FROM WALL ST. TO NEWGATE VIA THE PRIMROSE WAY.

BY AUSTIN BIDWELL.

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CHAPTER I.

One day in Newgate by some extraordinary chance I found a pin, and up in the darkest corner of the cell wall I scratched on the paint:

Let the stricken deer go weep
And the hart ungalled play,
For some must watch, while some must sleep.
Thus runs the world away.

These lines were there through all the agony of my incarceration and trial, but when the thunderbolt fell and I was walking back to that little room with the doom of "life" pronounced upon me what thought do you suppose came rushing into my mind?

There was I walking through the underground stone corridor leading from the Old Bailey courtroom to my cell, doomed to lifelong imprisonment, and the uppermost thought in my mind was of the lines I had scratched on that wall. I said to myself they were too gloomy and depressing; that it was a cowardly thought and message to leave behind me for some other unfortunate inmate, and I resolved, if it escaped the Philistines' paint pot, to leave a message of hope or high resolve. When the next morning came—Thursday it was and the first of sentence—I scratched these lines:

In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men.

An hour after I was insane. My mind became a blank, and I knew and remembered no more until the following Sunday, when I awoke like one out of a trance and found myself in a convict uniform in a cell, and there, with that brick arch over my head and the stone floor under my feet, for 20 years I lived and moved and had my being. We lived in South Brooklyn, near to old No. 13, the Degraw street public school. To that I was sent, and there got all the education I was ever fated to have at any school except the school of life and experience.

I attended for some years, and even now I cannot recall without a smile the absurd incompetency of every one connected with the institution and their utter ignorance of the art of imparting knowledge to children.

At home I had picked up that grand art of reading and went to school to learn the other two R's, with any trifle that I might come across floating around promiscuously. I certainly hope our much lauded public schools are conducted on better lines now than then; if not, they are frauds from the foundation.

It was all very pitiful. My blood boils even now when I think of the traitors chosen and paid to see me fully equipped and armed to begin the battle of life who let me with plaster weapons which would shiver into fragments at the first shock of conflict.

I left James A. of old No. 13, with its algebra, logic, philosophy (heaven save the word!) and advanced grammar, unable to write a grammatical sentence. Indeed I took it for granted that in the good old days Adam had invented the word such as he named the animals, and, of course, supposed that he spoke good English. The knowledge of history I gained at No. 13 was strictly limited and exceedingly primitive. I knew the Jews in the old days were a bad lot; that Brutus had slain Cæsar; that the Mayflower had landed our fathers on Plymouth Rock; that wicked George III was a tyrant, and that the boys in Boston had thrown a teakettle at his head. I knew all about our George and the cherry tree, and there my historical knowledge ended.

So here I was launched out in the world a model scholar—exampled as proficient in grammar, history, logic, philosophy and arithmetic, but yet in useful knowledge a barbarian, unable to spell or even write a grammatical letter and unversed in the ways of the world—a world, too, where I would be cast entirely upon my own resources.

My home life was happy. My father had lost his grip on the world, but his faith in the Unseen remained. My mother, caring little for this life, lived in and for the spiritual. To her heaven was a place as much as the country village where she was born. She was never tired of talking to us children about its golden streets and the rest there after the toils and pains of life. But, boylike, we discounted all she said and felt we wanted some of this world before we knocked at the gates of the next.

Every night of my life in those days she would come to my bed to pray over me, ever saying, as she kissed me or clasped my hand, "My son, remember if you were to pass your whole life here in poverty and hardship it would not much matter so long as you attain to the heavenly rest." This teaching would have been well had she only taught me some worldly wisdom with it, but then all essential knowledge was kept from me, I being left to learn the ways of man in that terrible school of experience, the consequence being that when after some months I was launched out in life I was a ripe and apt victim to be caught in the world's huge snare. In fact, had my parents designed me to become a traveler in the Primrose Way they could not have educated me to better purpose.

Save when in the school I had never been permitted to associate with other boys, but was kept in the house, and up to my sixteenth year hardly dreamed there was evil in the world. I was told much about the "wicked," but thought that meant those who smoked tobacco or drank whisky. I hardly thought any women came under that category; but, if any, then it must mean those who came around selling apples and oranges. The reader will see that when once away from the shelter of home, in threading the world's devious ways, I would be crossing the roaring torrent "on the perilous footing of a spear," all but certain to fall into the flood beneath.

During my last year at school and for a long time after leaving it my father and mother were never tired of talking about my good education. Possibly they were not very good judges, but I am confident that they, after all, did not realize the importance of a boy being well equipped in that regard. Their thoughts and minds were so bent on the other world and things unseen bulked so hugely on their mental vision that there was small space left for things of this earth. They, good, simple souls, were made for and ought to have lived in the golden age, when all men were brave and all women true, where neighborly eyes reflected the love and faith within, but in our utilitarian days they were sadly out of place, and little wonder if they had lost their way in this world.

In their intense longing for the life beyond the grave, their passionate desire to walk the streets of gold, they, by their actions, seemed to forget we were on this earth, and that we were here with many sharp reminders of the fact.

The same guilelessness was manifested in their choice of our home readings. The books I was allowed access to in the house were "The Life of King David," "The History of Jerusalem," "Baxter's Saints' Rest," "The Immortal Dreamer's Pilgrim" and Fox's "Book of Martyrs." His first martyr is Stephen, and such was my gross ignorance of history that I always supposed Stephen had been martyred by the Church of Rome. Here was mental food for a boy who had his own way to make in the world.

Craving other mental food than "The Life of David," I used to dish pennies with a chum and buy that delectable sheet, "Ned Buntline's Own," then in fear and trembling would creep to an upper room and read "The Haunted House" or "The Ghost of Castle Ivy" until my hair stood on end in a sort of ecstatic horror, or the stirring adventures of "Jack the Rover" or "Pirate Chief" until my brain took fire and my heady impulse stirred every fiber, impelling me to follow in their footsteps.

I had remained idly at home for some six months after my happy release from school, when one night my father returned from New York and said, "My son, I have found a situation for you." That was delightful news, and when I went to bed that night I was too excited to sleep.

So now at 18 I was about to sail out of harbor, and how equipped!

Absolutely without education, void of worldly wisdom and in my boyish brain dividing the world into two sections. In one was King David slaying the Philistines or dancing before the ark. In the other were Jack the Rover and the Pirate Chief. How easy to guess the sequel! Yet I was not a bad boy—far from it. I only needed wise guidance and good companionship, and as the ignorance and credulity of my character dropped off the innate virtue—mine by lawful heritage—would have been developed. But pitchforked into the wild whirl of Wall street and its fast set of gilded youth, the gates of the Primrose Way to destruction were held wide open to my eager feet.

The situation my father had obtained for me was with a sugar broker of the name of Waterbury. He was a partner in a large refinery, his office being in South Water street. He was a nice, conservative old man and let things run on easily. His chief clerk, Mr. Ambler, was every inch a gentleman, who, quickly perceiving what an ignoramus I was, out of the goodness of his heart resolved to teach me something.

There were two sharp young men in our office. They liked me well enough, but used to guy me unmercifully for my simplicity and clumsiness. One of them, Harry by name, was something of a scapegrace, and soon acquired quite a power over me. I stood in much fear of his ridicule and frequently did things for which my conscience reproached me rather than stand the fire of his raillery. The greatest harm he did me was in firing my imagination with stories of Wall street, of the fortunes that were and could be made in the goldroom or on 'change. He made tolerably clear the modus operandi of speculators, and I secretly resolved that some day I, too, would try my fortune.

My friend Mr. Ambler's health was bad, and frequent attacks of illness caused him to be away from the office for weeks at a time, and that meant much loss to me. When I had been there about a year he resigned his position and went as manager for a factory in New Haven. But before leaving he interested himself so far in my welfare as to secure me a position with a firm of brokers in New street at a salary of $10 a week. My employers were good fellows, lovers of pleasure and men of the world, not scrupling to talk freely with me of their various adventures out of business hours. I had lost much of my awkwardness and gauche manners, and under the $10 a week arrangement began to dress fairly well. My employers did a brokerage business and speculated as well on their own account.

My duties were decidedly light and pleasant and brought me into contact with some of the sharpest as well as the most famous men in the street. Among them was a brilliant young man of my own age, who took a great fancy to me and frequently proposed that we should start for ourselves. Being doubtful of my powers, I shrank from risking my scanty funds in any speculative venture. Much to my mother's concern I had begun attending the theater, and one night on my friend Ned's invitation I went with him to Niblo's. After the performance we went to supper at Delmonico's, and I was perfectly fascinated by the company and surroundings, going home long past midnight a different man than I had last left it.

The next day Ed came to the office and invited me to lunch, when, after [illegible] disparaging remarks about the country cut of my garments, he offered to introduce me to his tailor, who was never in a hurry for his money. After business that day we walked up town together, and, prompted by Ed, I ordered $150 worth of garments, then went to his outfitter and ordered nearly an equal amount in shirts, ties, gloves, etc.

One [illegible] that when, a few days later, I walked down to our office, [illegible] my employers raised my salary to $20 a week, but this left me poorer than when I had [illegible] my poor little $10. Soon after, [illegible] by Ed, I ventured $50 on a margin in gold. [illegible] I won, invested [illegible] and within 14 days was [illegible]. I paid my tailor and [illegible] a $100 [illegible] supper on borrowed money. [illegible] after this I [illegible] the St. Nicholas, the then fashionable hotel. From that time I [illegible] and more away from the influence of [illegible].

[illegible] on our own account under the name of E. Ward & Co. My partner's parents were wealthy, and his father had been well known in the street, which gave us standing.

[illegible] years I speak of were fortunate ones for Wall street, [illegible] of every kind on the boom, the general wealth of the country running up, [illegible] bonds and every kind of speculative enterprise being launched. Our firm history was the usual one of broker firms in that tumultuous epoch—the Wall street of those days—commissions in plenty, [illegible] in plenty, but one's bank account never growing, for what was made by day in those [illegible] excitement of glittering values was thrown away amid wilder scenes at night. Those, too, were indeed the flush times for the professional gambler, for men were [illegible] they burned the candle at both ends. Day faro banks were open everywhere around the exchange, and enormous sums were nightly staked in the up town games. These were everywhere, all protected, and the proprietors invested their money for rent, fixtures, etc., with as much confidence and kept their doors open as freely as if embarked in a legitimate speculation. Hundreds who spent the business hours of the day in the mad excitement of the exchange flocked around the green cloth at night, devoting the same intensity of thought and brain to the turning of a card which earlier in the day they had given to the market reports of the world. Shall I wonder that death cut such wide swaths in the army of brokers. Statistics show that it was more fatal to belong to that army than to an army in the field.

We had latterly somewhat neglected business, our real business being at night, when we made the pursuit of pleasure hard work. Soon the finances of our firm not only ran low, but were on three several occasions exhausted, so that we not only had recourse to borrowing, but were barely saved from bankruptcy by liberal donations from Ed's parents. His father was a fine, jolly old gentleman and took it quite as a matter of course that it was his duty to help us off the rocks when we ran on them. My partner took everything easy, but I, having no indulgent parent behind me ever ready to draw a check, began to be uneasy over the financial situation. Strangely enough, however, it never occurred to me to cut down my personal expenses, and I continued living at the same extravagant rate as when money was plenty, dining and wining and being dined and wined. Just here an important character, one destined to have an influence for evil on my future life, came upon the scene, and I will halt for a moment in my narrative to give some account of him.

This man was James Irving, popularly known as Jimmy Irving, chief of the New York detective force, and a bad hearted, worthless scamp he was. I was with several friends in the Fifth Avenue hotel one cold January night when he came in and one of our party, knowing him, introduced us. He was a man of medium height, rather heavy set, blond mustache, pleasant eyes, but with a weak mouth and chin and a flushed face, telling a tale of dissipation. It was when Boss Tweed ruled supreme in New York, and the whole administration was honeycombed with corruption. Except under similar political conditions could such a man attain to so responsible an office in a great city as that of chief of the detective force—a position which at that time invested him with all but autocratic power, an old rounder and barroom loafer, without one attribute of true manliness and not possessed of any quality which would point him out as a fit man for the place. Nevertheless, when the position became vacant his political pull caused his selection. From being a mere detective on the staff he became chief. And truly this meant something in those days. The great civil war had but lately ended, and the country was still reeling from the mighty conflict. The flush times resultant from the enormous money issue of the government kept everything booming. The foundations of society were shaken, and vice no longer hid itself in the dark caves and dens of the great city.

But to return to my friend, Captain Jim Irving, who, before our party had separated, had opened three bottles of wine. Before leaving I had asked him to call on me at the St. Nicholas. The next day he came and invited me to take a drive with him to Fordham the following Sunday. On Sunday he appeared behind a fast trotting horse and in every respect an elegant turnout.

Soon after dark we returned to my hotel, and after dinner, lighting our cigars, we started for police headquarters. There he attended to some routine business, having first introduced me to two of his chief detectives. Many who read this will recognize the men, but in this narrative they will be known as Stanley and White. I will not further describe them now, but as they will appear in the story from time to time the reader will be able to judge what manner of men they were.

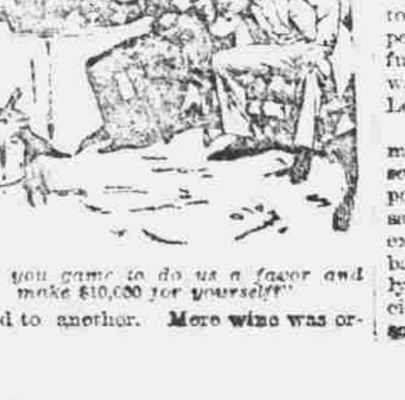
For the next eight weeks my life went on much the same as usual. In our business we made some money, but by one unfortunate investment lost our entire capital, and, what proved worse for me, my partner's health began to fail. Dissipation, late and heavy dinners and irregular hours began to break a not overstrong constitution; consequently one Saturday he abruptly announced his intention of withdrawing from the partnership to take a trip to Europe. There was nothing to divide save the furniture in our office, which he presented to me. The following Wednesday he sailed with two members of his family. I saw him off, bidding him what proved to be a last farewell. I left the wharf feeling very lonely and miserable. It may be well to remark here that he died a year later in Italy, the mere victim of a fast life, while I was scared, but took no warning from his fate. In truth I was in the Primrose Way, which is ever found a most [illegible] and unhappy thoroughfare.

Meeting Irving from time to time, he was most flattering in his attentions, while I was young enough and silly enough to be pleased with his notice. [illegible] this time I met him while coming out of Wallack's theater. Shaking hands warmly he invited me to supper at what was then known as [illegible] Delmonico's. After supper, walking [illegible] Broadway and Eleventh street, we found Detectives Stanley and White. Here wine was ordered, and long after midnight we parted, they first having exacted a promise to dine with them the following night at Delmonico's, at the same time stating that they wished to make me a business proposition.

At 11 I arrived and entered the restaurant, was at once recognized by a waiter, evidently on the lookout, and ushered into a private room up stairs. Only White had arrived, but soon Irving and Stanley came, and supper was ordered. With such gentry as these wine is always in order. Then they became confidential, and the conversation turned to the subject of making money. Very skillfully they extracted the confession that I had none. When excited by the talk and the wine I cried out, "By heaven, I want money!" Stanley grasped my hand and said, "Of course you do; a man's a fool without it." Irving interjected, "Are you game to do us a favor and make $10,000 for yourself?" "But how?" I gasped. "Go to Europe and negotiate some stolen bonds we have, will you?"

For $10,000 to become accessory to a crime!

It was an appalling proposition, and I shrank from it with an aversion I could not conceal any more than he and his confederates could conceal their chagrin over the way I took it and over the fact that their secret had been imparted to another. More wine was ordered, and before we parted I had promised not only secrecy; but, worse still, I had also promised to consider the proposition and give my answer the following night.



"Are you game to do us a favor and make $10,000 for yourself?"

As my evil genius would have it, that very morning I had a visit in my office from the agent of my landlord requesting arrears of rent and from a tradesman whom I was owing demanding immediate payment of an overdue bill.

Pressed for money as I was, the $10,000 seemed a large sum and offered an easy way out of my difficulties. I shall never forget that day nor how its slow minutes dragged during the mental struggle. Time after time I said, "What could I not do with $10,000?" How vast the possibilities before me with that sum at my command! Then, after all, had not the owner of these bonds lost them forever, and why should not I have a share instead of letting these villain detectives keep all? And through all I kept saying to myself: "This of course is only speculation. I will never do this thing."

At last the stars came out, and I started for a long walk alone up Broadway to Fifth avenue and into the park. Since that park was formed few men have ever passed its walks in whose bosoms raged such a tumult as in mine. I was young, in love with pleasure, and poverty seemed a fearful thing. I kept saying, "I cannot do this thing," and then I would add, "How am I to keep up appearances and how am I to pay my debts?" Unhappily I had taken an enemy into the citadel. In the misery of the struggle I drank heavily.

In my excitement I exaggerated my poverty until it seemed impersonated and assumed the guise of an enemy threatening to enslave me. From 8 o'clock to 11 I paced that mall, and then left it to keep my appointment with Irving & Co., with one thought surging through my brain, and that was that I dared not be poor, the result being that before we parted, to their renewed question, "Will you do this for us?" "Of course I will!" I cried, and my feet had slipped a good many steps farther down the Primrose Way to death.

The present generation has become tolerably familiar with defalcations and robberies involving enormous sums. Previous to 1861 they were comparatively unknown, the reason being that the currency of the country was strictly limited. There were absolutely no government bonds of currency, while the few bonds issued by corporations were not usually made payable to bearer and therefore were not negotiable and were of no use to the robber. But in 1861, to meet the expenses of the war, the state banks were taxed out of existence and our present national currency system came into being. In addition to the enormous issue of greenbacks, bonds payable to bearer amounting to hundreds of millions were issued by the general government, by the individual states, counties, towns and cities, all becoming popular investments. The business of the express companies of the United States took a new phase, and for the first time in their history they began to be the carriers of vast sums from city to city. Then it was that those gentlemen who work without the pale of the law discovered new prospects of wealth and realized that even to crack a safe or vault of a private firm would be rewarded by a find of bonds that might amply repay all risks of robbery under police protection, while to execute a successful raid on a car or even an express delivery wagon on the street would mean wealth. To burglarize the vaults of a bank meant, if undetected, anything from opening a magnificent bar or hotel in New York to a steam yacht and winter cruises in the tropics and summer nights on the Mediterranean.

The first coup in this line, which at once became famous, was startling in its ease and magnitude. It was known and still is as "the Lord bond robbery." Lord was a very wealthy man, who had inherited his millions. His office was in Broad street, where he managed his estates. He had invested $1,200,000 in 5-20 bonds, all payable to bearer. For the thief, if he had any knowledge of finance and knew how to negotiate them, such a sum as this in bonds was better than the same amount in gold.

This was really the first of many great bond robberies, and it struck the popular fancy, but it stirred Wall street greatly. Who shall describe the frenzy of excitement that broke out at 300 Mulberry street—police headquarters—when the first vague rumors of a gigantic robbery were fully confirmed and it became known that Ned Ennis and his gang had a million and more of plunder?

All rings and pulls and gangs were smashed, combined and recombined again, while each and all were in an agony of fear lest the booty should be returned to the owner, minus a percentage divided between the gang and the ring, or sold to some clever fence, who would place the bonds away safely and sell them in Europe from time to time, keeping all for himself and they to have no share. What visions of diamond pins, of eight or twelve carats, all Brazilian stones, of swift, high stepping horses, of the heaven of Harlem lane on Sunday afternoons, with a bottle or two under the vest, haunted the sleep of all the detective force.

What a look of relief and triumph swept over the faces of Irving, Stanley and White when I gave my consent to their proposal to take the stolen bonds to Europe and negotiate them there.

They told me many amusing lies as to how the securities came into their possession and as to who were the rightful owners. The truth was, as I afterward learned, they were a part of the Lord bond robbery.

The next morning, Tuesday, Irving met me near the exchange and with some trepidation drew from an inner pocket an envelope containing the thousand dollar bond. Without waiting to examine it I walked off, saying, "I'll be back in ten minutes." He was evidently alarmed, and, like all rogues, suspicious of every one. He probably had some wild idea that I was laying a trap for him. In his ignorance of money methods he thought it would be a long, perhaps difficult, negotiation to borrow money on the bond, but of course I made short work of it, and Jimmy was more than delighted when within the ten minutes I walked in with ten one hundreds in my hand. A trifle like this made a great impression upon Irving, and from that time on I had his entire confidence. Tuesday evening I said goodby to my mother, merely remarking in explanation of my journey that I had a commission given me to execute in Europe. Leaving her, I went to our rendezvous, near Broadway and Astor place, where I found Irving, who handed me over his "boodle," as he termed it, remarking confidentially that I was to give him on my return his share into his own hands, and, singularly enough, each of the others did precisely the same thing. About 11 o'clock the other two came in, and after some parley White handed over his bonds, and Stanley informed me he would give me his on board before the steamer sailed the next morning. I had already paid my bill and sent my baggage over to Jersey City, so about midnight I set out, they accompanying me as far as the ferry, and there, after shaking hands a half dozen times, we said goodby. Having bought my ticket and engaged my cabin, I went direct to the steamer and went to bed. In the morning Stanley appeared and gave me his bonds. Ten minutes later the hawsers were cast off, and we were steaming down the bay. Two hours later Fire island sank beneath the horizon, and we were alone on the sea.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A PUZZLED PHILOSOPHER.

Why Should He So Greatly Miss the Things That Are Not?

A philosopher dwelt in a house owned by Cleon. But one day Cleon came to the philosopher and said, "Why have you not sent me the money for last month's rent?" The philosopher said he knew of no reason except that he had no money, having gotten to the bottom of his purse.

"You will have to move out," said Cleon, "to make room for a cordwainer I know who wants this house and has money."

"Would you, then," said the philosopher, "turn me out when I am so comfortable here, having dwelt in this house 30 years?"

"It is my comfort," said Cleon, "and not yours that I consider."

"Then you prefer a cordwainer, I conclude, to a philosopher."

"No," said Cleon; "a landlord has no preference except to prefer rent money to no rent money."

So the cordwainer moved into the philosopher's house, and the philosopher went to live in the mean hovel of the cordwainer.

But once there, although contented enough, because he was a philosopher, yet he could not avoid the obtrusive facts of the absence of all those things which in his former habitation had grown habitual to him.

This was the first thing that puzzled him—how that which was not could be so obtrusive. "What," said he, "can be so entirely nonexistent as a negation? And yet here I am confronted with an obtrusive negation."

"I miss," said he again, "a chest of drawers, a table, a fireplace and the scenery from the window where I used to sit. I wonder if it will be so after we are driven out from our bodies because death, the final, inexorable landlord, demands a rental we cannot pay."

In time, however, the philosopher gradually ceased being oppressed by the obtrusive memories and grew accustomed to new associations.

"I wonder," said he, "if it will be so when we are immortals—after death at first painful regrets for what we have lost, and in the end nothing of the old but faint memories and a new set of associations. I wonder always and wonder most if philosophy will ever be anything better than clever wondering about the wonderful."—Chicago Open Court.

LORILLARD'S ROSE LEAF CUT PLUG

If one knew the price before trying it, he'd be surprised to find it so good. If one learned the price after smoking it, he'd be astonished to find it so cheap. Big Value and Little Money never got closer than in this tobacco.

B L

Why chew cheap stuff! when for the same money you can get B. L. Tobacco. It is best and cheapest, as it is made from the best leaf—Lasts longest.