VENGEANCE BY VERA ROSEBERY.

A STORY OF A BRITON IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

WRITTEN FOR THE PITTSBURG DISPATCH

-BY-

A. OAKEY HALL.

I.

"UNDER so yonder lies 'the Home of the Exile, downtrodden and free!'"

These words, muttered rather than outspoken, were addressed by one passenger to another on board of the steamship Gallia, as a few evenings ago she was steaming about sunset time along the southern coast of Long Island and making for Sandy Hook. Both were John Bulls to their very phlegmatic cores.

The speaker was a very handsome young man of athletic form, of refined features and aristocratic presence—on whose face rested shadows of ennui, ill-assorting with his age.

The addressed passenger was a thick-set, pudgy man, with Hebraic cast of countenance, whose looks bore an imprint of cynicism. They had struck acquaintanceship in St. George's channel, and both being good sailors had been in every respect "fellows" during the passage.

"Yes, those are outlying shores of the Empire State. Home of the exile, it has been, as the shades of Emmet, Louis Phillips, Louis Napoleon and Garibaldi could bear witness; home, too, of the downtrodden; but how much longer America will continue to be such a home depends upon politicians and labor-Socialists who have already begun to exclude nationalities and artisans. But yonder is not what may be called a home of the free. The mob and the press have reduced Americans to a sort of servitude."

The pudgy passenger spoke hesitatingly, as if weighing his words, as a coinmonger would weigh half sovereigns or quarter eagles of gold. The youngster seemingly half listened only as if weighing his own thoughts instead of his companion's words. Yet he responded: "And yet it is to be the home of my exile and where I shall be freed at least of suggestive misfortune."

The pudgy passenger was a keen observer. He had not been a Wall street broker for 15 years without acquiring a detective faculty, a judgment of men and becoming an assayer of motives. He had without attracting much attention studied the youngster, and had molded much of the latter's observations into a fancied story as to his past.

"We shall soon go our various ways. You already have my card. Do not fail to call and see me as soon as you find it practicable. I may be useful to you, an exile, and perhaps save you from being downtrodden in this land of the 'free and easy.'"

The other slightly shrugged his shoulders, perhaps from habit; but he accepted the guerdon of courtesy with a pleasant smile and turned toward the cabin.

Reaching his stateroom he encountered in the passageway his body servant, still pale and weak from mal de mer, yet wearing a self-satisfied grin as he found the vessel nearing port.

"Is your lordship ready to be vaccinated? I hear we are soon to be in quarantine, where the doctors get fees for plugging your arm with—"

"Hush, Mivins, you forget. There is to be no lordshipping over here. You have stowed that stuff all the voyage—not a soul on board knows who I am and no one in America shall ever know. To you and to everybody I am plain Mr. Carson, an old name in our family, and the moment you offend we part company and you return home, for all your seven years of excellent service in our knockings about the world."

The body servant touched his forelock, and admitted that in the joy of coming near land he had "slipped his memory." It was plain to see by the dialogue which followed as to directions and acceptances of orders that master and servant had been on terms of intimate understanding for a long time. There were few points in Europe, Asia and Africa accessible to tourists that they had not visited. Milord held a courtesy title as the younger son of a deceased duke, and brother of the living successor, whose two sons seemed to be a perpetual bar against any hopes of the younger brother succeeding to the family honors. These were impressed at present upon impecuniosity. There were historic titles, domains mortgaged to the last rookerie, and there was a husbanding of every shilling beyond the law of waste. Milord—who at Cambridge had been crack oarsman, unrivalled cricketer, well up in the list as a wrangler and the best boxer, fencer and athlete of his college—had for some time enjoyed a goodly income. But, although no gambler nor bookmaker at races, nor given to gross vices, he had been no saver of money; and when the family crash came he found himself with a world-wide experience of men, languages, climes and manners, but the possessor of only a small annuity—the legacy of a dowager aunt and of amount just sufficient to keep him on the living list for necessities, and with the only real luxury left him in the aid of a faithful servitor, who blended the faculties of friend and body servant. Caring not to be prodded by social bayonets in the "battle of life" on English soil, he had preferred emigration to America rather than to Australia, where English gossip was as busily rampant as in Mayfair or Scarborough.

In a few days Carson had accepted the post of private secretary to the banker, and found himself installed at a fair salary in an occupation which gave him all his hours after 4 o'clock of each day. His easy manners, his imperturbability and curious patience made him in only a few weeks a great favorite with his employer, who treated him more as a friend than as a subordinate. Carson also won upon the habitues of the office. In a few months he became well known on 'change, and was often invited to dinners and evening entertainments. At the former he seldom ate or drank. His soup-spoon and fish knife became mere toys then, but his conversation was frequent and attractive. He knew the art of the talker in sinking self and starting topics that interested the self-love or sympathy of listeners. He took conversation as a game of rhetorical battledore and shuttlecock, neatly returning with interested stroke a delivered topic. But he never betrayed deep interest. His throws were cynical, but never offensively nor drearily so. There seemed to be a subtle mystery about him that was implied only. He baffled the curiosity of matrons in the most teasingly indifferent manner. The chatty American girl would often be piqued at his want of enthusiasm. His expensive stastes in carriage hire, changes of dress, books, and in menus that rather gratified the eye than impressed the palate all kept his purse thin, but he had learned how to marry thrift to desires. He suffered only one extravagance—the hire of the faithful Mivens.

Time hung heavy around the latter's neck. He could not, like Mark Tapley, become jolly under adverse circumstances. He missed his music hall of the evening. By day his old nook in a "pub" was exchanged for the noisy tipple amid a crowd of strugglers at an American "bar." These shocked his traditions. He missed his lounge along the railings of Rotten Row in Hyde Park. "Everybody is so busy here," he would remark to his incognito lordship; "I have been through Central Park this afternoon, and the carriage folk and equestrians seem from their look to be doing the park only under medical advice."

Thus suffering ennui that as often visits "high life below" as above "stairs," there came one day to Mivins a curious incident. Several months after the exiles had exchanged Astor House comforts for apartments, one of the newspapers that originate rumors for other papers to deny contained an article of which the following is an extract:

"There also recently arrived an eccentric nobleman who intends to 'do' our country without divulging his identity. He affects the disguise of a valet and courier, and it is said plays his part with a perfection of acting that would do honor to any theater," etc.

This extract fell under the notice of Mrs. Mortimer Merton, a widow lady of fortune and social cleverness, who was known in New York society as its Mrs. Leo Hunter. Celebrities—especially from "foreign parts"—formed an element of her social craze whenever luncheons, dinners or receptions were to occur at her hospitable menage in "Upper-ten-dom." She read the reference over and over with sparkling eyes, and called her daughter—in her tenth season of

Madam Mortimer Merton.

bellehood—in consultation. They conversed of how to obtain a clew. "Yet the masked nobleman must come into evidence somewhere."

So, for at least a fortnight, Madam Mortimer Merton converted herself into a detective at all social gatherings, asking pertinaciously, "Have you, my dear, heard anything about an eccentric nobleman who"—etc., etc. Soon chance threw into her way a clew that diligent search had failed to evolve.

II.

Mivins was cooling his ennui by violating an ordinance of Central Park in exploring its thickets and treading its verdure with all the quietude and stealthiness of a poacher, when he heard a half stifled shriek proceeding from the neighboring bridle path. Gaining its skirts he saw a young girl clinging to her saddle pommel, while her horse—quite a docile looking animal—was running away with a portion of the bridle unbuckled. Meantime a dazed looking groom was coming up behind. Mivins, who, in halcyon days gone by, had in many seasons ridden to hounds in attendance on his master, and was himself a cool hand with restive horses, instantly ran onward until the excited steed reached him. While the animal was still running he seized the curb rein and soon had the animal in check. He then disengaged the affrighted lady and laid her upon the side of the bank as the stupid groom came up, to whom the rescuer dealt a few sarcastic remarks with allusions to the groom's better horse, and his want of presence of mind.

They found that the young girl soon recovered from the shock. Taking Mivins' hand she began to pour out her heart in thankful words. She asked for his card, and the groom shyly added something about her father, "who would be happy to know who had been so heroic." Mivins merely said: "I have been something of a groom myself, and am now only a body servant. Wherefore, my name can be of no service and I am only glad to have accidentally proved my aid." Thus saying he touched his hat—Mivins had caught graces and such magnetic insistances as residence amid good breeding inspires—and disappeared in the bushes. But not before he had unknowingly dropped from his pocket a used envelope postmarked from England and bearing his address. The young girl's sharp eyes saw it, while the dull vision of the groom missed it, and in a moment it was in the pocket of her riding dress.

Naturally the incident soon became a family topic, and the story was duly told the next evening at one of Mrs. Mortimer Merton's stereotype receptions, to the great delight of that lady.

"What luck," she exclaimed, "and an groom? And he claimed to be a body servant? Have you not read about the disguised and eccentric English nobleman?

Exchanging Confidences.

What luck indeed! It must be he. But—" she added, under her newly bridged teeth—"I shall be the first to take advantage of the lucky discovery."

Before the "lights had fled, or the garlands were dead," the scheming hostess had duly written to the address copied from the truant envelope her compliments. Her R. S. V. P. card requested the pleasure of the company, etc., etc., on Wednesday evening fortnight to dinner. She sealed it with her crest, as befitted the destiny of the missive—the motto being, Fortuna juvat audaces.

Meanwhile "Mr. Carson," solely to oblige his employer, had compromised with his dislike of society and accepted an invitation to a large evening party; and while the Central Park incident was actually in progress had been gossiping with one of his fellow banking clerks who eagerly coached the "Britisher" on the methods and characteristics of New York society.

In the evening after his little coaching he made his debut at the reception of Mrs. Judge Stevens, a friend and banking client of his employer. Her exactions as hostess were few and simple, but rigid. Her talkers and dancers must be fine looking and graceful, with morals not too plainly stained with naughtiness; and they must wear unexceptional evening dress. Mrs. Judge Stevens as a hostess knew the value of tasteful toilets in the foreground when differentiated against a background of black coats and white linen. Her husband, who had died of gout induced by the prime old Sercial that has utterly disappeared from the face of the earth as has the mastodon, had left her a large fortune, and the knowledge of how to nurse it and use it to advantage. Childless, she became a social mother-in-law to her guests of young women and young men. She had lived in many lands and had skimmed the creme of the best societies abroad. She was a typical hostess in knowing how to drown her self-consciousness in the industrious streams of caring for and promoting the comfort and joys of her friends. No one sent other than a sternly necessary regret for invitations to her dinners and entertainments.

"You are very fortunate, Mr. Carson," said a sparkling young beauty to him on an introduction, "in being, as a stranger, so soon invited to Mrs. Judge Stevens' house. Now if these were Mrs. Mortimer Merton's drawing rooms, I might say you were a nobleman. She is as fond of celebrities as is your London *World* newspaper."

Carson's face slightly flushed at the unconscious hit, and he retorted: "Are noblemen then so much sought after as our Welsh saddles of mutton?"

"I do not say with the old saw ravenous a nos mouton, for I prefer what your people call 'grass lamb.' Yes, we have a craze on noblemen. For instance, look at that group under the Millet picture yonder. Matrons and daughters are clustered around that recently arrived baronet, Sir Frederic Murray."

Carson looked in the direction, and his imperturbability slightly faltered in look and tone, for the personage in process of being adored was not that baronet, whom he well knew. "Rich, I presume, and marriageable?" he interrogatively answered.

"Oh, yes, and he brought splendid letters. Beside, the baronetage tells all about him."

"And do letters and a printed book constitute all that American families accept as social vouchers?"

The tete-a-tete was interrupted by the polite "beg pardon" and an introduction to the chatty beauty, while Carson passed over toward the group around the baronet and soon obtained an introduction. "Shall I roast or roost and play detective," he thought to himself.

"You also, I hear, are from England; are you much acquainted there," said the "baronet," with a faintly suspicious falter in his tone.

"No, indeed, for I am only of the middle class—a banker's clerk, and of course go little into such society as yours, Sir Frederic."

The latter put his glass to his eyes, gave a haughty stare, and seemingly relieved, stonily said, "Quite so. I fancied as much. Of course—of course," and turned away to pose before a matron with two daughters garlanded for any chance matrimonial sacrifice.

Carson soon took occasion to rejoin another chatty young American to whom he had been presented and who had graciously asked to point out a few of the noted guests.

"Well, yonder stands a veteran ex-diplomatist and historian, who was many years in Paris. Note his tall form, his Romanesque profile and pose. You see I commence at American beginning, for his great grandfather was a veritable aboriginal chieftain of the Mohawk tribe near Albany. See, he yet shows the skull and high cheek bones of the Indian. How courtly his bow, engendered of European atmospheres, to the lady he pauses before."

"And she—why she seems a veritable shop window of jewels as she sits."

"The wife of a millionaire by inheritance, and of German ancestry. His grandfather explored Alaska as a furrier long before Behring Straits became a crooked element of diplomatic combat. There are other races "to right of them, races to left of them"—all types of blood-crossings in American residents. Perhaps every civilized country of the world is represented in the guests present. For instance, at the end of the room by the crystal mirror is an ex-Mayor of this city, whose paternal grandfather was of your country and the grandmother was once a hat weaver in Wales; whose maternal grandfather was a Hollander and the grandmother a Frenchwoman. He married the daughter of a lady who was Manx and who married a Canadian."

"Fancy!" languidly responded Mr. Carson; "you positively reckon ancestry here by multiplication; we Britons only by the algebraic quantities of an 'X' among the Druids and the unknown quantity of a 'Y' among Normans."

"While this reception is somewhat remarkable for wealth it is more notable for "brains." Brain power here as in London does not accumulate wealth, but here as in London wealth in its hospitality renders homage to the brains that guide pen and pencil. Yes, the brunette gentleman leaning on the chair lined with tapestry is a literary man and not a millionaire. He is a journalist of skill and power. Not so much at present a writer as a suggestor to other writers. He plans a campaign for a reporter. He finds the latter in ammunition, shows him vantage ground, deploys his battalion of penworkers and oversees their foraging. His hand is never removed from the lever of his journal. In all this he is aided by his wife over whom he is fondly bending—that is she, the blonde in dimples with arms and bust that sculptors sigh to place in marble. Near him is another Nestor of journalism—a grand combination of Echabod and Shylock. One who realizes the Mazeppa liner as to the patient search of him who treasures up a wrong.

The conversation was here interrupted by a tap on Carson's back from the fan of the first piquant beauty whom he had met on his entrance and of whom he had been in search. "What an automaton in our society a Briton is," she began gaily and as confidentially as if she had known him for ages. "I have been observing you. You have reminded me of images I saw in your Madame Toussaud's exhibition, or in our own Eden Musee. Do you Britons ever show animation or exhibit a sentiment even when talking it? Is every Briton "used up" at—at well let us say, thirty?" And she slightly blushed. As did he, for he had been only that moment impressed with the beauty of her eyes and with the elastic stamp of enthusiasm upon her features. Enthusiasm and volubility in a woman were rare qualities to him.

He became conscious of positively feeling a new sensation. Instinctively his hand went to his pulse. It was actually beating fast, and for a moment this wearied scholar of the mundane was embarrassed. This feeling increased when he semi-awkwardly added: "I am frightfully forgetful, don't you know, and I really cannot recall the name by which you were introduced."

She laughed reproachfully, but rallying, repeated, "Dontcherknow; and indeed I don't know whether you are a forgetful person. But pardon me. It was not I who was introduced, for I 'fancy'—that is the proper English word, I think—that you were introduced to me. My name was then mentioned as Vera Rosebery."

"I could not have heard it, or I never would have forgotten it—truth, flowers and fruit aptly conjured in a name that is evidently appropriate."

"Am I a conjurer to have suddenly awakened you from a state of social syncope to this one of trite compliments?"

"Not trite, but heartfelt surely," he responded, as his face for a moment lost its habitual stolidity.

She instantly, with a new blush, changed the subject and added, "Tell me if I have what you call an American accent. Do you know—pardon me I should have said dontcherknow—when I was in London two years ago everybody challenged my American accent. Now here we do not challenge your British accent, but pass it by."

"Is it noticeable, then?"

"Now let me be British—'Rawther.'"

He felt the hit to be clever and smiled—showing a fine set of white Saxon teeth—then good humoredly said, "Please give me some more examples."

"Well, in general if we Americans speak from the nose at times, especially during blizzards, you seem to possess a grill in your throats which broils language drawlingly. I could travel—were I a French or German woman—all over England did I know only two words—'Fancy' and 'Quite so.' You say 'cultsha' for culture. Your letter 'a' becomes as broad as our rivers; and instead of being 'sure' of a thing you are 'sher of it.' But why accumulate instances? Accent, after all, is a mere international game of give and take."

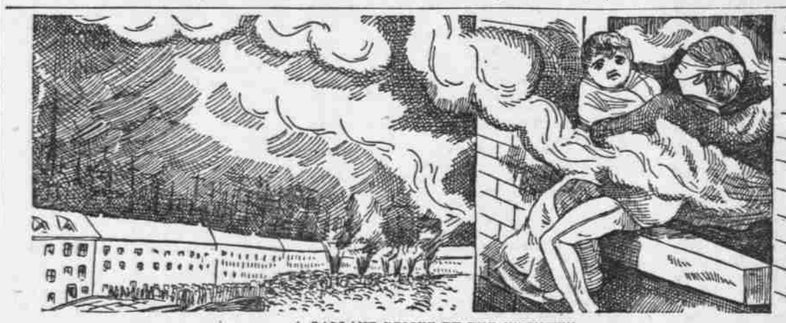
Carson with all his imperturbability could at this juncture have brained the "dude" who at this moment came and claimed Miss Vera for a "dawnse." He, too, was on accent bent; but it was a poor imitation of a Curzon street drawl. Miss Vera Rosebery also looked annoyed, and as she was borne away like a Zenobia at the wheels of a conqueror the Briton again felt the strange and new sensation of having been socially magnetized—he the "used up" blaze tourist of the world. He watched her in the adjoining room, evidently dancing mechanically and clearly absorbed in her thoughts. His own absorption followed as he took leave, and it did not desert him when he reached his rooms and encountered Mivins—who was also in evening dress.

When the invitation came for the latter under the supposition that he was a nobleman in disguise, he took counsel at once of his master, who, relishing the contretemps, advised him to accept and coached him in the role he was to play. He was simply to deny the imputation, and to insist upon the great honor done him, to marvel at the condescension and be natural. "If I indulge in the extravagance of a body servant, why should he not minister to my fun?"

III.

Months had elapsed since their landing, and Mivins had found in a member of the detective staff of the city police one with whom during a visit of the latter to London he had become "chummy." This was one of the shrewdest of his class and who had passed an ordinary lifetime as a modern Fouche. He was familiarly known as Golden Tim—a soubriquet as well understood at Scotland Yard as at the Mulberry police headquarters. Under his guidance Mivins had "seen the sights" of Manhattan to their realistic maximum.

One can estimate therefore the surprise with which Golden Tim on the evening of Mrs. Merton's reception saw Mivins the center of an eager group of guests who were evidently deferential to him. Well they might be for the hostess, with many smirks and smiles and implied innuendoes had bruited it around that there was the eccentric nobleman—a veritable "Lord Bateman of high degree," who was incognito exploring the States and looking out for a wife, while concealing his identity. Of course, Golden Tim was thus far ignorant of the cause and of the romantic relations of Mivins and his little public.



A GALLANT RESCUE BY THE UNKNOWN.

Equal surprise came upon the latter person when a mirror in front of him revealed the features of the detective. Presently they met.

"Not a word as to my identity," was about the hushed and whispered salutation of each.

"Identity indeed," quoth the body servant, "I have lost mine. The conversation of the hostess and of nearly all the people here seems that of Queer street. But as you ask why I am here, how is it you are?"

"I am only professionally known to Mrs. Merton. I attend many receptions and weddings, and my face becomes known to many guests without their guessing my vocation. Know that not only ground swells, and not a few of the swell mob obtain forced entrance to these entertainments; whereat it is a wise host who knows all his guests but the bona fide guests that I am employed to watch."

"To watch?"

"There are light fingers in the fashionable, as in the adventure world. Many a wedding present disappears. Many an ornament falls to—well, let me say—the floor, and is never found by its owner. Beside, I am advised to watch this evening one particular chap."

"Who is he?"

"Never you mind yet; but I'll tell you before long. But what has been done to you that you are losing your identity?"

Before Mivins could speak the question was practically answered by another group settling around him, led by the ubiquitous Mrs. Leo Hunter.

"Was your lordship—I beg pardon"—there was a little blush here as if apologizing for undue eagerness—"were you wearied of listening to compliments?" she said. "Here are several who wish introductions to you and who have heard of your prowess in the park."

Introductions followed and she confidentially whispered to the detective: "So you, too, are on the scent." And she rolled her eyes significantly in the direction of Mivins.

The former, not understanding, or rather misunderstanding her reference, whispered in response, "I feel sure he is not what he represents himself to be." But the detective was referring to the Baronet, on whom the suspicions of Mulberry street officials had already fallen. Her eyes twinkled with triumph as she answered in one of her mysterious whispers, "Of course he is not, but what can his rank be?"

"No rank at all, I fear. He may be an impostor."

"Impostor? Impossible!" and her face lengthened.

"But I must attend to him now as the supper crush is beginning," and Golden Tim made his way toward the frantic, hungry crowd in the adjoining room, followed by the bewildered Mrs. Leo Hunter.

Presently three persons emerged from the supper room—two of whom, a man and a woman, were evidently in a state of excitement. The other was a detective, cool as an icicle on Chamouni.

"What means this impertinence," said the man.

"This is my accepted husband," added the lady to the detective. "What do you mean by this behavior?"

She was an imperious and well-preserved matron—a widow of family and fortune.

"A short time ago you were wearing in your hair, madam, an ornament composed of an opal surrounded by diamonds."

She put her hand to her coiffure. It was gone.

The man turned pale.

"Did you pick it up? I have dropped it."

The detective with a quick yet quiet movement ran his hand into the man's breast pocket and pulled out the ornament, while the false Baronet aimed an ineffectual blow at his assailant.

"See what they are doing to Sir Frederick Murray," cried a lady coming toward them. At this some groups rushed toward where the three were standing. The detective, in a low voice, said, as he slightly touched the wig: "Bob Sutten, you are dead to rights; come out quietly and avoid a scene."

But the lady had diverted attention by fainting.

She was at least saved from a wretched existence on the other side of the water such as several American heiresses have known who blundered into wedlock.

Mrs. Merton instantly became a Niobe, so far as "tears, idle tears," were concerned. Vera answered, "If there were anything in the gossip my will power would be strong enough to put that or anything else of the kind wholly out of my life."

"Yes," rejoined the feminine friend, "but remember the lines, 'He comes too near who comes to be denied,' and such a denial might encourage. But possibly it is a case of la reine qui s'amuse."

"It is not only folly in a worldly sense, but I could never tolerate his insouciance, confessed weariness of existence and abominable sang froid that is often the shield of cowardice."

In due time the day arrived for the trial of the fallen baronet and Mivins, who happened to have witnessed the extraordinary legerdemain of the theft, was to be the witness. The courtroom was crowded and the corridors of the building thronged by unsuccessful applicants for seats. Society that had worshiped even the shadow of a supposed baronet was now eager to exult at his downfall. While technically he might be guilty of theft practically, society wished him convicted for this humbugging of society. That, popularly considered, was his crime.

Among the audience was Carson. The whole affair struck him as if it were a theatrical entertainment. He missed the quietude of London's Central Criminal Court and the white wigs and flowing gowns of lawyers. He admired the red cravat of the presiding judge who was clad in such a morning dress as he would have worn at a wedding. He was amused at the questions addressed to the jurors before they were sworn. He marvelled at the cameradeship that seemed to exist all around. The impertinence of some of the questions addressed to the witnesses who sat at their ease instead of standing at great discomfort as in an English court. And he was puzzled by the cross-firing of words between counsels and the confusions of "we object," "please note an exception," and by the free and easy way in which the Recorder was hectored by counsel and by the deprecatory air of the Judge, who, under no circumstances, wish to offend a man who might be a voter when the Judge came up for re-election. But most of all Carson trembled for Mivins when

A Charming Tete-a-Tete.

he became a witness, and he admired most the celerity with which testimony was given and taken down in writing by an official stenographer—so different from the slow and delayed manner of taking long hand notes that was in vogue at London trials. And greatly to his surprise the Baronet was allowed to tell his own story from the witness chair when in England his mouth would have been sealed.

The name of Mivins created what the reporters wrote down as "a sensation." The story of his saving a life in Central Park and of the curious mistake made at the reception regarding his rank had been duly chronicled by the press and had made him as much of an interest as the coy di devant Baronet himself. The prosecuting lawyer had generously admitted the ownership of the jewel so as to save the mortification of the appearance of the young lady who had been the dupe of the accused, so Mivins seemed to have, as actors phrase it, "all the fat of the part."

His cross-examination began and among the questions was this one, "In whose employ are you?" Mistily the words, "swear to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," came to him, and he faltered as his eyes caught those of his master and as he noted the flush upon his cheek. His hesitancy prompted the prosecuting lawyer to object. "It is the practice," thought Carson, "in America for counsel to object to everything and take chances." A wrangle ensued, during which some of the jurors patronized an old woman who was sauntering about the courtroom offering "apples and walnuts" in pantomime. At the end of the wrangle His Honor said he should "reserve his ruling to a later stage." This came so late that, much to the eventual delight of the witness, Judge and counsel forgot all about the subject matter of the wrangle. His master took great interest in the addresses of the counsel. They orated more about matters outside of than those which were inside of the testimony. At times counsel seemingly addressed auditors as actors often improvise asides. Carson was especially pleased with the fairness of the Recorder toward the jurors, whom he told had sole charge of the facts, while he commented only on the law applicable to those. He detected the superior fairness of such a course to that of many judges of his own country, who at least intimate, even if they do not declare, their opinion as to what kind of a verdict the jurors should give. But Carson's commiseration for the "baronetish Bob Sutton" was much weakened when he was told that months, and perhaps a year, might elapse when the sentence he heard pronounced could be carried into effect because of the multiplicity of appeals that was his right, with the sentence meanwhile suspended in operation.

CHAPTER V.

But summer vacation to the courts soon ensued and what time Wall street went into grasshopperish speculation and Fifth avenue uncurtained its windows and mirrors shrank behind Hollands, and when citizens rushed from the chattering of street sparrows to the biting buzz of rural mosquitoes, Carson took his fortnight holiday. Did he select for its celebration that Vichy of America, the Saratoga Springs, because Vera and her mother were to be at the same caravansary where he could also take rooms? But Carson, as the unrevealed brother of a Duke, while democratic in many of his methods, was a Tory and loved conservative ways. Saratoga had ancestral and traditionary fame like his own family. Among its century of pilgrims from the ranks of fashion or of invalidism all the Presidents, all the statesmen, leaders of society from all the metropolitan centers and from farms and

A Bogus Baronet in Trouble.

plantations as well, had made the resort famous. "Age had not withered it, nor custom staled its infinite variety." The odor of its pines and firs, the mellowed air of its mountains, the dazzle of its hotel life, the romance of its lakes and parks, the angles of its schemers or time-killers and the charm of yearly reunions yet, and, perhaps will for centuries to come, win yearly worshipers who alternate praise in the Saratoga temples, with their hammock-swinging in the wilderness or their loitering at the sea side.

Carson arrived a few days before Vera and her mother came over from the coziness of cottage life where Indian Holyoke adjoins towns of English nomenclature that reminded him of the Berkshire hills that he had last beheld from the northern heights of London, where Whittington heard the prophecy of Bow Bells. Carson soon learned the traditional programme of Saratoga life. The 9-o'clock arising and the bath of native waters, the saunter to the springs and the first imbibing of the tonic water, the matutinal gossip of the piazza, the compounding of plans for the coming hours, the grill of spring chickens for breakfast, the reading of the morning papers yet damp from city presses, the linger over luncheon, the drive to the lake or the realization there of the old song, "Oh lightly may the boat row that my young laddie's in," the sumptuous dinner where the "six hundred" charge upon menus that equally delight guests from all latitudes, the watching of twilight shadows, the evening flirtation, the feast of vesper music, the ball, the novel and the embraces of Morpheus—the only god of all mythology that every human agrees to worship.

One morning when the omelette aux fines herbes proved unusually tempting and the butter on the rolls uncommonly appetizing with its yellow sweetness, he found places reserved beside his own place for Miss Vera and her mother. Then they had arrived. What magic in cards shuffled over the inkstand of a prosaic hotel clerk. The heart of this blase Englishman actually beat a breakfast tattoo. He insensibly hummed a Tennysonian "She is coming, she is coming." How gladly he saw the slight flush of Vera's cheek as he arose to thrust aside the officious waiter at the back of her chair, who was hungering for a silver coin, while Carson was hungering for a tone of her voice.

The usual talk about mutual movements ensued. They had not arrived at the intimacy of even formal correspondence. Were the debuts of a "My darling" or "My precious," and of a "Yours with fondness"—addresses and superscriptions dear to the eyes of generations from the time of Heloise to this time of Saratoga loverdom—never to join in correspondence the names of Charles and Vera? Yet for all her incipient flush of the cheek he found her, not cold exactly, but under strict bonds of etiquette, with a mother as strictly on guard as the almost immovable horse guard by the archway of the Whitehall street in London that he loved in youth to haunt. Her raillery was again busy. Had the sight of so many celebrities at Saratoga fired his ambition yet? Had any prospect of life-yet interested him? Was Saratoga life worth living? Had the waters quickened his blood or given him an incentive? Had he met with a paragon of a flirt, etc.?

"No," he gallantly answered, while he merely sent through the pantomime of a silent abuse, "there be none of beauty's daughters with a magic voice like thine."

"Please don't quote; I hate quotations. I once took vengeance on a man who edited a book of poetical quotations."

"And pray what was the form of vengeance?"

"I learned a great lot of his own selections and fired them off at him like paper torpedoes or Chinese crackers, and made him wince and wince again. But how did you like our Fourth of July celebration? Did it make your heart sink to remember that at Saratoga came the first rebuff to you Britishers when Lord North was trying to coerce the Irish?"

"Take pity on me, Miss Vera. We shall never agree on English politics."

"Shall we or do we ever agree upon anything? You are as far below my enthusiasm as—as—" she faltered a moment for a figure like a bashful collegian in a cotillion.

He gally interrupted. "As you are above my want of heart."

"How happy an idea; as if so purposeless a gentleman should confess to that lack."

He signed.

"Are you choking with a mushroom, Mr. Carson, or was that a groan at my audacity? I beg pardon, perhaps I wound your amour propre, if you carry such a thing about you."

And so her raillery proceeded until he mentally asked himself "Would she be so cruel unless it was an intention of kindness or showed an ounce of interest?"

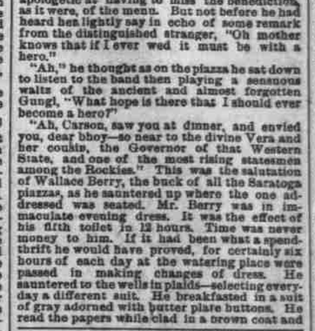
Soon bevies of guests began to stream out and many recognizing the belle of three seasons paused to greet her, and to give fresh cause for Carson's admiration of the woman who could like a juggler keep several balls of conversation spinning at one time.

"She often speaks of taking vengeance. It is her pet phrase," he thought to himself when alone with his Partigas on the smoking piazza. "What vengeance would she inflict on me were I sas enough to propose under our present circumstances? Vera's vengeance!" And he repeated the phrase as if in it there was a tender sound. Yet why not? The vengeance of Venus herself was often sweet and the arrows of her son often gave delicious pains.

He saw nothing more of her that day until dinner time. There are a score of les petits soins de la vie—a phrase very imperfectly to be translated—in the life of every woman that demand instant attention. There was wardrobe to be looked after, porters had played foorball with the luggage wherein the tenderest lace and the most exquisite dresses were reposed. There were cards and letters to be overlooked and notes to be written. But at dinner he was vexed to see seated between her mother and herself a stranger who was certainly distinguished looking. He had escorted Vera with graceful skill through the knots of plunging waiters in the mammoth dining room and with great ease of manner had attended to the etiquette of seating and the proper opening of serviette. He possessed a finely modulated voice and yet not overbraided—so to speak—with affected tones. Was this to be a rival, was the phrase he swallowed with his first spoonful of Mexican grumbo soup. The thought seemed to flavor it with a soupcon of Cayenne. Vera seemed to take especial interest in what he said; for he took especial interest in selecting his topics which ran through the gamut of the day events and touched epigrammatically all the news and the current gossip. All this gave occasion for her best comment and repartee to which Carson listened with delight and admiration, yet with a certain pang of that selfish disappointment which is the first usherring in of jealousy. Moreover while Vera addressed some observation now and again to him it was with a far-away look and on commonplaces. And no introduction took place. Before dessert really began to be served he made a remark half begging to be excused and half apologetic at having to miss the benediction, as it were, of the menu. But not before he had heard her lightly say in echo of some remark from the distinguished stranger, "Oh mother knows that if I ever wed it must be with a hero."

"Ah," he thought as on the piazza he sat down to listen to the band then playing a sensuous waltz of the ancient and almost forgotten Gungl, "What hope is there that I should ever become a hero?"

"Ah, Carson, saw you at dinner, and envied you, dear bhoy—so near to the divine Vera and her cousin, the Governor of that Western State, and one of the most rising statesmen among the Rockies." This was the salutation of Wallace Berry, the buck of all the Saratoga piazzas, as he sauntered up where the one addressed was seated. Mr. Berry was in immaculate evening dress. It was the effect of his fifth toilet in 12 hours. Time was never money to him. If it had been what a spendthrift he would have proved, for certainly six hours of each day at the watering place were passed in making changes of dress. He sauntered to the wells in plaids—selecting everyday a different suit. He breakfasted in a suit of gray adorned with butter plate buttons. He read the papers while clad in a brown coat and



And So I Am a Lord.

Palmerton check trousers. When he tooled in the afternoon behind a fast stepper his pongees were a la Turque. If he went boating no hero of a Tom Bowline in Dibdin's songs sported a tinier tarpaulin above what he called his brains, or nattier marine toggery. And for dinner dress his cravat was marvelously wide and tied with the immaculateness of Beau Brummel's time.

Every one of these suits paid duty upon the invoices of Poole, who in London is to men what Worth in Paris is to ladies—that is, condescending to allow other tailors to work upon his measures and cutting, but at sweating prices; with his own magic name duly inscribed on the tags of the garments. Mr. Berry had a museum of shoes and hats. He was obliged to double the wages of his valet because of that functionary's toil.

"Take a chair," said Carson. "And so that gentleman was a stateman?"

"I can't sit down, dear bhoy, for I am not wearing my sitting-down trousers. And he was her cousin. Owns no end of silver mines, and is expected next year to buy a Senatorship from his Legislature."

"A lover maybap?"

"Naw," drawled Mr. Berry. "He don't come from Utah, don't-yer-know; more's the ill luck for him, because he has a wife. There she is now, by the window, near the group of youngsters in execrable coats and vilely wrinkled white ties."

"Oh, married!" rejoined Carson with a sigh of relief.

"But that wouldn't stop another wedding if he wasn't sweet on number one, because really in his State divorces are as easy as putting my horse over four bars. Otherwise, don't-yer-know, he might marry his cousin. By the way, people say you are getting sweet on the girl yourself. Tidy settlement you could get. But au revoir, I see the girls looking around for me. See you later, as my old law preceptor, Sam Tilden, used to say."

By one part of the buck's vaporing Carson felt relief. Next came a revulsion as he remembered the words "but only a hero."

CHAPTER VI.

The advancing night was balmy and inviting of strolls, so he descended into the street to walk in the direction of the Hilton Park. He had not passed many turnings before a bright flame shot from the second story of one of a row of brick houses near by that were divided into apartment flats. Very briskly burned the window frames, and the flames already began to lick at the copings above. Listlessly he turned toward the conflagration that seemed to threaten dangerous destruction. He was not long in joining the gathering crowd that was already welcoming escaping inmates and anxiously expecting the arrival of firemen with apparatus. Some of the terrified tenants were bemoaning the loss of valuables left behind. Several of these rushed through the blinding smoke in search of property, but one who wore the cap of a nurse suddenly cried out in a pitiful shriek, "The child! the child!" At this juncture the firemen arrived, to whom she began hysterically to narrate how in her fright she had forgotton her charge and where it had been left. A dozen men now sprang toward the door, and among them a gentleman in evening dress. As they rushed inward sudden volumes of smoke poured from the hallway outward, and the impulsive rescuers were forced to come running back to the pavement. All but the gentleman in evening dress.

"He will be suffocated," cried one. "He will be burned," vociferated another. While above the din of working engines and the placing of ladders and the shouts of lookers on, louder and louder became the shrill shriek of "the child, the child! and its mother is at the hall!"

At this moment shouts and din seemed to cease, for at a window, out of which came almost solid bursts of smoke, the blackness of which was curiously tinged with reflection of flame, and all forming a background to the man in the evening dress with a white handkerchief oddly tied over his face as he was holding a baby.

Amid the momentary hush at the weirdlike sight came his commanding voice: "Hold your coats, some of you. At least let us save the child."

Before the latter portion of his cool words was entirely spoken cheer upon cheer arose below at his undoubted presence of mind and sang froid; while a dozen men had stripped off their coats, and standing elbow to elbow had formed a species of bag below. Then the cheers ceased and a new hush of expectancy was felt. "What would he do? Could he throw the babe safely or was it going toward certain death?" were the questions that every fireman and on-looker mentally asked themselves.

Still never hush and fresher expectancy from below as he was next seen to sit on the window sill; and steadying his left hand against the shutter made the motion of a toss with the other hand.

Double hush and triple expectancy from the crowd below when with the strength of an athlete, the quickness of a swordsman and the precision of a bowler at ball play the figure from out the blackness all around him parted with the infant.

A white parcel now descended, amid the deepest hush of all, and then fell with result of perfected aim into the center of the extemporized receptacle. The child for an instant bounded upward, but on its second and minimum fall was skillfully caught in the arms of one of the stalwart firemen in the rescuing group.

But the brave man? Was he to perish? He was presently seen at the next window, having reached it by a masterful and flylike crawl on a coping under both windows.

"Ladders, ladders," was the new cry. These had already been prepared, but as the longest touched the walls beneath, where the unknown man in evening dress stood it proved too short; while as that conviction was forced upon the firemen flames began to pour on the top rounds out of the window below the place where the fire-beleaguered hero stood, seemingly yet undaunted.

A visible wave of horror seemed then to pass over the throngs. The most experienced fireman appeared to be at a puzzling loss of plan. But cheers again arose as the threatened man, still with the handkerchief over his face, was beheld moving over yet another coping, grasping the sills with tenacious clutch, occasionally hidden by the dense smoke that became denser when streams of water blunted the force of the fire behind him.

What was his aim? What his purpose? What his destination? Sooner or later he must fall into the vortex of flame behind him or on the pavements below.

"He is making for the water pipe," cried the chief engineer.

"He has grasped it already