THE POCKET PIECE

SHORT STORIES AND SKETCHES
BY AMERICAN AUTHORS

FIRST SERIES
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BY
EDGAR MAYHEW BACON

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INTRODUCTION

Verily, a pocket-piece should need no introduction. It should lie so cosily and cannily in the easiest corner of your favorite pocket that you can hardly believe that you did not come from the mint together.

Therefore we will not say much. If it fits your fancy, then it has fulfilled its mission and you will no doubt look for others of the same coinage that are upon the road.

The Publishers.
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The stories contained in this little book have been once submitted to the public in the pages of "Scribner's Magazine," "The Atlantic Monthly," "The Epoch," and other widely read periodicals; by the courtesy of whose publishers I am allowed to put them in more permanent form. If I launch them again without great expectations it must be also without grave misgivings, since I can show so honorable a clearance. If they serve to relieve the tedium of a journey, to while away the hour before dinner, or even to act as a gentle soporific for some wakeful reader, they will have accomplished all that the author anticipates.

Edgar Mayhew Bacon.
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THE TODDVILLE RAFFLE.

The day of the big raffle had arrived. All the sporting men of the township, and that included about two-thirds of the male population, gathered in the bar-room of Jackson's tavern and prepared for the annual event by deep potations of crude whiskey and the unsavory combustion of alleged Havanas. Toddville had a custom, all its own, which was sufficiently unique to merit a prefatory word of explanation. All property forfeit to the town through non-payment of taxes, as well as unredeemed securities or such chattels as
had been accepted for debt or fine, were appraised by a committee, who took their aggregate values as a basis and prepared a certain number of lottery tickets which were sold at a uniform price to all comers. In purchasing these tickets it had long been customary to throw dice for choice of numbers, and as such a selection could be nothing more than guesswork the result of every drawing was watched with great interest.

Among the prominent loungers at Jackson’s, upon the day in question, was Jerry Winkle. He had but little money, and that little he had invested in a single chance for a ticket; but the very wealthiest capitalist of them all, even old Major Gumble, who had paid for ten “goes” with the air of a man who could afford ten more if he wished, did not support a loftier mien. Winkle’s broad-brimmed felt hat, worn at a rakish angle, suggested
a challenge. Over the frayed front of a shirt of questionable purity an unbuttoned waistcoat disclosed the flowing ends of a necktie. To wear a necktie was in itself a distinction in a town where most men were content to go collarless. Jerry's hands were thrust into his pockets, and his trousers into his boots. The fact that these boots were red as to tops and foxy about the heels, did not at all interfere with the impression that they were intended as a groundwork for spurs.

Newbury King rested one elbow on the bar, shook the dice-box and threw. Ace, three, four, and six spots were the result. "Six'n four's ten, 'n four's fourteen," chanted Jackson. "Next!" Major Gumble took the box. He peered into its depths with an air of great authority and rattled the cubes as one who has but to command fortune. He cast; six chances: sixteen, eleven, fourteen, twenty-
two, thirteen, ten—he looked annoyed and called for a whiskey; then, with glass in one hand and box in the other, he smiled once more on the attentive crowd and threw again: eleven, nine, twenty, twenty-three. "Twenty-three is hard to beat," he said, serenely.

From Major Gumble the box passed to Jerry Winkle. After a little flourish he rolled out four sixes. "That beats it, Major," he laughed.

The number of those who ventured was so large that the afternoon was nearly spent before the last one had tried his luck. Once the cast of four sixes was equalled and Jerry was called in from the porch to match his rival. Again he won, and drank at his opponent's expense. He had been drinking during the day at almost everybody's expense, so that it was no wonder that his gait was becoming unsteady and his speech more rapid than
coherent. "Shame, aint it?" commented John Bulow, one of the village trustees. "Jerry didn't never have no head onto him: anyway not for licker."

When the sunset had faded and the deep shadows began to rest in the valley, the poor drunkard lay on a wooden settee on the tavern porch. The noise of carousing, the excitement of the raffle, had subsided. Something curious had happened, and from the manner of those who surrounded the prostrate, slumbering man in the growing dusk it was difficult to tell whether that something was a joke or a tragedy.

"Hi, Jerry! wake up, shake yourself. The prizes has been named." The sleeper growled something but refused to be awakened.

"Who beat?" asked a late-comer, stepping in from the road at that moment.

"Jerry Winkle, here, drawed first cut and got the biggest card."
"What'd he draw?"

"Why, you see," the spokesman looked around as though he suspected that the matter might have a humorous side to it, and waited to catch any one laughing: "you see he's ben an' drawed—oh, blast it all, I can't tell ye, it's too redeeklous;" and here he began to laugh, the others joining in. The absurd inconsistency of what they knew to be coming captured the imagination of that audience, and the more they guffawed and shouted over it the funnier it seemed. At last the noise they made partially aroused the sleeper.

"Wha'ish th' mat?" he mumbled, feebly. "Why, Jerry," gasped the Major; "Jerry, you drunken reperbate you, you've ben an' drawed the church."

Toddville had had a church once, but its organization lapsed, and the building, long mortgaged, had gone to the hammer and sold for a song. This was the prize
that Jerry Winkle had gambled for, sworn over, got drunk about, and won. There it stood, down in the valley, its white clapboarded sides gleaming dully in the twilight. Will Dorset, the last-comer, did not join in the general mirth as he looked first at the unconscious owner and then at the newly acquired property.

The news of the raffle and its result spread like wildfire. Country places have no need for newspapers. News travels across lots and up lanes and over fences with a celerity that nothing but its growth can equal for marvellousness. Anent Jerry and his church. “It was a shame.” The 'Squire, to whom Will had reported the matter, said so, and the sentiment was echoed by the best people in that little community. But neither the verdict of the more conservative towns-people, neither the dictum of those who had lost their right to conduct the church's affairs,
nor the scoffing of the stranger within the village gates could alter the incongruous fact.

On the Sunday following the raffle Jerry was on his way to witness a ball match which was to take place in a lot two miles down the valley. He paused in passing the church, and looked at his big possession with a feeling that was part pride and part shame.

"That there church is mine," he thought. "But I ain't no sort to own a church neither." He went around and inspected the sheds. "Good sheds, too," he soliloquized. He tried the basement door. It was locked. "Wonder who in creation has got the key? Kinder funny, too, not to know where the key to a man's own church is." Next he essayed to open a window. The nail which had fastened the sash down fell out and it yielded to his vigorous push. With somewhat the
feeling of a burglar he clambered in and surveyed his property. There was the pulpit, with well-worn cushion, where old Domine Rees had long ago pounded and expounded. Jerry could well remember how, when he was a little boy, he had used to sit in one of the pews and dangle his short legs as he squirmed under that ponderous eloquence. That pew on the north aisle, just under the window, was the one that had belonged to his people. He seated himself there, where his father had sat, and reaching out his hand to the book-rack took therefrom the old hymn-book. It had “Jacob Winkle, Esqr.” written in bold characters across the fly-leaf. Jerry had worn his hat during these first few moments of occupancy. He now took it off and placed it on the seat in front of him. As he did so the whimsical aspect of the proceeding struck him so that he laughed aloud. Then hushed
in spite of himself by the cold echo of his own mirth, he looked nervously around. At the moment he could almost have sworn that the old audience-room was full of the old worshippers looking at him, the intruder, in condemnation.

It was broad daylight, and the empty place, even with its shutters closed, afforded no suggestive shadows where a ghost might lurk, yet in its Sabbath stillness it was populous. Across the aisle was where the minister's family used to sit. Up yonder by the pulpit, still stood the chair once occupied by the gray-haired precentor. It was easy to picture his tall form, clad in the clawhammer coat and voluminous stock of an older time, as he rose, book in hand, to "raise the tune." Over the whole room was that pervading, peculiar atmosphere that long-disused apartments often have; not mouldy, nor close, nor damp, but obsolete. There was
a distinct flavor of antiquity about it, as though the last sexton when he shut the big door for the last time, had shut in a fragment of that year.

Beside the new proprietor, stuck between the cushion and pew-back, was a large palm-leaf fan. It had his mother's name written in faint pencil lines upon one of its radial divisions.

Yesterday Jerry had thought to sell the building as old lumber, if nothing better offered; perhaps put up a shanty of some sort for himself upon the site. But to-day the matter took a different aspect. He might almost as readily resolve to sell the modest tombstone that marked the last resting-place of his parents out there in the little graveyard.

He rose with a start, intending to leave the building. There were people coming up the road; so he waited till they had passed before climbing out again. Off in
the distance he could hear the shouts that encouraged some batsman to make a home run. The game was in progress. For him to be absent would excite more comment than he cared to face just then.

Reaching the field he lounged up to that angle of the snake fence where a group of rustic sportsmen had congregated, and received a running fire of greeting and comment. "Hello, Jerry! jes' got up?" "Jerry, how's the church?" "When you goin' to begin preachin'?"

The poor fellow's new relation to the big building up the valley had at last been generally accepted as ludicrous. "Jerry wouldn't jine the church so the church had to jine Jerry." This from one of the wits. Another added: "Like the ole man in the tale that wanted the mountain. Mountain wouldn't come to the ole man, so the ole man had to mosey
along to the mountain, as the feller sez."

The subject of these remarks did not enjoy them. The influence of his recent quiet half-hour in the church was still strong upon him. He could not summon his usual ready wit to answer jibe with jibe; so he turned his attention to the game and was soon among the loudest of those who encouraged the players.

"Should think you'd be ashamed of yourself, Jerry, a-spendin' your Sunday this way when youv'e got a hull meetin'-house of your own!" said one, joking him. Jerry swung half round, supporting himself on the arm of one of his companions. "You shet up," he responded. "I had 'nuf of that. Some folks have got neither church nor releegion." Those who laughed most heartily at this retort were careful to keep farthest away from an arm that they knew was still powerful;
but after his outburst Jerry became sullen and silent.

As time passed people began to notice and comment upon a change in this man. It was not that he was better than before only less companionable and enjoyable. If anything he was drunk oftener—only he drank in a morose, unsociable way that his friends could not understand. He did not swear less than he had always done, but his conversation between whiles was less entertaining. His very hat lost the jolly, aggressive air which had distinguished it and sat suddenly on the back of his head. Men act so when they are in love or in debt, and sometimes when they are in arrears to conscience.

One thing he would not do if it was possible to avoid it—pass the church alone after nightfall. In daytime it was bad enough. Since his visit it had seemed more and more the harboring place for a
band of reproachful spirits, who saw his character and course in its naked ugliness—as he was beginning to see it himself.

No doubt the special direction of his imagination was due rather to whiskey than sober conscience. The effect was not less real. He made, in his walks, long detours, crossing fields and sneaking along fences till the dreaded spot was avoided.

Yet wherever he went he could not get rid of the sight of the white box that stood in lieu of a spire, and which always seemed to be saying to him, "What a disgrace to me you are!" He tried to sell it, but, partly no doubt because he hated so to talk about it, he failed to find a purchaser who wanted a meeting-house anyhow. If it had been a cow or a horse, or even a good bull-dog of fighting stock, he might have done better. But a church! As long as it stood there it was
impossible to get even the worth of the little piece of ground it stood upon. People do not attach much value to a few feet of soil in a country where farms are measured by the hundred acres. It became, with its memories, its traditions, its sanctity, a Nemesis always watching his unsteady footsteps.

At last he resolved to put an end to his torment. He would destroy the church.

One starlight night, having brooded long over this purpose, Winkle started out to put it in execution. Making a wide circuit, to avoid meeting any one who might be travelling upon the highway, he stole cautiously across the meadow toward his property. He had provided himself with a bundle of straw well-saturated with oil, and this he carried in his arms, so that it was with difficulty he could pick his way. He stumbled across
a ploughed field to the fence row of elms, and kept well in their shadow till he had gained the brook with its bordering wall of moving willows. This he skirted, approaching the burying-ground. That had not entered into his calculations. There lay the very people the recollection of whom had made the building unbearable to him. For a long time he crouched down in the shade, hugging his bundle of inflammable stuff close, and staring at the few white, irregular stones that seemed to do sentry duty for the great, square, vacant house beyond them. "That is where my father and my grandfather lie," was the thought that forced itself in on his mind. "There is where I shall be, too, some day, in the old churchyard." And quickly followed the reflection that when the church was gone the churchyard would be naught.

In haste now, perhaps because the night
air or some other chill was making it difficult to keep his teeth from chattering, or perhaps because he doubted the strength of his resolution, he piled the straw against one corner and placed a lighted match under it.

An opportune gust of wind fanned the flame into instant blaze, lighting for a moment the white clapboards upon which the paint was beginning to crack and peel in places, illuminating the sheds and even casting a glory upon the faces of the carven marble cherubs on the graveyard stones. But had any other spectator been there he would have been most struck with the look upon the incendiary's face. Swift repentance, self-hate, condemnation of his own evil deed, lined it with an expression of lively remorse that the dancing light served to intensify.

Then with a spring he threw himself upon the blazing heap and tore it away,
trampling it under foot, scorching and scarring himself (as we most of us have done) in the effort to undo the mischief he had begun.

One Monday morning Mrs. Busbee was standing by her clothes-lines, basket at foot, learning the latest news from Liza Jane Green, who had just run over with her budget.

"An' it's the queerest thing. They ain't no sense into some men. What d' you s'pose ever led him to go away that fashion, 'thout ever sayin' ay, yes, or no to any of his folks? I ben down at his aunt's house an' she say she's satisfied 't's 'bout the bes' thing and the sensibles' thing he ever did."

"They do say he ain't been quite right in his upper story sense he drawed the church in that there raffle, which I claim was about the redic'lousest thing a body ever hear tell about."
"Right er wrong, he's gone clean away out o' this place, an' I d'no but what his aunt's mor' 'n half right. He ain't but small loss."

At the tavern, at the store, down by the blacksmith's forge the same topic was variously discussed. Before the raffle Jerry had been a popular man with a certain class of people, and his sudden departure consequently created a wider ripple of excitement than yours or mine, dear reader, might cause in our community. For a few days his memory was kept green, then his name was occasionally mentioned in a reminiscent way, and at last his old-time cronies found it necessary to preface any story in which he figured with the formula, "You remember Jerry Winkle what used to live here; the same one that drawed the church?"

At length the place that had known him well, and knew little good of him,
seemed to know him no more. Once, indeed, a statement was made by a salesman who came in his yearly round to the place, that he had seen Jerry running a "wheel" at a county fair; but that may have been error, or malice, or simple mendacity. He had faded out of the village life completely. But the church remained and our story henceforth has to do with it.

What had become of its owner no one knew; that is to say, no one but Squire Dorset, and he laid out money for the necessary paint and repairs, and paid the taxes when they were due, without ever betraying his principal; for no one doubted that he was simply acting as an agent in the matter. There was not the slightest suspicion that the Squire had purchased the property. He had been an intimate friend of our reprobate's father, and he had, perhaps, on that ac-
count exerted himself to find a purchaser for the son.

But if such was the case the Squire was certainly a most exemplary agent. He not only kept the exterior of the edifice in good condition, but he busied himself as well with the interior, so that the broken benches were repaired, the pulpit furniture furbished up, and even the walls whitewashed. In fact, as though having faith in the dawn of a better day for Toddville, the Squire—or rather, that unknown some one whom the Squire represented—kept the Lord’s house ready for occupancy.

Once in a while, it is true, his neighbors shook their heads and whispered strange things about the Squire. He was getting to be an old man, and it was more than intimated that he was not without the childishness of age. The church had been the cause of one man’s
unaccountable behavior, and now it really seemed as though—well, at any rate, there was no sense in spending good money for such an object. Some very zealous friends, after thoroughly canvassing the matter among themselves, actually summoned courage to advise young Dorset, the Squire's son, to put the old man under restraint. Young Dorset rather surprised his advisers by the readiness with which he listened to the suggestion.

"I only see one way to do that," he replied, quietly, "and that is to employ a keeper to go around with him."

It is wonderful the interest that we take in our neighbor's misfortunes. In twenty-four hours all Toddville knew that Will Dorset thought his father ought to have a keeper. "The ole man must be a heap sight wuss 'n we any of us ca'c'lated," observed Jackson.
Not long after this a buggy drove up to the Squire's door and a quiet-looking, rather powerfully built man alighted. He was met by Will Dorset. They went quickly into the house together.

For a day or two no one had a chance to interview the Squire's son, but at last Major Gumble "jes' took the bull by t' other horn, sir," and stopped him on the road.

"How's your father, Will?"
"Oh, he's pretty well, considering."
"I wanted to ask you, Will, whether that there was the—h'm—the pusson you was speakin' about."
"Oh, yes," said the young man. "You may call him a sort of keeper, I guess. He is a sort of keeper."

The new keeper seemed to humor his charge in every possible way. It is a trick that these skilled persons have of keeping their patients from actual out-
THE TODDVILLE RAFFLE.

break. And of course everybody was mightily interested. Really the old gentleman seemed harmless enough, only some of his acts were amusing. For instance, on the Saturday following the advent of his attendant he was seen busily tacking up notices on the trees at every prominent point and cross-road within a radius of three miles from the church. These notices read:

"There will be Divine service to-morrow (Sunday, June 12,) in the church at Toddville, at half-past ten o'clock."

People read, grinned, and passed on.

But, supposing that the notices might indicate some new phase of mania which nobody wanted to miss, when ten o'clock drew near there was a large crowd gathered on the road in front of the church. Nor was their coming bootless. Just before the hour arrived the writer of the notices appeared, attended as usual by
his keeper. Together they entered the church, after a brief whispered dialogue, during which the stranger seemed to ex-postulate and the Squire to insist upon some point he was urging. The crowd followed.

Squire Dorset walked steadily to his old pew and reverently bowed his head there. The keeper made directly for the pulpit, stood for a moment waiting for the rustle and bustle of the incoming congregation to subside, as, with the force of old custom, all found seats, and then gave out the opening hymn:

"God moves in a mysterious way."

Fairly trapped, the people of Toddville joined in the singing, bowed their heads in at least the semblance of worship, and listened to the sermon.

When they finally dispersed, light on more than one subject began to break
upon their understandings. Has the reader also guessed the conclusion?

The Rev. Jeremiah Winkle had come home to his church.
ZENAS SMITH'S RIDE TO ROXBURY.

Lost on Saturday, the third of this instant March, between five and ten of the clock in the morning, five Johannes' or Josephus's, or both, loose out of my pocket, between my dwelling-house in Abington and the widow Susanna Richardson's in Roxbury. Whoever shall take up said pieces of money and will give information to the printers hereof, or to the subscriber, shall have ten dollars reward, or two dollars for each piece, paid by me the subscriber.

ZENAS SMITH.

ABINGTON, March 5, 1770.

This advertisement appeared in the Boston Gazette of March 12, 1770, just one week after it was dated. The editorial and news columns of that issue of
Messrs. Edes and Gill's journal were filled with accounts of the Boston Massacre and the indignation meetings consequent, while broad, black margin lines and a row of black coffins in illustration supplemented the horrors of the letterpress.

Who was Zenas Smith of Abington, and what was the reason of his long journey to Roxbury? I may picture him pretty closely by focusing the lines of the advertisement. Zenas was doubtless well to do. The man who owned a house in Abington, and carried a pocketful of gold pieces,—carried them "loose in his pocket,"—was certainly not going to Susanna Richardson's for cold victuals or old clothes. The value of a Johannes of Portugal or Brazil was seventeen dollars and six cents (Webster gives it as eight dollars, but this contradicts Emerson's table); the Josephus may have been a
popular name for dobra or doubloon, one worth twenty-four cents more, and the other a dollar and four cents less, than a Johannes: so it becomes evident that Zenas’s loss was not less than eighty and probably more than eighty-five dollars, with a possibility of its having been eighty-six and a half. I have been very explicit in making the statement, because I think it proves that the advertiser was not pinched for money, and disposes of the idea that he may have gone to the widow for pecuniary aid. The same argument forbids the supposition that he was an artisan or tradesman. An artisan would not have had what was a large sum for that day “loose in his pocket” as he went to his work, and a tradesman, if well to do, probably would have sent an employee. That this man was not himself an employee is, I think, shown by his signature. No clerk would advertise
over his own name the loss of his employer's money, even supposing that he carried such sums of it with him. Nor can we suppose that he was a landlord making collections, though it was upon the Saturday succeeding the end of the month that the loss occurred, for the sum which he lost would have paid the monthly rent of a larger and more palatial house than Roxbury contained, and it was not yet time for the quarterly or half yearly rent; he would have waited till May for that. Besides, he speaks of Susanna Richardson's house in a way that convinces us that it was her own house. Nor was Zenas a tenant. The idea of his being out at five o'clock, on a raw March morning, upon a road that has never lost its reputation for blusteriness, to pay his rent or to pay any other debt, is preposterous.

On March 3d the sun rose about 6.30;
that is to say, one hour and a half after Mr. Smith was on his way to the widow's. It was an early start for a business man, and much too early for one who had no business. His confessed ignorance of the exact denomination of the pieces of gold that he had in his pocket and the certainty with which he states their number go to show that he had counted out five coins, of about the same size and weight, before he started, and that he had done this in the dark. There was no doubt in his mind that he lost five gold coins, and that these pieces were either "Johannes' or Josephus's, or both" (notice how carefully he words that statement), but he had no idea which. If he had said four or five, or had in any other way shown a careless habit of memory, we might believe that he had carried those pieces for a few days, and had forgotten exactly what they were; but this
definiteness gives one an idea of method and forehandedness. Or if the pieces in question had been all of his store of wealth, we could not conceive how it would be possible for him to be unable to state within the price of a new saddle how much he possessed.

No; we see a capitalist, a man of wealth, rising long before daylight to go upon a journey of twelve or fourteen miles on a March morning, along a road exposed for a great part of its length to all the fury of March winds. We see him open the strong box where he has placed the wealth which colonial troubles make it unwise to leave in a banker's hands. He takes from that repository five gold coins, running his fingers over them to be sure that they are of about the same value, and places them loose in his pocket. He will have use for a sum equal to eighty dollars. During this time
no light has been struck, because the clicking of the steel and the flare of the light might attract the attention of some evil prowler, who would in turn visit the box after Zenas’s departure.

But now the first difficult question arises. Did he ride or walk to Roxbury? I incline to believe he walked only as far as his own stable, and, having saddled his steady, respectable cob, jogged out upon the highway on four legs instead of two. In the first place, no man of standing in a country town could, at that day, be without a horse. In the second place, no man having a horse would start off before daylight to walk twelve miles in such weather, leaving the locality out of the question. In the third place, a man would have walked twelve miles in less than five hours. It takes a careful horse, picking his way in the dark, to travel as slowly as that.
We know that the nag was sober and sedate, as we know that his master was middle-aged, plethoric, and practical, because we read that between the lines of his advertisement. Would a young man, or a lean man, or an imaginative man, have mentioned the widow Richardson's house? Would not such a man have written simply, "Between my house and the Roxbury postoffice," or, "Between Abington and Roxbury?" Would a married man have mentioned the widow Susanna Richardson's, or a man who had anything to conceal? And would a man, staid and honest and stout enough to advertise so frankly, ride anything but a steady-going nag, do you think? This man had no idea of gossip or scandal, and therefore we infer that he was a bachelor. We have further evidence of his single estate in the fact that he offered an exorbitant reward to the per-
son who should return his money, and because he published that reference to the widow. Even a middle-aged, stout, and unimaginative man would think twice about putting such testimony where his wife could see it.

Now it will be noticed that the fact of such a man having lost his money shows that he was unduly excited, pleasantly or otherwise, so that he became careless. The time consumed on the road was too great for us to imagine that the cob trotted at all, but the wind may have blown the skirts of the sober brown coat till the golden shower fell unnoticed from the ample pocket, as it learned to do when it first shook the chestnuts down; while Zenas pulled his three-cornered hat closer over his square forehead, and thought—of what? Of the widow, doubtless. But no one can suppose that it was as a lover he thought. His business must have been of
a pressing nature, such as he could not entrust to another, and, though one requiring money to a considerable amount, not a transaction between debtor and creditor, or one involving property directly. He was evidently going as a friend, for he carried hard, tangible proofs of friendship with him (until he lost them), and as a friend whose services were needed at once and urgently,—a trusted and discreet friend. Yet it is possible that I am in error when I say that he did not think as a lover. It is only safe to affirm that his message was not to make love at this time, and we have no business with feelings that have no connection with the text.

That Zenas so promptly attended to this affair, regardless of what the world might say, certainly proves an unusual warmth of devotion on his part,—a devotion which doubtless tempered the March
winds as he rode out of his door-yard at Abington.

We surmise what the widow's trouble may have been, as we read upon another page of the Gazette reference to one Richardson, described as "infamous," who "fired the gun which killed young Snyder;" his name being also connected with the assassination of Mr. Otis. The murder of Snyder and the assassination (that is to say, attempted killing) of James Otis took place but a short time before that quarrel between the rope-makers and the Ninth Regiment of British regulars which led to the massacre of Crispus Attucks and his companions, which we know as the Boston Massacre. So clear it is that the ride to Roxbury occurred between the time of Richardson's act and that of the resistance of the Bostonians, that we cannot avoid suspecting that Dame Richardson's trouble may have
been the result of that of her namesake.

If the sympathies of Mr. Smith had been with Richardson and the custom-house party, he would hardly have advertised his loss in the Gazette, which was a mouthpiece for the colonial party, and bitter in its denunciations of the Royalists. As an illustration of the fever of indignation at one side and sympathy with the other, it may be mentioned that, after a full description of the death of Crispus Attucks, who was a negro, and of his burial in the middle cemetery of Boston, the Gazette prints the usual weekly statistics as follows:—

"Buried in the town of Boston since our last, eight whites, no black."

The negro who died in such a cause was not black, from the Gazette's standpoint.

Hardly would the sympathizer with
Richardson have advertised in that paper. But it is not at all unlikely that he may have been a ready advancer of funds to his friend the widow.

If Richardson was really the man for whom these funds were ultimately intended, he must have been still alive (though perhaps on trial for his life); and if alive, then the son of the widow,—else she was no widow. Or it is very possible that some other form of trouble menaced her; it may have been foreclosure of a mortgage upon her property. In any case, we may be sure that her sad face lighted as she saw the square chin of Zenas Smith resting on his stock, his ruddy cheeks a little ruddier from his ride, and his benevolent gray eyes full of a kindly purpose, as he tied the sober nag by the door of her house in Roxbury.

Then Zenas put his hand down into his right pocket, into its mate, into each of
his pockets successively, and his face grew pale. He tried again, the widow watching him anxiously, till at last he could conceal the sad truth no longer, and blurted out,—

"Susanna, I've been a fool. This morning I put five Johanneses or Josephuses or both, loose in my pocket, and I have lost them on the road hither."

Then, if they were Quakers, as I suspect they were, Susanna answered him:

"Now don't thee mind, Zenas. I make no doubt it will all be well in the end, and thee had better come in and get some breakfast, after such a long ride."

It may be she said that in all the simplicity of affection, and it is just barely possible that she may have had an inkling at the same time of more Johanneses or Josephuses, "or both," in the strongbox at Abington.
Of one thing we may be sure: Zenas enjoyed his breakfast with such an appetite as only an early ride can give one; and if the widow in the end won something even more substantial than a few gold pieces, I am sure that no one will accuse her of setting her cap for any one. For my part, I never see or hear of a person named Susanna Smith without wondering whether I have guessed this riddle aright, and longing to ask her who her great-grandparents were.

*     *     *

My sister Martha worked up the foregoing account, which she calls a pure piece of detective work, with the facts left out. I have frequently told Martha that accuracy is not incompatible with a historian's work, but she cites, in support of her method, a list of names which begins with Plutarch and does not end with Froude.
Nevertheless, I resolved that I would discover something definite, if only that there were no bottom facts in the case. As a result of my investigations in one quarter, I received one day a chocolate-colored envelope, addressed in green ink, and bearing in the upper left-hand corner this legend in red:

State Library of Massachusetts,
State House, Boston, July 8, 18—.

It was a note from the very polite Acting Assistant Librarian, assuring me that he could find no trace of public man, author, or criminal who had signalized the name of Zenas Smith in the commonwealth, but that possibly the Recorder's office might produce deeds or other data that would furnish a clue. So I tried the Recorder's office; but so far as the object of my search was concerned its archives were barren. From the Recorder's
Second Assistant Acting Deputy came, however, the consoling hint that people often found in church records information that the public books lacked. I at once turned to the church for consolation; but though a carefully worded note of inquiry was type-written, and copies sent to all the pastors of every probable denomination in Abington, I failed here also. The conclusion was forced upon me that either Zenas was not fond of gathering himself together with the people of Zion, or that the old church records of that town had been badly kept; so there was a fresh discouragement to vex over. But Martha's mental energy did not flag. "I am sure," she observed, after a season of meditation, "that Zenas must have invented something. No Yankee goes through life without doing so. And don't you think, if he did invent it, he must have got it patented? Certainly,
I don't want to advise, but if I were you I should send to the Patent Office; that is,” with a sudden return of the offended-dignity air that she had forgotten for awhile, “if you insist upon discrediting my solution.”

Of course I adopted this plan, writing that same evening; but after the letter had been sent I began to question the sanity of such a step, telling my sister that I did not believe the Patent Office had been running so long. Time proved the justice of this doubt. I got a reply stating that I “must apply to some other department for the information I wanted.” There was a Zebedee Smith who had invented a churn, and a Zebulon Smith who had patented a sewing machine,—but no Zenas.

I next tried libraries. No obscure corner of history escaped me. I learned more about the war for independence
and the causes which led to it than I ever dreamed of knowing. Among the two millions who inhabited America at that time, about the only man who had escaped historical mention was Zenas Smith.

"I tell you what," said Martha. "Well, my dear?"
"Send a letter to Zenas himself."
"But where—his address—"
"Send it"—and her face lighted with a sudden inspiration—"to the dead-letter office."

As one sometimes concludes a serious matter with a joke, and thus whimsically acknowledges defeat, I did as advised, and addressed a petition, full of moving pleas that he would drop his incognito, to "Zenas Smith, Esq., Dead-Letter Office, P. O., Washington, D. C."

In the course of a week I received a reply. This was signed by Zenas Smith.
He wanted to know who I was, any way, and what particular reason I had for writing a humorous letter to him. Did I mean anything personal by it, and if not what did I mean? He said he was an old man and had been in the department a great many years, but this was the first time he had been the recipient of so much impertinence,—"gratuitous impertinence," he wrote.

"An old man!" said Martha. "Well, I should think so."

"Can you recall what I wrote to him?" I asked sadly; realizing that the stone I threw just for fun had smashed somebody's window.

"Why, yes. You asked him how he managed to 'cover his tracks,'—that was the rather slangy way you expressed it; and then you wanted to know whether he had ever done anything in the world but lose gold Johannes's. Besides that, you
couldn't leave out that threadbare joke about the climate where he had been living last, and—oh, you asked him what part he took in the battle of Lexington."

"Of course I did. If there had been any other utterly absurd thing to do or say, I should have added just that much to my folly. And now what am I to say to this gentleman?"

"This—gentleman?"

"Certainly. We have by accident found some one of the same name as the man who inserted that advertisement."

"Then you may be sure he is a relative. No one but a relative would ever have thought of having such a name. I would write to him again, if I were you, and get all the information possible. He may not really be as cross as—as he sounds."

"I shall undoubtedly write again," I answered, perhaps a little tartly, "because
it will be necessary to apologize and explain; otherwise I would let Zenas Smith and all his relations go to Jericho."

My letter to the old gentleman (who, I could not but feel, was distinguishing himself by the use of a name he had no business with) was one of long explanation and almost abject apology; at least, so Martha told me. She also informed me that my dragging her name into my explanation had a biblical analogy: the woman tempted me, and I did write. But I let it stand. I did not wish Mr. Smith to misunderstand anything.

I sent the letter this time to the address printed at the head of Mr. Smith's letter, which was No. 1, 2½ Street. He must have got it very soon, for his answer came during the next evening.

DEAR SIR,—Apology accepted. Very natural mistake. Have an old letter somewhere. Will com-
municate further. If a historical account, will be glad to furnish anything in power.

Yr. obdt. Servt.,

Z. Smith.

"There!" said Martha. "Didn't I say so?"

"No, my dear, not that I heard; and if you will observe, this letter tells us absolutely nothing."

"Nothing? Read between the lines, as we did with the advertisement: doesn't it say that he is a relative and rather eager to have his ancestor written up?"

Astute Martha!

In course of time a rather bulky package came from Washington, and on being opened revealed three inclosures. One was a letter from Mr. Smith, putting at our disposal and commending to our care a second paper written by Zenas Smith, the earlier. The third sheet was one of memoranda. From this last we learned
that Zenas was the great-grandfather of his namesake, and that he had been a soldier of the revolutionary war.

"There?" exclaimed Martha, in vexation. "We never thought of the Pension Department; though of course," she added, "it makes no real difference, as we have got all we want." As she spoke she unfolded Zenas's letter very reverently, and spread it out on the table before us. The paper was yellow with age, and the ink dim but legible. Here is a copy of the letter:

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Dear Son,—You ask an explanation of the old cask found by you in the cellar of the Abington house. I think I can satisfy you on that head. You already know how the committee, of which Samuel Adams and Dr. Warren were the soul, used the time before matters came to a head with Great Britain in preparing for a conflict felt by all of us to be inevitable. We had recruits on every hand, and, so far as possible, stores, hidden on all the
principal roads, and the members of the committee, of whom I was one, pledged themselves to keep their forces in readiness for an outbreak. We communicated by means of a sort of cipher, generally using the public press for our enigmatical notices to each other, and found at that time the friendly attitude of the Boston Gazette of incalculable service to us. Among the stores which I had caused to be secreted near the highway to Roxbury were five barrels of gunpowder, of several grades, but a very heavy storm on the morning of the 3d of March (just twenty-nine years ago to-day) flooded the cellar where the ammunition was, and so damaged it that we could not save above an eighth of the entire quantity. This was removed by night to my house as being a safer and drier place, and buried there in the cellar in a substantial cask. I notified the committee of the loss through the usual channel, and there the matter ended, for after the battle of Breed's (or, as you now call it, Bunker's Hill) I was absent on service elsewhere and the gunpowder was forgotten. This is, in brief, the history of the cask you inquire about. . . .

From your aff. father,

Zenas Smith.
I looked at Martha to see how she took it.

"That quite upsets your little romance," I said.

She was silent for a few moments, and then, with apparent irrelevancy, replied, "How much Mr. Z. Smith of Washington writes like his great-grandfather!"
SQUARING AN OLD ACCOUNT.

Two men sat together in the rear seat of a smoking car on one of our railroads and chatted familiarly of the ups and downs of a miner's life, the topic being suggested by a landscape dotted with coal-breakers and furrowed with coal roads.

The freedom and interest of their conversation did not seem to be damped by the fact that the younger of the two carried a revolver, while his companion wore a pair of those uncoveted articles of jew-
elry which are known in criminal circles as "bracelets."

The few passengers who had observed them learned from the confidential brakeman that they were a noted detective and his prisoner on the way to trial. As far as ages went, the pair might have been taken for father and son, the fine gray head of the one contrasting strongly with the crisp brown curls of his captor.

What crime had been committed, the brakeman did not know, but hazarded a conjecture that it "must have been a pretty bad one, or George Munsen wouldn't have took the trouble to put them things on his wrists."

Presently the brakeman and the conductor satisfied the joint demands of etiquette and curiosity by stopping to exchange a few words with the detective; the former then perched himself upon the coal-box directly behind the prisoner, and
the latter dropped magnificently into the seat in front. The train was sweeping around a curve and past a ruined trestle on the hillside, at which both of the passengers looked with some interest.

"I remember that place," said the older man.

"So do I," responded the younger; "I was born there. Came near being buried there, too," he resumed, after a moment's pause.

"How was that?"

"It's a pretty long story," said the detective, "but I guess we'll have time for it between this and the next station. Way up there on the slope is the little settlement where I made my débüt, so to speak; from it to the bottom of the hill there used to be a gravity road—a long, winding track reaching from the settlement down to the top of a blank wall of earth where a slide occurred the year I
was born. On both sides of the track grew saplings that had sprung up since the disaster (what I am telling you happened five years later), and they crowded the road and hung over the old rusty rails on which the coal cars used to run. You must remember that the houses were built near the mouth of the pit—that was one of the first mines worked in this country, and one of the first to be abandoned. Time I am telling about, some men were walking up track, and a lot of children playing near the top, little dev’s, climbing in and out of an old car which had lain there since it made its last trip, with the broken spraggs still in its wheels.

"The men were miners, all but one of them, who questioned his companion about their work and the country they lived in. He was evidently a stranger—probably a newspaper man."
“Presently, as they talked, a shout from the top of the slope attracted their attention, and they looked up just in time to see the car begin to move slowly down the grade.

“There was an impatient exclamation from the oldest man in the party. ‘Them brats is always up to some mischief,’ he said. ‘They have started that old thing off at last; I’ve been expectin’ to see it go any time this five year. They’ll be breaking their necks yet with their tomfooling.’ And another of the group added: ‘We must dust out of this lively, unless we want to get our own necks broke; she’ll either jump the rail or go to pieces at the bottom; lucky there ain’t no one aboard of her.’

“The stranger was looking anxiously up at the approaching runaway. His quick eye had caught sight of something round and golden above the black rim.
"'There's a child in that car,' he said, quietly.

"It was a second or two before his companions realized the awful meaning of that statement. A child! That was, as if he had said that in a few moments some one—perhaps one of themselves—would be childless.

"With one impulse they turned to look at the broken rails by the edge of the fault. Shuddering, they fixed their eyes again on the approaching mass, then hopelessly on each other. They could not dream of stopping the progress of the car. But quick as thought, almost, the stranger took hold of a sapling and bent it down till it nearly touched the track. 'Hold it,' he said, to one of the men; 'it will help to check her.' A rod further down another and then a third and fourth were held in the same way. So four of the party waited for a few
breathless seconds, while the two remaining ones hurried further down; but one more effort and the car was upon them. The first obstacle was whipped out of the hands of the strong man who held it and the car rushed on to the second with scarcely lessened force. Again, the barrier was brushed aside, but this time the speed of the old wreck was perceptibly less. By the time the fifth obstruction was reached the new comer was able to clamber aboard and throw the child into the arms of his companion, but before he had time to save himself the old truck had regained something of its momentum and was plunging on towards the precipice.

"Well, the man jumped just as they reached the edge, just before his vehicle shot over into the air, but he had very little time to choose his ground, and so landed, as luck would have it, on the only
heap of stones in sight. The others picked him up for dead, and carried him up to the settlement, where the miners held a regular wake over him. But he came to life in the middle of the festiv—, the obsequies, I mean—and it was found that he was only crippled for life.

"The miners, folks not easily moved, were enthusiastic about the affair, and gave such testimonials as they could, to show their gratitude and appreciation. One of these expressions took the form of a souvenir, signed by every man in the place and stating in very grandiloquent language what the poor fellow had done. His quick wit seemed to them more wonderful than his courage and devotion, in a community where neither quality is unusual at all.

"The man who takes his own life in his hand every day, and has frequently to fight for the life of some companion,
values a 'brainy' action. In the box with the testimonial was a purse of fifty dollars and a curious old gold cross, that had been treasured by the mother of the lad who was saved, as her one piece of finery. On it was rudely engraved these words:

“'Given by the miners at the Notch to the man who risked his life for a child.'

“That was all. The poor fellow went away and would have been forgotten, only that the old miners told the story sometimes to their children.”

The prisoner was looking out of the window. The conductor rustled around as though ashamed of the interest he had shown in the story—a story which he did not doubt was pure fiction. Only the brakeman gave way to his sympathy, and asked whether the man had ever been found.

“Not that I know of,” replied the detective.
“And was you the boy what he saved?”
“I was the kid.”
“And you never heer’d tell what became of the man—what would you do if you sh’d come acrost him sometime?”—Evidently the brakeman had an imagination which was trying to assert itself.
“Oh! I’d try to even the thing up somehow. I suppose common decency would demand that: I’d treat him as well as I knew how.”
“Look here,” said the prisoner, turning from the window with an apparent effort to change a conversation which, for some reason, had not seemed to interest him—“look here, old man, I’ve got a little keepsake that your story just reminded me of, and if I could get at it I’d ask you to take charge of it for me till—till this is over. If you’ll put your hand in there and pull out that bit of ribbon: so—”
The conductor almost jumped out of his seat. "Hang me if it ain't the cross that you've just been telling about!" he shouted.

* * *

A month later the detective was undergoing a cross-examination by the conductor and brakeman.

"Yes, he was a bad lot—oh, yes, he didn't have a leg to stand upon; the facts were all as clear as day. All true about the cross and the rest of it? Just as true as gospel. What had he been doing? Throwing bombs the last thing.

* * * Punished? Well, to tell you the truth, they won't be apt to punish him till they catch him again, I guess. Fact is, he got away from me somehow that same night, Who, me? Oh, no. I'm not on the force any more; I've been bounced."
The peddler’s horse jangled a string of tuneless bells as he walked. The peddler leaned forward, with his elbows resting on his knees and regarded, with the critical appreciation of a philosopher, the oscillations of the off fore-wheel. It was an old problem with him, how the wheel could bend in and out, making a track like a serpent, yet stick to its axis.

It was just what McRotty had himself been doing all his life. He allowed himself a good deal of liberty of action around a centre of very decided principle.

Little Hannah had crept into the box and
had fallen asleep. Her guardian reached down and pulled an old ragged rug over her.

"Hannah looks peaked," he said to himself. "I gotter have some sorter tonic for her. I wisht I knew what to do. This ridin' around the country with me aint the best thing in the world for a sick child; but I'm blessed if I know any better way."

Coming down the hill towards the old tannery pits where stood the cabin of Granny Brown, the reputed witch, he stopped Jake and began to count over the day's receipts.

"That's ten cents for me, and a quarter for Hannah, and another for Jake and the purp. That'l leave a dollar for the old ooman,—I wish it would burn her—and a little for Susan in case her dad aint got anything, which it aint likely he has."

McRotty had many pensioners. If his stock was new he did not trouble himself for anything beyond the pressing needs of these. Having counted his cash, and put that in-
tended for Granny Brown by itself, he drew
the cover down over the sleeping child so that
she was hidden from view, and drove on to the
cabin, to be met by shrill vituperation from
the crone. All the miseries of age seemed to
have settled in that poor, deformed old body,
the reflex of which was in her ugly, distorted
mind.

A voice like a heron's greeted the peddler.
With both trembling hands she grasped her
staff and bent forward over it. Her colorless
face, with its wrinkles and gibbous eyes, pro-
truded from the meagre red folds of her shawl
like a vulture's head from its ruff. From the
corners of her toothless mouth hung the pen-
dulous jowls of an animal, making the old
creature witch-like enough.

"Yes, I know ye. Coming around to see
what else ye can steal. Where's that child?
Where is she! I want her, I say. Who's to
run errants, or to fetch me a bit of wood or
a drop of water? She's mine and I want her
back!" she screamed, with senile insistence. Her quavering voice rose higher and shriller. The child in the van quaked as she realized where she was. Surely, surely, McRotty would not give her back.

"The young un's dead," said McRotty. He told the lie with such apparent candor, that the child half raised herself from her hiding place in her surprise. She wanted so to see McRotty's face. She was not sure whether she was really alive or no. If not, it was, at any rate, very comfortable to be dead.

For once Granny Brown was nonplussed. She began to tremble and quake. "Dead! the last thing that ever belonged to me. Who will shut my eyes for me?" The fit passed: she gradually worked herself up into a fury about it.

"Ye did it a purpose; ye needn't tell me. I know ye tried to get her to die jest to spite me."

"Here's something for you," said McRotty,
handing out the dollar, as he gathered up the reins and clucked for Jake to go. But the hag clung to the van, and when he refused to give more, cursed him in a strain so original and vindictive, that even the peddler quaked.

"G'long, Jake. Get ap, get ap!"

Nevertheless, the loneliness of the forlorn old creature was pitiable. She would die so some day, as she had lived, without human companionship.

McRotty had a dim notion that he should receive extra credit for a dollar bestowed under such peculiarly aggravating circumstances. He thought: "I dunno how this givin’ is any ways different from any other givin’, but I want it understood, that if there is any particular Christian way to give a dollar, that’s the way this dollar is gave. I aint sure about my motives nor my sperrit, but I’m dead sure that it’s worth a good deal mor’n a dollar to do it."

The little lame dog rejoined the van at the
foot of the hill, having made a detour to avoid the hut.

As the peddler and his family jogged along, the loneliness of the way was sometimes beguiled with song. There was a rift in McRotty's lute, but little Hannah's treble piped in like the voice of some modest woodbird. At such times Jake kept one ear pointed back. The dust from the gyrating wheel rose in a spiral cloud, and the lame dog limped contentedly under the van.

There were other pensioners than those we have met. Sometimes the peddler, in his anxiety to provide for all, left nothing for himself. Who could fail to be amused, that such an improvident, uncalculating fellow sometimes went to bed hungry.

McRotty was not saint-like. Any one of the boys between Mosstown and Duck Hollow would laugh if you called him anything but Crosspatch. They pelted the van, and he chased them, sometimes whip in hand.
That was an active vendetta. No injury to himself would have been resented so promptly as the insult to his beloved van.

Yet one object was dearer to him; that was Hannah. But Hannah was fading before his eyes. It made no difference that he gave her the choicest fare that he could command, and made a matrass for her "nest," so that she might be more comfortable. Without avail he paid for a lodging where she could spend her nights, but where she absolutely refused to be left alone when he was away.

She must be lifted into the van whenever it started. Frail little flower! The peddler's eyes were moist when he watched her delicate face with its unearthly quiet and peace. He had found her too late.

It was because of his desire to provide for the winter a home where little Hannah could have shelter, and if need be a doctor, that McRotty resorted to night stands. He was by nature peculiarly fitted for this branch of
his profession, being fluent even to eloquence. His penetrating, harsh voice was generally the vehicle for original and witty speeches and odd conceits.

He saw a doctor about the child. Pityingly he examined the delicate creature. He knew that her days were numbered.

"She is far from strong," he told McRotty. "Very far from strong. Have you any other children?"

Then the explanation of Hannah's parentage, bondage, and emancipation were simply given. At its close the physician looked more kindly at McRotty. "You are a good man. I wish there were more like you. No! no! Put up your money. There is nothing I can do for the little one. Perhaps if you could give her a little change it would help to prolong her life."

"A little change," he said. McRotty thought the matter over during the next day or two, and as a result of his meditations
he changed his route, so that the people on
the east side of the hill wondered if the ped-
dler was ill or his van broken down. He
turned Jake's head in a new direction. The
oscillating wheel made its snake-like track in
a new road. Hannah was delighted. It was
like traveling in a foreign land. She bright-
ened so that McRotty was sure she was
mending. But the old langour returning, he
was alarmed again. She must be taken still
further away. As the season was advancing
he turned Jake's head southward.

Wonderful bargains were made by the vil-
lagers and farmer's wives with the new ped-
dler, whom they afterwards discussed among
themselves.

Once a child, visiting in a distant place,
went running to her mother with the announce-
ment, "What do you think, mama, I have
seen our old peddler." But the woman an-
swered, "Nonsense, child, we are two hundred
miles away from home. He could never drive
his old horse as far as this." Nevertheless it was McRotty and the van.

They struck into the mountains. Before attempting to cross them, the peddler replenished his stock at one of the large towns he passed through. Away from most of his pensioners he had made money. Financially his change of base had been a success. He had never made a more satisfactory trip.

Now the mountains hemmed them in. The wonderful hues of morning and evening, the beauties of rock and tree and fern bed, the wild grandeur of cliffs and crags, awed and delighted the travelers. But the road was silent, steep and rocky. Jake made frequent halts for rest, and the lame dog could not keep up with the van, so had to be taken into McRotty's place while the latter walked and aided Jake with voice and shoulder.

At the infrequent cabins of the mountain-eers money was scarce, but the peddler carried away about all that there was in circulation.
He had a way with him. The men argued. The women chaffered and bought. Indeed, though he did not realize it, the face of the sick child helped trade with many a sympathetic, motherly soul.

Finally the van rolled down toward the plain once more. The slopes were less abrupt, the swales, red as blood with the stalks of the cut buckwheat, radiated from white, thrifty-looking farm houses. Valleys and villages burst into view. The van ran more smoothly, the roads being better.

Then there came a day when its master, looking back, saw that he had indeed put a formidable barrier between himself and his own country. He was a stranger in a strange land. But he had come all this way to save little Hannah, and he would persevere. So far, in spite of the "change" she had not mended but had failed perceptibly.

One night the van was standing in the square of a populous country town. It was
court day and that brought people from a distance, so that the place was filled with a curious throng, ready, as country people are, for any novelty. McRotty had a lantern, a great red affair that he used for such occasions, swinging overhead, and beneath it he hawked his wares. He stooped now and then to the box where the little child lay, and under pretense of looking for goods to attract the gaping circle of customers, asked in a whisper that contrasted strangely with his usual strident tones, “How d’ye feel now, dear?” And the child’s voice, full of weariness and pain, replied always, “I don’t feel good, Lotty.” “Poor child—Lotty’s poor little one. Lotty ’l be through pretty soon. We mus make ’nough to get our lodgin and breakfus, you know.” Then he would stroke her head and take her little hand in his for a moment and turn to his audience again with a mist before his eyes and a curious tightening in his throat. Yet he sold well. The crowd roared over his witty
speeches, and having laughed they bought. He saw that that sort of thing could not last much longer. He must sell out now if he could—sell goods and van, and Jake if necessary, to afford a little rest for the child over whose face he saw the fearful shadow resting. This was his opportunity. If he could close out to-night, surely, surely, he might save her yet.

In the crowd before him, that grew as he talked, all were strangers. They were men who probably had wives and children and roofs of their own. They were known to each other. He alone was homeless. He had no friend but the child. Those who knew him were far away.

"Now, neighbors, what you want is one of these good, old-fashioned, home made cloth caps. They aint no shop work an' no shoddy 'bout 'em. They's warrented to last as long as the moral law and fit as close as Uncle Esic's arm to a widder. George Wash'n'tin
wore one o' these caps when he was crossin' the Delaware. Doochaloo said he wouldn't care to be lost in Africa without one. There's a style and a tone to 'em. You go to Noo York and go to the theayter and what d'ye see there? Why, half the nobbs has on caps of this here identical pattern. Thank you, sir. When you aint a wearin it 'tl do to carry eggs in, an' when it gets old it'll come in handy fer gun wads. No extry charge for advice. Step up an' buy, gentlemen. I only got eleven left out of that dozen, and if I couldn't get another I wouldn't part with the first of 'em. While you are thinkin' about it I'll show you the best thing in the way of grease eradu-crater that the mind of man ever invented—only in this case I'll bet a dollar 'twas a woman.” He dove down as though to find some of the vaunted packages, found Hannah's cold fingers instead, and whispered hurriedly, "Can't I do nothin' for you, love? How are you feelin now?"
"O, I'm so tired, Lotty, but I'll be rested in a little while."

"God bless you, little one, touch me if you want anythin'." Then, turning to his audience: "As I was a sayin', 't must aben a woman invented it, because we all know that a woman 'l knock spots out of close quicker'n a man can any day. As a grease eraducrater this'l beat any other eraducrater in the world—I know, I've tried 'em all. It'll clean a bad record or the spot on your wife's silk gownd that she got on at the last sworree. There was an 'ole woman tole me she used it fer an eye sarve and it cleared her wision so she throwed away her specks the next day.

"(How you feelin' now, Hannah? No easier? try an' get some sleep, dear.)

"The United States sockological cumanission have ordered a million boxes to clean the spots off the sun with—that's right; a quarter of a dollar or two dimes an' a nickle, thank you, sir. Two more, thanks. I never was
in a place where the gents was such good, wide awake buyers. Now I’m goin’ to show you,—

“(Take some o’ this cordial, little Hannah. It’ll brace you up fine. Lemme lift you a little so’t you can lie easier. That’s the way. I’ll soon be through now.)

“Patience, gents; don’t be impatient. As I was about to say, I’m goin’ to show you the nineteenth wonder of the world. This is the first time it has ever been onto exhibition. That’s right, examine it. I don’t wonder you wanter know what it is. Pass this over to that gentleman with the diamond collar button, please. That’s a new contrivance for indicatin whether yer dice is loaded or not,—or whether yer grocer gives you elevin ounces to the pounder butter,—or if the big fish your father-in-law caught was as big as he thought it was. In other words, it is a scales. Lemme show you. It goes together so. Easy as flyin’ when you’re
uster it. How many? Yes sir, twenty-five cents; most of my goods is twenty-five cents; sort of trade mark.

"——How are you now, little one?

"Hannah. Hannah! She ain’t asleep? She can’t be asleep so with her eyes open? Hannah,—little Hannah!" His trembling hand sought the pulse, felt for the stilled heart beat. Little Hannah!

His own heart almost stood still at what he discovered. A moment later, as the throng began to grow impatient, he turned to them again.

"I’m sorry, gentlemen, but there is something gone wrong. I can’t sell no more to-night. I find my stock has got mixed up that bad it will take me longer to sort it than you could wait. Good night." So McRotty’s van moved through the dispersing crowd with its peaceful dead and sorrowful living load.
UNCLE SUNDAY.

"I hold yo' horse, maaster, whilse you 'sist de lady ter dismount. I jes' fasten him here, so, till one them stable-boys comes derreckly an' takes him yonder. Walk right in, sah, an' I'll take yo' keerds to my mistus."

As they entered the broad hall, the old man peered around anxiously, as though surprised at not finding at least one hall-boy on duty. He swung the parlor door open, aud ushered the guests in with the air of a man who resumes once familiar duties under stress of peculiar circumstances.

Ascending to the second story with the cards, he presented them to his mistress with
the free comment that "They looks like our kind of folks,—quality folks,—Miss Marg’reet, so I jest put my bes fut forrards."

Presently he reappeared at the door of the parlor, and announced, "Miss Delplaine be down presently, sah," his white head bowing low meanwhile.

Retiring with all the dignity of an ancient butler, he gained the back hall, and at once quickened his pace to something as nearly resembling a run as his old legs could accomplish, muttering to himself as he went:

"As soon’s Miss Marg’reet get dar in de parlor, de fus’ ting she do be to open dem front curtains 'fore I c’n get de horse tooken away."

With trembling, eager hands he loosened the hitching strap, a heroic undertaking in itself, for Uncle Sunday was mightily afraid of horses; nor did he breath comfortably till his charge was safe in the carriage-house.

"I like to unloose him if I knowd I was
shore I could get him hitched again," he soliloquized. "'Sides dat, I aint so shore I got anything to feed him 'cep' grass, an' he don' look like a horse w'at been raised on grass, nuther."

Painfully the old man crept to the loft, and thankfully gathered and threw down a little hay which he found there, ruthlessly robbing a hen of her nest in his eagerness to get enough.

"Now dat dar's 'complished satisfactory, I like ter know how long dey purposes ter stay. Hope ter goodness Miss Marg'ret aint goin' ast 'em to stay to dinner!"

He locked the door of the stable, and hurried back to the house. "If dey does stay,—an' dere aint no reckonin' on w'at Miss Marg'ret goin' do,—de dignity ob de house got ter be kep' up, but blest if I knows how, dis time."

Uncle Sunday had spent most of the latter years of his life in "keeping up the dignity of
the house." Born on the estate in the days when slavery was an institution still tolerated in New York, though very rare, he had spent his youth in that happy idleness which "young maaster's valley" looked back upon from his eminence of four score years as the veritable age of gold. He had accompanied his charge to college, assisted in the pranks and honors of that far-away time, and was rewarded with the honorable post of butler.

Years passed. The master married, was a father, grew old, and died, commending with his dying breath the care of his orphan daughter to the servant who had been so faithful to him. Margaret's mother trusted the faithful negro as her parent had done, and at the end of her brief wedded life, she in turn invested Uncle Sunday with a sacred charge—the comfort and well-being of her infant, Margaret.

But the years, coming with many promises, departed as robbers, carrying with them bank
stock and live stock, servants and securities. Those who had eaten long of the bread of the Delplaines went regretfully to those who could afford to pay and feed them. As each servitor followed his predecessor down the long drive under the elms, Uncle Sunday took up the abandoned task without complaint or murmur.

First he became gardener; then hall-porter; afterward cook, and finally assumed the duties of that useful creature known in domestic economy as "second girl." If a hero is one who never fails to rise to his occasion, I leave you to name Uncle Sunday.

As he stole into the house again, with a satisfied feeling of having accomplished another of the illusions to which he devoted much of his time,—that is to say, having, as he imagined, impressed upon the visitors the idea that the Delplaines still supported a proper retinue,—Miss Margaret came swiftly to find him.
“Uncle Sunday, Judge Lord is an old friend of father’s, from the West. He and his wife will dine with me to-day.”

“For de good gracious sake, Miss Marg’ret! We aint got nuthin’ ’tall ter set befo’ ’em.”

“Oh, you will manage somehow. You know you always do,” she replied, lightly, and returned to her guests, leaving the perplexed negro to shake his snowy wool in despair.

“Dis sorter thing make a man ole befo’ his time!” he groaned. “W’at I goin’ do? De ain’ no trest at de butcher, an’ de ole hen mighty tough. De ain’ no gyarden sass to speak of, nuther, nor no fiddlin’s fo’ de las’ course. How I goin’ keep up de dignerty if Miss Marg’ret act like dis?”

Uncle Sunday might confess defeat; he often did, but he stopped there. He never failed. By some process of chemistry known only to the great few, the toughness of the old fowl was reduced to a minimum. With
wine and eggs a dessert was concocted; tomatoes lent their disguising influence to the soup, and the judge was full of compliments to his hostess on the perfect service rendered by her venerable butler.

"He seems an admirable manager," added Mrs. Lord. "I wish that I could find such a one. I can imagine that your other servants give you no trouble while he regulates affairs."

Miss Margaret admitted that she did not experience the slightest inconvenience from that source.

If the major domo dreamed that his trials were over, he reckoned wildly. His mistress called upon him, as he regarded, with a mingling of regret and pride, the remains of the dinner that had both taxed and attested his ability, and announced, in her usual nonchalant way, that the Lords would rest with them till the morrow. The lamentations of the privileged servant were instant and vehement.
“Now, Miss Marg’ret, w’at I ever done to you dat you should treat me dis fashion? Ain’ I give de jedge a mighty fa’r dinner, when you knows you’se’f we hadn’ nothin’ in de house ’cept’ de cellar?

“But I clar to gracious, Miss Marg’ret, I clean beat, dis time. Let alone de jedge’s horse, w’at I carnt unhitch to save my soul, even ’lowin’ I had anything to give him when I done got him unhitch, dar’s de supper an’ de brekfus’, an’ all de udder wukkins ter foller. We’s quality, Miss Marg’ret, an’ we got to do like quality an’ look like quality, an’”—he added, with pathos—“it beats my time to cunjure how we’se goin’ to do it.”

But Miss Margaret only laughed airily at the old man’s perplexity.

“You will accomplish it somehow, Uncle Sunday; you know you always do.”

So Uncle Sunday went about it. He disposed of the horse question by persuading a darkey on a farm adjoining to take that labor
off his hands. Then he turned his attention to the question of provender for his human charges. Supper was arranged for, as his mistress had decreed, "somehow." Breakfast, after a masterly struggle with inadequacies, he succeeded in serving to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

The mysteries of the upper region he grappled with successfully, as usual. The judge was complacent as he viewed the polish on his boots, and the judge's lady found no detail of comfort wanting in her chamber. Surely Miss Delplaine was blessed in having such servants in her house—so efficient yet so unobtrusive!

After breakfast Uncle Sunday waited confidently for the order to have the judge's carriage brought around; he contemplated and enjoyed in advance Miss Delplaine's pleased surprise when the newly acquired negro should appear in the place of groom.

Thinking of this, he went to the stable to
see how his employee was getting on, and found that individual in a state of disgraceful intoxication.

What was to be done? The horse was in the shafts and partly harnessed when he arrived on the scene of inaction; before the assistant reached a state of maudlin incompetence he must be made to complete that service.

With many misgivings the old man finally inspected the work, fastened the animal to a strap depending conveniently near, and then assisted the drunken man to the outer air. He returned to the house crestfallen and heartsore, to be met for the third time with the announcement that the visitors had consented to prolong their stay.

Uncle Sunday was too crushed to respond. There seemed to be no further possibility of avoiding disgrace. His wrinkled cheeks were actually wet with tears as he groped his way into the buttery, and fell on his knees by the
dres-ser. He lifted up his voice, softly, out of respect to the proprieties of the house, but fervently, after the manner of his race, and said:

"Lawd, I ain' nothin' but a pore ole niggar w'ats doin' de bes' he kin to save dis house from bein' disgrace. Ef it ain' askin' too much I wish you done kill dis ole man right now, or else perwide me somethin' to put into de stall and on de table for dis yere jedge f'um out Wes' w'ats cum to devour us like de locusses devour de chillun of Izrul.

"Ise a weeked ole sinner, O Lawd! but I ain' done bad enough ter desurb dat my ole gray hair be brought down wid disgrace dis way, nohow. I ain' a-askin' nuthin' fer my own se'f dis time, but fo' de fambly—dey's quality, Lawd! Gib us dis day our daily bread, and other things accorjun."

Uncle Sunday got up from his knees somewhat stiff and sore, but greatly comforted. A man of resources, he was inspired with one of more than ordinary greatness now.
Perhaps his instinctive consultation with the ancient watch which his master had given him years ago, suggested a plan. The open face of this confidential friend smiled up at him and the hands seemed to make signs. What did they propose?

Uncle Sunday started by the nearest path for the village.

"What'll you gib me for dis watch?" he asked the storekeeper as he laid that tried friend on the counter and leaned his trembling brown hands heavily beside it.

"I don't know. I don't want your old turnip," was the curt reply.

He gulped down the big lump in his throat that impeded his breath, and drew himself up indignantly.

"'Taint no turnip. 'Taint becomin' in no man to talk so 'bout a good watch, nuther. I ast you a civil question, Mr. White, an' I spected I'd get a civil answer."

He prepared to return the rejected time-
piece to his pocket, but Mr. White good-humoredly interposed.

"Don't get wild, old man. Let me have a look at your watch?"

He examined it with so much carelessness and want of feeling, that Uncle Sunday thought he should faint.

"What do you want for this old thing?"

The negro thought rapidly. He did not know anything about the value of such property, so he blundered upon a figure.

"Seben dollars, sar."

"Hoo!" shouted White. "Do you throw yourself in along of the watch? I'll give you three for it."

"Call it fo', Mr. White. Call it fo', —an even fo',"—suggested our friend.

"Nope. Tell you what I will do. I'll make it three and a half."

He turned to the till, and laid three dollars and a half on the counter, then looked inquiringly at his customer. The watch lay
between them; beside it were the bright coin.

Uncle Sunday wavered. There came up before him the face of his old master, of the first day that the watch had been worn, with a pride that could hardly be concealed. Then he remembered Miss Margaret, and the necessities of her house.

"Well! What are you going to do?"

"I'll take it, Mr. White."

White's large palm swept the watch towards him, but the negro, with a cry that was most pitiful, stretched out his hands involuntarily after it.

"Jes' once mo', sah? Jes lemme hol' it in my han' once mo'."

It was given to him. He seemed to caress it, he placed it near his ear and listened to its long familiar voice; he turned his back to the storekeeper for a moment, during which time no one may know what sacred rite was performed, but when he handed it
suddenly to its owner, there was a drop of water on the crystal.

"Hold on, uncle!" shouted White, as the old man struck blindly for the door. "You forgot to take your money. And say," he added, "I guess I may as well make that four, after all."

When Uncle Sunday went mournfully back over the stile, across the field, his arms were full of bundles and his heart burdened with grief. Others might eat and be satisfied, but he felt that no dinner would ever so fill out his waistcoat that he should cease to have a sensation of vacuum about the region of the pocket where his watch had reposed.

The judge dined well that evening. The judge's horse had a full measure of feed, and the clock work of domestic service in Miss Delplaine's household seemed unimpaired by age or accident. In the morning the judge called for his horse, and the assistant negro, who had sobered in the meantime, brought
him round; so the credit of the family was saved, but at what a cost nobody guessed.

White, the storekeeper, had been in the West in his youth, and, singularly enough, lived in the town which proudly owned Judge Lord; so it happened when that gentleman came driving down from the Delplaine house, that he was recognized by the merchant.

"Does my eyes good to see you, jedge," after the first salutations had been exchanged; "How long you been in town?"

"Two days."

"Two days? sho—where you been stopping?"

"We have been visiting Miss Delplaine's. By the way, what a house that is, old-fashioned style that we Western people imagine had died out. I must say, White, that for a good table and unexampled service I have never been better entertained. She must be a good patron of yours, eh?"
White looked at the judge in perplexity for a moment, and then, seeing that the latter was evidently in earnest, he shook hands again with the great man, and went back to his store with the look of one who has made a discovery.

"Great guns! That nigger is the greatest genius in this State of New York. 'Best feed and best service,' that's what the jedge said; that's what gets me."

How it happened I never could tell exactly, but Uncle Sunday might have been seen wearing his much-loved watch one bright day soon after this, and he wore it till he died.
What we really need is a new tense. For all ordinary purposes one may do well enough with the "was" and the "will be" of our every day speech, but for extraordinary occasions we certainly require an unusual mode of expression. The purpose of this story, as intimated, requires a new tense.

Our hero—John Historicus Simpson—was born in the 36th century A.D. This statement will no doubt be beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds; but that need not
trouble the reader. John Historicus, I repeat, was born in the year three thousand five hundred and — and, at the time we write of, was living with a Maiden Uncle and a cousin from Vassar College. They inhabited one of the "heat, cold and malaria-proof" cottages built upon the south shore of the then thickly populated (though as yet undiscovered) land which lies (?) to the eastward of that artificial continent which the United States government will no doubt cause to be constructed when we shall take the place of China in the gradual shifting of populations.

The Uncle who kept house for John Historicus and his Vassar cousin was a quiet lady-like old person who never troubled his head about men's rights or any of the "advanced" questions of the day. "Men have all the rights they need if they know how to use them," he was wont to say. His favorite relation was his niece Lotharia; a bright dashing fellow she was, who had gone
in for all the college honors and who pulled the best stroke on the river. She studied law. Historicus was very bookish; instead of devoting his days to dress and society he spent most of his time in poring over choice and rare copies of what the ancients called magazines — perhaps because of the explosive compounds they contained.

If we look with reverence at the great men of former times and, with a feeling like awe, scrape the moss away from the ragged lines with which *Hic jacet* is graven on their tombs, with how much more of worshipful feeling must we regard this little man of the 36th century when we recognize in him the Historian of the Future.

That is rather a ticklish position for a man to occupy, but, strange to relate, the deserving and honored incumbent never suspected his own identity. He supposed himself to be only a historian of the present who could do his reverencing with the best of his contem-
poraries. Of course we know that A.D. 3500 is in the far, dim future, but he thought it only a part of the present. Attention is called especially to this point, as it shows how even a wise man may hold absurd notions and be governed to a large extent by prejudice. Historicus, be it admitted, then, lived in complete ignorance of his mission until one day he stumbled upon a volume of antiquity—a treasure more rare and curious than any which he had had the delight of studying.

It was at the stall of a book merchant that he found it; after the purchase had been arranged he discoursed to the dealer of the value of his discovery. "See!" he said. "The language is undoubtedly Teutonic (from two tonics) and probably that archaic form spoken by the aborigines of America about the time of King Lincoln the 1st." The shelves of the book merchant extended for blocks down the main thoroughfare of the
metropolis and as his eye glanced along the endless rows he sighed, thinking how many times he might let a good bargain go as this had done.

The book in question was a copy of the much prized fables, (called “History” upon the quaint title page), of one Froude, who was still alive when the poet of the Sierras formed that famous sect known as the Millerites, and when the ancient military bishop and governor of a great commonwealth had just begun to reap the reward of fame for his political satire, Hudibras. How strangely the old-fashioned type and the absurd papyrus appeared to the student, used as he was to the more modern method of the transmission of thought by means of the electric audographic film. It is just possible that Simpson was the only man in the city who could have read the contents of that curious volume.

He clasped his treasure close, hiding it in the folds of his robe, and made his way
eagerly over the distance which intervened to his home; or, to speak more correctly, the distance made its way under him; for the pavements of the city were always in motion, sliding along as rapidly as one would care to walk. It was beautiful to see the orderly, noiseless way in which the current of human life glode (that is a 36th century word) past each other, one going up town and the other down. There was no standing on street corners, no loafing about the doors of hotels. When one man wished to talk with another he either walked with him or entered a conversation hall, where they could have a table and chairs for an hour by the payment of five cents. That was a modern improvement. All along the flowing way, as it was called, were chairs and benches, and over the whole of it was spread, in rainy weather, a great umbrella. Besides all this the space below the paving was hollow and arranged for the reception of baggage and parcels. Histori-
cus was not at all tired when he reached home with his precious book; to whose contents he at once applied himself.

Upon the margin of one of the pages were several dull black lines evidently made by some forgotten blunt instrument. Upon being chemically examined these marks or tracings showed the presence of Carburet of Iron, or that substance known to the ancients as Graphite. The student was in raptures. Hastily adjusting his new automatic eye regulator he enlarged his vision sufficiently to be able to read what was written there. *It was an appeal to the Historian of the Future.*

John Historicus laid down the volume and pondered. "Yes," he said. "I have certainly seen that many times before, but was never so struck by it as now. Is it possible that I can be the Historian referred to? I have always considered myself as of the present; but 'appearances are deceitful,' as some old philosopher—I think Milton—says. And
it is possible that I may be the Historian of the Future."

Historicus was very downcast when he made this discovery.

"I shall have a hard time adjusting their old lies," he said. "As hard, I imagine, as ever one of their old time judges had in the days when a barbarian could not commit a crime without involving in his punishment a whole regiment of policemen, detectives, lawyers, jurors and judges—to say nothing of the newspaper men. Now we manage things better. The electric criminal indicator records the commission of crimes and the slip of evidence passing under the galvanic motive detector, at once enters and sets in motion the whole constabulary automata; it is very complete. We live in a wonderful age," mused the young man. "But for me, the Historian of the Future, if I am really that person, there can be no restful mechanical appliances, ministering gently to my needs."
I must be girt with the ancient judicial gown and crowned with the wig and then be jury and court recorder as well—yes, and even executioner. Pah! how could I ever have admired that pack of aspiring scribblers?" This was one of the most remarkable speeches Historicus had ever made, both because of its length and its intensity; but he was deeply moved. He wildly, and for a time vainly, raved against his establishment in that honorable but tedious office to which a too trusting antiquity had called him. But he could not doubt his mission now. Too often had he seen such words as these: "History will vindicate me," or "The Historian of the Future will, with clearer vision," etc., etc. Some men would have shirked so unpleasant a duty as that with which Simpson found himself face to face, but something in the young man’s moral make-up forbade that.

A conversation with Lotharia put a somewhat new face on the matter for a while, how-
ever. Entering the library in that peculiarly breezy way for which girls were noted in the year 3500 A.D. she threw herself into an easy chair and her cigarette into the fire, (they had come back to the broad open fire-place and wood fire by that time) and communicated herself as follows:

"Cousin Horri, what ails you to-day? You look as though you had lost your best friend. If you boys would only live out of doors more —row and walk and that sort of thing as we girls do, you would not feel like moping in a corner all day long. Come—get your hat and cloak and we'll take a turn on the Plaza."

Poor Historicus' rather wan face flushed with pleasure at these words; lighted, in fact, very perceptibly; for he was no longer young and these little attentions on the part of his handsome and strong cousin were very gratifying, not the less, perhaps, because of their infrequency. But he murmured: "I can't possibly go this morning, dear, much as I
should like to walk with you. I have too much to do. You see I have been down town already and I must finish all this writing; besides helping Uncle Timothy with the housework."

The young lady arose with a considerable show of temper and walked quickly towards the door.

"One would think by your coquettish airs that you were sweet seventeen instead of"—bang! went the door and cut off the rest of the sentence.

"It is a fact," sighed Historicus, "I am a passee old bas bleu of uncertain age, which that ancient prophetess, Mother Winslow, said meant 'certainly aged.'"

In a few moments, however, the gay Lotharia returned, quite penitent for her petulance. Going over to her cousin's side she patted the little gentleman's dehirsuted crown and said tenderly:

"What's the row, Horri?"
“I am the Historian of the Future;” sighed Simpson.

“That’s bad; what did you do it for?”

“I didn’t do it; I had no more to do with it than you had when you got the scarlet fever. The first thing I knew I was all broken out with it. Look at this book”—here he presented what looked to the girl’s untutored eyes like a bound collection of beetle tracks—“see how they appeal to the Historian of the Future.”

“Yes, but this isn’t the future, its the present;” she said, as she gracefully lighted another cigarette.

“You goose—it’s the future to them;” interposed Historicus, with some asperity. He continued; “I sometimes doubt whether the past and the future are not all of life, since we never know the present except in one of the other tenses: we never realize it.”

But Lotharia replied sagely: “I tell you what it is, my son, if anyone is going to get
on in this world he must be sufficiently contemporaaneous to know the present while it is here; otherwise, it strikes me that his life will be made up of the things he is just going to do and the things he has just missed doing.” Then, after a pause, she added: “I’ll tell you what, Horri.”

“Well?”

“Well—just skip it.”

This was a cutting of the knot in a way for which our little friend found himself hardly prepared. But the idea, as an idea abstract, gained favor with him as he considered it. There was an element of common sense in it which recommended it to his fancy. An hour or so later the newly elected Historian of the Future was quietly pursuing his studies when a nervous rap on the door startled him.

“Come in,” he cried, as he snatched an arm-ful of apparatus from the chair at his side. There entered presently the strangest procession that the eyes of mortal ever were
blessed with seeing. Historicus was amazed at the appearance of the people who confronted him. He looked at his own flowing robes, with their graceful white folds and then at the straight, sombre and improper costume of his guests. They were certainly bipeds; he remarked to himself that they seemed to belong to the family of waders. There were fat men, thin men, short ones and tall ones, and some of no particular figure at all, and they every one wore ridiculous clothes that fitted closely to arms, legs and backs: the only approach to drapery was a pair of tails that hung irresolutely from the edge of each upper garment. It was the costume of the nineteenth century.

The spokesman of this odd company was a lean-faced, resolute-eyed old man, who spoke with what we would recognize as a strong Scottish burr. He advanced before the others and asked: “Can ye tell us where we may find the Historian of the Future?”
"I presume I am the person you seek. Pray be seated. What can I do for you?" asked poor Simpson, politely.

"What! You? Such a wee runt as you the holder of that honorable office? Well—I suppose you have read *Sartor Resartus*; what think you of that work? And my life of Frederick the Great and all my histories and pamphlets and the like?"

"Really," stammered Historicus; "I—I—really—never read—that is, I hardly recollect. You see, the fact is, it is considered a great deal nowadays to have even heard the name of so small a matter as a pamphlet written sixteen hundred years ago." Historicus felt exceedingly warm.

"Such a small matter!" echoed his visitor, shrilly and wrathfully. "I dinna' wunner ye are sic a puny gowk if your food has been the titles o' beuks"

"But my friend—"

"Na, Na. I am not a friend to any starved
diner on beuk titles!” So saying, the irate classic shook the dust from his shadowy feet and departed in high dudgeon.

Then another pressed forward from the ranks of the visitors and said, while his face was wreathed in smiles: “No doubt you will consider it a needless precaution for me to bring with me so familiar a work as my ‘Age of Reason,’ but I wish no unnecessary delay, as I have a lecture to deliver in Hades this afternoon. Please let me have my certificate as soon as possible.”

“But, my dear sir, I am sure I have never before heard of the work in question. It must be a very rare one, for though I am an acknowledged bibliopole yet I never have chanced to see a copy.” The Historian of the Future spoke slowly and sadly. Then his visitor, like his predecessor, departed muttering; merely pausing long enough to give an incredulous stare. He was heard to say something about having mistaken the house.
By this time John Historicus Simpson made up his mind that he was in for an all day job; so he seated himself again at the table, ruled an electric receptive film and called judicially for the next applicant. It never occurred to him to put up a sign requiring fifty dollars for an opinion. "Next!"

A poet came next. A poet, well on in years, about whose gray, wiry hair and bristling unkempt beard hung a suggestion, a flavor, of English meadows and meres and the sea wall of her coast. In his hands were odes and idyls, and the herons stalked beside him in stately fashion, while curlews, like dreary gleams, flitted over him. By his side walked another old man, whose fine lips seemed ready to burst into some song of happy Acadia, or the music of some golden legend.

These two came to the table together, and the judge rose and did honor to them, because one had set to music the thoughts of the sages of his time, and had cast the weight
of his genius into the world’s scale for good, and the other, in another land, had shaped his heart into a focus to collect and distribute again the sunshine.

After these were many others—soldiers and statesmen, novelists, and those other writers of fiction whom we call historians—but the poets were treated the best of all.

Many of the people who came to that tribunal had never been heard of, and they all went away satisfied that they had not yet found the Historian of the Future. There were those who had advanced very confidently to lay their works upon that table who departed in a sadly demoralized condition. The judge ran his eyes over some of the titles. "Lectures on the Mistakes of Moses"—unknown. "Descent of Man:" a rare work of logical whims. "Reign of Law:" a classic of worth and still used as a text book. "Life of George Washington:" one of a hundred similar accounts of a semi-authentic person-
age who was supposed by some authorities to be a sort of rehash of King Authur. And so the list ran on, _ad infinitum_. But after a while the Historian of the Future grew weary of his task and demanded anxiously:

"How many of you are there?"

"As many as the stars in heaven," answered a voice from the centre of the crowd.

"Then I refuse to have anything to do with you, or your business; the whole thing is a shameless imposition."

There was a sudden flurry of grey garments, a gleaming of many sunken eyes, moving of bony fists and a deafening horrible outcry—a most clamorous outcry of shrill voices. And John Historicus Simpson found himself lying by the side of the sofa, while Lotharia bent over him, he still holding the volume he had bought that day from the merchant.

"Cousin Horri!" cried the girl; "Cousin Horri, wake up; you've been having a nightmare."
“I suspect I have,” said Historicus. He slowly unwound himself from the self-acting chrono audo penetrative coil in which he had somehow become entangled. “I suspect I have—and I am sincerely thankful that it was nothing worse.”