

ELIPH' HEWLITT, CASTAWAY.

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER,
Author of "The Reformation of Uncle Billy," etc.

WITH PICTURES BY FREDERIC DORR STEELE.



"SELLIN' books, be you?" said the landlord of the Yarnaby Hotel, as his guest dropped into one of the vacant chairs that stood in an irregular line on the sidewalk before the door. "Well, I don't want ter say nothin' discouragin', but I guess you struck Yarnaby 'bout the wust time you could 'a' picked out. S'pose you've heard o' Walter Scott, ain't you? Thought prob'ly you hed, seein' as you're

in the book business. Well, sir, Yarnaby ain't through Scott yet, an' I don't reckon she 'll take no more books jist now. Scott hit her purty hard."

"Ten volumes, fifteen dollars cloth, twenty half-morocco?" inquired Eliph' Hewlitt.

"Thet 's it!" said the landlord. "Thet 's the ticket! I got a set myself. So 's everybody in Yarnaby, I guess; leastways, I ain't found nobody yet thet got missed. They 's enough Walter Scotts in Yarnaby right now to start up a book business. Yarnaby goes kind o' easy on books generally, but when she does go in she goes heavy. They ain't many towns where you 'll find every livin' soul ready an' willin' to take fifteen dollars' wuth o' Walter Scott, two dollars down an' a dollar a month till paid; but I guess them ten volumes 'll last Yarnaby quite a spell, an', anyhow, she won't buy no more literatoor till she gits paid up on Walter Scott. I figger from my own feelin's thet 'bout the wust time to sell a feller books is when he 's still payin' once a month on them he 's already bought. 'Bout the second time the feller comes round collectin' fer a set o' books, a man feels he 's been foolish, an' he 's got to grin an' pay; but ef another feller

comes round 'bout then tryin' to sell some more books, it 's purty nigh an insult."

Eliph' Hewlitt drew his hand over his red whiskers and coughed gently.

"They told me in Davenport," he said softly, "that Yarnaby was the most literary town in Central Iowa."

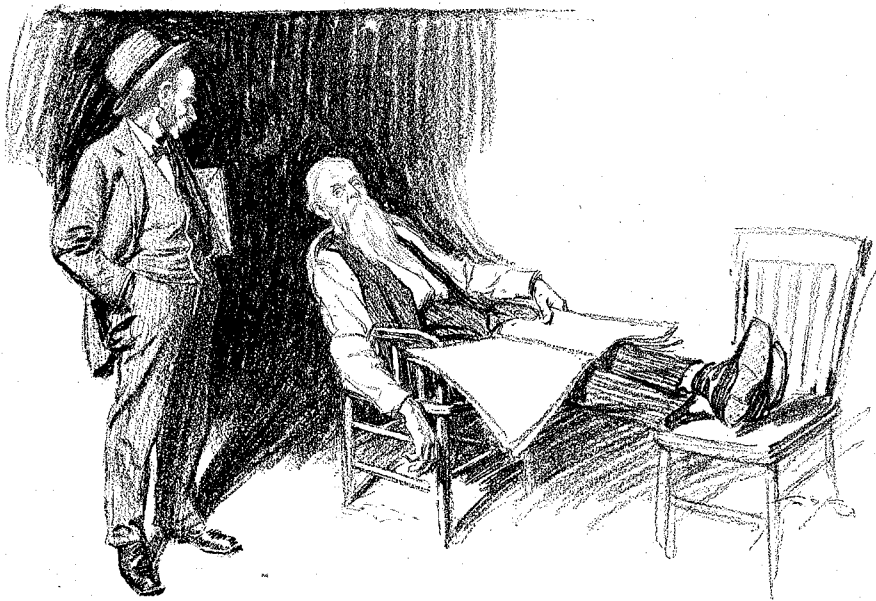
"Yes," said the landlord; "thet 's what the Walter Scott feller said, an' I reckon it 's so. Ev'ry book-agent thet comes along says the same thing; an' we're proud of it, too. But they 's other things besides books. Yarnaby 's strong on literatoor, but she 's strong other ways, an' jist now 's the time she 's hoein' another row; an' thet 's one reason I say you've hit us the wrong time. Ef I was you, I'd git along to some other place, an' come back later. Jist this minute Yarnaby 's got all the books she kin handle, an' her mind 's off on another tack. They hed a great missionary revival here last week, an' you kin bet thet every dollar thet goes out o' Yarnaby these days, excep' what goes fer dues on Walter Scott, is goin' fer the heathen. The women-folks is havin' a sale this very evenin' ter raise cash ter help along the cause."

Eliph' Hewlitt arose from his chair, and tucked the oil-cloth parcel that had been lying across his knees under his left arm. He was a small man, and his movements were short and jerky.

"Missionary sale?" he said briskly. "I guess I 'll go around and look in on it. Strangers welcome, I suppose? I'm rather fond of missionary sales, and I think the world and all of the heathen. Think the ladies would like to see a stranger?"

The landlord grinned.

"Ef you've got any money, I guess they 'll more'n welcome you, mister. From what I've saw of mission sales in Yarnaby, I calculate anybody thet 's hankerin' ter buy gingham aprons an' sofy-pillers is purty sure ter hev a front seat, even ef he is a book-



"I 'M RATHER FOND OF MISSIONARY SALES."

agent. I'd go round with you, but I got my rent comin' due next Saturday, an' I don't really need no tidies an' sich. 'T ain't far. It's bein' held at Miss Gandell's, two blocks up, an' you can't miss the house. It's the big yaller one this side the road, an' the gate's off the hinges an' stood up alongside the fence. But I guess ef them's your samples in thet package, you might's well leave 'em here."

Eliph' Hewlitt did not leave them. He hurried away with brisk little steps, and when he reached the large yellow house he found the door open. The sale was well over. The gingham aprons and cat-stitched dusting-cloths were all sold, and only a few unlucky crocheted slipper-bags and similar luxuries remained, and these were being offered at greatly reduced prices, much to the chagrin of the ladies who had contributed them. The cashiers were counting the results of the evening's business, and the other ladies were grouped about the minister, who stood in the middle of the parlor, laughingly explaining the merits of a plush-covered rolling-pin that he had purchased in a moment of folly.

Eliph' Hewlitt tapped on the open door to call attention to his presence, and walked into the parlor. Miss Gandell came forward, a shade of anxiety on her face.

"Miss Gandell, I suppose," said Eliph' Hewlitt. "Well, my name is Hewlitt, Eliph' Hewlitt, and I heard of this sale at the hotel. The landlord said strangers were welcome—"

"Of course they are!" exclaimed Miss Gandell. "I'm afraid all the best things are gone, they went off so quick to-night; but you're just as welcome, I'm sure, an' mebbe you'll find something you'd like, though I suppose you're a travelin' man, an' I don't see what you'd do with a knit tidy or a rick-rack pin-cushion, unless you've got a sister or a wife to send it to. But mebbe you ain't a drummer, after all?"

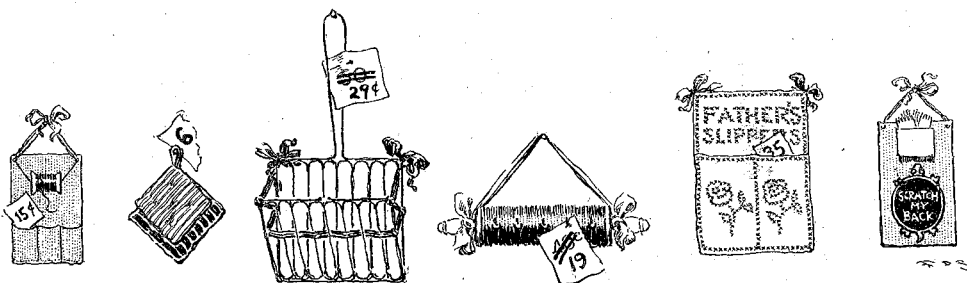
"Well, yes, I am sort of a drummer," said Eliph', tapping his parcel; "book-agent, you know. That the minister?"

Miss Gandell drew back when Eliph' mentioned his occupation. She did not consider a book-agent any less worthy than another man, but she had been obliged to miss the last payment on Walter Scott, and she had an ill-defined feeling of guilt. To miss a payment was almost as hideous in her eyes as to neglect to put a dime in the contribution-plate each Sunday would have been. Her first thought was that Eliph' had come to bear away rudely the ten volumes of Sir Walter before the eyes of all the women of Yarnaby, and she gladly grasped at his last words.

"Yes," she said quickly; "that's him. Let me introduce you. He—he likes books."

"I'm not selling books to-night," explained Eliph', for her words seemed one form of the usual reception of a book-agent, and to indicate a desire to be rid of him as quickly as possible; "but I don't mind meeting him."

Miss Gandell led the way to the center of the group, and Eliph' Hewlitt followed her.



"ONLY A FEW UNLUCKY CROCHETED SLIPPER-

When she introduced him she added that he was a book-agent. She may have done this as an explanation, for Yarnaby, and even Yarnaby's minister, craved details, or she may have done it to give fair warning to all concerned. At any rate, the effect was instantaneous, and the smiles of welcome faded. The minister shook hands gravely, and the ladies who had run forward with shoe-bags and tidies turned and walked coldly away.

Eliph' Hewlitt smiled.

"Funny how that name makes a man unpopular, ain't it?" he said, addressing the minister. "But I ain't going to talk books in Yarnaby. The landlord down at the hotel told me it was a bad time, so I'm going to pass it by this trip. Well, we deserve all the blame we get. Some of us do pester the life out of people—don't know when to stop. Now, when I see a man don't want my book, or when I see a town ain't ready for it, I drop books and go off and leave them alone. I could have stayed down there at the hotel and bothered the landlord into taking my book. He'd have took it, because everybody that sees this book and understands it does take it; but I said, 'Why bullyrag the life out of the poor man when there's a missionary sale going on in town, and he don't want a book and I do want to see the sale?' I am interested in missions."

"It is a great field," said the minister, with a sigh of relief; for, as the literary head of Yarnaby, he was always the first and most strongly contested goal of the book-agents. The subscription list that did not bear his name at the head bore few others, and he appreciated the self-denial of Eliph' Hewlitt in passing such a good opportunity to talk business.

"Are you deeply interested in the field?" he inquired graciously.

"Well, you see," said Eliph' Hewlitt, "I was cast away on one of those desert islands myself once, and I know what those poor heathen must suffer for lack of churches,

and civilization, and good books to read. I can feel for them."

Some one pushed a chair gently against the calves of Eliph's legs, in gentle invitation for him to be seated, and he took the chair and laid his package across his knees. Those who had drawn away now gathered closer about him, and all gazed at him with interest.

"Well, I never expected to live to see a man that had been shipwrecked," said Miss Gandell, "let alone shipwrecked on a desert island—an' a book-agent at that!"

Eliph' smiled indulgently.

"I was n't a book-agent them days," he said; "it was that made me a book-agent. If I had n't been shipwrecked on that island I would n't be here now with this book on my knees."

Miss Gandell's face flushed.

"I'm sure I ask you to excuse me," she exclaimed. "I don't know what I was thinkin' of not to ask to take your package. Let me put it aside for you. They ain't no need for you to be bothered with it."

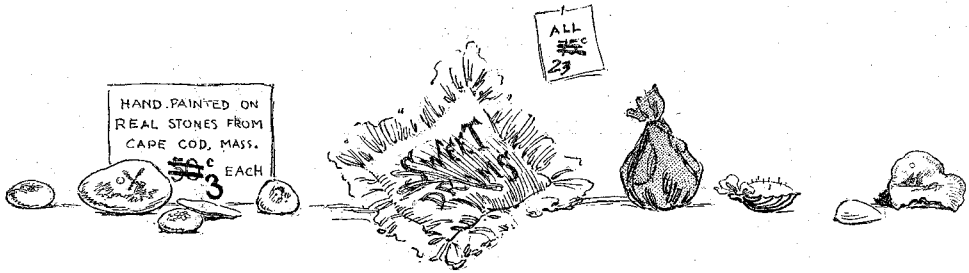
"Thank you, ma'am," said Eliph', "but I'll just keep it. No offense, but I never let it get out of my hands, day or night. It saved my life, not once, but many times, this book did, and I keep it handy. But for this book, that shipwreck would have been my last day."

"Land's sakes, now!" exclaimed Miss Gandell, "won't you tell us about it?"

"Well, as I said, but for this book I'd be bones in the bottom of the sea. Yes, ladies and gents—bones, of which there is one hundred and ninety-eight in the full-grown human skeleton, composed of four fifths inorganic and one fifth organic matter."

"How dreadful!" cried Mrs. Skinner, the butcher's wife. "But how come you to git wrecked?"

"Five year ago," said Eliph' Hewlitt, "I was a confidence man in New York. New York is the largest city in the Western Hemisphere; population estimated over three



BAGS AND SIMILAR LUXURIES REMAINED."

million; located on the island of Manhattan, at the mouth of the Hudson River. If I do say it myself, I was a good confidence man. I was a success; I got rich. And what then? The police got after me, and I had to run away. Yes, ladies and gents, I had to fly from my native land. I took passage on a ship for Ceylon. Ceylon," he added, "is an island southeast of India; population three millions; principal town, Colombo; English rule; products, tea, coffee, spices, and gems.

"We had a good trip until we were almost there, and then a big storm come up, and blew our ship about like it was a peanut shell, tossing it up and down on the mighty waves, and round and back; and the third day we bumped into a rock, and the ship begun to sink. In the hurry I was left behind when the crew and passengers went off in the boats. Think of it, ladies; not even a life-preserver to save me, and the ship sinking a foot a minute."

"Goodness me!" said Mrs. Skinner, "you was n't drowned, was you?"

"No," said Eliph' Hewlitt, "or I would n't be here to tell it. I rushed to the captain's cabin. I thought maybe I would find a life-preserver there. Alas, no! But there, ladies and gents, I found something better. When I did n't find a life-preserver I was stunned—yes, clean knocked out. I dropped into a chair and laid my head on the captain's table. I sat there several minutes, the ship sinking a foot per minute, and when I come to my senses and raised my head, my hand was laying on this."

Reverently he raised the volume from his knees and unwrapped it, and the Ladies' Foreign Mission Society leaned forward with one accord to catch a glimpse of the title. Eliph' Hewlitt opened the book and flipped over the pages rapidly with the moistened ball of his third finger.

"It was this book, ladies and gents, and it was open here, page 742. Without thinking, I read the first thing that hit my eye.

'How to Make a Life-preserver,' it said. 'Take the corks from a hundred champagne-bottles; tie them tightly in a common shirt; then fasten the arms of the shirt about the body, with the corks resting on the chest. With this easily improvised preserver in place, drowning is impossible.' I done it. The captain of that ship was a high liver, and his room was chuck-full of champagne-bottles. I put in two extry corks for good measure, and when the ship went down, I floated off on the top of the ocean as easy as a duck takes to a pond."

"My sakes!" exclaimed Miss Gandell, "that captain must of been an awful hard drinker!"

"He was," said Eliph' Hewlitt—"fearful. I was really shocked. But there I was in the water, and not much better off for it, neither, for I could n't swim a stroke; and as soon as I got through bobbing up and down like your cork when you've got a sunfish on the end of your line, I stayed right still, just as if I'd been some old bait-can a boy had thrown into an eddy, and I figgered that like as not I'd stay there forever. Then I noticed I had this book in my hand, and I thought, 'While I'm staying here forever, I'll just take another peek at this book,' and I opened her. Page 781," said Eliph' Hewlitt, turning quickly to that page, "was where she opened. 'Swimming: How to Swim, Float, Dive, and Tread Water—Plain and Fancy Swimming, Shadow Swimming, High Diving,' et cetera. There she was, all as plain as pie, and when I read it I could swim as easy as an old hand. The directions are plain, practical, and easily followed.

"I at once swum off to the south, for there was no telling how long I'd have to swim, and as the water was sort of cool, I thought best to go south, because the further south you go the warmer the water gets. When I had swum two days, and was plumb tuckered out, I come to an island. The waves was dashing on it fearful, and I knew if I tried to land I'd be dashed to flinders.

It knocked all the hope out of me, and I made up my mind to take off my life-preserver and dive to the bottom of the sea to knock my brains out on the rocks. But, ladies and gents, before I dived I had another look at my book, hoping to find something to comfort a dying man. I turned to page 864."

Eliph' Hewlitt found the page and pointed to the heading with his finger.

"'Five Hundred Ennobling Thoughts from the World's Greatest Authors, includ-

mountains, rivers, lakes, and plains, their animal and vegetable inhabitants, their ancient and modern history, et cetera, and come to 'Islands, Common, Volcanic, and Coral'; and on page 940 I read that coral islands are often surrounded by a reef on which the waves dash, but that there is usually a quiet lagoon between the reef and the island, with an opening from the sea into the lagoon. When I read that," said Eliph' Hewlitt, closing the book, "I shut up my



"'I WAS N'T A BOOK-AGENT THEM DAYS.'"

ing the Prose and Poetical Gems of All Ages," he read. "There they were—sixty-two solid pages of them, with vingetty portraits of the authors. I read No. 285:

'As thou hast made thy world without,
Make thou more fair my world within,' et cetera.

'Whittier, J. G., commonly called the poet of liberty, born 1807, died 1892'—with a complete sketch of his life, a list of his most popular pieces, and a history of his work in behalf of the slave.

"I was much comforted by this," said Eliph' Hewlitt, "and I run over the pages this way, thinking of what I had read, when I hit on page 927: 'Geography of Land and Sea.' I skipped ten pages telling of the five great continents, their political divisions,

book and swum round till I come to the opening, swum across the lagoon, and fell exhausted on the beach. I was played out, and I had swallowed too much water. I'd have died right there, but I thought of my book, and I turned to the index, where every subject known to the vast realms of knowledge is set down alphabetically, from A to Z, twenty thousand references in all, dealing with every subject from the time of Adam to the present day, including, in the new and revised edition, just from the press, a history of our war with Spain, with full-page portraits of Dewey, Sampson, Cervera, and the boy king, and colored plates of the battles of Manila Bay and Santiago. I ran my eye down the page till I come to 'Drowned, How to Revive the, page 96'; and what I read saved my life."

The ladies sighed with relief.

"What shall I say about my four long years on that island?" said Eliph' Hewlitt. "I was the only man on it. Oh, the pangs of solitude! Oh, the terrors of being alone! But, ladies and gents, I suffered none of them. I was not alone. He is never alone who has a copy of Jarby's Encyclopedia of Knowledge and Compendium of Literature, Science, and Art, published by Jarby & Goss, New York, and sold for the trifling sum of five dollars a volume, one dollar down and fifty cents per month, the book delivered when the first payment is made. And that, my friends, was the book I had, and the book you see before you."

The minister put out his hand.

"May I look at the volume?" he asked, and Eliph' Hewlitt passed it to him with a nod.

"From the first the book was my friend, philosopher, and guide. I had no matches. Page 416, 'Fire: Its Traditions—How to Make a Fire without Matches—Fire-fighting,' et cetera, taught me to make a fire by rubbing two sticks as the savages do. I had no weapons to kill the fowls of the air. Page 425, 'Weapons, Ancient and Modern—Their History—How to Make and Use Them,' explained how to twist the cocoanut bark into a cord, and to shape the limb of the gum-gum-tree into bow and arrow. Page 396, 'Birds—Tropical, Temperate, and Arctic—Song Birds, Edible Birds, and Birds of Plumage,' with their Latin and common names, and over one thousand illustrations, told me which to kill, and which to eat. Page 100, 'The Complete Kitchen Guide,' being eight hundred tested recipes, —roasts, fries, pastry, cakes, bread, puddings, entrées, soups, how to make candy, how to clean brass, copper, silver, and tin, et cetera,—told me how to cook them.

"Yes, my friends; I went to that island an ignorant, unbelieving man, and I came away well educated and reformed. For my idle hours there was the 'Complete Mathematician,' showing how to figger the most difficult problems easily, to measure corn in the crib, water in a well, figger interest, et cetera, by which I became posted on all kinds of arithmetic. There was the 'Letter-writer; or, A Guide to Polite and Correct Correspondence'; the 'Dictionary of Legal Terms; or, Every Man his Own Lawyer'; the 'Modern Penman'; the 'Eureka Shorthand System'—in fact, all the knowledge of the world condensed into one thousand and four pages, for the small sum of five dollars. Who can

afford to be without this book, which will pay for itself twice over every week of the year?

"I was picked up, ladies and gents, by a passing ship, and I decided to devote my life to a great work—to circulating this wonderful book in my native land. I wept when I thought of the millions that had not seen it—the millions that were living poor, starved lives because they did n't have a copy of Jarby's Encyclopedia of Knowledge and Compendium of Literature, Science, and Art; and I gave my life to the cause."

The minister handed the book to Eliph' Hewlitt, and cleared his throat.

"It seems to be all you claim for it," he said; "but I fear the good landlord of the Yarnaby House was right. We are not, many of us, ready for more books at present. If you return in eight months or a year—but Yarnaby has so many books, and—"

Eliph' Hewlitt smiled, and put his hand gently on the glossy black knee of the minister's best trousers.

"True," he said, "true! Yarnaby has books. Yarnaby appreciates books. Yarnaby knows the civilizing and Christianizing influence of books. But," he exclaimed, "think of the heathen! Think of the poor missionaries fighting to bring civilization to those dark-hued brothers! Shall it be said that every house in Yarnaby has a set of Walter Scott, ten volumes with gilt edges, while the minds of the heathen dry up and rot for want of the vast treasures contained in Jarby's Encyclopedia of Knowledge and Compendium of Literature, Science, and Art? Here in this one book is the wisdom of the whole world, and will you selfishly withhold it from those who need it so badly? If I know Yarnaby, I think not. If what is said in Davenport regarding the unselfishness and liberality of Yarnaby is true, I think not. I know what you will say. You will say, 'Here, take this money we have collected this evening and give to the thirsting heathen as many volumes of Jarby's Encyclopedia of Knowledge and Compendium of Literature, Science, and Art as it will buy at five dollars per volume.'"

He glanced around the circle of faces.

"That is what you will say," he said; "but Eliph' Hewlitt will beg a chance to do his little for the noble work. He will, seeing the good cause, make the price four seventy-five per volume, and throw in one volume free for the Yarnaby Sunday-school library, where one and all can have ready reference to its helpful and civilizing pages."

When Eliph' Hewlitt returned to the hotel the landlord was asleep in the chair before the door. He arose with a yawn, rubbed his eyes, and led the way into the office, where the single kerosene-lamp was burning dimly. He stretched his arms as he glanced at the clock that stood above the dusty pigeon-holes behind the desk.

"'Leven o'clock!" he yawned. "I must have been asleep two hours. Guess you 'll want ter go right up ter bed, won't you? I reckon you found out Yarnaby don't want no books this trip; an' ef you want ter git

the mornin' train west, you 'll need all the sleep you kin git."

Eliph' Hewlitt tossed his package on the desk.

"Why, yes," he said; "I wish you would call me in time to catch that train. I 'll be ready for bed in half an hour or so. I done a little business up yonder, and I want to write up my report. And, say," he added, "if any feller comes this way selling books the next month or so, just tell him Eliph' Hewlitt 's been here. There ain't any use for a raw hand to waste time in a town when I 've got through with it."



WATCH-NIGHT AT TRINITY.

BY HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

KEEPING the watch-night in the somber church
Still wreathed with green and of the forest smelling,
The hollow of the dark new year I search
For shadows in its wide recesses dwelling.

What phantoms hide there, and what portents loom,
With outlines gathering to no shape or seeming,
But mantled in a mystery of gloom,
And vast and vague before my slender dreaming?

Out of the dusk, with honor and with bliss,
With fluttering plume and innocent beguiling,
To bend and greet me with her honeyed kiss
Rises Great Fortune, rosy-red and smiling?

Or waits me Ruin in that awful land,
Casting a cloak about his formless fashion,
With dust and ashes falling from his hand,
And glamour lost before his pallid passion?

Is it white Death in that cold void I see,
Veiling with mist and tears his unknown being,
Or is it lovely Life that comes to me,
Glad wings and perfumed airs about her fleeing?

Nay, I am waiting in the church. The lights
Twinkle like stars among the sweet pine branches,
The midnight peals, and close to heavenly heights
On tides of song the joyous spirit launches.

And through dim aisles and dome I feel the breath
Of unseen hosts within the music swelling,
And know for peace or pain, for life or death,
A hand will lead, a presence be indwelling!