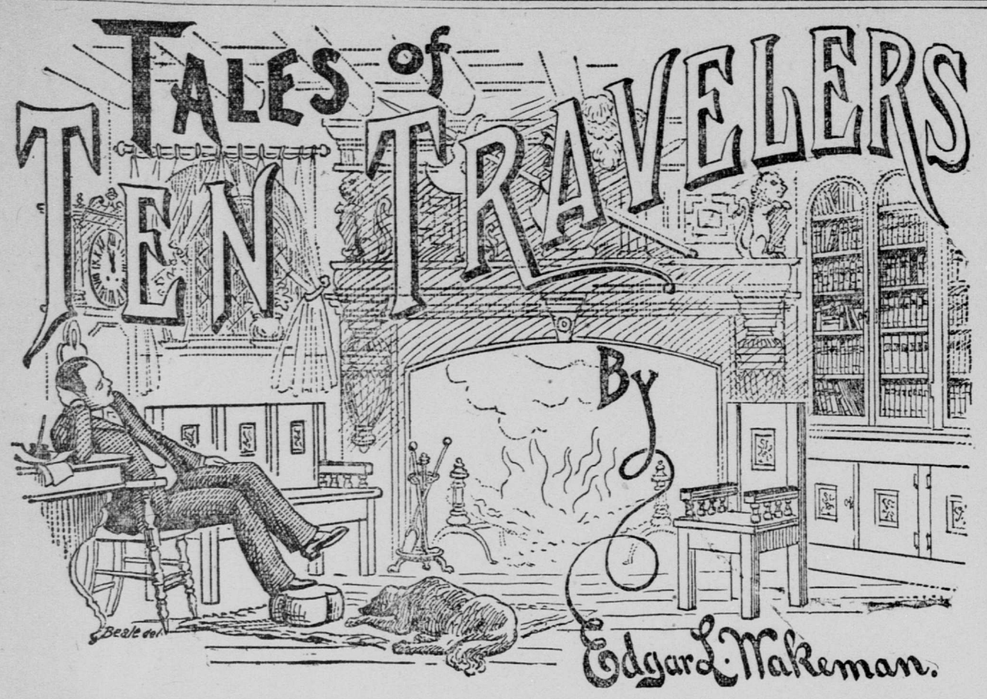


## DOROTHY HARDY'S MASCOT.

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Hard times!

Hard times enough at any time for the great world of toilers, fighting the senseless battle for love and life and home.

Hard times!

Hard, fierce times now, when the pulses of trade are stilled by the wrangles of leaders of men; when the rich fly from the presence of poverty to the makeshift of travel in foreign lands; when the miserly hoard more closely and savagely; when the charitable are broken by the great wave of appalling want beating them down; when the crafty fatten upon dolor and misfortune; when the lawgivers, temporarily safe behind their fortress of plenty and power, drowsily theorize, speculate, quibble and delay; and even when the apostemic heads of great Governments dawdle through weeks, months, almost years, among the delusions of diplomacy, the turpitudes of place-giving, or the senilities of wrangling with senates, while millions are starving beside the rusting wheels of trade.

Hard times!

Bitter, dark, rayless hard times to the wretched poor, with no outlook beyond; with howling blasts searching them out to hurt and sting and scourge; with hunger pinching and with winter freezing; with disease lurking to pounce upon them when manly hope is done; with lonely agony to rack them when reason is almost gone; and with gaunt death to claim them, and at last release them from their pitiless struggle just to live—kinder, tenderer and more compassionate far than the bland, flint-hearted inquisitors above them, who maunder still of the wrong of this party or that, of wonderful theories, of political advantage, of tariffs, of reforms, of trade free, trade fair and trade foul, while Impotent Lethargy is unctuously filling countless thousands of pauper graves.

Hard times!

Humblers of the proud, victors over the strong, levelers of the many. How their remorseless hand strikes where least expected, smites in remote and unforseen places the half-attained fruitions, and shifts and changes the relations of men. In all that measureless land between the wretched poor and the wretched rich, the land which zones the world with blessed aspiration and with building and builded homes, how their blight palsies the arm of effort and of love! How their threatening wraiths walk beside the father in his toil, the mother in her endless helpings and hopings, the student in his delvings, the professional man in his all but reached success, the inventor in his vigils, aye, even the lover in the most blissful hopes he ever may know, changing the cherished dreams of years to black pictures of despair! Liquidation, the great economists may call them, but petrefaction is the truer word. And whoever shirks, withholds, or plays vulture with his fellow man when such dark days are come, puts back the hands of universal human good and progress on the dial face of time and shall be known as an enemy of his race and kind.

Something like this was rumbling through Richard Hardy's tired head and discouraged heart as he walked the streets of the great city of New York, for he had not the wherewithal to ride, and saw the pitiful scenes of want and suffering on every hand in that hard times winter of 1894, finally coming, by a circuitous route, to his own home in the sky-piercing Spuyten Duyvel Flats.

From a safe distance his near-sighted eyes furtively and with difficulty through his spectacles for a long time regarded the carved entrance to the Flats with its gaudy glass, its gay chandelier, and its rows of polished speaking tubes and electric bells, hoping to escape the, at that moment, most distressing ogre of his distressed poverty, their alert and watchful janitress. At last he valiantly plunged into the entrance, touched his own bell, "Ninth Floor, Rear," was inside the door in an instant, and was making fine headway up the stuffy stairs, when a frowsy head, with a hatchet face, hooking itself over the lower newel-post as if it had been sprung from its capacious panels by his guilty tread, snapped out,

"Mister Hardy!"

"Oh—ah?" he stammered, halting on the last stair as if caught red-handed in the apartment house domestic crime of ascending to his own domicile without having given account of himself. "Is that you, Mrs. Rasper?"

"Yes, it's me!"

"Well, my dear Mrs. Rasper," he temporized while his heart beat rapidly, for he did not know just how to handle the virago turnkey of these modern penetiary home-cells without a penny in his pocket, "what—what is it you wish?"

"Stuff!" chopped out the newel-post gargoyle.

"Well, frankly, my good woman, I do too!"

"Coal 's outer your bin."

"Ah?"

"Grocer 's rampin' round."

"Well, well."

"Milkman says youse givin' him th' Bowery."

"The Bowery?"

"Yes, the faucet."

"Yes, th' D. B."

"Well, well, well! I'm surprised!"

"I ain't. 'N' th' lan'lord says rent Saturday, er out youse go."

"Dear, dear!—not quite so loud, Mrs. Rasper; there's a good woman; I'll see about it at once; at once, Mrs. Rasper."

"Youse better!" And with this, the frowsy head, hatchet face and biting tongue of Mrs. Rasper, janitress, disappeared into the newel-post or the equally dark mahogany Somewhere with a sharp click and a loud bang.

Up, up, up, he stumbled to where another head, a little, round, kindly, smiling, head, had hooked itself over a baluster, not as a hideous gargoyle like the one below, but as a calm, clear, ever steadfast beacon light to his humble home, and he mentally exclaimed, "God bless that loyal face," as he at last espied it and smiled back its bright welcome, though his heart sank within him as he reflected that he could bring its precious owner no other news than of hard, hard times and everywhere his own ill success and failure.

And so out of the compassionate cowardice of his heart he began temporizing again. Before he had turned upon his own landing he stopped, reached up over the star-rail, drew his wife's face to his own, kissed it tenderly, and still standing on the stairs with his arm half around her waist, as he seemed to be merely resting leisurely from his effort up the eight pair of stairs, he said pleasantly and reflectively.

"Dot"—he called her Dot, because it always seemed to him that she had the faculty of punctuating their affairs with kindly duties and resolves—"Dot, do you know that whenever I climb these infernal stairs it always seem to me that the lower down a fellow gets in city life the nearer his abode reaches to heaven?"

"Capital idea," returned Dot enthusiastically, "I'll jot it right down and put it in your 'Ideas' envelope immediately after supper. That is—"

Here she paused and looked at Richard Hardy, literator, ruefully.

"Oh, that's all right, Dot," he replied, quickly divining her meaning, and giving vigorous reassuring thumpings to various protrusions of pockets and coat skirts.

"Good," said the little woman, brightening up noticeably. "But, oh, Dick Hardy, where did you ever get that coat?"

"Oh, ah! Yes, this coat. This map of Connaught, you mean? Stood in line for it, Dot."

"You don't mean it, Dick!"

"Sure. The other one went—went up the sluice, Dot, to get some returned manuscripts out of the postoffice. You know, Dot, the winter storms whistle pretty recklessly around the front of the Government building? Well, I was standing there with the manuscripts and without the coat. Rather chilly exchange, Dot? Seeing the 'ol' clo's' line forming below, in front of the old *Herald* building, I just pulled my jacket collar as high as I could, dropped my face as far as it would go, put my glasses on upside down so no one would know me, and fell in line with the rest of the Godforsakens."

"Poor, poor Dick," whispered Dot consolingly over the baluster rail.

"No 'poor Dick' about it, Dot. It was great luck. Well, there was an awful lot of chattering, shivering, shuddering and moaning in that crowd, and some clubbing by the police, just to keep our blood circulating, they said; but at last I got swept in there somehow. A pompous old fellow seemed to single me out for a fraud. He glared at me for a while, and then he whispered to an officer who yanked me inside the railing. I thought for a moment, Dot, of the Tombs and the Island; but, after old Pomp had glared at me for a few moments longer, he questioned me a little, then walked around and around in a circle, chaffing and sputtering as though the room were too small for him. Of a sudden he blurted out he'd be 'upper-cut, lower-ribbed and stomach-pitted if it wasn't blankety-blanked tough,' when he jerked the Irish frieze coat from his own ponderous frame, chucked me into the coat, and then gave me a rush out the side door as though he might possibly relent if I was not hustled out lively!"

Two heads and four arms had an affectionate engagement over the baluster for a moment, when Dot drew Dick gently into the little hallway behind their own door. It was a "three-room and a bath" apartment. The happy voices of children not yet conscious of hopeless want, issued from the tiny dining-room and kitchen, and other voices, querulous, fault-finding, unsatisfied voices of ancient women, came forbiddingly from the "best room" beyond.

"Never mind, Dick," said Dot soothingly. "It is just the mothers. Old ladies always get a little wearing towards supper time."

But Dick, with clouded face, could not but listen for a moment.

"I'd have you know, Mistress Stevens, its not to my liking at all. Never was. Dick could have a hundred girls with money. He'd been a great literary man long ago if he had. But I wasn't to be consulted—I, that scrimped and saved and pinched and sacrificed to put him through Yale—oh, no, no, no! Of course not, Mistress Stevens!"

"That's my mother," said Dick with a sigh.

"Yes, Dick."

"Literary. Pooh!" replied the voice in a defiant key. "What's literary? Stuff, nonsense, rubbage. Them collegers ain't fitten t' rake hay, Mistress Hardy, if ye want my mind. Dorothy Stevens could a had dozens, dozens! Yes, scores agin and agin o' men as had somethin' in 'em; men that was up and comin'; men as has snap and go an' style and cash; and she'd a had 'em, too, if I'd had my way, Mistress Hardy. Literary! Fudge! If literary's livin' up here higher 'n' mountings, cooped up like chickens in a lighthouse 'n' badgered and sassed by other cooped-uppers, janiters an' puttin-oners generally, I'll take a farm, 'stead o' literary, every time, I will! Umph! Literary! Bother! Fudge!"

"And that's my mother, Dick."

"Yes, Dot dear, it surely is."

"Come on, Dick, don't worry. Now for supper."

The brave little wife preceded him into the box-like kitchen, while Dick, after jingling the keys furiously, opening and closing the hall door briskly, and, with a little extra slam, with a bravely-sung snatch of a song which sounded like—

Hard times and hard men may 'round ye be tearin',
What good at all are ye if always despairin'—

as merrily as though he had brought home a big check for a little manuscript, just to still the heated differences of motherly opinion in the "best room," followed Dot, and, with a hasty glance at the coal bucket and the fire in the range, began unloading his pockets on the lids of the stationary tubs.

"Here are a half-dozen jolly potatoes, 'samples' from Washington street, Dot. Gaze on this cut of round steak and grow fat. This package," diving into another pocket, "comprises five ounces of philanthropist' tea. 'Twenty-five pounds of coal, two cans of condensed milk, or five ounces of tea,' the ticket read, and I took tea for mothers' sakes. Wait until I get into the Galway District of this frieze coat, Dot. Press those two loaves of charity bread to your motherly breast, girl. Beauties, arn't they? Met one of the press gang so hilarious over having sold a 'scoop' on 'Captain Kid's treasure' that he got cheery, then charitable, and bought bread tickets with his envelope,' and, with tears of joy trickling off the tip of his noble nose he stood there on Park Row distributing them without discrimination to passers by. I made fourteen circuits around this isolated case of newspaper charity before the supply gave out, and we're all right for bread for a fortnight, Dot!"

"You're just splendid, Dick!"

"Connemara regions of this coat are yet to be explored, Dot. Ah, yes, exactly. Here's a half-pound of butter. Walked, Dot, and it preserved its form, you see. Here's a bottle of milk—cream gravy to-night, Dot!—and here," said Richard Hardy, literator, glowing, holding a dainty pot covered over with pretty labels up to the single gas jet, "here, my dear, is a surprise."

"My! Dick what is it?"

"What is it? What is it? What does J-A-M spell, anyhow?"

"J-a-m—jam. J-a-m—jam," shouted both children, Bob and Nellie, bursting into the kitchen with a shout of reserve information.

"It does, does it, my hearties? Well," retorted Dick with mock seriousness, giving both of the youngsters a hug and a kiss to the eminent danger of his trembling eyeglasses, "Well, Hardys, junior, there'll be no jam for anybody but your venerable grandmothers at the subsequently princely repast of this household, if you approach the supply department in that tone of voice again."

And away they went happy as birds at the great spirits of their "darlingest" father, to lay the table, as Dot had bidden them, while Dick, hanging his Irish frieze upon the speaking tube, rubbed his glasses with a dry corner of the kitchen towel, tossed his cuffs into the wainscoted cupboard, turned up his coat sleeves, gave the kitchen sharp-knife two or three "zip-ziffs" on the range pipe in place of a steel, and fell to paring the potatoes with wondrous care and zest, and Dot set the kettle singing, sliced the bread into dainty squares, got ready a drawing of tea, and began bravely hackling the steak with the potato masher.

"It seems to me, Dot," resumed poor Dick Hardy, still temporizing, "it seems to me that just about one-third of the earth's products are wasted. Now, if you will observe the practical economy evidenced by the manner in which I am paring these potatoes—"

"Dick, I've got a plan!"

Dot had closed the kitchen door softly and was looking fondly and compassionately at her husband.

"I know all about it, poor fellow. No good news. You don't want to say it, and you're just talking against time, Dick. We might as well own up to each other, mightn't we? We've—we've just got to the very end, Dick?"

"I should rather think we had, Dot," he admitted solemnly, looking hard and digging vigorously at the eye of a potato, "to the end, Dot, with the 'd' pulled out of it besides."

"We sent the dining-room carpet out to be 'cleaned' six weeks ago."

"Right you are, Dot."

"And the chiffonier to be 'mended,' five weeks ago, Dick?"

"Just five weeks yesterday."

"And the parlor table to have the marble top 'polished' four weeks ago to-morrow."

"You always were immense on dates and figures, Dot."

"And the mantel clock to be 'repaired' the next week, and your easy-chair and book-case 'to your new office' last Saturday?"

Richard Hardy stabbed a potato desperately and groaned outright.

"Poor, poor Dick," she continued tenderly. "We have done these things together, not only just to live through these cruel, cruel times, but—and bless your noble heart for it, Dick!—to keep those poor old childish mothers of ours from knowing the real truth. Gracious me! Those potatoes must go on instantly. I'll slice them fine, Dick, and they'll be done in a minute."

Something in Dick's eyes or upon his glasses caused him again to employ the corner of the kitchen towel vigorously.

The potatoes were soon a-humming, Dot filled the teapot with boiling water, ready for the drawing and the boiling water again at the last moment. Then the old-fashioned skillet, not a new-fangled broiler, was over the glowing coals in a jiffy, with some butter hissing around in its depths. She dextrously twirled the skillet until the rich brown bubbles eddied furiously, when the steak was dropped within, whirled round and round, and turned for a double searing before the slower and careful frying. Then the good little helpmeet resumed:

"Tell me, honest now, Dick, have you tried every possible means of selling your splendid work? Did you see the *Nibmer's Monthly* folks?"

"Sure, Dot. Instead of taking another story they begged so exquisitely to be released from using two 'Accepteds,' that I hadn't the heart to refuse them."

"And the *Metropolitan?*"

"Treated me like a prince! The editor wanted me to dine at the club with him. But the moment I ventured to suggest MS to him, do you know he grabbed his watch, reached for his hat and overcoat, and gasping, 'Just five minutes to catch the ferry, Hardy,' he fled, fled, Dot, entreating me to think over a great serial; to think it over hard—during my next summer's vacation!"

"But the *Plenthury*, Dick?"

"Ah, Dot, Editor Burnsiher is indeed one of those who maintain that 'all space is filled with matter.' His head lay upon the desk as I enterd. He arose and approached me with, 'Ah, Hardy, my dear boy. So glad to see you'! He took my hand in both of his. He led me softly to another room. We passed before a tremendous safe. As its huge doors swung open he pointed, with averted head, to his pigeon holes and their contents. 'I do not know what your feelings may be at such a spectacle, Mr. Hardy,' he murmured, 'but you may, perhaps, imagine mine.' I hastily withdrew. Even the eight-carat diamond on his finger seemed dimmed with tears as Editor Burnisher waved me a sympathetic adieu. Dot, what do you think I saw on a little placard hung against the stuffed pigeon-holes of that *Plenthury* safe?"

"My! Dick, how can I tell?"

She had put the steak upon a hot platter and was now stirring the butter and flour softly in the skillet-bottom for the gravy.

"Well, Dot, 'twas just this:

"*Unused MSS $50,000.*"

Dot thoughtfully stirred the golden brown gravy until it began to thicken; added another lump of butter and pushed it back to let it simmer a little. Then, taking the plates from the warming oven to the dining-room, she gave the table a few finishing touches, asked Dick to mash the potatoes, which he did with hearty vim, not forgetting a splash of milk, a sprinkle of salt and a bit of butter; and, after putting on the drawing of tea, asked, this time, a trifle timidly:

"Dick, what about the Sunday papers?"

"Great Scott," exclaimed Dick hotly, furiously beating the potatoes almost to a lather. "Now, now, Dot, don't. Why, little woman, don't you know that the Sunday papers are exclusively for 'ads,' the Four Hundred, reprints from the comics and the female lingerie reporters? Whew! Dish these potatoes, do, Dot."

She dextrously removed the creamy stuff to a tureen, whisked the kettle under the water faucet, and innocently and half sadly asked,

"No chance with the syndicates?"

Dick was now smoothing his hair at the kitchen glass and adjusting his cuffs and collar. He looked at Dot long and thoughtfully. Then he burnished his glasses briskly with his handkerchief, set them squarely on his nose, took another good look at the little woman, marched straight to her, took her pink ears firmly in his fingers, gave her forehead a pitying sort of kiss, and then remarked more disconsolately than he had ever spoken to her in all his life:

"Dot, wife? Now don't you know, Dot, that the syndicate handle only razor-back humor and Gallmadge sermons?"

"Poor, dear Dick," said Dot despairingly, but with a loving smile shining through her gathering tears. "But come, supper's ready. You ring the bell, Dick. I'll be there in a moment."

She really waited to dry her eyes and chase back the olden smiles in their place, as Dick, after a bit of romp with Bob and Nellie, tapped the little table bell with a rattling staccato, and, as the ladies appeared from the "best room," as far as possible from each other, stately saluted them and escorted them, one by one, over the intervening four feet of space to their respective seats at the table.

"Glad to see you in such spirits, mothers," began Dick heartily after grace had been said.

"My spirits aren't worth minding, Richard," said Mrs. Hardy, the elder, with a groan.

"I've got none to brag on, thank ye," rejoined Mrs. Stevens with a toss of her head.

"Don't, mother, please," said Dot, as she poured the fragrant tea.

"Oh, they're just joking us, Dot. Didn't you see them wink?" persisted Dick merrily, while serving the steak, potatoes and gravy.

"It's no joke to be cooped up like this, to ennybody that's ever had anything, as I said to Mrs. Hardy jest afore supper," snorted Mrs. Stevens gulping down her tea.

"No, an' it's no joke, Richard, to be held down by others," retorted the elder Mrs. Hardy, the bit of steak at the end of her fork trembling in unison with the quivering frills at the edge of her cap.

But Dick rallied them again and again until the old ladies, despite themselves melted into an attitude sufficiently tolerative to permit of each partaking of a hearty meal. Then, as usual, from long habit, they scourged the distracted couple for a time with their personal ailments; flaunted the asperities of life without competence and amplitude, such as was their wont in their own good old days; upbraided Dick and Dot because the farm home, up the Hudson, had not already been secured as had long been promised; made Bob and Nellie very miserable about their manners and their books, and, finally, by accident, hit upon their ever blessed recourse of wrangling upon the exhaustless subjects of "justification" and "immersion," which were still bitterly upon their poor old lips as they closed in slumber in their single beds at opposite sides of the "best room," giving Dick and Dot longed-for opportunity to stow away the children in the folding bed in the same room near the dining-room door, push the table over against the mantle, pile the chairs upon it, and let down from the partition wall their own creaking, folding bed for the night.

"Now, Dot, dear, for that plan of yours," said Dick eagerly when they were alone. "Do you know that thrust about the farm nearly broke my heart. After we had paid eighteen hundred dollars, and four hundred dollars more would have saved it! It's awful, Dot!"

"Is the mortgage foreclosed, Dick?"

"No; but might as well be. Four hundred dollars, or four hundred cents, it is all the same."

"Dick, are you a brave man? I mean morally brave, dear?"

"Try me and see."

"If I asked you to sacrifice something—something almost as dear to your heart, to your very life, as your children, as—as your wife, Dick, do you think you could do it now; now, husband, when there might be happiness, prosperity, perhaps even the little farm yet, for us, where the old folks might have a little—well, just a little more room, Dick, and where we could at least be safe from this horror of deception, of want, of being turned into the very street, Dick? Could you? Would you?"

She had never talked like this to him before, and he looked at the little mite of a woman beside him in amazement. But he also rubbed his glasses furiously and nodded his head determinedly.

She tripped into the kitchen and almost instantly returned with a curious little, apparently legless table in her hand. With a few dextrous movements its hinged, crossed legs came into place with a click, its hinged, detached, stout cross bar joined, and with a little jump she landed herself in a sitting posture upon the table.

"Isn't it lovely, Dick? And stout? My! Just see here!" She gave herself a vigorous shake. "Did a little sewing for Mrs. Jack Plane, eleventh floor front, and her husband—he's a cabinet maker, Dick—made this for me; I mean for you, Dick."

"Chocolates? Jumping frogs? Seabeans? Jewelry? Playing cards? Lamp chimney cleaners? Horseradish? What—what line, Dot?" he inquired lugubriously.

She pointed to huge piles of books upon shelves above the doorways, piled upon the mantel, dangerously crowded upon the top of the folding bed and stacked high, where the bookcase had been, along the hallway partition wall.

"Gewhillikens."

Richard Hardy, literator, sprang into the circumscribed atmosphere of his little dining-room as though an explosion had occurred in Eighth Floor, Rear, flat below.

By the time he was on his feet again, Dot had one arm around him and was leading the dazed writer to this pile of books and that: but the poor fellow could not see rightly for a little, and Dot went on soothingly and bravely with her plan.

"I knew it would almost break your heart, Dick; not the standing in the street—you're too much of a man to be ashamed of that—but letting your treasures go into other hands; almost as if they were Bob and Nellie, Dick. Dear, dear old books! How we have loved them! But I knew, in this dreadful hard times' choice of sacrifices, you'd only have to—to think of it, just once, Dick. Why, you must have paid thousands of dollars for them. I have been all over them; just 814 volumes. And just look here, husband! I've got all these pretty price-marks lettered and ready. Some of the single volumes ought to pay a month's rent of this flat. Landlord's pressing us too, Dick. And I found some real little curios, if the right folks only come along. No use at the 'second-hands.' Dick, dear, forgive me! but I've tried them; just to get prices, you know. 'Not buyin', mom; nor sellin' neither!' was the reply from all. But along Printing House Square, or Park Row, or around there somewhere, Dick, there are just oceans of editors and lawyers. Why, Dick, they are always buying books; good books. And here's a nice oilcloth I've hemmed and got ready, in case it sleets or snows. You won't mind a little snow, now that you've got that lovely Irish frieze, will you, Dick? The pockets will be just lovely for little volumes and lunches! And Dick, dear, best of all, here's a whole dollar—a little mending for Seventh Floor, Rear, dear—to start with!"

She had not dared to look up at him, before, brave soul though she was; and now that her eyes met his, she saw his face was deathly white. Well might it be, when the life dream of a writer is in an instant so blackened and effaced!

"Oh, Dick—husband! What have I done! What have I done?" she sobbed, sinking piteously upon the little table beside her.

"Done!" he blurted out after a mighty gulp, while stroking her head tenderly. "Why, bless your precious soul! You've done dead right. It's a go! Street-stall goes! Books go! Friends go—drat them! Literature goes! Everything goes, Dot!"

What a face of joy, of hope, of love and of blessing was the one she turned to his as she faltered out, "To-morrow?—Dick?"

"To-morrow? Gewhillikens? This holy minute, if you say so, Dot!"

Dot could not say that; but she did say countless good and sweet things of arrangement, of classification of book-lots, of prices fitted to the hard times, of retaining the most precious and most necessary volumes to the last, and, particularly, of one strange little volume, no bigger than her dainty hand; a volume of scarcely more than thirty pages, done with pen on parchment through years of patient research and labor, by one Marcel, Crown Advocate of France, as a gift to Louis, *Le Grand*; "Tablettes Chronologiques" was its title, and it comprised a record of succession of all the Popes, Emperors and Kings who reigned from the birth of Christ to 1700, the year of its presentation to Louis XIV.; a genuine curio bound after the fashion of that luxurious time, its edges richly gilt by the stylus; a volume recording the birth and horological influences, the death, manner of death, the length of reign and the historians of all these mighty potentates; and altogether containing vaster, more exact and wonderful information than any other equal number of pages the world ever knew; in fact, a marvel volume of profane history, for personal study by the grand monarch; and such a perfect unique in lore and art and association as the most cunning book-hunter had never yet possessed.

For generations before Richard Hardy's time, and to this very moment, this little yellow enigma, which had passed from among the treasures of emperors to the house-chests of the people at the sacking of the Tuileries, had been given no braver place than a library fag-end or a child's meager amusement from its strangely-wrought characters and designs.

But when Richard Hardy resolutely set out the next day with his little table and huge package of books, the "Tablettes Chronologiques" curio, encased in an oil-skin cover, was safe in one of his pockets; and somehow the little book gave him an indefinable feeling of opulence, too, for Dot had solemnly declared it would prove a mascot and bring back the parlor table, the mantel clock, the carpet, or the bookcase, before the week's new and daring venture was done.

It did even more than this for him. It gave him a strange consciousness of an ancestery behind him he never before had experienced; of the stern stuff that was, or still should be, coursing from the Huguenot line through his veins; and of the mightier fact that no shame can come to him who stands among the densest throngs in honorable battle for home and love.

He found himself actually nodding familiarly to the old newswomen, huddling, freezing and mumbling about the doorways and wind-swept corners of the great newspaper edifices; giving cheery salutations to clerks, messengers, porters and carters who rushed and tumbled about him; and even arranging his books on his little table, which he set alongside the *Sun* building, on Frankfort street, while whistling away as blithely as though all his life an agile and cunning participant in the canny shifts and cruel artifices of the street. This strangely buoyant mood carried him bravely enough through a bitter winter day, almost to its night, without a single sale, and, so kindily disguising was the Irish frieze, more luckily without recognition by any friend.

Soon the comfortable looking men of this locality began leaving the great office building for their homes. Then a chubby-cheeked, jolly-looking editor of the *Press* passed his stand, turned, glanced along the titles of the books, handed Dick three crisp bank notes for an illuminated "Homer," and went his way. A half a dozen lawyers or insurance men or capitalists followed. An annotated copy of "Byron" went to one of these, and "Hallam's Constitutional History of England" was taken by another. The "Lives of the Lord Chancellors" went to a famous corporation lawyer. Mr. Pulitzer, strolling past from the *World* building, caught up and carried away "Alonzo and Melissa." One of the *Tribune* editors fancied a rare old edition of Rousseau's "Eloisa." Somebody from the *Times* wished the "Lancashire Witches," and when a certain venerable editor from the almost historic room above his head descended to the street, buttoned his great coat close up around his long, white beard, caught sight of the little stall, and, with the bland remark, "Book-selling is an honorable calling, sir!" handed the young merchant a twenty-dollar bill for a bright, clean copy of the rare "Burckhardt's Arabian Proverbs," and then with a stately "Good night, sir!" slowly trundled away, Dick could contain his unrestrainable excitement alone no longer.

He clutched his books, snapped together the little table, sped to the elevated railway station, fidgeted impatiently all the way to his own station, rushed down its stairs, paid the grocer, the butcher, the milkman, ordered coal by the ton with outlandish house supplies on his way, rang up Mrs. Rasper with furious hilarity, clapped the overdue rent in her hand with a bang and a flourish, with something besides for herself and her children; and, scrambling up the stairs frantically, came to his own door and Dot's trembling, outstretched arms like a whirlwind of joy and triumph; owing no man a penny; with his day's lot of books still half unsold, and a roll of bills in his hand which it took the whirling heads and misting eyes of these two tried souls a long and a happy time to count!

After the first wild intoxication of success, there was a little reaction in Dick's spirits and trade. Books were often returned, or exchanged. Even fisticuffs were occasionally necessary to protect his pocket and stall. The winter wind swept cruelly around that particular corner from the open park spaces, down past the dismal arches of the bridge, to the great river beyond; and chillier and more cutting far were the stealthy, contemptuous glances of old acquaintances among the passing throng. But he bore it all with positive bravery. If impudent curiosity pressed him too closely, he would deftly parry it with, "Sh-h-h! Making a practical literary study. There's a fine set of 'Bacon', sir!" which was all true enough, poor fellow! in this one region of the great city, where a quarter million souls pass and repass each day and night, where the thunder of the presses is never still, where more astounding extremes of competence and poverty and tremendous intellect and besotted ignorance, eddy and whirl, and crash together, than in any other single place beneath the sun.

Then there were the compensations in character study among those who came and nibbled at his books, tarrying and chattering or brusqueiy purchasing and going their several ways, and he found himself unconsciously acquiring exactness in estimate of motive, intention and secret purpose on the part of those who prefaced their paltry hagglings with forgivable pretense, while a ready diplomacy, on his part, grew without effort into fine and nice corresponding adjustment—the inexorable difference between art in theory and the art that grows polished and powerful from use.

One visitor only puzzled him. This was a lady; a lady plainly but richly clad, erect, splendidly poised as if conscious of physical and mental strength, with a firm, fine face, that might have been a Portia's or a jurist's so expressive or impressive could it at once become, and with large gray eyes which looked straight at one for a straight response, and seemed sure to finality of every possible shading of historic, art, associative and actual value, of any book upon his stand, without once opening its lids.

He had grown to notice her coming along Nassau street, and almost without looking, to know that she frequented the large book stalls of that ancient thoroughfare. A few times she had paused before the little collection a moment, and then, with a slight inclination of the head, had disappeared in the direction of the bridge approach.

One bitter cold day he turned from his usual exercise of kicking the foundation of the *Sun* building to keep his feet from freezing, to see her standing in her sables beside his stall. Her purse was open as if she was about to purchase. It was the first time he had seen her hesitate, and he believed her incapable of hesitation.

"I beg your pardon, sir; I am in error," she said, quietly, slipping her fingers dexterously under the lid and disclosing the title-page of "Balzac;" "I was under the impression that this was a first edition."

It put Richard Hardy on his mettle, for he was now sure he was dealing with an astute collector of books.

"This trifle, madam, might interest you," he observed with some dignity, proffering Dot's mascot curio.

She thanked him, took the littte book in her hands and turned its parchment leaves as leisurely as ever the Grand Monarch had done, but her gray eyes and her now impassive face gave no betrayal of interest or purpose, while Dick silently burnished his glasses and his wits of diplomacy, awaiting some sign.

"Have you fixed its price, sir?"

"Its value is well-known, madam," returned Dick solemnly, while mentally begging absolution for the astounding whopper he had told.

The lady made no reply, but at once handed him her card and a bank note and asked the privilege of taking the book to her home for examination. The note bore the legend "$100," and the card, "Mrs. Hope, Park Place, Brooklyn."

"Certainly, Mrs. Gope. By all means, Mrs. Lope. No deposit necessary, Mrs. Pope—Mrs. Rope—Mrs. Hope, I mean!"

But the lady, with a quiet bow, had disappeared, leaving Richard Hardy, while Fahrenheit marked many degrees below zero, mopping great drops of perspiration from his face and head.

Scarcely three hours—they were as years of suspense to the bookstall proprietor of Frankfort street—had passed, when the lady returned. It was the effort of his life, but Richard Hardy received her in a manner which might be termed stately and affable repose. She handed him the little curio and he placed it in its oiled-silk case in his pocket. Then he returned the bank note and the card. Mrs. Hope thereupon glanced at her watch. Both she and Dick, if Dick could see at all, saw that it was precisely a quarter to three o'clock.

"The banks are not yet closed," she said casually.

"Not yet, Mrs. Hope," Dick calmly answered.

She rested a little check book upon the edge of Dick's stall, with a stylographic pen wrote in the date, "to bearer," and her own signature in a round, masculine hand. This done, she looked up at Dick, who was, by this time, crowding the brick wall behind him for support, with

"Well?"

"Frankly, madam, it is quite painful to be exact when dealing with a lady. Write your own price on the check. Perhaps we will not differ."

What she wrote his dazed eyes did not see—perhaps never saw; but he mastered himself sufficiently to nod his head, to take the check, to hand the lady the curio, to see her turn and lose herself in the crowd thronging the bridge entrance, to stagger to the Nassau Bank, where a ruddy-faced paying-teller counted out for his slip of paper great piles of bills; to climb to a certain near real estate office, and, as in a dream, exchange only a few of those bills for a sealed and taped document certifying his ownership of a certain little farm and cottage home; to return and gather up his remaining books and that clicking table, which he will retain as a blessed memento his whole life long: to call a carriage; still, as in a dream, to find the Spuyten Duyvel Flats and its Ninth Floor, Rear, with its blessed, home-waiting and now delirious souls within; and, finally, through times' winter storms, from which all dread had gone, to superintend the most ecstatic "moving" from apartment prison to blessed home that had ever been the lot of man, while the heading of the new stationary of one literator's family, just now being printed, will read, "Glendorothy Catskills-on-Hudson," to the end of that family's hopeful, happy days.


# HEALTH MORE THAN SUCCESS.

## No One Has a Greater Share of Both Than Beautiful Marie Tempest.

That stage fright is a malady which afflicts the most experienced and capable actors, as well as beginners, is the unanimous verdict of the profession.

Miss Marie Tempest, whose many successes upon the English and American stage have placed her in the front rank of operatic stars, admitted frankly upon a recent occasion that she is frequently attacked by stage fright. Miss Tempest combines a voice of extraordinary pitch and sweetness with the dramatic fervor of an emotional actress to a greater degree probably than any other prima donna now upon the English speaking stage, and the statement will be a surprise to thousands of her admirers whom she has impressed as the personification of supreme confidence and self-control.

"The sensation is one of utter collapse," she said, "it is truly an awful feeling and is nearer to sea sickness than anything else I know of. Players with a highly nervous organization are sure to be attacked by it when approaching the climax of an important part, or when appearing for the first time in a new play. Those playing emotional roles are more susceptible to stage fright than others, because the individual capable of portraying those parts successfully is necessarily possessed of a highly nervous and impressionable temperament.

"In one respect a highly developed nervous organization is indispensable to success, as without it a proper conception and feeling of the part to be acted are impossible. You know an actress must not only understand her part, but be so absorbed in it that she forgets her own personality, and for the time being lives in her assumed character."

"Then great nervous excitability is a decided advantage to an actress?"

"In the way I have described, yes; as a general proposition, no. The mental strain, the intense application necessary to a proper realization of the part, the apprehension that the audience may be criticising you adversely, and the constant study of new roles, undermines the health and often cuts short the career of the conscientious and ambitious actress. At the close of last season I was completely prostrated by nervous excitement and overwork. My nerves were so unstrung that the slightest sounds startled me, and I became sleepless, melancholy, and irritable. Sick and disheartened, I sought the home of an old and dear friend, who immediately advised me to use a brain and nerve food of which I had heard much but knew comparatively little. I would have taken anything she chose to give me, but I liked the taste of the preparation and continued its use. I had not consumed one bottle when I found that my nervous system had resumed its normal tone. I no longer jumped at shadows, my appetite came back, each night brought sound and refreshing sleep, and I am now in perfect health and vigor, through a systematic use of Paine's celery compound. The present season has been the most successful, and therefore the most exacting, of my career, but the invaluable remedy which restored my health has also preserved it. I have recommended it to numerous friends, and in every case with most fortunate results."

The beautiful prima donna looked the picture of health as she spoke. Her large blue eyes sparkled with animation and her countenance lit up with an expressive smile that enhanced the charming vivacity of her manner as she remarked:

"I have found that devotion to a chosen pursuit is not incompatible with good health. If all the men and women, the clergymen, teachers, merchants and lawyers in this busy country, whose overtaxed brains cry out in protest against the heavy burdens laid upon them, were to embrace this remedy I am sure there would be a marked decrease in that terrible disease, nervous prostration, which seems fast becoming a national one with you Americans. Success is indeed a glorious thing, but, believe me, health is better."


[For the RECORD-UNION.]

### A PLACE FOR THE OLD.

There's a place for young and old, where all
may rest in peace,
Where self it never fills the soul, and friendships never cease;
And vows made at God's altar, they firmly
hold us fast;
To the "Alpha" and "Omega," the first one,
and the last.

God's children love to greet us, be our stay
however long.
We meet with Christian welcome, and the
hallelujah song.
And when the hours are over—the hours of
song and prayer—
Our souls are full of sunshine, for our Savior
meets us there.

So shall we know who follow on, according to
His word,
How dear the house of God as home, how
sweet to serve the Lord.
As one by one the years roll by, with Jesus as
our stay,
His spirit, witness, bears with ours, we are
happy on the way.

The prudent youth will seek to learn the
wisdom of the old,
Who ever counts the love of God, more precious far than gold.
Whose "faith" it never wavers, through
trials, griefs and fears,
When the Savior's voice is calling, how each
sorrow disappears.

There's room for all in the Savior's love, and
a God that's reconciled,
Reveals himself in his own sweet way, to the
"old" and the "tender child."
Should I be spared from middle-age, to long
life here below,
O may those years be spent for God, and
more of Christ to know.

The name that I will strive to leave should
be unsull'd and pure,
For me! when "Time" has pass'd away what
else will then endure?
And written in "The Book of Life," there may
my name be traced;
All else beneath the Savior's blood, there will
to be effac d. —W. B. DUTTON.

Sacramento, Cal.

### Brought Her Repartee Along.

Just as the door of the City Clerk's office was due to be closed the other night two young ladies called and stated they were looking for a marriage license.

"This is not the place," explained the sober-faced clerk. "The clerk of the court issues them at the courthouse, but you are too late to get down there before he goes home."

"Isn't that provoking?" remarked one of the maidens with a pout equally provoking. "They told us that this was the place to get licenses."

"It is. Dog licenses," the facetious clerk answered.

"The license is for me, not you, sir," answered the girl, and a deep hush fell over the city seal.—Minneapolis Journal.


### "My Daughter's Life

Was saved by Hood's Sarsaparilla," says Mr. B. B. Jones of Aina, Maine. "She had seven running sores in different places on her body, but since giving her Hood's Sarsaparilla she has become well, strong and healthy."


To pass the time pleasantly in church Morris Whitt