The Gentleman From Indiana

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

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CHAPTER VII—Continued.

Harkless usually ate his breakfast alone, as he was the latest riser in Plattville. (There were days in the winter when he did not reach the hotel until 8 o'clock.) This morning he found a bunch of white roses, still wet with dew and so fragrant that the whole room was fresh and sweet with their odor, prettily arranged in a bowl on the table, and, at his plate, the largest of all with a pin through the stem. He looked up, smilingly, and nodded at the red-haired girl. "Thank you, Charmion," he said. "That's very pretty."

She turned even redder than she always was, and answered nothing, vigorously darting her brush at an imaginary fly on the cloth. After several minutes she said abruptly, "You're welcome."

There was a silence, finally broken by a long, gasping sigh. Astonished, he looked at the girl. Her eyes were set unfathomably upon his pink tie; the wand had dropped from her nerveless hand, and she stood rapt and immovable. She started violently from her trance. "Ain't you goin' to finish your coffee?" she asked, plying her instrument again, and, bending over him slightly, whispered: "Say, Eph Watts is over there behind you."

At a table in a far corner of the room a large gentleman in a brown frock coat was quietly eating his breakfast and reading the Herald. He was of an ornate presence, though entirely neat. A sumptuous expanse of linen exhibited itself between the lapels of his low-cut waistcoat, and an inch of bediamonded breastpin glittered there, like an ice-ledge on a snowy mountain side. He had a steady, blue eye, and a dissipated, iron-gray mustache. This personage was Mr. Ephraim Watts, who, following a calling more fashionable in the eighteenth century than in the latter decades of the nineteenth, had shaken the dust of Carlow from his feet some three years previously, at the strong request of the authorities. The Herald had been particularly insistent upon his deportation, and, in the local phrase, Harkless had "run him out of town." Perhaps it was because the Herald's opposition (as the editor explained at the time) had been merely moral and impersonal, and the editor had always confessed to a liking for the unprofessional qualities of Mr. Watts, that there was but slight embarrassment when the two gentlemen met to-day. His breakfast finished, Harkless went over to the other and extended his hand. Cynthia held her breath and clutched the back of a chair. However, Mr. Watts made no motion toward his well-known hip pocket. Instead, he rose, flushed slightly, and accepted the hand offered him.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Watts," said the journalist, cordially. "Also, if you are running with the circus and calculate on doing business here to-day, I'll have to see that you are fired out of town before noon. How are you? You're looking extremely well."

"Mr. Harkless," answered Watts, "I cherish no hard feelings, and I never said but what you done exactly right when I left, three years ago. No, sir; I'm not here in a professional way at all, and I don't want to be molested. I've connected myself with an oil company, and I'm down here to look over the ground. It beats poker and fan-tan hollow, though there ain't as many chances in favor of the dealer, and in oil it's the farmer that gets the rake-off. I've come back, but in an enterprising spirit this time, to open up a new field and shed light and money in Carlow. They told me never to show my face here again, but if you say I stay, I guess I stay. I always was sure there was oil in the county, and I want to prove it for everybody's benefit. Is it all right?"

"My dear fellow," laughed the young man, shaking the gambler's hand again, "it is all right. I have always been sorry I had to act against you. Everything is all right! Stay and bore to Korea if you like. Did ever you see such glorious weather?"

"I'll let you in on some shares," Watts called after him as he turned away. He nodded in reply and was leaving the room when Cynthia detained him by a flourish of the fly-brush. "Say," she said—she always called him "Say"—"You've forgot your flower."

He came back and thanked her. "Will you pin it on for me, Charmion?"

"I don't know what call you got to speak to me out of my name," she responded, looking at the floor moodily.

"Why?" he asked, surprised.

"I don't see why you want to make fun of me."

"I beg your pardon, Cynthia," he said, gravely. "I didn't mean to do that. I haven't been considerate. I didn't think you'd be displeased. I'm very sorry. Won't you pin it on my coat?"

Her face was lifted in grateful pleasure, and she began to pin the rose to his lapel. Her hands were large and red, and trembled. She dropped the flower, and, saying huskily, "I don't know as I could do it right," seized violently upon a pile of dishes and hurrid from the room.

Harkless rescued the rose, pinned it on his coat himself, and, observing internally, for the hundredth time, that the red-haired waitress was the queerest creature in the village, set forth gayly upon his holiday.

When he reached the brick house on the pike he discovered a gentleman sunk in an easy and contemplative attitude in a big chair behind the veranda railing. At the click of the gate the lounger rose and disclosed the stalwart figure and brown, smiling, handsome face of Mr. Lige Willetts, an habitual devotee of Minnie Briscoe, and the most eligible bachelor of Carlow. "The ladies will be down right off," he said, greeting the editor's finery with a perceptible agitation and the editor himself with a friendly shake of the hand. "Mildy says to wait out here."

But immediately there was a faint rustling within the house; the swish of draperies on the stairs, a delicious whispering when light feet descend, tapping, to hearts that beat an answer, the telegraphic message, "We come! We come! We are near! We are near!" Lige Willetts stared at Harkless. He had never thought the latter good-looking until he saw him step to the door to take Miss Sherwood's hand and say in a strange, low, tense voice, "Good morning," as if he were announcing, at the least: "Every one in the world except us two died last night. It is a solemn thing, but I am very happy."

They walked, Minnie and Mr. Willetts a little distance in front of the others. Harkless could not have told, afterward, whether they rode, or walked, or floated on an airship to the courthouse. All he knew distinctly was that a divinity in a pink shirt waist, and a hat that was woven of gauzy cloud by mocking fairies to make him stoop hideously to see under it, dwelt for the time on earth and was at his side, dazzling him in the morning sunshine. Last night the moon had lent her a silvery glamour; she had something of the ethereal whiteness of night-dews in that watery light, a nymph to laugh from a sparkling fountain at the moon, or, as he thought, remembering her courtesy for his pretty speech, perhaps a little lady of King Louis' court, wandering down the years from Fontainebleau and appearing to clumsy mortals sometimes, of a June night when the moon was in their heads.

But to-day she was of the clearest color, a pretty girl, whose gray eyes twinkled to his in gay companionship. He marked how the sunshine was spun into the fair shadows of her hair and seemed itself to catch a lustre, rather than to impart it, and the light of the June day drifted through the gauzy hat, touching her face with a delicate and tender flush that came and went like the vibrating pink of early dawn. She had the divinest straight nose, tip-tilted the faintest, most alluring trifle, and a dimple cleft her chin, "the deadliest maelstrom in the world!" He thrilled through and through. He had been only vaguely conscious of the dimple in the night. It was not until he saw her by daylight that he really knew it was there.

The village hummed with life before them. They walked through shimmering airs, sweeter to breathe than nectar is to drink. She caught a butterfly, basking on a jimson weed, and, before she let it go, held it out to him with her hand. It was a white butterfly. He asked which was the butterfly.

"Bravo!" she said, tossing the captive craft above their heads and watching the small sails catch the breeze; "and so you can make little flatteries in the morning, too. It is another courtesy you should be having from me, if it weren't for the dustiness of it. Wait till we come to the board walk."

She had some big pink roses at her waist. "In the meantime," he answered, indicating these, "I know very well a lad that would be blithe to accept a pretty token of any lady's high esteem."

"But you have one, already, a very beautiful one." She gave him a genial up-and-down glance from head to foot, half quizzical, but so quick he almost missed it. And then he was glad he had found the straw hat with the youthful ribbon, and all his other festal vestures. "And a very becoming flower a white rose is," she continued, "though I am a bold girl to be blarneying with a young gentleman I met no longer ago than last night."

"But why shouldn't you blarney with a gentleman, when you began by saving his life?"

"Or, rather, when the gentleman had the politeness to gallop about the county with me tucked under his arm?" She stood still and laughed softly, but consummately, and her eyes closed tight with the mirth of it. She had taken one of the roses from her waist, and, as she stood, holding it by the long stem, its petals lightly pressed her lips.

"You may have it—in exchange," she said. He bent down to her, and she began to fasten the pink rose in place of the white one on his coat. She did not ask him, directly or indirectly, who had put the white one there for him, because she knew by the way it was pinned that he had done it himself. "Who is it that ev'ry morning brings me these lovely flow'rs?" she burlesqued, as he bent over her.

"'Mr. Wimby,'" he returned. "I will point him out to you. You must see him, and, also, Mr. Bodeffer, the oldest inhabitant—and crossest."

"Will you present them to me?"

"No; they might talk to you and take some of my time with you away from me." Her eyes sparkled into his for the merest fraction of a second, and she laughed half mockingly. Then she dropped his lapel, and they proceeded. She did not put the white rose in her belt, but carried it.

The square was heaving with a jostling, good-natured, happy, and constantly increasing crowd that overflowed on Main street in both directions, and the good nature of this crowd was augmented in the ratio that its size increased. The streets were a confusion of many colors, and eager faces filled every window opening on Main street or the square. Since 9 o'clock all those of the courthouse had been occupied, and here most of the damsels congregated to enjoy the spectacle of the parade, and their swains attended, gallantly posting themselves at coignes of less vantage behind the ladies. Some of the faces that peeped from the dark, old courthouse windows were pretty, and some of them were not pretty; but nearly all of them were rosy-cheeked, and all were pleasant to see because of the good cheer they showed. Some of the gallants affected the airy and easy, entertaining the company with badinage and repartee; some were openly bashful. Now and then one of the latter, after long deliberation, constructed a laborious compliment for his inamorata, and, after advancing and propounding half of it, again retired into himself, smit with a blissful palsy. Nearly all of them conversed in tones that might have indicated that they were separated from each other by an acre lot or two.

Here and there, along the sidewalk below, a father worked his way through the throng, a licorice-bedaubed cherub on one arm, his coat (borne with long enough) on the other; followed by a mother with the other children hanging to her skirts and tagging exasperatingly behind, holding red and blue toy balloons and delectable batons of spiral-striped peppermint in tightly closed, sadly sticky fingers.

A thousand cries rent the air; the strolling mountebanks and gypsying booth-merchants; the peanut vendors; the boys with palm-leaf fans for sale; the candy sellers; the popcorn peddlers; the Italian with the toy balloons that float like a cluster of colored bubbles above the heads of the crowd, and the balloons that wail like a baby; the red lemonade man, shouting in the shrill voice that reaches everywhere and endures forever: "Lemo! Lemo! Ice-cole lemo! Five cents, a nickel, a half-a-dime, the twentieth-potofadollah! Lemo! Ice-cole lemo!" — all the vociferating harbingers of the circus crying their wares. Timid youths, in shoes covered with dust through which the morning polish but dimly shone, and unalterably hooked by the arm to blushing maidens, bought recklessly of peanuts, of candy, of popcorn, of all known sweetmeats, perchance; and forced their way to the lemonade stands; and there, all shyly, silently sipped the crimson-stained ambrosia. Everywhere the hawkers dinned, and everywhere was heard the plaintive squawk of the toy balloon.

But over all rose the nasal cadence of the Cheap John, reeking oratory from his big wagon on the corner: "Walk up, walk up, walk up, ladies and gents! Here we are! Here we are! Make hay while we gather the moss. Walk up, one and all. Here I put this solid gold ring, sumptuous and golden, eighteen karats, eigteen karats of the priceless mothers of metals, toiled fer on the wild Pacific slope, eighteen garnteed, I put this golden ring, rich and golden, in the package with the hangkercheef, the elegant and blue-ruled note-paper, self-writing pens, pencil and penholder. Who takes the lot? Who takes it, ladies and gents?"

His tongue curled about his words; he seemed to love them. "Fer a quat-of-a-dollah! Don't turn away, young man—you feller in the green necktie, there. We all see the young lady on your arm is a-langrishing fer the golden ring and the package. Faint heart never won fair wummin.' There you are, sir, and you'll never regret it. Go—and be happy! Now, who's the next man to git solid with his girl fer a quat-of-a-dollah? Life is a mysterus and unviolable shadder, my friends; who kin read its orgeries? To-day we are here—but to-morrow we may be in jail. Only a quat-of-a-dollah! We are Seventh-Day Adventists, ladies and gents, a-givin' away our belongings in the awful face of Michael, fer a quat-of-a-dollah. The same price fer each-and-every individual, lady and gent, man, wummin, wife and child, and happiness to one and all fer a quat-of-a-dollah!"

Down the middle of the street, kept open between the waiting crowds, ran barefoot boys, many of whom had not slept at home, but had kept vigil in the night mists for the coming of the show, and, having seen the muffled pageant arrive, swathed, and with no pomp and panoply, had returned to town, rioting through jewelled cobwebs in the morning fields, happy in the pride of knowledge of what went on behind the scenes. To-night, or to-morrow, the runaways would face a woodshed reckoning with outraged ancestry; but now they caracoled in the dust with no thought of the grim deeds to be done upon them.

Int he courthouse yard, and so sinning in the very eyes of the law, two swarthy, shifty-looking gentlemen were operating (with some greasy walnut shells and a pea) what the fanciful or unsophisticated might have been pleased to call a game of chance; and the most intent spectator of the group around them was Mr. James Bardlock, the town marshal. He was simply and unofficially and earnestly interested. Thus the eye of Justice may not be said to have winked upon the nefariousness now under its vision; it gazed with strong curiosity, an itch to dabble, and (it must be admitted) a growing hope of profit. The game was so direct and the player so sure. Several countrymen had won small sums, and one, a charmingly rustic stranger, with a peculiar accent (he said that him and his goll should now have a smoot' old time off his winninks—though the lady was not manifested), had won twenty-five dollars with no trouble at all. The two operators seemed depressed, declaring the luck against them and the Plattville people too brilliant at the game.

It was wonderful how the young couples worked their way arm-in-arm through the thickest crowds, never separating. Even at the lemonade stands they drank holding the glasses in their outer hands—such are the sacrifices demanded by etiquette. But, observing the gracious outpouring of fortune upon the rustic with the rare accent, a youth in a green tie disengaged his arm—for the first time in two hours—from that of a girl upon whose finger there shone a ring, sumptuous and golden, and, conducting her to a corner of the yard, bade her remain there until he returned. He had to speak to Hartley Bowlder, he explained.

Then he plunged, red-faced and excited, into the circle about the shell manipulators, and offered to lay a wager.

"Hol' on there, Hen Fentriss," thickly objected a flushed young man beside him, "iss my turn."

"I'm first Hartley," returned the other. "You can hold yer hosses a minute, I reckon."

"Plenty fer each and all, chents," interrupted one of the shell-men. "Place yer spondulicks on de little ball. W'ich is de next lucky one to win our money? Chent bets four sixty-five he seen de little ball go under de middle shell. Up she comes! Dis time we wins; Plattville can't win every time. Who's de next chent?"

Fentriss edged slowly out of the circle, abashed, and with rapidly whitening cheeks. He paused for a moment, outside, slowly realizing that all his money had gone in one wild, blind whirl—the money he had earned so hard and saved so hard, to make a holiday for his sweetheart and himself. He stole one glance around the building to where a patient figure waited for him. Then he fled down a side alley and soon was out upon the country road, tramping soddenly homeward through the dust, his chin sunk in his breast and his hands clenched tight at his sides. Now and then he stopped and bitterly hurled a stone at a piping bird on a fence, or gay Bob White in the fields. At noon the patient figure was still waiting in the corner of the courthouse yard, meekly twisting the golden ring upon her finger.

But the flushed young man who had spoken thickly to her deserter drew an envied roll of bank bills from his pocket and began to bet with tipsy caution, while the circle about the gamblers watched with fervid interest, especially Mr. Bradlock, town marshal.

From far up aMin street came the cry, "She's a comin'! She's a-comin!" and, this announcement of the parade proving only one of a dozen false alarms, a thousand discussions itook place over old-fashioned silver timepieces as to when "she" was really due. Schofields' Henry was much appealed to as an arbiter in these discussions, from a sense of his having a good deal to do with time in a general sort of way; and thus Schofields' came to be reminded that it was getting on toward 10 o'clock, whereas, in the excitement of festival, he had not yet struck 9. This, rushing forthwith to do, he did; and, in the elation of the moment, seven or eight besides. Miss Helen Sherwood was looking down on the mass of shifting color from a second-story window—whither many an eye was upturned in wonder—and she had the pleasure of see Schofields' emerge on the steps beneath her, when the bells had done, and heard the cheers (led by Mr. Martin) with which the laughing crowd greeted his appearance after the performance of his feat.

She turned beamingly to Harkless. "What a family it is!" she laughed. "Just one big, jolly family. I didn't know people could be like this until I came to Plattville."

"That is the word for it," he answered, resting his hand on the casement beside her. "I used to think it was desolate, but that was long ago." He leaned from the window to look down. In his dark cheek was a glow Carlow folk had never seen there; and somehow he seemed less thin and tired; indeed, he did not seem tired at all, by far the contrary; and he carried himself upright (when he was not stooping to see under the hat), though not as if he thought about it. "I believe they are the best people I know," he went on. "Perhaps it is because they have been so kind to me; but they are kind to each other, too; kind, good people—"

"I know," she said, nodding—a flower on the gauzy hat set to vibrating in a tantilizing way. "I know. There are fat women who rock and rock on piazzas by the sea, and they speak of country people as the 'lower classes.' How happy this big family is in not knowing it is the lower classes!"

"We haven't read Nordau down here," said John. "Old Tom Martin's favorite work is 'The Descent of Man.' Miss Tibbs admires Tupper, and 'Beulah,' and some of us possess the works of E. P. Roe—and why not?"

"Yes; what of it," she returned, "since you escape Nordau? I think the conversation we hear from the other windows is as amusing and quite as loud as most of that I hear in Rouen during the winter; and Rouen, you know, is just like any other big place nowadays, though I suppose there are Philadelphians, for instance, who would be slow to believe a statement like that."

"Oh, but they are not all of Philadelphia —" He left the sentence, smilingly.

"And yet somebody said, 'The further west I travel the more convinced I am the wise men came from the east.'"

"Yes," he answered. 'From' is the important word in that."

"It was a girl from Southeast Cottonbridge, Mass.," said Helen, "who heard I was from Indiana and asked me if I didn't hate to live so far away from things." There was a pause, while she leaned out of the window with her face aside from him. Then she remarked carelessly: "I met her at Winter Harbor."

"Do you go to Winter Harbor?" he asked.

"We have gone there every summer until this one, for years. Have you friends who go there?"

"I had—once. There was a classmate of mine from Rouen—"

"What was his name? Perhaps I know him." She stole a glance at him. His face had fallen into sad lines, and he looked like the man who had come up the aisle with the Hon. Kedge Halloway. A few moments before he had seemed another person entirely.

"He's forgotten me, I dare say. I haven't seen him for seven years, and that's a long time, you know. Besides, he's 'out in the world,' where remembering is harder. Here in Plattville we don't forget."

"Were you ever at Winter Harbor?"

"I was—once. I spent a very happy day there long ago, when you must have been a little girl. Were you there in—"

"Listen!" she cried. "The procession is coming. Look at the crowd!" The parade had seized a psychological moment.

There was a fanfare of trumpets in the east. Lines of people rushed for the street, and, as one looked down on the straw hats and sunbonnets and many kinds of finer head apparel, tossing forward, they seemed like surf sweeping up the long beaches.

She was coming at last. The boys whooped in the middle of the street; some tossed their arms to heaven, others expressed their emotion by somersaults; those most deeply moved walked on their hands. In the distance one saw, over the heads of the multitude, tossing banners and the moving crests of triumphal cars, where "cohorts were shining in purple and gold." She was coming. After all the false alarms and disappointments, she was coming!

There was another flourish of music. Immediately all the band gave sound, and then, with blare of brass and the crash of drums, the glory of the parade burst upon Plattville. Glory in the utmost! The resistless impetus of the march-time music; the flare of royal banners, of pennons on the breeze; the smiling of beautiful court ladies, and great, silken nobles; the swaying of howdahs on camel and elephant, and the awesome shaking of the earth beneath the elephant's feet, and the gleam of his small but devastating eye (everyone declared he looked the alarmed Mr. Snoddy full in the face as he passed, and Mr. Snoddy felt not at all reassured when Tom Martin severely hinted that it was with the threatening glance of a rival); then the badinage of the clown, creaking along in his donkey cart; the terrific recklessness of the spangled hero who was drawn by in a cage with two striped tigers; the spirit of the prancing steeds that drew the rumbling chariots, and the grace of the helmeted charioteers; the splendor of the cars and the magnificence of the paintings with which they were adorned; the ecstasy of all this glittering, shining, gorgeous pageantry needed even more than walking on your hands to express.

Last of all came the tooting calliope, followed by swarms of boys as it executed, "Wait till the clouds roll by, Jennie," with infinite dash and gusto.

When it was gone, Miss Sherwood's intent gaze relaxed—she had been looking on as eagerly as any child—and she turned to speak to Harkless and discovered that he was no longer in the room; instead, she found Minnie and Mr. Willetts, whom he had summoned from another window.

"He was called away," explained Lige. "He thought he'd be back before the parade was over, and said you were enjoying it so much he didn't want to speak to you."

"Called away?" she said, inquiringly.

Minnie laughed. "Oh, everybody sends for Mr. Harkless."

"It was a farmer, name of Bowlder," added Mr. Willetts. "His son Hartley's drinking again, and there ain't any one but Harkless can do anything with him. You let him tackle a sick man to nurse, or a tipsy one to handle, and I tell you," Mr. Willetts went on with enthusiasm, "he is at home. It beats me—and lots of people don't think college does a man any good! Why, the way he cured old Fis—"

"See!" cried Minnie loudly, pointing out of the window. "Look down there. Something's happened."

There was a swirl in the crowd below. Men were running around a corner of the courthouse, and the women and children were harking after. They went so fast, and there were so many of them, that immediately that whole portion of the yard became a pushing, tugging, pulling, squirming jam of people.

"It's on the other side," said Lige. "We can see from the hall window. Come quick, before these other folks fill it up."

They followed him across the building, and looked down on an agitated swarm of faces. Five men were standing on the entrance steps to the door below, and the crowd was thickly massed beyond, leaving a little semicircle clear about the steps. Those behind struggled to get closer, and leaped in the air to catch a glimpse of what was going on. Harkless stood alone on the top step, his hand resting on the shoulder of the pale and contrite and sobered Hartley. In the clear space, Jim Bardlock was standing with sheepishly hanging head, and between him and Harkless were the two gamblers of the walnut shells. The journalist held in his hand the implements of their profession.

"Give it all up," he was saying in his steady voice. "You've taken $56 from this boy. Hand it over."

The men began to edge closer to the crowd, giving little, swift, desperate, searching looks from left to right, and right to left, moving nervously about, like weasels in a trap. "Close up there tight," said Harkless, sharply. "Don't let them out."

"W'y can't we git no square treatment here?" one of the gamblers whined; but his eyes, blazing with rage, belied the plaintive passivity of his tone. "We been running no skin. W'y d'ye say we gotter give up our own money? You gotter prove it was a skin. We risked our money fair."

"Prove it! Come up here, Eph Watts. Friends," the editor turned to the crowd, smiling, "friends, here's a man we ran out of town once, because he knew too much about things of this sort. He's come back to us again and he's here to stay. He'll give us an object-lesson on the shell game."

"It's pretty simple," remarked Mr. Watts. "The best way is to pick up the ball with your second finger and the back part of your thumb as you pretend to lay the shell down over it: this way." He illustrated, and showed several methods of manipulation, with professional sang-froid; and as he made plain the easy swindle by which many had been duped that morning, there arose an angry and threatening murmur.

"You all see," said Harkless, raising his voice a little, "what a simple cheat it is—and old as Pharoah. Yet a lot of you stood around and lost your own money, and stared like idiots, and let Hartley Bowlder lost eighty-odd dollars on a shell racket, and not one of you lifted a hand. How hard did you work for what these two cheap crooks took from you? Ah!" he cried, "it is because you were greedy that they robbed you so easily. You know it's true. It's when you want to get something for nothing that the 'confidence men' steal the money you sweat for and make the farmer a laughing-stock. And you, Jim Bardlock, town marshal!—you, who confess that you 'went in the game 60 cents' worth, yourself'—" His eyes were lit with wrath as he raised his accusing hand and levelled it at the unhappy municipal.

The town marshal smiled uneasily and deprecatingly about him, and, meeting only angry glances, hearing only words of condemnation, he passed his hand unsteadily over his fat mustache, shifted from one leg to the other and back again, looked up, looked down, and then, an amiable and pleasure-loving man, beholding nothing but accusation and anger in heaven and earth, and wishing nothing more than to sink into the waters under the earth, but having no way of reaching them, finding his troubles quite unbearable, and unable to meet the manifold eye of man, he sought relief after the unsagacious fashion of a larger bird than he. His burly form underwent a series of convulsions not unlike sobs, and he shut his eyes tightly and held them so, presenting a picture of misery unequalled in the memory of any spectator. Harkless' outstretched hand began to shake. "You!" he tried to continue —"you, a man elected to—"

There came from the crowd the sound of a sad, high-keyed voice, drawling: "That's a nice vest Jim's got on, but it ain't hardly the feathers fitten for an ostrich, is it?"

The editor's gravity gave way; he broke into a ringing laugh and turned again to the shellmen. "Give up the boy's money. Hurry."

"Step down here and git it," said the one who had spoken.

There was a turbulent motion in the crowd, and a cry arose, "Run 'em out! Ride 'em on a rail! Tar and feathers! Run 'em out o' town!"

"I wouldn't dilly-dally long if I were you," said Harkless and his advice seemed good to the shellmen. A roll of bills, which he counted and turned over to the elder Bowlder, was sullenly placed in his hand. The fellow who had not yet spoken clutched the journalist's sleeve with his dirty hand.

"We hain't done wit' youse," he said, hoarsely. "Don't believ it, not fer a minute, see?"

The town marshal opened his eyes briskly, and placing a hand on each of the gamblers, said: "I do hereby arrest your said persons, and declare you my prisoners." The cry rose again, louder: "Run 'em out! String 'em up! Hang them! Hang them!" and a forward rush was made.

"This way, Jim. Be quick," said Harkless, quietly, bending down and jerking one of the gamblers half way up the steps. "Get through the hall to the other side and then run them to the lockup. No one will stop you that way. Watts and I will hold this door." Bardlock hustled his prisoners through the doorway, and the crowd pushed up the steps, while Harkless struggled to keep the vestibule clear until Watts got the double doors closed. "Stand back, here!" he cried; "it's all over. Don't be foolish. The law is good enough for us. Stand back, will you!"

He was laughing a little, shoving them back with open hand and elbow, when a small, compact group of men suddenly dashed up the steps together, and a heavy stick swung out over their heads. A straw hat with a gay ribbon sailed through the air. The journalist's long arms went out swiftly from his body in several directions, the hands not open, but clenched and hard. The next instant he and Mr. Watts stood alone on the steps, and a man with a bleeding, blaspheming mouth dropped his stick and tried to lose himself in the crowd. Mr. Watts was returning something he had not used to his hip pocket.

"Prophets of Israel!" exclaimed William Todd, ruefully, "it wasn't Eph Watts' pistol. Did you see Mr. Harkless? I was up on them steps when he begun. I don't believe he needs as much takin' care of as we think."

"Wasn't it one of them Cross-Roads devils that knocked his hat off?" asked Judd Bennett. "I thought I see Bob Skillett run up with a club."

Harkless threw open the doors behind him; the hall was empty. "You may come in now," he said. "This isn't my courthouse."

[To be Continued Monday.]

$50.00 to San Francisco and Return.

The Chicago Great Western Railway will on account of Biennial Meeting of Knights of Pythias, sell excursion tickets on July 28th and Aug. 9 to 10th, good to return Sept. 30th. Through Tourist car weekly. For further information apply to L. C. Rains, Agent, Cor. Nicollet Ave. and 5th St., Minneapolis.

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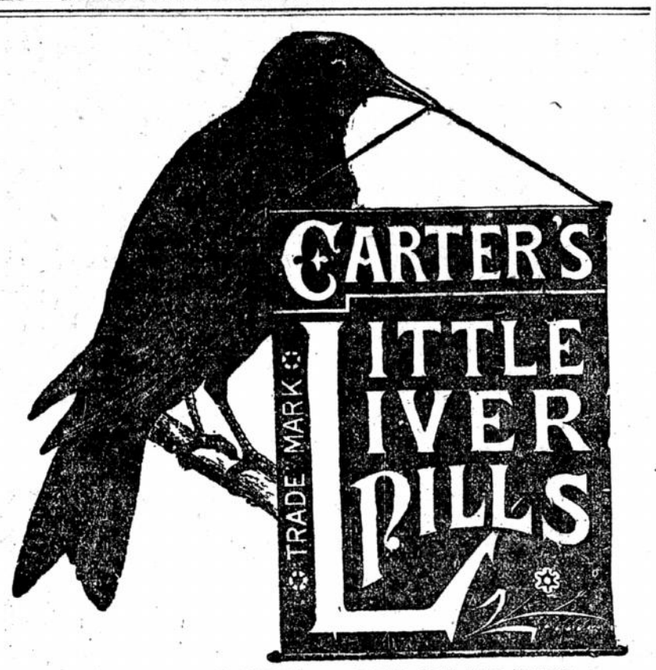

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Men, you can be cured while you sleep. In fifteen days! "Gran-Solvent" dissolves urethral obstructions like snow beneath the sun, reduces enlarged gland, contracts and strengthens the parts, forever stopping drains and losses in fifteen days.

No drugs to ruin the stomach, but a direct, local and positive application to the entire tract.

Gran-Solvent is the wonder of the century. Discovered by the Chemist Fabrion, it quickly interested the great Scientist and Physician, Erdman, who developed it and proclaimed that marvelous action in Urethral Ailments which electrified the world.

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Gran-Solvent is not a liquid. It is prepared in the form of Crayons or Pencils, smooth and flexible, and so narrow as to pass the closest obstruction.

The great virtue in the method of application is its direct and positive action. No vile, drastic drugs to ruin the stomach and digestive system. The Crayons are inserted upon retiring at night, dissolving by the heat and secretions of the body in three hours, which is sufficient time to penetrate and dissolve urethral obstructions, dislodging the granular mass root and branch, together with the false membrane upon which it forms, thoroughly medicating the Prostate Gland, reducing Enlargement and contracting the Ejaculatory Ducts, forever stopping drains and losses, curing while you sleep, without pain or inconvenience, in fifteen days.

The alterative and antiseptic action of "Gran-Solvent" asserts itself in destroying the germs that infest the Bladder and Gland.

During the past year 20,468 weak, wasting wrecks were cured—20,468 men born again to begin life anew with fresh vigor, full of strength and the consciousness of restored health. Under the influence of this sovereign solvent urethral obstruction is dissolved and dislodged in 15 days.

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