

The Saturday Evening World's Short Story Page

THE EASTER OF THE SOUL IN THE MAKING

BY O. HENRY.
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BY FRANK CONDON.
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It is hardly likely that a goddess would die. Then Eastre, the old Saxon goddess of spring, must be laughing in her muslin sleeves at people who believe that Easter, her namesake, exists only along certain strips of Fifth avenue pavement after church service.

As it belongs to the world, the paragon in Chilkoot Pass discards his winter white feathers for brown; the Paganian Bess Brummell oils his chin and curls his another sweet heart to drag to his skull-straw hat. And down in Chrystie street—

Mr. Tiger McQuirk arose with a feeling of disgust that he did not understand. With a practiced foot he rolled three of his younger brothers like logs out of his way as they lay sleeping on the floor. Before a foot-cure looking glass hung by the window he stood and shaved himself. If that may seem to you a task too slight to be thus impressively chronicled, I bear with you; you do not know of the areas to be accomplished in traversing the cheek and chin of Mr. McQuirk.

McQuirk, senior, had gone to work long before. The big son of the house was idle. He was a marble-cutter, and the marble-cutters were out on a strike.

"What all ye?" asked his mother, looking at him curiously; "are ye not feeling well this morning, maybe now?"

"Ye're thinking along of Annie Maria Doyle," impudently explained younger brother Tim, ten years old.

"Tiger" reached over the hand of a champion and swept the small McQuirk from his chair.

"I feel fine," said he, "beyond a touch of the Edon't-know-what-you-call-it. I feel like there was going to be earthquakes or music or a trifle of chills and fever or maybe a picnic. I don't know how I feel. I feel like knocking the face off a policeman, or else maybe like playing Coney Island straight across the board from pop-corn to the elephant hounds."

"It's the spring in yer bones," said Mrs. McQuirk. "It's the sap rising. Time was when I couldn't keep me feet still nor me head cool when the earth tremors began to crawl out in the dew of the mornin'." "Tis a bit of tea will do ye good, made from peppermint and ginseng bark at the druggists'."

"Back up!" said Mr. McQuirk, impatiently. "There's no spring in sight. There's snow yet on the shed in Donovan's backyard. And yesterday they put open cars on the Sixth avenue line, and the janitors have quit ordering coal. And that means six weeks more of winter, by all the signs that be."

After breakfast Mr. McQuirk spent fifteen minutes before the corrugated mirror, subsiding his hair and arranging his green and purple ascot with its amethyst tombstone pin—eloquent of his chosen calling.

Since the strike had been called it was this particular striker's habit to hit himself each morning to the corner saloon of Blaherty Brothers, and there establish himself upon the sidewalk, with one foot resting on the bootblack's stand, observing the panorama of the street until the pace of time brought 12 o'clock and the dinner hour. And Mr. "Tiger" McQuirk, with his athletic seventy inches, well trained in sport and battle; his smooth, pale, solid, amiable face—blue where the razor had traveled; his carefully considered clothes and air of capability, was himself a spectacle not displeasing to the eye.

But on this morning Mr. McQuirk did not have immediately to his post of leisure and observation. Something unusual that he could not quite grasp was in the air. Something disturbed his thoughts, ruffled his senses, made him at once languid, irritable, elated, disinterested and sportive. He was no diagnostician, and he did not know that Lent was breaking up physiologically in his system.

Mrs. McQuirk had spoken of spring. Spectacularly "Tiger" looked about him for signs. Few there were. The organ grinders were at work; but they were always precocious harbingers. It was near enough spring for them to go penny hunting when the skating ball dropped at the park. In the milliners' windows Easter hats, grave, gay and jubilant, blossomed. There were green patches among the sidewalk debris of the grocers.

On a third story windowill the first show cushion of the season—old gold stripes on a crimson ground—supported the kimonoed arms of a penitente brunette. The wind blew cold from the East River, but the sparrows were flying to the eaves with straw. A second hand store, combining foresight with faith, had set out an ice chest and baseball goods.

And then "Tiger's" eyes, disregarding these signs, fell upon one that bore a bud of promise. From a bright, new lithograph the head of Capricornus confronted him, betokening the forward and handy brew.

Mr. McQuirk entered the saloon and called for his glass of beer. He threw his nickel on the bar, raised the glass, set it down without tasting it and strolled toward the door.

"We're the matter, Long Bolinbroke?" inquired the sarcastic bartender; "want a chiny vase or a gold-lined sperine to drink it out of—hey?"

"Say," said Mr. McQuirk, wheeling and shooting out a horizontal hand and a forty-five-degree chin, "you know your place only when it comes for givin' titles. I've changed me mind about drinkin'—see? You got your money, ain't you? Wait till you get stung before you get the droop to your lip, will you?"

Thus Mr. McQuirk added mutability of humor to the strange humors that had taken possession of him.

Leaving the saloon, he walked away twenty steps and leaned in the open doorway of Lutz, the barber. He and Lutz were friends, making their sentiments behind abuse and bludgeons of reports.

"Irish rooster," roared Lutz, "how do you do? So, not yet had der boilemanns or der catcher of dogs done der duty?"

"Hild! Dutch," said Mr. McQuirk. "Can't get your mind off of frankfurters, can you?"

"Bah!" exclaimed the German, coming and leaning in the door. "I haf a soul above frankfurters to-day. Dere is springtime in der air. I can feel it coming in afer der mud of der streets and der ice in der river. Soon will dere be winter in der islands, mit kegs of beer under der trees."

"Say," said Mr. McQuirk, setting his hat on one side, "is everybody kiddin' me about gentle spring? There ain't any more spring in the air than there is in a horsehair sofa in a Second avenue furnished room. For me the winter underwear yet and the buckwheat sack."

"You haf no boestry," said Lutz. "True, it is yet cold, and in der city we haf not many der der signs; but dere are der free kind of bebble dot should always feel der approach of spring first—day are boist, lovers and poor widows."

Mr. McQuirk went on his way, still possessed by the strange perturbation that he did not understand. Something was lacking in his comfort, and it made him half angry because he did not know what it was.

Two blocks away he came upon a foe, one Conover, whom he was bound in honor to engage in combat.

Mr. McQuirk made the attack with

the characteristic suddenness and fierceness that had gained for him the endearing sobriquet of "Tiger." The defense of Mr. Conover was so prompt and admirable that the conflict was protracted until the onlookers unselfishly gave the warning cry of "Cheese it—the cop!" The principals escaped easily by running through the nearest open doors into the communicating back yards at the rear of the houses.

Mr. McQuirk emerged into another street. He stood by a lamp post for a few minutes engaged in thought, and then he turned and plunged into a small notion and news shop. A red-haired young woman, eating gum drops, came and looked freezingly at him across the ice-bound steppes of the counter.

"Say, lady," he said, "have you got a song book with this in it? Let's see how it leads off—"

When the syntagma came will wander in the day, love,
And whatever of these happy days of yore—

"I'm having a friend," explained Mr. McQuirk, "I laid up with a broken leg, and he sent me after it. He's a devil for songs and poetry when he can't get out to drink."

"We hav' not," replied the young woman with unconcealed contempt. "But there is a new song out that begins like this way: Let us sit together in the old armchair; And while the freight fishes will be comfortable there."

There will be no profit in following Mr. "Tiger" McQuirk through his further vagaries of that day until he comes to stand knocking at the door of Annie Maria Doyle. The goddess Eastre, it seems, had guided his footsteps aright at last.

"Is that you now, Jimmy McQuirk?" she cried, smiling through the opened door. "Annie Maria had never accepted the 'Tiger'." "Well, whatever!"

"Come out in the hall," said Mr. McQuirk. "I want to ask yer opinion of the weather—in the love."

"Are you crazy, sure?" said Annie Maria.

"I am," said the "Tiger." "They're been telling me all day there was spring in the air. Were they liars? Or am I?"

"Dear me," said Annie Maria. "Haven't you noticed it? I can almost smell the violets. And the green grass. Of course, there ain't any yet—it's just a kind of feeling you know?"

"That's what I'm getting at," said Mr. McQuirk. "I've had it. I didn't recognize it at first. I thought maybe it was en-wee, contracted the other day when I stepped above Fourteenth street. But the katesjammer I've got don't spell violets. It spells yer own name, Annie Maria, and it's you I want. I go to work next Monday, and I make four dollars a day. Spiel up, old jimmy—do we make a team?"

"Giddy!" sighed Annie Maria, suddenly disappearing in his overcoat. "Don't you see that spring is all over the world right this minute?"

But you yourself remember how that day ended. Beginning with so fine a promise of vernal things, late in the afternoon the air chilled and an inch of snow fell—even so late in March. On Fifth avenue the ladies draw their fur coats about them. Only in the forlorn windows could be perceived any signs of the morning smile of the coming goddess Eastre.

At 6 o'clock Herr Lutz began to close his shop. He heard a well known shout: "Hello, Dutch!"

"Tiger" McQuirk, in his shirt sleeves, with his hat on the back of his head, stood outside in the whirling snow, puffing at a black cigar. "Donnerwetter!" shouted Lutz, "der winter, he has come back again yet!"

"Yer a liar, Dutch," called back Mr. McQuirk, with friendly geniality. "It's springtime, by the watch."

IN THE first place, we shall not be curious about Casopolis, and nowhere in this chronicle will you find an extended description of its Main street, its Methodist Church, or the court house, surrounded by a wooden railing, to which the folk of the countryside tethered their horses on market-day.

Casopolis is a small town as these lines are being written.

It was a small town when Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, and Casopolis will be a small town the day they are celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal.

Casopolis lies in the middle of a fertile State, criss crossed by railways, some of which lead to New York City, the home of art, arrogance and alimony.

He came to the city on the Cannonball Accommodation, leaving Casopolis daily, except Sundays. His name was Hector Moe, and in appearance he was exactly the sort of man who would look like a person named Hector Moe.

In his hand was a yellow suitcase, purchased at the general store. He was tall and gangling, lean of body, lantern of jaw, and his eyes protruded an eighth of an inch further than is common.

Over his person was draped a suit of Casopolis store clothes, black in color, but shaded here and there with green.

In the smoking car of the accommodation an underwear salesman gazed intently upon Hector Moe and engaged him in conversation.

"I am going to New York to make my fortune," Hector admitted. "I've always lived in Casopolis, but my talents fit me for an enlarged sphere. I will admit that my appearance is that of a jay. I am conscious of the air of ruralism that surrounds me. My folks have tried to dissuade me from going to the great metropolis, but in vain. And I have in my pocketbook the sum of \$200."

"You want to be careful when you get to New York," the underwear salesman advised. "Some of those city sharpers may grab your roll."

"I shall take care of myself, never fear," replied Hector confidently.

Filled with the spirit of adventure and trembling at the marvelous things about him, Hector left the train at Forty-second street. He hurried away, reading directions on a sheet of paper, and an hour later he was the undisputed tenant of a hall bedroom in a lodging-house on Lexington avenue, just off Thirtieth street.

Mr. Moe was young. In a week he had cast aside many of the rural garments. He bought himself a knitted cravat, low shoes, and a speckled waistcoat. He checked his throat in a collar that permitted no tie-room, and brushed his hair straight back, instead of giving it the James A. Garfield part.

He began to look upon the twenty-two years he had lived in Casopolis as a mispent youth. Now and then he sent back to Casopolis picture postcards of large and ornate apartment houses, with the words written under them: "Here's where I live."

Every time he set foot upon the broad walks of the metropolis he experienced tingling sensations. The rushing taxicabs filled him with joy, although he had never ridden in one. The tall buildings brought the tears of pride to his eyes. He loved to mingle in the home-going jams in the subway, and to paw over the thought that he was one of them.

The Casopolis Weekly Breeze had a little article about "Hector Moe, now a resident of New York City, but formerly one of Casopolis' promising young men." Hector cut out the paragraph



and put it in a frame over his iron bed.

In the course of time and when Hector had come to a sophistication that enabled him to tell Third avenue from Fourth by the smell, Fifth from Sixth by the noise and Broadway by the way the women carried their skirts, he met a man.

The hour was eight of a summer evening. The pursuit of folly, joy and triviality had just begun. The streets were crowded with men and women in evening dress. Motor cars deposited their prosperous loads every twenty feet along the curbs. Steady lines formed and crowded the theatre entrances.

Standing on the corner with a rap look in his eyes, Hector observed the stranger. Loneliness had made him somewhat mellow, and he was glad when the strange man evinced an interest in him.

"This is surely a wonderful city," the unknown began, nodding toward the crowded streets. "It is an old story to me, but it never fails to impress me. You are a stranger here?"

"I have been here for some time," Hector answered in a dignified tone.

"Sometimes," continued the stranger, "I find it difficult to select amusements. There are so many interesting things to be done in this great town that one is embarrassed and unable to make a choice. Don't you find it that way?"

Hector smiled and nodded.

"To-night," said the man, becoming more confidential, "I have felt the string of an old spirit in my veins. There was a time when I might have been described as a gay young blade, and many the night flirted with the goddess of luck. For some strange reason, I feel impelled to-night to dally with the little white ball. Do you happen to know any place that is open? The police have become very strict of late, I understand."

"No," Hector answered, feeling somewhat guilty and ashamed of his lack of knowledge. "I'm afraid I couldn't direct you. I know very little of gambling."

"There was a famous old room not far from here," the man said thoughtfully. "I wonder if it might be open to-night. Do you ever do anything in that line?" Hector reflected.

Truly New York had provided him with continual amusement. He had been interested in everything he had seen, but, on the other hand, no one had come to him personally and offered to provide definite entertainment. The thought was gratifying.

"I might do a little in that line," he answered, using the stranger's words for safety's sake. "Provided the stakes were not high, I might risk a dollar or two."

"Let us go down the street and see if we can break into this place," said the man jovially. "I feel lucky to-night, and maybe I can share some good luck with you."

They departed together. The unknown offered Hector a large, black cigar, which he accepted like a man of the world.

Fortunately enough, the distant gambling house door opened at the name of the stranger. Bolts rattled, an inquiring head appeared in the square port-hole, and a voice said:

"Mr. Briggs? Certainly you can come in. And anybody with you is also welcome here, because we know that you are a gentleman and a scholar."

Mr. Briggs smiled quietly at Hector, and that young man was inwardly pleased at the thought of being in company of a man who was received so graciously.

The gambling house proprietor took Hector by the arm like one who had

The Real "Hot Weather Malady"

It Is Peevishness. Steer Clear of It.
By Clarence L. Cullen.

THE other afternoon, when the day's heat was greatest, about fifty men and women, most of them cross, were lined up in front of the counter of an uptown railroad ticket office. Most of them, it appeared, wanted chairs on parlor cars for Atlantic City.

The five decidedly civil young clerks behind the counter were working hard. Their manner was respectful and obliging. But it appeared that the supply of chairs on parlor cars for Atlantic City had run out. Therefore the fifty-and-odd cross men and women, wrought upon by the heat, stomped at the clerks. They snarled and said spiteful things to the clerks about the railroad and Pullman companies.

The clerks, of course, had nothing whatever to do with the fact that there were no more parlor car chairs to sell. They had sold all they had to sell, and that let them out. But they were snarled at and spoken harshly to. And, because they, no doubt, need their jobs, they were compelled to take all of this terrible abuse of supposed-to-be rational men and women; all of whom, by the way, also demanded that they be waited on at once.

There is a good deal of talk, spoken and printed, about the unappetishness of folks who have to meet the public in crowds—ticket office men, box office men, street car conductors, clerks and so on. A good deal of the talk is well based. But the hot weather's a pretty good season to give that kind of talk a vacation.

The men who meet the public in great mobs during long hours every day, are human beings. The heat affects them just the same as it does the fellow—the very petulant and snarling fellow, many of them—from whom they have to pass.

They come in for a good deal more maltreatment of the tongue-lashing sort than is generally known or suspected. Most of them are very patient. They would not last a day on their jobs if they were not decidedly patient.

If one of them now and again, wrought to a moment of heat irritation, puts an impolite word or so out of his system, the individual who has caused that might very easily reflect that maltreatment of the tongue-lashing sort than is generally known or suspected. Most of them are very patient. They would not last a day on their jobs if they were not decidedly patient.

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The clerks, the ticket office men, the conductors, the gate men and many others who meet the crowds have pretty mean summer jobs, nor are they highly paid for their work.

The great majority of them do the best they can, which, speaking collectively, is mighty well. There is every reason why they should be given a chance for their law marble.

And there is no sense or decency whatever in gratuitously abusing them.

MOTHER'S TONGUE.

"Do you realize the power of the mother tongue?" asked the young man who professed interest in literature.

"Yes, and so does father," replied the young woman.—Buffalo Express.

A CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE.

"I believe in taking the world as I find it," remarked the plutocratic promoter of great trusts.

"That's all right," replied the mere man. "But please don't take it all at once."—Lippincott's.

Hunting Crickets With--an Automobile

Curator Raymond L. Dittmar's Ingenious Scheme for Tracking the Willy Insects to Their Lair and Capturing Them Alive.

Cricket hunting with an automobile—the latest reply to the call of the wild, and the ingenious hunter is Raymond L. Dittmar, curator of the New York Zoological Park.

Mr. Dittmar is about to depart on his vacation, which is also his annual specimen hunt. This year he plans to devote special attention to the capture of crickets, katydids, locusts and the other scurrying, crawling, busy fauna of Sullivan County. And he has devised a plan for their circumlocution worthy of Nimrod or the great Theodore.

"You see," he explained, "there's lots on insects that look exactly like leaves and twigs. See this one," and he picked up a specimen from his desk which indeed strongly resembled a light green leaf, even the legs seeming like shredded leaf fibers.

"These insects live on trees and shrubs," continued Mr. Dittmar, "and it's practically impossible to locate them by sight. Their only way of betraying their hiding place. Yet many of them, like the cricket, sing only at night, and one can't go scrambling after them in pitch darkness. On the other hand, a strong light, from an automobile or a pocket flash, frightens them and stops their singing, so that the hunter of specimens is helpless."

"Last summer I was out with a friend in a motor car and we heard a regular chirping chorus. I said: 'I'll get some of these fellows.' And I started to climb a neighboring tree, asking my friend to direct his motor searchlight into its branches.

"Presto! The katydids were silent and indistinguishable from their leafy hiding places. On a sudden impulse I said to my friend: 'Now your motor



of the aid of my searchlight, secure a number of valuable specimens. The musical vibration will prevent the insects from being frightened at the light. It won't be necessary for me to give an exact imitation to each separate song so long as my motor siren or other instrument is tuned to set up the same number of vibrations as those sent out by the insect in question."

"Have you found any musical instrument which will attract flies or mosquitoes?" Mr. Dittmar was asked to store. I also have an automobile siren from which I have removed the megaphone in order to diminish the noise.

"I shall drive my car into a suitable neighborhood and set my musical instruments at work in turn. Then I feel genuinely confident that I can, with

known him for years. Champagne, cigars and dainty salads were served free from little tables on wheels that were pushed by colored servants among the players.

The rooms were gorgeous in velvets and silks, and Hector stepped upon carpets and rugs two inches deep. He gazed upon roulette wheels for the first time in his life, drank of the champagne and smoked excellent cigars—free.

Some time during the evening Mr. Briggs disappeared and was seen no more, and one hour after Hector entered the palace of chance he retraced his steps down the long stairway with a numb feeling at his heart and a pocketbook distinguished by complete and utter emptiness.

His two hundred dollars was gone! The gambling house men now possessed the two hundred that had come triumphantly from Casopolis. They could have taken Hector's roll away from him in the first fifteen minutes of play had haste been necessary, for the wheel was acutely crooked.

Stunned, and with his brain totally paralyzed by the calamity, Hector stumbled from the brightly lighted room. He leaned against a friendly banister and realized the awful truth—that he had been skinned alive—bleed—banned—boiled—stung—burned to a crinkling cinder!

The laughter of other men came to his ears, mingled with the clatter of falling chips. There was no one to pay him attention now that his money had gone from him, and he stood alone on the stairway in sublime misery.

"Oh!" he moaned aloud. "What shall I do? I am ruined! I will never dare lift my head. I shall never be able to return to Casopolis and face the Jews. I thought that I had learned the ways and wiles of this great city, but I am an innocent sheep. My life is blasted at one blow, and my future is gone!"

He turned and stared about him dumbly. Mechanically, and scarcely knowing what he was about, he walked up the stairway, passed the swinging, leather-bound doors behind which lay his two hundred dollars, and seeing another stair, he ascended it to the top. Then, being a young man and full of unutterable woe, he sat himself down upon the rich carpet and wept copiously. With his desolate countenance in his hands, the tears trickled down and formed little pools on the expensive footing.

Hector wished he was back in Casopolis with some one to comfort him in this terrifying moment. He longed for the handclasp of the postmaster, the cheerful panorama accorded by Hector's red barn, and the country backwoods driving in to church on Sunday.

Then he dried his futile tears and summoned his numbed faculties. At his back was an iron ladder, the top of which rested against the ceiling scullie, and as Hector gazed upon it with sad eyes a sudden and terrific commotion started him.

From the depths, far below, came a roaring sound, followed by the crash of falling glass, the overturning of tables and the banging of iron doors.

To Hector, sitting there, the sounds meant nothing definite, but to those careless spirits about the gaming tables any violent noise is but one thing—the sound of the door smashing police, the coming of the raiders in uniform.

A close investigation on the part of the men at the green cloth would have revealed nothing particularly alarming beyond a gas explosion.

Hector's red barn had filled a cellar with gas, which had gone off with a bang, raising upon an inactive furnace, which it hurled through a base-

JUST POSSIBLE.

"I don't understand why we seem to be growing tired of each other," said a husband of but a few months.

"I haven't an idea," said the wife.

"Well," replied the young man, "perhaps that is the reason."—Lippincott's.

THE DIFFERENCE.

The Manager—There isn't a single line in your five-act play that will live.

The Playwright—But I'm not writing for posterity. I'm writing for plunks.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

TOO IMPULSIVE.

"I admire everything that is beautiful," he said.

"You mustn't say such things to me," she replied. "We have only known each other a little while."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

HATS FOR EVERY WOMAN.

A London firm has sixty display windows in its store and recently all the windows were filled with a display of women's hats. Nearly seven thousand hats were shown, and it was believed that every woman in London could find at least one to suit her.

CHINESE ATHLETE BEST.

In the recent far Eastern Olympic games at Manila the best all-round athlete was a Chinese, Pan Wen-ping, who won the gold medal in the 20-gate (golf)

ment windows; doors were blown in and windows out.

But from the door below the spot where Hector Moe sat mourning a thin stream of highly excited citizens poured into the hall, and ran madly up the stairway, and before the surprised young man could remove himself from their path a fat, hard-breathing person had dropped on his knees before him.

"Lemme out of this!" he whimpered. "Lemme out, pardner; if my firm heart I'm pinched in a gambler's raid my self gone!"

The fat one thrust a handful of bills toward Hector. Surprised beyond measure, Hector took the bills. The fat citizen ran lightly up the iron ladder, pushed open the scullie and crawled to the roof.

Instantly another man selected Mr. Moe.

"Officer," he said, speaking quickly. "I am not guilty of any crime, but I wouldn't be caught here for the world. I'm a church deacon, and—your know?"

He slipped Mr. Moe a wad of money and followed the obese man up the ladder and through the scullie.

Hector stood stock-still, stupefied by the rapidity of passing events and the queer crinkle of the bills in his hand.

Still another man passed before him, placed money in his hands, and ascended to safety. There was no need for conversation now.

"Those who were not yet out of the raid observed the actions of those who were escaping. Hector placed the money in his various pockets and said nothing. There was nothing to say.

The last man in line was whimpering outright.

"Oh!" he said. "Oh! Officer—please!"

Then Hector looked at him closely and said—Christian P. Featherbone, the leading chicken breeder of Casopolis, the owner of the four-and-tenb store, the second assistant vestryman in the Advanced Church.

"Hector Moe!" muttered Mr. Featherbone, observing the actions of those who were escaping. Hector placed the money in his various pockets and said nothing. There was nothing to say.

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