becky, is forgot, fur it's sartinly worth it," he said in ecstasy. "It's jist like I allus imagined the New Jerusalem looked."

"Where in the world shall we go first? I feel as green as a college gal in a kitchen," said Aunt Becky, looking vacantly at the great buildings, yet seeming to see nothing.

"Let's go over where those beautiful streams are sparkling and spraying and let me live over again the dreams of my childhood when I used to read fairy tales!" cried Ruth, never stopping until she reached a knoll overlooking the beautiful Cascade Gardens, where art and nature had been blended into a masterpiece of incomparable beauty by the genius of man. At the crest of the hill, which gradually sloped to the edge of the water, was



Festival Hall, covering two acres, with a dome greater than all others in the world, including St. Peter's at Rome. This building was the nucleus of a semi-circular colonnade of Ionic pillars, between which were statues representing the fourteen states and territories included in the Louisiana Purchase. At both ends of the colonnade were pavilions and from their interiors cascades of sparkling water dashed down to the basin below, while a larger stream poured from the Festival Hall.

"Jist look at the fandangled bricky-brac on them buildings and along them cataracts," said Uncle Bob, in wonderment. "There in the center is a woman on a cannon driving two bears, and a couple of gals with hosses' bodies seem to be cavorting around trying to trample down the naked babies wrastling with fishes. And there are a hull lot of other women carrying vases and alarm clocks and things and some youngsters playing flutes and eating pie."

"It's a beautiful work of art," said Ruth. "It is called 'The Triumph of Music and Art' and was done by the sculptor Martiny."

"Wal, Mr. Marteeny must have the imagination of a newspaper reporter," said the old man. "It seems to me that Music and Art could triumph without riding down human beings and raising sich a hullabaloo as that. Mebbe it's what some folks call classical music, so it ain't much wonder I can't understand it. I s'pose that slim youngster with nothing on but a torn sash represents Ragtime."

"Well, I'd think a heap more of that statue of Music if she had on a few more clothes, even if it



was only a pair of toe slippers," said Aunt Becky. "A woman couldn't be very much that would ride out in public on a cannon drawn by bears or coyotes or whatever they are, dressed in sich slouchy fashion."

"It will take a week to cover the grounds alone," remarked Ruth, rather puzzled. "There are 1,240 acres, nearly twice as much as the Columbian Exposition at Chicago. Perhaps we'd better spend the rest of the day getting general ideas without visiting any of the buildings."

For hours they strolled through the enchanted green and white pleasure grounds, teeming with a thousand charms unknown to Babylon's famous gardens. They admired all the imposing palaces, which conveyed the impression of solidarity, despite the diversity of their endless colonnades of Ionic, Doric and Corinthian pillars, their domes, towers and minarets, and their statuary symbolizing every active force in the trend of civilization.

Here they paused to rest beneath the branches of a sturdy tree; there they watched the numerous schools of the finny tribe from the speckled trout to the radiant goldfish, specimens from the waters of many different lands, sporting and playing, scintillating in a rainbow of marvelous tints, blended by Nature into a harmonious combination of colors.

"Oh, the wonderful works of Nature!" exclaimed Ruth.

They watched the tinsel spray from some graceful fountain leaping into the air, and then seeking oblivion in the cool marble basin below.

The happy party then walked in the direction of the lofty and handsome terrace. They thoroughly

enjoyed and admired the scene before them beyond their powers of expression. The picture appealed to them with its richness of color, its unique blending of classic and modern architecture, its artistic entablatures and friezes, its countless shafts crowned with electric light globes, its parterres and esplanades, its bowers of flowers and foliage, and waving triumphantly over all the representative flags and pennants of all nations—certainly a symbol of peace and good will toward men.

“Uncle, there is the Palace of Manufactures and it covers fourteen acres,” said Ruth, after referring to the Pocket Guide again.

“Gee whizz! that seems almost impossible,” replied the old man. “I hain’t got a wheat field that big. It must be something like the White House.”

“And that Palace of Liberal Arts, which is after the French Renaissance style of architecture has a front 750 feet long.”

“I thought some Frenchmen must have built that,” said Uncle Bob, coldly. “It must have tuk him quite a spell to do it. I’d hate to live in a house with so many gew-gaws fur I’d allus be knocking a knob off or git my feet caught in something all the time. I like that big pink building we was looking at awhile ago.”

“That was the Administration Building and it is truly magnificent,” replied the girl, making a memorandum in her Guide and Time Saver. “Uncle, that Palace of Art on the plateau there cost over a million dollars. Isn’t it gorgeous?”

“What’s that house with the big steeple on?” asked Aunt Becky.

“It’s the Palace of Machinery, with 200,000 square

feet; the ornate building across the way is the Palace of Electricity, the mysterious force that in the past few years has revolutionized the world."

"I might have knew it wasn't a church," whined Aunt Becky, whom violent exertion had made rather petulant. "I hain't seen a church since we left Skowhegan and I hain't seen a person in any hotel bow his head and ask a blessing on his food. I expect when they tip the waiter they think that is all that's necessary. We're gitting to be reg'lar heathens and if Bob went to church he wouldn't know enough to take off his hat till the preacher invited him to. Funny, how habit gits hold of some people."

"That building, representing Education—the fountain of knowledge that nourishes and develops the human soul—attracts me," said Ruth, ignoring Aunt Becky's sarcasm. "Isn't it beautiful, all surrounded by water and so lavishly decorated? I want to spend considerable time in there. That big structure with the tall obelisks is the Palace of Mines and Metallurgy, which reveals the hidden secrets of the earth; precious gems, sparkling quartz; gold, silver and other metals. See, some one has stopped a boat at the foot of its steps and is taking on passengers."

"Why do they set houses right out in the water that way," said Aunt Becky. "It reminds one of an Ohio River flood. What on earth did they want to build 'em right out in them puddles fur? I never seen sich poor management. Mebbe that's a French idee, too, Bob."

"No, it ain't, fur the French ain't so overly fond of water as all that," laughed Uncle Bob.

"That immense building is the Palace of Agricul-



ture, the symbol of the best results of Nature's fertile fields, and typical of the wonderful genius of man," explained Ruth, pointing to the stately structure which covers eighteen acres. "It enjoys the distinction of being the largest building ever erected for a single exhibit."

"Cracky, but it's a beauty," interpolated Uncle Bob, his face glowing with pleasure. "Its decorations of colored fruits and flowers makes a feller's mouth water to go back to the farm. I bet it'll be so blooming full of farmers all the time you can't git 'em out with hoss pistols when they git interested."

After viewing the exterior of the Palace of Transportation, containing strange and marvelous machines, representing power and speed, they made a hasty tour of the various buildings, commenting freely upon the treatment of the various types of architecture, and eulogizing to their heart's content.

"I'm glad to see that Maine has good-looking headquarters," declared Uncle Bob, with enthusiasm. "What a big city of state buildings we have and what a fine sprinkling of stars Old Glory has anyway! All this is tiresome to the feet, but it's ennobling and uplifting to the mind and heart. After seeing this St. Louis Fair, I'll allus feel like laughing every time I attend another fair at Skowhegan. I used to think it put up a brilliant effort, but la me! you could stick the hull business in one of them leetle buildings out there you call pavilions and have enough room left fur all the people that attend 'em."

They were tired and hungry when they returned to their humble boarding-house on Humphrey



Street, where immediately after dinner Ruth became very busy with her pencil and Pocket Time Saver, while the old people talked over the grand sights they had seen that day, occasionally varying the colloquy with brief naps and mild discussions.

Three hours passed before Ruth ceased writing and permitted the thought line on her pretty fore-



*Ruth reads her poem to the old folks.*

head to relax. Springing to her feet, she interrupted the dialogue with the words:

“Say, Uncle and Auntie, I was so impressed by the different state buildings and their various exhibits that I wrote this little poem, which I mean to dedicate to the Honorable David R. Francis, President of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.”

The verses, which drew from her dotting foster parents excessive plaudits, ran as follows:

"The sympathizing sister states of this united land  
 Bring gifts and greetings to her gracious Queen,  
 To proud St. Louis, who controls this Exposition grand—  
 The greatest Fair the world has ever seen.  
 There's Alabama with her cotton, snowy white and fine,  
 Alaska with her wealth of Klondike gold,  
 Bright Arizona with her palace, Moorish in design,  
 And Arkansas whose mines bring wealth untold.  
 And there is California's famed 'Camp of '49,'  
 And Colorado's gems are pure as day;  
 Connecticut her manufactures offers at the shrine;  
 Columbia, a government display.  
 Sweet Florida, the Land of Flowers, offers fruit galore,  
 And Georgia proves she is a wise bas-bleu,  
 Hawaii, Pearl of the Pacific, brings her tropic store,  
 And Idaho her grain and grasses, too.  
 Brave Illinois her ample pens with live stock does adorn,  
 Indian Territory sends her chiefs;  
 Fond literary Indiana makes a farm of corn,  
 And Iowa is decked with vines and sheafs.  
 Coy Kansas shows the proud results of ever busy hands;  
 'The New Kentucky Home' her sons will thrill;  
 Louisiana, dear to me, in matchless beauty stands;  
 Maine brings the ships constructed by her skill.  
 Fair Maryland an oyster bed has marvellously wrought,  
 Wise Massachusetts shows her schools complete,  
 Great Michigan her copper mines and orchard fruits has  
 brought,  
 And Minnesota brings her famous wheat.  
 Old Mississippi in the home of brave Jeff Davis lives,  
 Missouri has a thousand things to see,  
 Montana splendid sapphires, rubies, topaz freely gives,  
 Nebraska brings her noted State 'Musee.'  
 New Jersey rules the home of Washington at Morristown,  
 New Mexico has bullion by the ton,  
 New York, 'the Empire State,' is winning prestige and renown  
 Nevada shows how mining ore is done.  
 North Carolina brings tobacco to the common goal,  
 And North Dakota shows the fruits of toil,  
 Ohio brings farm implements, petroleum and coal,  
 And Oklahoma staples from her soil.  
 Vast Oregon, of pineries and fisheries will tell,  
 The Phillippines a native village send,  
 While Pennsylvania displays old Independence Bell,

And Porto Rico, treasures without end.  
Rhode Island shows her rubber, woolens, safes and silver-  
ware,  
South Carolina, shrimps and luscious fruits,  
And South Dakota, prairie hay and vegetables rare,  
And Tennessee her mineral pursuits.  
Broad Texas in a star pavilion meets her loyal court,  
And Utah in a palace, small but fine.  
Virginia in Thomas Jefferson's old home holds fort;  
Wisconsin in her halls of native pine.  
Young Washington brings painted portraits of her lovely face,  
And West Virginia her coal and wood.  
Wyoming with her costly onyx holds a lofty place,  
And all join hands in loving sisterhood.

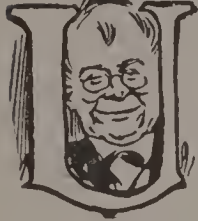
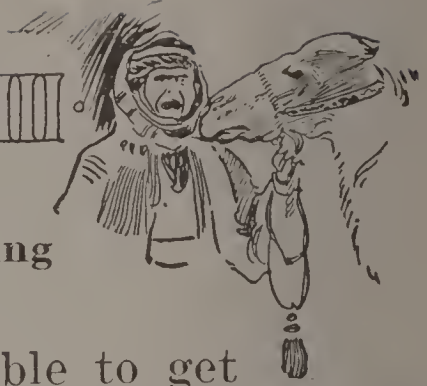


*The World of Wonders.*





## CHAPTER · VIII ·



### Startling and Thrilling Surprises.

UNCLE BOB was unable to get up on the following morning by reason of a severe attack of rheumatism, and for several days he remained in bed, anxiously cared for by Aunt Becky and Ruth. Although they begged him to summon a physician, he turned a deaf ear to their entreaties and finally said to his faithful wife, who was bandaging his cramped limbs with vinegar poultices:

“I want you to stop threatening me with the doctor, Becky. I’m too hard up to pay sick bills, and besides, these St. Louis surgeons have a mania for cutting people’s legs off, and I ain’t strong enough and am too far from home to stand any experimentin’.”

Aunt Becky, with the weak resignation that always imbued her when her husband was ill, left the room to heat flannels at Mrs. Blumenschmidt’s range, while Ruth, who was left in charge, sat down by the bed and with eyes that seemed to widen in sympathy, gazed steadily into his face.

“Ruth, have you heard from Lige Knaggs?” he asked, as soon as they were alone together.

“No, Uncle,” replied the girl. “He wanted to correspond, but I said I would return all the letters he sent me.”



“That’s jist what’s the matter! I knowed it all the time and it’s all your fault!” cried the old man, whose restless nerves made him incautious.

“What do you mean, Uncle Bob?” asked Ruth, leaning eagerly forward for an explanation and clutching the counterpane with trembling fingers.

“Nothin’—nothin’ at all; I must have been out of my head. Some of them dodgasted herbs Becky keeps drugging me with will be the death of me yet,” replied the downcast invalid, with a bitter laugh that sounded strangely foreign and aroused apprehension in his ward’s bosom.

“Uncle Bob, rheumatism doesn’t bother you so much as worry. There is something on your mind and I want to know what it is. If there is anything I can do for you, please tell me,” said the girl, tears springing to her eyes, as she took one of his hands and held it tightly.

“Wal, I didn’t intend to break the secret, Ruth, fur fear it would spile your trip; but I reckon it’s come to a show-down now and something must be did,” replied the old man tremulously. “I—I mortgaged the old homestead to git money to bring us to the World’s Fair, and as I never carried sich a wad of bills in my life, I didn’t manage it jist right and run short. I mortgaged the farm and every dodgasted thing on it to Lige Knaggs, and a few days ago I wrote fur a couple of hundred extry and he hain’t answered the letter. I only have four dollars and seventeen cents left.”

“You mortgaged the old homestead that we might take this trip, and to that Lige Knaggs!” cried Ruth, her heart crushed by the bitter revelation. “Oh, Uncle Bob, I’d rather have stayed in Skowhegan

forever than to have placed you under obligations to him!"

"Now, Ruth, don't take it to heart. I think I kin clean up the debt in a year or so, fur I'm going to work like a nailer when I git back," said Uncle Bob, sorely smitten by her dejected attitude. "Ruth, maybe a letter from you would fetch him. Gosh! we need the money and we must have it some way."

"I don't want to be under obligations to Lige Knaggs. Oh, Uncle, can't you think of someone else?" replied Ruth.

"There ain't another soul in Skowhegan I'd ask fur a loan, and no one knows that I mortgaged the homestead except Lige and Becky. Come, can't you write to him for my sake?"

The haunting fear that burned in the old man's eyes stayed the stout negative reply that rose to her pale, drawn lips. She realized that they were at the mercy of Lige Knaggs, whom she despised above all living creatures, and her soul rebelled; but throttling her pride, she replied bravely:

"I shall write at once, Uncle. I shall tell him to telegraph the money, which I know will come at once. Don't worry any more."

"Oh, I won't; I won't! My rheumatics is much better and I'll be able to dance a hornpipe when the money comes!" cried the old farmer, his face beaming with gratification.

Seating herself at the table, Ruth completed her task and handed the letter to the now happy old man. At that moment Aunt Becky entered with a pan containing one of her extraordinary concoctions and said excitedly:

"Ruth, Mrs. Blumenschmidt said there was a



*Uncle Bob plays his part well—Ruth agrees to write the letter.*



strange man and woman in the parlor waiting to see us. I can't imagine who on earth it is, unless mebbe Mayor Wells of St. Louis and his wife heard about us being here and come to call. Run downstairs and tell 'em to set down and look at the album, while I rub Bob's legs."

Whether it was due to Aunt Becky's further attention or Ruth's co-operation, Uncle Bob soon felt much better, and he decided to mail the letter at once, so that Lige would get it as early as possible. Putting on his coat and hat he started out for the post-office, and meeting a man standing on the corner, he asked him the direction.

"Oh, it's way down town," was the amused reply. "Did you want to mail a letter?"

"Wal, I reckon I do. I didn't calculate to rob the post-office."

"Just go to the next corner and turn the handle of the red box you will find there, and the post-office department will send a special wagon to get it. If it doesn't come promptly, turn the crank three times in succession and that will surely bring it," replied the stranger, but Uncle Bob could not see the facetious twinkle in his eye.

The old man hastened to the designated corner, while the stranger took his stand across the street, ostensibly to wait for a street car. As the first signal did not bring the mail wagon immediately, Uncle Bob grew impatient and again rang the bell three times in quick succession. Hardly had he relinquished his hold when a fire engine came pell-mell down the street, while from another direction came a hook and ladder wagon, followed by a hose cart, with the fire marshal bringing up the rear.

Before Uncle Bob had time to realize what all the hub-bub was about, fire engine apparatus seemed to swarm from every direction.

"Where's the fire, old man?" asked the marshal, stopping close to Uncle Bob, who, with the letter in one trembling hand, clung to the alarm box with the other.

"Fire—where? Who—who said there was a fire?" cried Uncle Bob, in amazement.

"What did you pull that box for if there wasn't any fire, you blanked fool! Don't you know a fire alarm box when you see it?" cried the exasperated marshal.

"That smart city dude over there with a smile on him like a split watermelon told me to ring the bell and a hurry-up wagon would come for this letter I wrote to Lige Knaggs, of Skowhegan, but I didn't mean to rouse the fire company and the state militia and everything else. Catch that feller before he has a chanst to duck under cover—the sneakin' pup!"

The laugh of the St. Louisian, who was the cause of the excitement, suddenly changed to a look of startled chagrin, when he was chased two blocks by three men from the hook and ladder wagon, and finally caught and handed over to the patrol, while the fire marshal, convinced that Uncle Bob was as honest as he was unsophisticated, gave him a lecture, which he was too much dazed to comprehend, and then rode away.

"St. Louis isn't any better than Skowhegan, and not half as good in some respects," mused the old man, when the silence of night again prevailed. "You can't sew a button on your coat in Skowhegan

that Widder Slant and her tribe don't start some kind of a scandal about it, and you can't ring fur a mail wagon in St. Louis, to send a letter, that the hull town don't turn out to find out all about it. I guess human nature is kinder curious the world over."

In the meantime, Ruth, too much overcome by the recent confession of her guardian, to be curious about anything, mechanically hurried down to the parlor, where a tall, slender woman, enveloped in an odor of musk, rushed forward and crushed her in a wild embrace, showering upon her a succession of kisses that would have reminded a casual spectator of a blue jay pecking at a ripe cherry.

"Oh, you dear girl! I'm so beneficently happy to see you!" cried the visitor, with a series of little shrieks and gurgles. "What a time we had finding you!"

"Why, Mahala Ann Wattles!" exclaimed Ruth, when she had time to recover from her second great shock of the morning, and stood staring at the gaudy creature, who had been the belle of Skowhegan a decade before. She was radiant in a dark blue traveling suit, somewhat short in front, and wore an assortment of ribbons and ornaments that produced a bewildering effect; but the masterpiece of her wardrobe was a great flaring hat, pompous with vivid yellow buttercups, interspersed with clematis buds.

"How do I look?" she asked, laughing rapturously, as if she knew that the response would be highly commendatory.

"I never saw you look any better," replied Ruth,



truthfully. "How did you get here and who came with you?"

"You sly little minx, can't you guess? I've got a surprise for you, but you sha'n't know what it is till I have a visit with you," said enthusiastic Mahala Ann, viewing herself in a cracked mirror.

"This isn't such an awfully swell place, but it's in a lovely part of town. Have you got in society yet?" she continued, after a few moments of dead silence.

"We only came here a few days ago," said Ruth tartly.

"I s'pose St. Louis is different from Skowhegan in regard to society," continued Mahala Ann. "You know they don't wait till a stranger gets off the cars there before they begin to rush him. Daddy allus says that since it's leap year, whenever a new man strikes town the girls all line up at the depot to give him invitations to tea parties and dances, and run him out of town with their attentions before the week's out."

Her amused titter was interrupted by a sneeze, so volcanic that the portiere behind which it was generated, rustled like a living object, and Ruth sprang to her feet, her eyes distended with terror.

"Of course he had to let the cat out of the bag! You can't trust a man to keep still that has the hay fever," said Mahala Ann, laughing until her buttercups vibrated as if exposed to the ravages of a tornado.

"What is it?" whispered Ruth.

"Come forth, Beauteous Vision, thou Flower of Manhood, thou chief of the tribe of Benjamin and Mehitabel Jane, and claim the ideal of your dreams

—the girl you crossed the continent to strain to your bosom!” cried Mahala Ann, with a flowery gesture.

In response to her command the curtain was drawn aside and Lige Knaggs, red and awkward, conspicuous in a pale-blue tie and a ready-made suit,



*“Come forth, beauteous vision !” said Mahala Ann.*

so designed as to display to advantage his enormous feet and hands, stood before them, too much embarrassed to appreciate the sarcasm of the eulogy.

Ruth’s dislike for the poor mortal was temporarily forgotten when she thought of the joy his coming

would give Uncle Bob; while he, emboldened by the look of relief that overspread her face, shuffled forward and wrung her hand in ecstasy.

"I'm mighty glad to see you, Ruth. I didn't know whether you keared fur me or not, but now I know you do, and Mahala Ann kin change her snicker to t'other side of her face," he said, squeezing the hand of the girl he adored.

"As soon as Lige got the letter from Uncle Bob Springer, telling about all the grand sights to be seen in St. Louis, he made up his mind to come, too," explained Mahala Ann, when she had apparently recovered her composure. "He run around like a hen with his head cut off or a yearlin' colt with a phonygraph tied to its tail, and bought a lot of new clothes, and I caught the St. Louis fever; too. Actually, I was just positively insane to go, but daddy wouldn't hear to it. I told Lige about it and he jokingly said he'd loan me the money, so I just packed up my grip and left a note to daddy, and off I skipped. Lige didn't s'pose I'd do it, but I fooled him that time."

"Why, Mahala Ann Wattles, it's a case of elopement, then! You'll be the talk of the town! How did you ever happen to disobey your father and why did you run away?" gasped Ruth.

"I don't care a piece of beeswax what the old gossips say," declared Mahala Ann, belligerently, although she flushed a delicate crimson. "Lige and I have been raised together and there ain't a person in all Skowhegan that would dare say a word about Rube Wattle's daughter. Like Caesar's wife, I'm above suspicion and there ain't a bit of danger of me falling. Now I'll trip up and find Aunt Becky



Springer and see what she has to say about it, and give you two a little chance to spoon. 'Ta-ta!'

She made a dramatic farewell gesture, but being unaccustomed to treacherous, polished wood floors,



*Mahala suddenly slips and falls.*

she slipped and fell violently, her buttercups and clematis buds collapsing as if humiliated. Before Lige could assist her, she sprang nimbly to her feet and with another hysterical giggle and a parting glance at the mirror, flounced away in all her garish glory.

"Air you reely glad to see me, Ruth?" asked Lige, drawing closer and again attempting to take her hand.

"Yes, I am glad, for Uncle Bob has been wanting to hear from you," replied Ruth, sick at heart, but covering her qualms with a feeble smile.

"I tell you, Ruth, I missed you like the dickens," continued Lige. "I used to stand fur hours in front of your house and look at the iron stork in your flower garden and think of you. You've allus been

so cold and offish and uppish; but I allus imagined you liked me or I wouldn't have kept takin' your snubs and sendin' you things, only to have you send 'em back. You used to run off when I come to see you and let me set a hull evening at a stretch with Aunt Becky Springer, but I never flared up a bit. I used to bring her Sen-Sen and Yucatan gum and cloves, fur paw told me oncet that the best way to ketch a fractious calf was to slop the cow. I allus loved you, and I—"

"Please don't, Lige," begged his idol, suddenly drawing back and gazing at him as if he were a hideous monster.

"I've allus been good to you, Ruth, and I'll be a heap better when you're all my own. I'll git you a hangin' lamp and a parrot, and everything you want, and all the women in Skowhegan will be jealous of you. You know I've done a lot fur Uncle Bob Springer and fur you, and I could turn—"

"Lige, I can't hear you talk that way," protested the girl, staggering towards the doorway. "Give me time to think it over, and until I decide, please leave me alone. You have never talked to me this way before."

"I never talked that way to any gal before; but when a feller is bubbling over with love, he's apt to git eloquent. I made up my mind I'd pop the question lots of times, but you never give me a chanst. I'll wait a lettlet while longer, but I'll have you, if I've got to steal you, although I don't believe that would be as easy as to kidnap Mahala Ann."

"Come, Lige; enough of that kind of talk," said Ruth, striving to be calm. "Let's go up and see Uncle Bob. He's been very ill."

The meeting that followed was a demonstrative one. When Aunt Becky had rebuked Mahala Ann roundly for her rash conduct, and Lige had been greeted with honest cordiality, the old lady as usual was disposed to look upon the inevitable as the work of Divine Providence, and when Uncle Bob returned he cheered and cried with delight.

The next day they went to the Fair grounds, accompanied by Mrs. Blumenschmidt, at Lige's invitation, and spent the morning wandering about in unsystematic fashion.

"What's all this fuss about anyway? It looks to me like a reckless waste of money and time to go to all this trouble for only six or seven months. What good does it do and who does it benefit?" said Uncle Bob.

"Why, Uncle," replied Ruth, "it's a world lesson, an aggregation of science, beauty and art. It shows the results of man's wonderful genius, displayed in the most instructive and attractive manner, educating and enlightening the entire world. In a few moments we see what has taken hundreds of years to bring about. Compare that new gang plow you bought last fall with that unpretentious, awkward stick we noticed while passing through the Agricultural Palace. For thousands of years it has been the only plow used in many countries still struggling with ancient ideas which have been allowed to remain in a dormant state for centuries.

"Even the Skowhegan farmers seem out of date when we look at the wonderful machines used by the western agriculturists—steam gang plows, harvesters, threshers and other modern implements.

"The forty million dollars spent will not be a



drop in the bucket compared with the influence of the Exposition upon the development of every line of science and industry in all parts of the earth. Think of it, Uncle Bob, every state in the Union, nearly every country on the globe, every trade and profession—all vying with one another to tell the wonderfully fascinating story of progress! When these magnificent buildings and even we ourselves shall have passed away, the influence of this wonderful combination of beauty, science and art will still live in memory, and those following us will realize and appreciate the marvelous advancement during the last century.”

Mahala Ann did not go into raptures over the wonderful exhibits which confronted them on every side. On the contrary, she looked very critical, and soon became cross and tired.

“Wal, Mahaly Ann, the next time you go to a world’s fair, which will probably be in one of the Twin Cities of the great Northwest, I’d advise you not to dress like you was going to an afternoon thimble party,” said Uncle Bob, puffing energetically at his pipe. “I think them high-heeled slippers and tight belt and your other gew-gaws is the principal cause of your trouble.”

“Well, the very idea of your criticising the way I dress!” she exclaimed wrathfully. “Maybe I don’t just exactly come up to your ideal as far as my wardrobe is concerned, but I try to dress in style, and I flatter myself that I please the people of good taste, judging from the way the well-dressed men all turn around to look at me.”

“Wal, I should think they would,” continued Uncle Bob, who would rather tilt with her than

Aunt Becky, for the reason that her feminine vanities were more numerous and ridiculous. "Men don't allus stare 'cause they admire, if the fool women only knowed it. Old Hank Spencer's blind sorrel mare, that walked on three legs, used to draw twicet as many spectators as any thoroughbred hoss in the country. You can't expect to enjoy anything if you're allus lookin' fur something to spile it. Libbie Jones didn't like Californy when she went there on a Christian Endeavor excursion, and said the climate was unhealthy. Truth of the matter was she set inside the boarding-house all the time worrying about tarantulas."

"Beg pardon, sir, but no smoking is allowed inside these grounds at present," said a mounted guard, elated with the recent possession of great authority, as he halted in front of Uncle Bob.

"Mebbe you think I'm an incendiary or an anarchist or somethin'," replied the old man warmly. "P'raps you'd like a lettle puff yourself."

"Please put that pipe away," was the stern command.

"It seems to me that you St. Louis people are flaunting your morals a leetle high," said Uncle Bob, with a tremendous puff that set the officer to coughing. "With your keep-out signs and your hands-off signs and your no-smoking signs and your no-dogs-allowed signs and your Sunday closing notions—"

"Will you please put that pipe away?"

"Jist two more puffs, if you please, Sonny. I hain't going to waste terbaccer fur the likes of you," resumed Uncle Bob, smoking with avidity for another minute, before knocking out the ashes and



*"Smoking not allowed, Sir."*



placing the pipe in his pocket, while the youthful guard rode away, angry and disgusted.

"I'm just glad you got a good calling down," declared Mahala Ann, with a laugh that restored her to her usual good humor. "A man that smokes a pipe in public with ladies is certainly more to be abhorred than a woman who dresses in style."

Suddenly there was a crashing of cymbals and a thunder of drums mingling together in a gusty prelude, and a band in one of the stands of the Plaza St. Anthony struck up a brilliant Meyerbeer selection in a manner that made Uncle Bobb forget his recent tilt with the guard.

"That's Susie's Band!" cried Aunt Becky. "I allus wanted to hear her, so we kin set right down on the steps of this big building and enjoy her music."

"I don't see that it sounds any better than the Skowhegan band," said Lige, evidently disappointed. "Since Old Bill Tucker plays the bass drum there ain't a band I ever heard tell of that could make more noise."

"That's right, and there's nothing about this band that would make a person want to fly," said Aunt Becky. "Elvira Dingle fainted once when she heard 'em play 'The Maiden's Prayer,' with irritations."

"That's nothin'," said Uncle Bob contemptuously. "Old Dingle, her father, died a week after he had been to church fur the fust time in thirty-seven years and heard the old woman choir sing, 'Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.' Some of 'em couldn't sing if they had a million tongues, fur any fool knows that the voice is the main thing. Howsome-

ever, if they had a thousand tongues to gossip, some of 'em would make purty good headway."

"How can we enjoy the music if you keep talking all the time?" said Ruth impatiently.

"I allus thought people went to musicales to visit and re-cooperate," laughed Uncle Bob.

"You people can't sit here on these steps!" shouted another guard very curtly. "By paying a small admission fee you can get inside of the chain over there and have chairs."

"Wal, I'll be gormed if a feller kin be comfortable any place in this here show," exclaimed Uncle Bob petulantly. "I wish they'd have all the restrictions printed inside of the guide book so we'd know how to act. I wouldn't pay a penny to set in one of them green chairs jist to hear Susie play and go through her monkey-shines every time the crowd cheers.

"Why, Uncle, Sousa is a man," said Ruth.

They had not proceeded far, when the band struck up "The Star Spangled Banner," with such admirable vim and expression, Uncle Bob and his party were enraptured, and even Lige admitted that it had some points superior to those of the Skowhegan organization. Later when they heard the famous Innes and Weil bands and the orchestra of Ernst and Bendix in the St. Louis Plaza, their praise was unstinted.

"After all, it ain't so much the drums and the way you pound the daylights out of 'em, as it is all them leetle crinkly instrouments that make your sensibilities sizz like water on a hot stove and go off in steam," said Aunt Becky.

As bad luck would have it, Uncle Bob, who had not yet recovered from his rheumatic limp, was vis-

ited by another dire calamity that hurt his pride as well as his backbone.

With Mrs. Blumenschmidt he was admiring a tandem bicycle in the Palace of Transportation, when a Dutchman, very ragged and dirty, came up in front of them and gave his companion a brutal leer that



*“Dunder und Blitzen! I split you clean up to your chin.”*

caused her to utter a piercing shriek and cling to his arm for protection.

“What do you mean by insulting a lady, you dog-gasted, low-lived rowdy!” cried Uncle Bob, quickly assuming the aggressive.



"I show you vhat I dinks, you gross hog! Dunder und Blitzen, I split you clean up to your chin mit my knife und die you up shust like à bretzel!" shrieked the Dutchman, completing his tirade with a sturdy blow aimed full at Uncle Bob's nose, and in another moment the two were rolling upon the floor, where they scuffled fiercely, raising no end of dust and excitement.



*"Ach, mein Gott in Himmel!"*  
cried Mrs. Blumenschmidt.

"Och, Mein Gott in Himmel! Oh, Chacob, Chacob! quit dot, aber I calls der boliceman! Oh, Chacob! Chacob, dot man vas my boarder und vas shust been sick in bet und you'll kill him! Help! help!" screamed Mrs. Blumenschmidt, executing a fantastic dance around the prostrate, struggling bodies, while the crowd began to gather. A guard heard the commotion and ran to the spot, arriving in time to prevent the enraged Dutchman from strangling his adversary to insensibility.

"What is the cause of this disturbance?" he shouted, after he had succeeded in separating them.

“I caught dot villain valking mit mein frau und making luf to her. I saw 'em mit my own eyes, und vhen I drierd to dalk, he up mit his fists und joomp on me und struck me und lay me out on de grount, flat as a gooseberrah pie und pooty nigh proke my pack,” vociferated the Dutchman, whose rage had somewhat abated.

“Och, Mr. Policeman, dis man vas a shentleman, und he vas my ferry good freund, und ve vas not making luf, but shust lukiing at a bischnickle built pig enough for two, and dot ting—dot wr-r-r-retch dot use to be my hoosbant, coom gicking und brancing arount, und make trooble!” said Mrs. Blumenschmidt, with the assistance of appealing gestures, as she stood before the guard, her eyes swimming in tears and her nose red enough to arouse the suspicion of the laughing spectators.

“I didn't even know the woman was a Missus,” said Uncle Bob, brushing his clothes. “I've got a family of my own on t'other side of the building and I kin soon tell you who I be if it's necessary. If any old kraut-stuffer wants to wallop me, he'll have to be mighty sure he's got more sterling qualities than blow and beer to back him up.”

“You'd better go along with your husband,” said the guard, but Mrs. Blumenschmidt replied indignantly:

“Go along mit him? Go along mit dot vife-peater dot I only lif mit two munts und dot vas blenty—dot prute dot schlap my mouth vhen I was sick in bet mit de salivation? I'd rather geep boarders und valk hant in hant mit der old Scratch dan lif mit a voman-killer!”

With a scornful laugh, the lady drew herself

up proudly and walked away with Uncle Bob, her



*The howling ticket seller on the Pike.*

ex-husband proceeding in an opposite direction, followed by the guard.

They found the rest of the party looking for them and Uncle Bob told his story without embellishing it with useless details, while Mrs. Blumenschmidt expatiated upon the undesirable traits of her former husband. During the rest of the day, the old man insisted upon walking close to the side of his life companion, and Mrs. Blumenschmidt fastened herself upon Lige, to his great disgust.

The Pike provided them with the amusements that pleased all, and with giddy abandon they plunged into its vortex. The dis-

tracting music, the shouts of ticket sellers, the wealth of bright colors and the antics of a hilarious multitude of sightseers surpassed their most exag-



gerated expectations. Never in the history of the nation had so many diverse and excellent attractions been collected to please the public, and never were the senses of the Skowhegan delegation more bewildered, as when they passed from place to place, each a world in itself.

There was far-off Alaska, truly cold in its suggestiveness; the ornate Moorish Palace; the abode of the unkempt Cliff Dwellers; Mysterious Asia, from whence proceeded most unearthly yells; the Palais du Costume; the Siberian railway; Old St. Louis; Constantinople; a Southern plantation; Battle Abby; the shops of the glassworkers; the Temple of Mirth; Statisticum; the Irish village; Over and Under the Sea; Seville; the Magic Whirlpool; the water chutes; the fire fighters; the naval exhibit; Jim Key, the trick horse; and scores of other allurements.

As their tastes seemed to differ widely, Ruth suggested that they divide their party into three couples, one to visit Cairo, another Hagenbeck's Animal Show, and the last to explore "Creation," all to meet a half hour later to relate their experiences at the "Galveston Flood," which terminated the Pike, thus saving time and expense. At the time specified, the party were again re-united at the place designated, Ruth and Mahala Ann being the last to arrive, the latter perspiring from unusual exertion.

"Mahala Ann and I found Cairo very interesting," laughed Ruth, while her companion fanned herself with a tiny kerchief and looked morose.

"I never saw such a girl as Ruth," complained Mahala Ann. "She kept edging me on to do things

and yet she wouldn't do anything herself, but stand and make fun of me. The streets of Cairo are atrocious! I wouldn't live there for anything. The people are all weazened and greasy, and the men wear either white veils or red turbans, queer jackets or else night-gowns, go barefooted, and haven't any sense of decency. Well, nothing would do but I had to ride in the procession that goes through the streets every few minutes. All the people began to get on the mules and there wasn't anything left for me but the camel and I had to get in the basket with a horrid, fat Norwegian, who had been drinking some kind of intoxicating liquor. Ruth wouldn't get in with me, but just stood, nearly killing herself with laughter. Then they started that terrible music and those brazen priests in little gauze accordion-pleated skirts and brass bracelets on their calves began to dance ahead to herald the procession. I honestly never felt so cheap in my life. Such bawling and such actions! I wondered what daddy would have thought if he had seen me. Then the driver poked the camel with something that looked like a soap stick, to make it run, and we began to sway back and forth in that big clothes-basket like peas in a pod. Sometimes the fat man was in front and some of the time I was holding him around the neck, and sometimes we were both at the bottom of it with our feet palpitating over the sides. I cried and pleaded for mercy, but the more I shouted, the harder they made the camel run and the worse the Norwegian swore, and those nasty heathens acted positively scandalous. I'm just as black and red as a checker board and I want to go home—my hat's just ruined!"

"I s'pose the spectators took you for part of the show. You look like you'd been riding a hull day in Chicago in a North Clark Street car," laughed Uncle Bob, while Mahala Ann bit her lip trying to suppress her vexation.

"What did you and Mrs. Blumenschmidt do, Lige?" asked Ruth, smiling mischievously, for she had paired them off and sent them to Hagenbeck's Animal Show.

"We didn't go to the show," he replied, glumly. "I didn't care to hear crocodiles and seals and white mice, playing musical instroooments when I could hear Susie's band play twicet as good, without paying for it."

"I s'posed it would hurt you to part with your money," said Mahala Ann spitefully.

"I went inside of the Ozark shooting gallery and fired at the pasteboard bears and peacocks and things, and didn't even win a postage stamp," he continued, looking very much put out.

"And what did poor Mrs. Blumenschmidt do?" asked Ruth.

"Oh, she stood outside in front of the 'Hereafter' and waited till I got through," he replied.

"Well, such selfishness—you stingy old miser!" hissed Mahala Ann, glad to find a target at which to aim her ill humor.



*Lige shoots at  
pasteboard  
bears and peacocks.*



"We saw 'Creation' and it was sublime!" cried Uncle Bob. "It did me as much good as a sermon, although I didn't have a chance to take a nap."

"Yes, but I was bored to death before the thing started," said Aunt Becky. "You know you have to go up a flight of stairs facing the audience, and when we came up, all the hundreds and hundreds of spectators began to cheer and holler and wave their



*Uncle Bob waved his umbrella in their faces and made a speech.*

handkerchiefs, and Bob thought they was trying to honor him 'cause he was going to run fur the office of county drain commissioner, and although I hiked at his coat tail every blessed minute, that old lunatic pulled off his hat and made a speech.

"You just ought to have heard the wind-up! 'Now, friends,' he said, shaking the big family umbrella

in their faces, 'as we go through life let us eat, drink and be merry, for the morrow we know not.' You can guess how they hollered and acted, and I felt like coming down through the clouds. Men don't have to wear bracelets on their calves and go bare-footed, and have rings in their noses to be heathens, Mahala Ann. When we got seated another stylish couple came up, and the crowd did the same thing to them. That was part of the show, and represented what a big hullaballo could be made out of nothing. Everybody that came up got cheered the same way and I could see Bob gitting smaller and smaller until he'd almost fit in the main hole of an ant hill, and he began to swaller real hard as if he was trying to keep from blasphemy. Purty soon the curtain was drawn and we saw how the universe was made and how the earth developed from something that wasn't no bigger than a lemon until it became life size. It was glorious and inspiring."

"Yes, but they had to spile it at the tail end when they had seven females to stand up on a sort of a clock shelf, to represent the seven days of the week, wearing white dresses with frills and tuckers in 'em," growled Uncle Bob. "They had big rats in their hair and I couldn't for the life of me see why the likes of them should be in 'Creation'."

"Look at that poor old squaw setting there by the roadside," said Aunt Becky, pointing towards an Indian painted red and yellow, with a wisp of black hair falling down upon a blanket of many colors. "The poor thing looks so doleful, as if she was flushed with this great onward march of civilization. I'm going to speak to her."

The kind-hearted old lady crossed the street and bending over the gaudy creature, placed her hand upon the black be-feathered head and said tenderly:  
“I allus felt so sorry fur you poor critters, driven



*Aunt Becky embraced the wrong Indian.*

helter skelter from your beautiful valleys and rivers to that leetle potato patch out West, while the Dagoes come streaming into the country at the rate of one hundred a minute and nobody cares. You look a heap like Pocohontas, I imagine. Ain't



you afeard to set out here with all them profane people standing around? What's your name, dearie?"

"Me a Sioux—me no speak English much," was the guttural reply.

"Sue—I allus loved that name! It jist suits your style of beauty," continued Aunt Becky, placing an arm tenderly around the neck of the grinning Indian. "Bob never liked the name, 'cause it sounds too much like a law suit."

"For the land sake, Aunt Becky, do stop embracing that Indian!" cried Mahala Ann, flying to the rescue of the old lady. "A man over here says it's not a squaw, but old Chief Red Devil!"

"Look out fur your switch, Becky! Like as not he'll scalp you!" shouted Uncle Bob, laughing until the Pike reverberated.

"Why, fur the land sake!" gasped Aunt Becky, fleeing as fast as her feet would take her. "He looks fur all the world like a woman. I didn't s'pose the men squaws painted their-faces and wore beads and bracelets."

"The idee of you, Becky, who allus boast of your constancy, makin' love to a big buck Sioux in broad daylight," wheezed Uncle Bob.

"That robe the Indian had on looked like the big wrap Lige bought for his mother to wear to church over her new silk dress," laughed Mahala Ann. "When I saw it, I nearly died with merriment, fur it was pink, bordered with baby blue and lined with buff. I made so much fun, he took it back and asked the clerk if it was appropriate for a woman seventy-nine years old to wear to church, and the clerk said it was a kimona and was only intended

to wear to the bath-room, and as Lige folks haven't got any bath-room, he gave it to me to cut up for a crazy quilt."

"Poor Lige is as unfortunate as Biddy Hoofmarine," said Ruth, joining in the laugh. "Her highest



*Art must be respected*

aspiration was to lead a German, and when she married a well-to-do man from Berlin, her friends used to say in a joking way that they believed her supreme wish would be gratified; but her husband did all the leading."

When they reached the Fine Arts building on the

hill, all of which had not yet been turned by the painters from white to the old ivory color that was to be the dominating hue of the various palaces of the Exposition, another guard met them at the door and bade Aunt Becky check her umbrella.



*Shocked at Statuary.*

“I never seen sich people to wring money out of visitors as they do out here!” she exclaimed in disgust. “I’d like to know why my umberell’ hain’t as good a right in here as my bonnet or anyother arti-



cle of clothing I have on. Next thing we know they'll be charging us duty fur wearing jewelry."

"People are very apt to point at the works of art with 'em and deface 'em, and we are required to check 'em," said the guide.

"I spect he thinks you're Carrie Nation and might git to smashing things," said Uncle Bob, fishing out ten cents.

"Now, young man, that umberell' has been in the family well nigh on to twenty years and if you lose it, I'll make Bob wear it out over your back," threatened Aunt Becky as she gave it up.

Ruth was delighted with the oreads, satyrs and other mythological creations from the brushes of the world's greatest artists, but Aunt Becky was shocked repeatedly, especially in the French gallery.

"Such perniciousness!" she finally gasped, as she turned her back to a life size painting of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden on a hot day. "I'd punch that shameless picture so full of holes it would look like a skimmer, if I had my umberell'. I want to git out of this photographt gallery and see something more calculated to please modest eyes."

At that juncture Mahala Ann, who, bubbling with the spirit of adventure had wandered unchaperoned into the Cuban gallery, came skipping back, very red and excited, but still able to giggle.

"Oh, Aunt Becky, I've had the most romantic experience!" she cried, striving to suppress a hysterical peal of laughter with a kerchief much too small for the purpose. "I was looking at that big painting of Psyche admiring herself in a creek—you know she was the girl that caused the Trojan war

and got in a love entanglement with Paris, and after that Psyche knots were all the rage—well, I looked up and there stood a handsome man, a regular prince, quite as perfect as the Apollo of Bellville, only a little better dressed, and he was looking right in my eyes and smiled.”



“Maybe he was looking at your hat.”

“And did you embrace it?” asked Uncle Bob.

“No, I did what any self-respecting girl of good taste would do under the circumstances,” replied the excited speaker rather irritably. “I looked down modestly—kind o’ put one foot in front of the other just like this, and sighed a little, and—”

“Mebbe he was looking at your hat,” said Uncle Bob glumly.

“He wasn’t any such thing!” retorted Mahala Ann, making a wry face at Uncle Bob and giggling awhile before she proceeded.

“He was tall and square-shouldered, and had the bluest eyes and the sweetest little Van Dyke beard, and I said to myself, while my heart pitty pattered outrageously—Mahala Ann, your opportunity has come.”

“He must have thought you was a living picture,” laughed Uncle Bob.

“He didn’t anything of the kind! He looked admirably at me and came so close I could have grabbed a handful of whiskers, if I had been one of the impulsive kind like Carmen, and he said: ‘Pardon me, fair maiden, but your face reminds me of old times, and I associate it with my childhood, when a certain little girl strangely like you must have looked many years ago, hunted wild flowers with me over the hills and meadow.’ Now wasn’t that just too dear and romantic for anything?”

“Now, Mahala Ann Wattles, if your pa ever ketched you flirting like that, he’d wear his slipp’ry elm cane out on the feller’s back and your’n too,” said Aunt Becky with unusual severity. “How unladylike fur you to stand there and listen to the compliments of some wolf in sheep’s clothing, who is on the trail fur innocent gals like you! Why didn’t you slap him right in the face?”

“And spoil a romance? Oh, Aunt Becky, you are too prosaic. If you had been to a state normal school two terms, you wouldn’t take life so seriously. When a girl knows she has met her beau ideal, she loses all sense of propriety, and the fellow understands, for he suffers the same way. Something told me to come to St. Louis, even if I did have to run away, and—”

“Wal, Mahaly Ann, you’re as daffy as a snow-blind sheep, and the sooner you git back to Skowhegan the better,” said Uncle Bob in sheer disgust. “Like as not he was a married man with six children or mebbe a möll-buzzer waiting fur a chanst to grab your reticule.”



“And what did you say when he made his pretty speech?” asked Ruth with a roguish laugh.

“I don’t know as I said anything, I jist flushed a little—Oh, I believe I did say ‘Mayhaps,’” replied Mahala Ann, her spirits, temporarily dampened by the advice of her elders, spouting forth again with renewed vigor. “I just sort of believe in re-incarnation. Like as not we were lovers in some pre-existence. Mebbe he was Parsifal and I was Kundry, the fairest of women.”

“I’d hate most mighty bad to be the re-incarnation of something that never existed,” said Uncle Bob dryly, as they walked out of the building to the sward of a beautiful stretch of park, through which ran an artificial stream that dazzled in the sunlight.

“What a dandy place this is!” exclaimed Lige, looking devotedly down at Ruth, who shuddered coldly, although his gaze was extremely ardent. “I wish we could have a river in our back yard like that at home, jist fur you and me to set by.”

“It makes me think of the old revival song we all love,” said Mahala Ann, warbling in a shrill, nasal falsetto:

‘Shall we gather at the river,  
The beau-tee-ful, the beau-tee-ful river.’

“It’s almost sacrilegious fur yoo to sing it, though,” said Uncle Bob.

“Oh, there he comes! There comes the man that spoke to me!” cried Mahala Ann, almost frenzied with joy. “Something told me he would follow me and claim his own. Now, Aunt Becky, don’t say anything to scare him away. Make him welcome for my sake. Won’t you?”

The stranger was as she had described, tall and handsome, with a rosy complexion, somewhat

bronzed by the sun, and a Van Dyke beard neatly trimmed. He slowly approached them and was about to raise his hat, when Aunt Becky, with a far-reaching cry, rushed towards him, and falling upon his bosom, twined her arms about his neck, embracing him again and again.

Mahala Ann's face turned ashen white and she was struck speechless with surprise, while the rest of the party were smitten with a dumbness and a numbness hitherto unfelt by them.

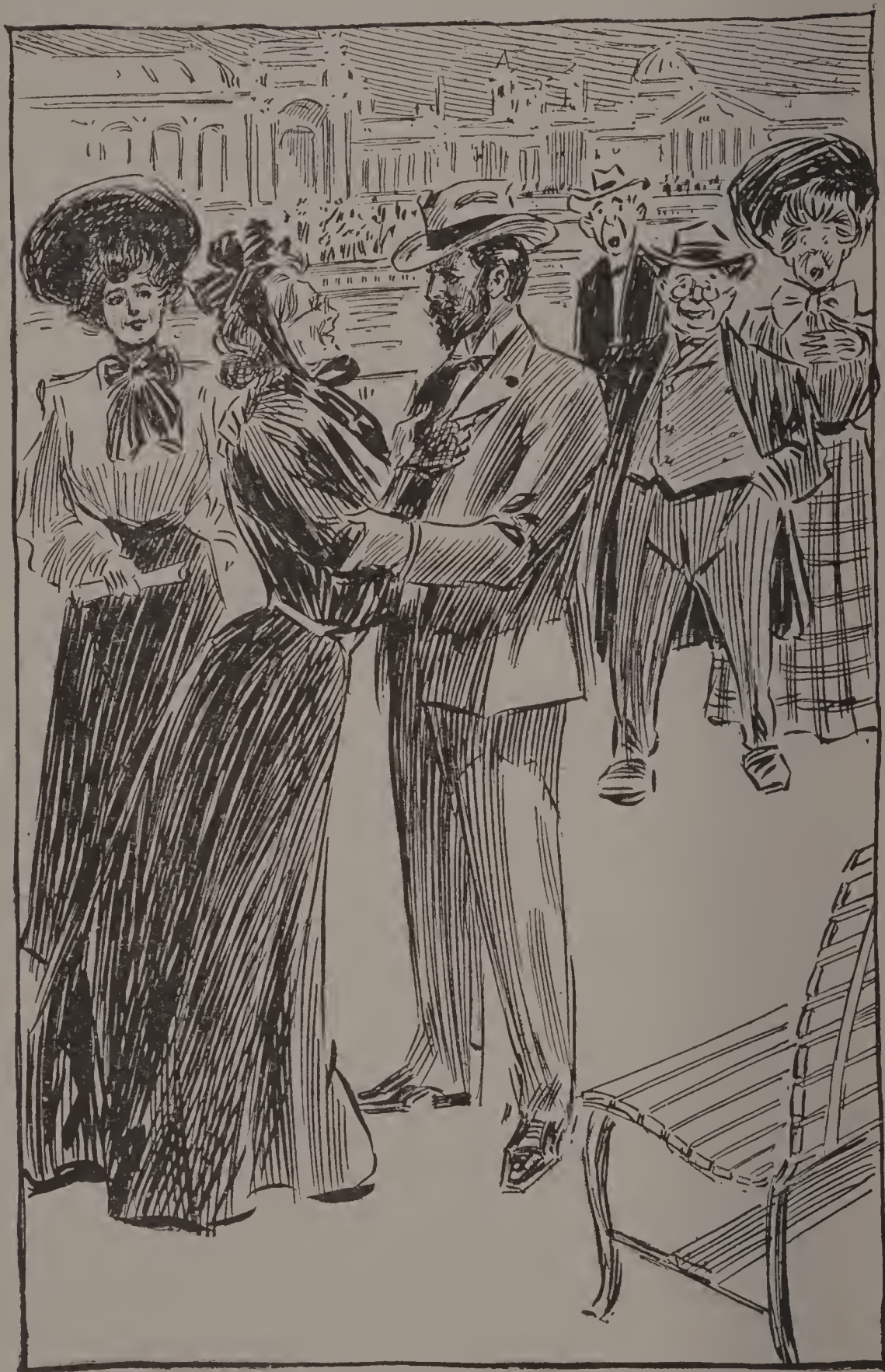
"Oh, Tom, my boy,—my long lost son. I knew you'd come back—I knew it! My prayer is answered—it was His will after all!" cried the old lady, weeping with ineffable joy.

"By the big dipper of the celestial firmament, it's Tom—our boy Tom! Is it possible—is it real!" cried Uncle Bob! "I didn't recognize him on account of his whiskers. Thank Heaven, he has come back to us! Becky, I told you the whole world would be here."

The stranger greeted his father with equal tenderness, and then embraced his mother again.

"Where have you been all these years, Tom?" she asked, still weeping. "Oh, my boy, tell us all about it. Is it true! Is it possible!"

"The story is a long and strange one," said the long absent son with much tenderness. "I arrived a week ago at San Francisco from Australia. Having accomplished my desire to accumulate a fortune, I decided to go back to Skowhegan to see my dear old father and mother and make their last days happy. I was determined not to return until I could obey your command, mother, never to show myself there until I amounted to something. I



*Fate wills that they meet at the beautiful river.*



have made a snug little fortune at mining—enough to keep us all in luxury as long as we live.”

For fully fifteen minutes Tom and his parents, too happy to notice the spectators that gathered around, talked rapidly and earnestly, while Aunt Becky kissed him again and again and Uncle Bob never for an instant released his hand.

A strange expression swept over Ruth's face as she looked upon this exciting drama.

“I furgot the rest of the party,” he finally said, motioning for them to advance. “We were so selfish in our happiness at finding our boy we never thought of anybody else. Here, Ruth, hurry up. Tom, this is your adopted sister, although she still goes by the name of Ruth Burton.”

The look of admiration that shone in Tom's eyes as he greeted her, found its response in the heart of the unaffected girl, who realized that she, too, as well as Mahala Ann, was confronted by her soul's highest ideal of manhood.

“This is Mahala Ann Wattles and Lige Knaggs of Skowhegan—you remember 'em. Mahala Ann is two years and seven months older than you be,” added Uncle Bob.

“I think I can place you now,” said Tom, shaking hands with the girl, who was too much overcome to even exchange greetings, and for once in her life had nothing to say when an opportunity was afforded. “When you pulled my coat tail in the art gallery, I was rather rude, for which I beg pardon.”

“Where are you stopping, Tom?” asked Uncle Bob.

“At the Southern Hotel, and where are you staying, father?”

“With Mrs. Blumenschmidt here. She lives on Humphrey street.”

“You must join me at the Southern, just as soon as you can pack your grips,” said Tom authoritatively. “We’ll go right away and see to it.”

They left the ideal spot, with its velvet lawn and sparkling waters, and as Ruth watched the old people, both leaning upon the staff of their declining years, the significant hymn suggested by Mahala Ann, surged through her mind and filled her with unspeakable happiness, for a multitude of heavenly voices seemed to chant in exquisite harmony of the meeting at the beautiful river.



*They left the ideal spot.*



## CHAPTER IX



### **T**he Wheel of Fortune Decides Their Destiny.

THE days that followed were happy indeed to the re-united Springer family, and Tom, after seeing that they were all supplied with the comforts of a first-class hotel, did everything else in his power to increase their enjoyment.

With marvelous intuition he ascertained the needs of each and immediately set about to supply them. He also politely repulsed the increasing attentions of Mahala Ann, who seemed to labor under the hallucination that he had been sent by Providence solely to rescue her from spinsterhood, and while hearing from his mother the early history of Ruth, he also learned about the mortgaged homestead and the intolerable attitude the beautiful girl was compelled to assume.

But it was Widow Slant, the foremost gossip of Skowhegan, who afforded him the means to bring about the desired results, which proved to him that sometimes a gossip may do a piece of work worthy of commendation.

One morning, after spending an almost sleepless night, thinking of modest Ruth, with her animated face, rare intelligence and charm of manner, he went to his mother's room, but was chilled by the baleful atmosphere of the surroundings.



Mahala Ann, with head bowed down, sat upon the couch weeping bitterly, while Ruth and Aunt Becky stood beside her, trying their utmost to console her. Uncle Bob sat in an arm-chair, apparently very much disturbed, while Lige stood pigeon-toed in the



*Skowhegan gossips worry  
Mahala Ann.*

center of the room, looking as embarrassed as if he had been charged by a police court judge with stealing chickens.

“What in the world is the matter?” asked Tom in great concern.

“Oh, Becky got a letter from that dodgasted, infernal old Widder Slant that said a hull lot of things about Mahala Ann’s character and the poor gal is all broke up over it. Becky hadn’t no business to tell her, but women’s worse failing is gossiping; they can’t keep a secret,” said Uncle Bob sourly.

“I meant it fur her own good,” replied Aunt Becky warmly. “Mahala Ann

has allus been a sort of a darter to me, ever since her mother died, and I thought it was my dooty to tell her. Of course her paw raised Cain when he found her note saying she had slipped off to the

World's Fair with Lige, and Widder Slant says that people are talking dreadfully, and they gave her Sunday school class to Elvira Dingle."

"I didn't think they would dare to talk that way about me and that my father would be so heartless," wailed Mahala Ann. "I'm ruined in that town and I'll drown myself in the Mississippi river, for I never can go back."

"Now, Mahala Ann, what's the use of pulling your hair out and fretting about what a lot of old gossips say," replied Uncle Bob, who felt keen compassion for the girl, now that she was experiencing bitter retribution for her lack of discretion. "Did you ever hear of an old backbiter running down somebody else that didn't have some nasty scandal in her own family to look after sooner or later? Scandal mongers are allus especially hard on the shortcomings they have themselves, and the pure-minded don't bother about keeping other peoples' records in smooth running order."

"I'll never, never hold up my head again," insisted Mahala Ann, almost exhausted from weeping. "I never talk about anybody, but if the facts were known old Widder Slant and Elvira Dingle and a few others have enough to do to keep their own door-yards clean. Old Widder Slant is a hypocrite and would steal her best friend's good name if she could and sell it for a nickel, and Elvira Dingle's conduct is shameful—a pretty Sunday school teacher she'll make! I know all about her, for old Granny Butters told me a few tales I could tell if I was a mind to repeat things."

"That's right, Mahala Ann,—spunk up a leetle

bit and then go back and clean 'em all out," said Uncle Bob encouragingly.

"We'll find a way out of this scandal, so don't cry any more, Mahala, you better save your tears, maybe you'll need them when you and Lige are not feeling so sweet on each other as you do now," said Tom reassuringly, as he tactfully left the room, motioning Lige to follow him.

They met in the writing-room, where Tom drew a small book from his pocket and sitting down at a desk, filled out a check. Then turning to Lige, he said:

"I want to thank you, old man, for your kindness to my father. Here's a check for the full amount he owes you, as well as the interest for one year, and a neat little sum of five hundred for your wedding present."

"My wedding present?" gasped Lige, his ears flushing a bright cranberry red.

"Yes—of course you intend to do the right thing by Mahala Ann Wattles and take her back home, an honorable married woman."

"Why, I never even thought of marrying Mahala Ann," said Lige, with unusual spirit. "She palmed herself off on me and came of her own accord. I—I ain't responsible 'cause she got her foot in it."

"You certainly are as much to blame as she," said Tom with austerity. "You know how easily girls of that type are led into indiscretions and naturally she would be glad to go any distance with you. I have seen a good deal of the world and believe I am correct in thinking that she is dead in love with you. Can't you read it in her eyes?"

"Why—why, Mahala Ann can't bear me," said



Lige in utter stupefaction. "She told me t'other day that if the likes of me ever popped the question to her she'd never stop running, and I told her I wouldn't ask her—not even to have the fun of seeing her run like an old cow. Nothing would do her but a prince or a dook."

"Pshaw! A girl as fond of the men as Mahala is, generally gives up her lofty aspirations before she finds her prince," said Tom, still implacable. "She would accept you in a minute if you had the sense to propose, but you don't recognize a fine girl when you see her. I've been all over the country, as well as Europe and Australia, and I never saw a girl like Mahala. She'd make you a jewel of a wife."

"But—but, it's Ruth I'm after," blurted Lige, redder than ever.

"Ruth, my adopted sister. Well, the very idea!" exploded Tom, his scornful eyes traversing Lige's unsymmetrical figure to the toes of his ample shoes. "She wouldn't marry you if you had a million, and I shouldn't permit it anyway, so there!"

He brought down his fist upon the desk with terrific violence and continued rapidly: "Don't you know old Rube Wattles is a desperate character and he'll fill you full of buck shot if you ever go back there again without taking along his daughter as your wife?"

"I would much rather be shot full of holes with a Krupp gun than go back as her husband," said Lige stubbornly.

"Well, there's just this about it, Lige Knaggs, you'll marry the girl or have me to settle with," said Tom, turning upon him a set, determined face. "I knew her when we were school children together

and I'd willingly lose my life fighting to protect her good name."

"Why don't you marry her yourself if you're so keen to git her married off?"

"Why, because—because, I'm in love with another girl! What in thunder is the matter with you! The idea of your asking me such an absurd question!"

"But the gossips will soon git tired of talking and Mahala Ann will be the bell-sheep of the bunch a year from now—it allus happens that way," said Lige, fumbling with the check Tom had handed to him.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, to show my good will for you and Mahala Ann," continued Tom.

"I hate to bribe a man to get him to open his eyes and see what a fool he is and what a good chance he is missing, but I'll raise your wedding present another five hundred dollars."

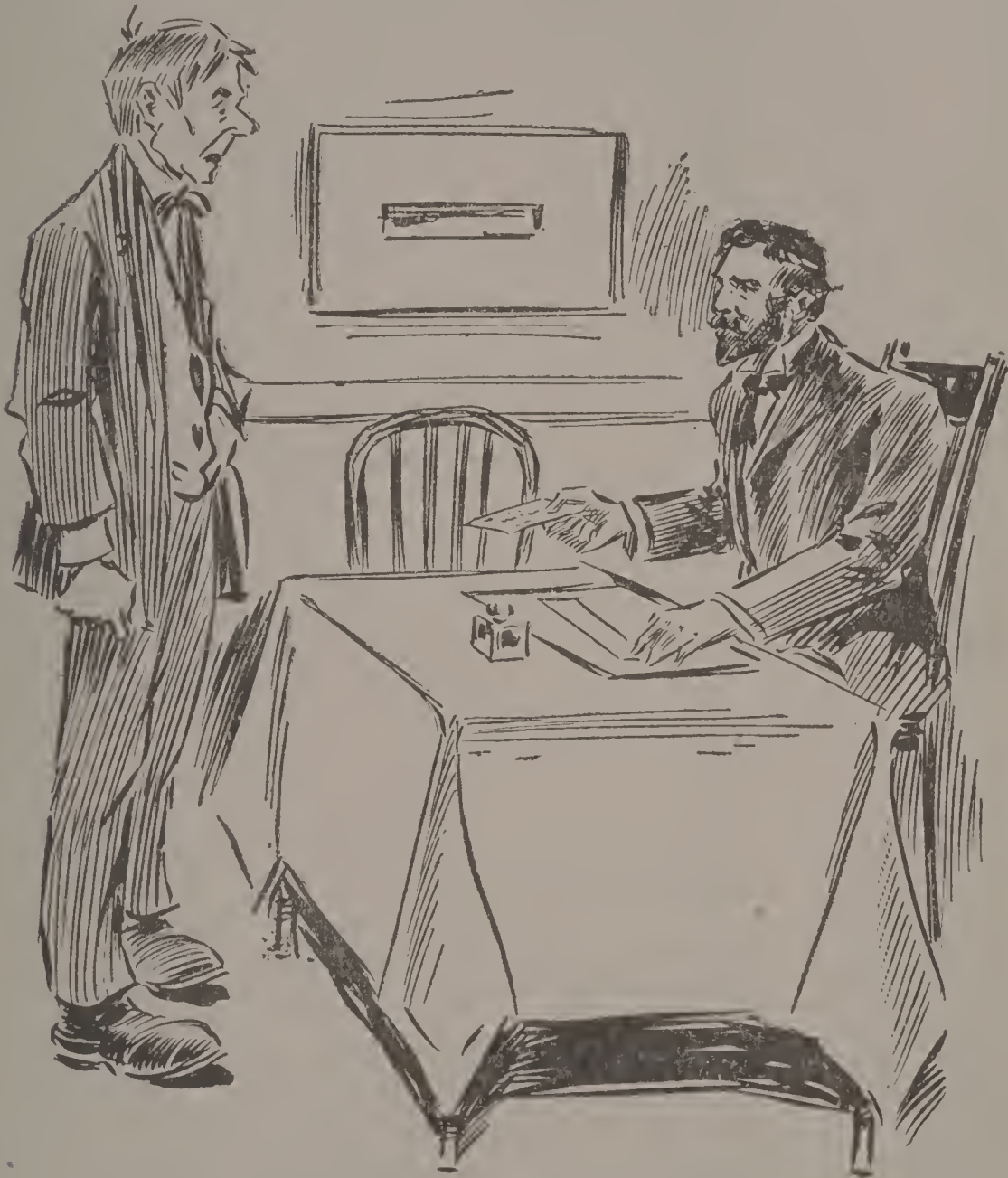
"You couldn't say a thousand, could you?" asked Lige eagerly, entirely forgetting himself.

"Not another cent more," replied Tom brusquely. "I'm surprised that you should be so mercenary; but I have no fear of your being unkind to Mahala, should you succeed in winning her. When you get broken to the harness, you'll go all right. Now, will you marry the brightest and most talented girl in Skowhegan or send her back in disgrace?"

"By Joe, I reckon I'll take the risk, providin' she'll have me," said Lige doggedly. "Mebbe you'd better go and tramp the gravel a leetle, so I'll have smoother running."

"You can tramp gravel better than I can, Lige, for you're used to it," replied Tom greatly relieved.

“You can’t make me believe you’re not man enough to win Mahala. I bet a horse you’re the only fellow in Skowhegan she’d have. Take her by storm and



*Tom's stratagem.*

she'll be glad to give in. Now don't make a laughing stock of yourself any longer. It's just a waste of time for you to hang after Ruth, for she doesn't



want to marry you, and besides, she's not the style of a girl you should mate with. Now run up and tell Mahala you want to talk to her and then take her out and treat her to ice cream or whatever she wants, and every once in a while squeeze her hand a little, and don't you dare bring her back till you've won her consent, or you'll never hear the last of it. Remember that love like commercial pursuits requires a little strategy."

With this parting advice Tom left the room and joined the rest of the family who were getting ready for the Fair.

"Go and call Mahala Ann, Ruth," said Aunt Becky, busily engaged with her new gloves.

"Mahala Ann and Lige are not going with us this morning, but we'll see them at lunch," said Tom, so decisively no one dared to ask any questions, and the party soon started without them.

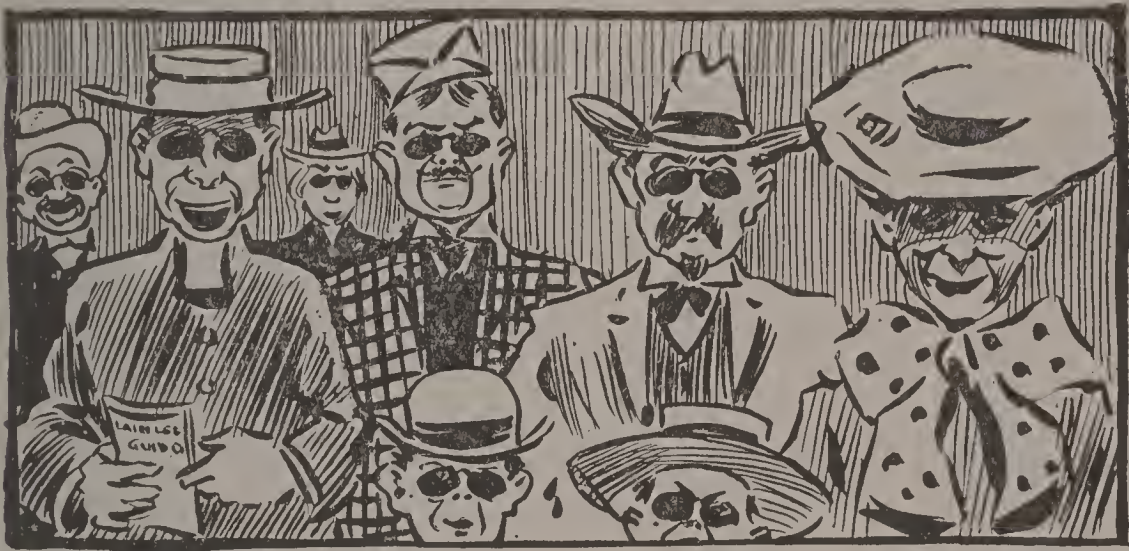
Considerable ground was traversed on this occasion, as Tom insisted on renting roller chairs, and they were trundled along the wide thoroughfares and through the extensive buildings by boys in blue-gray uniforms. The sunken gardens were a mass of foliage and vari-colored flowers, while beds of pink hydrangeas, scarlet geraniums and purple pansies, dotted the green, rolling lawns and the sparkling torrent of the cascades and the placid waters of the lagoon were a source of pleasure and attraction to the visitors. The Ivory City was indeed ready for its guests and welcomed the multitude with flapping flags and bands of sweet music.

As they moved along the broad avenue, where Brazil, Mexico and Siam were represented by structures notable for their grace and utility, and

out upon the International Avenue where Italy, Austria, Great Britain, France, Belgium and other governments had erected artistic edifices to display their exhibits and afford shelter for their sons and daughters, Uncle Bob said impressively:

“A feller kin ride and walk through this big fair till he gits string-halt and yet he can’t see a millionth part of the grand display.”

“I wonder why so many people have to spile the effect of things by wearing smoked glasses,” said Aunt Becky.



*A fad no better than turned up trousers.*

“It’s a kind of a fad, just as it is for people to wear their sleeves rolled up all the time at summer resorts, or for dudes to have their trousers several times too large, just to make themselves ridiculous,” replied Tom.

In the Government Building, the old man was amazed at a huge quadruped, possibly a relic of the reptilian age, and he broke forth enthusiastically:

“Wouldn’t it be sport to go hunting fur a beast





*"Here's E Pluribus Unum," said Aunt Becky.*



like that? They say it was unearthed in Colorado and it's no wonder that state was so long getting settled, if it had beasts like that running around. The very name of it is enough to scare even a snake charmer—Armored Dinosaur Stegosaurus Ungulatus Marsh.”

“Here is E Pluribus Unum,” said Aunt Becky, looking up at a gigantic statue. “My, what a big, buxom strapper she must have been!”

“And there is Laocoon,” said Ruth, who had often read of the unfortunate character in her well-thumbed Virgil. “How the poor man must have suffered in the embrace of that terrible serpent, and how the two little boys seem to be struggling to get free!”

“If all the men and boys could see that expressive figure, there wouldn't be any more whisky and beer and cigarettes sold,” said Aunt Becky, who believed that the image was designed to teach a lesson in temperance. “Jist think of the thousands of male critters who are struggling in the toils of that terrible monster! Let's don't look at it any longer or I'll dream of snakes all night.”

Uncle Bob was much pleased with the United States Fishery Building, containing specimens of the finny tribes, of all sizes, shapes and colors of the rainbow, and with all pertaining to agriculture, horticulture and forestry, while Ruth, from an aesthetic standpoint, admired the lofty Louisiana Purchase monument and the statuary which adorned the buildings in profusion, some of which gleamed as if wrought of beaten gold.

They went through Jerusalem and became famil-

iar with all its intricate streets and queer inhabitants, and here Tom bought some novelties in one of the bazaars.

“This wailing wall in the outskirts of the town must have been a mighty good thing,” said Uncle Bob. “I think every town ort to have one and when anybody has a tale of woe to bore his neighbor with, he ort to be made to go to the wall and set on it till he gits through.”

“Sich an idee!” exclaimed Aunt Becky, with contempt. “If we had one in Skowhegan you’d be setting on it half your time. How ridiculous that a feller had to go and set on a wall to wail!”

“Mebbe it’s where they took babies that kept folks awake with the colic,” suggested Uncle Bob in evident earnestness.

“Any Bible student ort to know that they didn’t have colic them days,” said Aunt Becky. “Neither did they have tuberculosis or appendicitis, according to the Scriptures.”

Having seen Jerusalem, they passed through a pretty Japanese tea garden, located upon a hill and at last came to the Boers and Britishs, who carried on a battle in the stadium each day, before thousands of spectators.

“You couldn’t tell the English from the Dutchmen if it wasn’t fur their leggin’s,” declared Uncle Bob, after eyeing them intently for a few minutes. “The Boers wear leather and the others wear yarn stockin’s; but they’re a likely lookin’ lot of young fellers, and I’d like to take some of ’em back to work on my old homestead farm this summer.”

The Philippine village, surrounded by a bamboo fence, where men and boys of varying shades of

brown and yellow sported among the trees, almost entirely nude, shocked Aunt Becky, although she could not resist taking her place among the long line of curious gazers, and peeking through a hole in the fence, until the guard said she must hurry or else miss the big show.



*A place to chew the rag.*

“I think the United States bit off a purty big piece when she took the Philippines,” said Uncle Bob. “We can’t civilize ’em in three centuries or more.”

“Then look at the parade grounds and you will, no doubt, change your mind, for some of them are



far more American than what is generally supposed," laughed the roller boy, pointing to an open space, where a large concourse of people had gathered, and were vigorously applauding the drill of a troop of Filipino soldiers in natty uniforms, who moved with remarkable precision to the inspiring strains of "Columbia," played by their own silver band. It was an imposing sight and not one false move or one lingering footstep marred the performance. At the close, when the little black-eyed Filipinos, in their brown Khaki suits and broad hats, marched erectly away to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," protected by an American flag which waved majestically in the breeze, Uncle Bob cheered with the rest, and Aunt Becky wiped her eyes, bedimmed with patriotic tears.

"Are you an expansionist, father?" asked Tom, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"Wal, a few years ago I was a radical anti-expansionist," admitted the old gentleman. "I thought the government had all the territory it needed for its people, and it ort not to look out for new possessions till our own country was perfected. Didn't believe we ort to spend four centuries raisin' rich cream and then mix it in with some other nations' skimmed milk. After seeing this drill and so many other things from across the sea, I realize that Uncle Sam is big enough and great enough to assume responsibilities, and now that we are recognized by the nations of the earth as a world power, it should be our mission to scatter the influence of Christianity, establish our commercial supremacy and relieve the oppressed, build up and disseminate the fruits of civilization wherever cruelty, ignorance

and superstition exist; I shall never open my mouth against expansion ag'in."

The various Philippine government buildings were also a source of gratification to the patriotic Skowheganites and Tom and Ruth spent a half hour admiring the paintings of Queen Isabella, King Alfonso, President Roosevelt, Secretary Taft, General Lawton and a group of Moro warriors, the work of famous water-color artists.

The display of German manufactures in the Liberal Arts building, from the costly wares of Dresden to the toys of Sonneberg, absorbed them for a long while, and finally they found themselves in a vast section, scented with bamboo and other aromatic woods, where Japan had made a mighty effort to show to the world the ingenious products of her handicraft.

"Little Japan has done herself proud," declared Aunt Becky, covetously peering at a collection of dainty blue dishes securely locked in an ornate china cabinet.

"And poor old Russia's stall is still vacant, although I hear she will make a sort of a display later on," said Uncle Bob. "I don't know what to think about that Japanese war. It looks as though things were going at sich a smart pace, we get the news several hours before it happens. One day Port Arthur is blowed to smithereens and the next day a half dozen or more warships are destroyed and as many are torpedoed and sunk."

"Are you for the Japs or the Russians, Father?" asked Tom.

"Wal, I believe in siding in with the weak brother fighting for his freedom. The Japs have sprung



*A visit to fair Japan.*



up like mushrooms. Thirty or forty years ago Japan was jist barely on the map and it's only been about twenty years since they were recognized as a nation. The dodgasted little fellers are plucky and brave and have won the respect of the world in their fight with one of the greatest European powers. I hope they'll win out."

"We, as Americans should not forget the fact that Russia has always been our friend," said Tom. "She sold to us, in preference to all other nations, the tract of land known as Alaska for \$7,500,000, which at that time was thought by many of our people to be worthless. We have already realized \$100,000,000 from the transaction and no one can estimate the hidden gold and mineral wealth still in the bowels of the earth. The time is near by when this far off territory will not only supply our home market from her wheat fields but the entire world.

"In all our national calamities, Russia has always shown her willingness to aid us," said Tom. "Besides she is a good purchaser of our home goods, especially farming implements. I believe nations like individuals should give credit where credit is due."

"Wal, I never could bear 'em since the Jewish persecution at Kishineff," said Uncle Bob stoutly.

"And some of them can't bear us, because they think we are a nation of negro lynchers," replied Tom.

Another treat to them was the display of good Queen Victoria's Jubilee gifts in the Hall of Congress, and after a walk through the Chinese village and Grant's Log Cabin, they returned to the Southern Hotel for lunch.

"Lige and Mahala Ann were waiting for them in the parlor, sitting upon a tete-a-tete chair, apparently in the best of humor.

"We've been waiting for you an hour," cried Mahala Ann, jumping up and hastily arranging her dark top-heavy pompadour, which looked rather queer. "Oh, we've had the most transcendently gor-



*The impressive ceremony of Mahala Ann and Lige Knaggs.*

geous time! Speak up, Lige, and don't sit there chewing your cud."

"Darn the luck! Mahala Ann and me hunted up a preacher and got married, and I suppose we're open to congratulations," stammered Lige, as red as a peony in full bloom.

"Married! Do you mean to say you got married and never even told us!" exclaimed Ruth, reproachfully, although rejoicing inwardly at the disappearance of the menacing spectre that had dogged her for many days and nights.

"To tell the truth, I didn't know I was to be married when I started out, but a person never knows what a calamity will fall upon him before the day is over," continued Mahala Ann, giggling absurdly, while her friends congratulated them. "I never knew Lige was so devoted till he went for me this morning. No woman was ever courted so hard inside of an hour as I was and if I look untidy you must lay it all on him. I never dreamed of being his wife twenty-four hours ago, but I just couldn't resist him. He threatened to take carbolic acid and hang himself and cut his jugular vein if I didn't, so I thought it was my duty to save his life."

"But why didn't you invite us all to the wedding?" asked Tom, laughing immoderately, as he jokingly attempted to kiss the bride and nearly twisted Lige's horny hand out of shape.

"We thought we'd git it off our minds and besides I don't believe in long engagements anyway," continued Mahala Ann. "You know Lib Jones has been trying to get married for three years, but somebody in the family allus dies or something else turns up before she can get her invitations out, so I suppose she'll continue to remain single all the remainder of her life, as chances aren't so plenty when a girl reaches forty-two."

"We'll have a big spread to celebrate the nuptials of Mr. and Mrs. Elijah Knaggs," said Tom, almost beside himself with joy.



"I don't feel like I ever could eat another mouthful," declared the bride. "Lige just simply blew himself, and I never was treated so lovely in my life. He must have spent at least forty cents on ice cream and kisses alone, and I know we ate two pounds of figs between us, to say nothing of hot peanuts, soda water and gum drops. Look at my engagement ring—isn't it just too dear?"

She held up a ring set with an extremely green emerald and Aunt Becky went into raptures over it.

"It ort to be a purty good one, fur I laid out a dollar and a quarter to pay fur it," said Lige, smiling generously.

"Nobody asked what you paid for it," snapped Mahala Ann. "I've got my marriage certificate in my satchel and it will do me worlds of good to take it around for all the old Skowhegan gossips to look at. I'm going to have it put in a gilt frame and hang it in our dining room."

"It's too good for anything that Mahala Ann has found a mate," said Uncle Bob. "We can all go back now to Skowhegan hitched up in pairs; but won't Widow Slant be on her high hoss when she sees us comin' back home as if we had just come from fairyland. I reckon she will be disappointed. I promised to send her a beau by express."

"I don't think she is so gone on men as all that," said Aunt Becky.

"Well, I don't know," replied Uncle Bob. "I heard her hollerin' at the top of her voice in the back yard before we left, 'I want a man, I want a man.'"

"You mean she was singing, 'I want a Mansion in

the Sky,'” said Aunt Becky. “You musn’t make light of sacred things, Bob Springer.”

“Wal, I believe in tellin’ the truth whether it’s in the morning before dawn or after the sun has disappeared over the hills at night.”

“Here’s a poem that Lige wrote to-day, and it’s strange that I never knew he was such a literary man,” continued the bride, with great pride, displaying a scrawl, which Tom read aloud with some difficulty:

“There are gals of every size and style  
Assembled at this big Fair,  
From the cold north pole to the warm sea isle,  
A-flutterin’ everywhere.

There’s the Geisha gal in her scanty clothes,  
And the thick-lipped Malay gal,  
And the Hottentot with her big, flat nose,  
And her skinny Hindu pal.

There’s the Filipino, now our kin,  
Quite fur from a beauty prize;  
And the little squaw with her copper skin,  
And the Turk with her piercing eyes.

The Circassian gal with her silky hair,  
The Boer in her sloppy shoes,  
And the Persian gal who is passing fair,  
And the Jap with her coy goo-goos.

And the Chinese gals with their pigeon toes,  
And some from Korea, too;  
And the sawed-off, lop-eared Eskimos,  
And the black-eyed Russian Jew.

There’s the languid, swarthy Spanish belle,  
And the fair Cuban, also,  
And the gay Parisian demoiselle,  
And the fat freak in the show.

These are but a few about whom they sing—  
You kin toast ’em if you like;  
But Mahala Ann is the sweetest thing  
That ever came down the Pike.”

"Now, isn't that too dear!" exclaimed the bride. Here Lige has loved me from childhood and I never even gave him a chance to show it."

"Gosh! I don't deserve much of the praise fur writin' the poetry; I jist suggested it and Mahala Ann wrote it and put in the stops and metres," said Lige modestly.

"You'll have to give your husband a few lessons on how to keep quiet at the right time," said Bob, laughing heartily at Mahala Ann's discomforture.

The luncheon for six that followed was a very enjoyable affair, and early in the afternoon they set out to visit the Fair for the last time.

Whether it was due to Uncle Bob's excessive patriotism or Mahala Ann's culture, the reader must decide, but since Lige's marriage he had endeavored to show Mahala Ann and the rest of the party that he knew a few things as well as those who had been more highly educated. Passing the numerous pieces of statuary, Lige took occasion to demonstrate his wide historical knowledge.

"Now there," he said, pointing to the statue of Columbus, "is the greatest man that ever died. He sailed into Lake Champlain, and into the Gulf of Mexico, and then down the Mississippi, discovering America at Wisconsin."

Uncle Bob somewhat staggered at this display of learning, and a little in doubt himself as to geographical names, did not dare to contradict him, and Mahala Ann was just far enough away not to hear the conversation. "Now there's George Washington, the greatest general that ever lived," he continued. "He fit the Battle of Waterloo; the Battle of Bunker Hill; the Battle of Trafalgar Square; and



then he up and fit the whole Civil War, and I say deserves more credit for protecting his country than Columbus does for discovering it."

"You're off on your topography, Lige," said Uncle Bob, "he never fought in the Civil War at all. That was before your day, anyway, and what do you know about it?"

"Well, he fit more battles than any other ginerall - anyway," said Lige.

"I've seen so much of the Exposition, it's all a jumble in my mind," declared Mahala Ann approaching them. "I wonder what exhibit each of us will remember longest?"

"For my part, I have noted with especial interest the pains and expense put forth to show the public the various processes in all departments rather than the mere fruits of those processes," said Tom. "To me the elaborate mining and machinery displays and the electrical building with its wonderful innovations has been the greatest inspiration."

"Wal, I liked the live stock exhibits," said Uncle Bob, "and the cozy House of Hoo Hoo, where the men set and tell yarns something like we do in Hi Pratt's barn on a rainy day; also the bell boy drill at the Inside Inn and the baby incubators on the Pike. I've heard of chicken incubators, but never knew they had invented 'em to hatch babies. Uncle Jasper, the colored preacher, was right when he said, 'The world does move.'"

"I was interested in the canned goods," added Aunt Becky, "and the fine dishes and the wireless telegraphy tower, and the poultry farm and them little electrical cameras that take your picture fur a nickel. When the little bell rung, I thought I'd

cracked the glass sure, but there was my likeness jist as natural as life."

"Oh, I doted on the gorgeous Parisian gowns," gushed Mahala Ann; "and the physical culture building and the athletic grounds and the life saving exhibit and the aeronautic concourse and the Morocco Palace and the Wisconsin State Building, where all those handsome men were sitting out on the piazza smiling at me when Ruth and I passed by."

"The sculpture and the architecture and the paintings delighted me," said Ruth. "But what pleased me most were the booths of the publishers, filled with beautifully illustrated books, almost too dainty to handle. It seems to me that the art of book making, printing and color processes have made the most rapid strides of all, and that the public is becoming educated to appreciate the very best. My sympathy is with the busy publisher and the tireless writer, and to me the newspaper is the most wonderful and useful of all man's creations."

"And what made the biggest impression on you, Lige?" asked Uncle Bob.

"Oh, I don't know," replied the bridegroom. "I guess it was the eatin' houses. I was jist wishing I could stay long enough to eat a square meal in each one of 'em."

"Then you'd have to stay alone, for it would take two months, at least, and you'd have fatty degeneration before you got around," said his wife. "Your table manners would be worse than ever by the time you got through with them Mexican and Philippine restaurants. Our teacher in domestic science used to tell us girls never to marry a man

until we had observed his table manners, for nothing was more degenerating than to sit at the breakfast table for the rest of our lives facing a man who let loose on a pile of grub like he was a potato bug exterminator. She told us never to marry a man, no matter if he had a million, till we had tested his table manners with a cream puff when he was ravenously hungry."

"Pooh, anybody could eat a cream puff; I could put a hull one in my mouth and swaller it at one gulp, and foller it up with a dozen more at one settin'," said Lige proudly.

Tom, in spite of Aunt Becky's remonstrances, purchased tickets for a trip over the realistic scenic railway. The entrance was as crowded as a department store during a bargain sale and the gate keeper kept pushing back their patrons until Mahala Ann threatened to faint.

When they were seated in couples in a long, narrow car and started on their journey down precipitious slopes and through dark tunnels, Tom yelled at the top of his voice, according to the prevailing custom, while his poor mother trembled and ducked and prayed that they might be delivered from death in such a worldly place.

"Oh, this is awful—this is terrible! shrieked sensational Mahala Ann, clinging close to her husband for the first time, although he was too much frightened to enjoy it. "If I ever get out alive, I'll keep out of these whirly-gigs in the future!"

"Whoopy!" cried Uncle Bob, waving his hat. "This is delightful, and its funny how it affects people so differently. It's jist like a ride in an air





*First experience down the Chute.*

ship. We go up like a sky rocket and come down like a fallin' met'or."

Ruth remained very quiet, soothed by Tom, who held her hand tightly and sat closer than was really necessary.

When the car reached the terminus of its circuitous route, Mahala Ann, with both her snaky arms entwined about the sunburned neck of her spouse, was the last to get out.



*Pike beauties in short skirts.*

"Oh, let's have another one," she gurgled. "It isn't so bad after you get used to it."

"You'll have all the excitement you want after you've been married a year," said Uncle Bob grimly. "Let's git out and keep moving. I've got my mouth puckered up fur pop-corn or a pipe, I can't tell which."

"We'll have an orange lemonade," said Lige, leading the way down stairs. "Tom give us a bridal luncheon and it's my dooty to return the compliment and treat the bunch."

When they had quenched their thirst at an adjoining stand, they entered the Russian Theatre, the audience of which was as interesting in its cosmo-



*Uncle Bob in danger of apoplexy.*

politan aspect as the stage full of buxom Slavic beauties in short skirts and pink stockings.

When the Cossack soldiers executed their fanciful dances and the chorus girls whirled around, shouted and smiled at the omnipresent baldheaded row, Aunt Becky hid her face in shame.



"Sich perniciousness!" she groaned. "I never have been to an opery in my life and I never want to go to another one."

When the chorus sang with remarkable vehemence and sweetness the Russian National Hymn, supplementing it with "The Sar Spangled Banner," during which rendition a fat girl appeared wrapped in an American flag, while the entire caste sank to their knees, holding up their arms in adoration, Uncle Bob cheered until his wife feared he would succumb to apoplexy.

"I'm a pro-Russian now!" he exclaimed. "If the Russians feel that kind to Old Glory, I'm never going to knock 'em ag'in. The Russian women are a turnal sight purtier than the Japs anyway and that cute, leetle bunch they say used to be a favorite of the czar, is a crackerjack!"

The Tyrolean Alps with its great beer garden and concert hall and its colored fountains of remarkable beauty, took up another hour of their time. After ascending through picturesque scenery to the summit of the crags, they were told by a guide that they could not descend without sliding down the steep incline, which resembled the smooth bannisters boys delight so much to ride upon.

"I kin never in the world git down these," quavered Aunt Becky. "I wonder what kind of a mix up you will get me into next."

"I'll git on first," said Uncle Bob with youthful nerve, "and Ruth, you can sit on sidewise and hold to me—around the neck if you want to—then Lige and Mahala, and let Tom and mother come last so she won't feel the force of a possible collision."

They were soon seated and clinging together, they

began their steep descent like a great human centipede, a guard standing at the foot of the highly-polished slide to stop them. All might have landed safely had not the bride grown hysterical and thrown up her arms with a loud scream, unseating Lige and wrenching Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky from their treacherous positions so that the four rolled to the bottom in promiscuous confusion, shrieking in every range of the bass and treble clefs.

"Are you hurt, mother?" cried Tom anxiously, after he had picked her up and stood brushing the saw dust from her black dress.

"No, but I'm dreadful shook up. I'd like to spank that Mahala Ann," replied Aunt Becky angrily, in a low voice. "I'd lose my reason if I had to live with her another week."

"I couldn't help it," said Mahala Ann, straightening her hat. "I thought what a terrible thing it would be if Lige got caught by a splinter and maybe hurt himself, and I just had to scream. I'm awfully sorry, but I can't get over being nervous any more than one can avoid being near sighted."

After visiting the Irish Village, where they saw Blarney Castle and a good Hibernian vaudeville performance, they made their way through the dense crowd to the Observation Wheel, beset by carriages, automobiles, roller and Sedan chairs, guide-book sellers in scarlet uniform and a series of fakirs who were filling their pockets with the dimes and quarters of an extravagant people bent upon having a good time.

"I'm mortal afeared to go up in that big wheel," said Aunt Becky, gazing at its dizzy summit, with frightened eyes. "Don't you remember how one of

them Ferris wheels got stuck in Earl's Court, England, a few years ago, and the people had to stay penned up in the cars all night? They had to send telegrams to their families and hadn't nothin' to eat but buns until the sailors clumb up and gave them doughnuts. The owners of the wheel had to give 'em five pounds apiece to keep 'em from suing them for damages."

"There ain't no danger, Becky," insisted Uncle Bob. "If the management don't get us down in proper time, right side up, I'll go after 'em and give 'em a hundred pounds apiece, and I won't be particular where I hit 'em, either."

They were ushered into one of the cars and were soon hoisted to the summit, where they could look down upon the great Ivory City in all its brilliant beauty, and the more enduring thoroughfares of St. Louis, then the busiest and most festive spot on earth.

In some inexplicable manner, Lige and his bride who had stopped to look at a miniature locomotive and train of cars, after they had alighted from the wheel, lost the rest of the party. They wandered for some time in search of them, but gave up in despair and sought consolation in a light lunch at the Nebraska Coffee House, after which they strolled back into the forest where they sat for several hours planning their future and enjoying the sylvan solitude and cool breezes. They did not observe the palaces in the distance, as they burst into a glare of electric light, and when they emerged from their retreat, not a soul could be seen, not even a guard in red or blue or gray or brown. For a while they groped around in unfre-



quented byways until the lights went out, leaving them in utter darkness.

"We're lost, as sure as I'm a foot high," said Lige in consternation. "I thought I could guide myself from that big bird cage, but I don't see any way out."

"You mean the aviary of the Smithsonian Institution; but you might just as well try to find a needle in a haystack," declared his trembling wife.

"I reckon we can tramp along awhile and if we don't run acrost somebody, I kin holler loud enough to raise the dead," said Lige, at the same time sprawling over a bed of petunias and pulling Mahala Ann with him.

"This is awful!" she wailed, scrambling to her feet and again seizing his arm. "What if we should be held up or murdered by some of those wild tribes on the Pike?"

"Who goes there!"

The stentorian voice proceeded from the bushes that were unusually dense in the darkness, and soon after a bulky figure was seen, towering above them on the summit of the hill, blocking the passageway.

For a moment Lige's knees clashed together like cymbals, but his wife, although still more frightened, was not deprived of the use of her tongue, and she responded bravely:

"We're lost, sir, and we can't find our way out."

"It's after eleven o'clock and you're liable to be arrested for being on the grounds!" was the thunderous response.

"We—we belong to the big hotel just inside of the grounds," she stammered, trembling at her

falsehood as well as the formidable creature whose outlines still remained indistinct.

"Then go right along this path and turn to your left," replied the apparition. "Hereafter when a watchman asks who you are, just say 'Friends.'"

Greatly relieved, they hurried past their disturber, but Mahala Ann, whose fright suddenly gave way to anger, shouted bravely back at him:

"It's funny that people have to stop at the big tavern inside of the grounds in order to be friends! The idea of you yelling that way at a woman, just as though it was any of your business who it was that went there! I want you to know I am Rube Wattles's daughter of Skowhegan, and I'm respectable even if I do happen to be lost while walking around in this wilderness with my new husband."

When they reached the big hotel, a bell boy took them to the exit, where Lige thanked him cordially, to the disgust of the lad, who expected a nickel. After waiting a few minutes, the car they desired pulled up in front of the entrance and they were taken back to the Southern Hotel, with no other annoyances to mar the eve of their honeymoon.

In the meantime the Springer family, thankful to be alone again, ate dinner in the Model Kitchen and spent the early evening visiting various places of amusement.

"So we are to leave this delightful city of pleasure tomorrow," said Ruth regretfully, as she and Tom sat for some time upon a bench in a secluded bower, looking at the buildings and grounds effulgent with myriads of lights, yellow, white and red, while a band in a pavilion a few hundred feet away played sentimental airs from "The Bohemian Girl."

“Yes, I am sorry to leave so soon, but I have some important business in Denver and San Francisco, and I thought you, mother and father would like to go with me through the wonderful West.”

“Oh, Tom, do you really mean it? Won’t that be delightful! I can never, never repay you for your kindness to me,” said Ruth gratefully.

“You can repay me a thousand-fold within the next five minutes if you only will,” replied Tom, drawing closer and taking her hand, not with the cringing obsequiousness of Lige Knaggs, but with a manly firmness that fascinated rather than awed her.

“Ruth, from the very first moment I saw you—even before I heard you speak a word—I felt for you the admiration no other girl has ever inspired,” he continued, bending down so close his beard touched her cheek. “That feeling has developed into love, so pure, so steadfast, so far-reaching, that my wealth, my pride, my vaunted bachelor freedom are as nothing in comparison. You seem to tremble and your hand is cold—you cannot speak! I hope there is no other who claims your affection, and that you are willing to be more than a sister to me. Let me enfold you with my great love, and let us continue the journey of life together.”

Resting her head upon her hand, Ruth seemed to be engaged in prayer. Then she replied with an assumption of dignity, although her heart was overflowing with happiness:

“Oh, Tom, do you realize what you are saying? Do you think I could make you happy, you who have seen so much of the world? Are you sure you have found the right one?”



"I can truthfully say, Ruth, that I have never loved until I met you. Like a rolling stone, I have wandered far and near, and have seen beautiful women in every clime; but none that can compare with my little Ruth. I have carefully and thoughtfully considered the matter. Will you be my wife?"

Glancing up into his large blue eyes, Ruth modestly whispered, "If you are sure I can make you happy—yes."

The words had hardly left her lips when Tom drew from his pocket a beautiful diamond engagement ring, and slipping it upon her finger, said:

"May our love be as endless as this circle, and as pure and sparkling as this diamond."

Filled with the ecstasy of first love and emotion, he threw his arms about her, and pressed her to him, showering kisses upon her cheeks and lips.

"I must confess that love-making is an art that I have not yet had the opportunity of cultivating," laughed Ruth, although tears glistened in her eyes. "I always admired you," she continued, with a serious expression upon her face. "As soon as I was old enough to know that you had gone out into the world to make your fortune, I began to weave a romance about you. All these years your picture has been hanging on the wall in my room in a wreath of Love Everlasting. Somehow I had a presentiment that you would return. My prayers have been answered."

When Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky appeared a half hour later, the lovers sat hand in hand, too much absorbed in their own happiness to take further interest in the triumph of art and nature all about them, although the band played Lohengrin's Wed-

ding March, and hundreds of sky-rockets filled the heavens and showered the ivory fairyland with millions of dazzling jewels.



*Fate decides Ruth and Tom's destiny.*

To them the past was nothing and the present was but the beginning of their existence; but the future seemed to stretch away in infinite space before them, radiant with the sunshine of eternal love.



Toward the Setting Sun

-Ruth Makes a Discovery.

**G**OOD MORNING, little transplanted rose," said Tom cheerily, as Ruth joined him in the parlor on the following morning, very sweet and lovely in a brown walking suit that accentuated the color of her eyes. "You look charming to-day. I wonder why it is that some girls may dress ever so plainly and yet have style, while others spend fortunes on dresses and fixings and always look dowdy. You have admirable taste, little modest Marguerite."

"You are a flatterer and a deceiver," declared Ruth, although she dimpled and blushed with pleasure. "You can't be sincere when you compare me to a rose and a Marguerite in the same breath."

"You are both—you are a veritable flower garden in yourself, as blooming as an American Beauty just now, although you were like an unobtrusive Marguerite when you first came in. You are modest as the daisy, as constant as the violet, as pure as the lily and your eyes are like stars."

"I must be a paragon if you can't find enough flowers with which to compare my virtues and physical charms and have to seek assistance from the



stellar system," replied Ruth, blushing still deeper as he took her shapely hand with the gallantry of a knight of old and kissed it reverently.

"If you will only give me time, I can prove that my praises are all sincere. I hope you haven't regretted your promise, little one, now that you



*My Queen of Queens.*

have had time to sleep over it," said Tom, looking at her with adoring eyes as she seated herself upon a Roman chair and rested her arms akimbo.

"I didn't sleep at all," she replied, with the semblance of a pout. "I tossed all night and thought it over and tried to penetrate the hazy future with my little feeble ray of reason, and—well, I don't know whether it would be for the best or not. You have seen so much of the world and are so wise and cul-

tivated and I am just a stupid little country girl and can't do anything but cling and trust."

"I hope you may always feel that way. I know I am much older than you, but I believe we shall be happy together so long as you are willing to cast

your lot with one so humble as myself. We'll go back to spend the summer at Skowhegan and then go to New York for the winter, where my business takes me."

"And I shall have to give up my one ambition to teach school," she said, with a sigh of resignation. "From a little tot it has always been my supreme wish to instruct the young, for next to motherhood, the life of a conscientious school teacher is the most sacred. They don't get half the praise they deserve."

"No, nor half the salary either," replied Tom earnestly. "Well, you can conduct a private school and arrange the curriculum and classes to suit yourself."

She looked at him askance, dimpling with an incredulous smile that drove him to distraction.

"On one condition—and that is, you are to take but one pupil, your husband, to teach and torment and torture and terrify until he meets your approval."

"That will be nice," she said, with a smile of unmistakable happiness. "I shall be most severe at times, but I shall do my very best until the end, no matter how bent and bald and toothless my pupil becomes."

"But don't speak of the end, lambkin," pleaded Tom, with a sudden look of pain. "My life has been so full of painful vicissitudes, so busy and full of anxiety so long, that I pine for sweet rest in the haven of matrimony for the remainder of my life."

She was not permitted to reply, for with the boyish impulsiveness that had always characterized him, he suddenly rose, and bending over kissed her

passionately, this time upon her upturned mouth; then he looked around to see if his act had been witnessed.

“Why, Tom Springer, you’re jist like your paw fur all the world!” exclaimed Aunt Becky, who had arrived in time to witness the befitting but unconventional climax. He allus needed watching when a purty gal was around, although he never misbehaved in a public place like this.”

“A fellow has a right to be affectionate with his little adopted sister, hasn’t he?” asked Tom, encircling his mother with his brawny arms and giving her a kiss almost as affectionate.

“He sartinly has,” replied the old lady, tears filling her eyes, as she looked up lovingly into his face. “It seems like old times to be with you ag’in, sonny. You was allus so affectionate. Bob’s been a kind, faithful husband, but he never thinks of kissing me since I’ve got old and humly, yet it makes me happy when he jist squeezes my fingers a leetle or bumps foreheads with me to tease me. People never ort to git too old to be affectionate, and it ain’t no harm to show it—but how do I look?”

“You look stunning, mother,” replied Tom, turning her around as if she were a model on a pivot. “You’ll soon be as swagger as the best of them. Now that fortune has dealt kindly with us I mean to see that you and father will have every comfort that money will buy. Clothes chosen and worn with good taste have much to do with one’s appearance and happiness.”

At that moment Uncle Bob entered, sleek and rotund in a new suit of clothes, a gray Fedora hat,



a bright tie and shoes that creaked in the deliciousness of a smart shine.

"Oh, Uncle Bob, you look like a nabob!" cried Ruth, throwing off her embarrassment and rushing into his arms to give him a robust hug and kiss on his happy, ruddy cheek.

"Wal, I feel sort o' like a thin woman that pads



*Uncle Bob's Transformation.*

and knows that everybody is on to it; but it's all Tom's doings, and I s'pose I'll git used to it," replied the old man, returning the kiss with deafening enthusiasm.

"The Lord has been good to us," declared Aunt Becky fervently. "I thought it would be His will to bring us all together here in St. Louis and I

have prayed for it ever since we left Skowhegan. If I hadn't so much faith in prayer I'd never consented to have the old homestead mortgaged."

"Yes, you were guided by Divine Providence," said Tom. "I was seized with a desire to visit the Fair and then to make good my resolve made twenty years ago to return to Skowhegan. I know my absence must have caused you many nights of anxiety, and often my heart ached to see you and father and the old homestead once more, but I was spurred on to accomplish my ambitious dream. You remember, mother, on the bright Maymorning many years ago that I made up my mind to leave home, you told me not to come back until I could amount to something. But don't cry, for that mandate of yours was the making of me, and I know how it hurt you to give it. I went out in the world to fight life's battles, and although they were severe ones, Fortune smiled on me after all and enabled me to make enough to keep you all comfortable as long as you live. It was the doings of Providence and I owe it all to my dear mother."

He embraced her again and for a few minutes she wept, half remorsefully, half gratefully, upon his breast.

"Now cheer up, for there's another surprise for you," he said soothingly. "You must congratulate yourself upon bringing up a girl in accordance with my most approved methods. In Ruth Burton I have found the ideal I have hunted for all these years. She has consented to be more than an adopted sister to me—she will be my wife."

"Oh, Tom, is it possible!" said Aunt Becky.

“Little did I think such happiness was in store for me when I left far-off Australia,” continued the long-lost son.

For a few moments the effervescing joy of the old couple manifested itself in congratulations and kisses, and never did four hearts beat in more happy unison.

In the midst of their love feast, Lige Knaggs and his wife of a night entered, the latter wearing a white hat, such as has been used by brides ever since feminine apparel came in fashion.

“Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. Knaggs,” cried Tom banteringly. “I hope you rested well.”

“There isn’t no rest for me till I git back to Skowhegan and put those atrocious gossips to shame,” said Mahala Ann. “I return as an honorable married woman instead of a maligned spinster, anyway.”

“And it will be a good joke on them,” said Tom, with another laugh of sheer amusement, for Lige was too conscious to do anything but look red and awkward, and Ruth’s searching brown eyes made him vastly uncomfortable.

“You’ll be carried around on a chip when you get back and you can give little tete-a-tetes at the Woman’s Club, where you can tell all about your and Lige Knaggs little jaunts.

“Why don’t you tell ’em the news?” asked Uncle Bob, looking at Tom with glistening, animated eyes.

“There’s nothing to tell just now,” replied Tom evasively. “Just tell the people we’ll be back in two weeks and give a housewarming that will make the old homestead ring with joyous laughter just like it used to in the old days. We’ll telegraph you



the exact day and hour we expect to arrive, and Mrs. Knaggs, I hope you will have a dinner prepared such as only the daughters of Skowhegan know how to get up."

"That I will," replied Mahala Ann, blushing broadly when her eyes fell upon her husband and his white string tie and red geranium boutonniere.

After a breakfast of surpassing excellence, where humor and merriment were the principal relishes, there was another skirmish for satchels, suitcases and packages, and the sextette took an omnibus for the Union Depot.

"It's a shame we have to leave St. Louis before you do, Lige," said Tom, after he had purchased his tickets for Denver and returned to where the little group of old friends were chatting vociferously. "If you left town first, we'd pepper you with rice, but unfortunately our train leaves two hours earlier."

"Dang it! I'd jist as leave wait here with no one but Mahala Ann," replied Lige, flushing to the tip of his shiny nose. "I hope you'll be as lucky as I am about gitting a good wife, Tom. I allus liked Mahala Ann ever since we used to play tag together at recess time, but I never could git up the nerve to pop the question."

"And so you eloped with her," thrust Aunt Becky a trifle spitefully. "Well, I'd like to see them gossips at Skowhegan eat their lies when you git back. I bet the boys'll give you a bellin' and the paper will be full of it. Don't furgit to send us one, Mahala. Where in the world is Bob? I have to watch him every minute or he'll git into mischief."

A searching squad was about to be organized, but such a step proved unnecessary, as the happy old



*Getting ready to cross the continent.*

man hove in sight a few minutes later, smiling benignly.

Simultaneously the west bound train was announced and fond good-byes and congratulations were exchanged.

“Mahala, jist take charge of the house like it was your own,” said Aunt Becky, kissing the bride warmly. “Don’t furgit to have beet pickles and dried apple pie with sugar on it when we come home, for Tom allus liked them things, if he hasn’t outgrown ’em.”

“Yes and invite in the hull neighborhood and let’s have a reg’lar hullabaloo of a time,” said Uncle Bob, likewise kissing her warmly.

When Lige rather sheepishly shook hands with Ruth, something in his manner struck a chord of sympathy within her gentle bosom, and forgetting all her former repugnance for him, she said warmly:

“Goodbye, Lige, and may you ever be happy. I thank you for all your kindness to Uncle Bob and to—to me. It shall not go unrewarded. You have won a girl who I hope will make you a suitable wife and you must always be good to her.”

He did not reply, but his homely face paled perceptibly as he held the warm hand of the beautiful girl, who had been his inspiration ever since he first saw her making snowball wreaths in the little sunflower forest of the Springer garden, where she reigned as queen during many a long summer afternoon.

“Now we’re off fur Denver, the city a mile in the sky!” cried Uncle Bob, when they had been ushered into the luxurious Pullman car, whose elegance



awed the old couple and made them uncomfortable for a few minutes.

The morning passed pleasantly to the four travelers, and they amused themselves as suited their fancy. Uncle Bob and Tom spent some time in the cozy smoking room, where the former puffed a handsome meerschaum pipe presented to him by his son, and the latter read the newspaper and talked of the old home and childhood friends, but principally about his little fiance. Aunt Becky ventured to sew, but gave it up and begged Ruth to lay down the Pocket Guide and Time Saver she had been reading.

"I shall never forget the great Fair at St. Louis," said the girl, closing the book and putting it neatly away among her treasures. "No wonder it takes columns and columns of space to tell about it in the newspapers and yet the half can't be told. I hope all people who visit it and meet old and beloved friends will enjoy it as much as we did."

"Yes, after all, them are the main things," said Aunt Becky, thoughtfully. "It beats all what a person will be led into jist fur the sake of the associations; still I hain't got a bit of use for them frail critters that gits led into evil places, somehow or other. I s'pose it's natural fur a respectable woman to feel that way."

Her moralizing was interrupted by a roar of laughter from the smoking room, and presently Tom appeared, followed by Uncle Bob, both of them shaking with amusement.

"Gracious, what's the matter?" asked the old lady indulgently. "Has your old paw been putting nonsense in your head, Tom?"

"No, but he's still a game one all right," laughed her son. "Did you know he decorated the trunk Lige Knaggs bought for himself and wife yesterday—tied streamers to the handles and tacked placards all over it, which read: 'This is a green pear jist married,' 'Here comes the bride,' and 'One trunk is now enough fur two.' Read the verse you tacked on, father."

Uncle Bob, still heaving ponderously, took from his pocket a crumpled bit of paper and read:

"The Skowhegan gossips will please change their song,  
Fur these fancy placards and rags  
Proclaim that aforesaid have did a great wrong  
To Lige and Mahala Ann Knaggs."

"My land, Bob, Mahala Ann'll never furgive you as long as she lives," said Aunt Becky fearfully, although Ruth seemed to enjoy the joke hugely.

"She's so glad to git a man, she'll be willing to stand the notoriety of it all right," said Uncle Bob. "I sent a telegram to Hi Pratt that they were married and on their way home, and I bet they'll git one of the all-firedest bellin's anybody ever had. They'll treat 'em like they did old Hank Spencer and Cordeely Butters, when they ran off to Plainville to git jined. Don't you remember, Becky, how they met 'em at the depot and the brass band played, 'Darling, I Am Gittin' Old,' and they hauled 'em down the street in a dray, and how cussed mad Cordeely was?"

"Yes, and it was a shame, too," declared Aunt Becky stoutly. "They run it jist a leetle bit too fur when they throwed water on 'em and 'most ruined Cordeely's bonnet. Sich things are out of place and I hope they won't treat Lige and Mahala Ann that

way. Like as not some of the fellers that don't like her singing will take their spite out on poor Lige, and he's so fearful slow he can't take his part a bit. My land, he's so dull of comprehension he fell through a trap-door one day and Widder Slant said he didn't know it till they told him about it a half hour after."

"Wal, a leetle fun won't hurt 'em," replied Uncle Bob. "When anybody sneaks off and gits married unbeknown to their friends, they ort to expect to git held up for targets when they git back. I'd like to help give 'em a good bellin'."

"Then I suppose Ruth and I will have to catch it when we get back to Skowhegan after our honeymoon," said Tom with much seriousness. "I'm so much older than Ruth I s'pose they'll have the band play 'Darling, I Am Growing Old,' too; and maybe ruin our health and wardrobes with water."

"Why; Tom, you ain't in your prime yet and the band won't play anything of the kind," said Uncle Bob. "There's jist a nice difference in your ages. You know they laughed when Chauncey Depew married a gal young enough to be his niece, and said he was robbing the cradle, and now the Sunday papers say how happy they are and how they lead the social procession in New York and Washington. They say the marriage made him younger and give her matronly dignity."

"Oh I know they'll act horrid when I arrive home as Tom's bride!" said Ruth, likewise feigning great concern. "Hi Pratt will shoot blank cartridges and they'll throw tin cans and carrots, and yell, and drive us around in a dray, and some of the girls who used to snub me will be glad of a chance to



watch my humiliation, and I s'pose you'll help them, won't you, Uncle Bob?"

"I'll be dodgasted if I will!" replied the old man, stamping his foot, while his face flamed with indignation. "If any man in Skowhegan says or does a thing to give either of you offense, I'll thrash him to a pulp, sure as I'm a foot high! How dare they think of making sport of my son Tom and my leetle darter Ruth that are both the apples of my eyes and the idol of our affection!"

"Bob, remember the Golden Rule, to do unto others as you would be did by," admonished Aunt Becky, while Tom and Ruth burst into laughter and the old man retreated to the smoking room, realizing that he had been vanquished again. There he remained until dinner was brought by a porter and placed upon a little, portable table.

His national pride again expanded when he saw Kansas City, holding her own with tremendous expansiveness, fully as citified in appearance as St. Louis, and as they penetrated the vast wheat fields which spread in every direction to the blue horizon, he eulogized the state of Kansas, once the butt of jesters, but now raised to an exalted position among the western states.

When the porter began making up the berths for the night, Aunt Becky watched with intense interest, and when his task was completed and the curtains drawn for them to enter, she rebelled just as she did when for the first time she saw the state-room of a lake steamer.

"Land a gracious! these states-rooms ain't as big as them on that ship we sailed on, coming to Detroit," she exclaimed. "I believe I'd rather set up

than run the risk of being smashed up in a wreck in one of them cubby-holes. The people don't undress in the aisles, do they?"

"Oh no, mother," replied Tom, smiling at Ruth; "but in these little compartments it is quite an art to be able to disrobe without injuring yourself or being observed. With a little practice you will become accustomed to it. Most of the passengers dress and undress in their berths without any difficulty."

"And I s'pose the hammick at the foot is fur people that have children. My land, you couldn't put a rolling-pin in it!" continued the old lady, with critical sarcasm.

"The swinging nets are for such clothing and parcels as people care to put in them," replied Tom.

"Wal, talk about gitting into tight places! I'd hate to have to sleep two in a bed, in one of them things. A fat old man with rheumatiz would feel sort o' cramped," said Uncle Bob, also struck with wonderment.

"You don't need to, for I've arranged to have mother occupy the lower berth and Ruth the one above and you and I will take the next section, and you can have the lower one if you prefer," said Tom.

"And any sneak-thief that passes kin reach in and help himself to our belongings," persisted Aunt Becky.

"Becky's allus afear'd someone'll steal her switch," laughed Uncle Bob.

"I wish you'd stop twitting me about my switch all the time," said his better half irritably. "It's allus well to be keerful and I'd like to feel sure that I am safe from hold-ups and robbers when I'm in

bed anyway," replied his life-time companion.

"When you get inside, you can fasten the curtains securely with these loops and buttons," said Tom, showing how it was done. "The conductor and porter should be on watch all night, and in case of hold-ups we will all be warned in time."

After the usual exchange of kisses and good-nights, they retired and no more complaints were heard from the old couple, who soon succumbed to the soothing movement of the train.

During the night Uncle Bob woke up, thirsty for a drink of water. Poking his head out of the berth and finding the coast clear, he started in the direction of the gentlemen's dressing-room. Returning, he found he had forgotten the number of his berth. What to do he did not know. Everything was quiet excepting for the occasional bass and tenor snore from some passenger who seemed to be enjoying "Nature's sweet restorer," sleep.

Becoming thoroughly confused, Uncle Bob broke out, "Gosh, what shall I do!"

Turning to the berth nearest to him, he summoned sufficient courage to draw aside the curtain and peek in. Glancing at a delicate feminine ankle, he hastily retreated. Thinking he must be near his own berth, he turned to the next one; but only to make another similar mistake. The form of the person that met his gaze seemed strangely familiar, and he was about to pull aside the curtains when caution prompted a more careful investigation. Bending over the woman who was quietly sleeping he peered into her face; but the features were not those of Aunt Becky.

"Dodgast the luck!" exclaimed Uncle Bob. "There





*Becky! Tom! I'm lost!*

must be all females on this train!" But before he could extricate himself the mischief had been done.

Jumping up in her bed with a start, an old maid, who had attracted his attention during the day on account of her extremely homely appearance, glanced into the old farmer's face with a look of horror, and shrieked, "Robbers, villains, kidnappers! conductor! porter! Come quick!"

Frightened by this sudden outcry, Uncle Bob backed out with such force that he tumbled over into the berth opposite. As he fell, he caught hold of one of the draperies in the vain hope of saving himself. It, however, gave way, revealing to the gaze of the now awakened and astonished passengers the ludicrous sight of a young bridal couple who had taken the train at the last station.

"Lieber Gott, a wreck, a wreck!" cried the big, burly Dutchman, upon whom Uncle Bob had landed. In his fright he gave the old farmer a push that sent him into the middle of the aisle, where he stood in a gorgeous pink flannel night-robe that reached only to the knees, shivering and shaking with chagrin and dismay.

"Becky! Tom!" he shouted, at the top of his voice. "Dodgast the luck. I am lost and can't find my way back to that tarnal bunk. Becky, I say; Tom, stick your head out so that I won't land in another old hen's nest."

Aunt Becky, thoroughly alarmed by the confusion, looking out of her berth, discovered Uncle Bob who had been within a few feet of her during the entire scene. Catching sight of the familiar face, Uncle Bob fairly ran for shelter. Aunt Becky, seizing him by the collar, pulled him into her berth.



“For land’s sake, Bob Springer, what have you been up to now?” she cried. “You are always gettin’ into some unaccountable trouble.”

After an explanation of the mystery had been thoroughly understood, and all had enjoyed a hearty laugh at Uncle Bob’s expense, peace and quiet were once more restored.

The first glimpse of the Rockies in the distance was hailed with delight, and Aunt Becky, who had been for some time rapt in a deep study, turned inquiringly to her son.

“Say, Tom, which one of them mountains is Denver on? Does the train go up to the top or will we be tuk up in an elevator, like we was at the hog-killing in Chicago?” she asked anxiously.

“Denver is a mile above the sea level, but we have been gradually ascending that altitude ever since we left St. Louis,” replied Tom. “The train will soon arrive at the City of the Plains and a person who knew nothing about its lofty position would never think that the elevation was any higher than that of St. Louis, except that the air of Colorado is crisp and dry, while that of the Mississippi states is as thick as buttermilk.”

When they reached Denver and saw the great depot with its capacious wings, it was Uncle Bob’s turn to be surprised again.

“I expected to see a leetle log station with cow-boys and miners and drunken Indians hanging around,” he confessed.

“You will be surprised at the metropolitan aspect of the city,” said Tom, leading the way into the waiting-room. “The majority of the inhabitants are from the East, and she is just like an eastern



city, except that she has a newer and more modern style of architecture. This was once a wild and lawless place, but it has been converted into a model municipality ruled by broadminded enlightened people with cultivated tastes. When Equal Suffrage was established, gambling houses were closed down and Sunday was kept with a vengeance. They say they have a Women's Club here that is second to none in the world and that department stores would rather suffer disastrous conflagrations than be boycotted by it. They are better versed in parliamentary law than the men. If I were a woman, I wouldn't live in any other city but Denver, for it is the only place where a woman is not only as good as a man, but a little bit better."

"Poor hen-pecked men!" sneered Uncle Bob, "I hear the women connive in politics just the same as the men and that a lot of the big politicians fawn around 'em and toady to 'em to git their votes, although they'd like to take the ballot away from 'em if they could. When it comes to women prowling around the poles and lobbying and making stump speeches, I draw the line. I heard once how a girl twenty-one years old ran ag'in two married men fur the office of county treasurer in western Colorado and although the men had fam'lies to support and the gal likely had a comfortable home and a father to keep her, she got the job. It's easy enough fur the young fellers to hustle around fur a purty gal if she wants a position like that. In another Colorado city the mayor had to take a poor man off a garbage committee and put a millionaire's wife on in his place, 'cause the Woman's Club was

set on it and wanted to be represented. Some day they'll have a woman governor here and the poor men will be drove on top of Pike's Peak or across the border into some other state."

"He dont' mean a word he says, Tom," said Aunt Becky, with apparent Christian resignation, although she longed to smite him. "He jist wants to argue and he thinks more of the women than ever. He likes to hector me and I ain't going to fight with him. Why, if Mis' Hoskins run fur constable in Skowhegan, he'd furgit all about his rheumatics and his sect notions trying to coax and bully everybody into voting for her. Women's sphere has been expanded and I'm glad of it, but rather ashamed that the new West had to set the example.

"A woman ain't fit to vote!" cried Uncle Bob, much preferring stern rebuke to mild reproof. "A sartin Princeton tutor was logical when he said a woman's brain wasn't as big as a man's, consequently it couldn't contain as much."

"How does it happen that so many idiotic people have big heads, some of 'em twicet too big fur their bodies? Does it look reasonable fur you to set up and say that is a sign of intelligence?" retorted Aunt Becky, growing wrathful in spite of her resolution to ignore his scathing calumny. "I don't see how it follers that a person kin think more with a big head than he kin with a leetle one any more than he kin walk further with big feet than leetle ones. Besides, if a man's intellect is superior to a woman's 'cause his head is bigger, then a cow must know a heap more than a man."

"Oh, Auntie, please let's discontinue the argument on Equal Suffrage, for we are missing all the

sights. Save your discussions till we get back to Skowhegan," interrupted Ruth.

"Land! I don't propose to let my sect be run down by a man and anybody that says I don't know as much as Bob Springer can go and hunt up my pedigree," replied Aunt Becky, red with indignation. "Bob's never been to a Female Suffrage meeting or he wouldn't be so ignorant. Last August when the biennial meeting was held in Skowhegan, I never heard such papers read by women in all my life—some of 'em was forty and fifty pages long, and the men who come to sneer kept up a round of applause all the time."

"I s'pose they had to do it to keep awake," chuckled the old man, immediately calling attention to some stately building.

Seventeenth Street, the principal thoroughfare of the city, with its attractive architecture unsullied by coal dust and undimmed by the ravages of frequent rains, was to them an inspiring sight, and when they entered the Brown Palace, with its bronze and onyx interior, one of the most beautiful hotels upon the American continent, Uncle Bob again launched forth upon a patriotic eulogy of the United States and her wonderful possessions.

"Jist think of it, Tom, the folks in the East run over to Europe to see old ruins and relics and don't have any other idee but that Denver is a place for buffaloes and invalids, and I hain't seen one of either class since we landed. Half of the people in Maine think that civilization don't extend quite as fur as Buffalo, New York."

"As enlightenment increases in this country more and more each year, the Down East Yankees who



have not traveled will soon be convinced that there are things to learn from the West," replied Tom, wishing to humor his father rather than to excite another argument.

The next day they visited Capitol Hill, notable for its wide streets, its splendid stone residences, its well-kept lawns and its scarcity of shade trees; they also went through the famous Elitch Gardens and other resorts, and admired the hazy Rockies in the distance, encircling the city like a dull amethyst girdle; but Aunt Becky's steps began to lag towards the close of the day.

"I believe I'm gitting mountain fever," she declared, after they had returned to the hotel and were listening to an orchestra playing on one of the balconies. "I feel as stiff as a statue and my breath kind of flitters like a humming bird."

"I'll git a doctor right away," cried Uncle Bob, in alarm.

"I think you needn't worry, mother. I'm surprised that you stood the fatiguing journey to-day as well as you did. It's only the high altitude and you'll be all right to-morrow," said Tom, consolingly, adding gently in a low tone to Ruth:

"And how does my lambkin stand the exertion? I hope you are not suffering from shortness of breath and aches and pains, too."

"No, indeed, the air and sunshine seemed to intoxicate me and I feel like flying—maybe it's because I am so very happy."

"May you always be happy and contented, darling," said Tom tenderly, pressing her hand. "I think the climate has something to do with it,

though. It always affects people differently. How does it make you feel, father?"

"Wal, I believe you'd have to git a derrick to move me if I stayed very long," answered the old man with a yawn. "I can't git enough to eat and I want to sleep all the time I ain't eating."

"If you ever want a change from the old homestead, we'll come here to Colorado and ranch it awhile," said Tom cheerfully. "Now, mother, I'll get you some medicine and if you feel able we will go to Colorado Springs and Manitou in the morning. There is a Colorado Midland or Denver Rio Grande excursion and we may find a jolly crowd."

Aunt Becky was in excellent health and spirits when Tom called at her room the following morning, and after breakfast they left for Colorado Springs, which is said to be the home of more millionaires than any other town of its size in the world. From thence they took a trolley car for Manitou, the renowned resort with its comfortable hotels and bewitching environments.

They drove through the Cheyenne Cañons with their picturesque, rocky elevations and majestic waterfalls and at last reached the Garden of the Gods, where a party of tourists, most of them school teachers, were mounting a pack of burros to take a trip through the classic grounds. In spite of Aunt Becky's disapproval, she was picked up by Tom and placed upon a little white burro, while Ruth, Uncle Bob and he mounted others and away they started upon their novel pilgrimage.

Those who have enjoyed trips of this kind, know how soon the most decorous conventionality relaxes and how the hilarity increases in volume as the ex-

pedition progresses. The little beasts seem to delight in getting as near to the edge of a precipice as possible, but so sure-footed are they and so near to the ground are the feet of their riders, all sense of fear soon vanishes. The restless creatures weave around among their companions, brushing and scraping the shins of some one of the excursionists, as they shamble lazily along in a compact mass, their sole animation resulting from the frequent hallos of the driver and the stinging crack of his whip.

"I can't see them things the driver points out, to save my life," complained Aunt Becky, trying to see the statue of the stage coach carved by Nature at the top of the rocky elevation. "I think he must be dreaming."

"They are very hard to see," admitted Tom. "I've often heard that the Garden of the Gods was a disappointment at first, but after one sees it several times, its beauty and sublimity is fully appreciated."

"The gateway is the most romantic part of it, I think," said Ruth. "It really seems as if the Olympian gods had fashioned this wonderful garden and that it was at one time inhabited by them."

"The crowd's a little too big to enjoy it though, isn't it, Ruth?" said Tom, as he caught her burro by the bridle and tried to make it walk amicably beside his own.

"I beg pardon, Missus; I know I'm gitting uncomfortably close to you, but blamed if I kin make this here animal behave," apologized Uncle Bob, who had unintentionally ridden up beside a very fleshy school teacher in a linen duster and green goggles.



"Oh we will have to accept the inevitable, since we are riding on ill-mannered burros," said the woman, blushing deeply.

"Blamed if I kin control the beast at all, dodgast the luck," continued Uncle Bob. "I've kicked and pounded and done everything else, but he jist goes ahead and don't mind it a tarnal bit. They put me in mind of a bed of maggots."

"Mine is just as unruly," replied his new companion de voyage. "I hope you will pardon his rudeness, too."

"Sartinly. If you kin stand it, I kin. We're both big and fat and we're jammed up here together like Siamese twins and my circulation has stopped on one side and I 'spect yours has, too, but it might be worse."

This bit of conversation broke the ice and for a while they chatted pleasantly until their burros stopped and began to graze by the wayside.

"Why, did you ever!" gasped the woman in surprise. "The rest have gone ahead and the driver has lost track of us. For mercy sake, start these animals some way!"

In vain Uncle Bob cudgeled the poor beasts with a heavy stick he found by the road; he belabored their stolid sides with his fists and kicked them until his rheumatic pains became unbearable, using language that was commendable for force rather than purity, but at last he gave up in despair.

"Maybe if we both got off and pushed hard, we could make them go," suggested the woman, whose hearty laughter had merged into a tremulous piping wail.

"Yes, and the fool things would kick up and leave

nothing of us but a grease spot! Old Pike's Peak yonder couldn't budge 'em," replied Uncle Bob, in helpless disgust. "If I had hold of that driver, I'd wring his dodgasted, blasted neck."

"Are you married?" asked the woman eagerly.

"What's that got to do with you an' I?" answered Uncle Bob.

"But your wife—" said the woman.

"Wal, you know when the boys get out for a leetle fun, it don't make much difference whether they're in Skowhegan or atop of Pike's Peak," replied Uncle Bob, his face fairly beaming with smiles.

"No, I didn't mean that—I thought if you were married, your wife would soon miss you and send back to get us and—Oh, well you know," said the woman, with a suggestive laugh.

Just as they were about to abandon the burros and try to overtake the rest of the party on foot, the sharp call and whip-crack of the guide were heard, as he dashed around a hillock to their rescue. Instantly the little beasts pricked up their ears and started on a mad gallop as fast as their stubby legs could carry them. Uncle Bob twined all his limbs around the burro and yelled and threatened and snorted, expecting to be dashed to pieces upon the rocks, while his companion, who likewise clung to the beast with the tenacity of a prickly burr, screamed, wept and wheezed, sitting firmly by his side. In a few moments they halted close to the Balanced Rock, joining the other tourists, who were shouting and crying with laughter.

"Father, the lady beat you by a neck!" yelled Tom, so nearly convulsed his face was purple. "A





*Colorado burro discovers Uncle Bob is not a skilled rider.*



man can't beat a woman at anything in Colorado—not even at riding a burro!”

“Wal, I'll be dodgasted if I ever want to ride another of them tarnal, cussed, long-eared animals ag'in as long as I live!” cried the old man, who failed to see the humor of the situation. “Why don't you laugh, Becky, and show your ill-manners? Fust thing you know, you'll be spread out on the ground like a coat of paint. I don't see nothing to laugh about.”

“It's so funny, Bob, every time you git in with a strange woman, it always ends in a predicament,” replied Aunt Becky, tears streaming from her eyes.

Other interesting sights were seen about Manitou, including the Cave of the Winds and William's Cañon, and on the following day they continued their picturesque trip by the Denver and Rio Grande railway, through the rugged Rocky Mountains, where turbulent rivers and roaring torrents foamed over broken ledges and dashed into ravines of incredible depth. They passed through the warm valley in which the town of Florence nestles among her alfalfa fields and fertile mesas, finally approaching the famous Royal Gorge, a gigantic gateway, hewn through a solid wall of rock. Slowly they ascended in bewildering fashion the snow-covered mountains crested by Marshall Pass, eleven thousand feet above sea level; from thence they descended abruptly to Grand Junction, with its jungle of fruit trees. All along the route, nature with wild prodigality had scattered her famous land-marks,—a series of marvels that inspired and delighted them.

They were glad, however, when Salt Lake City,

the picturesque "City of the Saints," spread out before them, taking her afternoon siesta beneath her interminable rows of lofty cottonwood trees, a place which at first sight might be a disappointment immediately after visiting Denver, but whose dignity, repose and romantic beauty dwell in the mind of the tourist forever afterwards.



*Enjoys a plunge in Utah's salt waters.*

They were driven to the Knutsford Hotel, where after supper they took a stroll through the business part of the city with its wide streets and blocks of unusual magnitude.

The felicitous days that followed in this garden spot will never be forgotten by blithesome little Ruth, who enjoyed all the delights of a courtship

conducted by a man of the world, of unlimited experience, who knew just how to make the party comfortable.

First they visited the Great Salt Lake, upon whose glassy surface they floated in black and white bathing suits, unharrassed by the anxieties and inconveniences which beset bathers in fresh water, who must paddle to keep from sinking. Once Uncle Bob forgot to keep his arms extended straight out as directed and turned over, the salt water filling his eyes, mouth and nostrils, almost strangling him. He floundered and snorted for a while, but finally thrust one of his feet in the soft sand and was enabled to get a foothold. For a few minutes he stood sputtering and rubbing his eyes until able to join in the hearty laugh that followed.

Then in the evening they entered the Great Salt-air Pavilion, where one thousand couples can dance comfortably, and with the cool breezes from the water gratefully fanning their cheeks, Tom and Ruth glided to the inspiring waltzes and two-steps of a superb orchestra, while the old people watched and admired from an unobtrusive corner, Uncle Bob finally saying:

“I feel like hollering with joy, Becky, every time our Tom and Ruth comes slipping around so gracefully to the sweet music, to know that they will soon be man and wife and begin the matrimonial glide. I hope their life will be one long waltz with nary a war dance to mar it.”

“I don’t jist exactly approve of dancing, though,” said Aunt Becky, when Uncle Bob’s praises had grown excessive.

“Wal, I’d a heap rather they would be dancing



than playing kissing games and hissy-cat like them Smith gals at home, who thought it was wrong to dance. I don't think their religious scruples stood so much in the way as the conviction that they were too blame awkward to learn how."

On the following day as they were viewing the Mormon Temple and the Tabernacle, set in grounds of remarkable beauty, another discussion was provoked between the old people.

"The Temple is a majestic building, but it is almost as severe and mysterious as the Rockies," said Ruth. "The Tabernacle, with its dome-like roof, is also one of the wonders of the West. I understand that a person can drop a pin in the choir loft and the sound can be heard in the gallery over two hundred feet away, so remarkably perfect are its acoustic properties."

"Wouldn't it be awful to hear Mahala Ann sing one of her anthems in there?" chuckled Uncle Bob.

"When a gal gits married she generally gives up her singing and other accomplishments," said Aunt Becky reproachfully, for she thought her husband's gibes at Mahala Ann were the acme of hypocrisy.

"It would be a public benefit if more of 'em could git married off," replied Uncle Bob. "If polygamy was still in existence we might send out a couple of carloads of superfluous widders and old maids that would make good wives and let our old bachelors and widowers and grass-widowers have a leetle rest."

"I s'pose you'd like to be a Mormon yourself?" jerked Aunt Becky.

"Wal, sometimes I feel like a leetle change would be refreshing. Anyway a man wouldn't be so apt

to git lonesome if he had a harem," replied Uncle Bob boldly.

"I'm sure I never give you a chance to feel lonesome, did I?"

"No, you're purty much of a houseful, Becky, but I kin understand how pioneers in a wilderness like this was would want to populate it as quick as they could, and how raising fam'lies became as much of a fad as collecting libraries or anything else. Polygamy afforded an open market for women that couldn't git husbands in the East and—

"I honestly believe you'd like to be a Mormon," interrupted Aunt Becky reproachfully. "When you read about Reed Smoot trying to git in the Senate from Utah, you used to say his domestic affairs wasn't any of the government's business and like as not his persecutors were jealous 'cause they had to be content with one wife apiece. It would take five women to keep you straight."

"Wal, I'd be mighty partic'lar about choosing amiable ones any way," retorted Uncle Bob.

"I think any woman that would want you fur a husband was purty hard up to git married," blazed Aunt Becky. "Gals nowadays ain't going to marry any old kind of a specimen jist to git a man and mebbe have to keep him. A lot of our old spinsters—in fact the most of 'em—are unmarried and glad of it. The majority of 'em ain't rich enough fur dukes and fortune hunters and are too pesky good fur the average man and they'd rather be dead than marry scalawags like some of their grandmothers did. An old codger like you—"

"Wal, Becky, you know there is a silver lining behind every cloud."

“Now, let’s don’t have any more arguments, Auntie, to spoil our happiness. Just be thankful, Uncle Bob, that you have one wife and a good one at that,” interposed Ruth, flying to their assistance as usual.

The Hall of Relics, containing all of Brigham Young’s sacred paraphernalia, from an old hat to the last porous plaster he wore, was also visited, and the remainder of the day was spent in sketching the residence portion of the city.

“That must be the Amelia Palace, the residence of Brigham Young’s seventeenth wife, who, by the way, was his favorite,” said Tom, pointing out a large frame structure by no means palatial.

“Oh, she’s the one that kicked the sewing machine down the stairs ’cause it didn’t suit! I allus admired her pluck,” said Aunt Becky.

“Just think of a man having nineteen wives and sixty-four children!” exclaimed Ruth.

“And think of him living to a good old age, too!” said Tom, smiling mischievously.

“Joseph Smith was a better Mormon than Brigham Young, fur he had five wives and forty-seven children. Let me see, if he had as many wives as Brigham, he would have 165 children,” said Uncle Bob, figuring with a lead pencil upon a slip of paper.

“That calculation is jist about as sensible as your riddle, ‘If it takes thirteen of Widder Slant’s pancakes to cover a meeting house, how many letters would there be in a mail bag?’” said Aunt Becky disdainfully. “You’re so cracked about some things.”

“There is the Beehive, where part of Brigham’s immense family lived, including most of his wives,”



said Tom, pointing to another large, unprepossessing building.

"I wonder why they called it the Beehive. Do you suppose Brigham meant to be merely polite and wished to honor the good works of his wives, and named it his Beehive, because it was so full of the sweet domesticity?" said Ruth.

"I think he meant to be ironical," conjectured Tom. "Perhaps he housed up the wives there who were inclined to be quarrelsome and jealous and stung him with their reproaches."

"I 'spect he called it his Beehive 'cause the poor bees had to keep busy all the time looking after the sixty-four children," ventured Aunt Becky.

"And mebbe it was 'cause the women allus kept up such an infernal buzz he couldn't hear himself think," said Uncle Bob, whose opinion was accepted without dispute.

They left for California on the following day, passing through Ogden, another celebrated Utah city, noted for its fruits and vegetables, and across the Great American Desert, during which ordeal they chatted about the World's Fair, read newspapers and magazines, and tried to forget the dreary waste that stretched away in all directions as far as the eye could see.

Leaving Truckee, and nearing the beautiful, picturesque Sierra Nevada mountains, the long train with three engines, puffing and snorting as though their burden was too great, commenced to make the ascent, nine or ten thousand feet above sea-level, darting out of one snow-shed to quickly enter another,—a monotonous journey of forty miles, approaching the tourists' delight, the famous, histor-

ical Downer's Lake, thousands of feet below the snow-capped peaks.

Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky, peeping out of the car windows, were amazed and delighted at the beautiful scenery and the deep blue waters, quietly resting at the foot of the jagged mountains.

Aunt Becky, nervous and excited, exclaimed, "For land's sakes, Bob Springer, if this car tips over, where will we go?"

"I reckon, Becky, it wouldn't make much difference where we went after we had scraped and tumbled over them there pesky, ragged-edged rocks. Here we go again!" exclaimed Uncle Bob. "Say, Conductor, when are we goin' to leave these dodgasted boxes?"

"When we come out of the last one."

"Grand! Sublime!" remarked Ruth, as the train came out into the open, high above the tree-tops.

"Yes," said Tom. "Way back in the '49's these mountains echoed to the sound of the wild rush of the miners and prospectors in their excited search for gold. See," pointing his finger in the direction of the mountains which many years ago had been leveled by hydraulic machinery and the miner's pick. "Those were lively days in this part of the country. Many a man lost life and property in the search for the yellow metal, while others made their fortunes. Leland Stanford, Huntington, Crocker and Sharon are among those who first got their start in these hills from Nature's hidden treasury. To these men more than to any others belong the credit for having made it possible for us to enjoy the luxuries of travel while the train is speeding over this very road."

"But," said Uncle Bob, "didn't they have to squeeze the farmers to get the money to build the road and dig these tunnels?"

"Not at all," said Tom; "but by pluck and great hardship they succeeded in overcoming what seemed an almost impossible task. The nation's wealth has been greatly increased by this gigantic enterprise, and we owe a debt of gratitude to these early pioneers."

"I agree with you," said Ruth. "The men who control great wealth are as necessary to the community and the country's welfare as the men behind the shovel and the pick."

When they reached Sacramento in a valley of orange trees, with her stately palms and luxurious vegetation, they realized that again they were in one of the chosen spots of the Divine Maker. It was raining when they arrived in San Francisco, but they took a cab and drove to the Palace Hotel, where, after dinner and an hour spent in the cool, white rotunda, they retired to their rooms.

San Francisco, with her omnipresent rustle of activity, her air of western audacity and overpowering enterprise, her palatial residences and massive public buildings, her unexcelled parks and boulevards, her crowds of pleasure seekers as smartly attired as those of Gotham, and her many other attractions, with the balmy air of the Pacific Ocean, combined to fill the Skowhegan tourists with new emotions, to which was added the pang produced by a sudden realization of the finiteness of time and space.

As Uncle Bob expressed it as they walked



through the flower-bordered walks of the Sutro Gardens:

“We have been from ocean to ocean and have found that even the United States has a jumping-off place. All journeys must come to an end, and all things decay. Even these beautiful flowers in the flush of full bloom will be faded and scattered to the four winds and forgotten in a few brief days. I wish we could continue to wander on together through smiling gardens and green vales like we are now doing—jist we four and no more.”

“Mebbe we will some day and we won’t be bothered with cumbersome, aching bodies like we are now,” said Aunt Becky, whose optimistic views of the hereafter were her greatest source of consolation.

“At any rate, father, I believe in enjoying the trip as we go along and I hope all journeys will have as happy an ending as ours will be when we get back to the home I left so many years ago,” said Tom tenderly.

“I’d like to see the Leland Stanford University, the largest west of the Rockies, and the giant trees and violet farms, and many other things that must be very interesting, but I, too, am anxious to get back, for, after all, there’s no place like home,” said Ruth.

They also saw the Golden Gate and Cliff House, from whose windows they looked through telescopes at the rocks in the distance, which were dotted with seals of all ages and sizes, some splashing in the water and others basking in the sunshine upon ragged-edged rocks. In the afternoon they hired a guide, who took them through Chinatown,

where for several hours they were engrossed in studying the environments of the queer celestials, who lived in the heart of the cosmopolitan city and were a vital part of it. They had their fortunes told by a Chinese necromancer, who, with the aid of little scented sticks labeled with hieroglyphics, told Ruth that she would marry a titled foreigner and



*Visits the underground Celestial Colony.*

have six children, and assured Tom that he would never marry, which for the moment seemed to provoke him. They visited the Joss House, which Uncle Bob declared was correctly named, for here is where the Chinese devils are consumed by fire. In a quaint restaurant they ate Gok Fah Goey Doo,

Hong Foo Yung Don, Mut Cum Quat, Lot Day Gee Goo and Shu Op, washing it down with Sue Sin tea and finishing the repast with Li-chee nuts, although Aunt Becky continually declared that Chinamen were unclean and not even a prophet could tell what ingredients they used in their preparations.

Through extraordinary gold-smithing establishments, drug and spice emporiums, crowded fish markets and other busy places they wended their way, stopping to see the Palace Hotel of Chinatown, where its tenants sleep six and eight on hard shelves in a room to which the light of day never penetrates. They also witnessed a Chinese funeral, where the corpse was borne along in great state, its approach heralded by loud shouts and the assiduous clashing of cymbals. In the first cab a woman, presumably widow to the deceased, craned her neck through the window and was gazing ahead with a gratified smile; but the spectators could not tell whether she was pleased at the success of the display or the predicament of her spouse.

In the evening they took the fast Overland Owl train for Los Angeles, crossing the great Mojave Desert while they were sweetly sleeping in their berths, dreaming that they were in the heart of a tropical jungle through whose glistening boughs Birds of Paradise fluttered, singing strange melodies, while the train speeded through the land of flowers.

They were completely rested when they arrived at the "City of the Angels" and spent the first day touring through the parks of the captivating city, which are bowers in an oasis of bloom and beauty. They drove to old San Gabriel Mission and con-



versed with the Spaniards who cluster in a peaceful hamlet at its feet; they passed through Pasadena, whose loveliness has lured to its shrine hundreds of wealthy men who wished to pass their last days in peace and quietude; they visited Santa Monica and bathed in the Pacific Ocean, and from Mount Lowe looked down upon the beautiful valley of orange groves and habitations of a prosperous community.

Having seen the principal points of Southern California's thriving inland city, they were soon speeding over the luxurious Sunset route for New Orleans, the pride of the South, who bears upon her venerable front the impress of a romantic origin.

"At last I am in the dear old Crescent City," said Ruth, with a happy sigh of relief, as they leisurely walked along its thoroughfare, sweltering in the hot sun.

"Yes, this is the metropolis of the great state in which you were born, and it is here that I shall take you as my bride and companion for life," said Tom, his face illumined with unspeakable joy.

They engaged accommodations at one of the leading hotels, where hurried preparations were made for the wedding, which was solemnized in the parsonage of the Rev. Mr. Tuttle, a pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church, in compliance with Aunt Becky's request.

The event took place in a small parlor, conspicuous for its immaculate cleanliness, from the snowy curtains to the Smyrna rugs that decorated the polished floor. Never did a bride look sweeter and more lovely, nor a bridegroom happier and more manly, than did Ruth and Tom while the sacred ceremony was being performed in a bower of clean-



*"Never did a bride look sweeter."*



ders and myrtles, the sun shining full upon them and crowning the bride's dusky hair, and its wreath of orange blossoms, with an aureole of gold. Aunt Becky, in spite of her stoic resistance, would have burst into tears of joy, had she not feared that her manifestation might be misconstrued, but Uncle Bob looked on with infinite pride, hardly able to control his insane desire to cheer vociferously, and the stately, gray-haired wife of the minister smiled in sympathy with them all.

"This sartinly is a peculiar affair and surely truth is stranger than fiction," said Aunt Becky, after kissing the happy pair five or six times in succession. "I never seen a bride married in blue before; they generally wear white and carry white roses and look so corpse-like, it ain't no wonder the bride's mother allus goes into a cryin' spell. You know the old tune goes: 'Marry in blue and you'll allus be true,' and you look like an angel in your blue dress, dear, and them red roses you hold will bring you happiness and contentment.

"Love allus goes where it's sent," said Uncle Bob, with immense satisfaction, as he followed his wife, shaking his son's hand with more than paternal cordiality and pressing Ruth to his bosom as he kissed her repeatedly.

"Sometimes it's sent to mighty queer places though," said Aunt Becky. "I don't believe matches are allus made in Heaven, like this one; some of 'em are surely made in the other place; some of 'em are hatched up at tea parties and dances, and some of 'em jist happen—like Lige and Mahala's, for instance."

"This marriage was ordained by Providence and



resulted from the prayers of two fond parents, whose dearest wish was the happiness of their children," said Tom, kissing his wife again, upon whose drooping lashes tears of happiness gathered as pure and bright as the diamond of the engagement ring she had worn but a few days.

The wedding supper, which was served in the hotel, was complete in every detail from the bride's cake with its delicate frosting, surmounted with a fanciful castle resembling one of the fairy pavilions they had seen at the World's Fair, down to the little sprigs of white jasmine that lay beside each plate.

On the following day they took the train for Proctorsville, where in compliance with Ruth's dearest wish they searched for her father. None of the people they accosted had ever heard of Clyde Burton or his wife and they were about to give up their quest when a retired planter directed them to old Aunt Dinah Dorsey, an ex-slave, who was one of the pioneers of the quaint town.

They found a white-washed cabin over-run with vines, in a respectable portion of the negro quarters, and in response to a knock an aged colored woman, gray and emaciated, wearing a flame red turban, opened the screen door and with obsequious politeness invited them to enter, at the same time limping around to wipe the imaginary dust from the few straight-backed chairs which were lined against the wall.

"'Deed you'se welcome, ladies and gemmen. It's been a long time since Aun' Dinah had a visit fum de quality," she said repeatedly. Proctorsville ain't what it was in de ole days befo' de wah, since so

much new folks move in and so much ob de ole families move out," said the negress, taking a chair after her guests had been seated.

"You must have known all the old families then," said Ruth, with a strange tremor which seemed to be the shadow of some portentous monster that might destroy her dream of happiness.

"La, chile, I used to know all de bluebloods and de po' white trash and all de niggahs in dis pa't ob de country. I was a slave in de fambly of ole Marse Dorsey."

"Perhaps you knew Clyde Burton," said the girl faintly.

"Deed I did, chile," replied the old woman, with alacrity. "Poor fellow, dey say he done gib up his life in Mobile seven yeahs ago, when de yellow fevah was ragin'."

"Then he is dead!" gasped Ruth, growing very pale.

"Yes, honey, de papahs done say he was daid and what de papahs say ob cose mus' be so."

"Did you ever know his wife?"

"Rose Burton? La sakes, chile, my sistah Phoebe was her old cull'd mammy and I know Rose fum a li'l baby. Po' gal, she done disappeared ovah twenty yeahs ago wid her baby and de folks tink she drowneded herse'f in de Mississipp'. No one ain't evah heard tell ob 'em since, and Clyde, he nearly kill hisse'f grievin' and grievin' arter 'em. Dey say he nevah smile aftah dey lef'."

"Why did she drown herself?" asked Ruth, determined to lift the veil that concealed the mysteries of her early infancy.

"Rose was de daughtah ob Francis Renault, a

Frenchman dat belonged to de nobility, and he come to dis state and married and move to Proctorsville, and befo' de wah he owned some ob de fines' lands in dis section. When de wah close he had nothin' lef' and all de ornery niggahs he used to clothe and feed and look arter like dey was his children, done desert him, 'cept my sistah Phoebe, and she stayed till he died. Rose was raised like a fine lady and she was de only chile, and all de people called her Creole Rose. Laws-a-massy, chile, de beaux done tote her around like she was a queen and she went to all de big fetes in New Orleans and dey all make a big fuss ovali her, but—wal, you know how de French and English git 'long togethah under de same roof! Dey love each othah, but don't understand each othah, and one day when Clyde scold her, she didn't say a word, but she jes' pick up de baby and dey went to de big rivah and dey jump in and dat was de las' of 'em. Clyde spend all he had tryin' to find 'em, but Lowd, he might jes' as well tuk his money and t'rowed it away. Dey was bofe han'some and dey was bofe proud, and dey bofe had to suffer fo' it and de poor li'l baby, too."

"The poor little one was not drowned at all and neither was the mother," said Ruth, tears of gratitude filling her eyes, now that the mists had been satisfactorily cleared away. "I am Ruth, the daughter of Clyde and Rose Burton, and when my mother left her home in this place she started for Maine to find a distant relative, but was taken suddenly ill and died at Skowhegan. It is to these kind people with me that I owe my everlasting



gratitude, for it was they who reared me and filled my life with happiness."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, chile,—ole Sistah Phoebe prayed fo' you and yo' muddah as long as she live, and sho' nuff, her prayers am answered!" cried the old woman, clasping her hands together over her bosom and smiling ecstatically at Ruth.



*Aunt Dinah gives Ruth the picture of her mother.*

"La, Miss, you has de eyes and hair ob Rose, and de outlines and white skin ob Clyde Burton! You needn't be 'shamed ob yo' fambly, honey, do' dey done lost all dar money. Praise de Lawd! I'se mighty glad to live to see dis day."

For another hour the girl plied the old negress

with questions, and her heart grew lighter as she learned of the good deeds of the Renaults and Burtons, and at the close of the harangue, which was accompanied with typical African gesticulations, Aunt Dinah gave her a faded daguerreotype of her mother, sweet Rose, which old Mammy Phoebe had cherished until the hour of her death. Tom thanked the old woman and gave her enough money to keep her comfortable for years to follow.

"I should like to know even more about them, but still I am so glad that I have learned this much," said Ruth, as they walked down the street, followed by Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky, who had kept respectfully silent during the strange interview.

"Let the past bury itself, dearest," said Tom, tenderly. "I would love you just the same, whether you were a plain little Skowhegan girl or the scion of the venerable Renault and Burton families."

Having accomplished their mission, they returned to the city, where, after further investigating the wonder of this great gateway to South American ports, the largest cotton mart in the world, they decided to return home as quickly as possible and on the following evening they left for Washington, D. C.

When they arrived at what Uncle Bob declared was the greatest capital in the world, they set out at once to see the White House, notable for its elegant simplicity, also the Capitol, which is the great amphitheater of the Potomac, and the Treasury Building with its Ionic pillars and scores of spacious apartments. They also took a trip on the Potomac to the residence of George Washington at

Mt. Vernon, where Uncle Bob's patriotic rhapsodies, so plentiful throughout the trip, reached a grand climax in words that would have made the Father of Our Country proud to possess such a loyal and devoted subject, had he been permitted to hear them.

A day later they were enroute homeward bound, stopping at Boston for the purpose of seeing more of its many attractions, affording Ruth and Aunt Becky the privilege of shopping to their heart's content from unstinted pocket-books. On the morning following their arrival, Tom went out early, telling his wife that he had to look after some important business. Three hours dragged slowly by, but he did not return. At last she went down to the parlor, where the old people were likewise waiting patiently.

"I fear something has happened to Tom," she said, looking anxiously out upon the busy street below.

"Nonsense, child, you mustn't imagine sich things," said Uncle Bob, who, try as he would, could not conceal his agitation.

"I suppose every girl feels that when she gets a good husband and life's pathway seems to be strewn with roses, it's too good to last and something will turn up to spoil it all," she replied, tremulously.

"But their doubts were soon dispelled when Tom entered, flushed with exertion, dusty and out of breath.

"What's the matter?" cried his wife, rushing to his arms.

"Nothing, my dear,—it's all over now," he said,



sinking into a great leather chair. "I had an encounter with a prodigious monster, but I conquered him, just as Hercules did the Lernean hydra, and I have brought him to my people as a gift. He is now as docile as a well-broken broncho and I can manage him with one hand."

"You look like you'd been wrastling with that terrible Tammany tiger," said Aunt Becky in alarm.

"Tell us what it was, Tom," pleaded Ruth. "Are you joking, or did you really get into trouble?"

"Behold my captive!" cried the mischievous Tom, drawing back the window curtain and pointing down to the street below.

"It's an automobile—a big, comfortable, brand new automobile!" exclaimed Ruth, clapping her hands.

"That's the thing they call a rich man's toy, but the good, everyday, common-sense way of traveling is good enough for me," said Uncle Bob.

"Well, Bob, we might as well be out of the world as to be out of fashion, so if Tom is good enough to give us this pleasure, we should appreciate it," replied Aunt Becky.

"Yes, it's all ours, and after taking a little spin this morning, I'll have it shipped straight through to Skowhegan, to remain there at the depot until called for, and then we'll ride to the house-warming in grand style," returned Tom, as pleased as a schoolboy with a new top.

"I'd be skeered to death every minute," said Aunt Becky, shuddering violently. "The machine might git to going and never stop, and we'd skeer the hosses and mebbe break our necks. That would be a turrible ending after all the pleasure we have

had. Besides how would the secretary of the Band of Hope look riding back to Skowhegan on a red—Satan?"

"You'd look a heap more respectable than you did the morning you left behind them oxen," laughed her husband, who had changed his idea of sticking close to nature to that of more modern methods.

They were too excited to eat their luncheon and as soon as they had finished, Tom helped them into the automobile and they took a long ride, seeing nothing but their new vehicle. At the close of their journey Aunt Becky's fears had subsided and they were all jubilant.

A few days later they were on the way to Skowhegan and found the precious automobile, with its gay trimmings, occupying the greater part of the baggage-room. It was the work of but a few minutes for Tom to properly adjust it and to get Uncle Bob and Aunt Becky comfortably settled on the rear seats, after which he placed Ruth in front, and springing in beside her, he grasped the lever with a loud halloo, and they whizzed over rough and dusty roads toward the old homestead.

"I wonder if Lige Knaggs got our telegram all right," said Uncle Bob, as they neared the long-coveted goal, which was tuneful with the melodies of birds and redolent with the perfume of lilacs.

"Yes, he must have received it all right. I told him not to meet us at the train with the old oxen as we were not certain as to the exact time of arrival," replied Tom.

"I almost wish the trip were not so near to an end," said Ruth, earnestly, looking into the eyes of

her husband, as he bent towards her. "It's all been so happy—just like a dream of Heaven."

"This is only the beginning, darling," said Tom tenderly, drawing her closer to his side. "May we ride through life side by side just as we are now doing for many, many years to come."

"Watch out, Tom, you're going to run in the gut-



*"There is Hi Pratt's barn," said Uncle Bob.*

ter and bust the biler of this dodgasted machine," remonstrated Uncle Bob, laughing boisterously, and likewise edging closer to his faithful companion.

"Why, Bob Springer, are you so citified that you don't know a turnpike ditch from a gutter?" exclaimed Aunt Becky, in disgust.



“Oh there is Hi Pratt’s barn,” cried Uncle Bob.

“And there is the dear old homestead smothered with vines and guarded by the apple trees and the pigeon cote, and there is the chicken yard and the old red barn and the cool, green meadows and the forest and the hills beyond! I’m so glad to get back!” cried Ruth in delight.

“Yes, yes, how inviting it looks and how glad I am to breathe the air and enjoy the home of my childhood! Even the old school-house off there in the distance, where I spent my early days learning to read and figure, awakens a thousand fond memories,” said Tom, sharing her exultation.

“And there are several rigs hitched to our racks and a lot of children playing in the yard. They must be fixing to give us a house-warming that will break the record in Skowhegan. I kin smell Mahala Ann’s cookies and pies,” chimed in Uncle Bob.

“Toot your horn, Tom! Blow a strong blast and let ’em know we’re coming,” said Aunt Becky, with an unusual burst of pride and enthusiasm.

“I bet none of ’em ever seen a bald-headed go-cart like this before, and like as not they’ll all take to their heels when they see us comin’,” chuckled Uncle Bob as Tom blew a long shrill sound.

“See, there they come!” cried Ruth, clapping her hands gleefully. “There is widow Hoskins and seven or eight of her children, and there is Rube Wattles with his slippery-elm cane, and Hi Pratt and Lige Knaggs and Elvira Dingle and Granny Butters and the Smith girls and oh, a whole lot more!—And there is Mahala Ann in a long white apron, waving a towel!”



*Return home in automobile satisfied to live  
a contented future*

"Our old farmhouse looks like Brigham Young's Beehive," said Uncle Bob gaily. "Wal, the more the merrier. We'll have the jolliest time the old homestead ever knowed, fur the Prodigal Son is returning and with him comes his charming bride."

"Fur mercy sake, look at Widder Slant running to meet us!" exclaimed Aunt Becky. "She's way ahead of all the rest and like as not she'll fall down and git run over if she don't slow up a leetle."

"I 'spect she remembers my promise to bring her back an old widower if I found a suitable one, but blamed if I'd even recommend her to Mephisto. She looks like a fat doughnut spilt out of a dinner basket," said Uncle Bob, who even in the midst of his joy had no use for the famous Skowhegan gossip.

"Bob, she's as welcome as anyone else. She's a good-hearted soul and a woman who hain't got much intellect is apt to over talk herself and shouldn't be held responsible," replied Aunt Becky, craning her neck forward to view the approaching delegation, which included at least half a hundred people of all ages and of various strata of Skowhegan society.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"That's Hi Pratt shooting blank cartridges again," said Ruth, laughing merrily.

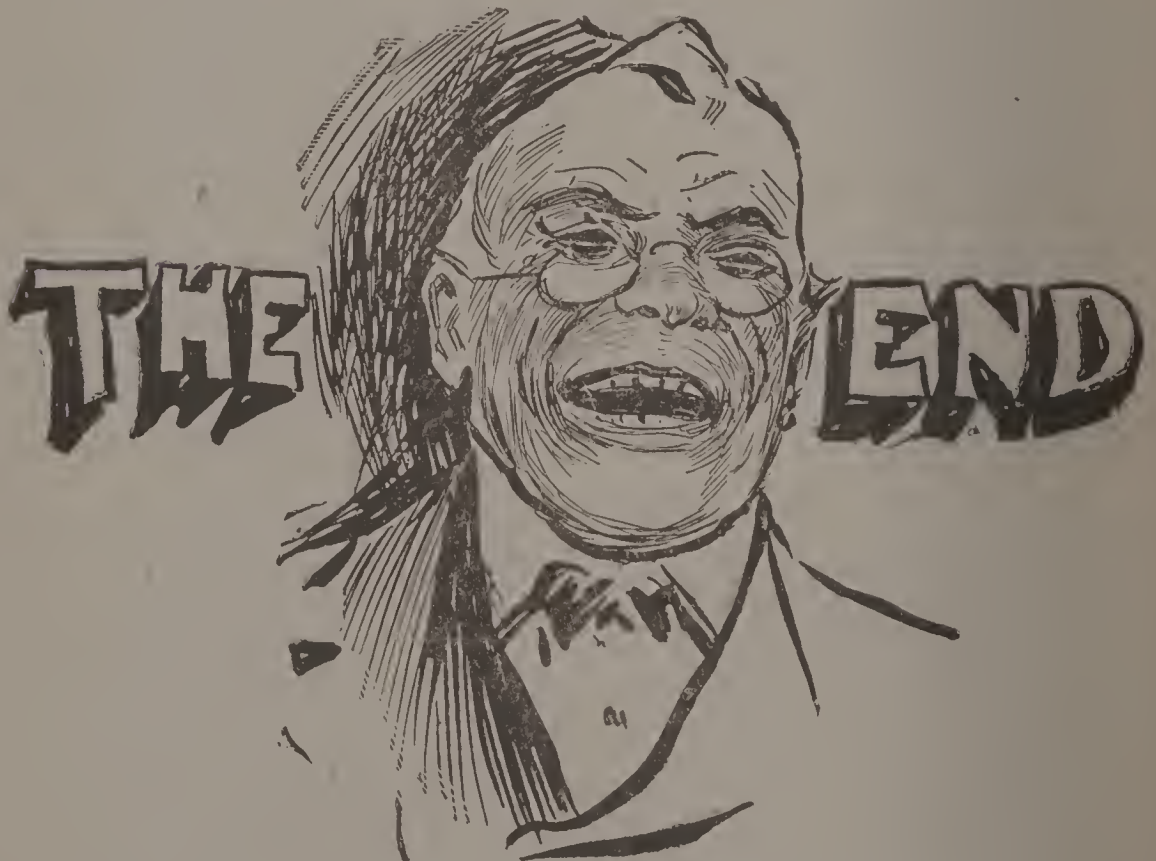
"Slow up a leetle, Tom," entreated Aunt Becky. "Let's keep 'em guessing and give 'em a chanst to admire our self-movin' she-bang."

"Hurrah for old Skowhegan!" shouted Uncle Bob, springing to his feet and waving his hat as if he were listening to a campaign speech that merited continual applause. "I never appreciated Mahala Ann's graduating valedictory until now; but it's true, every word of it:



'Oh happy home of childhood, strange that we can never feel,  
How deeply in our hearts thy spirit dwells,  
Until we wander from thy care, and recollections steal  
Into our dreams, like distant, chiming bells!  
For though we travel through the world to profit and to learn,  
From coast to coast, through cities great and small,  
There comes a time when tired souls would willingly return  
To old Skowhegan ————— dearest place of all!'"

"Becky, we have seen the world, we have been round the hull country, and now we return to the old homestead farm, amazed with the wonders of the past—satisfied to live a contented future."



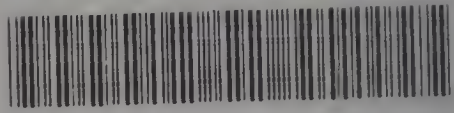


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