

EDITOR'S DRAWER

HE KNEW WHAT WAS DUE TO THE COURT.

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

HE was one of the characters about the town when I first knew it, and though I did not at the time know his history, and could not avouch my witnesses, I somehow took it in from the city at large. He was not exactly a vagabond, for he had a house—a brick house at that, though a little one—and one of the oldest and most dilapidated in the town; and there was a garden beside it, though it was nothing more than a tangle of bushes, weeds, and briars, and there was no paling left to the old enclosure. He was not exactly a drunkard in the police parlance, for though he was often full, he generally got home at some hour of the night, however drunk he might be, and he rarely ever got into the police court. (It may be doubted if a man can be a vagabond, however lazy, drunken, and disreputable he may be, if he has a house of his own, however dilapidated and covered with mortgages it may be, to which he can retire at will, and a garden, however grown up and unenclosed, in which he can wander when he wishes it.)

If he was not a vagabond, however, it was a shadowy wall which withheld him from being one; and if he was not a drunkard, the line which divided him from it was impalpable. He was of a family which once owned a considerable part of the land on which the town was built. Other members of the family had got rich thereby, but he had grown poorer and poorer. He belonged to a past age, and was at loggerheads with everything new. He was a privileged character. He abused everybody, but nobody minded him. If he said a biting thing, every one laughed; if he got drunk, some one carried him home and poked him inside of his broken door; if he got angry, some one took his stick from him till he became quiet. He was known universally as "Old Jerry." How he lived was not absolutely known. No one would have dared to offer to give him anything.

He had been sheriff at one time—a fact of which he was very proud. He had owned then not only the old house and its torn garden, but the ground on both sides of it where the two large factories, owned by a nephew and namesake of his, a somewhat pompous gentleman, had since gone up. At least he claimed to have owned this ground, though the courts had decided otherwise. People said generally that whiskey and dissipation had ruined him; he said the man who owned the factories on either side of him, and the rascality of the world at large, had done so,

and he expended every resource at his command in annoying him. He had long since encumbered the remnant of his property, the old house and garden, in fighting him, and when he lost the suits he consoled himself by devoting hours a day to vilifying him wherever he could get a hearer to listen, which was not difficult. He always treated me with distinguished politeness, though I was counsel against him. He was paralyzed at this time, and could just shuffle along with his hook-handled stick; but his command of language was by no means as limited as the command of his limbs, and he used to curse his nephew with a lavishness which would have put Er-nulphus to the blush. He even applied to court to change his relative's name, claiming that he had no right to it, and when that was refused, threatened to change his own name, that it might not remain the same with his.

At length his kinsman's patience gave way; the application to court to change his name was the last feather, and matters culminated. He applied for a writ of lunacy, and Old Jerry was brought up before three justices to be examined. I was counsel. We appeared before the magistrates in the justices' room in a corner of the old court-house looking out over the old part of the town, where the fashionable residences had been years before when the city was a village, but which was now almost covered by tall factories, with their blank walls and high chimneys. Almost the only break among them was the gap immediately facing the window, where a dingy little old house, with dormer-windows and a broken porch, was set back in an unfenced yard filled with bushes, and half hidden by two or three scraggy old trees, which leant above it as if to rest on it as much as to shelter it.

When we arrived Old Jerry was already there in charge of the deputy sheriff. He was dressed in a clean shirt which showed marks of darning, and his long gray beard gave him a distinguished air. I had fallen in with the three magistrates and one of the examining physicians just outside the door, and the other doctor who had been summoned soon arrived. As we entered, Old Jerry tried to rise. The officer said he need not get up; but he scuffled to his feet, and made a profound bow to the magistrates, remaining standing until they had all taken their seats, when he tremblingly resumed his. He never looked at his nephew, though his manner showed hostility in every fibre of his frame.

"Do you think I do not know what is due to a court, sir? I was sheriff before you were born," he said to the officer, who half smiled and said nothing. "Yes, sir, no deputy either—High Sheriff, who made deputies, sir." The officer still said nothing, and the next moment he apologized to him, declaring that he had always treated him like a gentleman. "Which is more than I can say for every one in this room," he added.

There was a brief consultation among the

doctors thought insanity. Old Jerry sat scornfully silent till they had both testified. This ended the evidence. The presiding justice asked him if he wished to say anything. He said no, not there—he should appeal—but a moment afterwards, as they were writing out the committal, said, suddenly, "There is one infamous rascal in this room." Everybody looked up. "I don't refer to you, your Worship, or you, or you, sir," to one justice after the other, very blandly. "I know too well



"HE WAS NOT EXACTLY A VAGABOND."

magistrates, and then the one who had issued the writ said that they would begin the inquiry. The papers were examined and found in form, and then the two doctors were called to testify. The evidence was all one way, and was pretty clear. He had persistently refused for years to sell his old house or garden, and had let bushes grow on land worth \$5 a square foot till it was all eaten up. He had pursued his nephew with extraordinary virulence. There were besides a great many other curious things. This proved something, certainly; the

what is due to the court; and"—turning and looking at me very doubtfully—"I don't mean you, either, sir. I knew your father, and he was a gentleman. I know you've been trying to help rob me of my house all these years, but I don't blame you; that's your business that you are paid for. And I don't mean you, or you," addressing the doctors. "If I were speaking of fools, I might not be able to overlook you. I don't mean you, Mr. Sheriff, and"—more briskly—"I don't mean myself." He sat back and looked straight ahead of him,

whilst his relative shifted uncomfortably in his chair and tried to look unconcerned.

The committal was made out and delivered to the officer, who beckoned to him, and he rose and went shuffling out, stopping at the door to make a profound bow to the court to which he knew so well what was due.

A few days later I met him shuffling along on the street, and I suppose I showed some surprise in my face, for he stopped and spoke to me.

"I'm back, you see," he said.

"Yes; how is it?"

A WELL-STOCKED LARDER.

THE stoutest hearts among them must acknowledge a feeling of some concern when night falls upon the passengers of that trans-continental railway which takes its dining-cars off the trains after dinner, and shunts them on a side track, to be hitched on to the first train bound the other way for breakfast next morning. There are plenty of things that would like to eat the passengers in the country through which they travel, but there is nothing that they would care to eat cooked and ready for them on the route. I fancy the same regret at parting from the passengers seizes the dining-car men, for one of them told me that the company switched the car off wherever it happened that the last passenger finished his dinner. If the last man is impressionable he finds himself choking down his food and gulping his coffee scorching hot—he hardly knows why. In that case the car may be switched off at a little village where there are seven saloons and one dwelling.

But if the man is a dullard he eats on undisturbed, and the car goes off in the wilderness, where the conductor, waiter, and cooks leave it, with all its nineteenth-century conveniences, and go fishing till bedtime, to the accompaniment of the howling of wolves and the hooting of owls. I know that the frequency of this fate weighed on the soul of one conductor, for he gave me a glimpse of his finer nature. "I oughtn't to be thrashing iron all my life," said he. "I've got a home that'd make you dizzy. My wife is a real lady, and my children are musicians till you can't rest. My son can play the fiddle 'way up in Que, and my girl can bang the tar out of a piano."

On that train I received a telegram from the president of the road, in which he asked me to stay up till two o'clock in the morning, because he was on a train that would pass ours at that time, and he wished to shake my hand and say, "How d' do?" It grew to be a tiresome wait. At midnight, sitting all alone in the smoking-room of the sleeper, I must have presented a striking picture of loneliness, for the colored porter of the car took pity on me.

"Have something to drink?" said he.

"No, thank you."

"Well, you see," he said, "when I got to the asylum where that rascal got me sent the board was in session, and I knew most of them, and their fathers before them; and they asked me what I was doing there, and I told them the whole thing—all about that scoundrel who has been robbing me, and you, and those two other fools, and all; and they said they knew you all, and that I had more sense than all of you put together; and I'm d—d if I don't believe they are right."

He shambled off, and I am not certain that I disagreed with the board.

"Well, won't you have something to eat?" he asked. "It's been a long while since you had anything to eat."

"Why, where can you get any food?" I asked, for I had seen the "diner" cut off, and had said good-by to its conductor, whose children were such heroic musicians.

"That's all right," said the negro, grinning. "I kin git yer mos' anything yer want, ef you're hungry. How would a little chicken suit yer, or cake, or fruit, eh?"

"But where is all this variety to be had? The dining-car is taken off," said I.

"Te he!" the darky replied. "Dinin'-cars don't make no diff'ence to me. I reckon I know where I kin git you de bes' in de land."

"But how on earth will you do it?"

"Oh, outen de passengers' baskets," said he. "Back yer in de car dere's a lady what's got two or three col' chickens 'n' some apples 'n' oranges. Dere's another young girl—she's got cake 'n' sweetmeats 'n' sandwiches. Dere's a gemman wid a whole box of stuff—canned ham 'n' pickled oysters 'n' crackers 'n' cheese. Dere's—"

"Why, you rascal! would you rob the baskets while the people are asleep?"

"N-n-no, sir; 'tain't zackly robbin' 'em," said he. "I'd only do it to help out a gemman of de right sort when he am pow'ful hungry. Oh, you needn't be afraid. I've fed many a man dat way sence I've been on de road—many 'n' many a time."

JULIAN RALPH.

PROOF.

THE maid was a recent importation, but after a few weeks had been promoted to the position of waitress. When she had been installed in her new duties a few days her mistress asked, "Bridget, did you attend to the parlor to-day?"

"Indade oi did," was the answer.

Who could doubt the light of truth which sparkled in her eyes? Her mistress believed her, but, to make assurance doubly sure, asked again, "You are positive?"

"Oi am that," said Bridget, in an injured tone, "and would ye be wantin' proof, oi can show ye the pieces of the brick-brack that oi bruk in dustin' the room."

The Reformed Tigress.



LADY on the lonely shore
Of a dull watering-
place
Once met a Tigress weep-
ing sore,
Tears streaming down
her face.

And knowing well that
safety lay
In not betraying fear,

She asked, in quite a friendly way,
"What makes you weep, my dear?"

The Tigress brushed a tear aside.

"I want a man," she wailed.

"A man? They're scarce!" the Lady cried.

"I fear the crop has failed.

"There is but one in miles, and, oh,
I hear that he is wed!"

The Tigress smiled. "I am, you know,
A man-eater," she said.

"You eat them!" screamed the maid; then ceased
In horror and amaze,
And sat her down to show the Beast
The error of her ways.

"Men are so scarce," she urged, "I fear
There aren't enough to go
Around. Now is it right, my dear,
That you should waste them so?"

"I weep to think of all the men
You've spoiled ere now," said she.
"And if you eat the rest, why, then,
What will become of me?"

The hours flew by; she took no rest
Till twilight, when, at last,
The contrite Beast with sobs confessed
Repentance for the past.

"Go," said the maid; "take my advice.
I know what's best for you.
It's cheap and filling at the price.
Go, seek the oyster stew."

The Tigress lies unto this day
Upon an oyster bed.
The Lady, so the gossips say,
Is shortly to be wed.

OLIVER HERFORD.



MORE EXCITING.

"THAT is a picture of the old Puritans going to church, Robby," said Mr. Norris, impressively. "Here you see them tramping through the snow in single file, every man with his gun thrown over his shoulder, ready for instant use in case of an attack."

"What did they have to carry guns for?" asked Robby, with interest.

"To keep off the Indians," replied Mr. Norris. "That is the kind of men that built up this country. Not the bitterest cold, nor the heaviest snow, nor the fact that they went in extreme peril of their lives, could prevent them from performing their religious duties. Just think of our sturdy, pious forefathers when you don't feel like going to church, and remember the hardships they endured to enjoy the privilege of worshipping on Sunday, a privilege which I am afraid you are inclined to hold too lightly."

"Pooh!" observed Robby. "I'd go to church every day in the week if I could get a shot at an Indian on the way!"

HARRY ROMAINE.

A GOOD EXCUSE FOR ONCE.

'LIAS BLACKBURN was, in his day, one of the most successful and notorious moonshiners of southwestern Virginia. Still, 'Lias was by no means an unprincipled man. His contempt for the revenue laws was complemented by a regard for a code of morals, peculiarly his own, that gave him no little worry, for it particularly inveighed against unreasonable inebriety. 'Lias never was drunk without cause, and "any other reason why" being no reason for a drink to his logical mind, he was often sober for five consecutive days.

After one of these periods of abstinence 'Lias found occasion to smuggle a ten-gallon "kaig" into Tennessee. 'Lias had a quasi-conviction that in spite of his generous gauging of the barrel, a shortage might be noticed when he delivered the goods, and the suspicion weighed on his mind more than the "kaig" on his shoulder. When he reached the part of the mountain trail called High Knob, the greatest elevation thereabouts, he felt so worn out by worry and fatigue that he decided to rest awhile. The beauty of the night brought comfort to 'Lias's soul, and the softness of the turf to his bare feet. He threw down the "kaig," stretched himself on the grass, and shut his eyes for "fo'ty winks."

Around High Knob there is only one thing thicker than huckleberries and moonshiners; it is rattlesnakes. Consequently 'Lias, wakened by a sharp pain in his right great toe, was not at all surprised to see an immense rattler wriggling away. 'Lias sat up. A great contented smile spread over his face. He drew the "kaig" a trifle nearer, put out his left foot and shook it at the retreating snake.

"Chaw away, ole man," said 'Lias. "I's just as well prepared fo' you as though you'd given me six months' notice."

COGGESHALL MACY.

AN INFERENCE.

DURING Pennsylvania's "Long Parliament"—the session of the Legislature which convened in January, 1883—there were a good many things done and said which have never appeared in print, and which their authors have taken especial pains should never become history. Some, however, would bear repetition, and we give one. The representative from the sixth legislative district (located in the city of Philadelphia) was the Hon. Hugh Mackin. Among the others in that body were the Hon. Mr. Sp—r of Perry, and the Hon. Mr. McN—a of Bedford, both of whom were ready debaters, and both of whom spent a good deal of time on their feet. Once in debate Mr. Sp—r in the course of his remarks referred to the fact that he and the honorable gentleman from Bedford were born upon the same day.

"Mishter Shpeaker," said the gentleman from the sixth district as he arose, "did I undershtahnd the gentleman from Perry to say that his birthday fell ahn the same day as the gentleman's from Bedford?"

The House quieted down, and Mr. Mackin was assured that such was the fact.

"Then, Mishter Shpeaker, I rise to remark thot it must ha' been a domned windy day."

A SAD MISTAKE.

MRS. FOSTER was from New England, and regarded life very seriously, never shirking or turning back from the path of duty which lay before her, but she never realized that French was at all necessary until she visited Paris. Then she had to rely on a phrase-book, which relieved her mind of all care, but greatly exercised the mental powers of the natives with whom she came in contact. Her nephew, who was studying art in the French capital, secured for her an invitation to a reception given by a famous French artist. Mrs. Foster went, accompanied by her nephew (and the phrase-book). She thought she knew just where to open it and read her lines. She was introduced in French to the artist. He spoke in French, her nephew replied in French, until the dear old lady got bewildered. But she felt that she must say something, so she opened the inevitable book and read off the first sentence which met her eye, giving it the true New Hampshire twang. The artist smiled sweetly, her nephew also smiled sweetly, but as Mrs. Foster saw the translation in italics after the sentence she nearly fainted. As her nephew led her away, however, he congratulated her upon her introduction and her knowledge of the language.

"But, Henry," cried his horrified aunt, "did you hear what I said? I asked him how soon could we get something to eat—that's what I asked him—in French."

Her nephew smiled; he would have liked to laugh. "Oh!" he replied. "Did you? Well, auntie, it doesn't matter, for he asked me what in thunder you said, and I told him I didn't know."



"Look at de jay a-comin' dere. Jes watch me do 'im wid me little game.



"I'll jes bet yer fifty yer can't pick out de ace o' clubs, an' I'll drop de cards right down before yer eyes. See?"



"I'll do the best I can to win the fifty, but—



"To make sure that there is no mistake—



"I will ask you to examine this card and see that it is all right.



"It's amazing how readily people are deceived."

THE FAKIR AND THE PRESTIDIGITATEUR.

NO MISTAKE IN THE PULSE.

DR. B—— of Virginia is a very able man in two branches of human endeavor. He is famed as a physician, and as a consumer of wines at dinner he is probably not anywhere excelled. Because of the latter distinction he is rarely called upon professionally after dinner by those who know him. It happened not long ago, however, that the sudden illness of the wife of one of his friends made it necessary that he should be summoned in a professional capacity late in the evening. The doctor came, visited the patient, and prescribed.

As he was about to leave the house the sick woman's husband asked him what the exact trouble was. The doctor put on a long face, and seemed unwilling to gratify the husband's curiosity; but finally, after much insistence upon the latter's part, he observed, gravely, that the lady had been indulging in too much strong drink, but that he had prescribed, and that the ill effects would soon pass away.

The revelation astounded the husband, and he expressed some doubt as to the accuracy of Dr. B——'s diagnosis.

"I am not mistaken at all," he replied, indignantly. "I have had much experience in cases of this sort, and cannot be mistaken. The pulse is an absolutely accurate indicator. Mrs. S——'s pulse at this moment is the pulse of the inebriate." With this he left the house, not at all pleased that Mr. S—— should have chosen to doubt his judgment.

Mr. S—— immediately repaired to the sick-room, and was still further disturbed on entering to find his wife in a most hilarious state of mind, laughing so heartily, in fact, that he was almost of the opinion that Dr. B—— was right after all. Upon inquiring of madam as to the cause of her mirth, he was informed that Dr. B—— had sat at her bedside, looked at her tongue, and requested to feel her pulse. She had held out her hand, but the doctor had not taken it at all, but had contented himself with placing the fingers of his right hand upon his own left wrist.

In short, the doctor had felt his own pulse!

HIS CRITICISM.

HE was a typical beggar in appearance. It was very late, and he accosted a passer-by, requesting assistance. If his tale was to be believed, he had not eaten in many days, and the philanthropic pedestrian resolved to assist him, not with ready money, but by giving him a meal. He took him to one of the most famous cafés in town, where he ordered a regular course dinner for the unfortunate. This the beggar ate with a relish which was the best confirmation of the truth of his story. When the last morsel of the feast had been eaten the philanthropist paid the bill, and on the way out asked the beggar how he had enjoyed the meal.

"First rate," said he; "but say, their cookin' ain't what it ought to be, is it?"

HOPELESS AMBITION.

I'd like to write a drama full of fancy and of fact,
In which I'd handle love and crime with some regard for tact.
I'd like to have a hero who could move an Alp aside,
To rescue from the villain bold his poor unhappy bride.

I'd strive to have a heroine with beauty like to that
The Persian story-writers used to knock Bagdadians flat;
I'd like to have her rival, with her dazzling ways, the moon,
Combining grave demeanor with a tendency to spoon.

I'd like to have her lines enriched by poetry divine
From Omar quoted, or from Keats, and here and there from mine.
I'd like to have her fond of art, of letters, and the stage,
And just to keep her human, when it's needed, let her rage.

The villain would be lovely if I only had my way;
He'd poison, stab, and hari-kari once or twice a day.
He'd use the strangest oaths that ever came to mortal ears,
And all his poses I would have made horrible with leers.

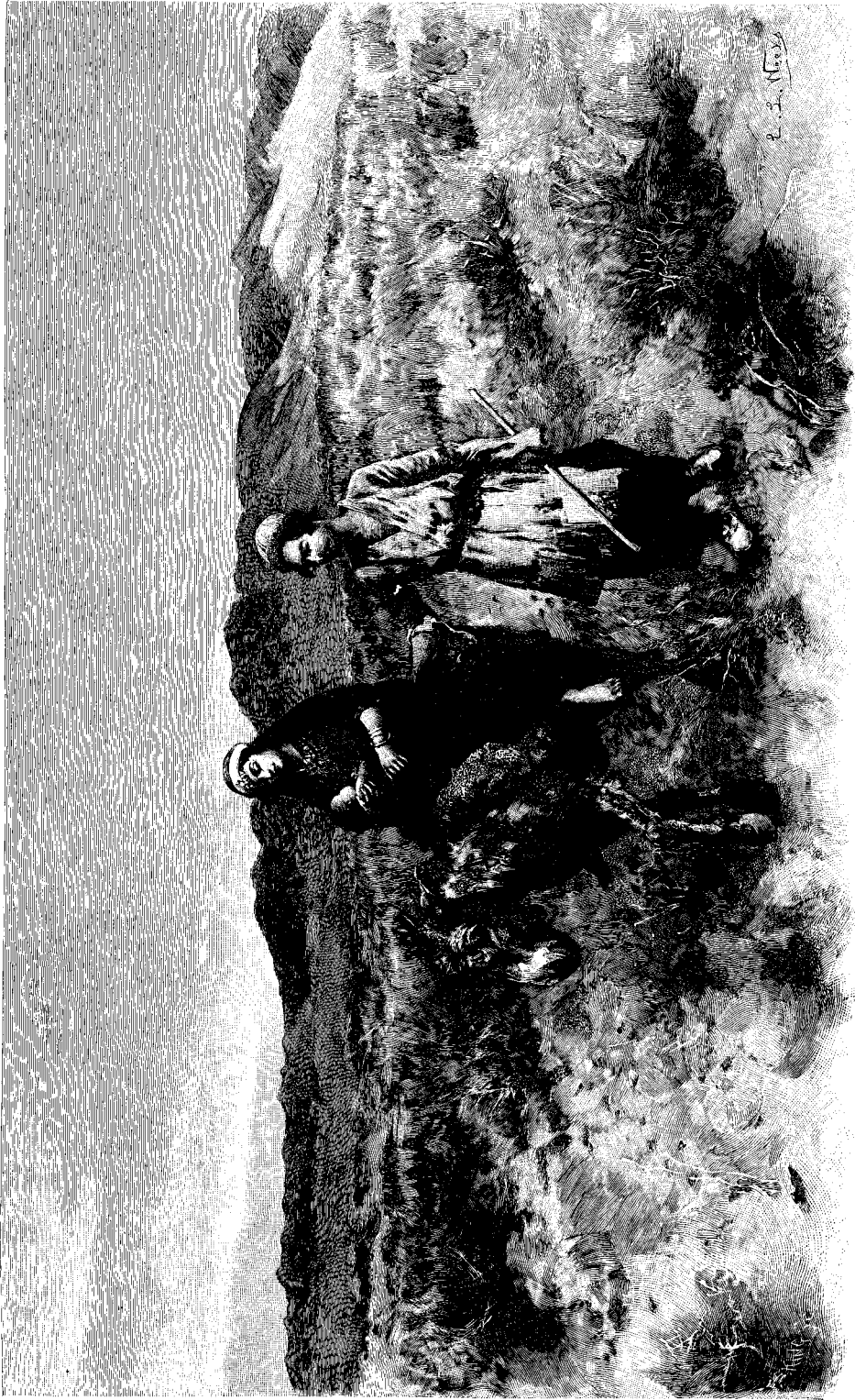
I'd have him sink a steamship in the solemn dead of night,
To have a forged two-dollar check removed from earthly sight.
I'd have him burn a flat-house and destroy a thousand folks,
To kill the light-haired sleuth-hound who is always cracking jokes.

And finally I'd have him die a miserable death:
I'd have a farm-yard bovine's kick deprive him of his breath.
In short, in this great drama, which I dream of night and day,
I'd have a taking mixture of all styles of modern play.

The tank could be in one scene, and the saw-mill in the next;
And in the third by blood-hounds I would have the villain vexed;
A fourth could have an Indian to take the ruffian's scalp;
But best of all would be where John for Mary moves the Alp.

But no, I'll never do it. Though for fame I madly sigh,
I'll never reach the pinnacle 'pon which I've set my eye,
Because, when I have written parts, and read my pages o'er,
I find that everything I've done some other's done before.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



PERSIAN MOTHER AND CHILD.