SPOOKS CAME AND WENT.

IMMORTALITY DEMONSTRATED AT A COST OF $1 A HEAD.

The Medium's Strategic Position—A Songstress Who Kept Her Place—Rush of the Spirits—The Believers—Distinguished Ghosts Appear—A Misty Materialization.

Spooks in misty white draperies and spooks in black frock coats are skirmishing nightly about a certain back parlor in West Forty-sixth street. The house is the residence of a medium who announces that she will demonstrate the immortality of the soul "on Tuesdays and Sundays at 8 and on Saturdays at 2."

Thirteen persons, including a SUN reporter, assisted at one of the evening demonstrations recently. The reporter did not assist very much, but that wasn't his fault, as the following story will prove. The names here given, both those of the persons present and those of the alleged spirits, are substitutes for the real names, except in the case of eight famous personages who deigned to flourish in and out of the medium's cabinet.

The home of the medium is one of the thousands of brownstone, high-stoop New York houses. But it has one peculiarity. When a séance is in progress blue baize shades are rolled down at the windows, the outside door is locked, and, if one looked only at the first floor, one would say the house was closed for the season. Inside there is the customary hall and the long, narrow, commonplace parlor, relieved in this case by a cheery grate fire.

Of the thirteen who sat in the circle—which is not a circle, but a long row facing the cabinet—one was the medium's manager, or partner. Six were old-timers, well known to one another and to the medium. Two came with the old-timers. The four others were strangers, but were introduced by some one known to the medium. This introduction is most important. No one can get in without it. The fee was $1 each. At least, it was for the strangers.

The immortality of the soul was to be demonstrated, according to announcement, at 8. But it was nearer 9 before the folding doors into the back parlor were thrown open. During the wait the old-timers sat around and exhaustively gossiped of themselves and all their friends, so that the reporter, total stranger though he was, could have told them a long list of personal items and have made a respectable showing as a medium himself. Finally one woman spoke of the open fire.

"Something ought always to be placed in front of that grate," she said with a meaning glance toward another old-timer. "You know they forgot that last week and you remember what happened," with a sly wink and a giggle.

The medium herself came in at this moment; a short, ample woman in a black satin gown, about as spiritual in appearance as a good fat hen. She wore shining spectacles; a most appropriate detail, as will be seen later. She spoke blandly to the old-timers; pleasantly to the strangers, whom she regarded with suspicion nevertheless.

"Sing one of your sweet songs while we wait," she begged of one woman, whose work seemed cut out for her, since she led the singing throughout the evening.

"Do you know whether any of the Cary sisters' poems are set to music?" asked the songstress, after she had warbled something about shadowland.

The medium and her assistant had gone out and nobody else knew.

"Because they come to us so often," said the songstress, "that I think it would be a delicate attention if we'd sing one of their own songs some time."

"I'll tell you what," said Mrs. California. "Just ask 'em themselves, the next time they come."

"You ask 'em. You're so much better acquainted with 'em."

"All right. That's a good idea, too. Don't you know how pleased Longfellow was the other night when we sang him 'The Day Is Done'? They appreciate those little attentions."

"Of course. By the way," said a tall, elderly, intellectual-looking man, "have you ever heard Mrs. White speak under control?"

"No, but you ought to have heard Theodore Parker give us an oration through Miss Black the other night."

"Indeed? But I doubt if she compares with Mrs. White. She is controlled by Cicero, Vishnu, Darwin and Longfellow. Aren't they four wonderful guides?"

The strangers were trying to keep their eyes from popping out of their heads when the lifting doors were pushed back and a cold blast of air rushed in from the back parlor. The room was lighted by a single gas jet, burning in a green globe. The cabinet was on the side of the room next to the rear hall bedroom—of course. The other three sides were naturally unavailable, since one would have opened into the next house, one into the back yard, or rather the air two feet above it, and the third communicated with the parlor. The cabinet was open in front but was hung about with very heavy curtains which could be closely drawn. There was a chair inside for the medium. At that end a table, holding a vase of withered flowers, formed a bulwark outside the curtains. The assistant, or manager, or whatever he was, sat at the other end of the row of people. This row was across the room facing the cabinet, at a distance of about ten feet. The far corner beyond the cabinet was dark and empty. After a brief preliminary talk the medium went into the cabinet and drew the curtains. One of her remarks was:

"All we know comes from growth, contact, adaptability, knowledge." The rest of her discourse was like unto this.

When the curtains were drawn the assistant, who may be called Mr. Blinker for convenience, turned out the gas. From somewhere in the smothering darkness came the voice of the songstress beginning "Nearer, My God, to Thee." The others took up the strain and, as they sang, a faint light stole across the darkness. It was not supernatural, however, for it came from a sort of lantern on a high shelf in the corner behind the circle. A gas jet burned dimly in this lantern, which had solid sides and a rather opaque glass front with a slide which could be raised and lowered. The believers and the manager would hoot at the suggestion of human interference. According to them, the spirits of Crow Foot and White Face, two good Indians, because dead, invisibly manipulate the slide.

The light slowly grew until it was possible to distinguish any specially fishy objects; a sheet of music on the organ between the back windows, a white feather on a hat, and light spots where the faces were. The singing went on. They reached the line, "Angels to beckon me." Noiselessly the curtains parted and a misty white figure stood in the opening, spread out both hands, bowed its head and vanished. The song had died away.

"This is Priscilla," announced Mr. Blinker. "It is a spirit which always comes first to bless the meeting."

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

The songstress finished the verse from the exact point where she had been interrupted by the apparition. That was a peculiarity of the songstress. At one time the spirit of her husband came and called her to the cabinet; she was leading in the singing of "Then You'll Remember Me," and had reached this point: "There may perhaps in such"—. She kindly interrupted the verse, however, and went up to let her husband speak to her. The communication over, she returned to her chair and began without hesitation——"a scene some recollection be," and so on. Even the return of her husband from the spirit world could not make her lose interest in her own singing.

When the first hymn had been finished the company started another one, and were hard at it when the elderly gentlemen—call him Johnson—began saying:

"Sh-sh-sh!"

The singing ceased, and from the cabinet came a deep voice:

"Good evening, my friends. We greet you."

"Good evening, Mr. Cushman. We greet you," said the old-timers in chorus.

"This," announced Blinker, "is the spirit of Mr. Frank Cushman, one of the leading cabinet controls."

Howdydo, everybody?" came in a high, penetrating whisper from the cabinet.

"Oh, good evening, Bright Eyes!" in another chorus in recitation from the circle. "We greet you, Bright Eyes."

"Oh, we gain to have such a lovely evenin'!" announced the high whisper. "I got somebody here for ever'body. Jus' bushels o' them!"

"Have you, Bright Eyes? That's nice, Bright Eyes," from the chorus.

"This is Bright Eyes," announced Blinker. "A little Indian girl who is also a cabinet control."

"Such a sweet child," from one rapturous old-timer.

The songstress tuned up once more. She knew her business, and kept the singing going except when actually interrupted by the spirits, in spite of the music, however, occasional creakings could be heard coming from the cabinet floor. Her second selection was an appropriate one about angels hovering around to carry the message home. It was interrupted by a second apparition between the cabinet curtains.

"This is Alice Cary," announced Blinker.

The spirit bowed and bowed, while the chorus recited its little greeting. A moment later a second apparition stood beside the first, and Blinker promptly proclaimed it to be the spirit of Phœbe Cary. Then the deep voice of Mr. Cushman said that the sisters wanted to talk with Mrs. California. She went to the outside of the cabinet, the spirits retiring within, and the listeners in the circle could hear a succession of strident whispers, with a running commentary in Mrs. California's voice:

"Whisper—whisper—whisper—[Yes, I know—] whisper—whisper—[Beautiful! beautiful!]—whisper—whisper—whisper—[Oh, I'm so glad!]"

The interview was brief and Mrs. California returned to her place, saying fervently:

"Thank you, Mr. Cushman!"

"You understood, madam?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Cushman! It was beautiful, Mr. Cushman, will you ask the Misses Cary if there are any of their poems set to music? We would like to sing some of them."

There was an awkward silence from the cabinet. Then the deep voice said:

"The sisters ask me to tell you that they are pleased with anything you may select."

"But if they have a favorite poem"—began Mrs. California.

"They say they will not presume to dictate," said the deep voice, and Blinker promptly started another hymn.

This was allowed to proceed to the end, when the curtains parted and a woman's figure in faint, transparent white draperies came out into the room, moved quickly to the dark corner and, with a wave of her long diaphanous scarf, vanished as if she had been a ray of light suddenly extinguished. The light from the lantern, by the way, had grown dimmer than ever, as it did at every subsequent time that the spirits left the cabinet. Evidently it could be turned down or up from a distance. Another song was started, but died away when a spirit parted the draperies and whispered something. All of the spirits except Mr. Cushman spoke in these hoarse, broken whispers. It was a shrewd vocal move, because the sharpest listener could distinguish only three speakers in this way—Bright Eyes, Cushman and the women. Within these three divisions, all whispers sounded alike to the reporter. The whisper of Bright Eyes was quite individual, like her accent, which was a mongrel affair, composed of negro dialect, baby talk and bad grammar. The whisper, however, was too suggestive of the voice of the medium herself to be mistaken by the undeceived listener, and the reporter couldn't help wondering whether the medium chuckled over her own joke when, wearing her shining glasses, she called herself Bright Eyes.

The spirits kept coming rapidly as soon as things were really started. Taken altogether it was a pretty distinguished company. Not long after the Cary sisters had come and gone Prof. Tyndall walked out of the cabinet and wanted to say a few words to Mr. Johnson. After the professor had disappeared Mr. Johnson kindly told the company that Tyndall had been acknowledging the mistake he made in life when he questioned spiritualism.

"Yes," spoke up Blinker, giving away the whole scheme, "I was just reading to-day about Tyndall's conversation with Faraday. The question he asked him."

"Remarkable!" exclaimed the astounded Mr. Johnson. "He just told me he had come to answer that very question."

Remarkable, indeed!

William Ellery Channing's spirit was announced, and a figure in church robes appeared, and whispered a while to one of the women. Harriet Martineau came and talked to another old-timer, to whom Blinker said unctuously:

"Ah, she was a fine character, Mrs. Green. You attract those great spirits."

Along with these spirits came those of friends of the old-timers. There was one woman in the circle who was undoubtedly sincere in her belief in the manifestations. She had been there before and had evidently persuaded her husband to come, with the hope of convincing him. They had lost a son, and after some preliminary talk by Mr. Cushman and Bright Eyes a figure supposed to be the boy in question, He hoarsely whispered first to his father and then to his mother, who burst into tears. The boy also seemed much affected and Mr. Cushman solemnly remarked:

"Don't cry, my boy! It wastes the forces."

"He's so excited," whispered Bright Eyes loudly. "He was so anxiefied."

"She means he was so anxious," explained Blinker.

Another spirit was that of a woman who died suddenly on Christmas Day. She, too, was "excited," in Bright Eyes's phrase. (So Indian!) She went and moaned, still in a hoarse whisper, and was altogether tragic.

"Oh-o-oh!" she sobbed. "It's all over! It's all over and I'm all alone! I've been near you so often—so often!" This to one of the women who was an old acquaintance. "I've been beside you as you sat and sewed and I've even tried to influence the parrot."

"Well!" exclaimed the woman, turning to the circle with a superb gesture, "that is a test!"

"Wonderful!" murmured the chorus.

"The spirit of Rachel," said Mr. Cushman, "will now materialize and dematerialize in the open room."

The light sank to a mere glimmer, and over in the corner, beyond the cabinet, there was at first only a fleeting glow in one spot. That vanished and another point glowed. Then there was a larger glow, which brightened and paled alternately. Finally there was the line of a long, misty white drapery. That vanished, came back, grew; another line of light came; the drapery floated noiselessly about; grew brighter, until finally the outlines of a figure clad in white were discernible. Then, by the same slow degrees by which it came came, the figure faded away.

"Beautiful!" sighed the chorus, pausing in their song. "A wonderful manifestation!"

All of this time the strangers were not getting any attention whatever, but finally Bright Eyes piped up and said that there were spirits hovering around the lady with the white feather in her hat.

"Do you hear?" demanded Blinker of said lady.

"Yes."

"Always respond to the cabinet. It establishes a line of communication."

"Some one is going to happen to dat lady, Bright Eyes goin' to tin' out what it is."

"Thank you," remarked the lady. Could it be that there was a tinge of sarcasm in that thank you?

"Oh, I see a lot o' folks standin' around Mr. Barber!" exclaimed Bright Eyes, having thrown, as it were, this offering to the wolves. Mr. Barber was almost another wolf of a stranger, having come for the first time, but with an old-timer. "One of 'em got bushels o' hair stickin' out from his head.

"Whiskers?" suggested somebody.

"No! Please don't talk dat way. Dis man, he play some musical instrument."

"You mean musical instrument," suggested the invaluable Blinker. "Is it Beethoven?"

"Yes, yes! It's B—B—Beethoven. He's extracted to you by your m—m—moosical talent."

"Do you hear, Mr. Barber?"

"Yes."

"Always respond to the cabinet, please."

"You very nice man, you Mr. Barber."

"Thank you."

"You t'ink slow, but you're sure. You not be satisprised with any testa—teeta—teetalogical scheme o' fate. Dat's a big word for Bright Eyes."

"Yes," benevolently from Mr. Johnson.

"Theological is a big word, Bright Eyes."

"Somebody standing beside Mr. Barber told Bright Eyes to say that," said Mr. Cushman.

"There were great spirits around him. Kant and Hegel and Darwin and such men."

"Ah," breathed the songstress in rapture.

"Musicians, ain't they?"

"No," hurriedly from Blinker, who sat next to her. "They're philosophers."

"Oh!"

And so on and on. Spirits came with delightful facility and disappeared by sinking through the floor or going through the wall. The managers wisely refrained from having them go through the ceiling. But no spirits deigned to come to any of the four total strangers present. Bright Eyes gave these unknown visitors her attention now and then, communicating such priceless bits of information as this:

"I see five spirits over the heads of the ladies on the sofa. Yes, I do. One of 'em's a man. He-he was on your mother's side."

"Do your hear?" from Blinker.

"Why, yes."

"Always respond to the cabinet."

"Well, which one of us?"

"Oh," said Bright Eyes, "dat lady with the scarf, she's very medimumistic, I know. She very easy sad; very easy gay. She got somep'n troubling her top-head now."

"She means," explained Blinker, "you have something on your mind."

"Yes," from Bright Eyes. "I goin' help her straighten it out."

But she didn't. Instead of that she materialized in the form of a half-grown girl in white over in the dark corner and asked Mr. Barber if he came regularly to see her.

"Go on," said Blinker, "but go slowly. You might frighten her."

Mr. Barber advanced with caution, therefore, but when he was still six or eight feet from the figure, whisk! it vanished and a moment later a hoarse chuckle came from the cabinet.

"She'll come out again," said Mr. Cushman.

"I'll catch her next time," said Barber with determination. It is worth recording that Bright Eyes made no further appearance.

As the reporter had no spirits calling on him he did not get close enough to the apparitions to have a good look at them. One of the old-timers assured him that the spirits felt solid when touched. As for their faces, the light was so faint that features were practically indistinguishable. The women were all in white draperies, but the men appeared in regulation masculine garb. When the sitting was over Blinker hastened into the parlor and lighted the gas, but did not light the jet in the back room. The circle followed him, but not too soon for the reporter to hear smothered coughing from the cabinet. Bright Eyes had evidently strained her throat with her whisper.

A Bell Ringer's Strike.

From the Chicago Record.

FRANKFORT-ON-MAIN, Jan. 10.—The village bells of Potzbach, Germany, have not been ringing since New Year's Day, and the people have awakened to the fact that the man, a teacher, who has done the work hitherto, has been paid only $2.04 a year, and has struck for higher wages. The people of the town are troubled, for they have discovered that the bell rope hangs in the teacher's bed chamber, and that he will not allow anybody to disturb his early snooze by entering and pulling the rope. It is said that the man for the last year has been in the habit of ringing the bell while lying in bed in the morning.

PHYSICIAN TO THE BIRDS.

A METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL WHERE FEATHERED CREATURES ARE TREATED

Some of the Ailments to Which the Birds Are Subject and the Method of Treatment Employed—Grip Prevalent Among the Songsters—How the Birds Get Sick.

Just over the locksmith's and in the rear of the old book store in Seventh street is a curious little hospital. It is altogether different from metropolitan institutions for the amendment of human ailments or the restoration of indisposed four-footed creatures. It is a hospital for birds, household pets which have succumbed to the evils of gluttony and have contracted a sort of bird gout, as it were, or are afflicted with one or more of the several diseases to which birds in captivity are liable.

In scrupulously clean cages piled in tiers against one wall of the room (for the hospital limits are thus abridged) perch or nestle the patients—canaries, bobolinks, mockingbirds, goldfinches, bullfinches, chaffinches, parrots, robins; some drooping and filmy-eyed with pain; others evincing a "chipper" aspect of convalescence. One ragged gray parrot in a bottom cage squats in a cotton bed chewing the breast feather of reflection, and ejaculating a hoarse, self-commiserating "Poor Polly!" None of the song birds exercises its talents. Once in a while a plaintive "Peep" comes from a querulous little canary, or a fellow sufferer which is beginning to take notice advertises its progress toward recovery by a feeble "tweet-tweet!" There is a decided note of inquiry in the latter call, as if the patient were demanding to know how long its illness is to continue, and were taking the faculty to task for its tardiness in effecting a cure.

Against the opposite wall are rows of shelves, on which in orderly array are grouped polished, labelled cannisters, like those in the tea merchant's shop some doors above, which contain bird dainties and healing drugs. A small case beneath the hospital's solitary window is crammed with books which describe the nature and ills of birds. This evidence of technical knowledge gives a dignity and professional aspect to the place which cannot fail to favorably impress the visitor.

In the centre of the hospital, comfortably esconced in a creeking old Morris chair with faded cushions, sits the faculty in those hours devoted to consultation. He (the faculty) is a short man of extraordinary girth and extraordinarily thin legs. His head is bald, except for a thin fringe of hair lurking behind his ample ears and the rear foundation of his temple of thought like a stunted hirsute hedge, but his features, which are cast in a large mould, are expressive of much good humor, and he has a husky chuckle which is good to hear. Like most scientific men he sports a title. On his professional cards appear, boldly underscored, the words:

"PHYSICIAN TO THE BIRDS."

"That is a title I took only after mature deliberation," he explains to the visitor who has wandered in to take a look at the hospital. "At first I did not relish it at all, for every man who does your corns or tints your nails calls himself 'doctor,' while the fellow who polishes your shoes is a 'professor.' But as I have studied birds scientifically for years I concluded when I established the hospital that I was really justified in taking the title of 'physician to the birds' without being placed in the same category with chiropodists and bootblacks. Certainly if the veterinarians feel it no incongruity for them to assume the title and dignity of 'doctor,' I may be permitted to call myself a 'bird physician' without offending professional propriety."

"How do you obtain patients for the hospital?" asks the visitor, having assured the bird doctor that he is entirely right in his argument.

"Oh, in various ways," says he. "Of course there would not sufficient business accrue from the slight advertisement the hospital's sign affords to keep me alive, so I advertise in the newspapers every once in a while, besides keeping regularly in touch with the dealers in domesticated birds. When I first opened the hospital and went around to see the dealers they were very much opposed to me, for most of them were doing a little doctoring themselves and did not care to direct their patrons to another healer. But as I also make regular visits to private houses to treat bird patients they gradually saw that I could do them some good by recommending my own patrons to deal with them in seeds and other bird supplies. Now they keep my cards in their establishments and recommend me to people whose pets are ill. I, of course, reciprocate in all possible ways. If I am called in to treat a bird at its home I do not supply medicine or dietary articles, but ask the owners of the afflicted pet to deal with So-and-So. That I know will be a good thing for a good humor and he will send me all the business he can.

"Although visiting private patients contributes much to my income, still I prefer to have them here in the hospital," continues the bird doctor, rising ponderously from the chair and opening a double cage in which three or four dejected canaries are cuddled down in soft warm nests. "I spend several hours each day in this place, closely studying my little patients and the characteristics of their diseases, and as I room in the rear of the hospital I am frequently here at night, should one or more of them need constant attention.

"Now, says, here," briskly removing one of the sufferers from its bed and stroking its ruffled feathers, an attention evidently much appreciated, "here are some poor fellows down with the grip—yes, plain, miserable, undeniable grip—and they manifest its symptoms for all the world like human beings. See how limpy their eyes are. Could the human cutie afford more eloquent testimony of the dread affliction? Besides, if you will place your ear to this bird's body you will detect its broken, choked respirations. Another thing, observe how positively indifferent the patient is to handling. It has no interest in my friend, as if in its hospital nest, as indifferent to possible peril as a traveller in the throes of seasickness. That is certainly a sure indication of the grip, and one you will appreciate if you have ever suffered its torments and ravages. This bird has ceased to care whether it lives or dies. Perhaps it wants to die, as most persons and animals with the grip do.

"This winter I have treated no less than fifty small cage-birds for grip," resumes the bird doctor, restoring the sufferer once more to its bed and passing on to the gray parrot, which is pitying itself at the rate of a "Poor Polly!" every half minute, "but this is the first parrot I have had to wrest from grip's tenacious grasp. I am sure to have more success with it than I have had with the other birds, although out of half a hundred I lost less than half, because its internal mechanism is not so delicate as that of the canaries, finches, robins and other small minstrels, and because a parrot, being a famous imitator of man, communicates the symptoms of its ailments almost as intelligently as a human being. This one in particular acts just like a nervous, fussy man would under similar circumstances. It is irritable to a degree, and demands constant attention. It wants sympathy more than it does drugs, and when sympathy is not as immediately forthcoming as it desires it raises a pumpus. If pity did not overcome the visibles one could scarcely refrain from laughing at the poor bird's actions. Just now it is quiet, and will huddle down in its bed moaning and repeating its exclamation of self-commiseration for an hour or two. Parrots may not appreciate the meanings of the words they utter, but they do undoubtedly understand the sentiments conveyed in the combinations of words they are taught to repeat. As, for instance, this one in the moments of its utter despondency says "Poor Polly," over and over again. It knows that is an expression of sympathy, and it also feels the need of a large amount of the same. But when it becomes exasperated to the pitch of desperation, which is one strong phase of grip, the bird holds forth in its choicest hair-lifting Billingsgate, and cuss words galore vibrate upon the atmosphere of the hospital. Thus it evidently understands the proper application of profanity, and also, I may add, the consistency of the application.

"Oh, hell!" remarked the afflicted parrot, as if understanding the bird doctor's little lecture, and determined to verify his assertions in a drastic way. With this explosive introduction he proceeds to vitiate the atmosphere until the hospital is a sort of a metaphorical moral sewer, and the bird doctor, to clear the air, is forced to give the sufferer something from one of the polished canisters.

"Here is a poor little songster which is dying of consumption," says the physician to the birds when the profane parrot is finally soothed and has resumed its dribble of "Poor Follies!" He brings to view a tiny goldfinch, which flutters in momentary alarm as it rests in his broad palm, and then settles down in lethargic resignation.

"Consumption is common among all small cage birds, particularly the canaries," continues the bird doctor, caressing his little patient, "but the case of this one is rather remarkable. It was the pet of a young woman who died of consumption some weeks ago, and during her last illness the goldfinch was constantly in her room. Soon after her death although the bird has always received the best of care, it manifested all the symptoms of consumption. It was brought to me recently, but the disease has made such progress that the bird is sure to die. Now this case proves to me that birds are susceptible to many forms of man's infectious diseases, among which consumption may be specified, and suggests as well that the deaths of many household pets are caused every year by confinement in the rooms of the sick. Just as tuberculosis affects man and horses and cows equally, so do the germs of many diseases infect the little creatures which we keep in our houses to amuse us with their songs or antics.

"The diseases of cage birds are many and often complex in character. In a state of nature, when they are at liberty to follow their natural instincts, disease is a rare affliction. In captivity they fall ill, as a rule, because their keepers are careless or ignorant of their requirements. If people who own birds would only take a little time to study their natures and ascertain from an authority the best methods to pursue in caring for them, there would not one-tenth as many of them die as at present. That is one reason I have such success with the hospital. Here the temperature is always even, something which is absolutely essential to the welfare of cage birds, and they are not allowed to overfeed. Half of the pet birds in New York are annually destroyed by gormandizing.

"A bird is the cleanest of all creatures, and must have the same care when it is in captivity as it bestowed on itself when at liberty. Thus, in seven out of every eight cases, I find that the afflicted bird has either eaten too much, has been exposed in a draughty room, or is succumbing to the neglect of its owner.

"'My birds are drooping and will not sing,' is a complaint I frequently hear when my patrons send for me. 'The only sound they make is a sort of gurgle. What's wrong with them?'

"The charges are a fair investigation will show me that the afflicted birds have been hung up in windows through the imperceptible crevices of which come cold blasts of air, or I will find the birds, through mistaken kindness, are being actually stuffed to death with all sorts of dainties, in addition to their normal bill of fare. Again, foul water in the cages arprises me that the birds are not kept clean, or I discover their cages hanging in rooms in which sick people are living. If they are transferred to the hospital the birds generally pick up form in a very few days owing to proper care, diet, and pure warm air, but it is often the work of weeks to put birds in good condition where I have to treat them at the owners' homes, and necessitates numerous visits and consequent expense."

"Is it expensive—the treatment at the hospital?" hints the visitor.

"I don't think so," says the bird doctor, reflectively. "An ordinary patient is received for a consideration which extends from $3 to $5 per week, the charge being regulated by the amount of attention required or the nature and complexity of the disease to be treated. Simple colds, rheumatism, catarrhal troubles, loss of voice and other ordinary ills to which the flesh of birds is heir are treated for $3 a week. Fits, some of the evil effects of gluttony, and inflammation of the intestines come higher, as a rule, as the patients so afflicted demand great care. I never attempt delicate surgical operations on the birds, although I do occasionally patch a broken leg or set a broken wing. When a bird is badly injured and its recovery is a matter of doubt I invariably advise freeing it from its suffering by the use of chloroform. This is readily done by rolling a piece of stiff paper into a cone sufficiently large to cover the injured creature, and sprinkling some drops of chloroform over the bird. It results in a quick and painless death.

"I charge for my visits to private houses from 50 cents to $1, according to distance, or I make an agreement with my patrons who own large aviaries to visit their birds at stated intervals for so much a year.

"Some of my best patrons are the proprietors of saloons or barber shops. A great many of those establishments possess cage birds, and the owners are careful in keeping them in the best of condition. So on the slightest indication of disorder they will notify me to come or send the birds to the hospital.

"In Brooklyn I have many patrons. That borough is really a city of birds as well as a city of churches, and some of the most beautiful and valuable birds in the country (a bird, by the way, now in high favor) are to be found there. There is a wealthy old lady who lives in Brooklyn who has me come to her home every Wednesday to inspect a pert little finch which she values above anything else in the world, apparently. It is the finest specimen, but then she says she is perfectly willing to pay my charges for the pleasure it gives her to hear assurances of the bird's excellent health.

"In the bachelor apartment houses I have many regular patrons. Indeed, you would be surprised at the number of men who own cage birds in New York and the amount of affectionate care they lavish on them. Really, I think the male owners of feathered pets display more love for them than women do. They certainly avail themselves more often of the services of the physician to the birds and his hospital than the latter, which, to my mind, is a strong proof of their superior attachment."

HIGHFLYER IN ST. LOUIS.

A Bank Experience in a Town Where Everybody Saves His Money.

The man with the red nose and the teeth about the bottom of his trousers had his feet on the table in the perfect attitude of the American philosopher. He was thinking deeply. His pockets were empty and his throat was dry. He had just expressed a wish for $2.

"Why don't you save your money?" asked his friend with the thin lips and the prosperous air. "Start a bank account. You'll never amount to a cotton hat until you do. A man's got to have money in the bank before he can have any self-respect."

"That settles me, then," replied the man with the red nose. "I'm a dead one, for I've taken a gilt-edged, four-ply oath by the wings of the three black angels never to put a cent in a bank. I tried it once out in Missouri and I've learned a lesson. I've got to spend my money to save the credit of the country. Why if I should put any money in a national bank, it would bust the next day. I tell you I tried it and I know. It's purely regard for the national credit which makes me insist so strenuously on blowing every cent I make."

"You're a hero," said the other man. "Why don't you start a kissing bee or a collection of swords?"

"Sarcasm, my dear sir," remarked the man with the red nose, "is extremely bad form coming from a friend with money to a friend without the same, but I'll forgive you and buy a drink if you will come up here to a place where the angels never frows when—oh, they ain't just had money to burn—I picked out a savings bank with a good reputation and deposited $20. Think of it, Me! Me! with a bank account. Say, why, I just swelled up and pushed my chest out like a drum major. Oh! I was going to do all sorts of stunts. I was going to give a dinner every week. I was going to take a year's savings and buy suburban lots. I was going to be a rich, self-respecting, reputable gentleman with a family; going to be somebody I was—amount to something in the community, you know.

"That night I went to bed a different man. Upon my soul I was revolutionized. I dreamed I had a million dollars, and woke up in the morning convinced that it was a good omen. I went to business and worked harder than I'd done in months. When I went out to luncheon I bought an afternoon paper and liked to choke to death. What do you think I saw right on the first page? 'The —— Bank closes its doors. Depositors lose everything.' Now, you know $20 don't cut much ice with me, but this knocked me. If I'd spent it in a barroom or been touched, it wouldn't have feazed me, but, by jiminy, to tip my whole nature over and nerve myself up to saving money and then have the whole thing go to rot—well, it was too tough for me; that's all. I took a car and went up to the bank. There I found a mob of howling maniacs who'd been saving money all their lives.

"'I've got $20 in this bank,' I said to the big fellow who was standing guard at the door.

"'Dot iss too bad,' he said.

"'But I only put it in yesterday,' I explained.

"'Dese udders iss more vorse off dan iss you,' said he. 'Dey put deirs in more as two, tree years ago, und dey can't ged id owid.'

"'They are a slight bigger fools than I am. That's right,' I howled. 'You're a lot of humps, all of you. I'm glad the bank's busted—glad you lost your money. This will teach you to spend what you make. That's what I'm going to do. But I'll give you this tip. If you ever see me put a cent in another bank, pull your money out, for it will burn up or blow up before morning.'

"Then I left them butting their heads against the bank building. But I kept my word. I've never put a cent in the bank since, and I'm not going to, either. I'd hide some in a stocking, but burglars would get that, so I just keep right on spending it a shade faster than I can get hold of it. By keeping a little ahead of my receipts I'm perfectly sure of not breaking my resolution. Well, here's this friendly bartender. Come in now and help me increase my bill."

Fox Terrier Cracks and Eats Nuts Like a Squirrel.

A lively little fox terrier owned by a family uptown has developed a strange habit. In his afternoon rambles now he stops before a grocery store in front of which, among other things, there is usually an open box of table nuts. Picking up two or three nuts in its mouth the dog runs away with them to its master's house, a few doors off. There, stretching itself on a rug in front of the door, the dog holds a nut between its paws, cracks it with its teeth like a squirrel, and eats it with relish.

SIZE OF THE WEDDING FEE.

$2,500 THE BIGGEST THERE CLERGYMEN EVER HEARD OF.

Minus $2 Was the Lowest—Shocking Act of a Bride Who Appraised Herself—One Parson Got a Ton of Hay—Others Led Into Speculations—Clerical Etiquette.

Some six or eight clergymen had dined together at the rectory of an American seaside resort and immediately after dinner had repaired to the rector's study for a chat. The rector's wife being absent, it was a stag party, or, as such clerical gatherings are called, a black crow party. One of the number was in particularly high spirits, and, being interrogated as to the cause, he said he had every right to be happy, inasmuch as he had two days before received a wedding fee of $500. Congratulations followed, and the ball of matrimonial yarns was tossed from one to another.

First of all, there was a general discussion as to the average wedding fee, which was found to vary greatly with the social status of the parish. But as each parson had had from two to five cures, a fairly accurate average of fees was arrived at. Leaving out such exceptional parishes as St. Thomas's and St. Bartholemew's in New York, Trinity in Philadelphia, and Trinity in Boston, it was agreed that the average fee was from $10 to $15. This, be it remembered, includes country parishes (not missions) and the general run of city churches. Fees seldom fall below $2, and frequently they rise to $10 or $20, occasionally to $50, and in rare instances to $100. A $200 fee is a thing to be remembered, a $500 one never to be forgotten. Sometimes the fee is so extremely small as to be held in everlasting remembrance. For instance, when Brother Smith (real names not given) announced his $500 fee, and had received congratulations, Brother Jones declared that he held the record in the opposite direction, having once received a fee of 5 cents, which he generously presented to the bride. But Jones's honors were short lived, for Brother Brown at once told his experience, revealing the depths of moral degeneracy to which man may fall.

He had a mission in the West at one time, and competition with the District Judge, who also was empowered to perform marriages, was keen. On the occasion in question Brown was accosted on the street, and at the earnest solicitation of the bridegroom-elect accompanied him to procure the license. Not till then did the man become aware of the fact that he had left his money at the hotel. He asked the parson to pay for the license, and as the eye of the District Judge was fixed upon him, Brown readily consented. After the marriage the happy man said "Thank ye," and when the clergyman mildly suggested $2 for the license and the usual fee, he was startled by the reply:

"Thunder! what's yer usual?"

"Well," said the parson, "we sometimes get $2, sometimes $5."

"Then ther ain't no usual about it," said the Happy Man, quickly adding: "Tell yo what I'll do, mister; I'll gamble with yer. I'll wait a year, an' if this pans out O. K. I'll give ye ten, an' if it doan't"—. He smiled.

To make the story short, the man refused to disgorge except on these conditions, and as Brown never heard of him afterward he was out the cost of the license, so that his fee was $2 less than nothing.

One of the company that night was a clergyman from Canada, and he followed up Brown's narration with some stories of fees in kind. On one occasion he received a bag of potatoes, on another a frozen goose. Another time the bridegroom said:

"I'll give you your fee to-morrow, sir, and it will be the biggest you ever got." And it was, for next day the happy man drove round with a load of hay.

This Canadian had an experience which concerned one of the fair sex, and for downright, unblushing meanness, he declared, it almost rivalled Brown's story of the man who let him in for the license. The Canadian had married his couple, the registers were signed, and nothing remained but the giving and taking of the fee. The bridegroom, a strapping young fellow, asked:

"How much is it?"

The parson glanced at the smiling bride and slyly answered: "Whatever you think it's worth."

Now, it should have been worth a good deal, for the girl was young and pretty, and, under ordinary circumstances, the parson's reply was a masterstroke of diplomacy. But the swain was dense.

"I reckon it's worth about 50 cents," he said, holding out two quarters.

The clergyman looked blankly at the coins, then turned to the fair one. "I'll leave it to you, madam," he said. "What do you think it's worth?"

What did this young and blushing bride do? She reached out, took the coins, handed one quarter to the minister and put the other into her pocket!

"A thrifty wife," said the Canadian with a sigh, "is her husband's crown."

When the merriment over the Canuck's experience had subsided, a parson from one of the Adirondack villages, who was leaning lazily against the mantel and puffing clouds of a delicate aristocratic blue, drawled out:

"Why doesn't some one ask me what's the fattest fee I ever got? Well, I'll tell you. First, let me ask a question. What, in poorer days, used you all to do when the customary envelope was handed to you? You did just what I used to do; you smiled and put it in your pocket with indifference and airy thanks."

The company all nodded, and the brother of the swell parish resumed:

"Exactly; then you sneaked away at the earliest opportunity into some side room or secret place and furtively opened that envelope."

They all laughed. The parson of millionaires went on:

"That's what I used to do, but I got over it. Well, I once had a marriage of a very rich New Yorker—he gave the name of one of the three or four very richest New York families—and I got my envelope as usual and put it in my trousers pocket. Will you believe me when I say I forgot all about that envelope after the ceremony? Well, I did. About ten days later I was in the same trousers, and, happening to thrust my hand into the pocket, it encountered the envelope. Even then I did not realize what the paper was, but drew it out, opened it and saw a check for $2,500."

This was the biggest fee any of the party had ever heard of, and, although rectors of some of the richest congregations in America have been questioned since then, no other fee to exceed $1,500 has been heard of. It would be interesting to know if this fee has ever been surpassed. When thousands of dollars are lavished, as is not uncommon, on floral offerings alone, it would not be surprising to find a proportionately lavish fee. But sometimes those who make the biggest display for the benefit of the public are most niggardly to the officiating clergyman.

One of these gentlemen told of a notable chance which once came in his way. He had married a young graduate of an Eastern university who was then interested in mining in Colorado, and after the ceremony the bridegroom took him aside and offered him his choice of $100 or a certain hole in the ground.

"Some years ago," said the bridegroom, "a company sank a shaft a few miles from here; after going about fifty feet it flooded, and all attempts to pump it were fruitless. Then it was abandoned. Now three fellows here have raised $1,500, calculating they can pump it out and sink the shaft twenty feet further. They've ordered a dummy engine, and will begin operations shortly. One of these partners has lost faith in the thing, thinks the water comes from an underground river, and will sell his share for $200. Here's your chance; I'll give you a fee of $100, or I'll buy that share for you. What do you say?"

The parson wouldn't say. He wanted to think it over and begged a few days to make up his mind.

"All right," said the bridegroom. "I'll be back in a week or so, and if the share is still for sale I'll buy it."

He went with his bride to Denver and the clergyman went out and inspected the hole in the ground. When the benedict returned the parson told him that he'd prefer the $100 in cash. About a month after the clergyman removed to Nebraska, and two months later received a letter from New York from the bridegroom, in which he was informed that the partners had succeeded in pumping the shaft, had gone down ten feet further, had struck ore, and that at the time of writing a New York syndicate had concluded to buy the hole in the ground, and to that end had just made an offer of $1,000,000.

"My greed for immediate wealth," said the narrator with a sigh, "knocked me out of precisely $333,333."

"And thirty-three and one-third cents," added an unsympathetic brother.

This story drew out a similar one, in which a New York broker offered to buy Erie for the man who married him, agreeing to stand any loss and to hand over the profits in the event of a rise. This seemed like a cinch and the parson expressed his thanks; and well he might, for he had $3,000 turned in to him. Then the fever got him; he went down Wall street, cleared some $10,000, and had the good sense to retire from the pastures where lambs gambol and bears growl and bulls roar.

Other experiences of a similar character were related, but these may stand as being typical of all. One man had a lot given him in a mining town, the town boomed and the lot was