THE MUTABLE MANY

BY ROBERT BARR.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

There is an idea prevalent that the young women of our land welcome addresses which the golden youth of the opposite sex urge upon their consideration, and that a girl's happiness augments in proportionate ratio as the number of the proposals bestowed upon her increases. This, however, is merely a supposition, and there are, unfortunately, no statistics to which a historian, anxious to be accurate in statement, may turn in order to substantiate or overthrow this almost universally held opinion. It is to be regretted that the census, which gathers together in tabulated form so many interesting facts pertaining to the race, gives no attention to this particular subdivision of human data; and that, so far from being able to form any definite estimate of the feeling with which a girl welcomes the undoubted compliment of a marriage offer, we are in the dark as to the average number of proposals a woman receives, say, between the ages of 17 and 27. An inquisitive government which does not hesitate to ask a woman every ten years to set down her age in black and white seems, strangely enough, to shrink from inquiring into a vital question on which the future well-being of a nation largely depends; thus no one can positively state that matrimonial advances are held in high estimation by their recipients, clinching the proposition by referring the doubter to Blue Book such a number and such a page.

It being thus impossible to generalize, the careful writer is compelled to fall back on individual instances, and it must be set down that Edna Sartwell, so far from being happy or elated over the fact that two young men within one week had asked her to share their varying fortunes, walked hurriedly back to the school, filled with terror and dismay. On the very threshold of womanhood she had suddenly and unexpectedly been brought face to face with a state of things which made her wish to shrink back into the untroubled tranquillity of the life she had hitherto led. These two disquieting events, following one so closely on the other, loomed up in undue proportion to their importance, and threatened to overshadow the future. It seemed an appalling thing that the fate of two men should be placed at her disposal; that on her shoulders should be cast the great responsibility of deciding, unaided, a momentous question with far-reaching consequences. And if the first two young men with whom she became acquainted acted thus, what was to be expected from the numerous host she was still likely to meet? A pathway strewn with broken hearts offered no allurements to the feet of the young traveler, a life lived in atmosphere of deep sighs was intolerable. The girl was frightened at the outlook, which was all the more bewildering because only partly understood. "It is often as important to classify your problem as to solve it," her father had once said to her, but solution or classification appeared equally difficult to her.

Barney had taken his rejection badly. He made no attempt to conceal the fact that his life was blighted; that he would re-enter the world a changed man, but heroically determined to make the most out of the wreck. The austere, rugged road that now lay before him, unbrightened by love or human sympathy, he would walk with grim, if sombre, resolution; brushing aside the frivolities of existence; setting his face with sullen but dogged persistence toward the cheerless journey of life; hoping for no recompense except that perhaps he might have the consolation of knowing he left the world a trifle better for having lived in it.

Inexperienced as she was, Edna could not help contrasting the actions of Hope and Marsten, not altogether to the disadvantage of the latter. There was no question in her mind that Marsten had in reality an uphill road to travel; yet he had gone into no heroics about it, and he asked nothing but that she should remember him. She had been sorry that she could give no encouraging word to Marsten, but Barney made her feel somehow that she was to blame in his case, and that he was an ill-used man. Then, it was difficult to realize the serious nature of hardship of Barney's future career, when every one knew he had more money than was good for him. Some thought of this seemed to occur to Barney himself at the time, for he spoke bitterly and contemptuously of his wealth, and of how it handicapped him; however, he was going to give it all away when he came into his full

"A Dozen Times Edna Began a Letter."

fortune, and start the world afresh, winning his laurels and what little cash would suffice for his frugal needs, with his good right arm, assisted, presumably, by his paint brushes; so, in the face of this noble resolution it would have been unfair to censure him for the possession of riches he had no hand in accumulating.

Edna hurried toward the school, thinking little of the reprimand in store for her, and much on the contrary conditions of this world. She, like Barney, needed advice, yet had no one in whom she might confide. She thought of writing fully to her father, remembering her promise to tell him everything that troubled her; but she shrank from the thought almost as soon as it took form in her mind. Besides, both complications were settled finally and forever, so why worry him unnecessarily about a page of her life on which was written the word, "Finis?" There surged up in her heart a deep, passionate yearning for the mother she had never known, and whom she now missed as she had never missed before. As she thought of the portrait of the beautiful, sweet-looking woman in her father's office, whose pathetic eyes shone so tenderly and lovingly upon her, the tears which had been near the surface blinded her, and she sobbed, "I am alone—alone!"

On reaching the school Edna went directly to her room, where she found a letter from her stepmother awaiting her, and this helped more than anything else to drive away the sad thoughts which filled her mind. The letter ran thus:

"My Poor Dear Edna: You will doubtless have heard of the dreadful calamity that has overtaken the business of Monkton & Hope, a calamity from which I fear it will never recover, although your father, as usual, scoffs at what I predict, and says they are fully insured—as if an insurance policy could cover the far-reaching effects of such a disaster. There seems little doubt that the fire was caused by some of the disaffected men, exasperated, probably, by the treatment they have received, although that is no excuse for the crime. But we are all short-sighted, misguided creatures here below, with the taint of original sin in each of us; unable, unless directed by a higher power, to take even the slightest action that will be acceptable; prone ever to slip and stumble if we neglect those warnings which for our benefit are showered on the just and the unjust alike, but if warnings are passed by—or, worse still, scoffed at—how can we hope to profit by them and mend our ways as an ever-indulgent Providence—eager to forgive if we but exhibit a desire for forgiveness—intended they should?—and when I asked your father in a most gentle and respectful, (I hope I know my duty as a wife by this time), way if the fire had not pointed a great moral to him, he said with the most regretful flippancy—which I have sometimes attempted to correct in you—my poor child—that it pointed the moral to be well insured and to have fire escapes from the upper floors; as if ribaldry like that was not very much out of place in speaking of a solemn event where two immortal souls went to their last account without a moment's warning—going, for aught we know, through perishable fire to flames that are never quenched. The usefulness of this thought makes no impression on your father, who is as stubborn as ever, and I fear no more just to his men than before all this happened. A poor young man named Marsten has been ruthlessly discharged by your father, and may now be wandering about the streets, looking for work and starving, for all that anyone knows or cares. Ask your father why he was discharged if you want to know, but don't ask me. It's nothing but pride—pride—pride. My child, take warning while there is yet time, for the night cometh. Harden not your heart.

"I shall continue to petition for you both, for the mercy is unfailing and unlimited. Your loving but sorrowing mother.

"SARAH SARTWELL."

The benevolent intentions of this letter were in no wise frustrated, and Mrs. Sartwell would doubtless have been pleased had she known that the reading of it did the recipient of it a world of good. It acted as a tonic, and gave Edna something to think about, preventing any morbid reflections on the wreck she had made of Barney's life.

The discharge of Marsten was a great shock to the girl, and for the first time in her life she thought her father had acted unjustly. At first, in pondering over the unexpected bit of information, she thought her father had, in some way, heard of the young man's visit to Eastbourne; but as she turned the subject over in her mind she came to the conclusion that his dismissal was the result of their meeting in the garden at home and the finding of Marsten there by her father. The reason, then, the young man had time to come to Eastbourne was because his time was now his own. And yet he had said nothing about it, even when she asked him how he got away from duty. He had spoken well of her father, although he must have felt he had been unjustly treated. She had thought nothing of his good words at the time, but now they came back to her. She determined to write to her father, and tell him all about Marsten's visit and its result, but when she sat down with the paper before her, she found she did not know how to begin. She wished to ask him to repair the unnecessary wrong he had done to Marsten, for there was not the slightest chance of her ever marrying the young man; but somehow, when she came to put this all down on paper, the task seemed very difficult. The difficulty was increased by the knowledge that her father must at that moment have as much on his mind as any one should be called upon to bear, and she pictured the silent man sitting at home, tired out with the work and worry of the day, while the monotonous voice of his wife drew moral lessons from every new obstacle he had to surmount. No; she would not add a single care to those already on his shoulders.

The girl sat with her elbows on the desk, her chin in her hands, gazing with troubled eyes into vacancy, as if the problems that beset her were in the air before her and could be hypnotized into solution. A bewildering feature of the case was that she had continually, of late, to readjust her ideas, and bring them into correct relationship with some new fact which came within her cognizance. All the conversations she had held with her father, many of his actions, bore quite a new significance when she learned that he knew Marsten loved her. Again, the fact of Marsten's dismissal lent a sharp poignancy to her remembrance of his fervent declaration that, for her sake, he would strive to please any master placed over him, as no man had ever striven before. Edna did not share her stepmother's fear that the young man was starving; but her imagination kindled at the thought of his impassioned words, his resolute determination to succeed, addressed to the daughter of the man who a day or two before had turned him into the streets. The more she thought about her father's action, the more unjust it seemed. A dozen times she began a letter, and as often again relapsed into reverie. Barney and his mystical woes faded entirely from her memory. Gradually she came to the conclusion that if she did not intervene in Marsten's interests, she would be making herself responsible for the continuance of the injustice; and, although she wished to relieve her father from all anxiety regarding her feelings toward the young man, still she was ashamed to touch upon that part of the subject.

It might be possible some time, when she sat at her father's knee, to tell him about it, with averted face; but to write it, she could not.

At last she succeeded in drafting a letter, which she hurriedly posted, fearing that longer meditation upon the question might result in it not being sent at all:

"Dear Father—I am sure you must be very busy, and perhaps very much worried at the present moment. You know I do not wish to add to your burden, and would rather lighten it if I could; but in that I am as helpless as you are strong. We made a compact awhile since, and that is why I write. Something has happened for which I feel partly responsible. In a letter received today from my stepmother she says you have discharged Mr. Marsten, and she thinks he may now be looking in vain for employment. I am afraid you were not pleased at finding him talking to me in our garden, but that was my fault and not his. If that was the reason, won't you please reconsider and invite him back? Your loving daughter, EDNA."

The answer came almost before she thought her letter had time to reach London.

"My Dear Little Girl: I should have written days ago, but unfortunately I cannot dictate an affectionate letter through my shorthand clerk, and the older I grow the more I dislike writing with my own hand. Worried? Oh, dear no! Why should one worry? I am afraid your belligerent old father still loves a fight, whether with circumstances or with men. Before the fire was out, telegraphic orders were dispatched to three machinery firms in the north. While the fire engines were still flinging water on the ruins, I had secured a lease of the four houses that adjoin the works, had compounded with the tenants, and sent them packing. That night men were at work knocking doorways through the partitions and strengthening the floors. Happily the engines and boilers were not injured, being in a separate building, and already such machinery as we could get is in place, and a long, saggy, wobbling iron rope carries the power across the yard. The new secretary of the union proposed a conference with me to discuss what the firm was willing to do for the men thrown

"HALDIMAN SAT IN A DEEP ARMCHAIR," ETC.

out of work by the fire. I refused to discuss anything with the new secretary, he not being an employee of mine. He is a shrewder man than Gibbons; so he at once got up a deputation of my own men and sent them to me. I received them, of course, and they asked me if I would give them 15 per cent of their wages while out of work. 'No,' I said, 'I can always do better than the union. There will be paid 100 per cent of the wages, not 15; I expect you all back at the works on Monday.' I fancy I made the men open their eyes a bit. Work will be going on as usual within a week, and we won't be behind with a single order. The new factory, which is now being built is in accordance with modern ideas, and I expect to be able to increase our business so that the four houses leased will be retained when the new building is ready for occupation. Forgive this patting of myself on the shoulder, but a man must brag now and then to some one, and you, my dear Edna, are the only one to whom I can boast.

"Yes, the compact is still in operation, and I'm glad you wrote about your stepmother's letter, although I hope you will not take too seriously any half-hysterical comments on my tyrannical conduct. A man must act, and one who acts is bound to make mistakes. Perhaps the discharge of Marsten was a mistake. I don't think so, but of course your stepmother does, and, as facts always embarrass her, she sees instant starvation and all the rest of it. Everything, Edna, depends on the point of view. A lighted match is dropped by accident or design, and, falling on inflammable material, certain chemical changes take place; carbonic acid gas is produced, and a factory goes down in ruins to supply the materials for combustion. All this seems perfectly natural to me, and in accordance with established scientific research. But your stepmother's point of view is different. She sees the finger of Providence, and because I don't, I'm a scoffer. Now, I've as great a belief and trust in Providence as any one, but to me Providence works sanely. It doesn't destroy a factory and kill two men merely to show me I'm in error, because it could accomplish its purpose at much less expense and trouble. I can't think that Providence is less sensible than my little girl, and she takes the right method. She says in kindly fashion, 'Father, I think you are wrong, and I want you to reconsider.' She doesn't try to prove me a heartless despot. I would at once reconsider, and would invite Marsten back, but it is not necessary. He is the new secretary of the union, with a larger salary than the wages he had here, with his time practically his own, and with ample opportunity for mischief if he chooses to exercise his power. I feel it in my bones that in one or two or three years I shall have to fight him. It will be an interesting struggle, but I shall win. So with this final bit of brag I close my long letter. I hope to run down and see you on Saturday, and meanwhile all the sympathy you have to spare, lavish on that iron-handed tyrant,

"YOUR FATHER."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Barney abandoned his tandem to the tender care of his man, and went up to London by train. He sat gloomily in a corner of a first-class smoking compartment and cursed the world. Nevertheless, he was able to consume a great number of cigarettes between the sea and Charing Cross, and, as he smoked, he made stern, heroic resolutions regarding his career. He would now take it seriously in hand. He would business-manage himself. He saw in the clear light of a great disappointment that he had hitherto paid too much attention to the production of masterpieces and too little to the advertising of them. It was evidently hopeless to expect the appreciation of a stupid and uncritical public to come to his work, and the great critic whom he had confidently looked for had not yet put in an appearance. If, then, the critic would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet would go to the critic. He would purchase the most expensive art critic there was in the market; then the tardy public would learn that a genius had lived among them unrecognized.

As his comprehensive plans took final shape the train ran into the glass-roofed tunnel of Charing Cross. Barney sprang into a hansom and drove directly to the works. "Beastly hole," he said to himself as he gazed around at the ruin the fire had wrought. The ground was covered with cluttering heaps of burnt and twisted iron, and piles of new building material were scattered everywhere. The apparent confusion and ugliness of it all offended his artistic sense, and he thanked his stars that it was not necessary for him to spend his days there. He accosted Sartwell, who had been discussing some question with the architect, and shook the manager's hand with energy and cordiality.

"Mr. Sartwell," he cried, "I came the moment I heard of the fire."

"Ah," said the manager, dryly, "Have you been in America?"

"No," laughed Barney, "not quite so far away as that; but, don't you know, I never read the papers, and so heard of the conflagration purely by accident. Now, I am here entirely at your disposal, and am ready to do anything and everything you want done. I would rather not carry bricks, if there is anything else I can do, but I am ready to help in any way I can. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Sartwell, that in placing myself at the disposal of the firm, I do so at considerable sacrifice, for art is long and time is fleeting, and I have work to do in my studio that you, perhaps, might not think worth doing; but I hope posterity will not agree with you, don't you know. Still, I am here. Command me."

"Indeed, you do me wrong," said Sartwell with a grim smile. "I consider you of much greater value in the studio than here. I have no doubt posterity and I will quite agree in our estimate of your labor. Artists are few and laborers many. It would be a real disaster if our present crisis were to interfere with your artistic work. Therefore, although I am flattered by your generous offer of help, I could not think of availing myself of it. No; the studio is your place, Mr. Hope."

"It's uncommonly kind of you, Mr. Sartwell, to say so many nice things about my efforts, and I assure you I appreciate them, for I don't have too many encouragements—I don't, I assure you. This is such a beastly materialistic world, don't you know. Has my father got home yet?"

"Yes; he returned last night."

"Ah, I didn't know that. Terribly upset, I suppose?"

"A trifle worried."

"Naturally he would be. Well, there's nothing I can do for you, then?"

"Nothing, unless you undertake the decoration of the new factory, and thus send it down to posterity with the Vatican frescoes. Still, that question won't arise for a month or two yet."

"Quite so. I'll think about it. Well, if you need me, you know my address. A wire will bring me at any time."

"It's generous of you to stand ready to leap into the chasm in this way, but take my advice and stick to the studio. Nevertheless, I'll remember, and let you know if a crisis arises with which I am unable to deal single handed."

"Do," cried Barney, again shaking hands with good-natured effusion. "Well, good-by."

He picked his way to the gates and stepped into his waiting hansom, a well-merited feeling of having answered the stern call of duty cheering his heart as he drove away.

It was a long drive to Haldiman's studio, and Barney, telling the cabman he might have to wait an hour or two, dashed up the steps and rang the bell. Being admitted, he asked if Haldiman was at home; then sprang up the stairs, struck one startling knock on the studio door with the head of his stick and entered.

Haldiman stood at his easel, a black pipe in his mouth, an old jacket on his back, and a general air about him of not having brushed his hair for a week. A half-finished drawing in black and white decorated a great sheet of cardboard placed on the easel.

"Hello, Barney," he cried. "I thought that was your delicate way of announcing yourself. You look as trim and well groomed as a shop walker. Haven't given up painting and taken to that line, have you?"

"No, old man, I haven't," shouted Barney, slamming the door behind him and coming into the room like a cyclone. "And I'm not trim, for I have just had a railway journey, and went from Charing Cross to the works, and from the works here. I've had no time to go to the club and make myself pretty. I was in too much of a hurry to see you. So don't be sarcastic, Haldiman."

"Everything is comparative, Barney, and to me you look like a radiant being from another and a better world, where a man has unlimited credit with his tailor. Sit down, won't you?"

"That's what I came for. I say, Haldiman, where do you keep your exhilarating fluid and the siphons? I'm tired out. Be hospitable. You see, I've a load on my mind these days. The works were partly destroyed by fire, and we're rebuilding and all that sort of thing, don't you know, which rather takes it out of a fellow, looking after workmen and seeing that no mistakes are made."

"Oh, I saw about that in the papers and was wondering if it was your shop," said Haldiman, placing a small table beside his friend and putting a bottle, a siphon and a glass upon it. "Help yourself, my boy. You don't mind my going on with my work?"

"But I do," cried Barney. "Sit down yourself, Haldiman. I want to talk to you seriously."

"I am behindhand with this picture now, Barney. I can work and listen. Fire away."

"Look here, Haldiman, how much do you get for a smear like that?"

Haldiman stood back and looked critically at the picture, then said with a drawl:

"Well, I'm in hopes of looting four guineas out of the pirate who edits the magazine this is for. It's a full page, you know."

"Great heavens! Imagine a man doing a picture for such a sum as that! I wouldn't draw a line under £100."

"I've often thought of putting my price up to that entrancing figure," replied Haldiman, reflectively, "but refrained for fear of bankrupting the magazines. One must have some consideration for the sixpenny press."

Barney thrust his hand deep into his trousers pocket, drew out a fist full of coins, selected four sovereigns and four shillings, and placed them on the table, saying:

"There, Haldiman, there's your guineas. I buy that picture. Now, sit down and talk to me. I want your whole attention."

Haldiman stood for a moment looking alternately at the money and at the man. At last he spoke, slowly and quietly:

"Some day, Barney, you'll do a thing like that, and get smashed in consequence. I'm unfortunately unable to throw you out of the window myself, but there is a cabman loitering about in front, and I will call him in to assist me if you don't at once put that money in your pocket. Don't make me violate the sacred rules of hospitality."

"You have violated them, Hal, already, by getting angry. I see you are angry, so don't deny it. Besides, the cabman wouldn't come; I own him, and if he did I could put you both out."

"You can't hire me, like a cabman, you know, Barney."

"Of course not, of course not. I'm not trying to, dear boy. Do sit down and be sensible. I've come to you as one friend to another, for I'm at a crisis in my career. I need help, so be good to me. I take a serious view of life now, and——"

"Since when?"

"Since this morning, if you like. The 'when' doesn't matter. I've come to the conclusion that I'm wasting my existence. You'll scoff, of course, but I know I have genius—not talent, mind, but genius. There's no use of making any bones about it, or pretending false modesty; if a man is a genius, he knows it. Very well, then, why not say so?"

"I see no reason against it."

"Quite so. Now, Haldiman, how much money do you make in a year?"

"You mean, how little?"

"Put it any way you like. Name the figure."

"What's that got to do with your genius?"

"Never you mind. What's the amount?"

"Now, Barney, if you're cooking up some new kind of financial insult, I give you fair warning I won't stand it."

Barney had gulped down his stimulant, and now paced up and down the room, clearing a track for himself by kicking things out of the way. Haldiman sat in a deep armchair, his legs stretched out and his hands in his pockets, watching his friend's energetic march to and fro.

"The artistic profession," cried the pedestrian, "has been held up to the scorn of the world since painting began. Read any novel and you will see that, if the heroine is to make a doocedly bad marriage, she invariably falls in love with an artist—invariably."

"Well—she generally marries us."

"Yes, and lives in misery ever after."

"Oh, we're generous, and share it with her."

"You see what I mean. The artist is held up to contempt, and all respectable people in the book are aghast at the girl's choice. Now, why is this?"

"Ask me a harder one. It is because fiction is notoriously untrue to life. The wives of the Royal Academy live in splendor and luxury undreamed of by the ordinary lady of title."

"Nothing of the sort. It's because the artists don't business manage themselves. They have no commercial sense. Therefore they are poor. Now, if a man invents a soap, what does he do?"

"Washes himself."

"He advertises it. He becomes rich. Why, then, if a man writes a great book, should he not advertise himself and his book in every way that is open to him?"

"I believe he does, Barney. Where have you been living this while back to be so ignorant of the approved modern methods in art and literature?"

"Isn't a great picture of more value to the world than a much-advertised soap?"

"Well, if you ask me, I should say no. I'd take the soap as a civilizer against the Louvre any day."

Barney stopped in his walk, raised his arms above his head, and let them drop heavily to his sides.

"I haven't a friend in the world," he cried, in tragic tones. "Not one—not one."

"Barney, this conversation is bewildering. What are you driving at, anyhow? Art, soap, literature, advertising, friendship, marriage—what's wrong? Who is the woman?"

"Don't talk to me about women. I hate them."

"I thought you were most successful in that line. I believe I have your own authority for the statement."

"Success! One is successful up to a point, then there is a disappointment that shows what a sham success has been. I'll never speak to a woman again."

"I've been there myself—several times. Still, we always return—if not to our first love, to our fourth or fifth. As for friends, I don't know any man who has more."

"Not true friends, Haldiman. I haven't one, I tell you. I did think you were a friend, and you do nothing but sneer at me. You think I don't see it. I do, all the same. I'm the most sensitive of men, although nobody appears to appreciate it."

"I don't sneer at you, Barney. What put that into your head? I think you sometimes fail to appreciate other people's sensitiveness. You are a trifle prone to flaunt Bank of England notes in the faces of those not so well provided with them as you are. Then the sensitive soul rises in rebellion."

"That's my unfortunate manner Haldiman. I really don't mean to do so. If I had a game leg or a club foot and came thumping in here with it you wouldn't make fun of my defect would you? Of course not. Well, why should you resent a defect of manner when you know my intentions are good?"

"I don't resent anything about you, Barney—at least, only spasmodically."

"You know I'd go to the end of the world to serve a friend—I would, honest; yet I've no luck. Here is a poor devil of a musician I'm trying to befriend. I can see he dislikes me intensely. I got a publisher to bring out some of his music—paid all the expenses—yet it was like pulling teeth to get that organist to allow me to help him, and he's a genius if there ever was one. I got a select and appreciative audience together to hear him play. He didn't come, although he promised to do so, and the people thought I was trying to make fools of them. It must all be my accursed manner. Now you always know the right thing to say. I don't. My genius doesn't run that way. I'm an artist."

Haldiman threw back his head and laughed. Barney stared at him, displeasure on his brow.

"What the deuce are you laughing at now?"

"Forgive me, Barney; I'm laughing at the thumping of your club foot, although you did not believe me capable of it."

"What have I said?"

"Nothing—nothing. Barney, I love you. You are the one and only Barnard Hope; all others are base imitations. Now listen to me. I haven't the faintest idea what it is you want. This conversation has been simply encyclopaedic in the amount of ground covered; but I'll do for you what you would do for me, short of abduction or assassination. I'd prefer not to land myself in prison, if you don't mind, but I'll even run the risk of that. What do you want? Out with it."

"But the moment I begin you'll say you're insulted. You terrorize me Haldiman, 'pon my soul, you do."

"Go on. For ten minutes insults are barred. Will you go on?"

"Very well. I asked you how much you made in a year, and you jeered at me."

"I never keep accounts, and never pay a debt until the brokers come in, so I really haven't the slightest idea. You can guess at the amount just as well as I can. Guess and proceed."

"All right. I want to pay you double your yearly income for your help in this matter."

"That isn't friendship; that's commercialism again. I beg pardon, I forgot. Don't look daggers, Barney. I accept. Can I have the money in advance?"

"Of course you can," cried Barney gleefully, making a dive for his inside pocket; then, as the other went into a fit of laughter, the joyful look faded into an expression of intense indignation, and Barney, with a curse, strode to the door. Haldiman sprang to his feet and grasped the offended man by the shoulders.

"None of that," he cried. "Come back, you villain. You are not going to offer me a fortune and then sneak off in that fashion. Sit down, Barney; sit down and go on with the pretty talk."

"Oh, it's no use," said the other, in tones of deep dejection. "I said I hadn't a friend in the world, and I haven't."

"Bosh. You're harder to h[illegible]r than a baby. If a man may no[illegible]le in his own room, where may [illegible] I'm intensely interested and wan[illegible] to know what crime I'm expected to commit, [illegible] Never mind the money, but state your case."

"The money is part of the case. I pay or I don't play."

"Certainly. That's understood. I accept. Fire away."

"Well, you know all the editors of the illustrated weeklies and magazines."

"For my sins I do—alas."

"Then, to come right to the point as between man and man, I want to buy a first class critic and the editor of a first class illustrated periodical."

"You mean you want to buy a going magazine?"

"I don't mean anything of the kind. I mean just what I say."

"Then I don't quite understand you. Explain."

"What I want is this: I want a first-class art critic to write an article in a first-class periodical saying that Barnard Hope is the greatest artist the world has ever seen."

"Oh, is that all?"

"No, that's not all. I want the article superbly illustrated—in color, if possible—with reproductions of my chief paintings."

"Ah, I wouldn't do that, Barney, if I were you. The pictures would be rather a give-away of the great critic's eulogy."

"Yes, I knew you would say that. The obviousness of such a remark would command itself to you. But you see I'm perfectly frank with you. Now, could you manage this for me? Remember, I don't care how much money I spend."

Haldiman removed the black pipe from his mouth, knocked the ashes out of it, and thoughtfully refilled it.

"Well, for brazen cheek, Barney," he said at last, "that proposal"——

"Yes, I know, I know, I know. But these things happen every day—or, not to exaggerate, let us say every second day. It is simply doing for me what Ruskin did for Turner. Turner painted away all his life; nobody recognized him, and he died in Chelsea. Now I'm living in Chelsea, and I want recognition during my life. Of course, my Ruskin will come along after I'm dead; but, like the fellow who was to be executed, I won't be there to enjoy it. Things rarely happen at the right moment in this world, and my brazen proposal is merely to take events by the coat collar and hurry them up a bit. You see what I mean. Besides, I am infinitely greater than Turner, don't you know."

Haldiman smoked and meditated for some moments; then he said:

"I'm not sure but the trick may be done, although I doubt if brutal barefaced bribery will do it. How would a magazine like 'Our National Art' suit you?"

"Perfectly. What he says is taken for gospel all the world over."

"Well, I happen to know that the editor of 'Our National Art' has been trying for a year to get Vielleme to write about English art, but the Frenchman won't come over to London, even for a day, at any price. Vielleme is great as a writer, but greater still as a money spender. I'll run over to Paris and sound him. You couldn't bribe the editor of 'Our National Art,' but he will print anything Vielleme will write for him. Now I know the Frenchman doesn't care what he writes for England, although he is rather particular about what appears in Paris. He thinks there is no art in England."

"He's right, too, as far as his knowledge goes; but he's never seen anything of mine."

"Just so. Then, if Vielleme agrees, you would be willing to send some of your immortal works over to Paris for his inspection."

"All of them, my boy, all of them."

"Then we'll look on that as settled. I'll do my best."

"God bless you, my dear fellow! God bless you!" cried Barney with deep emotion, crushingly wringing the hand of the wincing man, whom he now declared to be his one friend on earth. He clattered noisily down the stairs like a stalwart trooper, sprang into the waiting hansom, and departed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Marsten went to work with an energy and singleness of purpose which probably no organizer of labor ever felt before. Chance, or destiny, had plaed him in exactly the position he had long hoped to attain. At first there was little to be done but wait until the union had recovered from the wounds received in the late fruitless struggle; nevertheless, while he waited, he planned, and gradually developed, the scheme which he hoped would revolutionize the labor of the world. He saw in the future one vast republic of workers—not bounded by nationality, but spreading over the entire earth—with its foothold wherever one man toiled with his hands to enrich another. He had no delusions regarding the immediate success of his project, and did not flatter himself that his ideas would spread with anything like the rapidity of cholera, for example, but he hoped first to place the union on a firm footing in England, and then, with a brilliantly successful strike—conducted as a general of genuis conducts a battle—to show what might be done by a thoroughly well organized force against a rich and powerful firm like that of Monkton & Hope. He looked forward to the time when every worker in England would be a member of the union; after that he hoped to affiliate all the workers in all English speaking countries; finally, the benighted foreigner would be included. Then, when the whole was united like an electric installation in a city, the unfortunate capitalist who placed a finger on one point would receive the combined current of the entire system and die without knowing what hurt him.

The equipment of the workers would be so complete that strikes would become fewer and fewer, and finally cease; just as war will cease when weapons of offense reach such a state of perfection that no nation will dare to pick a quarrel with another.

This great republic of labor would be divided into various states, and these states would be again subdivided into as many sections as experience showed to be most practicable. Each section would elect its secretary, the secretaries would elect a governor of the state, the governors would elect a president of the whole organization. Every official should be paid a salary, sufficient, even in the lesser offices, to keep the incumbent and his family without the necessity of manual labor, so that each officer's whole time could be given for the benefit of the union.

Marsten gave much thought to the problem of reconciling deserved promotion with popular election, and, perhaps, if he had known more of the results of universal suffrage in a city like New York, he might have reconstructed his whole plan, but he had full belief in the adage that the voice of the people coincides with that of the Almighty, and so, perhaps, did not quite appreciate the practical difficulties which lay in wait for a scheme that looked beautiful on paper.

Early experience convinced him that he could hope for no active assistance from the men themselves, and he promptly eliminated that factor from his calculations. He thought of beginning his fight with an educational campaign, using in this way the time which must elapse before the treasury of the union was once more in funds, but he found he could never get more than half a dozen of the men together at one time, and those who came to the meetings he called seemed to take but slight interest in what he had to say. This did not discourage him, as he was, in a measure, prepared for the indifference he met; and he remembered that his great model, Napoleon, took no one into his confidence. Napoleon struck unexpectedly—struck quick and struck hard—and Marsten resolved to do the same the moment he had the power. Failing to interest the men collectively in the desirability of a close and universal union, Marsten tried to win their separate confidence, but he soon discovered that in attempting this he was traveling a dangerous road. He was amazed to find that there existed a latent sullen opposition to him; that many of the men seemed to regret the generous impulse which had caused them to place him where he was. They could not see what he did to earn the money he received; some thought they were giving him too much, as he had no work to do, and more than once advised him to keep quiet and leave the men alone, to know when he was well off, and not to turn the thoughts of the members to the fact that they were supporting him in idleness and luxury.

(To Be Continued.)

ANECDOTES OF SHELBY.

An Old Comrade Tells of the Famous Confederate Fighter.

Kansas City Star: "No man could ride with Jo Shelby for four years and be worth his salt at anything else," said Major J. F. Stonestreet today. "I did it, and ought to know. I have not been worth killing since."

Major Stonestreet was an associate of General Shelby in his boyhood, and was with him through the war. Perhaps no man in Kansas City had a more intimate acquaintance with the dead general.

"Shelby was essentially military," Major Stonestreet went on. "He loved the life. Its dangers, labors, rough living and brilliant successes suited him down to the ground. If he had been so placed that [illegible] of his years could have been spent in war he would have been the happiest man on earth. To him the soldier's life was the happiest of lives; the soldier's death the death of deaths. He was fond of his men, but he did not spare them. In his four years of campaigning many, very many, of them were killed. He was not sentimental about it. They took their chances, he used to say. He exposed them to no dangers that he did not share himself. He, too, took his chances.

"He was morbidly sensitive about the conduct of his men—the more so that they bore the reputation of 'raiders,' which, it must be confessed, they earned. Hard riding and fighting make a hard appetite, and they were no respecters of other people's pigs and poultry. Once we were half-starving in Arkansas. Shelby and I rode down to the White river to water our horses. A detachment of the troops was doing the same thing just below us. Among them was Dick Gentry, now of Kansas City. He was a gallant private and a good fellow. Slung across his saddle was a sack, carefully tied and bleeding at one end.

"'What you got there?' demanded Shelby.

"'Been havin' my clothes washed,' said Gentry.

"'You'd better get back to camp,' said the general, 'or your clothes will bleed to death.'

"Gentry was put in the guardhouse. That night a quarter of fresh pork found its way to Shelby's tent. 'I haven't an idea where this came from,' he said, as he looked at it hungrily, 'but go round to the guardhouse, orderly, and tell 'em to turn Gentry loose. There's no use in keeping a man shut up all of his life for a little laundry.'

"We were down in Texas," continued Mr. Stonestreet, "when we got the news of Lincoln's assassination. The men were on review, and the intelligence went down the line like a flash. Some of them foolishly cheered.

"'Boys,' said General Shelby, sitting erect on his horse, with one hand raised in air and his head bared, 'this is the heaviest blow yet dealt us. Lincoln's slaughter was the act of a madman. If he had lived he would have been just and generous to the south.'

"Major-General Holmes was in command of our part of the transmissisippi department. He was a West-pointer. President Davis was a West-pointer also, and thought that no man could be a soldier unless he bore the hall-mark of that academy. Therefore, he appointed Holmes, who was a gentleman and well-meaning, but stiff-necked and dull. Holmes sent for Shelby.

"'General,' he said, when the cavalry leader appeared, 'your men have been stealing, and it must be stopped. They are thieves.'

"'Sir,' said Shelby, 'whoever told you so lies.'

"'I believe it is true,' said Holmes.

"'Why?' asked Shelby.

"'Because everybody says so.'

"'Do you believe a thing when everybody says so?'

"'I do!'

"'Do you know what everybody says about you?'

"'I do not. What do they say?'

"'They say that you are a d—d old fool,' and Shelby walked out.

"'What is more,' continued Mr. Stonestreet, 'Shelby was right. Men can't fight and starve, too.

"General Shelby was a soldier only. As a man of business he was a failure. Into business life he brought the same bold policies that distinguished him in war times, the same dash and the same recklessness, and they wouldn't do. He would lend money to anybody who asked for it, taking no security, and to have served in his command was an open road to his purse. To the day of his death he was beset by hangers-on who had known him in war time. He seemed never to weary of them or to learn that they were leeches."

DENVER'S NEW ART GALLERY.

A Temporary Building of Staff to be Erected at Once.

Denver News: Ever since the public meeting held by the Denver Artists' club, some weeks ago, at which time plans for an art gallery were considered, the members of the club have been busy, and now advance with the settled plan to erect an art gallery on one of the small triangular plats of ground on Park avenue, which belong to the city. The park commissioners, who control the ground, have announced their willingness to allow the Art club to build on one of these plats and will probably take more formal action today. The spot selected for the building will be between Colfax and Seventeenth avenues.

These triangles, which have mostly been turned into small parks by the park commissioners, are about 100 feet long on each side, and will allow the erection of a handsome and roomy building for the purpose of displaying pictures. The commissioners will make an arrangement with the Art club whereby the city will receive a share of the fees, and this money will be devoted to the purchase of new pictures, which will be placed in the gallery. Admission to the gallery will be free, and the gallery will be conducted on much the same principle as those in eastern cities.

The building will be constructed of staff at first, and will cost between $1,500 and $3,000. As funds are accumulated the staff structure will be covered with stone and thus a permanent and durable building secured.

The Art club has been negotiating for some time for this site from the city on which to build, and it is said that the terms are most satisfactory. The triangular tracts along Park avenue are practically useless to the city at present, and one of them will furnish an ideal location for an art gallery. The triangularity will admit of something new and novel being erected and a handsome edifice may be looked for. Several architects have already submitted plans for an oblong art gallery, which, of course, have prover superfluous, now that a three-sided creation has been decided upon. There are a number of architects who are members of the club, and it will not be long until their ingenuity will be made evident in further designs.

If there is any Difference between the Three Crown and those conceded by almost everybody to be the best powders on the market, the Three Crown Baking Powder, manufactured by Hewlett Bros., has the greatest leavening strength and purity.

J. T. KINGSBURY, Chemist, University of Utah.