VARIOUS

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Belford's Magazine, Vol. II, No. 3, February 1889 Dec 1888-May 1889:

Содержание

A FEW PRACTICAL FACTS FOR SENATOR EDMUNDS 4
IRAR'S PEARL 10
THE FIRST REGIMENTS OF U. S. COLORED TROOPS 27
THE OLD TUNE 52
BOTH SIDES OF THE COUNTER 53
IRISH NORAH TO ENGLISH JOHN 70
BELLA'S BUREAU. 4 71
SCARE THE FIRST 71
SCARE THE SECOND 75
SCARE THE THIRD 84
A SHOT ON THE MOUNTAIN 91
EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT 93
PURIFYING THE POLLS BY LAW 93
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 95

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A FEW PRACTICAL FACTS FOR SENATOR EDMUNDS

I am a physician practising in a small manufacturing town, and am doing very well so far as getting business goes – might even be able to save a little money if it were not for the bad debts. They make my income pretty small, considering the amount of hard work I am compelled to do; and the time spent in endeavoring to collect my bills takes a great many hours which, in justice to my patients who pay, ought to be used in brushing up my medical studies and trying to keep abreast with the rest of the profession.

It is hard to get out of a warm bed at night and tramp off a mile or so to look after a patient when you are not certain of ever getting your pay, and it seems to grow worse instead of better. The number of people who, because of their poverty, need a doctor the most are on the increase; and yet so long as they are not poor because of vicious habits, one really hasn't the heart

to refuse when called upon. I hear a great deal said about the prosperity of the workingman and the high wages he receives, but observe as a matter of experience that only a few are able to save enough to carry them through a few weeks' illness, let alone paying the doctor, who is forced to wait months and sometimes even years for his pay, getting it then a dollar or two at a time.

To be sure, some of my patients own homes of their own, but the most of them are in debt, a mortgage being about as regular an attachment to a workingman's house as a chimney.

Wages, too, are not quite so high as they were when I began practice: they fell pretty low at one time, and then, when human nature could endure it no longer, came a strike. The employers were horrified; there never had been a strike in this town before: the working men, women, and children all received high wages. "There is John Smith, for instance – earns eighty dollars a month. There is Miss Jones, who makes two dollars a day. There are some who earn even more." True enough! But one day I was called to see John Smith lying dead on his kitchen floor; fell dead on coming home from work, died in the harness, worked to death; a young man at that, and ought to have been good for twenty years more. His employers wouldn't have allowed one of their horses to work that way.

I remember the first time I ever saw Miss Jones – a bright, pretty, red-cheeked girl, fresh from the country and proud to think that she could earn her own living; to-day you would not recognize her, bent, haggard, and worn; the rosy cheeks all gone;

and the sunken chest and hollow cough too plainly prophesy the end is not far off. High wages? Yes! for flesh and blood are cheap.

Well, the strikers compromised, got a raise in wages of five per cent., with pay once a month instead of half at the end of the month, and the balance at the end of the year, as had been the custom. Most of the employers gave up the "pluck-me store" system, and we had better times.

Every year there comes family after family, all skilled working men and women, from over the ocean, and I begin to see men standing on the street corners looking for work, while every now and then one of the employers will cut down wages a little in some department of his factory.

I see the men and boys who were born here crowded out of their places by the imported labor, leaving town, and later hear of them beginning life over again in some western village, or taking up government lands on the prairies. If it were not for the emigration out of the town, wages would scarce be enough to support life, so fast does immigration to the town keep up with the demand for labor.

The place used to be full of little shops, and the business was conducted by hundreds of small manufacturers who were but one remove from their men; in fact, it was no uncommon thing for a man to begin manufacturing for himself on the savings from two or three years' labor.

But now these small shops are used as tenements, and a dozen large firms do nearly all the business, crowding the few small

manufacturers that are left closer and closer to the wall every year. This is because much of our raw stock has to be imported: we can make only a few kinds of our class of goods in this country. The large manufacturer, who is generally an importer also, is thus able to offer a full line of goods to the jobber, which the smaller fry can't do.

The business is a highly protected industry, the people being taxed by a tariff of fifty per cent to support it.

In this connection a few figures may prove instructive:

The total value of gloves manufactured during the census year was	$5,718,539
For making which, labor received as wages	1,245,013 or 22%
And the raw material cost	3,404,937
Leaving a surplus to the manufacturers of	1,068,589 or 23%
Yet their capital invested was only	2,690,048

The tariff of fifty per cent is sufficient therefore to enable the manufacturer to pay, not the difference in wages between European labor and American, but *all* the wages and twenty-eight cents on the dollar's worth of finished product besides; while – there being no tariff on labor – foreign labor comes to compete with home labor just so fast as the difference in wages will warrant the making of the journey from the old country to the new.

The tariff on gloves in an unfinished state is, however, but twenty per cent, and at that rate many gloves are imported so

nearly finished as to require but little labor to fit them for the market: and here the large dealer who imports is able to obtain another serious advantage over the small dealer, and at the same time, while pretending to protect labor, defraud it.

The closing of the small shops, and the consequent driving of our people into large factories, hurts the best skilled workman in that it lessens the number of employers competing for his services. I have been a protectionist in the past, for I was taught to believe that protection raised wages; but the results of a careful inquiry as to cause and effect have shown me pretty conclusively that it does not and can not.

I have talked with many workingmen who are beginning to perceive that the tendency of wages to fall a little from time to time is due to the competition of the "pauper labor of Europe," which coming to this country, underbids them at the shop door, takes away their work, and turns them out to shift for themselves; while the employer, who is protected by a duty of fifty per cent, gets his labor in the lowest market and sells his goods in the highest.

Said a glove-cutter to me the other day: "Doctor, if all the workingmen born and brought up here and all that have come from the old country had remained here, wages would not be fifty cents a day. I understand very well what keeps wages up in America: it's the great West, with its free land acting as a safety valve; and the worst is that so much of it has been given to railroads or sold to cattle syndicates for a mere song. When the

remaining free land is appropriated, God help the workingman!

"Yes, we're protected in all that we have to buy: food, clothing, and shelter, in a way that increases the cost to us; but in what we have to sell, our labor, we have no protection at all. They give us good wages, for if they did not we would emigrate to the West and leave them, and by reason of this confounded tariff they put up the price of all we need so high that wages, measured by their purchasing power, are not so large after all. If the difference in real wages was so great as the protectionists claim, there would be more immigrants coming from Europe in one day than do now in a year."

The workingmen have been educating themselves in the last four years, and are no longer to be deceived by superficial comparisons of the differences in wages between countries; they will also examine into the differences in conditions, productive power, and the like, which the protectionist statistician omits to do.

William C. Wood, M. D.

IRAR'S PEARL

"One hundred golden pieces for this slave! Who bids? – who bids?"

"One hundred golden pieces? Surely the man has some special talent to be valued so highly."

The speaker stopped, and drew near to the crowd that had gathered about the group of captives crouched in the center of the market-place. As he approached, one among the gathering said:

"Room for the vizier; room, room!"

And the assembled people drew back on either hand, leaving a pathway clear.

The man went forward, followed by his attendants, and faced the inner group of the crowd, a picturesque gathering of armed Bedouins, swarthy and turbaned, clustered about a number of captives whose lighter complexion and free-flowing hair told of a more northern nativity, and which the most ready-tongued of the warriors was now loudly offering for sale.

"One hundred golden pieces buys this slave," he cried again, his eye quickly noticing the interest evinced by the glance of the new-comer; an interest that his ready wit told him might be utilized to advantage.

"And why one hundred golden pieces for this man? Methinks I have seen much stronger knaves sold for an hundred silver pieces;

and, lo! you ask for gold. Why?"

"Your servant is a dog if he does not answer the question to the satisfaction of the most exacting. This man comes from the sea that lies beyond our northern mountains, and can live in the water. There is no better diver than he; why, he has brought up pebbles that were ten fathoms down, and surely each fathom's depth is worth ten golden pieces."

The speaker turned to the crowd for approval, and the affirmative nods that greeted his appeal brought a smile of satisfaction to his dark face.

"If you speak truth, you are right," answered the vizier. "But where is your proof?"

"Ask the man; he will not lie."

"Can you do what he claims for you?" questioned the vizier, turning to the captive.

A smile of mingled scorn and contempt passed like a flash across the man's face, and then he said:

"What will it matter to me whether I can or no?"

"This," answered the vizier: "if you can, I shall purchase you for the sultan's pearl fisheries. One pearl each day makes you free for the remaining hours, and the sultan is not a hard master. I have known him give slaves their freedom."

"I need no freedom, for my people are here. Shall I have food and shelter?"

As he spoke his glance swept along the faces of the captives and turned away, a bitter disappointment in it, as though it could

not find those for whom it sought.

"You will have food and shelter; yea, and garments for all needs."

"I can do more than he says," said the man.

"Then I will give the golden pieces for him. Bring him to my palace before the sun sets."

And as the man bowed low in answer, the vizier turned and went slowly down the street that led to the sultan's palace.

That evening his new slave lay asleep on a rug in the rose-scented corridor of the palace, and dreamt of freedom and love all through the long hours of the night.

The next day the vizier carried the man to the sultan's divan, and having told of his accomplishments, presented him to his royal master, whose great delight was the vast hoard of pearls that burned like smothered sunbeams in his treasury.

That same day the man was sent to the pearl fisheries on the gulf, and it was ordered that should he prove successful he was to have a house for his special accommodation, and, on his parole of honor, be allowed the freedom of the city and ten leagues of the adjacent country.

Taken to the fisheries, he soon proved himself the master of all engaged in that dangerous work, and was quickly made the favorite of the sultan by the brilliancy and largeness of the pearls that he found. He was given a small house seated in the center of a garden where fruits and flowers commingled in fragrant profusion, and his food and clothing were such as he himself

chose, for the orders of his royal master made his wishes in these things law.

His labor for the day was soon over, one pearl, often the result of a five minutes' bath, made him free for the remainder of the twenty-four hours. This time he employed in reading or in taking solitary walks along the shore of the bay opposite to that where the fisheries were located. Here a mass of frowning cliffs rose in dark grandeur against the sky, and over and among these he would clamber for hours, their steep acclivities and the wind-notes that echoed among them seeming to have a strange fascination for him.

At last there came a rumor to the court that the sovereign of a distant Indian realm had become possessed of a pearl whose size and brilliancy of hue were unequalled in the world; and the sultan, hearing of this, sent an envoy to ascertain the truth of the report. The return of this messenger confirmed the statement, and filled the sultan's soul with envy. He knew that he could not purchase the gem, but he determined to stimulate the efforts of his fishers, and for this purpose he caused it to be announced that any slave who should find a pearl more brilliant and larger than that possessed by the Indian monarch should be given his freedom and one hundred thousand pieces of gold.

To Irar, for such was the name by which the northern diver had elected to be known, this proclamation brought no joy. Others of the fishers made desperate exertions to obtain the prize. He brought his daily pearl and went away, basking in the sunlight of

his garden, or climbing some rough cliff that he had not scaled before.

When questioned concerning this indifference, he smiled, a scornful and bitter light burning for an instant in his eyes, as he answered:

"Why should I desire to change my life? I have food, a home, clothing; and life can give nothing beyond these. I have no country, no friends. The foray that brought me here swept my people from the face of the earth. My labor is light, my holidays are many. What benefits can freedom give me?"

If the philosophy of his questioner could find no adequate reply to this argument, the passion that slumbered within the slave was not to be so dumb.

He had finished his daily task, and was loitering through a shaded lane just outside of the walls of the city, when he saw approaching the veiled form of a woman. As she came near him, the wind, that kindly agent of man, came blustering down the lane, and before the little brown hands could grasp the filmy white gauze that told of maidenhood, blew it back from the face, and gave Irar a vision that no time nor distance could efface.

He was a strongly-built and handsome fellow, young and brave, just such a man as would please the eyes and heart of a maiden whose love was waiting the call it would so gladly obey; and though a heightened color was hidden by the quickly captured veil, a pleased smile made answer to Irar's look of respectful admiration.

To his salutation, a voice sweet as the nightingale's responded, and then the little form went tripping on, and disappeared through a gateway a short distance from where he stood.

The sunshine of his garden, the conquering of mighty cliffs, ceased to have an attraction for Irar, and his feet seemed drawn to the secluded lane in which this vision had come to him. It was strange how many errands there were calling the little maid along that shaded way; and the wind was ever at hand to give one or more glimpses of the face that was growing sweeter and brighter every day. But while joy was always a portion of these meetings, now and then a dark thought would give its stab; for was he not a slave? And how could he dare to look forward to a time when one so beautiful should be his own? – aye, all and all his own?

He had discovered that were he free he could claim this jewel, for she was a peasant's daughter: and yet how far above him, for she was free.

He had but just left her, having felt the warmth of her breath so near his cheek that it thrilled him like wine, and the clinging clasp of her hand was still tingling in his blood.

"Oh that I could own this pearl!" he cried: and then he shouted aloud in great joyfulness, for the sultan's proclamation flashed up in his mind, recalled by the word he had used.

He would find the sultan a pearl; he would be free – yes, and rich. But his northern blood was cool, and he made sure that his dear one should not suffer should he not succeed at first.

When he met her the next day he said:

"I have come to bid you good-bye for a time."

Her little hand trembled, and her bosom heaved as though a sob were welling up for utterance.

"Only for a time, remember," he went on. "And when I come again it will be to claim a bride."

There was a supreme confidence in his tone, a foreshadowed success that inspired even himself, as he asked:

"Will she be ready for me?"

For answer she nestled in his arms, and no wind was needed to tear the veil aside that his lips might claim love's pledge from hers.

"Shall I have to wait long?" she said.

"No, perhaps a month; but I hope it will be less even than that."

"Oh that Allah would make it less!" she answered.

A long time they lingered in the rose-scented shadows, and then Irar, with her kiss of hope and prayer warm on his lips, strode rapidly back to his home.

Arrived there, he rubbed his body thoroughly with oil to make it mobile and supple, and then sought the slumber that would give him strength for his search.

With the first glinting of dawn he arose, and having partaken of a plain repast, sat down to consider how he should act did he find the pearl.

Should he give the gem to the inspector of the fisheries?

No, for the man was not friendly to him, and might prove false.

The better way would be for himself to carry it to the sultan,

and as he laid it at the feet of his royal master, claim the reward that had been offered.

This plan satisfied him, and then another thought arose: How should he hide it from the keen eyes of the watchful guards, whose duty it was to see that no gem was carried away, and who stood ready to search each diver as he appeared above the water?

This was a more difficult problem to settle than was that concerning the way in which the gem should be conveyed to the sultan; and the sun had risen far above the mountains lying eastward from the city before he could devise a plan that seemed to meet his needs.

At last a smile of satisfaction took the place of the perplexed look that had pervaded his face, and rising, he hastened to the bay.

The divers were already at work, and one or two had finished their labor and were going away, when Irar sprang into his skiff and was rowed out to the deeper water, where the pearls lay hidden. He was not so easy to please as he had previously been, but scanned the water curiously, directing the boatmen to pull in many different directions, while he stood in the bow, watching.

Suddenly some mysterious prompting whispered, "Now!" – and without a moment's hesitation he sprang from the skiff and sank swiftly down to the indistinct depths below.

Merciful Allah – did he see aright?

Yes, there lay the pearl he sought, perfect, brilliant, a gem that royalty itself could not outshine.

To grasp it and thrust it into his mouth, yes, and to swallow it, was but an instant's work; and then he quickly found another gem, and with it sped upward to the surface.

A half-hour had not passed, and now he was hastening back to the city, buoyant, elate, his heart beating with swift throbs of joy.

He did not seek his home, but turning down a narrow and unfrequented street sought a dark, closely-curtained house, and knocking, was silently admitted by a sallow-hued man, whose broad brow and gleaming eyes, set deep under shaggy brows, told of a strange and subtle power that only he could wield.

"Well, friend Irar," he said, when he had led the young man to a dim room at the back of the house, "can I do aught for you to-day?"

"You can. Listen." And Irar told, as briefly as he could, of his love, the sultan's promise, and his success.

This done, he went on.

"That you are skilled in the arts of surgery is well known. If the pearl stays in my stomach it will be ruined. For an act that saved your life, which I was glad to do, help me now."

The man thought for a moment, and then said:

"I will, but you will be sick for a week, and perhaps for a longer time. What must be done in this case?"

"Your word will be enough to excuse me from work. Will you not go to the vizier and make the excuse I need?"

"Yes; and now, was the gem hard to swallow?"

"It was."

"Sit quiet here, I shall soon be ready."

Swiftly the man prepared two mixtures and brought out some thin knives and other curious instruments. These and some bandages he placed on a small table that he drew near to a slab standing in the middle of the apartment.

"Lie down here," he said, and Irar obeyed.

"If you feel the pearl forced up into your throat, do not struggle, but grasp the sides of the slab, and keep as quiet as you can: I will see that no harm comes to you."

"I will do as you say."

"Now drink this;" and he handed Irar one of the potions he had prepared.

No sooner had Irar swallowed this than he grew faint and chill; and then a horrible sickness filled him, and with violent retchings he sought to relieve the oppression in his stomach. The man stood by, a knife in his grasp, and just as Irar felt a lump stick in his throat a hand was clasped tightly below it, and it was forced upward. Then a swift movement of gleaming steel followed; and just as the pressure on his lungs grew to a suffocating intensity, the lump causing this was ejected from his throat, and stinging pain told of rapid punctures, through which a thread was quickly drawn.

Then a burning liquid was applied to his throat, and a bandage wound about it, after which he was carried to a couch and told to remain quiet.

Then the man picked up the pearl and, washing it, held it up

to the light.

"A right royal gem," he cried, his eyes gleaming. "Here, take it, or I shall begin to envy you your prize;" and he thrust the pearl fiercely into Irar's hand, going immediately from the apartment.

In an hour he returned, holding a paper that bore the seal of the vizier.

"You are excused for a month," he said, "and before that time you will be well: in fact, you will be able to move to your own house in two weeks. The one thing needful is that you keep your neck quiet."

It was not hard for Irar to do this, for did he not know that love and freedom were both waiting for him? The days passed swiftly, for dreams of a happy future filled both waking and sleeping hours, and the contentment that pervaded his existence made his recovery rapid.

At the end of a week the bandages were removed, and the surgeon looked in surprise at the nearly healed cut.

"This is better – much better than I hoped for," he said. "A week more of quiet, and you will be all right."

He bathed the wound with a lotion, replaced the bandages, and then wandered restlessly about the room. This was but a repetition of his course ever since Irar had come to him, and caused his guest no uneasiness.

After a time he grew quiet, and going to the window, seemed to be pondering some plan. Then his face lightened, and coming back to Irar's couch he said:

"I will make a cooling drink for you, and then go out." And he left the room, soon returning with the draught, which he held out to his patient, who took it and drained the liquor to the dregs.

Again the surgeon wandered about the room in a restless way, furtively watching Irar, who soon felt a delicious languor stealing over his senses.

"Let me see your pearl once more," said the surgeon, and Irar languidly handed it to him.

Did he dream it? – or did he see the surgeon clutch it fiercely, then thrust it hurriedly into his mouth and with a gleam of savage triumph hastily swallow it?

There was no certainty of this when he awoke, but a strange sensation of indistinctness in his mind, which gradually cleared as his eyes grew accustomed to the light. But he could not rid himself of the thought, and he thrust his hand under the covering of the couch where he had kept the pearl, and started up with a cry of horror.

The pearl was gone!

A man came running in, alarmed by his cry; and of him Irar demanded, in a voice choked and hoarse with emotion:

"Your master, quick! – where is he?"

"I have not seen him for a week."

"A week? And I?"

"You have been asleep. My master said you would not wake before a week had passed, and that he would return ere your slumber was broken."

It was true, then, this horror that he had thought a dream; and he buried his face in his hands that the servant might not see his emotion. In a little time he grew calm, and raising his head, he said:

"Has your master returned?"

"No."

He put up his hand, and felt his throat – the bandage was gone. To his questioning look, the man said:

"The master ordered it. It was taken off the third day after he went away, and you can eat if you desire to."

"I will. Bring me a light repast."

In a little time he was eating the food brought, and calling for his clothes he put them on and tried to walk. At first his steps were unsteady, but they quickly grew firm. Finding that the pouch containing his knife and purse was in its place, he went forth. But instead of seeking his own home, or the lane that had so often been the goal of his wanderings, he turned southward, and leaving the city was soon pacing the sands leading towards the rocks that he had so frequently explored.

Soon he reached them, and began his usual clambering among them, going on and on, but keeping near the sea. At times his hand would explore the pouch where his knife was, and once he drew it forth, and his eyes gleamed with satisfaction as his finger tested the keenness of its blade.

His glance sought every shadowy hollow, and twice he turned into fissures that seemed to lead to a deeper gloom. But he

returned and kept on, reaching at last a bold crag, beneath which a gully of the sea ran in – so narrow that he could almost step across it.

The garrulous call of a gull drew his attention to a dark object that rose and fell with the swelling and sinking of the tide, close to a little square of sand at the head of this opening. It had a strangely human look, and he made his way down to it. Taking off his sandals, he gathered his garments up above the wash of the waves, and soon had grasped the floating clothes that streamed out from the central mass.

The strain caused this to turn over, and showed him the white and livid face of the very man who had played him false.

For a moment a savage joy filled his soul, and then his manhood exerted its sway, and pity came; and as the softer feeling caused a mist to gather in his eyes, he noticed that there was a large, unnatural lump protruding from the dead man's throat.

Hastily drawing the body on the sands, he drew forth his knife, and carefully cut the flesh about this.

A cry of joy came, as his pearl dropped from the slit and lay, clear and shining, on the sand.

Hastily secreting it, his better thought prompted him to bury the man whose avarice had come so near wrecking his life, and finding an oar blade on the sand, he dug a grave close to the rock, and dragged the body to this.

A small tablet fell from the clothing as he was doing this, and

he picked it up and put it in his pouch. Then he covered the body, and heaped the sand high above it.

Resting for a little time, he clambered back to the top of the cliff and quickly returned to the city, hastening to the vizier's palace.

His request to have audience with the sultan was immediately granted, and the vizier being about to report to his royal master, Irar was told to accompany him.

Arrived at the palace, the vizier quickly made Irar's wish known.

"The slave I gave your highness for a pearl-fisher desires to speak with you."

"Let him speak, for he has ever done his work well," said the sultan.

Bowing his head low, Irar held out his hand, closed over the pearl.

"Your highness promised freedom and gold to the slave who should bring you the finest pearl on earth; will this one win the gift?" And he unclasped his hand and showed the peerless gem it had hidden.

With a cry of delight, the sultan said:

"Yes, you are free, and the golden pieces shall be paid you when you wish them – now, if it is your choice. More, I appoint you the inspector of my pearl fisheries. Hand me the gem, and do you see our wishes fulfilled."

The last commands were addressed to the vizier, who took

the pearl and laid it in the sultan's hand. Irar bowed low, and withdrew to the outer court by the palace gate. Here he was soon joined by the vizier, who gave him the certificate of his freedom, and the royal decree announcing his appointment to the inspectorship.

He also gave Irar some costly jewels, saying:

"You have done well. The sultan is overjoyed at this rare good fortune, for the pearl is much larger than that of the Sultan of Coromandel. He has remembered that I gave you to him, and so I share my gain with you."

Irar thanked him, and taking the papers, asked permission to be absent from duty for a time.

"You are free, and can do what you please, and you need not assume your new duties for a week."

Thanking him, Irar hastened away. It was growing late, but the sun still shone in the lane when he turned down its shadowy way. The gate was quickly reached; but before he came to it, it was flung open, and the light and gladness of his life shone on him.

As he clasped her in his arms, she murmured:

"I have watched for you every day; but now I shall have no more watching or waiting."

"No, my darling, you will not. Lead me to your father: I would speak with him."

It took but a short time for Irar to secure the consent that he sought. His royal appointment was a powerful factor in the argument, and he returned to his home a happy man.

As he was removing his garments before retiring, the tablet that he had found on the surgeon's body fell to the floor. Picking it up, he opened it, and saw some partly obliterated writing. Closely scanning this, he read the following:

"I have the pearl: it is mine. But since I have swallowed it I have become possessed with the thought that there is another like it – yes, larger and more brilliant – waiting my seeking; and to-night I shall go out to the fisheries and find it. I shall go alone, in a skiff that I have hired; and to-morrow I shall have two pearls, like which the world has no more."

"The fool! – he could not swim," said Irar, "for I rescued him from the sea when he tried to. Well, he wrought his own punishment, and may Allah forgive him as I do." And he sought his couch.

One week after this occurred Irar carried to the larger home that was allowed him as inspector of the pearl fisheries the sweetest and fairest bride in all the wide Persian realms, a bride more pure and lovely than the pearl that had given him his freedom and crowned his love with triumph.

Thos. S. Collier.

THE FIRST REGIMENTS OF U. S. COLORED TROOPS AND HOW THEY WERE RAISED

May 22, 1863, a general order, No. 143, establishing a bureau "for the organization of colored troops," and providing for the detail of three field officers as Inspectors of these troops and for the creation of a board to examine applicants was issued from the War Department.

Although some colored men had been enlisted in Louisville and, under the authority of General Hunter, in South Carolina, the above order was the first formal recognition of this class of troops by the Government.

The Inspectors were to supervise at such points as might be indicated by the War Department "in the Northern and Western States," but recruiting stations and depots were to be established by the Adjutant-general as circumstances should require: the first clause expressing the conservatism of President Lincoln, and the second affording a wider range for the energies of Secretary Stanton.

The first Inspector detailed was Colonel William Birney, of the 4th New Jersey Volunteers. He was an Alabamian by birth, the son of James G. Birney, who had been the Presidential candidate of the Liberty party in 1840 and 1844. He had enlisted

as a private and been elected Captain in the 1st New Jersey, had served through the different regimental grades, and had just been nominated to the Senate as Brigadier-general. At the beginning of the war he predicted to his friends, Secretary Chase and Henry Wilson (chairman of the Senate Committee on military affairs), the exigency for calling colored troops into the service, and had offered, in that event, to aid in organizing them without regard to his grade in the white troops. Hence his detail after more than two years' waiting.

Reporting at Washington in the first days of June for his new duty, Colonel Birney was kindly received by the Secretary of War, but found that neither he nor Mr. Lincoln had marked out any definite line of action or had any orders ready to give him. Day after day his anxious inquiries were met by the same answer:

"Wait a little longer; we are not ready yet."

Finally, about the 10th of June, weary with oscillating between the Ebbitt House and the War Department, the Colonel asked leave of Mr. Stanton to organize a colored regiment at Washington. Written orders were refused, but oral permission to do what he could was granted him. He went to work at once, and before the 18th of June he had enlisted, uniformed, armed, and equipped four hundred men, gathered from Washington, Georgetown, Alexandria, and the country beyond. They were of course very raw material, but their habits of obedience and temperance were equivalent to the usual quickness and independence of the white troops. They were proud of their new

position and enthusiastic in learning the manual of arms, even rising at four o'clock in the morning to begin their drill, which they practised incessantly through the day. The brightest among them were made sergeants and corporals, while young officers from the white regiments around Washington were detailed to serve as captains and lieutenants.

By the end of the month the 1st U. S. Colored Regiment was full, and Colonel Birney marched it down the avenue, past the White House to the Capitol, and back; affording a rare spectacle to the crowds that followed it, and one which the old inhabitants of the city certainly had never expected to see. But there they were, ten companies of black, brown, and yellow men, ex-slaves, dressed in the uniform of the United States, armed and equipped like white soldiers, and pledged to stand by the Government in its struggle with their former masters. They made a fine appearance, marching quite as well as white soldiers, and calling forth many compliments for themselves and their officers.

Still no orders came from the War Department, and it was some time before Colonel Birney understood the cause of the delay. Recruiting for colored troops had been begun in Philadelphia and Boston, but progressed slowly; and at Washington men were not obtained in any great numbers from the resident free people of color, but were mostly fugitive slaves from Maryland and Virginia. Colonel Birney represented to Mr. Stanton the advantages of recruiting, in the States named, and the superiority as soldiers of the men raised on farms to those

gathered in the alleys and slums of northern cities.

The Secretary listened attentively, and after reflecting a few moments, said:

"Go over to the White House and have a talk with the President. Don't say that I sent you. We will talk the matter over afterwards."

The Colonel was promptly admitted to Mr. Lincoln's presence, and a complimentary remark of the President on the excellent appearance made by the colored regiment opened the way for his visitor to give his views about recruiting from the Maryland farms.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Lincoln; "you surely do not mean that we should take the slaves?"

"Mr. President," replied the Colonel, "a man's allegiance to his Government is not subordinate to claims of private parties upon him. If he is willing to fight for his country he should be allowed to do it."

"But my pledge!" said Mr. Lincoln. "You forget my pledge to the loyal slave States, in my proclamation of emancipation."

Here, then, was the point of difference between Mr. Stanton and the President. The former was willing to recruit colored troops in the loyal slave States, and the latter was opposed to it.

Of course the subject was dropped.

On the 28th of June Col. Birney was ordered to Norfolk to recruit slaves of rebels, but he had scarcely begun when another order brought him back to Washington.

Arriving about the 4th of July, Mr. Stanton showed him a letter from General Schenck, commanding the district of Maryland, stating that large numbers of free men of color had been gathered at Baltimore to work on the fortifications, and that a competent officer, if sent at once, might get a great many recruits among them. In answer to the Secretary's question of what he thought of this, Colonel Birney answered:

"I can organize several regiments in Baltimore, but probably not from the class mentioned by General Schenck. Free colored men will not fight to help the Government maintain slavery in Maryland; and that is the President's pledge. But the slaves will enlist, for they will get their freedom by it. If you send me to Maryland it must be with the knowledge that I will never recognize one man's right of property in another. I believe, with the Vermont justice, that the only proof of such a right is a deed signed and sealed by the Creator."

Mr. Stanton laughed. "Well," he said, "whatever you do, remember you do it on your own responsibility." This was repeated and emphasized.

The Colonel accepted the terms, asking the favor, however, that Mr. Stanton would do what he could for him in the event of the President's displeasure. This was cheerfully promised, and the necessary orders were then made out. A letter also was written to General Schenck directing him to recognize Colonel Birney as in charge of the recruiting of colored troops in Maryland, and to have his requisitions honored by the ordinance,

commissary, and quartermaster officers. That is, the Colonel was to have *carte blanche* for his special business.

The large barracks near Druid Hill Park having been assigned for his use by General Schenck, who named them "Birney Barracks," the Colonel telegraphed for the 1st Regiment. As the "Plug Uglies" before the war, and the attacks made on the first northern volunteers by the Baltimore populace, had given that city the reputation of being peopled chiefly by roughs and rebels, it was thought best to have a sufficient force there to overawe the violent.

The regiment, under command of Colonel Holman, arrived at night without accident. It was put into good condition, and a few days later, with Colonel Birney riding at its head, was marched, with music, flying colors, and fixed bayonets, through the principal streets of the city, causing immense excitement and some apprehension among all classes. Doors and blinds were hastily closed, and the police gathered in force to be ready to repress disorders. But none occurred. One man was arrested for hurrahing for Jeff Davis; but this, scarcely worth noticing, was the only incident that indicated rebel sentiment.

From that date the populace accepted the situation, and it was quite safe for recruiting squads of colored soldiers to march through every quarter of the city.

It was worth going some distance to see the sergeant selected to command these squads march his men out. Black as a coal, his grand, martial air and proud assumption of authority were most

impressive, while his stern, ringing voice made itself heard all over the drill ground. No doubt his pompous manner, aided by his uniform, had much to do in bringing in recruits.

The business of recruiting was, however, one of peculiar danger in other places. About this time a Lieutenant who had been left at Norfolk by Colonel Birney was foully murdered. A little later another was shot down near Benedict, and a recruiting agent was mobbed and killed in Frederick County. On two occasions armed men lay in ambush for the purpose of shooting Colonel Birney, but he was forewarned.

It very soon became evident that more energetic means must be adopted for filling up regiments. Accordingly, a requisition was made for a small steamboat for the purpose of recruiting along the eastern shore of Maryland. Before, however, completing his arrangements to do this, Colonel Birney's attention was called to another matter, the result of which did not tend to make him more popular with Maryland slave-owners.

Calling at General Schenck's office, one morning, a letter was handed him to read by Adjutant-general Piatt, which I here copy *verbatim et literatim*. It was addressed to President Lincoln and dated:

"Baltimore, June 15, 1863

"Hon. President Abraham Liccln. *Sir*: i would like to

inquire from you sir that we slaves are entitle to Be confine In prison By our masters or not sir. We have bin In Prison for two years and a half and some are Bin in here for seventeen months and so our masters are Rible General A. B. Steward and are now in the Rible Army sir and put us slaves here Before He went into the Rible Army and we are Bin here Ever sence and we are waitin to Be inlisted in the army or navy sir to fite for the stars and stripes there is about 20 of slaves in the Balto city jail our masters says that they are going to keep we slaves in Prison untill the war is over or soon as he can get a chance to send us slaves Down South to the Rebilious and we all would like to have our Liberty sir and i sir i wish you would do something For we Poor Slaves we have no shoes or clothing to put Put on only what we Beg from the soldiers and citizens that comes to the Prison i would like to have my liberty. Direct your letter to Captain James warden in the city jail then he will give the Slaves their Libberty from your humble Servant."

No name was signed to this document, probably from prudential reasons. The name of the warden was, however, repeated, as though to emphasize the address.

Such an appeal could not but make a profound impression on Colonel Birney. He caused some inquiries to be made among the colored people, and learned that there were in the city at least three slave-pens in which men, women, and children had been confined for safekeeping since the beginning of the war. Thirty cents a head per day was the charge for keeping them, and they were to remain in confinement until the close of hostilities.

Col. Birney decided that no time should be lost in attending to this business. He called to see General Schenck about it, but the General had gone to Washington. Colonel Piatt was in the office, however, and unhesitatingly gave the required permit to open the jails.

Taking with him a few soldiers, Colonel Birney visited, one after the other, the dreadful pens where nearly one hundred human beings were found in a condition of misery almost incredible to the present generation. Nearly all the men and many of the women were chained in some manner or other. One aged man wore an iron collar to which a chain was fastened attached to an iron band around one ankle, and so short that it was with difficulty a step could be taken. Another, almost as old, was chained in a similar way from an iron belt to both ankles. Some were handcuffed and some had only their ankles chained together. The only place for fresh air or exercise was a small court-yard inclosed by high brick walls which, being whitewashed, had seriously affected the eyes of all the prisoners. Only a few of them could see well at night, and some were almost totally blind. A few afterwards recovered, but several lost their sight completely. In this condition they had been kept for two years or more.

A blacksmith was sent for, and in a few minutes every chain was broken and the captives were told that they were free. The younger ones received the announcement with shouts and laughter, and ran eagerly to gather up all their little belongings

and make themselves as tidy as possible before leaving the prisons. Others were incredulous and timid about accepting the boon offered to them, while the older ones, more deeply imbued with the religious spirit, raised streaming eyes to heaven and thanked the Lord that their deliverance had come at last.

They were all marched to the barracks and examined by the surgeons. A few only were found available as soldiers. The others were sent to the Quartermaster's Department in Washington and disposed of there. The expressions of gratitude from those who remained with us were most fervent, but often a little amusing. Colonel Birney was spoken of among them as a man sent by the Lord, a second Moses come to deliver and lead His oppressed people. He was prayed for in their evening prayer-meetings, and the Lord implored to be with him and "purtect him always, on de right hand and on de left, in de front and in de rar;" and one earnest old man was heard to pray: "Eben as he hab done it unto de least ob dese, my chillun, say de Lord, he hab done it unto me, and we prays dat de Lord will recognize dat fact and bless him accordin'."

The opening of the slave pens, and the revelations concerning the treatment of the prisoners confined there, caused, as may well be supposed, a great sensation. Owners of slaves began to discuss measures to protect themselves from Colonel Birney's operations. Reverdy Johnson was appealed to and secured as their representative, and complaints were forwarded to Washington. That these were not noticed at that time was due,

in a great measure, to the influence of the Hon. Winter Davis, then member of Congress, and of Judge Hugh L. Bond, between whom and Colonel Birney a warm friendship existed as well as entire unanimity of opinion on the colored soldier question.

The Colonel now felt free to carry out the plans he had matured, of the success of which he had not the slightest doubt. Taking with him a few of his most reliable officers, he embarked on the steamer that had been furnished him and started on his first voyage of discovery. He was absent a little over a week, and was so much encouraged by what he heard and saw that no delay was made in despatching the boat again, this time in command of one of the lieutenant-colonels.

And now all along the eastern and western shores the news flew that able-bodied men would be received as soldiers, transported to a place of safety, and no questions asked. On it went like the unseen blaze beneath the pine brush, darting out now here, now there, still travelling swiftly and silently until it reached the remotest districts of the State, and the black population knew that its emancipation was in its own hands. Soon one boat was not enough to bring away all who were willing to serve in the Union army. A second boat and then a third were added to the service, and recruiting stations were opened in various parts of the State. To these flocked the slaves, fugitives from both rebel and loyal masters, many of them at the risk of their lives bringing their families with them, walking often forty and fifty miles to reach the station. Here they were protected

until the boats came along which carried them to Baltimore. A crowd always gathered to see them land, and followed as – often two and three hundred together – they were marched in double file through the streets to the barracks.

It was certainly a grotesque but pathetic spectacle, that of these people just escaped from bondage, all ragged, many of them with scarce tatters enough for decency, barefooted and bareheaded, or with handkerchiefs around their heads, dirty and forlorn, each one carrying a little bundle containing his entire earthly possessions.

Immediately upon their arrival at the barracks the men were examined, the able-bodied ones enlisted, the rest otherwise disposed of.

Before the 1st of August the 2d and 4th regiments were complete, the 7th and 8th more than half full, and the 9th was begun.[1]

It was surprising how many men had to be rejected. Sometimes out of a hundred recruits fifty would be found physically unfit for service. But those accepted were, as a rule, fine, hearty fellows.

The preliminary process to becoming a soldier was not always relished. The carbolic soap bath in the river, with the after clipping and shaving and shampooing, being in many cases a first experience, was not submitted to in every instance without grumbling. A few even rebelled, positively refusing to go into the

[1] The intermediate regiments were raised in Boston, Philadelphia, and in Ohio.

water. A facetious sergeant, detailed to supervise the scrubbing, originated an argument which proved most effective.

"Look at you now," he was heard to say, "you ignorant nigger! You don't know nothin'. Don't you see your ole close a burnin' up on de sho', and don't you know when you gits inter dat ribber and scrubs wid de guvment soap you washes all de slavery out ob you? Go 'long wid you!"

And the subject, aided by a touch of the sergeant's foot, would make no further resistance.

But when, the bath and barbering over, comfortable underclothing was given them and they were then arrayed in bright new uniforms and a glittering musket was put into their hands, surely Solomon in all his glory never experienced the glow of satisfaction that warmed the hearts of these ex-slaves as they viewed each other, and each man knew that he looked just like his fellows. For the first time in their lives they were men, not "boys," – not chattels to be disposed of at the will of a master, but owning themselves, treated with respect, and considered worthy to take part with white men in defending the Union. In many of them the almost immediate change in look and bearing from cringing humility or unmeaning levity to earnest willingness and self-confidence was strikingly apparent; in others the change came gradually, as though time were needed to make them realize the revolution that had taken place. But it was surprising how quickly the vast majority learned well what was required of them, and how few rascals there were. Intemperance and profanity were

exceedingly rare among them, and the guard-house opened its doors to a much less number than was usual in white regiments.

Of course there was general dissatisfaction among the abandoned masters and mistresses, many of whom were left without a single field-hand or house-servant. Scarcely a day passed without bringing one or two of these owners or their agents to inquire for some Sam or Tom or Dick. They were always invited up to headquarters to present their claims, and the records were examined for their satisfaction. If the names of their slaves were among the enlisted men, the ex-owners were required to produce a certificate of loyalty from the provost marshal of their district; and, if this was satisfactory, they were referred to the Board of Claims, to be organized in Baltimore for the purpose of deciding upon such cases. If they could show no proper certificate, they were summarily dismissed. Very often a man would change his name when he enlisted, thus making it very difficult for his master to trace him, besides causing confusion and a good deal of merriment among the young officers, as those who took new names invariably forgot them.

"Andy Smith!" the sergeant would cry at roll-call; but no Andy Smith would answer until, the name having been repeated several times, some comrade would nudge the fellow who had assumed it, saying:

"You is Andy Smith; don't you 'member you is?"

And then there would be a start and an exclamation of:

"So I is – I done forgot!" followed by a loud "Here!"

Amusing and sometimes pathetic scenes between masters and servants were of frequent occurrence. It was surprising in how short a time a poor, crying, slovenly slave became a bright, neat, self-asserting man.

One morning a tall, ungainly fellow, who had tramped several days to get to us, was brought to headquarters. He looked as though he had been driven and hunted all his life; but he was strongly built, and his ebony countenance, though showing a good deal of anxiety, expressed fearlessness and resolution. The officer who accompanied him reported him sound in every way except that he stuttered badly. Before the Colonel could speak to him, the fellow managed, with much difficulty, to get out an earnest request that he should not be "'jected."

"But you could not give the countersign if challenged," said the colonel.

"Jes try me, please, mars Colonel," the poor man stuttered. He was tried with the regular drill orders, and the proof of the man's pluck was that, though surrounded by a crowd that laughed at his ridiculous efforts, he made an heroic stagger at every order, and with a certain air of dignity that had its effect. At any rate, the Colonel, pleased with his manly bearing, told him that if he would come up the next morning and give those orders without stuttering he should be mustered into the service. Whether what his comrades asserted, that he spent the night practising in the grove back of the barracks, was true or not, it is a fact that the

next morning he appeared bright and cheery, and in a voice that resounded over the campus he repeated every order promptly and intelligibly. He was accepted and a few days afterwards put on guard at the foot of the hill. As he was quietly pacing up and down his beat, a man rode up, sprang to the ground, and saying, "Look after my horse, fellow," started to walk up the hill. He failed to recognize in the neat, fine-looking soldier whom he had addressed his runaway slave. But the slave knew his late master, and with the sense of security inspired by his uniform and his loaded musket, he stepped forward. He could now say "Halt!" without stuttering, and he said it in a very decided tone. And then the master, looking sharply at him, exclaimed with an oath:

"Sam, you stuttering idiot! what are you doing here?"

"Defendin' de country, mas – sa," Sam stuttered.

His master burst out laughing, and with another oath ordered Sam to stand aside and let him pass, as he had come to take his man back home, and intended to do it. But Sam was not alarmed. He lowered his musket significantly, and managed to say:

"I aint nobody's slave no more, massa. I'se under the orders of de United States Guvement, and dem orders is to let nobody parss here what can't gib de countersign. Ef you kin do dat, you kin parss: ef not – not!"

The master raved and stormed in vain. Sam stood firm, until the officer of the day who, unobserved, had witnessed the scene from a clump of trees, thought best to interfere. He escorted the irate Marylander to the Colonel's office, but it is hardly necessary

to say he was obliged to return home alone, as he came.[2]

A very similar incident occurred shortly afterwards, which I believe found its way into the papers: but it will bear repetition.

A new recruit, feeling to an exaggerated extent the dignity and the importance with which his uniform invested him, and realizing also, perhaps, the solemn obligations of his oath, was approached while on guard by his former master, and, with the usual oaths, ordered to get out of the way. This the sentinel declined to do, and the master began to abuse him for "a coward," "a black scoundrel," "a sneaking thief," etc., etc., all of which the soldier bore unmoved. But when the white man, still more infuriated by this indifference, damned the Union Army and even the uniform the black man wore, the latter became excited, and facing his angry master, said, in a very forcible manner:

"Massa, you kin 'buse dis nigger as a nigger as much as you please: dat don't hurt nobody. But when you damn dese buttons, you damns de goviment, sar, and dat am treason, and I'se pledged to stop it. Now scoot!"

And he charged on the astonished master, driving him down the slope and into the road, and kept his musket levelled at him until he saw him get on a street-car and ride away.

After a time, curiosity brought many people from the city every afternoon to see the troops drill, and before the end of the summer it became the fashionable thing for ladies and gentlemen

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[2] Sam was a member of the 7th regiment, and in battle was distinguished for his bravery. He was killed Oct. 27, 1864, in the battle near "Kill House," Va.

driving out to stop below the hill on which the barracks stood and remain during the whole parade. Many even descended from their carriages and came up the slope to get a better view. As to the colored population, the barracks, and all that took place there, were full of interest for them. It seemed as though each one felt that he or she gained something in importance by belonging to a class that was attracting so much attention. Those especially who had sons or brothers among the troops rose at once in their own estimation and in their social scale. I could cite a number of amusing illustrations of this vainglorious sentiment, but one will suffice.

The respectable matron who did my washing came to me one morning to say that she would be obliged to give up my patronage, as her son had just enlisted and she could not think of disgracing him by continuing her business. Remonstrance was in vain; she retired from the suds, and lived on her importance and, presumably, on her son's pay.

One afternoon in the early fall two ladies came to headquarters. They were dressed in fashionable mourning, were gentle of speech and manner, and evidently belonged to the best society. They stated that they owned a large farm in Calvert County, had been visiting in Philadelphia, and had just learned that two "valuable boys" belonging to them had run away and enlisted in Baltimore. The "boys" had been brought up in the family, had always been kindly treated, were perfectly contented, and must have been worked upon in some subtle manner to have

been induced to leave. They felt sure that if they could see them they could persuade them to return, as they could not bear the thought of the hardships the "boys" must undergo in army life.

The Colonel looked over the roll and found the names of the "boys," who had enlisted two weeks before. He informed the ladies that, even if willing, these soldiers could not be remanded to slavery; but if they would like to see them, he would send for them. The ladies requested that this should be done, and an orderly was dispatched to bring the fugitives.

Few worse specimens, as regarded raggedness and general evidences of hard usage, than these two men had come up from the western shore. When they now made their appearance in the office, tall, good-looking fellows, in their clean uniforms and new shoes, and their countenances beaming with satisfaction, it was no wonder that their mistresses did not at first recognize them, and were embarrassed in addressing them. A short conversation ensued, during which the men, though perfectly respectful, let the ladies understand that they were neither ashamed nor sorry for having left the old home. As the visitors, evidently much chagrined, at last arose to go, one of them, extending her hand to the younger one, said:

"Well, John, good-bye; I am going home to-morrow. What shall I tell the people for you?"

"Give 'em my love, marm," said John, "an' tell em I's mighty glad I's here, an' I wish dey was all here, too."

The other lady had taken out her pocket-book, and now said

to the other:

"And you, Will, what shall I say for you?"

"Tell 'em all, marm," he earnestly replied, "dat de Lord hab broke my yoke an' made me free. Tell em I'se happier dan I eber 'spected to be in dis world – an' I blesses 'em all."

"Very well," she said coldly, and dropped something into his hand. Both ladies bowed and departed.

The man Will stood looking reflectively at what his mistress had given him. As the door closed on her, he turned to the Colonel and, showing a silver quarter, said:

"I'se worked fur dat woman mor'n twenty years, an' dis is de fust bit ob money she eber gib me!"

Towards the last of September Secretary Chase, being in Baltimore, was invited by Judge Bond to drive out to the barracks and witness the parade of the colored troops. His appearance was a pleasant surprise to Colonel Birney, who, up to that time, had failed to elicit from him any expression of interest in his work; though, on account of old friendship and political sympathies, the Secretary was the first person from whom the Colonel had expected support. But Mr. Chase had not as yet gone beyond the President in his views concerning the enlistment of slaves. He, however, expressed himself greatly pleased as well as surprised at the fine display the troops made, and the next week he repeated his visit, accompanied by Secretary Stanton.

As it happened, one of the recruiting boats arrived that very day, bringing over two hundred of the usual miserable crowd.

Instead of having the men among them inspected at once, the Colonel saved them for his afternoon programme.

The expected visit of the distinguished men became known in the city, and long before the time for parade the road in front of the barracks was blocked with open carriages filled with ladies and gentlemen. The two secretaries, in a landau, were so placed that they had an uninterrupted view of everything.

The bugle sounded and the different companies, with bayonets and every accoutrement glistening, marched in splendid order to their respective positions. As the last company wheeled into line, and while the spectators were enthusiastically expressing their admiration of its soldierly bearing, the raw recruits who had arrived in the morning filed up and, each one grasping his little bundle, were placed in line with the others. Their tattered garments, shoeless feet, and disreputable appearance generally, afforded a striking and painful contrast to their uniformed brethren. The suggestiveness of the spectacle could not but strike every beholder. Mr. Chase declared it was the most impressive sight he had ever witnessed. Mr. Stanton warmly congratulated Colonel Birney, and expressed his satisfaction and his thanks that so much had been accomplished without embarrassing him.

The vigor with which recruiting had been pushed had taken the Maryland slave-holders by surprise. For some weeks they made no appeal to the government. Then, recovering their self-possession, they set to work to procure a revocation of Colonel Birney's authority.

Their first applications were made singly or by delegations to General Schenck or, in his absence, to his Adjutant-general, Donn Piatt, both of whom had steadily and cordially given their official aid and support to Colonel Birney's operations, though, from the nature of his orders, he was not subject to their command. The General, with quiet dignity, referred the envoys to Secretary Stanton, but held out no hope of change; but the adjutant gave them deep offence by his sturdy patriotism, expressed with the wit and humor for which he has always been celebrated.

Secretary Stanton was deaf to remonstrances. But it was not long before Reverdy Johnson and Governor Swann discovered that the President was not aware of the enlistment of slaves. Petitions, letters of complaint, and charges against Colonel Birney were now poured in on Mr. Lincoln. Finally, Reverdy Johnson and the Governor, at the head of a Maryland delegation of slave-holders, called on him and presented the grievance with all the eloquence they could command.

The President was much disturbed, and supposing General Schenck to be the responsible party, wrote to him intimating a purpose to disavow his acts. Thereupon the General went to Washington and, explaining his position in the matter, protested against censure or disavowal, and tendered his resignation as commandant in Maryland if such a step against him was intended. Mr. Lincoln listened patiently. Then, after a short pause, he said:

"Schenck, do you know what a *galled prairie* is?"

The general knew every kind of prairie except that.

"The galled prairie," resumed Mr. Lincoln, "lies on the slope back from the narrow river bottoms, and is so called because the waters from higher levels cut gulches in it. But it is rich land. On it grow oak trees of a peculiar species. Their wood is almost as hard as iron, and their roots grow deep down. You can't cut them or dig them up. Now, general, how do you suppose the farmers treat them?"

This was a poser.

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "they just let them alone and plough around them."

With this the President arose and shook hands, and General Schenck returned to Baltimore, pondering over the parable of the "galled prairies."

Nothing further was said about censure, but Mr. Lincoln was troubled on the score of his "pledge," and did not let the matter drop.

Colonel Birney was very busy one day issuing the final orders for despatching three boats to a point where, from information received, several hundred good recruits were waiting. He was interrupted by a telegram direct from the White House, as follows:

> "How many slaves have you enlisted?"
> *(Signed) "Abraham Lincoln."*

The answer reached the President while Governor Swann and

his friends were making another call on him.

"About three thousand," it said.[3]

A short and, according to the report of the committee, a pretty sharp discussion followed the reading of this answer, ending in the despatch of another telegram to the colonel:

> "Hold on and care for what you have; enlist no more until further orders.
> *(Signed) Abraham Lincoln."*

Colonel Birney's disappointment can be imagined. In another hour his boats would have been off and out of reach of telegrams. Now, all orders had to be countermanded and the boats tied up.

The next day the colonel went to Washington and had an interview with Mr. Stanton, always his friend, and ready to do for him all that his position towards the President permitted him to do.

The latter Colonel Birney did not see, but the encouragement, protection, and aid he received from the great war secretary, with whose patriotism mingled no selfish ambition, enabled him, after a few weeks, to reorganize his plans and continue the work which led to emancipation in the State of Maryland.

A new order was issued, by consent of the President, authorizing the enlistment of slaves of rebels and of consenting loyal masters.

The final details of this novel recruiting business will be given

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[3] A much larger number of slaves had been received at the barracks, but the great majority, being non-combatants, had been transferred to other points.

in another chapter.

Catherine H. Birney.

THE OLD TUNE

With sad face turned aside, lest sudden comers see her weep,
She sits, her fingers softly trying, on the ivory keys,
To find a half-forgotten way – that memories
May soothe her yearning spirit into dreamful sleep.

And now the old tune rises, – trembles, – slowly stealing round
That empty room, where often in the other years
It sang its love and tenderness, and gathered tears
To eyes that weep no more, – ah, sweetest, hallowed sound!

Irene Putnam.

BOTH SIDES OF THE COUNTER

ALMOST A TRAGEDY

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Ethel Neverby,	*A Shopper.*
Mrs. Maud Sampelle,	*A Shopper.*
Mr. Newcome,	*A Salesman.*
A Chorus of Seven other Salesmen.	

Scene: —*The principal aisle of a fashionable shop. Mrs. Neverby and Mrs. Sampelle discovered sauntering along near a prominent counter strewn with rich woollen dress-goods. Mr. Newcome, as they pause for an instant, makes a dash forward toward the ladies: the seven other salesmen for a moment seek to restrain his ardor; but he refuses to be restrained, and instantly holds up to the gaze of the shoppers a piece of cloth with a most alluring air. They pause – halt – whilst the chorus, withdrawing, sing, in a low, melancholy voice —*

Chorus.

Poor Newcome!
Nay, we must not seek to prevent it;
If we should, he would only resent it:

Let us then be all silent anent it.
Let him say of his breath, "I have spent it;"
Of his patience, "Behold! I have lent it;"
Of his will, "Woe is me! they have bent it;"
Of his garment, "Aye, lo! I have rent it;
Because I believed that they meant it:
Meant to buy —
Heigh-o-heigh!
O – O – "

[Chorus retire and busy themselves with other remote customers and goods, keeping, however, a wary and observing eye fixed upon Newcome.

Newcome (*gushingly*). What can I show you this morning, ladies?

Ethel (*sweetly*). Oh, thank you, we are merely looking as we pass by.

Maude. Oh yes, that is all.

Newcome. It will do no harm to show you these goods, I am sure, ladies. These double-width, all-wool, imported French suitings, in all the latest shades, reduced, marked down only half an hour ago from two dollars and a half a yard to – one-fifty!

Ethel (*takes a step nearer to the counter*). That blue is lovely, isn't it, Maud?

Maud (*also taking a step counterward*). Yes, it is lovely.

Newcome. Is blue the color that you are looking for, madam?

Ethel. Oh, not specially.

Newcome. Now just allow me to show you these blues: ten different tones, – the navy, Marie-Louise, slate, Russian, Princess of Wales, robin's-egg, army, cobalt, indigo, steel, – all of them exquisite, and very fashionable!

[Brings down pieces of goods and displays them.

Maud. They are lovely.

Newcome. All at the same price, one dollar and fifty cents, reduced from two and a half only this morning.

Ethel. Why are they so low? (*Fingers goods*). Is there any imperfection?

Newcome (*ecstatically*). None in the world, madam – none in the world. They are just an importer's surplus stock that our buyer got at a tremendous reduction, and we are selling them at this absurd price merely to get rid of them before taking stock.

Maud (*eying the goods behind the counter on shelves*). Ethel, that gray is too sweet for anything; it would just match your chinchilla furs perfectly!

Ethel. So it would!

Newcome (*tossing aside the blues with a jubilant air*). Gray, did you say, madam? We have a line of grays not to be found anywhere else in the city; every possible tint and tone. Is it for yourself, madam?

[Gazing at Ethel as he moves heavy pile of grays from shelf to counter.

Ethel. Oh no; we are, as I told you, merely looking (*glances*

at Maud) for a friend.

[Chorus of clerics, softly and with a semi-sarcastic, semi-melancholic demeanor, advance and sing:

They are looking for a friend,
Who is ill, and cannot spend
Any strength, but must depend
On their offices, and send
For some samples that may tend
To assist her health to mend.
So their time they gladly lend
To so laudable an end
As is "looking for a friend."

[Chorus retire and again busy themselves with other customers.

Maud. Yes, an invalid lady who is unable to go out at all; we thought if we could take her some samples.

[Chorus groan weakly.

Newcome. Certainly, madam.

[Opens drawer and hands forth any number of packets of samples.

Ethel. Oh, how good you are! Thank you. Say, Maud, isn't that green, up there, the top of that left-hand pile, isn't it too lovely and chic for anything?

Maud. Perfect.

Newcome (*abandoning the search for more samples*). Green – did you say green, ladies?

Ethel. Oh, never mind!

Newcome (*struggling with the greens, which threaten to topple over on him*). No trouble at all, madam – none (*lands the greens successfully on the counter*). We have, as you see, a complete line of the greens – the most fashionable and stylish color of the season. Do be seated, madam, and just let me show you these unparalleled goods, one-fifty only a yard, reduced from two and a half, all-wool, warranted imported French dress material. We sell no domestic goods in this establishment.

Maud. We might look at them, dear.

[Approaches seat.

Ethel. Well (*approaches seat*) – I suppose we might; we promised her we would look at everything, you know, and report this afternoon.

Newcome (*displaying goods*). There, ladies! I am sure there is not to be found anywhere in the city, or indeed out of it, such a selection of greens; all tones and shades to suit every taste and complexion. Is it for yourself, may I ask, madam?

Maud. Oh no, no, no – for a friend.

Newcome. And what complexion is the lady, light or dark? We have tints to suit all.

Maud (*to Ethel*). Would you call her fair or dark, dear?

Ethel. Oh, dark, of course.

Maud. You would! Why, I thought she was just about my complexion.

Ethel. So she is, love, exactly.

Maud. Why, darling! I am not dark, surely; I am considered to be very, very fair for a person with such dark hair and eyes.

Ethel. Now, I would call you a perfect brunette, dear.

Maud. How funny! Why, I'm just exactly your complexion.

Ethel. Oh, my love, only reflect – my hair is yellow and my eyes are blue!

Maud. I know, dearest, but you have an olive skin.

Newcome (*who has been patiently holding up the greens at the risk of breaking his arms*). There, ladies! I am sure we have a selection of shades in these greens that must suit the most fastidious.

Ethel. They are beautiful!

[Sits.

Maud. Lovely!

[Sits.

Newcome (*warmly, and much encouraged by the ladies having taken seats*). Oh, I can always tell at a glance what will suit a customer. Now, what you desire is not the common grade of colorings, but something elegant and yet not conspicuous – like this new reed-green, for example.

[Holds up the goods.

Ethel. How sweet!

Maud. Isn't it?

Ethel. Do you really think she would like green?

Maud. I don't know; she is so particular, you know.

Ethel. Yes, I know. Didn't she – It seems to me she said something or other about brown – didn't she?

Maud. Why, yes, to be sure, I believe she did.

Newcome (*casting the greens into a reckless oblivion*). Brown? We have a selection in all the browns that is not to be found elsewhere, I am confident. (*Struggles with great pile of browns; grows warm with effort; pauses to mop his brow with handkerchief; finally brings down huge number of browns and lands them on counter*). Our – assortment – of – browns – is (*heaves a deep sigh*), I may say, unequalled.

Ethel. What a sweet shade that is!

Maud. Isn't it?

Ethel. Are these the same price as the others?

[Fingers the browns.

Newcome. Exactly the same, madam; one dollar and fifty cents a yard, reduced from two and a half; all-wool.

Maud. Are you sure they are all-wool? This piece feels rather harsh to me.

Newcome. Every thread, madam; that I will guarantee. We are not allowed to misrepresent anything in this establishment. You can see for yourself.

[Recklessly frays out a few inches of the brown.

Ethel (*also fingering goods*). Yes, they are all-wool; French, did you say?

Newcome. Every piece imported. We keep no domestic woollen goods whatever. We have no call for anything but the foreign goods.

Maud. How wide did you say?

Newcome. Double width, madam – forty-four inches.

Ethel. Five, seven – let me see, it would take about – how much do you usually sell for a costume?

Newcome (*with hilarity, holding up the browns*). From eight to ten yards, madam, according to the size of the lady. For your size I should say eight yards was an abundance – a great abundance.

Ethel. She is just about my size, isn't she, Maud?

Maud. Just about. It wouldn't take eight yards, I shouldn't think, of such wide goods made in Empire style.

Ethel. No, I suppose not; but then it's always nice to have a piece left over for new sleeves, you know.

Maud. Yes, that's so.

Newcome. An elegant shade, ladies, becoming to anyone, fair or dark. I am sure any lady must be pleased with a dress off of one of these – serviceable, stylish, the height of fashion.

Ethel. Is brown really so fashionable this season?

Newcome. I am sure we have sold a thousand yards of these browns to ten of any other color.

Maud. Is that so?

Ethel. I do wonder if she really would prefer brown. What do

you think, dear?

Maud. Well, it depends somewhat, I think, on how she is going to have it made.

Ethel. True. Well, I think she said in *directoire*.

Maud. Plain full skirt?

Ethel. Yes, smocked all around – no drapery at all.

Maud. Candidly, love, do you like a skirt without any drapery at all?

Ethel. Well, no, I can't say I do. Do you?

Maud. No. I like a little right in the back, you know – not too much. But I think a little takes off that dreadfully plain look. Don't you?

Ethel. Yes.

Maud. How are y – I mean how is she going to have the waist?

Ethel. I don't know. I heard her say that she was going to have a puff on the sleeve.

Maud. At the elbow?

Ethel. No, at the shoulder.

Maud. And revers, I suppose.

Ethel. Yes, those stylish broad ones.

Maud. Of velvet?

Ethel. Velvet or plush.

Newcome (*who has been manfully holding the browns up above his head, permits them to gently descend*). We have a full line in plushes and velvets, ladies, to match all these shades.

Maud. How nice!

Ethel. So convenient!

Newcome (*mildly*). Do you think you'll decide on the brown, madam?

Ethel. Oh, dear! I don't know. It is so hard to shop for some one else!

Maud. It is horrid.

Ethel. I vow every time I do it that it shall be the last. I am always so afraid of getting something that the person won't like.

[Sighs.

Newcome. Any lady must like this brown, madam. Just feel the texture of this piece of goods, and take the trouble to examine the quality. Why, I have never in all my experience sold a piece of goods of such a class at a cent less than two dollars a yard – never.

Maud. It is very fine.

Ethel (*vaguely eying the goods behind the counter on the shelves*). Is that a piece of claret-colored that I see up there?

Newcome (*lays down the browns with a faint sigh of reluctance*). Yes, oh, yes.

Ethel. Never mind to get it down.

Newcome. No trouble in the world to show anything; that's what I am here for. (*Sighs as he attains the clarets and fetches them to the counter.*) Rich shades; ten tints in these also, calculated to suit any taste.

Maud. I always did like claret.

Ethel. Yes, it is so becoming.

Maud. It has such a warm look, too!

Ethel. Now, that – no, this one – no, please, that darker piece – yes. Maud, dear, that made up with plush and garnet buttons and buckles – Oh, did I tell you I saw some such lovely garnet trimmings at Blank's last week, only seventy-five cents a yard, just a perfect match for this. Wouldn't it be too lovely for anything?

Maud. Indeed it would. I am almost tempted myself. Claret is my color, you know.

Newcome. A splendid shade, madam, and only just two dress lengths left.

Ethel. Is this the same goods as the others?

Newcome. The very same; all-wool imported suitings, forty-four inches wide, reduced from two-fifty a yard to only one dollar and a half.

Maud. Wouldn't that be just perfect with that white muff and boa of mine, dearest?

Ethel. Too startling, love. Do you know, I think you made a mistake in getting that white set.

Maud. Why?

Ethel. Too striking.

Maud. Do you think so?

Ethel. Yes. Of course it's lovely for the theatre and opera.

Maud. It's awfully becoming.

Ethel (*to Newcome*). Now, do you really sell as much claret color as you do green or brown this season?

Newcome. Oh yes, madam; if anything, more. You see claret is one of the standards, becoming alike to young and old. Why, a child might wear this shade. Claret will always hold its own; there is a change in the blues and the greens and the browns, but the claret is always elegant, and very stylish.

Maud. I think so too.

Ethel (*meditatively*). I do wonder if she would like claret better than brown.

Newcome. I can show you the browns again, ladies.

Ethel. Oh, never mind.

Newcome. No trouble in the world. (*Holds up browns and clarets both.*) Now you can judge of the two by contrast.

Maud. Both lovely.

Ethel. Which do you like best, love?

Maud. My dear, I don't know.

Newcome. You can't go amiss, madam, with either of those, I am sure. Any lady must like either of them.

Ethel. Oh, dear! I wish people would get well and do their own shopping; it is so trying!

Maud. Horrid!

Newcome. An elegant piece of goods, madam; will wear like iron.

Ethel. What would you do, dear?

Maud. I really don't know what to say. When does she want to wear it?

Ethel. Dinner and theatre.

Maud. By gaslight, then?

Ethel. Yes, of course.

Maud. Does the gaslight change the shade much?

Newcome. Just a trifle, madam; it makes it richer.

Maud. Darker?

Newcome. Just a half a tone.

Ethel. Then that must be considered. Oh, dear!

[Sighs plaintively.

Maud. Why not look at it by gaslight, love?

Ethel. Oh, I hate to give so much trouble!

Newcome. No trouble in the world, madam – a pleasure. I will gladly show you these goods by gaslight, for I am confident you will only admire them the more. Here, boy (*calls boy, and hands him a pile of goods*), take these to the gaslight-room. This way ladies, please. (*They cross the aisle and enter the gaslight-room, preceded by the boy, who sets down the goods and retires.*) There! look at that! Isn't that a rich, warm, beautiful color!

[Displays clarets.

Maud. Lovely!

Ethel. Yes, lovely – but (*dubiously*) I am so afraid she won't like it.

Maud. It is very perplexing.

Ethel. Yes. Oh, how sweet those browns do look in this light! Don't they?

Newcome. Ah, I just brought over the browns, madam, for I

thought you might care to see them too.

[Displays browns.

Maud. How they do light up! Don't they?

Newcome. Newest tints, every one of them. Not been in stock over a few weeks, and those browns have sold like wildfire.

Ethel. For my own part I always did like brown.

Maud. Yes, so do I.

Ethel. It's so ladylike.

Maud. Yes, and it's a color that is suitable to almost any occasion.

Ethel. Yes. Now that lightest piece would be just too sweet, wouldn't it, made up with that new Persian trimming?

Maud. Exquisite! Say, do you know I priced some of that trimming the other day.

Ethel. Did you? how much?

Maud. Awfully expensive! Five dollars a yard.

Ethel. How wide?

Maud. Oh, not more than four inches.

Ethel. It wouldn't take much, would it?

Maud. That depends on where you put it.

Ethel. Well, just on the bodice and sleeves and collar.

Maud. About two yards and a half.

Ethel. Fifteen dollars?

Maud. Yes.

Newcome. This brown trimmed in the manner you mention, ladies, would be very elegant.

Maud. Yes, so it would. I wish now that I had looked more particularly at the browns out by the daylight.

Newcome. It is easy to look at them again, madam, I am sure. Here, boy, carry these goods back to the counter where you got them. (*Boy crosses, laden with goods; Newcome and ladies follow.*) That's it. (*Boy retires.*) Now, madam, just look at that shade by this light. Isn't that perfect?

Ethel. Yes, it's lovely, but —

Maud. Did she say she wished a brown especially, dear?

Ethel. No, she left it to me entirely.

Maud. How trying!

Ethel. Yes. I – I really, you know. I don't dare to take the responsibility; would you?

[Newcome's arms falter slightly in upholding the goods.

Maud. Frankly, my love, I think shopping for anyone else is something dreadful.

Ethel. It is so trying and so embarrassing. I don't dare really to get either (*Newcome's arms fall helpless; he sighs*) one of them.

Maud. They are lovely, though; aren't they?

Ethel. Yes, if (*Newcome revives a little*) I thought she would really be satisfied.

[He essays once again to hold up the browns.

Maud. But, dear, they never are.

[His arms again droop.

Ethel. No, never. No matter how much trouble you take, or

what pains you are (*he sighs feebly*) at (*he totters*), they are so ungrateful.

Maud. Yes, always.

Ethel. Well, I believe we can't venture to decide this morning (*he staggers*) about the shade. We will very likely return to-morrow.

[He raises a weakly deprecating hand.

Maud (*aside, as the two ladies are going*). Well, we got off quite nicely.

Ethel. Yes, didn't we! I wouldn't be seen in either of those horrid things; would you?

Maud. No.

[Newcome falls to the earth with a groan of despair; the Chorus rush forward and gently raise him in their arms. As they bear him off, they sing, in a doleful and yet half-malicious fashion:

Chorus.

Poor Newcome!
You are not the first man they have ended,
And left on the cold ground extended;
Or to whom they have sweetly pretended,
On whose taste they have weakly depended; —
Whom they've left on the cold ground extended,
Minus money they never expended,
On goods that they never intended

To buy,
Heigh-o, heigh,
O – O – !

[*They retreat*, C., *as the ladies exeunt*, R., L. *Music pianissimo as curtain falls.*
Fannie Aymar Mathews.

IRISH NORAH TO ENGLISH JOHN

(Her theory of Home Rule under the Union.)

"It manes, and shure and where's the harm?"
Said Nora to her spouse;
"It manes: if you must mind yer farm,
That I shall mind me house."

BELLA'S BUREAU. [4]
A STORY IN THREE SCARES

SCARE THE FIRST

I almost flung myself into Dick Vandeleur's arms when he entered my library that evening.

"Can you imagine why I sent for you in such a deuce of a hurry?" I blurted out, embracing him effusively in my pleasure at seeing him.

"Well, I did think there might have been a woman in the case," he drawled, in his deliberate way, stopping to adjust his neck-tie, which had worked its way over his ear during the struggle. "But then, as I happened to have acted as your best man only two months ago, when you married the most charming of women, why, b'Jove, I – "

"Well, it is a woman," I groaned, cutting his speech short.

"The devil!"

"Yes, and the very worst kind, I fancy, if thoroughly aroused."

"But, my deah boy, with such a wife it's – it's – it's – "

"Yes, it's all that and a good deal more," I growled, gloomily. "Don't add to my misery with your ill-timed reproaches. Richard,

[4] The rights of dramatization of this story are reserved by the author.

a back number of my unsavory career has turned up to deprive me of my appetite and blight my being. You remember Bella Bracebridge, of the nimble toes, at whose shrine I worshipped so long and so idiotically? Well, I received a letter from her only yesterday."

"No!" – incredulously.

"Yes."

"What! – little Bella who used to caper around in such airy garments at the Alhambra?"

"The very same. I only wish I could be mistaken," with a despairing groan. "It seems she married money and retired from the stage. By some means she disposed of her husband, and is now a rich and probably good-looking widow. She has purchased an estate within half a mile of here, and is going in heavy for style. She wants to make me the stepping-stone to social success; she sighs for the purple penetralia of the plutocracy. See what a predicament I am in! To introduce her in this house would plant the most unjust suspicions in Ethel's Vassarian mind, while her mother, Mrs. McGoozle, might institute awkward inquiries into the dear, dead past" – with a shiver of anticipation. "Now, my dear Vandeleur, that woman means mischief. She has got about a hundred of my letters breathing the most devoted love: if dear Ethel got a glimpse of a line she would go into hysterics. Bella has hinted, even politely threatened, that unless I show her some attention, which means introducing her to my wife's circle of friends, she will publish those letters to the world or send them to

the dramatic papers. Now you must help me out of this scrape."

"Delighted to be of any service, I'm sure," tapping his boots impatiently with a jaunty little cane. "But, really, you know, I don't see – "

"Why, it's easy enough. Don't you remember we were once the pride of the school because we robbed watermelon patches so skilfully? What a narrow shave that was in the apple orchard the night before commencement, when you – "

"Yes, yes, I remember, deah boy; but what have those childish pranks got to do with the present case? We don't want to rob an apple orchard" – by way of mild protest.

"It is another kind of fruit that we are after – the fruit of youthful follies. Here," opening a cupboard and throwing out two pairs of overalls somewhat the worse for paint, two jumpers ditto, and several muddy overshoes, "Vandeleur, if you love me put these things on."

I fancy I can see him now adjust his glass and survey me with bulging eyes. I certainly did have nerve to ask that famous clubman, so irreproachable in his dress, to assume such inartistic and plebeian garments.

It took a great deal of palavering before I could persuade him that I was lost unless he consented. How he grunted as he reluctantly laid aside his silk-lined white kersey coat and evening dress, and tried to put on the overalls with one hand while he held his aristocratic aquiline nose with the other.

"Really, I hope I shan't be found dead in these togs," he

remarked ruefully, as he surveyed himself in the glass. "What would Flossy say? and how the chaps at the Argentine would wonder what I'd been up to!"

I cut short his speculations by thrusting a soft slouched hat on his head and dragging it down over his eyes.

"There now!" I said, standing off and contemplating him critically and admiringly; "you have no idea, my boy, how becoming this costume is. One might imagine you had been born a stevedore."

He looked rather sour at this doubtful compliment, and hitching up his baggy trousers, asked, "Well, what is the next misery?"

"It is twelve o'clock," I said, referring to my watch. "My wife has gone to bed. Like Claude Duval, we will take to the road."

After a stiff libation of brandy and soda we stole softly downstairs and found ourselves in front of the house. Only one light glimmered in the black pile, where Ethel was going to bed.

"Where away?" asked Vandeleur, as I turned the path.

"To storm Bella's bureau," I cried, leading the way through the dark.

SCARE THE SECOND

With much difficulty we found ourselves at last in the spacious grounds of Bella's estate. I had laid my plans carefully the day before, and there seemed no possibility that they would miscarry. By liberal fees I had learned from her butler that she was to spend that night in New York with a friend, and for a further consideration he offered to leave one of the drawing-room windows open so that we should have a clear field.

Everything seemed to be working beautifully, and I already felt the coveted letters in my grasp. We found the French window ajar, and with tremulous hearts stepped over the sill and into the room. After several collisions with the furniture, of which there seemed to be what we thought an unnecessary amount, we finally scraped our way into the hall.

Here was a quandary. We were in a hall, but what hall? Whether the stairs led in the right direction there was no one present to consult. We walked or rather crawled up them, nevertheless. I tried the first door on the landing, and was rewarded with "Is that you?" by a female voice that sent us scuttling along the passage in undignified haste.

Well, at last, after many narrow escapes from breaking our necks, we reached Bella's room. I knew it the moment I saw the closet full of shoes. Bella was always proud of her feet, and had, I believe, a pair of boots for every hour of the day.

To make things even more sure that I had arrived at the chaste temple of my former flame, there was the famous bureau of ebony inlaid with ivory – that bureau which contained enough of my inflammatory letters to reduce it to cinders.

"Can you regard that bureau with equanimity?" I exclaimed, unconsciously assuming a dramatic attitude. "Does it not recall your vanished youth – the red horizon of your adolescence? Ah," I cried, overcome by the sight of that familiar bit of furniture, "how often have I slid a piece of jewelry into that top drawer as a surprise for Bella! Her delighted shriek which followed the discovery rings in my ears even now. Oh, halcyon days of happy holiday, mine no more, can a lifetime with a funded houri wholly fill your place?"

"That's all very well," cried Vandeleur, who can assume a disgustingly practical tone when he wants to. "While you are rhapsodizing here over your poetical past, some stalwart menial may arrive with a blunderbuss, and fill our several and symmetrical persons with No. 2 buckshot. Perhaps Bella may have missed her train or her friend. She might return here at any moment and surprise us" – looking around him uneasily.

"Anybody would think that you had never been in a boudoir at this time of night," I retort savagely.

I begin to pull out the drawers of the bureau, breaking locks in the most reckless way, and tossing the contents of these dainty receptacles about in the most utter confusion. Vandeleur, with his eyeglass adjusted, is poking into everything in the closet as if

he were looking for a mouse, only pausing now and then to glare around with an apprehensive shiver.

"Dear me," I soliloquize, while the contents of those bureau drawers are tossed here and there in the fever of my search. "How everything here reminds me of the past! She has even preserved the menu card of that memorable dinner at Torloni's; and here – here is a lock of brown hair tied with a pink ribbon! I really believe it must be mine!"

"My deah boy," howls Vandeleur, shaking me by the arm vigorously, "will you cut short your soliloquy? Is this a time for poetry, when we might get ten years if we were found burglarizing this house?"

I pay no attention.

"And here is the steel buckle from her shoe that fell off the night we danced together at the French ball. Poor dear Bella! that was not the only dance we led where folly played the fiddle!" – with a thrill of reminiscence.

"If you don't find those letters in just two minutes," interrupts the dreadful Vandeleur, "I shall post for home."

"In one second, my boy – one second."

Now I examine the bureau carefully for a concealed drawer. I seem to have ransacked every corner of that precious article in vain. Visions of Bella's vengeance flash before my eyes. I can see the demoniac smile on her face as she gloats over my downfall. The white wraith conjured up by the thought of those fateful letters fills me with a mad fury, and I long to dash that hateful

bureau into a thousand pieces and flee the house.

But the demolition could not be executed noiselessly, and the situation is perilous enough already for a man of my delicately organized constitution, with a heart that runs down with a rumble like a Waterbury movement; so I think I won't break the bureau.

I renew my mad search for the missing drawer, that seems to be of a most retiring disposition, as drawers go. I bethink me of stories of missing treasure: how the hero counted off twenty paces across the floor, and then dropped his dagger so that its blade would be imbedded in the wood, and then dug through several tons of masonry, until he found a casket, sometimes of steel, sometimes of iron, and sometimes of both.

And then he did a lot more mathematical calculating, and pressed a knob, and there you are! Ah! a thought – I had forgotten to apply myself to the moulding of the bureau, as a hero of the middle ages would have done under the circumstances.

I begin from side to side, up, down, and around. Ha! ha! at last! A little drawer shoots out almost in my face, startling me like a jack-in-the-box.

A faint perfume of crushed violets salutes my nostrils. The letters – they are there in the bottom of the drawer! I know them too well by the shape of the square large envelopes. They cost me many a dollar to send through the stage-door by the gouty Cerberus at the gate when Bella trod the boards.

I reach out my hand to seize them, when an awful scream causes me to stagger back in dismay.

Bella Bracebridge, in a jaunty travelling dress, stands in the doorway in the attitude of a tragic queen – her eyes flashing, her bosom heaving, just as she looked the day she asked for a raise in salary and didn't get it.

She steps towards me: I retreat, transfixed by her defiant attitude. She fear a common burglar? Never!

I know she intends to seize me and scream for help, and I am afraid, too, that she may recognize my face. So I step back – back, edging towards the window.

She reaches out her hand to seize me, then totters and falls in a dead faint.

I look around for Vandeleur. He has lost all presence of mind; is staring at the figure on the floor, with wild, dilated eyes, and an expression of hopeless idiocy on his face. I can hear people moving below stairs. Her scream must have aroused the house. "Vandeleur," shaking him by the arm, "we must run for it. Do you understand? Ten years! Hard labor!" – the last words hissed excitedly in his ear.

"What? where? who?" he mumbles, with a face as expressive as that of codfish.

I rush to the balcony to see if we can make the jump below. It is dark, but the leap must be made. Better a broken leg than a ball and chain on a healthy limb for years and years.

I drag Vandeleur in a helpless condition out on the balcony, boost him up on the railing, and push him off. Then I leap after him.

Fortunate fate! We fall into a clump of blackberry bushes, and not a moment too soon. Lights flash out from above. I hear the hum of excited voices, Bella's calm and distinct above the rest, as she gives the ominous order, "Let those bloodhounds loose!"

Ugh! We scramble out of the bushes in the most undignified haste, leaving most of our outward resemblance to human beings on the thorny twigs. Then helter-skelter over the fields and hedges, stumbling, staggering, and traversing what I suppose to be miles of country.

Vandeleur is snorting like a steam calliope in bad repair, and I am breathing with the jerky movement of an overworked accordion. "I can go no farther," he exclaims, dropping down in a huddled heap at the foot of a scrubby pine-tree like a bag of old clothes.

I don't feel much in a hurry either, but I try to infuse some life into him by hustling him and shaking him in a brutal and unsympathetic manner.

"Do you hear that?" I howl in despair as the baying of the bloodhounds rolls towards us over the meadow like muttered thunder. "There is nothing to do but climb this tree, unless you want to furnish a free lunch for those brutes."

"Free lunch? get me some," he mumbles, relapsing into his old idiotic state again. Then I fall upon that unfortunate man in a fury of rage, and pound him into a consciousness of his danger.

He consents at last to be pushed or rather dragged up in a tree, whose lowest limb I straddle with a feeling of wild joy and

ecstasy just as the hounds rush past below, their flashing eyes looking to me just then as large as the headlights of a host of engines.

"Let's go home now," again murmurs the helpless creature at my side, shaking so on the limb that I am compelled to strap him there by his suspenders.

"Ain't we going home?" he chatters. "I want a good supper, and then a bed —*bed*," lingering on the last word with soothing emphasis.

"Oh, you'd like a nice supper, would you?" I growl. "Well, those bloodhounds are after the same thing. Perhaps you had better slide down the tree and interview them on the chances. Then one or the other of you would be satisfied."

"But they've gone away."

"Well, you needn't think you have been forgotten, just the same. Don't you see, wretched man, that the morning is breaking," pointing to the east, where the sun had begun "paintin' 'er red." "Once in the high road we should be discovered at once; here at least we are safe – uncomfortably safe," as I moved across the limb and impaled myself on a long two-inch splinter with spurs on it.

He fell into a doze after that, only rousing himself now and then to utter strange croaking sounds that frightened me almost as much as the baying of the bloodhounds. I think I fell asleep too for a few moments, for when I was roused by an awful yell proceeding from my companion I found that he had burst his

bonds and fallen out of the tree, while the bright sun was shining in my eyes.

Visions of Ethel's face over our charming breakfast-table rose before me, and I seemed to scent afar off the steam of fragrant mocha in a dainty Sèvres cup as she held it towards me. The thought of that morning libation settled the business.

I would march stalwartly home – yea, though a thousand bloodhounds with dangerous appetites barred my way!

I slid down the tree and found Vandeleur still asleep. I don't believe that even the fall had waked the poor fellow up.

I had only to whisper the word "Breakfast" in his ears to have him start as if he had received a galvanic shock.

"Where?" he asked, with tears in his eyes.

"Home."

We crawled along through the bushes in the wildest haste our poor disjointed and almost dismembered bodies would carry us; like a pair of mud-turtles who had seen better days did we take to all-fours.

Fortunately, my place was not far away, and we had just strength enough to crawl up on the porch and fall against the door heavily.

"Breakfast," I gasped, as Ethel's lovely face appeared suddenly at my side like a benignant angel's.

"What – what can I get you?" murmured the dear girl, in an agony of mind, hurrying here and there, her eyes suffused with tears.

"Bloodhounds!" murmured Vandeleur, relapsing into idiocy.

SCARE THE THIRD

If you have ever had the fortune to be married to a Vassar graduate of the gushing and kittenish order, between nineteen and twenty, you will understand how difficult it was to explain my dilapidated appearance that memorable morning.

The ingenuity of my fabrications would have stocked a popular romance writer with all the modern conveniences; and I am sure the recording angel must have had difficulty in keeping pace with my transgressions unless he or she understood short-hand.

Vandeleur took an early opportunity to escape to the city, knowing very well that he would be held accountable for my degraded and dilapidated condition. The friends of a married man always are held responsible by his wife for any of his moral lapses, no matter when or where they may occur.

If I had only succeeded in my undertaking I might have viewed even my wounds – of which there were many – with some equanimity. But to have suffered in vain was enough to try the strongest soul; and I am afraid I was unnecessarily brusque to Ethel when she insisted on soaking me hourly in the most horrible liniments of her mother's decoction. I was pickled for about a week by her fair hands, and had become so impregnated with camphor and aromatic compounds that I exhaled spices like an Eastern mummy or a shopworn sachet-bag, and longed to

get away from myself and the drugstore smell that clung to me closer than I ever want my brother to cling. I consented to the embalming process, because I wanted to look respectable when Ethel's mother, Mrs. McGoozle, put in an appearance. I knew I could not so easily satisfy her mind regarding that night of folly without the sworn affidavits of half-a-dozen reputable citizens. She said I wrote so much fiction that it had become a habit with me never to tell the truth.

My eyes had just begun to lay aside mourning when I received at the dinner-table one stormy night the local paper. I took it for my wife, who had a penchant for reading the patent-medicine advertisements; but on the present occasion I displayed an unholy eagerness to get at its contents. More misery! More horrible complications!

Almost the entire sheet was given up to a description of the burglary. There was a picture of Bella's house and of Bella herself; of the cook, of the coachman – yes, and even of the bloodhounds.

I had puzzled my brain since that night in trying to imagine why the hounds had sped past our tree, our noble tree, instead of gathering in convention at its base and talking the matter over among themselves while we starved to death upstairs. The paper gave the solution of the problem. They were pursuing the trail that led to our milkman's farm – the poor creature of whom I had basely borrowed our suits and overshoes.

The worthy man had been arrested and haled before the

nearest justice of the peace, and had he not been able to prove an *alibi* to the effect that he was watering his cows at the time, he would have been summarily dealt with.

But he had held his peace about my share in the transaction – bless him! and being a thrifty man, had brought a suit against Bella for threatening his life with her dogs.

Yet I had no cause for congratulation, for now I was in the milkman's power as well as Bella's; and the very next day the honest fellow put in an appearance, very humble and yet very decided, and insisted that I should present him with Ethel's prize Frisian cow as a premium on his silence.

And I had to consent, though my wife had hysterics in parting with the animal, and sobbed out her determination to tell Mrs. McGoozle everything when that lady arrived in a few days.

This may not sound very terrible to you, but I knew the dreadful import of her words.

There was a flash of light through the gloom of my suicidal thoughts the next morning that made my heart beat high with hope.

I read in the morning paper that Bella, the cause of all my trouble, was dead, and that there was to be a sale of her effects at a New York auction-room the next day.

Of course that dreadful bureau was in the lot, and I knew that if it fell into unscrupulous hands there was enough material in that little drawer to stock a blackmailing establishment for years and years.

I took the first train for the city on the day of the sale. The bureau – Bella's bureau – was just being put up as I entered the place.

I had a thousand dollars in my pocket, so I felt rather contented in mind. The bidding on the bureau began in a discouraging way. The hunger of the crowd had been appeased before I came, and they displayed a lukewarm interest in the bureau. I bid two hundred dollars finally to settle the argument. I was tired of the delay. I wanted to settle forever the incubus that preyed upon my spirits. "Two hundred," I cried exultantly.

"Three hundred dollars," came in quiet tones from the corner of the room. The words seem to ripple in an icy stream down the back of my neck. Could it have been the echo of my voice that I heard?

"Four hundred," I cried uneasily. The terrible thought flashed over me, that perhaps another lover had turned up, who believed that his letters were in the bureau, and was just as anxious to get it as I. Horrible!

"Four hundred is bid for this beautiful Louis Fourteenth bureau," howled the auctioneer, repeating my bid. "Why, gents, this is a shame: it's – "

"Five hundred," said the voice from the corner, in calm, cold tones.

Ah, if I could slip through the crowd and throttle his utterance forever.

"Six hundred," I screamed, in desperation.

Then my unseen foe woke up and we began to bid in earnest. Six, seven, eight hundred, ran the bids.

In one of the lulls of the storm, when the auctioneer began to wax loquacious regarding the beauties of that bureau, I slipped secretly around to the cashier's desk.

Would he take a check? I implored. No, he would not; and I thought he wore a triumphant glitter in his fishy eyes. The terms of the sale were cash: it was to conclude that day. I turned away, sick at heart.

"A thousand!" I cried, in desperation, staking my last dollar. There was a moment's ominous silence. I began to feel encouraged. I watched the fateful gavel poised in the air, with my heart in my teeth. It wavered a moment, then began to slowly descend. Never had I seen such a graceful gesture defined by man as the freckled fist of the auctioneer described at that moment of hope.

"Twelve hundred," croaked the demon in the corner.

The crowd blended into a pulp of color. I fainted.

I lingered about the city all that night, searching in vain for a lethean draught at the haunts where consolation is retailed at two hundred per cent profit. I did not find the nepenthe I sought for anywhere on draught, so I went home in disgust.

Ethel received me in her usually effusive manner. She knows I object to being hugged at all hours of the day, yet I have never been able to cure her of that affection-garroting process so much in vogue with young wives of the gushing order.

"What do you think?" she chirped, when I had staggered to a chair in a half-strangled condition. "Dear mother has just sent us the most beautiful present – "

"Oh, I suppose so," I sneer savagely. "She generally does present us with something beautifully useless. Perhaps this time it's a dancing-bear, or a tame codfish" – with a wild laugh.

"Oh, how can you talk so!" lifting a dab of cambric to her nose with a preliminary sniff that is generally the signal of tears, according to our matrimonial barometer. "You know dear mother is so fond of you."

"Well, it's a case of misplaced affection," I growl, lounging out of the room just in time to avoid the rising storm.

I dash upstairs and smoke a cigar in my own room. Then I feel better, and stroll into Ethel's boudoir, resolved to pitch her mother's present in the fire if it doesn't suit me. She ought to be suppressed in this particular. "Wha – what! No – yes, it is!" The bureau, Bella's bureau, stands in the chaste confines of Ethel's satin-lined nest. I fling myself upon it, tear the little drawer open – hurl the bundle of letters into the grate with a cackling laugh.

Ethel enters timidly just then, and looks first at me and then at the burning papers with doubt and wonderment in her blue eyes.

"I have been paying some old debts," I say, with an uneasy laugh. "These are some of the I.O.U.'s you see burning."

She lays a soft little arm around my neck and a curly head on my immaculate shirt-front. Oh, spotless mask for such a darksome heart! I wonder she cannot catch the sound of its

wicked beating.

"I have been worried about you lately, dear," she whispers, with a tender tremor in her voice. "I thought perhaps you might – you might – have become entangled with some other – other – " Then she burst into tears.

"How often must I tell you, darling," patting her cheek softly, "that you are the only woman I ever loved?"

"Oh, Jack!"

Ernest De Lancey Pierson.

A SHOT ON THE MOUNTAIN

An eagle drifting to the skies
To gild her wing in sunset dies,
To float into the golden,
To swing and sway in broad-winged might,
To toss and heel in free-born right,
High o'er the gray crags olden.

A dark bird reaching on aloft,
Till far adown her rugged croft
Lies limned in misty tracing —
Till, riding on in easy pride,
Her cloud-wet wings are ruby pied,
Are meshed in amber lacing.

An eagle dropping to her cave
On dizzy wing through riven air,
A bolt from heaven slanted;
A startled mother, arrow-winged,
A mountain copestone, vapor-ringed,
An eyry danger-haunted.

An eagle slanting from the skies
To stain her breast in crimson dyes
Beneath the gilt and golden;

A shred of smoke – the gray lead's might —
A folded wing – the dead bird's right —
Abreast the gray crags olden.

The blush light fades along the west,
The night mist rolls to crag, to crest,
To cowl the ghostly mountain;
Black shadows hush the eyry's calls;
Below, a broad brown pinion falls —
The last light from the fountain.

J. W. Rumple.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

PURIFYING THE POLLS BY LAW

The edifying efforts made by Congress to throw guards about the ballot would be encouraging were they based on a little knowledge of the fact, and the reason for it. As it is, the *be-it-enacted* agreed on is little better than a solemn protest. Our learned law-makers would enjoy greater progress if they would remember that we have had for a century all the law necessary to punish such corruption, and that the trouble lies in our inability to enforce its provisions.

What is really wanted is a tribunal to try and enforce the stringent enactments already in existence. This does not now exist. When a candidate for Congress corruptly purchases enough votes to secure his return to either House, he knows that such Chamber, being the judge of such applicant's qualifications, forms a court without a judge to give the law or an impartial jury to render a verdict. The Committee on Elections in either House is made up of the Democratic or Republican party, and so the jury is packed in advance.

This is not, however, the only evil feature in the business. There is probably no organized body so ill-fitted for adjudication upon any subject as Congress. Returned to place by parties, the

members are necessarily partisans. Their tenure of office is so brief that they have no time in which to learn their legitimate duties through experience, and these duties are so numerous, to say nothing of being encroached upon by services entirely foreign to their positions, that they have no opportunities for study. The consideration then of any subject from a judicial point of view is simply impossible. It is "touch and go" with them, and the *touch*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.