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The Black Cat

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The Black Cat

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The Lost Pasture Lot.*

BY BIRDSALL JACKSON.

FULL of sunshine was the June morning when Uncle 'Bijah Thompson drove slowly homeward in his rickety old calash-top wagon. Charley, the iron-gray, shambled on in front, drawing the vehicle just fast enough to keep it ahead of the cloud of dust they were raising. He had long since learned that this was the only condition set upon his progress and rolled along in his usual over-fed complacency.

Wild roses besprinkled the hedges, filling the air with fragrance, and the trees looming over them cast patches of shadow across the roadway. Content rested upon the fields of rank-growing grain, content hung in the pellucid air above them, and content reigned in the heart of Uncle 'Bijah.

On they went, rattling down over the little bridge at the foot of the hill, then up again on the other side, the sage Charley meanwhile with one ear cocked forward in reconnaissance and the other inclined backward to assure himself that the whip stayed in the socket where it properly belonged, and old Uncle 'Bijah sitting back comfortably and stroking his patriarchal beard with satisfaction.

* The writer of this story received a cash prize of $200 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

The long rows of corn on the hillside enfiladed past them, first diagonally ahead, then straightway at the side, then diagonally again behind. Then the quince-tree hedge near the homestead swung into line, and beyond this came the whitewashed palings between which Aunt Mary's peonies thrust their beauty upon the grateful world.

When they drew up at the barn, the plethoric Charley heaved a deep sigh of relief and rattled the harness with a vigorous shake, expressive, doubtless, of his hope that some day it might come to pieces and fall from him utterly; and Uncle 'Bijah rose slowly, lowered his lanky frame to the ground, straightened it and began to unharness, whistling and chuckling softly to himself.

"Goodness gracious! 'Bijah — Why couldn't you have stopped at the house first and told me about it and unhitched afterwards? You are the provokingest man I ever lived with."

Aunt Mary, with a blue and white checked apron thrown over her head, was coming toward him with eager steps.

"Didn't know you had lived with any other man," said he, turning away from her to lead the horse into his stall.

She stood looking after him patiently, almost pathetically. Forty years of household care had stamped the crowfeet at the corners of her eyes and set the dark circles beneath them, forty years of hard labor had given her shoulders the heavy droop typical of the farmer's wife. Her voice trembled with anxiety when she spoke again, as he came out.

"Tell me, 'Bijah, quick. I can't wait any more. I've waited so many years. How did you make out?"

"All right."

"Then it's sold?"

"Yes, contract signed and money enough paid down to make it good."

"And the price, 'Bijah, the price?"

"What we agreed on before I went."

"Forty thousand dollars," — she spoke in a half whisper, as though scarce comprehending, now that the fact was accomplished, "forty thousand dollars! What will we ever do with all that money?"

"Now ain't that just like a woman? Wishes for something,

and works for it, and prays for it thirty odd years, and when it does come, 'What'll we ever do with it?' says she. Mary, I'm 'most ashamed of you. We'll do what the rest are doin' with it, the ones we've envied all these years."

"But how did you ever get him to pay that much?"

"Well, I've always been pretty good at a business transaction. You know that. If I hadn't been, that five-thousand-dollar mortgage would be right here on this place, as it was when we started."

She looked up at him with silent assent.

"After talkin' with him a few minutes I could see he wanted it bad, so I asked my price and stuck to it. 'You're asking too much,' says he. 'You don't have to pay it,' says I. 'It's only worth about half that to you,' says he. 'But you're the one that's buyin', Mr. Hilton,' says I. So he went up five thousand at a time till he got there."

"Well, I'm glad it's settled," said Aunt Mary. "But it'll be hard to leave the old home after all, some ways, won't it, 'Bijah? It'll be 'most like losin' one of the family. Think of what we've enjoyed here. I shall always love the place for that, no matter where we go."

"Why don't you look at it the other way?" he remarked quickly. "Why don't you think of what we've suffered here?"

"Well, 'Bijah, if I do, I'm not sure but what I love it just as much for that too."

"I guess the forty thousand will make us whole for all we leave behind," said he.

They were now walking together toward the kitchen door. A flock of chickens trooped after them expectantly. A robin which had been hopping along on the white palings in front took wing, and, alighting in the top of the big cherry tree by the gate, swayed up and down with blithe carol. Near the outer end of the grape trellis at the rear porch they stopped and looked about them, — at the fields of flourishing grain below and the corn on the hillside, at the long line of five-rail fence Uncle 'Bijah had set upon his boundaries in the beginning, at the orchard he had planted soon after, pruned for a score of years, and gathered fruit from almost as much longer, at the piece of woodland he bought later to make

his possessions complete. After a long pause, she turned to him again.

"Well, 'Bijah," said she, "I'm only sorry David couldn't have known of this. He was always talkin' about fixin' it so's you wouldn't have to work so hard. If this had only happened before David — before David — went."

There was a lowering of her voice toward the end, and a tremor upon the last word, the word she invariably substituted for that which she could never bring herself to utter.

He turned to her and spoke gently, even soothingly.

"He was just as anxious about you. And whatever else comes out of this for us, you shall never work so hard again as you have here, Mary, never again. I'll start in a day or so to look up a place for us to move to and we'll go right away."

And with hearts filled with joy, the old couple passed through the low doorway into the kitchen and thence into the sitting room beyond. The slowly moving squares of brightness on the floor by the eastern windows of the little room had not seemed so bright before in thirty years, and the clock upon the mantel-shelf, the one with the pastoral scene on the front of the case and Gothic pinnacles on its corners, had never ticked so cheerily.

Many were their plans for the future; the purchase of some small homestead near by with sufficient acreage to keep the old man busy, yet not enough to be a care to him; a house more comfortable and convenient than she had been used to; and, mayhap, some of the trips about the country which they had heard spoken of by others but had always considered wholly beyond their means. It was indeed an eventful day and a happy one for Aunt Mary and Uncle 'Bijah.

"'Bijah," said Aunt Mary as he came in one afternoon several weeks later, "I thought you were goin' to look up a place. We'll have to go right off, now that the deed has been passed."

"I know it, Mary, but Mr. Hilton said we needn't hurry and I wanted to get our stock sold first. It's mighty exhaustin' work to sell live stock if you care somethin' about 'em and want to make sure they'll all have good homes. When they come after ole White-nose this mornin' and led her away, and Charley stuck his head out of his stall and looked around at all the other empty ones and

then at me, as much as to say, 'This is a nice fix you're leavin' me in, here alone,' I don't think I ever felt so tired in my whole life."

"You do look played out, 'Bijah, and it's been hard for you, I know. But we're sure it's all for the best, and the thought of it will soon wear off after we leave. I think we'd better move as soon as we can find a place."

"Yes," said he, "so do I. I'll start right out tomorrow."

Every clear day for several weeks thereafter, the old calash-top propelled the sage Charley down the hill until its wheels rattled on the little bridge at the foot; whereat, the somnambulist awoke and a cloud of dust arose in the midsummer air, while the countryside for miles about was filled with the noise of their journeyings. From these pilgrimages, Uncle 'Bijah invariably returned despondent, but still hopeful.

Through some unknown agency, possibly that of the Gipsom girls, who had now been girls about thirty-five years, and who conducted privately a very reliable information bureau, it became known that Uncle 'Bijah and Aunt Mary would buy a place, if one could be found to suit them. After that, it was not through lack of neighborly advice that the purchase was not made forthwith.

On several occasions, upon receiving reports of an especially encouraging tenor, they set out together, eager in their quest and flushed with hope. But they were continually disappointed, and the summer waned away without any decisive action.

Others came to gather the crops Uncle 'Bijah had planted, whereat the patriarch, his round of accustomed duty steadily contracting, and for want of something better to do, went out to watch them at work. Nor could he forbear telling them how the harvest should be managed to best advantage. And when they answered him lightly, or not at all, and gave no heed to his counsel, the old man passed slowly homeward along the fence, steadying himself with his hand at the top rail, and betook himself querulously to his rocking chair for solace and rest.

"Who'd ever thought," said he, "Who'd ever thought, Mary, that we'd live to see our place run over like this by a pack of numskulls who don't know a wheel-barrow from a mowin' machine? It makes me sweat all over to look at 'em. It tires me more than the work used to."

"Well, then, 'Bijah, stay away from 'em till we go. We'll be sure to find something to suit before long. You know I've been ready and anxious to leave these three months past."

"Not a bit more so than I have," the old man blazed. "You just show me a place that's laid out half-way sensibly for comfort and convenience, like this one, and a house where I won't feel like a cat in a strange garret, and a well of water that comes anywheres near the taste of ours, and see how long I'll stay here."

Then followed several more days of fruitless search, and finally one at the close of which Uncle 'Bijah drove in wearing such an expression of satisfaction that Aunt Mary hurried out the kitchen door to intercept him.

"No, Mary," said he, "I haven't found what we want, but I've done the next best thing. I've got Mr. Hilton's word that we can stay here all winter if we want to. It seems he's goin' to turn the farm into a place where they play this new game,— knock a little ball as far as they can with a club, then walk after it, so's to knock again, so's to walk again. On the way home," he added, "I stopped at the doctor's."

"Well, what did he say?"

"Said I was as sound as a dollar, and good for ten years at least. Only one sign of danger. 'And what's that, doctor?' I asked. 'I don't hardly know how to tell you,' says he. 'You probably know already better than I do. It's your feeling that you ought to come here, or rather, it's whatever is back of that feeling, what I might call the germ of the idea that you need me.' 'Well, doctor,' I says, goin' for my hat, 'if that's all you can find wrong, I've got the germ of an idea that I don't need you at all.'"

"For my part, 'Bijah, I never did think it amounted to anything, anyway," was Aunt Mary's comment.

With the coming of early autumn, the long rows of corn on the hillsides went into bivouac, and the grain-stacks in the adjoining fields, although lacking the military erectness Uncle 'Bijah exacted, stood guard above them.

For the most part, the old man kept closely to the house and his chair in the sitting room, and, apparently, gave small heed to the changes, whether because he had no wish to note them, or possibly could not bear to do so.

But, late one gray afternoon in November, he went out and walked slowly through the fields, as had been his wont after the crops were gathered and all made snug for the winter. He came back at a shambling half-run with one hand at his breast. Aunt Mary saw him, ran out, and helped him in to his chair.

"Why, 'Bijah! What in the world is the matter?" she cried.

"The pasture lot!" he panted. "The pasture lot! It's gone! And the brook! The brook went too!"

He sank back wearily into the chair with closed eyes.

"You know the place, Mary, where I run the fence across the bend of the brook, so's they could go down and drink whenever they wanted to. Old Whitenose was there, just like she used to be. And when I went towards her with my hand out, in a flash, she was gone; and I was walkin' across *on dry land.* And the fence was gone, and nothin' left but one broad, open field."

She stood looking down at him in amazement and solicitude.

"There, there, 'Bijah! Don't go on so! You've run and got yourself overheated, and it's made you light-headed. They've taken down the fence and filled in the bend, I s'pose, in their improvements."

The old man sat for several minutes in silence. Then his faculties drew together, and, his mind slowly readjusting itself, the smouldering fire within him blazed up.

"Improvements!" he sneered. "Improvements! The fools! They've ruined the best pasture lot in the four townships! I'm goin' right off to see Mr. Hilton about it."

"Oh, don't, 'Bijah. Please don't do that. You can't change it any now. You'll only tire yourself all out again for nothin'!"

But, despite Aunt Mary's tearful protests, he rose, dragged himself to the barn, harnessed the old horse, and drove out.

It was nearly dark when he drew rein at the door of the Hilton country-seat and asked for the proprietor. But when the latter, who was just home from his afternoon on the links, came out and greeted him pleasantly, Uncle 'Bijah sat bent over in the dusk, fumbling at his whip and at a loss how to explain his errand.

"I thought you ought to know," he began, finally, "that somebody has taken down the fences and filled in the brook and ruined the pasture lot."

"I do know it — in fact, I ordered it done." Mr. Hilton's voice suggested good-natured raillery.

"Mebbe you didn't know it was the best pasture lot to be found in a day's drive," suggested the patriarch.

"Hadn't a doubt of it," said the other. "And now it's going to be a part of the best golf links to be found in a day's drive, which, to my way of thinking, is a good deal better."

The impatient Charley lurched forward a little just then, and the light streaming from one of the front windows struck full upon Uncle 'Bijah's face.

"Great God! Man, don't look like that!" Mr. Hilton's tone and manner changed completely. "I wouldn't knowingly bring that look into a man's face for anything in this world. And I won't have my pleasure paid for so dearly as that by anybody. I'd rather lose ten times the few thousands I've spent on your farm than to have you feel so badly about what I'm doing with it. I insist on transferring it back to you immediately."

The old man's lank form straightened up in the seat as though a bullet had struck him.

"Not if you offered me twice what you paid for it to take it again. You don't know 'Bijah Thompson. I asked my price, didn't I? And you paid every cent I asked. I never took water on a business deal in my life, nor went into one without lookin' on all sides of it. I know I've had spells of feelin' tired lately, but there ain't anything the matter with me. And if there was, could ownin' a few acres of land more or less make me worse or better? No, Mary and I have acted for the best in this. It's just what we planned and agreed on. Why, Mr. Hilton, Mary and I have *prayed* for this over thirty years. And now we've got the chance, do you think I could ever look her in the face again and tell her I hadn't been man enough to stand by her in it? All the same," he concluded, "it's good of you to offer it, and I'm glad to know that dealin' in stocks don't keep a man from bein' a gentleman."

"Nor does farming," reciprocated Mr. Hilton smilingly.

Whereupon they shook hands, and Uncle 'Bijah drove homeward. Aunt Mary awaited him at the barn, helped him from the wagon, half-carried him to the house, and, with much difficulty, succeeded in getting him up-stairs to bed.

There the old man fretted for several days like a petulant child, now sitting up in bed to see from the window what was going on about the place, now sinking back again in wearisome complaint, assenting to his wife's plea that his interest was a passing one, but invariably reverting to the same monotonous theme.

But finally, one bright, keen December morning, as Aunt Mary sat at her little sewing table in the sitting room, she was astonished to hear steps in the stair-hall adjoining, and, before she could rise, the door opened, and Uncle 'Bijah stood before her, fully dressed, and as erect as in his prime. She was still more astonished when he walked with strong, firm step to his chair by the window.

"Why, 'Bijah! I never was so taken back in my life. I'm afraid this'll be too much for you. I wouldn't have believed you had strength enough to get half way here."

"Well, Mary, I didn't feel as if I could at first, but you see I *had* to come. Why, I couldn't see down towards the orchard at all from the bed-room window. But I'm better, now I've got here. And stronger, yes, a good deal stronger. Only this pain gnaws me some here, in the side. But I'm gettin' used to that, now. That'll never kill me. Oh, I'm good for ten years yet. Don't you worry about me. And I *had* to get up, so's to see if everything was all right at the orchard. I wish you'd come over, Mary, and run up that shade. Mebbe I've been dreamin' up there, but for several days I've been hearin' a sound, kinder dull and heavy, like clods fallin' onto something down in the ground. And this mornin' it was stranger and worse, more like something, or mebbe, *somebody bein' struck by an axe.*"

Aunt Mary laid the white kerchief she was hemming upon the sewing table, crossed the room to the window, and raised the shade. At the first glance, the old man's hand went to his breast, and his whole body seemed to droop and shrivel before her.

"Oh, Mary! They're gone! The ones we set out first! All we planted before Davy was born! Don't you remember how he used to laugh and hold up his fat little arms to the blossoms? And how he cried one day, and ran and struck one of the trees with his fist, 'Tause you fwowed 'at apple down onto my papa's nose,' says he? That was Davy every time, lookin' out for his daddy."

"Oh, don't, 'Bijah! Please don't! I can not stand it!"

But he heard not, or heeded not. "And now they're cuttin' the ones he and I set out together. 'For your use, father, in your old age,' says he. 'No, for yours, when you marry and start out,' says I, and argued with him, not knowin' he was right."

"'Bijah! Stop! Look here! Look at me!"

But the old man could see naught else but one thing. He had half risen from his chair, with one hand on the arm, and with the other plucking alternately at his beard and breast.

"But the old tree between! They've left that! That's the one his little swing used to hang from. Put it there myself, so's I could watch him from the corn-lot. Back and forth, back and forth, he used to go, in the shade and out again, like a shuttle. See! They're goin' right past it. They won't touch that one! They wouldn't dare!"

His voice fell to a whisper, a tense, incisive whisper, that pierced the stillness of the room like a dagger.

"Why, if they tried to cut that one, Davy'd *come back* and stop 'em. O, Mary! Look!" He pointed with one trembling hand. "Look! They've turned towards it again! And *he* is there *now!* And they're swingin' for him with their axes! O my God!"

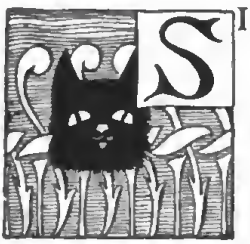
The old man sank heavily into his chair, threw back his head, and sighed deeply. Aunt Mary bent over him for a moment in silence, then tottered in bewilderment to her chair.

. . . . . .

On the third day thereafter, the astute Charley, neighing his protest against hunger and neglect, drew to his aid one of Mr. Hilton's workmen, whose curiosity led him thence to the farm-house. He went in at the kitchen entrance, crossed the room softly and swung wide the inner door. At one side of the sitting room, an old woman with bright eyes and shrunken features was swaying to and fro in her chair, droning weirdly as though to a child held in her arms, while at the other side, the motionless figure of the patriarch sat by the window and stared out with stony eyes.

How Uncle Sam Lost Sixty-four Dollars.*

BY CHARLES FORT.



IMON BOBBLES had ways of his own, so you must not be astonished at anything done by him.

Said Simon: "Ain't I the strange feller, though! I'm that set on travelling! I'd like to be in Denver, just to say I was there. I'd like to go out to see Budd Lobe in San Francisco. I ain't got any use for Budd and he ain't any for me, but I'd like to go out just to say I was there. I'd like to go to Washington. Don't care about the Capitol and wouldn't be bothered with the Monument; don't care about generals and senators, but just want to say I was there."

Simon made a discovery. Said he: "It costs money to travel!"

Simon was given to wisdom. Said he: "There's always ways of doin' things." And this was his way:

The postman hastened from corner to corner, collecting mail. And there on a letter-box sat Simon Bobbles, perched comfortably, swinging his legs.

"Hey, young fellow," said the indignant postman, "You mustn't do your lounging there! The Government ain't in the furniture business. Do you hear?"—for Simon said nothing, but swung his legs indolently,—"You mustn't loaf there, so take a jump for yourself."

"But I can't," answered Simon. "I can't move, and by rights I can't talk, either. I'm mail. I'm mail. See?"

MR. BUDD LOBE,
234 Pearl Street,
San Francisco,
Cal.

Upon his forehead was a postage stamp. Upon his coat was marked in huge letters the above address.

"Don't talk nonsense," said the impatient postman. "And you'd better not interfere with the post-office, either." He called to a policeman.

Now, Officer O'Glory was a new policeman, and, as he had been in trouble several times because of arrests made too promptly, he was a careful officer. Not grasping the facts of the case, he approached, glancing at a little book of rules.

"I'm mail," said the unruffled Simon. "He can take me or leave me. I'm addressed and stamped and I don't care what he does about it."

"Stamped!" cried the wrathful postman. "Why, he weighs at least two hundred pounds. And for that he's got one miserable two-cent stamp on him. Officer, are you going to take this fellow?"

Officer O'Glory fluttered the pages of his book of rules. Unfortunately, the compiler had neglected to foresee such a situation.

"When in doubt, use your own judgment." That was the only suggestion of application.

No; there was another:

"Never permit yourself to be thought at a loss."

"I can't touch him, if he's mail," declared Officer O'Glory. "You don't get me before the Commissioner for picking parcels off the tops of letter-boxes."

"But how far would a two-cent stamp carry him?" shouted the postman.

And Simon answered: "I ain't supposed to talk, 'cause I'm mail, but you know that so long as there's one stamp on anything you've got to take it. Wasn't there any on me, I wouldn't go; but so long as there's two cents paid, you've got to take me for the rest to be paid at my destination."

"Well, I'll be registered!" cried the postman. "But Mr. Budd Lobe will be glad to see you! How are you mailing? You're first-class postage, I suppose?"

"I'm always first-class goods," answered Simon.

The postman calculated rapidly.

"Two cents an ounce or fraction thereof. Sixteen to the pound — two hundred pounds — sixty-four dollars! But won't Mr. Budd Lobe be glad to see you! Come on, then."

"Carry me," said Simon. "I'm sort of a ward o' the Government and must travel luxoorious. I'm mail, and can't walk."

And with many a gasp and many a groan, the postman staggered to the post-office with Simon resting comfortably on his back.

"He's mail!" gasped the postman, falling into the office with his parcel.

"He is!" said the postmaster. "Well, he don't go here. He's live stock, and Uncle Sam isn't carrying live stock. Turn him out."

"That'll be all right," Simon agreed; "turn me out. I'm mail and ain't supposed to talk, but my sender'll sue you. There ain't a court in the land would uphold you. You just try to classify a human bein' as live stock and hear the kick that'll go up. There's the Wimmen's Clubs always something frenzied to find something to kick about. You let them hear you call them and other human bein's live stock!"

"To — to California with him!" roared the postmaster. So there was nothing to do but to accept Simon and cancel his stamp. The indignant cancellation clerk dipped his fist into indelible ink and punched the stamp on Simon's forehead, while up and down his clothes "postage due" stamps were pasted.

Neatly done up in a sack all to himself, Simon travelled across the continent. He saw nothing of Philadelphia and nothing of Chicago.

"Don't want to," said Simon; just want to say I been there. Must go to Washington, too. There's sights there. Don't want them; just want to say I been there." And, having a plentiful supply of tablets secured from a vegetarian, he subsisted as well as any vegetarian, secluded in the mail car until the brakeman cried: "San Francisco!" and another postmark was stamped on his forehead.

It was the early morning delivery. The postman went up a stoop, whistling and crying: "Lobe! Budd Lobe! Any one know Lobe?"

Budd Lobe knew Lobe and he hastened down the stairs.

"Sixty-four dollars due!" said the postman.

"Why, if it isn't Simon Bobbles!" cried Budd. "How are you, Simon? What on earth are you doing here? And what's

that on your forehead? What kind of a stamp album are you wearing?"

Said the postman: "Sixty-four dollars, please!"

Then Budd Lobe understood.

"What? For Simon Bobbles? He ain't worth it. Sorry, Simon, but you know you aren't worth anything like sixty-four dollars."

"I know it," Simon admitted, and mumbling something about being delighted to see him, Budd ran down the stoop, and rushed around the corner, flying from so much unpaid postage.

"Well, if this isn't a sell!" exclaimed the postman. "Now what's to become of you?"

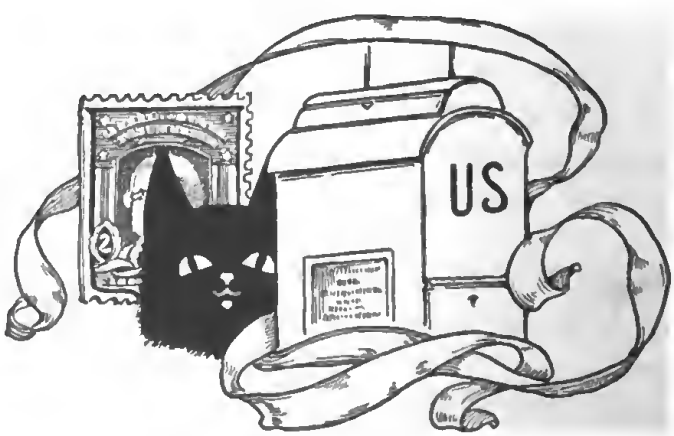
"Kind o' like to see Washington," drawled Simon. "Anyway, I've got it to say that I've been to 'Frisco."

And with the Government at a loss of sixty-four dollars, he was forwarded to the Dead Letter Office.

A clerk rudely tore off his coat. It was the "envelope" of the "dead letter." In a vest pocket was a card bearing the name and home address of Simon Bobbles.

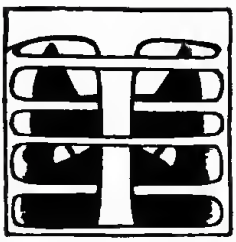
They sent him home from the Dead Letter Office.

Says Simon: "There's always ways of doin' things. Been everywhere! Didn't see much places, but just the same can say I was there."



The Viper's Sting.*

BY JAMES H. PIERCE.



HE train came out of the darkness, hissing with impatience at the delay, and stopped with a jerk as the last spark dropped from the protesting brake-shoes.

Sheriff Crawford, in the chair-car, stirred uneasily, and then settled in a more comfortable position, and a man who was standing in the aisle stole silently away, with short, halting steps.

The brakeman swore softly to himself and called many maledictions upon the head of the "lazy lout" on No. 3 who had not opened the switch, and the crew of No. 3 cursed the crew of No. 8 for delaying them three minutes. Number 3 went into the moonlit west and No. 8 faded into the plain to the eastward, and the place was left alone save for the lizards, toads, and owls, that make of that sunbaked land a home. No; not alone. Something struggled awkwardly to its feet, and the light of the stars disclosed a man with a "fishplate" in his hands. He dropped and swung his feet across the rail and the iron rose and fell in frenzied strokes. Soon he rose and, careful only to step on the ties, also faded into the sand and brush.

The lights of Seligman appeared like low-lying stars, the long, wailing whistle from the engine as the train approached the station caused the sheriff to stir, the brakeman called out some unintelligible jargon, the officer again stirred, stretched, rubbed his eyes open, jumped wildly to his feet, and rushed madly up and down the car. His prisoner was gone. The brakeman was neither polite nor patient — in fact, he was secretly elated — for he had worn bracelets himself.

"Hum-m-m-m! Must have dropped off at Chino — last stop — five miles back — walk, or you might charter a hand-car — run

nuthin' back; this ain't no freight train," drawled the brakeman, and then, as Crawford's words began to be personal: "Say, look here, my frien', I'm not takin' care of your prisoners, I've got somethin' better to do, and you go a little slow with your chin music. I-don't-care-a-tinker's-cuss-who-you-are; if you get fresh wit me I'll take a fall out of you. See?"

Several miles west of Chino, where the road cut through a rock-strewn ridge, the hunted hesitated, and, finally turning south, he vanished into the shadows. Carefully he stepped from rock to rock, leaving no sign that a man had lately passed that way.

The hunter found that the hunted had dropped to the ground; the marks on the rails told that the shackles were broken; but where had he gone? Did he know the country? Would he strike for the water holes? Nothing could be done until daybreak, and then there was no trail to follow, nothing but dreary wastes of sand. Crawford notified all stations and offered two hundred and fifty dollars reward, without any strings, for Brady. He smiled grimly at the idea of any man trying to escape in that sea of sand and cactus. A man manacled and without water or horse! He'd have him again in a day or two, alive or — dead.

All that day, from a distant ridge, a pair of bloodshot eyes watched the trains approach, pass, and disappear, all apparently in a sea of water. Several freights waited on a passing track and he knew that the key to freedom was there. Sometimes he dozed, but waked again with the cold perspiration standing in every pore — for every buzzard's shadow, every whisper of the breeze in the brush, every clump of brush, every rock, was to the hunted a danger. A "road runner," dodging about in the rocks trying to determine the nature of this invader, dislodged a small stone which, rattling down, sent this hunted wretch into a nervous frenzy.

And thirst! Did any of you who have ridden across this desert with an obsequious porter to bring you water if you were too indolent to go and draw it from the cooler yourself, look out across those sunbaked mesas and wonder what it would be like to be out there under the July sun, the gates of freedom opening to you and the creeping vultures of the law between you and water?

As friendly darkness stole over the sage-brush, he crept down and across the waste and waited. A freight pulled on to the switch, the trainmen passed along towards the engine, and a drink-demented being dashed into the caboose and drank and drank from the water-butt. His thirst partly satisfied, he cast about for something to carry the precious fluid away in, and then his heart hesitated in its even beat. Looking down on him from above was a pair of brown eyes and a voice had said, "Good, wasn't it?" They stared for a second, one pair with compassion in its depths and one with murder — then: "Pard, if you're as hungry as you was dry, there's a bucket of grub under that seat. Don't say anyt'ing, just grab it and slope, der gang 'll be back any minit," and as the figure disappeared into the darkness, there came from the caboose, "Water at the Springs, nineteen miles west." And brown eyes sat back and soliloquized; "Bracelets on and shackles broken; it's Brady. Hell! I had two hun'erd an' fifty in me mit, but den," with a sigh, "I'd only blow it at de Needles, an' liberty is wort' more to Brady den booze to me."

Nineteen miles. You who have ridden that distance from Yampai to Peach Springs, in a passenger coach, did not think it far. With a good horse under you it is just a little unpleasant without water. On foot in the daylight and along the road, you can make it without water, if you are stout of heart and strong of limb. Confine yourself in a stuffy cell for weeks, then run over the rocks and through the cactus in the starlight, blister and cut your feet, have the cactus spines burning and poisoning your legs to your knees. Let every sound, every movement in the moving darkness, be to your distorted imagination a waiting officer. Don't follow the beaten trail, or the railroad, for there are men lurking along the highway, and along the ties, looking for you and the two hundred and fifty dollars reward. Climb into and out of ravines, make wide détours, try to find the railroad which seems to have vanished, watch some shadow that appears to be endowed with life while your heart almost seems to cease its beating. Shun every habitation, or sign of habitation, for fear of your fellow-man. Even the dogs seem to scent you unheard-of distances, and there is no way to stop their snarling. Do all this as Brady did, and live!

Back to the friendly hills went Brady, and at the break of day far north of the Springs in a cavern he rested. The pangs of hunger were added to the pains of thirst, and he had all the day to stay and suffer. Now and then he dropped into a fitful doze and dreamed of banquets and bubbling springs, only to wake half-mad and look out across the shimmering sand and wonder where and how far the Springs were. When the rays of the sun were making long shadows behind the hills, Brady was first conscious of studying idly a bird on a rock. How odd it looked with its red neck and the side-long contemplative glance and,— then a circling object caught his eye, and as it swung just above him and hung suspended for a fleeting instant, determining if the feast were yet ready, reason said, "buzzards" and that came back which put our men on Missionary Ridge, which sends them into the frozen North, or where the Southern Cross burns brightest; wherever there is something to conquer; that bulldog courage that has carried the stars and stripes so many times to victory. He sat up and stared about him. Where was he? Where had he wandered? To the south and west must lie the railroad.

Some time during the following night he found a "cow trail," and in a cow track was some damp earth, and he nursed from the mud a little moisture. Just as the sun rose, footsore and with swollen tongue, he crept into the shade of a rock, and with dim eyes saw, almost below him, the little Arizona town of Peach Springs. With his eyes fixed on those red buildings that to his distorted vision seemed to be drifting slowly away, sleep overcame the pursuer-cursed brain, and it was late when he finally drifted back to water-haunted consciousness and realized that the old spring which he was striving so fiercely to reach was only another dream.

That night a being with its tongue so swollen that it protruded between its teeth, a beast to stand between whom and water meant death to one or both, crept up and lay under where the water dripped, and absorbed the liquid into every pore, and, not knowing or caring why it dripped, could not bless the pumper who had filled the tank to overflowing. He touched the water with his lips; it was his mistress. He let it drip through his fingers; he was a boy again, and playing in the waters of boy-

hood. It meant freedom, and as the word drifted across his vision the first law of nature came back.

A freight stopped at the little station, and the crew threw something off — boxes, ham and bacon. The latter he dare not touch, but a box-cover was loose, and he took a can of beans and tipped the box so that the other cans would roll about as if broken open when thrown from the car. An old canteen was hanging on the wall of the section house; it was hugged deliriously. Food, and a way to carry water — the gates of freedom were wide open! Then came the weary hours of covering his trail, for things were missing, and the gates of Yuma were open behind, and the gates of Paradise opening in front. When morning came Brady was in the hills, and a gentle wind came and smoothed the few marks yet remaining in the sand.

He came again that night, and, listening at a window from which came light and voices, learned that there was five hundred on his head, and the old Wells Fargo two hundred and fifty. He looked at his manacled hands, and the price of his freedom made it the more dear.

He traveled the more rapidly now, for he could go from tank to tank without suffering so very much except from hunger and blistered feet, and they, like the hand that toils, were getting calloused, so he traveled freer each night. From Peach Springs to Hackberry was not bad, because it is a land where, for the desert, water is abundant, but from Hackberry to Kingman only the Creator and Brady knows what he suffered and how he lived.

At Kingman he found what his every effort had been exerted to find, but out on the desert tools are scarce, and if you lose any when you are in the employ of the railroad you have to pay for them, so the tools are locked up. He had a file. It wasn't very sharp, but he could cut the chain and get his hands free, and then it was only a question of time and work to get the irons off his wrists and ankles. The country was rather familiar here, too, and he knew he could leave the railroad at Franconia, reach the Colorado River, go down it into Mexico, and then his mind ran riot.

It is thirty-seven miles from Kingman to Franconia, and when the dark outlines of the few buildings that make the town suddenly

grew out of the darkness and sand the man could not believe the evidence of his own senses, but hunted the signboard, and was even then somewhat doubtful, for the time had passed so quickly in his new freedom that the long miles of greasewood and sand had faded as had all the horrors of the past weary days.

Several miles southwest of Franconia Brady crawled into the shade of a deep arroyo and sought the last day of slumber midst the creeping horrors of the desert. But oblivion would not come to the body and mind now apparently free from bondage. His mind was filled with what he would do with his life, so dearly bought. After trying for some time to drift into unconsciousness, he began to file the shackles from his ankles. The sun was yet two hours high when he climbed to the level of the plain, for he couldn't remain inactive, he must test this new sensation, no dragging iron on his ankles and a corresponding lightness of the heart. He looked about to get his bearings before starting on his joyous trip to the river, — again came that tightening of the heart strings. Out across the brush his eye had caught a moving object; was it a man-hunter? As an animal, first scenting danger, crouches to the ground, so crouched Brady; his hands were clenched and the breath was hissing through his set teeth; was he to lose now?

The hunted animal has not the power to reason his chances of escape, but flees upon the slightest suspicion of discovery until he is cornered, and then fights blindly to the death. Brady studied each and every point; if the officer was cognizant of his being here in the vicinity of the "Needle rocks" flight was out of the question. If the officer was alone and he could spring upon him unawares, the chances were about even, but would an officer be out looking for him alone? He decided to wait and see, and if the man had come here alone then it was just a matter between themselves who would be the victor; if there was more than one, then he could only give a good accounting of himself. Carefully he wrapped an old piece of cloth around his file, to serve as a handle, and like a jaguar watching his prey he waited.

The beast gradually left his face and a puzzled expression came. The object was coming his way, but it was zigzagging about, circling, disappearing in the brush and reappearing going in a new direction, and apparently at times crawling on its knees. Brady

was now on his feet, shading his eyes, and if it had not been so thoroughly impossible he would have thought the object a woman. Suddenly it began to rush madly about and Brady saw it disappear into a ravine and, throwing caution to the winds, he dashed out to where he had last seen the object, and there, clawing into the earth at the bottom of the arroyo, was what was left of a once beautiful woman.

Just at sunrise her shattered reason came back, and throughout the day Brady fed her scraps of food, and nourished her with his scanty stock of water, until with the coming of night she could stand erect. Then came the return. She was neither strong of heart nor limb and could not walk with her swollen and blistered feet. Half carrying and half dragging, he got her to a road within a few miles of Franconia. Pointing out the way to the town, he told her he had to leave her and think of his own safety. She asked him not to leave her — just to go in sight of the town — and, putting self away, he went, until dimly across the starlit space could be seen a dark spot, which he told her was the town. She was weak, footsore, and hysterical, and she begged him to name a price, anything within reason, just to stay with her until daylight and the town were nearer. He told her that he had been three nights and two days without sleep now, and before he could travel he must get rest, and the short remaining time he must utilize in securing his own safety, for with day came danger to him. On her knees she implored him to stay. Nothing, simply nothing, would be refused him, and she tried to get a coquettish tone into her voice, but freedom was beckoning and Brady turned to the hills. Then she asked for the sake of her poor old mother, and Brady hesitated. He saw his own mother, before death called her, waiting the return of her boy, and somewhere a mother was waiting and, if she knew that her daughter was out on the desert, she was watching and praying for her safe return; so, just as the east began to gray, he turned toward the hills and freedom. When the sun rose he was a speck on the sand and she staggered into the town and told her story, and the people of the desert fed and clothed her, and she drank of the elixir of life.

Those simple children of the barren wastes couldn't tell her how she might let her friends on Bill Williams River know of her

safety, but Sheriff Crawford, who had stayed in the town over night, surely could, so he was called. In the ensuing conversation, she asked if he was in search of an escaped convict, and he told her no, that he was down just on some official business. And then, her curiosity aroused more than ever, she asked if there were not a convict at large, and he told her no, that the only one who had escaped lately was long ere this a victim of the silent wastes that she had been guided from by some divine power.

Then she asked about him. *Seven hundred and fifty dollars reward!* Why, it would buy beautiful dresses, rings, a piano, — he had saved her life, but he was an escaped criminal, a danger to the community, and some one else would have found her, any way, she was such a little way from the town. She forgot that when found she had been traveling towards the Hualapia Mountains, directly out into the land of death. Perhaps she did not know. She would be a heroine! Would she get the reward? she asked. Yes, he knew she would get five hundred any way, for he would pay two hundred and fifty, and the Wells Fargo people always paid the same. Again came a whisper, — he saved your life. But it would be compounding a felony and a sin to conceal the whereabouts of a criminal.

She closed her eyes and, floating before them, were the pictures of a woman driving from the ranch house of a friend and a lazy wandering about in the adjacent hills. Then the woman got out of the cart and did not tie the gentle old horse; a rabbit jumped from a clump of brush and the horse was away; the woman was dashing madly after him, and suddenly she realized that she was tired and thirsty; and she forced the nails into the palms of her hands as she thought of all that had followed until she had looked into the face of that dangerous criminal.

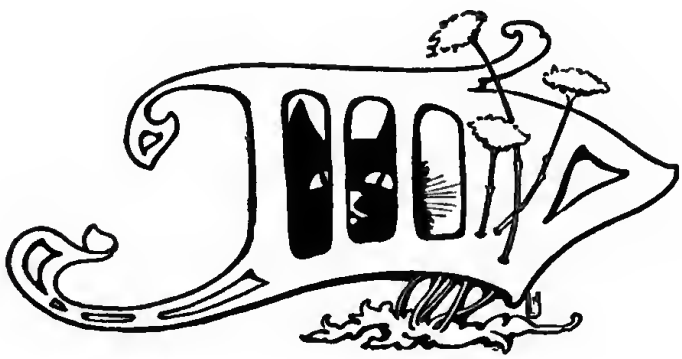
Into the shade of a deep arroyo Brady crawled and, worn out with the events of the last two days and nights, fell into a troubled sleep. No thought of a viper's sting worried him. Why, a coyote wouldn't do that!

In the land of his dreams he was back in the home of his boyhood. How joyously he snuggled down in the coziness of his bed! Then it must be morning, for he could hear that voice calling him, — a voice that had been silent for many years. It was just his dear

old mother, and he would pretend that he did not hear and she would come and gently shake him and say, "My boy, the larks are calling." The sainted form entered the doorway of his dream, and her eyes were smiling eyes and her voice was low and sweet.

Brady stirred uneasily, for the voice was harsh, and it was not calling "My boy," but "Brady," and his name wasn't Brady in those days.

Slowly consciousness came and the blue eyes faded to gray, and the gray hair became a white hat, and the hand that in dreamland had been extended to caress him, now held a .45. The gates of freedom were closed, and the prison gates at Yuma were open.



Whom Destiny Pursued.*

BY JOHN PALMER GAVIT.

SELECTING the moment when the sun broke through the clouds at the turning of the tide and lighted up the angry green, white-capped waves, the Higgs baby, leaning over the veranda rail, fell with a shriek of terror into the rose-bush, and the young man and young woman who had been reading at opposite ends of the veranda jumped from their seats, dropped their books, and rushed to the rescue. The child was injured only in her dignity, and her fall would have had small importance in this narrative had it not marked the End of a Beginning — or the Beginning of a Beginning, if you prefer.

When the excitement was over, the young woman returned to the house, the young man stood for a moment at the foot of the steps, looking out across the tossing, foam-streaked water, at the close-reefed schooner, beating up the Sound against the wind; at the great white steamer beyond, with her long low-lying trail of smoke; at the spray, dashing over the brown rocks at the entrance of the harbor. He returned to his book with the gentle recollection of a shy smile, whose sweet confusion almost acknowledged the acquaintance thus begun in the truce of a common helpfulness.

One in Finland, the other in Timbuctoo, they might have dwelt the past five years and known no less of each other. Yet in all that time they had lived within one short block in a narrow street of city boarding houses; had walked mutually oblivious over the same pavement — an hour apart in time, a world apart in fact!

Once only he had overslept, and passed her on his hurried way to his office. She was going in the same direction, and he noticed

her trim and dainty figure and pretty hair. She noticed him not at all. On Sundays he slept usually until some time after she had gone to church, and their meal-times were an hour apart. Thus they never chanced to meet, and the singular coincidence which sent them off to their vacations on the same day and to the same place on the Connecticut shore found them still strangers.

Let so much of introduction sufficiently explain why these two, the only guests to arrive that morning at the Silver Sands House, came down from their rooms at almost the same moment, and passed out upon the veranda without speaking or affecting to notice each other.

"Her name is Martha McLean — she's a school-teacher in New York," the landlord explained to the group of smokers in the billiard-room. "She spent the summer here two years ago. A mighty sweet girl, and pretty as a picture, as you can easy see. She told me she hadn't a relative on God's green earth. The fellow? I never seen him before, but he writes a good fist, and paid for two weeks in advance. That's a certificate of character in a hotel, you know," he added with a chuckle.

The young man resumed his seat, put his feet again on the rail, relit his pipe, and opened the book. An expression of intense astonishment sprang into his face as he took from it a bit of faintly-perfumed blue ribbon, in place of the card which he had been using as a book-mark.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he exclaimed, half aloud, instinctively looking round for the girl. She was not in sight.

"Now, who would have supposed — she didn't look like that kind of a girl, you know! I took her for a nice, sweet, well-behaved little party, ready enough to be friendly if one were properly introduced and all that sort of thing, but sure to take offense if a fellow should look at her more than about so much. By George, you never can tell. All the same she's a dainty little baggage."

Just then the dinner bell broke in with its discordant jangle, and going indoors he stopped at the register on the office desk, to see who she might be. They met at the dining-room door, and as he stepped aside to let her pass in before him, she looked at him in a frightened way, and flushed to the roots of her hair. Their

seats at table were relatively far apart, and back to back. After dinner, she passed out of the room some moments in advance of him, and he did not see her leave the house by the back way, pass swiftly down the path to the woods, a book under her arm, a white parasol adding somewhat superfluously to the shade afforded by her wide-brimmed hat.

From his front window he looked out upon the Sound toward the dim haze of the Long Island shore, against which snow-white sails shone in the afternoon sun, and cogitated thus:

"Don't it beat the Dutch — that quiet little thing, with her demure mouth, and her thoughtful gray eyes! I suppose the best thing for me to do, unless I want to flirt with the little adventuress, will be to ignore the whole business. As the only young people here, I dare say we shall be talked about enough as it is. I'll take a walk and think it over."

He was whistling gaily as he flicked off the heads of the long grasses that lined the way. That path leads through the woods along the brow of the cliff all the way round the west side of the harbor, till you turn either down the rocky footway that takes you to the Horse-shoe Beach, or sharply to the right to the open space at the top of the promontory where the light-house stands.

Hesitating at the dividing of the unfamiliar way, the young man at last turned down toward the beach, where the surf still roared after the storm of the morning. A shady nook between two rocks attracted him; and he comfortably ensconced himself, "Paul and Virginia" lying open on the sand beside him, while he searched his pockets for a match. One he found, and one only — a flimsy broken-backed affair, with only half a head.

"Another count in the indictment against the little siren," he growled. "If I had not been engrossed with her, I should have remembered to stock up before I left the hotel. I don't believe I'm Irish enough to get a light in this breeze with this miserable wreck of a match."

The shelter of his hands proved unavailing, and after one tiny aromatic puff, the flame was out. He flung the offending fragment from him with a snort of disgust, and thrust the pipe into his jacket pocket, forgetting it instantly in the shock of a startling discovery. The leaves of his book, whisked over in the wind, had

left only the front cover open, and the title page displayed to his astounded gaze a dainty signature:

MARTHA D. McLEAN,
No. 94 WEST 999TH STREET,
NEW YORK CITY.

"Gee whiz! This isn't my book!" he cried. "How in thunder did I come by it? It's 'Paul and Virginia' fast enough, but my copy had my own name in it! I see how it was — the mix-up when the kid fell off the porch! No wonder I had to cut those pages twice. Well, I'm glad about that ribbon, anyway, even if it does write me down a conceited ass. I'd rather be an ass than find her a — oh, I beg your pardon!"

He stepped round the rock, and found himself gazing blankly into the white face and blazing eyes of Martha McLean!

Inevitable Fate, I presume to assert, had turned Martha's steps back from the light-house and down the steep path to the Horseshoe Beach, to a seat beside that self-same rock only a few moments after the young man had settled himself upon its other side. She made herself comfortable, adjusted her parasol, and opened her book in its shade. She was speaking to herself:

"I guess he will understand that I am not that sort of person," she was saying, and firmly closed her lips till only a thin line remained — a feminine institution which requires no description. "What have I done that this man should take advantage of me in this fashion? This is what it means to be a woman, and alone in the world — the mark for every designing man whose path you cross!"

Her eyes were dim with tears of mortification and distress, as she took from the book a business-card, on the back of which was written the cause of her perturbed soliloquy — this astounding message:

"I will call on you, if you please, at four o'clock. Please do not fail me. Yours, W. B. JACKSON."

"I will impress upon this young upstart that every lonely girl he meets is not necessarily to be regarded as his natural prey. And he doesn't look like that kind of man at all. Dear me, I was thinking of him as a fellow who would be kind to his sisters and loyal to his mother. How gentle he was with that little child!

But you never can judge by appearances — I should have thought myself old enough to have learned that. Anyway, he will understand by his failure to find me that I am not the kind to be 'called on at four o'clock!'"

She shut the offending card into her book with a vicious snap, then with a sigh laid her head back against the rock, and looked away across the harbor. Suddenly she sat bolt upright, startled by the snap of a sputtering match close to her ear, and a fragrant whiff of smoke blew past her face, bringing her to her feet with white lips and fluttering heart, as the very subject of her indignation faced her with his startled apology.

"You are — you are ahead of time, Mr. — Mr. Jackson," she said, as calmly and sarcastically as her demoralized condition of mind would permit. It is not yet four o'clock."

"Why, I — no, I believe not," he stammered, equally taken aback, and taking out his watch; "it is only — that is, it is just five minutes of four! I beg your pardon, I did not mean to intrude."

"I can judge of your intentions only by your actions," she said, gaining courage from his evident embarrassment. "Apparently you take it for granted that every woman is eager to cultivate your acquaintance upon your slightest overture."

"But, my dear madam, I assure you. I — "

"I have no patience with your assurances," she exclaimed; "your conduct is unmistakable and abominable. I am not so unsophisticated as not to know how men of your type regard a woman, especially if she seem alone and defenceless in the world."

"You are unreasonably severe," he protested. "You misconstrue a mere accident — "

"Is it a 'mere accident,' as you call it, Mr. Jackson," she cried, "that you presume to thrust yourself upon me without introduction, and without my slightest intimation by word or sign that your acquaintance is desired? I want you to understand that there is one woman capable of interpreting your designs and of defending herself. I dare say you thought I would be your easy prey, but you are to find yourself in this instance exceedingly mistaken."

"I do not understand you," he declared, aghast at this torrent

of denunciation. A sense of injured innocence was coming to his rescue.

"Of course not! How could you understand a lonely girl having the temerity to resent any advances which you might condescend to offer? You send me an insulting message, and when I take steps to avoid a personal encounter with you, you pursue me as if I were your legitimate spoil, of which you shall by no means be defrauded. And when I face you with your shame, you 'do not understand!' But I trust that for once you —"

"I sent you no message," he exclaimed, hotly. "I have no idea what you mean! I came here, if you please, to be by myself."

"Do you dare to deny, Mr. Jackson, that you —"

"By the way," he interrupted, somewhat impatiently, "allow me to suggest that you discontinue calling me Jackson. My name, by your leave, is Varney — I much prefer it, and hitherto have had no reason to be ashamed of it."

She stopped with a gasp, as if he had struck her. Then she took the guilty card from the book and thrust it at him, demanding:

"What have you to say, then, to that? Do you use another name only for the delectation of defenceless women? I found that in my book!"

He glanced at the card, struggled an instant with a torrent of conflicting emotions, then burst into shameless laughter, in which immense relief was evident. Whereupon her indignation flashed into flame, and she blazed upon him with angry tears in voice and eyes:

"No doubt it is very amusing for you, sir! But I fail to see the humor of it. If I had a father or brother —"

He became serious instantly.

"I beg your pardon, Miss —Miss McLean. It certainly is not amusing in that sense. It is, or might have been, a serious matter. But I am happy — more so than you can well appreciate — to say that I am quite innocent of that of which you have very naturally accused me. Will you be so good as to let me have that book a moment?"

Reluctantly, and very much on her guard, as if against some manner of ambush, she surrendered it to him. He flung the cover

open, and placed his finger at the top of the title-page, upon the strong, forceful signature:

RICHARD W. VARNEY.
HIS BOOK.

"An extraordinary coincidence in our literary taste, Miss McLean, has led us to this embarrassment, and to mutual misunderstanding and misjudgment. Permit me to restore to you your own volume, and with your permission to retain my own."

The rosy flush of her indignation fled from her face, leaving it snowlike in its pallor, then returned in a great crimson surge flooding her brow and neck, as she gasped in dismay:

"Oh, I see! I'm so sorry — how can you ever forgive me?"

Varney, smiling, extended his hand.

"We might forgive each other," he said.

And so it befell that at precisely four o'clock, as the always-punctual steamer *Margaret*, from New Haven, blew her whistle for the Silver Sands landing, these two futile fugitives from the inexorable pursuit of destiny stood hand-in-hand at last!

Eggs, $12,000 Per Dozen.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

ASTUS JOHNSON, colored, was the pride and solicitude of the little village of New Canaan, Connecticut. The Baptists stood willing to immerse him, the Methodists were eager to sprinkle him, the Episcopalians hoped sooner or later to receive him into the fold, while the Congregationalists would have been proud to have pointed to him as a disciple who shunned the primrose path of dalliance and walked in the strait and narrow way. And since his skin had grown a shade lighter he was claimed by the Christian Scientists, for Rastus had prayed to become as his white brethren and, such is the power of mind over matter, his cuticle had suffered a change. But this latter happy state may have been due to a more frequent application of soap and water.

Then the day came when Rastus was able to read. A good lady of the village had taught him his letters, and when at last he applied that knowledge so advantageously as to peruse the *New Canaan Chronicle*, the first copy of which — warm from the press — always fell to him as a mark of special honor, the village all but arose and set the town bells a-ringing in celebration of the joyous occasion.

But alas! with knowledge comes sorrow, as the psalmist says, and this ability to read proved the undoing of Rastus. It was three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon when the old colored man suddenly stared at a particular paragraph in the paper which he had to that moment been leisurely and proudly perusing, then, letting the paper fall to the floor of the country store where he was seated, he began to groan, his black and erstwhile saintly physiognomy depicting the utmost pain and alarm.

The bystanders hurried to his assistance and did everything in their power to relieve him, but Rastus was not to be comforted.

"Oh, good Lawd, de chicken, de chicken!" groaned the sufferer.

"Where is the pain; do tell?" pleaded Mrs. Samanthy Baxter, who was in the store at the time buying some calico with which to make handkerchiefs for foreign mission work.

Placing his hand in the region of his stomach, Rastus again groaned, "Oh, good Lawd, de chicken, de chicken!"

Mrs. Baxter sought by every Christian means in her power to soothe the sufferer. Indeed, she went so far as to beg him to recollect that his suffering was merely an error of the mind, for mind is everything, and that he could overcome it by the sheer force of will, but Rastus evidently had inside information contrary to that doctrine, and kept rubbing his stomach and groaning, "De chicken, de chicken!"

"What chicken, Mr. Johnson? Speak, poor soul!"

"De Thurston chicken! Oh, de good Lawd!"

"I knew it!" cried Mrs. Baxter. "Some wretch has poisoned one of Mr. Thurston's chickens, and now our unhappy colored brother has eaten of the chicken and been poisoned. Some one run for Doctor Thorpe, while I call on Brother Thurston!"

Leaving the sufferer groaning and writhing, Mrs. Baxter made straight for the Thurston farm on the outskirts of the village, to return a little later with her eyes as large as saucers.

"Land sakes, what do you think?" she cried. "There's a lot of city men down there, and Thurston is holding an egg auction, and when I came away they were bidding eight hundred dollars apiece for hens' eggs!"

Instantly there was a general movement on the part of the villagers toward the Thurston farm, Old Rastus Johnson, however, insisting that he be abandoned to his misery. When they reached the farm the excitement-seekers found the amazing report of Mrs. Baxter fully corroborated by the evidence of their own eyes and ears. Thurston was disposing of hens' eggs to a group of highly excited bidders at an average price of a thousand dollars for a single egg.

Open-mouthed and dumfounded the country people stared at

this amazing proceeding, wondering what on earth the world was coming to. When, finally, the strangers took their leave, bearing with them some two dozen hens' eggs and leaving behind checks payable to Thurston of the aggregate value of twenty-four thousand dollars, Thurston turned to his expectant audience and spoke as follows:

"A California genius has given us the pitless orange and the seedless grape, the spineless cactus and the thornless rose! Then why not the boneless hen?

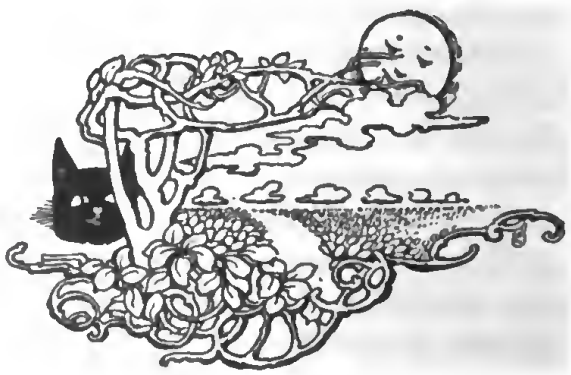
"Three years ago I gave up my position as a bank president in New Haven and came out here, and by gradually eliminating by painless surgery the bones of certain chickens while yet very young, and later intercrossing these chickens, I have at last succeeded in producing an egg that hatches into a boneless hen. Think of it! A breed of poultry all meat and no bone; all food, no waste; no nourishment lost in building up a useless frame of bone, but every grain of corn fed the chicken going to produce pure food stuff. Yesterday I was approached by a great financier who sought to have me form a boneless poultry trust with a capital of fifty million dollars but, being opposed to all morganizations, I have thought best to dispose of my boneless eggs to men who knew a good thing when they saw it, and have just sold to enterprising buyers the first two dozen by auction. I have now under way a boneless duck, as well as a boneless hog, which latter will control the pork markets of the world. I have just received an offer of one hundred thousand dollars for a pair of these hogs; but what is one hundred thousand dollars for an animal that will upset half the business of a great city like Chicago? I snap my fingers at the sum. In time I hope to place upon the market a boneless shad, but I shall speak now rather of what I have accomplished than of what I purpose."

Exchanging glances of profound astonishment, Mr. Thurston's auditors hurried back to the store where they had left Rastus Johnson in the doctor's charge. He was still bemoaning his affliction when the villagers returned and, in answer to renewed questioning, replied:

"Good Lawd, forgive me! Las' night I done borrowed an' eat one ob dem boneless hens what is wrote about in this yeah paper.

It could 'a' laid me a lot ob dose thousan'-dollar aigs an' made me rich!'

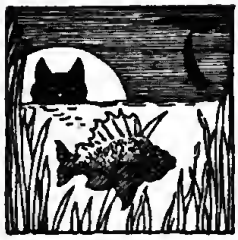
The cause of his sudden illness was explained! While assimilating the white man's religious teachings, he had retained his racial love for chicken, and being made aware, through a notice in the *New Canaan Chronicle*, that the particular kind of chicken which he had "borrowed" and eaten the night before was capable of laying veritable "golden eggs," he had fallen sick with grief.



The Power o' Love.*

BY ADELINE KNAPP.

Once I had laughed at the power o' love
And twice at the grip o' the grave.—*Tomlinson.*



THE prao, with its ancient bamboo sail, lay so close in shore that the port outrigger rested on the beach. Salvator sprang out to push off, while Juan Pablo ran along the starboard outrigger, to put her on an even keel. They had rice, and some maize meal on board, and they must make Daltique, certainly by the next day, or — famine had pressed close in Daltique, and might press closer still before the new crops were ready.

Salvator and Juan Pablo, living back in the mountains, had not learned, until it was almost too late, that these strange Americanos, with their new government, were giving out rice, at Iloilo. They hurried down, at that word, and although Juan Pablo had no one to wait for his coming, Salvator could not get back too soon with their stores.

From a little bamboo landing-stage, close at hand, two Americans watched the embarkment disgustedly. It meant wrath and disappointment to them, for they desired Salvator's services. The only Visayan in the district who could command any English, he refused their most generous offers to go with them to the little bario, back in the jungle, where they were under orders to establish a school.

The little Filipino padre beside them lifted his shoulders, in deprecation of their black looks. He had given over trying to make them understand. He knew no English — the Americanos no Spanish, and all their intercourse was carried on in school Latin, which lent itself but sparingly to the conduct of modern business.

"I'm always stopping to construe the stuff when I try to talk it," Marmedel said to his companion. "I was stronger on the team than in the classics, at the 'Varsity," he added, "But what the devil more does the fellow want, Brandison? Can't you get it out of the padre?"

Brandison considered, and presently evolved, in sonorous dissyllables, an equivalent of Marmedel's colloquialism. The padre replied eagerly, and at length, in ecclesiastical Latin, so little expressive of the inner situation that Brandison gathered from it but one idea: Salvator wished to return to his wife.

"Oh! Bug the luck, anyway!" Marmedel muttered, at this information. "Just as if she wouldn't rather have the *dinero* every time. That's the worst of it, though," he continued, sagely. "This comes of the nice, kind little plans of our folks at Washington. Now, for instance, if the Government wasn't giving these fellows rice for the asking, they'd be glad to work. There's the case in a nutshell."

He warmed to the subject as he saw Salvator listening, a hand on the gunwale of the prao.

"This fellow here," he said, "won't do a stroke of work till his rice is gone and he's hungry again. Isn't that so? eh?" he called to the Filipino.

Salvator shook his head. He, too, had tried to explain to the señors, but his English, gathered, painfully, while body-servant to an American officer, was limited. He understood far more than he could say.

"Eh?" Marmedel pushed his question. "You'd be mighty glad of dinero if you were hungry now?"

Memories of the famine pinch were in Salvator's mind, but what could these huge red señors know of famine?

"Pickaninny hungry *now*," he ventured, "I take rice."

"Better take money to *buy* rice," Brandison said. "That bag won't last long."

The two teachers did not know. The District Superintendent was away, riding his barios, and before he went he had spoken to them but vaguely of a famine which *had* prevailed over Daltique way, in the mountains. A famine, in the past tense, is not an uncomfortable idea to one who has not known it in the present

imperative. It is rather pleasant to reflect that Government provided relief, and it is all over.

Juan Pablo, balancing on the starboard outrigger, called to his partner in gutteral, explosive Visayan. There was no time to linger. Salvator, pushing the prao well away from the beach, sprang to the outrigger, ran along the frail, slippery structure, and picked up his iron-shod bamboo pole, while Juan Pablo hauled at the sheets. Two or three pole-thrusts, now one side, now the other, and they were in deep water. The light bamboo sail caught and filled in the breeze, and they danced away, the far-spread outriggers flicking the water as the prao rose and fell.

"Looks like a big dragon-fly skimming the water," Marmedel commented, as he watched the retreating craft. "If that fellow'd had any ambition we could have made him mighty useful."

Off across the sunlit sea the prao fluttered on her course. Juan Pablo sang softly to himself, squatted in the cock-pit, his back braced against the side, but Salvator's face was joyless and lowering as he sat astern, easing the sheet to the give and take of the sail. Never before had he known discontent. To go with the Americanos would have met his heart's desire, had it not been for Home — Home, and hungry wife and children. It was well for Juan Pablo to sing and be happy; he knew nor cared that there were needs and possibilities beyond the day's food and enjoyment, but he, Salvator, had seen, and learned. This was a dog's life, even as the big, red señor had said. He was being dragged back to it, and elsewhere, in this very land, were things he could only dream of; never know; never grasp.

"But what sorrow is it, not to go with the señors?" Juan Pablo interrupted his song to ask. "They go far from home."

Salvator snarled, contemptuously.

"What sorrow is it that a man should live as a dog?" he answered.

As Juan Pablo stared in silent amaze, he went on:

"The señor said the word, and it is a true one. To hunger and thirst, and be glad of a handful of rice; to dig, to drive the carabao, to eat, and sleep, and wake to dig again." Salvator's tirade broke off in a bitter laugh. His companion looked perplexed. His mind had never conceived a problem.

"But it is life," he ventured, remonstrant, "and there is dancing, and the cock-fight, and love, and the little ones——"

Salvator laughed again.

"May the alligator eat all fools," he sneered. "Life? It is only death alive; and love, and children? Seven thieves! But they kill a man and drink his blood!"

Juan Pablo crossed himself, hastily.

"Mother of Mercy!" he cried, "Must one not fear God? I have no wife or child, but neither do I blaspheme the good gift."

Salvator's laugh was more bitter still, but he did not reply. He was looking far ahead, where sea and sky had taken on a gray sheen, with here and there white flecks on the crest of an occasional slow-breaking wave. The sun, round, and sickly pale, beat hotly down on the little boat, and in the direction of Salvator's gaze showed the lines, and the curling black smoke, of a small steamer.

Both men recognized the craft. It was an inter-island transport, and its genial young captain was known throughout Visayan ports as "the kind Americano." As the boats drew together a Visayan sailor came forward on the steamer and hailed them.

"Better turn back, the Captain says," this was his message, "The typhoon comes."

The sky was changing, swiftly. It and the sea were a smoky yellow, now, the latter running slow and heavy, like strained honey. The air had become breathless, and the black, soft-coal smoke from the transport's stacks hung close above the waters. Juan Pablo looked at Salvator in dismay.

"We must go back," he said.

Apparently the other did not hear. He was staring seaward, ponderingly.

"The Captain does not know," he said, at last, "and there is famine at home. We must take the rice thither."

"Nay, but the prao would never ride the typhoon," Juan Pablo persisted. "And as for the famine—" his shoulders went up in a submissive shrug, "What comes, comes, and the Americano señors would be glad of your company."

Ah! that thought had already been in the other's mind, but an angry sense of responsibility over-rode it.

"We must take the rice home," he muttered, sullenly, holding on his course. The useless sail had been run down, and he was wielding a long oar while Juan Pablo sat on the gunwale, debating.

"We can never do it," the latter cried, rising in alarm, "Turn back, or we shall die!"

"I turn not back," Salvator said, savagely. "If you are afraid, there is the steamer. Doubtless the kind Americano will take you in."

For reply, Juan Pablo suddenly sprang up, and with a loud cry to the receding transport, jumped overboard. The American captain saw the action, and a moment later his command, scarcely larger than a good-sized launch, came about. The swimming Visayan was taken aboard, and through a sailor the American sent another warning across the water to Salvator. The latter shook his head, and presently the captain came round to his course again, muttering an imprecation on the crazy Filipino. He dared not risk his own ancient little craft in the coming storm, and was hurrying to safety.

Salvator cast one look back at the fading transport, and bent to his oar. The sea lapped oily smooth, in a long, soft swell, past either gunwale, and the prao rose and fell with its slow undulations, in a quiet that yet was not peace. The Filipino's thin jusi camisa clung to him wetly, but underneath the damp, oppressive heat a vague suggestion of chill made itself felt, and he shivered.

As he did so, the prao gave a sudden lurch, which threw him forward upon his big oar. He recovered his balance with a grunt — the wood had struck him in the stomach — and wiped his streaming face upon his sleeve. Along the sky, on the north and the east, heavy banks of black cloud hung, and though it was still clear overhead, he knew that rain was coming. He rolled his wide, flapping, cotton trousers up to his hips, and covered his cargo more securely; there were two bags of rice and one of American maize meal.

He rolled these in the rubber poncho of an American cavalryman, who had sold it to the Filipino, in defiance of regulations, when a thirst was on him. Salvator made the package fast to the mast, with a strong lashing of bejuca, the native rattan, and again applied himself to rowing.

The yellow-black sea heaved and sank, slower and more heavily, running to meet the yellow-black sky. East and north the clouds were mounting higher, and Salvator could do little more, in the terrible heat, than stir his oar languidly, yet every now and then came that little hint of chill in the air. The prao gave a heavier lurch than any before, and shipped a lot of water, whereupon he left off rowing, and began to bail.

Glancing upwards from this task, a sudden terror seized him, of the ominous sky. He sprang to his oar once more, and put the prao about. Love of life filled him, and he redoubled his panting efforts to make headway over that slow sea. He was headed, now, for the shore whence he had set out. He could never make Daltique; but if he could get back to Iloilo he might yet go with the teacher-señors.

Another lurch of the prao — the swell was growing heavier, and instinctively he glanced at his cargo. It would be unnecessary, in Iloilo. The thought awoke memory. Paula and the two little ones waited for rice, which no one but he would bring them.

His spirit leaped to fierce anger at the thought. There was Juan Pablo, who was contented at Daltique, yet no ties held him; he could go back to safety; even to the wider life for which he did not care. Only he, Salvator, who knew and desired; who had seen the wider vision, must go on, staggering to the end, under the burden of his dog's life. He knew that he must go, and he cursed, in his heart, the yearning which drew him, despite ambition and desire, to the hopeless effort promising only death.

Sullenly, his anger burning deeper and deeper still into the fibre of him, he turned the prao again, with difficulty, this time, in that treacly sea, and once more the long oar complained against the gunwale, as he steered toward the black clouds, now half-way up the sky. They rushed to meet the little craft as she came about, and, yawning above her, loosed their surcharge of flood.

She stood still and shuddered under the impact. Salvator, his oar knocked from his grasp, was beaten down, bodily, by the weight of descending rain. He sprang up, on the instant, and again grasped his oar. The rush of the storm seemed, for a moment, actually to whip the sea into quiet; then the wind came, and the prao was swept forward in its mad embrace.

The first wave that went over her broke the bamboo mast just above the lashings of the rice sacks, and swept her of everything she contained, save the man, and his precious cargo. She was full of water, from gunwale to gunwale; only the straining outriggers kept her afloat.

Crawling along through the wash, Salvator felt their fastenings. One had started, and he fumbled, with sodden fingers, at the stout bejuca withes. A blackness of darkness had descended upon the sea, and it was bitter cold. Looking seaward as he worked at the lashing, the man saw, by a dart of the lightning's forked tongue, a white portent racing toward him. Higher and higher it loomed, until, crazed by its menace, he shrieked out, in defiance. He clutched at the gunwale as the crushing smother rushed upon him, and one arm, slipping in between the lashings, held him, gasping, and half-drowned. The next wave, more merciful, lifted the little craft high upon its curling crest.

As she rolled down into the trough the bejuca withes tore loose, parted, and the starboard outrigger swung free at one end, dipping the prao's nose under. Flinging out upon the other outrigger the man clung, cat-like, with legs and arms, and brought her up again. He had no sense of peril. He was conscious only that a blind rage impelled him to fight the forces assailing him. He clung to the outrigger, as the next wave whelmed him, and cursed sea and sky and storm, in his fury. Then the forward lashing of the loosened outrigger gave way, and the prao careened, but he swung out on the long reach of the other side, and balanced her for an instant longer.

Only for an instant, however. As he hung there a lull came, during which he heard a new sound, above the beat of the rain and the rush of the sea. It was the roar of surf, and he knew that the end was near. He had scarcely noticed it when there was a churning whirl, a sound of grinding, a crashing blow from some unrecognized source, and, still cursing, he passed into mighty silence.

He came out of it slowly, hearing vaguely, for a long time, ere his wandering consciousness returned, the roar and fury of the sea, behind him. Far above him gleamed a bit of black sky, across which stars raced madly, fleeing from clouds that pursued

them. Just beyond reach the sea still raged at him, dashing in angry threat against intervening rocks, beyond which he had been flung. He lay, spent and shipwrecked, on a shelving bit of the cliff, safe, until some comber, craftier than its fellows, should manage to tear him off.

Stretching exploring hands hither and thither in the darkness, he laid hold upon something which brought perception back to him. One of the bags of rice, bursted, and despoiled of half its contents, had been flung up beside him. He staggered to his feet, and pressed against the cliff, feeling eagerly, in the darkness, to determine his surroundings. On three sides arose perpendicular rocks; the fourth side opened toward the maddened sea, which every now and again stretched savage, yearning fingers across the rocky guards of his slight harborage.

Stripping off his soaked camisa, he knotted the sleeves together about the neck, and into the bag thus formed he put the broken sack of rice. Some strands of twisted bejuca still clung to it, and with these he secured the package to his shoulders, passing a fastening over his head, as well. He worked intermittently, as the flashes of electricity gave him light. The storm was increasing in fury, and the sea's menacing fingers clutched at him more than once, before he finally turned his back upon it, and began to climb the cliff.

Slowly, slowly, now feeling his way in the blackness, now noting it by the lightning's instant glare, he crept upwards, clinging to a projection here, setting his foot in a crevice there, fighting his way, inch by inch, with torn hands and feet, and abraded, bruised limbs. His right forearm was open to the bone, down its length, but the sea, even despite its fury, had salted the wound, and washed it clean. A dreadful gash gaped across his forehead, but there was none to see, and for the time being he was past feeling.

He reached a ledge across the cliff, and stood upright upon it, feeling along the surface above him for new holds. Everywhere was smooth, wall-like rock, and he moved off sidewise, continuing his blind search, until, far to the left, the surface again became broken and rugged, and he resumed his upward creeping. His burden of water-soaked rice oppressed him fearfully; he paused more and more frequently, for breath, and to wipe his bleeding

fingers upon his matted hair. He had lost all consciousness of why he crawled upwards; only blind instinct kept him moving, clinging from point to point, scaling each difficult inch with no thought for the next one. At last, setting his right foot where his right hand had just clung, he raised himself, pressing close to the rock, and his seeking fingers found no projection, or least hold, on the cliff's smooth face. Here, at last, was the end.

The gale at his back pressed him close to the rock, and he lay there, numbly, awaiting the instant when, his last strength departing, he should dash downwards, to the waiting sea. Every nerve in him recognized the inevitableness of this instant, and deadly fear smote him. He could feel the weight of his burden pulling him backwards, and he half moved, with an instinct to throw it off.

At the faint motion something stirred in the depths of his nature. Before his eyes seemed to rise the little nipa hut beside his young rice patch, and Paula's face, hunger-pinched and yearning, as she hushed the wee creature tugging at her breast. He could see small Matteo as he last beheld him, gnawing patiently at the end of a dry cane-stalk, and his soul yearned in tenderness over the vision. What were life, or wider reach, or opening knowledge, if these, heart of his heart, flesh of his flesh, were not to be in it?

He pressed his forehead against the cliff. He spread out his hands, and leaned his bare chest close to the rock. Thus he clung, like any limpet, while the tumult of fear within him slowly sank. His nerves steadied again, and he watched, alertly, for each recurring flash of lightning to show him the face of the wall before him.

Far on his left, he at last made out, the rock shelved boldly, but the utmost reach of his arm fell short of that chance for safety. Save for his frail foot perch, his only hold upon the rock was the pressure of his body, — the clinging touch of his open palms.

These latter he began shifting, line by line, never raising them, until, although his feet had not moved, his body leaned to the left. Every perception was alert, now, and with breathless caution, his left foot crept sidewise along the rough projection on which he stood. Presently that projection ended, and upon its last edge his foot paused. He shifted his weight and slowly dragged his right foot along. There was but the merest chance, and it seemed an

eternity before, reaching again, his hands touched the edge of the shelf above him. He waited, not daring to essay the ultimate hope, husbanding his strength for the last effort. The next glare from heaven should light his attempt.

When it came, it showed a crevice in the rock, and he thrust his knee into it as he threw himself forward. Panting, he clung, for an instant, then dragged himself up and fell, face down, on the shelving, rocky platform, his whole frame shaking with sobs of exhaustion.

The quick dawn found him there, and roused him from slumber, showing him the top of the cliff, close above him. Gaining it, he washed some of his rice in rainwater caught in a hollow of the rock. He ate it and went on his way, threading the mountain ways, hour after hour, heedless of the sun's fierce heat or the jungle's tangle, resting but the shortest of half-hours, in the middle of the day, until, as the afternoon was closing, he staggered out upon a mesa overlooking his home. Below him, like a sheet of green fire, his young rice field glowed with promise. Bamboo and hemp trees waved against the crimsoning sky, and leaning from the door of the hut, Paula called little Matteo in from the evening's damp.

Salvator watched her for a moment ere he gave a low call. She turned, looking upwards, and her cry of greeting was almost a moan.

"Salvator! Is it indeed thou? Is it well with thee? And hast thou brought food?"

He was speeding down the familiar trail, staggering weakly, beneath his precious load.

"It is I," he cried; "I have brought food; and it is well with us!"

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THE BARODA CO. Dept. 28
71 Wabash Ave., **CHICAGO, ILL.**

$20 to $50 WEEKLY made selling this NEW INVENTION, the STANDARD SELF-FILLING -CLEANING Fountain PEN

No ink dropper. **No** smeared fingers. **No** twisted rubber. **No** complication.

$178.90 earned in **32** days by retired business man in Alabama.

$35.80 for a month's **spare time** by G. Jos. Lovett, of Mass.

$5.40 made in **first two hours** by Mrs. Mary M. Lennon, of Mich.

Our free lessons in successful salesmanship make experience unnecessary. We send all particulars and figures to **prove** above records; write to-day.

Energetic Agents and District Managers Wanted

Fills Itself instantly as any ink-well, **THIS WAY.**

Standard Pen Co., 969 Baker Bld., Toledo, O.

10 Stacks of Silver Dollars

as high as the 10 successful contestants

And a little fortune of Silver Dollars to be divided among 830 other readers of the NATIONAL MAGAZINE

Given for Little "Heart Throbs"

What is your height worth to you?

Easy for Everybody

Will you be measured with silver dollars?

SINCE the first announcement was made that Ten Thousand Dollars had been placed in the First National Bank of Boston to be finally given away for Heart Throbs it is astonishing how many clippings, poems and amusing stories have been entered for prizes.

The contest is so simple and fair that everybody who can read and can appreciate what is good, what is pure, or what brings out the emotions of the heart, can enter his choice in our great competition and receive a "fair and square deal" when the awards are made.

Certainly you can put your hands right on that story you once read and thought it was the *best* you ever saw; it was so awfully funny. And that other one that made the tears start in your eyes and the big lump rise in your throat when you read it. You have these in your pocketbook, or in the old scrap book, or possibly in your writing desk. Somewhere, surely, you have one or two that are worth the huge pile of silver dollars that we are eager to exchange for them.

There are no unreasonable conditions. The clipping or copied extract must not be longer than 500 words. You must hasten to send in your contribution as the contest will close and the prizes begin to be awarded on or before Sept. 1st, 1905. NATIONAL subscribers only are elegible to the competition.

840 PRIZE AWARDS. WILL YOU TAKE ONE?

Besides the first ten prizes, each a stack of silver dollars as high as the head of the prize winner, there are ten awards of $50.00 each for the ten next best stories; twenty awards of $25.00 each for the third grade; one hundred awards of $10.00 each for the fourth grade; two hundred awards of $5.00 each for the fifth grade; and five hundred awards of $1.00 each for the sixth and last grade. **U. S. Senator Allison and Admiral Geo. Dewey will make the final awards on behalf of the judges.** These names are an absolute assurance of the sincere good faith and confidence this "Heart Throb" contest merits from you. If you are not already a regular subscriber, send along the accompanying coupon with your subscription for six months and with one clipping, or a year's subscription and two clippings. Be sure to do so soon as the contest will be closed as soon as 50,000 new subscribers are obtained. Understand the NATIONAL is a dollar-a-year magazine and is worth all you pay for it. There is nothing to lose — you may secure a handsome award. When you *know* Joe Chapple, you will like his NATIONAL MAGAZINE. Show this to your newsdealer and say there is something for him if he will send for particulars. **Joe Chapple, Editor.**

National Magazine, - Boston, Mass.

CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO NATIONAL MAGAZINE, BOSTON, MASS.

B.C. 8-05

Enclosed find 50 cts. and clipping for entry in the "Heart Throb" contest.

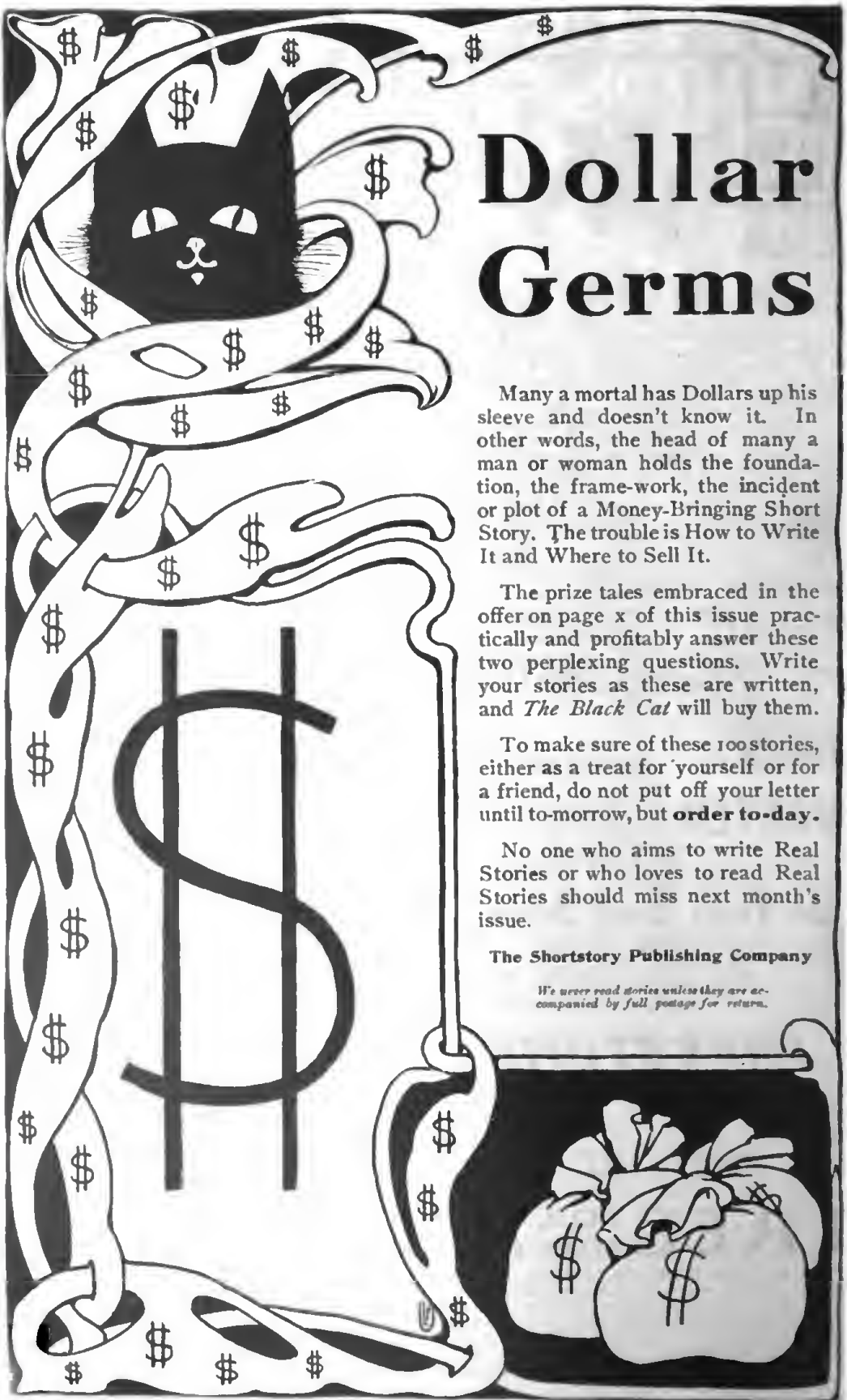
Name _____

Street _____

Town _____

State _____

$1.00 for a year's subscription gives privilege for two entries, etc.



Dollar Germs

Many a mortal has Dollars up his sleeve and doesn't know it. In other words, the head of many a man or woman holds the foundation, the frame-work, the incident or plot of a Money-Bringing Short Story. The trouble is How to Write It and Where to Sell It.

The prize tales embraced in the offer on page x of this issue practically and profitably answer these two perplexing questions. Write your stories as these are written, and *The Black Cat* will buy them.

To make sure of these 100 stories, either as a treat for yourself or for a friend, do not put off your letter until to-morrow, but **order to-day.**

No one who aims to write Real Stories or who loves to read Real Stories should miss next month's issue.

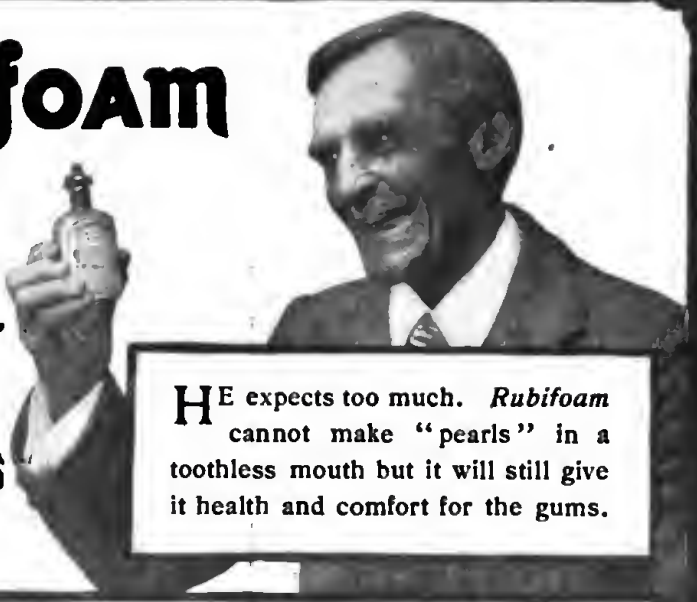
The Shortstory Publishing Company

We never read stories unless they are accompanied by full postage for return.

Hints for the Vacation.

An attractive 150-page pamphlet, full of the temptation of river, field and mountain, is published by the Central Vermont Railway, under the style, "Summer Homes of Vermont, Islands and Shores of Lake Champlain, Adirondacks, and Canada." It is filled with excellent pictures of Summer-time scenes in places far from the press of city life. There are complete descriptions of the various resorts, convenient time-tables and lists of special excursion rates, of which the wise may take advantage. Those who have not yet settled the great question as to where the vacation shall be spent can hardly do better than consult this pamphlet, which may be obtained by sending six cents in stamps to J. E. Bentley, General Passenger Agent, Central Vermont Railway, St. Albans, Vt.

Rubifoam won't make teeth-it cleans them



HE expects too much. *Rubifoam* cannot make "pearls" in a toothless mouth but it will still give it health and comfort for the gums.

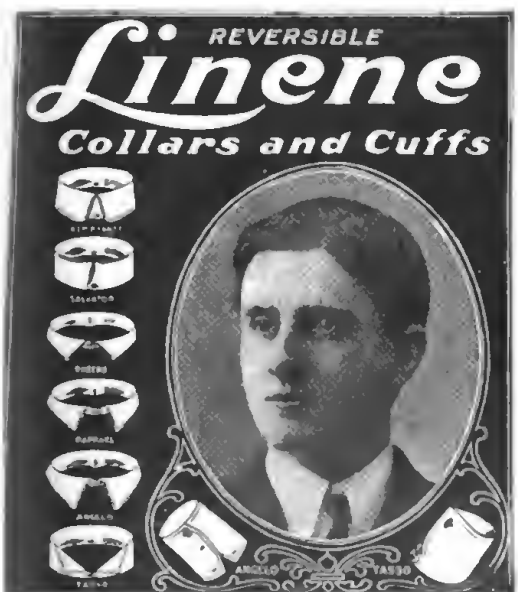
The time to make teeth beautiful is now—while you have them. Don't delay the use of *Rubifoam*. **25 Cents Everywhere.**

Sample for a 2-cent Stamp. E. W. HOYT & CO., Lowell, Mass.

REVERSIBLE

Linene

Collars and Cuffs



Have You Worn Them?

Not "celluloid"—not "paper collars"—but made of fine cloth, exactly resemble fashionable linen goods and cost of dealers, for box of ten, 25 cents (2½ cents each).

No Washing or Ironing

When soiled discard. By mail 10 collars or 5 prs. cuffs for 30 cents. Sample collar or pair cuffs for 6 cents in U. S. stamps. Give size and style.

REVERSIBLE COLLAR CO., Dept. O, Boston.

QUILTED MATTRESS PADS

THREE SCORE and TEN YEARS is a long life, yet about THIRTY YEARS of it is spent in bed. Then why not make your bed as comfortable as it can be made.

Quilted Mattress Pads will not only make it comfortable, but as they are spread over the mattress, they will protect it, and will keep your bed or baby's crib in a perfect Sanitary condition.

Quilted Mattress Pads wash perfectly, and are as good as new after laundering.

They are sold in all sizes by Dry Goods dealers

EXCELSIOR QUILTING CO.
15 Laight Street : : : New York

DISABLED

It's tough luck

when a husky man is disabled by failure of something he depends on.

Many an athlete and business man is "put away" by failure of his heart caused by coffee drinking. If not heart, perhaps stomach or kidneys. When the oar begins to show a little crack, chuck it quick and in time. When symptoms of heart, stomach, kidney or nervous troubles show, quit coffee entirely and use Postum.

"**There's a reason**" for

POSTUM

Hydrozone

CURES

ECZEMA and kindred skin diseases. Indorsed by the medical profession and sold by leading druggists. **HYDROZONE,** although harmless, is the most powerful germicide. Not genuine without my signature:

Charles Marchand

57 Prince Street, New York.

Chemist and Graduate of the "Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures de Paris, France."

Preparations with similar names are concoctions of water, containing oil of vitriol, sulphurous acid and inert impurities.

A FREE TRIAL BOTTLE

of **HYDROZONE,** sufficient to demonstrate its healing properties, will be sent on receipt of attached coupon. (Name your druggist.) Requests without coupon ignored. Only one free bottle to a family.

Write legibly. Coupon good only until October 5, '05.

Name.....

Address.....

19 City.....State.....

Druggist.....

"The groves were God's first temples."

SEPTEMBER IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

No finer place in September can be found than the Adirondacks. The air is cool and bracing, the scenery beautiful, and they can be reached in a night from Boston, New York or Niagara Falls. All parts of the Adirondacks are reached by the

NEW YORK CENTRAL LINES

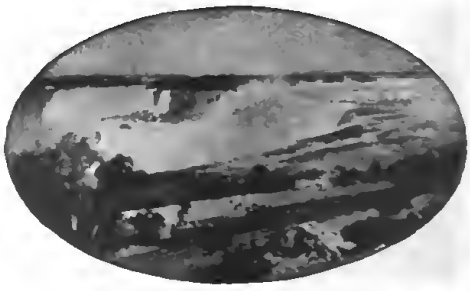
A copy of No. 20 of the "Four-Track Series," "The Adirondacks and How to Reach Them," will be sent free on receipt of a 2-cent stamp by George H. Daniels, General Passenger Agent, New York Central R. R., Grand Central Station, New York.

MICHIGAN CENTRAL

"The Niagara Falls Route."

BETWEEN

Chicago, Detroit, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, New York, Boston, and the East and Northern Michigan Points



All trains passing Niagara Falls by day run directly by and in full view of the entire Panorama of the Falls, stopping 5 minutes at Falls View.

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