

The Saloon-keepers' Girl.

A TALE OF LOVE AND WHOA IN TWO CHAPTERS.

(After Several well-known Authors.) It was close on to 9 o'clock P.M. The fitful glares of a few solitary gas-jets from isolated upper windows shone through the rolling billows of pulverized macadam like swamp fog.

The bleak forms of street lamp-posts standing in deep darkness furnished convenient resting places for the particles of limestone in their wild career through the air.

It was moonlight, according to the municipal lightning tables, but the moon was two hours late by the almanac.

A few lonely figures might have been seen straggling homeward in the blinding element and green goggles, while a denser cloud of dust, moving with uniform regularity, indicated the passage of a street car.

The street should have been reconstructed according to a bill which passed the Legislature two years before, and the contractor was traveling in Europe for his health.

A larger cloud of dust than usual and a dull, bottomless sound like that of a man attempting to sit on a chair and missing it, evidenced the passing by of a loaded horse.

The sharp clink of the horse's hoofs against a hard substance showed that there still remained traces of a roadway that would furnish food for future archaeologists.

The rider was Sylvester DeWardbummer, the proud inheritor of his father's indolence, who was on his three-times-a-week visit to his affianced, the lovely high-school-educated daughter of his father's dearest friend and patron, James McBugjuice, proprietor of Saint's Rest Saloon.

It was through his influence that Mr. DeWardbummer in his declining years had secured an entrance into the asylum and safe retreat for the feeble-minded. In other words, he had just been elected a member of the city Legislature.

A duller and more bottomless thud than usual was followed by a muffled sash and a smothered swear. The cloud of dust ceased.

CHAPTER II.

The frame mansion of James McBugjuice towered in stately squalor above the meaner residences of merchant princes and peddlars around it.

It was half past nine P.M. by the time bell. The proud proprietor leaned wearily but triumphantly on the bar, and with an unconscious air of superiority, wiped the drippings of the last glass of beer from the counter.

That day he had been elected President of the Saloon-keepers' Executive Council and legislative Representative of State and city, and declaring the Downing high-license law invalid.

A smile flitted over his massive features as he dreamed, the next day being Sunday, of selling sixteen kegs of beer in picnic glasses, and a barrel of whiskey to wash the pulverized macadam down the throats of the 450,000 or 500,000 inhabitants of the Future Great.

In short, he felt himself master of the situation.

The second-story front room was the boudoir of Alberta, his sixteenth child and only unmarried daughter.

The fair Alberta sat on a three-legged divan gazing with much pensiveness and I-wouldn't-care-if-I-had-a-plate-of-foe-cream-air on the dismal scene without.

There were two exquisite burnt clay flower pots on the window ledge, but the flowers had refused to live.

Alberta's voluptuous and luxuriant charms were only heightened, not hidden, by an-it's-too-warm-to-dress-up-robe of thin summer goods.

In her ecrú-colored hair were resplendent diamonds made from her father's best decanter, that flashed back in myriad-colored rays the light of the wick on the center and only table.

In her hand she held the Japanese advertisement fan given her at her last birthday, but one, by Sylvester, with which she remorselessly crushed the mosquitoes as they struggled tiredly through the window cracks.

Her face bore an expression of cruel scorn as she hissed through her set teeth, "Why don't he come?"

Suddenly she bethought herself that the must perform her customary ablutions in preparing for Sylvester's coming.

She skipped rapidly to the wash-basin, and hesitated a moment before turning on the mud solution.

As she stood posed in graceful hesitation a voice came up through the sink, "Whoa, Arabi!" The words were faint, but distinct.

"This he, he, he comes!" cried the listening Alberta, her heart palpitating like a steam churn-dasher.

She pushed to the window; not a sound broke the profound stillness save the snore of the policeman on his beat. Again came the sound, "Whoa, Arabi!"

Arabi was the name of the steed Sylvester had hired on tick.

A noise under the house had aroused Mr. McBugjuice.

The whole neighborhood was aroused. After four hours of digging they were rewarded by the dragging out of a human being by a grappling hook.

It was Sylvester DeWardbummer. But ah, how changed.

He was dripping.

Words failed to describe his condition. He had fallen through a gas pipe hole into the sewer, and his faithful horse had swam to the house of his fiancée.

When Alberta recognized him she gave a cry of joy and would have fallen on his neck, but the odor was too much for even her well-trained nostrils.

She fell almost fainting into her father's arms.

The wedding was postponed. Sylvester was suppressed as a nuisance for some time.

But under a wine and beer license on week days and Sundays, old man McBugjuice still takes in the tin that is destined to place his sixteen heirs among the rich and great.

The State Executive's proclamation hangs on the wall and city elections come often.—Post-Dispatch.

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