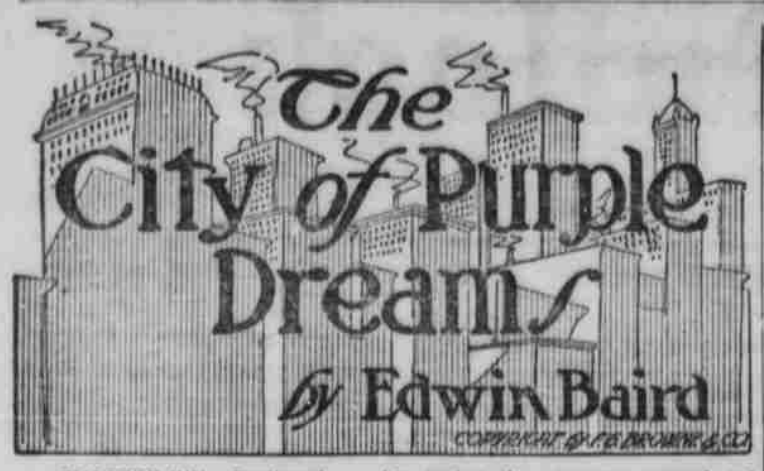

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

—18—

Daniel joined in merrily and more than held his own in the three-cornered melee. Having bought a paper, he was publishing the sort of yellow journalism the masses wanted.

Very naturally his enemies attacked first what seemed to them his most vulnerable spot. "Why did he change his name?" "Why did he need an alias?" "What foul deed had he done and essayed to cover up?" These were the questions hurled broadcast; these the ones they fain would answer. "Investigators" were dispatched to Maryland. All went well—or ill for them, because nothing but good could be found of him—until his nineteenth year. Then they encountered a blank wall. There were five years unaccounted for. His family was unimpeachable. The Daniels of Roanoke county were of the South's first people. The Fitzrandolphs of England and Virginia had distinguished themselves on more than several occasions. Plainly, there was nothing here for their purpose. But those five years!

When they had given up all hope of ever sounding it and were searching in despair for a successful plummet, Daniel very deliberately laid bare on the first page of his newspaper everything it contained. With genial candor, and not without relish, he narrated his five years in trampdom. In justice to himself, in justice to his party, he felt he could do no less. Between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four his had been an eventful life, and the story thereof was not dull.

The bomb exploded with a deafening crash, and with a howl and a shriek his foes were upon him. Rending the disclosure as a pack of wolves, they chawed it, gnashed it, made it ugly and held it up greedily to the public gaze.

And then when the rumble and bombast had died away, when the blood and smoke had passed, Hugh Daniel Fitzrandolph stood before the populace—a hero. The city which reveres the memory of a man who, starting as a clerk, later saddled with debts, hewed his way through adversity and became the "Merchant Prince" of the world, of another who struggled from a butcher's apprenticeship at two dollars a week to the pinnacle of the Union Stock Yards, of scores of others of ignoble beginnings and vast achievements—such a city was not slow to erect a pedestal for one who had once been a vagabond and was now become a multi-millionaire candidate for the highest honor the city of his adoption could pay him. Thus, for the hour, Daniel had become an idol of the people.

Daniel rushed his campaign onward with a tireless zeal that outdistanced his rivals and lost them to view. Here, as in the wheat pit, his endurance and energy were a marvel to all who knew him. He snatched only five hours from the twenty-four for sleep, and less than one hour for meals. Every minute of the remaining eighteen was a busy minute.

The campaign came to a whirlwind finish. Daniel rose at daybreak on election eve and was on the go ceaselessly for twenty hours.

While smoking a good-night cigar with Hunt at two o'clock next morning he remarked:

"Altogether, Harry, it has cost me a warm million dollars. But it has been worth it—every cent. I've had a million dollars' worth of fun."

Yet an hour later, had one looked in the front room of Daniel's apartment, one would have doubted it. The room was quite dark, and before the front windows overlooking Grant park he was sitting very silent and motionless. A gray fog was rolling dumply in from the lake, thickening the night with its clammy embrace.

From the avenue below came sounds of an irresponsible quartette. They were rendering "The Heart Bowed Down," and even their untutored throats, guttural with libations, could not wholly mar the tragic sweetness of Balfe's sad melody.

The melancholy strains, something softened by the distance, floated dolefully up to him. Music—even the worst—always had a singular effect upon Daniel. Good or bad, he could never listen to it without feeling within him a responsiveness transcending the composer's note. It was as though, sounding the keynote, he soared on to realms the composer essayed, yet failed to attain.

His elbows resting on the arms of the chair, his chin on his interlaced fingers, he sat for a long while gazing into the foggy gloom. And mirrored in his face was an ineffable loneliness which by its very profundity must needs be mute.

He pressed his hands to his forehead and slowly shook his head, again and again, his eyes closed.

Yes. Yes, he had failed once more. He would fail next time. He would always fail. He could not forget. He could never forget.

Daniel started, sat up suddenly, looked round with a jerk. It was past nine o'clock. He had been asleep in his chair five hours.

After casting his ballot the day seemed a void. There was nothing more to do. It was all over now. Already the election was practically settled. He lunched in an obscure little restaurant and went motoring.

Returning, however, he left the car at Twenty-fourth street continued afoot toward town, his raincoat collar turned up, his soft hat down, and wandered aimlessly about, taking studious care to shun his usual haunts.

CHAPTER XV.

All afternoon of that rainy April fourth, Daniel roamed restlessly about the loop, until, shortly before dark, the returns began coming in. About the newspaper offices he mingled with the crowds, black smudges against shining streets, watching the figures flashed by precincts on screens; and when, as often occurred, he was greeted effusively by friends and acquaintances, he would answer perfunctorily and stride on to the next bulletin.

From the start it was plainly seen which way the election tended. Dinwoody was carrying the First, Fourth, Fifth, Tenth, Sixteenth and Eighteenth wards by a big plurality. Fitzrandolph and Buffington were running neck and neck. Skimkus, the Socialist, was last.

Before eight o'clock the winner was known.

John Dinwoody, champion of vice and crime, was elected mayor of Chicago.

With a sickening dissolution, Daniel's castle came crumbling about his ears, and he lay among the ruins and the dust, bruised and stunned by the utter havoc, yet unresigned to the inevitable.

* * * * * * *

Scenting a storm of questions anent his unexplained absence, Daniel forestalled it by outlining to his secretary a philanthropic plan of such magnitude that the curiosity of the two was drowned in astonishment.

"I believe you're kidding!" exclaimed Hunt. "Do you know what such a thing would cost?"

"Fully"—glancing over the letters and telegrams beside his plate.

"It would take the bulk of your fortune, rich as you are."

"Not 'would,' Harry, 'will.'" Putting aside his mail, and devouring a thick steak as he talked, Daniel continued: "I shall establish these houses in every town of a hundred thousand or more. In New York, Philadelphia and Chicago there will be one to every two hundred thousand inhabitants—or more if needful. They will be self-supporting, nonprofit-making. Those who can afford will have food and shelter at the net cost of provision. Those who cannot will have both free. Above all else, I want no publicity. In fact, I prefer having my name left out of it altogether. I wish you two would remember that, and act accordingly. Each of these settlements, by the way, will be known as an Esther Strom memorial."

Hunt interposed. "Esther Strom? Let me see—why, that woman was an anarchist!"

"She was something more besides, Harry. She was a great altruist." Daniel looked down, stirring his coffee slowly and thoughtfully. "And she did me an irremediable wrong," he quietly ended.

Hunt burst out: "Then why the—"

"I'm hanged if I know, Harry! I suppose it is a queer notion. We all have them, don't we?" He added in an odd voice: "Perhaps I deserved all I got. Anyway, I believe she was a martyr."

"A martyr to anarchy!"

"But still a martyr to what she considered right."

"Steady, Dan," said Hunt. "You're getting morbid. Come along to the pit today. There's something stirring in summer wheat. It'll wake you up; make you your old self again."

"No use, Harry. I'm finished with speculating."

"You talk like a has-been! Why, you're just starting in life. You've got to do something. A man like you can't loaf. What's it going to be?"

"Giving to others."

Hunt jerked his head impatiently. "I mean what business, what line? You've got some big thing up your sleeve, Dan. Out with it."

Daniel dabbled his fingers in a finger-bowl. While drying them on a napkin the vertical lines appeared sharply between his brows. He lighted a cigarette.

He shoved his chair back, stood up. "Henceforth I am going to take my happiness in my own way. I learned how at daybreak this morning. I am going to give, give, give. And I won't stop giving until the last cent is gone."

"Dan, I believe you've gone crazy."

"And I believe," said the secretary, who read his Bible on occasion, "that Mr. Fitzrandolph shows a very keen wisdom. Furthermore—well, there is a verse in Saint Matthew, which runs: 'Ye are the salt of the earth, . . .'"

Jonas, the valet, touched his sleeve. "A special delivery letter, sir."

Taking the square envelope from the servant's salver, without observing the superscription, the secretary opened it and perused the contents. He knitted his brows.

"Puzzling," he murmured, scratching the back of his head. "It's anonymous, has neither beginning nor end—" He looked suddenly at the envelope, then, with an apology, handed the message to his employer. "I didn't notice it. It's marked 'personal.'"

One glance at the sheet of notepaper, and Daniel sank into his chair. With his strong fingers he pinned the note to the table, breathing rapidly through dilated nostrils. Hunt, sitting next to him, recalled afterward that it was the only time in all the years he had known him that he had ever seen the man's hand tremble.

Daniel looked up, stared blankly a moment at the two silently questioning faces. His lip quivered slightly.

"Boys, I've received startling news, I've changed my mind about giving

Goose! What Did He Mean? He Was a Full Hour Early.

everything away. I'll go ahead with those houses. But I'll go a little saner. In a little saner manner, you understand. And, boys, I am going to do that big thing!"

He sprang up.

"Jonas! Call a good livery stable. I want their best saddle horse at twelve sharp. Craig, make an appointment for tomorrow morning with Stanley Graham, the architect. 'Phone for the head barber downstairs, Jonas. Mention ten dollars to him."

Then, without any of them knowing what it was all about, the speculator, the secretary, and the valet, had their hands seized and wrung with a vim that crushed their fingers.

Hunt, burning with curiosity, permitted his eye to rest momentarily upon the opened note lying on the table. He could make nothing out of it. It began without preface and was unsigned. It consisted of two questions, written in a flowing, girlish hand:

"Do you remember our last appointment? Will you keep it today?"

* * * * * * *

As the superbly lithe, red-haired young woman mounted with cool composure on the sorrel horse, cantered serenely past the Grant monument in Lincoln park she glanced at her watch and saw it was one o'clock. A gardener spading the soft ground beside the bridle-path stopped his work, as well anyone might, to follow her with admiring gaze. There was a delicious "earthy" smell of spring in the air, a vernal quickening all about.

Presently—she had passed the end of the hillock just north of the monument—she turned in her saddle, and perceived far to the south a dark shape growing rapidly larger. She jerked the reins precipitately, wheeled about, started back in alarm. Her admirable tranquillity had vanished.

Goose! What did he mean? He was a full hour early.

Escape was cut off. Quickly she guided her horse into the concrete arch monument—and waited. Her perturbation increased. Her gloved hand toyed nervously with her riding crop. Her heart pounded against her side. She smoothed for the fifth time her stylish riding-habit, adjusted for the tenth time the pointed hat atop her Titian hair.

What did he mean? He was an hour early—

Now she could hear the rhythmic thud of the hoof-beats. They were coming with break-neck speed. Louder and nearer, louder and nearer, louder and nearer—

A form shot past. Her heart leapt to her throat.

Then the scuffle of a horse checked in a headlong gallop, swiftly returning sounds, and the archway was darkened by a broad-shouldered, athletic man astride a heaving, foam-flecked steed.

His age sat lightly upon him. He looked much younger than he was. He had swept off his hat, and his thick black hair, matted dampy against his forehead, showed never a trace of gray. He was distinguished rather than good-looking, and the skin of his newly—and wholly—shaven face was as fresh, as clear, and as glowing as her own.

Stirring within the minds of these two, who had beyond question proved their love for one another, who had known sorrow and bitterness and despair, who had traveled years to reach this moment, treading a long circle to fuse it at last, were—who shall say what thoughts and emotions?

But suppose I tell you what the gardener, spading the soft ground beside the bridle-path, overheard?

". . . Well, Kate, how are you? You came a little early. Two was the hour, you know. . . ."

". . . Dan, I like you ever so much better without the beard. . . ."

(THE END.)

FUTURE MOTHER OF HEROES

Small Girl, Brave After Operation, Deserves the Encomiums of the Operating Surgeon.

"Now," said the surgeon, "look right over there in that corner, and maybe—maybe—there, it's all over, and you never knew what hurt you. My, but you are a brave girl."

At that moment the chubby little girl sitting atop the operating table—did not look very brave. Surprise was in her eyes and two great tears ready to roll down upon the marble slab, for the woman doctor, realizing that more than half the pain of the small operation which is the rule in the daily clinic at Mercy hospital, is due to the dread of it, had stolen a march on little Marie, and the operation was over before Marie knew it had begun.

"Yes," continued the kindly doctor, as she hid the shining blade behind her, "you are a mighty brave little girl. You aren't going to cry."

Marie blinked the tears back and straightened up her small body.

"'Course not," she said, "I'se four years old." And her big eyes gazed proudly into those of the surgeon.

"Here," said the doctor as she turned the small girl over to the nurse for out patients, "is the future mother of heroes—American heroes."—Kansas City Star.

Famous Woman Orator.

Mary A. Livermore was born in Boston, Mass., Dec. 19, 1821. She was not more than 11 or 12 years old when she conceived the idea of helping her parents by some definite occupation. She learned to sew, and made flannel shirts at 6¼ cents apiece. Regarded by the pastor of her church as a prodigy, at the age of 14 she was sent by him to the Charlestown Female seminary, where she soon ranked with the best scholars the institution ever had. At the age of 20 she was placed in charge of the Duxbury high school, Mass., a position of unusual rank for a woman at that time. With the outbreak of the Civil war in 1861 she became an organizer in woman's war work. In 1863 she made her first public address at Dubuque, Iowa. Her wonderful talents as an orator were immediately recognized, and her fame as a speaker soon became nation-wide.

Not His Own Words.

The hoary-headed examiner glanced over the top of his spectacles. "Are you sure," he inquired, "that this is a purely original composition you have handed in?"

"Yes, sir," came the answer. "But you may possibly, sir, have come across one or two words in the dictionary."—Blighty.

Took It Back.

Pickpocket (visiting friend in prison)—I engaged a lawyer to speak for you this morning, Slim, but I had to hand him my watch as a guarantee.

Prisoner—And did he keep it?

Pickpocket—He thinks he did.