M. QUAD'S SENSE AND NONSENSE

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Q. HOPE JONES

His Receipts Are Small, But His Faith Is Great

"Ladies and Gentlemen—While I was obliged to walk thirteen miles on foot today not to disappoint you with my great moral exhibition this evening, and while the receipts at the door are only $1.70 and the hotel-keeper appears to be a stony-hearted, avaricious critter, I appear before you in no wise cast down or discouraged. I have a mission to fulfill, and in fulfilling it I expect to meet with more or less adversity. Before opening the exhibition I will pass around the hat and take up a collection for the benefit of the club-footed people in the Island of Guam. No one need feel obliged to give, but all should remember that a cheerful giver is greater than a Chicago beef-packer. Do not confound this stereopticon exhibition with any of the circuses traveling over the country, and remember that Q. Hope Jones is not the tool of any trust or the agent of any syndicate. The collection foots up 11 cents and several buttons, and in due time some club-footed man or woman in our new possessions will have reason to bless your liberality tonight. It isn't the amount of money

"YOU SEE CAIN AND ABEL BEFORE YOU!"

you raise for a native with his heals drawn up to his knees, but it's the sentiment that induces you to give.

"Our first picture this evening is given to settle a disputed point. It is contended by agnostics that Cain never killed Abel. Those of us who believed that he did have holy writ to back us, and this picture backs holy writ. You see Cain and Abel before you. The man with the club is Cain. He has just struck Abel to the earth, and Abel is just breathing his last. They were brothers, but Cain had threatened for years to do him up. There was envy and jealousy to urge him on, and one day the fell deed was accomplished. I do not claim that my special artist was on the spot, but if there is any wild-eyed knock-knee carpist in this audience who disputes the authenticity of this picture his money will be returned at the door. It was not only a cold-blooded, unprovoked murder, but Cain was inclined to brag about it afterwards. And the fate of Cain is a moral lesson which none of us must lose sight of. It profited him nothing. On the contrary, he was driven out of the land without a coat to his back or a cent to his name, and after wandering too and fro for nobody knows how long he crept into a thicket and died. If any of you are planning to kill your brother, pause and reflect. There is no profit in it. I have a brother whom I would like to practice on with a crowbar for about fifteen minutes, but I shall restrain my hand and wait for consumption to get in its work. No matter what theories may be advanced or what sophistries brought to bear, never doubt that Cain killed Abel. The scene is before you. You cannot doubt.

"Our next picture represents the whale swallowing Jonah. The agnostics have endeavored to make the present generation doubt that such an affair ever took place, but you have the scene before you, just as it has been handed down from father to son. These carpists ask: 'Why should the whale have swallowed Jonah?' I ask them in return if they can reasonably expect that Jonah should have swallowed the whale? Some one had to be swallowed. The whale was there and Jonah was there, and the whale being the biggest he naturally took the lead in bringing matters to a climax. It is contended that Jonah could not have lived on after being swallowed. How do these carpists know that he couldn't? Did they ever interview a man who had been gulped down? Those were special occasions, and special whales and special Jonahs were made to fit them. To my mind, it was as easy for that whale to take in Jonah as it is for a goat to bolt a sardine can, and if there is a cock-eyed, bow-backed villain among us who wants a war-map of the interior of that fish, that he may dispute sacred history, let him rise up and face me. It's not our business to inquire how Jonah made out after being swallowed. He may have had a good time or a hard time of it, but we know he was all O. K. when he reappeared. Q. Hope Jones has had his dark days, my friends, but in the midst of the worst of them he was always consoled by the belief that Jonah was duly swallowed.

"Our next picture represents Daniel in the lion's den, and here again we find the agnostics in opposition to us. My artist was not there, but if there is a false-hearted, hump-backed, bow-minded man in this audience who is going to let facts make any difference with him I do not want his money. History tells us that there was a cage of lions; that there was a man named Daniel; that the door of that cage was opened and Daniel chucked in. It was expected that the beasts would make cat-meat of him right off the reel, as they hadn't been fed for three days, but they never harmed a hair of his head, and the scoffers therefore contend that the story is all a yarn. Q. Hope Jones is not here to deceive you. You can bet dollars to cents that Daniel and the lions were all there, and that if the lions didn't eat him there were good reasons for it—reasons perfectly satisfactory to those who wrote of the times. A scoffer asks: 'Does any man believe that if I were to enter a cage of hungry lions I would come out unharmed?' That has nothing to do with the case. A lion which had reasons for not eating Daniel might have reasons for devouring David. I have tumbled down a well, rolled off the roof of a barn, been tossed by a bull and kicked by a mule, and the fact that I am living tonight is perhaps due to my solemn and unalterable belief that Daniel was cast into a den of lions and came out without a button missing.

"Our next picture represents another incident which scoffers have made much of. A good man was going up the mountains to pray. A lot of children followed after and called him old bald-head and threw stones at him and mocked him. The bears came forth from the thickets and destroyed about forty of the mockers. It is contended that those children were guileless, and that the merciful Creator would not have inflicted such punishment upon them. My friends, no man of today knows the kind of 2,000 years ago. It is my opinion that he was a bad lot—about forty times worse than the Bowery hoodlum of the present generation. Last night, as I held forth in the town hall of Pumpkin Point-on-the-Hudson, a boy hardly ten years old threw a goose egg from the back end of the hall and hit me in the solar plexus, and the exhibition was interrupted for twelve minutes. If a lad of today, after 2,000 years of moral elevation, will do that, what can you say of the children of that date? The bears might have overdone their work, carried away by enthusiasm, but let us continue to believe that the moral lesson was not lost upon the community.

"An intermission of five minutes will now occur that I may change from Biblical subjects of 2,000 years ago to landscapes along the Erie Canal, and when the exhibition is finally concluded and the hat passed again for the benefit of the orphans of Liberia, each and every one of you will have had the worth of your money twice over and will go home with newer and nobler resolves in your hearts."

BOWSER'S EXPERIMENT

It Held High Hopes, But Met the Usual Fate

There was a sort of three-ply, back-action, double combination book on Mr. Bowser's face as he entered the house, and for the life of her Mrs. Bowser couldn't make out whether he had fallen heir to a fortune or decided to run for office. In this situation she wisely held her peace, and asked no questions, even when she discovered that he had brought home a package. He vouchsafed no information, but during the dinner hour was pre-occupied and exhultant by turns. When they had adjourned to the family room he was ready to explain, and he softly began:

"Mrs. Bowser, with your permission, I want to try a little experiment this evening."

"Is it connected with that package you brought home?" she cautiously asked.

"Somewhat. You know how my shoulders have pained me of late? There are mornings when I can scarcely raise my hand to button my collar. I haven't said much to you about it—"

"I never heard you complain of your back and shoulders," she interrupted.

"No."

"Only last night you wanted to move the furniture in your bedroom about, and you said you felt like turning handsprings."

"If I haven't complained," he continued, as he preserved his good nature, "it was because I didn't care to worry you. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Bowser—a matter of medical fact—I am what is called shoulder-bound. That is, rheumatism has seized upon and contracted my muscles, and if something is not done paralysis will eventually overtake me. If I get a stroke of paralysis you will become a widow."

"And you must stand on your head or climb up the side o' the house to ward it off?"

"No, ma'am. The remedy is very simple. Half an hour's work for a few evenings will fix me all right. I met a professional athletic today, and after examinating my condition he told me just what to do. However, if you have the slightest objection—if you want to see me become a victim of the dread paralysis—"

"What did he tell you to do?" she asked.

Mr. Bowser went to the hall-tree and got his package and returned with it and held it up and replied:

"Simplest thing in the world. It is called a punching bag. You inflate it and hang it up and punch it. The exercise benefits every muscle in the back and shoulders. It only cost $3, and I'll get $500 worth of good out of it. It would also be a good thing for you to practice on. If you don't object I will inflate it and hang it up and pound it a little this evening."

"Well, go ahead," she sighed, "but don't blame me."

"Blame you about what? How can I blame you? What can happen? I simply hang the bag on the chandelier, remove my coat and vest and punch it. Nothing can be more simple. You don't expect I'm going to knock the house down, do you?"

Mrs. Bowser relapsed into silence, while he went ahead with the inflating. When the bag was ready he hung it up on the chandelier and removed his coat and vest. He had carried his point without much opposition and was bland over it.

"Now, then," he said, as he spat on his palms and made ready, "you watch how I do it. It is the greatest exercise in the world. It is warranted to cure dyspepsia, indigestion, neuralgia and so forth, and to straighten up the spine and give a man a military carriage. It is practiced in every college and seminary in the land, and there are few homes without their punching bags. You see I stand this way—and I reach out this way—and I biff! bang! with my left—"

The biff! bang! was a "swat" which would have busted the panel of a door. The ball shot away and upwards as if fired from a cannon, and about half the glass ornaments of the chandelier came rattling down on the floor. Mrs. Bow-

"WATCH HOW I DO IT."

ser cried out in alarm and made a rush for the parlor, but Mr. Bowser laughed and reassured her and added:

"I guess I overdid it a little for the first blow. I'll make a rat-tat-tat of it."

He played with a ball for a minute and the rest of the trimmings and two of the globes came raining down. The other globes would have followed had not Mrs. Bowser uttered words of vigorous protest. With the perspiration running down his face he paused to reply:

"Never mind a few cents' damages. This is great work. I'm feeling a movement of muscles which have been dormant for months. Perhaps you'd better go upstairs and avoid the racket, and I'll hitch the bag to that telephone wire on the ceiling."

Mrs. Bowser promptly disappeared, and he got the step ladder and gave the bag a hang from the wire. When he squared off before it again he was alone and untramelled, and he meant to knock seven bells out of something. The bag had a long play, and as he hauled off on it there was a crash against the ceiling and a rebound that made him see stars. In coming back the bag struck him fair in the face, and for a minute he looked around to see the horse which had kicked him.

"I'm on to that little curve!" he muttered, as he got ready for the next round. "I remember now, the professional told me the object was to punch and dodge, the same as if scrapping with a man. Well, here goes."

Mr. Bowser had never studied the elusive tactics of the punching bag. Mrs. Bowser, who was waiting at the head of the stairs for a calamity, heard him thump and grunt four or five times and then begin to dance about. About a minute later there was a crash and she called down:

"Have you knocked a side of the house out, Mr. Bowser?"

Mr. Bowser hadn't. In his dodging about he had encountered a chair and fallen over it, and had come down so heavily that a referee would have counted him out. It was a long minute before he got up, and then his good nature had departed. No punching bag ever made by mortal man could knock him about with impurity. He rose up with a determination to collapse that bag with one awful blow. He had been warned to go easy, but his outraged dignity demanded revenge. Mrs. Bowser heard him tapping the bag with his left to get it in motion, and then she heard him draw a long breath like a horse going up hill as he hauled off to deliver the knock-out blow with his right. As he jumped in to deliver the blow he had to dodge the bag, and there was a thump against the wall which rattled things clear to the garret, followed by a howl, a stagger and a fall. She got down stairs in a breath, and found Mr. Bowser lying across the foot of the lounge, with the bag playing pendulum about him. His awful blow had missed it and landed on the wall, and his good right hand was already puffing up to beat a cabbage head.

"What—what has happened?" she asked as she thought of arnica and bandage and slings.

Mr. Bowser struggled up like a stricken ox, and he looked from his broken knuckles to the dent in the wall from the swinging bag to Mrs. Bowser and up to the despoiled chandelier. She was prepared for a furious outburst, but none came. After a long minute he quietly but sternly said:

"Woman, return to your room! In the morning all will be settled. You were against me and you crept downstairs and struck me with a chair, but our lawyers will settle all that and you can start for your mother's by the noon train. No more, woman—not another word! You have failed again, but that is the last time—the last time, and good night to you—good night!"

PILGRIM JOE

A Clear Conscience Is Far Better Than Gold

As I left the town of Jericho in which I had met the most prominent citizens and took their tin-types at 10 cents a take and made the world better for my comin', I was in such calm spirits that I gave the old hoss a kick and said to myself:

"Honesty don't allus lead to riches, but a clear conscience is not put to any expense fur hair-dye."

And also:

"It don't cost nuthin' to sympathize with misfortune, and if you talk fast enough they don't git no chance to ask for a cash loan."

And again:

"Give your fellow-men all credit fur honesty, but look fur coins with holes bored through 'em."

I was thus feelin' content and happy and tryin' to excuse Cain fur not hangin' on to hisself in that affair with Abel, when I meets up with an old critter whose back was humped up like a camel's and whose legs was bowed fur apart. I halted my outfit to give him greetin' and mention the fact that integrity and a clean shirt hev never bin defeated as a combination, when he says:

"I don't keer fur no integrity bizness. I'm a man as can't be bluffed!"

"As how?" I asks.

"As no critter who is luggin' a grasshopper around in a bottle. I've got sunthin' here as will chaw your hopper up in two minutes by the clock. Put up or shet up!"

And with that he shows me a quart bottle with a beetle in it and wants to bet me even up that he will do my hopper. I tried to explain to him that my inseck was a thing of peace, and that I carried him about that I might study the ways of natur' and advertise my bizness at the same time, but he was wroth and called me names. He contended that I was carryin' that hopper around to bluff the innercent of Oklahoma and that it was fur him to call the bluff. When he had offered to bet me ten to two on his beetle, I felt a spirit of recklessness steal gentle o'er me. It is a spirit which allus steals o'er the best of men when they are offered big odds. I obeyed the voice of the spirit and got down with my hopper, and a minute later we had them both in one bottle. As the insecks begun to skirmish around I says to the old heathen, on whose face there was a smile of satisfaction:

"Art travelin' about in hopes to make the world brighter and better fur them who sorrer and are heavy hearted?"

"Not by a durn right!" he answered with all promptness. "I'm takin' keer of No. 1 and lettin' the sorrerful and heavy-hearted comfort themselves as best they kin."

"But he who is without sympathy is without friends."

"I don't want any, and you git ready to hand over them $2! My beetle has got your hopper on his back and is thumpin' the life out o' him!"

Fur a minit it looked as if my inseck would be overcome, and despair was tuggin' at my heartstring. But of a sudden he rallied and put forth his strength, and it was not long before the end came. That beetle was a licked inseck. He had met the hopper and was his'n. As the conflict was ended I looked to see the old critter beside me pay up and to remove the mangled remains, but he claimed a foul and hit me on my venerable chin. Without waitin' to remark that man cometh up like a flower and is cut down, I closed with him, and we plowed up the earth. He was tough and full of ambition, but with the aid of justice I laid him low and made him pay up. His soul was too full fur utterance as I drove away, but mine wasn't. I wiped my bleedin' nose with tender hands and remarked to myself:

"He who would undo his feller-man let him beware that he is not laid low himself."

And also:

"Be not puffed up and vainglorious, and be not overeager to look fur bluffs."

And likewise:

"The man of humility seeketh to avoid contention and would dwell in peace, but when aroused he goeth with all his might to slay!"

Two miles farther on toward Juba Hill I came to a shack, with a woman sittin' at the door. She was smokin' a corncob pipe and weepin', and her attitude and her loneliness appealed to my sympathies.

"Into each life a little rain must fall," says I as I got down and stood beside her.

"Yes; bar'ls and bar'ls of rain," she answers as she wipes her eyes anew.

"Has the dog died or the old man run away that this is a house of sorrer?"

"It's on account of the old man, but he didn't run away. He went over to Rose Hill the other day and got drowned in the mill-dam."

"And in your bereavement and loneliness your heart yearns fur consolation? Widder, in this your hour of darkness and despair the undersigned—"

"Oh, you shet!" she says as she began to smoke harder and weep less. "The old man was no great snakes, and I kin do a heap better, but what I'm sorrerin' over was that they hain't found his body, and he has $17 in his pocket!"

I stood there fur a minit and looked down upon her grief-stricken form and tried to find some sayin' appropriate to the occasion. Not bein' able to hit one, I went back and climbed upon my wagon and drove off. The town of Juba Hill was almost in sight, and I was gradually recoverin' my usual speerit when I come upon a feller seated under a tree by the roadside. He was not weepin' but his

"SHE WAS SMOKIN' A CORNCOB PIPE AND WEEPIN'."

countenance expressed grief and sorrer, and I knew that all was not well with him.

"Hath found the world cold and heartless?" I asks as I looks him over and smiles at him in a brotherly way.

"You might call it that way," he answers after a long time.

"How hath man wronged you and brung heaviness to your heart?"

"It was done at poker, and Juba Hill was the place. Two days ago I entered the town with a song on my lips and $200 in cash in my pockets, and I am now dead-broke, and my speerits are low. I sat in a game with the mayor himself, and he was my undoin'."

"Was it bluff?" I asked.

"Never a once. It was that he held the better hands. My straights and flushes and full houses went fur nought. Even when I held four aces he raked in the pot with a royal flush."

Then I knew that he was a tenderfoot from beyond the river and that the ways of the woolly West were too wily fur him. It was my duty as a consoler of the unfortunate and a friend of sorrer to do what I could fur him, and I sat down beside him and entered into a game which was without a pet. In an hour he was prepared to unhorse the enemy who had brung him low, and mountin' to my side we drove into the town of Juba Hill together. With the $10 I lent him as a stake the refreshed pilgrim hunted up the mayor and scooped him in as fish are landed from the sea. He held nuthin' lower than three kings, and fours were his whenever he desired. With tears of gratitude in his eyes, he restored my own to me, and the size of his boodle was that of a horse's leg. When he had silently departed from the sleeping town, that he might not be toyed with by the satellites of the mayor on the morrow, I retired to my couch to indulge in that refreshing slumber which a clean conscience allus brings, and as I pulled off my boots I found myself hummin' a song of peace and good will. I had licked one man and brought another into his own ag'in, and I had a right to feel balmy.

"BLACK JIM," THE CONVICT

The man known as "Black Jim" had been sent out to the penal colony of Australia for forgery. How they came to call him thus I could never learn. He was not a dark-faced man. On the contrary, he was light and fair-haired, and you didn't have to talk with him five minutes to realize that he had been born of gentle people and had no viciousness in his nature. They sent him up to Woona Wally after his first two years of imprisonment, and he fell into the hands of George Stebbins. In those days an Australian convict was bid off—that is, a settler in want of help would bid a price for so many men, and they were turned over to him for a certain length of time. He was responsible for their feed and care, and his word was law. He could work them as hard and as long as he wished. He could starve and beat them, and there was no one to come between. In case of insubordination he could shoot them down, and the government simply accepted his statement of the affair. All convicts were glad enough to get away from prison and out upon the ranches, and in most cases they found good masters and were decently treated. As a member of the mounted police I knew that Stebbins was a hard man to get along with. He had been a tavern keeper and a bully in England, and his wife had committed suicide and his two sons been taken away from him by the law on account of his tyrannical and brutal nature. As the owner of a big sheep ranch at Woona Wally the man had a sort of standing and a few friends, but there were plenty of people who kept clear of him. A part of the duty of the police was to keep an eye on the hired convicts in a certain district, and we thus came to know that Stebbins had less care for the men he hired than for his dogs. On two or three occasions we had been compelled to report him for excessive punishment, and the feeling between him and the police was not altogether friendly.

Black Jim came up to Woona Wally with six other men, and the gang were up at police headquarters for the night. It fell to us to take their pedigrees and post them as to their new master and what would be expected of them. In our district we always gave a convict a fair start. He was told what would be required of him, advised to do his best to please his master and given to understand that if he went straight we would see that he had fair usage. I was interested in Black Jim at once. The law had made a convict of him, but it hadn't degraded him. He had kept an honest face, a clear eye and a frank voice, and I hadn't filled out his blank when I was wondering how he could have been found guilty of crime. I detained him for a minute to ask for his story.

"I haven't any, sir," he quietly answered.

"You do not declare your innocence of the charge"

"Of what use now that I am serving the sentence?"

I saw that he did not mean to give me any particulars and therefore pressed him no further. I had a more frank talk with him about Stebbins than with any of the others, however. I had an idea that Stebbins would be down on him from the first because of his superior looks, and I went pretty thoroughly into details. When I had finished the prisoner said:

"I thank you, sir, and shall do my best to please."

Things came about as I feared. As Stebbins inspected his gang he picked Black Jim out for special attention. He had little to say to the others beyond making blood-curdling threats of what would happen if they didn't toe the mark, but to Jim he said:

"So they have sent me a gentleman, have they? They thought I needed somebody to teach me manners perhaps. Mebbe the idea was for you to sit on the veranda and give me daily lessons. Well, you've come to the wrong shop. Look, now, I'm going to keep an eye on you. You think yourself head and shoulders above the crowd, but I'll take the conceit out of you. Just give me the slightest excuse and I'll break you in to beat the band!"

The men were set to work clearing land. At the prison Black Jim had been detailed as a "trusty" and had not come in contact with hard work. He took his place with the gang just the same and was one of the most industrious workers among them. He knew that Stebbins was watching him and hoped for an opening, and he was determined to disappoint him. It was two weeks before anything had happened. Then Black Jim had the misfortune to break the handle of the ax with which he was working. Stebbins at once seized upon the incident as a pretext for punishment. We should not have known anything about it at the police station, six miles away, but for a black boy, who reported that Stebbins had one of his men hung up by the thumbs, I was sent over to investigate. Black Jim had been hanging by the thumbs for two hours when I reached the place and had been unconscious for at least half of that time. I soon had him down and being cared for, and I had it hot and heavy with Stebbins for half an hour. He contended that the man had been insubordinate, and had even threatened his life, and that some of the convicts backed him up in hopes of making things easier for themselves, but I knew that it was a false charge. I wouldn't do to say too much to Stebbins, however. Low and contemptible as he was, he had a "pull" with the government and did not hesitate to threaten revenge on me for interfering with his discipline. Neither one of us sent in a report, but we were open enemies after that.

Not one convict in a thousand would have stood the insults and degradation put upon Black Jim during the next year, I know he tried his best, but there was no pleasing Stebbins. He was always boasting that he had a gentleman convict, and that he was bound to "break" him, and he spent a good share of his time worrying the man. It was an almost daily thing for Black Jim to be flogged, and four-fifths of his day were spent under lock and key and on a diet of bread and water. My interest in him saved him somewhat, but as the weeks went by I knew what the end would be. He would either rise up in his desperation and kill Stebbins, or he would bolt for the bush and join a gang of rangers. There were times when I felt vexed with him that he didn't do one or the other and show a proper spirit, although it would have been my duty to hunt him down in either case. One day, as I was returning with the troop after hunting down a false alarm of bush-rangers, my horse shied and threw me almost in front of Stebbins' house, and as I struck on a stone and had several ribs broken I was carried in. He was not glad to see me, but under the circumstances was obliged to give me a bed. Having got settled, the police surgeon would not allow me to be removed. The brute Stebbins wanted to show his independence of the police and persecute Black Jim at the same time, and the insults he heaped on that convict for three or four days made me itch to shoot him. On the fourth night of my accident four men and three women arrived for an evening visit. They were about the only friends Stebbins had in a social way, and he made them very welcome. My being in the house was not permitted to interfere with the festivities. When dinner had been finished and the drink had gone around, Stebbins sent for Black Jim and ordered him to dance for the amusement of the company. The convict respectfully but firmly refused, and his master cried out in indignation:

"You won't dance, eh? Too much of a gentleman to give us a hornpipe! Mebbe this company isn't swagger enough for the likes of a bloomin' murderer!"

"The charge against me was forgery, sir," quietly replied the man.

"I don't care what it was. You are insubordinate, and up you go by the thumbs! After hangin' till daylight, you'll probably be a little more humble!"

I protested, but Stebbins went ahead. The men gave him their assistance, and the women encouraged him. He had had ropes and pulleys fastened to the ceiling long before, and it wasn't five minutes before the convict was fastened up. I saw desperation in his face as they laid hands on him, but he did not resist. His arms were drawn up till his feet were clear of the floor, and had I been able to reach a pistol I know I should have killed some one. The man had been hanging ten minutes, and the agony had almost brought unconsciousness, when the door was kicked open and bush rangers crowded in. It was a complete surprise. The women screamed out and began to cry, but the men, with the exception of Stebbins, took it rather cool. The bully and coward went white as death and fell into a chair, and it was almost pitiful to hear him beg for his life. He knew those bush rangers were escaped convicts, and he also knew that stories of his brutality had gone to them. While three of the rangers covered the people with their pistols, the fourth cut Black Jim down. Then he stepped over and took a look at me and said he had heard of my accident and was very sorry for it. When Black Jim had recovered sufficiently to stand on his feet, the leader of the outlaws put a pistol in his hand and, pointing to Stebbins, said:

"Shoot him dead in his chair! He deserves mercy from no man!"

Jim returned the pistol and shook his head. Next instant Stebbins toppled out of his chair with a bullet in his head, and the leader said:

"Sorry we have interrupted the festivities, but it was our calling night! We were after Stebbins alone, and the rest of you need not fear. Come, Jim, we want you."

Two of them helped the forger-convict out of the house and upon a horse, and that was the making of the most notorious bushranger in all Australia. He had a career of five years and then died from a bullet, and it was two years after his death before it became publicly known that he had let the law make a convict of him in order to shield a brother. I had always believed him innocent of the crime, and, knowing how he had been persecuted and abused by Stebbins, I almost rejoiced when the bushrangers carried him off to make a leader of him.

THE LIME-KILN CLUB

Seeking a Cure for Bow-Legs in Colored Circles

"My frens," said Brother Gardner as he rose in his place in the Lime-Kiln Club the other night, "I has been told by de doctors dat onless sunthin' am soon done de cull'd people of dis kentry will be a bow-legged race. Dar am a garm dat am attackin' men and women alike of our race, and ebery day I see men on de street who seems to be walkin' on each side of a bar'l.

"I has found myself coverin' most of de sidewalk when I walk abroad, and de same am de case wid odders of you. Doze germs has got to be got rid of or we'll have to take to de middle of de road to git anywhar! I am advised dat de only cure am ridin de bike, but befo' committin' myself I wish to hear de experiences of a few of brudders. Will Brother Roebuck White make a few remarks?"

In response, the brother arose and said:

"My frens, arter two months of deadly peril, doorin' which my life was in danger ebery hour in de day, I have at last arroved at dat pint whar' I kin mount my bike widout hevin' it tied to a post. Bewar' of de mistake I made at de outset. I could not 'zactly separate de bike from de mewl. I was all de time dodgin' dem hind feet, wharas de greatest danger from a bike cums from de front. I has been axed what effeck de bicycle will hev upon de progress of de cull'd race, an' I take advantage of dis public opportunity to declar' my belief dat it will do mo' to place us 'longside de twentieth century dan any other invenshun of man. De 'lectric doahbell jumped de cull'd race ahead fifty y'ars in a single month. De waterbury watch an' de rhinestone breastpin gin us another boost, but it was reserved fur de bike to pick us up as a race an' push us to the top round of de ladder. On seben different occasions I has spread my wings an' took a fly, to cum down on my head an' shorten my neck by an inch or so, an' on seben or nine more I has laid down in de middle of de road an' let de turmoil of life pass me by, but nebber fur one minnit has my determinashun grown weary. I still need an ice wagon on one side an' a street kyar on de other to hold me up an' keep de wheels on de airth, but I'ze gainin' on it all de time an' I will stick to it to de end.

"We hev but to look back a few short y'ars," began brother Cato Jackson, as he arose in response to an invitation, "to realize whar we was at den and whar we are at now. Eben two short y'ars ago de cull'd man clung to de hand-sled an' wheelbarrer an' de one-hoss wagin! He had no ambishun above 'em. He was groping in de depths of ignorance an' depravity. He was but one step removed from barbarism. De bike cum amung us like a thief in de night, and lo! the change. Today, we am bein' rolled for'ards on de crest of de wave of progress an' who kin tell whar we shall stop? I hasn't had a bike—bought on de installment plan, of co'se—but a few brief weeks, but I see Art in de way I walk up to dat masheen, an' wonder which foot it am gwine to kick wid us dis time; I see Grace in de way it wobbles about an' turns around a corner when I want to go straight ahead; I see Beauty in de way de billboard; an' telegraph poles codge me, an' progress am written on every line of de face of de druggist who supplies me wid arnica an' porous plasters. Dar may cum a time, Misser Chairman [illegible] cull'd man will turn from de watermilyon wid a tired look—when de crow of a rooster at midnight will not disturb his slumbers—when de menshun of yams, persimmons an' possums will interest him no more dan de menshun of Adam and Eve—but Heaven forbid dat de day shall eber cum when he kin stand off an' gaze at a hundred dollar bike, resplendent in its pristine glory widout feelin' his pulse bound wid ambishun an' his heart throb wid newer an' higher resolves."

The president stated that this was a question bound to come before the club sooner or later, and he would therefore bring it up and hope to settle it once for all, and to the satisfaction of all concerned. As for himself he did not believe that riding the bike degraded the cloth. True, a preacher might get into the habit of stopping at various roadside houses and calling for two beers, and of forgetting his humility when his machine picked up a stray cow or attempted to climb a stone wall, but he believed they could be trusted to preserve their dignity and position.

Brother Antimony Skinner expressed his great surprise at the remarks of the last speaker. His own pastor was one of the first to ride the bike, and if it had made any change in him it was for the better. Preachers must have recreation as well as other folks. To keep them sawing wood in the backyard six days in a week and preaching on Sundays would in time wear them out. He had learned in a class with a preacher, and he had seen that man take a fly and come down on a curve and shake the earth for ten miles round, but yet not a swear word escaped his lips. He had been out with him on the road, but there was no beer. He had seen him scorch along beside a trotting horse, but he did not get sporty. A preacher might become gay in time if he rode out on the bike at night with three or four female champions of the world, but even then he would take the chances.

Brother Abraham Lincoln Bebee thought the question a serious one, and he had given it much thought. While he believed in personal liberty to the furthest extent, the question was, "How does the bike effect the average bikest?" There was but one answer to that. As soon as he began to tie the bottoms of his trousers preparatory to a spin his feelings underwent a sudden change. There was a sense of exultation closely approaching recklessness. His hat slid over his ear, he looked around for a five-cent cigar, and if he was behind in his rent the landlord could go to grass. Never in his life until he rode a bike had he wanted to bet on a horse race or wear a diamond pin. If the ministry was thus affected—and it was pretty certain to be thus—the result could not fail to be disastrous. He was no alarmist, and he had always voted the straight ticket, but if the clergy of America were mounted on the bike he would not be responsible for what might happen.

Brother Julius Henderson did not, could not, doubt that the preacher would be equal to the emergency, no matter what it was, and that he would hold his own against whatsoever temptation. He had never seen a sporty preacher, but believed he would like him. Let the good man get out on a bike and enjoy himself, and if he became festive he could sever his connection with the church and always hit a good thing in politics.

Judge Comeback said that he arose with great reluctance, having two sore heels and a crik in the back. The issue was a new one, and he did not wish to commit himself. He would not deprive any man of the joy and exultation of riding a bike, but he should not listen to stand by and hear the remarks of a minister of the gospel when the thing suddenly got out from under him as he was spinning placidly along. He himself was a man who had never been betrayed into the use of exclamations until he began riding the machine. To his great amazement and sorrow he now found himself frequently making use of such forcible language that the police threatened to run him in. A preacher might stand the test, but in case the machine struck a paving stone dropped from a wagon and the good man got what is called the double-action circumbendibus, the chances were even up that he would break loose and become a desperado for ever after.

The question was then submitted to a vote, but it was found that the club was a tie. When this was ascertained the president said the matter might come up again in conjunction with others, and the meeting was adjourned.