

A mad world and its inhabitants / By Julius Chambers.

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A MAD WORLD





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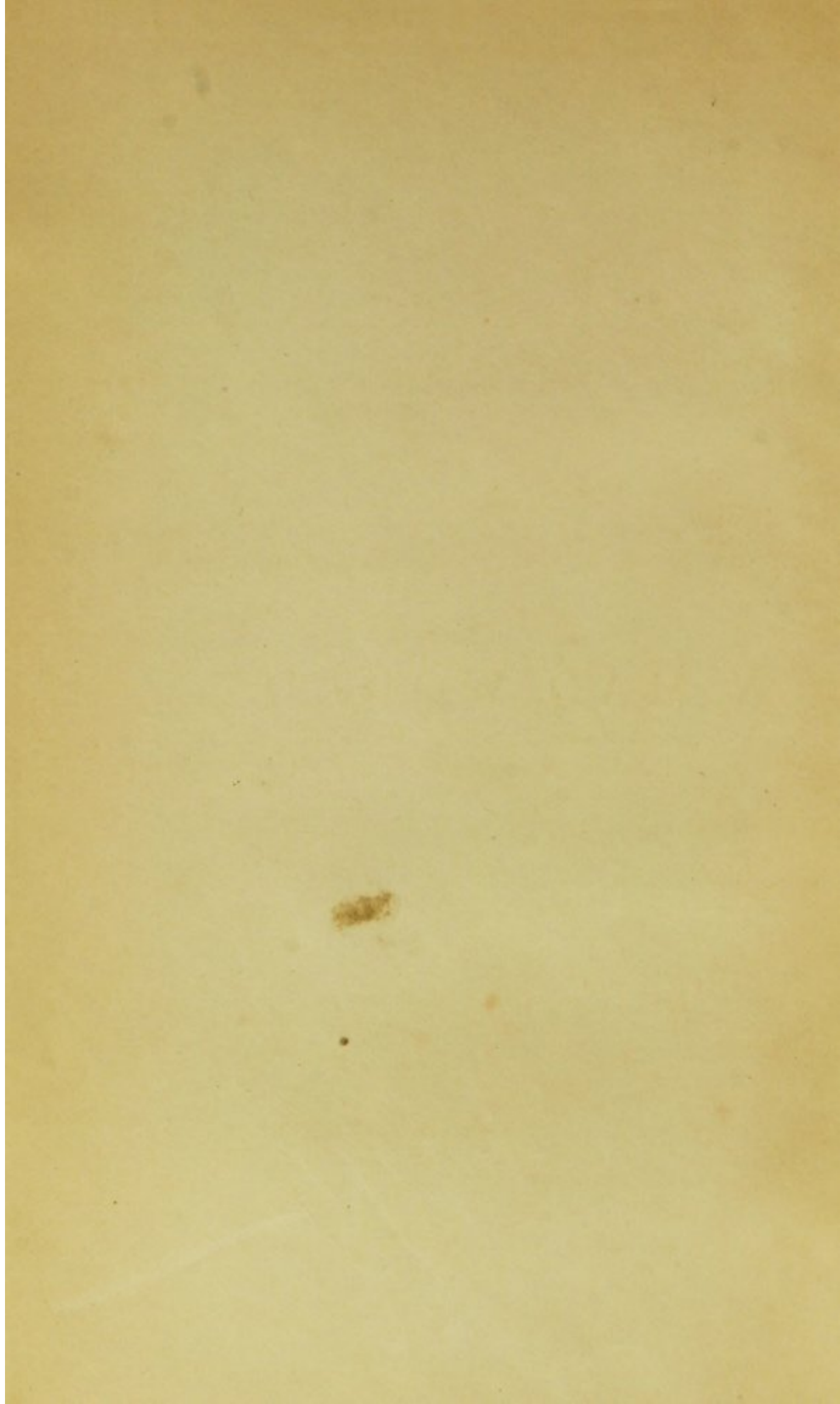
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A MAD WORLD.

A

WORLD

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A MAD WORLD

Insanity
AND ITS INHABITANTS.

BY

JULIUS CHAMBERS.

NEW YORK :
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
549 & 551 BROADWAY.

LONDON :
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON.

1877.

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2 ALBERT TERRACE, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, }
LONDON, *October 9th.* }

MY DEAR SIR :

I beg to acknowledge with thanks the account of your voluntary incarceration in a private asylum, and the observations you there made in the interest of the public and of suffering humanity.

This is the way to work. A great battle is not to be won without self-sacrifice. Accept a tribute of respect from a brother writer interested in that good cause, and may Heaven prosper your efforts !

I am, dear sir,

Your very faithful servant,

CHARLES READE.

JULIUS CHAMBERS, Esq.

I have not thought any preface necessary other than the above generous letter, received soon after the events narrated were made public ; but it may be well to say that the pseudonym of "Felix Somers" has been employed for the purpose of recounting my own experiences.

J. C.

LONDON, *May*, 1876.

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE kind reception accorded to this book in England—for, though printed in London, the events narrated occurred in New York—has induced its republication in America.

J. C.

NEW YORK, *November* 21, 1876.

PROGRAMME.



THE PROLOGUE.

INSANITY AS A FINE ART.

BOOK THE FIRST.

A FARCE: "BORROWING TROUBLE."

In which an Amateur plays the leading part.

BOOK THE SECOND.

AN EMOTIONAL DRAMA: "MAD MORTALITY."

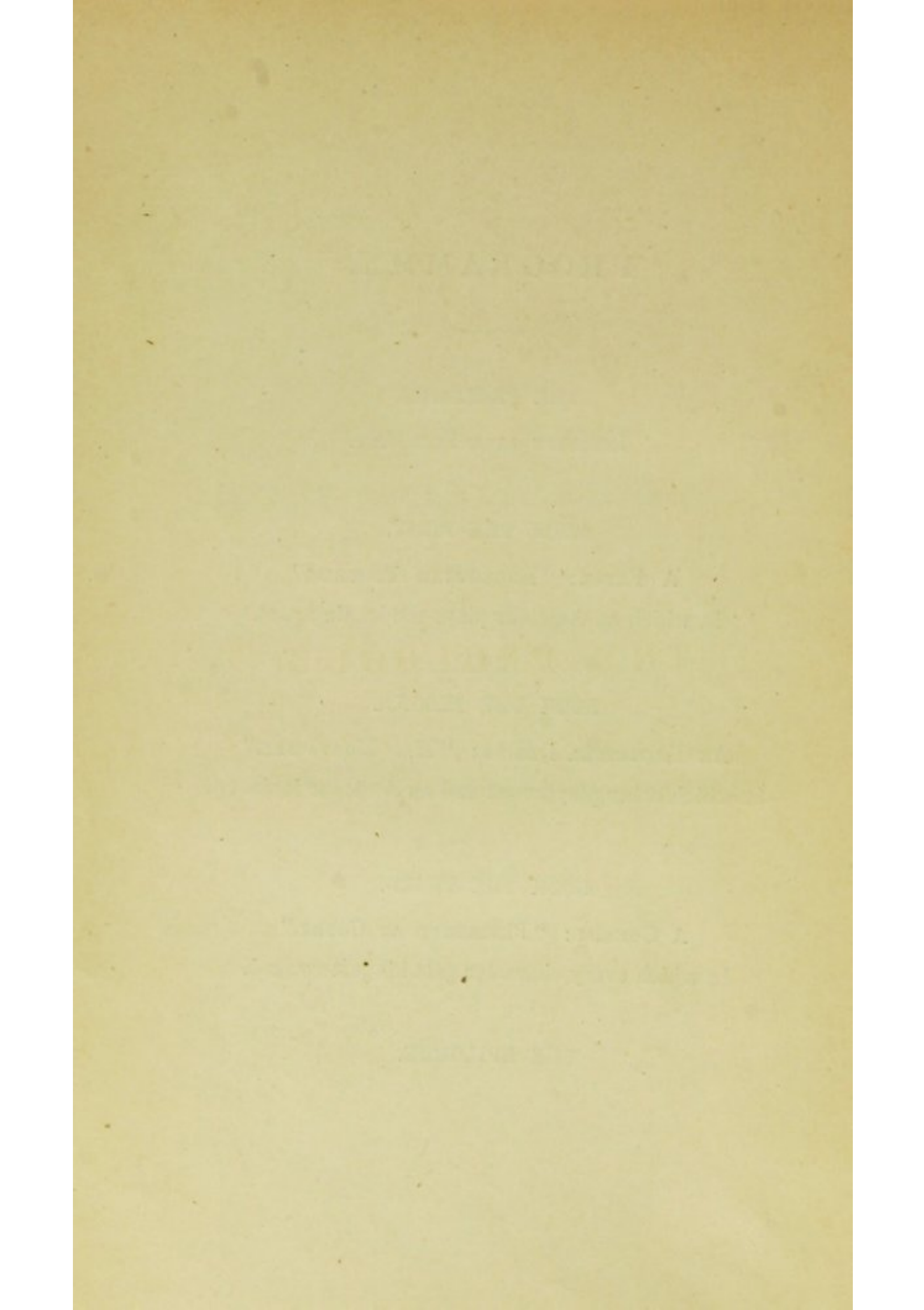
In which other players act and an Amateur looks on.

BOOK THE THIRD.

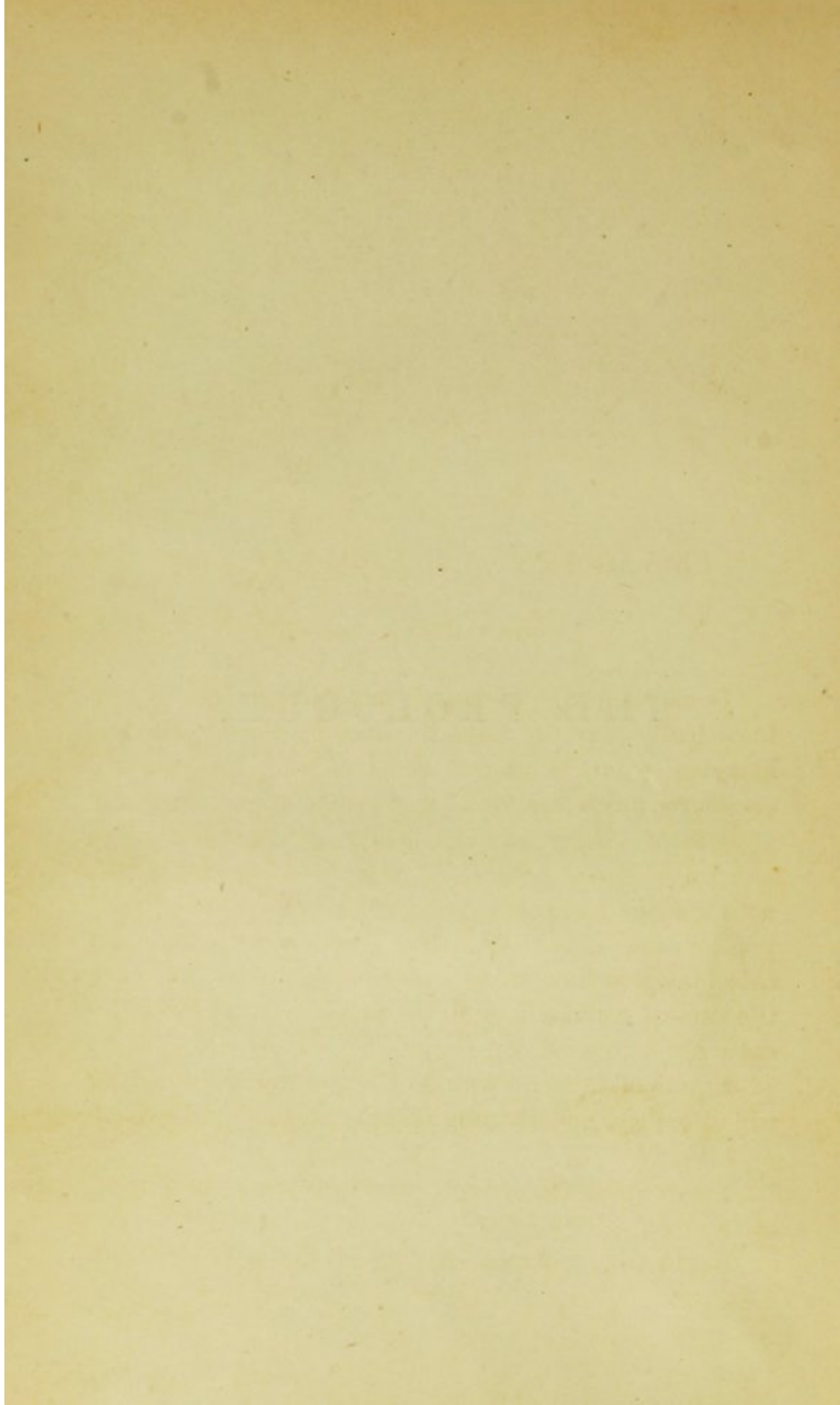
A COMEDY: "PRESENTED AT COURT."

In which every character gets his just reward.

THE EPILOGUE.



THE PROLOGUE.



THE PROLOGUE.

INSANITY AS A FINE ART.

[*Spoken to Future Players.*]

It may appear the easiest thing imaginable to systematically play the unmethodical madman. In this, however, your judgment deceives you, for you will encounter much study and many difficulties. And here a word of kindly advice, cruelly given, perhaps, to ambitious young actors. If you are a sentimentalist, with a weak mind, ask your manager to "underline" you for some other part. The leading one throughout this play is a dangerous experiment, unless you have the utmost command of all the faculties you possess by nature.

You decline to be warned? You would know how to judiciously and thoroughly master your part?

Listen!

There are before you at least two weeks of desperate study.

Begin with a careful reading of the most elaborate

treatise upon the general subject of mental disease.¹ If you have never "crammed" for a college examination, you will find it hard work to study earnestly, even violently, an uninteresting subject. The first three or four days, groping among medical terms, will be found dreary enough. Then go into a hasty perusal of the entire range of medico-legal and general literature bearing upon insanity. Hunt out every horror. Keep Bucknill's valuable work constantly at hand; it is a wonderful book for your purpose. From it you will get all the prosaically described symptoms, which you must afterward galvanize into living, moving action. There, too, are the tests for feigned madness as applied to criminal law: these you must thoroughly memorize in order to be prepared for the "experts in lunacy." You need fear nothing original; stick to your memory and defy surprises. Next, make yourself perfectly familiar with the lunacy statutes. Learn all the legal formalities of commitment, and, having engaged an able lawyer as your counsel, consult him freely regarding your "case." He will be invaluable when you wish to close your "engagement."

In bringing out your play you will also need the efficient "support" of two other character parts. Supply this want from your trustiest friends only, but don't delay choosing your colleagues an hour after the end of the first week. You will require "a relative" of middle age, authorized to "commit" you, and will-

¹ Dr. Bucknill's great book is the best, "Manual of Psychological Medicine," by Dr. J. C. Bucknill, F. R. S., F. R. C. P., and Dr. D. H. Tuke. Churchill: London, 1862. (There is a later edition, 1875.)

ing to settle your bills ; “ a friend ” of younger years who can truthfully present your story at its worst. I was fortunate in finding such colleagues in the persons of Mr. Foster and Mr. Dinfor, who at once made my cause their own with an enthusiasm the more pleasing because I needed no new proofs of their fidelity. The first assumed the *rôle* of an uncle, the second of an old-time friend. An advertisement, inserted in the most widely circulating newspaper in any land, could not have secured me two more sincere coadjutors.¹

These preliminaries concluded, plunge desperately into general reading. Keeping up your collateral studies in Beck, Pritchard, Fodéré, Lauret, Morrison, Esquirol, Foster, Sundt, Hammond, Parkman, Upham, Carpenter, and, above all, Bucknill and Tuke, so as to master all phases of the real disease, give an evening to the feigned madness of Hamlet : for, although the purport of his madness is not very obvious, the young prince had evidently made the subject a special study, as he might have done for some part of a biennial examination at Wittenburg.² Cling to Shakespeare, but

¹ Something like this, for instance :

WANTED—AN UNCLE AND A COLLEGE FRIEND, TO COMMIT A young journalist to a mad-house. Stating age and enthusiasm in such a ticklish enterprise. ADDRESS, FELIX SOMERS, Printing-House Square, New York, U. S. A.

² Dr. Bucknill is in doubt whether Hamlet's assumption of madness was “ to obtain proof of his uncle's guilt, or to conceal under a mask the gloomy, gnawing vengeance of his heart.” By it, however, like Mr. Somers, he placed himself in the power of his enemies, for had the king accepted his madness he could have consigned his nephew to the care of a Dr. Baldrick of his time. Hamlet rehearsed, or, as players say, “ got up in his lines,” in the presence of poor Ophelia : Mr. Somers studied the various facial expressions of which his countenance was capable before a large pier mirror.

don't try to imitate him. He furnishes for your study plenty of madmen and no end of fools—the choice of models rests entirely with you.

In the light of the fund of information which you are absorbing from your long list of medical authorities, devote a part of an evening to contrasting the wonderful psychological study evinced in the development of hallucination in *Macbeth*, and of the more dangerous mental disease in *Lear*. Observe how well the author understood that overstrained nervous tension, now known to the "experts" as "Morbid Impulse." Remember the deadly unpremeditation which, on some past occasion, may have almost induced you to leap from some great height. If you have never known it, get you hence to the first tall steeple, whence, looking out, behind some safe bulwark, you may know how delightful 'twould seem to jump. Read at midnight the dagger scene in *Macbeth*, and realize, if you ever shall, the fine line of distinction between mere disordered fancy and the latent seeds of mental disease, as you are to watch them ripen into mania in *Lear*. If you master that passage you comprehend to a nicety a man's first real doubt of his senses. While the subject of hallucination is under contemplation, you would do well to refresh your recollection of Scott's weird book on "Demonology and Witchcraft,"¹ Burton's "Anat-

¹ All these species of hallucination are now associated by Dr. Hammond under the head of Morbid Impulse. If a woman proclaims herself a witch, or if a man habitually gets out of bed over the foot-board (no matter how much easier or more convenient it may be), she and he are victims of morbid impulse. Very learned theory, that!

omy of Melancholy," and the maddest of Poe's wild tales. Hawthorne and Poe base many of their best stories upon Aristotle's apothegm, "*Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiæ*," but the *ergo* of all arguments based upon such a premise is that, in real life, the more insane a man is the greater are his prospects of fame. Certain it is that the more desperate your simulated madness, the surer are your chances of commitment. Indeed, much of what was inspiration to the ancients appears in the light of modern psychology closely allied to madness.

Rest your mind by changing from one author to another, but never abandon the subject for an hour.

Keep your imagination excited, then, to the highest degree. Peruse the ghastliest tales at the ghostliest hours. Study, read, dream! A hasty review of Horace's well-known satire¹ will be profitable if you observe how the excited imagination of the speaker enables him to realize three hundred thousand casks of wine more readily than one thousand. If you believe in the Pythagorean theory, you will meet in these pages the reality of the man who dwelt in Horace's fancy.

Watch your health with zealous care. Eat heartily, at regular hours, during your studies—if necessary to build up tissue, drink good English ale with your dinner—and walk out in the evening. Smoke no more than usual.

A week of this laborious task-work has passed. Remembering that an actor is not worthy to portray a death-scene until he has looked upon a dying man, go in an afternoon to an adjoining city or county, and

¹ Book II., Satire iii., lines 111-121.

thoroughly examine so much of the interior of a mad-house as you are allowed to see—drawing from the keepers, by judicious fees, the character and treatment of the patients kept out of sight.

Under no circumstances—other than those which I shall hereafter state—do you make your enterprise a personal matter with the physicians. They are, as a rule, jolly fellows, who appreciate a laugh as well as any other class of professional men—even when at their own expense. You will observe that their hearts are filled with true sympathy at the moment in which they order you the ice-water douche.

You are to begin the most important stage of the training on the tenth day—and in this you cannot be “coached”—namely, the dieting, or, more properly, the starving process by which you are to develop every particle of will-power that your constitution possesses, as well as all the irritability latent in your nature.

Up to this moment, if I have made myself clear, you have taken the best care of your bodily health. You have lived the regular, laborious life of an enthusiast. Now cast all regularity of life to the winds. Stop your hearty dinners; substitute for the ale two large cups of black coffee or strong, green tea. If four cigars have been your daily allowance, now smoke fourteen—so that the sudden abandonment of tobacco three days later will, at the end of forty-eight hours’ abstinence, smash your nervous system into fragments. Any regular stimulant, taken to excess for a short time and then suddenly stopped, will produce the same result.

Never for a moment lose confidence in yourself, or in the power of your constitution to sustain all the shocks from which it is to suffer. There is no danger from a systematic and temporary overstrain; the human mind can endure severe trials, under which the physical frame would be shattered forever.

Go ahead now; it is too late to draw back; let the consequences take care of themselves.

You have selected your immediate "support," you have rehearsed for four days and nights before a large mirror the various contortions of pain which your face is capable of simulating, the hour for the rising of the curtain has been agreed upon, and now—*one last suggestion!*

If your employer has a friend who, having killed a rival on the steps of an hotel like the Grand Llama, is on trial for his life and dreads most the testimony of two physicians who first attended the wounded man, by all means let the privilege be his of selecting the brace of doctors who are to be the victims of the play. He certainly deserves some consideration at your hands for the compliment which he pays you in his choice for so difficult a "commission."

Study, if you please, the Trilogy which follows, therein to learn how Lunacy has been successfully feigned, and to observe Insanity in all its dreadful realities.

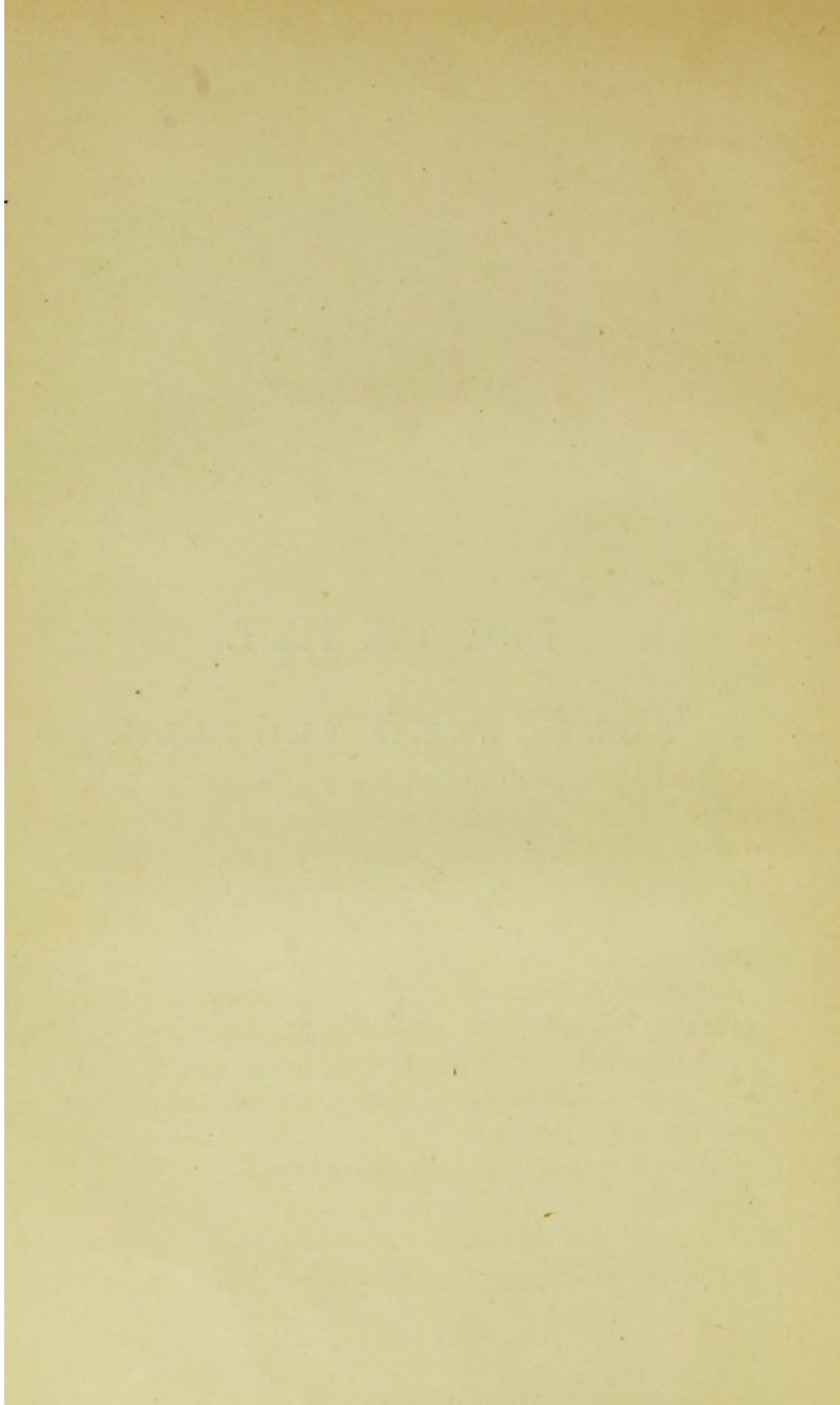
END OF THE PROLOGUE.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery by Columbus in 1492 to the present time. It covers the early years of settlement, the struggle for independence, and the formation of the federal government. The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1789 to the present time. It covers the early years of the republic, the expansion of the territory, and the development of the industrial revolution.

The third part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1861 to the present time. It covers the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the rise of the industrial revolution. The fourth part of the book is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from 1901 to the present time. It covers the Spanish-American War, the Progressive Era, and the rise of the modern industrial revolution.

BOOK THE FIRST.

BORROWING TROUBLE. .



BOOK THE FIRST.

BORROWING TROUBLE.

I.

COMMISSIONED.

It was a sultry July afternoon in New Orleans.

I was seated in the smoking-room of the St. Charles Hotel—a special correspondent, worn out after a long journey. Tossing away a cigar, I gazed dreamily into the street, absolutely without a thought in my mind.

A boy entered the room and handed me a telegram.

“More political corruption,” thought I, as, upon breaking the envelope, I saw a message in cipher.

I uncoiled the dispatch with the aid of the key, and started back aghast at the novel mission which I was asked to undertake.

“Shall I wait for an answer?” asked a strange voice at my ear.

Fearful that the contents of the message was known to others besides myself, I sprang out of my chair and

faced the inquisitor; but my eyes encountered the stupid, innocent face of the messenger-boy, whom I had quite forgotten. He offered me a quantity of telegram blanks; and, amused at the ridiculous grace with which I accepted them—thinking more of the boy's bewildered face than of the crisis of the moment—I reseated myself to prepare a reply.

I prefixed the address at the top of the blank. Then I found myself in a grave quandary; to save time, I affixed my signature. The truth was, I hesitated to write the answer.

Curious events in my future hinged upon the decision I was so suddenly compelled to make.

Again I took up the telegram, and read it with the key—once, twice, thrice. There could be no mistake.

Then I wrote, and, thrusting the paper into the boy's hand, tried to convince my beating heart that I had dismissed the subject wholly from my mind.

He received it hesitatingly, and looked at me inquiringly.

The answer was simply "Yes."

As the boy disappeared, I absently glanced at my watch and discovered that it was the hour for dinner. I did the most appropriate and lucky thing imaginable—strolled into the dining-room.

Many happy ideas owe their inception to a good dinner.

While in the act of ordering the first course, a waiter handed me the card of a traveling acquaintance, bearing the request that I should join him and a friend of his at dinner. Accepting gladly, as a visitor in a

strange city generally will, I soon found myself chatting sociably with my traveling acquaintance of the previous day, and his friend, Dr. Pulsado.

“We were classmates at Cornell,” explained the commercial agent, after introducing his companion. “If I haven’t forgotten my slang, we used to ‘rush’ in the same squad, ‘ride the same Greek pony,’ and make love to the same ‘college widow.’”

“Mr. Somers can dispense with any further details,” the doctor quietly interrupted. “If you will permit me to finish the story of our lives to date, I can do it quickly enough. I should say, ‘Party of the first part’ went into trade; plenty of business after the first day: ‘party of the second part’ went into medicine; very little in the shape of business after the first day—employed in arranging his books. But how do you like our city, Mr. Somers?” asked the doctor, suddenly changing the subject.

“Quite well, indeed; only I wish it were in a cooler climate,” was my reply.

“Oh! the heat does not trouble us,” said the doctor.

“No, I suppose not,” retorted the commercial agent, “when it swells the sick list so largely.”

The doctor asserted, good-naturedly, that such a thought had been foreign to his mind.

As the sequel proved, however, this remark was for me one of the most fortunate exhibitions of doubtful propriety imaginable. It turned the conversation into a channel no one could have foreseen; it led to the finding of the ruse by which alone my desperate commission could have been executed.

To it this book probably owes its existence.

"I say, doctor, do you have many cases of sunstroke?" asked the Boston traveler, struggling hard to appear serious.

"Not a case," retorted the physician, with the best of good-nature; "except when some Northern 'swell' like you comes to visit us. If you stay here a while, I shall probably have one, and I'll 'make it interesting' when I send in my bill. Seriously, it goes very hard with Northern people who are sunstruck in New Orleans."

"And the natives—?" began the commercial agent.

"Oh! they're sun-proof. With strangers, however, the symptoms, generally very marked, are quite interesting to study."

Up to this moment I had been a silent and, I fear, not a very attentive listener, for my thoughts were constantly dwelling on the strange telegram which I carried in my pocket. But now a weird idea flashed upon me: the conversation suddenly became of the most absorbing interest.

"Bad digestion," continued the doctor, setting down his glass, "dyspeptic symptoms, *ennui*, suppression of perspiration, debility of the body, wakeful—almost sleepless—nights, weakening of the nerves, vertigo, sudden prostration on the street, or occasionally in-doors. Exposure to the sun at the moment of attack is not, as generally believed, necessary. In mild cases, a physician, to avoid anxiety, calls it 'derangement of the liver,' 'nervousness,' or something commonplace—but it's prostration from the heat. It's sunstroke!"

“What follows the prostration?” I asked, earnestly. “Proceed, doctor; your conversation is very interesting to me.”

“No, no,” interposed the commercial agent. “I object to the continuance of this subject, and assert that this is a most uncivil way for the doctor to treat an old friend whom he has not seen for years.” Turning to the doctor, he continued: “You take the first opportunity offered by a slight acquaintance with that dreadful profession of yours to nearly frighten me to death, as well as a gentleman to whom I introduce you. Mr. Somers appears to be even more agitated than I am; he’s getting pale and nervous already.”

The commercial agent concluded his remarks with much sham seriousness, but with good-nature in every feature of his face.

“Does not intense mental agony frequently succeed the attack?” I hastened to ask, fearing that the topic would be changed. In this I was evidently mistaken, for “the language of the shop” was the doctor’s delight.

“Yes,” resumed the physician, addressing me. “After stupefaction ends, a genuine mania not unfrequently develops itself. The patient stares wildly, and for a few days has all the apparent symptoms of acute dementia. The comatose state lasts longer in some ‘cases’ than in others, and a few never come out of it. The mania generally sets in about the end of the second day, and, if the patient survives it, leaves the poor sufferer in a very exhausted condition—something like the weak state following a long and violent fever. In other cases the brain suffers more than the

rest of the body, and the mind never reasserts its control. Sunstroke is a *disease* of the brain, not a sudden shock (like a blow from a club or a stroke of lightning), and for a time that organ is thoroughly deranged."

"Try this champagne," interposed the commercial agent, filling all the glasses. "You'll have me for a patient before twenty-four hours are past, if you don't stop—Heaven forbid! The people of New Orleans are to be shod, not sunstruck, and by especial dispensation Heelem & Co., of Commerce Street, Boston, are to shoe them." (*Genuine applause; not given, but expressively symbolized.*)

"There's nothing like leather," said the doctor.

"There's nothing like physic," said I.

"There's nothing like—a printer's devil," said the commercial agent.

After dinner, I went straight to my room. I opened my note-book and read the telegram again:

"NEW YORK, July 10th.

"FELIX SOMERS, St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans:

"Will you feign insanity; enter Dr. Baldric's madhouse as a patient, and write an *exposé*? If you accept, come to New York at once. Answer.

"F. G. S."

I transcribed the message into the book, and underneath I wrote the following memoranda:

"The sunstroke mania is just the thing. Write to a friend that I have been sick; buy and read authori-

ties on the subject of insanity; go home by to-morrow's steamer, so as to get a week to 'cram' for the examination."

I then sallied out to make the round of the book-stores.

II.

FLOATING RUMORS.

THE fact that a stranger, named Felix Somers, had arrived in New York from New Orleans, and had taken rooms at the Grand Llama Hotel, becomes interesting in this place on account of many peculiar incidents connected with the stay of this guest, which are now matters of gossip among the three hundred fellow-travelers who inscribed their names upon the hotel books on that fair July day, and who have long since returned to their homes in all parts of the world.

The guest referred to was a young man who appeared to be a schoolmaster in the metropolis for the first time; but it would have surprised an old citizen to have observed the ease with which he found his way around New York. During day or night, the streets seemed equally familiar to him.

He passed as little time as possible in the dining-room during the day, and was never seen lounging about the corridors or in the coffee-room.

A guest at the same hotel afterward recalled the fact that, while visiting the objects of interest in the city, he had seen this slender, blue-eyed young man at a table in an obscure alcove of the Astor Library; and the thoroughly observant librarian of that institution

remembers to this day the young student's face, and recalls the earnestness with which he appeared to have been "cramming" for a thesis upon the subject of insanity.

A hall-boy in the Grand Llama recollects that a distinguished journalist and a prominent lawyer called at the young man's room on several occasions, and he further cites the mysterious circumstance that these visitors on all occasions went direct to the guest's room, without inquiring its number or sending their cards from the clerk's desk.

It may appear strange that all these trivial incidents should have been readily recalled more than two weeks afterward.

More curious, still, is the fragment of a conversation overheard by Miss Grundy during a summer's evening promenade with her betrothed in Madison Square, and which her worthy mother insists upon having incorporated with this narrative.

Two young men, who had been observed in earnest conversation, seated upon a neighboring bench, separated with the following meaningless words :

"Well, Dinfor, I am ready," said one, as he offered his hand to the other.

"Everything is arranged, and all details well understood by us," was the reply.

"Then let the farce begin at ten to-morrow."

"You may expect me at that hour."

III.

AN ECCENTRIC LODGER.

SITTING near an open window of my room at the Grand Llama, I saw the sun rise. Where I had taken my seat on the previous night, the daylight found me still.

The period of darkness had, indeed, been long; for I neither lay down nor walked the floor, but doggedly sat in an uncomfortable, short-backed chair for eleven lagging hours. There I remained, awake, because my tired body longed for sleep (a paradox until one has studied "Insanity as a fine art"), in order that by pure stubbornness the will should prove superior to all instincts of nature. I did not smoke, because my appetite craved tobacco as a parched throat water. Self-will once supreme, yield all habits must.

I was engaged for a difficult piece of character-acting in an unwritten play, which for more than three weeks had gradually developed out of crude legal and medical facts. Wearying as was the task, while tossing about on the Gulf of Mexico, and on the Atlantic off Cape Hatteras, I read book after book upon the ghastly subject of insanity. The fortnight which succeeded my landing in New York had been devoted to arduous study.

Dreary as was the night, it was industriously employed. I began at midnight my solitary diversion of summoning angry-visaged waiters from the office. I laugh even now at the doubtful success which attended my persistent orders for boiling water. It staggered the waiters when I insisted that hot water was my usual drink, even on an August night. Some forty times, in all, I rang for waiters, so that by daylight the office-clerk was doubtless familiar with the sound of my bell, and hoarse with calling, "Answer sixty-four!" I had the whole scheme well in hand; but, after the bell-cord ceased to afford amusement, the minutes lengthened out.

It was the hour at which Mr. Dinfor had promised to call.

I heard his footsteps in the hall—his knock—and saw him enter, accompanied by the hotel-clerk. He rushed toward me, as it had been agreed upon, but I forbade his greeting, and received his friendly words with a cold, sarcastic sneer.

"Why didn't you send me word of your arrival?" he began; but, turning to the clerk, who studied my strange demeanor, Dinfor continued: "He does not remember me; he acts unlike himself. Has anything happened to him?"

"This seems a strange intrusion, sirs. Is this your room that you walk in without my ringing for you?"

"How he stares this morning!" said the clerk.

"Don't you know me?—Dinfor?" my colleague supplicated, returning to my side.

I rose, and, with my *glacé* eyes fixed upon the intruder, in sullen silence paced the floor. Now I clasped

my hands convulsively to my temples ; at other times I slowly shook my head.

“ His wits are gone ! ”—from the clerk, as he tapped his forehead.

“ So it would appear ; what should I do ? ” were the thoughtful words of sympathizing Dinfor.

“ You ought to call a doctor.”

“ I’ll go for one this instant,” said Dinfor, as he followed the clerk out, and, drawing the door after him, closed the scene.

I was far from satisfied. I felt that I must do better when the expected doctor came ; and, stepping in front of the tall mirror of my dressing-bureau, I resumed the daily practice before my own image in the glass, thus remarking :

“ This morning I had that scowl of ghastly vacancy all right. Elevate the eyelids to their utmost extent—so. Contract the forehead—that’s better. Look through, beyond the glass, instead of at it—simple enough. By ‘willing’ to do so, concentrate your thoughts upon any object which your ‘mind’s eye’ pictures beyond ; then you do look through the first object, and give the very expression to your eyes caused by beholding the second—nothing easier. Suppose it’s a chair in an adjoining room you wish to see—an hypothetical chair. Do you doubt that *I* see it, in its brown upholstery—changeable as the various shades of daylight fall upon it—its carved arms ; its high back ; its broken castor ? Do you not observe that a button is off the cushion—and, by Heavens ! that the stuff is cotton velvet instead of silk ? ”

I lacked slightly in confidence, but otherwise I was

in good shape. The training had been as severe and practical as if preparatory to taking my seat as a "varsity" oar.

"Mehercule! how I'd like to lie down!" escaped my lips as I began to practise the symptoms for the hundredth time. Each of these was called for in the language of the text-books, serving in the capacity of my own tutor, and given again and again in my *rôle* of pupil. "The ghastly stare"—I had it to a nicety. "Spasmodic rising from a sitting posture"—easily done; "with nervous clasping of the hands to the temples"—properly executed. Thus the patient tutorship continued.

It had been decided that I should pretend to recognize the doctor and continue to ignore Dinfor. I heard coming footsteps with some anxiety, and, as the door swung open, saw upon the threshold my colleague and a medical gentleman. The physician cast his eyes about the apartment, and instantly whispered, "This looks bad; hasn't slept in his bed."

"No," breathed Dinfor. "He has evidently sat all night at the open window."

The moment had come to break the egg. I suddenly confronted the stranger and seized his hand, meanwhile keeping Dinfor under suspicious surveillance with my eyes.

"Why, Sampson, I'm glad to meet you!" I exclaimed. "You're the kind of a fellow for me. Give me your hand. But who's your companion? Still, no matter. How's Delilah and the baby, Sampson—the baby especially? I must congratulate—congratulate you."

I suddenly forgot what I was talking about, and, turning away from the gentleman, who now made his bow (whom Dinfor doubtless would have introduced) as Dr. Dromio Johnson, glided to the other end of the room. This was a pronounced symptom in the physician's opinion. I wanted to give Dinfor a chance to make capital out of the raw suspicions just developed. The two began to compare ideas.

DOCTOR. Strange; but it's the way they all act. What's his name?

DINFOR. Felix Somers.

DOCTOR. What do you know of him during the past few weeks?

DINFOR. I know very little. He has been traveling in the Southern States; here is a letter from New Orleans, dated the 10th of this month, saying that he had been ill. He arrived on the steamer George Cromwell nearly two weeks ago, as I have ascertained, and, instead of going to the house of his uncle, or calling on any of his friends, he came to this hotel, and I found him here this morning. The clerk at the desk can tell you how strangely he acted an hour ago, and how he pulled the bell every few minutes all night long.

DOCTOR. He evidently don't remember you—an old friend, do you say?

DINFOR (*sadly*). Yes, we've known each other long.

DOCTOR. Yet he believes that he recognizes in me—an utter stranger—some one whom he knows. But he may be drugged! He must have something to rouse him up; ring and order brandy and peppermint.

That'll bring him round if he has been—drunk or drugged.

A boy soon brought the brandy, which the physician divided into equal parts—offering one glass coaxingly to me, and keeping the other for himself.

Having refused it several times, I put the tumbler to my lips, and then—although I would have given much money to have drunk it—I astonished the physician by tossing both glass and contents together out of the window. The doctor followed with his eyes the spinning spheroid in its flight, and saw it successively descend through a small conservatory and aquarium, and finally crash through the skylight of the billiard-room, two stories below. He then drank his brandy in silence, and, as he smacked his lips, quietly remarked :

“I was mistaken. He must be mad, or he'd never have thrown away that brandy.”

DINFOR. What shall I do ?

DOCTOR. His mind is disordered. Summon his uncle at once. It will be unsafe to leave him alone in this room. You must get him a nurse. Shall I give you a list of competent persons ?

DINFOR. Certainly. I'll ring for a servant, and send after one. I can remain with Felix until he comes.

DOCTOR. That would be safest. I must hurry uptown to make a professional call ; I cannot be back for three hours. Do you think you can take care of him ?

DINFOR. Oh, yes ! I hope so. I shall immediately summon his uncle.

DOCTOR. Talk to him as little as possible.

DINFOR (*to hall-boy who enters*). Signal for a commissionnaire, and send him here at once. Don't be slow. How long will it take?

BOY (*as he vanishes*). Half a minute, sir.

DOCTOR. You had better try this nurse in Fortieth Street. He's a thoroughly competent man; strong enough, too—no small item in a nurse for one of these cases.

DINFOR. I want a careful man.

DOCTOR. This one is thoroughly experienced; he has served many years in the city hospital. Any doctor would rely upon the opinion of such a nurse.

DINFOR. He shall be engaged, if possible.

DOCTOR. It is now one o'clock; I shall be back at half-past four. I wonder what your friend sees on that wall to stare at? Curious case!

DINFOR. Very.

The door had no sooner closed upon the physician than my colleague turned to me and asked, in sober earnest, "Felix, what *were* you looking at?"

I laughed at his seriousness, told him I had simply selected an old nail-hole in the plastering as the focal point of my vision, and had kept it in sight for fear it might disappear. I then explained the simple trick of "the ghastly stare," and made it as easy to him as looking into the eyes of his tailor. I was thinking of the success which had attended my first real impersonation of the *rôle* of a madman, when a knock was heard at the door. The commissionnaire entered the room as Dinfor sprung the oak.

"My man," said Dinfor, "I want you to go to 141 East Fortieth Street, and engage the nurse whose

name is on this card. It's only a short ride. I'll pay you for two hours' time, so don't fail to find your man. Tell him he must come here, or send somebody, at five o'clock—don't have him come before. Here's an extra quarter for you to remember that he is not to be here before that time."

The commissionaire departed. Dinfor drew a chair alongside mine, and took a light from the cigar which I had just fired. The scene and conversation continued.

FELIX (*resuming his cigar*). You are conducting this campaign in Napoleonic fashion. Read me the telegram which you are going to send to Mr. Foster.

DINFOR (*reads*). "Foster, 96 William Street. Chicken, sweetbreads, and champagne, at Delmonico's, Fourteenth Street, one forty-five, sharp. Dinfor."

FELIX. Will he understand? [*A knock.*]

DINFOR (*opening the door, discovering hall-boy*). Hand this envelope to the telegraph operator in the hotel, and tell him that the message must go immediately. Are you the boy who has been up here before?

BOY. Yes, sir.

DINFOR. Then pay for the message out of this dollar, and keep the rest. Now go; hurry up! (*Resuming.*) Oh, yes, Mr. Foster will understand.

FELIX. I hope so. In view of the fact that I have not eaten anything since six o'clock last evening, I think my "lunch" will be rather more substantial.

DINFOR. Be more serious, old fellow. The most difficult part of your work is yet before you.

FELIX. Do you refer to the eating of the sweet-breads, or the drinking of the champagne ?

DINFOR (*seriously*). No ; your night with the nurse.

FELIX. Bad enough when it comes. Now for that lunch ; come, we can get out by the ladies' stairway—on which Whiskerando was shot, you remember.

.

The exacting critic who insists upon absolute accuracy in a narrative may occupy a vivid imagination during this interval of time with a street-scene, in which the commissionaire engages the nurse at the door of his house ; but it will be found that the nurse was engaged, all the same. For my part, while dictating these pages, I live the scenes all over again, and so strong is my recollection that I find myself as hungry as on that day, and must insist upon going to lunch just as Dinfor and I did.

IV.

AFTERNOON.

WE returned to my room, two hours later, accompanied by Mr. Foster, who had joined us. This was his first appearance as uncle.

“So, you call that a lunch, do you?” said Dinfor, laughing; doubtless thinking of the amount of soup, fish, and roast, which I—on starvation fare for the two preceding days—had eaten.

“Yes,” I answered. “A very comfortable meal.”

“We shall not have long to wait for the doctor,” remarked Mr. Foster, looking at his watch. “He is due now, is he not?”

“Yes,” I replied. “He is to make the next *entrée*—unless the messenger is too active and finds his man too soon. In that event we shall have the nurse on our hands, and must ‘guy’ the performance until the doctor arrives. That would be stupid, indeed: Dinfor, you must look out for this. If the nurse arrive first, you must waylay him in the hall, and keep him out of sight. But here comes some one. I must have a relapse.”

The physician knocked and was admitted. Mr. Dinfor promptly stepped forward and introduced the

strangers, after which he discreetly moved away to avoid questioning. The scene will bear "setting up."

UNCLE. What do you think of the case?

DOCTOR. Most sad. I confess that I do not altogether understand the symptoms; however, I haven't yet had time to carefully observe the patient.

UNCLE. His actions are certainly peculiar.

DOCTOR. How long has he been walking excitedly about the room?

UNCLE. I have just come in.

DOCTOR. Has he been coughing in that hacking manner for any length of time?

DINFOR. No, sir; not long.

DOCTOR (*to the uncle*). That phase of the disease has developed since I saw him. He has evidently grown worse. Listen! he talks to himself.

FELIX (*in a low voice*). This room is filled with dust (*shuddering*); how it chokes me!

DOCTOR (*aside to the uncle and Dinfor*). You observe that he now avoids me, although he greeted me warmly before. This very fact shows that he has a vague recollection of my face, and, as a consequence, suspects me of conspiracy.

FELIX (*continuing*). If it were not for these rascals, I'd open the shutters—I must have air!

DOCTOR. They all think themselves the victims of a conspiracy.

FELIX (*continuing*). What are these pains (*the temples symptom*)? Doomed to die in this dismal, dusty den!

DOCTOR (*approaching Felix*). Where have you been since you left the South?

FELIX (*with the stare vacuitous*). The South ?

DOCTOR. What did you want to do after you got home ?

FELIX (*with the stare of alarm*). The South !

DOCTOR (*feeling patient's pulse*). Beating very high. His case presents all the visible symptoms of mental aberration. The mention of the South evidently awakens some unpleasant association. He was ill there, you say ?

UNCLE. We have hesitated to talk about his illness until you had formed your own opinion of the case.

DINFOR. We were loth to realize the calamity which might have happened to him, a Northern man and unacclimated, in New Orleans.

DOCTOR. Exactly !

UNCLE. The sun's heat there in July must be intolerable.

DINFOR. This has suggested the idea to me that he might have been sunstruck, and, upon his recovery—naturally enough timid about confessing that it had affected his mind—may have spoken of his illness in a general way.

DOCTOR. This explains the whole case to my mind.

DINFOR. But we have no facts to sustain such a theory.

UNCLE. Absolutely none whatever.

DOCTOR (*nodding his head toward Felix*). There is the very best of evidence to a physician's mind. See him trying to brush the imaginary particles of dust out of the air in front of him. A brain-attack of this nature affects the eyes and the throat strangely. Have you secured a nurse ?

DINFOR. Yes, and expect him momentarily.

UNCLE. What is your advice ?

DOCTOR. Have your nephew carefully watched during the night, and if he becomes, and continues, violent, it would be best to send him to an asylum.

DINFOR. What institution would you recommend ?

DOCTOR. The best place I could suggest is Dr. Baldrick's.

DINFOR (*aside*). Dr. Baldrick's ! and he suggests it himself ! Godfrey's cordial, what a lucky chance !

DOCTOR. He had better be moved to a larger room.

DINFOR. I'll go and secure one. [*Goes out.*

UNCLE. I am ready to pay a liberal price for his keeping, doctor ; and I want him to go to a quiet asylum.

DOCTOR. It is for its quietness that I do especially recommend Dr. Baldrick's.

"I have engaged a suite of rooms in another part of the house," said Dinfor, reëntering the apartment after a few minutes' absence.

"Have your nephew moved to them at once, and put the nurse in charge," suggested the doctor to the uncle, professionally.

"You will call frequently and watch the case ?" was the relative's anxious inquiry.

"Certainly ; I shall return about midnight." Then, approaching my bedside, he said, "Good-by ;" but I continued to examine a round spot which I had discovered on the ceiling. The doctor bowed himself out.

"Completely taken in," said Dinfor, laughing.

"Yes ; I think he is," remarked the uncle.

"Now, Mr. Foster, you can return to the bosom of

your family for the night," said I, turning to my elder friend. At that moment a knock was heard. "Dinfor, there's the nurse! Have him carry my baggage to the new room, and keep him there until I finish this smoke, in which I have been so often interrupted. Come back after me yourself. A very mild relapse will do for this fellow; don't you think so?" I concluded, as I hid my cigar.

The open door disclosed a stranger, evidently of Hibernian origin. Dinfor addressed him:

"Mr. McFinn, I suppose?"

"Yis, s'r; at your sarvice."

"My friend here appears to be very sick, and I shall want you to sit up with him to-night," said Dinfor.

I turned instantly in my chair, and scowled in my wickedest fashion at the nurse.

"Och, I see; wrong in his head!" the applicant exclaimed.

"So the doctor seems to think," admitted Dinfor. "After he gets quieter, I want him moved to a room in another wing of the hotel."

"Can he walk?"

"Oh, yes! I'll take him over myself," continued Dinfor. At that moment, seeing a hall-boy passing the door, he called, "Here, boy, show us the way to No. 102, and bring this baggage along."

The three passed out—Dinfor, the nurse, and boy.

"I am deeply grateful to you, Mr. Foster," was my remark. "You are the 'squarest' uncle I have ever known. Now, don't let me keep you; Dinfor will come back alone."

“Good-night, Felix ; you have my best wishes,” said he, as we shook hands.

“Thanks, my dear sir ; happy dreams ! Adieu till ten to-morrow !”

As I saw my elder colleague depart, I could not suppress a wish that the night was ended. My usual evening-paper was pushed in under the door, and I sat down to read the news.

V.

TWILIGHT.

“Do you understand the care of disorders of this kind?” asked Dinfor, when he and the nurse had reached the new suite of rooms.

“Yis, sur; I have been imployed for pasht twinty years among such cashes.”

“I am glad that you are familiar with brain-diseases, because—if you carefully observe your patient’s symptoms—you will be able to assist the physicians in arriving at correct conclusions,” suggested Dinfor.

“Is he very viilint?” asked McFinn, with evident concern.

“Not very.”

“Is there fear for meself?” the strong man implored, more anxiously.

“No; I should think a man of your size and experience safe enough,” answered Dinfor, and, remarking, “I’ll go after the patient,” left the room.

The nurse listened until the sound of Dinfor’s departing footsteps died away. Then he thoroughly searched my traveling-bag, and appropriated my cigars.

Supported on the arm of Dinfor, I entered the apartments to find the nurse rummaging the chest of draw-

ers. Wishing to say a few farewell words to me, my colleague dispatched the man to the former room in search of a coat which had been purposely left behind.

“Now, old fellow, you are to ‘go it alone’ until ten to-morrow morning,” said Dinfor.

“I am sorry to have you leave,” was my answer, as I inspected the apartments; “but I’ll get some satisfaction for the loss of your company out of this man before morning. Isn’t he a giant?”

I couldn’t resist looking the nurse all over as he returned and laid the missing garment upon the bed. He was a man of forty-five years, above the medium height, and heavy set; with the exception of a slight lameness in the right leg, the personification of bodily strength. A neck of unusual thickness supported a large head on brawny shoulders; a pair of small, restless, blue eyes protruded from under his forehead, and a shaggy mass of iron-gray hair gave decisive caste to a broad, expressionless face.¹

“I have ordered your supper to be served in the room,” Dinfor explained to the nurse, as a waiter entered with dishes on a tray. “My friend, poor fellow, will not eat anything. I must hurry home now; take good care of your patient, and I shall see that you are well paid. The doctor will call again to-night.”

¹ I may say, in conclusion, that this historical nurse can be found at his home almost any day, and for those who contemplate an escape of this kind he is the best man who could possibly be selected. A contemporary journal obtained a curious narrative from McFinn by sending a reporter to “interview” him after the true nature of the case became known.

The waiter followed Dinfor out, and the nurse became my guardian.

It was a strange situation in which to find one's self—locked up with a cranky old nurse, who might prove to be crazy himself.

“Sorry you don't ate nothin', Falix—och! excuse me, Mистер Somers,” said the nurse, as he devoured his supper. “This beefshtake is of the besht; and, as for thim chops, they look illegant entirely,” he concluded, touching them with his knife.

I sat near a window at the opposite side of the room, watching my man.

The imperturbation with which on that occasion the nurse appeared to recognize the possibilities and the inevitabilities of the situation was a guarantee that he was not a novice in the sick-room. I experienced my first real doubt of final success as I surveyed my keeper, and recognized the fact that it depended upon thoroughly frightening and conquering this man. Apparently, every emergency was provided against. The windows were open, but the shutters were tied together with strong cord; the door was locked, and the nurse carried the key. I gradually turned my head away from the man, as if ignorant of his presence, and thus remained until my companion had concluded his supper.

My guardian then approached, took hold of me, and led me into the adjoining room, where I undressed. I was then put to bed, submitting passively. Neither of us uttered a word. A boy entered, and, as he removed the fragments of the meal, gazed sympathetically at the sufferer, whom he doubtless remembered

kindly because of numerous fees. The gas was lowered to a sick-room gauge—making the apartments look weird and ghostly—and the nurse seated himself at the bedside to smoke one of his patient's cigars. Such was the scene at eleven o'clock.

I lay staring at the ceiling, resting after the labors of the day, and as a preparation for the toils of the night.

VI.

MIDNIGHT.

THE moment seemed opportune. I suddenly sat up in bed, exclaiming :

“Where can I be? What a s-t-r-a-n-g-e place!” Then, as if detecting the nurse’s presence for the first time, I fairly screamed, “What’s that?”

“Oh, don’t bother yerself!” rejoined my companion, with mock sympathy.

“Who are you? Leave the room!” I commanded.

“Excuse me, sur,” he retorted. “I’m here to look afther ye, because ye’re sick.”

FELIX. Really? (*Staring at the nurse.*) Sick! Sick? Ha! ha! you lie, you scoundrel; you’re here for no good purpose!

NURSE. Indeed, mishter, I was ingaged—

FELIX. Stop! What’s your name?

NURSE. John McFinn. Be as asy you kin.

FELIX. Now it all comes back to me. John McFinn, indeed! Shaved your cheeks, colored your red hair; thought I had forgotten you—forgotten Barney, Barney McShane! Ha! ha! never—never!

NURSE. Tut, tut, tut! none o’ that, now. Do quiet yourself. (*Prepares a soothing draught.*) Take this fine medicine.

FELIX (*absently*). Am I losing the drift of the conversation? It's Barney; I never forget. Let me see! I was thinking what an elegant meat-pie a hippopotamus would make where monkeys are entertaining company, and the temperature of a pound of ice culminates properly in the coefficient of expansion; it will then, O men of Athens! be the duty of the Proedros to descend from the rostrum; and, when he has driven out over the shell-road to Lake Pontchartrain, let him bet on the ace when it's in the call of the last three cards and a friend is keeping the game. [*Drowsily.*

Barney! [*The bewildered man is silent.*

Oh, yes, Barney!

NURSE (*aside*). Thank God, the poor *omadhaun* is goin' to shlope!

Barney, humph, indade!

FELIX. Tell me! [*As if in a dream.*

NURSE (*aside*). Let him peg away.

During the slow development of the preceding, I had gradually gathered my feet up under me, and at that instant, without the slightest warning, by one tremendous effort, I sprang from a reclining posture over the foot-board into the middle of the floor, taking sheets and counterpane with me, shrieking in mid-air the name of—

“Barney!”

“I'm here. Fwhwat—will—ye—have?” was the instantaneous response.

Pale and quivering, this strong man—knowing, from his twenty years' experience, the demoniacal strength of a maniac—grasped me firmly by the arm, and, after his first exclamation, volunteered nothing

further. This tableau continued for half a minute, when, in an absent-minded way, I explained—

“I merely wanted a drink of water.”

“Ye can hev it, mishter; I’d do anything for ye.”

The man’s familiarity of manner had disappeared. He dropped into his place as nurse, and hastened to attend to his patient’s slightest want. The small, china-blue eyes keenly watched my face, while the nurse crossed the room and filled a goblet with water.

This was exactly the species of fear I desired to awaken, for I could see that he anticipated another attack of the mania. Dread of vexing me, dread of surprise, dread of being detected watching me—these were the exact emotions he manifested. I felt confident that, if I did not permit his mind to shake off this incubus, it could be turned to good account on the following morning, during the consultation of the “experts in lunacy.”

Noticing that the name of Barney was especially obnoxious to the nurse, I persistently adhered to that form of address.

FELIX (*in bed, sings*):

“The elephant climbs a tree,
Flu-e, flu-e; flu-e, flu-e;

The elephant climbs a tree,
Flu-e, flu-e, flu-e.

The elephant climbs a tree,
To see the bumble-bee.

Oh, wasn’t that a climb!—flu-e, flu-e, flu-e!”

(D. C.)

While this song continued through twenty verses or more, one of my carefully-calculated “accidents”

was perpetrated upon the watcher. I made the interesting test of the power of a strong will, under thorough subjection (through the medium of an exhausted nervous system), to control a weak pulse. The nurse had moved his seat to the head of the bed, and, as if by the merest accident, I flung my arm out in the direction of the watcher. My mind was concentrated upon my pulse, and in a few instants the pulsations were nearly doubled. In a stealthy manner the nurse drew out his watch, and applied his fingers to the invalid's pulse.

NURSE (*aside*). One hundred and eight, be the powers!

FELIX (*absently*). I wonder what time it is?

NURSE. Nearly twelve. Here comes the docthor.

FELIX (*aside*). Now for a relapse.

(*Suddenly; aloud.*) Oh! I almost forgot it; I must go to *that* yacht-race. The start is to be made at one o'clock; I can't lose a moment. [*Springs out of bed.*

I'll go by this window.

Landing on the floor at the side of the bed farthest from the nurse, at a bound I entered the adjoining room, mounted a bed, and sprang upon the sill of a small window placed high up in the wall, as if to jump out. All this was the work of an instant, and I had to wait until the clumsy nurse could overtake and capture me.

"Murther! murther!—Watch!" fairly shrieked the nurse, pursuing me. "Don't shtrike me; plase don't; that's a good young felly," he entreated.

A wild furore was heard in the hall, followed by violent knocking at the door.

“Come down; I say, come!” repeated the nurse, oblivious of the clamoring crowd outside.

He finally climbed upon the bed, and, seizing me around the waist, carried me by force into the main room. Having covered me up in bed, he dropped into a sitting posture upon its edge, thoroughly exhausted.

“Shall we break in the door?” the doctor called, from without.

“No, to be shure; I’ll open it,” retorted the nurse, throwing off the stupor which had overpowered his senses.

A gaping crowd of half-dressed guests, clerks, porters, and boys, followed Dr. Johnson into the apartments. Several ladies, whose curiosity had kept them awake and dressed, slowly came upon the scene.

I confess that the situation was worse than I expected—and its extreme ludicrousness made it necessary for me to turn upon my face and take a large bite of the pillow in my teeth to smother a furious fit of laughter. The scene that followed was worth seeing.

NURSE. Look at him! he’s in convulshins.

(*Tramping about the room.*) I musht have anither man. I’ll not be left a mortal moment alone wud him.

(*To the doctor.*) My life isn’t safe at-all-at-all.

(*To himself.*) I wish I was out o’ this; oh, holy mother!

(*To the guests.*) Look where he struck me! See me arms; I’m all black and blue wud him.

(*To the hotel-clerk.*) You’re the boss? Sind up assishtance.

And what did I shrame so fur, is it? Indade!

Do yez see that windy? (*Points to it.*) Well, sur, he had laped up into it, and was shlidin' out whin I grabbed him jisht in toime, or he'd iv been dashed to pieces on the ground below.

CLERK. I guess not; that window opens into a side-hall on this floor. I'll go down and send up a porter.

Mr. McFinn was working hard for a large fee, and the dim light of the room prevented the detection of his falsehoods. The dreadful idea of the scene which had preceded his entrance, gathered by the doctor from the nurse's words, settled all his doubts. Possibly he may have reasoned that, "when a man in sickness turns boxer and attacks his nurse,"¹ the brain is certainly affected. He felt my pulse, and found it beating one hundred and twenty—a natural result of my excitement.

"He doesn't look dangerous," said a guest in his shirt-sleeves, addressing the panting and excited nurse. "He is perfectly quiet now, and, were he ever so violent, a person of your size ought to be able to manage him."

"'Tain't any use of ye talkin' to me; I must hev some wan wud me," retorted the man addressed.

"I shall send a medical student over from my office to remain the rest of the night with you, and this porter will keep you company until he arrives. The room must be cleared," said the doctor, rising to go.

NURSE. Leddies and gintlemen, I must kape the pashint from excitement; ye musht lave him alone now.

¹ "Ut lethargicus hic, cum fit pugil, et medicum urget."—HORACE, *Satires*, liber ii., iii., 30.

FIRST LADY. Such a pity! Just like my poor brother-in-law, whom I told you about this afternoon.

SECOND LADY. Looks like a "nice" young man, too. [*Ladies retire.*]

HALL-BOY (*to porter*). Take care, Mike; don't let the young cove get the best of you.

PORTER. Trust me for that.

[*Boy and guests go out.*]

DOCTOR. I'll send the medical student right over.

[*Doctor leaves.*]

NURSE. Do, fur the love o' Hiven!

There was no need of wasting brain-tissue on the porter: the doctor had no sooner gone than I prepared to enjoy a rest. Turning to the nurse, I said, "Give me one of my cigars from your pocket, and a light."

"Yis, sur; I—will," was the confused rejoinder.

I propped myself up in bed and smoked. The porter took a seat at one of the windows; the manly courage of the nurse returned, and a show of quiet prevailed in the hotel. The door was left slightly ajar, and the nurse stationed himself beside it, either as a guard, or that he might escape into the hall in case of danger—leaving the porter to the mercy of the madman.

The coming of the medical student created a new and unforeseen obstacle, and the difficulty of deceiving him was instantly recognized. After his arrival—to anticipate slightly—I remained perfectly quiet for half an hour, studying the face of the nascent doctor, and determining upon a plan of action. At the end of that time I renewed the entertainment according to programme—trusting only slightly to accident.

“I was sent over by Dr. Johnson,” said the student, as he entered. “He woke me up out of a sound sleep.”

“Glad ye’ve come, sur,” said the keeper, with growing confidence. Turning to the porter, he dismissed him with a wave of the hand, “Ye can go.”

An interval of half an hour passed, in which, having finished my smoke, I again lay down, and pretended to sleep, until the roar of a passing fire-engine on Broadway was heard without.

FELIX (*sits up: listens*). Is that the steamboat I was to take?

STUDENT (*with an effort, soberly*). I guess so.

FELIX (*resignedly, dropping back on the pillow*). Well; let me have it, then.

NURSE (*aside: grins*). Wants to take a shteamboat; thinks it somethin’ to dhrink. (*To student.*) Ax him would he take it in a glass, or wud a shpoon? It’ll be rale shport; ax him.

STUDENT. I shall do nothing of the kind.

[*A milk-cart jingles along the street.*

FELIX (*sits up as before*). Another steamboat; but (*sadly*) it’s not for me. [*Slowly gets up: walks the floor, until a heavy wagon rumbles along the street.*

FELIX. What! still another steamboat? That’s very strange. Oh, what wouldn’t I give for one hour in the open air! (*Quickly.*) I think I’ll go out and try it. (*Nurse springs to the door.*) No, thanks; you need not open it. I’ve changed my mind.

STUDENT (*to nurse*). Just let him alone and he will walk for an hour yet; I must go down-stairs to get a cup of tea. It’s after five o’clock! I’ll soon return.

[*Goes out.*

NURSE (*aside*). I'll kape me ould shtand at the dure.

[*Sits down: door ajar.*]

FELIX (*stops walking*). I never was so watched. (*A wagon rattles along the street.*) That's the steamboat for me; I'll go at once.

I rushed wildly toward the nurse, who glided into the hall, closing the door after him; fainter and fainter, as the distance increased, grew his screams:

“Watch! Watch! Watch! Watch!”

This was the end. I went to bed for the rest of the night with calm confidence in the efficacy of that scoundrel's screams. “If the doctors will not send me to Baldrick's of their own choice, the proprietor of this hotel can afford to pay them liberally for doing so,” thought I.

The night-clerk of the hotel and the medical student hurried up-stairs and entered the room, followed by my nurse. The dangerous “pashint” was discovered quietly staring at the ceiling.

“You're a coward!” ejaculated the thoroughly incensed clerk, addressing McFinn. “He's as quiet as a child. All this row for nothing!” Turning to the student, he continued, “Don't you leave this nurse alone again, or he'll have the house in the hands of the police.”

Daylight came at last. A boy responded to the bell, breakfast was served, and the patient ate heartily. The hotel corridors echoed with the footsteps of guests *en route* to the breakfast-room, and I must do human nature the justice to say that several rapped to ask:

“How does the young man come on?”

VII.

MORNING.

“GOOD MORNING, doctor,” said the medical student, rising to greet his employer as he entered. “We are glad enough to see you come.”

“How did the patient pass the night?” inquired Dr. Johnson.

“Very badly—no rest at all,” replied the young leech. “With your permission, I’ll now go home and sleep”—and he vanished forever from my sight.

“An uncommon bad night; but I managed him be kindness, stringth, and strathegy—wud firmness,” added the nurse.

“I hope you weren’t rough with him.”

“Och, no, indade! I hurt the poor young gintleman? shtrike him? Surely, yez don’t mane it?”

“What do you think of the case, Mr. McFinn?”

“Roarin’, ragin’ crazy, sur; there’s no other way of iexplinashun.”

“His pulse is not so rapid now,” mused the physician, as he fingered my wrist.

“Augh; shure, for he’s tiard out.”

“I’ll visit another patient on the next floor,” said the doctor. “I shall soon return.”

The physician's departure was soon succeeded by the entrance of Dinfor. Pleasing was the sight of his face to me that morning!

"How's your patient, Mr. McFinn?" he inquired, exchanging glances with me.

"Worse, worse; a thousand 'oimes worse," the nurse replied, with agonizing energy.

DINFOR. Was he violent?

NURSE. Viilint, is it? There's thim that will have rayshun sometimes; but this Falix, be Saint Patdrick, was beyont all conthrol, he was. The way he abushed me was enough, so it was, to make any man forget his pious raisin'. (*Displays imaginary bruises.*) I'd rither 'tind a cashe of the black shmall-pox.

To amuse Dinfor, I indulged in a relapse—introducing the "struggle for freedom." It is needless to say that the nurse was rather more courageous than on previous occasions, and that "the patient" was pacified with less difficulty. As for wretched Dinfor, he suddenly found something remarkably attractive in the adjoining room, and remained there for more than a minute. When he reappeared, there were traces of tears in his eyes, and a nervous uncertainty about his usually firm mouth.

"Why, Mr. Dinfor, I am glad to see you," said Dr. Johnson, as he reëntered the room.

"Can you give me any encouragement?" asked the patient's friend.

"None."

"He passed a wretched night, I am told?"

"Miserable. No doubt now remains as to the nature of the attack."

“ Will you, then, as soon as possible, call in the services of a colleague, merely to comply with the law, for your judgment seems to be carefully formed, in order that my friend may be placed under treatment at some institution where his cure may be effected ? ”

“ Yes, I think it would be best. The young man has evidently taken a violent dislike to this nurse, and should not remain under his care another night.”

“ I would wish, then, if possible, to avoid the necessity of keeping him longer in the hotel or under this nurse’s charge. Can’t it be arranged ? ”

“ Certainly ; I shall send for Dr. Baker at once,” returned the physician, as he rang the bell.

A servant was dispatched immediately with a note written on the back of the medical man’s card.

“ Is your colleague an expert in lunacy cases ? ” queried Dinfor.

“ Yes ; he makes insanity his special study,” was the rejoinder.

“ Cheer up, old fellow, you’re all right now,” said Dinfor, with a look of honest sympathy. “ While the consultation takes place, doctor, I’ll go after the young man’s uncle.”

I was face to face with the medical tests and alone with strangers to my scheme.

The coming of the expert in lunacy was momentarily expected, and not without great anxiety, for, if my deception failed me, “ the game was up.” I lay thinking earnestly, not less of my prospects than of this yet unseen personage, who was “ down for ” a part much more interesting to me than he could have even guessed. “ Will he play the *rôle* to the utmost limit of its worth ? ”

I wondered; "or will he hurry through his lines in a mechanical, super-like fashion?" In my mind's eye there was a picture of a venerable personage of portly mien—bald as to his head. I indulged in much speculation regarding his methods and his actions. After making his *entrée* he would carefully adjust his spectacles, and, with some talk about the weather or the next election, begin an exhaustive examination, which included every test known to science for ascertaining the exact status of a disordered brain. Would he do this? If he confined himself to the tests laid down in the authorities, I had little to fear. There was one, however, that gave me great anxiety in my weak condition, namely, the test by chloroform. If that were attempted forcibly, I resolved to give my persecutors a scene they would remember. If a handkerchief, saturated with the drug, were placed over my nostrils, I must either stop breathing or fling it at the nurse. The risk of submitting to this test in the absence of Dinfor was too great to assume.¹ While there existed very little likelihood that this last resort of the craft would be applied to me, such an emergency had been provided for. It had been agreed to submit to it only in Dinfor's presence; then, as consciousness returned, he was to put me fully on my guard before I spoke by exclaiming at the bedside, "What a ghastly face!" This ejaculation, we had reasoned, would have been

¹ This test, I am aware, is rarely made except in the cases of criminals who are believed to be feigning insanity to escape justice. Its special efficacy consists in the fact that, when "the madman" awakes out of the stupor induced by the drug, he has wholly forgotten his ruse and disports himself naturally.

very near the truth, and therefore unlikely to have attracted attention. But Dinfor had strangely gone away, and, alone with two physicians—one an “expert”—I had before me a hard piece of work. My pulse was under perfect control, but I was very anxious, and wished the examination over.

Imagine my surprise and relief, in the midst of these worrying thoughts, as I saw enter the room, not an aged, deliberate practitioner, but a tall, nervous man of thirty-five.

With all the dash of a young physician, he laid aside his hat and precipitately devoted himself to my case.

I affected to take no notice of his entrance, concentrating my whole energies on maintaining a strong pulse. I knew perfectly well how the two doctors would begin. “First, the pulse,” I self-communed; “then they will want to see my tongue, and see it they shall, for, if it were not sufficiently ‘coated’ previously, the piece of honey-soap which I have just chewed up will fix it. But, after that—what?”

“A case of brain-disorder,” said my physician, in a low voice, as he welcomed his colleague. “I have sent for you to obtain your opinion.”

“The symptoms of nervous excitement, are they pronounced?” asked Dr. Baker, the “expert.”

“Clearly marked,” replied his comrade, as they approached my bedside.

“He looks very feverish. How do you feel, young man?” politely queried the expert.

I regretted much that duty compelled me to stare him in the face so unkindly.

“He has been comparatively passive for the past few minutes,” explained Johnson.

“I make fifty pulsations in the first half-minute, and sixty in the second?” quietly remarked the “expert” Baker.

“That quite agrees with my observations; from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty pulsations per minute,” answered my doctor.

“Very high. How’s his tongue? Let me see into your mouth, young man?” urged the expert, finally addressing me. “As I feared, coated with froth. A very serious case, indeed.”

The examination was ended, and the two wise men retired to seats in another part of the room. The expert turned to Mr. McFinn, and asked an opinion of the case, and an account of the patient’s conduct.

The entrance of Mr. Foster and Dinfor—I am glad to say, in behalf of Christian morals—cut short the nurse’s account of the night’s vigil. After the introductions had taken place, the conversation at once had reference to me.

UNCLE. What is your conclusion, gentlemen?

EXPERT. I fully agree with Dr. Johnson: your nephew ought to be sent to an asylum at once.

DOCTOR. Yes, that is our conclusion.

DINFOR (*sadly*). Poor Felix! [*Approaches bedside.*]

UNCLE. In that case, had we not better drive at once to the court-room and have the papers drawn? The judge will soon leave his office for the day, and, unless we procure the documents, the patient will have

to remain another night under the nurse's care ; and this, you intimate, doctor, is not desirable.

DOCTOR. We had better go at once.

EXPERT. I see no reason for further delay.

UNCLE. I wish to be guided entirely by your judgment, remember.

“Glorious! It's all over!” Dinfor whispered in my ear as the uncle and physicians walked into the hall.

I deliberately turned over in bed and went to sleep.

VIII.

L A W .

THE police-court room was tenanted only by a clerk, who sat at a desk, writing up his records of the morning's session.

Mr. Foster, Dinfor, and the physicians entered, and, approaching the scribe, "the uncle" asked:

"Is Judge Box in his room, sir?"

"He is ; take seats," carelessly rejoined the clerk, striking a bell. "I'll send for him.—Officer, step inside and tell his honor that several gentlemen are here on business."

The policeman touched his cap and disappeared.

The judge entered from the left, a cap on the back of his head, a cigar in a corner of his mouth, which almost stuck into one of his eyes, and with his hands buried in his breeches' pockets. As he came upon the scene, he continued speaking to his friends within his private office, through the open door: "He's a 'rum' boy, Jimmy is. 'The 'cursed lamp-post wouldn't get off the sidewalk?' Haw, haw! he'll fetch up here some Sunday morning, and d—n me if he don't get 'sent up.'" Turning to the uncle, he said, quickly, "Well?"

"I wish to obtain an order for the commitment of

my nephew to Dr. Baldrick's asylum," explained Mr. Foster. "The physicians are here to make oath to the necessary papers."

His honor took the cigar from his mouth, looked at the floor, tilted back on his heels, and chuckled once more over the "joke on Jimmy" as he said to his clerk:

"A' right; make that out."¹

CLERK (*to physicians*). Please stand up to this desk. [*Judge walks the floor.*]

(*To doctor.*) Your name and address?

DOCTOR. Dromio Johnson, Great Smith Street.

CLERK (*to expert*). And yours?

EXPERT. Antipholus Baker, Lexington Avenue.

CLERK. The patient's name?

UNCLE. Felix Somers.

CLERK. All of you listen. [*Reads:*]

[2d R. S., 5 Ed., part I., chap. xx. : title 3 : Art. 1, § 448.—Laws 1860, ch. 508, § 6.]

Police Court, Second District.

State of New York, City and County of New York, ss.

Dromio Johnson, of Great Smith Street, in the City of New York, Physician, and Antipholus Baker, of

¹ It should be stated, for the honor of the American bench, that the magistrate who signed these documents in so careless a fashion was attached to one of the lower police-courts. The days of Tammany Hall had just ended, and not all of the incompetent public servants had been removed. The first work of the next Legislature was to raise the power of granting commitments to the grade of a much higher court, so that to-day cases of this kind are brought before men who have their reputations to care for, and who could hardly afford to certify to "a personal examination" which they had not made.

Lexington Avenue, in said City, Physician, being duly sworn, severally say, That Felix Somers is Insane, and is so far disordered in his senses as to endanger his own person, and the persons and property of others, if permitted to go at large.

That they have personally examined said Somers, and are satisfied that he is afflicted with such a vitiated understanding, and alienation of mind, as disables him from judging correctly between good and evil, and of the consequences of his acts, amounting to an absolute disposition of the free and natural agency of the the human mind.

(Signature)

DROMIO JOHNSON.

(Signature)

ANTIPHOLUS BAKER.

Sworn to before me this 3d day of August, 1872

JOHN BOX, *Police Justice.*

JUDGE (*to clerk*). They have signed the affidavit?

CLERK. Yes, your honor. [*Hands judge the paper.*]

JUDGE (*to physicians*). You do solemnly swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that the statements contained in this affidavit, as subscribed by you, are true, to the best of your knowledge and belief?

DOCTOR. I do.

EXPERT. I do.

JUDGE (*to clerk*). I'll sign the order of commitment now; you can fill it out afterward. [*Signs.*]

(*To uncle and physicians.*) Excuse me, sirs.

[*Goes out.*]

CLERK (*to uncle*). What asylum is your relative to enter?

UNCLE. Dr. Baldric's.

CLERK (*to physicians*). Listen, and tell me if I have all the names right.

COMMITMENT—INSANITY.

Second District Court, Jefferson Market.

State of New York, City and County of New York, ss.
 TO THE POLICEMEN AND TO THE WARDEN OF THE
 BALDRIC LUNATIC ASYLUM:

WHEREAS, it appears to the undersigned, a Police Justice in and for the said City, by the evidence under oath and in writing of Dromio Johnson, Great Smith Street, and of Antipholus Baker, Lexington Avenue, TWO REPUTABLE PHYSICIANS, who say:

That Felix Somers is INSANE, and, by reason of such Insanity, is so far disordered in his senses as to endanger his own person, or the person or property of others, if permitted to go at large; and being satisfied, upon examination, that it would be dangerous to permit said Somers to go at large:

THEREFORE, in the name of the People of the State of New York, you, the said Policemen and Warden, are hereby Commanded to cause the said Somers to be apprehended, and to be safely locked up and confined in the Baldric Lunatic Asylum, in the City of New York (a secure place, approved by a standing order or resolution of the Supervisors of the City and County of New York as a proper Institution for the confinement of Lunatics), and to be dealt with according to law.

Given under my hand and seal this 3d day of August, A. D. 1872.

JOHN BOX, *Police Justice.*

It had not taken long to swear away a man's wits, to deprive him of his liberty, and to condemn him to dreary exile in a mad-house and among maniacs. It was only a matter of ten minutes, two affidavits, and two legal blanks. The magistrate's time was precious; acquaintances and political friends were waiting for

him in his private room; visitors having business with the court were something of a bore; and it no doubt appeared highly impolite to question the ability of the physicians or the motives of the kinsman. The applicant was a total stranger to the court, and yet no questions were asked; neither his name nor address was given—in fact, he had scarcely said twenty words before the clerk of the court was enjoined to “make that out.” The magistrate had never seen the physicians; they might be “reputable,” as the law required, or they might be venal quacks; but of their character and professional eminence the court was in a state of uninquisitive ignorance, and made no effort to enlighten itself.

Thus was a sane man sworn into a maniac’s cell in the city of New York, at the request of a stranger, and on the oaths of two unknown physicians, one of whom had felt the patient’s pulse, been with him twenty minutes, and agreed with the theory and views of a professional acquaintance; while the other, “an expert,” in hopeless embarrassment at the singularity of the case, had been prejudiced against the young man’s sanity by the fears and falsehoods of a panic-stricken nurse. The certificate had been sworn to and signed in accordance with the Laws of the State of New York, 1842, page 146, sections 20–30; the clerk of the court had “made *that* out” in good form, and the court had affixed his signature; after which his honor had retired to hear the remainder of “the joke on Jimmy,” while he finished his cigar.

CLERK (*to physicians*). That is all.

(*To uncle.*) You will take possession of this warrant.

UNCLE. It will, of course, be necessary for me to obtain a permit from the board of managers of the asylum?

CLERK. Not at all. With this warrant in your possession, you could arrest the person named in it anywhere in this State, and the physician in charge of any asylum within the corporate limits of this city would be bound by law to pay heed to the magistrate's order—fees, one dollar.

UNCLE (*pays clerk*). I am very glad to know that.

(*To physicians.*) Will you ride back with us to the hotel?

DOCTOR. Yes, with pleasure.

EXPERT. With thanks.

DINFOR (*aside*). Heavens! how easy it has been!

The court-room cleared, and the machinery of justice stopped.

IX.

A HAPPY LANDLORD.

THIS was an afternoon which I have no doubt the landlord of the Grand Llama will long remember. A carriage stood in waiting before the private entrance on Broadway. Mr. Foster, holding my arm, Mr. Dinfor, the two physicians, the nurse, landlord, and a porter with the baggage, emerged from the door; while the faces of guests and servants appeared at many of the front windows—I should have liked to thank the lady who had spoken of me as a “nice young man,” but the opportunity was not offered.

“Are we ready to go?” the uncle asked of Dinfor.

“Yes; all bills are paid,” he rejoined, assisting me into the carriage.

“There is not the slightest necessity of taking the nurse along,” replied Mr. Foster, to a suggestion from the physicians. Turning to the driver, he said:

“To the Baldric Asylum; don’t lose any time.”

We were driven off, amid the farewell greetings of the physicians and by-standers.

Our carriage took its place among the throng of

vehicles on Broadway, and not a word was exchanged between us until five blocks had been traversed. The patient at once became perfectly rational, and the long ride to the asylum, although cheerful enough, was unenlivened by any incident having even remote bearing upon this narrative.

In concluding this portion of the story, I may say that I have become fully impressed with the easy manner in which, for a good round fee, the affidavits of two disreputable doctors, belonging to that species of doubtful practitioners who employ a certain class of journals to advertise their calling, could have been secured. This would have satisfied the law, for the committing magistrate could not be expected to know the standing of all the physicians in the American metropolis (and such knowledge would certainly not be looked for from a justice who would sign a warrant "on personal examination," when he had not asked even the name of the person applying for it); yet it would only have proved that two doctors were venal. It had therefore been determined from the first that no undue advantage should be taken of the lunacy enactments by employing either ignorant or corrupt physicians. On the contrary, the law was tested under conditions entirely in its favor. The long course of study and two days of ceaseless anxiety and exertion were gone through for the sole purpose of reaching some definite ideas as to the general knowledge existing among the medical faculty regarding lunacy disorders. The two men who appended their signatures to the preceding affidavit were able, conscientious physicians of good standing in their profession, but—as is evident—unfit

to enforce the lunacy law. Every representation made to them from first to last was absolutely truthful, and they were left to draw their own inferences from the conduct of the patient.

I had been traveling South, had been ill in New Orleans, had written the fact from that city to Dinfor, had stopped apart from my associates at the Grand Llama upon reaching New York, had refused to recognize an old friend, and had been found by the hotel-clerk acting in the strange manner described to the doctor. The amount which the glowing falsehoods of the nurse contributed toward forming the opinions of the physicians cannot be charged either to my coadjutors or to me. He was the choice of the doctor who first took charge of the case. As the younger friend, Dinfor may have manifested undue haste in wishing to have the patient sent to Dr. Baldric's; but—granted that this be true—his zeal was moderated by the caution of Mr. Foster, who (more impartial than justice) insisted that the physicians should carefully examine the case. No malice was entertained against either the medical profession or its two members who signed the affidavits; and it has been a source of sincere gratification to The Three Conspirators to know that this *exposé* and the consequent prominence which the two physicians obtained have laid the foundations of their separate fortunes.

It may be interesting to know what was the cost of imprisoning a sane man. I append the expense account:

Paid 15 days' board, Grand Llama Hotel.	\$70 00
Paid brandy and peppermint.	50
Paid Dr. Dromio Johnson.	20 00
Paid Dr. Ant. Baker, as expert.	10 00
Paid medical student.	5 00
Paid John McFinn, nurse.	10 00
Paid hack-hire.	15 00
Paid fees, fares, gratuities.	12 50
Paid Baldric Asylum Company three months' board in advance, at \$20 per week.	260 00
Total cost.	<u>\$403 00</u>

The following letter, addressed to Mr. Dinfor two weeks later, naturally belongs to this narrative; and, having obtained its writer's permission, I cannot resist the temptation to insert it here:

"MY DEAR MR. DINFOR: Doubtless, no part of your object was to do injustice to the physicians whose names figure so prominently in Mr. Somers's narrative. I therefore request to be heard in my own defense.

"I was called in to this case by Dr. Johnson. After standing some minutes by the bedside—as 'the patient' affected irritability at the presence of strangers, and unwillingness to converse—I withdrew to a window, and sat observing him while my colleague visited another patient in the hotel. It is only Mr. Somers's due to say that his imitation of insanity was such as to indicate a high order of dramatic talent. I was in the room nearly or quite half an hour. His case was evidently not one of *delirium tremens*, nor the effect of drugging. It was not the delirium of a fever, nor of acute brain-disease: it was one of two things, either real or feigned mania (!). Now, under some circumstances—as, for instance, in investigating the sanity or insanity of a criminal—the latter possibility would have demanded consideration. But, I ask you, with what degree would it present itself to the mind of an ex-

amining surgeon in such a case as this? What motive could be thought of as likely to induce the deception?

“You could scarcely expect even an ‘expert’—unless gifted with a remarkably fertile imagination—to forecast all the possibilities of modern journalistic enterprise. As for my diagnosis of the case, I might defend it by citations from the highest medical authorities, were I not sure that your friend, ‘the patient,’ is already acquainted with the works. Therefore, I subscribe myself,

Yours, very respectfully,

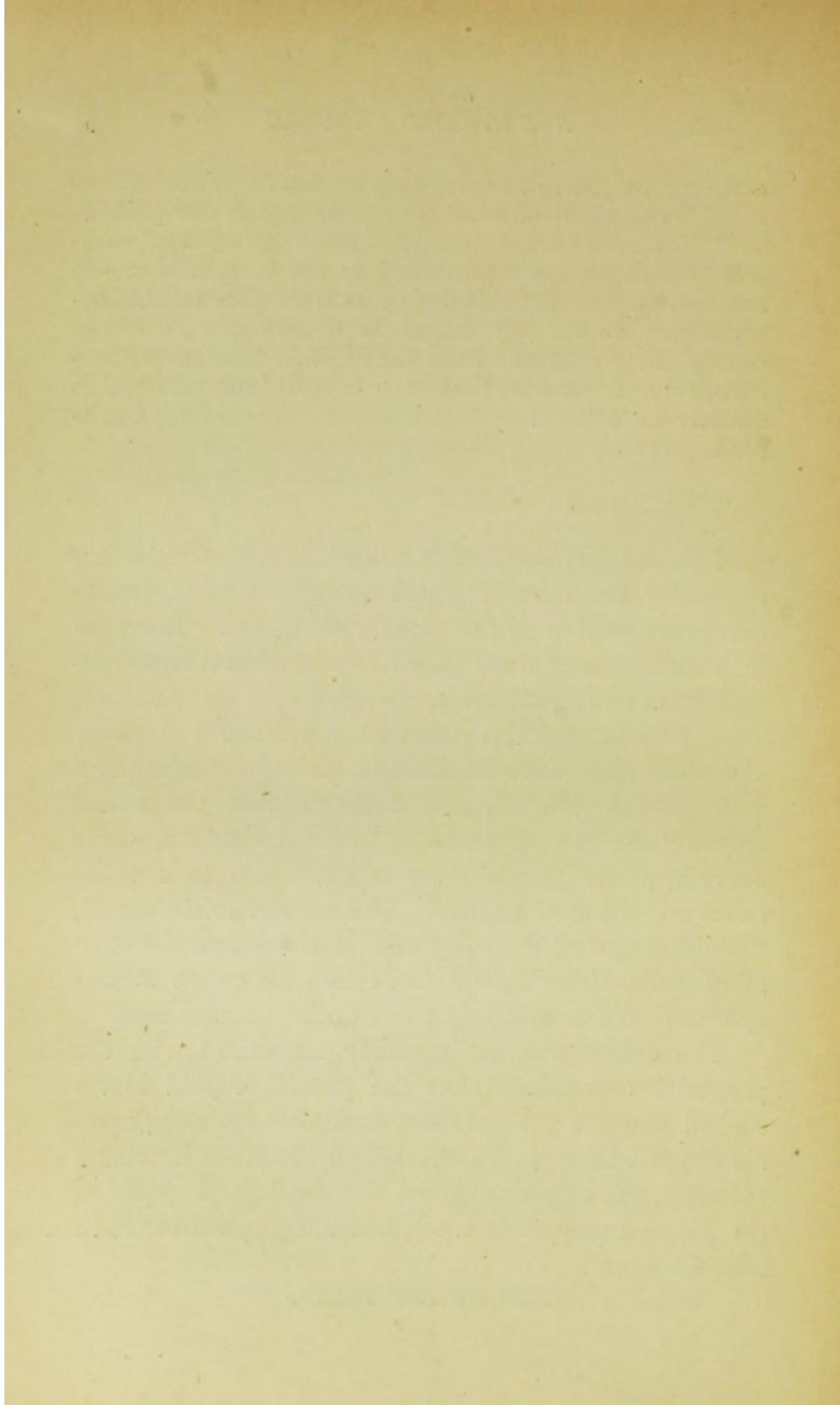
“ANTIPHOLUS BAKER.

“NEW YORK, August 28th.”

I should, perhaps, make one remark, in conclusion, regarding the reasons which prompted me to make this investigation in the manner described. The public prints had contained affidavits from several former attendants in the institution, charging that many abuses, more or less grave, existed in the Baldric Asylum. The chief physician, Dr. Baldric, visited the office of a metropolitan journal, and insisted that the editor should “send a young man up to the institution, where every opportunity would be afforded him to see the exact condition of affairs.” If I am not misinformed, the obliging doctor kindly offered to become the commissioner’s *cicerone*, and to explain the entire *modus operandi* of transforming a lunatic into a sane man.

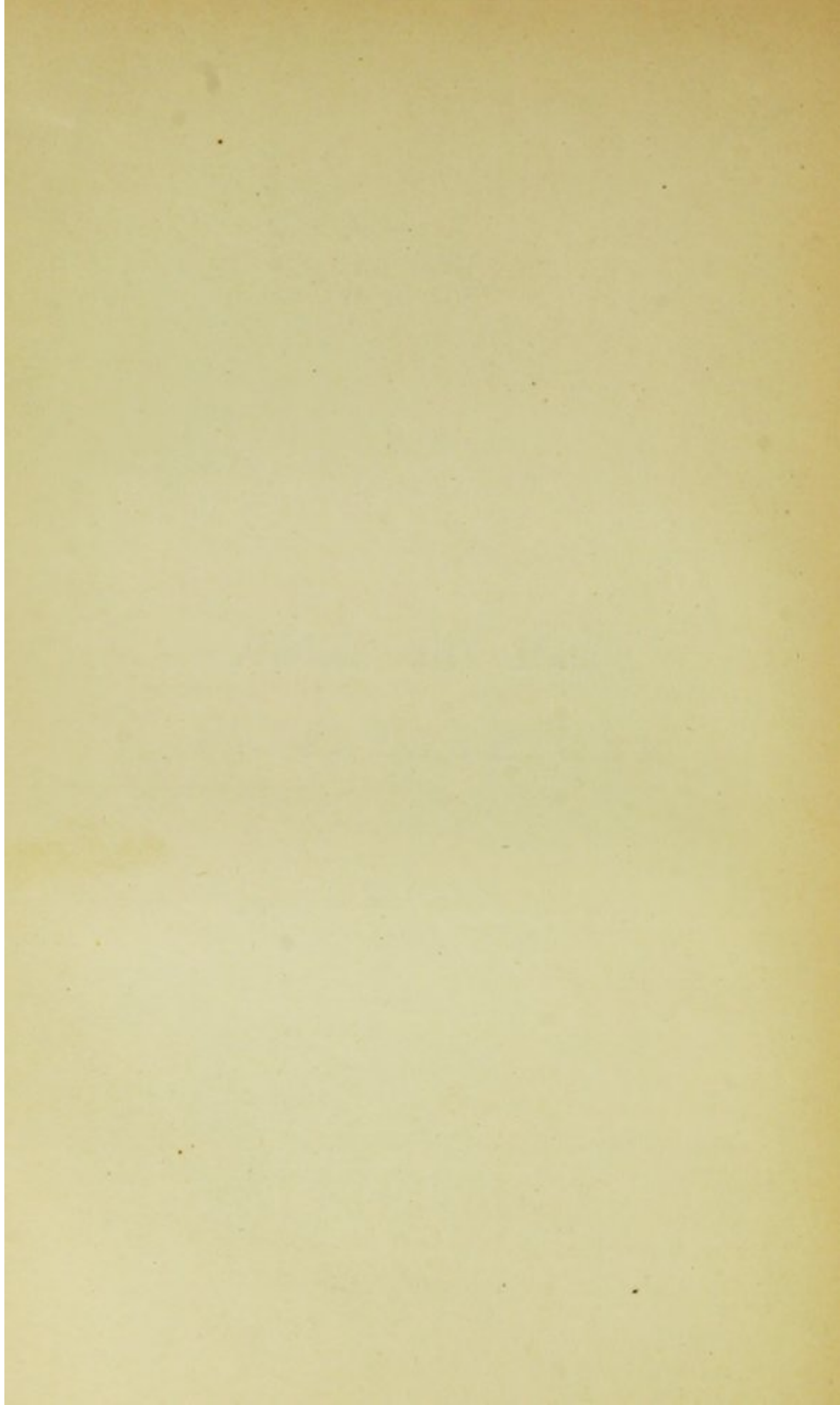
The editor was not specially impressed with the proposition as offered, but the physician paid him a second and yet a third visit, each time insisting upon his request being granted. When the visits became a nuisance, the editor accepted the doctor’s proposition (in his own way, it is true), and telegraphed to me in New Orleans.

END OF THE FARCE.



BOOK THE SECOND.

M A D M O R T A L I T Y .



BOOK THE SECOND.

M A D M O R T A L I T Y.

TWILIGHT was fast bringing to an end a delightful August day when a carriage entered the park surrounding Dr. Baldrick's institution.

The Three Conspirators were close to final victory or humiliating defeat.

The scenes were changing from a cheerful suite of rooms in a usually quiet hotel to a dark, damp cell in Bedlam.

Now for a drama of the Emotional School! In it another class of artists sustained the various rôles, while the leading actor of the farce passively looked on.

* * *

I did not realize the difficulties of the new part as I had those of the character in the farce; on the contrary, I imagined it much easier to look on, while others enacted melodrama, than to study the "business" for myself.

In common with almost every citizen of the metropolis, I was acquainted with the location of Dr. Baldrick's Asylum on the Bloomingdale Road. The site

was elevated, cool, and pleasant. A lawn of unusual evenness, garnished with bright beds of blooming and blossoming plants, surrounded the structure. Indeed, on former occasions, the dingy, brown-stone buildings—half hidden among the shrubbery and foliage about the spacious grounds—had looked almost inviting. But, like the majority of the city's inhabitants, I never had visited it or any other asylum; worst of all, I did not even know that the quarters to which all newly-arrived patients were assigned were in a dismal brick structure far in the rear and beyond the sight of all these flowering shrubs and gladioles.

The carriage halted before the door, and, after pressing the hand of each of my colleagues, I sank back into the shadows of the closed carriage—"relapsed."

It was not to be expected that, in the absence of any knowledge of our enterprise, the physician in charge should be aware of the arrival of an amateur lunatic, who hoped to secure an engagement at his establishment. To me the whole scheme seemed a *Midsummer's Dream*. I was announced to this acting manager as a poor, demented patient—not in my real character of "Moonshine"—and he, as considerate Theseus, agreed to give me audience.

We were all shown into the reception-room of the grand old building.

The special prologue for this act was spoken.

The police justice's draft upon the hospitalities of the home was produced.

Dr. Quotidian, the physician in charge at the time, heard the former with a smile of pleasure, but, while honoring the latter with a nod, he intimated in the

most gracious terms that theirs was a private, not a public, boarding-house. Therefore, he was obliged to convince himself that his guests could settle their board-bills.

My faithful coadjutor, Mr. Foster, was ready with his answer, and, as he counted out the requisite \$260, said :

“ I wish to leave the young man with you to-night ; here is the thirteen weeks’ board-money, and I will become responsible for all damages to the building or the furniture.”

This was satisfactory. I was engaged for ninety days, more or less.

Turning to me, Dr. Quotidian went through the formality of placing his fingers upon my pulse.

“ What is your name ? ” he asked.

“ Felix Somers,” I replied.

“ Well, Felix, how are you feeling to-day ? ”

“ I don’t know ; about the same, I suppose,” was my slow and deliberate reply.

“ Just such cases as yours are treated here ; you will soon be well again,” said the doctor, in conclusion.

The examination by the physician occupied less than one minute, and consisted simply in an attempted guess at the movement of the pulse. No information was solicited or volunteered in regard to the features of the case ; no inquiries were made regarding my temperament, constitution, personal habits, or the probable causes of derangement ; and not the slightest reference was made to the physicians who had signed the certificate. An awkward question regarding my occupation was, indeed, asked, but was cleverly par-

ried by Dinfor's answer that I had been canoeing for three months on the Mississippi. The physician was not informed that my letters were appearing almost daily in the greatest of American metropolitan newspapers. He may have inferred that I was a "gentleman of leisure," if he took the trouble to think at all; but his chief anxiety seemed to centre in the payment of the money, for, when that was arranged, he had no more questions to ask.

My pockets were then quietly emptied of their contents.

I shook hands with my two colleagues, and saw them depart with the first thrill of imprisonment that I had ever known.

* * *

On the following morning, to anticipate only slightly, my two coadjutors called upon Mr. Samuel Someuse, a member of the Board of Directors of the Baldric Asylum, to obtain a permit. As has been seen, they had succeeded in lodging me in the institution without a permit from any one of the Asylum Committee. The director who was thus applied to did not express any surprise that the doctor had in receiving me acted in defiance of a very old and proper regulation, but simply said that he would be very happy to sign the document. He then filled out the following blank, which was accordingly signed by all parties to the transaction:

"NEW YORK, August 4, 1872.

"Upon the admission of Felix Somers, of New York, into the Baldric Asylum for the Insane, I engage to pay to that Institution, through its Warden, twenty dollars per week for board and medical and moral

treatment. I engage to make compensation for all damages done to the windows, bedding, and furniture; to provide sufficient clothing for this patient; for a removal when discharged; and, in case of death, to defray the expenses of burial.

“ (Signed) ZACHARIAH FOSTER.”

“ For and in consideration of the admission and support of the above-named Felix Somers in the asylum, and of one dollar paid to me by the Baldric Asylum Company, the receipt of which I hereby acknowledge, I become responsible for the fulfillment of the above engagement.

“ (Signed) G. WASHINGTON WILD, *Warden.*”

“ Admit Felix Somers as a patient into the asylum, taking 260 dollars for thirteen weeks' board-money in advance, and the usual bond; the legal warrant for commitment required by the revised statutes will be furnished you before the reception of the patient.

“ (Signed) SAMUEL SOMEUSE,
“ *Of the Asylum Committee.*”

This was sent to the Baldric Institution that afternoon, and there ended the business dealings between “ parties of the first part and parties of the second part.”

* * *

I was no sooner alone than I recognized the change which had taken place in my relations with the world!

Up to that moment I had been most efficiently “ supported,” and the struggle had been that of three individuals working effectively together against a nurse, two physicians, a police justice, a half-dozen asylum directors, and an expert in lunacy. Now it became a single-handed work of diplomacy opposed to an insti-

tution honored by the world for a century of existence and its millions of wealth, three doctors, ten attendants, and nearly two hundred patients—*all* more or less deranged.¹ My relative probabilities of accomplishing what I had attempted were, however, exactly reversed—wholly in my favor. Working on the outside to get into the mad-house, the chances of detection were against me; now, being inside, the prospect was that I could remain as long as my board was paid, and no blunders were committed which should set inquiry on foot. The possibility of recognition by visit-

¹ The author insists upon retaining the word *all*, notwithstanding strenuous opposition. He declares that a physician or a nurse, from constant association with the insane, soon acquires a morbid state of mind, which in time becomes dangerous to himself, and totally unfits him for the care of others. He holds, therefore, that the attendants should be carefully selected, paid good wages, and frequently changed; that there should be a sufficient number of doctors to permit each and every one of them to air his brain during at least three months of every year; and he further suggests that a fund for that purpose should exist in the treasury of every private asylum, and a clause for that use should find a place in the appropriation bills providing for State institutions. He instances, as further proof of what he here asserts, an editorial paragraph from a newspaper of recent date: "The death by suicide of Dr. Thomas Dudley, for twenty years an assistant physician of a lunatic asylum at Lexington, Kentucky, is curiously suggestive. The natural thought that his familiar relations with insane people for so long a period had affected his own mind is corroborated by telegraph. For a year, it is stated, he has shown evidences of insanity, and his death is attributed to that. If such are the tendencies of persons who have charge of insane people, it would seem advisable to have a Board of Examiners to make an annual investigation of the mental condition of physicians and others in charge of institutions for the insane."

ors was only a trifling risk, and one which I accepted without hesitation.

I realized within an hour's time that the theory of Dr. Baldric and his assistants was that, when a person once became a patient in their institution, he lost the right to have even his existence recognized by the outside world.

I now assign as the real cause of this, and as the chief obstacle in the way of reform, the indifference of the great mass of the people, who, considering themselves so sane as to be forever beyond the danger of derangement, care little and think less about the sad lives of a class more worthy their pity than the lame, the halt, or the blind. How many citizens in each county of this nation, think you, trouble themselves enough to make even an annual visit to the county almshouses and asylums? Yet it is in such places that the most distressing cases of inattention and inexperience are found; and when a shattered and deserted half-deranged Thing effects Its escape, the people of the county for miles around turn out like bloodhounds to recapture the fugitive. "It's such real sport, you know; better than a fox-hunt, any day," I once heard a country swain remark in the presence of his sweetheart.

The recollection of a scene once witnessed in an Ohio almshouse sustained and encouraged me throughout all the trials of this arduous mission.

I had established, beyond any sort of doubt, that greater facilities were afforded for getting a sane man into a lunatic asylum than out of it. A sane man, once committed, has only the medical skill of a single physician to call to his succor, and that physician is al-

ready prejudiced against him for divers reasons. It is his interest—to put the baser motive first, and dismiss it soonest—to keep the paying boarder as long as his friends provide for his keeping. Then, too, the indorsement of the patient's infirmity by two reputable professional brethren leads the asylum physician to hesitate at reversing their sworn decision. It is not merely an act that seems to lack professional courtesy, but a delicate one, for, if a mistake be made, it is damaging to the reputation of himself or associates, and in any event is derogatory to a profession in which the members take unusual pride. Thus prejudiced, it is natural that there should be hesitation on the part of asylum physicians, and a disposition to torture a patient's protest of sanity and appeals for release into evidences of either idiocy or mania, confirmatory of the certificate of commitment.

- * * *

I was now with my keepers. An attendant took me in charge in an easy, off-hand manner that greatly amused me. Having expressed a desire to rest, this attendant conducted me to a large room containing four beds, on one of which I lay down; but, although my exhaustion was very great, my disinclination to be detected asleep in a public room and my insufferable hunger kept me awake. I tossed about until the bell rang for tea. During the interval several of the patients entered and surveyed the latest accession to their number. They were all mild, harmless individuals. The ill-nature exhibited by one of them I afterward traced to the fact that I had lain upon the bed which he occupied at night. Even those good-natured friends

of my youth, "The Three Bears," objected to intrusions of that kind.

I was shown down into the basement to the dining-room. In my anxiety to get something to eat, after my twenty-four hours of fasting, I had even started in search of the place myself. I did not grumble, even mentally, upon finding the apartment dark, damp, and cheerless. The tables and the food upon them were my chief thought.

Imagine, if such a thing be possible, my chagrin when I sat down to a cup of weak tea and a small, dry roll of bread, to be eaten without butter. What little milk there was had already been put into the tea and there was no temptation to take any sugar, for the bowl was swarming with small, red ants. The meal was not only uninviting, but absolutely deficient in quantity for even sick men. Almost as hungry as when I entered, I returned up-stairs.

There I was told that I had been assigned to a room in "The Lodge," and that an attendant was waiting to show me to it.

I was, then, to be admitted as a madman of the true type. "None of your sneaking, simpering idiots shall I be, but a real, first-class maniac—indorsed by the medical faculty." Such had been the contract which I had made with myself when, away in New Orleans, I had decided to assume the sunstroke mania.

This was the seal of success. I was *en route* for the realm of strait-jackets—"booked through" to Bedlam.

I was conducted to a large, grated door at the rear of the building, where a tall, gaunt individual, heavily mustached, awaited my coming.

The iron bars, in swinging open, groaned a requiem to decayed genius.

I stepped out into the darkness, with the attendant by my side, and a few moments' walk along a smooth pavement brought us to "The Lodge," or maniac ward.

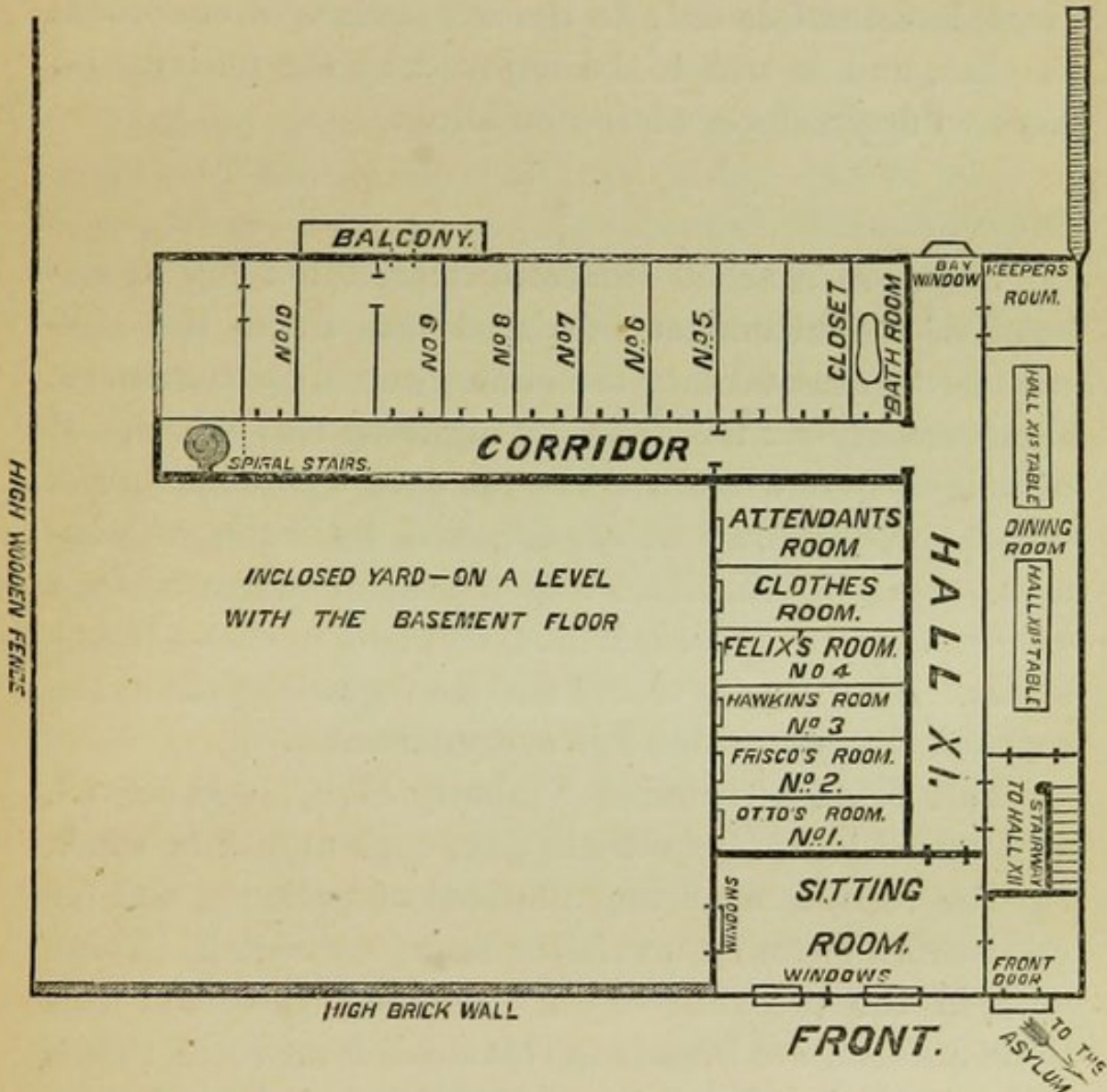
Before entering this building—within whose walls let him know no hope who leaves behind a friendless world—it would be well to tell you something about it. In doing this, I must not rely upon the ideas formed of it on this night, for it then rose against the pale, moonlit sky as a great, dark object, without a single lighted window—a bottomless pit in the sky. Although it was scarcely more cheerful in the sunshine, and utterly devoid of the romance with which the shadows invested it, the building appeared to better advantage in the afternoon.

By all means, let us now deal with it at its best, for we shall see enough of it at its worst.

The maniac wards of the Baldric Asylum are situated about two hundred feet in the rear of the main buildings. The accompanying diagram shows the outline of the structure, as well as the internal arrangement of the ground floor, and is accurately compiled from rough notes made by pricking holes in a scrap of the *New York Herald*, and smuggled back into the world in the toe of my shoe.

The mad-house is approached from the main building by a brick pavement, which, leaving the rear door from which I have just sallied, crosses a sandy roadway, and then turns abruptly to the left through a clump of shady trees. The general shape of the structure is seen to be that of an γ . The front of the

building, as we see it, is only two stories in height, but a basement, entirely below the level of the sidewalk—whose windows look out into a yard some eight or nine feet lower than the ground on the outside of



the brick wall which incloses it—adds another story in the rear. In this cellar are the padded cells, in which are many of the worst cases.

This yard is separated by a high wall from a terrace, on which there is a cool arbor and bowling-alley ; but I

may anticipate at this point so far as to say that these inviting places are evidently constructed for show, as, during my stay in the building, not a patient in Halls XI. or XII. was permitted to go there. Even the inclosure, before described as on a level with the basement, is accessible only to the worst class of confirmed lunatics, and is not to be enjoyed by the patients on the two upper floors of the building.

* * *

We soon reached the front door, and a key in the hand of the attendant admitted us. From the hallway I was ushered into the sitting-room, an apartment about twenty-six feet long by eighteen feet broad. It contained four windows, but its floor was destitute of carpet, its windows of shades, and its walls of pictures. Its only furniture was a broken centre-table, a pair of Central Park benches, and half a dozen heavy chairs. The strong doors and iron gratings made the sense of imprisonment felt every moment.

This room was called "Liberty Hall," and served, at a stated hour of a certain day, each month or week, for the reception of the relatives of patients, and beyond this apartment no visitor ever penetrated. Those who, in the presence of an attendant, conversed with their unfortunate friends in this small front room (when this permission has been granted), were, happily, unconscious of the fact that the heavy door leading into the interior of the building returned the object of their solicitude—a son, a brother, or a husband—to the company of men in strait-jackets. Yet they knew all that the general visitor to the mad-house of Dr. Baldric

could learn in regard to the patients committed to the charge of his or any-similar institution.

It was not to be so with me.

I was not to be treated as a visitor ; I was to enter the mysterious region beyond that heavy oak.

The summons soon came ; the door swung back upon its hinges. The attendant motioned me to enter.

I stepped into a narrow corridor running the entire length of the building, at the farther end of which I saw a strip of the same pale moonlight through which my guide had piloted me to this unknown region. The hall-way was utterly deserted, and, for the time, quiet as a cemetery. A tiny gas-jet, not sufficient to illumine the corners of the corridor, burned near the ceiling. The tall, mechanical attendant threw open a cell-door, and saying, sepulchrally, "You have number four," quietly pushed me inside.

* * *

The cell was more uninviting than any I had ever before seen, even in the lowest prisons. It was not more than six feet in width by nine in length, and was without any furniture, save a small iron cot with a straw mattress. It was only faintly illuminated, when the door was open, by the dull light from the hall ; and, as there was no transom over the door, I realized in an instant that the cell would be utterly dark as soon as I was locked up for the night. The walls were rough-finished and whitewashed, and their dreariness chilled my heart. I should have rejoiced at the presence, even pasted flat against the walls, of the cheapest daubs in the shape of pictures. However unlikely

I was to hang myself, I could not expect framed works of art swinging from nails in the wall. Yet, for any poor wretch who might have cared to indulge either his fancy or his curiosity in that direction, the absence of the cord and the nails need not have discouraged him; all he needed to do was to crowd his head through the large openings in the iron lattice-work of the windows, and then kick the cot away from his feet. But the latter mode had a decided favor in the heart of the suave Dr. Baldrick, because the most vigorous investigation would have failed to censure his institution for a suicide through such instrumentality.

The window was a poor affair; without glass, grated by iron bars, and so high from the floor that to look out of it one must stand upon the cot.

With one ray of hope, I turned to put my hand upon the door-knob, but, to my surprise, I found that the inside of the door was smooth, and, when closed, would be flush with the wall. I had never before imagined how essential to the proper appearance of a room were the knobs of its doors. The last apparent medium of communication with the outside world was gone!

The floor had been scrubbed in anticipation of my occupancy, and I discovered, upon removing my shoes, that it was still damp; and the odor of chloride of lime, which had been mingled with the water, was so offensive that it made the quarters untenable to any man whose sense of smell was not totally destroyed.

I saw or realized these facts, as the door stood ajar, in much less time than it has taken me to recall them.

No means were ever resorted to which proved so effectual in breaking the will, destroying hope, and inspiring madness, as solitary confinement in a cell whose walls or ceiling were bare of a single object to direct the thoughts or the attention of the unhappy prisoner. The dungeons of feudal Germany, revolutionary France, or inquisitorial Spain, were no better calculated for these results than was the cell in which I found myself immured.

The attendant ordered me to hasten my undressing and to get into bed.

Never having, in all the course of my wanderings, occupied such a room, or slept in such a bed, I protested earnestly against the injustice of compelling me to catch cold; but the polite young man listened with perfect indifference, and responded by telling me not to keep him waiting.

As I undressed, the attendant took up each article of dress as I deposited it upon my cot, and finally carried them all into the hall. The door closed with a slam, and the bolt shot into the lock.

The fact that there was no chair in the cell upon which to lay my clothes annoyed me at first, but I consoled myself now that they were to be hung up somewhere in a closet. Imagine my feelings, then, when I found that my clothing was to undergo another search; and, if I may judge from the condition of my apparel on the following morning, and from the inspections which I saw made on the garments of others who arrived during my stay, every pocket was turned out, and every inch of coat-lining carefully thumbed over.

I confess to having heard, with no small degree of interest, as I lay in my cot, the conversation between the attendant Twombly and the individual who assisted him. Various remarks were made regarding the absence of the cuff and shirt buttons, highly disrespectful toward Dr. Quotidian. They might be summed up in the remark of Twombly, as he dropped upon the floor the last piece of hope, "The doc. has made the first rake." I was sorry to hear such insinuations, but concluded that it would be a thankless task to defend the absent physician, and that possibly, after all, they knew him better than I did.

My clothes were then flung upon the damp floor of the hall, and left there all night.

I am thus explicit in describing this final searching process, to show how completely a patient is at the mercy of the employés of this institution, without money, pencil, postage-stamps, or paper.

A dose of quinine was soon after brought me, but I declined with thanks. I never liked the drug.

* *
* *

Then followed a night whose horrors, even to the minutest particulars, can never be forgotten. To me, even now, it is a shudder-inspiring recollection.

Left alone in the cell with my secret and my thoughts, I rose in my bed and gazed out through the grated window, in order to get a last breath of fresh air. The night had now grown cool, and a light breeze, blowing up from the Hudson River, refreshed me. The trees surrounding the yard into which I looked destroyed all the direct rays of the moon.

There were no lights in the other wing of the building. The sky overhead contained a few scattered stars, and I can truly say that never before did they awaken within my breast so much simple, soothing pathos.

Regretfully, but of necessity, I at last sought my cot. The straw bed was hard and uncomfortable. I would have welcomed the floor of a trading-post in the Itasca country, or the lively hospitality of any roadside inn of Andalusia. The sheets were of the coarsest and strongest sail-cloth, and in the darkness the only guarantee that I had of their cleanliness was dampness. The water in which they had been washed had been tinctured with carbolic acid, than which, if a more stifling odor exist, I should like to have it named. The sickening smell of chloride of lime and carbolic acid sought out my nostrils, whether I buried my head under the bedclothes, or inhaled the air of the room. The window, directly above my face, seemed the only comfort left me; but at intervals a gust of the night air swept in upon me, and, although agreeable in itself, soon gave me a violent headache.

Though tired and sleepy, it seemed impossible to become reconciled to the strange surroundings. I lay thinking for more than an hour, during which time all the future details of the scheme were gone over in my mind.

At last drowsiness overcame me, and I slept.

Exactly how long I was unconscious can never be guessed. Midnight had evidently passed when I was suddenly awakened by a demoniacal yell that for the moment fairly unnerved me.

The place ! the hour ! the darkness !

Once and only once before had I heard such a dread-inspiring cry—years ago—but I hear it even now.

I was traveling by the night express on an Ohio railway. A blinding rain-storm raged, and flashes of lightning dazzled our eyes. Thundering along through the darkness, wide awake, we were thinking of death—it was in the tempest, in the air. Suddenly a shriek of the whistle, the roar of maddened waters—*a crash!* One awful instant of silence, in which we held our breath while our hearts throbbed a measure of eternity. But then, above all earthly sounds, a continuous, piteous, heart-broken wail—of despair, of agony—which made the blood grow thick with cold. Ready hands, inspired by hearts full of wild resolution to save life, were found of no avail. The negro fireman, to save the train, refused to leap with the engineer, and lay buried to his waist under the engine's flaming fire-box, while the chilly, pitiless waters of the swollen brook laved his face.

In the first few bewildered moments that followed my awakening in a maniac's cell, I could not avoid the conviction that the scream proceeded from one of its darkest corners.

Merciful God ! a maniac had entered my room ! The key had been left in the door ! A hand-to-hand struggle in the dark with a demon ! I see his eyes—or think I do ? I hear his breathing—or my own ?

'Tis his heart that thumps so audibly, for mine has ceased to beat.

Dreaming, or—*Mad!*

“No; not mad!” I exclaimed, aloud, springing out of bed.

One mortal instant of inaction succeeded, in which I heard:

“Ou-oo, ou-oo, ou-oo; ya-ha, ya-ha, ya-ha—ksch—hist! ya-ha, ya-ha, ya-ha-a-a-a—a—” (a groan).¹

Thank God, I was safe!

That was IT again; awake, sane—faint from a nameless fear—master of the situation!

IT came from the cell underneath.

Oh, how sure I was of that! Willingly would I have staked my immortality upon my conviction—for the ear, under such a trial, never deceives. The outline of the window was barely discernible; I climbed up and looked out. The moon had evidently gone down, but there were the stars, the same tiny, twinkling orbs I had seen so many ages before. Since then I had lived throughout eternity.

Such was “the quiet retreat” to which a patient who had expressed a desire for absolute rest had been conducted by the orders of a physician making the treatment of lunacy cases the study of his life.

A physically-exhausted patient presented to this doctor, to all appearances suffering only from temporary aberration of mind, classed with and put within direct hearing of the very worst class of incurables!

A young man scarcely of age—the appearance of

¹ *Ou*, as in plough; *oo*, as in boot; *a*, in *ya* and *ha*, as in cat.

whose friends, as well as of himself, and the promptitude with which his board-bill was paid, indicated that he had been accustomed to the average comforts of life—was thrown into a cell without even a chair, and forced to sleep on a pallet of straw. Such the quarters for which his friends, and those of other inmates, paid twenty dollars per week.

I returned to my lumpy mattress, and snatched a few short hours of troubled sleep. I was repeatedly awakened by sounds equally as dreadful as those which had first aroused me; they came from all parts of the building.

* * *

The morning dawned at last. The dreariness of the cell was only enhanced by the beauty of the weather without; but the delightful lawn and the inviting walks were as inaccessible to me as if they had been in another hemisphere.

Upon glancing about the room I saw what, in the dim light of the previous night, I had not before observed. High up on the wall over the door was written in black, as with a piece of coal, the single word—“Mad.”

The thin coating of whitewash, that only had the effect of rendering it a trifle less distinct, probably marked the date of the crisis in the life of the man who wrote that dreadful word—either the day of his death or of his return to the world. Was it soberness or delirium? His must have been a philosophic nature, I reasoned, for it had taken many long hours of thought to gain resolution sufficient to place himself upon the

record in the sober, methodical way in which it was done. What was his history?

The door was suddenly opened, and an attendant flung my clothes into the cell with the summary admonition—

“Get up!”

Weak, worn out, and haggard, I gladly welcomed the summons, and soon made my appearance in the hall.

All Bedlam was loosed, and its inhabitants were pacing the corridor or sitting stolidly upon the benches.

It was only six o'clock, and I was informed that breakfast was not served until seven.

Having washed my face at a trough in the bathroom, I employed this hour of semi-opaque day in visiting every portion of the floor to which I could gain access.

I was thus prompt in beginning my work because I did not know how short might be my stay in that ward. It was possible that I might be transferred to the cellar among more dreadful companions, and the fact that my traveling-bag had not been brought over to “The Lodge” tended to strengthen, rather than to dispel, my fears of a change. A bare possibility existed that my friends might have been recognized, and the scheme, by some mishap, discovered. In such an emergency—simply one of the risks provided for—I must be prepared for transfer to either the Utica or the Blackwell's Island Asylum. There was ample evidence that an understanding existed between these three institutions, by which patients were suddenly transferred from one to the other when annoying writs

of *habeas corpus* arrived, after which it became very easy to say, for instance, "There is no person named Patsey Bollivar in our institution."

I began to look over the patients at once, and to assort them into groups. Although not attempting any intrusion of my acquaintance, I sought to exchange salutations with all inclined to sociability. I am well aware that any classification of patients, as mentally made by me at that time, might have fallen far short of a scientific selection; but I can now say that my two weeks' experience within these wards as a newspaper correspondent only confirmed the opinion I formed after my first morning's inspection, namely, that the treatment and control of the insane is wholly a matter of individual judgment, based upon experience. Science knows very little about insanity—all theories upon the subject are, sooner or later, found to be at fault.

For my part, no longer caring for the study of "Insanity as a Fine Art," the subdivisions were made for the purpose of observing the corporal treatment which the patients received, rather than the moral influence exerted over them. Those who were communicative to strangers or recognized acquaintances were placed in one group; those in whom all recollection of the world, or memory regarding the existence of the human race, seemed gone, in another. The individuals of either group were equally untrustworthy. In one class there was an ever-present mistrust of themselves; and in the other a hidden, and therefore dangerous, impulse, which might require only one word to develop.

To me it was a new world, peopled with a curious, wild, and even dreadful race.

The corridor, about seventy-five feet in length by ten feet in width, ran through the centre of the main building, from the sitting-room in front, previously described, to a large bay-window at the rear. An iron grating, needlessly heavy, was placed across the hall, within a few feet of the window, and its bars—perceptible from every part of the corridor—gave the establishment all the dreariness of a prison. From the rear end of the building an extension ran off at a right angle toward the northwest. This wing was not, as will be seen by the diagram, the full width of the main structure, and the corridor was along one side—that toward the inclosed yard—instead of through the centre. Along the side toward the rear were ranged the cells. The dining-room opened off the main corridor, or Hall XI., nearly opposite to the passage-way leading into the extension. Two iron-frame benches, such as are seen in the public parks, and are intended for a few minutes' occupancy, were placed in each corridor. On these the patients might sit, or not, as they pleased. To a certainty, nothing more uncomfortable in the shape of settees could have been provided: they were the causes of constant complaint.

At last the breakfast-bell sounded, summoning all the silly simpletons to the eating-room. I observed, during every morning of my imprisonment, that the hour's interval between the opening of the cells and the serving of the breakfast dragged very heavily upon all who were cognizant of the slow flight of time. The idea suggested itself that, as a lunatic's meal was at

best a pell-mell affair, it would have been much wiser to have dispensed with the early bell and the tedious hour's delay, and to have rewarded the first one dressed, washed, and in his seat at the table, with an extra biscuit, or two spoonfuls of sugar in his coffee. I stood at distance and watched the scene. Such persons as recognized the meaning of the bell flocked through the door like sheep. The wretched idiots or imbeciles, to whom the summons conveyed no impression, were shoved along the corridor, and directed to the right or to the left by a slap on the ears. Slight or aggravated as the cause of abuse might be, it was never resented. This augured vague recollections of severe punishment to those who had dared to resist brutal nurses. The poor creatures who were not molested seemed utterly careless as to the treatment of others. This simply indicated the utter absence of the *esprit de corps* found among all other classes of prisoners; it dispelled all possibilities of concerted plans for resistance, escape, or attack.¹ Each individual inhabits his own world of night alone, and seeks no one to share it with him. The curiosity which is supposed by inexperienced persons to exist universally among the inmates of asylums, I detected only upon rare occasions—in no other case, I may say in perfect candor, was it more strongly manifested than my own.

* * *

¹ Edgar Allen Poe's famous story, "The System of Dr. Tarr and Prof. Feather," to the contrary notwithstanding. However high or low this tale may rank as a work of literary art, as a matter-of-fact romance it must take its place in literature by the side of "The Balloon Hoax."

Entering the eating-room, after all were seated, I was assigned a place near the head of one of the tables.

The apartment was long and narrow, but the ghastly lightness of the room was a relief after the sombre shadow of the corridor. Two rough, wooden tables, twenty-five feet long, were placed lengthwise of the room. At the one at which I was placed were seated the occupants of Hall XI.; at the other the patients of the upper floor, or Hall XII., descending to their meals by a staircase which existed in the vestibule at the front of the building. The seats which the patients occupied were rude benches without backs. The walls of the apartment were of rough-finished plaster, white-washed, and unrelieved by even a single cheap picture.

Only a meagre impression at best can be conveyed of the dreariness and squalor of this room, and the nauseating manner in which this maniacs' morning meal was served. The tables, without any cloths, were greasy and slimy; the food, brought in large tin wash-dishes without covers, already cooked, from the main building, was nearly cold. The serving of the meal was allotted to the caterer, an unwashed, frouzy individual, who looked as though he had resigned from a Baxter Street restaurant to accept the situation he then held; he belonged to that low-born, ill-bred race of people who eat with their knives. Upon each plate, unceremoniously huddled together, were a small piece of boiled beef (possessing rather more smell than taste), two potatoes (boiled in their skins), some sliced tomatoes, bread, and a mere atom of strong butter. The coffee, containing only a trace of sugar or milk,

was doled out in large, white-ware slop-bowls. The knives and forks had evidently not been scoured for months; they were filthy beyond description. Their handles were sticky, their blades rusty—in a much worse condition than those to be found in the dirtiest and cheapest midnight lunch-stalls of Fulton Market or St. Giles.

Yet, across the table from me, in the midst of this squalor and dirt, sat an heir of the wealthiest family of America, who, if only sane, would have been the inheritor of millions. Near him, munching his food, I saw a man of noble face and iron-gray hair, whose eloquence was once the pride of the Senate-chamber, and his dinners and receptions the envy of all Washington.

“Let me have some milk and sugar for my coffee,” I innocently said.

“Not any more!” roared the attendant; “all that’s good for you is in the coffee.”

A perceptible grin at the silliness of my request touched the faces of all the maudlin minds around the board.

Such was my introduction to the dining-hall.

During my entire visit none of its inmates received the slightest courtesy from this attendant, Twombly; and, although I succeeded on subsequent occasions in obtaining trifling favors from Wilkins, the caterer, I observed that others did not.

The nine patients at the table ate with animal-like voracity, excepting a young man at my right, with an agreeable face, who seemed disgusted with the surroundings, and ate even less than I did.

It was a strange company.

I knew none of the guests by name, and no introductions were given me.

The ages of my messmates ranged from seventeen to seventy years. At the right of the young man by my side sat a venerable gentleman. His hair hung in straggling white locks about his face, and at times his eyes twinkled as merrily as those of Santa Claus. Beyond him, toward the lower end of the table, was a tall young man, with bright-brown hair and pinkish whiskers. Across the board from him, an idiot, stooped in form and hesitating in manner, chewed his food like a brute. A low, retreating forehead and receding chin characterized a face which seemed to come to a focus at the point of a lean, sharp nose. He had evidently never been otherwise than as I saw him; there was no story in his case.

The next face was that of a man with a history. A massive forehead, pale, wasted cheeks, and deeply-sunken eyes of faded blue, from which the look of intelligence had gone forever—a mental wreck, he seemed lost in thought, until, having swallowed his food, he hastened away, like an enthusiastic artist engaged in some labor of love, to resume his slow stride along the corridor. The world once knew him as Professor Otto, Doctor of Laws and of Philosophy in the University of Halle. God grant that he was thinking still of his text-books, his dictionaries, and his class-room lectures!

At the farther end of the board, to the left of the keeper Carrot, sat an intelligent-looking man of middle age, who at short intervals stopped his eating to rap

with his spoon upon the table in a quick and nervous way, as if telegraphing to his broker, meanwhile muttering some stray words in reference to railway and mining stocks. He was called Bullion by the nurses, probably because he had been a Wall Street broker, and had lost his senses and most of his money in the "Black Friday" panic, 1869.

By his side, straight upright, sat a man of middle age, who was known in the hall as "The Count." His eyes were of a pale-gray color, and stared wildly at times.

The two persons directly opposite me have been incidentally referred to. One was an idiot—so from birth. The other was an imbecile old man whose brain had deserted him in the moment of his triumph. A princely fortune and a bright political record in the United States Senate were his, but I saw him a lunatic pauper. Here, side by side, sat two millionaires—one made so by an ancestor's enterprise, the other by his own good fortune; each as poor as the other, now as low as the lowest; equals, neither could sink further.

I observed, although there came no one to occupy it, that there was a vacant place at my bench immediately to the right of me, and that several of the persons seated around the board cast longing glances at the food upon the plate.

"Where's Hercules this morning?" asked the caterer, noticing the vacant place.

"He's out of shape, and can't have any breakfast," replied Twombly, exchanging glances with Carrot at the other end of the table.

The breakfast came to an end, and, again passing

into the corridor, the patients betook themselves to pacing the floor, reclining on the benches, or standing silently against the wall.

The five long hours before dinner were occupied in carefully observing the nurses and the patients. Men, rude and uncultured, whose only qualification was physical strength, I found intrusted with the mending of that most delicate, wonderful, and mysterious creation of God, the human mind—broken, deranged, and shattered.

In the attendants, few redeeming traits of character were seen; among the patients, curious and startling mental phenomena developed with each hour.

Meeting the simpering idiot belonging to the lower end of my table, I accosted him.

“Are you well, to-day?” I asked.

His only answer was a leer, more senseless, more repulsive, than any I had ever before seen.

“What is your name?” I inquired.

“Bytheway,” he first muttered; and “By-the-way,” he then drawled out.

“I mean, what are you called?” I persisted, thinking that he misunderstood me.

“My name is Bytheway,” was the answer

“Haven’t you any other?” I queried, to suppress my surprise. “Such, for instance, as Smith, Jones, Brown, or Robinson?”

“Brown; yes, that’s it!” he exclaimed, showing more animation than I had previously thought him capable of exhibiting, followed by the horrible wrinkling of the face.

“Have you been here long?” I asked, thoughtfully.

"No," he answered, quickly and suspiciously; "I came yesterday."

I saw the grin no longer, but an ugly blackness gathered under the eyes as they avoided mine. He would say no more.

Twombly, the attendant, emerged from the mess-room.

"I am going to feed the animals," said he. "Do you want to come along?"

"Certainly I do," was my reply.

And so I left Bytheway Brown, feeling certain that I should find him in the same spot an hour or two later.

* * *

Together we walked off into the wing. Entering a small room, which served as a vestibule to an inside cell, Twombly unlocked and cautiously opened the door.

I stepped forward and peered through the opening into the gloom.

There was neither a seat, nor a bed, nor a pallet of straw in the cell—only a naked floor and walls. No heat in winter or cooling air in summer.

But I saw an object crouching on the floor. In the darkest corner, utterly nude, was what had once been a human being—with eyes fixed upon the door, and long, shaggy, tangled hair streaming over its shoulders.

The keeper entered the cell, and, seizing the object by an arm, dragged it out into the light, and turned it loose into a grated balcony at the rear. A rubber hose was then attached to a hydrant, and as the water

was played upon the sickening object, it uttered the most agonizing and savage screams. The water was then turned into the dreadful cell.

"This is the hole through which we feeds 'im," said Twombly, lifting a small lattice near the bottom of the door.

Deserted—lost—waiting to die! If there can be anything more dreadful than such a sight, I am unable to imagine it. Yet, on Harlem Heights, only seven miles from the City Hall, and even a less distance from a hundred churches where people meet every Sunday without once thanking their Maker for their sanity, it was realized.

I hastened back to the main corridor, shuddering and almost sick. Since breakfast-time the old moral had been burned into my soul: "Above all knowledge or riches is a sound mind."

* * *

The front sitting-room was a type of "Liberty Hall." There the greater part of the time between meals was passed. Several very dangerous patients inhabited this floor and were turned loose in this room among the harmless ones. The Count had frightfully bitten an inmate to whom he had suddenly taken a dislike; a second enjoyed the reputation of having attempted to "kick the head off" a silly companion who had aroused his anger; and a third had tried to cut a messmate's throat at the dinner-table, "just to see how he would like it."

There was an utter recklessness as to classification.

Dr. Quotidian entered about eleven o'clock, and simply inquired after the health of his new patient, whom he found seated upon an uncomfortable bench near the bay-window. His examination was limited to the counting of the pulse and the simple inquiry :

“How do you feel this morning, Felix?”

The pulse was found slow and regular as clock-work. Not the slightest trick was resorted to, except that I chose to refrain from answering, “I never felt so well in my life.”

My only imposition was in pretending not to hear him, and answering not a word.

Another long hour; a shorter interval, tedious for every one, after the dinner-bell had rung, and the patients were ordered into the mess-room.

On my way to the door I heard a noise inside the room, and, hastening forward, saw the attendant, Carrot, slap the face of the palsied old man on my bench. My blood fairly boiled. Nothing but the horrible consequences which, in my situation, would have followed interference, prevented me from throttling the brutish keeper on the spot. I was literally chafing with rage, when a voice hissed in my ear :

“If Hercules were here, that wouldn't have happened.”

Turning instantly on my unknown companion—I always trembled at the thought that any of these treacherous creatures were behind me—I saw the silly, expressionless face of Bytheway Brown.

Bullion, placid and unmoved, passed slowly down the hall. But the next dispatch, which he rapped out upon the window-sill with the small white pebble

he carried in his hand, varied slightly from the usual form. This time he muttered, addressing the message to Jay Gould, "Buy six hundred shares Lake Shore, and carry them for Johnny Hawkins."

Frisco said something to the nurse about striking poor old Hawkins, and, as a result, an hour later, I saw him coming down the hall to where I was talking with an attendant, closely laced up in a strait-jacket (written "camisole" in the annual reports, because it is more euphonious).

"You're a devil!" hissed the nurse, addressing him.

"Am I to be bound a thousand years?" was the Californian's sad attempt at a joke.

Under no circumstances whatever should punishment be the remedy for insanity. From the moment the physician in charge attaches the significance or the name of punishment to any of the means he employs, or authorizes to be used, to soothe the excitement or wanderings of a lunatic, grave abuses may creep in—offering excuse for harshness and cruelty on the part of the attendants.

* * *

I anxiously desired in the afternoon to have some clean linen, and asked Carrot, the keeper, what formalities would be necessary. Carrot was a short, heavy-set individual, who upon every possible occasion paraded his piety and his experience in the care of lunatics. From him I now heard a phrase which was repeated to me a hundred times or more during my brief visit, and which proved to be the most annoying

of the many petty and needless insults which were heaped upon these poor unfortunates. Carrot's answer, as he cocked up one eye and blinked the other, was :

“Speak to the doctor about it.”

“But the doctor has just gone, and I shall have to wait until to-morrow,” I remonstrated.

“Can't help it,” he answered, quite snappishly. “You must ask Dr. Quotidian.”

It may appear only a trifling matter to have to obtain the permission of anybody to wear a clean collar or to comb one's hair, but to all sympathetic persons, seeing and knowing the sufferings of the poor creatures in insane asylums, such treatment will clearly appear as the cause of more real mental torment than abuse, mismanagement, neglect, or poor food. Knowing, as the attendant did, that, in cases similar to the above, a whole day must elapse before the doctor returned, and that in all probability the patient would forget his wish in the hurry of the moment's conversation, only to think of it again when too late, the delay was simply cruel—especially would it have been so to a diseased mind, for which indulgence, in all its harmless wants, is an acknowledged panacea. Even after the request had been made to the doctor in person, not less than twelve hours of uncertainty were allowed to elapse before the most trifling want was supplied. Such was the invariable rule.

As regards my case, I had to be satisfied. But, on the following day, when Dr. Quotidian came, I was in search of facts in another part of the building, and he hurried away before I knew of his presence. Learning

that he was yet in a ward of the establishment, I went to Carrot, and, upon representing to him the facts and necessities of the case, was again curtly recommended to "speak to the doctor." In vain I asked to be allowed to send after the physician. Not until the third day, and after the doctor had been "seen," were my clothes sent to "The Lodge."

Another surprise awaited me, for, although the keys had been handed to the doctor upon my entrance, I had the satisfaction of seeing Carrot deliberately break open my satchel and drag its contents out through the side. It occurred to me that, if this valise were to be searched several more times by such individuals as the Irish nurse and the keeper Carrot, both it and its contents would become practically valueless.

For a moment I tottered upon the verge of detection. Although I had carefully destroyed every letter and paper that could in any way connect my name with journalism, a few professional cards had remained undiscovered in the pocket of an old coat. Fortunately, my surprise at seeing Carrot burst open the bag had caused me to observe him for a few moments. When, therefore, I saw the keeper take this bunch of cards out of the coat, I quietly walked up and snatched them from his hand. He did not see the engraving upon them and I did not give him time to protest, but, leaving his room, tore the cards into very small pieces. These I chewed awhile, and finally threw into a drain. Carrot was too busily engaged in his search to bother about a few pieces of pasteboard.

After the scene was past, I trembled to think what might have been my fate had the satchel been opened

at the main building and the cards placed in the hands of Dr. Baldrick. Cases of mysterious disappearance are easily accounted for in mad-houses.

Even again did I encounter the red tape of the institution, for I was not permitted to take any articles of dress to my cell—not even a comb and brush.

I took a seat in Liberty Hall.

In a corner I observed the old gentleman whom I had seen the attendant strike in the morning. He appeared greatly dejected. I crossed the room and spoke to him.

“How are you, uncle?” I inquired.

His whole manner changed; a sad smile lit up his countenance.

“Thank you, young man,” he said. “I haven’t been called so since my own dear nephew died.”

“Has he been dead very long?” I incautiously asked.

“No, not long,” he thoughtfully replied. “Let me think—just two weeks ago to-day.”

“What was your nephew’s name?” I inquired, solely for the sake of prolonging the conversation.

“Johnny. You will doubtless recollect him as Captain John, with whom Sir Francis Drake, when a boy, made his first voyage to Guinea.”

“Do you mean Sir John—”

“Certainly; Sir John Hawkins,” he exclaimed, with every manifestation of pride; when, suddenly changing his tone, he continued: “Poor Johnny was my nephew—named after me. And only to think what a very wicked man that innocent boy became!” The speaker was silent for a few moments. “I can hardly realize

how he went on from one crime to another, until he started the slave-trade, and ended his life the other day at the yard-arm," he said, between his sobs—just as if this life were not sad enough in genuine earnest without parading imaginary woes.

"No, no," I said, realizing that I had done wrong by encouraging him to talk. "He wasn't hanged. Those wicked stories about Johnny are untrue; he has been elected to Congress. The boy is all right; cheer up," I said, drawing him to the window. "Notice those carriages out in the grounds: fine horses, aren't they?"

Thus I engaged his attention until the only tears ever shed for Sir John Hawkins had ceased to flow.

Then I left him—slipping away so that the sight of me might not revive the subject in his mind.

* * *

Great are the contrasts met with in mad-houses.

Within a quarter of an hour I formed the acquaintance of the most contented and genial inmate of the institution.

"Are you perfectly comfortable here?" asked a small man whom I had heard called Harmony, as I encountered him slowly sauntering down the corridor, with his hands deeply buried in his pockets.

"Yes, thank you," I answered.

"You delight me," he said, smiling good-naturedly. "I am glad to know that all my guests are contented. Just as soon as the gay season is past, I intend to raze to the ground these buildings, and erect on their site a magnificent edifice whose inner walls shall be formed

of ivory, silver, and gold. Each guest shall thereafter have a suite of rooms with a retinue of servants and coachmen in livery, and every wish of theirs shall be gratified. I have already secured the plans, and I am prepared to carry them out. Make yourself at home, my dear fellow; you are my guest."

Without wearying my audience with the details of how, for weeks after returning to the world, I quietly pursued my inquiries into the former history of each and every characteristic case of madness encountered in this place, I may give here a brief outline of Harmony's life, as showing his special type of insanity, and yet sacredly preserve all the feeling of his friends.

I am aware that I am hazarding a very strange assertion when I say that Harmony, as I found him, was more contented and enjoyed better health than ever before in his life. A glance at his previous career may indicate what I mean.

Early orphaned, the small portion of the world's inhabitants with whom he was thrown in contact soon recognized in him a thrifty lad. Always at work, he begrudged even the few scant hours of sleep he snatched between midnight and daylight.

An enthusiast in youth, manhood found him attacked by the gnawing ambition of wealth—boundless riches and nothing less. He lived meanly then, so that, as he persuaded himself, he might enjoy all the luxuries of wealth when older. Soon he became penurious, and benevolence, if he had ever felt it, died within his breast. In early manhood he had won the heart of a respectable, honest girl, but as he delayed the marriage from year to year in order that he might the better sup-

port her, his heart became too selfish to admit another to share the earnings of his hands. As a tradesman he prospered, but he felt no richer. His shops multiplied, until on one great thoroughfare alone they were nowhere more than five blocks apart. He never married—could neither spare the time to seek nor the money to support a wife; he was on the high-road to vast wealth. Although fifty years of age, he argued that he had yet thirty good years ahead of him.

One morning he was informed by an acquaintance (for he had no friends) that a bank with which he had a small account had failed. The doors had closed three days before, but, as he did not take a newspaper, he had not learned the fact. The loss of a few hundred dollars turned the tide in his life.

Up to this point his days and nights had been full of care for the future; now there appeared—the more suddenly often the more dangerous and lasting—a new element of anxiety and unhappiness. He imagined himself on the verge of bankruptcy, and marveled that he had never thought of it before. Day by day this idea grew upon him. The few hours of sleep which had kept alive his exhausted nature grew shorter night by night. At first he only imagined and speculated as to what might happen. A few days or weeks later he began to reason with himself how easily such a calamity might overtake him. Then succeeded the dangerous element of dread, which banished hope forever.

Anxiety developed into fear, dread into belief, fancy into fate!

And so he came to Baldric's.

One of his former clerks has told me how, for forty-

eight hours at a time, Harmony used to sit at his desk overhauling his ledgers and cash-book, and staring at the two scales of the financial balance known as debit and credit. But this matters not to my story. Suffice it to say that wretched and morose he entered Bedlam. The one bank in which he had deposited the least of goodness or usefulness—his brain—had suspended forever.

A week of unconsciousness, with some violence, followed, at the end of which time there came a change.

He walked out into the corridor one morning and shook hands with all the patients, telling them one and all that they were welcome to his hospitality, and that he hoped they would remain his guests as long as they saw fit. He laughed and cracked jokes, and affected all sorts of amusements. The inmates of the ward were regaled with marvelous stories of his adventures, compared with which Figaro's account of the "snakes with bells upon their tails" dwindles into insignificance. The imaginary possessor of millions, he dispensed his benefactions with a bounteous hand, and enjoyed his money as no mortal ever did before him. One hour found him planning amateur theatricals; the next he figured as the manager of a circus company; again he was the director of an ocean steamship line; then he was confidential adviser to the Secretary of the Treasury, and had himself just taken up a one-hundred-million-dollar loan.

Who can deny, then, the happiness of this man, as contrasted with the cares he carried when sane?

Outside of Washington City, I do not think I ever saw a man so thoroughly satisfied with himself.

“Oh, he’s the happiest person living!” said every one with whom I talked.

* * *

Looking into Liberty Hall an hour later, Hawkins saw me.

“Where have they taken It?” he asked, in a whisper.

Not having the faintest idea what he meant, and anxious to avoid any reference to his nephew, I hastened to reply:

“I don’t know.”

“They might have spared It for my sake,” muttered Hawkins, to himself, looking down at the floor. “When It is here I am so contented that I don’t think of my dear, lost nephew.”

“It! What it?” I asked, in sheer desperation, to forestall his chronic state of grief.

“Don’t you know It?” he asked, with new animation, his eyes brightening as he spoke.

“No,” I replied, hesitatingly. “What or who?”

“Why—” But he suddenly checked himself, sneaked to the door leading to the corridor, looked cautiously out, returned, put his mouth close to my ear, and whispered, “Hercules!”

I was utterly dumfounded, and stammered out something I do not now recall. His tongue ran on:

“It! Hercules! Hercules is an IT!” Then, running his eyes around the room and its lunatic occupants, he said, with a shrug of the shoulders, “We’re all ITS!”

I got him to a chair and hurried away.

I wandered about the corridor, thinking :

“Such a name in this dreadful place, *νη Διá*, I will know who this Hercules is !”

The long, dreary hours of that afternoon !

There was nothing to be seen out of the windows ; the grounds were as silent as a cemetery. Within there were neither illustrated papers nor books ; and no comfortable place or position at or in which to read them had they been at hand. No games were anywhere to be seen, neither chess, checkers, nor dominoes, and it was not until three evenings later that a pack of greasy cards was produced by the caterer.

No book should be written without an effort to accomplish some slight good. Right here, therefore, I wish to urge the formation, in every town and city in this land, of a ladies' society for the collection of illustrated papers and periodicals, to be placed in the asylums and almshouses of their counties. One of the most gratifying events following close upon this journalistic adventure was the organization in the cities of New York and Brooklyn of societies whose sole objects are the distribution of papers and books among the asylums. Boxes for the collection of reading-matter have been placed in all the railway-stations, and they bear an inscription something like this :

“ BOOKS OR PAPERS DEPOSITED HERE WILL
BE SACREDLY DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE
ASYLUMS OF THE CITY.”

The papers and magazines deposited in the box at

the Grand Central Railway Depot alone frequently aggregate one thousand per week. These silent messengers of sympathy from kind hearts shed a more welcome light into the dreariest of worlds than all the prayers of Christendom—if any pray for the insane.

A supper of tea and bread without butter closed the day. As the twilight deepened into darkness the tiny jets of gas were lit, and the corridor became the dreariest place out of Hades. The night closed in, and I was again locked up to endure the misery and wretchedness of an intimate association with the howling madmen in the cellar.

During the afternoon I had acquired a very important "point" in the possession of a small, hard-wood toothpick, which I had discovered between the lining of my coat. Soon thereafter I had been able to secure a soiled scrap of a newspaper. These were two very important acquisitions. For the entire details of my stay in Bedlam I intended to rely solely upon my memory; but I must by some means carry out with me a diagram of the interior, and the dates of all important events.

Long and anxiously I waited until quiet reigned throughout the building. Then I climbed up to the window. Carefully stretching the paper across two of the iron bars, I found that the position of a puncture in the paper could be clearly distinguished by the faint and tiny ray of moonlight which entered through it. Strange as it may seem, what word to practise on was the next difficulty that presented itself—although

the great sea of our English vocabulary was open before me. I thought of my mother's name, but that would be irreverent; then of another feminine name, but that was one I still less liked to tamper with. I might have hesitated until daylight, had not the pleasant face and name of Dinfor's "star" come before my mind's eye. And when

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was finally picked in the paper, not even Dinfor himself could have beheld her autograph with more delight than did I my toothpick creation.¹

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I was late at breakfast in the morning.

The doors of all the cells had been unlocked after the rising-bell was rung. While I was dressing, after the last summons had been sounded, a man unceremoniously opened my door, entered, and began to make up my cot. I was about to ask him to defer his labors for a few minutes, when he looked at me and scowled. I then saw that he was the patient who, only a few days before, had bitten off a comrade's nose. I changed my mind: without saying a word, I gave this chamberman a wide berth.

The intrusion of this dangerous character was encouraged by the attendants, because he saved them la-

¹ Even now the author is unable to explain why he should have thought only of feminine names; but, having dedicated this book to Truth at the outset, he does not care to step aside now to account for so trifling a circumstance.

bor and trouble. He was a thoroughly incompetent and unfit person to be intrusted with the care of the rooms, and he looked more repulsive on that morning because of his recently-cropped head and his unshaven face. He emptied all the slops into the bath-tub, and yet the attendants thought it strange that even the most weak-minded patients disliked to take a bath. Several instances were seen where the choice was given a patient to take a dip in that tub or to wear a straight-jacket for a day—and the preference was always given to the latter.

During the visit of Dr. Quotidian on this morning I renewed a request made on the previous day to have a newspaper ordered for me, and repeated the assurance that the bill would be paid by my friends. The physician had, on the former occasion, promised faithfully that the request should be acceded to ; but this morning he admitted in the blandest manner that he had only “put me off,” and never had had the slightest intention of fulfilling his promise.

“We never order newspapers for patients unless their friends so direct,” he concluded.

I admitted that this was, possibly, a fair regulation, but asked why he had not told me so on the previous day, in order that I might have taken means to communicate with my friends.

At this the “gentleman” laughed in my face.

I did not know why he laughed then, but I did afterward, when I found that it was impossible to send to the outside world either messages or letters of the most harmless or trifling character. This was what had rendered my remark so humorous.

I followed him to the door, still entreating him to do something about the matter, but he laughed as cynically as before. I never wanted to strike "an image of the Almighty" so intensely; but I dared not do it. I had to endure insult and abuse without resenting them, for, had spirit enough arisen to impel me to do an act so natural, I should have passed a few days in a dark cell and a strait-jacket.

I had scarcely seen the doctor vanish behind the closed door before I witnessed a sight which nearly destroyed all my self-control, and, I confess, for the moment shook my better judgment.

The old Senator was suddenly thrust out of the hall leading into the extension, and behind him came an attendant, who alternately pushed him with his hands, and kicked him with his knee. Reaching a bench, the lost statesman was rudely jammed down into a sitting posture. Before he had recovered from the shock which a fall of that kind would give a man of his build, he was struck by the attendant with his open hand, first upon one side of his face, and then upon the other. The blows were inflicted with every evidence of passion on the attendant's part, and were administered because the unfortunate patient had himself protested against the rude way in which he, an infirm old man, had been hustled across the hall.

"Oh, this is too dreadful!" exclaimed Bullion, who stood near me. "I'll telegraph to God!"

I turned with a look of horror at the supposed blasphemy of the man, but never saw I more earnest, anxious, pitying face.

For a moment I had forgotten where I was.

“These nurses are duplicates of the damned,” said Frisco, as he arrived upon the scene.

Later in the day, I learned from the caterer that the Senator had annoyed the attendant about a game of cards. Truly, a grave offense!

I then secured a promise from the caterer that on a future occasion he would lend me his old pack of cards in order that I might indulge the Senator’s harmless wish.

Dinner, or the mid-day meal, was announced.

The time between the ringing of the bell and the opening of the mess-room door was always long, but it was more dreary than usual on this day. Never having had enough to eat at any one meal, I was always hungry before the next was served.

These dinners were peculiarly informal affairs. The boards of the rough pine table were always greasy, and smelled of sour dish-water. There were no cloths, because the attendants would not have appreciated them; there were no napkins, for the simple reason that the keepers had never used them, and the most refined patient did not dare to ask for such a simple luxury. A plate with a mess of food upon it, a saucer of rice or custard, and a glass of water—without any ice—were placed before each diner. Soup was never served in either ward of the asylum. There was no butter, the excuse being that “it would make the patients bilious.” Such a flimsy subterfuge could not have been urged against soup, which is neither expensive nor unhealthy, and, as a delicacy, so delighted in by all sick persons that it is one of the articles of food most in use by family physicians in ordinary practice.

There were no courses. The entire bill-of-fare could be gleaned, item by item, from the plate and saucer before me. There I saw a dinner—served *à la jumble*.

Menu.

Poisson.—White, boiled, with most of the scales on, and otherwise poorly cleaned, swimming in a thick, mud-colored sauce of glutinous consistency.

Légumes.—Potatoes, mashed, but full of hard chunks, all improperly cooked. Tomatoes, stewed, very thin and watery, and tasting of the tin can.

Hors-d'œuvre.—Bread, one thin slice, plastered upon a pyramid of mashed potatoes, cemented with stewed tomatoes and fish-gravy.

Dessert.—Rice, boiled dry, without sauce or sugar.

Water.—With “a bead on it.”

Neither coffee, tea, nor chocolate was served after the dessert, and I had to ask several times before I was permitted to have any sugar for my rice.

How long would the sloppiest city boarding-house mistress keep her apartments full on such fare, at even half the prices?—and I ask any of them who may happen to be among my audience.

The patients were expected to devour this disgusting mixture without remonstrance, and, as a matter of record, showing the efficacy of the discipline, not a word of complaint was heard. Patients who were slow eaters were ordered to “hurry up” in the most peremptory fashion.

The food was dealt out in a most ungenerous manner, and, after what had been served upon the plate

was dispatched, nothing more was to be had, except upon very rare occasions.

* * *

The meal was nearly ended, when a footstep was heard in the corridor, and an instant later a man of gigantic frame strode through the door and took a seat at the heretofore vacant place on my right. So startled was I at this apparition that I could not even give myself a clear idea of the man. He was more than six feet high, broad-shouldered, lithe, and powerful. The face possessed a peculiarly graceful outline, the forehead was well developed, and the cleanly-shaven chin and cheeks dimpled when he smiled. The nose was straight and sharp; the jet-black hair, so scrupulously dressed, contrasted with the ghastly pallor of his countenance. The eyes were of uncertain color, restless, dangerous. The mouth—that most important feature for the determination of character—was a riddle; it was firmly closed, as if the teeth were clinched; but, whether I there read determination and strong will, or only stubbornness, could not be guessed.

The new-comer sat quietly in his place, eating slowly and with all the propriety possible at such a table. I noticed, too, that every patient at that board felt more at ease after his coming. There appeared a freemasonry between the tall stranger and even the veriest imbecile. He bowed to each and every one, and critically inspected the faces of the guests as if they were his wards and he their guardian. Especially did I observe the childish delight expressed in the countenance of my English friend, Hawkins. The old man wel-

comed his opposite much as he doubtless would have received his lost nephew. And soon I saw at least one cause for gratitude. While the attendant's face was turned in the act of drawing a glass of water, the stranger slipped half of his bread across to Dr. Otto's place, and emptied most of his rice into Hawkins's dish. But neither of these persons seemed conscious of the gift. His cold, restless eyes were constantly upon the attendants, and I could see that even the mesmeric power of this shattered mind was felt.

Such a man was Hercules.

After a time he observed me, as a new face around the circle; but, after a sad, sympathetic bow, he went on with his dinner.

The attendants soon began to clear away the dishes, and to avoid being ordered out I crawled over the bench on which I had been sitting, and walked into the corridor.

I had not long to wait before Hercules made his appearance. Passing me without notice, he went to the sitting-room, where he cordially shook hands with all the inmates. Dr. Otto, the old German professor, appeared perfectly oblivious as to who was saluting him; but, as the tall, muscular man lovingly held the delicate palm of the frail-bodied student, for a moment there was a transfusion of nervous power. In like manner as the flickering taper of life is rekindled by the injection into the veins of warm, oxygenated blood, I here saw dimmed mental faculties brightened.

Hardly an instant did this scene last, however; for, noticing the crouching figure of an idiot in a corner, the giant picked him up as if he were a doll, and de-

posited him in the easiest position possible on one of the wretched settees. Poor Bytheway Brown! he put his arms around his benefactor's neck as trustingly as a child clings to a parent. This was an act of mercy of the purest and most exalted nature, for the idea of changing his unnatural posture would never have occurred to miserable Bytheway, and he would have remained in his bent-up shape until he had literally fainted from pain and fatigue. I had seen him on the previous day stand motionless in a corner with his face to the wall from dinner until supper time.

I began to realize what a true Samaritan this Hercules was. Although he had not discretion enough to shape his course for his own best interests, there was not a creature in all that building so worthless that this insane shadow of John Howard thought him beneath his notice or unworthy his care. Indeed, more than once—viewed in his undestroyed and indestructible humanity—he suggested to my mind a true picture of the elder Pinel, moving like an angel of grace, mercy, and peace, through the dreadful Parisian mad-house of Bicêtre—entering alone the dens of the most desperate cases, striking off their chains, and, like a little child, leading the furious creatures out into the sunshine, “from night into light.”

Filled with such thoughts, I took a seat in the corridor whence I could look into “Liberty Hall,” when I was gratified to see the tall stranger, who had already assumed the place of a hero in my heart, approaching. He sat down by my side.

Looking me in the face, kindly, as he ran his hand across his brow, he opened the conversation.

“A hopeless existence here,” he began; “but I could be happy enough were I only granted the privilege of taking care of my *protégés* in my own way. God knows I love *them*, love you all. I have tried to render this place more endurable, but I find it thankless work—not thankless from the poor souls, but from the desperate wretches who keep them here. A lost soul sees enough misery without enduring all the doubts and fears of an eternity in purgatory. After you have been here a hundred years or more you will realize how little is known about such places as heaven, purgatory, and hell, in the world where we used to live. I remember it all clearly enough now, although it must have been many thousands of years ago. I had a happy home and family in that pleasant world. I was grateful to God for so many joys, and when the doctor one day told me that I had only a moment to live, I didn’t pray for my own soul, but vowed that in purgatory or hell I would devote eternity to lessening the miseries of the damned. I have kept my word, young stranger! I have been their friend; now let me be yours.”

I gave him my hand. I was not able to answer. Bidding me be of good heart, this strange man rose and walked away.

He believed himself dead and among the lost!

I then fully realized for the first time how terrible must be the reflections, how wild the despair, of a sane man condemned to exile among these maddened souls, after a physician had, in answer to his pleadings and his protests, toyed with his pulse and postponed for a more convenient season a careful examination of his condition,

or even the most ordinary inquiries regarding his history. Imprisoned by due process of law, the victim, perhaps, of a base conspiracy in which physicians had been bribed or duped, and the magistrate had blindly put faith in strangers; forced to acknowledge the triumph of his foes, despairing of ultimate deliverance, losing faith in his fellow-man, and doubting his God: a sane man thus imprisoned could not fail soon to become, under the morbid influences of such a place, a maniac in fact as well as in name.

Under the law as it then existed, all that was necessary to lodge a man or woman in a mad-house was to obtain affidavits from two corrupt physicians, and upon these a writ would be granted by any police justice without the production of the supposed demented person before him—such actually was the case when the name of Felix Somers was tendered to Justice Box. The person charged with lunacy might be summering in Europe or at Saratoga, or wintering in Florida. The writ, once obtained, could be laid away until the return of the individual named upon its face. Armed with this document, the possessor could, at sight, “command any policeman or sheriff” to arrest the man or woman, and could, despite all protests, hurry the victim away to a private or public asylum for the insane. What difference would it have made to Justice Box, if, in this case, the writ had called for the imprisonment of Felix Robinson, or Wilson, or Adams? The person would have gone to Baldrick’s just the same.

I saw an attendant, with a whitewash brush in his hand, at the farther end of the corridor. I went to him.

“How long has Brown been here?” I asked.

“Nearly eleven years,” he replied.

“You must be mistaken,” said I. “He told me that he came ‘only yesterday.’”

“Nearly all of them are touchy about the length of time they have been here,” replied the attendant, sneeringly.

“Poor fellows! so they are still alive to feelings of shame or pride?”

“They are, altogether, a tricky and deceitful pack of scoundrels,” was the snappish reply from one of the gentle nurses who were employed to minister to minds diseased.

Not wishing to prolong the interview, I ended it then and there.

* *
* *

Supper had passed, and the time had arrived when the caterer had promised to lend me a pack of cards.

The Senator, Frisco, Thaddeus, and I were to make up the party. Frisco was the nephew of a great railway king on the Pacific coast; Thaddeus was the sad-eyed young man with the pink whiskers. The game of whist was chosen at the request of the Senator; for my part, I thought one game would do as well as another, and I did not expect to witness any exhibition of skill among the players. Throwing round for partners, the cards decided that Frisco and I were to play the Senator and his “sad-eyed” companion. My partner won the deal from the Senator by cutting a tray.

Frisco shuffled, then dealt four cards to each player, and—laid down the pack.

“Go on,” urged the Senator, impatiently.

Frisco started up, as if from a reverie, resumed the dealing, and finally exhausted the pack—a small club becoming the trump card.

It was Thaddeus's lead. He studied his hand until the Senator nudged him under the table, after which he played the ten of diamonds. I, as second hand, tossed on the tray of the suit; the Senator had, apparently, only a seven for “high,” and Frisco slammed down the ten of clubs, muttering, “Seven and three are ten, two tens with ‘big casino,’” and, placing the trick in front of him, he faced a card, as he whispered, “A sweep.”

Before leading back, Frisco looked at the table several times; when, seeing us all waiting for him, he mechanically laid down the four of diamonds, in utter violation of the best known rule of whist. Thaddeus followed with the jack of spades, much to my surprise, for, if he were short of diamonds, why didn't he trump? His partner did not interfere, and I certainly was not there to start a dispute. I quietly played the ace of diamonds, and, as the Senator had a small one, I won the trick. Before I could take up the cards, the pink-whiskered man at my right raked them all in with the joyful exclamation, “Hurrah for my Left!” The Senator at once disputed Thaddeus's right to the trick, and adjudged it mine. As I pushed it across to my partner, he winked again in the same self-satisfied air—as if he were cheating somebody—and, facing a card as before, laid this trick upon the other.

The doubt on my colleague's face was now understood: *he* was playing casino, and (another discovery succeeded this one in an instant) the sad-eyed man was amusing himself at euchre.

Seeing the perplexity which this curious discovery awakened in me, and not knowing its true cause, the Senator said, aside, "Don't bother to explain anything to them—they're lunies; we are the only hard-heads at the table."

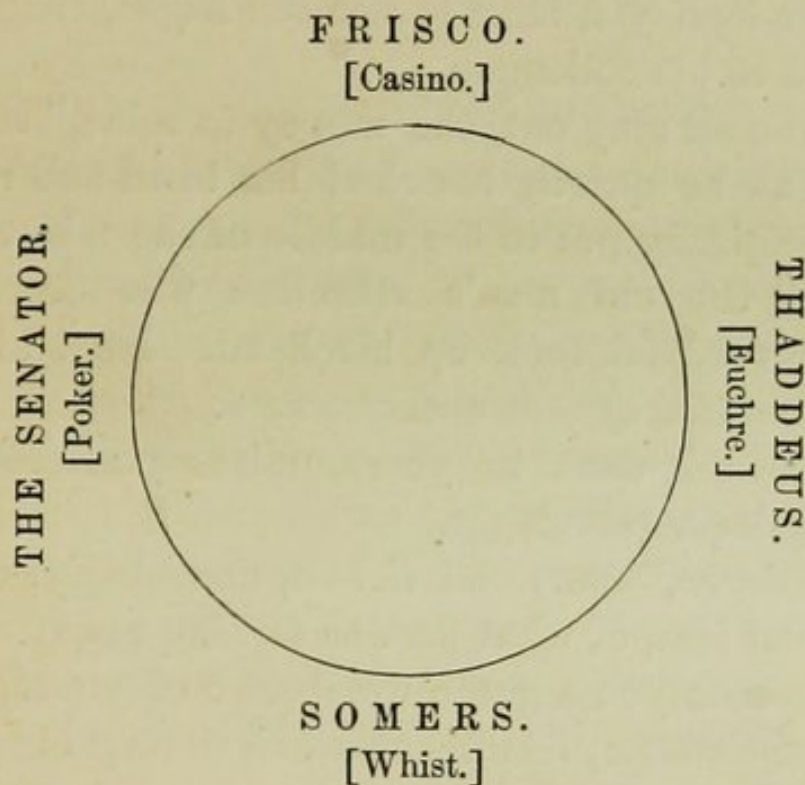
It was now my lead, and, as I had the ace and king of spades, I concluded to try that suit. I led the ace, and without the slightest hesitation the Senator trumped with a tray. My partner tossed down the five of the trump suit, and Thaddeus followed my lead like an honest man. It was Frisco's trick, and I could see that he was bubbling over with glee at our success. I handed the cards to him, he winked as before, faced one as he muttered, "Three sweeps and big casino."

The lead again belonged to my colleague. He did not require any waking, but at perfect random, as it seemed, played the right suit—a small heart. Thaddeus, contrary to Hoyle, played the queen. I had the king in my fingers, and was about to toss it on the table, when my attention was suddenly diverted from the game to the Senator. His face was expressionless as the Sphinx. He held only five cards in his hand—the other five had disappeared—and he did not seem to intend to play. The others grew as restless and gazed at him with as much surprise as I. Not a word was spoken, and the tableau remained unchanged until the Senator gravely said :

"I raise it a hundred."

Then, lowering his nose, as if looking over a pair of eye-glasses, he glanced unconcernedly around the group.

Prior to that moment in this game, there had been at least two sane whist-players; but the Senator's wandering mind had now returned to the "lang syne" haven of "bluff."



The idiosyncrasies of Frisco and Thaddeus had not startled me, for they had exposed their weakness in the first hand; but now even the Senator had been added to their mysterious zone.

A horrible shudder ran over me, and I clutched my cards convulsively—counted and recounted them to make sure that I, at least, knew what game I was playing, and that my mind had not deserted me.

"You all stay out?" queried the Senator, observ-

ing, although wrongly interpreting, the expression upon my countenance. "I'll make it a jack-pot, if you say so?"

Frisco grinned in his sickening fashion; Thaddeus laughed outright.

"We'll get the cards and spades," said my partner to me.

"Take it, if you have to use the Right," suggested Thaddeus to his colleague.

"If you all stay out, the money is mine," said the Senator, as he quietly bunched his hand and reached for an imaginary pot in the middle of the table.

While the old man's attention was diverted, I reached over and took up his hand. He had saved "a full"—three queens and two aces.

"The trick can't be yours, unless you trump it," said Thaddeus, sneeringly.

"That's so," muttered Frisco, doubtingly, without the faintest idea of what he was talking about.

"I'll teach you a game worth two of yours," fairly hissed the Senator, leaning forward to slap his partner in the face.

An attendant came running into the room, seized the cards, and dispersed the party.

Thus began, progressed, and ended the strangest game at cards in which I ever joined.

The abrupt close of our sport was soon followed by the order to go to bed.

"Who had No. 4 before I took it?" I asked, as I followed an attendant toward my cell.

"What difference does that make to you?" he demanded.

“Only, that I have seen a strange word written on the wall and was curious to know who placed it there.”

“I’ve forgotten his name,” the attendant answered. “He didn’t amount to nothin’. He died of—suicide, I think.”

“In this place?”

“In this very room,” said he, for we had now reached my cell-door.

“Still, I don’t understand about the writing—”

“Why, we found him dead one morning, with a piece of packing-cord tied tightly around his neck. He had strangled himself. That scrawl was on the wall, and a piece of charcoal lay by his side upon the floor.”

I was then locked up; and, although there is not a trace of superstition in my nature, I fancied all night long that the dead man stood on the foot of my cot writing that word upon the wall. Dangling loosely about his neck I saw the precious cord that was to bring him another life.

* * *

I had now prepared everything for the beginning of my work upon a diagram of the mad-house’s interior. A large, stiff piece of newspaper had been surreptitiously obtained and hidden away during the day, and the number of the doors in both halls had been carefully counted. I was no sooner locked up, therefore, than I began the work, and prosecuted it long into this and each of the two following nights. When completed, the diagram formed a large and rough orig-

inal, from which the cut on a preceding page was made. During each night, as I stood at the window working patiently with the wooden bodkin at long intervals, I heard stray lines of a low and mournful song—a lost soul bewailing its hopeless doom. Through the long night I heard it, and, like a lullaby, it soothed me to rest.

On the dreary morning after my first night's work, I was sitting at a window in the Liberty Hall, and by my side was Dr. Otto. After many acts of kindness—shown the invalid in every manner in my power—I had on this occasion succeeded in shaking him by the hand and in seeing him smile. His was not a smile of intelligence, but of thankfulness, such as he gave to Hercules—who loved and worshiped the old German professor “because of his fame in the other world,” and the great benefits which he, dead, had left to poor humanity.

The old professor enjoyed better health than might have been expected; but, morally speaking, his case seemed desperate—incurable. His mental condition was very strange. He appeared to no longer take any part in this world; he spoke to nobody, recognized nobody, but always seemed planning with, following, and talking to, imaginary beings. The persons by whom he was surrounded appeared to him as nonentities—he looked at them, yet did not appear to see them. He seemed to suffer if his vision was obstructed by a living being while he pondered; when a human voice reached his ear he seemed to treat it as a sound from another world; he was only contented when alone, and communing with his familiar invisibles. When, occa-

sionally, the doctor did approach, and asked the patient as to his health, he always replied, "Oh, I'm well!" then turned his back and walked away.

The professor and I were looking out into the little yard, inclosed by the fence and the wing of the building. There two frantic madmen were seen dashing their heads against the fence. A grizzly, long-haired man stood upon a bench, uttering, with wild gesticulations, a temperance harangue, while an audience of four distempered creatures, seated on the sod before him, applauded by gnashing their teeth and rolling their eyes. Near us, in the room, crouched two of these hybrids—neither human nor devilish, only impish.

Suddenly the silent, ever uncomplaining sufferer at my side turned and looked into my face. His eyes were clear, and reason looked out through them. His whole face then took a cast of horror and despair.

"O . . . mein . . . Gott!" were the words he uttered.

The most reverential, supplicating, sorrowful prayer that mortal dying ever lisped, or living heard.

Then, the expression of beseeching sympathy, of sudden hope, of horror at his position, of dread for the future, and of rational sensibility, faded from the eyes, as I, helpless and mute, sat with the burning tears running down my cheeks. His gaze was no longer at me, but through me, and beyond. The shudder that ran over his frame communicated its awful reality to me. The sad countenance changed as though a shadow crossed it, and that terribly heart-broken look of unfathomably hopeless despair was succeeded by the old

smile—so devoid of an appeal for sympathy, so absent of all hope, so lost to all care.

I had seen that most dreadful crisis in a lunatic's life—the rational moment in which he first realized his lost condition.

I turned away, feeling a terror I had never known before. In front stood old Hawkins, who, unknown to me, had been watching us.

Pointing to the fallen man whom I had just left, he said, as usual:

“Look at It!” Again he chuckled, “Look at It!”

There is an abyss in every man's heart into which he shudders to look; and he dies young who, with a shuddering glance into this dark depth, has not regretted he ever was born. With this startling reality there can be only one thought—“Just Father! grant me death.”

The Count became daily a more interesting study. He was of the highly suspicious type, and it was therefore very difficult at first to get acquainted with him. On one of “the red-letter-dinner” days—or when pie was given for dessert—the caterer had not served the Count with any, and, without the slightest hesitation, reaching across the table, he took mine. Instead of making any complaints, as he doubtless supposed I would, I pretended not to notice the act, and contented myself with half a dinner, in hopes of currying favor with the ungenial man. I found it impossible, however, to obtain another ration for myself, the attend-

ants intimating that I ought to have resorted to a fight, if necessary, to recapture the food. On the following day I divided my pudding with the Count, and at the succeeding breakfast gave him half of my bread. The consequence was, that in four days the imaginary nobleman and I were on fair speaking-terms.

* * *

I now learned that preparations were making for the usual visit of the Board of Trustees. The early hour at which the patients had been hurried off to bed on the previous evening was explained when I saw that the walls had been whitewashed during the night. This afternoon, while the patients were all locked up together in the front room, the floors of the entire building were scrubbed, and at night each "boarder" slept in a damp cell.

The visitors came on the following day. When I saw them crossing the lawn I took my seat in a corner of the corridor where I should escape special observation, for several years' experience as a news-gatherer about the city had brought me into contact with them. I knew them all.

First entered Jefferson Hyde, Superintendent of the Thin Skin Company of the Swamp, and Trustee of the Young Sinners' Salvation Society. Out of his pocket stuck the manuscript of a ringing article on political reform, which, I could not help thinking, would have read well beside a letter to the Superintendent of Buildings, offering a bribe of two hundred dollars for the privilege of erecting a tenement-house for the poor which should not comply with the law in respect to

fire-escapes. He was the "bogus" patron of art, the toady to a great editor now dead, boasted of a half-hour's conversation with the President upon the third-term question—altogether, he was the embodiment of vanity and superciliousness. The rational inhabitants of New York knew him so well that even the lunatic population had taken the measure of his humanity. He opened and looked into several cells, as if to see that the doors were properly on their hinges; he gazed at the wretched quarters in which the patients were fed, and forgot that when he was an apprentice-boy he was lodged better for two dollars a week than were his present wards for ten times as much. He passed the Senator without a nod of recognition, although I remembered that he had, only a few years before, "lobbied" for a whole week in Washington to secure an invitation to one of the old gentleman's grand dinners at Welcker's. But that was time past, and the Senator had probably given his last reception.

By his side walked Rodney Rondaway, Managing Director of the China Bank, prim, neat, polite; a man of the world without dissimulation. He appeared to be anxious to complete the examination in order to return to Wall Street before the last call of the Stock Exchange. His face was frank and confident; he would have organized a "corner" against his best friend in the same off-hand manner in which he would have subscribed a hundred dollars for a charitable purpose, or risked triple the amount upon a favorite yacht or a "call" at Morrissey's. Decidedly a man of caprice, although he did not acknowledge the fact, all his good and bad actions were governed by it. Therefore, it is

due to him to say that, had the thought entered his mind, he would have inquired after the health of each sufferer, and, while the humor lasted, would have made an effort to correct all abuses which had been brought to his notice. As it was, however, he merely glanced at the chairs and benches to see if they were broken, but passed the patients without asking if their heads were broken. The furniture was capital, while the sick men were only raw material out of which prospective dividends were to be realized: one cost money, but the other could be had for the asking.

The third director was a man of different mould. Carelessly dressed, from a brown-felt hat to a badly-shined pair of shoes, he bore the stamp of a man of heart rather than of head. I saw at once that he had come with the desire to ascertain the exact condition of the establishment, that he respected the few rights which poor lunatics should possess, and that to him the human face became no less divine when reason had forsaken it. There was nothing in the man's manner or dress to commend him to his colleagues, but there was everything in his face to invite the confidence of the frail shadows who saw in his smile the written language of his heart. And, because he was such a man, Dr. Quotidian hung to him, like Mephistopheles to the arm of Faust, and by his presence defeated every attempt on the part of the invalids to whisper even one little prayer for pity into their willing benefactor's ear.

Thus they came and went—the first two like fleeting shadows, recked not of whether going or coming; the third like a single sunbeam which enters a cellar and for a moment hovers over a drooping plant, thence

to pass across the floor until it vanishes without leaving any mark behind.

They descended the spiral stairway at the end of the extension, and were gone: the inspection had occupied exactly three minutes!

Nothing promotes more effectually the good working of a lunatic asylum than the frequent visits of its managers or directors, who should spend hours—not minutes—in familiar conversation and association with the insane, listening to their remarks and learning their wants. There is a very false impression that neither the remarks of an insane person nor his complaints are worthy of attention; but it is a positive fact—and I am assured of this by one of the most experienced doctors of the insane in Europe, and one of the ablest in America—that lunatics are not only very accurate in their statements concerning the material facts which come under their immediate notice, but also that, when cured, they usually retain a very correct and vivid recollection of the events which occurred during their confinement in an asylum, and of the treatment they there received. The information thus obtained may be highly important to the managers, and it would be of the greatest value to the physicians of the institution in their daily practice.

No proper asylum or hospital for the treatment of insanity can exist without strict adherence to a well-considered system of classification. As will be seen hereafter, there was little pretense of anything of the kind at Baldric's. The proof of this does not, neces-

sarily, rest upon the assertions of the writer ; it lies in the fact that he, feigning nothing, appearing a quiet person, without even eccentricities, daily visited by an "expert" physician, and constantly watched by "professional" keepers, was kept for days in the excited wards, surrounded by dangerous maniacs, without suggestion of removal.

Baldric's had always been considered a place for "genteel" lunatics, and, however much a poor patient might suffer from bad treatment at the asylum for paupers on Blackwell's Island, the friends of the more fortunate inmates of Baldric's might rest in peace. Here was an aristocratic insane asylum, with pleasant grounds, bowling-alleys, and other means of making a patient's time pass agreeably. Here were supposed to be books and papers and easy-chairs, skilled physicians and kind nurses—the very paradise of Bedlams. But, once suspicion aroused, the press forced the doors—for nothing that the public deserves to know can be effectually barred against the press any more, neither Central Africa, nor a Russian march on Khiva, nor the judgment of a German *Kammergericht*, nor the secrets of a United States Senate-chamber, nor the merciless massacres of the Christians by the Turks in Bulgaria. And then the paradise of Bedlams was a paradise no longer.

The learned doctors were there to go their rounds, feel the pulses, and slight their patients ; the kind nurses were indifferent and harsh ; the grounds were a tantalizing sight to the prisoners behind grated doors ;

the bowling-alleys were for the doctors and nurses maybe, certainly forbidden to a portion of the patients; the food was neither good nor clean; the beds were bad; the rooms were damp; the baths were filthy. These were the luxuries for which a patient or his friends paid twenty dollars a week!

* * *

I have since had a very interesting talk with a London physician, recognized as an authority upon the subject of insanity, and among other strange ideas which he holds is one especially interesting at this point. He allies to madness nearly all of the ingenious and daring business ventures which have made so many fortunes in late days; asserting that success in life is often due to the latent though unrecognized or undetected seeds of insanity in the system. It is, indeed, well calculated to startle us to be assured that insanity does not always manifest itself in mental weakness—as usually understood—but that occasionally the first alarming symptoms of brain-dissolution are to be detected in the sudden development of an abnormal quickness of perception and readiness of intelligent speech. The *reductio ad absurdum* test, as applied to such a theory, has already been pointed out in the Prologue, but the physician to whom I refer does not hesitate to grapple with the simple proposition in all its difficulties, and to insist that both theory and rule have their exceptions.¹

¹ If I am not at fault, Dr. Maudsley has also given some attention to this very point. In his "Responsibility in Mental Diseases"

These words are only prefatory to what I have since learned regarding an incident in Bullion's life which occurred within a fortnight of his incarceration. The story has no special reference to the learned theory evolved above.

During the few days of financial distrust which preceded the great panic which caused the fall of the house of Bullion & Co., the equally well-known firm of Nogood Brothers, stock-brokers, had been regarded with growing suspicions. They owed \$3,000 (£600) to Bullion & Co., and the head of the last-named firm, having heard the rumors, had found it impossible to sell their paper even at a ruinous sacrifice. He knew that, if the usual collector were sent, he would precipitate their failure and get no money. So, when their note fell due, he put on his hat, and strolled into the office of Nogood Brothers. They received him courteously, and, without his asking, handed him a check upon the Twentieth National Bank—a thoroughly solvent institution, but in a distant part of the city. The

he says: "There can be little, if any, doubt in the minds of those who do not subscribe to the Mohammedan faith, that an epileptic seizure was the occasion of Mohammed's first vision and revelation, and that, deceived or deceiving, he made advantage of his distemper to beget himself the reputation of a divine authority. The character of his vision was exactly of that kind which medical experience shows to be natural to epilepsy. Similar visions, which are believed in as realities and truths by those who have them, occur not unfrequently to epileptic patients confined in asylums. For my part, I would as soon believe there was deception in the trance that converted Saul the persecutor into Paul the Apostle as believe that Mohammed at first doubted the reality of the events which he saw in his vision."

old broker was almost thrown off his guard by their suavity of manner, but he lost no time in driving uptown to the Twentieth—where he was, of course, personally unknown—and, entering, presented his check.

The paying teller, having scrutinized the draft, and looked into his ledger, said:

“Messrs. Nogood Brothers’ balance at credit, just at this moment, will not cover this draft.”

“Does that make any difference in dealing with such a well-known firm as Nogood Brothers?” Bullion asked, indifferently.

“We make it an invariable rule, sir, with all depositors, never to advance money except upon special conditions understood by us both. Our rules are absolute in this respect, I assure you; otherwise so small an over-draft as \$75 would not prevent us from accommodating the house of Bullion & Co., to whose order I see the check is drawn,” answered the paying teller, incautiously.

“It is probable that Nogood Brothers did not expect me to present the draft until they could have time to make good their credit balance,” said Bullion, as if perfectly satisfied. “I’ll call in after lunch, when I am sure they will have provided for this check.” Bullion saw that the bank was about to throw Nogood Brothers overboard, and his course was decided upon instantly. He went out of the front door, and reentered the bank by another from a side street. He stepped to a desk, filled out the usual memorandum, and, taking a hundred-dollar note from his pocket, calmly walked up to the receiving teller, and made a deposit to the credit of the tottering firm. The pay-

ing-desk was on the other side of the room, and a stained-glass partition intervened. No questions were asked; the money was taken, and the receiving teller, without even looking at the depositor, passed out the usual voucher. Bullion went out, sauntered twice round the adjacent square, and then presented his check at the paying teller's counter. He received his money exactly an hour before the doors of Nogood Brothers closed—losing a hundred and saving twenty-nine hundred dollars.

This clever transaction—honorable enough, as business goes—was but the precursor of the wretched mental state which set in a week later, and landed him at Baldrick's.

Suddenly, the Count began to loom up as a character. Prior to this time he had not especially attracted my attention, and I had begun to think that my slight courtesies had been wasted upon him.

A startling piece of news had been brought into the Lodge this morning by Carrot, to the effect that a former patient, who had been sent home because his friends could no longer pay his keeping, had set fire to his house, and burned up his family. The Count introduced the subject to me after breakfast, as we sat near each other, and startled me by the sneering way in which he exclaimed:

“Ridley is one of us. Of course, he's not responsible for his acts either to God or man.” And then he laughed in that wildly triumphant tone, heard only when a maniac knows real joy.

There was more infidelity in that devilish jeer than in all the atheistical books ever printed.

“For instance,” said he, turning to me, “if I should feel inclined to throw you down at this moment and gnaw your jugular vein asunder, the law could do nothing with me.”

“Very true,” said I, with all the coolness at my command, but feeling an acute desire to change the subject, as I saw the ugly glare of his eyes.

Fortunately, there passed us at this moment a new face—strange in its singular brightness—whose story I shall tell at this point. He was an epileptic, and, although quartered in another hall, roamed at will through the entire buildings. He was a quiet, decorous man of perhaps fifty years of age; carried a pass-key, shaved himself, and took entire care of both himself and his wardrobe. He left the building alone whenever he pleased, without telling or asking any one either as he departed or returned, and passed entire days walking about the crowded streets of the city. Staunton seemed to be clear-headed, and I only learned weeks afterward, when too late to aid him, that for several years the physicians had, by depriving him of money, prevented him from visiting his relatives in a neighboring State, and that he was bound by a pledge made to them—considered by him dishonorable to break—not to go without their permission. The asylum authorities, by making to his friends such declarations as they pleased, induced them to believe that every statement of fact regarding his sanity, which he wrote them in his communications, was additional proof of his insanity. The management insisted that the absence of any complaints was a guarantee of the perfection of their establishment. But regarding this

man I have to-day a more startling fact to state than any other that came under my notice.

The narrative of my stay in the Baldric Asylum, as first published, contained a complete exhibit of the statistics of the institution, its receipts, expenditures, and profits (showing, by-the-way, a net income of \$49,244 per annum, after all deductions), which were obtained in an underground manner by another *attaché* of the journal which I served, and which I have every reason for believing came from a subordinate in the employ of the asylum, who sold his information at his own price. However this may be, I am satisfied that this patient was innocent of any complicity in the transaction.

The unusual liberties which he had been granted, however, made him the object of suspicion, and I have every reason for thinking that his movements were carefully watched by a private detective, or an employé of the institution. About two weeks after the *exposé*, as I was walking down Broadway, Staunton stopped me, and, in a rather longer conversation than I thought advisable, thanked me for the reforms which the escapade had already effected. This meeting must have been seen and a part of our talk overheard by some employé, professional or otherwise, of the Baldric Asylum.

The result of this encounter, or the like indiscretion of telling that he had met me, was that this man, who had had his liberty as a sane patient for months, was actually kidnapped and hustled off to an asylum in another part of the State, where he has remained closely imprisoned as a desperate lunatic ever since.

I make this last charge with the full facts in my possession.

There was no change in his demeanor so far as diligent inquiry, made through the medium of a nurse who has since been friendly to me, can elicit.

I have also learned since that a patient named Estrada had been confined in the Baldric Asylum as long as his board was paid. His friends failing to furnish the means, he was sent to Blackwell's Island Asylum, where he was kept several weeks, and then discharged by the physician because he was perfectly sane.

* * *

After Staunton had conversed a few moments with Harmony, he departed; the Count resumed his conversation, and I was gratified to find that he had changed the subject. I moved out of the reach of the Count's arms, and Harmony took my place. Turning my attention to Bytheway Brown, who was slowly turning himself round in a corner, the two persons near me passed out of my thoughts until my ear detected the confidential voice of the Count as he remarked :

“I am sure that I'm possessed of devils.”

“Why, my dear fellow,” said Harmony, in the patronizing tone which he always used when giving counsel to his inferiors, “such a thing is not possible in these days.”

“And they take the form of snakes,” persisted the man with the imaginary title.

“Quite absurd,” reiterated the ex-merchant, rather annoyed. “Don't you recollect how all the devils

went into a herd of swine, which ran down a steep place into the sea and drowned themselves?"

"True enough, I had forgotten," said the Count, pretending to recollect something which he had never known.

"That was the end of all devils on this earth," declared the late weigher of teas, in a tone that forbade further doubt or discussion. He then strolled away to look after the comforts of his guests.

Harmony affected, and indeed possessed, an extensive knowledge of the Bible, which he improved every opportunity to display.

"But I do see them sometimes," said the Count, moving up to me on the bench.

"See what?" I asked, rather cautiously.

"Snakes."

"I hope not."

"Yes," he said, sadly. "I know that I am going to be sick."

"Oh, no! you are not," I tried to reassure him.

"It is a very curious thing about this *delirium tremens*," he explained, in a perfectly rational way. "The first symptom of coming trouble is that you see something very disagreeable—generally a snake—lying coiled up on the floor THERE—*watching you*. Now, if you can convince yourself that this awful phenomenon is an effect of the imagination, you are safe. But, once you let the idea possess you that it is a real snake, you're gone. Then the dreadful reality drives you wild. It will make any living man crazy to have a snake watching him."

The last sentence was particularly terrible from the

way in which it was spoken. It was both declarative and interrogative.

"I became a victim to this dreadful ophiphobia in a very peculiar way," resumed the Count. "I never was an habitual drunkard. One drink of liquor did the work."

"That was very unfortunate," said I.

"Yes," said he, closely eyeing me. "I see that you, too, are skeptical. I'll tell you just how it occurred."

"By all means," said I, moving a trifle farther away.

"I was in the house of a brother-in-law, who resided in Madison Avenue," the Count began, striking a thoughtful attitude, as though he were trying to recall the exact facts. "This relative had a mania for relic-hunting, and, in his extensive travels, had accumulated a large and curious collection of zoölogical and mineral specimens. He was a thorough scholar, and, although peculiar and selfish, was a highly-esteemed member of several scientific societies. It was his declared intention to present his collection to Columbia College upon his death. Regarding the care of his specimens, the old gentleman had many original ideas. He insisted that, when kept in the light, the delicate hues upon the skins of reptiles, immersed in liquor, gradually faded out until the hide assumed the cream color or the dark tan shade seen in all zoölogical collections. Now, old Hodmandod was not a novice in his business, and was anxious to preserve the color of his wares until the day of presentation. For that purpose he had a dark closet built in the centre of the

third floor of his mansion." Here the Count rested in his narrative, and took a long breath. "I was recovering from a long illness," he slowly resumed, "during which I had been irrational at times, and had required the constant care of a nurse, but I was finally adjudged out of danger. On a fatal afternoon, thinking me asleep, my nurse left the room, locking the door behind him. For days I had suffered from an intolerable thirst, which, in reply to my appeals, the physician vainly tried to assuage with water. No sooner had my guardian left the apartment than, forgetting my weak bodily state in the burning desire of the moment, I c-r-a-w-l-e-d out upon the floor. For the first time, I observed a door in the wall, which appeared to lead to the front of the house. It promised freedom! Finding it fastened, however, I twisted off the leg of a chair, and, having crushed the lock, the door yielded. I sprang forward—only to find myself in a closet, without other exit than that by which I had entered. Feeling about the wall for another door, my hands encountered shelves, and, upon them, large jars of glass. Seizing one of the bottles and applying it to my nostrils, I found that it contained the one thing in the whole world that I was searching for—*alcohol!* There was no light in the place, but my sense of smell was ample guarantee. Wrenching out the large glass stopper, I drank—the deepest, deadliest draught of my life. I drank until a cold and clammy something touched my lips. I staggered to the light, where frigid horror completed my bodily wreck. The jar dropped from my grasp, and *we* (horrible unity!) measured our length upon the floor—by my side a writhing, slimy SNAKE."

There was a long pause ; neither of us spoke.

“ Since that day I have seen that serpent,” he resumed. “ When I am well, I pursue it ; when I am mad, it chases me.”

Frisco, who had come up during the recital, burst out into an hysterical laugh, and, exclaiming, “ Isn’t it a joke ? ” left us.

“ I have seen it to-day,” he continued, trying to reassure himself ; “ but I have put it down.”

He sprang up, and literally rushed away ; but the air which swept through the corridor bore me the words—

“ You’re not a real snake—not a *real* SNAKE. I have put you down.”

Already his mind recognized the presence of his demon, while the faint glimmer of departing reason was seen in the fruitless efforts to cast it off. It seems to be possible in such cases as this for the mental faculties to struggle a while, and that it is only after the nerves have reproduced this impression a great number of times that reason is overpowered.

The Count disappeared from the table that day. I never saw him again.

He had gone raving mad.

I talked with Hercules about the Count’s strange narrative upon the first opportunity. He had already heard it, and merely nodded his head, as he said :

“ Yes ; that was the way he died.”

* * *

I obtained paper one afternoon, and, having written a very brief letter to the Uncle, handed it to the phy-

sician during his next visit. Dr. Quotidian promised that it should be posted, and to test that very point was my object in sending it.

After dinner on that day, I observed that I was the object of considerable attention from the attendants. I became annoyed after they had apparently dogged my steps for about an hour, and I began to fear that they had in some way or other been apprised of the object of my visit to the establishment. Instantly I resolved to convince them of the seriousness of my case. Suddenly turning upon an attendant, I abused him to the full capacity of our meagre English language, and was about to resort to another tongue with which I was slightly familiar, when the fellow threatened me with a strait-jacket and a dark cell. This had the effect of causing me to become a model of sobriety and content. A study of the man's face during the scene convinced me that I was not suspected of sanity; I sought to know only that.

* * *

"I hear dismal, dirge-like singing at night," said I to Hercules, as I joined him for a walk in the corridor. "Tell me what it means."

"You have heard poor Anton's requiem to the Past," was the solemn reply. "He sings his mournful hymn exactly at midnight."

"Strange!" I muttered.

"Yes," he said. "For a long time I, too, watched for it, and found no rest until he began. His case is a very bad one; he has not seen the sunlight for a long, long time. He is said to be very dangerous, although

he used to obey me like a child ; but, then, it seems such a great while since I have seen him."

"Did he appear much worse when last you saw him ?" I inquired.

"Awfully changed," replied Hercules, running on, as if communing with his own thoughts. "When I first knew him he was young and gay and happy. We were acquaintances in the world ; but when I died I lost sight of him. After I had been here an eternity of time, the ghost of a man, with a young-looking face, entered. He was pale and wan. There was naught, only sorrow, in his countenance. Long hair, prematurely gray, streamed over his shoulders. It was Anton ! I rushed to his side, but he had forgotten me. Still, this was not to be wondered at ; we had been separated so long. What was his age then ? Let me see : he couldn't have been more than three or four hundred years old. Oh ! he was young—"

Together, we walked the entire length of the hall without either of us breaking the silence.

"Would you care to know more about my friend Anton ?" Hercules slowly resumed.

"Indeed I should," was my reply.

"Anton was born in the city of New York, of wealthy parents," began Hercules. "He was a bright child, and developed great aptness in his studies. He soon evinced a wonderful love for music, and before he was grown it became the passion of his soul. There was nothing practical about his nature. He lived in a dream. It seemed fortunate that he was born rich. A poor boy with his delicate temperament would have died young, and by his own hand. There

are some beings who were never intended to earn their bread. He was one of these. He had a woman's heart; a man's enthusiasm—impulsiveness. By this I would not indicate that he was indolent, profligate, or vicious. Far from it! He was an exemplary young man—moral, temperate, unselfish. His fancy—or hobby, as it was called—took him abroad, and several years were passed under the tuition of the best German masters. When he returned, his execution of the most difficult music was so marvelous that some of his friends asked him to give a public exhibition of his skill, hoping thus to divert his mind. He listened to their advice. A hall was engaged, and through the exertions of his acquaintances, aided by a plentiful distribution of complimentary tickets, was well filled. He sat down to the piano, and for the first few minutes his playing was in accordance with the score before him; but gradually all recollection of his surroundings faded away; and, with his eyes cast dreamily toward the ceiling, he launched out into the wildest improvisations. Now he reveled in the maddest transpositions; now the moving, tangible harmonies died away into fairy music. He carried the audience with him. All were spellbound. All felt that something dreadful might happen, yet none could dispel the lethargy of awe inspired. For a few mortal moments, I tell you, every individual in that audience was MAD. But the crisis came, and excitement gave place to horror. At the climax of a *crescendo*, Anton fell backward to the floor, hissing and frothing at his mouth. I doubt if any who were there that night can tell how they got home.

“It was a dreadful sight!” exclaimed the narrator, with a shudder, after a momentary pause.

“Anton came back to consciousness in his own room, but he never asked a question as to how he got there, or what had happened. The papers were carefully kept from him; yet he appeared to know all. From that moment he shunned the world. He became a recluse of the most confirmed class. All his days were passed at home; only rarely did he stroll out in the evening. He declined to play before strangers, and only at long intervals did he gratify the wishes of his family by taking a seat at the piano. He played best at night, when, in utter darkness, he would keep the entire family entranced by weird, melancholy strains. And, as Anton proceeded, it always happened that he became more and more intoxicated over his masterly and sympathetic interpretation of the music in his soul, until he would drop limp and exhausted into a chair, and moan, or sometimes tremble, as he rocked himself with closed eyes oblivious to all the anxiety of his relatives. Music was *his* demon. It haunted him, sleeping or waking; it hounded him to his death.”

We stopped in our walk before a bench: Hercules and I sat down.

“When too late, came the efforts to drive out the all-controlling spirit,” continued my companion. “The fated, inevitable climax was only precipitated. Anton’s physician ordered that he be kept from the piano. The instrument was locked up in a store-room. Anton’s misery knew no bounds; he mourned its absence as the death of a dear and cherished companion. He grew rapidly worse. He composed and sung for hours

at a time a requiem to departed happiness ; he deified the piano and worshiped it. Finally, he died. Then he came here. All he brought with him out of the Past was that death-song which, month by month, year by year, has grown shorter, until now naught remains, only the mere fragment which at midnight you'll hear him sing."

The story of a life was finished : there was nothing to be added. The singer and the song had a new fascination for me.

Hercules stood up to leave me, when Harmony approached, and politely accosted my companion :

"What is your height, may I ask?"

"Six feet and two inches," was the respectful reply.

"Thank you ; that was exactly my height once," said Harmony, as he bowed and returned to his chair.

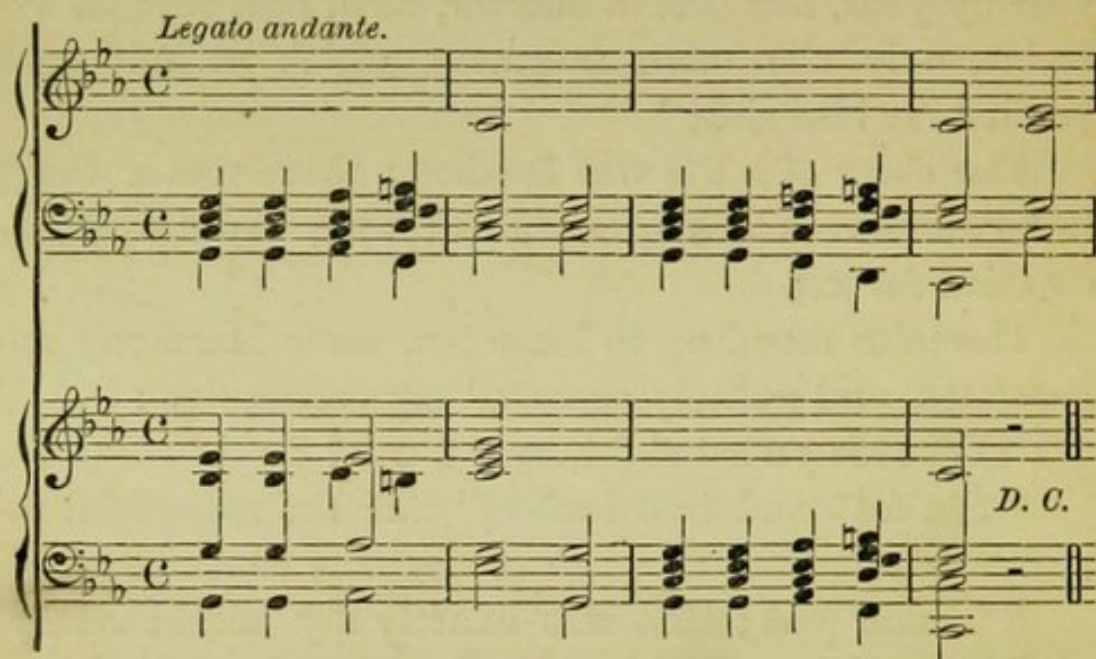
I was disposed to smile, until I looked into Hercules's face.

"That's very sad," mused Hercules. "In a hundred years or more that poor fellow won't be anything at all."

He appeared to think much of this incident, for he referred to it several times during that afternoon. It was evident that he implicitly believed the story. I was curious to know at the time whether or not he was troubled with a dread that at some future time he too would grow small. "Trouble does wear a man down," was the last reference he made to the subject as we parted for the night.

Having secured a scrap of paper, with a fine splinter which I had picked out of the floor, I prepared the

lines of a musical score; and that night I secured—in an imperfect form, it is true—the theme of this tedious song. It is a sample of maniac music, pure and simple, devoid of all romance.



This was the monotonous refrain that Anton sung over and over again to himself—solemn, weird, grotesque—a sort of wailing song, a cry of anguish retold through the dreary hours of the night like the nun forever telling her beads. The upper notes were, of course, all he sung, but in my ear the whole sad harmony was ringing as it is here appended; and so these few notes told in my heart their story of woe, as clearly as Dives's wail for a drop of water indicated the unfathomable bitterness of his anguish and despair.

It was Saturday night, and, as I lay awake listening to Anton's song, I thought of all the peaceful, quiet homes in the great village of Manhattan, of how gladly the tired workman hailed the end of the week, and of the calm solemnity of the coming day.

The night was dreadful as ever—even the sun appeared to rise later because it was Sunday morning.

Before I was fully awakened there came into my cell, through the grated windows, the soft tinkle of a bell. It was evidently very far away, but its murmured monotone came to my ear across the meadows and valleys intervening. I have since learned that it was the convent-bell at Fort Washington, two miles distant, announcing a service of thanks for salvation and sanity. But, at that moment, as I raised myself upon my elbow to listen, there drifted into my mind a paragraph from an old report of the Baldrick Asylum (for you must know that the institution is aged; ay, and that the compilers of its reports are experienced), which read: "The new City Hall bell is frequently heard at this place: on the evening of February 26th, 1847, its intonations were so distinct and loud that a stranger would have believed it to be in the neighborhood."¹ I imagined that I saw the madmen of Forty-odd listening to the tinkle of this bell.

I arose, and, hurriedly dressing, went into the hall.

At the end of the corridor by an open window I saw three silent, motionless figures. Sure enough, there they were—listening to the bell—just as they stood thirty years ago!

* * *

A cold and sloppy breakfast. Nothing to read, nothing to do except to sit and meditate upon the fu-

¹ Twenty-fifth Annual Report (1847). The diary for that year would appear to have been written by one of the inmates of the Lodge, if I may judge from the language. In July it is recorded that "there is no appearance of *that Gorgon* the potato-rot."

ture—a dreary day of penance because it happened to be the Sabbath. True, there was a small library in the main building, but it was practically inaccessible to the patients in the Lodge. It was composed chiefly of agricultural and Patent-Office reports, bound volumes of the *Congressional Globe* and the *Edinburgh Review*. A patient had facetiously written on the top of the bookcase, in chalk, the legend, "*Similia similibus curantur.*" The decidedly free translation which he gave to these words when I asked him what he thought of the library was even funnier still. "The like of these (books) would kill or cure the like of any of us," said he; and then he added, "Do you know, I have always thought that the author of that maxim must have been a Roman from Cork?"

A poor idiot who lived in the upper story (Hall XII.), but who messed in the common room of the two halls, and was known by the appellation of "Baby," was cruelly ill-treated that morning. He appeared not to be possessed of sufficient mental power to know when to come to his meals, or how to conduct himself. His walk from the upper hall to the breakfast-table was a journey always made with hesitancy, and after many pauses. He was generally urged forward by Löe-necker, his attendant.

On this particular occasion, because "Baby" hesitated rather more than usual to take his place on his bench, this heartless keeper seized the utterly absent-minded boy by the shoulder, and literally threw him across the breakfast-room, past the end of the table, when he again took hold of him and crushed him down upon the bench. The poor fellow uttered not a word

of remonstrance, and the attendant at the other end of that table laughed boisterously at the idiot's bewilderment.

I saw at a glance that Hercules had not yet arrived, and in my heart I thanked Heaven. Had he been present, there would have been a dreadful scene, and the noble-hearted man would have paid the price of his humanity by another week in a dark cell, warmed by a strait-jacket, and cheered with bread and water.

The hour for chapel came, and, having expressed a desire to attend, I was told to "fall into" a line which formed in Liberty Hall. Already in row I saw Harmony, Bullion, and Frisco. The column passed out through the front door, and across to the main edifice. Entering the basement door, the unbalanced squad moved forward over the stone floor, through a low doorway, past the bakery and kitchen, thence along a low, brick-arched corridor, to the extreme southern end of the building. Two flights of stairs brought us to the second floor above, and a few paces' further march landed us in the chapel. Bleak, white, and cheerless, such places of worship always are—why cannot they be otherwise? The room was probably forty by eighteen feet, and contained a double row of plain benches, on which were seated about sixty patients of both sexes. This was my first and only sight of the female inmates. A raised platform at the end farthest from the door served for pulpit and choir. A good cabinet-organ, under the charge of a fair young girl, furnished the music, and the singing by the congregation was rather better than I expected. The preacher evidently thought that anything would do for lunatics—or the

manager of the asylum, who engaged him, did. We had a sermon about up to the standard of the most imbecile minds present on that occasion. Then followed the prayers, which were much better, and we all knelt or sat with bowed heads, listening to the words of piety as they flowed from the mouth of our spiritual leader. The room was quite warm, but the worthy man seemed to think that he had a right to occupy as much of the Almighty's time as he chose. The congregation was wrapt in most respectful silence, when suddenly I heard the ominous "click, click, click," and the sonorous voice of Bullion supplicated, "Oh, mighty Solomon, my margin must be made good." There was some confusion, considerable grinning, and a few laughed aloud; but the minister proceeded, and the scene soon passed out of memory in minds that deal only with the present.

Among the ladies I saw one whom I knew to be the wife of a prominent Brooklyn gentleman, and the mother of an interesting family. I knew her to be a lady of undoubted character—universally beloved. Temporary mental hallucination, induced by severe illness after child-birth, had caused her to be sent to "the best asylum in the land," where a high price was paid for her board. Her malady exhibited itself only in a refusal to eat, under the conviction that the food she took would prove poison to her husband and children. These facts I then knew, but what I was afterward to learn was that her treatment by the nurses was so brutal as to reawaken pictures of the

Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria. It was impossible for her to communicate with her relatives. Her husband was only permitted to see her at long intervals, and, when he did, Dr. Quotidian or a nurse stood by his side and intimidated her into silence. The most startling fact was that direct influence was brought to bear upon this lady's husband by Mr. Rodney Ronda-way—through personal visitation and by letter—to induce him to continue her in the asylum. She soon recovered, but was detained in that place for eight long months.

Only a few specimens of the abuse and indignities she suffered can be stated in these pages; but, to such well-meaning ladies as care to establish what is here written, I may state that I have the consent of the late sufferer and of her husband to furnish their address and to say that such visitors will be heartily welcome.

This lady, accustomed to all the refinements of the social world, was repeatedly struck in the face by a nurse named Jane Eaton. On one occasion both her eyes were blackened, because, as Eaton expressed it, "she *looked as if* she wanted to listen to what me and Trotter was a-sayin'."

This lady was ordered to bathe in the same water used by "Old Aunt Maria," as a very frowsy woman was called; and for refusing was bound down in bed, on her back, for five days. And, when she beseechingly implored Dr. Quotidian to know why she was so placed, he smiled at her, as he had to me when listening to my appeals for reading-matter, and said: "You are so weak that there is danger of your fainting away and dying at any moment, and you are placed thus

because we want you ready on your back when you die." A more ghastly or brutal jibe than this was never made to the lowest specimen of humanity. The doctor, as we know already, was inclined to be witty, but lacked sadly in judgment as to what constituted good taste. He doubtless meant that the lady would be already "laid out," if she died strapped down upon her back. The lady was also treated to the drowning process to make her eat. She was held under water in the bath-tub by the nurse Eaton until, in each instance, she was almost suffocated. During each interval, as the nurse brought her patient to the surface, she used the following language: "Will you eat, now, d—n you?"

The letters which this lady wrote to her husband and relatives were always torn up before her eyes. The doctors told the visitors that she was not able to write, consequently not in a condition to be seen. She was frequently thrust, alone, into a dark room and locked up from four in the afternoon until seven the next morning. On one occasion she was begging not to be left alone for so long a time, and in her eagerness thrust out her hand to prevent the closing of the door. Her wrist was purposely and cruelly jammed between the door and the casing, mutilating it, and leaving it torn and bleeding without means of assuaging the pain. I have seen her maimed wrist. She was pinched, and shaken, and dragged about. This lady, wife, and mother, was on many occasions, at the caprice of the brutal nurses, driven before her keeper through the halls and corridors to the bath quite naked, and in that condition shoved and thrust about with such vio-

lence as to bruise and tear her flesh, yet the pain was as nothing compared to the dreadful humiliation of such treatment to a modest, virtuous woman. Among the instruments of torture was a very short vest of coarse muslin — a sort of abridgment of the strait-jacket — which was at other times strapped tightly upon her naked body by these fiends in the shape of women, after which, thus disrobed, and with her arms strapped behind her, they would tie her up to a post in the middle of a large room, a mark for their jibes and vulgar language — without even the power of hiding her face in her hands—while the leather thongs sunk into her flesh. The perpetrator of this infamy was the nurse, Jane Eaton; yet she is to-day the favorite employée of the institution. “Miss Eaton is firm, but kind,” said a young doctor of the institution. “We couldn’t do without Jane.”

And now, most dreadful of all, I have to relate an instance of the manner in which this lady was maimed for life. Time did away with the bruises and the scratches, but this poor sufferer will carry to her grave the marks of Jane Eaton’s brutality. One afternoon, after several days of perfect sanity, the strange hallucination returned. The lady-patient refused to eat when food was brought to her. The nurse, Eaton, went to the cell-door and screamed to the other attendants, “Bring the iron spoon, and a couple of you come here.” Then she turned to the sufferer, who did not dream that a spoon could be made a horrible instrument of torture, and said: “I’ll soon teach you never to say to me again that you will not eat.”

The two nurses soon entered, one bearing an iron

spoon. The two brutes held the trembling woman, while Eaton, having thrown all her weight upon the sufferer's under-jaw, forced her mouth open, and began to plunge the sharp-edged spoon down her throat. It will seem beyond credence when it is read that the roof of the lady's mouth was broken through, that the tonsils were cut off, and that the pillow and the nurse's arm were bathed in blood. Those who, like myself, have seen this poor creature's throat, and the ghastly, crescent-shaped holes in the roof of her mouth, will agree with me that Jane Eaton's name should be pilloried by the side of Nana Sahib, of Cawnpore, and Achmet-Agha, fresh from the shambles of Batak.

It may be considered strange that her husband and friends would permit this lady to remain in such a dangerous place, but she could not go home, and she was so frightened she did not dare tell of it in the nurse's presence. When suffering from the effects of unusual cruelty, they were not allowed to see her—were told she was worse. At last, with great difficulty, her husband took her away, determining to have her home well or ill, when she was found to be without the least trace of mental disease, and is to-day a respected member of society.

Yet, when, six months later, in the company of several ladies she visited the asylum to demand the discharge of this woman, Eaton, she met with no success or consideration. Dr. Quotidian received the delegation, and, after inspecting the lady's throat said, shudderingly, "It is, indeed, too bad." But, at the hour this edition goes to press (October, 1876), Eaton is still handling the spoon and dispensing the strait-jacket.

Will scoffers still say that this searching newspaper investigation should never have been made? Let the men or women who make this criticism—or the venerated editor of the *Evening Post*, who abused me so roundly—cross Fulton Ferry with me and visit the lady who has suffered all these awful wrongs at the “best asylum in the land.” Until they have done this, let them hold their tongues!

In the rear of the chapel sat Dr. Baldrick, who, looking up from his prayer-book for an instant, smiled in the same cynical fashion in which we shall hereafter see him under totally different circumstances.

Going out of the chapel I saw, down the corridor, what I supposed to have been the exercise-room of the women's ward. The first object that met my gaze was a little girl, about eleven years of age, laced tightly in a straight-jacket, and with the ends of the sleeves tied to an upright post, so that the child could neither sit down nor walk about. I have since learned that this child was so tied up for days at a time. “It saves us all bother with her,” said the nurse, Lizzie Trotter, when interrogated by a lady who afterward visited the place at my urgent request.

As we walked home from chapel I contrived to join Harmony, and we had proceeded only a few paces beyond the door of the building, when the chaplain stepped up and mixed into our conversation.

After hearing the remarks of the minister in thoughtful silence, Harmony suddenly said:

“Do you know, I have entertained angels at my house—genuine angels, too?”

“Harmony, you know that you are telling what is untrue,” replied the clergyman, with rather more acerbity than I fancied the occasion merited.

“Don’t you read in your Bible that angels came to Abraham’s house and ate with him?” asked the imaginary millionaire, without replying to the taunt.

“Certainly I do,” said the chaplain, with much emphasis and dignity, unconscious of the pit that the lunatic was digging for him.

“Very well,” said Harmony, with chilling composure. “Does your Bible say, then, that angels *shall not* come to Harmony’s house and eat with him? Tell me?”

And the ex-tea-merchant thrust his hands deeper than ever into his pockets as he put this sophism, looking meanwhile at his opponent very much as he would have done at a man who wanted to deceive him in regard to the quality of a coffee sample.

The worthy gentleman pretended not to hear correctly what had been said, and discovered all at once that the nearest road to his home led off at right angles to ours.

* * *

There was a new arrival in the Lodge on the following day. He was an old gentleman of fine personal appearance, though wildly strange and eccentric demeanor. His manner was exceedingly nervous, and at first I felt rather easier as I saw a nurse hurry him off into the corridor of the extension. But he reappeared

at dinner-time, and I was glad to see that Frisco had been transferred to the other table, and that the newcomer was thus assigned a seat where I could study him. He soon became the central figure in my observations. When he was conducted away from the table, the door leading into the wing of the building was closed, and it was not until late in the afternoon that I found an opportunity to prosecute my search after the new patient. Passing the door when I found it open, the old gentleman was seen pacing backward and forward across the extreme end of the corridor, clutching spasmodically at one hand with the other, and uttering moans at short intervals. The stranger scarcely noticed my entrance, nor would he recognize my friendly salutation. With regret I turned to leave him, when his manner instantly changed, and he poured forth upon invisible enemies such curses and invectives as I never heard equalled.

“But I am wrong; the fault is hers alone,” he exclaimed, striding up to me. “You must, somebody must, help me.”

“How can I be of service to you?” I asked.

“After all, nobody can do me any good,” he resumed, slightly composed. “Something fearful has happened to me.”

“Tell me what it is.”

“My wife has risen from the grave and fled to Chicago, whither I must go immediately or become insane.”

“Risen from the grave! Are you quite sure of it?”

“I’m certain,” he sighed. Taking me by the arm, he said, “And you shall know why I am so positive.”

He drew me to a window, and, as we stood looking

out into the small inclosure, where the madmen were, as usual, holding an orgie, he related the following story :

“ I was a rich, old bachelor—returned from Australia to find myself forgotten and friendless. As the rigor of winter approached I fled to the southern States, and ensconced myself in the midst of a Georgian family, on a country-seat near Atlanta. They had been large slave-owners before the war, and now, utterly impoverished, their penury was unendurable. The liberal price which I paid them for my board was, therefore, a benefaction.”

He stopped, I saw a shudder run down his entire frame, and it was several seconds before he resumed.

“ In this household there was a daughter. She was only in her eighteenth year, but the hard lessons of unaccustomed want had developed in her a precocity far beyond her years. Hers seemed a cool, calm resolution to marry in order that, by tearing a husband’s heart to shreds, she might wreak her vengeance upon the whole human family. But why anticipate ! I became deeply interested in this girl. At first I thought of offering to adopt her as a daughter ; finding, however, that she betrayed no aversion to a nearer tie—though supposed to have looked with favor upon a suitor of her own years—I married her.”

Again I detected the same horrible shudder, and again the narrator ceased speaking.

“ I brought my young bride to a villa on Long Island Sound, which I had purchased in the hope of making her future life happy with my own. But the whole dream of joy was a sickening delusion ; my wife made no disguise of the fact that she had only chosen

between the two bugbears of an elderly husband and a life of torturing poverty. She was bold in her contemptuous treatment of me ; while I did all in my power to hide from the world my miserable mistake. Such remained the situation until about a year ago, when her former youthful suitor in Georgia paid us an unannounced visit. I counted the days until I saw the presumptuous visitor depart for Chicago ; but soon after this my wife became seriously indisposed, and remained wholly secluded in her own room. I was not permitted to visit her, but was informed from time to time of her increasing illness. I had just decided to insist upon the services of a physician, when the nurse shocked me with the news that her mistress had the small-pox, and begged that I should set out for Georgia to bring her relatives to what she feared was her death-bed. In my helpless misery and dismay I—*the slave of a mad bride*—started as I was bid, but was stopped on my way, at Washington, by a telegram announcing that my wife was dead. Oh ! I have that message in this pocket. No, in this. Why, I thought I had it," he suddenly burst forth, in the midst of his calmer narrative, searching his clothing.

"Back I hastened," he continued, "in a condition of mind little short of madness—for I loved her—to be told by the nurse upon arriving that it had been found necessary to bury my wife on the day following her death. Under this culmination of horrors, wretched man that I was, I fell into a dangerous and delirious sickness. Recovering health and mind together, I returned into the world again without gratitude for my escape from death, with the intention of rearing a

monument over my wife's grave, and then seeking a foreign land. But, before I could carry out either project, an anonymous letter from Chicago informed me, with many substantiations of detail, that my wife still lived, and was in that city. Astounded, scarcely knowing what I did, I flew to the nearest detective bureau with the incredible epistle, and offered a million dollars for its certification or disproof. The unknown writer stated that the whole pretended sickness, pest-panic, and hasty burial, had been the machinery of a conspiracy between the simulating invalid and the nurse, the latter having been brought into the audacious plot at lavish cost. The servants had been frightened from my house by the stories of the dread contagion within it, but not even a false funeral had been used as a screen to the open departure of my wife for Chicago on the day on which I was telegraphed of her death. The reckless daring of the whole unparalleled scheme had secured its success. I took the first train on my way home, but I had no sooner set foot in New York than I encountered annoyances of every kind. Several men, who tried to convince me that they knew my name, followed me about until, finally, under the pretence of taking me to ride in Central Park, they brought me here. Now, I have one question to ask you, young man," he concluded, suddenly dropping the thread of his narrative, and looking me full in the eyes, as he laid his hand heavily upon my shoulder, "Where am I?"

The earnestness of that question cannot be reproduced in words. I knew not what to say; I dared not tell him that he was in a mad-house, and I considered it an act of duty to reply, "I do not know myself."

The most pitiful part of this story, to me at least, is to follow. Many days after obtaining my freedom, I heard the whole of this sad family history from the wife's own lips; and, while keeping sacred the feelings of a thoroughly repentant woman, I may say that the main facts regarding her crime and flight were true, but that, seeing the wrong she had done when too late, she returned to New York. She had been gone a year—tardy repentance, all will say—and what had happened to her husband during that time she knew not. But, when she heard that he was a madman, and she the cause, her future course was resolved upon at once. In brief, I found her struggling to support herself upon the scant fraction of her income that remained after providing for her invalid husband. His fortune had disappeared utterly in the year that had intervened; but, having lost all else, she still possessed a trifling sum of money, with which she truly reasoned could alone be obtained the only solace her former partner could ever know. The few thousands of dollars' worth of insurance stock, which he had given her only the day before she deserted him, she now devoted to giving him the protection and care of what she supposed to be the best asylum in the land.

She it was who, denied the privilege of seeing him, penitently and lovingly sent her victim, almost daily, a basket of flowers and dainty edibles which might have cheered his heart had they ever reached him. But they never did.

* *
* *

“You promised to tell me about your escape,” said

I to Frisco, during a dull afternoon. "This would be as good a time as any."

"One dark winter night," began the Californian, in a dramatic manner, "the wind howled 'round the old brown buildings, and over the icy roads. The time was early in January of last year. I had on the previous day possessed myself of a key to the main door, and knew that if I could reach it I was sure of release. I had a small pocket-knife which, more than a month before, I had coaxed from a friend who came to visit me. I had assured myself that, by cutting about one-third through the thickness of the door, I could reach the keyhole, and gain my freedom by means of the key which was in my pocket. The back of the lock had been protected by a thin iron plate set into the wood on the inside of the door, but, on a former occasion, when all were at breakfast, I had unscrewed the lock, and, having taken off this guard, had replaced it. I waited ever so patiently that night for the keeper, Bradley, to stop playing "You'll remember me" on that tuneless violin which you have heard so often—he's stationed on the hall above now. It was nearly midnight before the fiddling stopped, and I waited a full hour longer, so that all might be still. I then vigorously attacked the thick wooden door with my pen-knife, just over the keyhole. I worked away hopefully, but it had to be done most silently, for in the next room slept a most suspicious attendant, and every half hour the gleam of a lantern under my door announced that the watchman was passing on his rounds. Every sound seemed to reëcho with startling distinctness through the long corridor. At last it was done. Then,

dressing, all but my shoes, which were stuffed into the pockets of my overcoat, I left the room at a moment when I knew the watchman to be at the other end of the building. The same key that unlocked my door opened three others for me, and I found myself in the open air. The distance between the mad-house and the fence was soon traversed. Both stockings were soaked through, but, with some effort, the shoes were donned, and then I set off for the city, well knowing that the old adage about empty travelers singing before thieves did not apply to the fugitive from mad-house keepers. I soon had practical illustration of this. In five days, two men appeared at my room in a hotel on Madison Square, forced me to go with them, and brought me back here, where my former jailer has continued the same cruel restraint. Cracked or not, I don't see why I should be treated as a convict."

"You should proclaim the outrages under which you suffer to the world," said I.

"Who could have the courage to declare himself sane, living among madmen?" said Frisco, thoughtfully. "Surely, not I; not I!"

With what little experience I had gained I did not need to be told that an inmate of the Lodge was as completely deprived of his liberty as a convict in Sing Sing or Newgate. Although an institution at which each boarder or his friends paid a fixed sum per week, he was denied a host of minor privileges which, had they been granted, would have quieted his mind, but the refusal of which undoubtedly aggravated his dis-

ease. Especially is this true of such as suffered from softening of the brain in the earlier stages of the malady. The poor unfortunate discovered when too late that he had placed himself in the custody of nurses whose duties, as laid down, placed every restriction imaginable upon their comfort and their movements.

Leaving the restricted range of mere personal experience in the Baldric institution, and dealing with abstract facts, it is readily seen that the power, or rather license, possessed by the governing board of an insane asylum under bad laws, enables them to do far more than merely incarcerate their victims. Their grasp can reach even into neighboring States to pluck a man from his own hearth-stone. Like a woman charged with witchcraft in the old Puritan days, the man against whom the taint of lunacy is brought to-day has none of the sacred civil rights which are accorded to the guiltiest criminal. When a police-officer pursues a felon into a neighboring State he must have a warrant from the Executive ; and, when that felon is convicted and imprisoned, he knows for what and for how long. He knows that, when his term of confinement has ended, the strong-armed law that locked him up will open his prison door again. Surely, legislators are not so unskillful, and the English language is not so defective, but that laws can be framed whereby the same watchfulness may be extended to the ward of a lunatic asylum that is exercised over the cell of a convicted felon ! Institutions that make yearly reports to the State Legislatures—printed, by the way, at public expense, if my experience as a Washington and Albany correspondent serve me—and others that issue plausi-

ble appeals for assistance, whose very existence depends upon popular permission, should never be allowed to close their doors against that thorough inspection which citizens have a right to demand. They should be deprived of their most potent weapon against society—**SECRECY**. Nor should their directors ever be permitted to envelop themselves in a mantle of infallibility, or to constitute themselves the sole arbiters of a citizen's fitness to enjoy personal liberty.

“Is Anton any better to-day?” asked Hercules, kindly, of a nurse employed in the wing of the building.

“No, but he's still alive,” answered the attendant.

“So far gone as that,” said Hercules, sadly, almost to himself.

“Oh, yes! when we locked him up last night we all thought the devil would have him before morning,” said the attendant, hastening his pace, and resuming the street-song which he had been whistling.

“I really believe that that man does not know where he is,” said Hercules, turning to me as he nodded his head toward the departing nurse.

* * *

The sun had now risen for the tenth time since I had voluntarily surrendered my liberty. A day second only in importance to the first one had begun.

At four in the afternoon, Mr. Dinfor entered the front door of the asylum, and inquired for the physician in charge. Dr. Baldric received the visitor courteously, and plied him sedulously with questions which should have been asked when the patient was admitted. The

physician declared that the patient was slowly showing signs of improvement, and Dinfor expressed genuine surprise on being acquainted with the fact that I had been placed in the maniac ward. He asserted that I had been quiet and harmless on the evening when I had been brought to the institution. "Did the symptoms change, and was violence manifested?" Dinfor asked.

"No," replied the doctor. "He has not been violent, but excessively nervous and excitable, manifesting a desire to write to his friends, and to leave the institution. He is convalescing slowly, but, if he were withdrawn from the asylum and returned to the city, in my opinion a relapse would certainly follow, after which he would become much worse than when he came under our care."

Mr. Dinfor insists that this whole conversation was one of the funniest experiences of his life; and, as if to add to the humor of the occasion, Dr. Quotidian entered the room and joined the group, after shaking hands with the visitor.

"You say that my friend has expressed a desire to write?" asked Dinfor. "Neither his uncle nor I have received any letters from him. Has he written to either of us?"

"I do not know," said Dr. Baldric. "Quotidian, has Somers been allowed to write?"

"Yes," answered the assistant. "I gave him a sheet of paper and an envelope, and he wrote a letter to Mr. Foster three days ago, which I have kept here, and shall not forward because in it he asks to be taken out of the institution."

“Do you mean to tell me that the letter has not been posted?” exclaimed Dinfor, with surprise.

“I have thought best not to send it.”

“Patients, then, are not at liberty to correspond with their relatives and friends?” demanded Dinfor, with much feigned earnestness.

“Well, they are not strictly prohibited,” rejoined Dr. Quotidian. “Many patients fancy that they are perfectly rational, or that they are greatly abused, and we cannot consent that their friends shall be needlessly alarmed by thoughtless letters, nor that the Board of Governors shall be troubled with imaginary grievances. Patients are allowed to write when they please, but the officers of the asylum exercise caution in sending the letters.”

Having delivered himself of these remarks with a professional look, the doctor took the letter from a closet, where it had doubtless been laid away for all time, and handed it to Dinfor. It had been detained three days, and, according to Dr. Quotidian’s own statement of rules, would never have been posted. The envelope had been torn open, and Dinfor unhesitatingly unfolded and read the following harmless note :

“THE BALDRIG ASYLUM, NEW YORK, *August 10th.*

“MY DEAR UNCLE : I am now so much better that, your family having returned from the seaside, I hope you will come for me at once, or send Mr. Dinfor with a letter of authority. Dr. Quotidian and the attendants have overburdened me with kindness.

“I am, your nephew, FELIX SOMERS.”

While Dinfor was reading this brief epistle, the physician confirmed the statement of his chief that the

patient was gaining slowly, but should not be discharged for several months. "If taken away from the asylum at this time," said he, "excitement, nervousness, and a relapse will be inevitable. His uncle, Mr. Foster, should allow him to remain, by all means, and should pay no attention to any letters which he may write."

"It would give me great pleasure to see my friend," said Dinfor, folding up the letter, and putting it in his pocket.

"Oh! that is quite impossible," interrupted the doctor.

"Why so?" queried Dinfor.

"Because it is an invariable rule, never departed from, not to permit anybody to see patients in the Lodge who are not relatives."

"But I must insist that an exception be made in this case," persisted Dinfor. "I came here with Mr. Somers, and certainly think that I am entitled to the privilege of seeing him."

"The young man is in no condition to bear excitement, or to converse with any one at great length. I must therefore reassert that I think his uncle the only one who should be allowed that privilege," insisted the physician.

"You have not answered my argument at all, doctor," strenuously urged the visitor.

"Well, I shall consent on the condition that you will not remain with the patient more than five minutes, and that you shall avoid all exciting topics," said the physician, relenting. "But you must promise me not to give him money, postage-stamps, or medicine, surreptitiously."

“I accept all the conditions,” said Dinfor.

Dr. Quotidian rang a bell, and said to the attendant who answered it, “Conduct this gentleman to the Lodge, and tell the keeper that he is to have five minutes’ interview with the patient, Felix Somers.”

* * *

I desired to make yet another and final effort to communicate with the outside world in order to test this point thoroughly. During the forenoon I saw several carriages drive up to the main building, and observed that the footmen and the drivers were strolling about the grounds. I tore off one of my shirt-cuffs, and, when an opportunity offered by the temporary absence of Carrot in the extension, I stepped boldly into his room. With his pen and ink I wrote on the cuff:

Good for Three Dollars
If delivered to
JOHN D. TOWNSEND,
256 Broadway.

On the other side I simply said: “Come and see me; come at once.”

With this under my coat, I hastened back to the front window, and, after much cautious beckoning, succeeded in attracting the attention of a footman. He came as near as he could to the window, when, throwing the roll to him, I said, “Deliver this and earn three dollars.” He opened it and read the address.

He said that he understood it, and would deliver it. I had the satisfaction of seeing him put it in his pocket.

But I hardly need to state that the note on the cuff was not heard from until about a week after the *exposé*, when a man presented himself at the lawyer's office, as addressed, and claimed the reward.

In Belgium, every mad-house is provided with letter-boxes, in which the inmates may drop their correspondence free from the control or the supervision of the officers of the institution, and in other European countries the inmates of insane asylums are equally free to write what and to whom they please, and it is a penal offense to interfere with that privilege.

* * *

I had gone to my cell to lie down, for I was in a rather anxious and slightly impatient frame of mind. The writ of *habeas corpus* was to have been served on this the tenth day, and, as I saw the long hours of the afternoon slowly wearing away, I naturally feared that some delay had arisen. Imagine my joy, then, upon being told by an attendant that Mr. Dinfor was waiting for me in Liberty Hall, and that I was to have five minutes' conversation with him. I hastened to the room, and, for the first time in ten days, gazed upon the face of a friend. The hall had been cleared of patients, and the door was closed after me. The attendant came into the apartment, and stood by our side, so that he might watch us closely, and hear all that was said. Dinfor and I stood near a window, and our brief conversation was very commonplace, restricted almost wholly to inquiries regarding my health.

The floor had been swept in the morning, but the dust had not been brushed from the window-sill. Dinfor laid his hand carelessly on the window, and, a moment later, when the attendant glanced at the floor, with one bold flourish wrote on the dusty wood-work the stenographic characters :



This gave me the very information that I most desired. Dinfor soon after took his leave.

I returned to my cell in a very different mood from that in which I had left it. The glorious news had reached me. The trap was ready for springing; the *habeas corpus* was issued! I was now the ward of the Supreme Court, and my bondage could last only three days more. All this had I learned when Dinfor wrote:

“It will be served in an hour.”

* * *

This practically brings my narrative to a close, for I choose to pass over the two days and part of a third which began soon after Dinfor's departure. I do this merely because I was treated in a manner in such marked contrast to the previous ten days that its purpose would have been evident even to an insane mind. I was afforded an opportunity to escape, and was once encouraged by the keeper to do so, but I preferred to go into court. I could not afford to spoil *The Comedy*.

I received far more consideration at the hands of physicians and nurses than the Senator or Frisco, or the millionaire's son Thaddeus. The change in treatment and the discrimination in my favor were to be accounted for on only one hypothesis. The previous forty-eight hours had added neither wealth nor gray hairs to my estate, nor had I been suddenly revealed as a distinguished personage whose name commanded reverence. The reason was found in the simple fact that *I had established communication with the outside world*, and that on a certain hour, fixed by law, I could in a high court of justice assert my right to liberty.

The writ of *habeas corpus* was the palladium of my safety.

Here, then, I remained for twelve long days and nights, my sleep murdered by the shrieks of the crazed in the padded rooms of the cellars, associated during waking hours with every class of disordered minds. Dr. Quotidian solicited no information regarding the causes which had produced my alleged derangement, made no extended examination, held only two brief conversations with me, and Dr. Baldrick, the chief physician, did not, during my stay, even visit the Lodge, except under circumstances which will appear later. After my commitment I manifested no violence, nor did I in any manner feign insanity, judging, truly, that my presence in such a place would be taken as conclusive evidence upon that point. Notwithstanding all these facts, I was kept in "a lodge" with men in strait-jackets.

I now feel that, had I not been nerved with the consciousness that I was present in this place and

among these scenes of agony for a purpose—a work of simple justice and truth, to be told unreservedly and dispassionately, whether it was favorable or unfavorable to the institution—I could not have endured through those few days. Had I felt my imprisonment to be hopeless and aimless—had there been no thoughts to busy and interest me; but, on the contrary, my own wrongs and sufferings to make me despair—these associations would have driven me wild in a month. And, though I had every assurance of early release, though I knew that friends without were as anxiously interested in my release as I was myself, still the association with disordered brains, the total lack of amusements, the forced absence from the free air and sunshine, the horrible noises which alarmed the nights and defied slumber, the filthy manner in which the meals were served, the utter separation from the world, and all other conditions of my imprisonment, had such an effect upon me that, after nine days, in a fit of the deepest despondency, I wellnigh lost all courage. Cut off from all communication with friends, without money, forced to beg an attendant for even a drink of ice-water or a pocket-handkerchief, utterly at the mercy of heartless keepers and an incompetent physician—surrounded by madmen—I became so depressed and disconsolate that (it is no exaggeration) I actually began to question my ability to retain my reason should I be forced to remain longer where I then was.

Heretofore the persons who have told the stories of the wrongs they have suffered through incarceration in lunatic asylums have at least been subject to the suspicion that they were insane; but you have kindly

listened to the story of a special correspondent, who deliberately, by the order of his employers, and purely as a journalistic enterprise, procured his own imprisonment, and now narrates his own experiences in the plain, matter-of-fact manner in which he would "write up" a congressional caucus or a coroner's inquest. He has grouped the leading incidents together without regard to chronological order, and has told only such as seemed to him worth repeating.

* * *

I have yet a sacred duty to perform, and I shall make my promise good right here. When it became known in the ward that I was to go to court on a writ of *habeas corpus*, Bullion approached me early on the last morning, as I sat in the chamber of horrors, and handed me a small wad of paper, which afterward proved to be five leaves of a Prayer-Book, closely written in pencil, at the same time begging me to read it in court, or to have it printed upon circulars for distribution in Wall Street. I append it, *verbatim*, as a veritable specimen of the wild hallucinations of an insane mind, taking leave to state that, upon all topics in nowise related to finance, my good friend Bullion was perfectly rational. The original is carefully preserved in my scrap-book as one of the most curious mementoes of this strange adventure

"To the Insurance Companies and the Public:

"I once intended to publish a pamphlet showing how persons strike others dead, inflict with lunacy, create various diseases, and that the Scriptures were

written by the authors of these abuses, and also their object in causing bankruptcy. But these persons have secret conspiracies to prevent me from exposing them, and, whenever I come to the city, in the fall of the year many fires are caused, so that if they can get the house burned down where I stay there shall not be any unusual suspicion, and they are thus forced to have recourse to more incendiarism throughout the entire country to ward off further suspicions from themselves in the city. I have made application to several publishers to print my disclosures, when the conspirators referred to have surfeited the publishers with an overwhelming mass of literature, so that they should not want my work. I could not print it in New York, so was forced to try Boston, but, having made my determination known, Boston was burned down two days before I was ready to start in search of a publisher.

“Remain in ignorance of their secret power no longer, O men of Mammon! The idea of about ten thousand persons (in the nineteenth century) slaughtering and afflicting forty millions of people, whenever they choose, is monstrous! Had you understood me as long ago as April, 1870, the country might now have been nearly three hundred million dollars richer. If you would save your country and mine, now is the hour! You must not be indifferent for a financial crisis in the United States, and revolution, with wars throughout Europe, and possibly blood to the horses' fetlocks before their last days; that's their threat, but with little more than a breath you can set them at defiance. You must now look to yourselves; I can do no more; for, if I cannot get some employment, I shall

be either starving in New York, be murdered by a medical process on ship-board, or be smuggled into some lunatic asylum upon landing in England, unless you publish this pamphlet. Not only the salvation of your country, but the lives of your wives and children are depending upon the dissemination of this knowledge which exists alone in the brain of

“Your anxious friend and adviser,

“WM. MILTON BULLION.”

* * *

I was informed on the morning of the twelfth day that I must be ready to take a drive down town at ten o'clock.

I rose early and packed my clothing into my satchel, both having been sent to my room.

After breakfast, by considerable coaxing, I succeeded in getting a nurse to shave me, and obtained permission to comb my hair at a small mirror in his room. Upon looking in the glass I was almost frightened at the change which had taken place. Although slightly sick in New Orleans, from drinking the muddy Mississippi water on my voyage down the river, I had returned to New York in perfect health. Now I was pale and haggard.

Such was the effect of a few days and nights of life in the Lodge upon a sane man; awful must be the consequences for an insane person who experiences lucid intervals in which he fully recognizes the utter hopelessness of his situation.

At the appointed hour I had my hat in my hand to

go to the main building, where I was to join Dr. Baldric, and thence proceed to court. I stood waiting near Dr. Quotidian, who was conversing with the keeper.

“I hear that there was a birth over in the female ward this morning,” remarked Carrot.

“Yes; another idiot boy,” replied the physician, carelessly, as if thinking about something else.

The opening of a door at the other end of the corridor and the sound of shuffling feet attracted my attention. I turned and beheld four men whose faces were new to me advancing with a box over which a blanket was thrown.

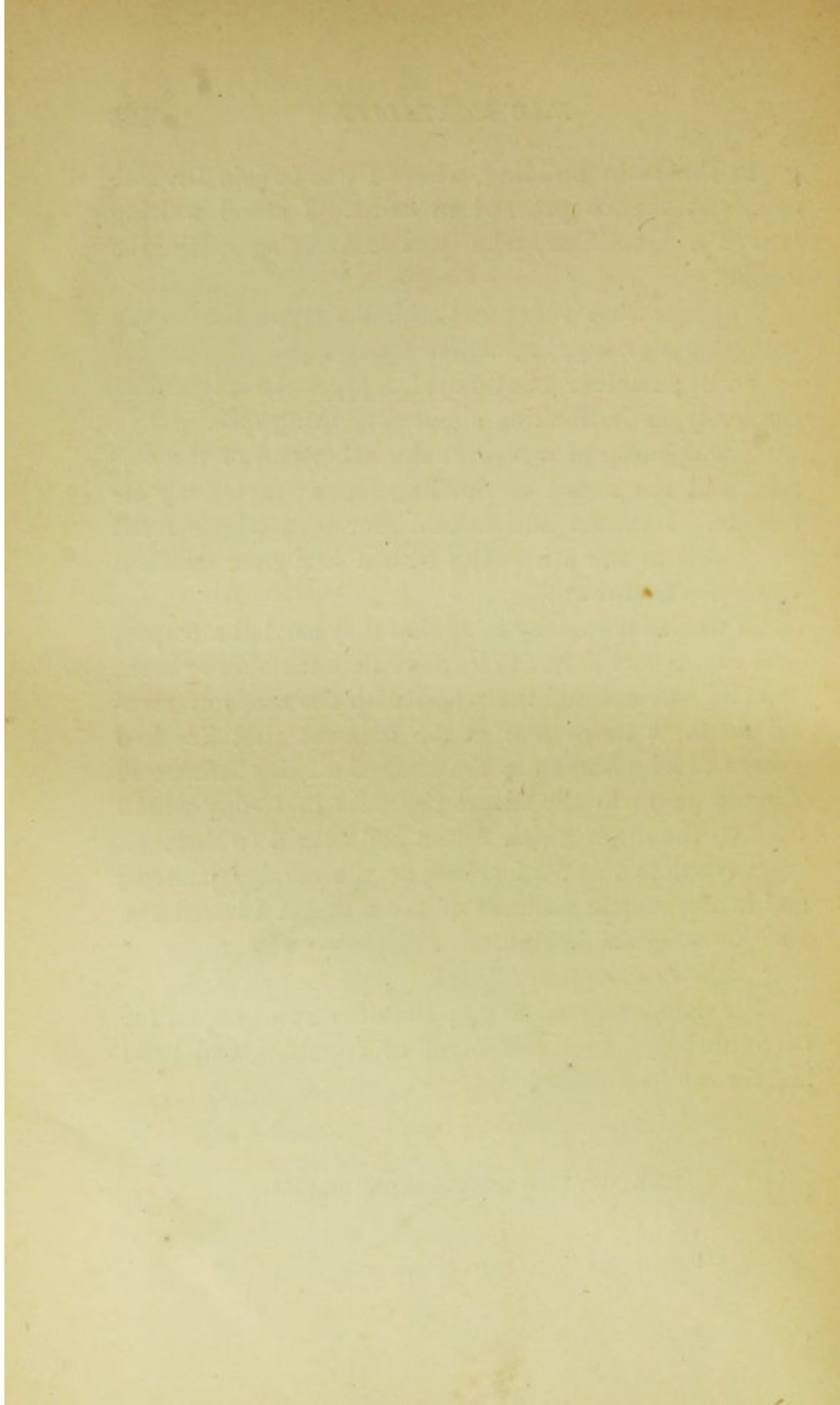
It flashed across my mind that they carried a corpse, and that it was better to be dead than mad-house born. A child had entered the world with the seeds of mental death in its system at the moment that life had ceased to be a burden to the musical maniac before me. Twenty years in the future the child of to-day would take up the dirge which Anton had ceased to sing.

“What is this?” I asked, as the *cortége* passed; and in the solemn stillness of the moment I heard the well-known voice behind me whisper—

“*It is resurrection!*”

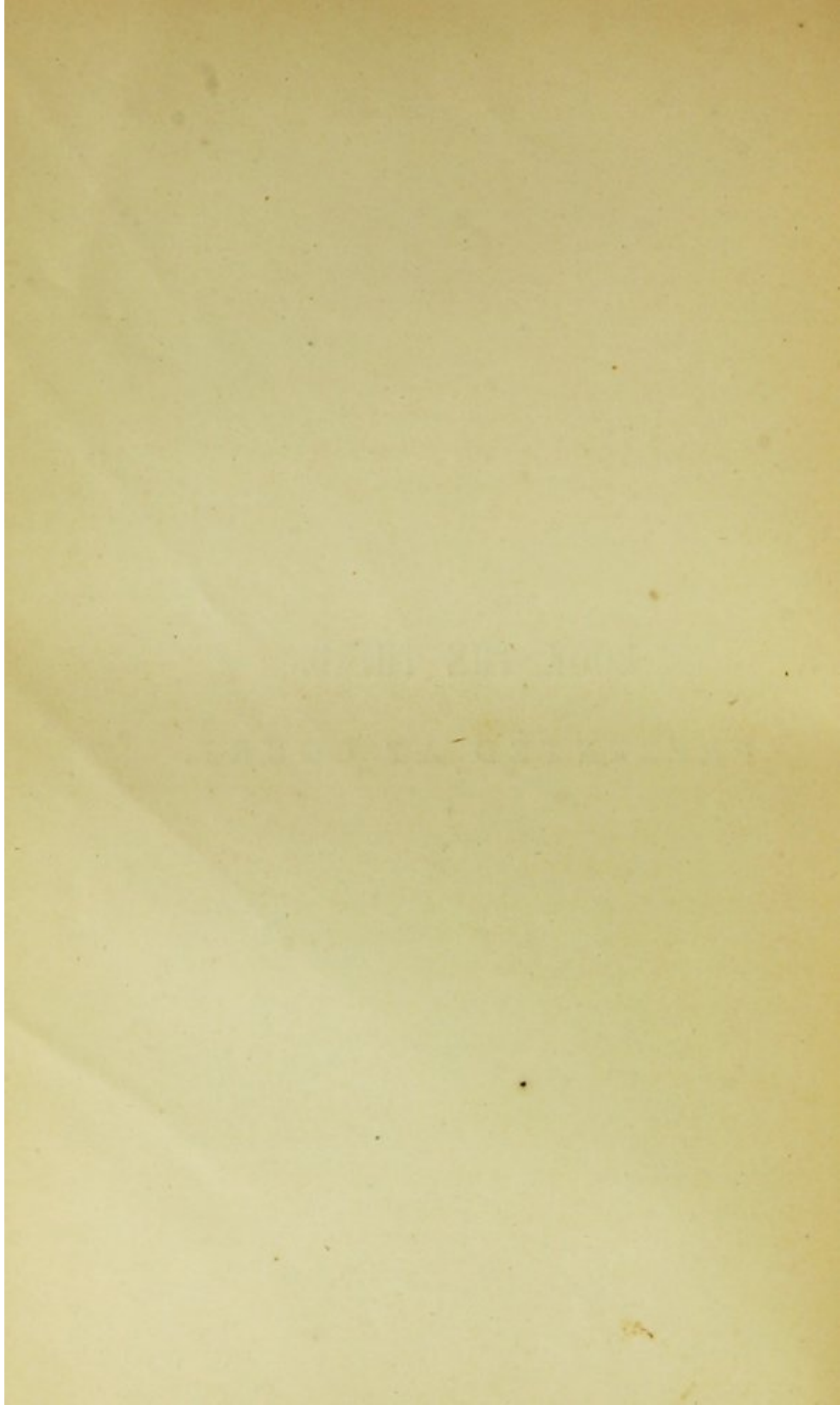
The doctor started to go; the door swung open for me; turning, I took the hand of Hercules, and bade him farewell—forever!

END OF THE EMOTIONAL DRAMA.



BOOK THE THIRD.

PRESENTED AT COURT.



BOOK THE THIRD.

P R E S E N T E D A T C O U R T .

I.

A COMEDY OF THE COULISSE.

ACTIVE preparations were making for the closing scene. There was a great deal of work done by the manager, Mr. Dinfor, and I shall ask you to step into the wings to see how conscientiously he performed it.

The editor of a metropolitan newspaper and Mr. Dinfor were closeted with a prominent attorney-at-law. The lawyer had just returned from the Supreme courtroom with a writ of *habeas corpus* directed to Dr. Baldric, of the Baldric mad-house, commanding the production in that court of the body, dead or alive, of one Felix Somers. He read the document to the two persons present :

The People of the State of New York.

To Robert Baldric, Superintending Physician of the Baldric Lunatic Asylum, New York; or the Physician in charge of said Asylum temporarily.

We command you that you have the body of Felix

Somers, by you imprisoned and detained as it is said, together with the time and cause of such imprisonment and detention, by whatsoever name he shall be called or charged, before one of the Judges of our Supreme Court holding the Chambers of said Court in this New Court House, in the city of New York, on Thursday, the 15th day of August inst., at half-past ten o'clock, to do and receive what shall then and there be considered concerning him, and have you then there this writ.

Witness, Hon. Daniel Buckingham, Chief Judge of the Supreme Court (First District), the 13th day of August, 1872.

By the Court,

CHAS. E. LOWLY, *Clerk*.

JOHN D. TOWNSEND, *Attorney*.

“That will do the business,” concluded the lawyer.

“I can immediately precede this writ to the asylum,” said Mr. Dinfor, “and see what opinion Dr. Baldric expresses regarding his patient. Then we shall see whether he is consistent after the *habeas* is served upon him.”

“I can send a trustworthy clerk with you, who will be entirely under your direction,” remarked the attorney, as he tapped his bell; “Send Mr. Hunky here,” he continued, addressing a boy who answered the summons.

A young man entered.

“This is Mr. Hunky, gentlemen,” said the lawyer, introducing his clerk. Then, addressing him, he continued, “Mr. Dinfor will give you his instructions. It is a matter which will require some discretion on your part, and I shall expect you to be judicious.”

The young man bowed.

Mr. Dinfor and his employer stepped to the other end of the room.

“Take a carriage at the City Hall,” said the old journalist. “Drive to the mad-house, see Dr. Baldric or Quotidian, and, if possible, Somers—at least, be assured of his presence in the institution. Carry out your plan fully; it is a good one. Have the doctor commit himself positively one way or the other in the case. Come down-town at once, and if you learn that Baldric is going to see Mr. Foster, the Uncle, telegraph me from the Fifty-ninth Street office the words, ‘He sings the music of the future.’ I shall repeat the message to Mr. Foster, who will be apprised of its import, so that he can proceed intelligibly.”

Mr. Dinfor turned to the clerk and gave him his instructions in a few words.

“You will drive with me to the Baldric Asylum for the Insane. I shall leave you in the carriage on the Boulevard, and enter the place alone while you exercise the horses up and down the road until you see me come out of the gate. Then drive past as if you never had seen me, and serve this writ of *habeas corpus* upon the physician in charge of the institution. Answer no questions, and ask him none. The carriage is waiting.”

II.

A PAPER WEIGHT.

MR. DINFOR walked composedly out through the charming grounds surrounding the asylum, and took an omnibus down the Boulevard for the city. He had, as we already know, fully accomplished his mission—he had obtained the unequivocal committal of both doctors to their belief in the seriousness of Somers's case, and he had informed the patient of the virtual end of his imprisonment. Dinfor was happy because of these results, and now could do nothing further until he saw what effect the writ would have upon their professional opinions.

The carriage containing Mr. Hunky, the lawyer's clerk, drove slowly down the Boulevard after Dinfor had entered the stage; then, by direction of the occupant, it turned into the gateway of the asylum grounds, slowly traversed the shady road, and halted at the front entrance to the imposing brown-stone edifice.

Mr. Hunky then alighted, and, ascending the stone steps, entered the open door.

"Is Dr. Baldrick at home?" asked the clerk of the janitor, who came forward in the hall to meet him.

"He is," was the laconic answer.

“Will you hand him my card, and say that I call on important business?” said Mr. Hunky, stepping into the reception-room.

The corpulent, red-faced, jolly physician appeared in a few moments. The usual courtesies exchanged, without further introduction, the clerk handed him the document containing Judge Buckingham’s signature.

The doctor glanced at the name—he was familiar enough with the appearance of such papers—and then carefully folded it up.

“I acknowledge its receipt,” said the physician, with an effort to appear cool, but the clerk asserts to this day that his face grew perceptibly redder.

Having bowed the young man out, the doctor clutched the janitor by the arm and fairly hissed:

“Send my team to the door this instant.”

III.

AN INCH OF TIME.
•

THE omnibus which carried Mr. Dinfor had halted at the Central Park circle when a team, driven at the highest rate of speed, dashed past.

In it, to his surprise, Dinfor beheld Dr. Baldric!

But the physician did not observe him; he saw only the pavement ahead.

Baldric held the reins, and by his side Quotidian.

The horses' pace was a killing one. With the driver it was a race against time, for the doctor thought that the possibility of finding Mr. Foster in his office depended upon reaching it at the earliest moment.

But in this he was mistaken; Mr. Foster awaited his arrival.

Within five minutes more he received a telegram, which read—

“He sings the music of the future.”

IV.

O CONSTANCY!

THOSE who have witnessed a minstrel performance will recognize this scene. They will see in it a very comical "first part," with Drs. Baldric and Quotidian as the talkative "end men;" Mr. Foster as the "centre man"—who always knows the answers to the riddles which the others try in vain to guess—and Mr. Dinfor as "the ghost" necessary to bring about the climax.

Dr. Baldric and his coadjutor entered the office of Mr. Foster, and, without waiting to take a seat, the former exclaimed:

"How could he have taken it out?"

"Are you addressing me?" quietly asked Mr. Foster, as he turned in his chair from his desk.

"How stupid I am, to be sure!" replied the doctor, slightly composed. "How could you be expected to understand what I meant? Well, then, your nephew has got out a writ of *habeas corpus*, commanding his production before the Supreme Court. How do you suppose he accomplished it?"

"Independent of any assistance from me, I can assure you," replied Mr. Foster, with chilling composure.

"A bad job for all of us," chimed Quotidian.

"Do *you* want to be dragged into court?" asked Baldric, harshly.

"It wouldn't annoy me very much," again retorted the incomprehensibly calm Mr. Foster.

"It will go hard with you for locking a sane man up in a mad-house," exclaimed Baldric and Quotidian in the same breath.

"I'll try and stand it," was the quiet reply.

So much advantage is there always on the side of the man who knows what he is talking about as opposed to another who does not. A single fact often gives its possessor the key to an otherwise incomprehensible situation.

"I have seen for some days that he had recovered," began Baldric.

"And so have I," echoed Quotidian, with a conciliating smile. "Perfectly restored."

"'Tis a pity you didn't discharge him, then, for you know that I left him wholly in your hands," retorted Mr. Foster.

"If you will persuade your nephew to withdraw the writ," continued the frantic doctor, "I shall be very glad to discharge him at once."

"I am very certain that I could not influence him in a matter of this kind," was the reply.

"Come, jump into my carriage and drive out to the asylum. Quotidian can — can walk and be d—d to him," excitedly vociferated the now thoroughly desperate Baldric.

“Really, you must excuse me, for I haven’t the time to go out there to-night.”

“It may be worth your while,” said Baldric.

“Indeed it may,” suggested Quotidian.

“Perhaps,” answered Mr. Foster, significantly taking out his watch; “but, as I can readily show that I could have had no selfish object in procuring the incarceration, and that I relied entirely upon the testimony of the committing physicians and upon your assistant, Dr. Quotidian, I am not inclined to let the subject trouble me further.”

“Something must be done,” exclaimed Baldric, in a hopeless way. “I don’t want him produced in court, for he is perfectly sane.”

“Perfectly sane,” echoed Quotidian.

Just at this instant Dinfor quietly entered the office, and his look of surprise at meeting the two physicians there was probably half genuine.

“Why, doctor, is Felix worse?” anxiously asked Dinfor, with a look which guaranteed utter ignorance of a writ of *habeas corpus*.

“No; not worse,” replied the doctor, uncomfortably. “He’s better, much better—”

“Cured,” soliloquized Quotidian.

“What!” interjected Dinfor; “cured in two hours! No longer ago you told me his case would require three months of careful watching. You startled me, doctor! But,” concluded Dinfor, gayly, “I’m glad of it.”

“I mean that I have been asking Mr. Foster to take his nephew away,” said Dr. Baldric, with a painful effort to regain his composure.

“Has he broken anything?” inquired Dinfor, cu-

riously; "or have you listened to his appeals for liberty?"

"Nothing of the sort," said Baldric, frankly.

"Broken me," muttered Quotidian, to himself.

"He has got the best of us all," continued Baldric. "You, as well as the rest, Mr. Dinfor." (*Rising inflection.*) "He'll have us all in court, where we shall make a very ridiculous figure, I can assure you, for 'I've been there before'—to use a common expression."

"What do you expect us to do?" with the same annoying composure, from Dinfor.

"We ask you both to assist us," said the doctors, in the same breath.

"We can do nothing," said Mr. Foster, firmly, as he swung his chair back to his desk.

"Then I shall go to Somers himself, and convince him of his folly in taking his case into court," said Dr. Baldric, as he moved toward the door, followed by his Shadow.

And, strange to say, both the physicians forgot to say "Good-by."

The scene remained unchanged until the two visitors had filed down the stairs.

Then a broad grin came over the faces of the two occupants of the office.

V.

CAN HE FORGIVE HIM ?

NIGHT, always dismal, generally dreadful, had come again. The bell for retiring had rung some time before the opening of this scene, and the flickering gas-jets in the halls had been turned almost out. Every patient was in bed, and the building was a silent sepulchre of wrecked hopes and useless brains.

Felix Somers lay tossing about on his pillow, tired and sleepy, too anxious to know whether Dinfor's plan of serving the writ had actually been carried out, to find rest.

He was soon to learn.

A light knock was heard at his door.

There had been no sound of footsteps in the hall, but, no longer startled by anything, young Somers turned over in bed, and quietly said :

“Come in.”

The key was turned in the lock, the door swung open, and a portly man, whom the patient at once knew to be Dr. Baldric, entered the apartment.

Somers fancied that he saw the shadow of another figure in the hall outside.

“Were you asleep, Mr. Somers ?” asked the doc-

tor, with studied politeness, as he seated himself by the side of the bed.

“No, sir, I was not,” replied the patient.

“Your pulse seems to be a trifle high,” said the physician, fingering Somers’s wrist. “Probably the result of restlessness ; but it will wear off.”

“It is very lonely and cheerless here in the evening, doctor. Couldn’t the place be ’livened up a little ?” remarked Somers.

“I’ll think of it ; what could you suggest ?” asked the physician, strangely considerate for his patient’s wishes.

And so—the doctor in a chair by the bedside and the patient in bed, both in the dark—this conversation progressed for the next ten minutes. Each one was studying the other’s game.

Then the doctor “showed his hand.”

“You don’t want to go into court and have all your friends know that you have been here, do you ?” Dr. Baldric finally asked, changing the tone of his voice.

“I should be very glad of the chance ; in fact I may say it would please me immensely,” replied Somers.

“But—” began the physician.

“I don’t much care whether my friends know about it or not,” continued Somers. “Such things eventually leak out, sooner or later, and it is just as well to have it over with.”

“Come, tell me. How did you get word to that meddlesome lawyer ?” asked the doctor.

“May I ask to what you refer ?” retorted the patient, with the utmost composure.

“Well, then, how did you get the writ issued which was served on me this afternoon?”

“A writ has been received by you? I am greatly obliged for the information. I have only to wish you good-night, for I am very sleepy.”

“So, you persist in going into court?” asked the physician.

“Persist? Certainly I do. Why shouldn't I?” exclaimed Somers. “Now I can get out in spite of you.”

“Well?” said the doctor.

“I don't think of anything else to say.”

“I hope you may rest well to-night,” said the doctor, suddenly dropping the subject of conversation.

Without any further effort to conceal his disappointment, he arose and went to the door.

“Go to sleep, now,” he mildly said, at parting.

“Thank you, doctor; I'll try,” was the reply.

And there this strange interview ended. But, as the door opened, Somers saw the shadow in the hall take the form of Quotidian, and, as the two men met, heard Baldric savagely say to his assistant:

“*We must produce him in court!*”

VI.

PUBLICITY.

THE day had come on which the return to the writ of *habeas corpus*, issued in behalf of the patient Félix Somers, was to be made.

During the forenoon, a close carriage, containing Drs. Baldrick and Quotidian, and young Somers, left the asylum, and, after a long drive, reached the courthouse.

For Felix Somers, it was the one ride of his lifetime. The route lay direct toward—Triumph!

Never had heaven so smiled; never seemed earth so fair.

The day's session of the Supreme Court opened in the usual fashion.

His Honor, Judge Dodge, ascended the Bench, and the clerk's gavel called the house to order. The audience, in all stages of attention, looked on or listened.

Through a side door the well-known Dr. Baldrick and his assistant entered the court-room, and made their way inside the bar. Accompanying them was a young man of twenty-two years, who might have ap-

peared to the lookers-on as a friend or relative of the distinguished physician, admitted with him for courtesy's sake.

Those who are familiar with the tide-like ebb and flow of a great city court of high jurisdiction, the rapid disposition of cases, the press of attorneys around their clients, the crackle of folding and unfolding manuscripts, the continuous dispatch of what to the novice seems matter for profound reflection, will apprehend the busy scene in which young Somers was a passive and decidedly unprominent figure until the hearing of his cause came up.

Just prior to that moment, Mr. Somers rose from his seat by Dr. Baldric's side, and walked over to a chair at a table occupied by his counsel.

Meanwhile, the lawyer for the asylum had entered, and, after conversing several minutes with Dr. Baldric, was next seen at an adjoining table, arranging his memoranda.

In a corner of the room sat Mr. Dinfor, the jolly spirit of the whole enterprise.

The editor of a prominent newspaper strolled into the court, and, without manifesting any unusual interest in the case about to be called, bowed to Dr. Baldric as he took a seat inside the bar.

Felix Somers sat by the side of his counsel, pale, anxious, silent.

The attorney for the institution appeared ill at ease. Dr. Baldric looked confident, while Dr. Quotidian did not attempt to disguise his chagrin at the publicity of the spectacle.

It was evident that the respondents intended to let

the case take its own course, and were unsuspecting of anything out of the ordinary.

After the usual statements that both sides were represented by counsel, and ready to proceed with the arguments, Mr. Townsend, attorney for "the patient Somers," rose to address the court :

"Your Honor, I desire, before the hearing of this case shall have occupied any great length, as much as lies in my power to simplify the case by a few explanations of fact. I am glad of the opportunity which my client's cause affords me of expressing before this court the full sense of horror which I feel at the unjust imprisonment of a sane man or woman in an asylum for lunatics. There is something so dreadful in the mere intimation, that, under our statutes, by bribing two venal quacks, such a thing becomes easy of accomplishment, that, when a clear case of the kind presents itself, our indignation knows no bounds. The outrages perpetrated upon defenseless people, through the medium of private asylums for lunatics, are not matters of imagination. The revelation of such wrongs does not belong to the province of fiction, but of fact. Nor are these glaring instances of inhumanity to be found in England alone ; they exist in America, ay, in the boasted city of New York. For proof of this statement, I have only to mention such cases—well known to your Honor—as Mrs. Packard, of Chicago ; Mrs. Norton, of Brooklyn ; Mrs. Pelschler, of London ; Commodore Mead, U. S. N. ; and, later still, of Nelson Magee. Assisted by defective lunacy enactments, evil-designing persons readily drag men from their fire-sides, women from their families, and make them vic-

tims of a persecution worse than ever dreamed of by the Inquisition."

The hall of justice had filled up from the corridor, as was always the case when it was known that the celebrated attorney was addressing the court. Dr. Baldric pretended to be reading a newspaper. But, as the attorney, with full oratorical fervor, uttered the words "victims of a persecution worse than the Inquisition," the doctor's eyes wandered across the room, only to encounter the steady, triumphant gaze of his late patient. A ruddier, a darker shadow crept over his face, spreading from his neck below his ears.

"As to the present time," continued the lawyer, "I need no better instance to show that sane men can be, and are, imprisoned in our mad-houses, than to refer, in general terms, to the case of the young man at my side. To prove that he is perfectly sane, I have before me a quantity of affidavits, signed by some of the most prominent citizens of New York. I shall be able to show, may it please your Honor, that, since the serving of the writ upon them, both of the physicians at the asylum have declared that my client was a sane man, and in every particular capable of taking care of himself. I can prove that they were anxious to discharge him to avoid producing him here—in this court, before your Honor—this, too, although only a few hours previously each of them had stated to a witness (whom I shall be glad to produce, should your Honor so direct) that at least three months' time would be required for his cure. I might remark, parenthetically, that his board was paid for that length of time in advance. I cannot consent to pass calmly over such an

outrage—such an example as this of medical ignorance, such an instance of heartless cruelty—by which this young man has for two weeks been detained amid all the ravings and horrors of Bedlam night.”

The judge and every spectator in the court-room now manifested the most intense interest in the case. The lawyer uttered the words “ravings and horrors of Bedlam night” with a deep, sepulchral effect, which made the very court-room grow chilly and dismal. The sunshine faded out of the atmosphere, the audience hardly breathed, when suddenly the bell in the adjacent tower of old St. Paul’s—a doleful and funereal bell—rang out the chimes of noon.

The speaker stopped. For half a minute or more the deep vibrations rolled slowly through the listening court, and, like the fall of the curtain at the end of a tragedy, faded the heretofore cynical smile down the throat of Dr. Baldrick.

The lawyer’s manner entirely changed during that short interval of breathless silence.

“I have said enough,” calmly resumed the attorney. “If my client needs a defense, he will be able to make it himself before the great constituency of the newspaper press. Upon the ground that he is a sane man, innocent of crime, unjustly deprived of his liberty, I ask the discharge of Felix Somers.”

Here the affidavits were passed up to the judge, and, after a moment’s silence, in which the counsel for the asylum, thinking that his opponent had finished, rose to begin his argument, Mr. Townsend resumed:

“I have only one other statement to make. I may now say that Mr. Somers was committed to the Baldrick

Asylum, after a careful study of the statutes, by a skillfully-devised plan. Many days were occupied in a study of the various phases of insanity, after which he was able so thoroughly to simulate the symptoms laid down in the books as to pass an examination by 'two reputable physicians' (as the statute has it); and, upon an order of commitment signed by Justice Box, the managers of the asylum granted a permit, and the doctor in charge took the young man in. The two hundred and sixty dollars demanded in advance were paid for him, and he remained in the institution for two weeks." (*Suppressed laughter.*) "He made this successful attempt to enter the asylum in order to test the efficacy of the present 'Lunacy Law,' and to settle the question as to whether a sane man could pass such an examination."

"Silence in the court-room," demanded the clerk.

"In a word, he visited the mad-house in his official capacity as a newspaper reporter," thundered the lawyer, as he sat down.

A rumble of applause, temporarily checked, then breaking out afresh, began in the rear of the room, swelled into a roar in an instant, became a din indescribable as the clashing of the judge's gavel and the orders of a squad of policemen were added to the confusion.

The scene at that moment was, without doubt, the most unusual that ever occurred in a court-room in any country.

The counsel for the institution had gradually sunk back into his seat, utterly dumfounded; and, when the crash of excitement came, he simply turned to Dr.

Baldric, and, in accents of biting chagrin and shame, hissed :

“The d-e-v-i-l ! This is a pretty mess !”

Poor Baldric ! He could not look around, he dared not face his counsel. He believed that every face in that vast audience was ready to grin at him—and he was right.

“Quotidian, this is your work !” exclaimed Dr. Baldric, as soon as he could command his voice.

“And to think that only the other day I was telling this patient how ‘Father Tom’ floored the Pope !” communed Quotidian, indifferent to the attack of his master.

The trio then hastily picked themselves up, and left the court-room.

A group of lawyers and newspaper-men gathered about Mr. Somers, and warmly congratulated him.

When order had been again restored, his Honor turned toward the place lately occupied by the counsel for the Baldric Asylum; but his chair, as well as that of his client, was empty.

There was therefore nothing for the judge to do, except to discharge the patient.

“The motion for the release of one Felix Somers from the custody of the Baldric Asylum for the Insane is granted by default. A further examination of these affidavits will not be necessary,” said the judge, with as near an approach to gravity as it was possible for him to maintain.

Then the confusion broke out afresh, and the congratulations to the young journalist came from all directions. The news of the sensation in the court-room

had spread over the entire building, and even the outside corridors were choked by a struggling throng clamorous for admission.

Already, every afternoon newspaper in the metropolis was taxing its utmost energies to have the first "extra" edition on the street, detailing the humorous features of the scene.

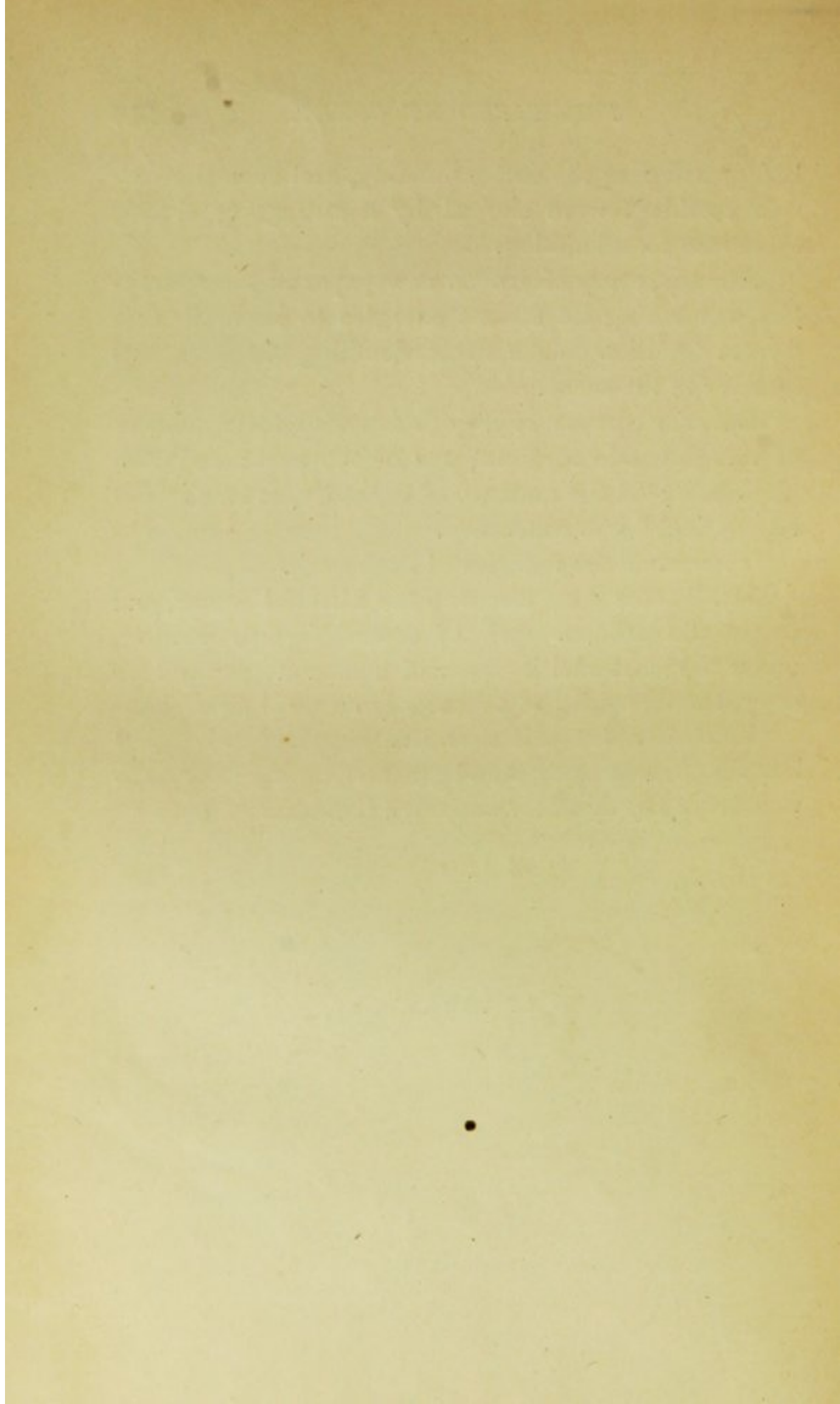
But the curious inquiry *de lunatico*, fitting climax of this dramatic incident, was of the past; and with its close ended the romance of the story, so far as "the late patient" was concerned.

Then came the realities of hard work.

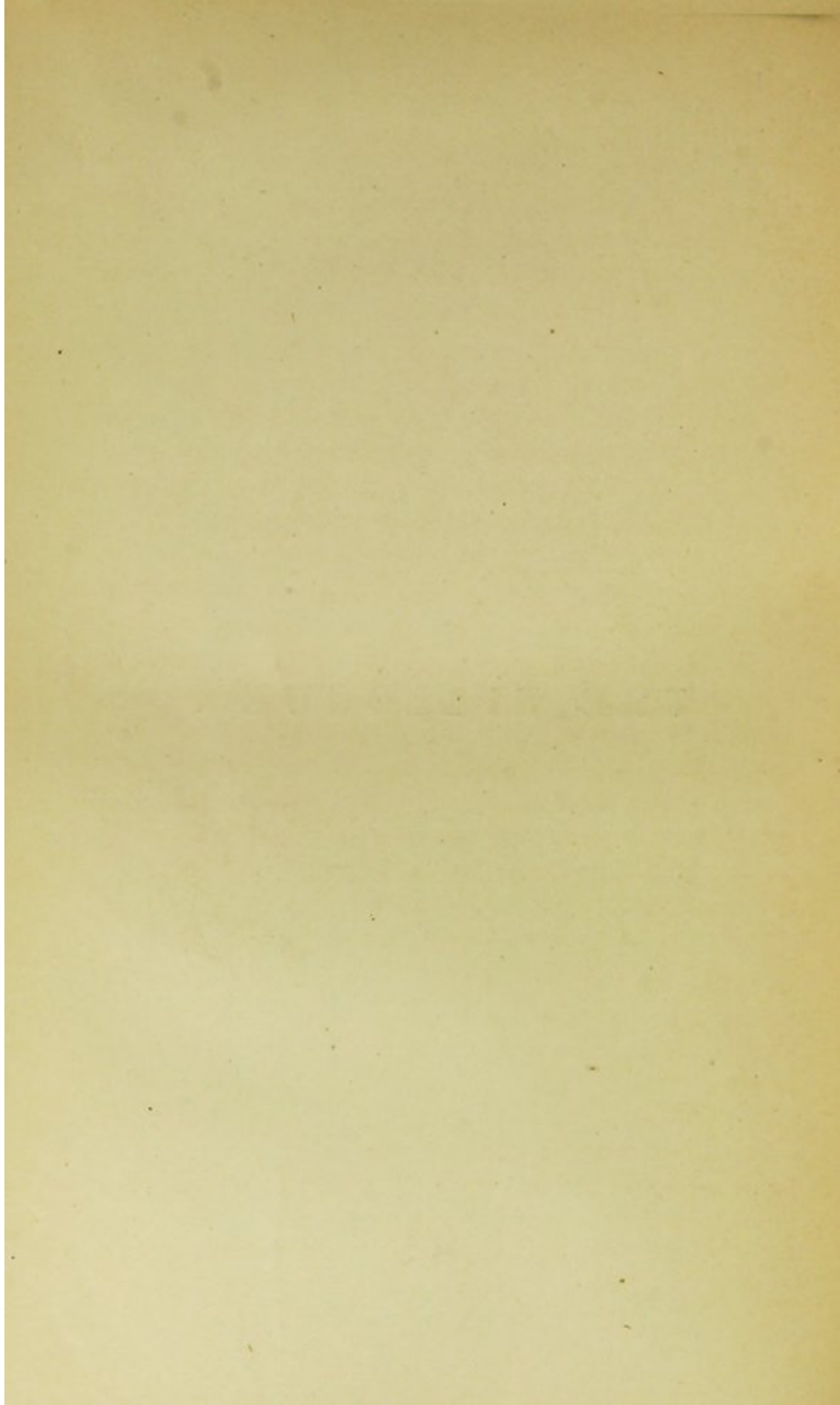
Mr. Somers went direct to the editorial rooms, and began the arduous task of committing to writing, under the most exciting spur of immediate demand for copy, the memories of a strangely eventful fortnight.

Day after day this narrative appeared; early and late the presses labored and groaned, but for two whole weeks the supply never exceeded the demand.

END OF THE COMEDY.



THE EPILOGUE.



THE EPILOGUE.

FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE.

THE object of this enterprise was not so much to prove that sane men are sometimes incarcerated in private mad-houses as to expose the ill-treatment to which the insane confined in all such institutions are subjected. But it resulted in showing that there were twelve sane persons in the Baldric Asylum, *in the opinion of the physicians*. Within thirty-six hours of the final scene in court, twelve out of the one hundred and eighty-five patients were discharged as cured, and returned to their friends.

It is barely possible that Dr. Baldric might have obtained an intimation in advance of the following letter, which was dated five days later :

“ALBANY, N. Y., *August 23, 1872.*

“GENTLEMEN: Charges of abuses in the Baldric Lunatic Asylum have lately been made in the public prints by parties who give their names and avow their ability to prove their allegations. This asylum is, in common with others of less note, a purely private establishment, subject to no supervision of the public

authorities. Our laws permit the confinement of alleged lunatics as well in these private institutions as in the public asylums of the State, upon the order of magistrates of the grade of Justice of the Peace, issued upon the certificates of any two physicians.

“This condition of the law, giving opportunity for abuses, I have more than once asked the Legislature to correct. At the last session, two bills passed the Assembly, furnishing better safeguards in connection with the commitment and care of lunatics ; one of these provided, very properly, that no person or institution should undertake the care of lunatics, except when licensed by the State Commissioners of Charities, and thus subjected to their inspection. This bill failed to pass the Senate. *It was very publicly asserted, and not denied, that the failure of the bill in the Senate was due chiefly to the personal efforts at Albany of the chief physician of the Baldric Asylum.*

“An aversion thus manifested to proper supervision of the public authorities makes it the more important, as well to the repute of the institution itself as to the public interests, that the charges now made should be investigated. I do, therefore, appoint you a Commission for the purpose of investigating these charges and any others that may be laid before you against this or any other asylum for lunatics, whether under public or private management ; and of visiting and inspecting the several asylums, with or without charges being made against them, with a view to discovering abuses, wherever they exist, requesting that you report the result of your inquiries to me as soon as possible. The duty which I impose upon you is, I know, onerous.

At present there is no provision of law enabling me to compensate you for your labor or your expenses. I feel warranted, however, in assuring you that the Legislature, at its next session, will not fail to make just and liberal compensation, knowing that the people will have the same confidence that I have in your fitness for this very important trust. I make an earnest request that, out of regard for the general good, you will accept the duty.

“Very truly, yours,

“JOHN T. HOFFMAN,

“*Governor of the State of New York.*”

“HON. FRANCIS C. BARLOW, Attorney-General; M. B. ANDERSON, LL. D., President of the Rochester University; and THOMAS HUN, M. D., Albany.”

This Commission, composed of the three most prominent men in the State in their respective professions—Law, Letters, and Medicine—met and visited the Baldric Asylum at as early a date as possible. They found the Lodge in about the condition in which it was on the day of the Director’s visit; everything was ready for an examination. These men were thoroughly in earnest, however, and insisted upon inspecting every portion of the institution without the guidance of the physicians or keepers. They scrutinized the wire cage in which the wretched Herbert Williams was exposed, naked, in the sun; they saw the author’s cell, and found it and its bed fully as objectionable as he had; they saw the patients at dinner, and, although the food was supplied in abundance and not one of “the guests”

was struck in their presence, the meal was served upon the greasy, uncovered tables, and in the same repulsive manner—Wilkins still trying to swallow his knife.

Having completed the inspection, Carrot, the keeper of Hall XI., was examined. He admitted that the uncomfortable seats mentioned by the author had been replaced by the cane-seated chairs and lounges then distributed too plentifully about the corridors and Liberty Hall; they had been borrowed from the chapel and the waiting-rooms of the main building—to be returned, of course, when the inspection was concluded; also, that the ice-water had been taken from under lock and key for the occasion; and, in many other unwillingly-given details, fully substantiated every statement of fact or incident recorded in the published narrative.

The author of these pages was summoned, and appeared at the first session of the Commission, where he repeated the entire details of his stay among the maniacs, with every incident, name, and date. He was asked, in conclusion, to give his opinions regarding the most efficient and practical remedies which would better the condition, and hasten the cure of the insane. These remarks, which, as given in detail, consisted of specific items and suggestions—all practical, simple, and useful—can here be briefly summed up as follows:

1. Do away with the element of secrecy—for insanity is not criminal—by the appointment of a humane and honorable man as Commissioner of Lunacy; this official to have admission to asylums at all times.

2. Secure a better classification of the patients, so

that the harmless shall not be associated with the vicious. The insane need some standard by which to win their way back to sanity.

3. Abolish the indiscriminate use of the strait-jacket and the cold-water douche.

4. Forbid the locking up alone in their cells of the sick or dying.

5. Put the attendants under such supervision as to render the perpetration of cruelty impossible.

In working out any theories of this kind, no scheme is practical which presupposes any other than physicians of fair average ability, actuated by pride in their profession and honesty of purpose, and attendants possessing a small share of common humanity—not totally bereft of it.

The Commission reported to the Legislature in due time, and upon its suggestions was drafted and passed a new statute for the insane. A Commissioner of Lunacy was appointed, whose entire time is given to the frequent visitation and inspection of every insane asylum in the State of New York. The reforms on every hand, and in many other States, were many and multiform. But the law cannot do all. The author looks to the medical profession alone for permanent reforms.

Whatever may have been found in these pages, therefore, which can be construed into an attack upon the worthy profession of Medicine, has, I beg to assure every one who reads, been completely misinterpreted.

In the legal brotherhood—closely allied to yours by medico-legal jurisprudence—there exists a summary mode of eliminating incompetent or disreputable mem-

bers. It is within the province of the Bar Association to bring before a court of high jurisdiction any judge, attorney, or counselor, who disgraces it, and, upon conviction—using the legal term—to “Throw him over the Bar.”

Such has been the justice recently portioned out to several prominent judges and lawyers, whose names might easily be given (were it necessary to be personal), and such should be the manner in which your older and equally honorable profession should deal with incompetency, criminal indifference, or venality. What words would be harsh enough to apply to a lawyer who, undertaking the defense of a man on trial for his life, and after receiving all his fees in advance, and deluding him and his friends with vain hopes, should abandon him at the last moment? How can a physician be misjudged, who, charged with the task of warding off Death in his most dreadful form, will leave his patients to incompetent assistants, while he enjoys a summer season at the watering-places?

Therefore, earnest, conscientious men of the medical profession, I say to you, regarding any such practitioner, borrowing the legal term :

“Throw him over the Bar!”

APPENDIX.

*Works upon Insanity read and consulted by the Author
prior to undertaking this Enterprise.*

- BECK—"Medical Jurisprudence."
BRIGHAM—"On the Brain."
 " "Utica Asylum Souvenir" (1849).
J. C. BUCKNILL—"The Mad Folk of Shakespeare" (London,
1867).
BUCKNILL AND TUKE—"Manual of Psychological Medicine,"
Churchill (London, 1862).
BURTON—"Anatomy of Melancholy."
EARL—"Visit to Thirteen Asylums in Europe" (Philadel-
phia, 1841).
 " "Psychopathic Hospitals of the Future" (1867).
J. EDDY—"Treatment of Insanity."
W. C. ELLIS—"A Treatise on Insanity."
ESQUIROL—"Des Maladies Mentales" (1838).
FODÉRÉ—"Traité du Délire" (1817).
T. FOSTER—"Observations on Insanity."
W. A. HAMMOND—All his works and published essays, and
lectures in the newspaper files. (His curious and in-
teresting lecture on "Morbid Impulse" has been pub-
lished since.)
E. JARVIS—"What shall we do with the Insane?" (1842).
 " "Causes of Insanity" (1851).

- F. LEURET—"Du Traitement Moral de la Folie" (Paris, 1840).
 MARC—"De la Folie" (Paris, 1840).
 MAUDSLEY—"Responsibility in Mental Diseases."
 MILLINGEN—"Considerations on Hereditary Insanity" (1845).
 MORRISON—"Mental Diseases" (1826).
 PAMPHLETS—In the shape of European and American asylum reports for the past twenty-five years, in all 83 pamphlets, lectures, reports, theses, etc. Reports of the Baldric Lunatic Asylum (1846 to 1871).
 PARKMAN—"Management of Lunatics" (1817).
 J. PERCIVAL—"Narrative of Treatment" (1838).
 PERZETER—"Maniacal Disorders" (1792).
 PINEL, *père*—"Sur l'Aliénation Mentale" (Paris, 1809).
 PINEL, *fils*—"Lecture before the Royal Academy of France" (English translation).
 J. C. PRITCHARD—"A Treatise on Insanity" (1837).
 T. PRITCHARD—Report of Cases.
 A. ROSS—"Recollections of an ex-Maniac."
 SMYTHE—"Private Mad-houses" (1823).
 SUNDT—"Om Fantefolket" (1859).
 UPHAM—"Disordered Mental Action," "Mad-houses in England," "The Insane of Great Britain" (1845 to 1856).
 WYMAN—Articles in *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh Reviews*, several of which have since been republished under the title of "The Border Lands of Insanity."

A FEW PRESS COMMENTS.

The author has so managed matters that his history reads wonderfully like a novel. He performed his part with unusual success.—*Saturday Review*.

The drama is given with great spirit; is capitally told; and it is impossible to read it without feeling admiration for the pluck and public spirit of the writer.—*Spectator*.

Mr. Chambers has done good work. The book shows him to have plenty of courage, a great deal of observation, some humor, and an unaffected belief in the daily press. No one who begins "A Mad World" is likely to leave it unfinished.—*Academy*.

It is sufficient testimony to the truth and graphic power of this remarkable *exposé* to say that it has the commendation and approval of Mr. Charles Reade.—*London World*.

He has demonstrated the extraordinary carelessness of the legal functionary who handed him over to the tender mercies of the cruel and callous keeper of the retreat for maniacs.—Editorial Review in *London Daily News*.

Its liveliness is most exciting.—*Eastern News*, Hull.

It is unique and forcible in character.—*London Literary World*.

The book is really an interesting one, and reflects great credit upon the ability and courage of the author.—*London Standard*.

A curious mixture of tragedy and comedy cleverly handled.—*The Rock*.

The author was fully qualified for the undertaking, and successfully carried it out by feigning madness. The revelations made in this book have produced much excitement.—*British Quarterly Review*.

The author played the rôle of a lunatic to admiration.—*Dundee Advertiser*.

The book is written in a cheery, loquacious style. The grimmest of humor is to be found in the Prologue, headed, "Insanity as a Fine Art: solely for Future Actors."—Review by cable in *The New York Herald*.

The mission which the writer of this volume undertook was one requiring Titanic nerves, and an amount of self-possession granted to few men, although desired by many. His cause was that of humanity, prompted by pluck and generosity of temper. . . . Any and all readers with any sense of the ludicrous will be delighted with the character of the nurse. Mr. Chambers spent "a strangely eventful fortnight," and its results are embodied in the fruitful and pleasant pages of "A Mad World and its Inhabitants."—*London Morning Post*.

The book is deeply interesting and has occasioned much comment in influential circles. It must certainly have required a strong nerve to undertake this escapade.—*London British Mail*.

PRINCIPLES
OF
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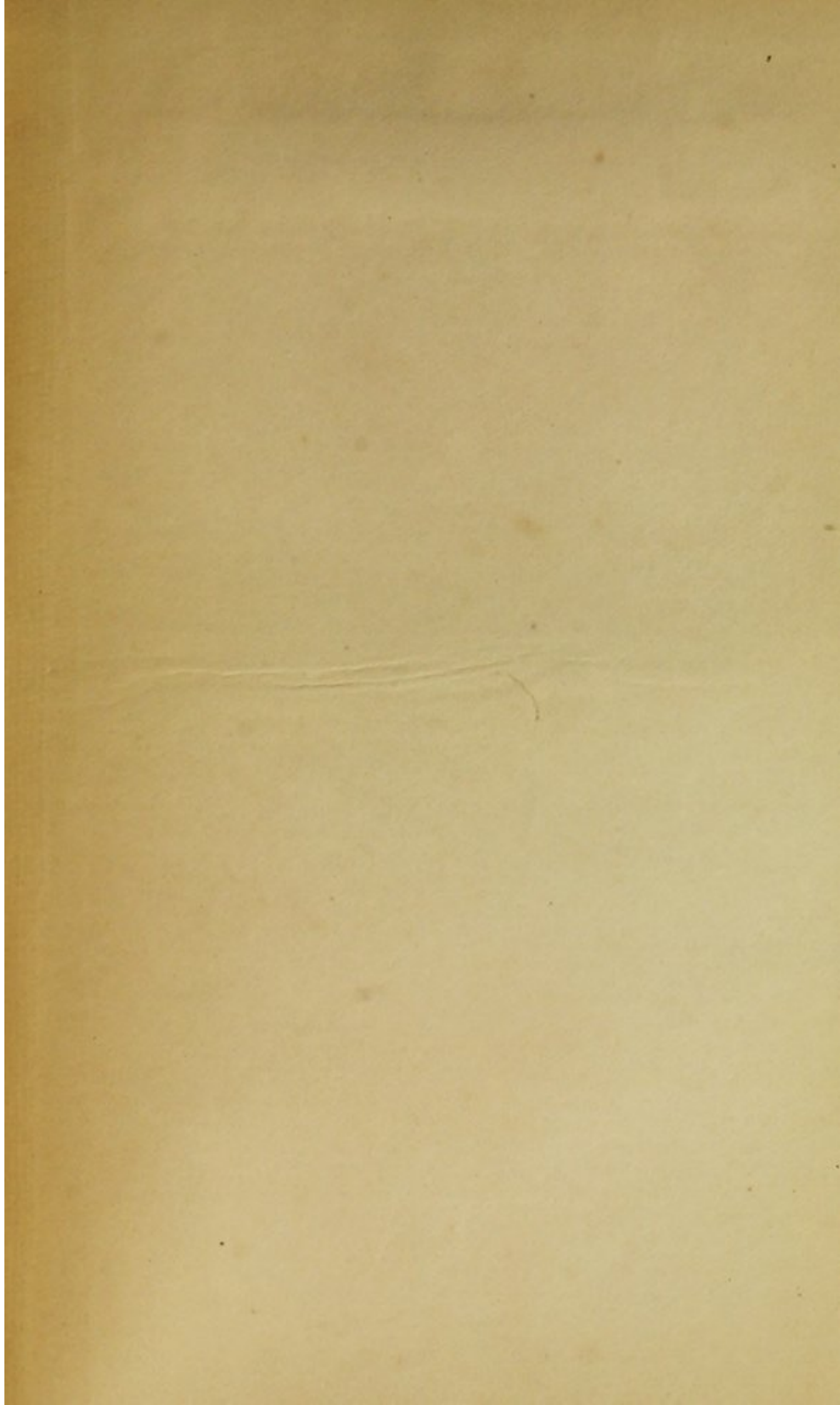
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