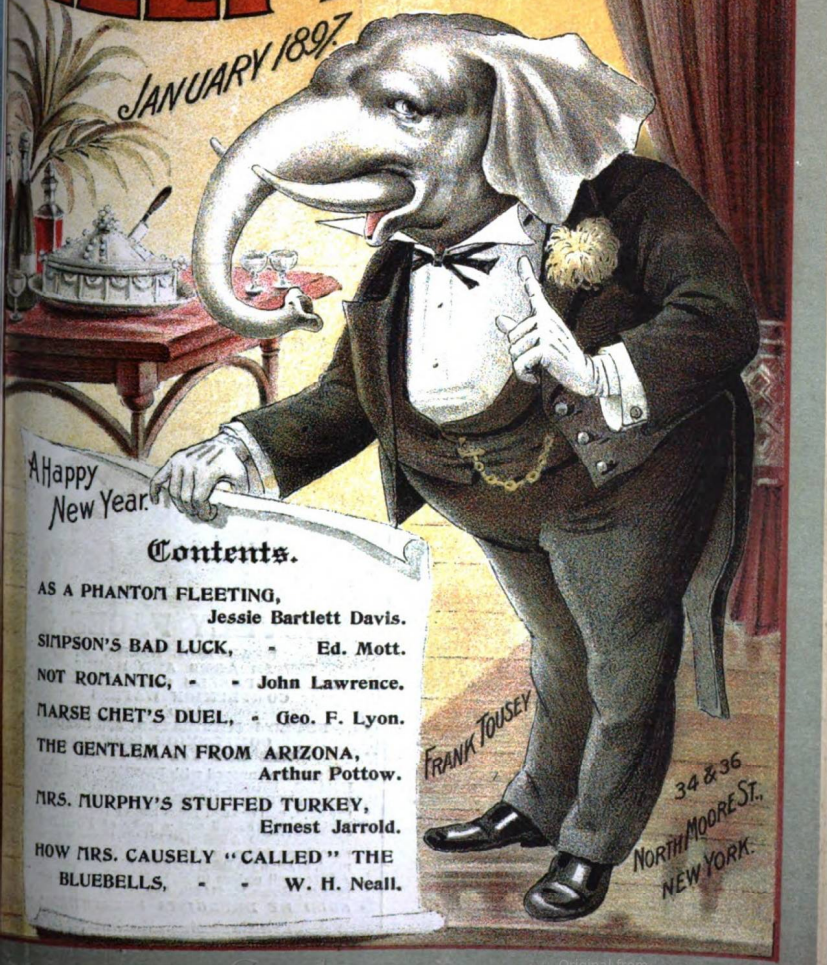
5 Cents.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT

JANUARY 1897.



A Happy New Year.

Contents.

FRANK TOUSEY

34 & 36 NORTH MOORE ST., NEW YORK.

REGINA MUSIC BOX

PLAYS OVER 1,000 TUNES.

Has better tone and more brilliancy than the Swiss music box, with no delicate parts about it to get out of order. Plays 30 minutes with each winding. Plays your own selection of music, and you don't have to listen to seven pieces that you don't want to hear for the sake of having the box play the one you want as is the case in the antiquated cylinder music box.

Has a strong movement that does not get out of order, and indestructible tune discs. The above

HANDSOMELY CARVED CASE

is being offered at the same price as the plain cases. Boxes from $12 to $200. Send for handsome illustrated catalogue.

REGINA MUSIC BOX CO., Rahway, N. J.

Columbia BICYCLES

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN can easily acquire *A Thorough and Practical Business Education* AT THEIR OWN HOMES by our system. That it is the most inexpensive and convenient method thousands of young men and women in all parts of the United States, will gladly testify. Distance is no barrier as the work is accomplished entirely through correspondence. A Trial Lesson costs only 10 cents and shows you how thorough is the system we employ. Interesting Catalogue free to all who write. Address,

BRYANT & STRATTON COLLEGE,

No. A-89 College Building, BUFFALO, N. Y.

A CLEAR COMPLEXION

The Outward Sign of Inward HEALTH.

LOVELY FACES.

BEAUTIFUL NECKS, WHITE ARMS AND HANDS, DR. CAMPBELL'S SAFE ARSENIC COMPLEXION WAFERS AND FOULD'S MEDICATED ARSENIC COMPLEXION SOAP Will Give You All These.

If you are annoyed with PIMPLES, BLACKHEADS, FRECKLES, BLOTCHES, MOTH, FLESH WORMS, ECZEMA, or any blemish on the skin, call or send for a box of DR. CAMPBELL'S WAFERS and a cake of FOULD'S MEDICATED ARSENIC SOAP, the only genuine beautifiers in the world. WAFERS by mail, $1.00; 6 LARGE BOXES, $5. Soap, 50 cts. Address all orders to H. H. FOULD, Sole Proprietor, Room F., 214 6th Ave., N. Y.

SOLD BY DRUGGISTS EVERYWHERE.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

A Monthly Magazine of Original Stories.

No. 8. JANUARY. 1897. 5 cents per copy. 50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., 1896, as second-class matter.

MARSE CHET'S DUEL.

BY GEO. F. LYON.

T the close of a long day's ride I found myself, late in the afternoon, making my way slowly along a dreary bit of country road in Southern Carolina. As far as I could see on either hand were wide-spreading fields of damp, marshy land, with here and there small clumps of low, stunted bushes. A few miles across the fields to my right the Santee rolled slowly along through cultivated fields of cotton and rice.

I urged my tired horse on, eager to find some place of shelter from the night and rapidly-approaching storm, both of which were almost upon me. I looked about, but could see nothing save the same wide-spreading fields of swamp on either hand, and a solitary bird of great size slowly winging its way overhead to the river banks beyond.

I saw no way out of it but to face the night and coming storm as best I could, and I felt self-provoked that I had not stopped over at one of the little villages through which I had passed several miles back, but too far behind to think of returning at this late hour, although I confess I was thinking seriously of doing so rather than to face the storm and the night. So deeply was I engrossed in considering whether to turn about and go back or

not that I had not noticed that my horse had left the turnpike upon which we had been traveling, and was now slowly picking his way along a narrow grass-grown path, or what seemed to once have been a road or driveway leading up from the main road to a group of trees, through the tops of which I could see a roof and several chimneys. Knowing that shelter of some kind was at hand, I pushed rapidly on, not a little pleased at the sudden change in my unpleasant prospects, although I was somewhat surprised to find such a place as this appeared to be in this out-of-the-way, deserted region. As I drew nearer I obtained a better view of the place, which was apparently deserted and fast going to decay. A number of large, overgrown trees shaded and hung low over the roof, which was green with moss and fallen leaves. The loose clapboards rattled and clattered in the wind, and a broken window shutter flapped dismally to and fro. The windows, too, were broken out in many places and gone, and the wide steps of the veranda were rotten and unsafe. The path or driveway leading down to the road was full of tall grass and stones, with nothing to mark its course save a low, scraggy hedge, overgrown and thriving in its neglect. The lawn, sloping gradually down to the road, was also thickly grown with tall, rank weeds and bushes. The whole place showed an air of neglect and ruin.

I dismounted from my horse and led him around the house to the stable in the rear, and succeeding in finding some loose hay in the loft overhead, I threw him an armful and went back around the house again and up the steps of the veranda to the front door just as the rain began to fall in great pattering drops.

I was about to open the door and go in, when I heard a step on the gravel path behind me, and turning I saw an old negro standing there at the corner of the house and regarding me with curious eyes.

As soon as he saw me turn and look at him he lifted his old battered hat, and with a feeble bow, he said in a remarkably distinct accent:

"Howdy do, sarh?"

I returned his greeting in rather an amused tone, for I could not help smiling a little at the sight of his tall, bent figure covered with an old army blue coat soiled and torn, reaching down nearly to his heels. He had on a pair of gray cotton pants with huge patches of some darker material sewed conspicuously on each knee, while his feet were thrust into a pair of old shoes which

had evidently seen their better days long ago. He appeared to be quite old, for he moved with slow, feeble steps, leaning heavily on a stout cane or staff.

The sound of his voice somewhat startled me, for I supposed the place to be entirely deserted and alone, but concealing both my surprise and amusement at the sight of his grotesque figure as best I could, I quickly returned his greeting, and said:

"Hello, Uncle. I saw that we were going to have a storm and I thought, perhaps, I might find shelter here for the night."

He looked at me a moment in surprise, and then hobbled slowly up the steps of the veranda to where I stood, and looked me carefully over from the tip of my shoes to the top of my hat, then without a word he thrust his hand down into the depths of his trousers pocket and drew forth an old iron key and slowly proceeded to unlock the door.

After some little fumbling and twisting he at length succeeded in unlocking it, and he swung it back, creaking and groaning on its rusty hinges, and motioning me to follow him, he went in. A damp, musty smell greeted us as we entered, and as he turned to close the door behind us, I glanced about the hall in which we stood. Great patches of plaster hung in masses from the wall and ceiling through which the bare laths could be seen beneath. Broken pieces of furniture were scattered about here and there. The floor creaked woefully as we walked along the hall and entered a long room opening to the left.

This apartment, too, had the same appearance of age and neglect as the hall through which we had just passed. Countless festoons of cobwebs hung gracefully from the ceiling, reaching nearly down to the floor; while the furniture of the room, once elegant and luxurious, was now broken and scattered about in confusion. The carpet at our feet was damp with mold and full of holes, and what once had been heavy, crimson curtains or draperies, hanging about the windows, were now a moth-eaten mass of hanging rags. A few old-time pictures and portraits hung tilted from the walls, but they were so thickly covered with mold and dust that it was well nigh impossible to tell now what they once had been.

I went to the window and, thrusting aside the curtains, looked out, and plainly saw that my chances of getting away that night were fast disappearing, for the rain fell in torrents and the sky looked dark and grim; evidently it had settled down for a rainy night.

I went back and drawing an old arm-chair up to the fireplace, at one end of the room, I sat down, and the old negro soon followed my example by depositing himself in another on the opposite side from me.

The dampness of the room soon began to make itself felt, and knowing the folly of spending a night in that damp, wet place, I got up and gathered a pile of the old broken chairs and tables scattered about the room, and piled some of them in the old fireplace with the intention of having a fire should I desire to go to sleep before morning. I then sat down again and proceeded to make myself as comfortable as the circumstances and surroundings would permit.

I presume my companion thought that I was taking a good deal of liberty, although he said nothing, but sat there watching me with an attention which I could not help smiling at in spite of myself. As soon as I sat down again, he produced an old corncob pipe, and began to fill it with some loose tobacco leaves, which he fished from some of the numerous pockets of his coat. I gave him some of my own fine-cut, for which he seemed greatly pleased, and after filling his pipe with it, he lit it, and sat puffing away in evident enjoyment and satisfaction.

For several moments we sat there in silence, and I looked about the old low raftered room, and wondered who and where the owner of all these faded surroundings was, and turning to the old man I asked:

"Who owns this old place, Uncle?"

He looked at me a moment as if surprised at my question, then taking his pipe slowly from his lips, he said in a voice feeble with age, yet clear and distinct, with little or none of the broken dialect of the southern negro which I had hitherto been accustomed to hearing:

"Don't you know this place, sarh?" he quickly asked, looking at me sharply.

I shook my head, and he went on:

"I reckoned that everybody knew this place. I take it that you are a stranger in these parts, sarh."

"Yes," I replied. "I never was in this part of the country before until to-night."

He nodded his head in reply to this, and then continued.

"Well, this old place use to belong to the old Colonel. You have heard tell of old Colonel Darrel, sarh?"

"No," I interrupted. "Who was the old Colonel?"

"The old Colonel, sarh? Why, he was my old master 'way back before the war, and he owned this place here and another down the river, but after young Marse Chet fought that duel with that young French fellow that come up from Savannah, old Marse he shut this old house up, and nobody ever came near it again, 'cause the people round these parts know all about the old house and say that it is haunted, and that every Christmas night the ghost of young Marse Darrel and that young French fellow that he fought the duel with come, and all the others that was here that night it happened."

I now began to get a little interested, and thinking perhaps it might help pass away a dreary hour for me there, I asked the old man to tell me about the old house, and why it was haunted. At first he did not seem inclined to say much about it, but after a few questions and a silver dollar, he told me the story of the old house, the old Colonel and his only son, Chester, and the duel he didn't fight.

It was many years ago that it all happened, before the war it seems, and young Chester Darrel, the only son and child of old Colonel Darrel, had just returned from college in the North, and the days that followed his return home were full of life and excitement. The young man was naturally a gay, reckless sort of a chap, and whenever he was at home or abroad, he was constantly surrounded by a company of young men as reckless and gay as himself—friends of his from the neighboring towns and cities.

The old Colonel was a stern, gruff old man, who cared neither for gaity or pleasure, and he looked on with disapproval while Chester and his boon companions were carousing and riding about the country on the old man's best horses and spending his money.

The nights were generally spent in drinking, and the morning light often found them lingering over the cards, and often the guests and sometimes even their host were carried bodily one by one by one by the servants to their rooms, insensible with wine. For some time the old colonel looked calmly on thinking that perhaps after Chester had sowed a few of his wild oats that he might settle down and become a dutiful son, but the gay company came and went and there was ever a constant round of boisterous festivities. For over a year things at the old place went on in this way. When young Darrel was not at home carousing and riding about the country and drinking at the taverns,

he was away rioting and having a good time somewhere else with his father's money. It was all in vain that the old Colonel at first talked and reasoned with his son, it was also all in vain when his good old mother pleaded and wept for him to reform, become a dutiful son, and equally in vain was it when the old Colonel, unable to any longer sustain himself, raved and swore that there should be a stop put to these scandalous proceedings at once, but Chester only listened patiently while his father talked, and when he was gone he laughed over it and things still went on in the same old way as before.

At length seeing that all talk and reason or pleadings were without any effect upon their wayward son, the old Colonel and his good old wife finally decided that they would go away—leave the old place to Chester and his associates, and perhaps sometime after they were gone, he would miss father and mother and reform. So one day the old family servant drove them in the family carriage down the river to the other place that was owned by the Colonel, leaving the mother's old home to the son and his wild companions, "monarchs of all they surveyed."

After the old Colonel left the place the servants soon began to be more in fear of the young master than they were of the old one, and instead of having the desired effect that the old folks had hoped for, things grew rapidly from bad to worse, and the whole neighborhood for miles stood aghast at the stories whispered about the doings at the old place. Night after night was spent in gambling and drinking and the days in carousing about the country for miles, until it seemed as if the occupants of the old house never slept, as it was a continuous round of riotous dissipation night and day.

It was Christmas night; the old folks had been gone over a month now, and there came up from Savannah a gay company of young sports to spend Christmas cheer with the young master. Among them was a young French fellow, Claud Gaston—a gay, reckless sort of a young chap, fond of cards and wine. All Christmas day was passed in riding about the country, and drinking at the taverns and having a good time, and after nightfall the gay company gathered in the long dining-room, and wine and cards being produced, the festivities began.

Chester Darrel and the young French fellow from Savannah were seated at a table playing faro together. Darrel was a good player, but young Gaston was a better one, and soon his superior skill in handling the cards began to tell against his companion's

more careless playing. Gaston, calm and collected, played, while Darrel seemed flushed and excited; his hand was unsteady from the effects of the wine he had been drinking, and his eyes gleamed with feverish excitement as he raised the bet already on between them to his last dollar.

He lost! It was only a natural ending against as adept a player as his guest was; but not believing in his own inferiority, Darrel cursed his luck, and draining another glass of wine, insisted upon another game, with Gaston to name the stakes. Darrel was without a dollar to put up, and he would not borrow. Already his watch, horse and jewels were gone, and still he must play again. What could he offer to make a bluff of it anyway and win back all that he lost?

Suddenly Gaston leaned over the table and whispered a few words in the ear of his host.

"You are engaged," he hissed, "so they tell me, to Miss Olive Arnold. Is it true?"

Young Darrel started a trifle at this, and then bowed his head in reply.

"Well," continued the tempter, "to make the game an object I will put up all I have won from you and five hundred dollars in addition if you will put up your claim to the hand of Miss Olive. If I win you are to yield up all claim whatever you may have upon her. If you win, all you have lost is yours, with five hundred dollars beside. As an object to play for and to make it interesting I do this. You can do as you please, however. Will you do it?"

For a moment young Darrel's cheeks flushed with anger and offense, but the fever and passion for play was upon him, and bowing his head, he muttered:

"I agree. Go ahead."

Gaston chose the jack of clubs, while Darrel staked his all on the queen of hearts, and watched with feverish intensity each turn of the cards. The jack won, with the queen following the next turn, almost a winner for young Darrel.

"It was not a fair deal!" he cried in his disappointment and despair. "You cheated, and I know it!"

"It was a straight game from the first," Gaston insisted, and he smiled exultantly into the face of his host.

"You lie!" was all Darrel could gasp in his rage, but scarcely had he uttered the words when Gaston seized his half-filled glass and dashed its contents full in the face of his host.

Some of the cooler headed ones among them sprang forward between them. For a moment they stood glaring at each other, their eyes flashing and cheeks aflame with rage. Both naturally hot-headed and fired with drink, they both insisted upon having immediate satisfaction given, and, of course, that meant a duel, and a duel Christmas night seemed to the gay assembly a fitting entertainment and a grand idea, and as they both insisted upon it, it was decided that a duel must be fought between the guest and his host that both might have the satisfaction demanded. A duel Christmas night, when peace and good will should reign among all men, seemed to the half-drunken company the very thing they needed to complete the day's festivities.

They were to have satisfaction in the good, old-fashion way of their fathers, but as anger was hot and liable to cool when the fumes of wine left their muddled brain, it was decided that the duel must take place at once, without delay, before the passion of either might have a chance to cool. The choice of weapons, of course, according to the old code belonged to young Gaston, and without a moment's consideration he chose pistols; then somebody, as a half-drunken joke, suggested that they fight in the dark, each man having *one* shot and equally as good a chance as the other in the darkness. The idea was a good one, and it was acted upon, and the long dining-room was chosen; the window shutters were closed and securely fastened, and the young men, each having braced himself for the ordeal with a stiff drink of brandy, took their places, one at each end of the long room, and the door was closed and locked upon them. The signal agreed upon for the young men to begin the hunt for the other was the popping of a champagne cork, in the hall outside, by the other guests. The bottle was opened, and with a loud pop the cork flew to the ceiling, and while the guests were drinking, just outside, the men inside were straining every nerve and sense of hearing to locate his opponent. For several moments all was still within the dining-room, then the stealthy steps of one of them could be heard creeping softly about, then came the fall of a chair as one of them had stumbled against it with uncertain, staggering step, and then there came the sound of a hurried rush of feet, and a loud report told the eager listeners that one of the men had taken his chance, but had he failed or won they knew not, nor could they tell which it was, guest or host. The wine was left forgotten now by the listeners, as they

gathered about the door listening with straining ears for the second report which they expected every moment to hear, but all was silent inside now, not a sound could be heard but their own suppressed breathings, and the beat of the storm on the windows and the night wind outside. Each moment seemed an hour to the now almost sober listeners. Ten minutes passed, and as the silence at last inside became almost unbearable, one of them called through the keyhole:

"Go on; what are you waiting for?"

There was no answer, and after a moment's impatience at the delay, some one suggested that a light be produced, and that they go in and see what the strange silence could mean. Again some one shouted through the keyhole, but there came no answer or sound from within, and then a light being produced they unlocked the door, and holding the lamp high over their heads, they slowly and cautiously entered, as if fearful of they knew not what. A death-like stillness prevailed; the guests peered nervously and anxiously about the room—up and down, and there among the shadows at the end of the long dining-room table, outstretched on the floor in a pool of blood, with a bullet hole in his side, lay the form of Claud Gaston, the young French fellow from Savannah, with a smile on his handsome young face, and grasped tightly in his hand was his pistol still undischarged, but he was alone. Expecting each moment to see the form of young Darrel, huddled behind some article of furniture, or crouched in some dark corner, the guests began to look about, hut in vain; their host had disappeared completely. The guests, now horrified and sober with alarm, stood looking at each other in wonder and fear. Where was Chester Darrel? The windows of the dining-room had all been securely closed and fastened, and the door, the only means of entrance or exit to the room, was also locked on the outside, and the closest search failed to reveal anything whatever like a trap-door or secret passage anywhere, but it was only too plain that the shot fired was by young Darrel, and it had slain his guest, and now where was he? He could not have passed out when the door was open when the guests entered the room. That was impossible, as a number of them stood in the doorway at that time, and all were positive that he had not passed them. The body of the young French fellow was carried up-stairs by the servants, and together the guests made a systematic search of the whole house from attic to cellar, and all through the grounds, but it was all

in vain, nothing was found, not even the slightest clew of the missing man. The shutters of the dining-room were found undisturbed, and not even a footprint on the soft gravel outside the windows could be found. Chester Darrel had as completely disappeared as if the earth had opened and swallowed him; mysteriously disappeared in a most mysterious manner.

The next day all the servants, assisted by the guests, began a most thorough search of the house and grounds once more, and finding nothing they scoured the surrounding country for miles around, but in vain, and they all returned, and the next day following the guests all scattered and left the old place alone and in the hands of the servants.

The old Colonel never cared to return to the old home again, and in the spring his wife passed away, and the old man, alone now, and broken-hearted at the strange, untimely end of his son, lived but a short time after the death of his wife, and then the war broke out soon after and one by one the slaves stole away and the old place was left deserted and alone. Stories were told about the surrounding country that the old place was haunted—haunted by the ghost of Chester Darrel, and the young French fellow from Savannah. Every Christmas night, it was said, they came at midnight and fought over again the duel in the long dining-room, and the people about seemed to grow to believe the stories, and the old house was left more to itself than ever.

Here, the old man finished his story, and still shaking his old gray head sat smoking away in silence. I looked at my watch, and was surprised to find that it was after midnight, and thinking that perhaps I might catch a few hours' sleep before morning, I got up and lit the pile of old broken furniture I had piled upon the hearth. A bright, cheerful blaze leaped up the huge mouth of the old chimney, and filled the old low raftered room with smoke, which poured out in clouds, nearly suffocating my companion and myself. The fault seemed with the chimney, which would not draw, thus causing the smoke to issue forth out into the room, and thinking something must be obstructing the draught, I took the cane or staff, which the old negro had used in walking, and I thrust it vigorously up the flue. It was as I had expected—there was something up there, and shutting my mouth and eyes to keep out the smoke as best I could, I reached up the whole length of my arm and gave another thrust, and I heard something drop and come clattering down the chimney and fall upon the hearth and roll out across the floor straight

toward the old negro, who sat dozing in his old arm chair. He opened his eyes slowly and gave one look at the object, and with a wild yell of terror, leaped to his feet and stood there regarding the object with chattering teeth and horrified gaze. As soon as I got some of the soot and smoke out of my nose and eyes, I looked more closely myself at the thing, and I saw there before me on the floor, a round shining, grinning skull, with its eyeless sockets fixed steadily upon the old negro, who in his fear and sudden shock, stood weak and trembling. Thinking perhaps I might find something more up the old chimney, I again reached up and poked about; this time I succeeded in dislodging a mass of bones which came rattling down onto the hearth, and nearly putting out my fire. To the bones a mass of rotten rags still hung to which were attached several buttons of a peculiar pattern, which the old negro regarded for a moment in horror and surprise, then as the truth began to dawn upon his feeble old mind, he exclaimed, huskily:

"Marse Chet, sure as I'm alive!"

And indeed it was true; evidently horror-stricken at the result of his shot in the darkness and hearing his foe fall, or perhaps fear-stricken after firing his one shot and fearing his opponent would take his life, he had climbed up the wide mouth of the old chimney, and had become fast up there upon the stout iron hooks inside, which were used in cleaning out the chimney. Of course the noise and confusion which reigned upon his strange disappearance, would completely drown his cries and calls for help; even the thick brick walls of the chimney would have completely muffled any sounds he could have made for assistance, and so, fast upon those cruel hooks, Chester Darrel must have suffered a terrible, miserable death, and after the old house was deserted his body had never been found until I had rudely dislodged it from its last resting place. I gathered up the remains as best I could, and with the help of the old negro, buried what was left of his young master out in the garden in the pouring rain, in plain sight from the window of the dining room where he had fired the shot that Christmas night which had slain his guest.

When we had completed our grewsome task I went back into the old room again and sat there smoking, the old negro and I, and I fell asleep. When I awoke the storm was over; it had stopped raining and the pale southern moon was stealing out from behind a dark bank of clouds, throwing a bright ray of golden light across the floor and up the side of the old fireplace.

In the morning I mounted my horse to resume my journey, and just before I rode away I gave the old man a handful of loose silver I had in my pocket and my bag of fine cut, and then I rode away. When I reached the turn in the road I looked back at the old house and saw the old negro sitting there sunning himself on the steps of the old veranda.

SIMPSON'S BAD LUCK.

BY ED. MOTT.

one could have been more lucky in love than Simpson was. He had won and married the handsomest and richest girl in the county. Better luck than attended him in business affairs never waited upon any one. He had made a fortune before he was thirty. In politics good luck had smiled on him from his first venture, and he had at last to positively refuse her further offered favors. But at cards he was the unluckiest man alive. No man loved the fascinations of a social game more than he. Whist, cribbage, euchre, poker—he played them all with equal enthusiasm and fondness, and with unvarying bad luck. It was not on record that Simpson had ever got up a winner from a single sitting. "Playing in regular Simpson luck" had come to be a proverb—not only in his circle, but in all that country round.

"I don't care for the money," he used to say (nor he didn't), "but I'd like to be able to say once that I won."

If he held four of a kind, it seemed to surely happen that no one stayed in with him, and he had only the ante draw to console him—except on one occasion. There was a jack-pot, and it had gone round four or five times, when Simpson opened. He had a right to, for he held three eights, and he made them four on the draw.

One by one the players laid down, until only one was left besides Simpson, and that one was on the point of quitting too. Simpson was mad.

"It beats the devil!" he cried. "You fellows must have some way of knowing when I get a hand, the way you always drop out on me!"

"Hold on, Simpson!" said the player referred to, who was young Frazier, the nervy oil broker. "I'll stay with you!" and he made good, threw his hand among the dead wood, and called for five cards.

"No!" exclaimed Simpson. "I won't have that! I've got a

sure hand, and I won't take advantage of a five card draw made just because I kicked. I don't want any sympathy stay!"

"Never you mind!" replied Frazier. "I don't have to bet my hand unless I want to, and I won't if I don't think something of it. What do you do?"

Of course Simpson had nothing else to do but bet his hand, which he did with a bad grace, for he felt that he had forced Frazier into the pot, and it wouldn't be any credit to him to win it. He made his bet stiff. Frazier looked at his five card draw, and quickly raised Simpson double his bet. Frazier had some reputation as a bluffer, and it nettled Simpson to think that he was hoping to maintain that reputation at his expense; yet, coming in as Frazier had, he hated to go on and win his money, and he told him so again.

"Never you mind me!" said Frazier.

So Simpson couldn't do anything but give Frazier a big raise back, which Frazier coolly saw and doubled. This went on for some time, when at last Simpson said:

"Oh, what's the use, Frazier? Things are my way to-night at last! I've got to win, but I won't call it a win, either, the way it came about. I call you."

Simpson laid down his four eights and reached for the pot.

"Opened on three," said he.

Frazier laid down four tens and took the pot.

"Got 'em on the draw," said he.

And that was the way Simpson's luck ran at cards. If he drew to a flush and filled, the other fellow would fill a bigger one and get the pot. If he didn't fill his flush and dropped out, he'd be sure to find that his hand would have been better than the other fellow's anyhow. Once, after losing everything for an hour, he said to another player, who had been playing in pretty bad luck, too:

"Let's change places."

They changed. From that time four out of five winning hands fell to the man who took Simpson's place, and he quit 'way ahead of the game. One time Simpson picked up his cards one by one as they were dealt to him. One, two, three, four aces showed up in succession.

"Everybody 'll stay out, of course!" he said to himself. "But if they don't, my time has come!"

It was Simpson's first say. The night was warm, and the windows of the room were up. Simpson sat immediately oppo-

site one. Before making his bet he shoved his chair back to get a drink of water from a pitcher on a stand behind him. A sudden puff of wind came in at the window. It caught Simpson's cards some way as they lay on the table, turned them face upward, and revealed each one to the astonished gaze of the players! Simpson's luck! There wasn't a man at the board who held less than three of a kind to draw to, and one held a pat diamond flush! They would have come in, of course, to a man. Nothing could have kept them out. No one said a word for at least a minute. Then Simpson tossed the exposed cards in the middle of the table and got up.

"I guess I won't play any more to-night," he said. "I'm liable to get four aces again, and if I hold 'em down and get to betting them, someone has got to hold a straight flush against me or the roof'll fall in, just to keep up my record for luck."

Simpson was noted for his persistence in coming in. He always drew cards, trying all sorts of combinations and chances to make a hand. He liked five card draws, especially after his experience with Frazier, but his anticipations of them provokingly failed to realize. The one single time that he declined to take a hand is one of the memorable incidents in his record. He had been playing with his usual luck. Finally a hand was dealt him that wasn't as good as eight high. He dealt it himself. When it came round to him to draw he declined.

"What!" said a player. "Pat?"

"No," replied Simpson. "I'm going to have good luck for once and stay out!"

There was some stiff betting on that round, and the winner raked in five hundred dollars on a ten full. Simpson turned up the five cards he would have held had he gone in, and simply said:

"My luck, that's all."

They made a king full.

Well, you might say why was Simpson so much of a chump as to keep on playing against such uniform and invariable bad luck? Suppose he didn't care for the money. Didn't he have any pride in himself that he was content to sit and see himself made the sport of chance night after night without the poor satisfaction of now and then getting even a temporary advantage by some display of skill or judgment? Wouldn't a man of pride and strength of mind quit playing when he found luck always pointing the other way?

Any man but Simpson, perhaps. It was just because he had pride and strength of mind that he kept on playing.

"You don't catch me knocking under to bad luck," he used to say. "As long as I'm a loser I intend to play. The first night I make a good up and up win out, then I quit."

Simpson made a trip to Europe. He met, as all voyagers so inclined do on ocean steamers, choice spirits who enjoyed cards. He played with his usual luck on the way over. That night, when he was to quit, was as great a distance away as ever, so far as all indications went. On the return trip Simpson met other choice spirits, and but little time he spent on deck. One night, in mid ocean, they were at the height of a particularly interesting game of perennial, never-wearisome, but often capricious poker. Simpson had filled a hand which seemed to disturb him. An officer of the steamer had just come down from the deck. Simpson lay his hand on the table, and turning to the officer, said :

"What sort of a night is it?"

"A glorious one, sir," replied the officer.

"Any sign of a storm ?"

"Moonlight, not a cloud in the sky, not a ripple on the ocean, not a speck on the horizon."

"No chance of running into a waterspout ?"

"Not the slightest."

"Nor danger of lightning from a clear sky ?"

"None whatever."

"Then," said Simpson, returning to the game, "I can't imagine anything else that might do me up, and I can say right now that this will be my last game of poker! I'll explain later, gentlemen."

The betting went on. Simpson never knew what hands were out against him, but they must have been strong ones, the way they were played. He knew what he held, though. A royal flush! He held the winning-out hand that night, and he knew it. The chips were piled high and higher on the table, and no one seemed inclined to quit.

"I've knocked my bad luck in the head at last !" Simpson kept saying to himself, as he tossed in his bets, bigger and bigger.

All other tables were deserted, and the excited players grouped about this one. The nerve tension of many was becoming strained almost to its limit, when suddenly there came a tremendous crash, a confusion of voices in tones of terror, and

words of hurried command, a total darkness, and a score or more of frightened men, struggling in an entangled mass here and there, whither they had been hurled by the shock. In the scramble and aimless rush in the darkness that followed the regaining of feet in the cabin, Simpson found himself hurried along until he stood on deck, where the ship's officers were actively engaged in assuring the terror-stricken passengers that there was nothing to fear—the danger was past. The moon was still shining brightly, not a cloud was in the sky, not a ripple on the ocean. But off the port bow, a quarter of a mile away, loomed a great gray object, that gleamed and glimmered and glistened when the moonlight fell upon it, towering aloft, peaked and minaretted like some architectural pile adrift from oriental shores.

"And what do you call that?" asked Simpson of an officer, grimly.

"An iceberg, sir," was the reply. "It came up suddenly ahead of us, as if it rose from the depths of the sea in our path, which, as a matter of fact, it did—a submerged one, sir, suddenly freed and booming upward. We had nearly time to clear it entirely, sir, but not quite."

Simpson went back to the card room. The lights had been renewed. Scattered about the apartment like wind blown leaves were cards and chips, in a hopelessly mingled mass, entirely unrecognizable as to form or ownership.

"I might just as well have held six high!" said Simpson, as he viewed the wreck. "But this is the last! I wouldn't have been surprised at tempests, waterspouts or lightning, but when they begin to dig icebergs out of the depths of the sea, and play 'em against me, I think it's time for me to quit!"

And he quit. Was there ever such bad luck as Simpson's?

NOT ROMANTIC.

BY JOHN LAWRENCE.

OME years ago, when I was old enough to be a soldier and young enough to be insanely curious about everything, I enlisted in a veteran regiment of volunteer cavalry. Raw recruits are nuisances to veterans, as I learned when I myself became a veteran, but two or three of our older men endured me patiently, and to one of them, Burney, I attached myself closely because there seemed some mystery about him.

There was nothing unusual about Burney's manner. He was a plain, matter-of-fact fellow, about forty years of age, who seldom talked about himself or anything else. He never made trouble, nor got drunk, yet often he would be absent from roll-call for days at a time; when he returned he never was held to account for his absence, although other men were severely punished for being out of camp over night. When I asked other old members of the company how and why Burney got off so easily for his absences, I was told, in tones that discouraged further questioning:

"Shut up!"

Once I asked Burney himself, and the reply, given without any show of indignation or other emotion, was:

"None of your business."

One day, while I was wondering aloud about Burney in the presence of a veteran to whom I had just given a large plug of captured tobacco (as I did not use the weed) the veteran said:

"If you'll keep still about it afterward, I'll tell you what you want to know about Burney. He's really a spy, although we call him a scout. There are several of our men in the same business."

Now if there was any man more than another that I wanted to see and know all about, it was a spy. Had a known spy and a distinguished general called on me at one and the same time, the general would have had to cool his heels. I determined to corner Burney and pump a lot of romances from his memory. Fortune soon favored me, for one day our company did the cav-

alry picketing of a road, and while the relief to which Burney and I belonged was not on post, the veteran suggested that we should go outside the lines, find a farm-house, and trade some coffee or salt for onions or sweet potatoes to vary the monotony of camp fare. We started, and I was not astonished that we passed the outposts without being questioned, for of course a spy could go where he liked, even if a raw recruit chanced to be with him. Within five minutes I blurted out:

"Burney, I know your secret—that you're a spy—a scout, I mean. But don't fear; I won't betray you."

"Won't, eh?' Well, how in thunder could you? We're not in the Confederate army, are we?"

Evidently I had made a mistake, so I talked industriously to get out of it. Burney listened a little while, then he said:

"I s'pose you think there's something secret about my work? Something mysterious about my position in camp? But there isn't—not a bit of it. Once in a while I go out for some information, just as some others of our men do. That's all."

"But you must have lots of romantic adventures?"

"Bosh!"

This was not encouraging, yet I persisted with:

"Do tell me about one of your trips—only one. I'll promise never again to ask you for another story."

"That's letting me off easy," said Burney, after a moment of reflection, "and I'd take you at your word if there was anything to tell. But there isn't anything worth telling. Let—me—see; what on earth did I see and do on my last trip?"

"That's just what I want to know. Tell me all of it, from beginning to end, and I'll trust myself to find some romance in it. You're so used to adventures that you——"

"Adventures be hanged! I tell you that there aren't any in the business, except where you find them in books. About that last trip now: I started while the company was on picket, so there would be someone to lead my horse back to camp. It was night, and I went out on foot between two of our outposts, just as any man from the enemy's side might have slipped in between them."

"What disguise did you wear?"

"None at all. I had on a soft, shabby felt hat, such as thousands of men in both armies wear, a whitey-gray flannel shirt, such as you are wearing now, and our light blue uniform trousers, so stained with dust and mud that no one would have thought

they weren't gray. I wore a light blue army overcoat, but half of the Johnny rebs wear the same kind, bought, captured, stolen or found."

"Did you carry a rifle or revolvers?"

"Neither. I was going for information, not to fight. Besides, I had to be in condition to pretend that I was a deserter from the Union army, if I could gain anything by it, or save myself from trouble, and deserters don't make a show of weapons."

"But suppose you had been obliged to fight for your life?"

"Then I should have had to depend upon the sheath-knife that I carry in my boot, to cut bread and meat with, lop branches and small firewood with, and such work. It's long, sharp, never unloaded and always noiseless."

I shivered and begged him to go on.

"I went through fields and woods, keeping as close as possible to the road, so as to hear any body of troops that might be moving, but I walked carefully, so as not to be heard by any one who was not specially listening. I was making for the hut of a colored man who lives two or three miles this side of the river. I'd made friends with him, during one of our scouts, by giving him a little salt and promising more in a few days if he would get me some information that was worth anything. Salt is awfully scarce and high-priced in the Confederacy, so a nigger has a hard time in getting any for his meat. Well, my darky wasn't at home, so I went on."

"What did you want to find out?"

"Oh, anything that was going on. In some places horses and forage is being collected; in others wagon-loads of smoked meats are on their way to the Confederate army. In some other place recruiting or conscripting is going on; perhaps, too, an officer or two of the Southern army may be home on leave of absence. Information about any such things may start our regiment out to gobble something, and to weaken the enemy to the extent of what is gobbled. Well, finally I reached a little town, and lounged about, asking questions."

"But how did you know the Union men from the others?"

"I didn't know them apart. I wasn't looking for Union men anyway; I was looking for information. I wasn't fool enough to talk politics. I pretended to be a reb, and on my way to Richmond to collect a note due to old Knighton—you remember him?—he has a farm near our camp. I had the note with me, too, to prove my yarn; it's a note the old man gave me to collect, for a

commission, if we chance to get into Richmond during one of our raids."

"But what did you do when the enemy's soldiers questioned you?"

"There weren't any of them to question me; the South has no soldiers to spare for little, out-of-the-way places. Well, an hour or two of chat with the man I put up with that night, got me all the information worth having, from that part of the country. In return, I gave him such crooked stories about things down this way, that the enemy will have hard work to straighten them out, when they get them."

"Then you had to lie?"

"'Twasn't lying," Burney retorted. "'Twas war."

"Ah! Go on."

"I learned that there was a grist mill a mile or two away, full of wheat and corn, to be ground for the enemy's commissary department. I also found out where there were about a dozen good horses, to go to the Johnnies' artillery. It did make my heart ache, not to be able to sneak those horses away and bring them into our camp."

"That would have been stealing."

"Not a bit of it! It would have been war. Still, I got some consolation in slipping out of the house that night, finding the grist mill, and setting it a-fire. I made a thorough job of it, too."

"Incendiarism!"

"Bosh! 'Twas war. When you shoot an enemy in battle do you call it murder?"

"No; but setting a building afire is—well, it's more cold-blooded than shooting a man during an action."

"Oh! It is, eh? What a savage you're going to be, if you believe heat of blood makes any act more decent."

I made haste to change the subject, saying:

"Of course you made yourself scarce after firing the mill?"

"Of course I did nothing of the kind. That would have fastened suspicion upon me, so that I could never have gone into that neighborhood again. No, sir; I was back in the house and fast asleep again before daylight, and of course I hadn't been missed. Next day I got the job of driving one of several carts that were loaded with bacon for the Johnny rebs at Petersburg, and I didn't have to make any explanations along the road, for the bacon-cart was sufficient passport."

"And at Petersburg you made drawings of the forts and counted

the enemy's soldiers, and took important papers from the Southern commander's headquarters."

"Oh, say! What sort of war stories have you been reading? How do you suppose a farmer soldier, as I pretended to be, could get at a commanding officer's papers? As to the forts, I got into only one of them, and couldn't have got there if I hadn't made an excuse to see old Knighton's son, whose regiment I knew the number of. I was going to give him a bogus message from his family, and pump some information out of him."

"How did you have the heart to play so mean a trick upon a man?"

"I didn't have it, for Knighton wasn't in the fort; his company was somewhere else that day, and I didn't want to get into trouble by having to ask my way about the lines. Still, I picked up some information that may be useful if ever we get close to Petersburg. Two or three days later I reached camp and reported. You can't see much adventure and romance in that story, can you?"

"No, but you must have left out part of it. How about the Union men who were glad to see you? Besides, you must have met some beautiful Southern women, and——"

"Hang women!" growled Burney. "If it wasn't for a woman I might be a good deal more useful on such trips than I am."

"Oh, oh, oh! And you said there was no romance in the business!"

"There wasn't, either, in the case I'm thinking of."

"Tell me about her, please, and let me see if you're not mistaken."

Burney frowned; then he said he wished we could find a plantation and get the vegetables we had come out for; he hadn't meant to venture so far outside the lines, he said. It was evident, however, that his mind was busy with the incident to which he had alluded. Finally he said:

"'Twas this way—don't you ever dare to breathe a word of this to any of the boys, if you don't want your throat cut. One night when I was outside the lines I stopped at a house to beg for something to eat; I was almost starved. The only people in the house were a woman and her little boy; the youngster was down with a hard fever, so, of course, his mother was half crazy. She had no near neighbors; her husband had been killed in one of the early battles of the war, there wasn't a doctor within ten miles, nor was there any place to get medicines. The woman,

who was a clever creature, though not what you could call handsome, was almost dead of exhaustion, for she had been watching the little fellow night and day for a week.

"Well, I've done a lot of nursing among our folks at home, and I know pretty well what to do in cases of fever, and I'm never without some medicine about my clothes in this swampy country, where a man never knows what day and hour the ague may strike him. I told the little woman that if she wouldn't let any one know of my presence, then or afterward, I'd help her pull the youngster through. I explained that I was a private scout—really a spy from Richmond; that it would go very hard with me if I were found neglecting my duty, even for the sake of a sick child, and if the Yankees were to find me there, in one of their uniforms, they would make haste to shoot me.

"She promised, and she got a good long sleep, while I looked after the youngster for two days and nights. In her waking moments I learned all she knew about Southern soldiers and stores in all the country round. Then I departed, promising to hurry back with some more medicine from Richmond; the child's symptoms bothered me. I kept my word about the medicines, although I got them in our own camp; at the same time I gave our Colonel the information that put him on the track of those fifty Johnnies and horses he scooped—you remember?

"Our regimental surgeon said that the symptoms I described meant typhoid fever, so you may be sure it took a lot of work to keep the little chap alive. It took a lot of medicine, too, which frequently took me back to camp. The woman was so grateful for what I was doing, and she believed my story so thoroughly, that she took long trips on foot to find out what was going on that might interest me; she would have tramped day and night, I believe, to keep me near the child.

"Little by little the boy—a chap barely big enough to talk a few words, began to get well, and he and I got very fond of each other. I taught the mother more about cooking for sick folks than she'd ever known before, and our surgeon gave me tonics for her, for she had got awfully run down in her anxiety over her youngster. Well, that woman's gratitude got too big for her to put into words, so she put it into her face, and just let me tell you, my boy, that a woman never looks better than when her heart is full of thankfulness about something."

"Yet all this time you were playing double with her."

"Bosh! Don't you suppose I've ordinary human feelings? I

was awfully, honestly sorry for her, and I meant what I said when I promised to save her boy for her—as I did. Where was I?—confound you, you've nearly made me miss the point of the story, but here it is. By something I had said, without any purpose, she knew that I wasn't a married man. One day she mistook for earnest a bit of banter such as men are always giving to women, and she let me know—very modestly and prettily too, that her heart and hand and little farm were mine whenever I chose to claim them."

"Oh, Burney. And you said there was no romance in spying. Go on. What next?"

"What next? Why, I found my best source of information completely ruined—yes, sir—completely ruined. I couldn't accept her offer—I couldn't pretend to, for all the information in the world. I was ready to do almost anything for the Union, but I drew the line at make-believe love—playing with a woman's heart. I told her it never would do—that she was worthy of the love of the best man alive; I meant it, too, for I'm a pretty fair judge of human nature, even if I am a homely old bachelor. I told her that it would be criminal for a fellow whose chances of being killed were specially good to even let himself fall in love, and tell a woman of it, until the war ended. She promised to wait for me, but I protested; I said I'd surely be killed, as my work was extra hazardous. The upshot of it is that I daren't go near that house again; I've set up a yarn, through the colored man I spoke of, to make her believe me dead, and I know it won't make her happy. Hang the luck."

Burney looked so unhappy that I was almost sorry that I had begged for the story. I was glad when I saw a house a little way ahead, and Burney had something new to talk about.

"An old minister lives there," said he, "so I guess we're not likely to be shot at. It's always best to be on the safe side, though, so hold up your haversack—that's the flag-of-truce sign for soldiers who want to do any trading."

We rode slowly up to the house, Burney cautioning me against dismounting. "It's Southern style," he said, "for a visitor on horseback to keep his saddle until somebody comes out of the house and says something. I wish somebody would come quick, for we've been away from the reserve an awful long time, and I'll bet——"

What Burney had intended to bet was never learned, for as he

spoke the front door of the house flew open and a plainly dressed woman with a radiant face dashed down the steps, shouting:

"You're alive! You're not dead!"

Burney looked more dead than alive as the woman leaned against the horse and him, kissed his hand again and again, and looked up at him with happy eyes, which nevertheless were full of tears.

"How pale you look!" she continued. "It's easy to see that you've been very sick. You ought not to be out of your bed. Oh, if Georgie and I could have known where you were after all you have done for us!"

Burney answered not a word, but continued to look as if about to drop from his saddle and die.

"You shan't go away from me again," the woman continued, "until I have the right to care for you. You saved the life of my child; you saved mine! 'Tis my right and my duty to save yours! Don't shake your head at me in that way and make such strange faces and nods toward your companion. I'm not ashamed of what I am saying. I'd be glad to have the whole world know that I love you and worship you, and won't be separated from you again!"

"Listen to me—carefully," said Burney, in a hoarse whisper. "You can see that I am on duty. I've no time for anything or any one—not even for you, who are the best woman I ever knew—God bless you!"

"Then I shall follow you—Georgie and I! We will take our chances."

"A camp is no place for a woman and a child," Burney answered. "Besides, you really don't know anything about me. I can tell you something that will make you hate me at once and forever—I shall have to do it, too. All I ever did for you and your sick boy I was fully in earnest about; I've got a heart, like any other human being. But, I've been the worst liar you ever heard of. I never told you the truth about anything except yourself and your child. I never was a Confederate scout, nor a Confederate of any kind; I'm a Union spy, and I glory in it. There!"

The woman did not start; neither did she faint. She looked calmly up, and replied:

"No matter what you are or have been, if you will be my husband."

"You shall have your way," said Burney, rapidly; "I call my friend here to witness that I say it—you shall have your way the

very first day that I can get the time to find you and take you to a minister, but——"

"The time is now," the woman interrupted, "for this very house belongs to a minister. I am here only by accident, or brought here by a special Providence, for I wanted to consult the good old man about some matters that he understands. Georgie? O—o—oh, Georgie!"

A small boy came to the door, stared an instant at the spectacle before him, shouted "Papa man!" and hurried to his mother, who still leaned against Burney's saddle.

"Tell Elder Gray to come out here—at once," said his mother. Burney looked at me desperately yet sheepishly; then he looked earnestly down at the woman, who returned his gaze with a happy, modest smile. She was so unlike any woman I had ever read about in a book, that I couldn't be sure as to what to think of her ways and doings. In a moment or two the child returned with an old and very deliberate man, who looked searchingly at Burney and me.

"Elder," said the woman, "this is the good man I told you about. He isn't dead, although he looks as if he had been not far from the grave. We want to be married—at once, for he must go back to his duty."

"Misguided sister," exclaimed the minister, severely, "would you marry an enemy of your country?"

"I'll marry the man who saved my child's life, and saved mine at the same time."

"I cannot prevent you," sighed the minister. "Join your right hands."

Burney slipped from his horse; I, feeling that I was his "best man," dismounted and removed my hat, which I afterward learned was bad form at a military wedding out of doors. The simple ceremony was soon ended; Burney kissed his bride, who threw her arms around his neck; then suddenly the pallor departed from Burney's face, and the plain, matter-of-fact, middle-aged chap actually looked handsome. But suddenly his manner changed again; looking sharply at me he said:

"Hurry back to the station; go right on to the regiment, and tell the Colonel—nobody else, what you've seen."

"But——"

"Go—quick!"

"Burney, I won't stir until you give me your word and oath, before your wife and this minister, that you are not going to de-

sert to the enemy." (Other men—good men, too, of our command, had married Southern women and afterward deserted.)

Burney snatched his pistol from his belt, pointed it at me, and said, very slowly and distinctly:

"Do as I said! Don't put your hand to your revolver! Mount! Go!"

I went. The Colonel looked greatly troubled when I made my report. Three days later I was doing picket duty on another road, when I heard, about dusk, a movement in some bushes near me. I challenged; there seemed something familiar in the voice that answered:

"Friends, but without the countersign."

"Advance—one, and be identified."

An unarmed figure came slowly toward me. When it was within several paces, I again shouted:

"Halt!"

"Don't you know me, you stupid fellow?" was the reply. "I'm Burney; the others are my wife and little boy. I've been prowling the outposts all day, to find which one you were on, and when I would have to strike it to get in under the darkness."

"I should think you'd have come by daylight when nobody'd have made you any trouble. The whole regiment knows you by sight and name."

"Yes, but they don't know—*them*," drawled Burney. "I think the older a man is when he marries, the more afraid he is of being laughed at by his friends. You're going to pass us in, though?"

"Certainly, and you'll have no trouble to make your way through the camp from here. Where are the other two?"

"About a quarter of a mile back the road, on my horse. I'll hurry back and lead them up. Say! How did the Colonel take the news?"

"He looked doubtful and troubled. But see here, Burney—what made you look and act so strangely the other day, right after you were married?"

Burney hung his head and was silent a moment. Then he said:

"Why, the truth is, I was a little afraid of myself, I felt so unusual. The fact is, it was the first time in my life that a woman's arms had been around my neck, and I didn't know what might come of it."

THE GENTLEMAN FROM ARIZONA.

BY ARTHUR POTTOW.

ONE winter evening, a few years ago, Charley Winthrop stood warming himself at an open fire in an apartment of the house in which he lived in New York.

There was a more than usually pleasant look upon his handsome face. For one thing he had been to Manhattan Field, and had seen Yale, his old 'Var-ity, triumph. But this fact, gratifying to his feelings as it was, did not account for the frequent quiet laughs which he gave. He held in his hand a letter, and this was the probable cause, for whenever he glanced at it his merriment increased.

He read it again—for the twentieth time during the day—and as he was alone he read it aloud.

"Your Uncle Ephraim, of Denver," the letter said, "will be at your house to-night, sometime. He will probably present himself in such a form as to hide his identity, for he wishes to put you to a test. He wants to discover what your real character is, and will take you by surprise. The writer ascertained this by accident, and made haste to warn you, having a friendly interest in you for your mother's sake. Don't neglect this advice."

"Wonder who the man is who sent this letter; one of my mother's old Denver friends probably," mused Charley. "Anyway, it was awfully good of him. By Jove! I'll get even with Uncle Eph before this night's through!"

When Charley received the letter in the morning, his first care was to dispatch a telegram to Denver. He received a reply, saying that his uncle had started for New York, and according to his informant was about due there that evening.

For nearly twenty years Ephraim Harley had lived in the West, toiling hard and gaining riches, and during this time he and his nephew had never met, though they frequently corresponded. The circumstance of his visiting New York, after such a prolonged absence, without notifying his nephew, added weight to the warning contained in this mysterious letter.

"By jingo!" cried the young man, walking rapidly up and down the room, "I see it all. Old Eph's heard of my extravagance and recklessness, and he thinks I'm another Charles Surface. He's returning loaded with dollars, like Sir Oliver Surface in Sheridan's play, and if he finds my heart's all right, I'll fare as well as the hero of the drama did. Heaven knows money will be very acceptable just now."

It was an odd freak on his uncle's part, but he was not greatly surprised that the old gentleman's visit was to be made under such peculiar circumstances. He knew, for he had heard his mother often say so, that her brother delighted in perpetrating practical jokes on his friends, and no doubt the habit was with him still.

Charley Winthrop's financial position was so well defined, that it was only a matter of time, and a very short time, too, when the crash must come. Meanwhile, true to his nature, he was as light hearted as ever.

People said that he was the gayest bachelor in New York, but when they said so they did not mean to imply that he was vicious, for this would not have been true. He bewildered his friends by his eccentricities, or dazzled them by his reckless extravagance, but he never shocked them. His record might have been better, but it could easily have been worse.

At this moment, arrayed in evening dress, he was awaiting the arrival of nine or ten of his friends, whom he had invited to a bachelor dinner at his house to celebrate his birthday.

"Seven-thirty," he said, looking at his watch; "those fellows ought to be here soon," and as he said the words, Parker, his English servant, appeared at the door.

"Mr. Morrison," he announced, as a tall young man entered the room.

"Why Jack, old chap, I'm glad to see you. How are you?" was the cheery greeting of the host. "I've something to tell you."

He had determined to take Jack Morrison into his confidence, but his intention was frustrated. Scarcely had he spoken when in quick succession a number of noisy, laughing young men arrived.

All these "Jacks" and "Charleys" and "Reggies," as they were called, were soon busily engaged in discussing the football game and quarreling over the result.

"I *must* tell them," said Winthrop, "it's too good to keep to myself."

But he had no chance. The conversation only stopped when there came a loud and continuous ringing at the street bell. For a moment everybody was silent.

"Can't be the sheriff," laughed Jack Morrison.

"I don't expect him—yet," answered the host, smiling too.

He had moved as near the open door as possible, and from where he stood he could hear talk going on in the hall downstairs, and was able to catch most of the words.

"I reckon, young feller, yer boss 'd make ye skip ef he war hyar. By gosh! this ain't the way to treat a gen'leman," said a voice, the tone of which and the language being distinctly of the West.

Charley instantly thought of the mysterious letter and smiled. "Uncle Eph!" he muttered. "Well, I'm ready for him."

He rang the bell, and Parker appeared.

"What is it, Parker?"

"Hit's a low fellow has wishes to see you, sir, and I can't get rid of 'im."

"Wishes to see me, does he, Parker? Why, show him up at once. I won't keep any man waiting."

"Except a creditor," said Jack Morrison, *sotto voce*.

Parker was so well accustomed to his master's eccentricities, and so well drilled, that he had never displayed any surprise at his actions. He blamed himself severely for having done so on this occasion. He had distinctly raised his eyebrows.

"Jim Brook of Brookville, Arizona, thet's me. Say, ye kin put 'Mister' on to et, d'ye hear?"

Mr. Jim Brook's voice was so loud and penetrating, and every word he said on the stairs to the servant was so audible to Charley Winthrop and his guests, that there really was no necessity to announce him. He had announced himself. But Parker never forgot the proprieties.

"Mr. James Brook!" he said in a loud voice as the visitor appeared.

"Jim, Mister, Jim, I reckon 's 'bout the size of et, interrupted the gentleman from Arizona, "thar's no 'James' 'bout me."

"Jim or James," said Charley pleasantly as he advanced to meet him, and proffered his hand. "Either will find himself equally welcome here."

The host and his visitor shook hands heartily.

"Yer the whitest man I've struck in this big town, mister," said Jim Brook.

"Charley's overdoing it a bit this time," whispered Algy Sinclair to Jack Morrison.

No one else made any remark or gave any indication that he felt surprise at the strange conduct of his host, though all the guests might have done so without having their good breeding questioned.

For Jim Brook was anything but a presentable person. His attire and appearance furnished a remarkable contrast to the living pictures in black and white that were around him.

Clothed in well worn garments he had a ragged beard and long, unkempt hair, and his shrunken trousers and several apertures in his shoes showed him to be as sockless as Jerry Simpson himself. His red nose gave him a vicious look, and not the least of his charms was a black patch, which apparently concealed the loss of an eye.

Before Charley could ask him the nature of his business dinner was announced.

"You must dine with me, Mr. Brook," said Charley; "we can have our talk later. No, no, I won't take a denial. This is my birthday and I drive no man from my board. Parker, place a chair for Mr. Brook."

"I say, old fellow," whispered Algy Sinclair, "have we got to eat with Dusty Rhodes?"

"Consider him the skeleton at the feast," answered Jack Morrison. "Don't crowd him too close and you won't get hurt."

"Take Mr. Brook's hat, Parker."

"Yes, sir."

"Go slow, young man," said the gentleman from Arizona, handing the servant a dilapidated derby whereof the brim and the crown seemed about to part company, "or ye'll do et a mischief."

His eyes followed the hat as if it were a relic of inestimable value, until Parker had disappeared. Then he sat down.

He not only found himself at Charley Winthrop's table, but inasmuch as he sat at his host's right hand, he might consider himself the guest of honor.

As the dinner proceeded, Charley saw that it was with difficulty that his friends kept their astonishment within due limits. But as they became warmed with wine, they paid less attention to Mr. Jim Brook, and more to the funny stories that were following each other without cessation.

Now Charley was watching his special guest quite keenly, and none the less so because he appeared to be indifferent to the stranger's actions. He became quite sure of the man's identity, for his apparent age and figure tallied with that of his Uncle Ephraim, so far as he could judge from what he had heard, and from portraits he had seen.

If Jim Brook had been accustomed to polite society he certainly succeeded marvelously well in concealing the fact. Charley thought he rather overdid the part he was assuming. But this very circumstance confirmed his suspicions.

"He doesn't know where to draw the line," said the young man.

The gentleman from Arizona might have been rehearsing for a public performance as a sword swallower from the way in which he thrust his knife down his throat, and of the duties of the fork he entertained the most elementary notion.

Still he did not drink from his finger bowl and he was entitled to credit for such abstinence, notwithstanding that his refraining from doing so, so far as the other guests knew, was probably due to the fact that he had a deep-rooted objection to the liquid the vessel contained.

There was little formality at the dinner, and after coffee had been served, the guests moved about freely, interchanging places and applying themselves vigorously to the wines before them.

The host took advantage of this proceeding to whisper in the ears of several of his friends.

"Don't look surprised, old chap, at what I'm going to tell you," said Charley, "I expect you were astonished when you saw him sit down with us. Your faces said as much, and I'm not surprised. Well, now don't shout, Jim Brook's simply my rich Uncle Ephraim disguised. He's worth millions of dollars, my boy. He thought to play me a trick, but this time he got left."

Those to whom Charley had spoken hastened to acquaint their neighbors with this astounding piece of news, and in a few minutes the behavior of all the guests towards the stranger had undergone a change. Notwithstanding their host's admonition they displayed their altered feelings in the respect with which they treated the disguised millionaire. Many were the congratulations Charley received upon his shrewdness.

"It's the smartest thing Charley ever did," said one man, and he expressed the general opinion.

All the men at the table wished to drink with Jim Brook, and he gratified their desire, never refusing what was offered him.

He rose rather unsteadily to his feet, and with shaking hands held his glass before him.

"Gents all," said he, "'fore we part I'd like to jest say 's yer the squarest lot I've ever chipped in with. As fer you, mister," —addressing Charley Winthrop— "yer a peach. Say, what are ye anyway?"

"I'm a philosopher," answered the young man with a laugh.

"Never heard of that bis'ness 'fore, mister. What may et be?"

"It's a man——"

"Stop!" cried Algy Sinclair. "Jack's going to tell us."

"It's a man," said Jack Morrison, sententiously, "who ignores the past, lives for the present, and forgets the future."

"Wal, Mister Philos'pher, an' gents all, yer dinner's good, and yerselves are better. Hyar's all yer healths."

Mr. Brook emptied two glasses of champagne, for one was not sufficient to do justice to the sentiment.

"You mustn't go yet," said Charley, "you want to have a talk with me, don't you?"

But Jim Brook appeared to be past talking. He threatened to collapse and so it was decided to take him to Charley's room, where he might lie down and recuperate.

After his departure naturally he formed the sole topic of conversation.

"He's my mother's brother," said Charley Winthrop.

"The family likeness was remarkable," observed Jack Morrison.

"My dear Charley," said one of the young men, "pardon me for saying so, but what a very eccentric family yours must be."

"We have some peculiarities."

"Guess he'll put you on your feet again," said Algy Sinclair.

"He must, Algy. I'm the only relative he has in the world, and after the way I've behaved to-night he can't go back on me."

The health of Charley's uncle was then drunk with three times three, and Jack Morrison had just started the bacchanalian ditty "For he's a jolly good fellow," and it was being sung to several different tunes, when Parker suddenly appeared in the room with a handsome elderly gentleman by his side.

"Mr. Hephraim 'Arley," said Parker, in his expressionless way, with his usual cruelty towards the aspirate.

The gentleman who was thus announced, advanced a few paces into the room with his hand outstretched, staring in a somewhat bewildered manner around him at the numerous faces he saw.

"I heard you drinking my health, and I thank you, gentlemen. Which of you is Charley Winthrop, my nephew?" This was all he said.

It was quite enough to strike everyone dumb with astonishment. Charley rallied from the shock quicker than the others. He realized almost instantly what had happened. Jim Brook had left the bedroom by another door, with the connivance of Parker, who, no doubt, was in the secret. Then he had changed his clothes hastily to reappear as the cultured gentleman and millionaire, Ephraim Harley.

Charley burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" he cried, "not bad, uncle. By Jove! it was a clever piece of acting."

Ephraim Harley stared in apparent astonishment at the laughing faces around him, and seemed to be too astonished to say anything.

"But I saw through it," continued Charley, shouting boisterously now. "I found you out in spite of the disguise, for to tell you the truth, Uncle Eph, you rather overdid the part. Still, your make-up was great."

"Young gentleman," said Ephraim Harley, sternly, "you must be either mad or drunk. Please explain yourself, if you're in a condition to do so."

All the young men saw that Uncle Eph was in a very bad temper, and that any further jokes at his expense would be very ill received, and their mirth was immediately restrained. Charley altered his tone too, for he did not wish to damage the good impression his previous conduct must have made.

But still he was bound to laugh loudly as he explained the events of the night to his uncle, and he felt that his doing so was only a farce, for of course the old gentleman was well acquainted with all that had passed, though he flatly denied the accusation.

"I'll see the scamp for myself, and have a talk with him, if he's fit to speak to me," said Uncle Eph, walking towards the bedroom.

"You won't find Mr. Jim Brook there, uncle. He's disappeared forever."

A few minutes later Uncle Ephraim came back and he had a letter in his hand.

"I found this," alluding to the letter, "in the room. It's addressed to 'Mr. Charles Winthrop.' You'd better read it."

"Oh, pray do it for me, sir," laughed Charley. "I daresay you're better acquainted with the writing. You'll find it easier to read than I will."

Charley gave a sly look at his companions as if to intimate to them that it was useless trying to deceive him. His guests were all awaiting the moment when Mr. Harley would make a full confession.

Savagely the last named gentleman tore open the envelope, for he was boiling with rage now, and he read aloud these words:

"I liked yer dinner and yer society very much, Mr. Winthrop, and I've taken jest a few things with me to remember you by. Being a philos'pher, ye won't mind. JIM BROOK."

Charley sprang to his feet and rushed frantically into the room. He found no Jim Brook there. Neither did any portion of his costly jewelry remain. Everything of a valuable and portable nature had disappeared.

Charley collapsed. He found he had been victimized by a clever scoundrel, who in some unaccountable manner, had obtained an accurate knowledge of Mr. Harley's movements, and had availed himself of it.

Each of the guests was sworn to strict secrecy, which means that within twenty-four hours the matter was the talk of the town.

Glad to escape from the raillery of his friends, and to recruit his fortunes, Charley Winthorp went out West with his uncle. The last time he was in New York—he shows himself there occasionally—he met his old friend Jack Morrison.

"Hello, Charley, old fellow, how are you? I want to ask you a question. Since you've been out West, have you run across 'the gentleman from Arizona?' Stop! Stop! Don't go!"

But Charley had fled.

How Mrs. Causely "Called" the Bluebells.

BY W. H. NEALL.

THEY were a delightful young married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Bluebell, and had resided in the quiet little village just about two weeks.

As yet, they had not cultivated the neighbors although the neighbors had religiously tried to cultivate them. Mrs. Causely especially; her lawn adjoined that of the Bluebells, and she felt it her duty to be sociable like.

Her laudable desire had a threefold object in it too; she wanted to know who they were; what they were, and—everything else worth knowing about them.

For Mrs. Causely was something of a gossip, to state it plainly, and the villagers looked to her for information on all important topics. The good woman did not wish to be considered inquisitive, far from it, merely "motherly," that was all. On the morning of the young couple's arrival, Mrs. Causely had leaned over the fence and seeing Mrs. Bluebell flitting in and out of the house like a happy bird, called to her. Obediently Mrs. Bluebell came to the fence and Mrs. Causely proceeded to be neighborly at once.

"Hadn't I better come over and show you how to regulate that range?" said she. "Mrs. Van Roden"—the previous occupant of the house—"had a terrible time with it 'til I showed her how.

"Then the valve of the pump gets out of kilter sometimes. I'll just run in and show you how to fix it.

"I reckon that you'd better let me help you set your things to rights. You're young at it, you know."

But to all these proffers of aid pretty Mrs. Bluebell shook her head and answered:

"No, thanks! Bert and I can manage very nicely."

"Stuck up thing!" Mrs Causely muttered as she went back to her kitchen.

"Likely as not they're afraid that I'll find out some of their family secrets. I'll just keep my eyes and ears open."

And she did.

But spy all she could, Mrs. Causely knew no more of the Bluebell family than she did the first day they took the cozy village house.

Every morning Mr. Bluebell kissed his wife at the door and stepped lively away towards the station, gayly waving his hand until out of sight, and every evening, upon his return from his business in the city, the little pink and white blossom of womanhood met him at the gate, and—more kisses.

"Soft as butter!" growled Mrs. Causely through the blinds. "They're not as good as they make believe to be."

But she was mistaken, for, on the two Sundays they had resided in the place, they had attended church, and had even intimated that in the near future they would probably connect themselves with it. This was good news to the Rev. Mr. Bingie, for his flock was not any too large, and as Mrs. Bluebell was a capital singer, she would greatly augment the choir.

On the second Sunday of the advent of the young couple, the Rev. Mr. Bingie had delivered a stirring sermon on "The Sins of the World," laying particular stress upon gambling.

He had evidently studied Hoyle's book of games, as well as several others thoroughly, for he seemed to have the names of the various kinds of hazard down to a dot.

Faro was dwelt upon and torn into pieces.

Dice was described as the load-stones of the devil.

Billiards and pool as the royal road to Hades.

Even poor, old maidish croquet was treated to a scorching.

Euchre was placed in the category of fashionable evils, leading by easy stages, to degeneration and disgrace.

And poker! Poker! and the good man shuddered at the mere mention of the name.

Poker was a sea of fire and brimstone, out of which the devotee never emerges.

A man who played poker was lost forever. His children were neglected; his wife abused; his money wasted, and ruin, poverty and death stared him in the face.

At this peculiar and extraordinary mode of using the sanctuary, Mr. Bluebell turned towards his wife, elevated his eyebrows and smiled his surprise.

Mrs. Bluebell slightly pursed her pretty lips, a sign that plainly said:

"Very much out of place."

All this little by-play Mrs. Causely saw and stored it up for future reference.

How she could use it she did not know, but she had always made it a point not to let anything escape her.

On the following Wednesday the opportunity of her life came; an opportunity for which she had long waited; the smiling, innocent appearing young couple was to be unmasked.

As usual Mrs. Causely was looking and listening through the blinds.

Mr. Bluebell had kissed his wife as of yore, and was swinging down the lane, when Mrs. Bluebell bethought of something and flew down to the gate, calling:

"Bert! Bert! Oh, Bert!"

He stopped and turned around, inclining his head to catch her words.

"Don't forget the poker to-night," she cried, "and be sure to bring the chips and the money for Kittie."

He nodded his head and went on.

Poker! That one word struck Mrs. Causely with stunning force.

Poker, the fire and brimstone pit; poker, that which the Rev. Mr. Bingie had particularly warned his people against.

Poker, and to-night.

"Oh! you deceitful persons," groaned Mrs. Causely, from the depth of her heart. "I saw your sly winking and smiling in church last Sunday; Mr. Bingie shall be warned of this; he shall know what kind of people he has to deal with; poker players, indeed."

She bustled into the dining-room.

A smell of tobacco smoke, that floated in through the open window, assailed her nostrils.

"Ah, there is Jack," she thought.

"He is a city boy and likely knows something of this dreadful game of poker. And I ought to know something of its evils also. Mr. Bingie didn't go into particulars; how could he?"

Jack Brown *was* a city boy, true enough; spending his college vacation at his aunt's, the aforesaid Mrs. Causely.

Jack had been introduced to several poker games at college, and he was so fascinated with the acquaintanceship, that the wee small hours came only too soon.

"Jack!" called Mrs. Causely. "Put out that nasty pipe and come here; I want to ask you some important questions."

The nephew carefully knocked out the ashes from his meerschaum bowl, and presented himself before his aunt.

"Jack," said she, severely, "do you play poker?"

"I do *not*," he answered, firmly, as well as truthfully.

No, poor boy, he was too reckless.

"I thought that you were not guilty of such an unpardonable sin," said she, "but—but—do you *know* how the game is played?"

"Yes, auntie, I must confess that I have seen quite a number *try* to play it."

"And it's a shocking game, isn't it? Just runs away with the money, doesn't it?"

"Well, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, and sometimes, at the end of the evening, you come out even. You never know until you cash in your chips."

"Chips!"

"Yes; they are a part of the paraphernalia. First you buy a stack of chips, you know; white ones, red ones, and blue ones."

"Chips!"

"That's what I said; I——"

"That's what *she* said too; oh! Jack! the sweet faced daughter of Satan."

Jack gazed at his aunt in wonder.

"She said what?" he finally asked. "And who is 'she,' and what makes you call her a 'daughter of Satan?'"

"Oh! never mind, Jack, never mind. Go on, go on; I'm so agitated."

"You certainly *are* rather flustered, auntie. Well, after the chips are all arranged before you, then the cards are dealt out. Next you begin to bet; ante; raise; call and show up, understand?"

"No, I don't understand at all," she replied. "But I know that a powerful lot of money is lost by it all; it's dreadful, dreadful. One man wins it all I suppose, and the others are left penniless."

"Well, I don't know about one fellow raking in all the boodle, though the cold blooded, nervy player generally does, unless there's a 'kittie.'"

"A 'kittie!'"

"Yes, in that event, the 'kittie' comes in for a share of the profits; at the end of a season's play, the 'kittie' is the best man by far."

"The 'kittie,' oh! Jack, *she* said that also. He was to bring money for the 'kittie,' this is terrible, terrible."

"Who said it, and who is to bring money?" demanded Jack, really getting vexed at his aunt's queer manner of speaking.

"Oh! I'm too disturbed to tell you now," she replied. "I *must* go over and see Mrs. Trumpter."

With that, she snatched up a sun-bonnet, and flew across the street to one of her old cronies.

In a few minutes the whole matter was laid before that lady, and Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell, Jack Brown, poker, chips and "kitties," were mixed up promiscuously.

The animated conversation ended by both ladies emerging from the house, Mrs. Trumpter going in one direction and Mrs. Causely in another, so that, by noon, Mrs. General Priest knew that "Mr. Bluebell carried on a gambling house, and had joined the church to entice the youth of the village."

Mrs. Gardiner was informed that "Jack Brown had lost all his money in Mr. Bluebell's house, and that Jack's father had sworn out a warrant for the arrest of the gambler."

Mrs. Perkins was led to understand that, "the police had raided Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell's house, and that Jack Brown had been poisoned by a 'kittie;' a deadly drug that gamblers use."

Wherever the story went, it was added to, distorted and redressed until the small village was in a ferment.

The Rev. Mr. Bingie was appealed to.

He immediately summoned the official members of his church around him, and a plan of action agreed upon.

It was arranged that the minister, the official members, and Mrs. Causely, the accuser, should call in a body, that very evening, upon Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell, and endeavor to turn them from the error of their ways.

In blest ignorance of what was in store for them, the young couple contentedly sat in their snug, little library; she sewing, and he reading aloud the evening paper.

Outside of the house a great crowd had congregated, and when the Rev. Mr. Bingie, supported by appointed committee, rang the bell, a solemn hush fell upon the multitude.

The door was opened by a rosy-faced Irish girl, and Mr. Bingie, clearing his throat, asked:

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell at home?"

"They be, sur," was the answer. "An' in the li-bo-ra-ry, sur."

With pious mien, the self-appointed censors filed in.

The young couple arose, and Mr. Bluebell advanced, offering his hand, whilst Mrs. Bluebell, with womanly instinct, mistrusted that they were about to be made the recipients of a surprise party, and mentally bemoaned their fate.

The husband shook hands all round, and invited his visitors to be seated.

They all found chairs with the exception of the Rev. Mr. Bingie, who as spokesman, remained standing. It was an embarrassing situation, but the minister had nerved himself for the ordeal.

With a preliminary throat clearing, he began:

"Brother Bluebell, I call you 'brother' for I understand that, in the near future you intend making application for admittance into our flock; Brother Bluebell, can a wolf enter the fold of the lambs without the lambs suffering?"

Mr. Bluebell thought not and Mrs. Bluebell looked frightened.

"Brother Bluebell, he who makes religion a cloak to cover a nefarious business, is a detriment to a community."

Mr. Bluebell again agreed but began to look annoyed, whilst his wife nervously toyed with a paper-cutter. "Brother," went on the Rev. Mr. Bingie relentlessly, "you and your wife were at church last Sunday, and heard my sermon. A powerful sermon, sir; a sermon that ought to turn people from paths of vice and corruption."

"It *was* a powerful sermon, Mr. Bingie," said Mr. Bluebell. "And I indorse most everything in it."

"You do; ah! the deceit of man. Beware, sir, beware, the pit is before you. You and your wife are standing on its brink."

Mr. Bluebell was now plainly angry and Mrs. Bluebell showed signs of great alarm, whilst Mrs. Causely was seen to apply her handkerchief several times to her eyes.

"Please explain, sir," said the young husband with dignity. "I fail to catch the drift of your conversation. It is an enigma to me."

"I will be brief, brother. It has come to my ears that you and your wife are slaves, yes, slaves to a hellish game."

The young couple's eyes were wide open with amazement.

"A game; what game?" queried Mr. Bluebell.

"What game? Ah, the brazenness of it."

And the Rev. Mr. Bingie rolled his eyes.

"What game? Poker, brother, poker. Poker that smells of

fire and brimstone; that steals the pocketbook and sears the soul."

Mrs. Causely wept audibly.

Mr. Bluebell glanced at his wife with a peculiar smile and she seemed reassured.

"So, I and my wife are accused of being slaves to poker, eh?" said the young man, reflectively scratching his chin. "Who brings the charge?"

"Brother Bluebell, it is my painful duty to inform you that Sister Causely, your neighbor, has undisputable evidence."

Mrs. Causely nodded her head in a sorrowful (?) fashion.

"This morning," continued Mr. Bingie, "she overheard your conversation relating to this evening. I will repeat it word for word, although I defile my tongue by so doing. Your wife uttered them, sir."

Straightway Mrs. Bluebell became agitated again.

"Ah, sister, you may well tremble, for those words have brought censure and disgrace upon you both."

"What were they, sir? This farce is entirely too long——" began the husband, much nettled.

"Patience, brother, patience," and the minister sighed, and then in a doleful voice continued:

"When you were half way down the street this morning your wife called after you. Do you remember that?"

Mr. Bluebell inclined his head.

"Her words, as I got them from Sister Causely, were: 'Don't forget the poker, to-night.' Do you remember them, brother?"

A great light suddenly broke over the intellect of Mr. Bluebell and Mrs. Bluebell was positively radiant.

"Why yes, I do remember Nan saying that," replied the husband, "you did, didn't you, dear?"

"I certainly did," she replied, concealing her face in her handkerchief to prevent laughing outright.

"You do not deny it then?" went on Mr. Bingie, impressively. "Ah! sister, shed tears, thy sins have found thee out. Now, brother, your wife followed up that request by another, it was—'and be sure to bring the chips!' Am I right?"

"Perfectly."

"And you admit that too; admit being asked to bring the chips. Chips, the devil's play-things; the base implements of the game, and did you obey your wife's instructions?"

"I did."

The Rev. Mr. Bingie could not find words to express his horror.

After recovering somewhat from Mr. Bluebell's admission, he proceeded to the third and last charge in the accusation.

"Now, brother, there is one more, and I am finished. Did—did you bring the money for the 'kittie?'—the most debasing thing of the whole transaction."

"I did not forget it," answered Mr. Bluebell.

His eyes twinkled, and the corners of his mouth twitched with an irrepressible desire to laugh.

The Rev. Mr. Bingie and the rest of the committee groaned.

The young husband now took the floor.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "whilst I thank you exceedingly for your interest in my wife and myself, and appreciate the trouble that you have taken to bring us back to the paths of rectitude, nevertheless people can make grand mistakes—inquisitive people especially."

This was a direct shot at Mrs. Causely, and she bristled accordingly.

"Now whilst I admit that my wife did remind me of the poker, the chips and the 'kittie,' as you say, yet I will state that Mrs. Bluebell and myself never played a game of poker in our lives, and in fact, never intend to. I will go further, I have never seen a poker game played."

"Or I, either," broke in Mrs. Bluebell.

A look of incredulity went around the room, and Mrs. Causely gave a decided sniff.

"Now, to show you how easily one may be mistaken," Mr. Bluebell continued, "I will give you ocular proof; excuse me, for just a moment."

He left the room but returned almost immediately, accompanied by the plump-looking servant girl who bore a platter.

"Now," said he, turning to the girl, "what I am about to ask you may appear a trifle singular, yet I want you to answer me without question. Will you please tell me how you rake the kitchen fire?"

"Phy wid a pohker, sur; to be sure."

"Good; and how did you rake it this morning?"

"Wid a sthick, sur; there beyant any pohker in the house, sur, till yez brought wan home the night, sur."

"Of course; and here it is," said Mr. Bluebell, opening his coat and exposing to view a bran new iron poker.

Mr. Bingie and the committee exchanged glances.

"Now, please," Mr. Bluebell went on, again turning to the girl, "kindly tell me what you have on that plate."

"Phy, they be chips, sur; preatey chips; the missis told yez to bring them the night, sur; phwat a funny question."

Mr. Bingie's committee arose, and Mr. Bingie himself was busy clearing his throat.

Mrs. Causely, as red as a lobster, eyed the door.

"Now, tell me your name, please," said Mr. Bluebell, still addressing the girl.

"Me name, is it? Phy, yez know it is Kittie Mullen, sur."

"Thank you, Kittie: that will do. Please take the poker and platter back to the kitchen."

Mr. Bluebell now turned to the discomfited people before him.

"To-morrow will be Thursday; Kittie's day out, you know. My wife was fearful that I would forget Kittie's wages; she was merely reminding me this morning, that is all."

Dumfounded, covered with confusion, and heartily ashamed of the whole affair, Mr. Bingie and the committee stood staring at the young couple.

All but Mrs. Causely; she was having a private case of hysterics in the corner.

Not a word did the Rev. Mr. Bingie say. What could he say?

Slowly, and in deep humility, the minister and the committee strode out of the house, supporting one poor, crushed female between them.

What their feelings must have been can only be imagined and what disconcerted them all the more, were the peals after peals of laughter that came from behind the closed door.

How the committee explained it all to the waiting throng is another story.

Jack Brown was so overcome with the absurdity of the thing, that he fell off of the limb of a tree, on which he was roosting, and broke his beloved pipe.

Poker, chips and "Kittie," were too much for Mr. and Mrs. Bluebell and they never attended the Rev. Mr. Bingie's church again; it would have been impossible for them to have kept their faces at all straight during the services.

MRS. MURPHY'S STUFFED TURKEY.

BY ERNEST JARROLD.

IT had been the custom for many years of the managers of the cement quarries on Cooney Island, where Michael Finn was employed, to give the men each a turkey on New Year's day. But owing to a depression in business the turkeys were not distributed on the day before New Year's, 1896. There were two practical jokers in the quarries, however, who determined that Mr. Finn should have a turkey. So they procured the legs of an old gobbler, and with the help of a piece of sacking, stuffed with straw and rags, and properly weighted, they managed to make a very fine imitation of a turkey, weighing eighteen pounds. To the imitation turkey was attached a card bearing the legend, written in a neat hand :

> The Hon. James Lindsley desires to express his appreciation of Michael Finn's services during the year by a small token. Happy New Year!

The turkey was placed in a conspicuous place in the quarry, and when Mike's gaze fell upon it he smiled broadly. The workmen gathered around as he carefully weighed the alleged turkey in his horny hand, and to the hearty congratulations replied :

"Well, lads, I'm sorry for ye, but it's aisy seein' that Mr. Lindsley knows well who airns his money !"

Throwing the turkey over his shoulder he trudged homeward up the Old Point road whistling "The Washerwoman's Lament," while the stars winked mischievously at him and the moon withdrew behind a cloud to hide her smiles. When he arrived at his shanty his wife relieved him of his burden with cries of delight, and when little Mike, his son, who had "eddication," read the card, Mrs. Finn threw her arms around her husband's

neck and kissed him, so keen was her appreciation of his worth as indicated by the card.

"It's only natural that you should have a turkey, Mike," said she heartily, "shure there's niver another like you in the quarry."

Mike, like most other men, accepted this encomium as his due, yet still he felt called upon to rebuke the partner of his joys by saying:

"Now thin, Biddy, I'm twinty-wan; don't be givin' me any of yer blather, but go and get the turkey ready for the pot."

"Faix I'll not, thin," replied Biddy.

"And why won't ye?" asked Mike in a surprised tone.

"Bekase I have the blue hin and a goose already kilt for the dinner to-morrow."

"Begorra, but that's too bad," replied Mike, "but I suppose the turkey'll keep, won't it?"

"Faith, it will not thin, Mike," said Mrs. Finn, "it's too fat and plump to keep long."

Her reply made Mike thoughtful for a few moments. He blew rings of smoke toward the ceiling and at last, taking his pipe from his mouth, exclaimed:

"Biddy, how many childer has Mrs. Murphy?"

"Three, Mike," was the reply.

"And her husband's dead three months, eh."

"Yis, three months lasht Tuesday, they buried him, God pity him!"

"Biddy?"

"Yis, Mike."

"We'll give the turkey to Mrs. Murphy."

"Oh, Mike, ye darlin' man, may the saints sthand bechune you and harrum! av coorse we will, acushla. The dear woman! won't she be crazy wid deloight!"

After supper the whole family started out to present the turkey to Mrs. Murphy. Little Mike went ahead with the turkey over his shoulder, his father and mother walking arm in arm behind. The man in the moon had smiled when Mike went home with the turkey, but as he looked down upon the trio carrying the bird already stuffed, to the starving widow, he burst into a "ha! ha!" which reverberated through the aisles of space like the booming of artillery. When the turkey was laid upon the table, Mrs. Murphy burst into tears of gratitude and the fatherless children gathered wonderingly around and critically ex-

amined the remarkable New Year present. Mike sent his son down to the grocery for a pint of the stuff which both cheers and inebriates, and Mrs. Murphy made some smoking hot punch which the elders drank to the health of everybody and to themselves in particular. Mrs. Murphy called down the blessings of all the saints in the calendar upon the heads of her kindly neighbors. Then she tucked up her skirts and danced a reel upon the hearthstone just as she had done in Ballyscuttry hundreds of times in her youth. All the cares of life dropped away from the little group under the genial influence of the "crater" and the New Year time. Laughter and song kept the little Murphys awake until long after midnight, while the stuffed turkey hung by the legs from the eaves to keep it fresh and cool for the pot on the following day. When the chimes in St. Mary's steeple told the hour of one, the Finn family returned to their home, their hearts glowing with kindness and filled with the consciousness of genuine philanthropy.

New Year's day broke clear and bright over Cooney Island. The sun shone through the windows upon Mrs. Murphy as she laid the turkey upon the dissecting table and began the operation necessary to prepare the fowl for dinner. She had made a small incision in the south-west end of the sacking covering the fictitious bird, when a piece of rag fell upon the table, followed quickly by nearly a quart of small stones containing a large percentage of cement. These stones were really valuable in a lime kiln, but of no particular use inside a turkey—at least, this was the view Mrs. Murphy took of their presence. An angry scowl overspread her face as she exclaimed:

"By the hair on Moll Kelly's cat, I never thought much of them Finns anyway. They are a dirty lot to play so mane a trick on a widdy wid three starvin' childer. But I'll give Mike Finn back his turkey, so I will, wid me two hands, and may the curse of Kisogue rest upon him and Biddy and the lad, bad luck to them!"

Mrs. Murphy was a large and muscular woman. There was a stern look on her strong face, and a fierce setting of the jaws together, as she started up the Old Point road, carrying the turkey by the legs, and leaving a trail of fine cement stone behind her. Mr. Finn was awakened from his morning nap by a tremendous knock on the door. Turning over, half awake, he said:

"Mickey, go and open the door, that's a good lad."

Little Mike, partially dressed, went to the door, and standing upon the stoop was Mrs. Murphy. She stepped aside, and swinging the turkey around her head, she brought the bird into violent contact with the boy's head, knocking him over the stove. Then rushing into the bedroom before either Mr. Finn or his wife could arise, she began to lambaste them with the remains of the imitation fowl. And to the rattle of cement stones against the wall and ceiling she kept up a running accompaniment such as:

"Hide yer head, ye spalpeen, Mike Finn! Get under the quilt, ye omadhoun! Chate the widdy and her childer, will ye! Make me a New Year's present of rags and stones, will ye! Oh, ye scut ye, Biddy! May hell fire roast ye and the divvil fly away wid ye. My heavy hand on both of ye, that ye may ate burnt feathers and drink vinegar when the thirst is on ye! Show yer dirty face, Mike, and I'll ram the legs down yer red neck!"

When the door banged behind the angry woman, Mr. Finn got out of bed and picked the cement stones out of his ears and whiskers. Then he comforted his wife, who, with hair streaming down her back and uplifted hands, exclaimed:

"Holy murther! 'Tis a cruel man that stuffed that turkey! Usha, but Mrs. Murphy must be crazy!"

Mr. Finn went into the kitchen, and found Mickey in the corner nursing a bruised shin.

"She threw me over the stove, father," said the boy, with a grimace of pain. "I wonder what ailed her?"

"Faith, I dunno, me boy. I'm afeared she's gone crazy wid joy bekase she got the turkey. Begorra, 'tis the lasht time I'll make a fool o' mesilf wid me generosity. The nixt time I have a turkey to give away, I'll kape it myself. Go to bed, boy; you'll freeze yourself."

Thus the New Year dawned on Cooney Island.

AS A PHANTOM FLEETING

BY JESSIE BARTLETT DAVIS.

IT was in one of the twentieth streets, far over on the East side, that Genaro, the sculptor, lived. A noisome neighborhood, where huge, gaunt tenements fester amid gas tanks, factories, coal and lumber yards. Up from the gullets of the sewers that pour into the river, floats the miasma of New York, which induces the vigorous brawn that enables the gamins who bathe there to become handsome policemen at twenty-four.

On the top floor of the ricketiest rear house of them all, Genaro carved among other subjects his own humble career. Genaro, tall, lithe, tawny, who had inherited his complexion from the muddy banks of the Tiber; and Genaro's wife, who used to sell flowers and confetti in the shadow of St. Peter's. Genaro's baby, also, whose "vast and wondrous dome" was the Jumbo tank of the River Gas Company.

It was Sunday morning in raw November, and Mrs. Genaro, released from her toil of the week, slept heavily in the inner room, heedless of the rattling sash that brawled with the fierce gale from the shore. She worked from seven in the morning till nearly nine at night, as cashier in a quick-lunch restaurant, whose myriad mirrors and clattering dishes often turned her pretty, tired head dizzy. She was well regarded by her employers who, once in a while, allowed her the great trust of presenting pay-to-bearer checks at their bank. She was ogled by all the dyspeptic pie-eating clerks, and rather sniffingly surveyed by the tea-sot salesladies and typists, who could not suffer her Madonna face and ravishingly languorous eyes. Poor little beauty!

While she lay all snuggled up in the threadbare quilt, Genaro in the next room was modeling with his long, flat fingers a female bust. It was the figure of a young girl, wearing a wide-spreading hat, that seemed to shadow her face and make the hollow orbits of her eyes deeper and more beautifully mysterious, the mouth curving in an innocent smile at once tempting and alluring.

It was such a face as one sees daily on Broadway or Twenty-third street, guarded by those picturesque peddlers from the land of ruins who never seem to have any purchasers.

There were a dozen or more copies of this piece carefully arranged along the mantel and on the stone in front of a dismally suggestive hollow grate.

With one foot, half penetrating his straw slipper, Genaro jogged a clumsy cradle, in which the baby whined and chirruped by turns, according as he bit his rubber-ring or the tip of his tiny red tongue.

Rafaelo the baby was teething.

In ten minutes the model had to be laid aside for the baby, who was squalling most piteously.

Genaro paced up and down to quiet him lest his weary mother should awaken. Tranquilly Rafaelo began to tug at his sire's silken mustache. His lip was almost in a fever, but Genaro only swore musically under his breath and softly closed the door of the bedroom. Then he continued his tiresome trot till a knock brought him to a halt.

"Come in," he replied in his suave, Southern tones.

At once there entered a tall, muscular man, warmly wrapped in a long ulster, the mere sight of which made Genaro for the moment forget that the temperature of his abode was just forty degrees.

The newcomer unbuttoned his coat and lowered his collar, meanwhile half seating himself on the plain deal table. His oldish, shaven countenance, was strong, but not at all handsome. Yet, he had about him that exquisite, ruddy crisp air of one of those privileged human beings who are bathed and massaged by a valet once in each twenty-four hours.

Genaro was not slow to recognize the type. He had studied it often while wandering in meditation and hunger in the region of Madison Square. The baby—precocious, pretty, prattling, as the children of over-young and loving parents generally are—seemed profoundly interested. He forgot that he was teething, and gazed at the stranger in silence.

The latter, whose eyes had been regarding somewhat oddly the numerous copies of the female bust, while he turned his slouch hat nervously in his hands, at last spoke in a constrained, though not unpleasant voice.

"Did you make those?" he inquired, pointing with a jerky gesture to the busts.

"Yes," the sculptor answered huskily, wholly mystified by the stranger's peculiar manner.

"Then I would like to speak with you," the other added.

Genaro, with a qualm in his unbreakfasted stomach, asked himself what mischance had befallen him now.

"You'll excuse my familiarity, I hope," the stranger went on as he drew forth a silver cigarette case and proffered it to the Italian.

Reassured a little, the latter took a cigarette, and then availed himself of the match which his visitor also offered from a silver case.

Grazia di dio! this man seemed lined with silver, and at this moment there were just six red sulphur matches in the tin box by the kitchen stove.

"You've got a child," resumed the stranger, after a puff that seemed to invigorate him; "wife, no doubt, and altogether a home, though not a luxurious one," and he glanced about with a shrug at the desolate apartment. "You won't laugh then, I think, when I tell you that I'm in love—really in love, not fancy-smitten or befooled by the coquetry of a pair of eyes or naked shoulders, will you?"

"No, signor," answered the sculptor, with a start, but it was because the baby made a sudden leap backwards.

"Thank you," returned the other, in a lower tone, and letting his chin fall rather shamefacedly. "It was about six months ago, on a Saturday, that I went to the Cosmopolis Bank to draw on my business account. By the way, have you ever been in there? Do you know where it is?"

"I don't," the sculptor answered, laconically, as he patted Rafaelo soothingly, who was fast tiring of the stranger's keen, gray-eyed visage.

"After all, it's immaterial. I need only tell you that the main window of the paying-teller is on a right angle from the ladies' window. As I was handing in my check I looked up, and beheld at the opposite window the most mysteriously beautiful face of a woman my eyes ever saw. She was receiving cash from the second teller and in an instant had vanished.

"Mind, my view of her was but limited. I could see her just vaguely behind the grating, and I imagined she was looking at me. The same thing had happened twenty times before with other faces; but now I begged the teller to hurry my change. I rammed it all into my pockets like so much newspaper and hastened around to the ladies' department.

"She had gone!

"Out in the street I went, up and down each block, always eager, impatient, resolved to rediscover her, and yet hardly sure I would be able to recognize if I saw her.

"It was twelve o'clock when I left the bank, it was four when I ceased searching and went home disconsolate.

"For weeks I haunted Union Square but unavailingly. Then business called me to Paris. I was glad to get away, hoping to forget those marvelous burning eyes, that saintly face that seemed more angelic than womanly.

"It seems ridiculous, I know, yet it's true, that once when sipping my liquor at a cafe, brilliant with light and laughter and women's jewels and their eyes, will you believe it, that I fancied I saw that face shooting swiftly past me on the street. I followed it for twenty minutes, hoping and hopeless, and then finally came back to my rooms still seeking, tired, dead tired of seeking.

"It has come up before me in my dreams resembling a picture I once saw in Rome, and I have confounded the vision of Raphael with the reality, the fleeting, mocking, shadow reality of my heart."

The visitor had dropped his cigarette smouldering to the floor. He was standing half inclined towards Genaro, who trembled at his vehemence and patted the baby most assiduously to prevent an outcry.

"Sit down," continued the stranger more calmly, noticing the pale quivering sculptor, tottering, as it seemed, beneath the swaying weight of the baby.

Genaro helped himself to the only four-legged chair he had.

"Seeing that I could not rid myself of this glorious, heart-ruining phantom," resumed the stranger, "I was almost glad to return to New York, where at least I might haunt Union Square in hopes of recovering her.

"The first thing almost that struck my sight was this bust," he had taken one of them in his hands and was gazing at it in a kind of fierce rapture. "It appeared to me almost insane that I should find a resemblance in the bit of plaster up for sale in the doorway of an empty store. And yet it was so like her, I began to think my obsession had set a nerve in my brain ajar. But again I could not help but recognize the same superb pose of the neck, the delicate aspirate nostrils tinted like pink shells.

"I inquired of the peddler who had made the piece. He did not

know and referred me to the wholesale jobbers, who in turn directed me to you.

"I feel happy now, I almost foretaste the bliss of meeting with the woman whose shadow I have pursued for six months with a heart full of fire. I'll buy every single bit you can make of her. I'll be the means of your fortune and fame, for I have the power to do it, and all I ask in return is to know where I may find this girl who has maddened me, that I may reach her, seize, possess her."

He stopped abruptly and stammered under his breath:

"God, how I love her!"

With this his lips dropped in a swift passionate kiss on the half-opened mouth of the statue. Then suddenly recalling himself he glanced up apologetically towards the sculptor.

"Jesu Christo!" screamed Genaro, in a very volcano of rage as he pitched the baby into the cradle as if it were a wooden doll.

Rafaelo emitted a piercing yell when his tender little skull cracked against the side of his bed, and before either of the men could change their expression of mutual perplexity, the door was flung open and Genaro's wife flew in, her eyes bloodshot from her rudely awakened slumber, her long ebony tresses flowing down over her bared neck and breast.

"My darling," she screamed, rushing to the cradle and catching up Rafaelo's sobbing form.

She had seen nothing but the cradle, and her child in pain. Now as she turned in full view of the stranger a hot blush started in the blue veins of her throat and overspread her face the hue of a blood orange.

The stranger staggered against the mantle knocking down one of the busts which crashed loudly at his feet. But he did not seem to take note of that. He remained tottering, waving his hand impotently before his eyes like a man struggling against the effects of a drug.

Genaro, appreciating his distress, motioned to his wife, who retired nestling the convulsive infant to her bosom and inwardly marveling at this miracle.

"Mr. Genaro," gasped the stranger, recovering after a few moments. "I—I humbly beg your pardon."

His voice fell almost to a gasp, and the last word came from his lips as with the agony of one dying. He held out his hand, which the sculptor took tremblingly.

Then he hesitated, as if seeking some sentence, sign or means

of expressing the tumult of astonishment, regret, repentance, desolation that swirled in his soul like a maelstrom.

Once or twice his lips parted as if to speak, but no sound issued from them. Taking his hat, he drew it down firmly over his brow, and as he opened the door, noticed the broken bust.

"Let me pay for that," he murmured in a pleading tone, meanwhile drawing forth a banknote.

Genaro hung back unwillingly.

"Then let me at least make the baby a present," he added, swiftly dropping the bill, and as instantly his tall, ulstered form shot from the room like a shadow.

A PECULIAR WAGER.

BY MORTIMER FELTENSTEIN.

THE Salama Allakoum Society was composed exclusively of M. D.'s. The name Salama Allakoum must have been adopted in a spirit of irony, for surely "Peace Unto Thee" is certainly not the motto of the medical profession. The purposes of the club, however, were not quite as mystical as the reasons for its appellations. These were purely of a social character, and the members were accustomed to gather periodically at the festive board to discuss the latest improvements in surgery and cookery—chiefly cookery.

There was one peculiarity about their regular social dinners which must be mentioned. They were not, as might be supposed, paid for out of the funds of the club; but a clause in the constitution of the Salama Allakoums provided that after every such affair the members should, as soon thereafter as convenience dictated, assemble and play a "freeze-out," the ultimate winner to defray the expense of the banquet. And as the victors on these occasions were the only ones eligible for the office of President at the yearly elections, interest in the game was by no means lacking.

One of the regular meetings was approaching, and printed notices, apprising the members of the date and place of the repast, as well as of the subsequent poker tournament, were dispatched. These notices, couched in mock Oriental fashion, commanded the "despicable reptiles"—by which was meant the members—to crawl on their knees to the feet of the "Royal Muck-a-Muck"—which stood for the President—who would enable them to "gorge their base bellies with all the delicacies of the season."

The command was obeyed. At the appointed time the banquet was held, the inevitable toasts made, and then an adjournment was taken in the gaming rooms of the club.

There were twenty-four in the party, so they separated into groups of six. The play began. The talk was, for the most part, strictly confined to the game, and no other sound was heard except the abrupt click, click of the chips, and an occasional smack-

ing of the lips consequent on the gulping down of the delectable liquid refreshments which had been placed in readiness for the players. It would be tedious to relate how the number finally dwindled down to a last two. Suffice it to say, that the first wavering lines of the early dawn found the chips divided equally between Dr. Muir, the President of the Society, and Dr. Fergus, its secretary.

"Aha, Fergus," said Dr. Muir, who was fond of indulging in grandiloquent English, "you, is it? Permit me, my dear sir, gently to insinuate into your auricular members my impression, that, to utilize the sesquipedalian phraseology of the occidental bard, you are, as a poker player, a veritable, silver plated cinch."

"Oh, I am, am I?" growled Dr. Fergus, in a subterranean voice; "nevertheless, I intend to do you up so brown that there won't be enough left of you to hold a post-mortem examination over. You a poker player? In the expressive phrase of one Shakespeare—NIT!"

"Oh, dry up; you'll raise a tempest between you!" exclaimed the Vice-President, in a disgusted tone. "Say, Muir, what's in that package you've brought along?"

"Oh, this; only a stomach-pump I purchased on my way here. Come on, Fergus; let's to our mutton."

The two sat down, and the cards were dealt. For a short time nothing of interest developed; after awhile it was Dr. Muir's turn to manipulate the pasteboards, and shuffling them to his satisfaction, he placed the deck on the table, and said:

"Cut."

The cards were cut and given out.

"Well," observed Dr. Fergus, frowning down on his hand, "it will cost you exactly two silver dollars to monkey with this pot!"

"Your statement," answered the verbose President, after a look at his cards, "is characterized by reprehensible inaccuracy. It will cost me four dollars, and you no less. Accuracy, you will perceive, is not, as is commonly supposed, based on an absolute standard. It is relative; at least in poker; for had my hand been of less value, your statement might have been more correct."

Dr. Fergus put his cards down on the table, and folded his arms.

"Are you going to shut up and play poker, or should you prefer to give us a lecture?"

"Sir, do you consider it necessary for me to suspend the operation of my vocal organs in order for me to play?"

"No; but it is in order for me to play. Without accusing you of inaccuracy, let me tell you that it will cost you eight, and not four dollars to draw cards."

"I am delighted to hear it. But aren't you getting slightly reckless? No? Then I'll make it an even ten."

"Twenty."

"H'm. You must measure your hand by the yard. I'll raise that a tenner."

"Twenty."

The spectators were becoming interested.

"You are getting decidedly reckless. I chip along. How many cards?"

"Cards? Don't let me trouble you; serve yourself."

"Oho! Bluffing is your forte, is it? I'll take two cards. Can't use any less. May the genius of poker have mercy on your miserable little soul."

"You may have to draw a tooth, sometimes. Better preserve your gas! I bet five dollars."

"I'll bet that, if nothing more;" said Dr. Muir, indifferently, briskly shuffling his five cards. "Let me see—yes, here are five bones to see, and five more to gauge the size of your bluff."

He had drawn to three kings.

"I'll raise that a like amount," remarked the secretary.

"Ditto here."

"In that case I'll elevate you to the extent of an X."

"I like that so much that I'll follow your example."

"Whew! You've got 'em this time, sure. Well, I'll raise you one more tenner."

"Fergus, you're kindness personified. I have here just thirty bones left; I'll put them all up, and I'm sorry that I haven't any more."

"So am I. There you are; this covers your raise, and now I have got——"

"Hold on, by Jove! You said you would do me up brown, and now I'm going to give you a chance to do it."

"All right, let's hear it."

"I've a proposition to make."

"Then make it."

"I'll lay you a private wager."

"No, no," chorused the bystanders, who had watched the

game with increasing interest, "that's not allowable by the rules of the society.

"Shut up, the whole lot of you," yelled the president, whose verbosity left him as his excitement rose. "I am president, ain't I? Don't you suppose I know the rules of this club? I don't propose to bet him any more money. Fergus," continued the president, turning to the secretary, "you think you've got the best hand, don't you?"

The secretary shrugged his shoulders and pointed to the heap of chips on the table.

"That speaks for itself, I guess," said he.

"In that case you'll have no hesitation in accepting my wager. It's this: You've drunk a good deal to-night; so have I. Now I propose that if my hand beats yours, I'm to be at liberty to pump out of you with this stomach pump every blessed drop you've swallowed to-night, and if your hand beats mine, you have the right to do the same by me. Well, what do you say? Do you take water?"

"Not on your cathodograph!" roared Doctor Fergus. "I'm your hairpin!"

A roar of laughter from the members signified their appreciation of the situation.

"Well, what have you got?" asked the secretary.

"What have I got, eh? Just direct your optics on these, will you? Three big kings and two big aces. Well, my friend, can you beat a king full on aces?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Haw, haw, haw! Fooled him by Juggernauts! Caught in your own trap, Muir! *Hand me that pump! I stood pat on four deuces!*"

HOME PORTRAITURE,

Views of the snowy landscape, with its leafless trees and fields of glistening ice, and flashlight pictures of congenial friends gathered about the warm fireside in the long winter evenings, all add to the charm of amateur photography.

It's easy, too, with our Film cartridge cameras. They load in daylight, have fine achromatic lenses, improved rotary shutters, set of three stops, and are beautifully finished. *Booklet Free.*

EASTMAN KODAK CO.,

Pocket Kodaks, Bullets, Bulls-Eyes. $5.00 to $15.00.

350 STATE STREET,
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

The Artistic Stamping Outfit.

Made from original designs drawn expressly for THE COLUMBIAN.

This Stamping Outfit is in no sense of the word "cheap" It contains many original artistic designs which cannot be obtained elsewhere the best efforts of artists who are prominent in this branch of decoration. Each outfit contains the following: Designs of—California Violets for Centerpiece 12½ x 12½ in. (*See illustration.*) California Violets for Set of Doilies 5 x 5 in. Clover for Set of Doilies 4 x 4 in. Fruit for Set of Doilies 3 x 3½ in. Wild Roses for Border for Piano or Table Drapery, etc., 10½ in. high. Centerpiece, Oval, Scallop Border, Clover design, 7 x 12 in. Wild Roses for Set of Tumbler Doilies 4 x 4 in. Conventional Square for Set of Doilies 4 x 4 in. Geometrical for Buffet Doilies, 5 x 5 in. June Rose for Scatter Work, Splashers, etc., 3 x 3 in. Pansies for Centerpiece 9 x 9 in. Pansies for Set of Doilies 4 x 4 in. Tiger Lily for Set of Doilies 7 x 7 in. Ferns for Border and Corner for Drapery Scarfs 10 x 14 in. Border for Flannel Conventional 1¼ in. wide. Pansies for Set of Tray Mats 7 x 7 in. Ribbon and Floral, for Set Square Doilies 5 x 5 in. Clover Leaves, square, for set of Doilies 6 x 6 in. Maybelle for Set of Doilies 5 x 5 in. Lily of the Valley for Set of Doilies 5 x 5 in. Mistletoe, and Border for Set of Doilies 6¼ x 6¼ in. Daisies for Set of Doilies 4 x 4 in. Square Conventional for Set of Doilies 4 x 4 in. Flowers and Bowknots for Set of Fancy Doilies 4 x 4 in. Chrysanthemum for all over work 3 x 3 in. For Set of Butterfly Doilies 6 x 6 in. For Set of Oak Leaf Doilies 5¼ x 7¼ in. Pond Lilies for Set of Lunch Doilies 5 x 5 in. For Set of Leaf Doilies 5 x 5 in. For Set of Acorn Doilies 3 x 5 in. One Floral Alphabet 1¼ in. high. One Script Alphabet 1 in. high. One Fancy Alphabet 1 in. high.

The patterns are perforated on 6 sheets of Linen Bond Paper, each sheet 14 x 22 inches in size, with ample working margins. With each outfit is sent one cake of Eureka Compound for doing the stamping instantly and successfully without heat or trouble, and full copyrighted instructions. We believe that in artistic excellence and utility of designs this outfit has never been equaled at any price. It was designed especially to help introduce into new homes Boston's great literary and family monthly, **THE COLUMBIAN**, and will be sent complete and postpaid, together with a 3 months' trial subscription, for **25 CENTS.** Stamps taken.

Address, **The Columbian**
13, 15, 17 Otis St., Boston, Mass.

Safety Razors FREE

This improved simplex magnetic razor can be used in any position, while walking riding in wagon or cars or on ship in storm, with perfect ease & safety. Anyone without practice can use it successfully. To introduce it, one in every town furnished reliable persons who will promise to show it. Enclose stamp to PUTNAM INTRODUCTION CO., 10 Murray St., N. Y. City

Home Games Almost Given Away

A Toy manufacturer being compelled to raise a certain amount of money sold us 10,000 sets of games for almost nothing. We have combined the sets with a three months subscription to MODERN STORIES (a family story paper) **for 15 cents.** Don't miss this chance—worth many times the money. **SEE WHAT YOU GET.**

1 set of dominoes	1 game of [illegible]
1 checker board and men	1 game of [illegible]
1 game of Authors (48 cards in pack)	1 ⅛ Magic Tricks
	1 game Clairvoyant
1 game Fox and Geese	1 game shadow Buff
1 ⅛ Parlor Games	1 game Tableau
1 game Nine Men Morris	1 game Pantomimes

Also 6 select Autograph Album Verses. How to Tell a Person's Age. A System by which you can write to another person and no one can read it without the key. 50 charming Conundrums with answers. All the above sent securely packed with a three month's trial subscription to MODERN STORIES for 15 cents. This offer is made simply to introduce our paper believing all who get it [illegible] to subscribe for years. Address

MODERN STORIES PUB. CO., 115 Nassau St., New York

An Elegant garden of the best named varieties of

SWEET PEAS

We will send one-quarter pound to any address, postpaid, for TEN CENTS in stamps.

Hillside Nurseries, Somerville, Mass.

ALL FOR 10 CENTS

All for 10 cents. Star Photograph Outfit with which you can produce a perfect photo in 25 seconds; requires no dry plates, no chemicals, no dark room. Photos are clear as if done by a **$250. Camera**; no practice needed. You can coin money making photos of people, houses, animals, etc. In same box with the Outfit we also give you one **Pretty Tolu Handkerchief** (nearly half a yard square). 1 Lucky Charm of Roses, solid perfume, keeps your handkerchief scented. Moth exterminator. Also 6 months' hand.

some **Illustrated Magazines**, full of stories, pictures, etc. This entire lot sent C. O. D. if you cut this out and return to us with 10 cents, silver or stamps; 8 lots for 25 cts. **Send and be delighted.** Address

STAR PHOTO CO., 9 Murray St., New York.

100 Flowering Bulbs

For 50 cts., Postpaid.

Hyacinths, Tulips, Crocus, Freezias, Jonquils, Daffodils, Washington Lilies, Lilies of the Valley, Japan Lilies, Madonna Lilies, Tuberoses, Oxalis, Gladiolus. All grow in the house or out doors.

50 Bulbs, 25c., Postpaid.

Hillside Nursery, Somerville, Mass

SYRACUSE BICYCLES SPIN TO WIN

IT ALWAYS PAYS to buy the best and doubly so when the BEST costs no more than one not so good The famous CRIMSON RIM SYRACUSE WHEEL has incorporated in its makeup ALL the leading features of HIGH ART BICYCLE construction

CRIMSON RIM RIDERS on the race track the past season won more prizes than were won by the riders of all other makes of wheels combined THERE IS BUT ONE CRIMSON RIM IT IS THE SYRACUSE

SYRACUSE CYCLE CO. SYRACUSE N.Y.


MONDAY
S
USE IT
EVERY
DAY
IN THE
WEEK
&
TUESDAY
A
WEDNESDAY
P
THURSDAY
O
THEN
REST
ON
SUNDAY.
FRIDAY
L
SATURDAY
I
SUNDAY
O