

never, never, going to rent or loan or sell again, in any form, and that was myself!

I felt like an Indian chief as I walked to the elevator. Miss Kable was with me, of course. The Russian Count and Mr. Mace put us in our cab, and for a second Mr. Mace and I stood apart on the pavement.

"I'd like tremendously well to call on you, Miss Crotchett," he said. He wasn't smiling at all; but he was dark and solemn, and his eyebrows looked heavier than ever. "I'd like to; but I won't!"

"Don't!" I said, and I was even crosser than he. "You were talking about real and pretend things. Well, I'll tell you this: I wasn't a real guest. I am a Universal Provider, and I hired out to Mrs. Wilkinson, so that she shouldn't be left at a table with thirteen."

His face broke all up into crinkles,—broke up the way the ice breaks in the Rock River. "Well," he said, "what are you so cross about? You earned your money."

I thought it was a horrid thing for him to say. He held out his hand; but if I had taken it, I should have cried. So I didn't. I only said:

"I'm glad you're not going to call."

"So am I," he said. "You have a dreadful temper."

"You haven't an idea how bad!" I snapped back!

Then the cab came, and he put me in. He looked pleasanter than he had all the evening.

"I don't see why you're so happy!" I said.

"Because I'm not going to call," he laughed.

Then he lifted his hat. So did the Russian Count. They stood there in their long evening coats, smiling and bowing, and we drove away grandly. It was quite splendid. You would have thought that was just the sort of thing I should like; now wouldn't you, Delphine?

Well, it may or may not have been; but when Miss Kable said in her nice little way, "Well?" I put my head on her shoulder and cried into her



I Am Furnishing a Cottage for a Bride.

soft eiderdown collar till it was all caked and soggy. Really, it looked so bad that the next day I bought a new piece and set it in for her. I kept the old piece. I don't know why. For my sins, I suppose. When I get too heady, I take out that messy old bit of eiderdown and think of how pride goes before a fall.

YOU see, there sometimes is a temptation to be heady. I have succeeded too easily! I have all I can do. Actually, I have been asked to furnish a six-room cottage out in the suburbs for a man whose sweetheart is coming on from England. He wants to take his bride into a ready-to-wear house. I'm going to do my very best. Everything shall be just right,—the lamp on the table, the easy chairs placed, the dishes suggestive of cozy meals. I'm even to stock up the pantry with good things to eat. It seems a little unfair taking all this busy pleasure away from the bride; but that's the man's lookout. He thinks he's doing a great thing, and I'm putting more than mere work into it. I'm putting myself into it. I think good thoughts for him and her all the time I am working, and perhaps when they come in, that first day, little elves of good wishes will come out and play for them. You know, I am discovering that the invisible things count just as much as the visible.

Now, there's Aunt Louise down home. You can't see her love, can you, or the thoughts she has, or the prayers she prays? But they can be felt. I tell you! It's the little invisible Aunt Louise that keeps Katy Crotchett from making a pink idiot of herself,—because, as you must know, there are plenty of chances up here in town to be almost any sort of idiot.

I don't say a thing about you; but I want to hear all about you just the same. You mustn't think you are merely a patent steam valve for your over-charged

KATY CROTCHETT.

To be continued next Sunday

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE



I DON'T see why I don't get on," said John Brown, as he painstakingly brushed the derby he had worn for three winters and one summer. "When I have a job, I work at it conscientiously. I am strictly truthful; I never gamble; and I can about live on a toothpick."

He dejectedly put on his hat. "Look how some fellows get along!" he muttered. "There's something the matter with my methods. I've got to wake up! There's Smith from up home,—everything booming with him. I'm going to call on him. He's never asked me to; but I'll change one method right now and find out if there isn't something to be gained by butting in. Perhaps I'll be able to get a pointer from him."

So to Smith's he went, and was very decently received.

"There's nothin' in turning a fellow down," Smith afterward remarked to a friend. "Treat 'em all good. You don't want to have anybody against you."

Brown went again to Smith's. On this occasion he ventured to remark that he was disgusted with his present job,—hard work, only seven per, and no chance of advancement.

"Well, look at you!" retorted Smith. "Look at you! Do you think you'll ever do any better in those clothes? There's just two parts to the secret of gettin' ahead,—one is hot air, the other is good clothes."

"But I can't afford—" began Brown. "Candy speech!" interrupted Smith. "Try playing a race. Go without your dinner a day or two, if you have to. You'll strike it sooner or later. If you won't, why get 'em on the instalment plan. But you've got to have 'em if you ever are goin' to amount to anything!"

Brown moistened his lips nervously. "I'll try the instalment," he said.

"Then when you go lookin' for your job," continued Smith, "don't slip in dead anxious and humble. Hot air!"

A FEW weeks later, Brown stood one morning before the desk of the manager of the Kron Construction Company. He was dressed like a fashion

plate, and a pleasant smile played on his lips. He had left behind him in the street the memory of two dozen unfruitful interviews. His new motto was the one thing in his mind.

"I can't talk!" snapped the manager. "Can't you see how busy I am?"

Brown glanced about, astonished. "For pity's sake!" he burst out impulsively. "You're not doing this work yourself? Well, some of us chaps can learn something about hustling, by looking in on you and seeing how you do things!" He turned to depart.

"Here, young fellow!" said the manager sharply. "Wait a minute."

John was immediately retained by the Kron Construction Company, and at double the salary he received formerly.

By degrees, he began to lose his prejudice against gambling. "You see," he said apologetically to Smith, "I was brought up to consider horse racing and poker playing dishonest."

"They're pretty honest compared with some things," retorted Smith. "You ain't juggling with other people's money without their knowing it; and anybody that loses to you is doin' it with his eyes wide open and because he was willing to take a chance."

"Yes," assented Brown.

"I know a fellow who was down to his last nickel," continued Smith. "Well, he plugged that nickel into a slot machine, and won out. Then he took a chance at a poker game, and won again. Then he played a horse, and his luck stood him in. Then he went to a curb broker he knew about, and bought a share in something. Well, let me tell you, he's rich now, that fellow. Gambling is speculating; an' nowadays you've got to speculate if you ain't goin' to be a back number."

BROWN soon began to be considered "getting along." He was often broke; but nobody knew it. He had acquired the art of making a front; and he soon found that if one was only dressed for it, hanging up a creditor (the feat that is so difficult to the man that has wrinkles in the back of his coat, whose derby had gone soft) was not such a trying process after all. But at this point he came

near doing something old fashioned. He almost fell in love!

Miss Rose Riley, stenographer, whose desk was next to his, was the cause. Rose was trim, pink-cheeked, with shining black hair and a laugh as merry as a wren's on a summer morning. Brown sometimes found himself paying her compliments of too deep a nature to be itemized as "jolly." He wondered if she was in love with him. He believed this to be fully possible; but if so, how could he account for the deliberate snubbing she sometimes gave him? Brown did not know that Rose was just as cautious as he was; that she thoroughly understood him; and that his foundation for a home, consisting of half clothes and half hot air, was a constant check on her impulse. Rose was afraid of poverty,—afraid as only those who have actually felt its merciless pinch can be.

One morning, to his extreme stupefaction, Brown learned that Miss Rose Riley and the manager were married.

He indulged in a bad half-hour. Then he said: "Well, she was sensible!"

WHEN summer arrived John was given two weeks' vacation. Formerly, he had always gone home. He would sit around on the farm, and his mother would make him Washington pie; and he would tell her his troubles; and his father would give him the advice he had always given him: "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," and more old-fashioned philosophy along that order.

But this summer John went to a fashionable seaside resort. He took an elaborate wardrobe along which he hadn't paid for, and the funds for the expenses of the trip were furnished by the efforts of an obliging horse.

On the night of his arrival, when he was out on the board walk, something happened that made a deep impression on him.

A man and a woman, whom he had seen before in the parlors of his hotel, paused near him, not seeming to realize that he was within earshot. The man was young, and his once fashionable apparel was rather seedy. The woman was middle-aged,—gaunt, plain of face, handsomely gowned, and much jeweled.

"Mrs. Rich," the man began in a very dejected tone of voice, "do you think you will ever get married again?"

The woman turned her head and regarded him with an immovable countenance.

"If you do," the man continued, "I know I could make you a good husband. I am very steady. I don't care anything about a woman being young; I like an older woman. I don't care anything about beauty either—"

The woman rose. "If I ever think of marrying again," she remarked grimly, "it won't be to a numskull!"

Brown indulged in a silent guffaw. "Numskull! You bet! That's it,—he's a blooming numskull!" he commented.

A WEEK from that night he himself paused in that same spot with Mrs. Rich. He was arrayed in his best, and was assuming his most smiling front. "By Jove!" he exclaimed suddenly, bending impulsively toward Mrs. Rich "but you look handsome to-night! You're stately. That's what you are,—stately as a queen! Don't call me down! A fellow loses his head sometimes—"

Before John had left that spot, he was engaged to one of the richest widows that frequented the board walk.

A little later in the season he ran up home for a day just to tell them about the great change in his affairs.

"And will you give up your position?" his mother inquired.

He regarded her indulgently. Then he replied, "Yes. It will take all my time, you know, to look after my wife's affairs and some of my own little Wall Street pets."

"Oh, I'm afraid we'll never see you any more!" his mother suggested tearfully.

"Oh, yes, you will!" John responded cheerfully. "I'll run up every once in awhile in one of my touring cars; and then I'll bring you and father down to town and show you such a time as you never had in your life."

"Dear, dear! isn't it wonderful how he has gotten?" commented his mother.

The father nodded his head. "The survival of the fittest—the survival of the fittest!" he asserted solemnly.

A look that was fourth cousin to sheepishness showed for an instant on John's face. Then he said, "Oh, yes, of course. But perhaps you had better say, 'The fittest—according to the way things are.' It isn't exactly like the good boy I used to read about in the Fourth Reader at school, nor altogether like Deacon Green, whom you pointed out to me when I was a youngster as a model that a fellow ought to follow."

"Oh, well," interrupted his mother, regarding him proudly and scarcely heeding his words, "as long as you're happy—as long as you're happy, John, other things don't matter so much."

"Oh—happy?" said John shortly, as though something new had been sprung on him. "Oh, I don't know about that. Nobody fusses much about such things as that nowadays. It's not the point, you know."