Dewdrop Danby

Harold Hansell

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Dewdrop Danby

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By

Harold Hansell

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To the

OLD GENTLEMAN

With the iron-grey side whiskers who

so earnestly implored me

"Not to set the Thames on fire"

I

dedicate this spark

towards

that impending conflagration.

DEWDROP DANBY

Whensoever my mind doth carry me back to that sleepy old mining town, once so populous and thriving, now so dull and listless, with the young timber springing up everywhere, and the hills around all pitted by the shafts sunk in the by-gone days by eager, hopeful miners—now alas ! forgotten and dead—back to the all but deserted High Street, down which one could fire a cannon ball at any hour, from morn till eve, without injury to a living soul, with the bricks of the houses all covered with green moss, and crumbling into red powder with damp and age ; and the muddy, sluggish creek, with its yellow waters, in which the " Chows," with their trousers tucked up to their knees fossicked away with shovel and tin-dish for a bare living, with rice at two pence the pound ; with the little white church with the big black iron hinges on the door, on one hill, and the little white lock-up, with the big,

black iron hinges on the door, on the other hill, and a mile and a half up the road—which many another comrade beside thyself hath traversed, never to return—that little square, all dotted with slabs of white, writ with black lettering, and fenced in with four-foot palings amidst the silent bush—whensoever my thoughts do carry me back to these things, then do I think of thee, O Friend of mine early youth —Dewdrop Danby.

I have no photograph of thee, Friend Danby—I do not need it. I have only to close mine eyes, and thy well-known form stands beside me. Give me the skill and cunning of the artist's hand for a few short hours, and I will paint a likeness of thee as thou wert in the flesh, for thine image is stamped upon my memory forever.

I will paint thee in thy Sabbath clothes, O my Friend, for in such garb, well I know thou wouldst like to be remembered.

Know, then, a little, thin, wizened man, about five feet two, clad in a long, broadcloth frock-coat, looking somewhat shabby after twenty years of faithful service, and out of the pocket of which peeped thy red and yellow bandanna handkerchief, with

trousers slightly newer, and of a ready-made build, grown—let us hope, from thy devotions, Friend—somewhat baggy at the knees ; a hat of the shape called chimney-pot, but which, to hide its shabbiness, thou hadst brushed up the wrong way, and called a " rough beaver ;" a paper collar, which thou changed with unfailing regularity once a month, encircled by a chequered neck-cloth of black and white ; these, together with thy trusty she-oak stick, completed thy attire. Thine eyes were of a faded grey, with a suspicion of humour in them, and thy drawn, kindly-looking face was somewhat of a streaky-tan colour, whilst a stubby, grizzled moustache of black, well sprinkled with grey, caressed thine upper lip ; but thy nose, my Friend, thy nose was thy strong point, in it was centred all thy individuality ; for it was of a rich ruby red, and hanging from it, glistening in the sunlight, sparkling in the moonlight, brilliant in the daytime, and a beacon in the darkness, was the perpetual dewdrop, from whence—given thee by some wag, perchance, in a spirit of envious mockery—thou derived the name of Dewdrop Danby.

Whensoever I think of thee, Friend Danby, I think of the Old Town. It is impossible to separate thee one from another, for thou art part and parcel of the same. How often around those hills hast thou dug shafts ; side by side with the "Chows" how often hast thou fossicked in the creek in search of the yellow metal ? Times without number hast thou trod that High Street with steps that were not solemn and slow, but sideways and staggery. How often hast thou been inside both the church —and the lock-up.

Thou wert ever a man of learning, Friend, and it were no idle boast that thou wert a graduate of the University of Oxford, but, Dewdrop, thou wert also an arrant humbug. Hast thou not been known to swear when sober, and when tipsy, didst thou not always quote the Scriptures.

I wonder, Friend, if lying cold and stiff a bleaching skeleton beneath the yellow clay thou hast thyself so oft upturned, thou dost remember the Raffle. One hundred members at one shilling each for a gold signet ring, the last ancient relic, thou said of thy family, which thou hadst brought with thee from the Old Country.

How wild we were when the Undertaker won it with a borrowed shilling, and how we laughed the first time he wore it, and it was claimed by the Doctor, who had lost it but ten days previously.

How thou didst chuckle that day ! It was a strange laughter, Friend, that laughter of thine. Whenever I see a turkey-gobbler, I hear it again.

Dost remember, too, how, clad in thy Sabbath clothes, thou went for a trip to the city in a first-class carriage on thine ill-gotten gains, and how we had to subscribe to pay thy return fare, and bring thee back—second-class—four days afterwards ? Thou wert ever a sad dog, Dewdrop !

And the party, Friend—the party—to which we took thee in the neighbouring town, where thy reputation was unknown, on the strength of thy promise to drink but coffee only.

Gad ! we were proud of thee that night, Dewdrop. Was it possible that the learned Mr. Danby—the courteous, old-world gentleman, the gifted, much-travelled conversationalist, with the fund of sparkling anecdote, who sang " The Banks of Allan Water " in a way that brought the

moisture suspiciously near the eyes—had, a few short hours before, with his trousers tucked up to his knees, been working side by side with Sing-Fu for a bare existence, in the creek.

Ah, me ! Verily a gentleman is truly strange. Education alone cannot make him, neither can poverty, drink, or misfortune wholly stamp him out.

And that widow, Friend—that widow. Surely thou missed the chance of a lifetime that night, Dewdrop. One hundred pounds per annum in her own right, and what chance had the Rate Collector, when she was all eyes and ears for nobody but the popular Mr. Danby ? But, Dewdrop, in the breaking of thy promise, thou missed thy chance. Hadst thou not emptied a whole decanter of whisky to thyself, surely thou wouldst have known that the way to a widow's heart was not to be gained by asking her, "Could she keep a man ?" Such a question might truly, with safety, have been left over until after the wedding ceremony.

And thy stories, Friend—funny stories—short stories, ay ! and tall ones, too, that fell from thy lips as we sat on many a

winter's night before a glowing fire in thy cosy hut !

Naught can stay the hand of Time ; thy hut is now a blackened ruin, and of that little group of listeners, all, save two, sleep soundly beside thee in thy rest—Long Jack and I alone remaining.

Thy voice, Friend, is forever silent, and none there be who can take thy place, and this is how it comes about that I, the prentice hand, take up my pen, and with the aid of a memory that serves me but ill, endeavour to set down to the best of my poor skill the Tales of Dewdrop Danby.

. . . .

I am not far from thee now, Friend. It is a joyous spring day, and I have walked up the old road thou knew so well, and am resting beside thy grave out here in the silent bush. The wattle is out in all its golden glory, and over all is an air of peace and quiet, broken only by the singing of the birds. It is a scene I know full well thou wouldst have loved to look upon, and would thyself have chosen for thy last, long rest. Sleep on ; I must

leave thee, for the days of life are short, and there is much to be done. Sleep on, until the Great Awakening Day, when, perchance, in the light of a Justice that we know nought of on earth, a pardon may be granted to even such as thou—and I.

The Testimonial

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

It was about three o'clock on a bright summer's afternoon, in a certain Australian township, one of those hot, simmering days when the very bees seem too lazy to hum, and all Nature seemed asleep, with the exception of a small boy, who, tempted by the gold lettering upon the black notice board of the Church of England, had wandered through the open gate, and was busily engaged in gently rubbing out with a piece of white quartz-stone, the name of the Rev. Jasper Weekly.

Later on, there was great discussion about this action of the small boy, some people attributing it to Spiritualistic Influence ; whilst others—amongst them the boy's father, who, having thoroughly thrashed, first the boy and then the subject—called it coincidence. Still, right or wrong, the fact remained, that within fifty feet of the aforesaid small boy, a meeting of the church-wardens and vestry of the

Church of England were engaged at exactly the same time, in the same occupation, viz., rubbing out the Rev. Jasper Weekly.

The Rev. Jasper had had another of what he called his " seizures." His first had occurred a week after his arrival in the parish, a year ago, and Churchwarden Hayes, the local school-master, who prided himself on his statistics, now stated that this was the fourteenth—the last two, he added pompously, occurring in the same week.

The last but one had happened on Wednesday, at a little picnic, given by the Rev. Jasper to the Sunday-school teachers —all ladies.

They started out in the draper's waggon, borrowed for the occasion, the Rev. Jasper driving, and the sound of his deep bass, and the school teachers' shrill treble, voices floating down the road after them to the strains of " Onward Christian Soldiers," seemed to give promise of a joyous, yet decorous, day.

On the return, the deep bass was still prominent—very prominent—owing, no doubt, to the absence of the trebles, and the air, " The Good Rhine Wine," pointed

to the fact that the two gingerale bottles, placed so carefully under the seat by the Rev. Jasper, had contained, not ginger-ale, but another amber-coloured liquid, not too largely diluted with water.

The trebles had arrived an hour previously, having completed the journey on foot. They had got tired, they explained, of the frequent stoppages, occasioned by the fact that the Rev. Jasper imagined that he saw the wheels going around, although when he pulled up, and descended to the roadway to make sure, he found that he was mistaken—every time.

Even this might have been overlooked, had it not been for the events of last Sunday evening. It is true, it was a warm evening, and a warm evening is very liable to make a man thirsty, especially if he is speaking for some time, so that there was nothing in the minister bringing a water bottle and a glass to the pulpit. He drank a great many glasses of water, and ran through the Lessons at a brisk pace. He started his sermon, and got through his "Firstly" at a hand-gallop; his "Secondly" he preached with the empty glass in his hand, having, in a fit of great absent-mindedness, forgotten to replace it;

during his "Thirdly," he dropped his handkerchief behind the pulpit, and, diving down in search of it, he never came up. The congregation waited patiently—one minute, two minutes—then, accompanied by a sound of long drawn, vigorous snoring, which continued right on between the verses, the choir sang the "Old Hundredth," and the congregation filed slowly out, while the churchwardens and vestry remained behind to verify their suspicions.

The first two who "verified," helped themselves so liberally, that the only means of verification for the remainder was a sniff of the glass. There is a lot of expression in a sniff, especially when accompanied by such expressive words as "gin and water," and the "sniffers" being in the majority, the fate of the Rev. Jasper was as good as sealed.

The churchwardens and vestry arranged a meeting for Monday afternoon, and were now sitting, and after looking (mentally) at the subject from every side, and walking backward and forward and underneath it, they eventually sat upon it, and having fully made up their minds upon a subject which they had come to discuss with their minds fully made up, they arrived at the

conclusion that the Rev. Jasper had had another "seizure," and that, if the matter was not to reach the ears of the Bishop, it must be his last "seizure" in that parish.

This decision was conveyed to the Rev. Jasper who was in waiting. In vain he promised amendment, and implored to be allowed "to have another wrestle with the devil;" but the vestry and churchwardens to a man were of the same mind as to the result of such an athletic contest, and eventually, after having written out his resignation, he left the church, the recipient of much advice, remarkable for its length, and of a cheque which—when sundry individual loans from the churchwardens and members of the vestry had been deducted—was remarkable only for the smallness of its amount.

The news spread through the village like wild-fire, reaching, amongst other places, the little back parlour of Miss Spinks, who conducted not only the News Agency, but the private affairs of all the inhabitants.

Enjoying an afternoon cup of tea with Miss Spinks was Mrs. Barnacle, the Rev. Jasper's landlady, who, being financially interested in the decision of the church-

wardens and vestry, had come here as the most likely place to hear the first tidings. Mrs. Barnacle had not been a very frequent visitor at the News Agency of late, owing to the fact of her newspaper account being somewhat over-due, but upon such an occasion as this, even such an important thing as the payment of accounts was buried in oblivion.

After the arrival of the news, an animated conversation took place, and at last, after having pulled to pieces, thread by thread, the last remaining shreds of the Rev. Jasper's character, Mrs. Barnacle rose to go.

"Bottles! my dear," she was saying, "Bottles! you never saw such a sight in all your born days. There's enough bottles in the cellar under my house to pave the road from here to the 4-mile post."

"Surely not," said Miss Spinks, in a doubting tone.

"Twice as many, my dear," said Mrs. Barnacle, who was nothing, if not a sensationalist, "three times!"

"You'll get a lot of money for such a heap of bottles as that," said Miss Spinks significantly, as she sorted out Mrs. Barnacle's account from amongst a heap

of others, and handed it to her. " You'll be quite a rich woman."

" Y-e-s," admitted Mrs. Barnacle, in a hesitating voice, as she bade a hurried adieu, trying in vain to think as she walked home in what book she had read that " Truth was cheaper than fiction."

The decision of the churchwardens did not trouble the Rev. Jasper in the same way as it troubled his parishioners. It was not his first charge, nor was it the first, second, or third that he had left in a similar manner, for the same reason. What troubled him was the fact that the congregation, to most of whom he was indebted for sundry small amounts borrowed " until the morning," were not likely to do anything in the way of giving him a presentation and a " send-off," and as he well knew the minister without " a send-off " from his late parish, is not likely, in a hurry, to become the incumbent of another. After much anxious thought an idea suddenly struck him, and he resolved to consult Walker, the landlord of the " Golden Age."

Now Walker had been the only one person in the township to benefit by the residence therein of the Rev. Jasper

Weekly, as the quarterly stipend of the latter personage, had, with small deductions, and with unfailing regularity, found its way into his pocket, and he, recognising this, was not ungrateful, and lent a ready ear to the Rev. Jasper's scheme, with the result that, after an hour of close deliberation, and the internal application of a liniment, composed of alcohol two, and water one part, the Rev. Jasper handed him a well-worn purse containing two sovereigns, and departed, leaving the matter in his hands.

The next evening, at 8 o'clock, a strong company was assembled together in the small, stuffy bar-parlour of the "Golden Age." Their strength was not so much in their numbers, for they consisted of but five persons, but lay, rather, in the various combined odours of their different personalities; for one was an ostler, two were swagmen, one an ancient fossicker, whilst the remaining personage was the landlord himself, who, weighing something in the neighbourhood of sixteen stone, had been heard to admit that though he did not believe in washing away the strength from the system, he always took a hot bath once a month.

At 8 : 5 punctually, the Rev. Jasper arrived, and was greeted with much stamping of feet and loud cheering. The landlord, having served drinks all round at the expense of the "house," now proceeded with the business of the evening. Laying a well-worn purse on the table, he rapped loudly, and having called for silence, he began to read his address.

"Gentlemen," he said.

Two of the company quickly removed their hats, whilst a third wiped his nose upon his coat sleeve.

"As members of the Church of England in this parish——"

Pat, the ostler, hastily made the sign of the Cross, under pretence of chasing a fly from his face, and mentally resolved to go to confession.

"It is our sorrowful duty to be present here this evening, to bid farewell to the Rev. Jasper Weekly, who, owing to indisposition, has decided to leave us and seek a warmer climate."

"'Ear, 'Ear and cheers."

"During his residence amongst us, we have learnt to love him as a brother (Great cheers), and it is hard to say which of us has derived the most profit ——"

(" You 'ave," said Pat, in a stage whisper.)

" Look 'ere," said the landlord, who had overheard him, " if you've only come here to make nasty, low insinuations ——"

The Rev. Jasper here intervened, and Pat, having apologised, the landlord proceeded—"the most profit from his ministrations (Cheers). His cordiality, his geniality, and generosity of spirit ——"

(" 'Ear, 'Ear," and cheers, from an audience not unmindful of frequent free drinks.)

" I repeat, his generosity of spirit," said the landlord, warming to his task —— (Renewed and prolonged cheering) " have so touched our hearts, that his departure will leave in our midst a vacancy which no one else will ever fill."

Here a genuine outburst of feeling occurred, occasioned by old Cradle, the ancient fossicker, suddenly bursting into tears ; for if the landlord had derived the greatest financial, his had been the greatest liquid benefit, from the stay of the Rev. Jasper, and the truth had not seemed to dawn upon him until now. The ancient fossicker having been pacified, the landlord continued—

"We, therefore, wish him success and happiness wherever he may go (Cheers), and a renewed return to health, and (turning to the Rev. Jasper) it is my pleasant duty on behalf of this meeting of your congregation, to bid you a fond farewell, and to hand you this purse of sovereigns (Cheers) as a small token of our affection and esteem." (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

The Rev. Jasper (who was received with great cheering and much stamping of feet) briefly responded. He was too overcome (pause) to say much (another pause), but this he could say, that wherever his duty might call him (Great cheers) he was sure he would never again look upon such another congregation as was assembled here this evening. (Cheers.)

He would never forget them—he could not (Cheers). In the years to come he would remember this evening (Cheers), and the slightest thing, maybe even a perfume, would bring back to him the individuality of each, of every one of them, with overwhelming force. (Great cheers.) As for the purse of sovereigns, he really could not take it (Loud cheers), and in bidding them a heart-broken farewell, he must request their permission to hand it back to the

chairman for the relief of the poor and needy of the congregation. (Cries of "granted," and loud and tumultuous cheering.)

Who was as poor as Pat the ostler? who was as needy as those poverty-stricken swagmen ? Who was as destitute as that ancient fossicker, and who, when the door of the "Golden Age" closed upon them at midnight, after a spree that will live for ever in the annals of that country township, was as "tight" as any man in that joyous, roystering crew ?—Why, the Rev. Jasper Weekly.

. . . .

A thousand miles away from this festive scene, with a sea voyage between, the Rev. Jasper Weekly has just been "called" to a flock in want of a "shepherd."

There were other applicants for the position, and the Rev. Jasper was by no means the best preacher, but the following newspaper clipping from the leading newspaper of the State which he had recently quitted, and which was found, accidentally as it were, amongst his other credentials settled the matter upon the spot :—

"An interesting farewell took place last Tuesday evening at Bushtown, when an enthusi-

astic gathering of almost every member of the Church of England in that district, assembled to bid farewell to the Rev. Jasper Weekly, who, owing to ill health, is leaving the parish in search of a warmer climate. In a touching farewell speech, during which many of the congregation shed tears, and during which he referred in moving terms to the many endearing qualities which had made their pastor so beloved, the chairman (Mr. John Walker) handed to the Rev. Jasper Weekly a purse of sovereigns.

"The Rev. Jasper was too overcome to say much in reply, but intimated that the loving wishes and kindly thoughts of his friends for his welfare, were all that he desired to carry away with him, and he begged leave to be allowed to hand back the purse of sovereigns to the chairman for distribution among the poor and needy members of the congregation."

The Chronicles of Haggistoun

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

It was perched upon the side of a hill, in the heart of a range of mountains in New Zealand, and many thousands of miles away from Old Scotland itself, yet all the same it was a Scotch town. Its inhabitants, numbering about 800, were all Scotchmen, or the descendants of Scotchmen—its associations, its music, its very drink, all were undiluted Scotch.

Its traducers in the neighbouring towns were wont to declare in sneering tones that nobody but a Scotchman could live there. Newcomers, not of that nationality, and doubting this assertion, had tried it, and had all, with one exception, come back to swell the forces of the traducers.

The exception was a Jew. His name was Solomon Isaacs, and in the blissfulness of ignorance, and at the expense of the Insurance Company, which had last insured him, he opened a clothing store in the Nethergate.

His windows were attractive, his stock was fashionable, his prices were low ; yet, at the end of a week, not a customer had crossed his threshold.

He was losing money.

Now when a Jew finds out that he is losing money, he wakes up and begins to think.

That was five years ago.

Who, at the present day is the proprietor of the largest drapery store and the broadest accent in the town? Who is an elder o' the kirk, a member of the golf links, the Robert Burns Society, and the Gaelic League? Who wears a check-pattern suit you could play draughts upon, drinks barley-bree, and is no mean performer upon the bagpipes?—Who, but the popular Saundie Mac-Isaacs.

The very policeman was Scotch.

Once long ago, on the evening of a hot summer's day a new policeman had arrived to take charge. He was not Scotch—but Wesleyan.

He was a strong, earnest man, brimming over with zeal. A member of the Christian Policemen's Union, holding strong views upon the Drink question, and what he had seen on his way up from the

station had made an impression on his mind.

He did not wait to unpack, but, after a hurried tea, he chased the goats from the lock-up, swept it out, and hurried down to the town to commence duty.

Jock MacKenzie was lying with his head upon the white quartz paving stone in front of the saddler's shop. Had the policeman not been a stranger, he would have known that Jock lay there every evening—the very bairnies could have told him that—he found it "so coolin' for the heid."

"Now, then," said the policeman, in his official tone, and not without an inward qualm, for Jock weighed sixteen stone.

But Jock snored peacefully on. If the stray calves, which had nightly bellowed in his ears, if the dogs which had sniffed round him, and the goats that had jumped over him during the last twenty years, had failed to awaken him, was he likely to be disturbed by a policeman.

Like lightning the news spread through the town that the new policeman was "gaun to rin in auld Jock MacKenzie tae the lock-aup," and in a few minutes every

available man, woman, and child had gathered round to see the fun, and offer advice.

"Tickle him wi' a feather," suggested one.

"Stab him wi' a straw," said another.

"Rub his nose wi' barley-bree," said old Nannie Macpherson, amid roars of laughter.

The policeman was getting angry. Jock snored on with provoking calmness, and, try as he would, he could not budge him an inch.

Suddenly he lost his temper. "Help !" he cried, "Help ! in the name of the law."

This roused them at last.

Help him ! of course they would help him ; were they not all loyal Scotchmen ? and when had the law appealed to a loyal Scotchman in vain ?

In a trice Jock was seized up, and the policeman with him ; two hundred and seventy-five able-bodied men, every one of them not only willing, but eager to lend a hand, up the hill to the police-station at a smart pace they went, a small army with the gudewives and bairnies, and old lame Davie on his crutch, bringing up the rear.

"It's a braw nicht," he said.

It is impossible for two hundred and seventy-five men to enter at the one time a small wooden building 10 x 12, but they tried it. All wedged together, shouting and laughing, one solid mass of humanity, all possessed with the same desire—to help the law. Yes ; they tried it, and when it fell at last, and flattened out like a house of cards, that policeman was not on top.

He did not unpack at all. He went away next day in an ambulance, and when the chief at headquarters, whose name commenced with Mac, read the report, the ghost of a smile was observed to hover for a moment over his usually stern features.

" Send McIntyre," he said. And the goats came back to sleep at night in a brand new lock-up, and the wee McIntyre bairnies made hobbles for the pet sheep out of the handcuffs, and played at "rounders" with the baton.

. . . .

The manager of the bank was Scotch.

His name was McNab, and he lived in a state of single blessedness on the bank premises in the Cowgate.

McNab had one peculiarity—he never got fu'. Newcomers to the town, in the days of their ignorance often tried to make

him so. They would take a few of the towns-folk into their confidence. Come roun' and see the fun," they would say. "We're going to make McNab fu'; just by way of a joke, ye ken. We'll see him safely home afterwards." *They* always arrived home safely. McNab saw to that in person, it was a point of honour with him. There was a reason why McNab could not get fu'. The truth of the matter was that there was not enough whisky in the town to make him so.

One cold winter's night McNab, who had been dining with the doctor, came down the Cowgate about midnight, and let himself in with his latch-key. As he stood in the banking chamber feeling for a match, a strange sound smote his ear ; it came from the back door of the bank, a rasping, rubbing sound, not loud, but continuous, as if some one were trying to force the lock

Like a flash the truth dawned on his mind—" the escaped prisoner."

A week before a prisoner had escaped from a gaol about forty miles to the south. He was a desperate character, and had stuck up and robbed several persons, and was supposed by the police to have gone further south.

They must have been mistaken, for he had evidently doubled in his tracks, and was now trying to break into the bank, and McNab, although no coward, was not going to risk his life in a single-handed encounter with him.

Hastily abstracting the bank revolver from the drawer at the back of the counter, he softly closed the door after him, and as fast as his legs could carry him, made his way up the hill to the police-station, a short distance away, and awakened McIntyre, the policeman, to whom he breathlessly related the news through the window of his bedroom.

Now McIntyre was a brave enough man personally, but he had a wife and children to think of.

"I'm off duty the noo, ye ken, but I'll look intae it the morn," he drawled sleepily, as he prepared to close the window.

"Ye'll come at once," said the desperate McNab—was not half his last month's salary lying in the bank safe.

"Well, ye gang and ring the fire bell," said McIntyre, temporising, "while I get on ma uniform!"

"I'll do naething o' the sort," said the

irate McNab, " ye'll come as ye are, or I'll report ye to headquarters."

This threat roused McIntyre at last, and he proceeded to dress himself, not forgetting, as he did so, to place under his waistcoat a large piece of inch plate iron about two feet square,—he had a wife and children to think of. In the meantime, McNab had roused up two miners who lived together in a hut near the police-station, and one being armed with a double barreled gun, and the other with a crowbar, and McNab and the policeman grasping their revolvers, the little party stole stealthily down the hill, and along the silent Cowgate to the front door of the bank.

Arriving here McNab slipped off his boots, and crept silently down the passage to the back door. Yes, the thief was still there, rubbing, rasping away, and when McNab put his hand on the door, he distinctly felt it giving. He must be nearly through. There was no time to lose.

On his return a whispered council of war was held, and it was arranged, that while McIntyre and the two miners crept round the side of the bank, McNab was to steal down the passage to the back door. At a

given signal (a whistle from McIntyre) McNab was to swiftly throw open the door, and rush out, while McIntyre and the miners charged round the corner. They would then capture the thief red-handed.

In breathless silence they stole to their appointed posts, and waited for the signal. The seconds seemed like hours, and the revolver shook in McNab's hand as he wondered, in event of his being shot, if the bank would erect a tombstone "to the memory of a faithful officer," or would meanly let him be buried by the parish, and credit his half month's salary to petty commission. The chances seeming 100 to 1 against the "faithful officer," and odds on the parish burial, he resolved to stand well behind the door when he opened it.

Meanwhile the more practical McIntyre shifted the iron lining of his waistcoat more over the region of his heart, and resolved to let the miners get well in front.

At last all was in readiness, and McIntyre gave the signal; that is, he attempted to do so, but although he blew three times, his lips were so dry that not a sound issued forth, and at last one of the miners, becoming impatient, gave it for him.

Round the corner with a loud shout and a terrific dash they went, the brave miners a good length ahead, while McNab, swiftly throwing open the door, poked his head cautiously round.

There was still solemn silence for a moment, then came a roar—a terrible roar of laughter—in which everybody joined but McNab, and under cover of which McIntyre dropped his iron breastplate silently into the long grass.

. . . .

A goat, a common billygoat, which, for the last half-hour had been industriously scratching its lean side to and fro against the iron knobs on the back door of the bank, and with the life half scared out of it by the sudden onslaught of McIntyre and the miners, hastily rushed across the bank yard at a terrific rate, and disappeared through a hole in the palings.

. . . .

After the laughter had subsided, there was a dead silence. It was broken by McNab—

"Come inside," he said, as he led the way to his cosy parlour. The fire was soon alight, and the kettle boiling merrily.

At half past three a.m., McIntyre, after vainly searching for his breast-pin, which, he said, he had dropped in the grass, was assisted home by two unsteady miners.

When they had gone McNab sat in his armchair by the smouldering embers, and gazed in a vacant way at the table. On that table were a copy of the New Testament, four glasses, and two empty bottles of the best "Glenlivat."

"Twelve and saxpence," he murmured absently.

. . . .

There are two things of which no man can be possessed, and yet remain a man of honour. He cannot have a secret—even if he has sworn on the New Testament to keep it—and a wife.

Now McIntyre was possessed of both these things. He kept the secret faithfully. It was his wife who told it, and that is why the bank manager of a certain town is disrespectfully spoken of behind his back as Goatie McNab.

. . . .

Years ago, on an October evening, with the band playing a lively quick step, a detachment of soldiers had marched into the town—Salvation Army soldiers. They

numbered about twenty all told, lads and lassies, and were led by a veteran captain.

Jock Mackenzie was fast asleep as usual, with his head resting upon the white paving stone.

"Halleluyah!" cried the captain, as they formed in a circle around the recumbent form, while the population quickly gathered.

Every night for three months they formed the same circle, the band played all the latest airs and liveliest tunes they knew; the lassies danced and rattled their tambourines; they fired volleys, and related their experiences; they held meetings in their "barracks," and cried, "Halleluyah! come and be saved." All in vain! The inhabitants came, they laughed, they cracked jokes, they enjoyed the fun immensely, but not a sheep came to the fold.

And through it all Jock snored peacefully on. The music soothed him, he said. He had never known what sound sleep was until the Army came.

Meanwhile the commandant at headquarters was getting impatient.

"Why don't you save souls?" he wrote up at last. The captain's answer was evi-

dently unsatisfactory, for next week he was replaced by a major. This major was a picked man, by sheer force of merit alone, he had worked his way from the ranks to his present position. He was invincible; no stronghold of sin had ever been able to resist him. He came. He was a wit, a born mimic, a genius; he could play on any instrument, and his very prayers were humorous. A music hall would have paid him £20 a week.

They enjoyed his sallies, they grew enthusiastic over his playing, their sides ached with laughter at his mimicry; but, at the end of a month, not a soul was saved.

He was on his mettle. He redoubled his efforts, and their sides grew positively painful.

"Why don't you save souls?" wrote up the commandant.

"Come and do it yourself," was the answer, for the major had lost heart.

The commandant took him at his word and came. He was a big, tall man, with a fiery eye and determined chin, and when he said he'd do a thing, he did it. His forte was eloquence, but at the end of a week,

he perceived it was wasted, and gave the order to march.

"Good-bye, we're coming back to save you. Hallelujah," were his parting words, and the inhabitants roared with laughter as they bade him a friendly farewell—they knew better than that.

They had forgotten that the Salvation Army has a large capital, and that in the saving of souls money is no object.

One evening, some six months after that, a strange thing happened. From far away amongst the hills came a weird, strange sound, soft at first, then growing louder and louder. Whatever it was, it had a magic effect on the inhabitants of the town; for in twenty minutes they were all gathered together in the Nethergate, with their eyes on the mountain-road.

Louder and louder, nearer and nearer, came the sound, wafted along on the breeze.

"The pipes!" they exclaimed, in wondering accents.

Yes, "the pipes," but who played them? None but Scotchmen could have played them in such a manner, yet were not all the pipers in the town amidst the wondering throng?

Nearer and nearer came the music, and presently the players stepped into view in the distance. First a gigantic Highlander, wearing the Mackenzie tartan, and carrying a flag which floated gaily in the breeze, then four pipers, blowing merrily away at their pipes, and behind them four lassies, each clad in a Highland costume of different tartans. On they came, nearer and nearer. How those pipers played ! Nearer yet, until at last they stood in a little circle around the sleeping form of Jock Mackenzie, and as the flag floated out in the breeze—a silken flag, in which all the tartans were skilfully blended—their wondering eyes read the words, " Blood and Fire."

" The Army !" they exclaimed, " the Salvation Army."

But the army in a new guise, and of a different speech. Three months before every person in that little band had trod the soil of old Scotland itself. Meanwhile the pipers played gaily on. Were there ever such pipers ? Then a strange thing happened. Jock Mackenzie, who, for the last twenty years had slept from 7 p.m. until midnight with his head on the white quartz paving stone in front of the saddler's shop, in whose ears the calves had

bellowed, and the band had played, over whose prostrate form the goats and the dogs had jumped, who had been publicly assured by the " meenister " himself that he would awaken some fine morning in hell flames—Jock Mackenzie *awoke*, and rising to a sitting posture, he gazed in bewilderment upon the stalwart forms of the pipers, and the fresh-coloured faces of the lassies.

"Is 't Heaven ?" he asked wonderingly.

Then they commenced to speak. First the pipers. What an accent those men had; you could smell the very scent of the heather in it. After that a fresh-faced lassie sang a hymn. It was not the hymn they listened to with such spell-bound interest ; it was not the hymn that brought that choking sensation to their throats. It was a voice of singular sweetness, singing, as only a Scotchwoman can sing it, " The Flowers o' the Forest."

When she had finished, there was a hushed silence. Jock Mackenzie broke it. " I'm saved," he shouted. That was all that was wanted. If an auld reprobate like Jock Mackenzie, why not they? Old Nannie beat Tib MacGregor by half a footstep for second place. " I'm torn wi'

doobts," said Jamie Erskine, always canny, as he stepped alongside the comeliest lassie in the group to be comforted.

First one and then the other in they came. The circle grew wider and wider, and presently they formed in line, and started off for the "Barracks," the pipers leading the way.

Lame Davie was not in the rear this time. Perched upon the shoulder of the gigantic Highlander, his eyes dancing with enthusiasm, he waved his crutch wildly in the air, and beckoned all and sundry to come and listen to the glad tidings.

"There's a mon frae Aberdeen," he shouted.

How those pipers played. Were there ever such pipers? Wha could resist them? Not those Scottish hearts truly. It was the Pied Piper of Hamelin all over again, except that the pipers were more, and the children were bigger. On, on, they went, and the following grew larger and larger. "O! the skirl o' those pipes"—"Bonnie Dundee," "The Macgregor's Gathering," "The March o' the Cameron Men," "Green grow the rashes, O." On, on to the "Barracks," past the doors of the kirk, past the very gate of the manse it-

self, from whence, if the story of his housekeeper be true, the Rev. Donald MacLachlan, hastily retreating, with uplifted hands in pious anger from these "Heathen," these "mockers o' the Word," was observed to retire to his study, and after drawing down the blinds, and blocking up every available point of observation, forgetting only the key-hole, to cross the tongs and fire shovel, and with an agility scarcely to be expected in a man of his years, dance in his stockinged feet, a sword dance to the enlivening strains of "Drops of Brandy."

The Old Track

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

TRESPASSERS PROSECUTED! Ah me! it seems strange to see that warning notice upon the familiar track leading up from the Old Town, and I must needs rub my eyes to see if I am not a-dreaming; yet of a truth I do not dream, for the ten-acre paddock has passed into different hands, and its new owner, less generous than the one of yore, has fenced it in with pointed palings, and even now the quick growing grass is fast spreading over it, as if in league with him to make it a thing of the past.

A thing of the past. Well, well! Australia's a free country, and a churlish man may do as he likes with his own, and give many a weary fossicker an extra ten minutes' walk round the bottom of Mundic Hill, and all to save the penn'orth or two of grass which will cover the track, and blot it out.

Yes; blot it out; for in the spring the

grass grows fast, and ere the summer's sun has turned it brown, the track will be covered over, and lost to our sight for ever.

Aye ! for ever, for ever ! And 'tis this thought that makes me lean with folded arms across the palings, and gaze upon the Old Track, and as I gaze, the years fly backward, and the paling fence vanishes away, and the track is peopled by those who trod upon it in the old time days.

Here comes Felix Donegan on his way home to dinner, carrying the half of a paling in his hand.

" What's the paling for, Felix ?"

" Shure this is the day them there dom " Family Hiralds " arroive, and the owld woman 'll be sittin' at home readin' about the lords and ladies and dooks, wid the breakfast dishes around her, and the foire black out, and divil a bit of dinner ready for a man, at all, at all, and I'm takin' home this bit av shingle to lay the flat av it across her back, bedad, and knock the aristocrachsy out av her system."

There goes the doctor hurrying up the hill. 'Tis his fortieth birthday, the day he miraculously cured the Beeston's baby of diphtheria, by giving it, in mistake, a dose

of the liniment for old Dan Doolan's knee.

Every man, it is said, is either " a fool or a physician at forty," but, methinks, Doctor, that in you the two qualities were combined.

Here comes Peter Abbott, half seas over as usual. Micawber Abbott, as we called him, who, for twenty years, hung round the hotel waiting for something to turn up.

" All things come to those who wait," 'tis said, and in good time something turned up even for Peter ; for his toes turned up, and Bennett, the undertaker, running short of timber, made one end of his coffin out of a whisky case, and, glancing over his work through his ram's-horn spectacles, ere he tacked on the cloth, saw naught of the irony of Fate in the inscription—Shamrock Whisky XXX.

Here comes quaint old Isaac Qualtrough, the shoemaker, with a parcel of boots under his arm.

" A pleasant day, Isaac. How's business ?"

" Rare brisk, Dewdrop. Rare brisk in ladies' boots. Dressy pieces, gals is now-a-days. Thirteen pairs o' ladies' boots and shoes have I soled and heeled these fourteen days, and never a one of them

but what did ask me for an extra thick sole. Ay ! An extra thick sole, mind ye, the longer to last them, whilst they chase the new, unmarried parson.

"Dressy pieces, I tell ye, dressy pieces. Fal-de-lals and frippery, face powder, and vanity, matrimony and misery."

There goes the accountant at the local branch of the Bullion Bank. Well mannered, but ill nourished. Not inclination, but circumstance, in the shape of a Board of Directors has made him such an ardent follower of Dr. Abernethy's famous advice —"Live on sixpence a day—and earn it."

Here comes my best friend in all the world, lame, half-blind, and gasping for breath, my old dog, Rusty. Other friends have come and gone, but this one friend remains, faithful and true. Ay ; unto death. One thing in this world that never turns dog on a man—is his dog.

Here comes garrulous Daniel Watkins to tell me, probably for the fortieth time, how he lost a gold nugget, worth fifty pounds, in the Yellow Creek.

It behoves us to be charitable of the failings of others, for right many have we of our own ; yet, in the weariness of glancing at his mournful counten-

ance, and listening yet once again to the same old, long-drawn story, the thought will come creeping into my mind, that after all it might have been better had the position of the nugget and the man been reversed.

There goes the Auctioneer, with his hearty manner and persuasive tongue. 'Twas but last Tuesday evening that I sat enraptured as I listened to his eloquence at the Butcher's send-off, and noted how deftly he twisted that pawky reprobate's character around before our eyes, until his very vices shone out resplendent as virtues. A powerful speaker, truly, a powerful speaker! Gad! if he hadn't been an honest, God-fearing man, what a rare member of Parliament he might have made.

There goes the new Presbyterian parson. A new broom sweeps clean, they say, and, hearing much of the wisdom of his discourse, I, although a staunch adherent of the Church of England, vacated my customary pew, and went to hear him last Sabbath evening.

The title of his discourse was Self-denial. A new manse is badly wanted, for the old one is fast crumbling away, and he proposes that the congregation shall con-

tribute towards the necessary funds by practising self-denial.

"What will you give up?" he said in his "Firstly." "What will you give up?" he said in his "Secondly," in his "Thirdly," and his "Fourthly." "What will you give up?" he said in his "Fifthly," in his "Finally," and in his "In conclusion." "And now, dear friends," he said once again, just before the collection, "What will you give up?" I don't know what the others gave up, that was a matter for each man's individual consideration and generosity. It was a Presbyterian Church, and I noticed casually that there was more copper than silver in the plate, but what the others gave had nothing to do with me. What I gave up, I gave cheerfully, freely, and gladly. It was not so much the value as the rarity of it. In all the wide world, I am sure, it could not be matched; my very soul warmed within me at the thought of giving it up. It was harder than adamant, harder than stone. It was the hardest piece of hardwood a poor, weary fossicker with ill-covered bones ever sat upon for two solid hours, and consisted of my seat in the third pew from the

door in that draught-haunted Presbyterian Church.

Here comes Mossiface, lank, lean, and hungry-looking. A gifted man, a clever man. Once, years ago, a lawyer with a large practice, now, like myself, through this accursed Drink, a broken-down fossicker in the creek.

For seven days we have missed him from his accustomed haunts. Seven days since I stood in the little white-washed court-house, and listened to his earnest pleading. Seven days, without the option, for stealing a goose.

Surely the very eloquence of his defence would have saved him had not the Bench been too ignorant to understand it.

There go the twin-brothers Gladstone, arm in arm as usual, with their narrow minds and wide-toed boots, and faces as expressionless as the crust of a penny loaf. In all their lives they have never quarrelled, no, not even years ago when they both fell in love with the same girl at the same time. James went to see her on Tuesday and Saturday, whilst Wednesday and Sunday were reserved for Joe. And when they proposed to her, she had, to their amazement, accepted the two of them.

Here was a puzzler ; they discussed it ; they thrashed it out, but they never quarrelled, and eventually they waited upon her, and laid the matter before her to decide—and, like a true woman, she left it to them. They went back, they wrangled, they disputed, they did everything in fact, until quarrelling was the one thing left ; but they could not do that, and finally they settled it by giving her up. Thereupon she sued them both for breach of promise, and when, on the advice of their solicitor, they settled out of court the two cases for three hundred pounds, she married the young man she was engaged to.

There goes the Rate Collector. I like the Rate Collector, a born joker, cynical, good-natured, and humorous. So many jokes had he played upon me that at last I determined to have my revenge, and I lay in wait for him as he alighted from the train after his annual trip to town.

"Well, Dewdrop, what's the news ?" said he.

"None too cheering, indeed," answered I, with long-drawn visage. "There's an epidemic in the town, nearly everybody's suffering from it ; the grocer's got it, and

the butcher, and the ironmonger, and the Wesleyan parson is sick unto death."

"In Heaven's name, what of ?" he exclaimed in astonishment.

"Your silly jokes," I quickly answered.

"Come, and have a drink, Dewdrop," he said smiling, as he led the way to the Yellow Creek Hotel—for he can give as well as take.

For many a long day after this we watched each other as a cat watches a mouse, but neither was to be caught napping until the day I met him, as I came from the cricket match.

"Who's in, Dewdrop ?" he asked, for he takes a keen interest in the good old game.

"Mick Murphy," answered I.

"Nonsense," said he, "Why, he was run out."

"Well, now the policeman has run him in," said I.

"Come and have a drink, Dewdrop," said he, laughing heartily, "for you have me fairly this time," and I followed as he led the way—to the filter at the railway station.

Here comes the ironmonger's lad with a new baby's cradle on his hand-truck. I have often thought as I shovelled the wash-

dirt into my fossicker's cradle beside the creek, that in one respect, at least, a miner's cradle, and a baby's cradle are somewhat similar.

There is ever an element of doubt as you rock the cradle to and fro as to how the contents will pan out.

There go the members of the late firm of Benson and Johnson—consisting of John Benson and Ben Johnson—round-faced and rosy, clean-shaved and charitable.

Away out in the pleasant country beyond the river, twelve old draught horses and two ancient buggy mares, which had entered the service of this firm in their frisky youth, and had become, in the course of years, old and trusted servants—fourteen horses, from twelve to twenty years old, which after a lifetime of faithful service, in exactly ninety-nine out of one hundred wealthy firms, retiring from business, would have passed under the hammer of the auctioneer, to be starved in the hawker's barrow, and ill-treated in the dealer's dray, and would finally have ended their sufferings as lions'-feed at the Zoo—fourteen aged horses, in a state of silent wonderment, roam the river flats, knee-

deep in pasture, without shoes on their feet or bits in their mouths. Other horses are called for, and go unwillingly back from a pleasant holiday and well deserved rest, to their lives of daily drudgery ; but these fourteen remain, and as the days grow into months, and the months into years, they give up wondering, and become fat and sleek and contented.

And the grazing bill for fourteen pensioned horses is duly paid when it falls due, without a murmur, for the clink of the golden coin has not driven away the human sympathy from the hearts of the members of the late firm of Benson and Johnson—consisting of John Benson and Ben Johnson.

There goes a man to his work at the Two Mile Reef. Not much of a man to look at. An ordinary, commonplace miner, in his rough working clothes, with an unkempt beard and steel-grey eyes. Many men have passed and repassed to and from the Old Town—weak men and strong men, famous men and infamous men, fortunate men and unfortunate men, good men and bad men—yet, above them all, this man stands prominently out, for he was the noblest man who ever trod the Old Track.

Never again shall he tread upon it, for he has passed over it for the last time, and we can but give him that place in our memory which he so well deserves. A fancy took me, and I went the other night to the old bush cemetery, where they have laid him, and where, I trust, in God's good time, I, too, shall rest my weary bones. All was still and silent, save for the creaking of the white-painted gates, as I pushed them open, and wended my way in and out beween the graves of many a one I knew in old time days, on to where the big white tombstone stood, with the soft moonlight streaming down upon it. Twenty yards away, even I, with my fast failing sight, could read the large, black letters, carved half an inch deep in the white marble by Amos Jagg, the stonemason, without fee or reward, for 'twas a labour of love.

Sacred to the Memory of

TALBOT JAMES

Who Gallantly Saved the Lives of His Three
Mates at the Two Mile Reef
On February 19, 1872
And in So Doing Lost His Own

"Greater love hath no man than this, in that
he giveth up his life for his friends."

Lee Sung's "Patchee"

From a Manuscript Found in the Hut of Dewdrop Danby

"Get out your ancient spectacle case, Skinflint, take therefrom the old steel-rimmed glasses, wipe them well with your dirty, red handkerchief with the white spots upon it, place them on your inquisitive old nose, with the cracked glass on the left-hand side, and peering through them with your ferrety, little eyes starting out from your miserly-looking countenance, read from the writing I have sent you the story of 'Lee Sung's Patchee,' for of all who read it you will be interested the most.

. . . .

"You were an old man when first I knew you, Skinflint, and that was many years ago, a wealthy, hard-hearted, penurious, miserly, grasping old man, with neither joy in your life nor charity in your heart. As far as I have ever known or heard, during your long life, you have never spoken a pleasant or a kindly word,

except to the well-to-do, nor have you of your riches ever given a penny piece in charity's cause.

" You have always paid your fire-premium and your pew-rent with unfailing regularity, the former to protect you from the fires of earth, and the latter from the fires of hell.

" Your sole object in life has been to accumulate money, and you have succeeded in your object, but at what a cost. Love and joy, and happiness, and human sympathy, and kindly thoughts, all these you have banished from your life ; but, never mind, you have your gold—at least all but one hundred and eighty-five pounds of it, which disappeared mysteriously from your safe as if by magic, on the night of the eighteenth of July, 1872.

" Let us go into the facts in connection with its disappearance, although, methinks, they are still fresh enough in your memory.

" About 3 o'clock on the afternoon of July 18th, 1872, notwithstanding the heavy rain, you saddled up the old roan, and jogging through the town, rode over the bridge, and, turning to the left, went up through Delves' cutting to Lacey's farm,

seven miles out on the Dry Creek Road. You had in your pocket-book a promissory note of Lacey's for one hundred and eighty-five pounds, due on that day, and payable at his residence. Arriving there you found him at home, and presenting the bill, he paid you in one pound notes and sovereigns, which, having counted and found correct, you placed in a wash-leather bag in your inside coat pocket.

" You arrived home again about seven o'clock, and, placing the bag in the iron safe in your bedroom, you locked it securely after you.

" About nine o'clock your aged housekeeper retired to her room behind the kitchen, and at 10 o'clock, after barring the doors and securely fastening the windows, you retired to your bed-room, and, taking the bag from the safe, you once more counted the contents, and replaced it. You will remember that you dragged the head of your bedstead right across the front of the safe, so that the door could not be opened without moving the bed, and then placing the key under your pillow, you retired to rest.

" It had been raining heavily all the evening, and about midnight you were

awakened by splashes of water dripping upon your face, and, lighting your candle, you discovered that they came from a leak in the hessian-papered ceiling above your head. You dragged your bed out of the radius of the drops, and speedily fell asleep again. Awakening in the morning, your thoughts, as usual, wandered to the one object of your existence—gold—and, taking the key from beneath your pillow, you unlocked the safe, and discovered, to your horror and amazement, that the bag of money was missing.

"From that day to this you have never been able to trace that money, nor have you the faintest idea as to the identity of the thief; but when you have read this writing, you will know both who he was and how he stole it."

. . . .

"I had walked down the road leading to the Chinese camp, after an absence of four years, and in the back room, behind Mow Hing's store, I found some half-dozen familiar faces congregated. Mow Hing brought out the black bottle and the tiny cups in honour of the event, and we indulged in many a reminiscence of bygone

days, flavoured with gin and laughter. 'Where Lee Sung,' I said presently, addressing nobody in particular. I was bending over tying my bootlace as I spoke, and suddenly I chanced to look up. Had I not done so, this would never have been written, and you, Skinflint, would never have known the fate of your beloved gold.

"On every face there was a broad, though silent, grin, but immediately they perceived that I was looking, the smiles vanished as if by magic, and every face became stonily impassive.

"'Him strikee patchee—go China,' said Hop Wal presently.

"I had years ago spent many an hour in those squalid dimly-lighted huts amongst these Chinamen, and I knew a little, a very little, of their mysterious ways and cunning dodges; but I could see they were keeping something back from me, and the curious fact of Lee Sung, who had been a vegetable gardener, striking a patch of gold, only made me more determined to find out what it was.

"At last one of the Chinamen with whom I had been on specially good terms in days gone by, rose to go home, and I accompanied him.

" When we arrived at his hut, I followed him in, and, catching him suddenly by the shoulders, I twisted him round so that the light fell full on his face.

" ' Now, you heathen Chinaman,' I said, ' tell me where Lee Sung strikee patchee.'

" Immediately his eyes began to twinkle, and he became convulsed with merriment.

" ' No savee ! No savee !' he said. ' No understandee.' I entreated him, I implored him, but all in vain, and eventually I lost my temper, and banged him over the head with his opium pipe, but he only chuckled away, and kept his secret. On three separate occasions during the next two years I again tackled him in vain ; but at last, in gratitude for a loan of a few shillings to tide him over a temporary financial difficulty, and after chasing from his mind the impression that the ' policee ' could ' run him in,' he told me the history of Lee Sung's ' patchee.'

" Lee Sung had been in Australia for nearly thirty years following his occupation of a gardener. He had worked hard and saved some money, but he was a born gambler with luck dead against him, and in his sixty-third year he found himself in

Australia still, with what remained of the savings of a life-time—some fifty sovereigns.

"Now Lee Sung had lately had a great desire to go back again to the Flowery Land. He recognised now, when too late, that with the money he had wasted in gambling, he might have been living there in luxury, and this, together with the fact that he had not sufficient money to take him there, only increased his desire to go; so that when he alighted from his cart at Lacey's farm, and passing by the open window with his basket on his arm, just as you, Skinflint, were counting the notes and sovereigns, it can hardly be wondered that he wished they were his.

"He did more than wish. After thinking it over, he determined to run the risk of a spell in 'chokee' in an attempt to gain possession of them.

"When you counted the sovereigns before retiring to rest, he had climbed up one of the verandah posts, and passing through the trap-door on the roof, was lying stretched out on the rafters above your head, gazing at you through one of the numerous mouse-holes in the ceiling. Nothing you did escaped his watchful eye, but when you drew your bed close up

against the front of the safe, and placing the key underneath your pillow, blew out the light, he was fairly staggered, and, creeping softly through the trap door, he retired to think it out.

"He went back to his hut, and for nearly an hour sat on the edge of his bed lost in thought. Suddenly an idea struck him, and with a stout piece of knotted rope, about twelve feet long, coiled around his waist, and with a small watering-can, half filled with water, slung over his arm, he started out once again through the rain for your habitation. Arriving there, he climbed up again to his old station on the rafters, and poured some of the water from the can upon the papered ceiling above your head. Presently it commenced to drip, drip, slowly down, and some of the drops, falling on your face, aroused you, and lighting your candle, you discovered, as you thought, the leak in the ceiling, and you moved your bed out of the radius of the drops.

"It was by that act, Skinflint, that you lost your beloved gold, for you also moved the bed sufficiently to allow the door of the safe to be opened. As soon as you were sound asleep again, the China-man opened the man-hole in the ceiling,

and, tying one end of the rope to a rafter, he lowered the other end into the room, and slid noiselessly down. In a very short time his deft Chinese fingers had withdrawn the key from underneath your pillow, and, after abstracting the bag of money from the safe, he replaced the key, and, climbing up the rope, disappeared through the man-hole as noiselessly as he came.

"Nine months afterwards Lee Sung sold his horse and cart and business to a 'cousin,' and retired, to end his days in the Flowery Land.

. . . .

"Take off the old steel-rimmed spectacles, Skinflint. Place them in their ancient case, take your battered-looking, out-of-date top hat from the peg behind the door, and walk down the street of the Old Town, not with that miserly, shuffling step, and those furtive, sneaking glances, but with a manly, honest tread, looking the inhabitants squarely in the face, for have you not done a charitable action at last? Is not an aged, hard-working Chinaman living at your expense in the lap of luxury, surrounded by every Chinese comfort in a little village on the outskirts of Canton?"

Grandpa Bagot

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

"Some memories are painful, and some are pleasant," said the solicitor, as he laid down his cigar, and fingered the bloodstone ring on his little finger, "and my memory of Grandpa Bagot is one of the latter.

"He is sleeping now, the little, twinkling black eyes are sightless, and the wrinkles are smoothed away, for he sleeps the Sleep which knows no awakening; but whenever I think of him, a smile comes creeping over my countenance as I remember how a stroke of fortune turned Grandpa the despised, into Grandpa the respected; Grandpa the downtrodden, into Grandpa the much-beloved.

"I noticed him first wandering aimlessly down the Wellington Road, just near the Rest-me-down Hotel, a thin, tired, starved-looking, little man, of perhaps sixty-five or seventy, clad in a Beaufort coat and a pair of check trousers, sizes too

large for him, and when I saw him lead a blind man across the road, and shift the bit from the mouth of the horse in the carrier's waggon, so that it might eat in comfort, I knew that his heart was large-sized also.

"Will you have a drink?" I said, tapping him on the shoulder, and he turned round and looked me up and down in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Thank ye kindly," he said presently, and we entered the swinging doors of the Rest-me-down.

"Your 'ealth," he said, nodding to me as he raised a pint of half-and-half to his lips, and drained it without moving an eyelid.

"Fancy anybody arskin' Grandpa Bagot to 'ave a drink," he said, as he replaced the empty pint-pot on the counter, and stretched out his hand towards the biscuit tray.

"Is it, then, such an unusual occurrence?" I asked. "Yes, 'tis now," he said, shaking his head sorrowfully. "Time was once," he continued, "in days gone by, when I'ad plenty of friends who'd say, 'Ave a taste, Bagot! just as I'd say to them, "Now, you 'ave one with me," but

they've all gone under now, and I aint got any money to arst anybody to drink with. I aint got anythink now-a-days as I knows of, except a stummick," he added plaintively, and Clara Margret allus takes care that that's none too full."

"Who is Clara Margaret?" I said.

"She's my son William-'Enery's wife," said Grandpa. "I lives with 'em. 'E aint my only son," he continued. "I've got four others. There's Charles-Fredrick, an' Dave, an' Tom, an' George-'Ector, five of 'em altogether. Lor', he added, when I think 'ow I used to stand 'ere in this very bar forty year ago an' boast as 'ow them boys were agoin' to take care of their old father when they grew up. I remember when George-'Ector was born, an' old Steinfeldt was twitten me right 'ere on this very spot, "Far better be puttin' something by for yer old age," says 'e, but I only laughs at 'im. It's an investment, I says, a regular payin' investment. Why, in twenty years' time, they'll be bringin' 'ome a pound a week each every Saturday night to their poor old daddy, and all e'll have to do is to smoke 'is pipe, and spend it. Five pounds a week, why, man, it's a regular payin' investment."

"It'll more like be arf-a-crown each to keep you from the Benevolent," says Steinfeldt, sneerin'-like, but I only laughs at 'im."

"Don't you worry your 'ed about it, says I. Them boys 'll shell out all right to keep their old daddy in comfort. And so they do, he added, and so they do. They shell out all right every Saturday night. Clara Margaret takes care o' that, but it aint a pound. O! bless yer 'art, no, it aint a pound; it aint even the arf-a-crown that Steinfeldt sneered about. I wish it was. I'd be real glad of it, for it's just eighteenpence less than that. It's a shillin', a common, vulgar "bob," that Charles-Fredrick, David, Thomas, an' George-'Ector contribute every Saturday night to the support of their aged father, an' William-'Enery, 'e don't contribute at all, because I lives with 'im, an' Clara Margaret, 'is wife, says that if the others wants to see me blown out like a halderman, they'll 'ave to pay for it, an' they says as 'ow they're quite satisfied to see me as I am, an' 'opes as 'ow she wont let Grandpa overload 'is stummick. Fancy overloadin' a stummick like mine, he continued, glancing scornfully at his waist-

coat. " Why, I'm that empty sometimes that when I takes a mouthful o' soup, you can 'ear it splashin' down against the sole o' me foot."

" Have another drink," I said, for I thought I would like to hear a splash like this.

" An' they blames me for everythink," he continued, as he laid down the pint-pot, " Not a bloomin', blessed thing as ever occurs, but it's Grandpa's fault. In some 'ouses things 'appen which aint nobody's fault, but it isn't a bit like that at our place. O, it must 'ave been Grandpa, they say. Why, dash me buttons," he added, waxing wroth as the memory of it stirred him, " this very mornin' when the cat went and 'ad kittens in the preservin' pan, I'm 'anged if I didn't 'ear that blessed Clara Margaret say, " O, it must 'ave been that silly Grandpa."

" If it weren't for Splatchett and 'is wife," he continued, as he pulled out a short clay pipe with a broken stem, and proceeded to fill it, " my life wouldn't be worth livin'. I'd go and drown myself, indeed I would, he added, as he mournfully rammed the tobacco well home.

Who are they ? I asked.

" They live next door to us, he said, and a kinder-'earted young couple never walked the face o' God's earth. Every Saturday reglar 'e 'ands me two plugs o' tobaccer acrost the fence ; for our people won't give me any, an' often durin' the week when I'm sittin' on the old kerosene box near the wood-shed, to get out o' the way o' Clara Margaret's tongue, I'll 'ear a soft whisper behind me, sayin' Grandpa, and when I turns round I'll see a bowl o' soup, or a plate o' meat and taties, or, maybe, a bit o' bread an' cheese restin' on the fence post. She knitted me this west-coat, he said with pride, as he pulled back his coat, and showed me a warm knitted vest, " an' 'e give me this coat. Why, it's 'ardly wore at all, he added, as he inspected the cloth minutely.

" Quite as good as new," I said.

" God bless 'em and reward 'em for their kindness to an old man," said he, and as we went through the swinging doors, I noticed that a tear was trickling down his cheek.

I often chanced upon Grandpa after this, and we grew to be quite friendly, and he told me of the different people he chanced upon in his wanderings up and down the Wellington Road.

"I bumped up against 'im, said Grandpa, in front of the "Bong Marchey," the big draper's shop down the road. 'E was a tall, thin man with a searchin' look in 'is eye.

'Ave you seen 'er ? he says."

"Seen who ? says I."

" Me wife 'e says. She went in that doorway shortly after we was married, six weeks ago come the second of August, and I've been walkin' up an' down 'ere waitin' for 'er ever since."

"It seems a long time to wait, I says to 'im."

" Yes, 'e says with a sigh, as 'e turned away, it does seem a long time to wait, but I suppose there's bargains goin'."

. . . .

"I was 'avin' a look at one of them penny papers on the bookstall, said Grandpa on another occasion, when a chap come up and laid 'is 'and on me arm."

" Take my advice, and don't you read 'em, 'e says."

"Why ? says I."

" Because they tells lies, says 'e. They told me to choose a wife with a

firm, strong footstep, because she would 'ave many virtues."

"An' did you? I says."

"Yes, says 'e sorrowful-like; I did, but I won't be able to see her virtues until she turns up her toes."

"Why won't you? I says."

"Because they must be in her feet, says 'e, as he 'urries away to where a big, stout, angry-lookin' woman with a red nose was waitin' for 'im."

. . . .

"Did you ever 'appen across a party by the name o' Sims?" said Grandpa one day as we came through the swinging doors of the Rest-me-down.

I don't recollect the name, I said.

"Well, if ever you do, you might tell 'im that Joe Bagot would be glad to 'ear from 'im. He borrowed seven an' six from me one day at Bennett's Creek, in '61, an' the next mornin' 'e cleared out, an' I ain't set eyes on 'im ever since. I didn't think much of it at the time, but I'd be real thankful o' that seven an' six now. Indeed I would," added Grandpa wistfully, as he bade me good day.

I didn't come across Sims, and as I thought I might easily expend seven and

six in a search for him, I decided to pay it for him, and after forging his name to a letter, stating that it had slipped his memory, I enclosed a postal note for seven and sixpence in the envelope, and forwarded it to Grandpa's address.

Shortly after this a rush of work came upon me, and I did not set eyes on Grandpa for nearly three months, until one afternoon my clerk came into my room—

There's an old chap named Bagot asking to see you, sir. He says to tell you it's Grandpa Bagot.

Show him in, I said.

In he came, but he was not the Grandpa of old. Was it possible that this prosperous-looking old gentleman with the tall hat and flowered waistcoat, and heavy gold albert, accompanied by a subtle perfume of bottled stout, was it possible that this was really Grandpa ?

"Wot a time," he said, as he grasped my hand and shook it cordially, "O, wot a time I'm 'avin'."

I looked him up and down in open-mouthed astonishment.

"O such a go," he said, his face beaming with smiles. "Such a rummy go, you'll 'ardly believe it."

Sit down and tell me all about it, I said, offering him a chair, for I was curious to know the reason of this remarkable change.

" You remember me, the last time I saw you, asking you to keep your eye open for a chap named Sims ?" said Grandpa.

Yes, I said, I remember it perfectly.

" Well," said Grandpa, " I'm blest if the very next day I didn't get a letter from 'im sayin' as it 'ad slipped 'is memory, and enclosin' a postal-note for seven and six."

Nonsense, I said.

" Perfectly true," said Grandpa, " the postman give it to me himself, and I stowed it away before Clara Margret set eyes on it. It struck me all of a 'eap," he continued. " I'd been thinking o' that seven and six, and waitin' for it so long, that when I got it, I'm blest if I could make up my mind what to do with it. I'd start out to buy somethink, and on my way I'd see somethink I wanted more, and back I'd 'ave to come and think it all over again. At last I made up my mind—and what do you think I did with it ?"

Give it up, I said presently, after a pretence at thinking.

" Sent over for a five-shilling ticket in Tattersall's Sweep," said Grandpa. I 'ad the reply addressed to the care o' the Rest-me-down, so that the pryin' eyes of Clara Margret ——"

Never mind that, man, never mind that, I said, interrupting him, as the truth began to dawn on me. What luck?

" I drew a 'orse," said Grandpa, " and about ——"

Yes, yes, I said breathlessly, interrupting him.

" It came first," said Grandpa with a shout, " and I won close on £5,000 !"

I am not an excitable man, but when I heard those words, I sprang from my chair, and rushing round, I caught old Grandpa's two outstretched hands, and we danced a ring-a-rosy on my office carpet.

" Champagne !" said Grandpa, as he eagerly grasped his tall hat.

Champagne ! I echoed, as I reached mine down from the peg, and arm in arm we went briskly down the stairs, for the unexpected had happened.

" You'd 'ardly believe wot an affectionate family mine is," said Grandpa with a

cynical grin when we were seated once more in my office. " I've got five of the kindest-'earted sons as ever breathed. They've increased my allowance to five shillings a week each, an' William-'Enery, 'e says as 'ow 'e can't accept money for keepin' 'is aged father, for it's a labour o' love."

" You was allus my favourite son, William 'Enery. I'll remember you later on, I says to 'im, and in the meantime I pockets the four five shillins every Saturday to spend as I like."

" Don't you spend any of that money you won in the sweep, Grandpa ; keep it in the bank, says George Fredrick, as 'e slips arf-a-crown into me 'and on the quiet."

" You was allus my favourite son, George-Fredrick, I says, I'll remember you later on, and away 'e'll go, smiling to hisself as pleased as Punch."

" Next day, perhaps, Dave 'll come strollin' up. Keep a tight 'old of that money, Grandpa. When you want anythink ask me for it, 'e'll say, as 'e slips a couple o' shillins into my waistcoat pocket."

"You was allus my favourite son, Dave, I'll remember you later on, I says."

"Then Tom 'e'll come up to see me, bringin' a bottle o' whisky, or, maybe, a pound o' 'bacca."

"Don't speculate with that money, Grandpa, 'e'll say. When you run out come to me for arf-a-sovereign."

"You was allus my favourite son, Tom, I'll remember you later on, I says."

"An' George-'Ector, 'e'll ask me down to dinner, an' there'll be turkey an' 'am, an' bottled stout. In fact, a regular blow-out, an' when I'm goin' 'ome e'll come an' see me to the tram."

"Be careful o' that money, Grandpa, 'e'll say, as he presses a shillin' into my 'and to pay my fare."

"You was allus my favourite son, George-'Ector, I'll remember you later on, I says, as I bids 'im goodnight."

"Then there's Clara Margret; if ever a man in this world 'ad a more attentive daughter-in-law than I've got in Clara Margret, I'd like to see 'er. It's Grandpa this, an' Grandpa that, the big arm-chair, the nicest cut o' beef, an' carpet slippers, an' a dressin' gown, bless yer, all worked with 'er own 'ands, an' all for poor old

Grandpa, as used to sit out in the cold on the kerosene box near the wood-shed."

"O nothink ain't good enough for Grandpa now, he continued satirically, an' that's why I've come 'ere to-day, for I want you to draw up my will for me, an' I'm agoin' to remember every one of 'em, every blessed one of 'em, William-'Enery, an' Charles-Fredrick, Dave, an' Tom, an' George-'Ector. I ain't goin' to forget one of 'em, I'm agoin' to treat 'em all alike, so that there'll be no wranglin' an' disputin' when I'm gone."

I took down Grandpa's instructions, and drew up the will, and in due course it was signed and completed by him, and left in my care. He also entrusted me with the investment of his money, and his business affairs generally, and during the next two years, I saw a good deal of him one way and another; and the more I saw of the old chap, the more I liked him, with his quaint sayings and sympathetic heart; for if Grandpa, the poverty-stricken, had been kind of heart, Grandpa, the well-to-do, was kind-hearted and charitable also.

He did not now confine his wanderings solely to the Wellington Road, but, as became a man of wealth, plentifully supplied

with pocket-money by five attentive sons, he journeyed further afield, and made frequent perambulations through the city, and rubbed shoulders with the world.

. . . .

" I was sittin' on one of them seats on the side of the road," said Grandpa, on one occasion, " watchin' the carriages drivin' up to the Garden Party at Guvernment 'ouse, when I was struck by the strange goins on of a queer-lookin' chap with a funny twinkle in 'is eye. Every time a carriage passed, 'e used to get up off the seat, an' run a little way alongside of it, an' then come back blowin' like a grampus, an' sit down again."

" I've 'ad a weary day, 'e says presently, I've been nearly run off me legs."

" Wot on earth are you doin', says I."

" I'm follerin' up the carriages of the " old families," says 'e."

" In the name of 'Eaven, wot for ? I asked in astonishment."

" To see the crest on the panels, 'e says, an' I know you'll 'ardly believe me, but on every blessed carriage I've seen this day, the crest is exactly the same."

" Why, it's impossible, I says."

" I'll take me solemn oath on it, says 'e."

" What is the crest ? I asks 'im presently."

" A broad arrow, says 'e with a grin, as 'e 'urries away after a carriage just arrivin'."

. . . .

" Heffernan, the policeman's after me," said Grandpa one day, as he came into my office.

What have you been doing ? I asked.

" Well, it was like this, said Grandpa, I used to know Heffernan when he was on the Wellington Road, but a little while ago he got transferred to a new beat, an' I met 'im on the High St. corner the other day lookin' mighty dismal."

" You're sorrowful-lookin', Heffernan wot's up with you ? I asked."

" Well, 'tis this way, says Heffernan, I'd just dropped off me beat for arf-an-'our the other night to 'ave a bit o' supper with the cook at 72, whin the Inspector comes along, an' reported me to the Chief, an' next day I was fined a pound for bein' " off me beat whilst on duty."

" 'Tis not justice, Heffernan, I says to 'im, 'tis not justice. If I was you I'd

write to the Chief protestin' against it, an' askin' 'im 'ow you could be "off your beat whilst you was on duty?"

"You're a real thinkin' man, Grandpa, 'e says, as 'e slapped me on the back, shure I never thought o' that."

And did he write? I asked.

"Yes," said Grandpa.

And what was the Chief's reply? I said.

"He fined Heffernan *two* pound," said Grandpa, "and suggested that the person who gave 'im the riddle might also give 'im the answer."

And now, I suppose, he's after you for the answer, I said.

"No," said Grandpa smiling, "for the two pound."

. . . .

One morning soon after this, I received a telegram from Grandpa's eldest son, William-Henry, and on going out to his residence, the drawn blinds told me that I was in the presence of Death—the King—and on entering I found that poor old Grandpa had passed peacefully away in his sleep.

On my arrival, the sons all grouped round me like a crowd of hungry vultures, with prying, eager questions as to the

amount of Grandpa's money, and the disposal of it, but these I refused to answer until after the funeral.

We saw the last of poor Grandpa next day, and, as I glanced upon the faces gathered round the grave side, as is my wont, it needed no keen eyesight to discover that the genuine sorrow and regret depicted upon the faces of Splatchett and his wife, and the few others who had really known and liked old Grandpa, was very different from the crocodile tears and long-drawn faces of Clara Margaret and the five sons.

On the return to William Henry's house, Splatchett and his wife were turning into their house next door, when, to their astonishment, I requested them to be present at the reading of the will.

"I 'ope 'e ain't been foolin' away any of 'is money in presents to people," said Clara Margaret, with a wrathful glance at Splatchett and his wife, as we all assembled in the room.

To my thinking, I said, as I broke the seal, he has been just, as well as generous.

I read the usual preamble amidst a breathless silence, then came a few small donations to charities and to a few people who had been kind to him, including

twenty-five pounds to myself to purchase a ring in memory of him ; all of which, as I read them out, excited much audible and sneering comment from the sons and daughters-in-law, and then we came to the gist of the matter.

"To my favourite son, William-Henry."

(William-Henry's face immediately lit up with smiles, while the faces of the others grew correspondingly darker.)

"To my favourite son, Charles-Frederick."

(Charles-Frederick immediately wore an expectant grin.)

"To my favourite son, David," (David joined the smiling circle.)

"To my favourite son, Thomas."

The smiles died away at this, and they all began to wear a doubting, mystified look.

"To my favourite son, George-Hector," I read on—"to all these, my favourite sons, I leave" —— (Here I purposely paused for a moment to blow a nose that did not want blowing, while they all craned their necks in an impatient, listening attitude.)

"The sum of one shilling each," I continued, "with the request that they will keep it, and attach it to their watch-chains

in memory of the weekly amount they so generously contributed for so many years to the support of their aged father."

They listened in breathless silence ; they were thunderstruck, but as I read on, they speedily rose to their feet, and found their voices.

"The little, sealed, brown-paper parcel, in the hands of my solicitor, and the residue of my estate," (amounting to some four thousand pounds odd, I put in for the benefit of my hearers), I leave to be divided equally between Peter Splatchett and his wife Mary Splatchett, in grateful remembrance of all their kindness to an old man."

I will draw a veil over the awful scene that followed, for you wouldn't care to hear, neither would I care to repeat the language. There is, likewise, no need for me to tell you how they contested the will, and got exactly what they deserved—nothing.

And the sealed brown-paper parcel ?

Oh, yes ; I handed that to Splatchett and his wife, as instructed. It proved to be a neat, little black picture-frame, and is now hanging in a prominent place on the wall of their dining-room.

With Grandpa's portrait in it, I suppose?

No, said the Solicitor, not his portrait. In the frame is just a common sheet of white note-paper, and written upon it, in violet ink, in Grandpa's shaky, trembling old hand, are these words:—

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, and it will come back to thee after many days."

. . . .

After the Solicitor had finished speaking, we smoked on for a while in meditative silence.

Do you know Duncan MacAlister? he said presently.

The wealthy squatter? I said.

The Solicitor nodded. Well, he's a client of mine, and one day I told him this story of Grandpa Bagot, and at his request I took him down and introduced him to Splatchett and his wife, and showed him Grandpa's handwriting in the frame.

It evidently made an impression on him, for, passing a blind beggar on our way back, he was overcome by a sudden outburst of generosity, and pressed threepence into his outstretched hand.

About a fortnight after this, he burst into my office one day in a state of great excitement.

"It's a graund trewth," said he.

What is? I asked in astonishment.

"Yon writin' o' Graundpa's," he answered. "Ye'll maybe remember," he continued, "me gi'en a blind mon threepence as we cam back frae Splatchett's?"

"Yes," I said, I remember it perfectly.

"Weel," he said, as he leaned over the table, and shook my hand warmly, "Wool's gone up tae twenty-aucht pence the poond, and I've made ten thoosand poonds the fortnicht."

"Mon," he said regretfully, as he picked up his hat, "If I'd only gi'en him saxpence."

Memories of "The Glorat"

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

The Glorat was a quaint, old place, well do I remember it, built in the bygone days in imitation of a Swiss Chalet, and perched on the summit of Bandicoot Hill, overlooking the One-mile Creek, it had withstood many a blazing summer's sun and wintry blast, and now having passed through various stages of usefulness, it formed at the time of which I speak the slowly-decaying, worm-eaten, mouse-infested, draught-haunted residence, wherein Miss Smith, for a consideration, "took in" boarders.

Many a summer holiday, in my more prosperous days, have I lazed away on the creaking old cane-lounge under the broad verandah, while my eyes wandered sleepily down on the scattered little mining town at the bottom of the hill, across the yellow waters of the creek to the Chinese camp, then up the opposite hill past the tottering poppet-heads of the long worked-out

"Golden Hope," and away out over the silent ranges into the "Great Beyond," as I dreamily wondered, if, after all, it were not better to quit battling with the world, and retire to end my days in some such peaceful secluded spot as this, where the temperature, and the average age of death, hovered in the vicinity of ninety-two; where births, marriages, deaths, and divorces were few, and scandal, flies, and drink predominated largely.

Pemberton, the school-master, lodged at "The Glorat." He had the keenest sight, the kindest heart, and the sharpest tongue of any man I ever knew. I have known him with one lightning-like glance see right through an innocent face, a reefer jacket, a waistcoat, and a chequered shirt, to where four stolen, rosy-cheeked apples lay snugly stowed away awaiting an appetite.

When Hung Fu, deserted by his countrymen after playing pitch and toss with death for three weeks, awoke once more to the consciousness of the things of this world, the first sight that met his wondering eyes, was the form of the schoolmaster, who had nursed him through—and the Chinaman did not forget.

And the Butcher, interfering as usual,

had found fault with the action of the Schoolmaster at the next meeting of the Board of Advice, and had referred in scathing terms to the "heathenish practices" of the Chinese, and a few moments afterwards, at the suggestion of Pemberton, had hurried away, very red in the face, to unloose his dog, which had been continuously on the chain for the last three months.

It was at "The Glorat" that I first made the acquaintance of Hung Fu. He was a vegetable John, and his garden was situated about half-a-mile away on the bank of the creek. Irrigated by an old tin hand-pump, it was a green paradise amidst the yellow gravel, an oasis in the desert. Many a summer's afternoon, with the sun from 80 to 100 in the shade, have I sat there on an up-turned candle-box, with boots off, and trousers tucked up to the knees, pulling leisurely away at the creaking old pump, while the cold, icy water fell in delicious streams over my feet and legs, as it flowed into the tiny channels of the Chinaman's irrigation scheme, and a sense of cool refreshment and delicious invigoration spread all over the body, and

gave ease to the feet, and peace and quietness to the mind.

It was a favourite recreation with Pemberton. He was quite an enthusiast over it, and declared it to be, not only a cure for every possible ailment of the body, but the one, the only exercise suited to the Australian climate, combining, as it did, athletics and hydropathics all in one.

Pemberton once persuaded a stout, portly old gentleman, who came to "The Glorat" in search of health, to try this cure. He was a Director of Companies, a guinea pig—a human pig, and he brought with him a liver, a case of claret, and an attack of gout.

Each afternoon, for exactly one month, after paying Hung Fu's modest fee of two and sixpence per week, he sat on the upturned candle-box in the brilliant sunshine, and pulled slowly away at the creaking old pump, and, as he pulled, the perspiration came out, and health and strength came back, and he began to know what it was to live.

At the end of a week his liver was in thorough working order again, but his gout remained. This worried Pemberton, who, in the absence of a medical man in

the town, had taken charge of the case, and eventually, after much anxious consideration, he attributed it to the claret, and recommended its discontinuance—and the old gentleman recommended him to mind his own business.

Pemberton could not be insulted like this, even in the interests of science. His unprofessional pride rebelled, and he threw up the case. He threw it up out of the cellar one dark night to Streaky Dan, and, next morning, when the old gentleman discovered his loss, he reported it to the policeman, and the policeman, becoming interested in the case, went down to Streaky Dan's hut, and successfully diagnosed it, and returned to the lock-up accompanied by the four remaining bottles—and Streaky Dan, and after their departure the Quiggin twins fought a seven-round contest for possession of the empty case, using the straw envelopes as boxing-gloves. And Streaky Dan left the lock-up at the end of a week, the policeman owing him nine shillings and sixpence, for sundry games of "poker;" and the gout left the old gentleman, and the old gentleman left the town, a cured and grateful man, and so impressed was he with the sweating po-

sibilities of the "cure," that he inaugurated a system of calculating cold-blooded sweating amongst the clerks of the institutions of which he was a Director, which proved such a success that in the course of time the newspapers called attention to it.

Whenever the Bishop came to the town, he always stayed at "The Glorat." Everybody liked the Bishop. He was such a nice Bishop, so eloquent and learned in the pulpit, so genial and good-natured, and rotund and jolly out of it. He was everything, in fact, that a Bishop should be, and the town was satisfied with the Bishop —and the Bishop was satisfied with himself.

At his last visit he had made a spirited appeal on behalf of the heathen. "Picture the poor heathen," he had said in the course of his remarks, "many without clothes, without shelter for their heads, without food to eat," and he wiped away a sympathetic tear as he spoke.

It was a strange thing that whenever the Bishop spoke of the heathen, he always grew sympathetic. It was his weak point, and he was carried away by it. He forgot that he was a Bishop, he forgot himself entirely ; he tramped and swayed from one

side of the pulpit to the other, like a man struggling to free himself from his chains—from the chains of duty which bound him to a Bishopric and £1,000 per annum, when he wanted to go to the heathen—to the poor heathen without anything to eat.

And when you looked at that round, rosy face, and portly, well-filled waistcoat, you knew that if by any chance he had gone, the heathen would have given him a right royal welcome.

I met Pat at "The Glorat." He occupied the dual position of handyman and general factotum to the establishment, and it was he who told me the story of Casey and the cat.

It happened, said Pat, "long before Oi became acquainted wid me present job, and when Oi was livin' in a hut near Casey and his woife away out there beyant the "Golden Hope."

"Oi used to hang me beef and mutton in a floy-proof safe, danglin' from the lim av a tree just outside the dure av me hut, and ivery now and thin it wint missin' in the most mystarious manner. Oi sat up wid me gun in me hand, noight after noight, wide awake until Oi fell fast

aslape, but divil a soight cu'd Oi catch me of the thayvin blackguard."

"At last Oi towld Casey about it, and he blamed it onto the Chinymen so emphatic, that, begob, Oi begin to sispect him." "One day, soon afhter, Oi shot an owld black tom-cat, as he came roamin' round afhter me sphring chickens. As Oi was lookin' at his thayvin owld carcase stretched out there in the sunshoine, an oidea came whizzin' thro' me mind into me brain, and when Oi had skinned him, and chopped off his head and tail, and hung him up inside the mate-safe, his own blessed mother, bedad, wouldn't have known him from a rabbit."

"Nixt day whin Oi wint to the safe, it was vacant wid emptiness, and the cat was gone, and ivery now an thin durin' the mornin' Oi got a whiff av rabbit-stew mixed wid onion, as it came hurryin' along on the breeze from Casey's chimney. About three o'clock that afternoon Oi got the skin av the cat, and begin stretchin' it out on the dure av me hut, and as Oi driv in the tacks, the noise roused Casey from his afternoon nap, an' inquisitive-loike, wid his poipe in his mouth, an' his waistcoat bulgin' out—for Mrs. Casey, Oi knew, did not ate rabbit—he come sthrollin' across."

" Says he, And pwhat are ye doin'? he says.

Shure, Oi'm afhter stretchin' out the skin av an owld tom-cat, says Oi.

Where moight be the carcase av it ? says he, lookin' round suspicious loike.

Dan Casey, says Oi, wid a long face and a sthern voice, for all the world loike the judge whin he sintinces the prisoner, 'Dan Casey,' Oi says again, repatin' his name a secind time wid great solimnity, the carcase av that cat, wid the help av yer woife's cookery and moi sthrategy, is restin' at this prisint moment in yure thayvin insoide."

" Casey was niver much av a man at seein' a joke, and snatchin' the hammer from me hand, he brought me a thunderin' crack unawares on the head behind me back in front av me face, and whin Oi come back to the wurrld Oi was lyin' on the ground, an' he was leanin' over the three-rail fence, an', wud you belave it, though the wind had died down, and ivirything was paceful and sthill and soilent, that man was as say-sick as if he had been tossin' about in a sthorm on the Bay av Biscay."

I met little Angelina at " The Glorat,"

She was a sweet child, a little golden-haired, chubby-faced, wondering-eyed mite of five, and her quaint sayings and coaxing ways took all our hearts, including Towser the mastiff, and Pat, the handyman, completely by storm.

"My father never takes a bath," she informed us one evening at the dinner-table, during a lull in the conversation.

While her mother led her hurriedly away, her father hastened to explain. It was all a mistake, he said, a laughable mistake. He took his cold bath every morning long before she was awake. Nobody, he declared, was a greater slave to the bath, or enjoyed the water more than he did. He was always floundering and splashing about in it, and the doctor had warned him that he was overdoing it.

We wore an interested look, and believed him; we had to. That man became a perfect pest ; let the conversation start where it would, he always took it to water, and kept it there.

We had hydropathics at breakfast, and aquatics at tea. Five or six times during the day, with a towel thrown loosely around his neck, would he parade up and down the verandah, informing all, and

sundry, that he had just been for a "dip" in the creek.

"The ducks hadn't a chance while he was in the town," he declared, they couldn't get near the water. Both the towel and his hair looked suspiciously dry for a man who had been plunging and splashing and diving and bobbing about in the water like he had. Hundreds of people wouldn't have believed that man, but we did; besides, it was too hot to argue, even about water.

Pemberton's birthday was fast approaching, and, anticipating the event, he had, a month before, purchased a plump, young, grain-fed goose. Under his fostering care it lost nothing of its plumpness. The first faint streak of dawn found him bustling round the pen, ministering to its wants; whilst, long after nightfall, he hovered, stable-lantern in hand, like a will-o-the-wisp, while he crammed nourishment into its long-suffering, but rapidly, expanding body.

One by one we all caught the craze. With elbows resting on the pen, we gazed admiringly upon it, whilst we pointed out its various qualities. We got up a sweepstake, and formed a guessing competition

upon its weight. We thought of, talked of, dreamt of nothing else, but goose.

Never was there such a popular man as Pemberton at this time; people who formerly said nasty things to his face, now said them behind his back; ruffled old ladies, whose equanimity and self-conceit had been rudely disturbed by his caustic tongue, now beamed placidly upon him, as if inviting friendship; stout old gentlemen, grown angry at hearing their pet theories characterised as "empty twaddle," and seeing their long-cherished conservative opinions thrown like chaff before the wind, now linked an arm affectionately in his, and beguiled him to their rooms, where, in stiff bedroom nobblers, from their own private bottles, they drank the health of the goose.

Even little Angelina and Towzer, the mastiff, caught the prevailing infection, and all day long, whilst she stirred it up with a stick between the bars, he sniffed round the pen, glaring at it with the eye of a connoisseur, as if calculating the bones, and at night time he slept with one eye open, and growled every time it cackled in its dreams; but two days before the eventful day he became impatient with so much waiting, and killed a promising young

pullet on his own account, and was promptly sentenced to be chained up at his kennel, and fed for three days on water only, as a punishment. And the soft, tender-hearted, lovable little Angelina shed tears at the cruel sentence of her playmate, and refused to be comforted.

The day before his birthday, Pemberton, with that generous, true-hearted, manly feeling, which had always characterised him, went round and invited everybody, friends and enemies alike, to be present at his birthday dinner. Nobody was forgotten. In the fulness of his heart, he even invited little Angelina's papa, who was a strict vegetarian and teetotaler, and with whom, on the previous day, he had had an argument on a water question, in which Pemberton, losing patience, had told him that as he had mentioned water in connection with every other subject under the sun, it was about time he mentioned it in connection with whisky.

At nightfall the goose was killed and plucked with much labour and great rejoicing; and at last, as it hung in all its lovely nakedness, head downwards, from a beam in the kitchen, never, they all declared, had they seen such a plump, juicy, well-rounded, grain-fed goose.

At last the birthday arrived. Never in his life before had Pemberton received so many handshakes, so many happy returns of the day—so few presents. The rejoicing was universal, universal except for the dismal howls of the hungry Towzer, which so upset little Angelina, that Pemberton, taking her by the hand, had gone down to the kennel to promise Towzer the after-dinner bones.

He discovered, however, as he quickly stepped beyond the radius of the chain, with a portion of his trouser-leg missing, that Towzer wanted something more substantial than a promise. What Towzer wanted was flesh—goose or human—he wasn't particular as to which, but flesh he must have—his system needed it. He would have given half his tail for a wing of the pullet, which, three days before, he had tossed disdainfully aside, and which now lay, so near, and yet so far, twenty yards away at the bottom of the woodheap.

Meantime the preparations for the feast went briskly forward. Old Sally, the cook, spurred to heroic efforts, by two and sixpence in pocket beforehand, and two and sixpence in promise afterwards, kept up a

noble fire, as she basted the fast-browning goose, which, as if not to be outdone in the general rejoicing, simmered merrily away in its own juice.

The old ladies, having assisted to decorate the table, went away to perform the same operation upon themselves, and the old gentlemen, resplendent in white waistcoats, journeyed from room to room sampling each other's whiskies, and talking on every subject under the sun, except —that, which they hoped would soon lay near their hearts—the goose.

At last all was in readiness, the goose, browned to perfection, and done to a turn, was carried into the dining-room by the proud and punctual Sally, while Miss Smith followed close behind with the vegetables.

The dinner-bell rang with a resounding peal, and finished half a bar in front of Towzer, who sang seconds, and we formed in line in the hall, a joyous, hungry, and expectant group, our host leading the way, with the sherry reclining gracefully on one arm and the bitters on the other ; whilst from out of the coat-tail pockets of sundry old gentlemen, peeped sundry bottles of whisky, each of a different brand.

As we approached the dining-room

door, Sally bustled in, beaming with pride, and carrying in her hand the apple-sauce steaming hot. As she passed through the doorway, she uttered a piercing shriek, and the sauce-tureen dropped from her nerveless hands.

The Goose Had Disappeared!

The plate on which it had been laid was toppled over, half the gravy was on the tablecloth, but the goose and the other half had vanished as if by magic.

The other half of the gravy was quickly recovered. We found it on the pinafore of little Angelina a few moments afterwards when she returned from the kennel, whither she had journeyed, in the kindness of her heart, to convey the goose to the starving Towzer.

With a yell, Pemberton grasped the situation, and rushed frantically for Towzer's domicile, whilst I followed close on his heels to view that awful scene. Never shall I forget it. Resting on the floor of the kennel, lovingly encircled by the two great paws of Towzer, who growled out his grateful thanks, as he wolfishly tore great strips from off the breast, lay that plump, juicy, nicely-browned, well-basted goose. Pemberton

made a mad plunge forward, but I grasped him firmly by the coat-tails, and held him back. It was a Victoria-Cross job, and there were no press correspondents handy.

We turned away, for the sight made us sick at heart, and filed sorrowfully back to the dining-room, where we found the guests seated in silence at a miserable meal of pork and vegetables.

We took our seats, but we could not eat. The sight of little Angelina's father, as he sat there with a fiendish, inhuman grin on his unwashed countenance, was too much for us, and when he helped her twice to pudding, and, patting her upon the back, called her "Father's sympathetic little girlie," I rose and left the room. So did Pemberton, but not before he had imparted, in a few choice words, to a certain person, whom he graphically described as a dirty, unwashed son-of-a-gun, his candid opinion of a man who regarded soap only as an ornament, and who, like the cows, —drank water.

And poor, diminutive Peter Murdoch, with the wife who lectured on Woman's Rights—Peter, the hen-pecked, the inoffensive, whose sole vocabulary consisted of the words, "Yes, my dear"—Peter was stirred

by the sight to a righteous wrath, and, leaning over the table, he shook his quavering fist in the face of the great unwashed.

"W-why don't you f-flay the little d-devil alive?" he said, and for the first time in her life, Mrs. Murdoch felt proud of her husband.

But little Angelina's father was not to escape scot-free; for Pat, the handy-man, irritated by the loss of a wing and a bit o' the bosom, which was to have been his share, and lured on by the promise of a reward of five shillings from sundry malicious old gentlemen, became suddenly short-sighted, and whilst the unconscious vegetarian was enjoying an afternoon nap upon the lawn, he mistook him for a pink carnation, and heaved a bucket of water upon his unwashed countenance; and sundry grateful old ladies, behind the window curtains in the drawing-room, contorted into various shapes, by the agonies of suppressed laughter, increased the reward to seven and six.

As for Pemberton, I knew exactly what he would do—and he did it. He got gloriously "tight," not in public, his position as schoolmaster forbade such an example; but he went down to Hung Fu's hut, and

despatched that not unwilling Chinaman to the store for two bottles of square gin. At 11 : 35, he was a bottle and a half ahead of Hung Fu, and when at 2 a.m., armed with a leg of the goose, which, at the risk of his life, he had recovered from Towzer's kennel, he aroused me from a sound sleep; it was to request me to come and be an onlooker while he knocked the stuffing out of the father of that towy-headed, young, thieving imp of Satan's mischief—little Angelina.

The Courtship at Liberty Flat

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

Come back from Purgatory, Denis Fogarty, back to your paling hut, beside the Yellow Creek. See, your old armchair is in its place in front of the roaring fire, and I have mixed you a stiff tumbler of the "Shamrock" you loved, not wisely, but far too well, and have filled up a brand new clay with your favourite Derby.

Come back to your old hut, for Long Jack and I are waiting for you. Come back, and sit in your old seat, and sip your grog, and puff your pipe as in the days of yore, and——

. . . .

"Say, bhoys, did Oi iver tell ye the story av our courtship at Libherty Flat?"

It was a noice little place, was Libherty Flat, bhoys; rowdy, Oi grant ye, for nearly ivery man in it was an Oirishman, but still their bark was worse than their bite, and a betther hearted or kinder lot av

lads, if a man was in throuble or sickness, ye couldn't well come across.

It was a great place for jokes and chaff and banter. Your turn to-day, moine to-mhorrow, and somebhody else's the day aftherwards, and as fur dhrinks—well, a pub paid in those days, Oi can tell ye.

Ye had to keep a ready tongue and yure wits about ye in Libherty Flat. I'll just give ye an insthance.

Lacey got wind av a railway job in the city, and left Libherty Flat, and about a week afterwards, Phelan got a letter when the coach come in.

Ah, bad news, bad news, says he, when he read it ; poor Lacey's got a sthroke. Poor chap, says Delaney, may his sufferins soon be over.

It's a linghering sthroke, said Phelan sadly, he'll linger for years yet.

Phwat sort of a sthroke is't, said Oi, curious-like.

A Guverment sthroke, said Phelan quickly.

Had ! cried the "bhoys," amidst roars av laughter, as they jostled me into the bar of the "Shamrock," and it took me two weeks hard wurk to wipe the score off the shlate.

Everybhody got a turn, nobhody was forgotten, but it seemed to me that Danny Murphy's turn came round oftener than anybhody ilses. Danny was an unoffensive owld widower, with none too good a temper, and lived in a nate little cottage near the entrance to O'Connor's tunnel. He disbelieved in jokes av any description, and never retaliated, and all he asked was to get gloriously dhrunk on Saturday noight, like the rest av the inhabitants, and to be left alone. Nothing ever interfered wid the first portion of his programme, but the secind depended entoirly on the force av circumstances, and the inclinations av the bhoys.

One foine November evening, as the coach pulled up in front av the Shamrock, Danny, who had been for a thrip to town, was observed on the box-sate ; but, wonder of wonders, seated in the middle, bethween him and the driver, was a woman, and a young woman, too.

Now women were scarce in Libberty Flat, wid the exception av Mrs. O'Rooke, the sixteen sthone woife av the landlord av the Shamrock, and hard-wurking Mrs. Rafferty wid the ten childer, there were

none, so that whin, as O'Loughlin put it, we beheld the purtiest, swatest little colleen that iver was born outside the Imerald Isle, it is not to be wondered that, raisin' our hats in the air, we gave three hearty cheers av welcome.

And Murphy, wid a half-pleased, half-cynical smile on his faytures, introduced us wid a wave av his hand.

"Gintilmen," he says, "me niece Norah." Norah, darlin', says he, the gintilmen av Libherty Flat. And Norah, blushing like a rose, gracefully bowed her thanks.

After a few moments of conversation, Murphy shouldered his niece's box, and prepared to mount the hill.

"Allow me," Mr. Murphy, says O'Loughlin gracefully, as he lifted the box from Danny's shoulder to his own, and Danny, with the same cynical smoile, started off up the path wid his niece.

"Allow me," Mr. O'Loughlin, says Mick O'Connor, sarcastic-like, as he lifted the box off O'Loughlin's shoulder.

"Allow me," Mr. O'Connor, said O'Loughlin, as he sthruck O'Connor fair in the eye.

O'Connor put down the box, and rushed

woildly at O'Loughlin, and Daly, seein' an opportunity, picked it up.

" Allow me," Mr. Daly, said Tim Delany, snatchin' it out of his hands.

" Wid pleasure," Mr. Delany, said Daly, as he hit him a voilent smack on the soide av the head, and Delaney, puttin' down the box returned it wid interest.

Nolan rushed forward to seize the box, but Cromarty saved him the trouble, and Doolan took it from Cromarty, and bumped into Phelan wid it.

Hooray, said Mrs. Rafferty's four-year-old, waving his little switch in the air, as he watched the fight from the doorway of the Rafferty mansion.

" Bravo, me darlin'," said Mrs. Rafferty proudly, as she lifted him up in her arms, " Shure ye've got the rale owld Oirish blood in yure veins, begorra, and some day, 'tis yerself will be wan av them self-same bhoys, whin yure grown to be a man."

Five minutes afterwards ivery available man in Libherty Flat was mixed up in that box question, and as the centre av the scrimmage surged further and further away in to the middle av the road, the box was left unprotected, and Mrs. Rafferty,

fearin' lest Norah moight be gettin' anxious about it, sent two av her small bhoys to take a handle each, and afther much pantin' and blowin' and restin', they landed the box at Murphy's.

Nixt mornin' things had quietened down, for they bore no malice in Libberty Flat, and, except for a few cut faces and sundry black eyes, you would never have known that any dischussion had arisen.

Oi niver saw a man leap into popularity as quickly as Murphy did afther his niece arrived, for she proved as swate and amiable as she looked, and at the ind av the week, the " bhoys " would just as soon as thought av playin' a joke on the man in the moon as on Murphy. It was "A foine day, Mr. Murphy." "How's your niece, Mr. Murphy," or, Murphy, " Will ye have a drink wid me ?"—and he would.

As soon as the day's wurk was finished, ye could smell yellow-bar soap from one end av the Flat to the other, and after tea the bhoys would begin and tittivate themselves up. Long-forgotten, black, broadcloth coats and chimney-pot hats were raked out, and the storekeeper ran out av paper collars the second day. One by one they would saunter up the road, as

Weatherboard Watson put it, " dressed for Piccadhilly," and after lounging in for a drink at the Shamrock, would turn into the track leadin' up to Murphy's, and knock gently at the dure.

" A foine evenin', Mr. Murphy, Oi thought Oi'd jist step up and ask ye phwat ye think av this bit av sthone ;" or, " Oi want ye to thry this linnyment for yere rhoomhatics, Mr. Murphy," " Oi've been a bit anxious about ye ;" or "A few wild flowers for Miss Norah, Mr. Murphy," and ye would sthep into the little parlour and foind it crammed to the roof wid all the eligibles and ineligibles av Libherty Flat, smilin' at Norah, and glarin' at each other across the room ; whoile Murphy looked on wid a cynical grin that caused ye to feel divilish uncomfortable, and made ye wonder if yure collar was straight.

The most aggravatin' part av it all was that Norah made no distinction. She smoiled on O'Connor, she sang for Daly, she walked out wid O'Loughlin, and went drivin' wid Nolan, and ridin' wid Doolan, and gathered woild flowers wid Phelan, and went fishin' wid Cromarty, and sang duets wid me, and she put exactly the same amount of pressure into her swate

little handshake, whether she was claspin' the hand av One-leg Jackson, or Handsome Joe, or Old Man Barlow.

This sort av thing went on for, perhaps, a month, wid a foight ivery second noight, and sometimes two on the same noight, bedad, and then O'Rooke, the landlord av the Shamrock, findin' that he was losin' money, for the "bhoys" spent all their spare toime at Murphy's, called a meetin', and suggested that the matter should be settled one way or the other.

Let every man who means to act square and wants to marry the colleen, write his name down on this list, said he, and then we'll draw lots, and each man shall ask the question "yes," or "no," in his turn.

To this the bhoys agreed, with the exception av Old Man Barlow, who remembered, when Doolan took off his coat and refrished his mimery, that he had a woife in Sydney, and afther he had retired from the contest, the list was prepared, and amidst grate excitement, we dhrew lots for our places. Although Oi tried to think av a prayer, as Oi put me hand in the hat, Oi couldn't, for the loife av me remember wan, but me good angel must have taken the will for the deed, for, bedad, Oi drew

number one ; then came Cromarty, Nolan, Handsome Joe, One-leg Jackson, O'Loughlin, Phelan, Daly, Doolan, and O'Connor.

We arranged that a week more should be allowed to elapse to "clinch the courtship," as O'Rooke said, and that on the followin' Saturday afthernoon the affair was to be settled for good and all.

The eventful afternoon at length arrived, and at 3 o'clock sharp, we assembled at the Shamrock, each man rigged out "fit to kill," in garments av ivery discription, hats av ivery shape, boots av ivery soize. Oi felt moighty narvous, Oi can tell ye, phwat wid bein' first on the list, and the chaffin' av the bhoys, who were not in the competition ; but by the toime Oi had a dhrink wid O'Connor, and another wid Phelan, and a taste wid Daly, and a dhrop wid O'Loughlin, and three fingers wid Nolan, and a glass wid O'Rooke, Oi felt fit to face a whole army of colleens, wid twenty Murphy's at their head, bedad, and amidst the cheers av the bhoys, wid me head erect in the air and a smoile on me face, Oi went up the hill at a brisk pace to Murphy's, and found him smokin' his poipe in the doorway.

The top av the afthernoon to ye, Mr. Murphy, says Oi, claspin' him be the hand.

The same to yerself, says he, wid the same owld cynical smoile.

Can Oi have a word wid ye in private, says Oi.

Ye can, says he, leadin' the way to the parlour.

It's about yer niece, Miss Norah, says Oi.

About me niece Norah ? says Murphy, surprised loike. What about her ?

I'm afther seekin' her hand in marriage, says Oi, as a cold sweat came out on me forehead, and Oi began to wish Oi had taken a dhrop more whisky.

Oh, indade ! says he wid a surphrised look ; in marriage.

Yes ; says Oi boldly—in marriage. Oi'll be but fifty-three come the 8th av January, and it's thinkin' Oi am that Oi'll be afther strikin' something good in me new claim, and Oi've got eighteen pound in the Bullion Bank in the city, and wid a swate little colleen like Norah——

Ye say ye have eighteen pound in the Bullion Bank, says he, interruptin' me.

Oi have, says Oi.

On yure solemn oath, says he.

On me solemn oath, says Oi.

Then give me the two pound ye borrowed from me at the Shamrock on St.

Patrick's eve, says he, as he took a blank cheque out av the table drawer, and placed a pen and the ink-bottle beside it.

This was a slap up against me wid a vengeance, for he was dhrunk at the toime, and Oi thought he'd forgotten all about it, but Oi wasn't goin' to lose me chance av life-long happiness for two pound, so Oi wrote out the cheque in a divil-me-care manner, and handed it to him careless-loike, but he was too wide-awake for me.

Ye moight oblige me by signin' yure name to it, says he, as he handed it back, Oi moight forget who giv' it to me.

Not much chance av that, says Oi, as Oi sadly signed me name, and gave it back to him.

Oi don't know, says he, my mimery's not what it was.

It'll last ye fur years yet, Murphy, says Oi kindly. Oi wouldn't trouble about it if Oi was you. Dismiss yure mimery from yure thoughts, Oi says, and let us talk av me marriage wid the colleen.

Do ye really luv her, says he, as he folded the cheque away in his pocket-book.

Luv her ! says Oi, luv, is it ? Shure there's niver a moment day or noight but phwat Oi'm thinkin' av her. Luv her ! may

the sun niver shoine on me again if Oi don't think she's the dearest, swatest little colleen that iver ——

Oi'm rale sorry fur ye, Fogarty, says he, interruptin' me wid a pityin' look, indade, and Oi am.

Why ? Oi asked, wonderin'.

Because Norah's married, says he, grinnin' from ear to ear.

Married ! Oi echoed, spacehless wid amazement. Yes, says he, she was married six months ago to her cousin Denis Murphy. He's a guard on the railway, and Oi'm expectin' him up be to-morrow's coach to spind his holidays.

Why the divil didn't ye tell us this before, Oi said, getting moighty angry ; for Oi could see he'd bein' havin' a loan av us.

Shure it must have slipped me mimery. It's not what it was, says he grinnin'.

Why didn't the colleen tell us, then, Oi demanded.

Perhaps she was gettin' even wid the bhoys for the tricks they've played on her poor old uncle, says he slyly.

Presently Oi began to cool down a bit, and the humour av the thing came into me mind, and as Oi thought av the others waitin' down at the Shamrock, a smoile began to creep over me faytures, and the

more Oi thought av them, the more Oi laughed, until the tears began to roll down me cheeks, and Murphy, he laughed so that he could scarcely sit up straight on his chair, and when the colleen came in at length to see what all the laughing was about, he had such a pain in his side, that, bedad, he couldn't speak, so Oi had to tell her meself.

It was a rale trate, Oi tell ye to hear that colleen laugh, for all the wurrld like the singin' av a bird.

Ye'll forgive me, Mr. Fogarty, said she at length, wipin' away the tears of laughter from her swate grey eyes, and holdin' out her hand.

Oi'll forgive ye, me dear, says Oi, bendin' down and kissin' her hand wid grate gallantry, on wan condition only.

And phwat is that ? says she.

That Oi'm to be number two, says Oi boldly.

Wid all my heart, says she smilin', as she brought out the bottle and mixed me up a sthiff nobbler to help me kape a straight face.

"Don't let on to the bhoys," says Murphy, as Oi took me leave, "let them all come in their turn."

"Trust me to kape a straight face," says Oi, wid confidence, as I started off for the Shamrock; but, bedad, it was harder than Oi thought, for the thought av them bhoys waitin' down there would kape creepin' into me moind, and when Oi come to the entrance to O'Connor's tunnel, Oi had to go and sit down, bedad, and have me laugh out. Oi laughed until me sides were achin' sore, and Oi could laugh no longer, and then Oi drew the longest face Oi could, and started out for the Shamrock.

"What luck!" cried the bhoys in one breath, but Oi jist gave them a despairin', languishin' look, and sittin' down in a corner of the bar, Oi began wipin' me eyes.

One av the bhoys brought me a whisky, and prisintly Oi rose up and wint over to Cromarty. "May yure luck be better than mine, Cromarty, old bhoy, Oi said, shaking him mournfully be the hand.

Did she reject ye? says he narvously.

"She did, she thrampled on me feelins, and rejected me wid schorn," says Oi, dhramatic-loike.

How did ye get all the mud on the back av yure coat, says Doolan, who was behind me.

"That's where Murphy kicked me out," but Oi'll be even wid him yet, says Oi savagely, nearly explodin' wid suppressed laughter, as Oi remimbered how Oi must have done it when Oi sat down to have me laugh out at the tunnel.

He won't kick me in this coat, says Cromarty, beginnin' to peel off, because it's not moine. Oi borrowed it from Casey at the "Golden Chance," and if it's damaged Oi'm to buy him a new wan; anyway Oi'll be better prepared in me shirt-sleeves, and in his shirt-sleeves and chimney-pot hat, Cromarty went up the hill to "put the question."

In about twenty minutes down he came again, walkin' slow and mornful-loike, wid his head hangin' down, and pushin' his way through the bhoys, he came and sat down on the sate next me.

Whisky, he said wid a gasp, and O'Rooke brought him a nobbler.

"Was ye rejected? said Nolan, for it was his turn next.

Yes, wid contemptuous rejectment, said Cromarty, gruffly; for he seemed in a divil av a temper.

We're comrades in misfortune, Fogarty, says he, as he grasped me be the hand, and

squeezed it until Oi nearly cried out wid the pain, and at the same toime kicked me slyly on the shins. Why didn't ye tell me, ye blackguard ? he whispered, lookin' moighty black.

Hist, Oi whispered, for the love av Heaven, think av Nolan ; and as the joke began to tickle him, he had to stick his hat over his face, for he was grinnin' from ear to ear.

Did he kick ye ? asked Nolan, coming over.

Don't disturb the man, says Oi, pushin' him away. Can't ye see he's cryin' wid disappointment.

Then Nolan wint up, and afhter a whoile Nolan came down wid a languishin', disappointed look. If iver a man in this wurrld was a born actor, shure 'twas Nolan. Divil take me if Oi know to this very day whether he was achtin', or whether he was not.

After Nolan came Handsome Joe. He was a Cannaydian, a tall, well-built, dark-lookin' chap, wid peircin' black eyes, and a foine opinion av himself.

It stroikes me Oi won't need to throuble about climbin' the hill, says One-leg Jackson, as he looked afther him ; but he was

mistaken, for in twenty minutes, back came Handsome Joe. He was in a divil av a rage, and looked as black as thunder.

Come out ! says he, clenchin' his fists and walkin' straight up to where Nolan was sitting.

But Oi jumped up betwane thim. Think av One-leg, ye fool, whispered Oi.

What's that ye said to me, said Nolan to Handsome Joe. Oi said " there's as good fish in the say as iver come out av it," says Handsome Joe, calmly, bendin' down and pretendin' to tie his bootlace, so as to hide his smoiles.

" Ye spake wurrds av wisdom," says Nolan, sittin' down again wid a disappointed look.

Oi don't think it's much use me goin', Oi ain't got a chance, says One-leg, tryin' to back out av it ; but hardly had he uttered the wurrds, whin Cromarty and some more av the bhoys began to peel off their coats.

If ye turn dog we'll duck ye in the creek, says Cromarty, and One-leg wint up in a hurry.

Presently he stumped slowly down again, and passing dejectedly through the bhoys, who clustered round, he advanced

to the bar, and rested his head wearily on his hands.

Whisky, says he mornfully, and O'Rooke mixed him a stiff nobbler, which he swallowed at a draught, and came to sit down in the corner. "Oi've lost me heart as well as me leg," says he dismally, and that was all the bhoys could get out of him, but he tipped me a wink on the quiet, and Oi could see he was enjhoying the fun.

O'Loughlin, Phelan, Daly, and Doolan, followed in quick succession, wid no betther result, and thin O'Connor wint up.

The lucky last, says O'Rooke, as he handed him the bottle.

Good luck to ye, cried the bhoys, givin' him three hearty cheers, as he started off up the hill.

Directly he was out av soight, Cromarty peeled off his coat, and advanced towards me.

"Whoy didn't ye tell me the colleen was married?" he demanded threateningly.

"And whoy didn't ye tell me?" says Nolan, squarin' up to Cromarty.

"And whoy didn't ye tell me?" says Handsome Joe, lookin' wrathfully at Nolan.

"And whoy didn't ye tell me?" said each of the others in turn, glancing wrathfully at the man who had preceded him.

Come, bhoys, come, says O'Rooke, steppin' in betwane and laughin' as he began to get an inklin' av what it was all about. Don't forget we've got to welcome back O'Connor yet, so come and have a dhrink at the expense av the "house," and tell us all about it, for it seems to me that afther all Murphy has come out on top.

So we shook hands on it, and had a dhrink, and as each man related his expariances, amid roars av laughter, we had one with him, and we were just goin' to have one wid each other, whin somebody called out that O'Connor was comin'—and we all bustled out to meet him.

Down he came wid his head bent down, and wid a tired, hopeless look and a mornful sthep, not known the joke had been put away, and one by one, in spite av our efforts to kape solemn, we began to grin.

" Kape yure faces straight, fur the luve av Heaven," says Doolan, and we managed to kape fairly quiet until O'Connor was about fifty yards away ; but, directly we got a good look at his mornful faytures, 'twas too much for us, and there went up from Libberty Flat a roar av laughter that must have pierced the clouds.

O'Connor couldn't face it ; he hesitated

for a moment, and thin he turned and fled up the hill towards his tunnel.

Afther him, bhoys, yelled Cromarty, 'tis his turn to shout, and away up the hill afther him we wint, for all the wurrld loike the small bhoys playin' at paper-chase.

He's gone up the tunnel, says Daly, who was the first to arrive.

We'll follow him to the ind av the wurrld, says Cromarty, whose blood was up ; and, regardless av his foine Sunday clothes, he jammed his top hat firmly on his head, and dashed into the darkness, and in we jostled through the clay and mullock, and dirty water afther him. On we wint, stumblin' and fallin' over the rails, half a mile under the hill, until finally we ran him to earth, at the ind av the tunnel.

Sthand back, Oi've got a pick in me hand, says O'Connor's voice from out av the inky darkness.

Well, kape it there, says Cromarty, as he dived under, and caught O'Connor be the legs, whoile the rest av us grabbed whatever portion av him we could, and, roarin' wid laughter and strugglin' and jostlin, we carried him back to the mouth av the tunnel.

Ivery man, woman, and choild in Libherty Flat was grouped around the enthrance, and niver shall Oi forget the cheers and shrieks av laughter they gave, as wid our top hats bashed in, and all our foine black clothes covered in yellow mud, we carried the struggling O'Connor into the daylight, and down the hill to the "Shamrock."

. . . .

Pwhat a noight we did have that noight, to be shure. It took me quite a month to wurrk me schore off the slate, and, wud ye belave it, Oi'm blest if Nolan didn't actually go and get dhrunk, and we left him at two o'clock in the mornin', sittin' on a fern-tub on the verandhy wid his arm round the tree-fern.

"Norah, me swate little colleen," he was sayin', "say that ye luve me agin."

Norah's husband came up the nixt day, and a rale white man wid a foine taste av humour he turned out to be, and 'twas wid a rare reghret that we saw Norah and him mount the coach at the end av a fortnight, and drive away.

"Gintilmen, says she, smilin' through her tears. Am I forgiven ?"

"From the bottom av our hearts,"

says we, bowin' low wid a foine courteshy, after which we give them three ringin' cheers.

" There's a big hole in Libherty Flat," says Phelan sadly, as the coach turned the bend.

" Thrue for ye," echoed the bhoys, as they wint sorrowfully back to wurk.

. . . .

One evening, about a year after this, we were all gathered around the Shamrock, whin the coach came in, and the driver handed Murphy a tellygram he had brought from the nearest Tellygraph Office, about twenty miles away.

Murphy tore it open wid tremblin' hands. Oi can't make head or tails av it," says he.

Who is't from ? says Oi.

" Me niece Norah," says he.

" What says it ?" says Oi.

" Colleen Bawn," says he.

" Shure, 'tis a baby girl," says Oi.

" Had, Murphy, had ! cried the bhoys," roarin' wid laughter.

" Hooray !" shouted Murphy, leadin' the way to the dure av the Shamrock.

" Hooray !" echoed the bhoys, as they followed him in.

The Silent Shoemaker

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

A day's journey by rail from Sydney, and a day and a half thereafter in a rumbling, creaking, crazy old coach, drawn by three horses over terrible roads, lands you at a quaint little mining town amongst the mountains. The town, which is situated in a deep valley, consists of but a single street running down the centre, with the houses clustered closely together on either side, and a few others dotted here and there on the sides of the mountains. At the back of the houses, on one side of the street, is a creek, which serves the double purpose of a drainage scheme for the inhabitants, and to carry away the water from the mines higher up. The town is known as Echo Valley, and is most appropriately named, for truly it is a valley of echoes. Let a sound, however slight, be made at one end of the valley, and it is taken up at once and repeated by an echo, which, in turn, is answered by

hundreds of others, from here, from there, from everywhere, from nowhere, echoing and re-echoing, growing fainter and fainter, until, finally, it dies away, and is lost for ever amongst the mountains.

The Chinese declared that the place was haunted by "devils," and no resident of the Chinese camp on the other side of the mountains had ever been known to enter the town after nightfall; consequently, poultry figured as a somewhat rare luxury in the Chinese menu.

Tim McGuigan, the proprietor of the butcher's shop, was an Irishman—a south of Ireland Irishman, and hanging from a nail on his shop wall was a small black object, about a foot and a half long with a knob at the end of it. He called it a "little sthick av bog-oak." Tim was passionately fond of music, especially one song; it was called "The Battle of the Boyne on Water"—he had been waiting for twelve years to hear somebody sing that song. It was a strange fact that he could never persuade anybody in the town to sing it for him, they had never even heard of it, they said.

One day a new schoolmaster came to the town. He was a single man, and found

lodgings at Joe Brown's cottage on the mountain side. He was a tall, thin man with a powerful voice, of which he was very proud; he reckoned it would "just about fill the valley," and after dinner he volunteered to sing. His forte was descriptive songs, and he chose an Irish one. It was called "The Battle of the Boyne on Water."

Before the second bar of that song was finished, Tim McGuigan was rushing up the mountain-side, wiping the dust off his "little sthick av bog-oak," as he ran. He had been waiting a long time to hear that song, and he did not wish to miss any of it.

It was quite a treat to listen to that schoolmaster. He was a wonderful singer. While he was singing, you fancied you could hear the battle raging, and when the song ceased abruptly, you could hear it more plainly than ever—his execution was almost perfect. It created quite a commotion in the valley, that song did. People were talking about it for days afterwards; in fact, they said it gave the schoolmaster a "swelled head."

The town had two peculiar characteristics. There was only one hotel in it, and

there were no two tradesmen in the same line of business, so that, except for the churches, there was no competition. Prices were high, and were regulated by a "ring," composed of all the local tradesmen banded together in the disguise of a club, known as the Merchants' Guild, and of which the grocer was President. They controlled the coach and the carrier, and the policeman was an honorary, and well-paid, member.

When a newcomer came to the town and started business, they promptly starved him out ; the butcher, the hotel-keeper, and the grocer refused to serve him, and the baker and milkman " forgot to call ;" the policeman turned a deaf ear to his complaints, and the inhabitants, most of whom were in debt to one, or all, of the tradesmen, either would not, or could not, help him, for fear of incurring a similar vengeance upon themselves ; so that the " Hunger Cure " generally proved all-sufficient to put up his shutters.

An ironmonger had once come to the valley and started business. He had got wind of the tactics of the " Guild " beforehand, and brought a fortnight's provisions with him, and had made arrangements for

supplies to be forwarded thrice weekly by coach from the nearest town, some forty miles distant.

For a fortnight he did a roaring trade. His prices were from twenty-five to fifty per cent. lower than the local man, and the inhabitants made "hay while the sun shone."

At the end of that time the "Guild" commenced operations. One day the coach did not arrive. It was laid up for repairs, the proprietor said, and he did not know for certain when it would run again. Presently the ironmonger commenced to feel hungry—very hungry. At the end of the second day he would have given a sovereign for a bun and a glass of milk.

The following morning, about eleven o'clock, after a light breakfast of poultry only—it consisted, in fact, of a fly which had accidentally flown down his throat—he was standing behind his counter, moodily staring out into the street, and half resolving to put his shutters up and clear out, when a small child, about four or five years old, came across the street, and gazed with longing eyes at the toy trumpets in the window. He was the son of the local policeman, and, held firmly in

his hand, was what is known to children as a "piece." It consisted of a huge slice of bread, quite an inch thick, liberally bestrewed with jam—and out of which but one small bite had been taken.

He was a man of principle that ironmonger, and when the "piece" caught his eye he quickly turned away, and began to dust his stock. When he looked again, the child was still there, but the "piece" had grown visibly smaller, and, even as he looked, the child raised it again towards his mouth.

The devil conquered. Hastily seizing up the string of trumpets, the ironmonger hurried to the doorway, and beckoned to the child. "Would you like to blow a trumpet, my little man?" said he smiling blandly. In came the unsuspecting child. "Would he like to blow a trumpet" indeed, would he like to blow fifty trumpets? and he did blow them—he blew them all. Laying his "piece" upon the counter, he picked up, first one and then another, and puffing out his little fat cheeks, he blew with all his might, and the ironmonger, with that complacent feeling which springs from a hearty meal, patted him kindly on the head, and encouraged him to blow

louder. The child blew with all his might. He blew until it gave him an appetite, and then, laying down the trumpet, he began to look around him as if in search of something.

"Have another blow," said the ironmonger quickly—he had feared this. But the child pushed the proffered trumpet aside. I want my "piece," he said, eyeing him suspiciously.

"You ate it," said the ironmonger with conviction, "I saw you." This was too much. "The human tongue may lie, but the human stomach cannot," and the child evidently realised this, for, yelling at the top of his voice, he rushed away down the street as fast as his little legs could carry him to "tell his father."

Half an hour later the ironmonger was in custody, and next morning was brought before the local bench on a charge of practising the "Confidence trick."

When the Bench, consisting of the grocer, as Chairman, and three citizens who owed him money, retired to consider the verdict, the three latter were in favour of discharging the accused, as the only evidence against him, a small jam stain on his shirt front, was purely circumstantial.

"If he gets less than a month," said the grocer sharply, "you all pay cash."

That settled it. The ironmonger got a month, without the option—it was a short month—and he came back at the end of twenty-eight days, and removed his stock, a sadder and a wiser man.

On the arrival of the coach one summer's afternoon, there had stepped down from it a sharp-featured, weather-beaten little man, who, after much struggling at the "boot" at the back of the coach had unearthed, with the assistance of the driver, a huge portmanteau, almost as big as himself. He found lodgings with Mrs. Fogarty, and when asked as to his nationality, said "he guessed he was a Yankee."

He roamed aimlessly around the town for a day or so, and the inhabitants began to grow curious concerning him. In answer to all inquiries "he reckoned he was just having a look round." "Could they assist him in any way?" they asked. No thanks; he rather liked hustling around on his own, he was used to it.

He got into conversation with the man who owned the shop the ironmonger had quitted some five years previously. It had been vacant ever since, and after half-an-

hour's brisk bargaining, he bought it from him for one-fifth of what it had cost to build—and the owner was glad to get it.

The "Guild" smiled when they heard the news. "A fool and his money were soon parted," they said. Presently a sign went up over the door—

JEFFERSON J. FRANKLIN American Boot and Shoe Maker

So he was a shoemaker, was he? "Well, he would need a good appetite, for his own leather would be pretty tough to eat," said the grocer; and nobody laughed louder at the sally than old Patsy, the local shoemaker. Patsy was a thrifty old bachelor; he had been there for twenty years; his prices were high, not to say extortionate, and, as he had invested his savings in mining shares to good advantage, he was generally regarded as one of the "warmest" men in the place.

Mrs. Fogarty was a kind-hearted old body, and when she heard of the little man's intention, she told him the story of the ironmonger as a warning, but it did not seem to dishearten him. "That chap

was a spoon-fed babby," was all he said. " Only one month ! I reckon I'd have given him six."

In course of time all was in readiness, and he moved into his shop. He had fitted up the room at the back as a bed-room, and meant to live on the premises, and do his own cooking.

The little shoemaker had been fortunate in starting at the time he did. He could not possibly have chosen a better time, for several of the tradesmen, grown bold by the fact that since the departure of the ironmonger five years ago, there had been no attempt on the part of anybody to start opposition, and tired of the bumptious manner assumed by him, had dared to ask the policeman, who was a notoriously bad payer, for a "small trifle on a/c."

The indignant policeman had at once forwarded in his resignation as a member of the " Guild." It was not the fact of their asking that troubled him, he explained, but they had had the audacity and presumption to ask him when in "uniform," and on his " beat." It was an insult to the Law, he said ; such a question should have only been put to him when off duty, and in plain clothes.

Relations between the "Guild" and the police were, therefore, somewhat strained, and the policeman openly showed his contempt for the "Guild" by taking down a pair of boots to the newcomer to be soled and heeled, and for which, when completed, he forgot to pay.

Soon the inhabitants began to sort out their boots. They would "make hay while the sun shone," but when they took them down, and looked at his price list in the window, they speedily brought them back again. His prices were the same as Patsy's.

This was not what they had been used to. It was an infringement on their rights. They grew quite indignant about it. Was it not an unwritten law of the town, that the prices of a newcomer should be from twenty-five to fifty per cent. below those of the local man; if not, how did he expect to attract business?

Several would-be customers went in and argued the point with the little man. He was courteous, but firm; his prices were in the window, if they did not suit, then they must go elsewhere.

They did go elsewhere, and as elsewhere meant Patsy, he grew quite jubilant about

it, and had an extra pint of ale with his dinner each day.

The inhabitants couldn't understand it ; the newcomer was evidently not quite right in his head. Joe, the doctor's groom, said he was " a bit off his chump," and that he was going to take a rise out of him. He was a wag, Joe was ; he had the reputation of being a " born humorist." What funny things he said ; what jokes he played on people; you couldn't help laughing at him, he made your sides ache, even the parsons and the grocer had been known to smile " unofficially " at the recital of some of his doings.

One evening Joe, escorted by a few of his bosom " pals," and carrying under his arm a small brown paper parcel, was observed to be wending his way to the shop of the newcomer, and, word having been passed round, the whole street was soon on the qui vive—Joe was going to take a rise out of the new shoemaker.

Joe entered the shop, while his " pals " clustered round the door to see the fun. I want these boots soled, said Joe, as he handed the parcel to the little shoemaker, and carelessly took a seat on the bench.

Certainly ! said the latter with alacrity, as he prepared to undo the parcel. It was well wrapped up, and after untying various knots, and unfolding innumerable papers, he disclosed a pair of " horse-boots " belonging to the doctor's fast-trotting mare.

In the roar of laughter which followed, Joe rose from the bench, and left the shop with a footstep, in which energy, determination, and hurrying were mingled. Neither the energy, the determination, or even the hurrying belonged of a right to Joe, but were imparted to him, as it were, for the time being by the little shoemaker, who accompanied him, and who, as if anxious for his safety, grasped him firmly by the collar and the nether portion of his garments. Across the road at a brisk pace he went, on, on, to the banks of the muddy creek, and when he emerged from it a few moments later, covered from head to foot in yellow mud, his reputation as a humorist, like his language, was doubtful ; but when it was discovered next day that the little shoemaker had put a sole on the " boots," thereby utterly ruining them, and had taken them up to their irate owner, the doctor, who in turn had de-

ducted the cost of them from Joe's wages, that reputation was gone for ever.

Meanwhile, as the days went on, the little shoemaker was not idle. He was making a hand-sewn boot. Into its composition some strange things had entered, short strips of flat wood, small pieces of tin, parchment, and piano strings even. It was about the most weird piece of boot-manufacture you ever saw. Although to all outward appearance a boot, it was, in reality, not a boot at all, but a musical, or, rather, an unmusical instrument—a regular sounding-board.

After it was finished, he sat there for two days, waiting patiently for the customers who never came. The Guild had, as yet, not interfered, but feeling that he would eventually be compelled to lower his prices, and, urged on by Patsy, they gave the word—and the little man commenced to feel hungry.

Not for long though ; he stood it for exactly one day, and the following morning, just as the coach was about to start, he was observed to hastily leave his shop, locking the door after him, and, accompanied by his huge portmanteau, to clamber on the coach, and depart.

His departure caused great commotion and laughter amongst the members of the "Guild" and the inhabitants generally, and in the excitement of the moment, the grocer snapped his fingers in the face of the policeman. Not that he meant, for an instant, to be guilty of such an ungentlemanly action; his intention had been to do it behind the policeman's back, but that individual had, unfortunately, turned round suddenly in the middle of the "snap."

The grocer endeavoured to explain this to the indignant policeman, who most ungraciously refused to accept his apologies, and who, in the presence of the bystanders, had the audacity to refer to him, the leading man in the town, the Chairman of the Bench and the President of the Guild, as a "dirty little whipper-snapper."

This little incident did not tend to improve the somewhat strained relations already existing between the police and the members of the "Guild."

If the departure of the shoemaker had caused some laughter and commotion, his return, two days later, accompanied by the big portmanteau, caused still more, although, as far as the members of the

"Guild" were concerned, the laughter was conspicuous only by reason of its absence.

He speedily opened up his shop, and then the secret of his journey became apparent—several large tins of cabin biscuits were ranged upon the shelves around the shop, and, hanging from the ceiling in lines as regular as an army of soldiers, were some thirty or forty huge German sausages. If it was to be a case of siege, the garrison evidently did not mean to surrender for want of provisions.

Punctually at 8 o'clock the next morning a strange, weird noise broke upon the ears of the inhabitants. Heavens! what a noise it was, a sharp, shrill, clattering, hammering noise, quick and incessant, never stopping for a second—a penetrating, searching noise, that grated on your nerves and pierced your very marrow, almost unbearable by itself, but when the echoes took it up, and got it fairly going, that usually peaceful valley was like Bedlam let loose.

It came from the shop of the little shoemaker, and it seemed to those who clustered curiously around his doorway that it was caused by the flat hammer, which the little man was wielding so vig-

orously, striking sharply upon the upturned sole of a boot upon his last. But they didn't cluster long, their nerves couldn't stand it.

The only man in the town who couldn't hear that noise was the policeman, for the Police Station was situated around the corner of the road, at the entrance to the valley, and the echoes, like the policeman, had their regular beat.

The policeman was sent for, but did not appear, and it was only in response to a deputation of the inhabitants, headed by the grocer as principal magistrate, that he condescended to put on his uniform, and stroll down about eleven o'clock to inquire into the matter.

What agonies those townsfolk had endured during those three hours, no tongue can ever tell. It is an ill-wind that blows nobody any good, and the draper, in spite of the raising of his prices, first fifty, and then a hundred, per cent. was sold out of cotton wool in half-an-hour; but all in vain, that sound would have pierced an ironclad.

On the arrival of the policeman, the crowd gathered round.

" Arrest that man," shouted the grocer in authoritative tones, pointing to the little shoemaker, who was pounding gaily away.

" What for ?" shouted back the policeman with well simulated amazement.

" Disturbing the peace," bawled the grocer, who was fast losing his temper.

" You can't be well," roared the policeman, regarding him with an anxious, affectionate look. " He's mending boots."

" Arrest him instantly," shouted the irate grocer, " or I'll write to headquarters."

" So will I," bawled the policeman, significantly.

The grocer took the hint, and discreetly withdrew ; but this state of things did not satisfy the inhabitants, and they forthwith retired to hold an indignation meeting.

And all the time the noise went ceaselessly, tirelessly on. The Cricket on the Hearth was nothing to it. Jeosophat ! what a noise it was. Have you ever heard a young lady fresh from boarding-school play hour after hour, without intermission, the first two bars of a piece called " Jessie's Dream," while a small

boy blew a shrill whistle continuously at her elbow, and, at the same time, a man behind the piano shovelled coals into an iron tank? If you have, it might, perhaps, convey to your mind a faint, a very faint, idea of what that noise was like.

It stopped punctually at one o'clock, and commenced with renewed vigour an hour afterwards. The townsfolk, meanwhile, had held their indignation meeting, and the result of that meeting was that the policeman was offered the choice of arresting the shoemaker, or of being reported to headquarters. He promptly referred them back to the grocer, who, as quickly, took counsel with the members of the "Guild."

"If the policeman is reported, everybody pays cash," was the result of their deliberations, and the indignation meeting promptly dispersed.

The noise ceased abruptly at five o'clock, and the little shoemaker smiled as he massaged his right arm, after which he made a hearty meal of biscuit and sausage, and retired to rest with a clear conscience.

Punctually at eight o'clock next morning, it grated upon the anxious ears of the inhabitants again. Oh, that awful noise!

The echoes, fresh from their night's rest, took it up with unholy readiness. Was there ever such a noise ? Would it never cease ?

A somewhat similar sound might have been caused by a maxim gun firing continuously from a two feet range at an iron target, and the flattened bullets dropping in never-ceasing showers upon huge sheets of plate glass fifty feet below ; or it might have been heard on a hilly roadway paved with corrugated iron laid sideways, and down which, despatched with unfailing regularity, two-pound cannon balls ran with an interval of half-a-second between each.

The grocer was suffering from a headache that morning—a neuralgic headache. He stood it until 10 : 30, and then he gave way, and hurried across the road to the shop of the little shoemaker.

"That's a nice boot," he bawled, pointing to the one the shoemaker was pounding. "What's the price of it ?"

"The patronage of the inhabitants," shouted back the little man, hammering away more vigorously than ever.

Then the grocer woke up, and began to see things. If he had been a canvasser

paid by results he couldn't have done more than he did for that little shoemaker. He shook up the members of the "Guild," most of whom had already had enough, and, despite the strenuous objections of old Patsy, the result of their deliberations was soon made known.

"Patronise the new shoemaker, or pay cash."

Ten minutes later he crossed the road in person, carrying in his hand a pair of boots to be soled and heeled.

The inhabitants were not slow to follow so good a lead, and in less than half-an-hour, the shop of the little shoemaker presented a curious spectacle. Strewn all over the floor, and all there for the same reason —waiting to be repaired—were boots of every description, size, and shape—men's, women's, children's, and babies'; hob-nailed, hand-sewn, and pegged; lace-up and button-up; Wellingtons, Balmorals, and Bluchers; calf, and kangaroo, and kid, all jumbled up together in hopeless confusion, every known species of boot under the sun almost—except horse-boots.

Then, and not until then, did that terrible noise cease.

A spirit of thankfulness, peace, and quiet spread over the Valley, and with the exception of Tim McGuigan, not a soul seemed stirring. Tim, as usual, when specially thankful for anything, had rapidly proceeded to get "tight," and was roaming all over the valley trying to persuade somebody to sing his favourite song for him. Failing in his endeavours, he at last sang it himself, and, forgetting in the excitement of the moment the individuality of the singer, he struck him a resounding blow on the head with "his little sthick av bog-oak."

Next day, old Patsy, broken-hearted and disgusted by the turn affairs had taken, and after saying good-bye to the "Guild" and the inhabitants, both individually and collectively, in a few choice, well-flavoured words, packed up his things and departed by the coach, and the little shoemaker, with a generosity hardly to be expected under the circumstances, gave him seven pounds ten for his stock and the good-will of his business.

. . . .

The little shoemaker is still an inhabitant of the Echo Valley. He is industrious,

and has grown stout and prosperous. The boots of the policeman, albeit the largest job in the town, are always repaired free of charge. He is President of a "Guild," which had much to learn, and the dexterity and lightning-like rapidity with which he can wield his hammer, driving a nail deftly home, and then swiftly withdrawing the hammer, so that not a sound ever issues from his shop, has earned for him the title of "The Silent Shoemaker."

The Vengeance of Burgess

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

When I accidentally saw him once again after a lapse of many years, during which time he had grown stout and oily and prosperous, I was minded to let these things of which I tell remain buried in the past to which they belong ; but when I saw the white, wan faces of the women and girls issuing from his factory, and heard how heavy his grasping, sweating hand lay upon them, I hesitated no longer, and whilst my anger is strong within me, I will tell the world the story of Burgess and the Jew.

. . . .

There are only two persons in this world who know the reason why the shirt-cuff on the right hand of the prosperous German-Jew—to whom I shall refer as Nathan—is three inches longer than that on the left, and also why he shudders when he hears a violin.

One of these persons is Nathan, the

other is myself—there used to be three, but Burgess is dead.

Yes, Nathan, Burgess is dead. Never again will the story of oppression cause the human sympathy to enter into his heart, and that fierce, steely look you remember so well to come into his cunning little eyes, for the heart has ceased to beat, and the eyes are sightless, and Burgess, the gaol-bird, the horse-thief, the cattle-duffer, and the drunkard—Burgess, the kind-hearted and faithful friend, the cunning and vindictive enemy, has passed to his last account.

You were wrong, Mounted-Constable Milligan, when you said he was killed in a drunken brawl in Christchurch. You were wrong, Mounted-Constable Lacey, when you said he was "doing time" in Queensland. You were right, Mounted-Constable Endicott, when you said he was hidden amongst the "Chows."

He was hidden in Ah Foo's hut, and in Ah Foo's hut he died, sick and weary of life, and, impatient for the tardy coming of the hand of Death, he hurried it on with an over-dose of opium.

And he is buried where he told Ah Foo to bury him, underneath the blackwood trees on the bank of the river, in one of

the loveliest spots that ever graced God's earth—the ruins of the garden of Lorenzo Galliagardi, the Italian.

Ah, Nathan! that name makes you shudder, for it was in the vine-clad hut of Gallygardy, as we called him, that you came to know by pain and suffering of the Vengeance of Burgess.

I don't know how it is, Nathan, but I can never forget that spot,; years and years have passed, but day or night, waking or in my dreams, working or resting, it rises suddenly before me, and I see it all as clearly as if I stood at the gate and looked down upon the garden. The borders of white quartz-stones, the blackberry hedges, the vines, the flowers, the beehives, the blackwood trees, the willows, the slow-moving river. I hear the humming of the bees and the singing of the birds, and seated upon the flat stone in front of the doorway of the hut, with his piercing black eyes and long-flowing white beard, clasping in his hands his beloved violin, I see the bent and tottering form of Gallygardy.

I often think that Heaven must be a place very much akin to that old garden, but with you, Nathan, it is different. Your

remembrance of it must be even better than mine, for you carry with you to the grave that which will always remind you of it; but, far from wishing such a Heaven as this, you would fain locate it together with those you met there in the nether-most depths of Hell.

But there is something missing, something which upon this earth shall never gladden our ears again. It is the music, Nathan, the music that bewitched our brains and senses, and, taking possession of our very souls, carried them to the heights of happiness, or the depths of despair, the music that Gallygardy played upon his ancient violin.

I have often wondered, Nathan, how you came to hear of Gallygardy's violin, and how, when he died, you were so speedily informed of his death.

When you came in the guise of a wandering tourist, and put up at Battinari's "Pub," at the little town across the ranges, we at first suspected you of being a detective ; but whilst you ate your first meal, Hung Wo, the Chinese cook, at the instigation of Burgess, went through your luggage, and found out you were a dealer in furniture and curios.

I was in Gallygardy's hut, together with Burgess, when you strolled casually in, as if by accident, whilst the old man was playing, and when he had finished, we noticed you were trembling, Nathan—trembling with excitement in every limb.

Gott in Himmel ! you exclaimed, with exactly the same look in your face as old Danny wore, when he found the big nugget in the creek.

The violin rattled in your nerveless hands as you examined it minutely, and the old man, noting the eager, covetous look upon your face, became alarmed for the safety of his treasure, and snatched it suddenly from your desecrating grasp.

It was an old violin, Nathan, that I know, for Gallygardy himself told me his grandfather's grandfather had played upon it ; but it must have been worth a lot of money, when you, a Jewish expert, offered him twenty pounds for it on the spot, and in less than ten minutes increased the amount of your offer to fifty, to one hundred pounds.

And the old man, with flashing eyes, spat upon the floor, and in his thin, high-pitched voice excitedly bade you begone.

Think you, he said, that a man sells his soul ? Know you not, Jewish pig, that a soul is priceless ? My violin is my soul, and when the breath from my body is gone, my violin shall be burnt, and the ashes shall rest upon my breast, my friend Burgess has promised it.

And then Burgess gave you his warning, which, later on, to your sorrow, you disregarded.

Listen ! Stranger, he said, when old Gallygardy goes under, the ashes of his fiddle go with him. I have promised him this, and anybody who tries to prevent it must reckon with me. Now, clear out ! go ! and never darken the door of this hut again, and you went, Nathan, for you liked not the nasty gleam in his little grey eyes.

Keep your weather-eye on Gallygardy's fiddle, Dewdrop, said Burgess to me as we walked home. There'll be trouble with yon chap yet. But you went away quietly enough, Nathan, and for two years we neither saw nor heard of you again, not until the morning of the day after old Gallygardy died. He lay all night with an apology for a white sheet, which Chinese Mary had wrapped around him, a lighted candle at

his head, and another at his feet, and the violin laid upon his breast, and in the early morning, as I walked sorrowfully up the hill to see the last of our old friend, you dashed by me at full gallop, bearing in your grasp the violin and bow, stolen by your sacrilegious hand from the body of the dead. Gad! you were brave, Nathan. Within forty miles round on any side, no man would have dared to do what you did that day—but it was the bravery of ignorance.

Three minutes afterwards I was in the hut of Burgess, and found him lying in a half-drunken stupor on his bed, with an empty whisky bottle beside him. I shook him roughly, and he sat up on the side of his bed, with a drunken, dazed look in his eyes. Wake man! Wake! I yelled in his ear, " the Jew has stolen Gallygardy's violin.

For, perhaps, two minutes he sat like that whilst I shook him, and excitedly repeated my words, and then the drink began to leave his head, and that ominous-looking flash came into his eyes. Which way? he said, and I pointed in the direction of Salter's Rush.

He pulled on his boots, and, grasping

his bridle, he staggered unsteadily from the hut. Three minutes afterwards, mounted bareback on his iron-grey mare, he skimmed the slip-rails like a bird, and disappeared at full gallop round the bottom of the hill.

It was a long chase, Nathan, for you had a two-mile start, but he caught you at the summit of the hill leading into Salter's Rush, and brought you back to Gallygardy's hut strapped to your saddle.

I will never forget the next scene, Nathan, nor will you. The stiffened form of old Gallygardy wrapped in the dirty sheet, the fear of—you knew not what, depicted on your coarse, Jewish face, as you sat bound to a chair with your stirrup-leathers, and your right arm bared to the elbow, the violin on the table, and the angry, half-drunken, vindictive look of Burgess, as he fashioned a piece of fencing-wire, about twelve inches long, into a rough imitation of the shape of a violin.

Like you, I wondered what he was doing, even when, unheeding your exclamations, and your offer of one hundred pounds for the violin, he placed it in the fireplace with the fiddle-shaped piece of

wire on top, and set it alight, I could not understand ; but when the wire became red-hot, and seizing it with the tongs, he advanced towards you, his awful intention dawned on my mind. Not that ! Not that ! I cried, springing forward to intercept him.

But he sent me sprawling with one blow of his powerful arm.

"No worse for him than the calves, Dewdrop, he said, as he seized your hand and held it firmly in his iron grip, as, with a grim, fiendish smile, and that inhuman look in his eyes, and unheeding your terrible cries and prayers for mercy, he plunged the fiery brand upon your naked arm.

The smell of your burning, Jewish flesh is in my nostrils yet. I see the sweat as it ran in a shower down your brow, the awful agonising shriek of pain you gave, before God, in his mercy, took away your senses, and let you faint away for the moment, is still ringing in my ears, and when you came back once more to consciousness and pain, with the fiddle-shaped brand on your right arm, which you will carry with you to the grave, you knew something of the vengeance of Burgess.

Cookie Knapweed

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

Cookie Knapweed is dead. This I know, for I made one of the little group who followed his remains to the old Bush Cemetery.

I heard the Parson read the burial service over him, with just about one-half the reverence and solemnity he accorded to the wealthy grazier, whose marble monument, with the weeping angels upon it, stood glittering in the brilliant sunshine not twenty yards away. I saw Long Jack—mindful of the enmity which the undertaker bore to the late Cookie Knapweed, and fearing lest the earth might be shovelled down with none too reverent a thud—take from the undertaker his shovel, and reverently fill in the grave.

All this I saw, and yet I would have sworn that Cookie Knapweed passed by me in a city crowd but a few days past.

'Twas, doubtless, but one of the fanciful jests that memory plays upon a man at

times, mixing up in one's thoughts the past and the present, the living and the dead, causing a long-forgotten face to hover a moment before one's eyes, and vanish as suddenly as it came, or, maybe, letting fall upon one's startled ears from the lips of others a trick of speech, or an expression which, well you know, belongs to lips that will never speak again.

All fancy! All imagination! Yet these tricks of memory set a man a-thinking, and ever and anon the vision seems to appear before me again. Cookie Knapweed to a T. The same drink-sodden, devil-may-care countenance, the lustreless, tired-looking eyes, the bushy eyebrows, the little grey side whiskers, the clean-shaven upper lip, the half smiling, half cynical mouth, the weak chin, the faded clothes, the shabby boots, the half respectable, half-broken-down appearance of a gentleman on the down grade.

. . . .

He was best known to the inhabitants of the old town as Cookie, but his proper name was Knapweed, not Cape-weed, sir, nor Chick-weed, nor even Sea-weed, as he

would gravely inform you, but George Frederick Knapweed, at your service.

A quaint old character was Cookie, a broken-down gentleman, who had fallen with the assistance of drink, from bad to worse, tossed like a cork on the Sea of Fate, buffeted by the waves of Adversity, blown hither and thither by the winds of Chance, until, in the course of time, he had found a none too enviable haven of refuge at 5s. per week and found, in the position of assistant-cook and general rouse-about to the Yellow Creek Hotel.

The weekly wage existed but in name, for Cookie's score at the bar was always well in advance of his earnings ; but as long as he had his whisky bottle half full and a fair-sized piece of chalk, Cookie was perfectly contented.

The whisky, he explained, was to stir up his thoughts, and the chalk to write them down. If anything unusual happened to a man in the Old Town, and it reached the ears of Cookie, then the best thing that man could do was to rise up early in the morning, before he became the laughing stock of the town, and with a bucket of water and a scrubbing brush wash away the chalk writing, which, in some mysteri-

ous manner had appeared on the front of his dwelling during the night.

The size of the writing differed according to the space available, and was sometimes steady, and sometimes shaky, according to the extent to which the writer had been able to " stir up his thoughts."

If Cookie prided himself on one thing more than another, it was on his ability to prophesy the weather, and, to do him justice, he was generally correct, so that when it came to his ears that the baker, a somewhat illiterate man, had started to prophesy, and in direct contradiction to him, he speedily took action, and next morning, when an indignant baker, surrounded by a laughing crowd, hurriedly took down his shutters, it was not so much from a desire to commence work as to efface from them the large, but somewhat shaky, chalk-written words :—

> **"To become a successful weather-prophet, a man may, at a pinch, dispense with both Education and Observation; but Rheumatism he must have."**

A famous temperance lecturer once came to the Old Town, and gave a lecture in the Oddfellows' Hall. The proceedings commenced with a tea meeting, with the lec-

ture in the evening. The Hall was crowded, Cookie being seated well up in front, and he brought his refreshment with him. The speaker was eloquent—and long-winded—and after a three-hours' discourse, and a long "conclusion" on the best methods of treating the erring, both men and women, the audience departed to think it over.

He was a short-sighted lecturer, with the bump of curiosity strongly developed, and when next morning, from his bed-room window at the Parsonage, he saw, resting on the lawn, supported by a brick, a large, flat board, which had formed one of the tables at the tea-meeting of the night before, and on which appeared some chalk hieroglyphics, he put on his glasses, and went out to investigate.

And a parson's wife, behind the study window, with a suspicion of humour in her composition, who had last night spent three hours in a draughty hall listening to an appealing voice urging her to give up drinking—the drink she never drank—pressed her handkerchief closely to her mouth, lest, perchance, even the ghost of a smile might escape, as a dignified lecturer,

after reading the hieroglyphics, rose hastily up, and walked away to admire the carnations.

"A woman may be treated with success in a variety of ways, but the best way to treat a man —is with whisky."

When the shareholders in the Sawmill Co., of which the butcher was also managing director, became suspicious of his evident prosperity, and grew tired of waiting for a dividend that never came, and appointed a committee to make an investigation of the accounts, with the result that the butcher was promptly fired out, he was, to put it mildly, annoyed ; but when next morning he put on his glasses, and read the writing on the front door of his shop, that butcher was downright angry.

"A Director differs somewhat from an ordinary man, and is best known— not by the company he keeps, but by the Company which keeps him."

Whenever a new parson came to the town he always sought out Cookie, and tried to lead him into better ways. One of them actually persuaded him to attend an evening service. He was an earnest man with a high-pitched voice that rattled the slates on the rafters, and gave, for the special edification of Cookie, a rousing dis-

course some two hours long on Sin and Repentance, and he flattered himself he had made an impression. So he had, for his maid-servant found the impression next morning in white chalk letters on the side of the Parsonage, and brought him out to see it.

"I sadly fear me, if it were compulsory for the sinful alone to wear sackcloth and ashes that there would be a strange uniformity in all our costumes."

When it became generally known that the undertaker, although in prosperous circumstances, had refused to support his aged mother, and had forced her to find a refuge in the Benevolent Asylum, the townspeople were disgusted, and a number of the inhabitants promptly held an informal indignation meeting, and resolved, in event of their dying, to be buried by the undertaker in the neighbouring town, until such time as he had made provision for the comfort of the old lady. They waited on the undertaker, and conveyed this decision to him, but he was abusive and adamant. They could "indignate" to their heart's content, he said, no line of conduct should be forced upon him by any meeting, indignation, or otherwise. It was a free

country, and he should do as he pleased. The inhabitants accordingly went back to their homes, and the chalk writing, which appeared on the black-painted front of his shop next morning, did not tend to change his decision :—

> **"Some children show just about as much gratitude to their parents as a chicken does to an incubator."**

Matters continued like this for some considerable time. The undertaker smoked his pipe, and lived on his capital. Several of the oldest inhabitants died, and were buried by the neighbouring undertaker, whilst the remaining inhabitants treated the undertaker with silent contempt, and endeavoured to forget all about dying and everything else connected with undertaking, and went on living as though they had untold centuries of life before them. They entered so into the spirit of the thing that, in course of time, they forgot even their ailments, and, consequently, forgot to call in the Doctor, and it was only when that individual went down, and wrathfully pointed out to the undertaker the extreme selfishness of the line of conduct, in as far as it concerned him (the Doctor), which he (the undertaker) had adopted, and feel-

ingly referred to the many good turns in the way of business, which he (the Doctor) had done to the undertaker, that at last, with a very bad grace, the undertaker gave way, and consented to provide for his aged relative. And the inhabitants agreed to be buried when they died by the local undertaker, in a proper and becoming manner, and Cookie got gloriously "tight," and went over in front of the undertaker's shop and gave three cheers for a dutiful son, and the indignant undertaker came hurriedly out, and called him a "drunken beast."

And next morning a still more indignant undertaker used bright-red language, as he washed away the white chalk writing from the door of his shop.

> **"Be ever mindful of the feelings of others, and when you call a man a 'drunken beast,' remember that it is an insult—to the beast."**

And when the door had resumed its original colour of dull black, that undertaker went over to the yard of the Yellow Creek Hotel. "I'll put a lid on your coffin yet," he vociferated, as he wrathfully shook his fist in the face of a placid-looking assistant cook, as he came up from the wood-heap with an armful of wood.

. . . .

Poor old Cookie ! He came and shook hands with us all, and wished us Good-bye before he went to commit suicide ; but we never thought he was in earnest, for he said good-bye to us in this way, on an average, three or four times every month; but this time he meant it, for when the undertaker stepped gingerly out into the yard one cold, frosty morning, and glancing shiveringly at his square 400 gallon tank with the white frost lying thick upon it, salved his conscience for not washing himself for three frosty mornings in succession, by the fact that water might be scarce in the summer, he was startled to discover the lid of the tank lying upon the ground, on it was an empty whisky bottle and a battered old hat, with a much-worn piece of chalk resting on top, and written on the side of the red-painted tank was poor old Cookie's last message :—

"Don't forget to put the lid on my coffin—I have chosen your water tank."

The Gratitude of Kung Wok

As Told by Dewdrop Danby

Bandbox Hill was a pleasant place to look upon. It was covered with luxuriant foliage from top to bottom, sarsaparilla climbed up the trees, mistletoe hung down from them, ferns grew in the crevices, cranberries covered the ground, and the heath, both the red and the white, flourished in abundance, the two colours blending together in harmonious confusion.

Situated on the summit, standing prominently out against the sky-line, was a huge rock in the shape of a bandbox, from whence the hill derived its name, and by standing upon the rock, you could discern, lying at your feet in the distance, the scattered little mining hamlet of Freedom Gully, and perched in a scooped-out hollow, away across the creek at the furthermost end, a good half-mile from the nearest house, stood the mysterious construction of bark and stones, palings and tin, saplings and mud, with the wooden

chimney, which comprised the habitation of Kung Wok.

Kung Wok was a Chinaman, and the Chinaman—beyond the fact that he could, if required, with the aid of a spadeful of earth and a kerosene tin of water, grow vegetables on a cannon-ball—is of no use to Australia. He toils hard and lives frugally, but he does not spend, and if, by hook or by crook, he can scrape together a few hundred pounds, he is off with it to his beloved country beyond the sea.

He is dirty, thieving, cunning, and mysterious, a slave of the opium god, a gambler, an eater of the wrongly despised rice, and has a genuine disregard for every known law of hygiene ; still, in spite of all this, he is seldom sick, and generally lives to a ripe old age. He is also quaint and humorous, fond of little children, kind to horses, and last, but not least,—and a fact not generally known,—he never forgets a kindness.

If a Chinaman has ever promised you his help, and in the time of need you call upon him, there is but one thing which will prevent all the help in his power bein placed at your disposal, and that one thing is—Death.

Kung Wok was a fossicker; his age might have been anything from forty to sixty, and his personage and reputation were alike somewhat unsavoury.

The local storekeeper had at last refused to serve him, or allow him to enter his premises, and had found an increase in his yearly profits thereby.

Clad in a tattered old reefer jacket, almost yellow with age, which he had picked up from somewhere, Kung Wok would come smiling blandly into the store, and ask for some article, which, as he well knew, was kept in the room at the rear. During the absence of the storekeeper, into those capacious pockets would go anything and everything within reach, to be sorted out and classified upon his return home, and after paying for his purchase he would depart, still smiling blandly from the store.

When he thought this was about played out, he tried another dodge, and it was this which had aroused the suspicions of the storekeeper.

Silk handkerchie! he would say, always with the same innocent, child-like smile.

Down came the stock of silk handkerchiefs on the counter. It always took him a long while to make up his mind; but

after much feeling with his fingers and shuffling about, he generally chose the cheapest, and went smiling away.

This performance was repeated several times, and the storekeeper began to grow suspicious. He overhauled his stock. For every common handkerchief which Kung Wok had purchased, one of the best quality had also disappeared.

Next time the Chinaman came in he watched him closely. Kung Wok, after the usual uncertain hesitation and feeling with his fingers, chose another common handkerchief, and departed. The storekeeper had not taken his eyes off him for a moment ; he would have taken a solemn oath that only the common one was gone, yet, when he counted his stock, another expensive handkerchief was missing.

A few days afterwards Kung Wok came back again. Silk handkerchie ! and the same confiding smile. The storekeeper was ready for him, and going to the door on some pretext, he gave a pre-arranged signal to the butcher across the street, who, thereupon, crept round to the back of the store, and lay in hiding in the room at the rear.

The storekeeper placed twelve handker-

chiefs on the counter—six common and six of the best quality. The same process all over again, the same hesitating choice, the same purchase of a common handkerchief, for which the Chinaman paid, and was about to depart.

Meanwhile the storekeeper had been counting the handkerchiefs—only ten. He gave the signal, and the butcher seized Kung Wok. He had been waiting a long time for this, for Kung Wok was an old enemy of his, and had made the perches of his poultry-roost look extremely desolate on several occasions.

Out with it, he said, with undisguised triumph in his tones.

" Wha for ?" said Kung Wok, loudly protesting, " me no understandee."

They did not stop to argue, the storekeeper held his nose—and Kung Wok—while the butcher searched him thoroughly. Right through all his pockets he went, every possible hiding-place he could think of ; he even took off his Chinese slippers, and let down his pigtail—not a sign of the missing handkerchief. Strip him, said the butcher, and taking the loudly protesting Kung Wok to the room at the rear, they stripped him of every garment, and

searched them thoroughly—still not a sign of the missing handkerchief. They began to look foolish, and Kung Wok put on his clothes again.

Chinaman, poor man, tellee policee, said he. The storekeeper took the hint, for they had handled him rather roughly, and handing him a shilling, pointed to the door. If ever you put your countenance inside that door again, I'll twist your yellow neck.

All li, said Kung Wok, as he departed smiling amiably.

Whisky ? said the storekeeper, with a look of inquiry.

No thanks, replied the butcher, for the first time in his life. " Phenyle."

Meanwhile Kung Wok, returning to his hut, and locking the door after him, stooped down and took off one of his Chinese slippers, and, with the aid of a small silver button-hook, which belonged by right to the " missie " who taught the Sunday-school class of " converted Chinamen," of which he was one, and which, in some mysterious way, had passed into his possession—withdrew, rolled by his cunning foot into a microscopic ball, from the specially-made receptacle in the toe of the slipper, the missing handkerchief.

John West was a clerk in the employ of the Bullion Bank, and was stationed at a branch office in the neighbouring town some seven miles distant from Freedom Gully. He was a short, dark, wiry young fellow of twenty-five, and an ardent sportsman.

One day, whilst shooting over the Bandbox Hill, which was a noted ground for rabbits, he stopped for a moment to reload, and whilst doing so a faint moaning sound, as if from some one in pain, reached his ears. He investigated it, and found that it proceeded from a newly sunk shaft some twenty feet deep, and stooping over he saw a dark mass huddled together lying at the bottom. Descending by the footholes in the side, he discovered Kung Wok, who had fallen when descending the shaft, and had been lying there with a fractured leg for three days. It was winter time and bitterly cold, and anybody but a Chinaman would have succumbed long before, and, even as it was, Kung Wok was pretty nearly at the end of his tether. Luckily there was a rope windlass on top of the shaft, and West speedily hauled the insensible form of the Chinaman to the surface, and after hiding his breech-loader in

the bushes, picked him up in his arms, and started for the nearest habitation, some two miles distant. It was no light task, but he could see from the state of Kung Wok that no time was to be lost, and sticking to it manfully with clenched teeth, he arrived at his destination in a state of utter exhaustion.

Here a cart was procured, and Kung Wok was conveyed with all speed to the district hospital, where care and attention, and his wonderful Chinese constitution, pulled him through, and in course of time he recovered.

West, beyond calling to see him in the hospital a few times, and dropping in at his hut—where he was always welcome—whilst out shooting, thought no more about it, and Kung Wok, beyond thanking him once, had never referred to the matter again.

Some years after this, West was transferred to the Head Office in the metropolis, and being in the neighbourhood before leaving, had called in to say good-bye to the Chinaman.

Kung Wok expressed regret at his departure, and presented him with a little Chinese charm. It consisted of a small

green stone, about half an inch long, with a few Chinese characters in red on it, and was attached by a swivel to his watch-chain.

"You wantee fleind, give him, letter me, first countlyman you meet," he observed.

By this he meant that if West, at any time wanted a friend, he was to write a letter to Kung Wok, and give it and the charm to the first Chinaman he met. West had thanked him and departed, smiling as he went at the idea of such a ragged, old, poverty-stricken reprobate as Kung Wok being able to assist anybody.

In the metropolis, West fell upon evil times. His expenses were greater, and his salary was meagre and insufficient to the position he occupied, and a friend for whom, in a moment of sympathy, he had backed a bill had made him liable for some fifty pounds. In attempting to recover this by horse-racing, he had gone deeper into the mire, and had ended by falsifying the books of the bank to the extent of some two hundred pounds.

Then he began to suffer the tortures of the damned. He began to look ill, and worried, and haggard, and his rest was haunted by visions of the prison cell. He

had no relations or friends to whom he could appeal, with any likelihood of a favourable reply for a loan of the money, and one evening, after his day's work was finished, he strolled moodily down by the river, and found himself wondering, if, after all, it would not be better to end his misery beneath its sullen waters. As he mused, he fumbled nervously with the watch-chain, and in doing so he fingered the little Chinese charm. Suddenly a thought struck him, why not appeal to the Chinaman, but he dismissed it with a bitter laugh. Of what assistance could a ragged old chow be to him? He went despondingly home to his lodgings, but the thought clung to him, he could not get rid of it. Every time he woke up from his fitful sleep it recurred to him again, and when at last he arose, feverish and unrefreshed, he had resolved to act upon it. Having procured pen and paper, he sat down and wrote :—

In great trouble—have stolen money—police will soon be after me—can you help? Having signed this, he placed it in an envelope addressed to Kung Wok, Freedom Gully, and detaching the charm from his watch-chain he went out in search of a Chinaman. As usual, the thing you seek

for most you cannot find, and it was quite half-an-hour before he discerned a vegetable cart returning from the market containing two sleepy Chinamen.

He hailed them, and handed the letter to the driver.

You savee, Kung Wok? he said.

Kung Wok, no savee, replied the Chinaman, handing the letter back, and preparing to drive on. West's heart sank within him, and his hand trembled as he handed the letter back again, this time with the charm resting on top.

The effect was magic. Like lightning the Chinaman seized the charm and the letter, and throwing the reins to his companion, descended hastily from the cart, and, hailing a passing tram, jumped on it and was gone.

West was astonished, it had all happened so suddenly that he began to wonder if he had been dreaming; but no, the tram was disappearing in the distance, and the cart containing one Chinaman only jogged slowly up the hill.

Freedom Gully was some seventy miles from the metropolis, and the nearest railway station to it was seven miles distant, and West, hoping against hope, waited

anxiously for a reply. All that day and the next he waited, and when at midday on the following day he put on his hat and went out to lunch, not a word had reached him. He began to despair. He could not eat, the food seemed like to choke him, and he left the restaurant. As he walked down the street, a Chinaman with two fish baskets on a bamboo slung over his shoulder passed him, and in doing so one of the baskets, as if by accident, bumped against him. The Chinaman did not turn round, but West, watching him closely, imagined that the forefinger of the hand resting on the bamboo was beckoning him to follow. In his state of mind it might have been mere imagination, but he resolved to lose no chance, and followed behind. Sure enough, in a few seconds, the Chinaman glanced quickly round, and seeing West following, considerably quickened his pace. On he went, up one street and down another, then through a narrow lane into the Chinese quarter. Right on he went, until, in passing a door, his basket bumped accidentally as it were against it. It swiftly flew open. The Chinaman went straight on without stopping or looking behind, but as West reached the doorway, a hand cau-

tiously beckoned him to enter ; he did so, and the door closed silently behind him.

Half an hour after West had entered that doorway, a customer of the Bank called in to have a discrepancy in his account explained. The entry was in the handwriting of West, and the fact of his non-return arousing suspicion, an overhaul of his books was made, with the result that by six o'clock a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Detectives were immediately in search of him, and a strict watch was set upon all out-going steamers and trains.

The next evening, in time to catch the night train for the country, two Chinamen issued forth from the doorway which West had entered. One was our old friend Kung Wok, and the other was a young, fresh-complexioned Chinaman, evidently a new arrival ; in fact, none other than West, but so disguised that nothing but the most searching scrutiny would have revealed to anybody the fact that he was not a Chinaman. His heavy black moustache had disappeared, his complexion was stained to a delicate olive brown, his teeth were slightly discoloured, and one in the front was missing, not by being withdrawn, but by the

simple expedient of painting it black ; his eyes had been dexterously painted and stained in a way that gave them an elongated appearance, and were further shadowed by the soft felt hat which he wore, being well pulled down over them ; his head had been shaved, and an artificial pigtail attached, and even his finger-nails had been ingeniously "doctored" in a way that gave them an appearance of greater length. Nothing was forgotten. He was to all intents and appearances a veritable newchum chow, and, as such, passed under the very noses of the detectives, and taking his seat with his countryman in a second-class compartment, they were quickly whirled along to their destination.

Luckily there were but two other passengers in the carriage, and they evidently regarding Chinamen with disfavour, withdrew to the other end, and at a wayside station, an hour's journey up the line, alighted.

Heap good luck, said Kung Wok, when the train had started again, as he opened his basket, and took therefrom a square bottle of gin and two tiny cups, and West, who had passed an anxious time, drank his health, and agreed with nim.

Arriving at their point of alighting, they descended, and after a seven-mile walk in the darkness, over rough and hilly country, they arrived at the hut of Kung Wok.

Here over a fire of three or four sticks, Kung Wok quickly prepared a meal of chopped up pork and rice, and having brewed a pot of tea, and unearthed from somewhere a knife and fork for West, who could not use the chopsticks, they sat down to supper.

West, up to the present, had not mentioned, nor had he been asked a word about his misfortunes, but, after supper, sitting upon the bed which had been prepared for him, he told the story of his downfall.

After he had finished speaking there was silence for a few moments.

You dam fool, losee money, said Kung Wok presently, as he methodically prepared his opium pipe, why not takee more ?

Ten minutes afterwards he was in the enchanted land of the opium-dreamer, and in a beautiful dream he beheld the strongroom of a bank, with the door wide open, and a sack and shovel in accommodating readiness, and in which a certain hard-working Chinaman, having filled the sack

with sovereigns, and conveyed it to a secure place of hiding known only to himself, hurried back to "takee more."

For three months West, still in his Chinese disguise, remained hidden in Kung Wok's dimly lighted hut, never stirring out except at nightfall, and then only to get a breath of fresh air. Kung Wok's Chinese visitors evidently knew all about him, although they never referred to the subject, and to the occasional Europeans who came in, he passed as Kung Wok's cousin, a new arrival from China, unable to speak a word of English.

Why your cousin no workee, Kung Wok, said Cornish Joe, who had one afternoon dropped in for a light.

Him cook, said Kung Wok, readily, heap good cookee, welly ni' cookee. You send him present ni' fowl, and, as he spoke, a grin overspread his features.

Cornish Joe began to see in that smile the fate of a nice, fat pullet, which had mysteriously disappeared from his henroost two nights before.

If I catch you hanging about my place I'll put a charge of shot into your heathen carcase, he said wrathfully.

All li, said Kung Wok, smiling amiably.

as Joe slammed the door behind him, and departed.

One night, at the end of the three months, Kung Wok, accompanied by West, issued forth, and crossing through the bush came out on the main road ; here another Chinaman with a covered-in vegetable cart was in waiting, and conveyed them to his garden, some twelve miles further on. They stayed here the night, and next night he drove them to the hut of another Chinese gardener, who, in turn, passed them on, and in due course they arrived at a Chinese hut near a town on the main railway line to Sydney. Here they stayed for a month, and West was instructed to let his hair and beard grow, and at the end of that time, after bidding good-bye with tears in his eyes to the faithful Kung Wok, carrying a swag and attired as a shearer, he arrived at the station in time to catch the night express to Sydney. Arriving here next day, he went to a certain humble address given him by Kung Wok. Here he found awaiting him a passage-paid receipt steerage, in the name of James Black, for a steamer leaving for San Francisco next day. There was also a closed envelope, on which was written the words, " Open at the end of the voyage."

He went boldly on board, and got safely away without being suspected, and on the arrival of the ship in San Francisco, he opened the letter. It contained a bank draft on San Francisco for £5, and a small slip of paper on which the money actually expended on his behalf—consisting only of the £5 draft, the bare train fares, and passage money—was tabulated. At the bottom was written an address in Sydney, and the words, " When in luck—remember."

West wrote a grateful letter to Kung Wok announcing his safe arrival, and speedily found employment. At the end of a year, he forwarded, with a letter of grateful thanks, to the address in Sydney, the sum total of the amount his Chinese friends had expended on him. He worked hard, and prospered, and three years afterwards the Manager of the Bullion Bank was astonished to receive from America a bank draft for £200 odd, in payment of the amount—with interest to date—which West had " borrowed."

Time went on, and one day Kung Wok received from West a draft for £50, payable to his order, and it was when he asked me—as a friend he had known for years, and whom he knew he could trust—

to write a letter to West, returning the draft, and stating that a Chinese friend did not expect to be paid for his services, that I became acquainted with the facts here narrated.

Kung Wok is dead. The Church of England minister, who mourns the loss of many a plump young pullet and grain-fed goose, said he died as he had lived, thieving and unrepentant; but I saw him die, and he also died like a man without fear in his heart, and with a smile on his face, for his mind was at peace. His bones were to rest in the soil of his beloved country—a friend promised him this, and kept his promise—and the cost of transmission thereof was borne by a grateful American citizen named John West, who was enabled to escape from the hand of Justice, and the contamination of the prison cell, to cross the sea to another land, and there to make reparation for his wrong, and lead a newer and a better life—and all through the gratitude of Kung Wok.

Recollections of a Resting-Place

As Told to Dewdrop Danby whilst on a visit to the City, by a chance acquaintance in the Botanic Gardens.

It was my favourite seat in the Domain, many an hour have I sat upon it, and watched the passers by. Young and old, grave and gay, sinners and saints, broken-down gentlemen and stuck-up snobs, young ladies growing old, and old ladies growing younger, weak young invalids whose days were numbered, aged pensioners who could not die, well dressed working-men with money in their pockets, sweated clerks with holes in their boots, city magnates with too much nourishment, starving beggars with not enough, midnight robbers whose consciences pricked them, turf advisers with no consciences at all, "charitable" ladies with hearts on their muff-chains, Little Sisters of the Poor with charity in their hearts, inhuman cyclists whose dogs ran behind them, good-hearted pedestrians going to the dogs, luxury and ease for the millionaire, curb chains and bearing reins for his

suffering "pair," for the dealer in his cart, beer and tobacco; for his half-starved horse, ill-treatment and sores; all shapes and sorts and sizes and conditions of anything and everything, blown like chaff before the wind on Life's Highway.

It was on that seat that I first met Lucy—Lucy the coy, the demure, with the neat ankle and the downcast eye. Three months afterwards she shyly called me George, and we were engaged to be married. My rapture was unbounded, in the fulness of my joy I took my old friend Maxwell down to see her. He was charmed and enthusiastic and complimentary. He slapped me heartily on the back, and called me a lucky dog. He declared he had taken a fancy to Lucy's mother, and whenever I went down to see Lucy, he came with me. After a while I found him there when I arrived, and becoming anxious, I spoke to him seriously about his infatuation for the old lady.

I often see Maxwell now, his face wears a somewhat sad expression, and he is neither so gay nor so enthusiastic as of yore, and his treatment of me is marked by an icy coldness. But I do not care, in spite of all his coldness, I will be friendly

with my old friend Maxwell, I insist upon it. I grasp him firmly by the hand, and squeeze it warmly, and when that hand does not respond and drops limply to his side, I seize it again, and shake it for all I am worth. I will not be put off. I link my arm affectionately in his, and say, "Maxwell, old friend, come and have a drink with me," and I do all this because I am not ungrateful. Nobody has brought more joy and happiness into my life than Maxwell has—for Maxwell married Lucy.

It was on that seat that I first became acquainted with Percy de Courcey, the dirtiest, gayest, drunkenest, old-rollicking dead-beat I ever saw. It was about noon on a broiling summer's day, and everything suggested a "Siesta," so that when he ventured the opinion that "Work was an invention of the Devil," and that it was only "fools and horses who worked," I quite agreed with him ; but, later on, when he produced crust after crust in endless succession from his capacious pockets, and heaving them in an aimless way at a stone on the opposite side of the path, wished that "bread was a sovereign a loaf," we differed, and after borrowing threepence in the name of Christian charity he departed.

The next time I met Percy it was in the city. I had an attack of the "blues," and was gazing at my boots in an abstracted manner. as if I expected an opinion from them on the vexed question as to whether or not "life was worth the living."

Suddenly a heavy hand smote me a resounding slap on the back.

"Cheer up, old blue-bag," said a thick, beery voice in my ear. "There's other worlds than this."

At his request, I lent him sixpence. I lent it to him in a hurry, for the crowd was beginning to gather, and away he went gaily humming an operatic air. I followed him at a respectful distance, for he was in a rare good rollicking humour.

Two Johnnies were standing on the corner, and one was telling the other his latest funny yarn. It was not by any means a new yarn, Cassius had sprung it on to Marc Anthony, and 2,000 years afterwards it re-appeared in an American comic paper, from whence it had been obtained by the Johnnie, who, dishing it up in a new guise, now brought it forth as the latest thing from the green-room of "The Oxford."

And you know, deah boy, I said to

Dolly Ballygirly, Dolly, my deah, your skirt is too short.

And what do you think she said, old chappie. Gussie, my deah boy, she said, it will be long enough before I get another.

Ha ! Ha ! laughed the listener in a languid manner, as the funny point of the story reached him—Ha ! Ha !

Ha ! Ha ! repeated the mocking echo of Percy de Courcey, who had also been an attentive, but unseen, listener. Ha ! Ha ! he echoed again, as he chucked the speaker familiarly under the chin—" What a d——d silly story."

Sir Botany Bay's carriage was waiting in front of the photographer's studio. In all the city there was not a richer man than Sir Botany Bay. He belonged to one of the " old " families, and his wealth had been left him by his father.

Talk about the attention of the Steamship Companies of the present day, why, they can't hold a candle to the old sailing ships. In the ship that Sir Botany's father came out in, they never relaxed their attention for a moment, and gave him a free passage into the bargain.

And if Sir Botany was a proud and haughty man, his coachman was twice as

proud, and ten times as haughty, as he sat there, stiffly upright on the box, the driver of the finest "pair," and the best landau in Australia. A crowd of onlookers was grouped around, but the coachman was used to it. He expected it, and he showed the disdain he felt for vulgar people, and "walked" by, staring stolidly in front of him at the horses' ears. Had he lowered his dignity sufficiently to give a glance at the crowd, he would have perceived that it was larger than usual, and that everybody was laughing.

Home, John ! said a sharp, stern voice at his back, and he turned suddenly round with uplifted whip as Percy de Courcey—who had been gracefully resting in the landau for the last five minutes, whilst he finished a cigar butt—clambered hastily to the ground, right into the arms of a policeman.

Ah, Robert, said Percy joyfully, as he linked his arm affectionately in that of the policeman, and strolled languidly towards the police-station, I'll just come up to your place, and give you a hand with a little bit of work for the Government.

I was waiting on the seat to see the Scottish Regiment pass by, when a Scotch-

man came and sat down, and my heart warmed towards him. An old schoolmaster of mine was a Scotchman, but it wasn't my heart that was warmed in those days. He made up a rhyme about Scotchmen, and we had to repeat it after him until we learnt it off by heart. I remember it even yet.

"I climbed up Fortune's ladder, and breathless did not stop, until I reached the end, and found a Scotchman at the top. Come down! Come down! I cried aloud, but down he would not get. The Scotch have aye stayed here, he cried, and sae wull they yet."

The Scotchman I met upon the seat was a genial old chap, his name was Macpherson, and he invited me to come with him and spend "a nicht wi Burns."

I shall never spend another night with Burns. I'm going to spend the next night with General Booth or Sir Wilfrid Lawson, I don't care which, but most certainly not with Burns.

I met my old schoolmate Alfred on that seat, and wasn't he just pleased to see me; how he wrung my hand, and talked of those schoolboy days. I often think of my old schoolmate. I don't think if I live to

be a hundred that I shall ever forget Alfred. I can't—he won't let me—he's a Life Insurance Agent.

I was sitting on that seat the day that the new Governor arrived in Australia, and prominent amongst other passers-by I noticed a staff officer of the Militia in all the glory of a new uniform. He wore a jaunty, devil-may-care, get-out-of-my-way sort of look, and the feathers on his hat floated out gaily in the air, as, with his head set haughtily back, he looked the whole world in the face like the village blacksmith of old, for he owed not any man—at least as far as he cared to remember.

I was resting again on the seat with my bicycle beside me when he passed once more just before nightfall, but he was such a different-looking man that I would scarcely have known him; his horse was tired and jaded, and had gone lame in the off hind leg; his uniform was covered with dust, and the feathers in his hat wore a drooping air as he spurred his tired horse on, looking furtively round every two or three seconds, as if he were pursued by an enemy—and he was, for a short, sharp-featured, hookey-nosed man was riding

about a hundred yards behind him on a low-geared,' ancient-looking bicycle.

Just as the cyclist came abreast of where I was sitting, he caught sight of my bicycle, and, quickly dismounting, he came excitedly towards me.

For the love of Heaven ! he exclaimed breathlessly, lend me your pump for a few seconds, and as he pumped up his tyre, he jerked out a few words of explanation.

Do you—see that—blessed warrior—in front—well 'e—cleared out—and let me—in —for four pounds—when I—was store-keepin'—at—Sawpit Gully—in '72. I've been—lookin' for 'im—ever since—but I—never got—a—glimpse of 'im—until—to-day, when I saw 'im ridin' in the procession—as bold—as brass—behind—the Gov. —but I'm on 'is tracks now—and I'll—have—my money—or I'll never lose sight of 'im—this side—of—the grave.

Thanks ! he said, as he handed me back the pump and rode off, and his words echoed faintly back to me as he briskly pedalled up the hill. I'll never—lose sight of 'im this side—of—the grave.

I waited far into the night for that man to return, but he never came back, and

from that day to this I have never set eyes on either him or the staff officer.

In fancy I often picture them, the lame charger, the limp, dejected staff officer, and the eager, vindictive, hookey-nosed man.

It is strange what an interest I take in those two men. They were both strangers to me, but I am always thinking of them, especially the hookey-nosed man. Whenever I think of that man the blood courses through my veins, and a wild desire seizes me to go and join in the chase—but not with the same object. He is after the staff officer, but I am after him ; for in the excitement of the moment, he took the wrong machine, and is chasing that weary staff officer over hill and valley and plain, through daylight and darkness, through sunshine and rain, through spring, summer, autumn, and winter, right on to this side of the grave—on my bicycle.

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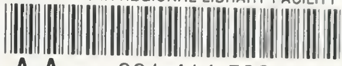
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