

Astorbilt: 'Doctor, I think I have perrybrownitis. May I?'—'Yes, marm; ten thousand dollars, cash in advance.' Next Mrs. Vandergould, and the other three hundred and ninety-eight; and the ten thousand; and all Fifth and Madison-aves., Newport, Bar Harbor, *et cetera*."

He smiled warmly and wrung my hand and went out. I sat down and thought. I laid out a plan of medication and operation.

Presently my bell rang and a man with a sore foot came in. Before, I would have welcomed him gladly. Now, I sent him away scornfully. I waited

a week. No perrybrownitis patients. I waited a month. No perrybrownitis sufferers. Not even Perry Brown.

Higgins one day mentioned him. "I hate to mention it," he said; "but that chap who came in that day—you know who I mean, that last patient of yours—he borrowed half a dollar of me as he went out. Said it would be all right; you would settle with me. I hate to speak of it; but—"

I went to hunt up that man with the sore foot. I found him, but his foot was well. But I gave him

a prescription, anyway. I told him it might come in handy sometime.

Probably Perry Brown died of perrybrownitis before he had a chance to interest the crowned heads of Europe. I shall not wait for him any longer. I claim that the plebeian youth of to-day, in this glorious Republic of ours, will be the millionaires and Four Hundred of to-morrow. I am building up quite a practice with the millionaires and Four Hundred of to-morrow. I have been very successful on the East Side in cases of measles, whooping-cough, and teething.

THE MAN IN THE CABIN

By Norman Duncan



The Customer Was Dancing a Hornpipe.

THE trading schooner Tax had come down from the Labrador. She was riding at anchor in the home port, with her hold full of salt fish, and the stock of goods in her cabin run sadly low. We had gone aboard that night to shake the hands of the skipper and the clerk. It was later, in the fore-castle, when a modest celebration of the prosperous voyage was in full swing, that Cook the clerk, a merry, blue-eyed little man, told the story of the man in the cabin.

"We was lying in Shelter Harbor," said he, "waiting for a fair wind to Point-o'-Bay. It was coming close to night when they saw him leaping along shore, kicking a tin kettle before him. I was in the cabin, putting the stock to rights after the day's trade. I heard a hail from shore, and the skipper's answering 'Ay, ay! This is the trader Tax from Ruddy Cove.' Then the skipper sung out to know if I wanted a customer.

"Fetch him aboard," said I, "if he's got a gallon of oil or a pound of fish."

"He looks queer," says the skipper. "Don't you mind that," says I. "Queer he may look, and queer he may be; but his fish will be just the same as the ones in the hold. Go fetch him aboard."

"With that the skipper put off in the punt to fetch the customer. But when he drew near shore, he lay on his oars, something puzzled, I'm thinking, for the customer was dancing a hornpipe on a flat rock at the water's edge, by the first light of the moon.

"Have you got a fish to trade?" asks the skipper.

"The customer gave a kick and a flourish. 'Good-even,' says he. 'I got a quintal or two o' codfish an' a cask o' oil that I'm achin' t' trade.'

"Have you?" says the skipper. "Then you come aboard. You're just the man we're lookin' for."

"The skipper pulled in, unsuspecting as you please and the man jumped aboard. 'I'm quite a dancer,' says he.

"I never see such dancin'," says the skipper. "Where'd you learn?"

"Hut!" says the man. "That's nothin' at all. When the moon's full an' high, I dances over the waves, an' when there's a gale blowin' I goes aloft t' the clouds an' shakes a foot up there."

"That's clever," says the skipper. "If you can dance as well as you lie, you must be a wonder."

"That I am," says he, with the gravest of faces. "I was on deck when they came aboard the schooner. It was then dusk. I noticed nothing out of the way in my customer's appearance. He was a large, big-boned fellow, with plenty of fat and muscle—as stout and strong as I wish I was myself—and a good man at a grapple. The skipper turned him over to me without a word of warning—not a single word of it—and went below to the

fore-castle. The wind was blowing cold and misty, and there wasn't a man left on deck."

"Oh, well," the skipper broke in, "how was I t' know—"

"That's all right, Skipper Job," the clerk interrupted. "I took him into the cabin, and you was snug enough in the fore-castle, where no hail of mine could reach you. It was not until then," he continued, resuming the story, "when the light of the cabin lamp fell full upon him, that I got a proper idea of my customer's size and strength. He was frowzy, dirty, and dressed in ragged mo'eskin cloth; and he had a habit of looking to right and left—anywhere but straight in my face—so that I caught no more than a red flash from his eyes from time to time. I felt uneasy. I didn't know why, but the feeling was right there, all the time. I wanted to get the business over as soon as I could—wanted to be rid of the big fellow; so I asked him what I could do for him.

"Oh," says he, "you hasn't got the thing I wants."

"Haven't I?" says I. "I'm thinking that we've a little of everything you ever thought of."

"I don't think you has," says he. "But," says he, "it would be a good thing for you if you had."

"And what is it?" says I.

"'Tis a spool o' silk thread," says he, "t' bind the fairies with. They're wicked," says he. "They wants me t' do things I don't want to. If you got any o' that thread," says he, "I'll take it."

"Come now, my man," says I sharply, "stop your jokin'. What is it you want?"

"I'm not jokin', sir," says he. "I wants a spool o' silk thread t' lash the fairies with."

"He meant what he said. But he looked harmless, and, if he had fish to trade, I was ready to take them."

"We've no silk thread," says I, "that will securely bind fairies. But if you want anything else, and have fish to trade, I'll take them."

"I wisht you had the thread," says he. He signed to me to be silent. Then he closed the cabin door and came close to the counter, behind which I stood, with no way of escape. "Has you got a loaded gun?" says he.

"His face was close to mine, and—well, I didn't quite like the look in his eyes—and I was no match for him. 'No,' says I, 'I've no gun.'

"Has you got a good knife anywhere?" says he.

"I thought it was high time to get out if I could."

"If it's only knives you're wanting," says I, "I've got lots of them. But I keep them in the fore-castle, where it's dry. So I'll just run forward to fetch the lot to show you." With that I jumped on the counter and swung my legs over.

"But he pushed me back.

"Don't trouble, sir," says he. "I'm thinkin' this," says he, taking an ax from the rack, "will answer just as well."

"It wasn't very pleasant—alone there in the cabin with that madman. I had no weapon at hand. My life was in the care of my wits, which are neither sharp nor ready. To hail the skipper was out of the question. He would not hear me; and the first shout might disturb the big man in the moleskin clothes more than I cared to think about. My only hope of escape seemed to lie in taking the man's attention from the thing he had in his mind. But I made one effort in another direction.

"Did you say green silk thread or blue?" says I.

"Green, sir," says he.

"Did you, now?" says I.

"Well, well! I thought you

said blue. And I believe we've a spool of green left."

"It's too late," says he. "I must get t' work afore the clock strikes."

"Strikes what?" says I.

"'Twelve," says he.

"Well, now," drawled the clerk, "that made me feel better. Twelve o'clock? It was then only eight. The skipper would come aft long before midnight. So I began to feel easy in my mind."

"It's a long time to wait," says I. "I'll make up my bunk, and you can lie down and rest for a spell. I'll wake you before twelve."

"It lacks twelve minutes o' the hour," says he.

"Nonsense!" says I. "It lacks a few minutes of eight. It's no later than that."

"There's a clock behind you, sir," says he.

"It was a cheap American alarm clock, the last of a half-dozen I had kept hanging from the roof of the cabin. I had kept them wound up, for the mere company of hearing them tick; but I had never set them—never troubled to keep them running on time. And this one was wrong. When I looked up I found that it pointed to twelve minutes to twelve o'clock."

"It's not the right time," says I. "It's far too—"

"Hist!" says he. "You've only eleven minutes left."

"And there we stood—the fisherman with his back to the door, and myself behind the counter—while the American alarm clock ticked off the minutes of my life. Eleven—ten—nine!"

"Nine minutes—eight—seven!"

"Look here," says I. "You're all wrong about those wicked fairies. You just leave them to me. I'll—"

"Six an' a half," says he.

"I began to sweat. 'Look here,' says I after a little. 'You listen to me,' says I, 'and I'll tell you—'

"Five," says he.

"At that moment I caught a long hail from the shore. 'Schooner ahoy!'

"I wondered if Skipper Job heard. Probably not; for he was snug in the fore-castle. The hail was repeated. Then I heard Skipper Job answer from the deck.

"Has you got a strange man aboard?" came from the shore.

"Yes, sir," says Job.

"Watch him," from the shore. 'He's mad.'

"Four," says the madman.

"I didn't know what was going on on deck. For two minutes not a word was said. My odd customer and I were silently waiting for the first stroke of twelve."

"One an' a half," says he.

"I heard voices forward—then the stealthy tramp of feet, coming aft."

"John, boy," a voice called "is you below?"

"It's me, brother Timothy," my customer whispered. "I must be goin' home."

"My customer put up the ax. With a sign to me to keep silence, he went on deck. He jumped into his brother's punt as docile as a child, gave us all good-night, and was rowed ashore. We did not see him again; for the wind blew fresh from the north-west in the morning, and by night the schooner was at Point-o'-Bay."

And that was the end of the story.

The old trader (whose schooner it was) and I went ashore together.

"What do you think about that story?" said I.

The old man laughed.

"Was that a true story?" said I.

"Didn't you catch the wink he wunk?" he asked.



"Hist!" Says He. "You've Only Eleven Minutes Left."