

# The Phonograph and the Graft

By O. HENRY

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"They're a sharp crowd," he says, kind of fretful. "They're capitalized by a foreign syndicate after rubber, and they're loaded to the muzzle for bribing. I'm sick," goes on Mellinger, of comic opera. I want to smell East river and wear suspenders again. At times I feel like throwing up my job, but I'm fool enough to be sort of proud of it. "There's Mellinger," they say here; "por Dios, you can't touch him with a million!" I'd like to take that record back and show it to Billy Renfrow some day, and that tightens my grip whenever I see a fat thing that I could corral just by winking one eye—and losing my graft. By George, they can't monkey with me; they know it! What money I get I make honest and spend it. Some day I'll make a pile and go back and eat caviar with Billy. Tonight I'll show you how to handle a bunch of corruptionists. I'll show them what Mellinger, private secretary, means when you spell it with the cotton and tissue paper off."

"Mellinger appears shaky and breaks his glass against the neck of the bottle. "I says to myself, 'White man, if I'm not mistaken, there's been a bait laid out where the tail of your eye could see it.'"

"That night, according to arrangements, me and Henry took the phonograph to a room in a 'dobe house' in a dirty side street, where the grass was knee high. 'Twas a long room, lit with smoky oil lamps. There was plenty of chairs and a table at the back end. "By and by the invitations to the musicale came sliding in by pairs and threes and spade flushes. Their color was of a diversity, running from a three days' smoked meerschaum to a patent leather polish. They were as polite as wax, being devastated with enjoyments to give Senor Mellinger the good evenings. I understood their Spanish talk—I ran a pumping engine two years in a Mexican silver mine and had it pat—but I never let on. "Maybe fifty of 'em had come and was seated, when in slid the king bee, the governor of the district. Mellinger met him at the door and escorted him to the grand stand. When I saw that Latin man I knew that Mellinger, private secretary, had all the dances on his card taken. That was a big, squashy man, the color of a rubber overshoe, and he had an eye like a head water's."

"Mellinger explained, fluent, in the Castilian idiom, that the soul was disconcerted with joy at introducing to his respected friends America's greatest invention, the wonder of the age. Henry got the cue and ran on an elegant brass band record, and the festivities became intimate. The governor or men has a bit of English under his hat, and when the music was choked off he says: "Ver-ree fine. Gr-r-r-racias, the American gentlemen, the so esplen did moosic as to playe."

"The table was a long one, and Henry and me sat at the end of it next the wall. The governor sat at the other end. Homer P. Mellinger stood at the side of it. I was just wondering how Mellinger was going to handle his crowd, when the home talent suddenly opened the services. "That governor man was suitable for uprisings and policies. I judge he was a ready kind of man, who took his own time. "Do the American senators understand Spanish?" he asked in his native accents. "They do not," says Mellinger. "Then listen," goes on the Latin man prompt. "The musics are of sufficient prettiness, but not of necessity. Let us speak of business. I well know why we are here, since I observe my compatriots. You had a whisper yesterday, Senor Mellinger, of our proposals. Tonight we will speak out. We know that you stand in the president's favor, and we know your influence. The government will be changed. We know the worth of your services. We esteem your friendship and aid so much that—Mellinger raises his hand, but the governor man bottles him up. "Do not speak until I have done."

"The governor man then draws a package wrapped in paper from his pocket and lays it on the table by Mellinger's hand. "In that you will find \$100,000 in money of your country. You can do nothing against us, but you can be worth that for us. Go back to the capital and obey our instructions. Take that money now. We trust you. You will find with it a paper giving in detail the work you will be expected to do for us. Do not have the unwisdom to refuse."

"The governor man paused, with his eyes fixed on Mellinger, full of expressions and observations. I looked at Mellinger and was glad Billy Renfrow couldn't see him then. The sweat was popping out on his forehead, and he stood dumb, tapping the little package with the ends of his fingers. The Colorado maduro gang was after his graft. He had only to change his politics and stuff six figures in his inside pocket. "Henry whispers to me and wants the pause in the programme interpreted. I whisper back, 'H. P. is up against a bribe, senator's size, and the coons have got him going.' I saw Mellinger's hand moving closer to the package. "He's weakening," I whispered to Henry. "We'll remind him," says Henry, of the peanut roaster on Thirty-fourth street, New York."

"Henry stooped and got a record from the basketful we'd brought, slid it in the phonograph and started her off. It was a cornet solo, very neat and beautiful, and the name of it was 'Home, Sweet Home.' Not one of them fifty odd men in the room moved while

it was playing, and the governor man kept his eyes steady on Mellinger. I saw Mellinger's head go up little by little, and his hand came creeping away from the package. Not until the last note sounded did anybody stir, and then Homer P. Mellinger takes up the bundle of boodle and slams it in the governor man's face. "That's my answer," says Mellinger, private secretary, "and there'll be another in the morning. I have proofs of conspiracy against every man of you. The show is over, gentlemen. "There's one more act," puts in the governor man. "You are a servant, I believe, employed by the president to



All me and Mellinger had to do was to follow.

copy letters and answer raps at the door. I am governor here. Senors, I call upon you in the name of the cause to seize this man!"

"That bristled gang of conspirators shoved back their chairs and advanced in force. I could see where Mellinger had made a mistake in massing his enemy so as to make a grand stand play. I think he made another one, too, but we can pass that, Mellinger's idea of graft and mine being different, according to estimations and points of view. "There was only one window and door in that room, and they were in the front end. Here was fifty odd Latin men coming in a bunch to obstruct the legislation of Mellinger. You may say there was three of us, for me and Henry, simultaneous, declared New York city and the Cherokee Nation in sympathy with the weaker party. "Then it was that Henry Horsecollar rose to a point of disorder and intervened, showing admirable the advantages of education as applied to the American Indian's natural intellect and native refinement. He stood up and smoothed back his hair on each side with his hands as you have seen little girls do when they play. "Get behind me, both of you," says Henry. "What is it to be? I asked. "I'm going to buck center," says Henry, in his football idiom. "There isn't a tackle in the lot of them. Keep close behind me and rush the game." "That cultured red man exhibited an arrangement of sounds with his mouth that caused the Latin aggregation to pause with thoughtfulness and hesitations. The matter of his proclamation seemed to be a co-operation of the Cherokee college yell with the carleise war whoop. He went at the chocolate team like the flip of a little boy's nigger shooter. His right elbow laid out the governor man on the gridiron, and he made a lane the length of the crowd that a woman could have carried a stepladder through without striking anything. All me and Mellinger had to do was to follow. "In five minutes we were out of that street and at the military headquarters, where Mellinger had things his own way. "The next day Mellinger takes me and Henry to one side and begins to shed tens and twenties. "I want to buy that phonograph," he says. "I liked that last tune it played. Now, you boys better go back home, for they'll give you trouble here before I can get the screws put on 'em. If you happen to ever see Billy Renfrow again, tell him I'm coming back to New York as soon as I can make a stake—honest!"

"This is more money," says I, "than the machine is worth." "Tis government expense money," says Mellinger, "and the government's getting the tune grinder cheap." "Henry and I knew that pretty well, but we never let Homer P. Mellinger know that we had seen how near he came to losing his graft. "We laid low until the day the steamer came back. When we saw the captain's boat on the beach me and Henry went down and stood in the edge of the water. The captain grinned when he saw us. "I told you you'd be waitin', he says. "Where's the Hamburger machine?" "It stays behind," I says, "to play 'Home, Sweet Home.'" "I told you so," says the captain again. "Climb in the boat." "And that," said Kirkay, "is the way me and Henry Horsecollar introduced the phonograph in that Latin country along about the vicinity of South America."

THE END.

## CRISIS OF GIRLHOOD

A TIME OF PAIN AND PERIL

Miss Emma Cole Says that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has Saved Her Life and Made Her Well.

How many lives of beautiful young girls have been sacrificed just as they were ripening into womanhood! How many irregularities or displacements have been developed at this important period, resulting in years of suffering!



Miss Emma Cole

A mother should come to her child's aid at this critical time and remember that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will prepare the system for the coming change and start this trying period in a young girl's life without pain or irregularities.

Miss Emma Cole of Tullahoma, Tenn., writes:

"Dear Mrs. Pinkham: "I want to tell you that I am enjoying better health than I have for years, and I owe it all to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. "When fourteen years of age I suffered almost constant pain, and for two or three years I had soreness and pain in my side, headaches and was dizzy and nervous, and doctors all failed to help me. "Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was recommended, and after taking it my health began to improve rapidly, and I think it saved my life. I sincerely hope my experience will be a help to other girls who are passing from girlhood to womanhood, for I know your Compound will do as much for them."

If you know of any young girl who is sick and needs motherly advice ask her to write Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass., and she will receive free advice which will put her on the right road to a strong, healthy and happy womanhood. Mrs. Pinkham is daughter-in-law of Lydia E. Pinkham and for twenty-five years has been advising sick women free of charge.

## Herbino.

Will overcome indigestion and dyspepsia; regulate the bowels and cure liver and kidney complaints. It is the best blood enricher and invigorator in the world. It is purely vegetable, perfectly harmless, and should you be a sufferer from disease, you will use it if you are wise.

R. N. Andrews, editor and Mgr. Cocoa and Rockledge News, Cocoa, Fla., writes: I have used your Herbino in my family, and find it a most excellent medicine. Its effects upon myself have been a marked benefit. Sold by Alvey & List.

## Automobile Axle Snaps.

The rear axle of Mr. James Weillie's automobile snapped in two last evening while he and his mother, wife and child, were riding on Fountain avenue. The rear of the machine came down in the street and a wheel parted from the body of the automobile. The occupants of the automobile were not pitched out, and escaped injury other than a shaking up.

## Growing Aches and Pains.

Mrs. Josie Sumner, Bremond, Tex., writes, April 15, 1902: "I have used Ballard's Snow Liniment in my family for three years. I would not be without it in the house. I have used it on my little girl for growing pains and aches in her knees. It cured her right away. I have also used it for frost bitten feet, with good success. It is the best liniment I ever used." 25c, 50c and \$1.00. Sold by Alvey & List.

## Little Boy Run Over.

Barnett Maloot, aged 8 years, son of Patrick Maloot, of South Third street, was run over by a horse and buggy Tuesday morning and his leg broken. W. A. Campbell was driving the horse and the little fellow ran across the street directly in the way of the animal. Campbell could not rein up quick enough to avoid striking the boy.

## A Positive Necessity.

Having to lay upon my bed for 14 days from a severely bruised leg, I only found relief when I used a bottle of Ballard's Snow Liniment. I can cheerfully recommend it as the best medicine for bruises ever sent to the afflicted. It has now become a positive necessity upon myself. D. R. BYRNES, Merchant, Doversville, Texas, 25c and 50c and \$1.00. Sold by Alvey & List.

## Blake Godfrey's Success.

Blake Godfrey, formerly secretary of the Paducah Y. M. C. A., has accepted the position of secretary of the association at Daxton O., one of the biggest and most successful associations in the country. His good fortune in securing the position will be shared by Paducah admirers. He had been doing work for the state association since leaving Paducah, and was located at Louisville.

## Ascension Day.

Tomorrow is Ascension Day, and will be celebrated by the St. Francis de Sales Catholic church with mass at 7 o'clock a. m. and again at 9 o'clock in the morning. The Ascension took place just forty days after the Resurrection and tomorrow is the 40th day since Easter.

## RESCUE HOMES

MODEL TO WORLD, SAYS COMMANDER EVA BOOTH.

She Defends Army Against Alleged Statements Made By Edwin Solenberger.

New York, May 23.—A reply is sued today by Commander Miss Eva Booth, of the Salvation Army, to statements said to have been made recently by Edwin D. Solenberger, general manager of the associated charities of Minneapolis, in a paper read before the thirty-third national congress of charities and correction in Philadelphia, says the declaration that the Salvation Army relief work as carried on through its homes, lodging houses and other agencies is poorly organized and poorly administered, and that the so-called work of the army is largely subservient to financial interest, "is unjust and untrue."

Denying Mr. Solenberger's statement that the army's social work was poorly organized and poorly administered, Miss Booth says: "Our social officers are specially trained and instructed for this particular branch. The work is thoroughly organized and carefully administered."

The reply continues: "Our rescue homes are a model to the world. In many localities these rescue homes constantly care for cases handed over to them by associated charities, and in the city of New York its rescue homes have taken direct from the city hospitals with the city ambulances, poor, unfortunate mothers and their babies, and have looked after them and their infants without a single cent of financial grant from the city for their support."

In conclusion Miss Booth says Mr. Solenberger recently wrote a letter indorsing the work of the Salvation Army.

## RENT PAYS FOR LAND.

Fertile Sections of the Southwest, Where Land Sells for \$15 and Rents for \$5 Per Acre.

One of the remarkable things about about Eastern Arkansas and Northern Louisiana is the fact that cleared land rents for \$5 per acre cash, and can be bought for \$7.50 to \$15 per acre. It costs from \$6 to \$10 an acre to clear it. Other improvements necessary are slight and inexpensive. The soil is rich alluvial, or made. It produces a bale of cotton per acre worth \$45 to \$60. This accounts for its high rental value. Other crops such as corn, small grains, grasses, vegetables and fruits thrive as well. Alfalfa yields 4 to 6 cuttings, a ton to a cutting, and brings \$10 to \$16 per ton.

In other sections of these states, and in Texas as well, the rolling or hill-land is especially adapted to stock raising and fruit growing. Land is very cheap, \$5 to \$10 per acre; improved farms \$10, \$15 to \$25 per acre.

The new White River country offers many opportunities for settlers. High, rolling, fine water—it is naturally adapted to stock and fruit raising. Can be bought as low as \$2 per acre.

See this great country for yourself and pick out a location. Descriptive literature, with maps, free on request.

The Missouri Pacific-Iron Mountain System Lines sell reduced rate round-trip tickets on first and third Tuesdays of each month to points in the West and Southwest, good returning 21 days, with stop-overs. For descriptive literature, maps, time tables, etc., write to:

R. T. G. MATTHEWS, Travelling Passenger Agent, Louisville, Ky. or H. C. TOWNSEND, General Passenger and Ticket Agent, St. Louis, Mo.

## Public Sale of Franchise.

Paducah, Ky., May 7, 1906.

I will offer for sale, at the city hall door, on the 30th day of May, 1906, between the hours of 10 and 12 o'clock a. m., a franchise for operating a street railway in the city of Paducah, in accordance with an ordinance recently passed ordering such sale, and in accordance with the terms and conditions reserved in such ordinance.

The city reserves the right to reject all or all bids. O. B. STARKS, Acting Mayor, City of Paducah, Ky.

## Mistakes in Assessment.

Sheriff John Ogilvie, who is now busy making out county tax bills, is finding a great many errors in the assessment which may have been made by the assessor, county clerk or the board of supervisors of the state. The sheriff will keep tab on each error and report to the fiscal board for correction.

## Senator Vest's Widow.

Mrs. Sallie Elizabeth Vest, widow of Senator George G. Vest, died yesterday in St. Louis after an illness of ten days of pneumonia. She was a native of Boyle county, Kentucky.

## TO LET

Several superior offices on second and third floors of our building, provided with heat, water, light, electric elevator and modern sanitary arrangements. Prices lowest in city for similar offices—double offices especially adapted for dentists.

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