

Wilkins W. A.

**The Cleverdale Mystery: or, The
Machine and Its Wheels: A
Story of American Life**



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«Public Domain»

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PREFACE

In presenting this volume to the public, the author hopes to impart information to some; reflect their own character to others; possibly point a moral, and by the tale interest the reader.

The warp of the fabric is reality, the woof fiction, the coloring domestic.

Awaiting the verdict,

Respectfully,

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I. BEAUTIFUL LAKE GEORGE

The world is full of charming spots that seem to be the original site of Paradise, but none show more perfectly the grace and grandeur of the Creator's handiwork than Lake George. Its limpid waters reflect the outlines of numerous islands – one for each calendar day of the year, yet each possessing beauties distinctly its own. The mirror of the lake's surface is framed by mountains of varying shape and size, yet each with special charms, while between them nestle lovely valleys, over which the eye never tires of roaming. In summer, every isle, hill, and valley is glorious with verdure; in winter they are dazzling in snowy vesture; but no matter what the season or condition, the lake and its surroundings are a constant source of delight to those who are fortunate enough to dwell on its shore.

It is to the credit of humanity that Lake George is a favorite place of resort during the summer, and that hundreds of families delight in building permanent summer homes there. Beautiful villas, picturesque hotels, tasteful cottages, unique cabins, and snowy tents abound on the water's marge, and pleasure boats of all sorts dance gaily on its waves. The vulgar, the dissipated, and stupid classes that haunt summer resorts seem to avoid Lake George; even humanity seems to endeavor to be in keeping with its surroundings at this beautiful retreat, and fair women, robust, active men, and healthy children are the rule at this modern Eden.

On the forward deck of a steamer that ploughed its way through the crystal waters on a bright summer day in 187– was a small party, consisting of Hon. Darius Hamblin, Mrs. Hamblin, Miss Belle Hamblin, and two little boys, George and Willie, aged respectively ten and six, with their nurse.

The Hon. Darius, a man of fifty-five, had served his district as New York State Senator at Albany for two terms. He possessed excellent judgment, and knew this so well that no one could help seeing that he was vain and inclined to be arbitrary in his manner. Mrs. Hamblin was a small, brown-haired lady, with whom time had dealt so gently that the unwelcome and indelible lines of approaching age had been sparingly distributed across a sweet and placid countenance.

Devoting her whole attention to the wants and pleasures of her children, she was not merely a kind mother, for with dignity and power she held the reins firmly in her grasp, although the high-spirited boys tightly champed the bits.

While the mother, as she sat on the steamer's deck, was all attention to her youthful treasures, the father discussed the politics and finances of the country with several gentlemen whom he chanced to meet. Thoroughly engrossed in conversation, he scarce noticed his daughter Belle, who, affectionately taking his arm, called attention to a landing the steamer was about to make.

As the boat drew in, there was seen a gathering bevy of males and females. Small row-boats hovered near the little coves surrounding the dock, and as great waves from the *Horicon's* paddles dashed their snow-crested tops upon the rocks, the little craft danced upon the water, some girlish voices uttering exclamations of fear for their owners' safety. Several persons leaving the steamer were quickly surrounded by friends gathered to meet them.

In a moment the captain cried, "All aboard!" The engine resuming its work, the paddle-wheels lashed the water, many little boats shooting out into the swell. Those on the steamer eagerly watched the merry throng on the dock or the still happier ones rocked by the "rollies."

"Oh, papa," exclaimed Belle, "this is delightful! See that party on the little island – isn't it a funny sight? See that gentleman shaking a frying-pan over his head! See the other campers washing dishes in the lake! Oh, how I shall enjoy this month! We are to stop at the next landing, and in ten minutes will leave the boat. Oh, isn't it delightful!"

The father rising took his daughter by the arm, his manner indicating unbounded love and parental pride. Belle Hamblin was a beautiful girl scarcely nineteen years of age. Of medium height,

she possessed a faultless form combining exquisite symmetry and grace. Full of animation when speaking, her tender blue eyes flashed intelligence and goodness, captivating every one who came within their reach.

She completely won the admiration of those on the boat by the tender and sympathetic way in which she ministered to a poor woman accompanied by four children, giving to the little ones from her lunch-basket oranges, bananas, and cakes, while the mother was offered more substantial food in the way of sandwiches. Tender-hearted and kind when Willie injured his wee finger, she worked over the wound, hugged the curly-headed boy to her heart, stilling his cries with sisterly caresses. Belle Hamblin was no ordinary character, for God had wrought those lovely attributes into her nature which cannot fail to command respect and admiration. She could not avoid being a prominent figure in any life picture of which she was part, for to her mother's instinctive quality of love was added the natural intelligence of her father. Possessing a pride in striking contrast with that so positive in her father's character, she readily assumed her natural position as leader in social circles. Endowed with a liberal education, taught the economies of life, and instructed in the art of housekeeping, she was fitted to be queen of the kitchen or the enchantress of the drawing-room.

The boat nearing the beautiful retreat where the Hamblins were to sojourn, wraps, baskets, and umbrellas were gathered up while Mr. Hamblin was taking leave of his friends. The *Horicon* slowly approached the dock close at hand; the party passed through the cabin to the gangway; lines were thrown ashore and the steamer made fast. Mr. Hamblin led the way, the children, wild as young colts, jumping in gleeful anticipation. About thirty persons crowded to the gangway, a rush was made for shore, when suddenly the piercing shriek of a female startled the bystanders, as a little boy fell headlong into the lake.

"Willie is overboard! Save him!" The voice was that of Belle Hamblin.

Rushing wildly to the edge of the gangway and seeing the little fellow sink into the water, she was nearly frantic with excitement. Mr. and Mrs. Hamblin were filled with terror, while those standing on shore appeared as if paralyzed. Suddenly a blue-shirted man darted through the crowd, and throwing himself into the lake, seized Willie, and a moment later placed him in the arms of the sister.

Belle, looking into his face, quickly exclaimed:

"Mr. Alden! I did not expect to see you here, but God bless you for saving the life of our treasure."

The curly-headed boy, with water dripping from his locks, lay in his sister's arms. Gasping and moving his head, the water running from his nostrils and mouth, he was carried to the family parlor at the hotel, where a physician soon restored him to his normal condition, and then the family, recovering from their fatigue and fright, appeared on the grounds, their exciting introduction and acknowledged social and political standing making them the observed of all.

Mr. Hamblin, having held many important positions in his party, was soon on terms of friendship with the sterner sex, Mrs. Hamblin and Belle taking their natural places among the ladies.

Mr. Hamblin was a genial conversationalist, and with his political reputation preceding him was of course much courted by all at the "Lakeside." Having been a State Senator for two terms, a prominent candidate for gubernatorial honors at a late convention, and possessing wealth and eloquence, his power was naturally great. A candidate for renomination the coming fall, he had already started the machinery to obtain control of delegates needed to consummate his desired wish.

American politics are controlled entirely by "wires," those of the great political machine being intricate as the telegraph netting one sees over the roof-tops of a large city. Mr. Hamblin, with a perfect knowledge of the workings of this machine, knew that a successful candidate must be able to manipulate the little wires of the party caucus, for as the caucuses are the expression of each town in the senatorial or assembly district, to obtain needed support requires wire-pullers in every school district. A candidate's personal merit is of minor consequence; he can do nothing without

understanding the working of the party machinery, and knowing also how to lubricate the entire apparatus with money.

Mr. Hamblin had been a little uneasy of late, a rival having arisen to contest his field. Heretofore enjoying the monopoly in the district, he was now in danger of meeting an obstacle in his onward course. As he sat on the piazza holding a letter in his hand, he soliloquized:

"Well, well! Making my way in politics has always been easy as knocking the ashes from this cigar, but if Miller's letter is correct Darius Hamblin is in danger. Let me see; I'll read this over again" – and he closely scanned the following letter:

Cleverdale, July 31, 187–.

Hon. Darius Hamblin:

Dear Sir: It is just as I feared: Daley says he will be a candidate at all hazards, and asserts he can drive you from the track very easily, having your former clerk's evidence to use against you. He is desperate, and has already been seen to visit saloons in the village, spending considerable money to win over the boys. Can you meet Rawlings, Horton, and myself at Saratoga Saturday night?

Answer by telegraph at once.

Yours,

Cyrus Hart Miller.

Mr. Hamblin knit his brow for a moment and said:

"Of course I must go. I must not be beaten this year. The next gubernatorial nomination may be mine if I win this time. I can be elected Governor, and Daley must be crushed or bought off. The die is cast – I leave on the next boat for Saratoga."

Rising from his seat and wiping the perspiration from his brow, he passed on to his room. Mrs. Hamblin expressed no surprise when informed he was going to Saratoga, for she had become accustomed to his sudden moves since he had gone into politics; she had learned that everything must be secondary to his ambition and political necessities. She quickly packed a small satchel, and the boat being due in an hour, Mr. Hamblin walked out to bid his children good-by.

Belle, leaving the side of a gentleman sitting beneath an arbor, came to meet him.

"Oh, papa! are you going away? That is too bad! I expected to take you out for a row this evening. Beside, a moonlight concert at Cleverdale Camp is announced in honor of your visit. Can't you postpone your departure?"

"No, my pet, business before pleasure. I am to meet a few friends at Saratoga to-night on very important business. By the way, I must send a telegram at once."

Embracing his daughter, he stepped into the office and hastily wrote a dispatch. When he came out Belle took his arm and said:

"Papa, we shall be *so* disappointed if you go. Mr. Alden has arranged to do you honor. And –"

"Belle," said he, interrupting her, "say no more about it, for I must go. By the way, Alden, who seems to be paying you much attention, may be good enough for a casual acquaintance at Lake George, but a daughter of Darius Hamblin, fit to be queen, in choosing associates must look higher than her father's bank clerk."

"But, papa, he is a gentleman – the very soul of honor – and there is not a lady in our party but feels honored by George Alden's attentions. Didn't he save Willie's life? He didn't know who it was, but seeing a child fall overboard his duty was plain. Beside, he always admired you, and you have repeatedly acknowledged that you liked him better than any other clerk in your employ. If you could see his kindness to the boys and myself, you would be more than ever pleased with him."

Mr. Hamblin's features grew hard; his lips became tightly compressed and the color left his cheeks as he said:

"Belle, my honor and that of your family is in your keeping. Bestow your affection upon that bank clerk and my affection for you will end forever. The Hamblin family can ill afford to make low connections. You hear my wishes – my commands. There comes the boat. Here, George, bring my satchel, and tell your mother I am awaiting her."

Poor Belle! trembling with involuntary emotion, her pale face was a reflection of the countenance of her proud father. She scarcely beheld the boat as it drew near; dimly saw a happy throng on the deck and the usual bevy of glad-hearted persons on the dock; faintly heard the paddle-wheels beating the water, and barely caught a glimpse of the small boats dancing in the steamer's wake, when a flood of tears burst from her eyes. Her mother quickly led her away, but not before her companions became conscious of her weakness.

The stern look upon her father's face and the cold good-by he returned to all was plain evidence of something wrong in the family which all had begun to look upon as a perfect pattern of happiness and domestic goodness.

CHAPTER II. A QUARTETTE OF SCHEMERS

Saratoga was alive with a brilliant throng of pleasure-seekers, gay with beauty and dress. Handsome equipages dashed along its shaded avenues with horses gaily caparisoned, the carriage occupants being decked with holiday splendor. The grand hotels overflowed with beauty and fashion; the parks, where artistic bands filled the air with music, were perfect bowers of loveliness. The hotel piazzas were crowded with visitors; the handiwork of Worth was everywhere present, and nature's mines contributed sparkling gems to adorn fair wearers.

All was not beauty however, for the presence of shoddy was perceptible, and listeners were amused or disgusted when lovely exteriors shattered hopes as stately matrons uttered words coarse and illiterate. "All is not gold that glitters" is fully realized while spending a day at America's famous watering-place and beholding the shams and deceptions of the fashionable world.

Saratoga is not merely a watering-place; it is also a mart where goods are painted and varnished to sell – in fact where many mothers introduce their daughters, expecting to dispose of them to the highest bidder. Politicians gather there to make and unmake men; "slates" are made or broken according to the amount of cash or patronage controlled by the manipulators.

As the afternoon train arrived from the north, on the piazza of the "Grand Union" sat three men anxiously awaiting the arrival of another. A few moments later a carriage was driven up, and the three gentlemen – none other than Cyrus Hart Miller, Editor Rawlings, and George Horton, chairman of a county committee – arose to greet the Hon. Darius Hamblin. The greeting scarcely ceased when several other gentlemen leaving their seats quickly moved forward to welcome the new arrival. Passing into the hotel, Senator Hamblin met other acquaintances, and it was readily seen that he was a lion among the men gathered at the great spa to discuss politics and "lay pipe" for the grasping of power and distribution of patronage.

After dinner four men met in Senator Hamblin's parlor. The reader by this time being acquainted with the leading spirit of the party, we will describe the others.

Cyrus Hart Miller, familiarly known as a local politician of the true American type, held a position in the Customs Department of the nation, having been appointed through the influence of his senator. One of those bold and adventurous spirits, who know so well how to control a caucus, he possessed a commanding presence, and when "button-holing" a man would produce convincing arguments that the cause espoused by him was apparently right. He always rallied the "boys" at a caucus, and when unable to win by the preferable method of moral suasion, was abundantly able to resort to bulldozing or "solid" methods. Just the man to take care of Senator Hamblin's interest, he was a standing delegate to all conventions where he could be of service to his chief. Although prepossessing in personal appearance, his hands were ever ready to perform any dirty work consistent with the average ward politician.

Editor Rawlings, another tool of Senator Hamblin, had been under the protection of his chief for a long time. His paper, like many country journals, was financially weak, but the purse-strings of the Senator, drawn about the editor's neck, enabled him to eke out an existence. When the Senator wished an article to appear in the *Investigator*, he was such a liberal paymaster that Editor Rawlings never hesitated to throw out paying advertisements to please him. The *Investigator* was Hamblin's organ, and Rawlings the superserviceable monkey. Every time the "boss" desired the crank turned, the monkey danced to the uttermost limit of the string, but if the string had broken the monkey could not have been controlled. Rawlings was one of those detestable creatures who have done so much to destroy the influence of respectable journalism. He was of that breed of rodents which sneak into an honorable profession and gnaw only where there is cheese.

George Horton, chairman of the county committee, another lieutenant of the same general, held the office of County Clerk, and although not as willing to perform dirty work as his companions, was an able adviser, with a mind prolific of deep-laid schemes. Being a zealous partisan of the "boss," in all advisory councils he was an important factor.

The quartette was a true type of the American political clique; their deliberations a fair sample of such conferences.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Senator, "help yourselves to cigars, and let us proceed to business. Miller, what is your opinion of my chance for renomination? Speak out – let us be frank with each other. What is Daley about, and does he intend to make us trouble?"

"Well – y-e-s," drawled out Miller, "he intends to beat you if possible. Approaching Rawlings on Sunday, he began working on him, even offering to help sustain the paper if Rawlings would not be tied to any one individual. If I am not mistaken he actually offered to advance the cash to buy a new press and engine for the office. Eh, Rawlings?"

The latter, turning red, was somewhat embarrassed, but soon regaining his composure, replied:

"Yes, the cuss *did* make a pretty good bid for my influence. You see, he knows he can't get along without a newspaper, and knowing the Senator would do as well as the next man I just dropped him – yes, dropped him like a hot potato, so to speak. When I go for a man I'm always solid. I'm a thoroughbred, and no man knows that better than our honorable friend, the next Governor of the State BY THUNDER!" and he emphasized the remark by bringing his closed hand down upon the table.

"Never mind that, Rawlings; I know you are all right, but we must head off Daley. That quarrel with my clerk on the Canal Committee was unfortunate, but the young rascal can have nothing to use against me unless he resorts to slander and lies, which unscrupulous enemies may put him up to. We must first get Daley out of the way. He has a little money, but not much; although he claims, you say, that the railroad interest are backing him against me. See here, Horton, what can you suggest? let me hear from you. First we will take a glass of wine. Rawlings, touch that bell. There; a waiter will soon be here. Light fresh cigars, gentlemen; by the by, Rawlings, did you ever visit Lake George?"

"No, sir."

"No? Well, you must go up there. I shall return soon and you must be my guest."

"All very nice, Senator, but where are the 'spons' to liquidate the minutiae, eh? You millionaires think newspaper men can scoop in all the plums, by thunder! The only time we can enjoy an excursion is when somebody's old steamboat wants puffing up. Now look here, Senator, if the door of heaven could be entered for a cent I couldn't afford to even peek under the canvas."

"Well, well, Rawlings," Hamblin replied laughingly, "we will look after the press, for if we do not keep this great lever of the world in order the world will suffer. Now, gentlemen, let us indulge in a little champagne. Here, waiter, fill up. Gentlemen, your health." And the Senator raised a glass to his lips.

"Drink quick," exclaimed Rawlings, "for Daleys are dangerous."

It was a poor pun, but the point seen by the party the Senator said:

"Ah, Rawlings, you are a cool fellow. The mighty men of the Fourth Estate are the literary and social princes of the day. Another cigar, Rawlings, and then I move the previous question with additional power of debate."

Thus did Senator Hamblin touch the weak points of his fellow-men. Well knowing flattery and wine were twin demons, attractive and seductive, with their assistance he enticed many men into his net. He had little confidence in Rawlings, well aware that if his antagonist Daley should offer more than he to obtain the influence of the *Investigator*, Rawlings would not hesitate to desert him. Perceiving his embarrassment when Miller mentioned the Daley matter, and well aware he had given Daley to understand the *Investigator* was in the market, Senator Hamblin threw out the Lake George invitation, for Rawlings was susceptible to flattery, and liking the flesh-pots well filled with milk and honey, when approached through the stomach, the gateway to his affection, was at the command

of the man desiring to enter. A week of feasting at the "Lakeside" and such private attention as the Senator could show Rawlings would apparently hold him.

"Horton, let us hear from you. What shall we do to force Daley from the course? You must have something to say on the subject?"

"I can tell you where Daley left a bar down, when elected to the Assembly last year," replied Horton. "I know a man who will swear he received two hundred and fifty dollars from him, with which to buy votes. This might be worked up and Rawlings can help us, the *Investigator* sounding the key-note in the editor's well chosen words and –"

"But see here, Horton, I can't run the risk of being sued for libel. Remember, Senator, I am not a millionaire, although I may put on a million airs," quickly replied the editor.

"Here is my plan," Horton continued, as if not noticing the remark. "Rawlings in his next issue must write a powerful leader advocating your renomination, hinting there is to be another candidate, and say in words like this:

"At this time there must be no change of horses, for Senator Hamblin has served his constituency faithfully, his hands being free from any taint of corruption. If the voters of this district wish to bring out a new candidate, it must be one who has never placed himself in position to be indicted for committing perjury, by taking the ironclad oath as a certain Assemblyman has done.'

"There, how does that strike you, Senator, and how does it hit you, Rawlings?"

The latter, hesitating, looked toward Senator Hamblin, who arose, took him by the arm, and walking toward the window stepped out on the balcony. They were absent about five minutes, and on re-entering the room, Rawlings approaching Horton, extended his hand and said:

"All right, Horton, old fellow; put it there. The thing shall be done or my name isn't Joe Rawlings. I must go to the telegraph office at once."

Seizing his hat he passed out as a telegraph messenger entered.

"A telegram for Cyrus Hart Miller."

"Here, boy!" replied that individual, and seizing the dispatch quickly tore open the envelope. The telegram being in cipher, Miller took from his pocket a memorandum, dismissed the boy, and making out the contents his face turned red with excitement, and he said:

"Just as I feared. Rawlings has really sold out to Daley. His paper appears on Tuesday, and unless he wires the boys immediately, we're euchred! Did you make any arrangement with him, Senator?"

"Yes, I 'fixed' him, and he has gone to telegraph his foreman. An article left at his office, he said, covered the whole ground and he would wire the boys to put it in type. To-morrow evening we will go to Cleverdale and be on the ground to cut off any attempt of Daley to beat us. Go at once, Miller, and secure a copy of Rawlings's dispatch – money will do it."

A few moments later Miller came in, privately handing the Senator a copy of the dispatch, which read as follows:

Saratoga.

Foreman *Investigator*, Cleverdale, N. Y.

Kill double-leaded leader, "A Change of Candidates Must be Made," and substitute article on sanctum copy-hook, entitled, "Senator Hamblin's Great Public Services."

(Signed) J. Rawlings.

Senator Hamblin stepping into his bedroom read the message; returning, a pleasant smile illumined his countenance. Touching the bell, he ordered another bottle of wine.

CHAPTER III.

TEMPEST-TOSSED LAKE GEORGE

For three days Belle Hamblin remained in her room attended by her mother.

The cruel words of her father sank deep into her proud and sensitive heart, and obstructed a great fount of joy, for during her short acquaintance with George Alden she had become greatly interested in him. A young man of irreproachable character, he had obtained a collegiate education, had never contracted bad habits, and was called a model man and brother. His sister gave music lessons, but that was not a sin in this land.

With Belle, who had often wished herself differently situated in life, the idea of self-dependence was strong. Having all that wealth could give, she envied those who day after day toiled at some honest labor.

Poor, unsuspecting girl, with every comfort at her command, she knew little of the sorrows of female toilers. Admiring the music teacher in the abstract, she knew nothing of the hardships attendant upon her labor. Looking upon the factory girls in her native town with some degree of envy, she was ignorant of the pangs of suffering so many undergo to make their scanty earnings sustain helpless loved ones at home.

During her seclusion, Belle had been greatly missed by her companions. One morning a note received from Camp Cleverdale, accompanying an elegant bouquet, gave her much pleasure, and she exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, I *must* go out to-day. I feel better and think the air will do me good. Will you consent?"

"Yes, my child, if your nerves have become quiet. Your father writes he may be absent a week longer. He has gone to Cleverdale and seems to be having trouble about political matters. Just what they are I am unable to say, for he always says 'women have no business meddling with politics.'"

"I agree with him, and only wish *he* would also give it up. Politics make men unmindful of everything else. Papa is so absorbed in it he forgets the feeling of his own flesh and blood, believing everything must play a secondary part to his detestable politics. His mind is in constant ferment, while the companions it brings him are not such as those with whom we like to see our loved ones associate. His only desire now is that I will bestow my hand upon some man who can strengthen him politically. Yes, it is too true that when a man becomes absorbed in politics, he is willing to barter away his birthright to gain his point."

"Belle, you are getting to be as incorrigible a hater of politics as I, but I cannot blame you. If George Alden controlled as many votes as that man Miller, or was as ready to do such editorial work as Rawlings, I believe your father would look upon him with favor. But never mind, child, go out to-day and enjoy yourself. Do just as you have done heretofore."

Having thus obtained the mother's consent, Belle arose, put on her hat – having previously arrayed herself in her flannel boating suit – and left the apartment. Her appearance was the occasion of many friendly greetings.

In a few moments a boat bearing four white capped young men left the little island at the south, where Cleverdale Camp, named in honor of Belle, was located. The lake was beautiful, the waves running sufficiently high to make rowing pleasant, and it was not many seconds before the boat with its jolly crew shot into the bay. In an instant Belle was face to face with the quartette, the first to greet her being George Alden, whose tender looks betokened his joy at again seeing her.

"Ah, Miss Hamblin, we have missed you at Camp Cleverdale, and as soon as you are able to bear the excitement you must come. We have postponed the entertainment on account of your sudden illness," said Alden.

"I shall be well enough in a day or two," the girl replied; "the lake air is my good physician."

The meeting lasted but a moment, the quartette departing together, but Belle suddenly felt like herself again.

One morning, a week later, the sun arose with more than its usual majesty and glory, and the cool air laden with the sweet odor of blackberry and pine came down from the mountains. The water of the lake was ruffled with little ripples, whose tops rose and glistened in the sun and then flitted on toward the shore, foreboding a pleasant day for boating, so the tiny boats riding at anchor in the bay were put in readiness for excursions or fishing expeditions. Belle, expecting her father, concluded to remain on shore and enjoy the children's society. About ten o'clock, Geordie asking permission to go on the lake, Belle gave consent, when Willie said:

"Tan't I do too? I wants to wide with Geordie – may I do?"

"Yes, but Jane must go with you."

The three were soon pushing off from shore, the little shell drifting into the bay where Geordie had permission to row around a rock about a quarter mile distant, and backward and forward the craft danced, the oar-blades rising like sheets of silver, dripping diamonds into the crystal waters.

Slowly over the north-west hills began to creep a black bank of clouds. It grew larger and larger, a half hour later spreading overhead like a dark ink-spot on a beautiful robe of blue. Belle, although absorbed in a pleasing book, occasionally looked to see if the children were in sight. The wind blew in little puffs, but she had never seen one of those gales that spring up so suddenly on Lake George. Suddenly she rose from her seat and laid down her book. About a mile from the boys' boat she detected an angry sea, and as her keen eye glanced toward the hills, nearly half a mile away, she saw the boat dancing on the rising waves.

Wildly advancing to the extreme edge of the dock she beheld the angry waters running in toward shore, each wave seeming to push the preceding one as if intent upon running down and absorbing it.

Beckoning to the boys, she waved her handkerchief, and called:

"Geordie! Geordie! come in – QUICK!" but the winds only dashed by her, while the waves seemed to laugh her to scorn. Drops of perspiration stood on her brow, her cries attracting the attention of her mother and a number of ladies. Only three or four men, employés at the house, came down, and when Belle implored them to go for the boys, they only replied: "Ah, Miss, we are no oarsmen; the waves would swallow us up."

Looking again, the almost distracted girl saw the waves with their great white heads, like ghostly capped spirits of evil, rushing about the boat. Mother and daughter were like maniacs, for the boys would be drowned unless aid was sent them, the little arms of Geordie being too weak for such powerful antagonists. The yawning mouth of each sea seemed to engulf the boat, which, riding for an instant upon another crest, would suddenly dive into the trough of the sea.

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Belle, "I cannot stand this! I must go to their rescue, or they will be lost. I will save them."

Quickly jumping into her own boat – a perfect little craft, made to ride the waves – she seized the oars and shot forth into the bay, only to be buffeted about by the angry elements. Unable to go straight to the loved ones, she gradually pointed her boat toward the north, and by great effort ran along the dock. As she worked against a chopping sea, banks of water struck the craft and sheets of spray rose above to break and fall over her. The wind dashed down upon her head, clutching at her brown locks. Still she pulled like a little giant. Occasionally catching a glimpse of the three, she beheld Geordie at his post heroically working his way to the rock.

The winds howled madly at her, and with all their force tried to push the brave girl back. Seconds were like hours, yet she pulled on until about ready to reverse her boat's position, when the waves seemed to say:

"Ah, my fine lady, when you turn, then we will swallow you."

Watching her opportunity – the sea lulling for an instant – she gave a quick pull, and as a huge wave approached, her boat turned and she breathed a sigh of relief as the water passed by her boat's stern. It was an awful time to her; one of those inspiring, grand, but cruel moments when Lake George, so beautiful in all its quiet glory, suddenly becomes transformed into a thing ugly, wicked, and furious.

Within a short distance of the little boat and its precious load, Belle saw a huge wave, looking like a dozen ordinary billows combined, sweeping down upon her brothers.

"Geordie!" she screamed, "put your prow to the sea!" but the words scarcely left her lips before the boat was caught up and the two boys and nurse thrown into the water. Belle unconsciously closed her eyes for an instant; on opening them she beheld Jane standing on the partly submerged rock, with Geordie and Willie clasped in her arms. South of the rock was the island on which Cleverdale Camp was situated.

The frantic girl saw the waves go headlong over the rock, submerging the faithful nurse nearly to the waist, but how dare she approach them? The children were as brave as the nurse, Geordie standing on the rock clinging to Jane, while little Willie was clasped in her arms.

In the distance could be seen the smoke of a small steamboat, but not a man was visible in the locality, all having gone for a day's pleasure; and Cleverdale Camp was deserted.

Belle's strength fast failing, she knew she could hold out little longer. Suddenly the cloud broke and in an instant the mad seas were partially quieted, as if the flood of golden sunshine that burst through the murky canopy had appeased them. Belle hastily ran her boat on the rock; Jane and the children were quickly seated in the stern; the sun disappeared behind the dark curtain of cloud, and the waters resumed their reckless sport. But the boat was turned toward Cleverdale Camp, and in a few moments shot into the little bay, and ran upon the sandy beach out of all danger. Belle rose quickly, jumped ashore, beckoned Jane and the boys to follow, staggered, and fell fainting upon the greensward.

CHAPTER IV. THE BOSS AND HIS AIDS

One of the nation's prominent beings, indigenous with American politics, is "The Boss."

The Boss is a great man, and stands forth mighty and inscrutable, an autocrat wielding his sceptre with a strong hand.

He must be brave as a lion; sagacious as an elephant; with all the cunning of a fox and the obstinacy of a bull-dog. His hide should be thick as that of the rhinoceros, and he must be as quick as the leopard in the mythical ability to change his spots. Like the hyena he must have an appetite for ghoulish work, while his eyes must be powerful as the eagle's, and his talons equal to those of any bird of prey. He must have a backbone combining all the vertebral rigidity of the whole animal kingdom, and his heels should resemble in their trip hammer power the catapults of the great American mule.

He must be a man of quick conception, ready to comprehend situations at once, and when an emergency suddenly rises he must be able to take it by the coat-collar and make it resume its seat. He must be a positive character in all things. He cannot be a boor, for social qualities are useful to him.

He is not the creation of human hands; he is born, not made, and his qualifications are merely perversions of noble gifts of the Creator. In all deals on the political card-table, the Boss stacks the cards just as really as do such magnates as Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, *ed omnes*, in Wall Street.

The Boss dictates candidates and sketches plans of political action, and if the man desiring an office does not suit the Boss, he may as well take a back seat without waiting to be sat upon and rolled over afterward.

The Boss does not always act openly, but generally prefers to keep in the background. Sometimes he is a judge "out of politics," as he says. He does not openly take part in the composition of tickets, but when a candidate comes to the surface the question is usually asked, "Does he suit the Judge?"

The Boss has his trusted lieutenants, selected for their fealty to their leader, and no man can expect to obtain an appointment within the territory of any Boss unless the latter espouses his cause. In many cases the Boss is a Senator or an Assemblyman, or even a lesser county official. Oftentimes he holds no elective office, but may be an appointee of the government or State. In office or out, he exists, and seems to be as inseparable from the political machinery of this Republic as the engineer from the machinery driving a steamboat.

Senator Hamblin, the Boss of his senatorial district, had his trusted aids in every town. He knew whom he could depend on when the town caucuses were held, yet feared the attempt of Daley to overthrow him, although confident of his ability to intercept the little scheme.

Monday evening, the four men arriving at Cleverdale, Senator Hamblin and Miller walked together toward the home of the former, while Horton and Rawlings went direct to the *Investigator* office. Rawlings calling for his proof-sheets, an article laudatory of Senator Hamblin was shown Horton. It was read and pronounced good, Horton suggesting the addition referred to in the conference at Saratoga. The words were quickly penned, and copy given the compositor. This was barely done when the sanctum door opened and Daley entered.

"Ah, Mr. Daley, how do you do?" exclaimed Rawlings. "Just returned home. How's things in Cleverdale? Nothing new, eh?"

"No – guess not. How are you, Horton?" and he extended his hand to the County Clerk.

"By the way, Rawlings," said Daley, "I am told you have changed your mind about carrying out the conservative wishes of the community. Is that so?"

"I don't exactly catch your meaning, Daley. Be a little more explicit," said Rawlings.

"Well, if you want it any plainer, I mean just this: the machine has recaptured the *Investigator*, after its editor's declaring he was with the people. That's all, Rawlings – that's all."

Rawlings, usually cool and collected, at once lost his temper; his lips trembled, his face flushed with anger, and raising his clenched fist, he said:

"See here, Daley, there is the door! and if you don't get out of it d – d quick, I'll throw you out! D'ye hear?" Rawlings stepped forward as if to execute his threat, and Daley quickly turned and left the office.

The next morning the *Investigator* appeared with the article reflecting on Daley. In the mean time Senator Hamblin visited the bank, and, meeting several party leaders, discussed the political situation, seemingly anxious concerning the position of every one with whom he conversed. He was suspicious of all, well knowing the hold he possessed on his followers was only retained by the amount of patronage at his control and the sum of money he was willing to spend for the purpose of enthusing "the boys," for no boss must let the boys become low-spirited; they may in such case take a notion to change bosses.

As the Senator dismissed two persons the door opened and Paddy Sullivan entered. Paddy was a large, red-faced, sandy-haired Irishman, his cheeks covered with a long rough beard. Holding a cigar between the second and third fingers of his left hand, he seized his black slouched hat with his right and dropped it on the table. His appearance seemed to please the Senator, for he extended a more cordial welcome to Paddy than to any previous visitors.

"How are you, Paddy?" he said, warmly grasping the great mass of flesh that individual used for a hand.

"Foine as a top, Sinitor, and how's yersel'?" quickly answered Paddy.

"Well – very well. Sit down and let's have a quiet talk. Throw away that old stump, there – try a choice Havana," and he passed a cigar-box taken from a private drawer. "Now, Paddy, how are all the boys, and how goes politics at 'The Shades'?"

"Politics has been so dull that we're only been able to dhraw about two kegs of lager a day. I've always noticed, Sinitor, that when politics is a little hazy, the boys are busted and the beer-tap only runs driblets. Ah, Sinitor, if I was in Congress, be jabers! I'd go in for a law that would have elickshun hild ivery month. But see here, Sinitor, look out for that blagyard Daley. He bought four kegs of lager lasht week; but shure I sot up six kegs for the b'ys – and – sh-h-h-h, d'ye moind – I tould 'em Sinitor Hamblin had left orders for me to do it – that I did. When the Daleys get the shtart of Paddy Sullivan and his frinds it's whin Paddy's shlapin'."

"You did right," said the Senator, "and you can send the bill to me. By the way, Paddy, are the boys all right? How many of the laborers at the mill can you pull for me? Ah, Paddy, you are a clear-headed man; no one can control as many votes as yourself."

"Ah, bedad! yee's jist roight. Ayven the good Father Burns wid his blissed callin' can't run as many men wid his holy power as Paddy Sullivan wid his lager and wishkey. The b'ys knows who's their frind, and when they was swallowing Daley's lager I tips 'em the wink and says I, 'B'ys, dom Daley, but here's to the hilth of the Boss!' and, Sinitor, ivery mother's son of 'em was rid hot for yees!"

"Well, Paddy, keep your eyes open. The caucus will be held in about six weeks. In the mean time set a keg of lager on tap each Wednesday and Saturday evenings and let the boys drink. If Daley comes around let Miller know. I shall be absent a few days, but on my return we must open the ball. One hundred copies of the *Investigator* will be given you each week. Give them to the boys, and call especial attention to the leading article. Right must win. Daley is engaged in an infamous conspiracy to help the corporations, and if it takes every dollar I am worth I am bound to stand by the people against monopolies. Ah, Paddy, to just such men as you are we indebted for a sound government founded and upheld upon patriotic principles. Without such, America as a nation would be a failure. Yes, sir, a failure."

"There's where your head is livil, Sinitor, and when yees git Paddy Sullivan's infloence, yees git as thru a heart as iver wint pittypat benaythe a man's vist. But I must go, and niver ye fear but that yee'l bate that Daley. Good-mornin', sir, good-mornin'," and Paddy was gone.

The Senator quickly threw open the window, and the fumes of tobacco, whiskey, and onions passing out, he thus soliloquized:

"Whew! that chap is not a very sweet-smelling bouquet. Gracious! it makes me sick. What a dirty road is the political highway to success. Bah! But a man cannot secure good fruit without the use of unsavory fertilizers, and so it is with politics; the tree must be nursed, and if the gardener wants palatable fruit he must not object to the fertilizing element needed to give the tree life and strength. No, I can stand a thousand Sullivans if they are as strong politically as Paddy."

At that moment the door opened and Cyrus Hart Miller entered.

"Well, Miller, what is it? You seem hot and flushed. Anything new?" quickly asked the Senator.

"Yes, and you must act at once. You remember a military company is about to be organized here. Those in charge have succeeded in getting enough names enrolled to obtain the necessary papers for organization. The company is an assured fact, the next thing needed is a name. Daley has offered to buy them a complete set of colors worth four hundred dollars, if the company is named for him. I just learned this from Kip Rogers, who expects to be captain, and I said to Kip, 'Senator Hamblin would do better.' How would Hamblin Guards sound? The organization is to be composed of the best blood in Cleverdale, and every man would be a strong friend of a generous patron. It is a good scheme, Senator, and a magnanimous offer from you would make the company a powerful auxiliary to your other strings. Of course there is the 'Hamblin Mutual Benefit Death Lottery Association,' named for you; then there is the 'Hamblin Steam-Engine Company,' the 'Hamblin Yacht Club,' all good, substantial aids to your ambition; but, Senator, the 'Hamblin Guards' would be of more real benefit to you than all the rest put together. What say you? I told Kip I would see him in an hour's time, for Daley wanted an answer this evening."

"Miller, you are a shrewd manager. Yes, you are right. You can say to Kip that I will present a stand of colors worth seven hundred and fifty dollars. The company can command me for one thousand dollars cash beside to fit up their parlors if the organization is named for me. Not a bad idea, and when the grand centennials occur the 'Hamblin Guards' shall go. Yes, Miller, they shall go with all the glory the men and their patron can command. Go at once and bring me their answer."

Miller was off in an instant, when the Senator seated himself and thus soliloquized:

"Hamblin Guards! eh? yes; it will read well in the newspapers. Ah, it is pleasing to see one's name in print – for other people to read. Such things as this, for instance, tell at the polls:

"Senator Hamblin is the generous patron of our local churches. He gives large sums for the support of the gospel. His charities are generously bestowed, while his name is recorded upon the hearts of all who love the church."

"Yes, permitting Belle to bestow gifts upon charitable institutions has been of great advantage, for every dollar thus expended has brought me at least four votes. She gives from her heart, while I advance funds from my pocket at the dictation of my head. She is a noble girl, and I was cruel to her when I left Lake George. But pshaw! George Alden! only a clerk in the bank! He has no political significance, and I cannot allow my daughter to form an alliance with a mere private citizen. Her heart is young and tender, and the fire of to-day can be easily quenched. When she marries she must make a brilliant match. Belle is sick, her mother writes, and I must return to Lake George. This evening I must attend the church meeting; to-morrow the Cleverdale Woollen Mill Company are to hold an important business meeting, and I must be present. Senator, you have too many irons in the fire! Be careful, sir, for these hard times are shrinking values. No unwise ventures, sir, or your fortune will take wings and fly away."

Thus he soliloquized, until interrupted by a note which read as follows:

Investigator Office.

Dear Senator: I will be at your house at 7 P.M. Will you be at home? Tell
boy Yes or No.
Yours faithfully,
J. Rawlings.

"Tell him Yes," said the Senator, and as the boy passed out, he remarked: "What the devil does he want now?"

Senator Hamblin stood high in the community as a successful business man. Until recently he had suffered but few losses. At the height of his business career, he was the leader of numerous enterprises, and for the past ten years president of the Cleverdale National Bank, the stock of said institution being quoted at one dollar and ninety cents. He was director in the Cleverdale Woollen Mill Company, capital one million dollars. His business friends saw and regretted that his infatuation for politics caused him to do many questionable things. In business, social, and religious walks, a man must be the personification of all that is good, but in politics he is allowed the fullest license to tread paths that are crooked. Hence Senator Hamblin's friends tried to reconcile themselves to his action, but succeeded only in stultifying themselves.

Promptly at seven that evening, Editor Rawlings was admitted into the library at Senator Hamblin's residence.

"Good-evening, Senator! Excuse me for calling. I will not occupy much of your valuable time. I have called to inquire concerning our business matters. I want to go to New York on Friday to buy that press and engine. What shall I do about payments?" said Rawlings.

"You can buy a press and engine for fifteen hundred dollars and have them billed to me," said the Senator. "After election I will make over same to you after you render me a bill for legitimate services and distribution of campaign papers. Do you understand?"

"Y-e-s, I understand, but Daley sent word he would give me out-and-out two thousand dollars to support him. Business is business, Senator, and I must make hay while the sun shines. Now I don't want to be mean or go back on a bargain, but hadn't you better see the two thousand dollars? You needn't say yes now, but let Miller come around and see me – he can fix it, for Miller is a man of business."

Senator Hamblin rose and walked toward the door. He was not in an agreeable mood, for he knew the man was a knave. Yet he was at his mercy. Had he followed the impulse of his mind he would have kicked him out-doors, but conquering his feelings, he said:

"Rawlings, you are not playing fair with me. If I accede to your demand now, will this be the last? I must know where I stand, as I cannot pay all I am worth for the help of a newspaper. Everybody thinks I have a gold mine and that they can tap me at their will."

"Oh, no, Senator, I don't think anything of that kind, but the railroads are shelling out money to overthrow you, and you know that business is business. I would rather be with you, by thunder, and am only asking what is fair."

Senator Hamblin, aware that Rawlings would desert him if he did not submit to his extortionate demand, and anxious to terminate the interview, replied:

"Well, I suppose I must submit. Miller will call in the morning and arrange matters. I have an engagement at eight, and time is most up."

Rawlings, not at all put out by the Senator's manner, rose and said:

"All right, I will leave you. I am solid, Senator – a regular thoroughbred – and when I go for a man I go my whole length," and passed out.

"Solid! Yes, you *are* solid – in your cheek. You are one of the representative men of the political arena. Bad – bad; and still you must be tolerated – yes, courted and paid. It is a blot upon our institutions that such rascals sometimes mould public opinion, all because they can wield a powerful

pen. They prate of honesty and rob a man by their disgraceful blackmailing and – But how could politicians get along if it weren't for such rascals?"

CHAPTER V. TO THE RESCUE

While the gale on the lake was putting Belle and her brothers in peril, four young men stood at one of the docks about two miles north of Cleverdale Camp, watching the surface of the water. One of them raised a field-glass to his eyes and looking across the tempest-tossed lake gazed intently toward Cleverdale Camp, and then said to his companion:

"Alden, what is that? It looks like a small boat; see, it seems to be hovering about the island rock. As I am alive, man, there is a woman on the rock with two objects at her side. It must be – "

His further remarks were cut short by Alden, who quickly seized the glass, looked intently for a moment, then said:

"Bob, there is also a woman in the small boat trying to rescue another from the rock. The two objects beside the woman on the rock look like children. They must be helped. Come along; who will go with me? Step up, boys; no time is to be lost; with a man at the oars and another at the helm we can weather this storm. Quick! who goes?"

George Alden, for it was he, was greatly excited as he observed the boat, for a terrible suspicion was filling his mind.

"George, are you a fool?" asked Bob Harkins. "No boat can stand such a gale; you are mad, man."

"I'm neither one nor the other, Bob, but a man; when a fellow mortal is in danger I am going to the rescue. If some one will go with me the work will be easier, but, alone or not, I am going. Come on, for I am off!" and he started for the bay, where his boat was safely harbored.

All efforts to dissuade him were fruitless, and no one volunteered to accompany him. His boat, the "Nellie," shot out from under the bridge across the little bay with only himself for crew. Fortunately the wind was in the right direction, yet the group on shore anxiously watched him. His boat rode the seas like a cockle-shell; she was up on a white crest one instant, and then hid herself in the sea's trough for several seconds, as if she had been swallowed up, but skilfully the well-trained arms managed the oars.

Suddenly, during a lull in the wind, Alden cast his eyes toward the submerged rock, and perceived that the objects had left it, while a little way toward the south he beheld the rescuer and rescued dashing over the excited lake toward Cleverdale Camp.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, "they are saved."

Heading his craft for Cleverdale Camp, within two minutes after Belle Hamblin had fallen George Alden was at her side.

"Oh, Mr. Alden, Belle is dead, she is dead! What shall we do?" exclaimed Geordie, while little Willie was moaning piteously.

Quickly leaning down and placing his ear to her lips, Alden felt a faint breath, and then was gratified to hear a deep sigh. She lay on the grass, her face white as snow, her eyes closed, the beautiful brown hair falling about her shoulders. Alden cast but a glance at her, and then asked the faithful Jane: "Will you help carry her to our camp?"

The limp form was taken up and George Alden passed toward the camp with Belle's face close to his. She was very pale, and the thought that her stillness might, perhaps, be that of death staggered him for an instant. Holding her in his embrace and realizing that his arms clasped all his heart desired, he raised his eyes toward heaven, and said something more earnest than young men often do when looking in that direction.

The camp reached, Belle was laid upon a bed of boughs, a blanket having been previously thrown over it, and then Alden and Jane began the work of restoration by gently rubbing the girl's brow with brandy, a little of the same diluted being forced between her lips.

The young man, informed by Jane of the circumstances of the morning, of the storm and the wrecked boat containing herself and the two boys, of their rescue by the brave girl, felt assured that Belle was only paying the usual penalty of overtaxing nature. But, feeling certain that his own destiny was linked with the beautiful girl lying so pale and quiet on the improvised couch, the pulsation of his heart would have told tales if any one had been by to listen.

While chafing her hand with spirits Alden was gladdened to feel her fingers close about his own, and then he noted movements of the lips as if she were trying to speak. He quickly poured a portion of the spirits into his hand and placed it to her nostrils. Nature began to reassert itself.

Belle sighed loud and long; her eyelids unclosed, the blue filling for an instant with wonder, and then the long fringed lids closed again. The veins filled with blood, and the plump cheeks showed the rose-tint of returning life. Gradually strength returning, she gently lifted her head, opened her eyes, and said:

"Where am I? Where are Jane and the boys? Are they saved?"

"Yes, Miss Belle," he replied, "they are all here. You are at Cleverdale Camp, with friends. Can't you sleep for a while? Jane will stay with you while I amuse the boys. You are safe here away from the storm, and a half-hour sleep will restore your strength."

"You are very kind," murmured Belle. Then she exclaimed, "Oh, I can see the mad waves opening their great yawning mouths ready to swallow me. My dear little brothers; let them come to me. Oh, Willie and Geordie! Thank God! you are saved. Thank God!" and kissing their foreheads she fell back exhausted.

George Alden arose to withdraw, telling Jane he would be in the tent only a few feet distant, when Belle, opening her eyes, said:

"Oh, don't leave me yet. Stay – but no – I am not myself. I am still filled with the horror of those cruel waves. My poor mother, God pity her! she probably mourns us as lost. Oh, George, is there not some way to inform her of our safety? It will kill her if she thinks us drowned."

"Yes, I will see to it at once, only promise you will try to sleep again," he replied.

"I will promise anything if you will only manage to relieve mamma's anxiety," and she again closed her eyes.

George, quickly obtaining a piece of white cloth, with paint he had at hand put on it in large, bold letters:

"All SAFE AT Cleverdale Camp."

Placing the sign in a conspicuous place and firing a pistol, he saw his signal was heard, as several persons gathered on the dock and answered by another pistol-shot. Raising a field-glass he beheld Mrs. Hamblin standing on shore with a telescope to her eyes. Knowing the anxiety of the mother was relieved, he returned to camp and ascertained that Belle was sleeping.

The hurricane, as if sullen at being foiled in its attempt to destroy the little party now safe at Camp Cleverdale, began to halt in its mad career, the waves that had been roaring and dancing upon the shore showing signs of exhaustion. Although the winds blew, it was evident their force was nearly spent.

Later in the afternoon, while George Alden was seated upon a rock amusing Geordie and Willie, the boys much interested in the stories he was relating, Jane approached the trio and informed him that Belle, awakening from her sleep, wished to see him in the tent.

Leaving the boys with Jane he walked toward the Camp, and on entering the enclosure was gratified at finding Belle sitting up. "How are you feeling now?" he asked. "You look rested, and I hope are much refreshed."

"Yes, thanks to your kindness, I am feeling like myself again. Is the storm over? What a narrow escape for us all! But, how came you here?" she asked, anxiously.

George then told his own adventures, relating all the circumstances of his trip, and then said:

"Ah, Belle, how happy I am that you are safe! I earnestly hope that you may experience no ill effects from your adventure."

"No, I am feeling quite well excepting a little lameness in my arms. It was a long, hard pull for my weak hands, but had I not undertaken it our poor little boys would have been drowned. It was a terrible ordeal, and when the cruel waves capsized their boat my senses nearly left me. When I saw my loved ones on the rock clasped in Jane's arms, my heart sent forth such a prayer of thanks! Are the boys injured?"

"Not in the least, the little fellows are perfectly safe. I trembled for you, though, when I saw your white face, your eyes closed, and your lips speechless."

He spoke feelingly, and as he did so gently took her hand, which she allowed him to hold with the confidence one feels when beside a trusted friend.

"And yourself, George," she said, "you look pale, as if the excitement had been too much for you, but I hope it is only your anxiety for us."

"It has been an anxious day for me. Had you been drowned, my heart would have been sorely stricken. Belle, I must speak – do forgive me – but you are dearer to me than all the world. I see you are offended, but when all I care for, all that I love, is before me I cannot help speaking from my heart."

Belle arose from her seat and said: "Oh, think of what you are saying. I am not my own mistress. You are noble and brave, and having been the means of saving us from sorrow, I cannot be too grateful to you. You are more to me than – than I wish; but do not talk of this to-day. The scenes of the morning – the awful waves, that seem even now to laugh me to scorn – make this moment too much like the bright day following the darkness of night – too much like the sunshine after a storm. Please, George, no more of this – at least not now."

"As you say; but hark! hear the merry laugh of the boys. Come, let us join them. There! you look like your own dear self again."

As they stepped forth the sun suddenly hid its face behind a cloud, but the tempest had nearly subsided. Belle's brothers ran to meet her, and in an instant two little pairs of arms were entwined about her neck. Then she arose and, turning to George, said:

"Can we go to our mother now? The lake is calm."

"Yes, in a short time, for I think I see the boys in the distance – if it is, we can make one trip. I have the children's boat, washed ashore during the gale, but Geordie's little arms cannot row to-night. See! The boat is headed for the island, and in a few moments we will take you to your friends."

In ten minutes the three companions of George Alden, stepping on the shore, were quickly informed of the state of affairs, and in a short time Jane and the children were in one boat, George and Belle in another, all gliding over the lake, which now was calm and beautiful, and soon Belle and the children were in their mother's arms.

Remaining with the fond hope of again seeing Belle, Alden wandered through the hotel, and about half-past eight, discovering the girl at the door of her parlor, he went toward her. Gently and lovingly taking her hand he drew her toward him and somehow their lips met. That instant a hand roughly seized the young man by the coat-collar, hurled him across the hallway, and the Hon. Darius Hamblin stood between the two.

CHAPTER VI. A CAMP DINNER

Senator Hamblin, leaving the stage-coach at Lake George, embarked on the little steamer Ganouski. He was accompanied by two gentlemen on their way to join a camping party of male friends, who had pitched their tents on an island about two miles south of Lakeside. The Senator was in good spirits, enjoying the society of his companions. The younger of the two, a fine-looking man about thirty years of age, resided in the same county with Hamblin, having represented his district two terms in the State legislature. His personal appearance was commanding, and for a young man he had taken a high standing in the political arena of the day. He possessed a keen black eye, sharp and piercing, around the corners of which could be detected an expression of recklessness and trickery, so necessary for a man of his calling.

Hon. Walter Mannis had been very successful in his political career, and older men pointed to him as a brilliant ornament – in fact, a rising star in the political theatre of the State; and so Senator Hamblin patronized and courted the young member.

Mannis had inherited a large fortune, which, added to his fine personal appearance and many accomplishments, made him a lion in both public and private circles. He was called the handsome member of the legislature, and many a mamma tried to win his smiles for a pretty daughter. Yet Mr. Mannis had never yielded to the charms of female loveliness and virtue. He remained a target, his heart seemingly impregnable to love's arrows.

His companion, a member of the legislature also, representing an assembly district in the great metropolis, was about the age of Mannis, although not as fine-looking or intellectually as bright.

"Senator," said Mannis, as the three sat on the deck of the little steamer, "you must stop at the island and dine with me. Our friends expect us, and a royal camp dinner will be awaiting our arrival. We shall leave the steamer at the dock nearest camp, where a boat will be waiting to convey us to the island. After dinner we will row you to your family at Lakeside, about two miles distant. What say you?"

"I will stop on one condition, Mannis, and that your promise to spend to-morrow with me. I would like to have some conversation with you concerning political matters in our county. Have I your promise?"

"I shall be most happy to accept, Senator."

A half hour later the little steamer drew up at the dock, when the three disembarked. They were soon seated in a small boat, and after a pull of a few moments the party stepped on the rock answering as a dock for the little island. Introductions being over, Senator Hamblin was led to the table, where a tempting repast was spread.

Reader, have you ever participated in a camp dinner?

No?

Then you have missed one of the rarest treats of life.

The dining-room is a tent opened at one end, through the centre extending a stationary table made of planed boards. On each side is a bench nailed to the table, capable of seating about six persons. To seat one's self, sit on the bench with back to the table; gracefully raising the lower limbs, right about face, your seat acting as a pivot for the body, swing over quickly, drop the feet beneath the table, and you are ready for preliminaries. Before you is new bread, white and tempting; butter of a rich golden hue; tomatoes, crimson and juicy with richness; cucumbers, pickles, sauces, and other relishes. The waiters are clothed in habiliments of blue surmounted by elegant crowns of native straw.

The cool breezes blowing from the lake, golden yellow-jackets in swarms hover about your head, occasionally swooping down into the sugar-bowl to see if the sweetness is first-class.

Presently bowls of delicious turtle soup are placed before you, and the aroma that rises is more than appetizing to a hungry man. As you convey luscious spoonfuls to your mouth, another aroma greets your olfactories: it is the fumes of coffee.

S – p – p – p – p!

A pair of red squirrels go scampering up a tree near by, intent on getting over the dining-room to enjoy the rich odors wasting themselves on the desert air.

Soup is followed by fish – none of your canned salmon or salt cod – none of your stale shad, a week out of water – but fish almost wriggling their tails as you spear them with a fork. They are smoking hot, with a rich hue of brown – the edge of the dish being ornamented with small clippings of fried pork.

Take the fish on your fork, insert a knife-blade in the back, when the white meat falls on your plate anxious to be eaten. Drop the knife and with your fingers catch hold of the skeleton at the head, pull gently, and it will divide itself from the other half. Your plate loaded with mealy potatoes, squash, boiled onions, and corn, you have before you a dinner fit for an epicure. How good everything tastes! All formality having been left at home, the camp dinner is the Eden of banquets.

Counting your skeletons, you will be surprised at the number of fish you have eaten. With your voracious appetite you will not fail to leave a place for a dessert of fruit which follows. Pies and puddings are not usually a part of camp dinners, fruit taking their place.

Senator Hamblin enjoyed the repast as thoroughly as his entertainer could have wished. Indeed, the entire party, though composed of politicians, did not easily get back to politics; for a half hour after dinner they sat on the rocks smoking cigars and discussing the surroundings. They could scarcely have helped it, for the scene was charming; the golden rays of the sun fringing the western hills gave the foliage a rare quality of splendor. The lake was like a sheet of silver, the surface reflecting the lovely azure of an unclouded sky. The air was pure and sweet, the breezes soft, and all the surroundings were specially successful bits of nature's handiwork.

Senator Hamblin was enchanted as he gazed upon the beauties of nature spread before him; for the moment he even forgot the trials and vexations of politics. Worldly feelings that agitated him from day to day were gone, and he felt that he stood in an earthly paradise such as no other locality could present.

"Mannis, this is grand! In all my travels I never beheld anything so enchanting. I do not wonder this is such a resort. In all accounts of this beautiful lake justice has never been done it. But while I am lost in delight and bewilderment, I am forgetting my family await me at Lakeside. Come, let us proceed to my quarters; it is growing late, and before we leave this place it will be dark."

The party arose, preparing to depart, and by the time adieus were said the shades of evening had fallen. The moon burst forth over the hilltops as Senator Hamblin, Assemblyman Mannis, with two others, jumped into the boat. The little craft soon touched the beach, and Senator Hamblin stepped ashore.

"Remember, Mannis, you are to spend to-morrow with me. Good-night, gentlemen;" and in a moment the oars struck the water again and the little boat was far away on its return trip. Watching the craft a moment he turned toward the house and said:

"Mannis is one of nature's noblemen. What a magnificent couple he and my proud Belle would make! Egad! if I could bring it about Belle would have a husband every way worthy of her. We will see."

After returning the warm welcome of those on the piazza he went directly to his room, fate decreeing his arrival at the moment George Alden so warmly greeted Belle. The young man, taken by surprise, was pushed violently across the hallway, while Belle confronted her stern father, who said:

"Belle, I am astonished!" and he led her gently into the room, quickly closing the door, and Alden was left alone.

The latter, regaining his composure, waited but a moment, then turned and left the house, in a short time arriving at his island camp. For an hour he remained alone on the rock with his own thoughts for company. He thought of the few days passed at the lake; the rescue of little Willie; the happy moments in the society of his heart's idol; the long days when her illness prevented him seeing her; and the many happy moments since she rejoined her friends. He thought of the day just ended; the storm; the brave girl in the boat; the loved ones on the rock, and the poor girl lying before him so helpless and white. His mind went back to the happy moment when he held her hand and told his love.

George Alden was a brave man, never quailing at danger, but when he thought of his humiliation he moaned in agony of spirit.

"I am only a bank clerk," he said, "but is that reason why this man's daughter should be injured by my society? I love her, and I'll have her, too, in spite of her father."

CHAPTER VII. THE CRUEL THUNDERBOLT

"Belle, what does this mean? How dare that fellow pollute your lips with a kiss?" angrily asked Mr. Hamblin as the door closed behind him.

"Father," replied Belle quickly, "George Alden is a noble man, and inspired by honorable impulses. His touch is not pollution."

Senator Hamblin was filled with rage; his face became scarlet; his lips trembled, and raising his hand he exclaimed:

"Go to your room! If he dares to repeat the scene of this evening I will send the presumptuous puppy adrift. No employé of mine must presume upon stealing my treasure. My daughter must select her companions from a higher circle than that of book-keepers."

Suddenly Mrs. Hamblin entered, and beholding Belle with hands clasped over her eyes, and hearing her sobs, placed an arm lovingly about her neck, and asked:

"What is it, Belle, darling?"

"What is it?" exclaimed the father; "it is this: she would throw away the honor of the family on that beggar, Alden!"

"Oh, Darius! think of what you say. Are you ignorant of the events of the day, or is your heart turned to stone? Poor child, she has saved the lives of your boys and proved herself full of heroism. The scenes she passed through to-day would have prostrated a person of ordinary character. Husband, you little know what a brave and noble daughter you have."

Senator Hamblin tried to calm himself. He walked to and fro several times, and then, halting before his wife, asked:

"What do you mean? If anything remarkable has occurred please inform me."

As Mrs. Hamblin related the incidents of the day, the cold, hard expression of her husband's countenance gradually softened. He forgot for a moment his personal ambition, forgot that the sweet girl before him had not only disobeyed but actually defied him, forgot the handsome Mannis and the audacity of the poor bank clerk Alden. As he listened to the thrilling recital of Belle's experience, the father predominated, and from his heart, in spite of its hard political crust, burst natural feelings. When his wife had finished he arose, went to Belle, lovingly placed his arms about her, and said:

"You are a noble girl, and I am proud of you. There, wipe away those tears. Your young heart is too good to carry a load of sorrow. The day's excitement has been too much for you. Give me a kiss and go to your room. A night's rest will refresh you."

Belle, raising her head, gazed into her father's face, and saw there the old look of love and affection that it wore before he became absorbed in public life; the cold, cruel lines disappearing, he was again the companion of her childhood. A flood of joy filled her heart, and she gave her father a look and embrace that would have reformed any parent not a politician.

"Good-night, darling," said the Senator, when released by his daughter. "Go to your room now. To-morrow you shall have a day of pleasure. I expect a friend to spend the day and dine with us."

Belle left the room accompanied by her mother, and the proud man was alone.

"She is a noble character," the Senator exclaimed as he paced the floor. "And Alden – curse him! – is worthy of her admiration. Still, so is Mannis. When she meets him she cannot help admiring him. But she is proud and sensitive. She must be moulded by kind treatment; force and arbitrary measures won't do. She is full of the 'no surrender' spirit of her father, bless her. I must try strategy."

Belle entered her room, followed by her mother, and closing the door threw herself into a chair, and burst into tears.

"Oh, mother, what trials I am having! Ever since we arrived here something has been occurring to make me unhappy. What have I done to deserve it? Papa is not the same man he used to be; he thinks even his own flesh and blood must bow to his ambition. Poor George has fallen under his displeasure, merely for the sin of loving me. Why should we have any hearts at all?" Then she told all that had taken place between herself and George Alden, and when she referred to the scene at the parlor door she sobbed as if her heart would break.

Her mother, who had suffered worse and longer than her daughter by the remorseless ambition that was demanding the entire sacrifice, comforted the weeping girl as only a mother could, and an hour later sleep ended for the day the sorrows of both.

The next morning opened bright and beautiful, the Hamblins as usual appearing at the breakfast-table. Belle's exploit of the previous day had been noised about the neighborhood, and she found herself the centre of attraction at the Lakeside, and the little boys Geordie and Willie came in for a share of honor. Belle bore her honors meekly. Unlike her father, hers was not a character to be excited by public applause. Besides, her mind was preoccupied, and her eyes often strayed toward Cleverdale Camp. While gazing in that direction she saw a little boat enter the bay and a gentleman step from it upon the beach, where her father warmly greeted him, and then escorted him to her and her mother.

"Mr. Mannis, I take pleasure in introducing you to Mrs. Hamblin and my daughter, Miss Belle."

The guest bowed to both, and said: "Ladies, I feel you are hardly strangers to me, for my friend here, your honored husband and father, is an old acquaintance in the forum of politics and at the State capital."

"We are always glad to meet Mr. Hamblin's friends," replied the elder lady, "and he has often spoken of you; you are very welcome, sir."

Mannis bowed his acknowledgments and then turned to Belle.

"Miss Hamblin, allow me to congratulate you on your narrow escape yesterday, and express my admiration of your noble exploit. It is fortunate that you had learned to use the oar, but few even of young ladies who row would have the courage to undertake so hazardous a trip. Do you know your praises are being sung far and near?"

"Belle is a brave girl," said the Senator, "and I am proud of her. Don't blush, Belle, you are too modest."

"But, papa, what did I do? I could no more resist the impulse that sent me out than you could help reaching forth your hand and snatching one of the boys from an approaching locomotive."

"Say what you will, Miss Hamblin, the world gives every human being credit for the brave deeds they perform, and your modesty will not enable you to avoid being praised for your heroism."

The conversation continued for a long time. Belle, like a true woman, enjoyed the society of a gentleman, and as Mannis had perfect manners and was a fluent conversationalist, the moments passed most agreeably. The Senator was delighted by the grace with which his daughter entertained his guest, and with great satisfaction he noticed that the handsome Assemblyman was greatly interested in the girl. Not a word on political topics had been spoken; for a deeper game was being played by the proud father, who in believing that he held a winning hand forgot that his stake was his own flesh and blood.

After dinner the two gentlemen went to enjoy a quiet smoke on the veranda of the gentlemen's sitting-room. Mannis was profuse in compliments regarding the Senator's family, all of which were extremely gratifying to the honorable gentleman. Gradually the subject of the approaching campaign came up, and Mannis disclosed that Daley had urged him to espouse his cause against Hamblin.

"I told him from the first I was with you, and now repeat it more strongly than before. I am more friendly to you now than ever."

"Thanks, Mannis, and if I can do anything to advance your interest you can always command me," replied the Senator.

Just then little Willie came running to his father, who took him upon his knee. The child's bright blue eyes and head of handsome brown curls always attracted attention, which his amusing lisp was quite sure to hold. Twining his little arms about his papa's neck, he began talking in a manner so amusing that the practical Mannis at once took a great liking to him, and Willie reciprocated it, so that Mannis was still further impressed by the Hamblins in general.

As the party chatted a storm-cloud arose, but no one seemed to notice it. The green was covered with children, little Willie among them, and as he danced with all the joyousness of healthy childhood he seemed the leader of the little party. The cloud grew larger, but no one was alarmed, for sudden and short visits from storm-clouds are not unusual at Lake George. Suddenly, however, there was a flash, a ball of fire appearing over the house and then dashing swiftly down. The shock for an instant prostrated all who were near by, but they slowly recovered – all but one; little Willie lay motionless upon the grass.

Senator Hamblin sprang from the piazza, seized the little form, pressing it to his bosom, and exclaimed:

"Willie – my child – speak to me! Wake up, my son! look into your father's face!" But the little form was silent, for Willie was face to face with his Father in heaven.

The lifeless form was carried into the parlor, and the family that prosperity had almost estranged from its head seemed united again by its terrible grief.

Note. – A casualty like the one described in this chapter occurred at Lake George, in the summer of 1877, the victim being a little girl of nine years. The author has borrowed the incident, describing the electric phenomenon as related to him by several persons who were sitting or standing by the child when the terrible thunderbolt dropped from the clouds.

CHAPTER VIII. AFFAIRS AT CLEVERDALE

Cleverdale is a flourishing village of about eight thousand inhabitants. Enjoying transportation facilities both by rail and canal, it contains several large factories, which in turn enable a bank to do a great deal of business and cause money to circulate freely. Churches and schools, not excepting a young ladies' finishing school, abound, and there is no lack of the rum-shops that in towns so large are always demanded by one class of inhabitants.

Like all other towns, Cleverdale had its local causes of dispute, and its differences between classes, yet so proud of Senator Hamblin was the town that when, two or three days after Willie's death, a little white hearse moved slowly from the Senator's door it was followed to the cemetery by representatives of every class and interest in the town, even the red head of Paddy Sullivan being prominent in the procession. Paddy was dressed in his Sunday suit of black. On his head he wore a high white hat with a narrow black band around it, and in his face was an expression of grief that undoubtedly was honest.

One of the Senator's bids for prominence had been the erection of the most imposing monument in the village cemetery, although he had not at the time buried any member of his family. This monument had given his eye much comfort, but when little Willie was laid in its shadow, the ambitious politician was too much absorbed in grief to notice the stately stone at all. For a few days his nobler sentiments had him so completely in possession that he fairly forgot even his public interests; although Miller called and reported that he had faithfully carried out all the wishes of his chief, no further orders were given him.

"Wait a day or two, Miller," said the Senator. "I am too much overcome for business or politics now," were his words.

But time cures grief, and great burdens soon fall from shoulders accustomed to other burdens. A few days passed and the doors of the Hamblin mansion were again opened, and Senator Hamblin at his bank looking after his large business enterprises. His political interests also began to receive attention. In this direction he found that his temporary withdrawal from affairs had been utilized by his opponents, who made a vigorous push. Of course Miller had not been idle, having worked hard – even kept Rawlings in line; in fact, no attempt had been made of late to win the *Investigator's* editor to Daley's side.

But an ugly paper had been privately circulated, charging Senator Hamblin with having made admission before a former clerk of the Canal Committee, of which Hamblin was chairman, of a character not consistent with a man of honor. The paper accused him of boasting, during his two years of chairmanship, of making more than a hundred thousand dollars on bills that his committee had approved. Fortunately a copy of the paper fell into the hands of Miller, who went to work to prevent further circulation. He had even called on young Sargent, making threats to intimidate him, but without obtaining satisfaction. He knew Sargent was greatly incensed against Senator Hamblin for throwing him out of his berth and fat salary, and also knew Daley and his friends paid well for the information they were using.

Senator Hamblin gave Miller full power to treat with Sargent and make him recant. Miller was a good worker, and not afraid to face any one. Had he been going to die, he would not have hesitated to call on Satan, if that were possible, and he would have done it in the full belief that some satisfactory arrangement for the future could be made.

He called promptly on Sargent, who received him with great cordiality.

"Well, Sargent, how are you?" said Miller, extending his hand to greet the ex-clerk.

"All right, Miller. Take a seat."

The visitor at once stated his business.

"Sargent, what in the world possessed you to make such a charge against the Senator? Of course the shot may temporarily injure the man it is fired at, but, my dear fellow, just think how it will injure you. Hamblin is powerful and rich and stands high among the business men of the State. He is a leading man in politics, and his influence can be used to crush a young man like you. He will be renominated, and that means re-elected: then all the men backing or helping Daley will be crushed. That is as sure as fate, for when the convention meets he will have at least three quarters of the delegates. His election is an assured fact, and can you, a young man, afford to go down with the wreck? I have always found, in politics, a man is safest when sticking to the machine."

"That may be," said Sargent, "but Hamblin played a mean trick when he shoved me out of the berth I held. I worked for him faithfully, and just because Jim Warren was backed up by Paddy Sullivan and the factory bosses I had to slide. I say it was a dirty trick, and I mean to get even with him."

"See here, Sargent, didn't the Senator say he would see you provided for? Now look here, man; there is need of another clerk in the bank, as the cashier's health is poor and young Alden unable to do the work alone. That place was to be given you, but when you got your back up and 'went' for the Senator, *his* Ebenezer rose, and you lost a better place than a temporary position on a committee."

"Why, I didn't know that," said Sargent in a surprised tone.

"Well, it is a fact; maybe it is too late now, after all you have done to injure yourself; but see here, Sargent, can't you recall that statement, if by so doing you can benefit yourself? Of course, if you persist, we shall meet the paper and break its damaging points; you will be ruined with it, for you must know Senator Hamblin will not hesitate to kill so grave a charge against his integrity. Come, Sargent, think it over. I don't know what I can do for you, but assure me you will recall the words and I will try and place you in a position where you will be taken care of. As you are now, when the polls close on election night, your reputation will be blasted and Daley and his friends powerless to help you. I tell you, Sargent, every young man should remember the loaf of bread he is cutting to-day may be turned to stone to-morrow."

Miller's words made a deep impression on Sargent, who rested his head on his hand a moment and then replied: "But how can I recall the words? That's what bothers me."

"I can fix that. Of course you will have to follow your first paper with a second, acknowledging your error in publishing the first – but pshaw! who cares for that? If you get a thousand-dollar position, that will fix you – eh, old fellow?" and Miller playfully hit Sargent in the ribs with his cane.

"Wait and let me think it over. I cannot decide now. I don't think anything very bad can result from it, for in politics everything is honorable. Queer thing is politics. Eh, Miller?"

"Yes, Sargent, but you might better freeze to a live man's heritage than walk, with your eyes open, into a dead man's grave."

The door-bell rang and Sargent recognized the voice of Daley, inquiring for him. He heard him approaching the room, and quickly turning the key in the lock and pointing to a closet, whispered to Miller:

"Quick! hide in there!"

As Miller entered the closet and closed the door, Sargent turned the key and admitted Daley greatly excited.

"Are you alone, Sargent? Eh? yes? Well, all right. That infernal Miller is raising the deuce with my canvass. Now see here, Sargent, the caucuses have been called in most of the towns in the county for next Saturday. Miller has succeeded in buying back the Strong Mill gang. Last week the whole lot were red-hot for me, but this morning the foreman informed me that he and his men should vote at the caucus for Hamblin delegates. The caucus is to be held in the evening, something unprecedented in town politics, so the factory hands can gag the voice of people of intelligence. The new military company has also been bought up for Hamblin by Miller, with a seven hundred and fifty dollar set

of colors, and the devil is to pay generally. Of course *you* will stick to me, and when our caucus is held we must spring a mine on the whole gang. By the Eternal! I am going to beat the scoundrels. Yes, sir, beat 'em!" and he walked the room like a lion at bay.

"All right, Daley, but I am not well to-day, I have a wretched headache, and you must excuse me this morning. Call to-morrow and we will talk it over. Excuse me now. Excuse – "

His further remarks were cut short by a crash in the closet, when the door flew open, Miller falling headlong on the floor, prostrate at the feet of Daley.

Miller rose from the floor, which was covered with broken glass, boxes, and books precipitated upon his head by a chance movement of his own as he had crouched listening at the key-hole. As Miller regained his feet, the three men stared at one another for an instant; then Daley exclaimed:

"Miller! you are the very evil one himself. Where in the world did you drop from?" Then turning to Sargent, he said:

"And you too have turned against me. Well, who *is* to be trusted?"

Seizing his hat, he hastily left the room, muttering words in such direct conflict with the third article on the table of stone delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, that they must be omitted here.

CHAPTER IX. THE CAUCUS

For three weeks after the death of little Willie, Belle could not bear to leave the mother and the little brother who remained.

She even suspended her work among the needy, and many inmates of charitable institutions missed delicacies she had been accustomed to distribute among them. Society in the village became dull and stupid by her withdrawal from its circles. During this time, however, George Alden frequently called, and the tenderness and affection of each heart for the other was plainly manifested. Mr. Hamblin in no manner interfered with his daughter and her lover, yet he chafed, fretted, and hoped that something would occur to break the spell.

Shortly after her return home, Belle received a letter from Mannis, full of sympathy, yet every line breathing sentiments that distressed her, for unlike most young ladies she felt hurt when demands were made upon her to which she could not respond. Admiring many qualities possessed by the handsome Assemblyman, she had no warmer feelings than friendship for any other man than George Alden. The latter was her ideal of true manliness, the former only evoked admiration for his intellectual qualifications and social gifts. Gladly would she have met Mannis on terms of common friendship, but his letter revealed that he expected more, for he announced a determination to lay siege to her heart.

Her father often spoke of his friend, even hinting that he would be proud of a son-in-law so gifted and successful. She had hoped that Willie's sudden death had changed her father's heart, but now she realized that the temptations and ambitions of public life once more bound him in their chains.

A lively canvass was now waging, and the inevitable discussions, criminations, and recriminations grew more and more exciting. On the eve of the caucuses the war of the factions waxed hot. Leaders and bullies of both sides were on the alert, and Paddy Sullivan held matinées and evening gatherings at "The Shades," lager beer and poor whiskey flowing as free as water, and the "b'ys" kept full at the expense of one or the other candidate.

"Arrah! b'ys, whoop 'er in!" Paddy would exclaim as he tapped a fresh keg of lager.

The night before the caucus of the Senator's party Paddy Sullivan was in his glory. The leading spirit among the class frequenting his gin palace, his word he declared to be "lar." While the bar was flanked by a row of men, Miller entered accompanied by Editor Rawlings, the latter overcome with liquor. After a general hand-shaking, Miller said:

"Come, boys, what'll it be?"

"Arrah, Mishter Miller!" said Paddy, "things is jist rid-hot; the b'ys is all sound fer our frind the Sinitor. The ould man will win as aisy as sippin' beer. I'll bet tin dollars wid any mon in the crowd that Daley won't git quarther of the votes to-morrow avenin'. He was jusht in here wid his party, and the b'ys took in his beer, and when the door closed agin him they up and give three cheers for the Sinitor. Now thin, gintlemen, here's a sintiment: When the caucus closes may Daley be a spilt pig wid his nose out of j'int."

"Hip! hip! guzzle 'er down!" chorused the crowd.

"Them's the sentiments!" said Rawlings, who clung to the bar for support. "I'm solid for Sen'ter 'Amblin. Whoop 'er in, boys. I'm a thoroughbred every time! Come, Paddy, set 'em up again – what'll y' 'ave, boys? This is a thoroughbred drink. 'Zactly so."

The party falling in line, their guns were soon loaded with ammunition, warranted to kill at forty rods and indirectly damage everybody in the neighborhood. Rawlings continued:

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