



# Thirty Years In Hell

— OR —

## The Confessions of a Drug Fiend

By COL. D. F. MAC MARTIN

Tulsa, Oklahoma

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## FOREWORD

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An ancient author tells us somewhere with the tone of a pedagogue, that if you have not done anything worthy of being recorded, at least write something worthy of being read. It is a precept as beautiful as a diamond cut in England; but it cannot be applied to me, because I have written neither a novel nor the life of an illustrious character. Worthy or not, my life is my subject and my subject is my life. I have lived without dreaming that I should take a fancy to write these confessions, and for that very reason the effort may claim from the reader an interest and a sympathy which they would not have obtained.

The *motif* to arrange in tangible form a narrative of reminiscences, episodes and confessions in my inflammatory career occurred to me while undergoing treatment in the psychopathic ward of a hospital for the elimination of the baneful effects caused by chronic addiction to that insidious, yet seductive narcotic drug classified in the pharmacopoeias of the world as morphine. I had sowed to the wind and reaped the whirlwind, and, having reached the fork in the road, I irrevocably resolved that henceforth by an iron-bound code of conduct, I should leave the white lights forever, and pursue the narrow way along the street which is called straight which would finally bring me to the house beautiful. During the days of listless, lackadaisical indolence in this *locus penitentiae*, I found time to delve into the dark corridors of the past in search of data. I disinterred them from the tomb of the long ago from the jejeune period of my life up to the present tick of the clock, after having passed a few years since, the half century mark on life's pilgrimage.

The record here partakes of the fluctuations of my own thoughts and feelings, treating of scenes before me, the whole being denuded of any tincture of chimera or even the cloak of affectation. It embodies a recital of years of confirmed enslavement to morphine, cocaine, chloral, hasheesh and other toxics which obtained over me the most incomprehensible ascendancy. It embraces seasons of ineffable felicity, inexpressible verve and consummate bliss, blended with unspeakable misery and unpardonable moral turpitude. Framed by nature devoid of the

capacity of self-will, it is little wonder that I plunged head-first into the wildest caprices and became a prey to the most ungovernable cacoethes and passions. From me in an instant, all virtue dropped as a mantle and became as wax and melted in her own fire, and I steeped myself in moral leprosy.

My sensitive life has been a fiery pulse of sin. Its chords have been played upon by every passing wind of fancy and folly, and especially by slaying myself with honeyed drugs. I served the god of opium for thirty years. For three decades I traveled the untrammelled wilds, keeping my ear close to the breast of nature, drifting like a wind-blown sunflower, a wanderer upon the face of the earth. The paraphrase is true that an assassin kills but once, but drugs killed me slowly with all the horrors of despair and misery into which they plunged me. The game is like playing poker with the devil when he has the usual house percentage and five aces in his deck. Yet, while in its indulgence I felt the pangs of every hell, I also enjoyed all heavens here below. Thru it all, I have lived in a dream and am now dying a victim to the horrors and the mystery of all sublunary visions, while my mind is besieged by tumultuous and crying memories.

While a bounden captive in the gyves of opium, my wanderlust propensities and vagrant inclinations were gratified. Impelled by the zest of living into strange adventure, I wandered, like Ulysses, thru different countries, saw many of the wonders of the world abroad and witnessed many of the shifting scenes of life. This was not in search of the golden fleece as either a soldier of fortune or chance, or as a torchbearer of the world, but with the idea of studying them with a philosophic eye in this strange and small world.

The canvas is a picture of life's other side in the servitude of opium and the quaffing of poison from golden goblets. Tantalus himself could have tasted no bitterer wormwood nor was Orestes ever haunted by furies so great.

Should anything *de trop* be detected here and there, from this idiomatic painting of facts, I ask the charitable indulgence of the reader. It is original matter put down in an original manner. I am depending solely upon my memory and out of the flotsam and jetsam which the dark tides of time have deposited upon its shores I embellish upon these pages. It is a waking man only who can tell his dreams, and in the *resume* thereof, I have lived in the glory of youthful pastimes, later days of trial and woe and horror—days of swiftly oncoming age and relentless penury, purchased at the price of lost illusions. My life has been one veritable Saturnalia of "drunken prophecies, libels and

dreams." May the unfolding of moral ulcers out of these burnt-out fires, published without morbid vanity, blaze a warning to the youths of tomorrow before I shall have stepped upon the broken arches of the bridge of life. The horrible catastrophes that sometimes happen to the vicious are as salutary to others by their warning as the most brilliant rewards of the virtuous are by their example. In fact much of the allurements that is found in blazing the vermillion trail of an adventurous voluptuary, may be found in its exhilaration and ease. In my case, the god morphia promised pleasure and finally produced pain. This is designed to portray how unprofitable and demoralizing it is for a man to risk his immortal soul in the attempt to get a froth of fleeting joy out of one day of the phosphorescent splendors of artificial pleasure and suffer ten-fold thereafter. Late reflections upon my dark days of error have unveiled for me many a dark depth in the human heart. I write these confessions, penned without reticence and without penitence, in the hope that my sad example may prevent any over-confident and headstrong persons who may chance to read it, from following the disastrous path of self-will which led me into the misery which I endured and which may plunge me hereafter into punishments which I dare not think of.

Vanity is a soul of smaller vices and the elasticity of my conceit—"more rich in matter than in words"—is such that I am thrasonical enough to classify the effort in the literary niche with "DeQuincey's Confessions of An English Opium Eater," which advanced to five editions, the first of which appeared in 1822, the last in 1856. The succeeding years have been conspicuously silent so far as any literature is concerned throwing enlightenment upon a topic at present very prominent in the minds of all who are solicitous for the preservation of the mental and physical vigor of the race.

I adhere closely to the fact in every particular and endeavor to give each thing its true character. In so doing, I have been obliged occasionally to use strong and coarse expressions, and in some instances to give scenes which may be painful to nice feelings.

For the free use of the perpendicular pronoun, I offer the soft impeachment. I nurse no defense for the exchequer of words, for the veritable *Thesaurus Verborum* with which the work is interspersed; but for the slang—slang, the bastard dialect, the enigmatical language of darkness and misery—which appears throughout, I offer no apology.

With such a retrospect, I shall be pardoned for seeking relief, however slight and temporary, in the weakness of these rambling

details, collected from the mosaic of events in my life, with opium always as the central theme. These may appear utterly trivial and even ridiculous in themselves, yet they assume to my fancy of adventitious importance as connected with time and place and which in full contributed to the general reduction which finally overwhelmed me.

THE AUTHOR.

## INTRODUCTORY NARRATION

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### A WORM OF THE ABYSMAL GHETTO

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*"Some men are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."—Twelfth Night.*

I am a plain blunt man like Mark Antony of Cleopatra's time—a plain man of affairs and mostly of this world. I am a citizen of the world; I am four hundred years old; I have been an inhabitant of Hell, and my home now is in the City of Broken Old Men.

I was not bred in the purple, nor do I declare that I am a scion of nobility and puissance; neither do I pretend that thru the natural canals of my physiognomy there gallops the royal ichor. At one time in my existence I became curious enough to shake the branches of the genealogical tree, and from this shaking I found that the illustrious name of my *pater* appeared neither in Burke's Peerage nor in the Almanach de Gotha. If the patronymic is in the log of the Mayflower or in the Chronicles of the Yellowplush, I neither know nor care; for, as a matter of frozen fact spotless Puritan pedigrees and the general eclat of lineage are usually a collection of fairy tales, and our arboreal ancestors are good enough. What matter is it of whom anyone descended? An ancestor's character is no excuse to a man's ill actions, but an aggravation of his degeneracy.

If heavenly stars control auspicious births, there were no three stars in Orion's belt when I was born. I was not ushered in by any mysterious portent in the sky. When my spirit flew in feathers, my playground was Paradise Alley, Poverty Row and the Five Points. I was the runagate of a poor family, a child of the mud; a bambina germinated in the slums of the East Side. From birth I was an *enfant gate*, up to the time that I developed into an *enfant terrible*, and I ultimately became an *enfant perdu*, undoubtedly a tainted wether of the flock.

I entertain not the penumbra of a doubt that there was an unmistakable strain of inebriety in me, and this was blended

with the virus of hedonism. There was a taint of vice, whose strong corruption inhabits our frail blood. It is said that the best men are moulded out of faults, and for the most part become much more the better by being a little bad. It is also said that the good outweighs the bad in every individual. It is my dictum that youth and folly go together, each sweetening the other, and I believe that the greatest fool is he who would have gone thru life entirely without folly. If the law of heredity is accountable for my alliance with the life of a hedonist, a voluptuary, a licentiate, a variant, an extremist in everything vile, in fact a moral butterfly of non-resisting power against the defilements of earth and the seductions of the world, then the whole retrospect is a mournful commentary.

The law of heredity, however, which requires that the descendants shall suffer by the faults and profit by the virtues of their ancestors, comprises truths which are no longer disputed. They shine forth, visible to the eyes of all. The child of a drunkard will bear the burden of the paternal vice all his life long, from the day of his birth to that of his death, in body and in mind. One might say that by this irrefutable example, Nature had intended ostentatiously to affirm and manifest the implacable character of her law, as tho' to make us understand that she takes no account whatever of our conceptions of justice and injustice, and that she acts in accordance with an unvarying principle in all these obscure circumstances into which we are powerless to follow the inextricable windings of her will.

This example, if we had no other, would be enough to brand that inhuman will with infamy. There does not exist a law which is more repugnant to our reason, to our sense of responsibility, nor one which does a deeper injury to our trust in the universe and the unknown spirit that rules it. Of all the injustices of life, this is the most glaring and the least comprehensible. For most of the others we find excuses or explanations; but when we remember that a new-born child, a child which did not ask to be born, should from the moment of inhaling its first breath of air, be smitten with an irremediable insolvency, with a ferocious, irrevocable sentence and with evils which it will drag to the grave, it seems to me that not one of the most hateful tyrants that history has cursed would have dared to do what Nature does quietly every day. Heredity is that monstrous cloud which darkened the whole vision of mediaeval theologians and in the light of modern science, with the tenderness of the modern conscience and with the sense of justice and proportion in which sin is today viewed, it is still that monstrous cloud.

Speaking for myself, I may say that I became a butterfly with wings dusted with vice. In fact, my precocity in vice was awful. My whole soul seemed stamped to the core with voluptuousness. My youth I melted down in different beds of vice and lust, in youthful levities and in pleasure-feeding frivolities. From my earliest memories I recall that my animal economy was in harmony with not the taste alone, but the effect of rum. At the jejeune period, I could handle red liquor like a juggler does a handful of hoops. I commenced to hit the ball very young. I was brought up in the gay heartlessness of dissipated life and allowed to go with a loose rein. I early tried my wings, and met every facility for low dissipation in the abysmal dives of the Bowery and the East Side, and abandoned myself to it with frenzied eagerness. I was a son of Belial, and fell most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion and the libertinism sanctioned by polite society. As a boozehound I undoubtedly lushed my share of the "growler" and drank to the depth of its dregs. Scouting the idea of introducing heart disease to human credulity, I unblushingly say that if there is a man living who has drunk more deeply, he is not a man whom I envy. And this declaration is not an hypnotic belief.

To one like myself psychologically weak in the flesh and so vulnerable to temptation, the fact becomes clear to the understanding, how I wantonly surrendered myself to a whirl of frivolity and descended to a vortex of thoughtless folly in my seasons of dissipation and became, *ipso facto*, a slave to the juice of the poppy and its chemical alkaloids. I was hence seduced into this withering vice by reason of a neurotic malaise, intensified by excesses in wine—the unpardonable sin, the only crime for which heaven could afford no mercy. I fear that the subtlety of my logic may mislead, for in endeavoring to be concise, I may become obscure. It is my purpose to say that when rum became an inactive agent to evenly balance the animal functions after a protracted debauch and whiskey sours aggravated the physical status, opium was resorted to as my *Fidus Achates*.

What magic was thus worked in the veins!

What a transformation from nerve-racking tension to physical relaxation and mental exhilaration!

The poppy of the Orient, the poppy of Turkey and the poppy of the Persian Gulf appears to the naked eye as harmless as the most innocent garden rose, but when the unripened capsules of what is called the *somniferum papaver* are incised, a concrete milky exudation is obtained by chemical precipitation. This is the juice, this is the salt, this is the crystal, this is the brown opium that is capable of decimating the ranks of humanity, of

hurling death to the sons of men. It is certainly good to look at, a flower in outward beauty, but never was poison and treachery more sweetly concealed. Within the infant rind of this small flower, poison hath residence and medicine power. It is full of what is called Punic Faith. It is as deadly as some gigantic tropical forest abloom with open-petaled poisonous flowers that snap shut on and devour whatever touches them. It is a poison more deadly than a mad dog's tooth. Yet, on the other hand, opium, using this term in its generic sense, is the most potential agency to bring about a state of ineffable quietness and the absolute lulling of the nervous centers, of any medication that the dispensary provides. Well has it been put that "It is a soft swoon of exquisite indolence"—an hypnotic lullaby of the soft *susurrus*. Under its dominion, one lolls in an atmosphere of mental clarification and physical composure. Gauged by the dosage, soporific and hypnotic sleep succeeds, attended by most exquisite and soothing dreams. The whole animal economy is in a state of the most transcendent placidity. Under the Circean umbrage of opium, the subject is as unruffled as the periphery of a glassy sea, or the frictionless face of a sun-kissed lake in June.

*"O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.  
Did ever dragon keep as fair a cave?"*

Opium is a narcotic that primarily produces pleasurable sensations. This is the physiological effect. The secondary effects are toxic to one not tolerated to it. The remedial offices performed by this one drug are various. Opium is at once a stimulant, an anodyne, an astringent, a hypnotic, an anaesthetic, an analgesic, a sedative, a quiescent, a soporific, a narcotic. Chemically blended, it is a cerebro-spinal depressant, an anti-spasmodic, an anti-phlogistic.

Truly, it is not a thing of earth, but must have been stolen from some Heavenly Arcadia.

Thus primarily thru the instrumentality of the FIEND INTEMPERANCE, I was for the period of upwards of thirty years a bounden slave to this flattering poison, administered subcutaneously by means of a perfect apparatus that man discovered but yesterday, an instrument of immense value to himself, but which has existed among creatures which man has seen fit to describe as lowly and repulsive viperine snakes for ages—the hypodermic syringe. Therein I was passion's slave. I was addicted to it not only in the U. S. A., but the mandragora had me body and soul as a citizen of the world in cosmopolitan ven-

tures from the Land of the Midnight Sun in the North, to the mangrove swamps of the Solomon Islands in the South; from the Occident to the Orient; from the Himalayas to the endless walls of China; from the Palisades of the Hudson to the glittering minarets of the Holy City; from the ice-bound waterways of the Arctic to the salt flood of the Antarctic.

It was my *bete noir*, my *vade mecum*. It first became a passion, then a hobby and finally a monomania.

On the narrow canvas of these few pages must be outlined the crowded incidents of my life as a drug fiend, fearful pages in the record of my existence.

In this volume I have assembled some chapters on narcotic indoctrination, and others which deal with the grotesque and terrible, blended with the farcical, the ludicrous and the emotional—scenes of terror and pictures of despair, crime, insanity and disordered fantasy, all from deepest tragedy to lightest comedy. They comprise some of the skeletons danced out from the Chamber of Horrors, the ghosts of yesterday that have haunted my footsteps as avenging sybils. They are episodes of action that have lived in my mind and incidents of repose that have recurred with no less force thru sunshine and sorrow, days of happiness and days of blood. The asbestos is rolled up, and before you is Col. D. F. Mac Martin, who will, without the constraint of conventionality, serve the good gravy himself.

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# Part I

## The Heaven and Hell of Narcotics

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# THIRTY YEARS IN HELL

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## CHAPTER I

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### THE OKLAHOMA OPENING

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*"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is spent in shallows and in miseries.  
Upon such a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures."*

—Julius Caesar.

Although life is a more incredible romance than any other, yet it is difficult to imagine that the life of a single unit of humanity could be of interest to the world, even conceding that such a life has had some strange turns in its roads. This may be the reason that most writers of reminiscences try to be amusing; and yet it may be that this endeavor of theirs comes from the revolt against the hard realities of their own career, which few care to face in memory. There may be also another less pleasing element in the reluctance of many to speak of the past. Those who are chiefly interesting because of their struggles, often say little about them and dwell on their successes. They have never discovered that their only real triumph is in the fight they seek to forget. Success means a permanent memory which effaces every other recollection. Success is not entirely rose-colored and in such memories there is often a bitter-sweet flavor; but what the world calls success is often wholly bitter in that it comes too late, and as a matter of fact, no ambition is fully realized, at least not in this nether world and no paradise becomes earthly in our age.

On this wide and universal theater of the world my life has been adventurous both in days of grim-visaged war as well as in

the weak, piping times of peace. I have practiced the most elevating profession in the whole realm of sciences. As one of the sons of Ishmael, those of the restless feet and the far dreams, I have been a wanderer extraordinary and in nomadic travel, have girdled the ball. In the U. S. A. I have reviewed, I feel infinite relief in announcing, more water tanks and have hit the geographical trail in circumgyratory peregrinations far in excess of the boastful A No. 1 and away ahead of the thrasonical calculations of either Chicago Slim, Frisco Red or New York Whitey. *Parbleu*, to be serious, a detail of where I have not been would claim less time than an exhibit of the map hallowed by my restless trail. And particularly in this retrospect have I concluded that this world is a small one after all. With me life has been a ripping game in the star dust upon the stage of the world's fools. Of the music and poetry of life, I have enjoyed an engorgement, of human miseries, the afflictions of Job. With me nature has been prodigal in the lavishment of her high cerebral gifts, but lacking in the bestowal of the golden largesses of Pandora's box. Endowed with excellent parts, born with world ideas, overflowing with the zest of life and inclined by nature to industry, with every guarantee of an honorable and distinguished career born of lofty aspirations, the lower elements in my soul dragged me down, and I trod along the path that I had sowed with the thorn and thistle for my feet, but which should have been covered with the wealth of princes. In my heart I had a thousand modest and unrealizable desires which gilded my existence with imaginary hopes, and, like Thoreau, I regretted not that I had so little, but that I required so much. Fortune's tender arm never favored me with a clasp, and I have taken her buffets and rewards with equal thanks. Most decidedly have I seen the nakedness and emptiness of life. As destiny is made up of cross roads, I have lived the life of chance in her dark mountains. The world is full of fools and I am no exception. It is paraphrased in the gospel according to St. Matthew that many are called, but that few are chosen, and like the eminent Southern lawyer, nameless here forevermore, who longed for this epitaph to be engraved upon a shingle after nature's debt had been paid, "Here lies one who might have been anything, but who chose to be nothing," so I, having been one of the called, chose the primrose path of dalliance and recked not my own reed.

Psychologically a hedonist and by nature a vagabond, what remarkable experiences, what singular passages and the really serious events in a life at all times strange and eventful while drugged with opium, I unblushingly record.

After graduation from Cornell, where pebbles are polished, diamonds are dimmed, silk purses are made out of sow's ears and round pegs are made to fit into square holes, I faced the world. In this knowledge-box I knelt to the professor, had myself vaccinated for a lawyer and had finally glued to my brow the fadeless laurel of Polymnia. This was possibly the early choice of a doubtful chance; and believing that the star of empire pointed to the West, I jogged thither and found myself a briefless barrister in "Bleeding Kansas."

About this time the promised land—Oklahoma—than which no finer tract in the nation existed out of doors, was to be opened to public settlement under the homestead laws of the United States and April 22nd, 1889, 12 o'clock noon, Central Standard time, was designated as the fixed time for intending settlers to initiate their entries and settle upon the land. Here, in this new Utopia, was offered a chance for me to retrieve fallen fortunes and to forget for the nonce, the heavy train of adversity and crooked fortune with which I was crossed in the vaunted land of sunflowers, sunshine and sons of guns.

This rush into Oklahoma gave birth to a new word in the legal glossary, to-wit the word "sooner." The word represented one who had entered the Territory in violation of the executive proclamation opening the country to settlement in pursuance of the Act of March 2nd, 1889, in advance of the time fixed therein. Hence it was that numbers of these prospective settlers became "sooners" and were subsequently adjudged disqualified by the courts as entrymen.

Leaving the northern boundary line of this coveted land, I landed a few hours after 12 o'clock upon the townsite of what is now Oklahoma City on this memorable day, and I mingled with the picturesque rush of settlers looking for land, a new home and a rise in the world.

This opening drew great shoals of people. Some of them were *sui generis*, others were not *sui generis*. They were so diverse that there was no rank or file.

Some of the peculiarities of some of these characters are described in the frank biographies of those two gentlemen who executed a little commission for King Richard III in which two royal princes were concerned. In distant parts of the continent they had left families, creditors and in some instances even officers of justice perplexed and lamenting. There were husbands who had deserted their own wives—and in some extreme cases even the wives of others—for this haven of refuge. Nor could the fact be detected from the personal carriage and general exterior whether they were or were not named as defendants

or co-respondents in the counts of this general indictment. Really some of the best men had the worst antecedents, some of the worst rejoiced in a spotless puritan pedigree.

The spectacular array included the Kansas Jayhawker, the Arkansaw Reuben Glue, shaking with the buck ague; the Missouri puke, the Texas Ranger, the Illinois sucker, *et al.* There were nesters, horse thieves, train robbers, high-jackers, bank raiders, yeggmen, ragamuffins and vagabonds, brand blotters, broncho busters, sheep herders, cow punchers, spoofers, bull whackers, range riders, minute jacks, wildcatters, fourflushers, *Chevalrie d'industrie*, outlanders, mountebanks, confidence men, sand lotters and proletariats, sun-chasers, blown-up suckers, fire-eaters, camp followers, tenderfeet, land whales, butterfly-chasers, bubble-blowers, remittance men, blue-sky promoters, sour-doughs, ticket-of-leavers, fellows with nicked reputations, geezers who had just been liberated from the hulks and had ugly corners in their lives to live down. There were muleskinners from Texas and Hi Skinners from Bingville. There were spellbinders from Kansas and highbinders from Missouri. There was Piute Charley, Cold Deck Mike, Alibi Pete, Alkali Ike, Comanche Hank, False Alarm Andy, Poker Jim, Rattlesnake Jack, Six-shooter Bill and Cactus Sam. There were marksmen who were quick on the draw and who could throw a half dollar in the air and clip it with a bullet from their revolvers three times out of five, or clip a pigeon in its swift flight, an accuracy of marksmanship born of amusement at clipping the buds off the twigs of trees. There were cowboys who could ride a buck-jumping mustang anywhere on earth. Among these prospective settlers were ancient maidens, fainting Berthas, wappened widows, withered amazons. There were scoundrels and camouflage artists—bastard scum of the earth and spawn of the devil who would not scruple to take unfair opportunities of their next door neighbors, glib and slippery creatures, together with a homogeneous smear of other shorthorns. There was also stranded humanity, scum and offscourings and human birds of passage in every stage of shipwrecked penury.

About the early days of Oklahoma writers have embalmed facts in the immortality of prose and poets have sung in the perpetuity of verse. This occurred for the most part in the early days, and is my apology for embellishing here the resurrection of a corpse too dead to skin and ordinarily it would be cruelty to animals to thus revivify it. Therefore by your gracious pleasure while you quietly sit upon your pillows, I want to feebly paint a picture of canned thoughts in their natural gar-

ments in the livery of mere words, simultaneously giving fresh costumes to the actors.

History has never at any time recorded an opening of government land wherein there was brought together such a motley colony of gamblers, pimps, cut-throats, refugees, *demi-mondaines*, bootleggers and crooks of both high and low degree. To guard against indiscriminate violence to person and property in the absence of constituted tribunals (except the United States courts in the Indian Territory, which were not vested with plenary powers) martial law was proclaimed and a company of United States Infantry was stationed on the Military Reservation adjoining the townsite. The police of the Territory was represented by the marshals, who appointed their own deputies, some honest and some with neither attribute of honesty nor truth. In fact, some of these deputy marshals were more crooked than the actual outlaws and some were accomplices of these outlaws. Among the Indians of the territories, there were strict and curious laws for their government. Notwithstanding these bulwarks, murders were rife and the "bad man" who couldn't cut death notches in the stock of his carbine indicating the getting of his man every morning before breakfast, was considered as scabbing on the job and deusted in the coterie of membership as units of gunmen. The highest law was *ex necessitu*, the law of the gun. The United States Commissioners of the Federal Court were deluged with informations ranging from murder to "introducing" and the several grades of criminal assault. The new domain having been by the Interior Department judicially declared "Indian Country," an inflammatory array of bootleggers engaged in the illicit traffic of red liquor of doubtful variety and "Poor Lo" was soused with this brand of tailor-made hell-broth to the brink of going out upon the war-path. "Joints" where the besom of destruction was dispensed sprang up as if by the invisible wand of some magic Circe or other mythological deity, together with gambling hells of mushroom growth. Honk-a-tonks and hurdy-gurdies of salacious flavor opened their flaunting doors wherein racy females with meretricious visages and libidinous ensembles dawdled about and initiated the novitiate in vice and separated him from diamonds and dollars, provided that he had any. No exception was made here as between the case-hardened cowman, plainsman, drunken soldiers, sheep herders, muleskinners, saloon swampers, pikers, line riders, squaw humpers, and in general the indiscriminate driftwood of western civilization. In fact, the wide-open element was in the saddle, and prepared to furnish dynamic throbs and thrills or any brand of frontier excitement the exacting visitor

might demand. It was the effervescent moment, where everything floated on the top that was foul, and where everything was free and easy. It was the home of mad excess with the lack of restraint that characterizes all new lands.

A tenderloin was reared in the environs where gimcracks of easy virtue disported themselves, displaying their ravaged charms in a veritable intoxication of salacious carnival that would back the Harem of the Sultan of Turkey clean off the boards and force a scarlet nun to count her beads and go thru the stations of the cross. Verily, they cut capers like bacchanals from Mount Menelaus. Within these bagnios, bedizened hookers and leering harlots of rococo charm, immersed in a cloudburst of perfumery which emitted from their diaphanous flummery and dewdads the true, yet indefinable aroma of the "soiled dove," tripped the can-can and whirled in lascivious pirouettes and evolutions the then unknown hula hula and the ancient Pyrrhic dance. Like whirling dervishes they revolved in an occult, weird, dreamy, mystic, druidical, cabalistic circle. There were wild convolutions of their garments and mad gyrations of their figures. Their skirts were freighted with the odor of *mille fleurs* and other perfumes with which they deluged their bodies, and these fumes added to the peculiar smell of rotten cigarettes, assaulted sensitive olfactories. A tenderloin maestro banged and thumped the ivory keys of a bum piano like an ass at the lyre. Under this spell they "bull-dagged" and danced the Hoochee-coochee, the Italian Tarantella, the snail drag, the shimmy shiver and old *risque* reels with free-floating drapery. They also did the "short dog," the Sphinx-winx and the Cleopatra clutch with barbaric abandon. Highballs and cocktails regaled the revelers with prodigal hospitality and the general joy was so unconfined that the flying feet of the *danseurs* and the *danseuses* found no rest and tired "peepers" were not kissed down and the carousal waxed not until the gray dawn. The nights were gaudy and the revelers mocked the midnight bell. All sorts of damaged goods danced in outrageous and unfettered freedom. There was the unequivocal beauty in the prime of her womanhood, putting one in mind of the statue in Lucian with the surface of marble of Parian quality and the interior filled with filth—the pox-wrinkled, bejeweled and paint-begrimed beldam making a last effort at youth—the mere child of immature form, yet from long association an adept in the dreadful coquetries of her trade, and burning with a rabid ambition to be ranked the equal of her elders in vice, were conspicuously legion. In fine, the tenderloin was a real "Hell's half-acre," the "bad lands" of the townsite.

The honk-a-tonk theaters where lewd plays and devices of

fancy appalled the senses, were ablaze with bacchanalian orgies and unrestrained debaucheries. They were Circean palaces of material and sensuous delight. In improvised places here, a gallery was provided and this was divided into small alcoves and sequestered corners, arranged especially for quiet conversation, where punks, boneheads and boobs with chimpanzee heads, and particularly of unmellowed intelligence, were entertained by *nymphs du pave*, pink savages, foolish virgins and peroxide demoiselles tinselled in a hurricane of festive spangles, dressed in transparent garments and fairylike brevity of skirts. About their persons glittered "phoney" jewelry of the pinchbeck and paste ring. Drinks masquerading in the genius of the French vernacular were served here, and the geezer who escaped to the street with gold still plugged in his teeth was a lucky dog. These gilded dens were free to enter, but a life was frequently the toll to emerge therefrom. The ancient panel game was worked to the limit and the limit was off. These cess-pools of iniquity and purlieu of vice and licentiousness were littered with "dippers" whose nimble digits extracted valuables from the exiguous pocketbooks of the unsuspecting and gullible boob. Touts for the red-curtained establishments were innumerable. Drunken fisticuffs were frequent and in them a free hand was indulged, the combatants emerging therefrom with battered visages, ecclymosed optics and lacerated pates. During the saturnalian orgies at the bar, where livers were heated with drink, barnstormers and hamfats of the rankest type sung devils' ditties and danced themselves into free perspiration as votaries of Thespis on the stage of Melpomene. The songs were haunting melodies of unadulterated bathos—madrigals and heathen canzonets of an amorous complexion. These were sung in strange slides, quaint quavers and affecting falsetto breaks, and were frequently hissed by ribald cries of "get-the-hook" and were the recipients at intermittent periods of addled eggs of the paleozoic age, malodorous chemicals and cabbage heads from the garden of Gethsemane. The muscle dance and the Egyptian glide were features *par excellence*. The character and variety stunts enacted here was of the rawest sort and, *en passant*, I recall an instance where a barnstorming old "Biddey," with a seven-year-old pinafore and a forty-year-old face, chirruping the ravishing strains of some honk-a-tonk ebenezer or other defunct wheeze, responded to an encore. As she trilled the notes of this stone age song, a justly irate patron cut loose with an "Old Betsy" and punctured Maude Adams with a bullet in her left limb. No wonder when it is considered that the specialties

offered were dismally inane and fatuous, the rankest brand of theatrical gravy to peddle to burlesque appetites.

The dance halls were embryonic. At the farther end of the sanded floor round and square dances were indulged in by frolicsome strumpets, gillflirted heifers and specimens of damaged goods generally, all attired in scant draperies. They bowed lovingly at the shrine of Terpsichore, moving like shuttlecocks in the mazes of the whirl, and generally tripping the light fantastic to the brink of apoplexy, in a synchronizing super-syncope aggravating the feet into a shimmying, tickle-toeing, snapping delirium. All of this was under the spell of a five-piece orchestra which reminded one of the frivolities of Joshua Whitcomb. A bar was set up here, supplied with embalming fluid that would cut the bark off a tree, to which the revelers shambled, reeking with sweat. Bacchanalian songs were sung here lustily to the clatter of bottles and glasses. There was an intoxicating vibration in the air. The pert and nimble spirit of mirth was red. While the orchestra snarled the gamut of dancing hoedowns and in the general rendition there was interspersed some rare dance tunes, the popular heel and toe hitting of the lumber with their leather were invariably "Rye-straw," the "Arkansaw Traveler," the "Irish Washerwoman," "Old Dan Tucker," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and other ghosts of little lost tunes too tired to die. The carbon dioxide created by fetid breaths sodden with cheap hootch, and the copious perspiration that rolled from these dancers, seemed like the foggy fumes that issue from a slave-ship's between-decks. The whole was a poison rendezvous where there was a hazy confusion of tobacco smoke, boisterous sounds, cards and rotgut whiskey. It was a rough-house hell, where the devil's scum, where the umbilici from the abdomen of society disported in defiance of human and divine rescripts. The dissoluteness and the abandon of these festivities were such that it put the promised land in a class by itself.

The general intelligence represented here was of a myopic character, the women being mostly demi-mondaines and adventuresses, while the male element included cow boys, thugs, bar-room geccos, lounge lizards and afternoon farmers, with here and there a sprinkling of deputy marshals, the latter carrying about their persons a shooting iron, holster and a spacious and bulging belt of shells. The second floor of these dance halls was partitioned off into small rooms, to which the godless revelers repaired after the reels. Certain it is that it would have required both a bellows and a fan to cool the lust of these gypsy drabs. They were steeped in concupiscence. There was no

mincing of virtue here. The sporting blood of the plunger took a header when it defied Doctor 606 or surgeon JVZ or prescription 1001, and when one yielded to this class of diversion he usually warbled this refrain:

*“Just a little sunshine,  
Just a little rain;  
Just a little pleasure,  
Just a little pain.”*

Diseases were sold here dearer than any physic.

Besides these regular houses of vice, rudely stamped, slovenly street walkers, who were candidates for the Old Lady's Home, with valerian breaths and syphilitic taint, “fleusies” who “hit the pipe,” “Janes” who sniffed “coke” and “snortins,” together with evaporated chickens and freelance prostitutes who chewed snuff, made open warfare upon the pocketbooks of the timorous rubes from the alfalfa belts and sage lands. Characters going by the soubriquets of “Slew-foot Nell,” “Soldier Pete,” “Slanting Annie,” and others, filled the concupiscent eye. Lechery was in the very atmosphere, and this brand of baggage was so pitifully sodden that a strong breath would blow it to pieces. In fact, their breaths would infect even to the North Star; and they would quickly poop one roast meat for worms. There were women here whose hearts were in their sleeves—women of false modesty—women who could play the pious innocent—women that the world could have gotten along without.

Immediately after the human freight deposited itself upon the townsite, gambling dens were opened, first in tents and these rapidly metamorphosed to gaming palaces, and within a week at least fifty gambling houses, approached by no mysterious passage or guarded entrance were in full running order, where the rattle of coin and the sweeping of boards brought the senses under the dazzling spell of an agony of greed, and where games from faro to craps, from five-handed draw poker to keno, from tric-a-trac and fan-tan to *trente-et-carante*, where *rouge et noir*, backgammon and Spanish Monte, Lansquenet and hieronymus were played, and adventurous spirits risked their all with the ace in the hole and the high card to win, as against velvet money represented by a flash roll big enough to stuff a feather pillow. In the midst of these bluffs, gun plays were on time schedule and in which human lives paid the toll.

Here also were roulette tables, where the little ball ever went merrily round.

Here also was the desperate thimble-rig bully for juggling tricks, who could see the under side of the cards readli, and so indulge in all sorts of *tracasserie*. And here also was the crimp with his light movable table upon which he manipulated the old-time "shell" game and other catch-penny attractions.

At this time Oklahoma City was a Mecca for old-time gamblers. It was a pocket edition of the Prince of Monaco's Monte Carlo. The green cloth gladiators were conversant with the entire card ritual, and besides a host of them deviated from the significance of the round-table slogan, "Honor among thieves." For instance in the inner linings of the cuffs of their left sleeve, were secured the packs necessary to be sprung at the crucial moment, and others were filched from the capacious pockets of their clothing, specially cut by the sartorial artisan. The elastic clip on the arm and the small circular mirror were in vogue, as part of the card sharper's outfit. This latter when laid face upward upon the lap, afforded the gambler the opportunity of seeing every card dealt to an adversary. There were also slick gamblers who dealt cards from the bottom of the deck, and where the king was slyly stolen from the deck. They knew the litany.

It would do violence to the truth not to mention the Tivoli game, the Rocky Mountain Dice game, the Lock game, the goose-neck and the four-card game.

None of the finesse was omitted for raking in the stamps, so customary on similar occasions, that it is a just matter for wonder how any are still found so besotted as to fall its victim. Yet the temptation to get something for nothing, or at least much for little, to flirt with coquettish fortune, is irresistible.

In these gambling rooms could be seen a singular admixture of sentimental blacklegs, with packs of cards in their pockets and revolvers at their backs, sure-thing grafters, confidence sharks, get-rich-quick Wallingfords, brace game sharpeners, slippery devils, audacious sharpeners, slick and unctuous swindlers, bunco steerers, wire-tippers, door-mat grafters, together with sturdy professional beggars, hopheads, feeble and ghastly invalids upon whom death had placed a sure hand and a grotesque medley of pinchback wine bums, white-line artists, blown-in-the-glass "stiffs," the whole comprising a sycophantic horde of ne'er-do-wells, human culls, human vermin and cutpurses looking for something to turn up, thus insuring their continuance of a *dolce far niente* existence, hard-boiled geekerinos with boiled brains and caked blood—units of the *genus homo*, simply vegetating in the places stupidly where fortune had fixed them. They were mere pawns upon life's chessboard—human footballs

that never reach the goal, and who bore upon their occiputs the ineradicable impress of the lash of misery. They represented wrecks, human wrecks.

The question is often asked why certain useless creatures have been created, and yet people sometimes propound this query concerning snakes. But, no matter; life must go on; whatever crafts are wrecked, the stream must not stop in its journey to the flood, and like the cave of juggernaut, rolls on regardless of the human hearts which it may crush or break.

For the human mind to contemplate a situation where lawlessness was universal, it would be difficult to imagine, and the elasticity of the popular mind might be staggered thereby. For four months after this opening, the streets were in Cimmerian darkness after the shades of night mantled the earth, houses being lighted by the uncertain flickering rays of the tallow dip or the antique oil burner. One may speculate relative to such a status after nightfall when spent bullets pierced the atmosphere like hail during a chinook, the derringers and shooting irons being in the hands of "bad men," thugs and hold-ups who delighted in making human targets thoroughfares for steel.

Bandit outlawry reigned and train robberies occurred every new moon. The pace and ferocity of life in the old Indian Territory created the bad man, just as the financier and trust magnate is created in the West and in the Middle West. Prior to this opening, the Indian Territory was an asylum for fugitives from justice of other states and a breeding place for crime. Besides being thinly populated, its peculiar geography afforded hiding places for refugees and here bands of outlaws held the officers at bay. The hills, the uplands, the dense forests, the streams and the thickets and the underbrush invited these fugitives and held them under cover secure from federal or other molestation. In the Cherokee Nation was hatched the scheme to rob the banks of Coffeyville, Kan., where four outlaws were shot and are now sleeping their last sleep in a potter's fosse with their boots still on. The criminal records at Fort Smith, Ark., show that more than one hundred criminals were hanged under the judgship of the late Judge Isaac Parker, the then Judge of the U. S. Court for the District of Arkansas. Like Jeffreys of England, he was commonly dubbed "the hanging judge." His court for judicial purposes included the eastern part of the old Indian Territory and from this Territory the criminal grist was supplied, among them notably Cherokee Bill, "Bill" Doolin, the Dalton gang and other noted outlaws, all of whom died with their boots on, true to tradition and the prophecy of their fellows.

Since this Oklahoma opening, I have been in many other por-

tions of the West, notably in the early days of boom cities of Colorado, Nevada, California, Montana and Washington. But alas! and alack! there exists no more glorious and traditional West of three or four decades since! Even Roundups, Carnivals to revive the old days, Wild West Carnivals, frontier days, stampedes and passings of the West have gone with the passing of the West. It is a terrible awakening from poetic dreams. There are few survivors of the old type, very few of the characteristic products of the western plains left and the West today is really East of the Mississippi River.

I cannot help wondering whether the old timers, if they ever revisit the scenes of their former labors in their larger comprehensions, the men who gave the dominant and picturesque coloring to the life of that period, view with regret the impending change or mourn over the day when the West shall appropriately come to grief, for the West is growing old and has disappeared forever on the horizon of time.

When, during the *ancien regime*, the six-gun was an honored institution and settled all private differences and Vigilance Committees and Law and Order parties adjudicated larger public ones, now seriousness and respectability, so called, reign and peaceful and pastoral days have succeeded. Gospel mills have been reared where saloons formerly flourished, and the old time gambling house and the bagnio which housed angels of darkness are no more. Like scarlet fever, the disease has spread from segregation and altogether people have been forced into paths of so-called rectitude by reason of the militant church movements formulated by moral purity protagonists, bilious smelling committees, Billy Sunday evangelists and cranks generally who have developed a form of moral dyspepsia known as the puritanical conscience. Added to this moral dyspepsia are the unholy crusades of national prohibition and woman suffrage. Notwithstanding all of these we know that the social millenium will never come by force but by persuasion, and the galled jades will wince while our withers remain unwrung.

The West of yesterday, like the red centaurs of the plains, the old galleons of the trail, the trappers, the prospectors and the buckskin garbed scouts and the American bison are fast disappearing from the face of the earth and fading from the imaginations of men. The old idyllic days of the argonauts and pathfinders are past and there is an Iliad yet to be sung of the enchanting spell of the West that is gone forever. These characters dwell in that realm of the storied past along with the driver of the overland coach, the buffalo hunter and the roving red man. Their day is past; yet in their day they were among

the most vivid and colorful of the types of two generations. I muse: "How chances mock and changes fill the cup of alteration with divers liquors." Yet as I ponder on the ringing grooves of change, I know that change is a law of nature and that it is a commonplace of science that all organism, plants, animals, human societies and everything changes as environment changes. *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.*

Now, in the tumult of these scenes and among this most grotesque assembling of cosmopolites, unacquainted as they were, one with the other, I proclaimed myself a limb of the law, a gentleman of the black robe and the green bag, an exponent of that science to which Grimke and Curran and Ingersoll and Choate gave their lives; and this long before I even understood the rule in Shelley's case. I was on a full sea of voluptuousness, and, taking the current when it served regardless of popular dogma, I plunged into a maelstrom of bacchanalian carnival and saturnalian revelry, a whirlpool of boundless intemperance. I drank with the trampled vintage of my youth. I became a reveler in the seething dance halls, a patron of the red-light district, an habitue of the bar rooms and a sitter at the round table with the green cloth overlaid with stained disks, and where the ante was a hundred dollars and a thousand dollar raise. In my bacchanalian devotions I gravitated from the gilded lobster buffets to the mediocre, these being less odious, because less incongruous sinks of pollution and finally I descended to the notorious dives. I drank with bestial avidity, so much so that the quantity would stagger the unbelief of Satan himself. I actually weltered in the mire of alcoholism. I indulged unchecked in all the mad excess of a counterfeit hilarity—the joint offspring of liberty and rum. I drifted with every passion till my soul became a stringed lute on which all winds played. With me it was to be Caesar or nobody—today a king, tomorrow nothing. I had rather be a beggar and live like a king, than be a king and live like a beggar. In fact, I indulged in high living and revelry as if I were going to die tomorrow.

The emoluments derived from my industry in my chosen avocation were wrung from the coffers of gamblers, scarlet women and others of the sporting class, as my ambitious finger was in their pie. I do not possess the ingrowing ego, yet I may say that I was in a gale of favor with this element and I made the best of it, for the reason that this class is usually flush. So among them, I wore the toga of the elect in the organized guild of gamblers and sports. The fact that I became their legal support, added a moral cubit to my stature in my own estimation, and in this I heard the hiss of envious snakes.

Now, notwithstanding that the shoemaker should not go beyond his awl, yet I offer with self-applauding pleasantry the *obituar dictum* that the encephalic, volitive, lymphatic and sanguine temperaments and the individual brain construction is responsible for man's fall thru intemperance, that most loathsome and dangerous of all fields and an adversary that destroys body and soul when its claws are fixed upon its victim. It echoes the curses of criminals, the cries of orphans, the sobs of mothers, the pleadings of loved ones, the groans of the dying, the shriek of the maniac, the senseless chatter of the idiot and imbecile, and the clanking of stronger chains than were ever placed upon the limbs of slaves. It sparkles with the joy taken from happy homes and glows with the hues it has stolen from the cheeks of health and innocence, while it reflects the miserable wreck of humanity it has left as well as the image of a depraved posterity. I believe that I have the ability to think things out for myself and, being aided by experience, this conclusion may be regarded at least dogmatic, if not *ex cathedra*. And yet it may be argued that a man so debased as myself cannot remonstrate with Providence or sermonize to society. If I am right, the fault is not in ourselves but in our stars, and one cannot help becoming a drunkard any more than an Ethiopian can change his skin, a leopard change its spots. The statistics of psychopathic hospitals, if any there be, where patients suffering from alcoholic dementia and alcoholic psychosis will confirm this belief. I am aware that temperance purists, psalm-singing bible-backs, sky-pilots, puritanical crusaders, pretty sentimentalists, temperamental extremists, long-haired preachers and short-haired women, priests and priestesses of Cybele, moral uplift protagonists and Billy Sunday pussyfeet and other so-called virtuous sinners, who go about with Corybantic enthusiasm, "stringing" the masses, assign another brand of dope for this evil. Let them nurse their theories of planetary influence, that excellent foppery of the world, environment and degenerate heredity. They are question dodgers. They belong to the herds, that stupid mass of men clinging forever to worn-out creeds. They talk like blind men pointing the way, and they ought to remain on their reservations. They talk like just having recovered from ether. The moral sense is sometimes startled out of its hypocrisy and demands the bitter beer of self-consciousness and remorse. Their views are jaundiced views. They are narrow-minded and let history say what it will, they will never believe that Socrates ever danced.

I feel gratified that in the exploitation of the foregoing idea as a conclusion based upon actual experience, I am eminently

fortified to advance it in a greater measure than Pussyfoot Johnson, Joshua Johnson, or too much Johnson, for the manifest reason that none of them have ever gone the route; and I have as much right to this opinion as a Chinaman has to burn punk to his joss or devil. A host of reformed drunkards will endorse this dictum as the frozen truth. I had rather believe him who spouted about the old Aramaic Golgotha and had seen and carried away a piece of the true and ancient Cross, than one who uttered dogmas about the Place of the Skull, and who had never been there. *Quand on voit la chose, on la croit.*

## CHAPTER II

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### MY FIRST "SHOT"

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*"For God's sake a pot of small ale."*

*—The Taming of the Shrew.*

My daily and nightly potations of brandy and rum continued with mechanical precision, and after protracted profligate revels I awoke one morning utterly collapsed from nervous tremors. I had been swine drunk and looking for an eye-opener. I was too nervous to guide the glass to my lips and this office was performed by the bartender, while two bar flies supported my equipoise. The potency of this liquor stiffened my relaxed sinews and dulled the nervous edge of my apprehension, and warmed the torpid blood in my veins and softened my acerbity. I thought that the bar mirror into which I now gazed was a bauble alongside of the world mirror which gave back to me the reflection of my own face. I closed my eyes and indulged in thought transference and I projected an apparition of myself by the force of my will thru space. I again gazed at the mirror and saw that my hair was standing out in neglected wisps, the pupils of my eyes were abnormally dilated, and my body I sensed was reeking with Sheeny hand-me-downs that had been glued to my cross bones for weeks. I had the face of a bacchanal from the shards of an Attic wine jug. It was frightfully disfigured by dissipation. I shook like the plumes upon the hearse and cursed the fates in a rapid fire of picturesque profanity and billingsgate.

The best of pleasures, social or otherwise, if carried beyond the natural power of physical or mental endurance, begin to approach the character of a penance.

In this strange pilgrimage thru life one meets up with essentially different bedfellows, and, *inter pocula*, among saloon loungers and bar flies this is especially significant. Misery loves company and human driftwood hungers for fellowship, and in

general conviviality there is the intoxication of good and the drunkenness of evil.

On this morning a number of bar flies were religiously practising before the saloon timber—units of the *profanum vulgus*, while about the room chair warmers lounged and wall geccos posed. In my survey of the room my eyes fixed upon one of these whose visage betrayed the very apotheosis of benignity. Something of a student of nature myself and an appraiser of character, never was I so fooled as in this human form. Yet he seemed to smoke the pipe of peace and withal, was to my conception at peace with himself and all the world. He looked at me and I looked at him. The countenance is the portal and picture of the mind. Mind is master of matter and man can summon both to work against themselves, strange pseudo-sciences of animal magnetism and electro-biology. Fortunately I have a talent for adapting myself to conditions and people, which greatly facilitates any investigation which I may have in hand. There was a certain fascination about him which I could not resist, altho' had I been normal, I would have known it to be only a veneer for demonology. Leaving his position against the wall where he had been posing as a mural lizard, he flashed me a wireless radiogram to follow him and as a nod is as good as a wink to a blind man, I obeyed this telepathic message. When we reached the tap room of this barrel house, he seemed after a few moments' conversation already installed in my intimacy. We had evidently reciprocal sympathy and similar tastes. In fact, he began by saying that he believed we were both born under the same planet. Very readily he came to the point when he confided to me that he had it within his power to steady my nerves and immediately transform me from a shivering disciple of John Barleycorn to a status where I would loll in a veritable heaven of ease and exhilaration. All of this he imparted in subdued monotone and his lisplings had the true ring of suspicion, which always haunts the guilty mind. His face was pale like those to whom dead Lazarus burst the tomb. He had an attenuated frame and the pupils of his eyes were gimlet-pointed. I am not a mind reader, altho' at divers times I have suffered the accusation of this soft impeachment, but all the same like the Melancholy Dane, I do know a hawk from a handsaw. So that I instinctively divined this human derelict as a chronic habitue to some narcotic drug. He had long white hands with dirty nails. His habiliments were greasy and full of rips and tatters at the bottoms. His vest was splotted with grease and spots of coagulated matter. He was shirtless and collarless. He was a replica, a counterpart presentment of Happy Hooligan, without the

tomato can, but in lieu thereof he had a sky piece that had grown rusty by exposure to all sorts of weather. His mug was both choleric and apoplectic, and all together he reflected the very genius of famine.

The siren song of the derelict I cashed in, and forthwith I conducted him to my law office, where, cloistered in the silence, I told him to "shoot." Whereupon from his pocket he uncovered a bottle which I noticed had upon it a red label with a representation of the skull and cross bones, and marked *Morphinae sulphas*. He placed a small quantity of the crystalline salt into a spoon holding water, applied a match and cooked the soup. He then drew the contents into a small metal syringe, screwed on a needle, rolled up my sleeve, caught up a pinch of flesh of the left arm and injected the dope in the tissues. In so doing, he held the instrument by its curved steel horns, and the juice so injected seemed so much like the contents of some poisonous insect.

I immediately felt the effect of the injection. There was a soothing sensation creeping over me, an elevation of animal spirits, a general buoyancy. There was physical exhilaration and mental clarification. My entire being seemed suffused with *empressement* and *verve*. The term *sans souci* is more expressive. I at once resorted to loquacity and I thought that I could solve the secrets of life imperishable and love divine. I thought that I held the key to the mystery of life and that I was the peer of the great guesser of riddles. I could explain magnetic effluvium, terrestrial rotation, sidereal attraction, molecular adhesion and the heliocentric theory of the solar system, the Calina of the Spaniards, the Quovar of the Ethiopians. I was in an atmosphere of unalloyed peace and dreamy indolence, the very distilled essence, the very quintessence of concentrated mental activity and physical composure. I addressed listening senates and heard the air echo with applause.

I was seized with an insatiable yearning to indulge in the garrulity of the charlatan and talked away like one to whom words were a necessary, escape for my surcharge of animal spirits. The injection seemed to fill all voids, for I was now neither hungry nor thirsty. I had had enough of both, and it is well known that there are certain occasions when enough is entirely too much and not even more superfluous, and that a little more than a little is by much too much.

My bum confrere now sallied forth to the street, for I was on the very *qui vive* of bodily activity and dreamy speculation. As boulevardiers we hit the high places. Altho' unkempt in personal appearance a moment before, I was now Chesterfield him-

self, an Apollo Belvidere. The drug had shaved me ten times over, and I thought that my all together reflected a glass of fashion and a mould of form. I entered a familiar emporium and came face to face with a large circular mirror that stood as a screen at the door. It flattered me beyond the most colorful dreams of the opium eater and I seemed to go right thru it, but I must have executed a detour for, on catapulting out, I observed it to be intact. I now found myself before a wooden Indian in front of "My Lady Nicotine" and to this figure I delivered an oration on Mosaic cosmology. Further on, I shadowboxed with the aid of a street lamp and swung a haymaker. I now recall that I was inordinately garrulous and I must have indulged in insipidities, platitudes, gubble, rodomontade and fanfaronade galore in the jargon of Paracelsus.

My animal status was much like that of the "little wanton boys that swim on bladders, far beyond their depth." I seemed to float in dreamy reverie in the ether, and then drop at will down to the earth, like a bird on the wing. I seemed mounting into the air, that I was floating, flying into it; it seemed that something was lifting me above the earth. I felt as tho' I were hanging in midair and had lost my hold of all things tangible. It was the nearest approach to flying that has yet been given to man. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and from its very novelty incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body.

Impelled by vagrant fancies, I wandered aimlessly about. In these circuitous shifts my groggy tracks must perforce have made the rounds of familiar landmarks and about which I had no recollection afterwards. But from common report, I must have cut some singular fandangoes, whirlings and pirouettes and pigeon-wings—a *dansez* this way, a *balancez* that way. I pitched pennies to starving beggars on the street and made salaams to lamp-posts and telegraph poles and shouted aloud to the populous heavens.

*I was in the tow of the FIEND.*

I was now in an Arabian Nights atmosphere. I thought that I was absolutely in another sphere. Of course, I did not know where I was. But I knew that I was not on this earth. It must have been a brief transition to heaven. The last that I remember is that I felt a subtle fire course thru my veins, followed by a delicious languor that crept upwards to my heart and seemed to arrest its pulsation by an irresistible persuasiveness to repose. Probably I swooned, for I lost all consciousness and recollection of time and place for many hours.

Thunderous rappings aroused me from a slumbrous lethargy

and I regained my deformed sensibilities. I opened the door of my office and it is said that if one even think of the devil, he will appear. In dreams of the night, I had not thought of the derelict who shot me with morphia, and so far as day dreams were concerned, the memory of him was lost in the swallowing gulf of dark forgetfulness and deep oblivion, for he had adroitly slipped from my side when we started out as boulevardiers. Now he stood at my elbow. I took him in and he ultimately proved bad money.

The "shot" of morphia that he had administered to me the day previous had spent its force, and I was in a fervor of perspiration. In other regards I was normal, and altho' I had casually heard of the drug before, I would not have thought of it again had he not been there. I knew that one single dose does not make a habit. But this fellow, fleshed in iniquity before time, was there going round in circles and sticking like a cockle burr to my meal tickets, and being there, I begged for another "shot." As a matter of fact, I did not have to ask him a second time to lure me on like some poisonous flower. I simply did not have the capacity myself to resist first beginnings. Whereupon my enemy administered another "shot" in the same old way.

Morphine must be a fickle Sphinx, for the day before I was robbed of appetite; now I was as ravenous as a gourmand. I instantly became captivated by kitchen odors. I yearned for the epicurean cooks of some Rialto Cafe to sharpen my appetite with cloyless veloute sauce. I thought that I was born for digestion only, and it mattered not whether it was the horns of a billy goat or the shingles of a church. Truly, it is an empty stomach that all sorts of incurable diseases finds an easy prey!

After having declaimed to an ink well on my desk, we floated out on the vagrant breeze and fetched up finally at a *rotisserie*. An epicure myself, I ordered a Lucullean feast for two and we fell onto the viands like hungry pikes, *ab ovo usque ad mala*. For the service rendered, I backsheeshed the waiter a half century to impress the cafe caryatides. I heard the whisper, "They're full of dope," and looking up, I saw quizzical, and wondering glances focused upon us. The conclusion was forced upon me that it was as fixed as stars that should I continue in the use of morphia, the fact would eventually germinate in a flying rumor and become a matter of popular comment. I could not afford to add chronic addiction to narcotism to habitual intemperance. I moralized that morphia might, perchance, shift John Barleycorn to a sidetrack, but I would still be on the main line of the drug addiction. Which road should I follow?

As subsequent events showed, I pursued both, and the work

of my demoralization began. I proceeded *de mal en pis* and commenced *bruler la chandelle par les deux bouts*. I cut down the tree to get the fruit. I was absolutely incapable of self-discipline. I was a hedonist from birth and sought present pleasure absolutely insensible to any sequences whatsoever. I therefore easily fell a captive to this potent drug. In the pursuit of present pleasure and the gratification of passing whimsical fancies, the opinions of others affected me not. My impressionable nature broke forth with redoubled ardor and I spurned even the common restraints of decency in the mad infatuations of my revels. While virtue consists merely in the avoidance of vice, I was headstrong by nature and pursued the broad way, and while I saw and approved of the better things, I followed the worst. I had not the gumption to resist first beginnings. I was incapable of bridling my appetite to yield to reason. I became a voluptuary by the imperious chance that rules the lives of human sons of guns. Possibly while I was not free from the weaknesses of the flesh, I may have been above the temptations of the spirit. In this I must have been working out my own manifest destiny.

Was I the architect of my ruin, the author of my fall, the maker of my bed? Was I the moulder of my fate, the captain of my soul? Was I the innocent victim to be immolated upon the altar of voluptuousness? Was I to be an excluded and marked man? Was it the inscrutable will of destiny that I should become a wanton licentiate? Was I the true forger of the chains that bound me? Was it some mysterious biological power, some magic susceptibility left as a legacy by my forefathers? Was my status the inevitable logic of fate, the true sequence of events?

My answer is that I was born morally insensible and had an insensate readiness to evil. Hedonism was born in me just as burning devotion is in certain souls. I was made of an incongruous compound, and must have had a ferocious animalism close to the surface of my being. I am aware that thruout my life my actions have received their impulse from the force of feeling than from the wisdom of reason, and this has led me to acknowledge that my conduct has been dependent upon my nature more than upon my mind; both are generally at war and in the midst of their continual collisions, I have never found in me sufficient mind to balance my nature or enough strength in my nature to counteract the power of my mind. I hold that man's normal condition and abnormal status of disease can both be traced to obvious causes—that man is subject solely to the laws of his own peculiar organization, that every man is the product of his own

surroundings. Therefore, as reason is the only touch, I leave it to the scientists and physiologists and the metaphysical moralists and to the believers in material positive science, to prove that my faults are those of temperament and of brain construction. When we consider that there is no effect without a cause, the conduct of individuals is no exception to this rule. As Bulwer Lytton says: "It is not an uncommon crochets amongst benevolent men to maintain that wickedness is necessarily a sort of insanity, and that nobody would make a violent start out of the straight path unless stung to such disorder by a bee in his bonnet."

Then who can overcome his habit of thought or reconstruct his character? Can a negro shed his skin? Can a leopard change its spots? As well try to make a swan out of a goose!

It became quite apparent to me, therefore, that as long as this human derelict and dope fiend hung about the fringes of the town jumping sideways for doughnuts and "chow," I was powerless to desist and had not the invincibility to overcome his ministrations of morphia. I fell a sacrifice to the power of temptation and bared my arm to receive the balm that produced unalloyed ease, undiluted pleasure, dreamy indolence. My mood was expressed in these words: "There is no God but Morphia and I am its Prophet." This is one of the paraphrases of the Moslem. And morphinomaniacs believe in this as tenaciously as the Mohammedan believes in Mohammed when he says: "There is no deity but God; Mohamet is God's apostle; God bless and save him."

I could not forego the black magic of the influence and the supreme peace—the peace that surpasseth all understanding—and the rapture exerted by the sting of the noxious little steel insect. I was fretting with crawling skin and muscles spasmodically twitching for the calming potion. My desire now became a lust of the nerves for the drug, altho' I was but an abecedarian in this the most beneficent toxic in the dispensatory.

## CHAPTER III

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### HOW I BECAME A DOPE FIEND

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*"But custom what they did begin,  
Was with long use account no sin."*

*—Pericles, Prince of Tyre.*

For two months thereafter I kept on in a pagan, sensuous way, the ministrations of this itinerant fiend being of daily occurrence. But one bright morning I awoke to find that the wanderlust had driven Happy Hooligan from the town, to seek riches in pastures novel, new and quaint. I had become tragically acquainted with the drug and was in fact uncompromisingly in its chains. I was in the dread valley of the shadow of the drug. I had experienced its unaccountable influences, its intoxicating joys, its reckless and mad career; now I felt the dreadful remorse, the ultimate despair and ruin in which it always inevitably ends. I was suffering because I wanted it and couldn't get it—the agonies of the damned in hell. But by some sixth sense I found him thirty miles away, lowering the tide in a can of beer in the rear of a Sheeny barrel-house. Upon our meeting he must have instantly observed the duller surface of my physiognomy and the dilation of my ocular pupils, as these are guide-posts to the trained eye, for he at once relieved my dilemma by ramming the delicate needle thru the skin.

He now told me that he had an unalterable purpose of resuming the wanderlust and that I must shift for myself. "Consult some Sawbones," said he, "or 'go gunning'." As a result of this latter admonition, I did both. First, I purchased a drachm of morphia, a syringe in an aluminum case, a complement of steel needles, some wire and absorbent cotton and at a Chink restaurant I bargained for a spoon. From that time on, I never saw or heard of my friend (?) again, altho' I trafficked in this and other drugs covering intermittent periods of thirty years. This morphine "sleigh rider" was therefore the mainspring of my epiphany to narcotism. It was because Gaston Beauvais had

met Andre Gessonex that it was possible for Wormwood to be written, and it is because I met up with this dope, a fellow fleshed in iniquity before time, that it is possible for me to write these chapters.

*In passim*, I am inclined to be both hypercritical and censorious about this quixotic *hombre*; altho' the less said of him the better. He was a spineless worm, with a two by four intellect, a cussed low-down lowlander. Physiognomy is a true science. The man of profound thought, the man of active ability and above all, the man of genius has his character stamped on his countenance by nature. The man of violent passions and the voluptuary have it stamped by habit, and this jeremy diddler was a type. Besides this, he had the heaven-branded features of a thief, and the drug hunched him to commit his favorite pastime. He had a preference for this sort of diversion. To him it was an art. If he had the option of having money given him, he would rather steal it. He would steal an egg out of a cloister. As a liar he always assayed one hundred per cent. He would lie with such volubility that one would think truth a fool. His very appearance reflected a wealth of picturesque destitution and his chronic addiction to morphia was so accentuated that his mug was as blanched as the Dove of Paphos. The drug had undoubtedly a half nelson on him. He had the brow of an incendiary, and the eyes of an owl; besides he had a prognathous jaw and a *retrousee* nose. Nature most certainly committed no blunder in the formation of this most extraordinary character.

A sawbones "shot" me for a week and after this I flew with my own wings. I was on the job for nearly three decades at intermittent periods. My dope rations for over twelve years increased from one-quarter grain to forty-five grains per day. Latterly I ran the gamut of narcotic consumption from thirty to fifty-five grains, or nearly one drachm per day. It was step by step that I reached this almost incredible maximum, for no man ever suddenly arrived at the summit of vice.

Many times I tried to break away from the demon, which was turning me into a bowelless egoist. A hundred times I threw the kit away into unfathomable recesses, and as I thought as far as the Antipodes, which, with the return of the reactionary state, only engendered in me the impulse to purchase another. A hundred times I threw away the hypodermic syringe as far as I could throw it, only to reclaim it when the nerves were stung by the reaction. I made a thousand resolutions to renounce which seemed absolutely irrevocable while lit up with the dope, but no sooner than the reactionary phases came about, all renunciatory oaths were like unto straw to the fire in the

blood and the devil in the nerves, and then would come the full fury of the monomania of craving, and I struggled in vain against its strange and irresistible influence. A hundred times so keen were my griefs, that I was tempted to relinquish the struggle and as many times I triumphed, the unquenched fire of my mind but burning the brighter for each opposition. Against the seductions of this artificial pleasure, I belted on the surcingle of abstemiousness with dogged resolution. I was constantly battered down under its hatches, but these were periods of spasmodic repentance only. I moralized on the iniquity of drugs and held converse with my own soul. Could I afford it from a moral viewpoint? Recollection, reason and penitence swept down upon me like hawks swooping down out of an angry sky. Hour after hour I paced in meditation with folded arms and bent head, thinking of all that had been or might have been, and after severe introspection, the last few months rose up strongly within me. Again and again all that I had seen and done in that crowded interval swept by my eyes, but the one thing that stayed while all others faded, the one ever-present shadow among so many, was the remembrance of the hypodermic. I laughed and frowned in turn to myself in my lonely walks to find how the infernal habit was growing on me. Was I a weakling to succumb thus to an uncompromising tyrant? It was idle nonsense. I would not yield. I put it behind me and thought of tomorrow, and then again was the outline of the FIEND in the yellow rift of the evening sky. And even the evening wind outside was whispering as it came sighing over the face of nature, and it seemed to whisper:

*“Never—Forever  
Forever—Never.”*

And there was something more behind all that thought. There were eyes focused on me, wherever in my fancy I saw them, that filled me with a strange unrest, and a whisper behind the whispers that issued from some impalpable and invisible presence—a fine, thin music that played upon the fibres of my heart, a presence behind a haunting presence, a meaning behind a meaning that stirred me with the strangest fancies.

A hundred times I made up my mind to risk the unknown horrors of future punishment to escape the maddening tortures of present existence.

A periodic dread of the sight of man, a sudden sense of my utter separation from the interests of the transitory beings around me, wild dreams, days of immoderate abstraction, yet

filled with the breathing picture of all that I had done with the hypodermic, rose before me with such intense reality that I lived again thru the scene. The successive progress of my indulgence, the swift and stinging consciousness of condemnation, the flash of fearful knowledge that showed me futurity—all were felt with the keenness of a being from whom all fleshly nature had been stripped away and the soul bared by every visitation of pain, I stood like a disheveled spirit in suffering.

Chronic addiction makes cowards of morphinomaniacs, yet when saturated with the dope, one can perform stunts that would appal human credulity. Burns has versified that whiskey will make one fearless of the devil; morphine will dispel fear of God, man, the devil or the Duke of Hell. They make faces at fate.

Ordinarily fiends begin by being fools and end in becoming knaves. They are playthings of the devil, liars and thieves. But they are only criminals because they are addicts. They have no standing before the tribunals of conscience or in the courts of established law. The victim of the morphine habit is no longer a normal man, but he is an eternally polluted, fallen man. He can be recognized in his movements, in his traits and in his general status of coma and the pasty appearance of his visage resembling a wax figure. Their moods are ever mercurial, so that they startle even the slaves of morphia themselves. But these moods are varied by others, singularly callous, when all humanity seems to have ebbed from the nature and the formula of the victim's faith might be a paraphrase of the Moslem. They live in a fool's paradise; they are lame devils, and like the heathen Chinees, their ways are dark and their tricks are vain. The main thing that they fear is detention on a law charge, thus bringing about a denial of the drug and when held by the law, their impetuous and fiery natures break out in a storm of rebellion.

They seldom smile and their laughter is of such an extraordinary and sardonic nature—so purely a mechanical spasm, quite independent of any mirthful attributes, that they are minus this afflatus. In them kindness and fellow feeling are dumb—the sheer brute ramps free, the strong, coarse primal animal which morphia rouses, at first merely to a savage irritation, but later informs with more than ape-like cunning with a callous cruelty lower than the brute's, because moved by more than the brute's intelligence. Their moral sense is blunted.

Withal, an addict when doped with the drug, has the capacity of unraveling abstruse cryptograms that would puzzle ancient and modern dogmaticians, indulge in recondite investigations, delve creditable in the mysteries of the alchemists, converse on icy algebraic symbols, deductive and inductive ratiocination, ex-

pound the meaning or moral of signs and tokens, the mystery of the unattainable, the procession of the equinoxes, the acceleration of gravity and even decipher the hieroglyphics. Learnedly could they discuss the atomic theory of matter, chemical affinity, capillary attraction and other things in this electro-magnetic world. Their moods are inconstant. They follow no ordered sequence. Morphine users agonize over the degrading vice. In this they drink to the very dregs, the cup of penance. At intervals so great is the suffering that frequent thoughts of suicide enter the mind, and by this means they are willing to contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world, its vanities, dreams, shadows, its unrealities. These intervals are during the luridly lucid moments which come to fine natures in such thrall—the moments when they see themselves as they are—when they say with appalled realization: “I am a morphinomaniac. I would sacrifice the happiness of my nearest and dearest for a dose of the terrible stuff when the horror of lacking it is upon me.”

To the material power that opium exerts over the immaterial part of fiends, I have known men who became fiends who possessed powerful and active imaginations, and who became so indolent in the great world of action that they reduced themselves to the level of those sluggish forms of animal life that lurk in the depths of forests and take the form of vegetable refuse, never stirring from their places to catch their easy prey.

The question has often been asked me touching the reason of my utter servility to drugs, and I unhesitatingly aver that it was due to hedonism, a vicious mole of nature, temperament and brain construction, which primarily brought about intemperance and from intemperance to narcotics. All of these were wished upon me at my birth.

Thus I became a fiend. I began to be so from the moment that my moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with my intellect. Having therefore, become a morphinomaniac by and thru the demon intemperance, the unpardonable sin as the origin of the evil of drugs, I wantonly continued in its use and took the flattering poison thereafter simply as a stimulus producing pleasurable sensations, periods of pleasurable quiescence, nothing more, nothing less. To me it was myrrh and storax, chlorine and rosemary. My impatient disposition called for this artificial stimulation. I never learned the icy precepts of respect, but pursued the sugared game. I therefore may have sinned against sound feeling by touching too closely and handling too freely what is essentially repulsive. It was a sin that grew within my own breast—the sin of an intellect that trampled

over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty chains.

I was a born hedonist, an unchangeable licentiate, an adventurous voluptuary, a congenital, and followed this bent regardless of consequences. I thought with Epictetus, that the greatest freedom is in bondage. I gave no thought to any dangers in the wake of the drug. I probably was imbued with some nebulous knowledge about certain dangers like one skimming along in his shallop upon the bosom of the Niagara River above the Falls, but I heeded not. I thrust myself into the hell of morphinism looking for present gratification of whimsical notions. In this pursuit, it is the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

## CHAPTER IV

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### DE QUINCY THE DOPE

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*“Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument  
But rightly to find quarrel in a straw,  
When honor's at the stake.”*  
—Hamlet.

Thomas DeQuincy in his “Confessions” states that upon the opium question generally he is the Pope. A thrasonical declaration such as this coming from one who used the drug intermittently for half a century, would dishearten the average controversialist relative to conclusions finally reached by him. But it gives me courage to close with him from the fact that after having used the drug myself for nearly thirty years, I regard myself a connoisseur. Therefore if Mr. DeQuincy is the dope, as well as the Pope, I claim to be the Dean, the Patron Saint, the Magnus Apollo on the opium question. But here is a difference between us. DeQuincy used laudanum and the crude brown plastic gum resin and I used the sulphate of morphia (which is a salt of sulphuric acid), the feathery, silky needles and cubes, its narcotic principle. Laudanum is known in the dispensatory as tincture opii, and is milder than the sulphate, for the reason that in its preparation it is blended with proof spirits. Opium, using the term in its generic sense, including all of its derivatives, such as morphine, codeine (an alkaloid derived from morphine), narcotine, the active principle of opium, laudanum, wine of opium, the latter containing 10 per cent granulated opium, cinnamon and cloves, alcohol and white wine, tincture opium camphorated, better known as paregoric and containing opium, benzoic acid and camphor, powder ipecac and opium, Dover's Powders, Tully's Powders, Brown's Mixture and the tenderloin preparation, heroin, (succedaneum of morphine treated with acetic acid), or any preparation of opium or where opium is a component part, notably Dr. Isaac Thompson's well-known eye water, which contains one-half grain of opium to the ounce, has

the same virtue. The virtue exerted depends upon the dose. Mr. DeQuincy contends that he used eight thousand drops of laudanum and twenty-five drops of laudanum are equivalent to one grain of opium. He was, therefore, habituated to three hundred and twenty grains of opium per day. Here is another difference. DeQuincy used opium by the mouth, that is, laudanum and the pungently sweetish brown pills and I introduced the drug hypodermically. Regardless of the relative strength of morphine and the crude opium, I dispute his declaration that "In less than 120 days no habit of opium eating could be formed strong enough to call for any extraordinary self-conquest in renouncing it, or even suddenly renouncing it."

To a chronic habitue bound in the tentacula of this poison for three decades, the *ipse dixit* of the dope descends upon me as a most preposterous frame-up.

O, ye shades of opium addicts passed to a new dope world, would that you were dowered with the auditory sense and inoculated with the voltaic pile, so that you could rise above the funereal vapors and veto the declaration of the dope! And you who are still on the ball, hearken to the sophistry of the dope!

One may become habituated within the period of two weeks and did he not have the capacity of self-will to then renounce, his addiction would become chronic. Cases are on record where patients who have taken opium in any form under the familiar disguise of medicine, afterwards craved for the same medicine, and ultimately became bounden slaves. The question would therefore resolve itself into the proposition of self-will, and obviously, one devoid of discretionary calibre would wantonly surrender to its seductions. There might be constitutional conditions in certain cases where one could with less effort renounce after two weeks' use.

The elevation of spirits produced by opium is not necessarily followed by a proportionate depression. There is no torpor or stagnation, animal or mental, following as a natural or even immediate consequence of opium.

"The varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite." These are Mr. DeQuincy's own words. In these cases the blood is tame, but where the blood is warm, and there is a want of discretion in the subject, he would succumb. In the primary stages exhilaration is produced, yet I have heard it declared by some persons who were given shots of morphine that the "shots" produced no exhilaration whatever. I believe that each dose diminishes the power of resistance and if a non-addict is powerless to break away after two weeks' traffic, how can he be expected to break away after a continuous

traffic of one hundred and twenty days? To attempt to do so, the subject would be thrown into a status of the most deplorable mental distraction and physical collapse. Any effort to renounce suddenly when subjugated in its chains, would result in an insatiable craving for a "shot," a "jolt," or a "pill." All vows would become as straw to the fire in the blood, and the subject would find himself in a state of physical collapse, wholly unapproachable by the feeble vehicle of words. In fact, the term "endless dolor," expressive enough, is feeble in expression. The drug fiend would suffer smartingly under the fires of abstinence, for morphine cries out in such a case: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," and such a repayment is deadly ennui of life. The subject would move heaven and earth by the lever of resourcefulness, and there is no expedient to which he would not resort to procure the cursed elixir and thus sweeten his blood, sustain the drooping animal energies and restore him to an equipoise of cloudless serenity. Necessity is a powerful weapon and has no law. He would invade holy sanctums and places where angels fear to tread. He would not hesitate to prise the gates of hell or leap up with elastic step the stairs of paradise, into the very presence of Jehovah. He would do things that would paralyze the moral senses. Murder would be a mere pastime, if, by its commission, relief would come, and he would be induced to commit any crime by an implacable cupidity. As hunger obeys no laws, *a priori*, the want of dope obeys none either.

I maintain that one addicted to opium in any form embracing the period of one hundred and twenty days would become a candidate for Doctor Dippy's sanitarium, if the drug were suddenly withdrawn. Further, that in sudden withdrawal, the subject if unrestrained, would commit suicide. The pathological horrors are so terrible that he would slay himself to be free and I could not blame him. O, that death would in mercy intervene, and thus cut short a season of endless dolor!

I further maintain that if in such cases, the reflex nerves failed to perform their duty, the subject would become a howling, defying, shouting, reeling, raving, foaming maniac.

There would be just as much suffering consequent upon a sudden renunciation of the use of the drug after four months, as there would be after four years. DeQuincy says that he "contended four times successfully against the dominion and did four times renounce it for long intervals." If he did so, he must have gone back to its use at least three different times. Since the record is silent, why did he go back? Was it due to a recurrence of rheumatism of the face and toothache? As a gen-

eral proposition, considering the very seductive quality of opium, men fall before the assaults of temptation. Did DeQuincy so fall?

I know that much the same inducements and alarms cast the die for any tempted and trembling sinner, and it fell out with me as it falls out with so vast a majority of my fellows in narcotic traffic, that I chose the better part and was found wanting in the strength to keep it. I had voluntarily stripped myself of all those balancing instincts by which even the worst of us continues to walk with some degree of steadiness among temptations, and in my case to be tempted, however slightly was to fall. He conquers a second time who controls himself in victory. Truly 'tis dangerous when the lesser nature comes between the pass and fell incensed points of mighty opposites!

The final judgment and deliberate award of Mr. DeQuincy upon the two following propositions which he variously terms popular misconceptions, popular dilemmas and ugly scandals: first, the supposed necessity of continually clamoring for increasing quantities, and secondly, its supposed corresponding declension in power and efficacy, is blank denial on his part. These are absurd conclusions, and absurdities need not be proved.

I believe that it is not absolutely necessary to increase the dose in order to derive from the drug its essential virtues, but one does this under the misleading hypothesis that it is necessary. It is a false conception of the mind. A morphine fiend cannot keep within bounds.

I also believe that the virtues diffused by morphine become less as chronic habituation advances, because the constitutional economy having become impoverished or overworked, larger rations may be proper. In seeking the light, I may be groping in the dark. *Par Parenthese*, the animal economy is much like a tract of land that has been repeatedly planted to the same crop, and having become worn out and denuded of its essential fertility, resort must be had to artificial fertilization. In the case of the tissues becoming less sensitive and unresponsive, there is created a lust of the nerves that prompts this increased dosage, yet it is a delusion from which the chronic habitue cannot escape. The primary effects of opium are mental exhilaration, physical relaxation and general buoyancy, and these last for about from three to four months, after which succeeds this lust of the nerves. When these effects have been spent he lapses into silence, inexpressible despondency, interspersed with fantasies, trances and the most profound reveries, and he becomes as restless as a panther. The morphine fiend is bound in the fetters of an un-

compromising dictator and he continues in its use in order to sustain his functional equipoise.

Borrowing legal parlance, one continues in its use (or abuse, which?) to circumvent the pathological horrors, the morbid process, the black reaction, the restlessness, the lassitude and the acute mental depression following summary withdrawal. He continues to circumvent the "blue devils," an abyss of untold mental abstraction and unspeakable physical malaise. Indulgence is granted to necessity and necessity knows no law.

This craving, this lust of the nerves, becomes an obsession, a mania, and, like Banquo's ghost, "will not down." It breaks down all resolutions, even if scrawled like the code of Draco in blood. It is a devil that tempts and insinuates against all odds.

In all my varied experience as a wanton trafficker in this poison, commencing with one-eighth of a grain and ascending to the grand maximum of sixty grains per day, I at no time ran across a case of sudden withdrawal, where the patient by his own choice withdrew, where a cure was effected. The subject ultimately lapsed back into the old groove. There may be cases where addicts have been peremptorily thrown into prison, and under a strict curriculum of discipline there, they have undergone an eternity of suffering before their final emancipation. But such cases are those of forced self-denial.

There is no such thing as "possuming" in dope habituation. Transcendent nerve is required to do things upon the dizzy ball. The records of history regale us with the announcement of *tours de force* that paralyze the imagination, but I unhesitatingly say that the most indomitable nerve is powerless to phase this unconquerable despot. One might suddenly quit tobacco; one might suddenly break away from the use of coffee; one might relinquish cocaine when one became a chronic user of it, as this drug is not a habit-forming drug. One might do all of these things with impunity, beard the lion in his den, the Douglas in his hall, but with profound emphasis do I assert that one could not suddenly renounce opium in any of its chemical forms, when one became habituated to it, without suffering the pangs of deprivation. He who will resolve so and carry it to a successful issue is yet to be fashioned by God; for at the present time, he is *non est inventus*.

It is not that one cannot do it; it is that one won't do it.

*Par Parenthese*, there is unqualifiedly no substitute for the drug in such dilemmas. The drug itself is the only "sweet, oblivious antidote"—like begets like.

Recurring to the first popular misconception, namely, the supposed necessity of continually clamoring for increasing quan-

tities, the drug slave nurses the delusion that if one pill will work certain wonders, an additional pill will do more, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Excessive dosage of any substance in the *materia medica* having toxic properties, will lead to dissolution, except in the case of chronic habitues to opium in taking excessive doses of that particular drug. *Au contraire*, it has been established beyond the jugglery of dispute that one-half grain of morphia will cause death if administered to one not tolerated to it, and further that an inordinately excessive dose would not kill him if he were kept awake until its effects had subsided. What would happen in the event of being subjected to repeated subcutaneous injections of the poison until the circulation became inadequate to take the injections up, or in any manner the blood defaulted in responding to such abnormal intake, is a conjectural proposition, and in the language of the card player, "I respectfully beg leave to pass!" I believe, however, that the last ounce would break the camel's back, and that such dosage would be requited by swift and fatal punishment.

I am therefore compelled to draw swords with DeQuincy, the dope, notwithstanding that he is the *facile princeps* upon all questions pertaining to opium. As a dialectician, I am supported in the views herein expressed from the fact that Mr. DeQuincy himself says that he "never followed out the seductions of opium to their final extremity and cannot, therefore, deliver any oracular judgment therein." I claim to have followed them out to their final extremity and may sermonize to society upon them. At least, my declarations may be regarded *ex cathedra*. They have been proven to me with all the certainty of a mathematical equation. They are as infallible to me as so many propositions of euclid. They are not those of a student, but rather of a dogmatician.

## CHAPTER V

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### OPIUM DREAMS

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*Romeo:* "I dreamed a dream tonight.  
*Mercutio:* And so did I.  
*Romeo:* Well, what was yours?  
*Mercutio:* That dreamers often lie  
*Romeo:* In bed asleep, while they do dream things true."

—*Romeo and Juliet.*

To this subtle drug I am indebted for having electrified courts and juries and for verdicts rendered by the elastic dozen. The drug is a potential factor in releasing from the fretted alcoves of the mind where are stored trite aphorisms, pungent quotations, nice sharp quilllets of the law and apt utterances that embellish forensic degladiation, force popular plaudits and wring verdicts from the apostolic twelve. The brain becomes electrified and the imagination becomes the artist of the soul, and this faculty runs riot under the stress. The imagination is the use which nature makes of the material world. It hypnotizes us into painting pictures that give color to our contentions, and makes us see life as in a glass darkly, and again "face to face." It makes us look thru the big end of the telescope of life and get the broad, optimistic view, or else thru the little end and get the narrow, pessimistic view. It resurrects ideas that were begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater* and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. True, our imaginations are as foul as Vulcan's stithy. It is a despot that clothes our discourses with roses. It is the mater key—the *passe partout*—that enriches phraseology.

In the enchanted dreamland of the nether world of sleep, one is instantly reminded of felicitous phrase, gorgeous adjectives, sharp epigrams, flowers of wit, melodious verse, grandiose magniloquence and the sweet smoke of rhetoric. In parliamentary jugglery, peculiar figures of speech, a whole family, a torrent of rhetorical effusions, classical metaphors and the wild beauty of hyperboles, Homeric strophes, airy parables, come lisp-  
ing for

utterance. One indulging in repartee, may hurl the most vitriolic shafts, the most venomous and palsyng philippics. The linguistic flow in eagle flights of oratory proceeds in rythmical cadence, ending in polished periods. Facts are habited in rhetorical diction and bring conviction like the descent of a Niagara. One's words are a very fantastical banquet with just so many rare dishes, and these are pronounced trippingly on the tongue with stridulous fluency.

I cannot subscribe to the doctrine that "dreams are but the children of an idle brain, begot of nothing but vain fantasy." Neither do I regard a dream itself as but a shadow, nor that men are such stuff as dreams are made of, and that our little life is rounded with a sleep. I do believe, however, that most dreams indicate some deep wish that lies dormant in the dreamer.

The dreams that proceed from the soporific and hypnotic virtues of the drug are angelic, elevating, uplifting. When mantled by the drapery of sleep one is wrapped in "Buddha's mighty thought, and dreams all dreams that light, the alchemist, has wrought from dust and dew and stored within the slumbrous poppy's subtle blood." Carried by Cuvier's fancy, one hangs as if suspended by a magician's wand over the illimitable abyss of the past which appears before one in a clear and definite vision. Under the dominion of Queen Mab, one's spirits are all bound up. I recall a picture where the most superb light burst upon my dazzled eyes; a roof of seeming gold arched so high that even its splendor was partially dimmed; walls of apparent diamond, pillared with a thousand columns of every precious gem, whole shafts of emerald, pavilions of jasper, a floor as far as the glance could pierce studded with amethyst and ruby—apparent treasures to which the accumulated spoils of the Greek or the Persian were nothing. Everything glittered with gem-like radiance. The floor was of alternate squares of black and white marble. The enormous pillars intersected longitudinally, and supported the return of the double vaulted roof. The tall pointed windows glazed with panes of a thousand hues and the whole, ceiling, pillars, walls, wainscoat, doors, statues covered from top to bottom with a splendid coloring of blue and gold.

As an antithesis to this, I have seen in my dreams hydra-headed monsters with the talons of a dragon, the tail of a diplodocus—I have dreamed of living monsters of hideous conformation with a representation of a death's head covering their breasts, with gleaming antennae projecting from their proboscides; of strange animals with scarlet teeth and claws; of barnyard turkeys with mushroom hats brandishing clubs and beckon-

ing me to the nether world. These latter dreams abused the curtailed sleep.

There was no height to which I did not ascend, and no bottomless pit to which I did not descend. In some of these flights and falls, what cruel disillusionments and what rude awakenings!

I saw innumerable caravans of lost souls moving in tongueless silence in the City of Dreadful Night. I beheld departed souls driven thru the shades of Tartarus like dead leaves. I saw more devils than the vastness of hell itself could hold. Upon the portico of the Prince of Darkness, I read the salutation, "Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here," in letters of livid flame. I heard the dying cry of hell's inhabitants sounding in my ears like the wails of disembodied spirits. I saw dry bones in the valley of death, dressed in the cunning livery of hell. I heard the cry of the damned from the very pit of hell. I perceived these utterly lost pilgrims more acutely within the dungeons of the damned, and on their foreheads was written the *hic jacet* of souls dead within. Swarms of spectres rose from deepest hell with bloodless visage and with hideous yell; they scream, they shriek, sad groans and dismal sounds stun my scared ears and pierce hell's utmost bounds.

As a physiological aftermath of excessive traffic in opium, the nerve centers are radically attacked, and it is axiomatic that one is a day-dreamer during the waking hours, the poison is the mainspring that produces hideous, incarnate nightmares while asleep. While lying upon my back I have been gripped by the tentacula of this octopus with such firmness that I thought corporal activity impossible. I would remain as immovable as a monument of victory, as I struggled violently with the fearful apathy that held my limbs. And when mounted upon these nightmares, what steeple chases I rode up and down the highways and byways of horror! One struggles, bound by that terrible powerlessness which paralyzes us in our dreams. One tries to move or cry out, and on all sides life seems to enclose one like a horrible wall. All kinds of outlandish predicaments presented themselves to me during these nightmares, and particularly that of being held in the clutches of some fiendish devil. In the act of falling from some elevated position, I always awoke to a sense of the surroundings and a certain wild terror of the soul.

While the immediate and predisposing cause of this strange physical phenomena of suspended animation flows from nerve bankruptcy, there seems but a single distinction between the hideous monster and the juggernaut of catalepsy. While in either case there is an external immobility, in the former one is sensible, in the latter one is senseless. In nightmare there is a

total cessation of all the apparent functions of vitality, and yet in which these cessations are merely suspensions, temporary pauses in the incomprehensible mechanism. One is a lethargy of motion, the other a lethargy of both motion and sensibility. In nightmare, one is without the ability to stir, but he has the capacity to think. The psychic symptoms of nightmare are chiefly made up of fear, together with a feeling of utter helplessness. This is not strange when it is considered that the brain cells are heavily charged with the poison and a violent irritation has been set up in the nerve tissues. The blood is contaminated, and its flow from the heart is irregular, and might produce epilepsy. As between these two, I believe that I would prefer the cataleptic trance, which in fact is indistinguishable from death itself, for in this latter, there is no consciousness of life. Total annihilation would be still more preferable, for this would deliver one of all earthly woes.

In these opium dreams there appeared a weird assembling of persons whom I had known in the long ago, and those whom I knew in succeeding years, and these in turn were unknown to one another, because removed by geographical lines. Upon mankind at large the events of very early existence rarely leave in mature age any definite impression. All is gray shadow—a weak, irregular remembrance—an indistinct regathering of feeble pleasures and phantasmagoric pains. With me this is not so, for in childhood I must have felt with the energy of a man what I now find stamped upon memory in lines as vivid, as deep and as durable as the exergues of the Carthaginian medals. Even the earliest memories were recalled in my childhood. They reappear under the passions like the traces of the palimpsest under the erasure. Youth and observation had copied many things, and these were depicted clearly to me. By the remorseless drive of time, these incidents were forgotten and would have remained forever entombed, but for the luminous architecture of the dream films. These strangers met together just as I had known them in life, attired in the same habiliments that the eye of recollection noticed as having been worn by them in former years, and these habiliments suffered no change by the silent flight of the raven-winged hours. Some of them had been dead for years, but this fact made no difference with the scene shifter in these dreams. For instance, if the *locus in quo* happened at the home of my birth in the effete East, familiar forms were snatched from the West and became actors on the stage erected by dreamland. The broncho buster of the West met the tender-foot of the East. Improbable situations were presented, and they stand out now in my memory more clearly than anything which

I have ever seen with my waking eyes. There is an absolute inability to perceive the absurdity and impossibility of the events which appear to happen in dreams. There is no sense of time and transition from one personality to another, and from one scene to another takes place without least surprise on the part of the dreamer. I believe in the vaso-motor theory which bases sleep upon the contraction of the blood vessels of the brain. Such are the tricks and the freaks played by memory in this dream scenery, which, defying scientific analysis, must repose in the dark chambers of indefinable mysticism and which conducts me to the conclusion that *songes sont mensonges*.

Here is another dream. Suddenly I seemed to be floating in space. I had no sense of my spirit being confined in my body. My person seemed to have no particular shape. I had a great sense of peace, joy and contentment. I had recollection, too, but the outstanding events of my life were but a dream. It seemed that I was progressing towards a definite goal, thru an intense, velvety blackness by which I was surrounded. At another time I found myself in the great deep of utter and complete darkness. Again I was floating, apparently on a strong current which was taking me towards some predestined goal. Then suddenly I saw a brilliant light, more powerful than the sun, which seemed to illuminate a boundless space. I was going toward it at a terrible speed. It seemed that after aeons and aeons had passed, my consciousness returned, and I found myself amid familiar surroundings. Those about me told me that my face had the death pallor, my hands and feet were cold and my heart was not beating.

Some of these dreams were most uneasy. Hideous objects seemed to pass before my eyes. I was continually in the most dangerous and appalling situations: stairs that I endeavored to ascend seemed to crumble beneath my feet, and thruout I went thru all the most terrible spasms of nightmare; but above everything I seemed to feel a pressure upon my breast and a cold, clammy weight that appeared to stifle me and to be crushing out my very existence. With a start at last I awoke and found my household cat purring on my breast.

In spite of all these, I beheld gorgeous spectacles at other times of more than sublunary magnificence. The Fall of Babylon, the Pompeian *tremblement de terre*, the burning of Rome, the massacre of the Christians, the triumphal return of a warrior with his victorious legions, the war of the worlds, all of which I had read about, and some of which I had really seen, together

with the spectacle of the sea giving up its dead—all of these were pictorially illustrated in prismatic pellucidity.

As a morphine fiend has no conception of the motion of time, time, the great braggart and bully of life, like those who fight in the dim twilight of the trenches, even in his day-dreaming, so it is that while steeped in the beguilement of sleep, one seems to live one hundred years in a single night.

O, Opium, thou mysterious, subtle and seductive resin! Thou art the peerless tranquillizer of the vital forces! O, thou slumbrous poppy, thou hast in thy subtle blood the elixir to endow the body with strength to resist the effects of time, of violence or of disease! Thou art the assassin of pain, of languor, of *tedium vitae*, thou art the briber of death! Under thy potent spell thou art able to metamorphose old age to youth, banish the hectic flush from the tubercular cheek, let fall the crutches from the cripple, the shackles from the limbs of disease! Thou restorest the neurasthenic and those cursed by neurotic malaise to a state of cloudless serenity! Thou chaseth to the realms of innocuous desuetude the detestable scourges of languor, listlessness and *ennui*! Thou hast the key to an Elysium of sweet slumber, the mother of wondrous dreams! Thou hast power to make one sleep out the great gap of time! Within thy seductive embrace and under thy tutelary powers, one may live a thousand years in a single night! Whether distorted by the ravages of disease, reduced to abject beggary by ill-fortune or bent by the flight of years, thou canst introduce the elastic step and maintain one in works of supererogation and preternatural requisitions for the expenditure of human energy! Thou givest courage to the hopeless and thou holdest out hope to the lost! Thou changest one's pumpkin to a coach and four, O, thou mighty mandragora!

## CHAPTER VI

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### THE RADIANCE OF OPIUM VISIONS

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*"Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments  
Will hum about mine ears and sometimes voices  
That, if I then had waked, after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,  
The clouds methought, would open and show riches,  
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,  
I cried to dream again."*

—*The Tempest.*

I have no power to describe the marvelous incidents that unfolded themselves as the gloom of the night disappeared. They passed before the gaze and passed away rapidly, fleeting pictures of disordered dreams. Phantoms rose elusively out of the mists of earth, like children of the sun and the river or like freaks of air and cloud.

Wonder, amazement, admiration, but faintly portray my mental condition. The magnificence of what met my gaze in this dream far surpassed anything I had ever dreamed of and brought to my mind the scenes of the Arabian Nights forgotten since my boyhood until now. My very senses were irresistibly taken captive, and I seemed to have wholly severed my connection with the world of today, and to have slipped back several centuries into the times of genii, fairies, and fountains—into the very heart of Persia or Arabia.

Not an inharmonious detail marred the symmetry of the whole. Beneath, my feet sank almost ankle deep into a velvety carpet—a sea of subdued colors. Looked at closely I found that the design was that of a garden: beds of luxurious flowers, stars and crescents, squares and diamond-shaped plots made up of thousands of rare exotics and richly colored leaves. Here, a brook edged with damp verdure, from beneath which peeped coy violets and tiny blue-bells; there, a serpentine graveled walk that wound in and out amongst exquisite plants and everywhere a thousand shrubs in bloom or bud. Above, a magnificent chan-

delier consisting of six dragons of beaten gold from whose eyes and throats sprang flames, the light from which striking against a series of curiously set prisms fell shattered and scintillating into a thousand glancing beams that illuminated every corner of the room. The rows of prisms being of clear and variously colored glass and the dragons slowly revolving, a weird and ever-changing hue was given to every aspect in the room.

All about the sides of the spacious apartment, upon the floor, were mattresses covered with vari-colored cloth and edged with heavy golden fringe. Upon them were carelessly strewn rugs and mats of Persian and Turkish handicraft and soft pillows in heaps. Above the level of those divans ran all about the room a series of huge mirrors framed with gilded serpents intercoiled, effectually shutting off the windows. The effect was magnificent. There seemed to be twenty rooms instead of one, and everywhere could be seen the flame-tongued and fiery-eyed dragons slowly revolving, giving to all the appearance of a magnificent kaleidoscope in which the harmonious colors were ever blending and constantly presenting new combinations.

I seemed lost in lazy reverie and perfect comfort.

Then there came the soft, undulating strains of music. They were just perceptible above the silvery notes of a crystal fountain in the center of the room, the falling spray from which splashed and tinkled musically as it fell from serpents' mouths into a series of the very thinnest huge pink shells held aloft by timid hares. The music seemed to creep up thru the heavy carpet, to ooze from the wall, to flurry, like snow-flakes from the ceiling, rising and falling in measured cadences unlike any music I had ever heard. It seemed to steal, now softly, now merrily, on tip-toe, into the room to see whether we were awake or asleep, to brush away a tear, if tear there was, or gambol airily and merrily, if such was my humor and then as softly, sometimes sadly, to steal out again and lose itself in the distance. It was just such music as a boatful of fairies sailing about in the clear water of the fountain might have made, or that with which an angel mother would sing its angel babe to sleep. It seemed to enter every fibre of the body and satisfy a music hunger that had never before been satisfied.

The revolving dragons went swifter and more swiftly, until the flaming tongues and eyes were merged into a huge ball of flame, that, suddenly detaching itself with a sharp sound from its pivot, went whirling and streaming off into the air until lost to sight in the skies. Then a sudden silence, during which I heard the huge waves of an angry sea breaking with fierce monotony in my head. Then I heard the fountain; the musical

tinkle of the spray as it struck upon the glass grew louder and louder and the notes longer and longer, until they merged into one clear musical bugle note that woke the echoes of a spring morning and broke sharp and clear over hill and valley, meadow-land and marsh, hill-top and forest. A gayly caparisoned horseman, bugle in hand, suddenly appeared above a hill crest. Closely following, a straggling group of horsemen riding fiercely. Before them a pack of hounds came dashing down the hillside, baying deeply. I, the fox, was running with the speed of desperation, straining every nerve to distance or elude them. Thus for miles and miles I ran on until at last almost dead from fright and fatigue, I fell panting in the forest. A moment more and the cruel hounds would have had me, when suddenly a little field-mouse appeared, caught me by the paw and dragged me thru the narrow entrance to her nest. My body lengthened and narrowed until I found myself a serpent, and in me rose the desire to devour my little preserver, when, as I was about to strike her with my fangs, she changed into a beautiful little fairy, tapped my ugly black flat head with her wand and as my fangs fell to earth, I resumed my human shape. With the parting words, "Never seek to injure those who endeavor to serve you," she disappeared.

Looking about, I found myself in a huge cave, dark and noisome. Serpents hissed and glared at me from every side, and huge lizards and ugly shapes scrambled over the wet floor. In the far corner of the cave I saw piles of precious stones of wondrous value, that glanced and sparkled in the dim light. Despite the horrid shapes about me, I resolved to secure some at least of these precious gems. I began to walk toward them, but found that I could get no nearer—just as fast as I advanced, so fast did they seem to recede. At last, after what seemed a year's weary journey, I suddenly found myself beside them, and, falling on my knees, began to fill my pockets, bosom and even my hat. Then I tried to rise, but could not; the jewels weighed me down. Mortified and disappointed, I replaced them all but three, weeping bitterly. As I rose to my feet, it suddenly occurred to me that this was in no way real—only a morphine dream. And laughing, I said: "You fool, this is all nonsense; these are not jewels; they only exist in your imagination." My real self arguing with my morphine self which I could see, tired, ragged and weeping, set me to laughing still harder, and then we laughed together—my two selves. Suddenly my real self faded away and a cloud of sadness and misery settled upon me, and I

wept again, throwing myself hysterically upon the damp floor of the cave.

Just then I heard a voice addressing me by name, and looking up, I saw an old man with an enormous nose bending over me. His nose seemed almost as large as his whole body. "Why do you weep, my son?" he said. "Are you sad because you cannot have all these riches? Don't then, for some day you will learn that whoso hath more wealth than is needed to minister to his wants, must suffer for it. Every farthing above a certain reasonable sum will surely bring some worry, care, anxiety or trouble. Three diamonds are your share; be content with them. But, dear me, here I am neglecting my work. Here it is March and I'm not half thru yet."

"Pray, what is your work, venerable patriarch?" I asked, "and why has the Lord given you such a huge proboscis?"

"Ah, I see that you don't know me," he replied. "I am the chemist of the earth's bowels and it is my duty to prepare all the sweet and delicate odors that the flowers have. I am busy all winter making them and early in the spring my nymphs and apprentices deliver them to the Queen of the Flowers, who, in turn, gives them to her subjects. My nose is a little large because I have to do so much smelling. Come and see my laboratory."

His nose a little large! I laughed until I almost cried at this, while following him.

He opened a door, and entering, my nostrils met the oddest medley of odors I had ever smelled. Everywhere workmen with huge noses were busy mixing, filtering, distilling and the like.

"Here," said the old man, "is a batch of odors that has been spoiled. Mistakes are frequent, but I find use for even such as that. The Queen of flowers gives it to disobedient plants or flowers. You mortals call it assafoetida. Come in here and see my organ." And he led me the way into a large rocky room at one end of which was a huge organ of curious construction. Mounting to the seat, he arranged the stops and began to play.

Not a sound could be heard but a succession of odors swept past me, some slowly, some rapidly. I understood the grand idea in a moment. Here was music to which that of sound was coarse and earthly. Here was a harmony, a symphony of odors. Clear and sharp, intense and less intense, sweet, less sweet, and again still sweeter; heavy and light, fast and slow, deep and narcotic, the odors, all in perfect harmony, rose and fell, and swept by me to be succeeded by others.

Irresistibly I began to weep and fast and thick fell the tears until I found myself a little stream of water, that, rising in the rocky caverns of the mountains, dashed down its side into the

plain below. Fiercely the hot sun beat down upon my scanty waters and like a thin, gray mist I found myself rising slowly into the skies, no longer a stream. With other clouds I was swept away by the strong and rapid wind far across the Atlantic, over the burning sand wastes of Africa, dipping toward the Arabian Sea and suddenly falling in huge raindrops into the very heart of India, blossoming with poppies. As the ground greedily sucked up the refreshing drops, I again resumed my form.

All at once the earth was rent apart and falling upon the edge of a deep cavern, I saw below me a molten, hissing sea of fire, above which a dense vapor hung. Issuing from this mist a thousand anguished faces rose toward me on scorched and broken wings, shrieking and moaning as they came.

*It was Hell.*

“Who in heaven’s name, are these poor things?”

“These, said a voice at my side, are the spirits, still incarnate, of individuals, who during life, sought happiness in the various narcotics. Here, after death, far beneath, they live a life of torture most exquisite, for it is their fate, ever suffering for want of moisture to be obliged to yield, day by day, their lifeblood to form the juice of the poppy and the resin of hemp, in order that their dreams, joys, hopes, pleasures, pains and anguish of past and present may again be tasted by mortals.”

As he said this, I turned to see who he was, but he had disappeared. Then I heard a fierce clamor, felt the scrawny arms of these foul spirits wound about my neck, in my hair, on my limbs pulling me over into the horrible chasm, into the heart of hell; crying shrilly: “Come, thou art one of us. Thou art a morphine fiend; fall into the pit.”

I struggled fiercely, shrieked out in my agony and in another instant all was dark, and shaking off the golden slumber of repose, I awoke as if I had slept on a perfumed couch, and to find that it was daylight—high noon—and that I was lying upon the leather bed of a place of penitence, while all about me rang the voices of nurses and thru the windows of wire netting streamed the crimson rays of the burnished sun.

In fact, on awaking from opium dreams, I was struck either with amazement or convulsed with laughter; and in this particular instance, I came back from hell with a smile on my face.

I had another vision of a large and populous city in broad day. There were edifices of huge proportions, with hyacinth and porphyry walls and of rococo design. There were streets, alleys, *cul-de-sacs*, squares, triangles, parks, terraces, esplanades,

plazas, monuments and fountains. It was a *tableau vivant*. Autos moved in a swirl of locomotion and aeroplanes plowed the ether. The skyscrapers were miraculously tall. Besides, there were subways and elevated trains. The city was arteried by smooth, white paved roads. I seemed reclining on a bank of velvet-edged clouds and observed this composite of all the cities that I had visited in the world, for in addition to our native American cities, temples to Apollo and shrines to Venus dotted the ways, forums, market places and the like in bewildering confusion. I have an Ulyssean experience of cities of the world. The dream scenery shifted from one film to another in rapid fire style, now opulent in the display of commercial magnificence, now rich in the splendor of beautiful drives along groves with feathery palms, Greek temples and white statues of the gods; along avenues of mellifluous arbors, thru parterres redolent with the ambrosial fragrance of native flora and exotic plants, past musical fountains active in display of ascending streams and descending drops of water. That magnificent refulgence came down from above, a glowing cascade of light. It scintillated like a beautiful gauze and leaped in fierce playfulness spinning its electric gossamers in that vacuum air like some enchanted tissue. It trickled in ambient, sparkling cascades; it overflowed the bosom of the fountains in tender sheets of blue and mauve and then sank as silent, as ghostly, as wonderful as it had come. All this was but the work of an instant, but an instant of such concentrated brightness and glowing visibility that I saw every detail of that beautiful thing—fountains played into basins of rosy marble.

Cloud-capped towers, solemn temples, sumptuous and magnificent marble palaces, enchanted places of ecstasy, sculptured brown-stone facades, colonnaded, statued, pierced by mighty doorways and lofty windows, passed in grave procession. There was also the splendor of marble and costly stone, porphyry, malachite, alabaster. All presented a triumph of architectural excellence and endowment. It was surely frozen music. I wished that the whole looked less solemn, less like a pauper's funeral.

I could have spoken, but would not for fear of breaking the charm, and I awoke to find none of the visionary character about me except, perhaps, a shaft of early morning light streaming thru the lattice, could be called a reflex of the mystic glory which had surrounded me in sleep. I looked about me with an utter depression of soul, the after dream of the reveller upon opium, the bitter lapse into every day life, the hideous dropping of the veil.

Another vision presented the residential part of a quaint old

village, the humble cottages of which were one and one and one-half stories in height and constructed of lumber. The window panes were of the old-fashioned sort and the uniformity of architectural design sustained the suspicion of its severe quaintness and mediaeval aspect. The season was the vernal one, and all nature was exuberant in natural growth and there seemed a rich abundance of vegetation. The streets were strewn with pollen and the air oppressed with the perfume of bursting buds. The whole prospect savored of home-keeping and rusticity, and there was suggested the freedom and carelessness of the life of primitive times.

It was early morning and few of the inhabitants were about. In a garden in front of one of these dwellings I observed "an old sweetheart of mine" ministering to a flower bed; at another primitive home an old granny moving in and out on some domestic license; from the chimneys here and there, smoke curled thru the ethereal stillness; bright tin, newly scoured brass and crockeryware were tidily hung up on rear porches; on the portico of one of these rude dwellings a huge Maltese cat purred; a hen with her brood scratched and clucked in another yard; the hum of bees could be distinguished and ever and anon a straggler appeared, lazily droning his way along the petal-strewn flags. Everything was prosy and quiet, and in despairing contrast with the scenes of activity and aspects of modernity suggested by the preceding vision. The entire scene bore the impress of tedious monotony. It was humdrum and bucolic and looked like an Elysium of gentle folk befitting a Quaker settlement, in all their characteristic simplicity.

The milkman was now proceeding on his matutinal rounds with jaded horse and antediluvian rig. His movements were slow and measured, and, as he performed the work of going from cottage to cottage, his nag was slower than a snail and expended more energy in trying to dislodge gnats assembled about its head and withers, than in exertions in pulling the milk cans.

I recall that my contemplation of this sight was rudely disturbed by some pragmatic boob arousing me for *dejeuner a la fourchette*. So annoyed was I, that I actually indulged in epithets of opprobrium hurled at his retreating footsteps. When he had faded away, I again closed my eyes and gazed upon the picture, and so absorbed was I in it, that it was an effort on my part to break away from the home-keeping character painted thereon. Altho' gentle day, before the wheels of Phoebus dappled round about the drowsy East with spots of gray, and altho' I was conscious of my locale and notwithstanding that my eyes were closed, yet I saw these things just as clearly as I had

ever before seen anything with my wide open eyes; and I heard the music, heavenly strains of Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata, music, of all flowers the most intellectual, that glorious painting to the ear, as sensibly as at any time when thoroly awake to the environments of life, and it came to my ears like the sweet South that breathes upon a bank of violets. I also inhaled the strange and subtle odors of the man with the long nose. I must have been deep in the dreams between sleep and waking, which give to realities a fantastic appearance. My eyes suddenly opened, yet my dream appeared only to be realized by my waking. When I had recovered my full senses all was so much changed round me that I could scarcely be persuaded that either the past or the present was not a dream. I had no consciousness of any interval between them more than that having closed my eyes at one instant, to open them at the next.

There was nothing phantasmal about these visions. The scenes stimulated the capacities of enjoyment. The characters were real.

They eclipsed the vaunted visions of Swedenborg.

My judgment is oracular upon this: that the lapsing into profound reveries while in the vassalage of opium is the coronet of what opium can do for human nature; and I say that the visions that come to one in the wonderland of dreams reach the zenith of visual concentration. One may be bewildered in the brilliancy of one's own imagination and fallen in the flames of his own youth, but I contend that one is bewildered in the brilliancy of these visions to the very madness of ecstasy.

Verily there is magic in the web of them!

The only sane hypothesis upon which I may predicate these visions is a functional derangement of the neural economy under the dominion of the drug, which produces a temporary mental unbalance, crouching madness in a sick brain. It is one of those spirits of a wayward fancy, which tantalizes the bed of the sick, deformed and unbalanced mind.

## CHAPTER VII

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### UNDER THE SPELL OF HYOSCEINE

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*"Methought I saw \* \* \**

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*Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,  
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,  
All scattered in the bottom of the sea."*

*—King Richard III.*

The dreams that come and the visions that proceed from the sleep producing virtues of opium are the most angelic, elevating, uplifting. This is true while one is wholly drugged with the poison, but in the convalescent stage they are the most tormenting.

For gruesome shapes and for ghastly situations, hyosceine has opium stopped four ways from the Jack. There are fearful things seen in the crystal of a dream. I underwent the hyosceine treatment once for the elimination of the evils following in the wake of a "shotgun prescription"; at another time while in the throes of the D. T.'s.

In the former instance the drug was suddenly withdrawn.

Hyosceine is precipitated from the dried leaves and flowering tops of *hyoscyamus niger*, cultivated from biennial plants commonly called henbane leaves. All parts of the plant are highly narcotic. It is called stinking nightshade, from the fetid odor of the plant. It is an hypnotic, an analgesic, an antispasmodic, a sedative, a mydriatic.

It is a very common thing for the imagination to paint for the senses both in the visible and invisible world.

I dreamed that I was the prisoner at the bar charged with crime most impious and revolting—I was the murderer of an innocent child. The hall of justice was a large amphitheatre and it was night time. The place was dimly lighted by sombre filaments which flickered and irradiated their rays upon the heads of officials and lawyers poring over heaps of papers. The judge

had an immobile and sinister looking face. He was the sole arbiter of law and fact. There were some heroic efforts advanced for me, but these were but perfunctory and ineffectual, for each time that anything was projected in my behalf, the body of the dead child was held up to the court. From each of the corners of the court room a gunman was stationed, his "Old Betsy" trained upon me. On the main floor revengeful villains were preparing a voltage of electricity to introduce into my system, and in the rear thereof I heard distinctly more of my accursed accusers distilling molten lead with which to singe my stomach. A trained nurse stood beside me and regarded me with the February goggle. In an instant I found myself groping between two hot plates of steel from which I violently wriggled to escape, and in so trying, I shook off the dreamy fancies. I looked about the sick room fully awake, but undoubtedly semi-conscious, and I could not banish the hideous thought that I must appear before another court, such terrible impression did this dream make.

The judge exercising jurisdiction in this tribunal was domiciled in a room as a patient in the hospital, and so was the murdered child; and both of these I had seen during waking hours thru the open door. These latter facts demonstrate to me beyond the power of quibble, that any object which has been intimately associated with any supreme paroxysm of human action, or human emotion, will retain a certain atmosphere or association which is capable of communicating to a sensitive mind, that is, the mind of a psychic subject with nerves which respond readily to any impression, regardless of drug inoculation.

Let me draw the curtain and show another picture which came to me in my dreams. It stands out now in my memory more clearly than anything which I have seen with my waking eyes. The dream scenery in this instance presented another court room scene, in which I was one of the idle curious. It was the morning line-up before the municipal burgess and the charges comprised a variety of peccadilloes, all categorized under the general title of grist from the devil's mill. Final judgments were entered upon pleas of guilty, and the court, exercising *ultra vires* powers, ordered the culprits, six in number, consigned to a subterranean space just large enough to admit them and so circumscribed that when the trap was closed down upon them, they had barely room enough to contain themselves on all fours. Prior to their enforced entombment here, which was fully consummated by the closing of the trap door, thus rendering the space as dark as the river of death, each was presented with a keen-bladed knife glittering like chalcedony, and instructed to slash one another

until the further order of the court. Pending the result of the bloody encounter below, the court resolved itself into a sort of an executive session breathlessly awaiting the result. The silence of the court was as the cloisters of sempiternal sepulture. Not a fly buzzed and not a sigh escaped to derange the prevailing taciturnity. The din of battle was like the murmur of a pleasant brook before that expectant hush. I was held by the fascination of horror, and could not take my eyes from the strange spectacle.

The court commanded the bailiff to open the trap door. Descending to this recess, he flung six inert and mangled bodies upon the court room floor, dripping with blood. Knives were buried in the cadavers, evidentiary of the desperate conflict below, and the dozen eyes of the stiffs were focused in a vindictive and vitreous dazzle upon the court. A pistol shot rang out, and His Honor, receiving a bullet in the right temple, court was automatically adjourned and the judge was instantly arraigned before the bar of a higher tribunal.

Gradually my senses became clearer, and I awoke from Hell with a crazy laugh.

I soon lapsed back and the scene changed to that of a burning building at the holy hour, from which I was in the act of escaping attired in a *robe de chambre*. I was on the top story of a ten-story structure and the flames had advanced to such a degree that escape by the stairways was cut off, and I was left to the alternative of executing the high dive below. A precipitate plunge to this concrete base meant instant dissolution, yet it seemed the only hope. The smoke burst in huge nebular volumes from windows and doors, and tongues of flame leaped into the tranquil sky, in volcanoes of spark and hissing tongues. I seemed stifled by the curling smoke and my head seemed to be bursting and my throat and lungs were consumed by internal fires. My hair seemed on end. I writhed and struggled and broke thru the gossamer web of this dream and burst with a shriek back to my own life and found myself shivering with terror. I found the warm clasp of a hand, and was greeted by my four orphaned children, gathered about the hospital bed, to the leather bosom of which I was inextricably strapped.

So, from this dream of unhappiness and despair, I forgot its freaks and awoke with laughter. Oh, what a blessed relief!

I lapsed back to dreamland, and the next instant I was in an airplane and passing thru a storm of the elements. I was being blown about on the storms of every region of the universe. My machine was cutting the ether with terrific velocity. I perceived astral bodies of all shapes dispersed by the elemental wrath, but my airplane seemed immune from contact, as I noticed

it volplane to permit the safe transit of revolving orbs. Like windswept withered leaves, these orbs now hurtled to the zenith and now plunged down to bottomless gulfs. I found certainly that matter was in a perpetual flux. My blimp was blown with restless violence round about the pendant planets and in the midst of all, I lived, tossed like a grain of sand in the whirlwind. I came suddenly out of this storm center and into an atmosphere so pellucid, that the naked eye could discern an infinity of worlds and space, and I was rapidly advancing to one of these whirling balls. Our landing was a plunge into some saline depth and I recall the impact as we dived to the pelagic immensity. Along the bottom we cruised, passing seaweed dowered with a phosphorescent glow and I perceived many shapes of oceanic creatures. The ooze and bottom of the sea was strewn with sunken wrecks and sunless treasures. Virgin gold lay there in huge wedges, but they passed by me like misers pass beggars. Fostered by the notion of original discovery, I was about to open a door of my aeroplane-submarine that would conduct me to them, when the rustling of a curtain shook me out of my trance and brought me from an infinity of worlds back to the psychopathic chamber. Like Caliban, I dreamed that the clouds opened and showered riches down upon me, and when I waked, I tried to dream again. Mechanically I arose from the pillow with blinking eyes, stretching my languid arms wearily and gasping like a man who had slept a hundred years. Awaking thus, with the cold beads of perspiration upon my agitated brow, I was confronted with the rude disillusionment that all was but a dream produced by and thru the peremptory withdrawal of the dope and the hypodermic introduction of hyosceine.

What a cursed, vexing disillusionment! What a blasted illusion!

On the sudden withdrawal of the drug and the incipient dosage of hyosceine, I heard the mellow voices of songbirds, their lusty throats inflated, I believe, in a melody of song. The passionate nightingale, forgetting the hills of Thrace, the thrush, the mocking bird, the cuckoo, the bobolink, the wood nymph, the pipit lark, the vireo, and the oriole vied with one another in dainty lays and dulcet harmony. There was haunting sweetness and rhythmic melody as the delicate vibration of appealing harmony rose and fell, and their seraphic notes thrilled into the dry, unused channels of my hearing. Then on top of all this entrancing music and ravishing melody, came another and different ornithological collection, discoursing the most discordant strains. The wren, the goose, the dunghill variety of rooster, the parrot, the cockatoo, the crow, and withal, the hoot of the owl,

the quack of the duck, the cluck of the barnyard fowl and the squeak of the cricket on the hearth, and the kokil, the bird of spring, could be heard singing its song in the boughs. The fluttering of wings and the general cockle-doodle-doo squawking accentuated the general din and the hospital where I was domiciled, seemed an actual aviary. There was gripping sadness and inane allurements now soaring to the heights, and now descending sharply into the uttermost depths in this orchestral symphony. The whole comprised continuous gushes of melody, unexpected cadences, interspersed with harsh and hissing sounds, leaps that would confuse a Philomel or throw Stradivarius into a swoon; then soft undulations of octaves which rose and fell like the bosom of a young singer. Mirth seemed the predominant spirit of these lays, commingled in one magnificent cacophony of musical discord—sweet thunder.

Under the power of hyosceine, cockatrices appeared fixing upon me the killing glance. Basilisks, dragons vomiting blood, pythons, lizards, seps, serpents with inflatable crests, hooded cobra di capellos, anacondas, boa constrictors and other venomous reptiles appeared before me and mocked me with sardonic bitterness; chacmas, geladas, monkeys, and ourang-outangs chattered at me; purple apes derided me and adders with cloven tongues, hissed me into madness.

Dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted my dreams.

I was in gnomeland among the abortive creatures and abysmal beasts of some subterrene kingdom, where things aged and evil beckoned me to their region of the shadows, to the realms of the nethermost hell.

I was haunted by the strangest antique shapes, wild natives of the brain, appearing in strange colors, by marvelous creatures belonging to the borderland 'twixt life and death, and by faces that bore an infinite variety of ugliness.

Devils came and thronged about me, grinning and howling and whisking their long tails in diabolic glee.

Boundless dreams of shadow flitted above me, blended with all the distortions of nature with the mask of shadow over their visages. Thoughts and images slumbered within me, like bees in a hive.

A current of disordered, sensual images ran like a mill race in my fancy, and I beheld an undraped Venus in the real modesty of naked chastity.

I was embraced by voluptuous maidens, who seemed the very incarnation of seraphs and cherubs, nymphs and naiads, but who

drove a hundred knives into my body and left me dripping in my life's blood.

I heard the simple lays of singing fishes and aquatic mice. I heard the whisperings of the pines, the dirges of the Borean winds, the discordant cadences of horrible Stymphalian birds of ill-omen, some like the voices of souls escaped from Hell.

I heard the Syriac language spoken in midnight meetings, in which tongue uncanny people worship the devil.

In fact, I conversed and walked with the devil himself.

I beheld a head, a livid, green convulsive face, with the look of one of the damned, and in his hand he held a dagger that emitted tongues of flame.

I saw phantom lights, huge shadows, black spirits in hell. I saw shapes in the density of impenetrable shadow, ill-omened, crawling things—ghosts on the banks of the Styx. I was shut up in a foul dungeon in utter darkness, enclosed by bare stone walls, where scaly and slimy snakes caressed me and wound their vermicular bodies about my own, in frantic convolutions to crush out my life.

Round my bed brownies, elves and pygmies, hixies, undines and loreleis danced in fantastic glee, dressed in nine-pin costume, while overhead hovered beldams and hags who rode broomsticks, and an unseen orchestra belched forth round dance music, like some scurvy tune at a funeral.

I was carried in the arms of a female gorilla to her lair in the jungles, and there subjected to a series of the most revolting orgies and merry-andrew ceremonies that could well be conceived.

At times my head was held as in a vise, and I was absolutely incapable of extricating it by the most rigorous efforts and with each such effort, the vise would close with such force as to baffle all resistance. To escape was impossible. There was an impression of powerlessness upon me, for whose melancholy I can find no words. My feet were chainless, but never fetter clung with such a retarding weight as that invisible bond by which I was tethered. Resistance was in vain. I was conscious that I might as well have struggled against the tides, or thought to stop the revolution of the globe.

I was buried in deep snows, in thick-ribbed ice, in shifting sands, in gulfs of mire. At times the firm earth gave way beneath me, and I dropped into blackness and there was a roar like the sound of many thunders, and a shock as if the earth were crashing into chaos, and my mind went out on me and I dreamed that I had died.

I was imprisoned in sweat chambers where the heat was turned on to the limit of Fahrenheit, and the more I wriggled

for freedom, the greater was the flow of hot vapor therein. It resembled the third degree in police investigations, but really reached the thirty-third degree, so far as my sensibilities were concerned.

Into my dull brain there flashed crazy germs of still crazier notions, and onto the retina of my eyes a marvelous reality or strange mirage that checked my pulse and fevered my blood.

Distorted faces, dread figures and crooked shapes, "mugs" wearing sinister aspects haunted me, waking or sleeping, like the riddles of forgotten goddesses solved after long centuries.

In the shadows of the room a vast, shaggy black form appeared, grim and broad as no mortal ever saw and red and un-wavering in the uncertain light, seven feet high, and possessed of two gleaming eyes that were bent upon me with a horrible fixity.

In the twilight corner glimmered the green glassy eyes of an old Thebeian crocodile, and there the shining ivory jaws of monstrous fishes, with warty hides of toads and shriveled forms of small beasts, dried in the kiln of long-silent ages and now black, shrunken and ghastly. I could see the fire of their eyes and hear their dismal howls.

The bed posts, the water pitcher and sundry objects about the room assumed amorphous shapes, now the head of a negro wench and in painful succession, a loathsome leper with hideous sores, a bloated form, an anaemic consumptive, a strangled babe, a death's head, a gigantic clown, an ugly devil, a bandy-legged dwarf, a huge spider, a bearded ape, a hairy-chested ourang-outang, all in this vast mundane bazar of human follies fashioned by fairy hands.

The slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices, the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned, that what was dead and had no shape should usurp the offices of life.

The pictures on the walls assumed animation and the person there represented, stepped right out of the frame.

I saw grim shapes flee to the spectral line of pygmies, and this picture would automatically reverse itself.

If I dared to glance upward, I beheld a menacing visage distending to an immeasurable magnitude, and ready to pour down wrath.

Serpents of the most inimitable lustre, yet of the most deadly poison, coiled and sprang at me with a rapidity that mocked human feet.

I had visions of unspeakable terror; flights thru regions of

space that left earth and the sun incalculable millions of miles behind, flights ceaseless, hopeless—still hurrying onward with more than winged speed thru infinite worlds.

I beheld a serene representation of the Eternal Father change to the sneering mask of a Mephistopheles, and the Virgin wrapped in a golden cloud among the angels change to a beldam.

A sense of uneasiness made a strong inducement to these drifting dreams.

They were dissolving views.

I heard great murmurs and saw superhuman outlines melt away as they appeared. I saw the Eumenides, now almost extinct, with the throats of furies shaped to unearthly croakings. The horrible was combined with the fantastic.

In these dreams I have seen spectres, half shadow and half light. At other times the figure was neither man nor woman; it had no definite form; it was a shapeless figure, a sort of vision in which the real and fantastic were contrasted like light and shade.

The extraordinary faces which in turn presented themselves acted like so many brands thrown upon a blazing fire and from all issued like vapor from a furnace, a sharp, shrill, hissing noise as from some immense serpent. Thru it all, I was seized with a sort of frantic intoxication, a supernatural kind of fascination.

In one of these extraordinary dreams, I dreamed that I had been buried alive. I lay in the sepulchre but with the full vividness of life, and with a perfect knowledge that there it was my doom to lie forever. A miraculous foresight gave me the fearful privilege of looking into the most remote futurity. Ages on ages unfolded themselves, with all their wonders to tantalize me. I saw worlds awake from chaos and return to it in flood and flame. I saw systems swept away like the sand, the universe withered with years and rolled up like the parchment scroll. I saw new regions of space, glowing with a new creation, the angelic hierarchies rising thru new energies, new triumphs, new orders of existence, developments of power and magnificence of sublime mercy and essential glory, too high for the conception of mortal faculties. No ray of light, no sound, no trace of external being, no sympathy of flesh and spirit or heaven was to reach me. The four narrow walls, the winding sheet, the worm, were my world. I seemed to lie thus for periods beyond all counting, powerless to move a limb, the sleepless, conscious vivid victim of misery unspeakable—the bondsman of the sepulchre.

In those wanderings I experienced not even the slightest recollection of the cause which had so sternly shaken my brain; wife, children, country were a blank. Imagination, the strangest

and most imperious of our faculties, whose soaring from earth to heaven may be among the indications of power beyond the grave, disdains to linger on the realities of our being. It delights in the commanding, the bold, the superb. In my instance, it had the wildness of desire, but who has ever felt its workings even in the dream of health without wonder at its passion for the richer and more highly relieved remembrances, its singular skill in throwing together the loftier portions of life and nature to the total disregard of the level; its subtlety in its seizure of the circumstances of pain, its fabrication of adventure at once of the most singular consecutiveness and the wildest originality, and all characterized by the same spontaneous swiftness of change and illimitable command over space and time, a power of instant flight from continent to continent and from world to world—the transit that would actually fill up years and ages the work of a moment—the actual moment expanding into years and ages.

What are these but the infant attributes of the disembodied spirits—the imperfect developments of a state of being to which time and space are as nothing—when man shaking off the covering of the grave shall be clothed with the might of angels—the splendid denizen of Infinitude and Eternity!

The fairies lured me to the torments of hell, where I bathed in fiery floods and mingled with the damned souls there, groaning, shrieking and crying in despair. In this abyss of lost souls, some were so crushed by sorrow that no hope remained even of dying, and all were envious of any other fate. It was truly the City of Dreadful Night.

Fantasies presenting themselves at night, extended their terrific influence far into my waking hours. My nerves became thoroly unstrung, and I became a prey to perpetual horror.

My imagination was poisoned by the spell of volcanic oratory. The *locus penitentiae* wherein I was ensconsed upon a leather bed, bound hand and foot by leather cuffs, was peopled with accusers who proclaimed my infamy in vitriolic phillipics, venomous diatribes and vituperative pasquinades. I heard hostile ejaculations and muttered complaints. In the indiscriminate lampoons, I detected the familiar voices of local enemies, who spared neither billingsgate nor ribaldry to lend semblance to their inflammatory indictments.

For these apochryphal offenses, God's unforgetting justice had dealt out to me the extreme penalty, and I awaited electrocution in a solitary cell under the eternally vigilant eye of the death watch, who held me constantly in the spotlight of an electric flash, whether I writhed in paroxysms of mental distemper

and physical restlessness upon the bare pallet or marked time within this cramped crypt on its bare stone flagging.

I was, in spite of myself, under the influence of an unaccountable hallucination, an absurd delusion, a mystery that our pride rejects and that our imperfect science vainly tries to solve.

Innumerable images of gloom and a crowd of sounds oppressed me in dreams, and I was persecuted by visions as hateful and by ghosts as hideous as ever appeared to fright the human soul.

Ages on ages seemed to have heavily sunk away and still I stood bound by the same manacle, standing on the same spot, looking at the same objects. To this I would have preferred the fiercest extremes of suffering. Of all passions that dwell within the heart of man, the passion for change is the most incapable of being extinguished or eluded.

A thousand years seemed but the lingering of a summer's day, a summer's day as a thousand years.

I was humbled to the dust by the many ill things I had done represented by the fanciful offenses conjured up in the minds of my accusers, and I suddenly became conscious of hidden sins. I was haunted by the ghosts of these sins, the cancers of concealed disgraces, which arose from their forgotten corners and usurped my attention in these profound and vivid dreams.

Thru it all, I spied a black, suspicious, threatening cloud hovering round about me.

A thousand vague and lachrymatory fancies took possession of my soul which made me sick of the false world, and I thought that it was silliness to live, when to live is torment. I thought that the stroke of death would be as the lover's pinch, which hurts but is desired, and that if the grave had room enough for two, let me be buried with oblivion.

There was profound anxiety and general hypochondriacism inoculated in me, and, like Cato, I resolved on suicide, the most decided of atrocities, and yet a breaking from one's prison, a riddance from all the pain and injustice of the world.

Violent must be the storms which compel a soul to seek for peace from the little phial of crystal-clear hemlock, or the savage mercy of the quick pistol or the silent knife, or to find surcease from trouble in some Lethean stream, or to plunge over a precipice deep enough to extinguish every appetite and ambition in the round of this bustling world!

A chuckle of fate rescued me, as it is a trait in the perversity of human nature to reject the obvious and ready for the far distant and equivocal. Or, possibly it was the devil's mercy that saved me. It is as natural to die as to be born, and we have a

prescription to die when death is our physician. I believe that the ravages of mental disease affect the soul of man in the same way that acute physical anguish affects the body, and an intelligent being suffering from a moral malady has surely a right to destroy himself, a right he shares with the sheep, that, fallen a victim to the "staggers," beats its head against a tree.

I would not again undergo this system of therapeutics for all the wealth of Plutus, or for the highest priced corner lot in Beulah Land. To escape it, I would rather at once be interred within the womb of earth, the great mother of eternal sleep.

All of these things seen in dreams and seen with the waking eyes, I knew had no origin except in the distemper of my fancy, begotten by disorganized, impinged and irritated nerves. And they all came about due to the physical condition of convalescence—the cleared vision that sometimes attends convalescence. My brain had received an overwhelming blow. Imagination was my tyrant, and every occurrence of life, every aspect of humanity, every variety of nature, day and night, sunshine and storm, made a portion of its fearful empire. What is insanity but a more vivid and terrible dream? It has the dream-like tumult of events, the rapidity of transit, the quick invention, the utter disregard of place and time. The difference lies in its intensity. The madman is awake, and the open eye administers a horrid reality to the fantastic vision. The vigor of the senses gives a living and resistless strength to the vengeance of the fancy. It compels together the fleeting mists of the mind, and embodies them into shapes of deadly power.

The moon, that ancient mistress of the diseased mind, strongly exerted her spells on me. Darkness was a source of terror; daylight overwhelmed me, but the gentle splendor of the crescent had a dewy and refreshing influence on my faculties.

My nervous system was worked up to an unnatural state of tension and produced this cerebral status. My mind was surcharged with fear and dread—the frantic fear of the vengeance of real and fancied enemies. It was troubled with thick coming fancies that denied me rest.

And for nearly three decades I had drank Circean cups of Opium.

The enemies of the body we can physically attack and oftentimes physically repel; but the enemies of the mind—the frightful phantoms of a disordered imagination—these no medicines can cure, no subtle touch disperse.

Upon this foundation I erect the edifice of hypothesis, the

card house of philosophers, as Cuvier built a skeleton from a single bone.

I believe that we have it in our power when we are once awake to the relation between the conscious and the sub-conscious mind, and it in turn in its relations to the various involuntary and vital functions of the body, to determine to a great extent how the body shall be built or how it shall be rebuilt. Mentally pondering over a thing and tracing it in the darkness, will operate to subsequently transfer itself to dreams. Mentally to live in any state or attribute of mind is to take that state or condition into the subconscious. *The subconscious does and always will produce in the body after its own kind.* It is thru this law that we externalize and become in body what we live in our minds. If we have predominating visions of and harbor thoughts of old age and weakness, this state with all its attendant circumstances will become externalized in our bodies far more quickly than if we entertain thoughts and visions of a different type. The recent researches of scientific men, endorsed by experiments in the Saltpetriere in Paris, have drawn attention to the intensely creative power of suggestions made by the subliminal mind to the sub-conscious mind.

## CHAPTER VIII

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### OPIUM AND JOHN BARLEYCORN

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*"Oh, thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou  
Hast no other name to be known by, let  
Us call thee devil! \* \* \* O, God,  
That men should put an enemy in their mouths  
To steal away their brains. That we should with  
Joy, pleasure, revel and applause, transform  
Ourselves into brutes!"*

—Othello.

My traffic in both opium and rum endured for nearly three decades, and whether my conclusions are to be treated as either oracular or dogmatic, I leave the reader to judge.

Reference to them includes them in the generic sense, and particularly when reference is made to rum, such as alcohol, potheen, usquebae, vino, mescal, ox-eye, bambi-bambi, sack, Tukela, aguardiente, Schnapps, bueno, pulque, sake, kefir, koumiss, methigelum, "Jake," or "Choc."

Rum confuses the mental calibre by a scattering of the ideas stored there, while with opium there is an even balance that regulates the ideas and maintains them in order; rum steals away one's natural composure and self-control; opium fortifies them; rum upsets the senses, opium inoculates a calmness, a coolness, an evenness of temper. Rum for an ephemeral period, is conducive to an elevation of the capacity to think and argue; opium sustains one in the dialectical arena thruout. An inebriate becomes absurd in his talk, awkward in his action, hyperbolic in blowing hot and cold alternately, and these attributes finally entrap him; rum provokes desire, but takes away the performance. Under the aegis of opium, there is a settled composure from beginning to end; under the influence of rum, the barbarous, sensual, unfeeling part of man's nature crops out; in opium the finer fiber is uppermost, the godlike and heavenly part of his makeup. In fine, one is evenly balanced morally, and he is mentally luminous under opium's thrall.

I resurrect from the tables of memory instances of having

swayed juries under the influence of a moderate quantum of liquor: but the instances were of fleeting moment. Any prolonged elaboration would invariably work a dissemination of primarily assembled facts seriatim, and a consequent complexity that would be arduous to smooth over or reconstruct. Besides, the personal visage of an inebriated person is usually offensive, and he is liable to be unstable in personal movements. His optics become filmy and clotted in a yellow liquor, glazed over with the fumes of intoxication and otherwise inflamed by a turgid and grumous state of the blood vessels, and his face suffused with a carmine glow, due to an engorgement of the vascular tissues; under opium, one is entirely composed so far as physical energies are concerned; his face is as white as the snow on a raven's back and he has an undimmed, myotic eye. As to rum, destruction lurks within the poisonous dose, a fatal fever or a pimped nose!

While alcoholic stimulants affect the medulla oblongata principally, opium acts chiefly in the cerebellum and excites reverie, dreamy ideality, optical delusions and the creative powers of the imagination. The effects of opium differ from those of alcoholic intoxication by not deadening the moral sensibilities or arousing the animal propensities. Opium smokers are dreamy and abstracted, not quarrelsome or violent. Those who use ardent spirits lose their moral delicacy, their intellect becomes dull, the reason cloudy and the judgment is overruled by appetite. Verily, when the wine is in, the wit is out!

Some old fossil long ago evaporated to the realm of ghosts, announced that in wine there is truth. I do not believe it, and no normal mind believes it either. It is a contention without any merit, and it throttles itself by its own idiocy.

The effect of rum being evanescent, the animal energies become depressed; opium exerts a sustaining efficacy even to the extent of supererogation.

Superannuated toppers pickled in the very brine of rum for years, invariably resort to whiskey after a protracted debauch in order to allay the uncomfortable aftermath. A quarter grain of morphia administered to such a person not habituated to the drug, or the usual quota to a fiend according to his toleration, is the single agency that will dispel effectually the "dark brown taste" and perform in general the office of counter agent on the morning after the night of the high jinks before.

From what tradition has established, the eoliths used rum in the stone age; it was extant in the time of Moses, and wine was a mocker during the time of the Meek and Lowly Nazarene, and all together it seems to have been in favor generally, notwithstanding

its faults. Wine offers a mental bath to those of respectability, and alcohol when mixed with wine adds strength, and a cup of generous white wine mulled with ginger helps genius—genius which sheds wisdom like perfume—and certainly genius and all persons of extraordinary profundity generally help themselves to wine. “Good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used; exclaim no more against it.”

From the foregoing, it will be seen that opium is not intoxicating, in the sense that alcohol is.

## CHAPTER IX

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### GRADUAL REDUCTION THERAPEUTICS

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*"Throw physic to the dogs,  
I'll none of it."*

—*Macbeth.*

As every school boy knows, the mothers of the sons of men do the weaning. This is the polestar of the gradual reduction treatment in chronic addiction to the glossy-berried mandragore. It is a system suggested by reason and an adopted course flowing from knowledge gained in the field of experimental medicine. Experience comes in life with its brief to conduct the lawsuit of life. Any hasty, sudden withdrawal is a memorial of barbaric times, a relic of the rude epochs. As time is the devourer of all things, and as it takes time to acquire a habit, time must be considered a factor to fight the morphine dragon in its relinquishment. It requires a slow pace at first to climb steep hills. According to some Arkansaw savant, "It is a poor rule that won't work both ways." And yet, I become inoculated with petrified wonder when I contemplate the horde of unenlightened units of the sawbones science in topics relating to narcotic thereapeutics, and knowing as I do their helplessness, I had rather trust the average morphine fiend to manipulate a curriculum of treatment than the average doctor. He could shuffle the cards more acceptably. Of course, as regards the medical profession, I rail not at those of coldblooded makeup, those who are psychologically *esprit borne*, shallow-pated, mope-eyed, hide-bound, case-hardened. I prefer to let the coldblooded and the dub ones pass on, and may my vitriol fall upon those who profess to know something of the vagaries of the morphine habit and who absolutely know nothing, but by assuming to know, bring a heritage of suffering to a long procession of the sons of men by treating narcomania by the farce of force.

To give illustrations of their utter ignorance would unnecessarily encumber this chapter, so I will be content with saying

that some of them had the surpassing effrontery to advise me to throw the stuff away, destroy the "gun" and quit; and this bunk was offered when they knew that I had had over twenty-five years' traffic with morphine, on and off the morphine wagon. If such advice wouldn't jar the trollies of a monkey and melt the rubber tires of a mermaid, I'll hang up the fiddle and the bow and be quite willing to be consigned alive to the tomb in a marble coffin! Were I possessed of the power of transference of one personality to another, like a Rhabdomantist, I would enjoy the instant transference of the morphine habit to these refrigerated charcots, and I would delight in observing their stunts of wriggling in the throes of a sudden withdrawal of the drug until they bent the pregnant hinges of the knee in suppliant appeals for a "shot," a "shock," a "jolt," or a "pill," to allay the mental ennui and the physical collapse. When they had cringed and cowered in abject servility, I could look on in supreme indifference and hypodermically inject into them a slug of anhydrous hydrocyanic acid.

A scientific leech hinted that I say NO and the trick would be turned. Another culler of herbs told me to embrace Christian Science and my emancipation would be sure enough; and still another pill-box said that if I would place an old bandana handkerchief under a rock, turn a cartwheel over it three times in succession, walk backwards one-hundred and one times and then utter the Caughnawaga whoop kollijopebikizzoliffanteriko, the charm would work.

What filtered moonshine! What balderdash! What inef-fable twaddle. What *jeu de theatre!* What Hippocratean pathology! What hogwash! What flapdoodle! What bum steers! The whole is a mournful commentary on latter-day medication. It is enough to make the stars fall. It is enough to make a gargoyle eat a porpoise. It would give a graven image the headache. It would take the saleratus out of a man's dough.

All sorts of charms, conjurations and magic mighty was hinted, but on the level, one might as well take Copenhagen snuff in diluted skunk oil mixed with the blood of a male saurian three times a day, poured out of a walrus bladder between meals until hell froze over. As well might one expect to cure madness by hellebore or by squirts of monoaceticacidester of salicylic acid! As well might one take the moon by the teeth. Verily, in the presence of human stupidity, even the gods stand helpless! Ignorance is the curse of God.

These croakers had the gall of a bullock, the heart of a hyena, the brains of a peacock. They are like Nebuchadnezzar: bereft of reason, and they eat grass like an ox. They indulge in

gaudy fables to hide the baldness of a fact. They are a rabble of quacks. Their philosophies are as thin as a draper's wand. They are enemies of the human race. Their position is *apropos de bottes*.

It is an adhesive cobweb in the popular mind that a fiend can be cured without help. I say with emphasis that one could no more cure himself unattended, than one could force an injunction against bad weather or sneak into heaven on another's passport, for the reason that left to his own devices, he would swallow the jam and reject the pill.

The only logical cure for morphinism is the gradual reduction system, and with unflinching fervor I hold a brief for it. It is the *ne plus ultra* of therapeutics. It is as good as jacks up before the draw, and I will gamble a stack of blues that it will beat three of a kind. It is the white light of reason that explores the darkest places. It is the light that beams out of a thousand stars. It must perforce appeal even to the most uninitiated layman, to the groveling apprehension of the herd, to the exceedingly perverse or impenetrably obtuse, as well as to the fervid dreams of the man of science. It is "on all fours" with reason, and it has received the blessing of orthodox science. In fact, it is sciences' pith and marrow, its last word.

Any other means employed is likened to the frog in the well—a crawling up one foot, a slipping back two. Any other means would be as effectual as so many placebos.

I underwent this vogue of therapeutics five different times with success. I had tried others and failed. The whole fabric of my mind had undergone a revolution and like a man tossed at the mercy of the tempest, I sought a shore and found it. This consisted in a gradual reduction of the narcotic ration, cutting the daily dose one-half the first week, and one-half each succeeding week for from four to six weeks. Concurrently the patient must be toned up with reference to the respiratory, stomachic and nerve economies. Along with this a stimulating massage and bath twice a week, together with a laxative condition of the peristaltic tract. The increased tissue change demands these ministrations. Manifestly, the patient must be subjected to unconditional restraint, and the only effectual restraint that I happen to know of consists of barred doors and barred windows for the period of at least three months.

If, at the expiration of this time the patient does not emerge therefrom a new man fully recruited, with eyes rounder and brighter, like a waking owl's, with flushed cheeks and a face shining like a rising sun and as brown as umber, with elastic step and agile frame, and with his shattered nerves nursed back to

normal health, I will be quite willing to eat a crocodile alive and whole, or eight brown polecats roasted whole at a single breakfast.

The gradual reduction system is one in which there is the minimum of suffering and the maximum of salutary results. Let the uninitiated be not seduced into the flattering idea that there are no terrible moments connected with this vogue of therapeutics. The enemy tramples the patient into a dull and inert thing, in whom every aspiration is dead but craving for the drug. One's brows knit like twine and one feels wrung and damp like a rag. There is intolerable restlessness, and one is goaded by a twitching of the muscles. There are grinding, physical tortures. One's very soul seems buried beneath deadening surfaces, from which the patient struggles upward or falls back as the craving for the drug is dominant or abeyant. There is a hideous punctuality in the enemy's advance or recoil. The conflict is like scaling a mountain sheathed in ice—sometimes two steps forward and one back; sometimes a discouraging slip of many steps backwards and the mountain climber with no physical strength to boast of and the handicap of the long unsuspected indulgence. There is a brooding loneliness about it all, but where there is a spark of divinity left in the patient, this faint glow will develop into the tiny flame, if frail human effort will unceasingly feed it. In this nature will assert herself. You may drive her out with a club, but she will return. Notwithstanding prognostics and diagnostics, nature will amuse herself in saving the patient in spite of the doctor's teeth, and all the aromatics, unguents, and simples, all the electrices, mandrake, hellebore, monkshead, nightshade, magic balsam and other exploited piffle in the dispensatory. To be free one must fight and pray and follow the routine as a devotee his religious ceremonial. I have tried all systems; therefore, my declarations are entitled to consideration as those of a dogmatician and connoisseur. *Experientia docet stultos.* There is no rheubarb, senna or purgative drug, nor no cataplasm so rare collected from all simples that have virtue under the moon that can equal this vogue of therapeutics. I have the most superabounding faith in it.

On the other hand, I have no faith in the so-called wonderful fountains of Arcadia, reputed to cure madness, drunkenness, narcotism and kindred ills; neither do I pin a tittle of faith to the efficacy of the lotus leaves which are reputed to raise the dead; nor in 'Tsaramint, the favorite stone of the Arabs, which the infidels call emerald, and by means of which epilepsy can be cured. Furthermore, I do not believe that cures are wrought in dreams, as advanced by some scientists. All of these are broken reeds—physic that prolongs sickly days.

The fifty-six hour cure, known as the Lambert cure, is a defunct wheeze, the Keeley cure, a species of elephantine *charlatanerie*, psychotherapy is snarled nonsense, and it is the parable of a moral truth that they produce but negative results. So far as home treatments are concerned, specialized in yellow journal mummery and their demagogic promises in the phrases of the charlatan, I would warn the gullible and credulous to give this class of nostrum medication a wide berth, and flee from them as from the wrath to come. In them there is neither a present remedy nor a patient suffering; and one might as well continue doping, as to fall a victim to these quackeries of medical experiment. As well might one jump into the sea to escape the rain. *Aegrescit medendo*. These latter quacks and voodoo specialists, like the before and after taking fakirs, whose antidotes are poison, are in the lists to bleed, and they bleed pocketbook and life blood alike.

## CHAPTER X

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### IN LIVERPOOL

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*"And if a man did need a poison now,  
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
Here lies a caitiff wretch would sell it him."  
—Romeo and Juliet.*

From early youth my days have been spent in wild adventure and strange experiences, until at the age of fifty-five there were very few lands upon which I had not set foot, and scarcely any joy or sorrow of which I had not tasted. I had always been *en rapport* with the exaltation of travel, and as I lick the chaps of memory and rake up from its gray ruins the ashes of all the yesterdays of my inflammatory career, a thousand tumultuous recollections are startled at the sound. From these recollections I photograph in bold relief my experiments in Liverpool, the city of the open door.

It was in July, 1902, that I shipped on a tramp steamer from Baltimore to this port, intending to return as a passenger after discharge of the cargo of cattle at Birkenhead. Prior to debarkation on board the S. S. "Irada" of the Bates line, I armed myself with a comfortable sufficiency of morphia for the trip, but my sensibilities were rudely jarred when I came face to face with the alarming prospect of an appreciable diminution of the supply attributable to unforeseen delays on the itinerary. While waiting for the return to Baltimore, my spirit of resourcefulness suffered a severe test to invent some means whereby to fortify myself with a sufficient supply for the return passage. I trod the *Via Dolorosa* on the streets of Liverpool for hours in an effort to get the dope, but was unceremoniously repulsed at every medical hall and chemists' shop. As I alternated between hope and despair, but resigned more to the promises of the former than in the apathy of the latter, it was suggested to me that I apply at a large wholesale house, Clay & Benjamin by name, and in response thereto I put this suggestion into execution. But

here I was equally disappointed. The regulations seemed to the very point of austere red tape, and I became sensible of some degree of chagrin at these informal setbacks. The situation put to a crucial test my capacity to hit upon some expedients, but I flattered myself that I had not yet exhausted my storehouse of tact and diplomacy.

I wound up the clock of my wit to strike something feasible.

I could not undertake the risk of returning on this voyage without a necessary supply. A means automatically formed itself in my mind and I thought that I had it all figured out. It involved the practice of deceit. I wrote out upon a blank sheet of vellum a *pro forma* prescription representing myself as an American physician and surgeon—an accredited officer of the ship—and presented this at the first medical hall displaying the sign of the mortar and pestle. I handed the little paper to an elderly gentleman behind the show case. It was an M. D.'s prescription calling for 60 grains of *morphinae sulphas*. Thereupon the old gentleman scanned it and in an obliging, apologetic manner, said: "All right, doctor, ready in a moment, sir."

Now if an English moment was going to be a tedious *Entr'acte*, I was hurried into a spasm of suspense as to what deportment I should assume to smother any lingering skepticism that this skull and cross bones artist might entertain as to the material representations made. The ship was docked at the Alexandra & Hornby dock in Bootle, and the telephone was handy. I was hence keenly sensitive; but I had to have the dope, and was prepared to put on a tragic face with an air of exceeding insouciance.

Swelled up by being dubbed a doctor, I endeavored to look the part of a sawbones by summoning up all the audacity in my makeup. I even in the interim proceeded so far as to venture some dialectical jugglery about toxics and materia medica in general to further confirm an impression of sincerity in this bolstering up of my status. This was *pour passer le temps* and to frustrate his asking any significant questions; and yet had he suddenly asked me how many bones there were in the arm, I would be helpless to inform him, altho' in abject desperation, I would have blundered a guess or gained time by indulging in some periphrastic dialectics.

Up to this time I was to be *L'homme faire d'importance*. Before entering this shop I had conceived some fabricated barriers to impertinent questions, but this ruse of engaging his attention was germinated on the spur of the moment and justified the means, for I well knew that the English people were sticklers

for legal restrictions, and in any case the least hitch would consign me to appear before the English Cadi.

I must have been lucky, for the dispenser handed me a package in the ordinary course. I passed him a half crown and started to leave his shop, when he mumbled something about farthings. But I did not want to take any chances of being foiled at the point of success. I said that I had kissed the tin good-bye, or words to that effect. Suspicion haunted my guilty mind, and like the thief, I thought each bush was an officer, each face an accusing one. He followed me to the door and handed me the change, but even at this, the eleventh hour, I thought of proceeding on my way when I obtained a view of his mug, which revealed to me freedom from uncertainty and I mechanically accepted. I then started on a walk and kept going, not in any definite direction, but in any meandering course as far from that chemist's shop as time and my pins would carry me.

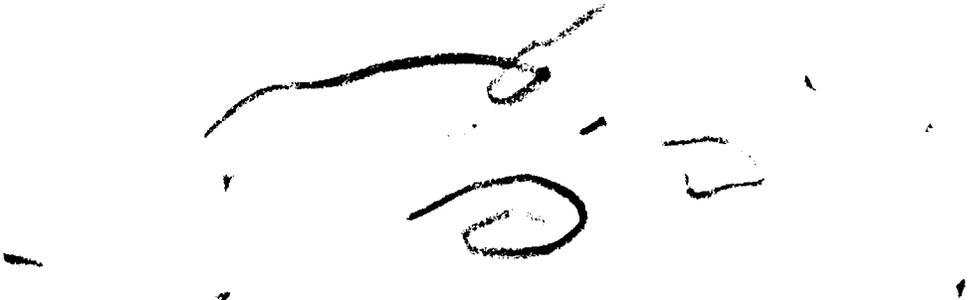
Before commencing another similar assault upon the English chemists for more dope, I squirted fifteen grains of the English brand of morphia into the tissues, and as I did so, I thought instinctively of Thomas De Quincy, author of the "Confessions," and who was born at Greenbay, near Manchester, August 15th, 1785, and died at Edinburgh, December 8th, 1859, in the old churchyard of the West Church there and upon which Edinburgh castle stands.

Assumption and naturalness are two different things. The former is usually difficult except to a born actor, but the latter is as easy as natural respiration. Being simply a player on the stage of life, I had to depend on dissimulation in the turning of tricks, and at the same time being lit up like an Episcopal cathedral by the electrifying "shot" just taken, I awaited results with a degree of self-complacency that would outface the most superlative staller with brazen indifference. It is the irony of fate that clouds intervene in shimmering sunlight, but this occasion was decreed an exception. Either the immortal gods appeared or it was a bold proposition of vagrant luck, for my ante wasn't called by the dispenser. Without focusing me with even a glance of introspection, the chemist proceeded to accommodate me, and I retired with an additional sixty grains obtained in a country where the most exact restrictions prevailed involving a pitiless fire of investigation and a scrutiny that can only be equalled by the curriculum formulated by Scotland Yard's third degree.

Upon turning a corner well out of alignment with this latter shop, I fell into step with myself and I actually shook hands with

myself, and I mentally congratulated myself upon having turned the trick of hoodwinking these English apothecaries.

Flushed by these conquests, I was impelled to repeat these onslaughts, knowing that it would take about sixteen days to return across the Atlantic pond on a "Tramp." Would it be sufficient for the fierce lust of accustomed nerves? I thought that it would, and accordingly took passage on the S. S. "Indore" of the Donaldson line docking at the monumental city, again on natal soil.



## CHAPTER XI

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### IN THE CITY OF GLASGOW

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*"I do remember an apothecary—  
And hereabouts he dwells—which late I noted  
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,  
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;  
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuffed and other skins  
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes,  
Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,  
Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses  
Were thinly scattered to make up a show."*

—*Romeo and Juliet.*

In October, 1902, I shipped from Philadelphia for the port of Glasgow on board the tramp vessel "Orthia" of the Donaldson Line, carrying a cargo of cattle. Following so closely upon the heels of my experiences in Liverpool, I should have profited thereby, for in the Scotch city I ran out of dope and was constrained to concoct schemes involving deceit and perfidy, trickery and knavery and perjury, that I might land a store of morphia for the return voyage to the Quaker city.

I had been a muleteer on board this vessel, hence my habiliments were not presentable for posing as a doctor, and I resolved to initiate a crusade by precipitately entering each medical hall that I came to. From a consideration of the many refusals that marked this canvass, I concluded that they arose because my personal appearance was against me, and, in all seriousness, I looked the part of a shepherd.

The world is a looking glass, and gives back to everyone the reflection of his own face.

The chemists replied that they had not the sulphate of morphia in stock, but had other forms, the acetate, the oleate, hydrobromide, the hydrochloride and the poison united with atropia. I resolved that certain replies were evasive and manu-

factured to non-plus me. These was as follows: "Are you a drug fiend?" "Are you a Yank?" "Do you want to commit suicide or kill someone?" "It is against the law to dispense morphia."

In reply to the apothecary who inquired if I was in the habit of using it, I said "Yes," when he at once responded: "We cawn't serve you," in the monosyllabic accent of the Bowbells. But I endeavored to close with this bloke in a rueful entreaty, in the piteous strained voice of the morphine hophead, but he fastened upon me the necropolis goggle by uttering the unchangeable ukase: "We cawn't serve you, Yank."

I now became immersed in a "brown study" relative to other makeshifts that I should pursue, and the impulse came to approach indiscriminately each and every medical man whose sign I might notice as I passed. I thought that doctors are men, not gods, and I would trust to luck to meet up with the sawbones of chemical attraction. Should he pinion me under the fire of inquisition, the purplish knots on my skin would confirm chronic habituation under his trained eye. My appearance was harmonious—I was as unpresentable as a moulting fowl.

I commenced a tour of the doctors about George's Square, and without ceremony I was repulsed by them until I ran into Sauchiehall Street. Here I read the name, "Dr. MacDonald." "This is a good Scotch name," I reflected, and "I will bum him." I thought that he might be a lineal descendent of the merciless Macdonwalds who mixed in border strike with the equally merciless Campbells in the Glencoe massacre, and if I impart to him that I descended from that root and branch, he might swallow the bull without a "chaser." Thus disposing, I entered his office on the third floor about the noon hour, and sat down in his reception room awaiting his entree. I sat there for a doleful hour, when I advanced to the door upon which suspended a placard, "Doctor is in." Here I opened wide the door; daylight there and nothing more. Of course, besides this daylight there was a formidable array of philtres and phials and bottles of different sizes and colors and labels, containing varicolored liquids and pills and squills and oils and triturates; also a long line of glass jars containing pathological and anatomical specimens, glazed presses full of chemicals; in fact, it seemed an exhaustive laboratory.

I was immediately seized with the fever of covetousness.

It is a postulate that no matter what exact conceptions a fiend may have had prior to his slavery in narcotism as to general rectitude and morality, when the time arrives that he is in need of a "shot," or where it may become necessary to put in a

store to circumvent future suffering, all such conceptions are brushed aside and the fiend nurses no compunctions of conscience. He will steal; he will forswear; he will commit any brand of knavery to obtain the stuff to lull the lust of nerves. The habit of morphia will make a sinner out of a saint. A preacher of the orthodox gospel, no matter if he be inoculated with the quintessence of puritanical prudery, will indulge in the latest brand of picturesque blasphemy to get the stuff. The most inveterate liar and thief that I ever knew was a fellow addict when in the slough of lustful nerves. He was normal in every regard when not lit up with dope; but when he needed a "shot," he would steal the candles set round a corpse and lie to the priest before the confessional for a "jolt" of the peerless nepenthe.

I further argued in this wise: "The doctor is out and has been out for an hour; he may be absent another hour, and I may have time within which to scan the labels on the bottles, boxes and cartons and surreptitiously purloin a supply and effect a getaway unnoticed. I might be able to square myself should the doctor intercept me redhanded, so I at once commenced a survey of the shelves expecting to find the abbreviation *Morph Sulph* on a label. I was searching for bottles of poison and I knew that I would find them wherever there were bundles of foul smells and bitter tastes. I finally located one—an eight ounce globule—which I hastily stowed into the inside pocket of my coat and "blew," and stopped not until I had reached the Broomielaw, the most notorious rendezvous in Glasgow, alive with drunken sailors and the depraved in general.

I was still up against the proposition that I would require more than this for the return passage, and resolved to repeat the routine followed in Liverpool, which was an assault upon the apothecaries. I possessed a few shillings remaining as a pecuniary pabulum from services rendered as a cattleman on the ship, and these I would sink into the coffers of the chemists. The barber reaped my antique stubble; I handed the bootblack and the haberdasher beggarly deniers, and, observing my front elevation in a tavern mirror, I thought that I reflected a shadow much like one having danced out of a bandbox *en grande tenue*. The fine feathers fitted me like a glove and translated me from rags to the livery of gentility. My hair was pommaded with bear's grease and bergamot and a fine wisp of VanDyke whiskers adorned my sinciput.

I drove the little needle into the tissues of my left arm and I had a "kick" coming. I then prepared holographically a *pro forma* prescription for one drachm of morphia and signed

“M. D.” after a quaint and curious name. Without fear or reproach, I presented this at the nearest chemist’s shop. I double-headed the joke at another and still another shop, until I was rewarded by receiving a store of six drachms of the Argyle Street chemists. As I left the green braes of Scotland I was sure that I had not tied a tin can to my tail.

It is the tact, the diplomacy of Machiavelli and Metternich, the *savior faire* that make stocks rise in value in human transactions. In the formation of plans, one must possess the boldness of Richelieu; to carry them into effect, the tact and wariness worthy of Mazarin.

## CHAPTER XII

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### IN AFRICA, THE HOLY LAND, GREECE, ITALY AND FRANCE

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*"Here is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murders in this loathsome world  
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell;  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none."*

—*Romeo and Juliet.*

I indentured on board the S. S. "Mount Royal" of the Beaver Line *en tour* to South Africa, to participate in the Boer War as a newspaper correspondent, and sailed from Southport, New Orleans, April 6th, 1901.

I was now using from thirty to forty grains of morphine per day hypodermically. The fact that this itinerary would consume about seventy-five days, I made preparations for a supply of dope to cover this cosmic journey. This included needles, wires, spoon and absorbent cotton, together with the indispensable syringe and as for the matchless nectar, the natural liquor, this latter was obtainable on board.

Thirty-five days was employed on this voyage when we entered upon the waters of Table Bay, before Cape Town, and from here we sailed to Durban.

On the ramble across the briny I suffered a *coup-de-pied* during the prevalence of a hurricane and this entailed the loss of a material quantity of the dope by salt water absorption. As to this I was faced by a clumsy dilemma and realized that I would be at the mercy of strangers in a war-ridden zone. The first thing that I did was to make confession of chronic addiction to the ship's doctor, and having found out that he was an American, I thought that he would, without serious opposition yield, but on the contrary I found him colder than a dead baby's toes and I upbraided myself for my indiscretion in monotonous imprecations addressed to myself. But I knew that it was next to impossible to daunt a Yankee fiend and the rebuff only sharpened the blade of my determination.

For sixteen years before this I had used the stuff in the United States and in Canada and where I had been confronted with no opposition in getting it. The *sine qua non* was the color of my bullion and with this one could purchase a barrel. But it seemed that the laws in South Africa, as in other places where I visited with impinged nerves for the want of it, the laws were perfunctory and I got by by handing over the money. And the price was the same, a shilling a drachm. This is the lowest price that I ever obtained it in America, but it advanced from six to ten dollars per drachm just prior to the passage of the anti-drug law of Congress in December, 1914.

Now in South Africa I was in the enemy's country, and I mean by this that I was an American and being a newspaper correspondent, and hence neutral, I was more or less a target for suspicious malcontents, and furthermore civil law was suspended and in its place was martial law, with its gruelling exactions and I was up against the "gun." I may have been over apprehensive relative thereto, but in all seriousness the outlook carried with it the complexion of alarm. Desperate maladies require drastic means, and I bided my time in a strange blending of hope and doubt. Durban is a town of about 15,000 population, and surely a Yankee of medial wit could make the riffle anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances!

*Par Parthenese*, the "bulls" of Durban were housed in odd and grotesque harness, some with rings in ears and nose and round their ankles, and they trotted about in the discharge of official and ministerial duties arrayed in "government socks." The police force consisted of others besides Zulus, and one of these happened to be an American from Arkansaw, and to this "bull" I unburdened my dolors. It was a meticulous undertaking and he raked in the jackpot by saying that he was without advice, and I shook him like a steer in the road, but before I did this, I sized him up in vitriolic billingsgate. It is hard to hide the sparks of nature. I want to say that he was a man of vinegar aspect and evidently scared of his own shadow. I therefore gave myself up to the unprofitable occupation of concluding that he was incapable of either laughing when a funeral passed, or of weeping at a wedding, and so conclusive was I of his individual make-up that I refuted the allegation of his Arkansaw nativity.

It is a miracle that he did not "spring" me to the borough burgess.

Hotfoot on this rebuff, I walked into a chemist's shop and after having made insistent appeals, I was forced to acknowledge that they would take no chances except upon an M. D.'s R.

Therefore, like one obsessed, I entered a strange shop and there in cold blood wrote out a *pro forma* prescription for a drachm of morphia, and signed it as a Cape Town physician and surgeon, a frame-up pregnant with shocking perjury and monstrous deceit. He looked it over, filed it in a strange dossier and motioned me to sign up. I signed the death warrant and he handed me a drachm of the "snow" in a card-board box. During these anxious moments, my brain and sense and soul and eye reeled, and I hurriedly asked the chemist to double-head the order, for reasons better known to himself. He did so, after I had shoved him the shillings, and I escaped with two drachms, enough to silence refractory and irritated nerves.

Barbadoes Island was the only stop on the return voyage and at Bridgetown, we anchored and the morphine fiend went ashore. Here I boned a copper colored doctor for another drachm, and we parleyed the haw-haw of the bow-bells until the drawl of the hawser was heard in the West Indies.

In the melancholy days of the sad year of 1901, our tramp got into New Orleans July 2nd, 1901, and I at once re-engaged; but before embarkation I purchased four ounces (thirty-two drachms) of morphia and added to it a half dozen hypodermic syringes in black Morocco cases, needles, wire and cotton, and in fact, enough even if the captain had sealed orders. The end of the journey brought us into the Buffalo River to the East London docks. This town is well known by reason of its fine gin, and being a voluptuary by nature designed, I could not resist its seductions and I fell at folly's shrine. This may seem bizarre, as morphia and drink do not go well together, but I was moulded in such a way that my whole animal economy is essentially apart from my fellows. Therefore, while the average morphine addict would be content with the dope, I easily fell for East London gin, Scotch highballs, in fact, any imported spirits. So that eleven thousand miles from the U. S. A., velvet drunk, and a dope habitue did not concern me; neither did the fact that afterwards I was thrown into the East London gaol. But, believe me, when I was released, I believed that to every bird its own nest is charming, and I longed for the home of my fathers. From this drunk I sobered up on morphia, the only true panacea for barleycorn headaches. It may seem strange to some that one can sober up from the disagreeable effects of whiskey by taking morphine, but all the whiskey in all the world would not take the place of morphia when the addict suffers from disorganized, impinged and irritated nerves.

With a heroic determination to crucify my natural pride, I shipped on the steamer "Gibraltar" as a messman in the galley

bound for Europe via the Suez Canal. Here on this voyage an indigenous fever seized me while we coasted East Africa, and its ravages compelled me to quit the vessel at Suez. It was then that I shot abnormal doses of morphia and absorbed the dope as a lily drinks dew, as I knew from actual experience that this drug is the relief *de luxe*. I know also that it is a counter-agent in the distress known as "The heaving up of Jonah." On a trip like this was, half work and half play, I only needed to be drugged and I spurned calomel, rheubarb, quinine, ipecacuanha, sulphate of zinc and monoacetica cidester of salicylic acid.

As our ship came within sight of and skirted the shores of the Persian Gulf, just before entering the Suez Canal at Suez, I impulsively thought of the poppy which is fructuously husbanded here, which are chaliced and flame to red, and the scarlet cups of which are filled with sunshine and bitterness. This was my first glimpse of the land of the Pharaohs, the land of sixty centuries and the mighty peace of Egypt's sky, ablaze with splendor.

From Suez I journeyed to Cairo, population 654,000. It was the full season at the capital, the mystic land of the old gods filled with profound enigmas of the supernatural and dark secrets yet unexplored. The city is noted for its hundreds of beautiful mosques, and magnificent old palaces, and for its being the chief center of Mohammedan learning.

On the Mouskee, Cairo's principal street, I got on the hump of a "ship of the desert," and visited the tombs of the Caliphs, the Mamelukes, the Obelisk of the Heliopolis, the temples of Khons and Amons at Karnak, the Temples of Luxor and Rameses III at Thebes, which, according to Homer, had a hundred gates. Then I viewed the Sphinx, slumbering there for centuries, the mighty guesser of riddles, and lastly the Pyramid of Ghizeh at the edge of the Libyan desert, just eight miles from the strangest city in the world, Ghizeh, whose proportions are as wonderfully significant of accurate knowledge concerning astronomy and the evolution of the earth.

From Cairo I "shanks-mared" it to the luxurious, the pleasure-loving city of Alexandria, population 390,000, the city founded by Alexander the Great and the home of the Ptolemies. This city is located at the delta of the Nile, a distance of 131 miles from Cairo thru the Valley of the Nile, as the crow flies. It is the largest valley in Africa and the most fruitful in the world. This area occupies the northeastern corner of the continent, as every school boy knows, being separated from Arabia by a narrow strip of sea and guarded on the west by the fastnesses of the desert. The route between Cairo and Alexandria

is littered with trees and sycamore and date-palms and filled with ugly buffaloes, white heron and pestiferous Nilotic flies. Amid the Nilotic reeds I observed basking crocodiles from 20 to 28 feet long, a live, horrible peril of the Nile.

I have heard it said that Naples is the dirtiest city of them all. I have been in this Italian city, too, and while this dictum may be true relative to some phases, Alexandria has it stopped four ways from the Jack for dirty bazars, nakedness, filth, dirt, poverty and wretchedness. Neither Pompey's Pillar nor Cleopatra's Needle can redeem it.

On this walk of 131 miles, passing thru the towns of Benha and Tauta, I did not hear great Memnon's morning song, even when marble lips were smitten by the sun, but I saw scarab beetles and felt their sting, a sting that would out-sting the sting of death itself; and I found time to observe Father Nile toss his brown and turgid waves and time to brood over the mysteries of this wonderful stream—its cataracts—an extraordinary panorama, so wild, so weird, so desolate, and of such transcendent color—and incidentally to see a dahabeah swallowed by a crocodile.

I accepted menial service on board a steamer flying the Austrian flag and this steamer carried us to Port Said, said to be the greatest coaling station in the world. It is situated on a spit of Egyptian sand at the head of the Suez Canal, the world's highway to the Far East. I had time enough to go ashore here and get outside of a few calabashes of imported liquor, and see the flotsam and jetsam of inebriated seamen hailing ostensibly from every port, and in twenty-five hours the Austrian tripper dropped anchor in front of Jaffa, reputed to be one of the greatest orange markets in the world, and the port where Solomon landed the timbers which formed the construction of his magnificent temple.

I was in the Holy Land, and knowing that I had enough morphia to last by judicious husbanding for about two months, I concluded to pay homage to the shrines based on traditional hypothesis and visit a country crowded with memories and associations which have been woven into our minds by the wonderful bible story. So first in Jaffa I visited the house of Simon the Tanner, and then the great city gate. From here I trudged to Ramleh, a town sporting the tall tower of the forty martyrs and situated in the midst of luxuriant groves and orchards of olives and sycamores, interspersed with palm trees; then thru the Valley of the Sharon and the hills of Judea and on into Jerusalem, a distance of about forty miles by country road and thru which the Israelites and Philistines fought centuries since. I

was surcharged with emotion as I approached the light blue minarets of the Gates of Zion, and the blue cupolas of its mosques. Repeatedly I soliloquized: "Is it possible that I am approaching Jerusalem, the Holy City?" Thru the Jaffa Gate I entered and down the street of David. I turned into Christ street, and in a few minutes I was in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and by an ascent of about fifteen feet I got to Golgotha. In fact, I was on Golgotha Hill. From the Mosque of Omar I viewed the landscape on the outside of Jerusalem, and returned to the Church. The Place of the Sepulchre with its stone of Unction is a weird and shadowy place. It put me in mind of the Whispering Galleries. Of course, I viewed the marble slab which was pointed out to me and to other tourists as the place where the body of Jesus Christ was finally anointed with spikenard and other oils, immediately succeeding the crucifixion. With the group of sensation-lovers I climbed the steps which brought us to the Chapel of the Crucifixion, and this was in all seriousness dingier than a dungeon, and would be as black as the City of Dreadful Night had not the tapers and lamps burned. Here were icons and other images, and the whole redolent with the incense of idolatry. Our guide told us that here in front of an altar pointed out was the rock where the Holy Cross stood; and on either side of it were the sockets which received the crosses of the two thieves.

A lot of priests hung about and dawdled about, attired in robes of the darkest crepe, and they sported on their heads tall, cylindrical hats and about their loins hung girdles of rope and their heads were pedantically tonsured. A perfect swarm of penitents constantly ascended and descended these stairs, at times kneeling in reverential obeisance and muttering petitions of devotion to the unknown spirit that rules the universal cosmos. From chapel to chapel I wandered, from "The Centre of the World" to the Chapel of the Syrians, where are supposed to be the ashes of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; the Chapel of the Apparition, the Chapel of St. Helena, and the Chapel of the Parting of the Raiment, the Abyssinian Chapel, the Coptic Chapel of Saint Michael and the Church of Abraham. But the greatest of these is the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. The company on this occasion was accompanied by guides who told what was what, and the company reached thru a low doorway a chamber about six feet square containing the rock hewn tomb of the Meek and Lowly Nazarene. Pilgrims, rich and poor, and from all over the world, kneel and kiss this worn slab of marble, and emerge therefrom seemingly with a load lifted from their shoulders. The priests bless the relics placed upon the altar by

these devotees. Among these devotees I observed old men close their eyes and rest their faces on this tombstone, and when a lazy minute had escaped from the hour glass, they would raise their faces and upon their countenances was depicted a serene and benignant look, and they would retreat in reverential obsequiousness. I also observed an old grandmother bent by the hurry of the years, with wrinkled face and valetudinary step, approach this fountain of absolution, actually lie down upon the stone and in a sibilant monotone mutter an untranslatable appeal to the cleft in the rock. I saw others appeal in other ways, and this is what one sees in the indiscriminate craving for penitence in the very shadow of the altar itself.

The succeeding points of interest after I had gone out the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem were Mount Zion and Mount Moriah and Solomon's Temple. The far-famed Mount of Olives next claimed my attention, and then the pools of Bethesda and Siloam, and my pulses thrilled as I entered Bethlehem, after having passed the Garden of Gethsemane in the Valley of the Kedron and the Tomb of the Virgin and the tomb of Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, preserved thru thirty centuries. It has been said that at the time of Christ, there was no room for the Holy Family at the inn, and this is advanced as one of the reasons that Christ was born in a manger. In my judgment, things have not improved much since that time, for, altho' I had the dinero to pay, I was constrained to sleep in a tent in Bethlehem. Before I left this city, I visited the Church of the Nativity and here I descended into the Grotto and read the inscription on a silver star: "*Hic de Virgine Jesus Christus natus est.*" Here I saw streams of poor pilgrims—Greeks, Armenians and Latins—come kneeling and kiss this star, the stone and the altar.

From Bethlehem I roamed to the Convent of Mars Saba, and on to the Dead Sea. Away to the left I viewed the Valley of the Jordan with the famous river winding thru it in numberless curves and zigzags and close by the mountains of Gilead and Moab. The Jordan is supposed to be the lowest body of water in the world and is nearer the center of the earth than any other, and according to tradition the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are under its waters. The river itself, that is, its surface, is 600 feet below the Mediterranean. Based upon traditional lore along its banks it is a dense, half-tropical jungle, haunted by wild beasts and poisonous reptiles. The river is reputed to have a shifting bottom and its currents are ever-changing. Notwithstanding these, in order to gratify a momentary impulse I took a plunge in this stream and actually cooked a "mulligan" on the shores of the steel-blue Sea of Galilee. I

also bathed in the Dead Sea, where I found it difficult to swim by reason of its great buoyancy due to the intensity of saline, combined with chloride of magnesium and chloride of calcium. Four days after this experience, I felt the disagreeable oily effects of this Dead Sea bath and took a last plunge in the River Jordan at a place which was pointed out to me by an Arab Sheik as the spot where Christ was baptized by John and where the Israelites crossed a dry path into Canaan.

Jericho, whose walls fell before Joshua, was the next stop, and passing Bethany, where Mary and Martha lived and the Inn of the Good Samaritan, I wound round the Mount of Olives and down thru the Valley of the Brook Kedron, and again entered Jerusalem by the Gate of the Tribes.

On this trip I was clad in pith helmet, khaki trousers and a flannel shirt tucked up to the elbow and open over the chest, all of which garments I bummed of an English tourist at Alexandria. Certain of the routes mentioned were infested with thieves and robbers and between Jerusalem and Jericho I was held up and relieved of what shekels I had, but they failed to find the store of morphine. Invariably when night approached I slept beneath the wide and open sky in the cool night air gazing at the quiet, lucent heavens. Notwithstanding that it is all backsheesh thru this country, I used my wits and got by Bedouins, dragomen, sheiks, Arab guards and the police. And many times I had hurled at me the stock exclamation "hadji," meaning pilgrim, and in answer to guides and beggars, blackmailers and supposed thieves, I mumbled "no sabe" and passed on.

I traveled over the same route from Jerusalem to Jaffa as before.

From this port the Royal Mail steamer "Dunvegan Castle" was in readiness for sailing to Athens, greatest city of the Levant (called after her tutelary deity, Pallas Athena), and other Mediterranean ports and ultimately to the British Isles, and on this vessel I grabbed still another galley service. On docking at Athens, I went ashore with the intention of pursuing the itinerary to Paris overland as a Yankee bum.

A tide of associations rushed over me as I set foot upon Grecian soil and over all predominated thoughts of mythologies and polytheisms, meditations of Homer, of Pindar, of Solon, of Socrates, of Pericles and Phocion.

I was in the land of the children of the sun.

In pursuance of a prurient curiosity I toured Pentelicus, Corinth (altho' *non homini contingit adire Corinthum*), Delphi, the sanctuary of Greece and chief of the oracles of imposture,

the Temple of Apollo, the Pass of Thermopylae, the Acropolis of Pharsalus and the Vale of Tempe, the Parthenon, which crowns the Acropolis; the Temple of the Wingless Victory, the Theatre of Dionysius, the ruins of the Odeon and the Erectheum, Mars Hill, the Pynx, the Prison of Socrates and the Roman baths, and outside the city, the Arch of Hadrian, the Temple of Jupiter and the Stadium. It has been said that the Greeks are not to be trusted, intimated by the aphorism, "I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts"; yet, on these excursions I subsisted on Grecian hospitality, the pabulum being olives, grapes, figs, oranges, honey and blackberries. Among the trophy-covered hills thru Greece I reached valleys, spots of singular beauty and seclusion, blushing with flowers, sheeted with olives and blossoming fruit trees.

Returning to Athens the prospect of availing myself of an overland peregrination to the French capital was shattered by my acceptance of a lowly shift aboard the cockleshell "Calabria," sailing for the turquoise canopy of Naples, over the blue and glittering Mediterranean.

At Naples, population 700,000, reputed to be the dirtiest city in the world, I sampled the morphia of the continent. This consists of a preparation of the drug done up in little cardboard cases, divided into cells. These cells, which were lined with cotton-wool, each held a small glass globule filled with a solution of morphia, sealed at one end with wax. They are safe by reason of the minimum of liability to infection. After seal is broken, the hypodermic is filled direct from these globules. They are free from atropia and this is the European or continental style. I encountered no impediments in the purchase of the drug here, which I effected at the *Farmacia Vanutelli* on the *Via Roma*. The chemist was only concerned in my *un donos*. In the Neapolitan city, I availed myself of a tour of the Toledo, the *Vilia Reale*, a glimpse of Virgil's tomb and the Catacombs; and afterwards, in a one hour's ride by rail, I rambled to Herculaneum and to Pompeii. These extravagances culminated in reducing me to humbled indigence, but as I still had with me 480 grains of morphine, I refused to tremble in this, the land of Garibaldi, Ariosto, Petrarch and Solferino. Along the route from Naples to Pompeii, the scarlet poppy shone in every field. Along the roadside terraces it grows amid the ripening rye-stalks forming a beautiful fringe of scarlet and gold. Strawberries lined the route which were two inches thru and as big as the largest horse-chestnut. I had sea food here, such as shell fish, clams, periwinkles and mussels and I drank Frascati and Montefiascone vintages until my pocket book was empty. The latter had such

ethereal fire and such a delicate, flashing, penetrating fierceness, that resistance to its seductions seemed futile.

Thru some of the monumental plains of Italy I saw flower-flamed valleys of ravishing scenery; and besides filling up on the Italian vintages I had a perpetual dietary of native roots, herbs and limpid brooks.

The steamer "Messina," a lime-juicer of Naples, brought me to Genoa, the single mooring being at Leghorn. Genoa is called the marble city, and is interesting for its wonderful old palaces; and the old town with its queer narrow streets all up and down hill, with always a view of the sea and the busy port at the end of the street. I professed fealty here by a visit to the palace of the Doges, the Monument to Columbus and the Campo Santo cemetery; and on the *Via Nuova*, I glutted my disposition to curiosity by a passing inspection of the multiform, velvet-eyed Genoese.

From Genoa I got to Marseilles on the same steamer. This city is situated on the Gulf of Lyons, and has a population of 550,000 and from here I actually walked the provincial roads to Paris, a distance of 350 miles, passing thru Arles, Tarascon, Avignon, Nimes, Montelimart, Valence, Tournure, Vienne, St. Etienne, Lyons, Charolles, Macon, Chalon sur Saone, Dijon, Avallon, Chatillon sur Seine, Tonnere, Troyes, Melun and Versailles. It was a route mostly between high walls, draped in trailing vines and pierced with mighty gateways. The old towers and the great churches seen on this trip filled me with romantic impressions. It was the fall of the year and the vineyards were in full swing. The vinetagers were busy in the fields around unloading the vines of their purple tribute and the air was laden with the odor of over-ripened grapes. A rich succession of dells, crowded with the olive, the berry and the grape in their autumnal dyes, spread out before me as far as the eye could reach, in a land whose air is pure as crystal. As thirst and hunger are the true secrets of luxury, I soaked a fulness of Chambertin, Volnay and Pommard. I passed thru towns which belonged to the mediaeval epoch, full of romance and story. And as every person is accounted for in France, I was fortified in brushes with the *gendarmarie* who police the cantonments by an exhibition of a passport and ship's clearance. I was subjected to scrutiny three different times on this trip, once near Charolles, another time at Montelimart and lastly at Tonnere, and had it not been for these and my voluble tongue in the *parlez-vous Francais*, as well as the Angleesh, it is quite possible that I might have run up against their sabres. But, *Ah, sacre bleu!* upon the exhibition of these documents, I thought that I could

hear the peas rattling in the stomachs of these pelting officers, as they shifted about. Had these myrmidons of the peace and security of the Republic seized me, and found upon my person, securely sewed into the fabric, a hypodermic syringe and about 400 grains of morphia, I might have done penance within the pale shades of a French prison.

I had been in Paris before and knew the city from the *Pere La Chaise* to the *Bois de Boulogne*, from *St. Denis* to the *Jardin Des Plantes*, so that when I entered her confines, I immediately repaired to the American Embassy. At the Embassy I negotiated for return passage and this is one of the reasons that I refused to capitulate again to the glamour and seductions of Paris, the city of luxurious vices, that fascinating town of extravagance and debauchery, the city of divine paradoxes, dogmatic materialism and mysticism and original sin. On the trip across I leisurely read to an old invalid, who paid me well for this service, De Balzac's "The Wild Ass's Skin."

## CHAPTER XIII

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### POT POURRI

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*“Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,  
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf,  
Of the ravin'd salt sea shark,  
Root of hemlock digg'd 'i the dark;  
Liver of blaspheming Jew,  
Gall of goat and slips of yew,  
Silvered in the moon's eclipse,  
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips;  
Finger of birth-strangled babe  
Ditch devour'd by a drab.  
Make the gruel thick and slab:  
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron  
For the ingredients of our cauldron.”*

—*Macbeth.*

It is true that with all deductions there remains a great residuum which means want of individual effort, conscious weakness of will and culpable failure of character when the sinner, like Horace, sees and applauds the higher while he follows the lower. If the good outweighs the bad, well and good, but if the evil outweighs the good, then that man is utterly lost and damned. Human nature is like a plant and in the garden of the world natures vary. When one has made allowance for the sins which are the inevitable product of early environment, for the sins which are due to clear physical causes and for the sins which are due to hereditary and inborn taint, the total of active sin is greatly reduced. In its worst forms all crime is the product of absolute lunacy. How could the world punish the unfortunate wretch who hatches criminal thoughts behind the slanting brows of a criminal head? The man of science has but to glance at the cranium to predicate the crime. It is not outside science or natural law for a family to have some deformity frequently reappearing, such as one eyebrow higher than the other or one ear bigger than the other, or some such hereditary dis-

proportion in the features. Shakespeare has said it in these lines:

“So oft it chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin—  
By the oergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens,  
The form of plausible manners, that these men,  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star—  
Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo—  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault the dram of eale  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal.”

Strictly so called there are no pains as a sequelae of opium eating, altho' Mr. DeQuincy in his “Confessions” uses the terms, “pains of opium,” “pleasures of opium.” Pleasure and pain are sisters. *Exemplum gratia* there are no pains such as proceed from gunshot wounds or from incisions in the corporal tissues, rheumatism, neuralgia, toothache, earache or the separation of parts by violence or some certain derangements of the functions. On the withdrawal of the dope there proceeds a war of the nerves—an eternal craving, bringing about uneasiness of mind, mental distress, disquietude and anxiety. There is *ennui*, mental languor, *tedium vitae*, nervous distraction, physical flightiness, intellectual torpor. It is restlessness in the highest degree, restlessness in the direst degree. There is an incapacity to mental concentration, a collapse of physical energies. One labors under the thumbscrew of obsession and fits of pandiculation are frantically conspicuous. The whole is a subtle and indescribable malaise. It is neither nausea, chills and fever nor acute pain. It is more horrible than these. It is hideous fatigue—a sweating, nervous irritability, horrid chill, a damp nervousness, a drilling in the arms and legs. One is like a marionette strung on wire. When in the throes of lustful nerves, one pours out the sweat of anguish. Pain signifies punishment. I can therefore assign no reason in denominating them pains unless it is to preserve the alliteration on the P.

. In medical parlance there is what is termed “shotgun pre-

scription." This consists of a little bit of everything in it for every ailment. It is a hit or miss, kill or cure compound. If one ingredient misses, the other hits and if the whole misses and none hit, it usually culminates in work for the undertaker. I once had prescribed for me a "shotgun prescription" containing no less than six different substances for the purpose of allaying the tedium and other ravages due to a protracted debauch in wine. These substances were morphine, chloral hydrate, codeine, bromide of potassium, digitalis and lactopeptone. I followed out its seductions from downright wantonness and the reason that it did not finally prepare me for the morgue should not be considered as a recommendation favoring the doctor, as I ascertained too late that it was prescribed by a medical man whose standing in the community was such that whenever an inquiry was made relative to his scientific capacity the reply invariably was: "Oh, that abortion of a pill-box; he couldn't cure a ham."

In the indiscriminate use of the hypodermic needle, fiends become careless. In forlorn straits, I have used water from stagnant pools, standing water from puddles after a rainfall and from muddy streams. I cooked dope in debris, such as discarded fruit cans, without the ceremony of subjecting them to lavatory exercises. And I recall an instance where a doctor to whom I applied for relief, unscrewed the case of his watch and in this wise he prepared the solution. To doctors to whom I applied to relieve my distress on occasions I have used hypodermics absolutely careless about any considerations that these same instruments might have been utilized in puncturing the tissues of infected patients or pierced the inert muscles of a cadaver. In my haste engendered by nerve bankruptcy I have broken needles which by the most arduous and painstaking shifts could not be extricated, and which ultimately came out in other parts of my body. I recall one, that, primarily lost in the tissues of the right arm, popped out from the calf of the right leg. This while listlessly languishing upon an ottoman and wrapped in a *robe de chambre* in my bed chamber, I heard a faint thud upon the bare floor and found thereon the broken end of a needle that had buried itself beyond immediate reclamation in the animal framework months before. I recall an instance in Norfolk, Virginia, where I used a needle that had been used in old fashioned medication, furnished me by a physician there upon my appeal to him. It looked big enough and strong enough to penetrate the hide of a rhinoceros, and it made a hiatus in

my anatomy sufficiently cavernous for the entrance of an iron-grey Missouri mule.

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To various lapses from the rules of action prescribed for moral conduct by divine or human laws, I add the crime of burglary. Technically it was burglary, but there having been the absence of the essential element of criminal intent in its commission, a successful prosecution could not have been maintained. Burglary is accompanied by some criminal intent, the intent to steal, to commit murder or rape or other public offense. In the case at bar, there was no other intent than the gratification of using a hypodermic syringe. This was the very head and front of my offending. The episode occurred in a deserted village in the Sucker state on a sabbath morning, being *hors de combat* relative to a syringe. I therefore burglarized a doctor's office *vi et armis* while the sober citizens and like as not the doctor himself, were gathered in spiritual devotions and praising the Lord from whom all blessings flow.

I positively declare that when the fever is on, when the black reaction comes, when a fiend needs a "shot," he will approach the Holy Throne if relief could be obtained there. I asseverate that under the hotspur of want, the curb, whip and bugbear of the law has no terrors for him.

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In dilemmas for the use of a hypodermic, I once addressed myself to a physician in St. Cloud, Minn. With urbane affability he handed me the much coveted tool and after I had prepared an ebullient solution, I shot one syringeful into the circulation of the arm. I drew up another syringeful and was about to slam this in also, when old sawbones exclaimed:

"You can't kill yourself in my office; if you want to commit suicide, jump from the castle walls."

As I was then using fifty grains per day, a doctor's smidgin would only be homeopathic. However, I got a sufficient jolt out of the single barrel to nerve me up in advance of a similar assault on another croaker.

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I do not profess to be *au fait*, so as to speak with decision about the colorless prisms known as hydrochloride of cocaine, as I never followed out the seductions of the drug as I did morphia, chloral, hasheesh and others, and this is the reason that I am here to say what I do say about them. I used enough cocaine, how-

ever, to appreciate the sententious reply danced out by a cocaine habitue when asked how he felt when imprisoned in the umbrage of the "snow." Turning to his jolt-head questioner, he said:

"Do you see the wires strung along the poles ahead of us?"

He referred to a web of telegraph and telephone wires a half block ahead something like thirty feet from the ground.

"Yes; what about them?"

"I can step right over them."

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In the novitiate stage of opium addition a fiend is imbued with the sentiment of egoism. He feels as tho' he were the human flame around about which cluster the human moths. He grooms himself so that his personal locomotion is a pins and needles one, and he becomes fastidious to an absurd degree of coxcombry. Under the spell of music he is much more so; and this is equally true whether it be an ancient lullaby, a wild Irish coronach or any scurvy tune, the twanging a stave of a religious hymn, the Dead March in Saul at a funeral, the rendition of a popular air from the masters, such as the Mad Song from Lucia, or the Miserere of Allegro or that which flows from a squeaky street organ in a ragtime vein of melody, or any foozle of a bray that starts to be one pitch and cracks into another.

This is a monster delusion, for in the estimation of those who know of his poison slavery he is despised, and those who are not so cognizant are not so porous as to be absorbed in contemplation of him over the most indifferent human tadpole.

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It could not be reasonably expected that a drug like morphia, the handmaiden of such unspeakable bliss in many channels, would not have its disadvantages. One of these is the obstruction of the alimentary canal. The peristaltic region is hampered by the astringency of opium, and this is more pronounced in the neophyte stage of addiction. It is therefore inconvenient to have to dose oneself with pills to sluice the alimentary tract repeatedly. The other disadvantage is retention of the urine.

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While the fiend is insulated in the tyranny of opium there is a marked declension in the amative economy. The drug has a

tendency to store up the secretions. King Priapus has abdicated his throne and in this wise the drug is an anti-aphrodisiac.

Opium is a sinisterly benevolent medicine when it can metamorphose one from an angry, brutal and generally offensive person into a merry, roystering child, chirruping at fanciful bagatelles. These are luminous moments and the "snowbird" is in harmony with life, has no conceptions of the elements of time and space.

The drug habit is a disease pure and simple. That the terms drug habit or drug fiend have been so generally applied, and so commonly accepted as descriptive of those afflicted with this condition is conclusive proof of general scientific neglect of it, of past apathy and indifference toward it and of ignorance concerning it.

That it is fundamentally a physical disease condition, presenting definite and constant clinical symptoms and signs and invariable and characteristic physical phenomena and that it has associated with it—and especially with its unskilled handling—some of the most agonizing physical suffering known to humanity, is now a matter of established record and proof.

That its physical symptomatology and phenomena are manifested in infants newly born of addicted mothers and that many of these infants die unless opiate is administered to them, is a well-known fact among those who have made open-minded study of and research into this condition.

That the physical signs and symptomatology and phenomena of body-need for opiate drug can be easily and invariably demonstrated upon animals purposely addicted in the laboratory and then deprived of the drug, and that the blood serum of these addicted animals suffering from opiate deprivation when injected into animals who have never been given opiate, produce the same symptomatology and phenomena are matters of competent observation and authoritative record.

That a considerable proportion, if not a considerable majority of opiate addicts contracted their addiction disease purely thru prolonged constant opiate medication, under conditions where they had nothing at all to do with the administration of the opiate and did not even know what they were getting, must be recognized and accepted fact.

That there is no class characteristic of narcotic addicts, but that the condition exists far more among the honest and worthy

and self-supporting members of society than it does in the so called "under-world" is now a matter of easily corroborated record. The narcotic addict is found in every walk of life, the minister and the judge, the physician, the business man, the clerk, the laborer; no class or occupation is without its members suffering from narcotic addiction disease.

The most urgent problem of the present narcotic situation is the one most sadly neglected in the past, and only recently beginning to be appreciated. It is the problem of securing intelligent, competent, and humane advice and treatment faced by the addict himself.

The one thing that the average narcotic addict wants is to be helped and cured. The idea that he does not want to be cured arises largely from his hesitation to submit himself to incarceration under legal commitment to institutions of whose results he has either had previous experience himself or has been warned away from by the experience of others. The army of addicts has increased since prohibition, and this great mass of addicts need something done for them. They are clinical problems of internal medicine, victims of a definite disease, controllable and arrestable.

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In the preparation of an ebullition of morphia in a spoon, it sometimes happened that the solution was too copious to inject at a single sitting, so much so that I was obliged to consign the residue to a glass receptacle containing absorbent cotton with the intention of using it thereafter. By this means there accumulated a quantity of dope which volatilized in a degree and became desiccated on the cotton.

A fellow hophead called one day in dismal need of a "shot." A twitching sensation was shaking him as a storm shakes dry leaves, and I suggested that he accommodate himself from this receptacle. He took one syringeful, but before he had time to draw up another, he fell to the floor in a spasm of syncope. A single jolt of this aqua fortis distillment was productive of too strong a "kick" and afterwards he was always guarded about sampling cooked up dope.

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No less than thirteen (ominous number) abscesses formed on my arms and legs within a short period. This was traceable to the indiscriminate use of "guns" of a raft of surgeons which propagated the hokey-pokey in the blood from septic poisoning.

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Reduced to forlorn expedients I have at several times used a

common eye dropper by affixing a hypodermic needle to its vitreous apex and thus squirted the lethargic juice into the sanguinary flow. But the most desperate shift occurred on board ship *en tour* from Alexandria, Egypt, to Port Said, on the Mediterranean, when I improvised a rubber bulb from the rubber of ship's boots. I tightened this to the glassy part with packthread, fastening the needle to the other end. This contrivance catapulted the morphine gravy with ambidextrous facility.

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Resolutions to renounce opium after habit formed, are like vows written in water; they are as straws to the fire in the blood; they are as false as dicer's oaths; they are as inconstant as the moon. As well might one try to wound the intrenchant air with the keenest blade; as well try to hold water in a sieve, swallow a locomotive, fatten a greyhound, kindle a fire with icicles, stay the ocean's tide with a shell or freeze the sun.

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Chloral hydrate, formerly chloral, is a colorless, transparent and very volatile crystal or white crusts of aromatic penetrating odor and bitterish, caustic taste. Its pleasurable sensations are like spread poppies, which when seized, shed their bloom. What it spends in fleeting volatility it more than compensates in the riot of its virtues.

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The tawny, brown colored opium comes principally from the marts of China, the West Indies and Turkey. On the shores of the Persian Gulf the petals of the poppy are purple, pink and white. The choicest grade of opium is the Li Yuen of China and the Turkish name for opium is *Madjoon*.

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Hasheesh is obtained by boiling the leaves and flowers of the female plant *Cannabis Sativa* with fresh butter. It is grown in the East Indies and gathered while the fruit is yet undeveloped, and while it is carrying the whole of its natural resin. It is one of the most potential nerve quiescents in the entire materia medica. It produces dreamy indolence in the ascendant scale. The Mohammedan princes, the peoples of West and South Africa and in the Malay Archipelago loll in hammocks and in canapes and dream life away under its soothing influence. On the female blossoms of Indian hemp, glands are found holding a narcotic, sticky, bitter-tasting substance, and this is the active

element of hasheesh. Hasheesh habitues may become dangerously violent in the intermediary stage before complete stupefaction sets in.

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“Happy Dust” is the tenderloin term for heroin, a comparatively new derivative of morphia. It is morphia treated with acetic acid and the continual use of it for a few years leads to physical collapse and death. When decline comes, there is an amazing reduction in flesh. It is strange that the deadliest of all habits is the simplest—no hypodermic, no pipe, no paraphernalia of any kind. It is used as a powder by sniffing and gives immediate sensation. Fashionable women crush a tablet or two in a napkin and hold this to the face as tho’ breathing the most exquisite perfume. It is stronger than either morphine or gum opium and while under its influence one is morally, physically and mentally irresponsible. Snuffing or sniffing these powdered tablets destroys the bones in the nose thru shrinkage of the blood vessels, as well as undermines the nervous system and causes the brain to totter. It is a singularly new substance, having been known for about a quarter of a century, while opium itself has been known for more than two thousand years. Seventy per cent of drug users now use heroin, since the passage of the Harrison anti-drug measure. It is a white, colorless, neutral powder and bitter in taste. Being a tenderloin preparation, assiduous care is expended in its output, being housed in small brown glass globules stoppered with paraffined corks and cotton stuffed in the neck thereof. Next to this latter are the glistening white tablets, bitter with horrible poison—heroin hydrochloride.

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The continuous use of cocaine will produce amnesia to an alarming degree, arising from its action directly upon the mentality, and finally the memory advances to a condition of absolute abeyance.

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Not long ago a symposium was held by a medical journal to determine by a vote among professional men the five most reliable drugs used in medicine. Those that got the most votes were in their order: Opium, mercury, quinine, digitalis, iodine.

Four out of the five have advanced in price—iodine alone remains at the old level. To follow the others and see what has happened to them, is as good a way as any of ascertaining drug conditions.

Opium is now selling for eleven dollars a pound, the highest

price in fifty years. At the outbreak of the war, it was about six dollars and fifty cents. The causes are somewhat complicated. There is a crop shortage in Turkey, hostilities held up shipments of the crude gum and our new federal law to prevent misuse of narcotics, cutting down consumption, led to hesitation in ordering supplies. Morphine and codeine, narcotics derived from opium, was used to allay suffering in the army hospitals during the late world's war. The United States is doing a good business in morphine so far as exportation is concerned, which has advanced twenty-five per cent.

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The greatest anodynes are hemlock, henbane, chloroform and opium, but the greatest of these is opium. It is the anodyne *de luxe*. The others are mere boot lickers in comparison.

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The most potent counter agent to and tranquillizer of nervous irritability and the shocking evil of *tedium vitae*, which latter includes within its scope, languor, ennui and listlessness, is opium. When one becomes indifferent to the ordinary pleasures of life thru luxury or the excessive indulgence in frivolous or sensual enjoyments, a "shot" of morphine makes the whole world look brighter and the drooping animal energies are electrified thereby.

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A morphine fiend has no pains, is immune from colds and a full jolt of it during a snowstorm in the very heart of winter, is equivalent to the warmest overcoat.

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I entertain a sort of a bromidic opinion that morphine when used moderately by one in the incipient stage of consumption, will ward off, all other things being equal, any succeeding stage of and finally put to rout, the alarming national calamity of pulmonary tuberculosis, popularly termed the Great White Plague.

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In nomadic travel I met many medical men who were slaves to morphia. In Dyersburg, Tenn., I met one whose face of chalk and general appearance suggested to me the apothecary in Romeo and Juliet. His looks were meagre; famine was in his cheeks; need and oppression stared in his eyes; contempt and beggary hung upon his back. He had pawned his library and

hawked his instruments for the stuff. Another in Dubuque, Iowa, whose visage was as pallid as the white petals of the lotos lily, and advanced in addiction as far as the other, yet in apparent affluence, was still practicing his profession in an elaborate suite of offices. So abject was the former, that I was constrained to oblige him by a division of the morphine I then had, to divert the wolf from his door; and so prosperous was the other that I left town with new needles, a comfortable quantum of dope and some substantial pezzos with which to sled the tortuous labyrinths and discursive paths of life.

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There is an unwritten tongue among dope fiends, hopheads and snowbirds. *C* is for cocaine, *M* is for morphine. Many times I have heard the retort: "I have no *C* but plenty of *M*." The fellow had a sufficiency of the ease juice; he was seeking the dippy dust.

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Chloral hydrate is almost upon the same plane as cocaine, so far as its effects upon the citadel of mentality are concerned. Both are liable after continuous use to produce amnesia, and there is a possibility that aphasia would result. Since my own mind has become clarified after successful treatment for the habit of chronic addiction to chloral, I recall instances in my addresses to juries while I used it, where I had forgotten at the time of presentation to dilate upon certain points, facts which were essentially important to force verdicts and compatible with the issues raised by the pleadings and adduced by the testimony. I have no cause for regret, however, as in every case I prevailed, and I can only account for such results upon the hypothesis that what I forgot the jury remembered.

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I underwent treatment as a dope fiend eight different times, and out of these eight treatments, I emerged unqualifiedly cured of the habit and freed from the servitude of opium. In these instances, I was either behind the bars or restrained in some similar manner equivalent to barred windows and doors. After these eight treatments, I fell no less than seven times to the assaults of temptation. The speediest cure was one week by the hyoscine route, during which week I was restrained by barred windows and doors in a private sanitarium. After release at the expiration of this time, I deliberately inaugurated a

drunken debauch in order to drive away temptation, and I continued in this carousal until sent willy nilly to a state hospital, a confirmed inebriate suffering from the ravages of *mania a potu*.

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With courage screwed to the sticking point, and with firmness as strong as a monk's vow, I have entered hospitals for the purpose of being released from the dominancy of opium. I nurtured in my secret thoughts a stern and desperate resolution that I would submit no longer to the enslavement of morphia. In advance thereof I always made preparation for probable eventualities; and in this connection, I had especially in mind the contingency that under a rigorous regulation of dosage, I would necessarily suffer. I recall an instance in point in Kansas City, Mo. Knowing that my attire would be thoroly searched for the stuff, I secreted two small glass phials of morphine in the hair of my head by tying these to tufts of hair, one phial in each armpit, similarly attached, another phial tied by tiny flesh colored thread to the toes of my feet, besides other phials glued to other portions of my anatomy. In addition to these measures, I cached a quantity in bottles in close vicinage to the hospital, so that they could be readily reached in case of lustful nerves. My sensibilities were severely shattered that same evening, when one of these phials dropped out of position while I indulged in customary ablutions on admission thereto. Upon this discovery by the hospital attendant, a systematic search was instigated, and the whole cargo was made manifest. I "blew" the place on the following morning. Similar happenings marked my manoeuvres in a score of other cities.

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A convention of hopheads was assembled in the jungles adjacent to a certain town some years ago during my captivity to the blandishments of morphia, all of the company being lit up like a Catholic cathedral on Lammas Night. A stray tomcat disturbed the solemnity of the proceedings, and being duly captured, the gang injected a "shot" of morphine and cocaine blended into him. When released, he executed a pirouette and in one crazy bound shot thru the bulrushes like a bolt of streaked lightning, or a frightened razor back shoat thru a field of ripened alfalfa.

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With nerveless fingers I have mixed dope and have administered hypodermic shots, while the train rambled as high as

seventy miles an hour, without the snapping of a needle or the puncture of a blood vessel.

In the company of a bevy of wine bums and barrel house stiffs, I once went in swimming in a glassy pool. As I stripped off my clothing and exposed the epidermis, one of the bums on seeing the blue and purple spots thereon, shouted to the others: "ECCE HOMO. Say, bos, this is the tattooed man from the Barnum & Bailey circus!"

I stood revealed in the common integument—the one immutable fashion of nature. I was mottled and pictured on legs and arms, and from waist upwards in the most bewildering manner, all in blue and purple tints. There were more pictures on me than there are on an astrologer's celestial globe, all due to the pricking of the hypodermic needle.

There are moments that to the sober eye of reason, the world of our sad humanity may assume the semblance of a hell. These movements are truly during the hyoscine cure for narcotism or alcohol, or any other trouble where hyoscine is resorted to as a therapeutic instrumentality.

Periodic sneezing is one of the aftermaths denoting the wane of the drug's virtues in the system. When a fiend goes beyond the time when he should have shot himself, he will invariably be subjected to fits of pandiculation. I well remember the episode when a fiend entered the office of a strange doctor, and, getting down on his marrow bones, informed the doctor that he was in need of a "shot." He told the doctor that he was at that very time suffering the tortures of Hades. He had the pasty skin, the vacant eye, the nervous quiver of the muscles, as tho' every organ and every nerve were crying out for the poison.

"Let me hear you sneeze!" said Sawbones.

The geezer couldn't execute this trick, but he returned in a few minutes immediately succeeding the self-administration of a sniff of cayenne pepper, convulsed by pandiculation, and the croaker, grasping the situation at once, threw a "shot" into him without any further *parlez-vous*.

Two occasions presented themselves in the days of my chronic slavery to dope, wherein I was prevented from using the hypo-

dermic needle, both of these occasions being while I was aboard ship during terrific storms at sea—once on a trip from New Orleans, La., to South Africa and at another time on the Pacific between Seattle, Wash., and San Francisco, Calif. It was absolutely impossible, even amidships, and on the orlop deck, to manipulate the steel sting. The only alternative was administration *per mese*.

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I have hypodermically injected morphine into my tissues in places darker than the Black Hole of Calcutta, while the freight rambled at sixty miles an hour, as successfully as under the enfilade of a spotlight in the quiet of one's private chamber.

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A morphine hophead was carried into the hospital at Kansas City, Mo., with abscesses on his body so close together that it puzzled the doctors to locate a region on his epidermis wherein to pierce the needle. These abscesses suppurated and opened to that extent that the stench from the loathsome putrescence was positively unbearable, and all the formaldehyde, chlorine and even perfumes of Arabia would not sweeten it. He was reveling in the last stages of chronic addiction, and was domiciled in an isolated detention tent where he soon farewelled to life, full of the great elixir of resurrection.

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A status of consummate bliss, heavenly happiness and ineffable ease is attainable by first taking a "shot" of morphine, then reclining on a berth as near to the extreme port or starboard side of the vessel as one can get when the "tramp" is rolling on the oceanic swell, and indulge one's morbid appetite when the lights, sounds, odors and surroundings are all arranged as to intensify and enhance the effects of this wonderful narcotic and submit to the combined assaults of the god of sleep and the god of dreams. It is an Elysium of bliss, and one feels the exhilarating effects of the drug slowly stealing over him. Sleeping there as one etherized, floating off buoyantly into space over hitherto unimagined worlds, a dizzy procession passing in gorgeous review before the throbbing eyes and simultaneously drinking in thru the nostrils faint whiffs of pungent salt air, saturated with the penetrating odor of iodine. One thus ensconced, might dream of old Neptune with his trident, of mermaids, of whales and porpoises and dolphins and deep sea specimens of the interpelagic depths. One might dream that he was in a region where

unseen fountains perpetually played and fairy guitars struck by invisible fingers sent forth an eternal harmony. It is a sleep like the princess in the fairy tale who slept for a hundred years. It is a sleep, not on a bed of roses, but rather on a bed of somnolent poppies.

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Out of seven patients undergoing treatment for the morphine habit under the abominable 56-hour Lambert cure, I beheld four of these taken out of the *locus penitentiae* on stretchers feet first. These were instances demonstrating the imprudence of an abrupt withdrawal of the dope in the exercise of this system of therapeutics. This is one of the many episodes wherein I noted fiends, poor weak things, fall by the wayside, victims swept down like defenseless pedestrians before cavalry or otherwise gathered in by the sexton in my doping days.

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Absinthe is a sedative. It is the common wormwood plant (*Artemisia Absinthium*) having a bitter, nauseous taste. It is called the Fairy with the Green Eyes. It is fatal to worms, hence the name. Nature has made the brain so delicate and the spirit so volatile, that its quality and comprehension vanish at its touch. Commercially, absinthe is a cordial of *eau de vie* (brandy), flavored with wormwood. Altho' green in color it is not a product of Ireland, but a syllabub of Paris.

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As a sedative to allay the tedium of alcoholic debauchery, bromidia ranks next to morphia. This may readily be deduced from a consideration of its component parts, viz., bromide of potassium, chloral hydrate and cannabis indica.

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At the time of the earthquake and fire in San Francisco, April 18th, 1906, there were over two thousand dopeheads in that city, the great majority of which number was temporarily quartered at the Presidio, pending the arrival of dope from other parts. Some of the most agonizing suffering known to humanity stalked into the ranks of this army by reason of the dearth of the drug, and here the fiends remained, willy nilly, until a shipment arrived from Los Angeles to quiet these restless and distressed spirits. There was wholesale pilfering among these habitues and eternal vigilance was the price of liberty to those who possessed

a trifling modicum. I was in Frisco at the time of the fire, but fortunately, with others, similarly addicted, managed to get to the Oakland Mole amid discomforting trials, and from this point I made no relay until I rode the "blind baggage" and curvetted right into Ogden, Utah.

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San Francisco, prior to the passage of the anti-drug law, housed more dope fiends than any other community in the U. S. A. Butte, Montana, ranked second. There was universal panic in the dope colony in this latter camp when the measure went into effect March 1st, 1915, some of the addicts "hitting the grit" to the Canadian border, others hiking to the Mexican line, and still others willing to boldly walk into state hospitals.

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In taste, chloral has a faintly sweet odor like the aroma of apples, and this taste is not unpleasant. It produces a sense of delicious warmth, and languor begins gradually to steal over one from some unexplained cause. An unaccountable sleep weighs down the eyelids, and at the same time the brain works actively and a hundred beautiful and pleasing ideas flit thru it. One feels utterly lethargic and everything appears to be reeling slowly round in a drowsy dance, of which the subject is the center. It reduces one to a partial state of insensibility, gradually going on to complete coma.

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The color and peculiar phases of a hasheesh dream are materially affected by one's surroundings just prior to the sleep. The lights, odors, sounds and colors are the strands which the deft fingers of imagination will weave into the hemp reveries and dreams, which seem as real as those of everyday life and always more grand. Hasheesh eaters and smokers in the East recognized this fact, and always, prior to indulging in the drug, surrounded themselves with the most pleasant sounds, faces, forms and colors.

Smokers use the dry shrub known as *ginyeh* and is the dried tops of the hemp plant. The hemp lozenges are made from the finest Nepaul resin of the hemp, mixed with butter, sugar, honey, flour, pounded datura seeds, some opium and a little henbane or hyoscyamus. In India it is known as *Majoon*; among the Moors as *El Mojen*.

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Since my final emancipation from the trammels of opium,

my normal sensibilities have been humbled to the dust and shamed into righteous indignation by a contemplation of the many blunders I committed and the many foolish notions I entertained while in narcotic captivity.

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Since my final emancipation from the slavery of morphine, I have dreamed of being addicted to its use, and what compunctions and heart throbs I had about how I was going to be released, how I could endure the pathological horrors incident to treatment again, and what reflections, as bitter as *coloquintida*, I nursed of a remorseful nature about my moral standing, and what ghastly features assembled and haunted me as in a nightmare's tightening grip! Of course, upon awakening, I was stunned by the agreeable surprise that I was as free as a bird in the air. He who has not left something sad behind him, and reawoke in the sunshine to feel the golden elixir of health and happiness in his veins anew, may take it that he has at least one pleasure yet unspent.

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On the ferry boat plying between San Francisco and the Oakland Mole, I encountered a confidence man who sported gig whiskers and the other accessories to look the part of gentle suavity. He approached me, evidently to pave the way to the possession of any loose velvet that I might have had, in that conventionality and smooth speech of "con" diddlers. The conversation was at first *en train*, and *inter alia*, I communicated to him the fact that I was a snowbird and "broke." I confessed this much by way of opening a masked battery. Our *tete-a-tete* was soon over, and he mingled with the passengers in his own subtle manner, and as the boat reached the foot of Market street, and passengers were about to go ashore, he peeled from a sawdust roll a one hundred dollar bill and handed it to me, simultaneously staring at me with eyes glistening with unhallowed fire, and with the air of the baffled bull of Phalaris, exclaimed:

"Take this and saw wood. Mum's the word."

I asked him to take a drink, and we repaired to a sybarite grill on Kearney street. I ordered a hot bird, an Arkansaw toothpick and a bottle of Amontillado from sun-kissed Spain. In an unguarded moment over our libations, I cautiously slipped a harmless dash of dope into his wine goblet. Under its spell he lost consciousness of the things about him, and while he dozed in

his chair he looked to me as meek as the ass on which Jesus rode to Egypt. While he thus slept and dreamed of Bung Loo and 3-card Monte, of the Tivoli and the Gooseneck, of grooved dice boxes, trimmed cards and pocket roulette wheels, I rolled him for both his flash wad and his tainted boodle. If I hadn't diddled him, he would have diddled me, so I considered the bilk as easy as getting money from father, and thus beat him at his own game to a stiff froth.

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Inordinate indulgence in alcoholic excesses culminated in an abrupt awakening during the night on frequent occasions wherein I was provoked to shoot myself with an injection of morphia. The occasion is fresh in my memory when one night at the holy hour, when graveyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion to this world, in a hotel in San Fernando, Calif., I employed myself in the process of preparing a "shot." In the manipulations I used a silver-plated hypodermic, which, when handled under the uncertain and flickering rays of the tallow dip, resembled bright and shining steel. My manoeuvres had evidently been observed by some peeping Tom, in all possibility a "native son" and who, at the breakfast table on the following morning, regaled the guests with the subjoined junkology:

"Say, fellows, I saw a man trying to commit suicide last night with a small steel smokeless pistol. He first shot himself in the leg, then in the arm. His nerve must have gone back on him, for he did not shoot at his head, or at any other part of his body. At last, he put up the gun, 'blew' out the candle and went to his room—number 13."

In the face of this vitriol, I closed like a clam, and hastily made a *pas de zephyr* in undignified precipitation.

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Getting results from experimentation frequently seduced me to ramble in untrodden fields. A curiosity seeker by nature, I mixed dashes of morphia, chloral and hasheesh in solution and then quaffed the cup. For a period of about fourteen hours the imagination made me an inhabitant of regions never theretofore explored, where I lolled in an atmosphere of dreamy indolence and *sans souci* reverie.

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The sustaining power of opium is marvelous. I remember having fasted for no less than three consecutive days. It was

on a Friday afternoon that I entered a Chink hop-joint on Dupont street, San Francisco, and there smoked the opium pills so strenuously that when I awoke and emerged therefrom I found that it was the following Monday afternoon by the Chronicle clock, and the newsboys were calling out "All about the Durrant case." I recall that when I entered thru the violet-velvet curtains to the silent ante-chamber hung with oriental drapery, I inhaled a fragrant, intoxicating vapor issuing from a strange sort of incense that burned within and that almost overpowered my senses. Everything about the company savored of orientalism, the orange colored velvet carpet, the Venetian lanterns and the mantels filled with queer Chinese porcelains. Sleeping there in that Chinese bunk surrounded by slant-eyed Chinks, I had some happy dreams. And with wide open eyes I beheld a brass Buddha do the can-can, a Venetian lantern to the eel glide and a huge Japanese jar danced the pedestal clog. A great elk's head bowed in reverential obeisance to me, a wine glass on the table danced a mazurka with a punch goblet, and mortals walked right out of the picture frames on the wall. While asleep in the bunk I was in graduated procession the King of Siam, the Sultan of Sulu, the Doge of Venice, the Maharajah of Rajputanah, the Prince of Timbuctoo and the Jack of Hearts.

But, alas, illusion is the food of dreams!

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My oracular judgment is that Naples is the dirtiest city, Paris the gayest, Jerusalem the rarest, Philadelphia the quietest, Glasgow the drunkenest, Moscow the quaintest, Monte Carlo the sportiest, Cairo the strangest, London the foggiest, Washington the cleanest, Chicago the windiest, and Frisco the dopiest city in all the world, and this after having visited all of them and having studied them with a more or less philosophic eye.

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The late P. T. Barnum crystallized a truth into an aphorism when he uttered the dictum: The American people like to be humbugged (*Mundus vult decipi*).

In 1905 I was sent to the Keeley Institute in Denver, Colo., to undergo treatment as a chronic morphine habitue. The Keeley doctor upon my avowal that I was a confirmed booze-hound as well, informed me that the treatment would include both morphine and John Barleycorn. In other words, it was proposed that the whiskey devil and the morphine Beelzebub

be driven out by the Keeley dragon. I rusticated there for six weeks, there being no thumbscrew of personal restraint whatever, and when I finally emerged therefrom, a whiskey highball or a club cocktail was just as inviting to my gustatory propensities and a "shot" of dope just as welcome to my animal economy as before. I would violate the truth were I to say that during this period I did not clandestinely use the "gun." Is it any wonder when it is considered that my personal locomotion was unfettered, and that I possessed the "long green" to maintain a supply of morphia? At the very threshold, considering the fact that I was using over fifty grains of morphine per day, I entered with misgivings, believing that six weeks was a period wholly inadequate even under restraint to arrest the habit, but as the County of Arapahoe was willing to foot the bill, I was willing to become a "star boarder." When these ministrations were concluded, I shook the Denver mud from my skees and boarded a green tin flivver for Erin Go Bragh.

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To the naked eye or subjected to the power of the microscopic lens, the sulphate of quinine and the sulphate of morphine appear alike, but the true test is the placing of each substance separately in the palm of one's hand or on any portion of the anatomical surface and then apply a slight moisture. The morphia will gradually absorb into the tissues, but the quinine will not. Both drugs are feathery and silky and of an efflorescent color.

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The lotus is a white and blue water lily. Denizens of the East Indies where it flourishes, indulge in its use to drown worldly cares, and it produces a condition of forgetfulness and induces a status of indolence to the worshipers at Lethe's wharf.

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History records that something like two thousand years ago the use of opium was indulged in by the poet, Homer, who begged his bread in the Greek towns; and history also records that Anastasius used opium, and carried with him the "little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug."

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Reduced to distressful straits while a dooper, I was compelled to pawn my law books for the stuff. I would have *cum magna*

*gratia* parted with my reputation had I had one; I would have hypothecated my passport to Heaven had I possessed this *carte blanche*, and this regardless of its non-negotiable character; yea, for a "shot" I would have sold the "fee-simple of my salvation, the inheritance of it; I would have cut the entails of all remainders and a perpetual succession for it perpetually."

## Part II

# In the Tow of the Fiend



## CHAPTER XIV

### DOCTOR JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

*"Thia murderous shaft that's shot!  
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way  
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;  
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking, but shift away,  
There's warrant in that theft that steals itself  
When there's no mercy left."*

—*Macbeth.*

The quality of mixing with my fellows is one of my strong natural points. I lay the flattering unction to my soul that with this quality of mixing with human units of diverse compass of mind and soul, I might have glittered as a Fourth Ward politician or a latter-day Joshua. The peculiar analytic attributes which I possess come from the fact that I wear windows in my bosom, and the indefinable something in my makeup, whatever it may be, produces the compelling, dominating personality. As the burnished sun sucks up the waters of the earth, or as a maelstrom engulfs everything in its seething vortex, so I draw men to me and force them to bend the pregnant hinges of the knee by a subtle wand, unrivaled only by a Rhabdomantist.

I am not a hapless chronicler of my own tragedies, yet penitence visits me when I reflect upon the one which stands out as the cancer of a concealed disgrace, borne upon the altar of an insatiable licentiousness when pinioned by the fetters of the alcoholic king and the emperor of drugs. For sixteen years it has been a picture turned to the wall. Calculating, then, the lustra of life from a consideration of the ferocity and pace which I have lived for the past forty years, Time's palsied fingers would write that I have arrived at the royal age of four hundred years, for in truth and in fact, I have lived ten in one during that period as a voluptuary, a wanton, a licentiate, a variant, full of mirth and misery, joy and bitter aloes.

The following I publish to relieve a distressed conscience,

even at the peril of being handed over to the executioner, notwithstanding that no one is bound to accuse himself except before God.

Its revelation breathes of pulque and poison; its pages exhale the incense of the hop-joint, the aroma of the now outlawed saloon. Reeking as it does with the juice of the poppy and the nectar of the grape, it drips as well with the blood of an innocent victim unconsciously transported to his long slumber within the portals of the tomb. Many moons since I have reproached myself in outrageous condemnation with unremitting intensity. To appease the offended deities, I have knelt down in the full of the beads, gone thru the stations of the cross, moistened my head with the holy unction and offered up salvos to the Throne. I have done penance before the icons of idolatrous adoration and performed religious duties with edifying assiduity. I have beaten my breast and howled with shrill and prolonged ululations. My agony could not have been worse had the great avenging angel stood over and beaten me with cruel stripes and scourged me with rods. As the Mohammedan facing Mecca, prostrates himself and exclaims, "Allah, keep me true," so I say, "Lord, forgive me this foul murder."

Thru the years of groping in the darkness, guilty of having been the author of a fellow man's untimely passing into some new infinitude, I have escaped the dragnet of the police, the dreaded touch upon the arm, the electric chair, the winding sheet of Potter's fosse.

As I perpetuate this confession in the immortality of frozen prose, may the gods defend me if there lurks between the lines—that the probative bear no hinge or loop—to hang a doubt on relative to my guilt, except that if he who left this outgrown shell by life's unresting sea could speak to mortals here below, he would dictate his own obituary, for he was, in fact, a party to his own enrollment among the gods, *volenti non fit injuria*.

Therefore, gentlemen, be seated, while I uncork a phial of one night's horror.

In my time I have been something of a student of life, and observer of men, women and affairs, an appraiser of their character, conduct and motives. Thus a kind of instinct which bred a tendency and grew to a habit has led me into diverse companies, the lowest and meanest. My entree to the company of the deceased occurred while I was one of a group of convivial timber wolves before a tavern bar in a hookworm village in Western Ontario, Canada. Prior to my contact with him, I had eloquently practiced at this bar, and after an exchange of greetings, we warmed up to each other in *camaraderie* as *beaux*

*esprits*, and each drink that we indulged in became the magnet for another. In this wise we seemed drawn to each other by a strong, strange sense as the Persian says one planet is drawn to another. A common feeling united us, and a common thought animated our minds and our actions. After all, misery perhaps is the strongest of all bonds.

In response to the itchings of thirst, drinks assembled themselves upon the bar with the regularity of a pendulum. In these diversions, I noticed that my associate became incapable of personal locomotion and that further, so far as conviviality is concerned, was neither company for man nor beast. It therefore became necessary for him to be conveyed to the hay, and this was hastily accomplished, and as the time was early in the afternoon of a cloudless autumnal day, I had expected that an evanescent campaign of sleep would restore him to a reasonable status of normality. But as to this I had recklessly reckoned, for within the hour he rejoined me in the giddy whirl before the tavern timber. I observed his visage as it was reflected before the tavern mirror, and it certainly betrayed the traces of broken slumber and his expectoration showed the "dark, brown froth" of a "hot box." His balance was unsteady, and his glance was shifty. His visage had that wine-bibbing caste and he looked the part to perfection of a graduated sot. His nerves seemed on edge, his monosyllabic stuttering and the intermittent spasms of pandiculation that he indulged in, proclaimed him to both the rounder and the most unlearned observer as one upon the precipice of the jimjams.

Having disposed of this diagnostic phase, and notwithstanding the evidence before me, I became aware, *inter pocula*, that he had not left his mesmerism in his suitcase. He read me thru and thru, and he wanted what he wanted when he wanted it. I read him too, and I began to divine inarticulate thoughts. Moved by some affinity within us, just as the alchemist's magic touch converts between two breaths one elixir in crucibles to another, or as zinc and acid generate the kindred mystery of electricity, so I saw in that man's flushed visage, desire flash thru his veins and light his heart and eyes with a divining color. In his face there was a true intensity; his keen eyes were full of distances, that is, of sensuous desires. I understood in an electric flash of consciousness.

In the interchange of glances and in answering smiles there lies an eloquence and a variety of language far beyond the possibilities of the most magnificent of spoken phrases.

Whether a telepathic wire had been installed between us and a means of communication established one to the other by some

occult or other force, I do not profess to say, but I know that ever since that time, I have had an abiding faith in telepathy. There are people who have double personalities, even triple or multiple personalities which differ utterly, all coming under the head of submerged personalities. I believe that a strong will can by virtue of its strength take possession of a weaker one, even at a distance and can regulate the impulses and the actions of the owner of it. If there was one man in the world who had a more highly developed will than any of the rest of the human family, there is no reason why he should not be able to reduce his fellow creatures to the condition of mere automatons.

Now, in order to circumvent the accusation of ambiguity in the conveyance of my opium-engendered ideas by the poverty of speech employed, let me say that this debauchee divined me as a morphine fiend, just as I had sized him up as a candidate for treatment in the incipient throes of delirium tremens. So that I was not surprised when he, in the utmost sangfroid manner and in that artful way known only to the obsessed, importuned me to allay his fevered occiput and nerve-racked body by and thru the potency of certain ministrations known to myself, his words being veiled in a subtle and specious speech.

Some mortals I know are dowered with ultramundane qualities that place them upon pedestals above their fellows, much like a sculptor is regarded over an ordinary stonemason or a member of the great historical school is above an artist of the inferior and vulgar class. My fellow inebriate was a clairvoyant of some exalted predominance, and besides this he had before his gaze as aids to accurate conclusions my gimlet-pointed pupils with their dark dots in the center of the iris, my ashen-faced contour like unto a waxen Christ, and the brilliant orbs of a morphine fiend. Hence, he divined me as a "snowbird" and begged for a "shot" of my favorite nepenthe.

In all of my intercourse with multiform humanity in my circumgyratory peregrinations over the world's geography, I have always comported myself discreetly in the dispensation of the drug to those not tolerated to its use. In instances of chronic habitues, obviously there is a freedom of traffic, an unwritten freemasonry of mutuality in the brotherhood of hopheads. In all other cases, best safety lies in fear. Not knowing, therefore, of my friend's chronic habituation to morphia, I prudently hesitated to allow his prayer and in a gracious spirit, *in totidem verbis*, so informed him. But unlike some mortals, there is a veneer to my apparent front of stolidity which can be pierced by prayerful supplications, and when the persistence of this debauchee became so insistent, and there was such drastic force

lent to his lisping modesty, and the fact that his general physical status was deplorable to the eye and so vulnerable to human compassion, that my recent declination mellowed into melting pity, and I half consented to accomodate him, believing as I did, that there is no hell and that if there be any, the devil is dead. In any case, I believed that the stars would roll on in their majestic spheres, regardless of mortal hopes and fears. Thus did I fall before the demon of perversity, which only tempts us once.

Accordingly, we repaired to his room in the hotel above the tavern bar, and I there administered to him a hypodermic injection of a quarter grain of morphine visualized by the inaccuracy of ocular measurement, which, to say the least is misguiding and dangerous. In having done this under the circumstances, I felt a consciousness of having lost my own self-respect, and in order to endure my own society and drown its recollection, I jabbed the needle into my own arm. When this was done, I left my friend lying upon the bed in his room and I repaired to the bar below.

It was while emptying "shoopers" of ale here some time after the above episode took place, that I began to "get my head," and I began to ponder over the status of this friend whom I had just left in his room. The thought suddenly flashed thru my brain cells now hypnotized by morphine and ale, that indulgence in sleep by one not habituated to morphia might metamorphose one from the physiological to the toxic stage and result in paralysis of the vital functions, coma and death. So that after due communion with my sensibilities, I hurried to his room in order that I might arrest the process of slumber or forestall its advance should he manifest any symptoms of drowsiness. He had the start of me of about one hour and this fact was alarming. Reaching his door, I at once tried the knob, but from this experiment I found that it must be securely bolted upon the inside, an act unwittingly done by my patient. I then commenced a thumping upon the exterior of the door. The inauguration of a tattoo upon the transom was also brought into requisition. I grabbed a convenient chair and slapped it against the door with thundering impact. None of these manipulations evoked a response, and for all of them, I might have tried to waken Duncan. Not a sound emanated therefrom; not a mouse disturbed the hallowed house. It was like the white silence of the morgue of death.

I peered thru the glass of the transom and beheld him lying upon the bed. I observed that there were no undulations of the torso, which, under normal conditions, heaves in the activity of respiration, much less did I discover a sound from the voiceless lips.

An insufferable gloom oppressed me. I was terror stricken

and my brain became a seething cauldron of confused ideas, realizing that I dare not make any undue tintamarre which might attract the inmates, who, upon the least hint, might raise the hue and cry and the episode culminate in my incarceration as a murderer under the inexorable English law.

I applied the phantasmal balm to my soul, troubled as it was by the horror of the situation, that by reason of some primitive imperfection in the glass of the transom, or the apparent bebulosity on its inner surface due to the accumulation of foreign matter thereon, the perspective was such that it afforded no true index of the undulations of the torso, hence the reclining form might be in the throes of normal slumber. In a momentary transport of glee, I hugged this as one last hope, a hope as slender and fragile as the willow branch at which a drowning wretch catches to save himself. This was the only solatium, the solitary fount to feed the vegetation of a withered heart.

But what if he were at that very moment dead? In a few hours, unless I effected a speedy getaway, I would be locked up and finally handed over to the hangman. And yet, knowing that I was innocent, why should I fly? Rather remain and face the music than be apprehended in flight!

When, finally I became capable of connected thought, I found myself faced by a big problem. If the worst came, suspicion would point to me, whether I stood my ground or attempted to escape. And the unpalatable truth is that I was the last person seen with him alive. Moreover, I knew not whether he was a stranger in these parts or a permanent fixture. In this latter case, a world of friends would come forward to assist the law officer of the Crown in the event of his death in a prosecution to force conviction of his murderer, and further that any virtues that the deceased might have had would plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of his slaughter. I mused that the village was a mere speck on the blue prints, and yet this very fact reflected an uneasiness, affording a conclusion augmenting the accusation against me.

Having engaged a room in the same hotel earlier in the day, I resolved to remain at least a brief season awaiting the outcome. It was now supper time, and from this fact I became affected with the added dread that should he be missed at the supper table, this circumstance might foster a desire in some of the inmates to awaken him in his room.

Of course, I could not tell a lie; I dared not tell the truth; so I compromised by keeping my mouth shut.

The evening meal was soon over, and I retreated to the room assigned to me earlier in the day and this was on the same floor.

Here I resolved to keep awake during the night bent on trying to awaken the sleeper, if possible, or otherwise ascertain the truth with an expenditure of the least possible stir on my part. During the pulseless watches of the night, first taking a look around to assure myself that everyone in the house was asleep, I tread the soft pedals with depressing monotony from my room to the door of his room to endeavor to awaken him. I tried the key of my own room in the lock of the door leading to his room, and altho' it turned with the usual click, it refused to respond and the sound echoed with thin, phantasmal reverberations. Necessity is ever a sophist. I tried to open the transom, but might as well have tried to open the gates of hell.

I was up against a proposition the solution of which was as far from me as the poles from each other. Like a soul obsessed, backward and forward I roamed, each time with a new clue to the denouement of the mystery or a new plan to pursue. I rejected a hundred schemes because their accomplishment involved a chance of detection. A snare lurked in every possibility. The prospect seemed hopeless, yet the more hopeless it seemed, the harder it drove me to frantic energies. A thousand thoughts came into my mind, one of these being the arousing of the guests and inmates and of unfolding the whole scheme. But on second reflection I could not afford to take any chances of thus having the hue and cry raised.

It was a long and weary evening, and, sad as was my watch and hectic as the visions which swept thru my heavy head, I would not quicken by one willing hour of sleep. The sad duties of a gray to-morrow must come. At times, I sat and stared at the wall, living the brief spell of my last life again—all the episode and change, all the hurry and glitter and unrest that was forever my portion—and then in spite of resolution I would doze to other visions outlined more brightly on the dark background of oblivion; and then I started up, my will all at war with tired nature's sweet insistence and paced in weary round the the little room, solitary but for those teeming thoughts and my own black shadow which stalked, sullen and slow, ever beside me.

I was being invaded by a stagnation of sleep and any procrastination might result in my dissolving from suppressed emotion.

But who can deride the great mother for long? 'Twas sleep I needed and she would have it. So it came heavily upon my heavy eyelids—strong, hypnotic sleep as black and silent as the abyss of the nether world. My head sank upon my arm, my arm

upon the foot of the velvet bed, and there, worn out with grief and watching, I slept.

At last I awoke and for a supreme moment lay in the warm glow of returning consciousness. As I sat upon the bed contemplating the sins of mankind, the hideous thought was upper-most in my mind of a dead man in a nearby room and I was his murderer.

I cannot hope, writing now, to convey in words at my command, a sense even remote of the utter loneliness which in that dreadful moment closed coldly down upon me. To escape was a natural impulse; to obey it, was quixotic.

It was now four o'clock a. m., and I made a last stand by taking a farewell look thru the transom.

The complete silence was oppressive. There was neither creak nor murmur. He lay in the same position as when he first sought rest upon the bed after having bolted the door, and his form was as still as a stone god. I was gazing upon a corpse. It was not sleep, then, the soporific sleep that a quarter grain of morphine produces, but it was death that an overdose takes body and soul. The devil's needle had worked its sorcery. The cursed elixir had done its work. Neither the living nor the dead knew that "it was loaded" with an overdose.

I was petrified with terror and my nerves were on edge. But my mind was fully made up. I decided in no shilly-shally sense to "chuck" the whole thing and avail myself of "leg bail." I thought with Pericles, "Lest my life be cropped, I'll shun the danger which I fear." Gray as the prospect ahead might be, behind it was black, so I concluded to plod on with stern resolve for a staff and melancholy for a companion. It was instinct, rather than fear, the instinct of prudence which guides all beings and makes them clear-sighted in danger. I resolved to quit the place at once and stand, not upon the order of my going, but like Malcolm and Donalbain, go at once.

Accordingly, I injected an extraordinarily copious "shot" of morphine, blended with a homeopathic quantum of cocaine, and I slyly slid out of that house forever.

Before I was Dr. Jekyll, the creative; now I was his *alter ego*, Mr. Hyde, the resolvent soul.

Gaining the street, a new difficulty arose, that of meeting up with the village constable or night watch. I looked up at the patient and untroubled stars, and I observed one shoot across the twinkling field. Was this an omen, I thought of honey or gall, bale or bliss? I bounced forward into the ocean of darkness and without impediment or error, I made my way. Providence favored me, as I met no meddlesome patrol, and my cushioned

tread was inaudible. After having goose-stepped it to the railroad depot, I grabbed the last car of a Grand Trunk Express train, which was slowly moving out of the yards and within an hour hurtled into Windsor. From this Canadian town, I crossed the ferry to Detroit. From the automobile city, I nestled myself upon the "trucks" of a passenger car bound for Chicago, the pocket edition of hell. As I rode into the Windy City the morning was opening her golden gates. The dawn came with violet deepening into purple, with purple flushing into rose, with rose shining into silver and glowing into gold. In the disordered pageant of struggling people with which Chicago abounds, I drifted out of my own life in its restless tide; a tide which dominated, thrilled and pulsated with the perpetual throb of the demon of hurry and unrest. I struggled on, avoiding the living torrent, and but for hope, I should have willingly lain down and suffered the multitude to trample me into the grave.

Procuring a morning paper, I noticed in the telegraph columns an account of this death in the village referred to. It was true even to details—that the body was found in his room, that he had died from asphyxiation due to morphine poisoning, causing paralysis of the chest muscles and that his companion of the day previous to his death had suddenly faded from the scene.

This intelligence descended upon me with thundering emphasis. As I strolled along the streets and gazed into the phantasmagoria of faces, I thought that I heard the interrogation "What hast thou done with thy brother Abel?" pierce the fearful hollow of my ears. But I actually laughed aloud at the comedy, to the consternation of the passers by, and I actually ejaculated in no low whisper "Am I my brother's keeper?"

I heard my name called by a voice familiar to me in a crowded street. I turned short round and saw the face of my victim looking at me with a fixed gaze. From that moment I had no peace; at all hours, in all places and amidst all companies, however engaged I might be, I heard the voice and could never help looking round and whenever I so looked round, I always encountered the same face staring close upon me. At last, in a mood of desperation, I had fixed myself face to face and eye to eye, and deliberately drawn the phantom visage as it glared upon me. And as the white lightning leaps thru the dull void of midnight and shows for one dazzling second some long-remembered country, ashine in every leaf and detail to the startled pilgrim, and then is gone with all the ghostly mirage of its passage, so, in that surprising moment so full of import the picture of the murdered one rose in my mind and was imprinted on the retina of my eyes. And angry with myself and that immaterial shade

which stood and hung its head before me; I stroked my hand across my face to rid me of the fancy, and, gathering myself together made my bow, murmuring something fiercely civil and turned my back upon it. For days and days it haunted me, even tho' I laughed it to scorn: The leer of the dead man repeatedly came back to me with a new significance. I snapped my fingers as if to pluck up my own spirits, and, choosing a street at random, I stepped boldly forward and found myself in West Madison street.

Was all of this a figment conjured up in my excited brain?

Yet I was the common quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, a known murderer. I knew that the scarlet thread of murder ran thru the colorless skein of my life. I was haunted by the ghostly fear of the touch upon the shoulder, of the *ecce homo* of the police. Should the worst come, I speculated upon the possibility of a shipwreck of my reason. The heaviness and guilt within my bosom took off my manhood. In a mighty effort to dispel fear, I reflected with Macbeth: "To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself," and seeing the reflection of a sunset in a glass of ruddy wine, I gave myself over to a whirlpool of drunken orgies among West Madison Street's lowest dives. And so the memory of this crime passed away like the stain of breath upon a mirror and I became Dr. Jekyll once more.

My riotous conscience has rehearsed this episode a thousand times since its happening sixteen years ago, and I here unfold it to the reader in the hope that absolution may come to a wayward and unhappy heart, before the rays of my destiny are gathering to a focus, and I creep into my sepulchre and pass back to carbon dioxide, water vapor and mineral salts.

## CHAPTER XV

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### IN THE SEWERS OF HELL

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*"Let's talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs,  
Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth."*

—*King Richard II.*

Has the soul a previous existence?

Are we feeble worms of earth, frail children of the dust, mere blobs of pulp?

Have we existed from eternity, or are we the offspring of chance?

Is life a vapor which appears for a time and then vanishes away?

Are the dead really dead?

I wonder and the world wonders.

I am an open scoffer of latter-day orthodoxy. I am a firm believer in the philosophies didactically enunciated by Copernicus, Humboldt, Montaigne, Helmholtz, Spinoza, Calvini, Comte, Galileo, Kepler, Flamstead, Spencer and LaPlace. These scientists whispered heresy in my ear, and since arrival at the age of intellectual capacity, mellowed by the stealing hours of time, and able to dispose of the riddle of the cosmos, comprising the absorbing questions of the mysteries of existence, the hidden powers which nature manifests to us, the origin of destiny of the human soul, biology and evolution and mosaic cosmology to an approving conscience, I have refuted the orthodox dictum of the soul's survival after the extinction of the corporal entity. I do not believe that all on earth is shadow, and all beyond is substance without change. In other words, I do not believe that the soul is the perfect individuum, Plato and Cicero *tout au contraire*. The liberal and the rationalist endorse this theory, and yet, paradoxical as it may seem, believe in an eternal king of heaven, the animist and the materialist only differing as to the kind of king, one a god of vengeance, the other a god of love.

The materialism of Epictetus, Condillae and DesCartes is sound practical philosophy for one who has sipped every joy and drank deep of every sorrow, who has been seared with a burning brand and lived the unholy life of a dope fiend, and this is substantially that I am the master of my fate and I make the declaration with sledge-hammer assertiveness that I am the captain of my soul. This is intellectual liberty.

I believe that one drop of water is as wonderful as all the seas, one leaf as all the forests and one grain of sand as all the stars.

I have lived among the shadows; now I am in the sun.

God, if he exists, cannot be offended with my doubts, which are but an avowal of my ignorance; I would guard myself against denying the existence of God, but I cannot sincerely and coldly affirm it.

It is wonderful that great thinkers discuss with sophistication the mysteries of transcendentalism, and are conspicuously silent about the world some say we came from. And still the wonder grows, if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame shall ever reassemble in equal activity in a similar frame, or whether they have before had a natural history like that of the body. Those who doubt a future state have no hesitancy in accepting a previous one which has survived in the belief of all ages.

Many times have I discussed with investigators the strange phenomena in nature which manifests in organized beings subjectively as thought, feeling, and things spiritual, and also discussed the possibility and also the probability of an existence of the spiritual part of man after death, and the cases of strange phenomena that tended to prove the indestructibility of matter or spirit, and that the spirits of the dead walk again. Yet, in the ordinary course of nature, it is unlikely that we shall ever meet again.

My faith in materialism was rudely shattered and came within an ace of being finally overthrown, by a singular experience that iced my blood and maddened me to the very intoxication of insanity, by the weird and ghoulish incantations and the sinister antics of bogles and other uncanny shapes a few years since within the confines of commercial activity.

I give here an illustration of the power to summon from the realms of the invisible, the shades of departed souls. It is a strange and marvelous case of psychic phenomena, and ought to appeal to the romantic fibre of those who believe in demonology and witchcraft, and to those who do not believe that spirits operate by natural law. As I write this bugaboo tale, and conjure

up threatening forms from another world, the facts haunt me as a dark rebus and my pulses still throb with the recollection of it. I set them down not for the purpose of detailing a mystery or of penning a romance, and I am willing to arrogate to the reader the right to conclude as to the extraordinary revelations being true in fact, or came as the aftermath of a diseased mentality, producing a "brain storm" or mirage of the mind, resulting from the excesses of a confirmed inebriate and chronic morphomaniac combined. Or had I one of those incomprehensible nervous shocks, one of those affections of the brain which dwarf the miracles to which the supernatural owes its power? Or might I not have been the dupe of my own excited fancy or the victim of an imposture in others?

Lockport is a town of some civic proportions, the population numbering some 30,000 souls and so called because there are built here extensive locks for the passage of small craft upon the Erie Canal. The town is located in northwestern New York, some of the present denizens being lineal descendants of the old Holland Dutch and Knickerbocker blood. While evidences abound showing, commercial advancement due to the fabrications of human ingenuity, the suggestions of experience and the invention of fancy, together with the general spirit of modern progression in this workaday world, and while these are quite noticeable in the architecture of the town and in general civic reform, yet ample landmarks remain to remind one of the Pilgrim Fathers and the antiquity of generations long mouldered in the dust of the ages.

It was the prevailing custom in the early epochs in disposing of the dead, to inter the bodies in plots within the limits of commercial traffic, after the vogue which prevailed in European countries for ages, where even now, in this the golden dawn of the twentieth century, may be visualized these sacred parterres, nestled within the throbbing pulse of the marts of commerce.

Lockport has at least one of these parterres—acres of God—encircled by the usual iron fence, tessellated and worked in arabesque of a gloomy tincture and eloquent with tombs, mildewed and discolored with age, aureoled with rosettes of lichen and bearded with savage moss. Its stone pillars and iron gates are laced with ivy, weeds are damp from rankness and the antiquated necropolis is otherwise indelibly stained by the touch of time, altho' at the time I write, was still used as a place of burial.

It was one auroral morning in June that I descended upon this town from Buffalo after a heavy train of mishaps and reverses at cards in the latter metropolis. I offer the soft impeachment of having for some protracted period prior to my arrival,

followed the sporting life there, resorting to the hollow ways of intrigue, living in the saps, and in addition, I consigned myself utterly to a revelry of wine and wassail and song. I fell from the gentlemanly estate and sought acquaintance and consorted with the vilest arts of the gambler by profession, and won at cards as the fruit of the natural percentage which always favors the professional player of odds who lets the other fellow do the guessing. Having become an adept in this despicable science, I blossomed out as a short card sport and practiced this and the art of winning with loaded dice and "shoving the queer" habitually as a means of increasning my means at the expense of novices who believed that there were five aces in a poker deck. These reckless orgies of self-indulgence included addiction to the deleterious, but calming juice, the boa-constrictor morphine. At the time I was surfeited with liquor and dope, and on my person I carried a small cargo of the drug. I also possessed some velvet with which to blow myself in a final pianissimo of fast spending and continue my long spell of frolic. Thus did I proclaim myself to the unsuspecting villagers, and thus did I plunge into a maelstrom of dissipation in their midst.

Conviviality is a lever that sucks into its vampire maw the submerged tenth, and I stuck to the cesspools. Here I met a bevy of lack-lustre eyed "soaks" and human odds and ends, some low-brows, others high-brows, that littered about the bars along the canal front. Some of these were cheated of feature by dissembling nature; others were stamped with a melancholy gaze. Their looks told of many blighted hopes. Their skins were full of wine. There were drunkards, inarticulate and reeling, with bruised visages, filthy garments, unsteady swagger, thick sensual lips and hearty looking, rubicund faces, all full of an inordinate vivacity which jarred discordantly on the ear, and gave an aching sensation to the heart. In this grotesque conglomeration of the undertow of the *genus homo* I singled out the human debris, some of them black-rouged with care, others gray-powdered with hunger. The disintegrating force could be traced upon the facial defiles, the sodden visage, the hunted look. In their faces was all the dumb pathos of the wounded and hunted animal. There were worn and hard faces with no calm or peace in the expression; the harsh lines and furrows spoke of foiled ambition and smarting vanity; and thereby hangs many a moving, dramatic and tragic history of gradual descent from the "Hupper Succes" to the lowest depths.

The great mass are divided into two distinct groups; one group represents savagery, the other angels of God.

The face is the index of the mind; the lion is known by its claws.

These derelicts constituted the driftwood of humanity. They were human discards, human zeros. Some were replicas of sin itself, with the criminal ear and the degenerate chin. It is needless to say that they knew nothing of the marbles of Greece, the stones of Venice, the poems of Shakespeare or the music of Wagner.

This is the class that I permitted to touch the hem of my garment, and into whose confidence I surrendered my generosity and with whom I collaborated in the unloading of "schooners" with belly to the bar. I moralize that in the tow of such a confederation they not only got my velvet, but they came very near getting my ram. It is a paradox that men of mental cultivation and those who love the loftier virtues, sometimes fall from grace and glue themselves to these human dregs and dangerous alliances. The explanation of it is as enigmatical as the flux of all things. As well might one expect a graven image to tell how an oyster makes its shell or explain the cause of thunder.

These afternoon farmers were moneyless men; therefore it was up to me to do the honors. In this dispensation, I was sensibly impressed with the precise punctuality which characterized their movements when a round of drinks was ordered; but I was not impressed with wonder when by dint of a succession of these invitations, the whole company rapidly gravitated to a condition of maudlin intoxication. Thru it all, I was becoming somewhat mellow myself, altho' I still retained the capacity to pass upon the inebriety of my fellows. *Pro re nata*, I purposely cheated myself of a number of highballs which would otherwise have gone under my belt, and these were by me deftly consigned to the cuspidor at my feet. I argued that I had the fulness of the afternoon before me within which to get dizzy, and that if I should so deceive them and so send them under the table first, I could sail before the wind to the king row. These precautionary measures germinated from a consideration of the fact that drug fiends are wary of being found out. I was sensible of the stubborn truth that the most remote or hobbling suspicion would subject me to impalement upon the nail of obloquy and I knew that the slow, unmoving finger of scorn would point to me, and these embers of accusation fanned into the ultra violet rays of inextricable ostracism, for I knew then, as I know now, that society is cruel, relentless and unforgiving.

As the hours flew past on the wings of the afternoon, the party of bar flies, wall lizards and barrel-house bums became swine drunk, which condition sent them finally to the floor.

After this I kept alternating from one dive to another until nightfall, during which time I must have eloquently practiced at the bar, for I became aware of my own condition, altho' steeped in morphine besides. To be true to the record, I was potted in wine to the very brink of aphasia, but had enough mother-wit left to hie me far from the madding crowd.

My higher sense dictated that I ramble out to some grassy plot somewhere in the environs of Lockport, lie down in the cool of the evening and surrender myself to the unspeakable sweating dreams of the opium eater, and enjoy the visions that come to one from the subtle poison while in its deadening clasp.

I hazily recall having quitted the saloons along the canal front; of having crossed the canal locks; of having sauntered past residences from which gleamed the evening light, of having trudged along a smooth highway beneath the black arch of night as a keystone, and of finally lying down upon a soft lap of earth, my head resting upon a vagrant hillock of sod.

I must have slumbered but fitfully, superinduced by the joint dominion of opium and ale, for I awoke in dreadful starts from the inexpressible fantasies that visit one from morphine poisoning and an internal sudorific of "knock-out drops." I was hunted down thru the dark alleys of sleep by hydra-headed monsters with fiery eyes and slimy tentacula, bedizened in cruel, violent colors that filled me with unreasoning fear. I was conscious that I was dreaming of slowly sinking down into the wormy earth among dead men's bones and all uncleanness, to the very sewers of hell.

About this time my sensibilities were aroused by hearing a sound like unto a muffled thud upon the ground near my feet, my hair oozy with terror, my flesh glazed as with a coating of thin ice. The moon shed a phosphorescent lustre that glowed and explored even the silent recesses of my surroundings. I mopped my eyes for clearer vision, and there beheld in abject terror white and gray tombstones of irregular shape that littered about zigzag confusion upon every hand. I was chained to the spot, and I shook with very horror as the quivering plumes upon the hearse as I observed these silent sentinels and these mouldering heaps.

Instinctively I consulted my timepiece; it was a few minutes after two o'clock in the morning. I was sitting bolt upright and behind me was a grassy grave—creation's melancholy vault. This was the hillock upon which my head rested thru the earlier hours. A mossy marble rose from one end upon which I could read the usual *hic jacet*, and below the stereotyped *requiescat in pace*.

*I was in the middle of an old-time cemetery in the middle of the night.*

I was in the twilight atmosphere where spirit and matter meet. I was in the vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom, the land of apparitions and empty shades, a jeweled city of the dead.

I sat upon a fragment of turf, embroidered as never was kingly portal, with my hands clasped over my eyes to remove from me all the images of life and gave way to that involuntary mood of mind in which ideas come and press in crowds without shape, leaving no more impression than the drops of a sunshower on the trees. I had remained long in this half-dreaming confusion and had almost imagined myself transported to some intermediate realm, when the evil spirit of fear took hold of me and I removed my hands from over my eyes.

My perceptions were keenly alive to the surroundings. The earth heaved into little billows as if to show the turbulence of that life which those who lay below them had lately quitted. There were decrepid and bending tombstones lurching at every angle or deeply sinking into the deep sea of forgetfulness around them. Near me was a willow tree, where the graves lie close together which had burst into tufted plumes in the fulness of spring, and the tall grass blades over each mound show a strange quickening of the soil below. Here and there are never-failing garlands of *immortelles*, with their sepulchral spicery, and on the tombs are the usual resurgam and other carvings. The simple humility of these carvings counterbalances all sense of the ridiculous. Over the graves as I read, the scriptural quotations are pregnant with humanity and tenderness. And as I see the gray *immortelles*, crowning a tombstone, I know that I shall find the mysteries of the resurrection shown rather in symbols and only the love taught in His new commandment left for the graphic touch.

Off in one corner I descried certain rude wooden crosses which marked the burial place of wanderers. I wot not pagan or christian, nameless mounds on which no tears are wept, no flowers are strewn and to which no visitors come. It was Potter's Field.

So far as I knew not another living, sentient being was there. Petrified by fear, I could scarcely move, much less cry out, for I was afraid of my own voice. A vague and impalpable sense of restraint and captivity seemed closing me in on every side. I was imprisoned, I thought, within invisible walls, solid walls as old as the world. The moon was lying on masses of cloud like a queen pillowed on cushions of silver which showed me in its indistinct illumination, every object as plunged in that ob-

scurity so awful in deserts and still moreso in that cemetery. At this time an untoward rattle reached my sensibilities from the rear, and, obeying a mechanical instinct, I risked a turn of the head, and away in the farther corner I beheld a ghostly shape wrapped in filmy tunics, which I readily perceived were the cerements of the tomb. It danced before me in sepulchral glee, courtesied in an ecstasy of Terpsichorean bedivement, and with a sweeping swish, vanished to its vault of clay, emitting a death rattle as it sunk to its depths, that tied up the circulation and refused the ruddy drops a visit to the craven cheek. It was with difficulty that the cervical muscles performed their office, and, mechanically I looked straight before me and there, before my terror-stricken orbs, not one, but a legion of grinning skeletons executed fantastic gyrations representing the evolutions of the dance of death, with the precision of a last rehearsal.

And now as the moon was stripped of her misty vestiture, the ponderous and marble jaws of all the coffins seemed opened and from each issued the faint, phosphoric radiance of decay, so that I could see into the innermost recesses, and there perceive the shrouded corpses in their sad and solemn slumbers with the worm. From out the countless pits there came a melancholy rustling of the garments of the buried. They were shrouded in unmouldered winding sheets, some shrouded all in white with boundup mouths, some naked and black as ebony. Silent figures wrapped in shadow flickered vaguely thru the gloom. They flitted in and about the tombs and ancient sarcophagi, ruined and empty, in demoniacal abandon and with minatory fingers pointed to me as if pronouncing a *memento mori*. Death's heads, jawless skulls and rough-butted shank bones without number rose on every hand, seemingly inoculated with the voltaic pile. Like the Babylonian finger on the wall it seemed that they were spelling out the letters of my judgment. The scene was truly a Golgotha.

As every man is under a sealed sentence of death, I thought that my time had come. It was if a summons had come out of the grave and I began to think of the immortality of the soul. My sensitive soul had vague yearnings for the infinite.

The next sensation was the sound of something resembling that of a lethal missile thrown high in the air and gaining momentum in its accelerated descent, reached the ground, gave forth a muffled thud. I thought that the sod began to move and I with it. I endeavored to shriek and my lips and my parched tongue moved convulsively together in the attempt, but no voice issued from the cavernous lungs, which, oppressed by

the weight of some incumbent mountain, gasped and palpitated with the heart at each elaborate and struggling inspiration.

I was streaming from every pore in cold perspiration, and in a delirium of fear, I mopped my frigid brow.

Fear is an atrocious sensation—a sort of decomposition of the soul, a terrible spasm of brain and heart.

As my hand descended to my side, it struck against a hard substance and broke welcome news. I remembered that it was a flask of whisky, a preparedness desideratum for hot-box eventualities.

Flushed with hope that I could by means of this agency release myself from the perilous predicament in which I discovered myself, I nervelessly wrested it from the inside pocket of my coat, drew the cork and took a most murderous drink. I was goaded to insanity by the osseous sounds that punctured the ether and the invisible instrumentalities that shook the sod and now waited for a revival of my nerve. This force became at once assertive, and believing that one of such drinks was capable of good results, I slammed another drink under my surcingle and by the blood of Holy Paul and the jumping Jerusalem, I was resolved to get out of the dread cemetery with tooth and nail, with hands and feet, with claws and beak or fight the imps and demons of hell. It was *aut vincere, aut mori*. I made a plunge forward, leaped over mounds of earth and threaded my way thru a maze of tombstones in a demoniacal race to gain the iron fence. In my precipitate rush forward, I stumbled upon some uncertain obstructions and fell, belly-up, into an open grave. A metallic sound riposted from this impact, and I became aware of the fact that I was prostrate upon a recently lowered coffin, presumably containing fresh fish. I clambered out of this like a bat out of the furnace of hell, and made for the fence, believing all the while that I could sense the breath of a legion of bad spirits upon me as they maddened me to increased speed by their deadened footfalls. It seemed as if stark and rigid forms thickened round me and crossed my legs at every turn. I took the bit in my teeth and cleared the fence with the agility of an acrobat, and felt safe from the fiends, now that I was on the open road.

As there comes an end to all things and as the most capacious measure is at last filled, the climax may be narrated in few words.

From that cemetery of departed shades and pallid ghosts, where ghouls and charmless apparitions cavorted in fustian robes in all the ghastliness of spirits burst from their sepulchres, where the rattle, of death's heads penetrated the ether of the

night portentous of a rebellion in Hades, I fled, in superstitious terror, with the agility of Atlanta. As I ran, the sweet moist air of the morning was like an elixir to my heated frame. Down that open road I plunged, while a thousand fancies danced around me. My sinews bore me stiffly up and while galloping along the highway, my startled vision perceived the outlines of several forms silhouetted against the matutinal vapors and these immediately took up the chase. Nerved by the booze just taken, and resolved to outpoint my pursurers *nolens volens*, and whom I had reason to believe were of the number with whom I had associated on yesterday, I redoubled my speed and maintained this until I rushed breathlessly into the first place displaying a light, which I afterwards ascertained was police headquarters. Here I fell upon the floor, smitten by the lethargy of lipothymy. I know not how long my encephalic economy was stunned, but I do know that when I came to, the candles of the night had burned out and jocund day stood tiptoe on the rim. The couch upon which my nerve-racked body lay was surrounded by uniformed police, who put the stock question regarding whence I came.

“Gentlemen, I have the sensations of a man who has just attended his own funeral,” I said. “True it is that I have been to Golgotha. I have seen such sights under the hallowed turquoise sky, as would freeze the blood of mortal man. I have seen the canonized bones of men long hearsed in death and shrouded in the draperies of the grave, burst from their cements and rise from their pits of clay. I have been strangled by the breath of shades long inured in the musty cloisters of eternal sleep. I have just left subterrene cloacas, and where I mingled with the Conqueror Worm, in the very sewers of hell.”

So saying, I snatched from a secret recess of my clothing, the morphine layout and prepared a solution of the peerless nepenthe. Under the very eyes of the police stationed about, I rolled up the sleeve of my coat and into the flesh of my left arm, which of course showed innumerable purplish punctures, I suddenly slipped the little sting of steel, sweeter than the first kiss of love to the innocent.

I tore out of Lockport without ceremony, first calling upon the immortal gods to witness my unquenchable pledge never to have my ticket punched for this Jonah town again, even should I outlive the everlasting, heaven-kissing hills and this old earth become a heaven and all men angels.

## CHAPTER XVI

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### THE LITTLE BLIND GIRL

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*"Or Hubert, if you will cut out my tongue,  
So I may keep mine eyes, O spare mine eyes,  
Tho' to no use but to look on you."*

—*King John.*

On a sultry June morning full of glowing poetry, I took passage on a river boat at Marietta, Ohio, due to arrive in Wheeling, West Virginia, the following morning. To the farthest reaches, the day blazed clear as a blue diamond in the smart spring sunshine. Landings lined both banks of the Ohio, and more time was actually expended in discharging and taking on freight than in the propulsion of the vessel thru its saffron waters. It was berry picking time and the transportation of this product constituted the major part of the cargo. I was the single passenger on board.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of this day—a day sufficient to make an old man young again or force an atheist to believe in God,—our vessel moored at the landing of an unpretentious town on the right bank of the river. A traveled highway stretched itself from the boat landing up the hill leading to the top of the bluff, and was there lost to the view by a diversity of overspreading and sheltering arbors. In sheltered nooks along the river the dogwoods had unfolded the heart shaped petals of their early blossoms, and in front yards the lilac bushes made the air fragrant. The vivid green hills were aflame with poppies and buttercups, relieved at intervals by patches of blue lilies and purple lupines, and here and there were cream dappled laurustiums, the flowering almond with its shell-heart of pink, sallow catkins, yellow gorse, the purple-red deadnettle, the ruddy hued fallaways of the poplar, the laburnum and hawthorn.

While seated upon a capstan observing stevedores engaged in discharging freight, my eyes wandered up this hill, where I perceived two figures approaching the boat. Distance interferred

with my power to size them up to a fastidious delicacy, but I found out as they came closer that I had blundered into the right, for the taller was an elderly lady, the other a little girl of ten years or thereabouts. They were governess and understudy. The governess seemed a matronly old girl and her charge filled all voids. She held a beribboned sunbonnet of sewed straw garnished with oxlips and primroses, with its long white strings. Her auburn hair rippled back in flowing ringlets down her back and over her shoulders. She was a young and rose-lipped cherubim. Her skin rivaled the purest ivory and the red flag of health was unfurled in her cheeks, and these were pink as almond blows. There was a saucy dimple imprisoned in her cleft chin—a chin that curved upward from the throat like the rounding calyx of a flower. Her visage was immobile, and in this repose was supremely virginal. She seemed as delicate as a china cup. The pure outlines of her shape told me that she came from heaven, for she looked like an angel fallen from the skies, or a spirit that a breath might waft away. I was frozen to the spot in contemplative adoration, as I banqueted upon her baby face. She presented a picture of purity and freshness.

She was habited in a gown of indescribably harmonious texture and pattern, and a necklace of pure pearls encircled her white throat. Her footwear consisted of little pink buskins, whose ribbons traced an X on her white open-worked stockings.

As she twirled her sunbonnet to and fro, her face betrayed grave impassivity. There was not the suggestion of a sparkle on it. Some lazy minutes passed, during which time her gaze was focused upon the sand at her feet. Then, on the instant, she raised her eyes to heaven, and even the opalescent gleam of the sun affected her not. I gazed at the face before me and stopped with a sudden constriction of heart. I began to smell the truth.

*She was blind.*

Sensitive as I am by nature framed, I was moved by compassion for this unfortunate child's affliction, and I concluded to present myself to the duenna to ascertain the facts. My journalistic experience in the past was an ample passport, and I would approach her with diplomatic shrewdness. I knew the rigid decorum practiced in the exchange of polite amenities; I was meticulously groomed, and I must pose *a l'Italianne*.

With a feeble smile I tried to introduce the subject with classical ease and lightness, and thus break down any barbwire entanglements of frigid unapproachability. I said:

“Madam, you will pardon an inquisitive compatriot; for the

past few moments I have observed your companion. Is the little girl blind?"

With devotional rapture I listened to her reply, which came with ingenuous pleasantries in French:

"*Oui, Monsieur, elle est aveugle; elle a eut aussi depuis sa naissance il y a dix annes.*"

Following the cue which she had inaugurated by replying in her native tongue, I humored her by the same *parlez-vous* and assured her that my interest was a natural one as a *paterfamilias*, and incidentally let drop the reflection that blindness was a jumping off condition and the most dreadful calamity that could afflict any feeble worm of earth, any frail child of the dust.

It may seem strange to the reader that a morphine fiend could be sentimental by nature, for at the time herein referred to I was a chronic slave to drugs and rum, and leading a life that would blanch the cheek of the most abject voluptuary. Yea, I was pickled in the very brine of hedonism. Notwithstanding this status, I was not divested of the attribute of emotional volcanics. And I believe that notwithstanding the condition in man of downright case-hardening and cankered mind, there are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost to whom life and death are topics of indolent jest, men who have no respect for heaven or earth, there are matters of which no jest can be made.

"To me the meanest flower that blows, can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

The *gouvernante* in her inimitable Pyrenees French, revealed these piquant details:

The little blind girl was the only child of wealthy parents who had recently moved from Mississippi, where she was born. Her father had been a planter there, and journeying North and quite content to entertain the lag end of life with quiet hours, purchased an estate above the landing. The child had been brought up exclusively at home in the simplicity of an *al fresco* life. The tenderness and indulgence of her parents was such that every childish whim was gratified, and there was exerted for her concerns a phenomenal solicitude, prompted by the parental instinct; and I was assured by the governess that a fortune stood at the disposal of science in the restoration of her sight. By nature precocious, she had at the tender age of ten

years, become a pianiste of remarkable finesse for a blind girl, and was at this time pursuing a semester in classics.

To be blind and to be loved is one of the most strangely exquisite forms of happiness upon this earth, where nothing is perfect.

Notwithstanding her beauty—the beauty of the seraphim—infantile loveliness clothed in all its chivalrous attributes of almost supernatural purity and grace, her inexpressible *douceur* of carriage—her inherent precocity—I say that notwithstanding all of these attributes, there was an indefinable something lurking within her psychic makeup tracing the melancholy gaze, the shy reserve, and generating the pensive abstraction which distinguished her every movement. She seemed immersed in a cataclysm of profound musing. Dull-eyed melancholy seemed her sad companion. There was a cloud upon that alert, yet pensive face. The delicate upward slant of the features that nature had fashioned so joyously like the petals of a flower held up to the sun, drooped from some inward blight. There was a fantastic quality about her—a something not of earth, but of the four winds, the sky, the great swept places—that gave a sort of flying quality to her beauty, like that of some empyreal spirit one might grasp for a moment between flights, she looked so undarkened by earth's mistakes and guilt. Her childish innocence took the form of ideality, purity and a refinement of soul that bade her seek communion with things above this earth. She had a look of spirituality and seemed surrounded by an atmosphere of holiness. She had the sense of feeling and the power of speech; she could enjoy the flavor of the honey and the fragrance of flowers, and she could hear the birds vying with one another in singing liquid mating songs in a melody of love. But, alas! she could not see! She was bereft of the heavenly jewels of sight, with which to behold the beauties of nature and the glories of art. Could it therefore be possible that in these convulsions of psychic concentration she breathed forth brief but deep-toned lamentations as she called upon the god of her blind world?

The French governess informed me that the little blind girl's name was Floss, and I at once became inspired.

“Little sunbonnet, do you know what Floss means in Latin?” I asked.

The languid tilt of her head shifted and on the moment her mellifluous tongue, pure as a sky-lark's, answered in a dolorosa:

“A Flower.”

Her words came sweeter to me than the murmur of a sunny river, and I replied:

"Your name is like the perfume of a flower and your personality is as sweet as the lily it suggests."

"May you sail with the tide," she rejoined.

Before we swung away from our moorings, the duenna importuned the little blind girl:

"*Dites au-revoir a la gentilhomme etrange.*"

"Good-bye," she said, dropping a mechanical courtesy, "and I thank you for the Latin."

"Good-bye; the labor we delight in physics pain," I said.

Nothing is said so often as "Good-bye." It was indeed good-bye forever.

Now, the above facts are trite and prosy, and up to this stage of their portrayal, would be powerless to move the interest or affect the imagination of the ordinarily speculative and impressionable mind, and they doubtless would have faded into the nimbus of obscurity, were it not for certain happenings thereafter recommending them to public perusal. My sole apology for embalming them to the immortality of literal narration may be detected in the luminosity of these subsequent events. It is my sole apology for this long introduction, my sole excuse for writing this chapter and the genesis of this veracious story.

Some few years following the above *rencontre*, while on my way East, I found myself within reach of this same sleepy old town. It was the same genial, auroral month, with its usual rosy glow. The pulse of rejuvenated nature was quickened, and men's voices were lifted up under the inspiration of summer. Vegetation was bursting into mellow ripeness under the kisses of the June sun. Arbors bloomed with the promise of a yield of succulent fruit and the vivid green hills were wrapped to the point of extravagance in a display of floral profusion. There was an enchantment about this locality that was engraven by the footsteps of youth, innocence and beauty.

The luscious remembrance of the incident here depicted revived itself in my sensibilities, and instinctively I inquired about the little blind girl.

When the intelligence came that she had been fatally struck by a bolt of lightning the autumn previous, I was petrified with astonishment, thunderstruck with emotion.

This little flower, then, was dead, deflowered and sapped of her sweetness and died with the flowers of the field. Since my former visit some immense angel had stood erect with wings outspread awaiting that soul. I mused that this lovely form faded away into the house with the narrow portal and her soul like a silvered dove, winged its way to the green fields of Eden. Here it was dowered with a new birth, wherein there is no blindness,

where all the hosts see thru a divine intelligence, eternal in a blissful immortality.

I gathered together some flowers and walked out to the village cemetery. Aided by the village sexton I found her grave, a white marble cross. Here amid children's graves with guardian angels of great specific gravity, rests forever the ashes of the little blind girl. I paused, and placing thereon a wreath of roses, lilies and azaleas, blended to form a general emblem of youthful mortality, I sweetened the velvet turf that wrapped the prettiest flower of all, and retired in gloomy contemplation from the place, moralizing on the flight of time, the fleeting romance, the lasting tragedy of human life and the evanescence of all earthly things.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A LATTER-DAY DELILAH

*“What I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!  
A woman that is like a German clock  
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,  
And never going right, being a watch,  
But being watched that it may still go right!  
Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all  
And among three, to love the worst of all.*

\* \* \* \* \*  
*Aye, and by heaven, one that will do the deed  
Tho' Argus were her eunuch and her guide.  
A wightily wanton, with a velvet brow,  
With two pitchballs stuck in her face for eyes.”*

—*Love's Labor's Lost.*

I confess that the reading public is sometimes fooled by nursed fables, and stunned by revelations that savor of a careful construction of involved explanation that fit into a certain fixed series of physical events, which fall by their own absurd weight, when tested in the crucible of the natural sequence of these events.

Aristotle has said that “with the true all things that exist are in harmony, but with the false, the truth at once disagrees.” And Starkie has enunciated that it is impossible to construct a false consistency of circumstances beyond a very limited extent. The imagination in the construction of premises, is a despot, and it is capable of clothing life with roses or of filling it with thorns. And imaginative beings who invent marvelous tales may take what license they please, but a simple narrator is nothing if not accurate. How often do we hear that there is nothing new under the sun! I do no violence to truth then, when I assert that there is nothing remarkable beneath the visiting moon.

To the incredulous and to the skeptical quibblers, therefore, and to those, who by their complex nature have a hunger for the bizarre and fantastic, to those who have the remarkable perceptions of the ludicrous, I vouch for the absolute truth of the

unique comedy here narrated, the name of the town only being veiled. They are as true and accurate as the needle that always turns toward the pole; as true as that the morning steals upon the night; as true as that the clouds and shadows of a summer day succeed one another as inevitably as light and shadow. If it is not true, then it must be invented. If there is discovered in this story the least little peephole of deception, the reader may turn away with a prudish disgust and discredit the author. But by the souls of the pious in Paradise and the unholy in Gehenna, I swear that it is true.

When I record that the singular events occurred in the state of Arkansaw, the very atmosphere about me may become vibrant with derision, for I frankly confess that of all the queer animals of both the higher order and the brute creation that ever stalked Jehovah's footstool, this state with its human zoo, is a winner with the bells and spangles. Poets have versified in a Niagara of thundering melody of the strange things there, and some wag inoculated with the efflorescence of humor and the chrysalis of wit in his makeup, has said that certain denizens in that state are so hopelessly verdant and obtuse, that they go to the polls on election day and vote for "Old Hickory." And yet such a revelation is not so startling when it is considered that the human sheep there are so penned in from other inhabitants of this giddy globe, that the modern newspaper is an exotic; that there is no clank of the colliery, no rattle of the locomotive, no roar of the blast furnace and no shriek of the factory whistle in these piney woods. They are an old-fashioned type seemingly content to live in old ruts, and to subsist on corn-dodgers, sow-belly, 'lasses and corn whiskey. They eat peas with a jack-knife and dip snuff on the end of a stick; and their principal occupation when not raising hell or going thru the evolutions of the donkey trot, due to an attack of the breakbone ague, is the grinding of Swedish face powder dubbed Copenhagen snuff. In the sequestered fastnesses, the *a la mode* vogue for pedal extremities is what is laconically named "government socks." Old nesters there grow tobacco for home "chawin," and all of them brew 'lasses from the native cane.

The history of Arkansaw for some decades past is a romance of a primitive people that are largely limited to the picturesque incident of illicit distilling of "corn likker" by companies of Robin Hood's men encamped in sequestered coves. The real Arkansawyers are easily singled out among other things by their lank longitude; tall, lank, dry rustics, old Reuben bushwhackers as ancient as the sun, who whittle, "chaw" tobacco and drawl a hundred distressingly personal questions. They are of the lowest

possible type, entirely without ethnological interest, indeed a little better than "mudfish." They occupy a low rung in the ladder of culture, dwelling amid the fog and swamp of fetishness. Their emotional stability is pronounced.

By reason of these facts, they have been for years subjects of idiotic burlesque.

The state is redolent with swamps, whose waters are inky black and whose trees are covered with parasites and hanging with festoons of vines, and miasmatic vapors spring up in an instant like flowers from the magic soil of India. A wild goose would be entirely lost in some of the bottoms of Arkansas.

A word about the snakes that infest the jungles. The native varieties constitute the blow snake, the hoop snake, the joint snake and the whip snake. The main stunt of the first named is to inflate its vital principle with malarial fog that rises from the dammed up swamps, and, in a violent expiration, blow a native's sky-piece off; that of a hoop snake is the adjusting of its caudal adjunct to its maw, and, describing a circle, roll along the alfalfa damps somewhat like a hoop in the assassination of distance and compel a swamp-angel to volplane out of the way; the long suit of the joint snake is to ramble along the malarial fungi in majestic carriage like a freight train and when surprised by the approach of a swamp-angel, uncouple its joints and deposit them to hither and thither sidings, while its head, representing the engine, sticks to the main line. When all danger has faded away, the joints couple together and the manifest is on the roll. When the whip snake strikes, it rises one-third of its length and cracks a swamp angel on the back, using the other two-thirds of its length for this purpose. These and other varmints peculiarly indigenous to Arkansas zoology, such as the web-footed Pollyhickus, the peccavi, the homo-camelopard and the cephalopod are subject to the chills nad fever and are known to have bummed bos for quinine, who were unfortunate enough to hit the grit thru the swamps of ripened ginseng. Other varmints there are the jaracoa, the whangdoodle, the sphenedon, the sucuruju, the Mazazza, the pfirrari, the camarasaurus, the catawissa, the catawampus, the moropus, the teledu, the ornithyrincus, the polymolywincus, the platibus and the dingalingadinga.

In this state quinine is as essential as wood and water, and is one of the only sure cures for malaria known to the medical profession.

The native nigger is as black as the Black Hole of Calcutta. He has a nasal proboscis, which, when flattened out, the nostrils represent the orifices of a double-barreled shotgun, and when the darkey is immersed in spells of inordinate cachination, the

thick labials part and within the cavernous maw is disclosed a small cemetery. The native shoat is specially trained to out-distance him by developing him into a razorback and the nigger is thus given a run for his money.

Lickskillet, Arkansaw, was in the spring of 1901, a hookworm, jerkwater speck of something like one thousand souls, located on the Iron Mountain line. It was a wide place in the road and of tomblike repose. Of the population there was a generous sprinkling of the descendents of the biblical Ham, and no violence will be done to truth when it is solemnly recorded that all of the inhabitants, irrespective of the color line, were for the most part, dense yaps, superficial yokels, unmellowed nesters, unlicked denizens and bonehead boobs. The town was dub and unpainted, with Rip Van Winkle movements and there was a general humdrum grayness of things. On the occasion of my initial visit there, and which I hope will be my last, as I slipped anchor at the depot, a small red-sanded affair, I goggled ahead of me facing the depot, the announcement in dizzy letters, "Cooncan Arms." To this inn I shuffled, assuming a deportment of the most Chesterfieldian arrogance and reflecting an attitude of the most ineffable and flattered importance. Wherever I may be, this is my personality, but in Arkansaw they are useless poses. Entering the inn, I was greeted by a poky, middle-aged crimp of unattractive physiognomy, who, in stuffy, bellowing petticoats of starched linsey-woolsey and other frippery of ante-bellum days and sporting cork-screw curls, relieved me of my handbag and cravenette and conducted me to an unpretentious room over which was scrawled "Hotel Office." I registered my moniker as hailing from Yokohama, Japan, and then slid into a comfortable, splint-bottomed rocker, *pour passer le temps*. The crimp handed me a copy of the local weekly, the "Lickskillet Squawk," and I drank in the agony columns with impatient eagerness. On the table before me was a copy of the two extremes of literature, the Bible and the Police Gazette, and choosing the latter, I perused its pages with the keenness of a true sport. It was now four o'clock p. m., so I concluded to improve the occasion by indulging in a ramble about the town seeking local color. This is what I saw.

About one block from the depot was located what the town plugs called a city park. This was a level square, but there was absolutely nothing to dignify it as an elysium dedicated to recreation, neither tree nor shrub nor bench, not even the semblance of an enclosure, much less a blade of grass. In the middle of this slandered parterre, a bunch of razorback shoats was irreconcilably asleep and sprawled out in the blistering sun. The long

snouts of these pesky critters were nuzzled in the pulverized earth, and at each expiration there was sent forth a volley of dust, as powdered as the gold dust of the dragon fly. Nearly a half-dozen shoats roosted upon the convenient limb of a black-jack. Retreating from this sight, I mounted a plank walk and observed an iron grey cow making its dinner of a variety of display goods in front of a grocery store. Her calf was dining at her udders, and to my consternation both of them *en bloc*, entered thru the door of the grocery store.

I regarded this as an odd proceeding, but all agog for sensation, I pushed on further up the street and this brought me abruptly to the open country, with its wide lonesomeness all about. The upper reaches of the town showed growing squalor. Forbidding shacks lined the way, more and more frowsy as the end was reached. There were battered, patched up shanties of broken windows and half-hinged doors—a haphazard array of tottering buildings. The few buildings that were there and inhabited by negroes were fallen into ruin except those patched up by their ebony tenants.

I contemplated the painfully acute somnolence of the town. There was not an Arkansaw yokel or sizzerbill or Bill Whiskers in sight. From a nearby barn the bray of an ass jarred discordantly on the ear, and at the same time my sensitive olfactories were assaulted by the odoriferous pungency of that well-known aroma which emanates from the hydrophobia-mad brown skunk. Barring these, there was not a sign of activity.

I now got curious to know what was the fate of the iron-grey bovine and her calf, and I was rewarded by seeing them clattering down the single narrow street that lost itself in a chaotic ruin of shacks. Passing the grocery store mentioned, I peered in, being actuated by curiosity, as the very atmosphere seemed to breed this quality. Here I piped a swamp angel, partially *deshabile*, reclining on the counter and engaged in an effort to prevent a swarm of flies from assaulting his mug by the aid of a skillet, in lieu of the customary fan. He seemed in a languid, pensive mood. On a placard suspended from the ceiling, the eye was greeted with this announcement: "Muskrat skins exchanged for quinine."

Not a solitary soul could be detected on the street and if a dynamite bomb had suddenly been exploded, it wouldn't have been heard by the hypnotic Reubens of Lickskillet. In passing the Post Office, I inquired when the next mail would arrive from the North. I was answered by a middle-aged mulatto woman, a

wench of unwieldy proportions and as black as the mouth of hell:

“Shucks, honey, Wha’s yo’ frum?” she asked in the untranslatable poetry of her class.

I replied that I hailed from Squeedunk.

“Do tell,” she said. “I have heern o’ Squee-Squee.”

“Dunk,” said I. “Squeedunk is about ten miles from Po-dunk, twelve miles from Skookum, fifteen miles from Pumpkin Centre and twenty-one miles from Pohokus Junction,” I added.

“Is yo’ gwine to stay long in Licksillet?” she asked.

“That depends;” I said. This is a pretty slow town.”

“It is ‘daid.’ It is so ‘daid’ that last Chusedy, Uncle Si Slocum dropt ‘daid’ in frunt ob dis yere Pos’ Offis and his body was not foun’ till de follerin’ Sat’d day.”

“The H—you say. The devil and Tom Walker.” I exclaimed.

Moved by prurient curiosity to probe the utter intellectual density of this Black Maria, I ventured some questions:

“What is the name of your Governor?”

“Is Licksillet the county seat of the county?”

“What day of the month is today?”

“How old are you?”

To all of these interrogatories she replied in the negative, and I finally wound up the inquisition by putting the question. Are you alive?” and to this she replied “I don’t know.”

“Well, if that wouldn’t jar my electric bells.” I soliloquized. “Truly, the only darkness is ignorance.”

As I was about to take my leave, she remarked: “Yo’ all sure is white folks.”

“Good-bye, Snowball,” I farewelled.

“So, Long, honey,” she returned.

“Watch your step, and don’t take in any rubber jitneys.” I farewelled again.

Returning to the Cooncan Inn, I found there a lop-eared and spotted houn’ dawg dozing behind the doorstep. It had evidently just licked up a skilletfull of sop.

The houn’ dawg is a native of the state of Arkansas and the most promising member of the whispering chorus which so often shatters the night hours in that sleepy region, far up on some lonely, rock-strewn hillside in the Northern part of the state of which this sleepy animal is a favored citizen.

How often have I sat in the sleepy dusk lost in meditation of the things that are, that were and will always be, only to have the sabbath-like stillness shattered by that song, sad as all the tears shed by mortal man, filled with the longing and heart

break heard only in the song of the disappointed and disillusioned houn' dawg.

As his song shatters the night like all the demons of gloom in all the gloomy region below, and finally dies away in the dim distant heights of the eternal hills like some silent, solitary soul trailing its lonely way from a world that it has known only to be a farce, and into a world of which it knows nothing and hopes for nothing, I think of the life of this poor, misjudged animal.

The best heart that ever beat in animal breast beats here beneath this mangy coat and these starveling ribs. No man is his enemy and all men are his friends. In fact, he loves the world in general and all mankind.

He knows that his creator made him to laze in the sunshine and dream of the long days of sunshine ahead, and the long nights when he will be free to sing his dirgelike song unmolested.

Does man show his sympathy for the tragedy and the heart-ache and woe so often heard in this humble friend's song? No; the song only brings curses on his poor weary head and kicks to the poor starveling ribs that cover the truest heart, a maw perpetually hungry and a hide full of aggressive fleas.

So when next you hear the song of the houn' dawg, full of the longing to be understood and loved, be charitable to this the breaker of your rest, the friend in need and the only true Arkansasawyer.

The gong honked for lunch and the "chow" was landed. The menu consisted of flapjacks and molasses, sweet potatoes, corndodgers, barbecued meat, Hungarian goulash, mountain oysters, bouillabaisse, goats' milk and tit-bits, all prepared by the "bull cook." The *piece-de-resistance* was the rind of a well baked shoat. The company spooned bacon grease on corn pone. It was a feast good enough for the Olympians.

The boarders having retired early as was their custom in these piney woods, the crimp invited me into the sitting room. In this I acquiesced, altho' at the time I thought it an invasion of liberties that could not be pardoned under the conditions. We remained here from early evening until early morning after which I retired with delight into that silence and solitude which made it so dear to the rustic population. When I arose, I found a row of web-footed old hens and cadaverous looking shoats roosting in harmonious fellowship on the bottom rail of the bed.

Now, so far as my relations with the crimp are concerned they were as stated hereafter. She confided to me that from early life up to this very moment when she first met me she had been in quest of a life partner, and that she had been afflicted with erotomania; that she had been a rose withering on the vir-

gin thorn of single blessedness; that she regarded me as her soul affinity, the very pink of all the proprieties, as right as either a rabbit or a trivet. She confided to me in the most unreserved delicacy, that she herself could become a most companionable partner to any man and that she longed for the day when heaven would send her such a man as your Uncle Henry. She said that she could be as constant as the Northern star, of whose true-fixed and resting quality there is no fellow in the firmament. She had exhorted the Gods to bless her with the acquisition of just such a man. She had invoked every deity in the hierarchy of the Southern skies to witness her imperishable love. She was in quest of Pluto's man—an animal without feathers and having two legs. She had consulted the stars and her prayer had been answered by my advent in Licksillet. I was her abstract ideal; I was her hitching post; I was her sturdy oak; she promised to be my clinging vine.

I was, of course, transported into a maelstrom of bewilderment that I should be singled out as her immaculate paragon. I repeatedly asked myself: "What's the game?" "Am I the innocent victim of a dark and diabolical plot?" "Am I to become a gowk, a cuckoo, a *poisson d' avril*?"

In the fire of our talk I suddenly confronted her with this question: "What if I am already glued to another?" She answered that it could not be, and that as to this she was following revealed destiny. I concluded, in spite of this, that she indulged in a lot of purr and bunk and wumgush, that she was a glass-faced flatterer, and I sprinkled cool patience upon the heat and flame of my distemper, believing that "'tis holy spirit to be a little vain when the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife."

I assured her that on the morrow we would resume further discussion, as I proposed to remain in Licksillet for some days on a routine of business (which was an unholy lie), and that ample time would be afforded within which to take up this affair of the heart. I was thereupon reluctantly lighted to my room, the epithalamium of the hotel, and here, under the pressure of a hypodermic injection of morphine, I was soon hurried to the realm of opium dreams.

When I awoke the fever from mosquito bites burned in my blood, and I again jabbed the hypodermic into the popliteal space of my left limb.

For two weeks I rusticated in Licksillet, during which time this crimp plied me for reciprocal love. She said that all that she possessed, she flung at my feet. In this expose, she detailed some choice parcels of realty in the State Capital and other realty here in the bucolic pueblo. There was a dollar mark accredited

to her of no mean pumpkins, and under all of the conditions, these were gifts for Apollo. Now, I was a "star boarder" at the inn, and remembering the fact that I was in need of immediate bullion, I resolved the question rather seriously, going so far as to undertake a trip to the County seat and to Little Rock for the purpose of investigating records. I had a two-fold object in doing this, the very material one being the husbanding of more dope to cover a more or less anxious period ahead of me. The crimp up to this stage had not been acquainted with my chronic addiction to morphine and cocaine, but the fact is that I was chained to a noble pair of brothers, morphine and cocaine, body and soul.

In all seriousness, I must confess that my first impressions regarding her vows descending upon me so suddenly, tintured with the idea that there might be a semblance of coquetry on her part, and induced me to revel in the belief that her profuse and voluble assurances of idolatrous adoration amounted to a phantasy of the moment—a baseless and unstable creation rather of the imagination than of the heart. Under all of the circumstances, had I not the right to be skeptical about her professions of fidelity? Yet in the evident impetuosity of enthusiasm of her nature, and with all the eloquence she could command, there could not be detected a scintilla of the old mysterious witchery we call charm, and if any were intended, it was veneered in her opulent words of endearment and in that nobility of soul and dignity of candor, which bent the stubborn knee of cavil. Her sweet tongue had the capacity to disarm the most infinitesimal hint of distrust. She had an expression of arch and coquettish benignity. Her charming air of naivete would enthrall a statue. If her professions of affection were of a gossamer texture or pregnant with the attribute of volatility, it was not apparent upon its surface. She was capable, like Rosalind, after having committed some *fauxpas*, discernible in her *bonne bouche*, of healing it up with her eye. If she had a cold bosom, the dormant fires lurking in its depths became at once enkindled. Whatever art she had, she had blundered on the chord that makes hearts beat in tune to some vast indwelling rhythm of the universe. Love is a credulous thing. It is like a web swung between ecstasy and misery.

From all outward appearances, this woman was worthy of any man's love and confidence. She was home-spun tho', but whether in spangles or in calico, a woman is a woman after all. Besides, this wench had some artistic accomplishments, among which was the fact that she could render some dulcet and heavenly music, such as soft lullabys and sweet serenades, as

well as execute some ravishing pizzicatos on the ukeleli, the swinette, the oboe and the seraphina. She sang for me a villanelle uplift—a tenor so singularly sweet and shaded by a pathos so subduing and tender, that I wot not the birds stopped to listen as there thrilled thru it some occult quality of tone and expression that was unspeakably touching.

On the other hand, I was a human derelict drifting hither and thither in an aimless way, and even granting that I soured of the bargain afterwards, there was everything to gain and nothing to lose, knowing as I did, that no light in any window in the wide, wide world, burned for this hophead. I was not married, except to drugs, and here was an opportunity at my door, like a pony all bridled and saddled, with the time, the place and the girl. I was a wretched soul bruised by adversity. I was sick of the wanderlust, was like a gambler with empty pockets and I sighed for a meal ticket with bread buttered on both sides in some Arcadian vale. If this woman should turn out to be the painting of a sorrow, a face without a heart; if, after having taken her for a rose, she should prove a thorn, or if, perchance, I became tired of any effervescent and deceptive charms in her makeup, I could hike to Reno, Nevada, where in twenty minutes I could get refreshments, and in another five minutes I could get a divorce. A *blase* man of the world, and frozen as I was by its cares, I was guillotined upon the block of her specious promises and honeyed words and the thrilling and enthralling eloquence of her low, musical language, which, Othello-like, eternally riveted my chains.

In all frankness I concealed nothing from her confiding affection, I entered with perfect sincerity, not only into a detail of my minor vices but even to my chronic addiction to morphine and cocaine, and I made full confession of those moral delinquencies and even physical infirmities. Notwithstanding all of these, I could be the most uxorious of husbands.

I did my most gallant at philandering.

“You have demanded of me on the morrow my hand in marriage. I shall yield to your entreaties. I sacrifice every feeling for you.” I said.

The next day was accordingly scheduled for the solemnization of the ceremony of marriage, and in the interim, title deeds were prepared and other documents constituting a nuptial settlement. I was bound to her in some mystic way that defied human analysis. There was the existence of natures in perfect affinity. Her charms were being revealed each day and I looked forward with felicitous anticipation to tomorrow, when I could claim her as my Dolly Varden. She seemed to me the very incarnation of

Medusa. To the very last her embraces became amorous, and at last I was to become a medlar in love.

On the evening prior to the wedding, we drank to each other's well-being, and I clandestinely slipped a slug of cocaine and morphine blended into her *demi-tasse*, so that these combined drugs could fight it out together. It was a harmless potion, and the worst that could be expected of the physiological effects would be transportation to a momentary trance, involving a sleep-walking dream. Finally, we parted, and I retired in ecstatic rapture to repair my o'erlabored senses by a sleep just as the crickets sang.

I must have slumbered for some time, superinduced by the draught of morphine and cocaine that I always administered on retiring, and during the shank of the night, I awoke. On my way downstairs, nature obeying necessity, I at once observed that her room, which was removed some few doors from my own, was ablaze with illumination. My curiosity pressed hard upon my prudence. Should I surrender myself to a morbid impulse? With shame and a hotly chiding conscience I looked thru the keyhole—a furtive and inexcusable act. The transom being open above the door, I used a mirror.

Could I be mistaken? Had I suddenly become a victim of near sightedness? Was there any refractory media about my eyes? No, Hortense.

She was dolling up for the event, and from all appearances, was then in a sleep-walking dream. I really thought that she had gone hemp crazy.

She stood before a mirror, ever and anon glancing sidewise at her form and visage, returning the smile that aureoled her face. Her breast was as flat as a shingle, and upon the removal of a wig from her gourd, her pate was as hairless as a billiard ball. I was sensibly agitated, yet retained the capacity to appreciate the ridiculous and sensed that I was soon to become the blown-up sucker to this Arkansaw flibbertigibbet. On the mantel before her grinned a full set of false teeth, deftly removed from her jaws, and displaying her cavernously hollow cheeks, but notwithstanding this she ravenously chewed Copenhagen snuff.

She was about the width of a bed slat and her cheek bones stood out like the hips of a wild broncho. She couldn't have weighed more than seventy pounds on the hoof and with her eye glasses on, the skin stretched tight over her bone structure. The sharp angles and deep hollows of her body showed clearly. She looked as lean and brittle as the dead branch of an old tree.

Never had any living creature been so emaciated and yet lived. She seemed no more than a phantom.

I was now utterly speechless with terror and with rage. From my vantage ground I thought that I piped a glass eye, but dismissed this as a possible prurient supposition. Her face was as yellow as parchment and time had written so many wrinkles, that there was not room for another line. In an outburst of passionate exultation and more in the manner and simplicity of a school girl, she had told me that she had never been kissed except by a brindle steer; she had also told me that she was thirty years of age; she now looked an acidulous maiden of eighty-three. Truly, she reflected more the December bird than the yellowleg pullet of May.

Now, up to this interesting crisis, nothing could deflect me from the firm purpose of matrimony with the crimp at the time stipulated, but when her hands wandered to her buttocks and a G string was pulled releasing an object in the shape of a small pillow, unmistakably indicating that it was utilized as an artificial caboose, and exhibiting herself *in puris naturalibus*, my faith was sensibly weakened, if not completely obliterated. She sported a pair of legs that looked like the running gears of a Kansas grasshopper. Verily, she looked like the last rose of summer, and in this respect nature was above art.

I dextrously turned the knob of the door. It yielded readily and I entered. Perceiving at once that she was in the actual presence of her innamorata, she pitched heavily backwards to the floor and fell as flat as a leaf and as dead as a mutton. In fact even before I bent over her, before I wiped the blood from her brow and felt for her silent heart, I knew that she was dead.

As I looked upon this being cold in death, I became surcharged with emotion.

Whether the excitement due to the near approach of marriage or the shock due to my abrupt invasion of her room, or an overdose of morphine and cocaine had hastened her end, I do not know; but I do know that as she lay there with the chill languor of death creeping over her limbs, she fixed upon me the baleful glare and closed her eyes forever.

N. B.—Those of my readers who may have objections to the veracity of this chronicle, may for confirmation consult the records of White County, Arkansas, where the mysterious death of Miss Samantha Coughenour is recorded June 11th, 1901.—*The Author.*

## CHAPTER XVIII

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### A HOT TOWN

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*"Be as a planetary plague when Jove  
Will o'er some high-vised city hang his poison  
In the sick ear."*

—*Timon of Athens.*

Each in the heyday of its sanguinary career as a western town Virginia City, Nevada, Dodge City, Kansas, Deadwood, Dakota and Creede, Colorado shone as Meccas of outlawry and terror.

Along the streets of these primitive border towns in the salad days ran a crimson tide of sin. Outlaws, fugitives from justice, roughnecks, pluguglies, whitecaps and "bad men" generally composed the shifting population, and a Broadway tenderfoot was as much out of his element there as a bull in a china shop or a patch of ripe tomatoes in a cemetery. Noted characters whose daredevil stunts have emblazoned the pages of yellowbacks in carmine letters, and who long ago stood in the spotlight as desperadoes, blazed an inflammatory trail. The use of the six-gun was honored with religious observance. In civilized communities organized tribunals of justice inflicted penalties against the law, but in these towns mob violence, *argumentum baculinum* was substituted for courts, and under such reign of terror lynch law was the single agency that could curb the spirit of unbridled outlawry.

Since the roly poly days of Creede, Colorado, where the slayer of Jesse James "bit the dust," no town has sprung into existence that could eclipse them except one, and that one for superlative venality, downright cussedness, notorious lasciviousness, general *diablerie*, *etourderie*, *friponnerie* and *tracasserie* had them skinned. During its fleeting regime, it was a modern Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, as a spot which showed the decadence of public morals, this one had Sodom and Gomorrah stopped four ways from the Jack. It was a hothouse of crime,

a nursery of heterogeneous pollution. Some places are warm; this one was a hot one—a latter day Inferno. There certainly was some jazz, joy and jambalaya in this town. Here morality was never known and sin held dominion over all. It was a clearing house for deviltry. In fact, the Devil himself held the uninterrupted sceptre of power *de facto, de jure, de lege*, and a minister of the orthodox gospel would be as extraordinary here as a politician at a prayer meeting, or an angel at a bull fight. The town should have been dubbed Hell, but paradoxical as it may appear, it was given the name, whether in honor or in jest, of a former president of the most advanced country on earth.

I refer to Taft, Montana, and my purpose is to report a *chronique scandaleuse*.

As an ephemeral town it germinated on the line of the Northern Pacific Railway during the construction of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, and it flourished from 1906 to 1908, furnishing labor to a crazy quilt of cosmopolites in the construction of road bed, tunnels and trestles along its tortuous and devious geography. The town consisted of but a single street stretching the length of a half mile facing the right of way. There were beautiful mountains rising sentinel-like at Taft's back door, turquoise heights veined with ivory snows, misty, mysterious and enchanting, dwarfing in colossal grandeur the insignificant crazy galvanized shacks. Gullies and abysmal gulches and natural *culs-de-sac* abounded amid these terra firma ramparts. The whole town was a motley collection of warped frame buildings which had taken root in sandy and inhospitable soil, and these were slammed together without any apparent aim at artistic detail or architectural finesse. There were also tumble down pariahs of shacks. The business of the railway company was transacted in an abandoned box car set alongside the Northern Pacific tracks.

In the very zenith of its glory as the toughest town on the map, it sported no less than fifty saloons, as many gambling hells and a like number of houses of prostitution. There were many proofs here of the Devil's cloven hoof. Besides the hook shops, freelance sporting women were numerous. The town was the jumping off place for stranded hulks, cutthroats, roughnecks, bull-necks, swift fingered tin horns, men who lived without work, women who lived without shame, ex-convicts, "shovers of the queer," knuckle-dusters and criminals of varied classification. These veritable harpies of vice flourished riotously, and plied their sinister designs upon the diverse European operatives of the camp and the unsuspecting in general. Here were congregated aces in the world of crime, Lombroso's type with the low

brow, the dull eye and the heavy jaw. Gunmen had waiting lists and the fee was any stipulated dollar mark and even went as low as a leather jitney. Conscienceless criminals vied with one another in a carnival of criminal depredations. Riotous revelry and absurd wickedness was predominant. There was a heterogeneous assembling of porch climbers, sand baggers, bunco steers, slung shot stiffs, strongarm holdups and the vicious in general in pursuit of both velvet and blood, wretches wavering between the last shade of poverty and actual starvation ready to take part in any disturbance or assist in any act of rapine or violence. For undiluted sin, the ancient Sodom and Gomorrah were Elysiums of social order. Taft was a companion-piece of Sheol. Vinous intoxication was a common habit with all and bar rooms were wide open, clamorous and throbbing with life all night.

Diddling in its most comprehensive compass, introducing the antiquated brace game, spirited away the roll of the horny-handed.

There were dope fiends, comprising hypodermic shooters, sniffers, snowbirds and "happy dust" devotees, some with their nasal organs eaten away by the ravages of cocaine "snortins," others in the last stages of habituation, with attenuated shapes and visages as white as the artificial snow which they wantonly introduced into their circulation, and existing *au jour le jour*. To possess the crystals in the pursuit of allaying the nerves and under the hotspur of want, these became willing factors in "con" games and petty thievery.

A hop-joint opened its ebony jaws, thru the flaunting *port-cocheres* of which a constant ingress and egress of ashen and pasty-hued wastrels moved, who "hit the pipe" and dreamed away the lazy foot of time.

Pimps, "macks," coistrels, gilded fops, morons and defectives and "secretaries" living together in lawless and extravagant lusts, ablaze with glittering gems, elbowed in and out of these flaunting entrances given over to scandalized etourderie and racy lasciviousness. Their white slaves, their Phrynias and Timandras flashily promenaded in millinery and dress proclaiming the latest product of the Parisian *couturieres*, simulating in their deportment an attitude of encouraging the most audacious ogler. Snow-white ostrich plumes surmounted their hats, and from their bejewelled throats to the tops of their dainty boots they were symphonies in diverse colors. On their supple fingers big, pure diamonds flashed. Furs were common—sable, chinchilla, ermine—fashioned like their hats in the last fantastic mode. There was here a kaleidoscope of the *demi-mondaine*,

women of some coquetries and redundant charms; some who bore the impress of a late gentility, flowers that had not a fair chance to bloom in the garden of life, because of defilement by the worm of poverty; others who had evidently emerged from the most unfathomable depths of social shadow. Yet all were attractive. I neither do violence to the truth nor do I draw upon my imagination when I declare that there was not a *rechauffee* fleusy, not a withered Jane nor a decayed crimp in the whole bunch. They looked young, fresh and robust, and unlike the usual coterie of the fair sex in any community, displayed the color which spoke, and which needed no factitious embellishment to enhance the natural charm. They presented to the gaze an airy and spirit lifting vision, wildly divine. They reflected the virtue of Diana. In fact, to an unqualified stranger within the gates of Taft, passing them upon the one-sided thorofare of Taft, one would unhesitatingly measure them as sedate and home-keeping housewives. The purest maiden's skirts could not be untarnished by the gilded dust of Taft. But *La Beaute sans vertu est une fleur sans parfum!*

We are sometimes deceived by the appearance of rectitude, and the devil himself hath power to assume a gracious shape. Yet it is a notorious fact that there wasn't during Taft's flush record, in it's wide-open and inside-out days, in it's fierce and unregenerate life, a legally married woman in the whole town.

Let it not be understood either by the subtlety of my logic or by any apparent vanity on my part to specially boost these pink and white dolls of the underworld, dressed in fluffy frocks, that, conceding their unexcelled personal charm and that their *ensemble* reflected unbleached goods, they were not *au fait* in the despicable coquetries of "Mrs. Warren's profession." Conversely, they possessed all of the bastard virtues. A venture into their bagnios, where the most revolting orgies, where the deed of darkness was even committed with eunuchs—human mavericks, where immoralities which I scarcely dare mention, levities that the *beau monde* could not and would not endorse, were daily practised with both sexes, was liable to cost a pretty penny; and it is known that persons travelling incognito and hazarding their personalities within these lewd and libidinous chambers, have suffered the loss of rhino and costly bijouterie, extracted by the nimble digits and velvet breadhooks of these concubines, aided and abetted by their parasitic pimps. There were as well women who would fill one's heart with pity, but would empty a pocket-book.

Courtisanes, "lady lovers," "soul lepers" and sexual perverts as nude as September Morn, who drank lust and corruption,

were on exhibition in all the diverse attitudes exacted by the aesthetic tastes of disgusting immorality.

Verily, there is no motion that tends to vice in man, but I affirm it is the woman's part!

No feature of rich, rare and racy lewdness was wanting when it is stated that Taft regaled the prurient guest within its gates, with the spectacle of a specimen of the third sex, domiciled in a tent in the rear of the main carnival of sin.

Six faro layouts were in constant operation in a like number of saloons, together with roulette tables and wheels of fortune and tables for baccarat, *ecarte*, solo, pinochle and other kindred games of chance, the keys being sunk in some bottomless pit.

Dance halls and a variety theatre with their familiar allurements of the wine room annex, were conducted in a coarse way, where the muscle dance was executed by barnstorming Salomes and stall-fed and city-broke fleusies before tango lounge lizards, nicotine soaked slobs, cabaret beetles, pool-room leeches, barrel house stiffs and pinchback bums; reclining on tiger skins and velvet ottomans. They were raw to the limit and the limit was off.

The commission of the capital crime was rife. The criminal records of the County were littered with prosecutions entailing homicide provoked by robbery, but the major number of these crimes never reached the courts. This was principally due to the fact that the town was not incorporated, and hence no public revenue provided for the protection of life and property. These depredations were more frequent, therefore, when the searching gaze of heaven was hid behind the globe and lighted the lower world, altho' thieves and gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, ranged and stalked forth under the rays of the noonday sun. It would dizzy the arithmetic of memory to speculate upon the number of lives sacrificed with boots on in the indiscriminate pillage and slaughter—human cadavers upon which it would be utterly futile to predicate a *corpus delicti*; but it is known as an incontrovertible fact that after the winter's snow had melted in the early spring of the final year of Taft's carnival of crime and lawlessness, no less than seventeen bodies were discovered on the buttes in the immediate rear of the dens of iniquity and sin. In these instances the dismal process of decomposition had advanced to such a degree that identification was abortive.

Conditions became so notoriously panicky following in the trail of general venality that the edict *Delenda est Carthago* went forth; the fagot was applied and the town went up in smoke no less than three different times, twice thru the orders of the railroad company, and once by heaven's frown upon the revolting

wickedness and desperate crime existence there, this latter to propitiate the immortal gods.

Like a feline dowered with nine lives, Taft rose Phoenix-like each time from its ashes, and its final overthrow was not accomplished until the forest fires of 1910. Like the vermicular creature whose caudal appendage wriggles until the sun's descent beyond the horizon, it at last grudgingly gave up the ghost.

Sodom sank, Babylon fell, Rome and Pompeii burned.

Virginia City, Nevada, where the Comstock, the Consolidated Virginia and the big bonanza mines worked triple shifts in the production of gold and silver, has faded into the nimbus of nothingness; the green verdure has been of prolific growth on the streets of Dodge City for many lustra; Deadwood City, Dakota, where the bleached bones of Wild Bill and Calamity Jane, picturesque Western characters in their day are buried, is now a moribund camp in the midst of the Black Hills and the owls and crickets long ago invaded Creede, Colorado and have since maintained undisputed empire.

What remains of Taft, Montana, may be incorporated within the compass of a few sententious remarks.

Happening there a year ago, I noticed a sprawling splotch including the Post Office, one solitary struggling saloon and a few old and dilapidated shacks. Among the scattered *debris* of former life and habitation, there was a noisome and unclean suggestion of decay. A faint, spiced odor of desiccation filled the scene. The dust of efflorescence whitened here and there. The elements had picked clean the bones of the crumbling shacks as they should finally absorb it. The same old box car formerly utilized as a depot, stood upon the right of way; but it was barred tighter than a miser's chest. Passenger trains still stopped, but this was more a precautionary measure than from any other consideration on account of the proximity of the three-mile tunnel. I piped a few gandy-dancers, bindle stiffs and a bevy of wop lumber jacks as the sole stragglers of this deserted camp. Transformed from what it was in former days as a noisome quarter, where everything bore the ineradicable impress, the very leprosy of the most deplorable degradation and of the most desperate crime to the tranquillity of the interior of an ecclesiastical tabernacle on a week day, it is at once amazing what changes a few years bring about and how things pass away like a tale that is told.

Out of idle curiosity, I entered one of these dilapidated unused shacks, where the atmosphere of dry rot was in the beams and rafters, and a score of other recollections arose within me as I descried upon the walls and ceiling all calibres of leaden

testimony to the poor marksmanship of the habitues of these hell holes and the ticklish calls had by human targets in running fires and in vis-a-vis scuffles. My thoughts were far, very far away.

The whole atmosphere of Taft teemed with desolation. The vicinity was haunted with the shadow of its complete desolation and it is a ghost city now.

I mused: "Troy was; Troy is no more." No warm hand greeted me on arrival; there were no farewells when I departed. I felt that I was a stranger in a strange land, altho' during the warm days there was much of what happened which I saw, some of which I was.

## CHAPTER XIX

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### A CORPSE FOR A BEDFELLOW

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*"Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,  
And look on death itself."*

—*Macbeth.*

The atmosphere was oscillating between thirty and forty degrees below zero one night in January not long ago, as I climbed into an empty "rattler" of an East-bound freight train in the railroad yards at Williston, North Dakota.

As the train rolled along the frosted metals, a rasping sound detached itself, and this together with the creakings and squeakings of the cars submitted to the sudden strain of locomotion, produced a clangor that set my nerves tingling. The wind was blowing sibilant whispers that I construed into ominous auguries and the flicker of lights from hamlets as we passed them, bespeaking comfort and coziness within, gave me a sensation of loneliness and dread, and my ears, altho' attuned to trifling disturbances due to the noise and groan of the train, were more acute now, and I was almost holding my breath in an effort of acute listening.

Savants of the occult have spread the gospel of premonition, and we also have our philosophical persons who make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless, and while I am ordinarily a man of stone and of a constitutionally high-strung temperament and capable of subduing that temperament at times, that I become temporarily immune from human dreads and icily cool amid universal panic, yet amid the general din, the very atmosphere seemed pregnant with a thousand possibilities more eerie than any clangor. The situation was tense, if not ghostly. The imagination, however, might be magnifying these sounds out of all proportion to their actual significance. Meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven and lean-looked prophets whisper fearful change. By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust ensuing danger and their hearts are full of fear, as when we see the water

swell before a boisterous storm or when we witness any singular atmospheric appearances. There are moments when hideous suppositions assail us like a band of furies and violently force the bolts of our brain.

There were warnings and portents and evils ominous this night, and the awful sub-consciousness of supreme evil—from the first to last it never left me. Before arguing, and before I came to any proper decision, my sensibilities were suddenly arrested, a slight jarring thru the whole frame of the car, a grinding and hissing from the brakes, and a dull thud told me that the train had stopped.

My mind was rapidly at work and I alighted from the car, bent on finding a warmer place on the train. I explored the cars on either side, found nothing suitable and before one could say "Truly, My Lord," I heard the highball out and the train was moving along. At each jerk the momentum seemed greater, and it glided from me and left me in the gloom. I was without benefit of clergy deserted at this water tank, destined like the one who was alone in London and the bird that was lost in Paris. The wind was howling a monotonous requiem and there was not a flicker of light within the broad expanse, save the fleeting after-glow, the red danger signal of the retreating train, which faded from me like the genii in the Arabian Knights. The single thing that gave me heart was the light which the snow afforded, irradiated like out stretched wings and the phosphorescent gleam of the gelid moon.

All the visible world was wrapped in a snowy, winding sheet of snow. It had fallen with vigorous, relentless insistence; and the wind was blowing as from Saturn's Cave. The frost was undoubtedly on the pumpkin and the corn was in the shock. Another thing that gave me heart was the fact that there was silhouetted against the whiteness of the snow, a water tank, but there was no box car upon the siding. The Gloomy Gus overcoat that comforted me I relied upon, but this and the rest of my garments were only partially proof against the elements which now rose with terrific intensity. My toes were beginning to get torpid, and it was with difficulty that I kept moving in order to sustain the circulation and my teeth were clacking like castanets from the cold.

I was withal startled by the pale glow of the great silent white loveliness around me. There is nothing so melancholy as the light produced by the double whiteness of moon and snow, or more depressing than a large expanse of stagnant water.

While walking along the track in quest of some haven of shelter, my eye descried a field full of little Alps below the twink-

ling stars. They were hay stacks. I selected the first one that I came to, after having drilled thru the white-feathered snow and the stubble rimed with frost, and applied a match. It was reduced to ashes in a half hour, and as I was mulling over in my mind the evanescence of all earthly things, a long freight train, East-bound, pulled up for water, and, finding an "empty," I threw myself into its bowels. It soon whistled out and I was on my way, altho' I knew not whither I was going.

As I paced the floor of the car to and fro, I stumbled over some substance which offered an indescribable mixture of resistance, firm and loose. It was a lump of something—a lump of unconscious something lay at one end of the car. I struck a match, and in the glare, discovered a human form huddled up in a heap, apparently asleep. I resumed my perambulations, first closing both doors of the car which were wide open when I entered. For fully an hour the train rambled along, during which time I paced the floor in an effort to keep up the circulation, but finally overcome by drowsiness, superinduced by the "shot" of morphine, I lighted some old newspapers and rags at the feet of the sleeper, thereby creating a small *feu de joie*, laid myself down beside the huddled form and surrendered myself to the seduction of slumber and the chancery of dreams.

I must have dozed somewhat from sheer exhaustion, for I awoke from the dreams of an opium-eater and with a stifled cry found my hand clasped in icy fingers. I also found that the fire at our feet had communicated to the clothing of my bed-fellow and I set to work to subdue the flame. It is needless to say how I did this; it is sufficient to say that I smudged it out.

Now, inasmuch as the heat from the bonfire erected at the feet of the sleeper, the smoke issuing therefrom and the rumble of the train, failed to arouse him, my mind became surcharged by a batch of morbid speculations and my whole being went up in the air of speculation. Whether I was right side up or upside down, I did not know. Perfunctorily I tried to awaken the silent form by vigorous kicking, but with negligible results. Fearing nothing, yet fearing everything, I turned the body over on its back; it seemed as mute as fish, as dumb as marble. I struck a match and held the light over the visage, and it was then that I found that the subject was as immovable as the Sphinx, as unrevealing as the tomb. The magic wheels and wizard pinions of life were inert. The limbs were rigid, the lips were livid, the vitreous eyes were presumably riveted in death. The teeth were bared and glistened and grinned at me in an uncanny way, and a congealed froth was on the lips. There was here the icy chilliness, the livid hue, the intense rigidity, the sunken outline and

all of the loathsome peculiarities of that which has been for some days a tenant of the tomb. The pasty face leered at me and at its sight, I experienced a sudden nausea for the first time in my life under similar circumstances, for in my time I had seen a great number of dead people; for instance, at San Francisco during the earthquake and then again at the Galveston horror, and at these places I saw numberless bodies in temporary morgues. I was also at Brother's Island, when the "General Slocum" burned, and there witnessed many agonizing scenes of death, and in other instances, I had rescued bodies mutilated beyond description. So that a dead person, for the single reason that he is dead, does not repel me, and altho' I knew that there was no hope that the subject here was alive, still for decency's sake, I felt the pulse and pulled open the shirt and placed my hand upon the heart. This done, I assembled the morphine layout and prepared one-fourth of a grain of morphine in solution and injected it into the left arm. This was the final test. There is no use to tell the reader how I felt as I stood by the body or the thoughts that came into my head. I felt bitterly sorry for this human derelict, and at the same time, selfishly concerned for my own safety and for the notoriety which was sure to follow. My instinct was to leave the body where it lay, and this hunch I followed. But before deserting it, I was completely engulfed in strange, unfathomable emotions that surged over me. This was mainly in reference to the sex of the subject. I had a miniature wax candle which I invariably carried for mixing dope in dark places, and in my survey of the face and in rolling up the sleeve of the subject, I was at once struck with the delicate effeminacy of the corpse. I knew that it was a corpse. I did not know that it was that of a female, however, until from my examination joined to my conclusions deduced from experimental psychology, I was satisfied beyond a doubt that it was, altho' dressed in the habiliments of a man.

The consciousness of these truths under the unique circumstances here detailed was like an electric shock of a terror deadly and indefinite, which sends the blood in torrents from the temples to the heart. The ghastly face haunted me, altho' in life it must have been the pivot of adorable concentration due to the singularly beautiful face and its youth, probably the adolescent period between sixteen and twenty years of ago. To gain control of my treacherous nerves, I jabbed the hypodermic into the tissues of my own arm.

I cannot, therefore, dwell upon the end of my encounter with this corpse; I cannot hope to make acceptable to my readers an account of how I escaped from that car. All that I now remem-

ber is that my stunned sensibilities were revived by my person coming in contact with some frozen surface, and a long string of cars was rapidly passing before my petrified gaze.

Chilled by the cold and lacerated by my dive from the car, I made for the open country, and following the electric illumination of the town to which we had been speeding, I covertly entered the first lodging house that I came to and retired in the arms of the morphine god.

Let me finish. There were some gruesome details disclosed at the autopsical examination two days thereafter upon the body of this female derelict. But the singular thing about the case is that a coroner's jury returned a verdict that the deceased came to her death from a combination of circumstances—from morphine poisoning administered by herself with suicidal intent and from having been frozen to death. The jury could not say which. As a matter of fact the evidence showed that the subject had been a sybarite and morphine fiend, and in support of this latter, a hypodermic syringe and a bottle of morphine was found upon her person, and her body was disfigured by purplish punctures.

How cynical a stuff life is! Is it not a far away echo?

When it is reflected how easy it is sometimes to convict an innocent man upon circumstantial evidence, it is at once indefinable how Fate, with a chuckle and working in mysterious ways, turns the unexpected upside down and saves us from the fireworks, and sometimes when the dark is darkest, Fate steps in and lights the heavens with a beautiful glow. I had in my possession at this time a cargo of morphine which I carried as a chronic habitue, and all of the accessories, and I could have put to eternal sleep, death and deadly night a thousand units of the sons of men ministering to them, and had I been apprehended for this crime and formally proceeded against, I shudder as I moralize on the eventualities.

In whatever light in which it may be regarded, it is sufficient to say that the jury believed that the girl had an abiding faith in the grandeur of pagan philosophy, for did not Epictetus say in the early centuries: "As for death, there is nothing in death to move our laughter or our tears?"

## CHAPTER XX

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### THE CLOCK STRUCK THIRTEEN

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*"In the most high and mighty state of Rome,  
A little 'ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."*

—*Hamlet.*

Madness physiologically urged is the loftiest intelligence. Yet I am not mad, and the days of my wanton indulgence in opium having ended, I therefore cease to dream. I offer this as an antecedent proposition lest the terrible tale of whimsicality which I am about to put on record should be considered rather the raving of a crude imagination than the positive experience of a mind to which the reveries of fancy have long been a nullity. Oftimes we are prone to attribute the fanciful to very natural causes and effects, rather than to some bizarre or rare combination of events and all the horrors that romancers suppose they have invented are still below the truth. I have no desire to be ridiculed as a superstitious dreamer; on the other hand, I could not ask you to accept on my affirmation what you would hold to be incredible, without the evidence of your own senses.

The singular events which I here pen involve the abnormal in psychical experiences, an experience so grotesque that it borders on the ludicrous. It is a voodoo tale that is in that dim region which stretches from the very utmost limits of the probable into the weird confines of superstition and unreality. It is neither fiction nor romance, but plain, earnest, veritable truth, involving the marvelous, the mysterious, the unseen in nature and is to be carefully tested by the requirements of reasonable probability. It may seem so incredible that one can hardly blame those who could not believe it possible. I should have been skeptical myself if I had not myself viewed the astounding sight.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, and to those who believe in spirits or in second sight, or in crystal gazing or the doctrines

of Mesmer and Cagliostro, to those who repose a fantastic faith in wood-spirits, goblins of the rock and river-fiends, let me open the gates and call up the midnight ghosts.

In the twilight of an autumn evening, I dived from the "guts" of a "rattler" and discovered myself in Ennis, Texas. Being a little more heavily drugged than usual, I cast about for some couch whereon to recline my body, fatigued from desultory travel, and to lay my fevered head upon the pillow of forgetfulness. Truly has it been philosophised that our foster mother nature is repose. As I shambled aimlessly along the walk my myotic eye caught a sign which announced "Lodging." From its unpretentious appearance, and the fact that it was somewhat distant from the pulse of business activity, I thought that the rate would be in harmony with my depleted purse.

The curved feather of a new moon hung in the west and stars danced in the dull October sky. The house was perched on a wooded ridge some rods from the highway, the entrance guarded by a toll gate from which ran a pathway carpeted in golden leaves and canopied by bright hued boughs. Contemplating the rich, the melancholy landscape—the tall trees surrendering to the wind their grotesque plumage; the scarlet sage, whose flashing color was beginning to fade; the crimson sumach, pouring out its heart blood by the way—I was lost in a dream of the happy summer, whose afterglow was reflected in the mellow haze of autumn light.

It was a stately dwelling hidden away in the gloomy woodland, and its front yard was bisected with mathematical precision by a gravel walk from gate to door, and strewn with myxomycetes. It lay mostly in the shifting shadows. The front of the house was heavily curtained with an enormous grape vine, encircling one of the carved pillars of the front porch like a gigantic serpent, and the vacant upper windows peer thru it at the old burying ground across the way and seemingly find a companionship in its grassy hillocks and sunken hollows, its headstones of slate and sandstone standing awry or toppling to their fall. In this burying ground are rude monuments for the most part with uncouth sculptures of grisly death's heads and spade and scythe.

As I gazed at the old mansion, these windows looked back at me with a desolate and sad-eyed expression thru the vines which seem a veil of crape partly withdrawn, and thru blinding cobwebs which might well suggest a mist of tears. It undoubtedly had a haunted look and reflected the traditional spookery, with its oppressive shadows. The whole aspect of the place reflected the negative joys of a once peaceful life. The gloomy silence was

unbroken save by birds, martins, mice and rats. The habitation contained some secret, some mysterious thought, for certainly it seemed a sanctuary which looked the most varied images of human life darkened by sorrows. I thought even that the aspect of nature about the place was evil, and now, to support the fancy, there was a dead silence round about—silence and darkness—solemn sisters—silence how dead, and darkness how profound! It seemed that I was amid the shadows and the whispering, the shapeless things and the wailing and sighing that hover between this world and the hereafter. It seemed that in the pallid rose bushes before the house white spectral things and inky shadows lay deathlike in the gloom. It was almost forlorn and melancholy, surely an unholy place, steeped deep with the indelible stain of some black story, some tragic end.

Regardless of these considerations, I entered the place and after having ransacked the whole house upstairs and downstairs, I found not a solitary tenant. I selected one of these chambers wherein there was a bed, a table with an oil burner and other debris of an inn of former glory. I was alone in this tenement of faint, sad odors and mournful sighing draughts; alone save for a mind stocked with somewhat melancholy fancies, dull, solitary and damp. I sensed the place as full of a weird, hushed sound, like the rustle of garments or the swish of the wings of water-fowl. The bed, however, looked peaceable and inviting, not at all the gaunt, funereal sort of couch which haunted apartments generally contain.

It was now after nightfall, so after the injection of a copious "shot" of morphine into the tissues, I consigned my body betwixt the sheets, drew the drapery of the couch about me and dreamed of the rosy dawn, the brilliant sunlight, the purple disks of the Orient, the enchantment of strange, far-eastern countries, the subtle, languorous sweetness of tropical gardens and of blossom-laden breezes, blown from palm-fringed islands set in turquoise seas.

Notwithstanding the radiance of this opium dream, some damnable deity bodied forth weird and uncanny spirits, evil and cruel wraiths and eidolons, that made the night hideous by their eerie knocks and inoculated in my soul a belief in the existence of evil genii, and that the spirit goes marching on after exhalation from its mortal prison in these funereal damps. From early evening until the gray dawn the unspeakable horrors of that night were enacted in a hideous drama before my appalled senses.

I do not remember how long I had slept. I must have been conscious during this slumber of my inability to keep myself covered by the bed clothes, for I awoke once or twice clutching

them with a despairing hand, as they were disappearing over the foot of the couch. Then I became suddenly aroused to the fact that my efforts to retain them were resisted by some equally persistent force, and, letting them go, I was horrified at seeing them swiftly drawn under the bed. At this point I sat up, completely awake. Up to this time cavernous silence reigned in this sepulchral habitation. Then came loud rattings from the back of the bed; after this, a thrumming against the wall. A most unaccountable antipathy came over me in this, my temporary abode. There is a feeling of dislike or apprehension with which we regard at first sight certain places and people, and this was not implanted in us without some wholesome purpose. I felt this antipathy strongly as I looked around me in my new sleeping room with the aid of light from the oil burner. However, finally concluding that the sensations mentioned might be a fanciful picture drawn from the imagination superinduced by heavy excesses, I blew out the light and tried to submit to the encroachments of slumber; but before I could automatically yield, there succeeded a thunderous clattering of some heavy material upon the panel of the bed just back of my pillow. This strange sound was succeeded by one actually sepulchral in its resonance, as of a soul in distress pouring out its lamentations in sibilant gesticulations, and the strangest sobbing noises came from the hollow wainscoating of that strange old dwelling place; there then sounded a slight rattle against the ceiling like hail tattooing the roof; then a strange calm seemed to wrap the room in its emptiness and vagueness.

The distressed souls, if such they were, had evidently concluded a temporary armistice.

I was aware of the presence of a ghostly creature in the room, of dim outlines and uncertain proportions—one moment it seemed to pervade the entire apartment, while at another it would become invisible, but always leaving behind it a distinct consciousness of its existence. It was a malignant presence, I now believed, some foul offspring of darkness and accursed ingenuity, some hateful spawn of wizard art and black mother night, some link between the worlds of substance and of shadow. Superstition is not my weakness, yet some mysterious apprehension of a strange force made me tremble, and I became vaccinated with the *ignes fatui* of this delusion. I kept as passive as I could, yet I knew that I was absorbed in a lethargy of suspense. How strange that a simple feeling of discomfort, impeded or heightened circulation, perhaps the irritation of a nervous thread, a slight congestion, a small disturbance in the imperfect

and delicate functions of our living machinery makes a light-hearted man melancholy and makes a coward of the bravest!

Dread is the emotion that precedes all others. I was in the presence of a mystery.

Suddenly I heard a gentle tapping which appeared to come from the wall. The sound was such as might have been made by a human hand. Most of us, I fancy, have had more experience of such communications than we would care to relate. This tapping was repeated with the same, gentle, slow insistence as before. The instance was not in itself particularly mysterious. Any one of a dozen explanations was possible; yet it impressed me strangely.

At this I rose from the bed, gained the floor and stepped over to the table to relume the oil burner, but before I could accomplish this, some invisible object sent me back to the bed. As I sat upon the bed, I was chained to the spot by observing an apparition in filmy frippery which actually walked in a haze of auroral lustre before my terror-stricken orbs and beamed in sepulchral ghastliness before me. Need it be said how wild and wonderful that charmless apparition seemed in that uncouth place, how the hot flash of wonder burnt upon my swart and weathered cheeks, as I sat there and glared at that pallid outline?

For some moments I stared back at the apparition, and actually projected myself into the Karmic aura of the intruder. Then, rousing myself, I stood up very quickly and stepped across the room. As I did so, the figure vanished in the darkness at the other side, while a long, drawn-out, melancholy sigh quavered thru the apartment. It seemed that the same waft of air that had conspired to its creation shredded it out again into the fine, thin webs of disappearing haze. I now opened the door of the chamber which opened out on a portico, and peered into the darkness. The portico was wholly untenanted and I returned to the bed. No noise or vision broke the blank and yet a coward chill was on me, for here and there was moving something unseen, unheard, unfelt by outer senses. I rose and fearful and yet angry to be cowed by a dreadful nothing, stared into every corner, but naught was there. I know not how long it was, some hour most likely that I slept under the influence of the drug, and the strangest feeling took possession of me in that chamber and a fine, ethereal terror, purged of gross material fear, possessed my spirit. I awoke, not with the pleasant drowsiness which marks refreshment, but wide and staring and my hair, without the cause of sight or sound stood stiff upon my head, for something was moving in the room.

I dozed again in happy forgetfulness of the present, while

the black night wore on to morning, and then I started up with every nerve within me thrilling, my clenched fists on my knees and my wide eyes glaring into the gloom, for the strange nothing was moving once more about me, fanning me it seemed with the rhythmed swing of unseen draperies, circling in soft cadenced circles here and there.

Resolved to explore this mystery, I relighted the lamp and looked about me. I drew the curtain of the single window of the room and gazed into the subterrene night. Darkness was there as dense as the wing of that ominous bird of the tempest and the night's plutonian shore. A slow mournful rain came down in muffled drops against the window with lugubrious tinnabulation. The ormolu on a mantelpiece ticked loudly, but the beating of my heart was still louder. I fixed my eyes steadily upon the dial and awaited its tolling. Its hands were about to cross the bridge of midnight, and at that very instant it struck with a sound like the whisper of a distant sea: ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, TEN, ELEVEN, TWELVE and the fateful and ominous *THIRTEEN*.

I lighted a cigarette for the sake of diversion, and awaited the passage of time with a tenseness that would have arrested the heart of many a mortal endowed with nerves of steel, and curdled the very blood in hearts less irrevocably on fire. I incessantly puffed on the sweet caporal and at the end of an hour by the clock, I "doused the glim" and sat upon the edge of the bed in anticipation of further developments. It was madness to do it, but my curiosity ramped free and overcame all dread. It was truly strange, and I waited for anything that might come next with calm resignation—a listless faith in the integrity of chance, which put me beyond all those gusty emotions of hope and fear which play thru fledging hearts. I fell a-ruminating, my chin upon my hands, upon a hundred episodes of happiness and fear. "Oh, strange, eternal powers who set the goings and comings of humanity, what is the meaning of this wild riddle of spirits you are reading me?" I said presently aloud to myself, and intending it for the supernatural intruder. As I muttered this to myself, I glanced about and strange to tell, stranger to hear, there came from out of the void, unmistakably the words:

"I am a murderer."

Again I brooded and then presently looked up, and there, by the bones of Saint Antony, between me and the wall, over against the fitful sparkle of the lamp, was a thin, impalpable form that oscillated gently to the draughts creeping along the floor and grew taller and taller, and took mortal air and shape, and rose

out of nebulous indistinctness into a fine ethereal substance, and was clothed and visaged by the concentration of its impalpable material.

That man was never brave who has not feared, and then for a moment I feared, leaping to my feet and staggering back against the wall under the terrible focus of those eyes that burnt into my being with a relentless fire that I could not have shunned if I would and would not if I could. For some time I was thus motionless and fascinated, and then the shadow which had been regarding me intently appeared to perceive the cause of my enthrallment, veiled the terrible bewitchment of its face. As it did so, I was myself again, my blood welled into my empty veins, my heart knocked fiercely at my ribs. I became surcharged with vengeance and made one mad leap to close with it, and ever as I nearly closed with it, it moved backward, now here and now there, mocking my foolish hope and passing impalpable over the floor, until the uselessness of pursuit at last dawned upon me and I stood irresolute.

I little doubt that immaterial immortal would have mustered courage or strength to speak to me but it sighed heavily at this moment and seemed so ill at ease, that, without a thought, I turned to observe it.

When my eyes sought the opposite side again, the presence was not half itself; under my very glance it was being absorbed once more by the dusky air. To let it go like that was all against my will and leaping to those printless feet, I called: "Stay another moment, you black demon of hell!" and as I said it, I swept my arms round the last vestige of its airy kirtle and drew into my bosom an armful of empty air. This ghost, like all ghosts, eluded equally my vision and my desire.

With the extinguishment of the light, I prepared to become a bed lizard and sleep, but no sooner had I placed myself in position, when a hellish legion of sprites and hobgoblins sallied forth upon the exterior of the house. This invisible assembly broke forth in a bedlam of weird sounds. The window panes rattled and a sound came from the roof as if the chimney had suddenly fallen in and shaking the house to its very foundations. And all of a sudden there came a pause and then the fall of a Titanian hammer outside, a rending, resounding crash that shook mother earth right down to her innermost ribs. It seemed that the imps of hell were loosed from Satan's thralldom.

Palsied by fear, I reached for the lamp, when the white fingers of some palpable, yet invisible ghost passed by my person and accolladed me on the deltoids. At this, I confess that my hair rose as it is said to do when a spirit passes away. I

must have lapsed into coma, for some minutes later my sluggish sensibilities revived, and I was reeking in a deluge of perspiration. I applied the sputtering flame to the lamp wick and resolved to sit out the remainder of the morning in silent cogitation and lonely caution, and explore this grotesque and sinister mystery which o'ershadowed me *A fond* on the morrow. I sat for an hour and thought—thought of all the rosy pictures of the past, of all the bright beams of love I had seen shine in maiden eyes, all the joys and success, all the sorrow and pleasure of my chequered life.

It was with the utmost oppression that I maintained a status of wakefulness even by the aid of cigarettes and intermittent sentry duty on the floor. Having a pack of marked gamblers' cards, I indulged in a game of solitaire to ward off dark thoughts. But now, even in the lurid sheen of the lamp, I fancied that I saw some mute, voiceless, presenceless spirit, so real and tangible to some unknown inner sense that hailed it from within me, that I could almost say that now 'twas here and now 'twas there, and locate it with trembling finger, altho' nothing in truth, moved or stirred. I fancied that I heard a demoniacal cry as if breathing a wail from the furnace of hell. I experienced a bit of apprehension which harbingered the coming of grim events and a sense of impending harm set my heart beating nervously.

Graveyard silence now fell upon the house and I saw quite distinctly a figure moving thru the mellow light, a tall, slim, hooded, spectral thing that seemed to radiate a light of its own. It moved steadily round the table, and as it did so, a wild, horrible yell filled the room, the cry of one in terrible distress. The luminous outline of the slowly moving sprite seemed of electrical origin and evidently was the same ghost that had appeared a little time before in a haze in the darkness of the room. I was confident of this and that the ghostly orbs had apparently been smeared with a preparation of phosphorous or cryptogamus fungus. A lighted candle borne high above its shrouded head diffused barely enough light to make the figure distinguishable, and the oil burner was severely dim. I thought that the air was charged with horrid gas, and I instantly reeled down to the carpet in an ocean of darkness and coma.

When I again became conscious, I found myself half kneeling, half lying across the bed, my arms stretched out in front of me, my face buried in the clothes. Body and mind were alike numbed. A dreadful terror in my heart was the only sensation of which I was aware. Slowly sense and memory returned, and with them a more vivid intensity of mental anguish, as detail by

detail I recalled the weird horror of the night. Had it really happened? Was the thing still there? Or was it all a nightmare? It was some minutes before I dare either to move or look up and then fearfully I raised my head. Before me stretched the smooth, white coverlet faintly bright with yellow sunshine. Weak and giddy I struggled to my feet and steadying myself against the foot of the bed with clenched fist and bursting heart, forced my gaze around the other end. My breath came more freely, and I turned to the window. The sun had just risen, the golden treetops were touched with light faint threads of mist which hung here and there across the sky and the twittering of birds sounded clearly thru the crisp autumn air.

The ticking clock hollowly boomed the hour of seven and I almost leaped for joy so highly strung were my nerves, and so appallingly did the sudden clangor beat upon them. I sat up upon the couch, trembling in every limb, my mind divided between thankfulness and horror. For a long interval I indulged in gloomy speculations in that gloomy house, peopled by shadows and the smell of sad suggestions. I hastily dressed, injected the usual morning eye-opener of morphine and at once sought the public square.

Entering a saloon, I gulped down with nerveless fingers a "gill baby" of tailor-made whiskey following this up by a carafe of brandy. To the bartender there and the sporadic blue and bulbous-nosed "rummies," grog-shop barnacles, dry farmers and the hoi polloi, consisting of aged fossils and young fungi, I became confidential, and related my recent troubles. A lucid explanation divested the dilemma of its enigmatical character, and to me it remained no longer a riddle.

There is no lock but a golden key will open it.

Had it not been otherwise cleared up I was about prepared to resign myself to the belief that I had one of those incomprehensible nervous shocks, one of those affections of the brain which dwarf the miracles to which the supernatural owes its power, or that I had submitted myself to the influences of an imaginative spell, or that I had corns on my brain and crooked pins in my gourd, or that I must have taken mushrooms for dinner or undigested cheese.

I had heard and I had read of the spirits of wicked men forced to revisit the scenes of their earthly crimes and as I found out, this was a case where such a spirit still lingered earth-bound, because worried over earthly things.

Now, it is one of the elementary principles of practical reasoning that when the impossible has been eliminated, the residuum, however improbable, must contain the truth. In the

absence of data we must abandon the analytic or scientific mode of reasoning, and must approach it in the synthetic fashion. In a word, instead of taking known events and deducing from them what has occurred, we must build up a fanciful explanation if it will only be consistent with known events. But we cannot build a house of blocks with half the blocks missing.

The fact is that some few years before an insane man had committed a strange and most bitterly heart-rending tragedy in the slaughter of a whole household in this very room, in the old tumble-down inn opposite the cemetery and simultaneously removed himself from the world by the savage mercy of the silent knife.

This to many would appear a grotesque impossibility, but to a psychologist like myself, I was prepared to accept as an absolute fact. The subsequent phenomena of which I had some very acute samples, may have had a bearing upon the sprites which seemed to haunt it, and were in this way a sequence to this tragedy, for I believe that the spirits of the dead are the amphibia of this life and the next.

This was the key, then, to the mystery of this strange encounter.

## CHAPTER XXI

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### ALMOST INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER

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*“Let us have  
A dram of poison, some soon-speeding gear,  
As will disperse itself thru all the veins  
That the life-weary taker may fall dead,  
And that the trunk may be discharged of breath  
As violently as lusty powder fired  
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's mouth.”*

—*Romeo and Juliet.*

The climax of undiluted gall is reached when a morphine fiend tries to hide his chronic slavery from the trained eye of the scientist, or the knowing eye of “the rounder.” But so far as the general public is concerned, it would have to depend for betrayal upon Dame Rumor, who “unfolds the acts commenced upon this ball of earth and upon whose tongue continual slanders ride, and who stuffs the ears of men with false reports” to wise up to the game.

Notwithstanding this, one may become careless, and this carelessness be visited by some dark fatality.

While domiciled in Oklahoma City, I had the reputation of feeding every miscreant and beggar who could crawl or hobble. In fact, I was always a friend of the human race, because I have heard the harrowing sighs and have seen the trickling tears shed of grief-stricken humanity so often. I always believed in the wholesome doctrine that we should be generous towards strangers, lest we entertain an angel unawares. All my life, not having been ignorant of misfortune, I early learned to succor the unfortunate. Hence I threw lazar alms away to these *sans culottes* and pitched pennies to starving mumpers and professional proctors on the street, and I at all times put my hand in my pocket and helped alien adventurers as a direct gift from heaven. The reputation I had thus gained made me a target for tramps, and this fact was utilized by the police to divert the tide of human distress from the municipality. Thus, when a

derelict drifted into port with a tremendous indictment against fortune, he was invariably turned over to me for relief. An instance in point wherein a roughneck got my goatee, I disinter from the gray vaults of memory.

He approached me with that sort of humility which disfigures the movements of a man down on his luck. I responded sentimentally to this down and outer and put him on his feet. I found that he was not, as is frequently the case, inoculated with the virus of the marble-hearted fiend of ingratitude, nor was he a low-down lowlander; for in return for my sentimental ministrations, he did some menial work about my legal sanctum, and this association brought us together in mutual fellowship. In such intercourse, he became acquainted with the mode of administration of morphine by the steel needle, and he knew where I cached the outfit. He was therefore placed in a position to gratify any vagrant caprice or psychological predilection as to the effect of a "shot," and was free to experiment with the virtues of transcendental medicine.

He did not overlook any bets.

To my unutterable horror as I entered my office, I found the pilgrim, like Homer, nodding his head off in an office chair. His visage reflected the blanchness of the camelia and there were other unmistakable signs of recent traffic in morphine.

I was rigid with fearful astonishment, for he was steeped in a morphine trance. An ashen pallor had crept to his temples, *pallida mors* was written on his brow, and his hands were as cold as a snowball. I was conscious of a sound, suppressed, but constantly repeated—the gasping, stertorous breathing of one who labored to swallow sobs, denoting spasmodic action of the muscles of the throat. I felt his forehead and his pulse: the one was moist, the other feeble, and these symptoms I knew were in accord with the therapeutics of the case, a case of morphine poisoning.

I immediately slapped and kicked him into wakefulness and I got a strangle hold on him. Then I anchored him on his pins and started him *bon gre mal gre*, on a tramp to the jungles. Thru the bulrushes, across plowed land and ripened grain, in forsaken lanes and green meadows, among nettles and tangling vines on the way, in fields of stubble, up and down gullies, in and out of ravines, thru an inextricable labyrinth of lanes and cross-ways and thru strands of barb wire, over hill and dale, skipping mud puddles and jumping bogs, I made him hit the high places by describing peripheries and walking the chalk line in endless peregrinations with a hayfoot and strawfoot seesaw, until the physiological effects wore off. In these calis-

thenic exercises, he knocked his head against fence posts, plunged into kennels, turned into blind lanes, rushed thru different meanders and frequently fell to the ground in stupors of overpowering drowsiness. I steered him to a pump and arranged his head so that the flow of that fine natural liquor—God's best and greatest gift to man, water—would descend upon his occiput and this was his diaphoretic. By reason of these attentions a partial revival of normal forces was attained; yet I trembled with the ague of both eagerness and fear, for I knew that if he succumbed to drowsiness following upon the least scruple of an overdose, the toxic effects would ensue producing coma and death, and I resolved to be "in at the death."

For fully six hours I drudged like a soldier ant and bore this cross of continuous activity. Finally I ventured a home thrust and bagged him for town thru a back door, and in a restaurant there, I shot into his dopy maw a few tankards of the dark.

While still the golden ball glimmered in the west, I had him hog-tied to a chair in my office, and to his pallid brow I glued a moist bandage.

The Chinese have a mode of punishment which consists simply in keeping the subject of it awake by the constant teasing of a succession of individuals employed for the purpose. This was the sentence as a *coup de grace*, imposed by me upon this hewer of wood and this drawer of water. It was the penance meted out to and suffered by this wanton empiricist.

Thruout the gloom of the subterrene night, I maintained a lonely and melancholy vigil over him, teasing him into wakefulness, regardless of the fact that my own circulation was suffused with a sufficiency of the *Aqua Tofana* to convert an entire hospital to the realms of Morpheus. Like the watchful minutes to the hour, still and anon cheered up the heavy time. By the means thus employed, I killed my patient with kindness and made the hill at last.

Had this episode eventuated in death, I would have become the central figure in an explosion of more or less publicity, and in a legal prosecution, unless I could show as matter of defense, the earmarks of the grandeur of pagan philosophy, I might have faced a jury and become the pivot of its verdict on a charge of criminal negligence, if not the graver charge of involuntary manslaughter.

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CHAPTER XXII

OUTSIDE THE PENITENTIARY WALLS

*Hamlet:* "Denmark's a prison."  
*Roscencrantz:* "Then is the world one."  
—*Hamlet.*

Wallula is a dub sage-brush two by four wide place in the road, in South-eastern Washington, at the junction of the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company's line with the Northern Pacific Railway. Upon its fringes are shifting sand dunes, smothers of alkali dust among the soap weed, armless cacti, evil choya and stinking alkali.

About the twilight hour on a summer evening, I boarded a freight train here loaded with dressed lumber, and was helped to a comfortable position upon its bosom by the village elbow of the law, who cautioned me to tell the "shack" to put me off at Walla Walla. A slow freight thru this country is a slow freight without any slips of prolixity, as it stops at every cross road on the line. The route traverses an exceedingly sabulous territory close to the Snake and other streams, and in high winds the sand is scattered like winter's withered leaves. During the jolting trip it filled my ears and eyes and cervix gaiters and finally blew off my billycock. Fortunately the sand and the jar of the train prevented me from succumbing to the encroachments of sleep, the soothing spell of which I felt imprisoning my senses at every jolt, and this is the reason that I survive to relate this tale; for when I clambered atop the lumbering rattler, my whole system was electrified by the zest of both morphine and laughing water.

Little yellow stars were straying across the fields of heaven, and the town minister of TIME was tolling midnight, as I alighted from the freight at Walla Walla. Helpless from the effects of spine-tingling, soul-inspiring nose paint, I knew not where to find a kipping place, and must have aimlessly wandered until the soft dominion of sleep spread o'er my limbs. When I

awoke, it was with a sudden intake of breath and a contraction of the muscles, the surroundings resplendent in the sun, the morn in russet mantle clad. Steeped in swinish sleep, I had slept with the untroubled serenity of a child.

I arose with the disturbance and sense of unreality of a dream, and as fresh as a bridegroom. There was the clear breath of flowers, and the warm wine of the sunshine set my blood throbbing deep and swift to a new sense of love and pleasure, as I stood up spell-bound on the dewy grass. The sweet incense of the spring was drawn from the warm budding earth, flowers glittered, the sun shone and the sky was blue, as I, the intruder, stood silent and surprised before a grotesque picture.

Before me arose a high stone wall stretching to right and left. Towers that looked like those of feudal days, reared at either end. Armed guards paced along its top, walking beats to and fro. As I backed away from the wall, a huge smoke-stack and roofs appeared to the view above the rim of the grim, gray wall. It was an inexpressible and grisly phantom, and in a flash I visualized the topography.

It was the state "Stir."

It was Sunday morning and early morning mass was being celebrated within the prison walls, for I clearly heard the man with the black cassock chanting the *Miserere* and likewise heard the responses *Te Deum Laudamus, Gloria tibi Domine, Pax vobiscum et nobis da mihi domine reverendissime misericordiam vestram*. Finally I heard the last faint peal of a bell, which rang sadly out and died. It was the Angelus.

To a dope fiend and drunkard like myself, who did not believe in being honest and in forgiving my enemies as the Bible teaches, and whose days went by swifter than a shuttle and spent without hope, these exercises struck solemnity to my soul.

I moved in a straight line in an opposite direction from the one in which I had gone before, with my back to Walla Walla, my face to the penitentiary wall. I had not moved far when I heard a guard from the top of the wall utter the command: *Halt!* when I stopped and threw up my hands in abject surrender. The guards from both towers now consulted together for an instant, and one of them hallooed in the crisp morning air "All right," as they both waved me away like the fairy of a pantomime. Yet in my mind I "put myself in his place"; I thought that if I had actually been a convict in that prison, and in escaping from it had reached the outside only to be recaptured—what a cruel disillusionment! The imagination may picture a man who has been in Hell, and thinks that he has made good his escape from that abode of lost souls, and who, at the last portal,

the outer gate, is plucked back and damned to all eternity. Is there any awakening so rude in all the world? Truly, 'tis a picture no artist can paint!

Tingling memories arise when I think of what might have happened to me, if, in the silent watches of the night these guards had heard me snoring in maudlin slumber—a slumber broken by gurgling sobs, due to the absorption of narcotism and bubble water, for I do not suppose that when a vicious man reasons with himself upon his vices, he is one out of five hundred times affected by the dangers that he runs thru his brutish physical insensibility. I have not the mood to ponder over possibilities, but if the moral has grown with the unfolding of the tale itself, I shall consider myself paid in full.

## CHAPTER XXIII

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### A HOLD-UP OF TOWN SLOPS

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*“Could great men thunder as Jove himself does,  
Jove would ne'er be quiet. For every pelting, petty officer  
Would use his heaven for thunder; nothing but thunder.  
Merciful heavens! Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,  
Splitst the unwedgeable and gnarled oak than the soft myrtle.  
But man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority,  
Most conscious of what he's most assured;  
His glassy eyes like an angry ape  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep; which, with our spleens,  
Would half themselves laugh mortal.”*

—*Measure For Measure.*

Shortly after the occurrence of the sensational exploits in the career of Pat Crowe, when the kidnapper had the combined police forces of Omaha, South Omaha and Council Bluffs non-plussed, I landed in the droning town of Neola, Iowa. It was on a crisp, tingling January morning when the North was enveloped fold on fold in a ghostly stillness of newly fallen snow. Crowe had just been acquitted of the charges of kidnapping, assault to murder and robbery, and the police to the verge of righteous indignation seemed outpointed at every turn, and, pending his temporary absence in unknown parts, these constabularies were in a flutter of doubt relative to new sensations. The efforts of the town bulls had become so abortive in landing the bad actor, that the bulls were apathetic, and this apathy was born of actual fear of the man.

Crowe's absence from the scene of his recent escapades engendered suspicious speculations in the minds of the police, and the news of any fresh sensations in which he figured was hailed with no little surprise and somewhat less activity in police circles. In fact, it became a matter of current gossip that the constabularies of these towns were infinitely inefficient, and grave whispers went the rounds that certain official heads must fall in the basket. Individual members of these forces became visibly

incensed about outrageous taunts of official inertia, and it is recorded that many pates were sapped by the policeman's "billy" when impertinent inquiries were made in a censorious way by wags bent on impaling the force on the pivot of public ridicule. The lynx-eyed hawkshaws of the law thruout the surrounding country were alike agitated, expecting at any moment intelligence of the commission of fresh depredations within their own bailiwicks by Black Bart's logical successor. And this latter phase was given added accentuation perforce of the fact that his whereabouts were shrouded in perplexing mystery.

This, by way of explanation, was the situation of affairs upon my arrival in Neola, situated twenty miles East of Council Bluffs. Speaking of dress, I may state that I was habited in a presentable front, my "benny" trailing to the dust, and I was clean shaven and withal, dolled up so as to disarm the town gossips of suspicion, villagers who idle about and who are ever ready to attribute evil to a stranger within the gates of their dub town. I knew that I was free from guile, and that the clothes lines and hen roosts of the community were safe so far as I was concerned and I humored myself by ruminating "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*, and with the Chevalier Bayard, I was *Sans Peur et sans reproche*.

Notwithstanding my arrogance I had less than a dollar to throw to the birds, and this was the last button on Gabe's coat. I knew that if this fact were known to the uncultivated loungers of Neola, it might presage a fall, so I determined, as I touched in my movements the hems of the garments of these rude and verdant boobs.

My purse had become depleted to the bagatelle referred to as a result of high carnival in Omaha some days previous in feverish wagers on the round table with the green cloth, hence it became expedient for me in order to forestall prosecution for violation of the state gambling laws to put on the snowshoes and trekk the veldt to unforbidden strands, and having determined to reach the city of which Hell itself is merely a pocket edition, the "shack" put me off at Neola.

I soon found out that I would be bottled up here for the day, and that I could ride the passenger at midnight. So, as the hours passed, I grew restless under the brazen gaze and the grave whisperings of the village home guards, who ogled me like a lot of gaping oafs. Sardonic grimaces focussed me at every turn. Like a comet I was wondered at by the rag-tag dunderheads. I was scutinized with the undisguised curiosity that town boobs do not scruple to express. I was in an uncertain spotlight. Could I be disillusionized? Was it hero worship?

Did this plain folk admire my peacock *hauteur* as I hit the high places? Was this a nightmare following upon a *coup* of hard luck and saturnalian orgies with "hot-box" and "shot" of morphine thrown in, and the popular frown meant wholesome idolatry?

I am inclined to the mood of Othello, and I will exclaim with him: "I'll never believe it," altho' "Welcome to our city" were written across the heavens. Let Apella, the circumcized Jew believe it; I could not, for I sensed some smouldering hostility and the very air tingled with supressed hate. Therefore, believing that their smiles meant hypocrisy, I called up my nerve and prepared myself for any tableau.

In the keen winter twilight I saw an extra policeman sworn in to augment the force. In stature he was *petit*, altho' in frame he seemed lithe and supple enough, but what there was lacking in him in leonine prodigality, he more than assayed one hundred per cent in penetrating scrutiny. Particularly did he have lynx-eyed "lamps" and as I passed him on my way to the Rock Island depot, he turned on me the evil eye in a skull and cross bones stolidity that would have had a tendency to freeze the marrow. To be more expressive, he had eyes that seemed to have a penetrating power which could make distance near. I gave him the "dead face," as I inwardly chuckled at his exhibition of affectation and his larceny of Jovian thunder. This thunder was spent upon me, and to a rounder, like your orator, it was sheer superficiality and pretense.

Shall I be frightened when a madman stares?

I was in the mood to tear away to some seclusion and afterwards walked over to the Rock Island depot and sat down upon a bench there, and heaving a heavy sigh I lapsed into insensibility and then into a profound slumber.

When I awoke I was still the sole occupant of the place and it was about midnight by the clock. I was alone, and as the Russian proverb says: "Heaven so high and the Czar afar off."

The sensation which is the subject of this chapter soon followed when five persons, bristling like hedgehogs, entered the waiting room, all of them being heavily muffled for winter. Among them I noticed the city marshal with glittering star. The others were home guards, obtuse boneheads, unlicked and unbaptized. They soon assembled in the agent's office and engaged in animated town bunk. I overheard how Zeke Simpkins lost a spotted calf; what pumpkins were worth at Skookum Center; that Si Henderson got his hoof caught in a wolf trap and that the schoolmarm was going to marry Bill Whiskers, by Crackey! Thru all of this monotonous parley I essayed to look the part of

one unconcerned, as tho' surrounded by some insulated atmosphere. I simulated sleep, for I considered that the best time to adopt a disguise is before it is needed.

As the party broke ranks, I heard the voice of one above the others who said distinctly: "Who is that geezer out there in the waiting room? It was then that one of the provincial gossips gave the whole snap away by saying in a half-serious, half-jocular vein:

"That's Jesse James!"

With the long "benny" that concealed my figure and a slouch hat hiding my features, permitting my eyes only to glisten in the depths, I most certainly had an inexpressibly mysterious and brigand-like aspect.

Some sage has said that "Forbearance ceases to be a virtue," and at this sally, I was thoroly infuriated. My gorge, whatever that is, rose. However, I had not long to wait for sensations, as the quintet entered in battle array. The sizzerbill with the lantern was the identical one who had googooed me earlier in the evening with his piercing "lamps." The devil was dancing in them sure enough. He at once sauntered up to me where I was seated upon a bench, and with an air of importance some people assume when clad with police authority and with odds in their favor, in organ tones of majestic authority, tempered with some acidity, said:

"Say, bo, the marshal will furnish you a bed."

To be serious, I hadn't asked for accommodations of this character and in my humble judgment no self-respecting man would apply to any such an almoner when in humble straits, for it is usually the rule, with no exceptions, that one who asks for bread, is handed a stone by these temperamental janissaries. Yet I did not so much dislike the matter as the manner of his speech. He really spoke with the rage of old Alcides. I got busy at once, and as I reached into an inside pocket, I fished out several jitneys and advanced to the ticket window and brought my fist down with a terrific whack, at the same time demanding a ticket to Minden Junction. This station was but a few miles away, but it was a junction point, and better facilities were there afforded to get across the country, and on to Chicago.

With stiff-starched formality the agent refused to sell me the paste board.

At this unexpected turn of events, my rage was boundless. Instantly the spirit of hell arose within me and raged. I was armed with audacity from head to foot, and cared nothing for God, man or the Prince of Darkness himself. Had it been possible to have observed my face at this instant, I believe that it

would have reflected an engorgement of blood—purple with rage and vexation.

Clearly it was up to me to start the fuse and as will be presently noted, I made some warm weather in the neighborhood even in January. After having fixed upon him the most baleful glare, I addressed the nectabanus in vindictive defiance in this wise:

“I do not know who you are and furthermore, I do not give a d——. However, as you may be interested in the disclosure of my identity, I will be frank in saying that I am not Jesse James returned from his vault of clay in the Missouri bluffs, but on the other hand, my name is Pat Crowe.

Every word was like a blistering drop of vitriol and burned like mines of sulphur.

It was a studied, hair-splitting farrago of a rejoinder and it clipped the dwarf's wings. Apprehension sat upon his brow; confusion dwelt in his craven eye, as he slowly gesticulated:

“You held the cards!”

At this instant he wilted like a violet. The remainder of the party affected to indulge in a whimsical smile, but the effort was feeble and perfunctory. There was a forced note in their merriment. They could not have been more surprised if a spirit had risen from the floor at their feet. They said not a word. Sometimes people understand that there is a time for silence. Really, it was a humorous situation—that of a broken gambler and morphine fiend holding up the village slops in such a manner. My own sense of humor is very acute, and it is a miracle that in spite of the gravity of the situation, I did not commit some *faux pas* by laughing out aloud. I attribute this to the single fact that, blended with this humor, I was inoculated with terrible projects of vengeance, the main one being to reduce the dwarf to impalpable powder.

It was not the season for levity by either party, and I believed that the dwarf and his confederates were conscious of being up against the proposition that I was indeed Pat Crowe suddenly returned from his clandestine rendezvous, and quite prepared to turn any trick from kidnapping raw bulls to looting the village bank.

Realizing myself the desperation of this singular *contretemps*, my mind became active on the moment, and then was seen an incredibly swift flash of steel, as I uttered the command. “Hold up your hands!”

Ten hands instantly shot heavenward as I covered the quintet of dry farmers with a shining “rod,” and admonished them

that I would plaster their remains against the wall if they dared to quiver a single muscle.

"You are the timid hares of whom the proverb goes, whose valor plucks dead lions by the beard." I exclaimed.

The familiar rumble of a train was now heard moving over the frosted rails of the C. M. & St. P. Railway outside, and seizing this opportunity for escape, I slowly backed out the door, hurriedly glued myself to the "bumpers" unseen by the meddlesome "shacks" and farewelled the town.

On the following morning I heard the familiar shout of the newsboys on the streets of Des Moines: "All about Pat Crowe."

It must be remembered that any news of Crowe's work at this particular time, ran like a train of lighted gunpowder thru the country.

The paper was plastered with inflamed scareheads about the celebrated kidnapper of the Cudahy kid, and while in the capital city for a week or more thereafter, full of morphine and whisky, I observed no activity in police circles to get him, and in a moment of conviviality, knowing that the law was on my side, I actually interrogated a uniformed officer about Crowe, to which he replied: "We don't want him; Pat has the police stopped forty ways from the jackpot."

I never laugh except upon good grounds, and it is my "horseback" opinion that I am entitled to utter one long shrill-toned, discordant and dissonant horse-laugh that would drown even that shout that \* \* \* tore Hell's concave, and beyond freighted the reign of Chaos and Old Night, after having compelled the rustic "bulls" against their own kidney to eat their own heehaw.

## CHAPTER XXIV

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### THE APOTHEOSIS OF MORPHINE ANNIE

(A Burlesque)

Passed by the Censor

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*"Many days shall see her,  
And yet no day without a day to crown it.  
Would I had known no more—but she must die;  
She must; the saints must have her; yet a virgin,  
A most unspotted lily shall she pass  
To the ground and all the world shall mourn her."*

—King Henry VIII.

In the fashionable cemetery of Rincon Hill, San Francisco, in a retired corner on the slope of a hill, where the sunbeams warm the crocuses to life in early spring and kiss the daisies in summer when they nod their little heads above the greensward, stands a broken marble column with these words chiselled at its base: "These bones shall rise again."

It is the tomb of Morphine Annie, of that city.

The poor old girl had used the stuff for many years, at first tentatively and sparingly, but at times breaking away from the horrible coil only to be carried by the current of temptation upon the broad bosom of chronic addiction. She paddled her own canoe thru difficulties of which she complained not, until her moribund strength and waning powers and the dry rot of age in her blood surrendered to nature's disintegrating forces, and her frail body was found at last in the clasp of eternal slumber.

The pruning knife of time cut her down, and death, the blind cave of eternal night, touched the button that fashioned her for the marble slab and the house with the narrow gate.

The tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief, and making a groan of her last breath, she now sings in heaven and shines as an etherealized essence in the angelic band. She belongs to the stars.

Throughout her life she religiously denied the doctrine of

spiritual freedom and the life of the soul—that the soul was the proper principle of life and development in the body—and this is why I marvelled upon discovering that her dying request was that a bottle of morphine be cached in her coffin to be handy on the journey unto the kingdom of perpetual light in the melancholy flood over the Stygian river.

Morphine Annie, like the average mortal, had her peculiarities, her imperfections, her frailties. She did not profess to be a rubricated saint; conversely, she maintained that she was a sinner. But her disposition was radically noble and generous, clouded only by superficial foibles. She was always willing to share the sorrows, troubles and cares of another, and in a frenzy of pity would part with the last wrap to clothe the naked and share her humble fare with the needy and destitute. When sickness stalked with implacable severity into the ranks of her sex, she became insistently solicitous, and dedicated her time and her sorrows in ministrations with a velvet hand to bring back a healthy glow to the fevered cheek. No hard luck story of the outcast appealed to her in vain if she possessed the wherewithal to gratify the prayers of the distressed from her meagre exchequer.

Her life was in harmony with nature. In fact, she was the incarnation of all the virtues. She abounded with pleasant faults, and finally died with her face toward the setting sun.

She did not make use of her salt hours by a course of rigorous economy, and this is the salient reason why she was incapable of putting by any treasure for chimney-corner days, and that blest retirement, the friend to man's decline, when she would become too old to cheat the winter any more.

She was an almoner to human woe in general; she was the reliever of a world of restless cares; she was an all round "good fellow," the "pal" of the grief-stricken, the comforter of the aching heart. Like old King Cole, she was a good old soul.

In her makeup the milk of human kindness never clabbered. She gave no chalk in return for cheese.

Her unpretentious cottage was a "hop joint" for hopheads, dopeheads, snowbirds and fiends of high and low degree, and no fiend who entered this Mecca of hopology belabored by the agonies or suffering the tortures of lustful nerves, was ever

turned away empty handed. She believed that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin. She took these fiends under her wing and doped out the happy dust with no niggardly economy.

There was no winter in her bounty; it was autumn time that grew the more by reaping.

Her good deeds will survive the winnow of time.

Like Marina, she never killed a mouse nor hurt a fly, nor trod upon a worm. In morality she was as stainless as the lily, as chaste as a star. In truth, she was chaste and immaculate in every thought.

She hated the police with undying animosity, and her hatred was so violent and her hostility so implacable, that it led sometimes to active opposition to these cohorts of the law.

When the intelligence gained currency that Morphine Annie was no more, there was a general flutter in the little settlement in Frisco where she had lived latterly the life of an anchorite, and there was general sadness in the ranks of the down and out clubs of both sexes. The fleusies of the neighborhood and members of the dope Sorosis laid the body out in a manner becoming the station of the deceased, with a profusion of *chappelles ardente* set about the corpse.

On sundry occasions she herself had placed the copper pennies upon the sockless orbs of "stiffs," and now these funereal weights were to be glued to her own downy windows, the delicate office being performed by Workhouse Nelly.

A real old fashioned wake was held, the mourners sitting before the lighted candles by the coffin throughout the watches of the night, while an invisible chorus rendered subdued music, like from Orpheus' lute.

Before final interment after the high Roman fashion of the mortal remains of one of the most picturesque characters of the Coast city, a brief service was conducted at the cottage of the deceased at which Colonel Timothy Hay, a lifelong friend of the dead woman, assumed the role of Muezzin after having tossed off a beaker of red Burgundy and injected a hypodermic "shot" in his left arm, indulged in an eulogium dwelling upon the well-ordered metaphysics of the departed and the paramount virtues of Morphine Annie. He also uttered truths from the Book of

Life, being inspired by the spirit of the living God. As he did so, the beads ran thru his fingers as *Ave* and *Pater Noster* were told, and he strangled his language in his tears. Cocoaine Mary then recited with lascivious metres the thrilling lines of that popular hop-joint bathos entitled "My blue-velvet band."

The pall-bearers at the funeral, which was characterized by barbaric opulence and display were Vaseline Lizzie, Hasheesh Maggie, Cocoaine Mary, Workhouse Nelly, Valerian breath Tilly, Copenhagen Snuff Minnie, Mudface Lil and Frivolous Sal.

She was buried with spices and fine linen and in plates of pure gold in the very odor of sanctity and respectability.

In a neglected locker in her hop-joint was found her last Will and Testament. An examination of its condition showed that it had accumulated the dust of time. The munificent legacies are these: She bequeathed her heart to San Francisco, her body to science and her soul to hell. To Frivolous Sal, she bequeathed the sun and the moon; to Workhouse Nelly, the planets Saturn and Jupiter; to Mudface Lil, the free ozone of the meadows; to Copenhagen Snuff Minnie, her reputation; to Valerian Breath Tillie, her ticket to Heaven (this was not transferable); to Vaseline Lizzie, her hop-joint pipe; to Hasheesh Maggie, her snuff-box, and to Cocoaine Mary, her hypodermic syringe. The rest, residue and remainder of her property, real, personal and mixed, wheresoever situated, she bequeathed to her executor, Colonel Timothy Hay.

When the clouds of the valley have assembled to hide from earthly eyes all that is mortal of one who has fathomed the impenetrable mystery of the Great Unknown, the world gets busy with personal vitriol and "men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues we write in water." In simple charity it ought to be the reverse, for *nil nisi bonum de mortuis*. The case of Morphine Annie was no exception to this rule, for before her ashes grew cold, her memory was upbraided by wagging tongues.

It is enough that flattery cannot soothe, censure cannot wound and ofttimes abuse is flattery.

Morphine Annie was a woman after all, despite the fact of her utter servility to the malignant substance that ostracised her beyond the social gates, as moral conventionalities considered such indulgence *contra bonos mores*.

Moulded by nature as she was, her acts of charity and self-

denial in the vineyard where she had her being, will outlive like acts of those whose powers to ameliorate human woe were limitless,—a monument more durable than brass.

In her instance no grave evil is possible to record, as her failings even leaned to the side of righteousness, notably the attributes of virtue and truth. In fine, her life was gentle and the elements so mixed in her that nature might stand out and say to all the world "This was a woman," and if there is another world, she lives in bliss, if there is none, she made the best of this.

Her epitaph in glittering, golden characters ought to express a general praise.

May the yellows, the blues, the purple violets and the marigolds hang as a carpet over the green grave marking her everlasting mansion; may goodness and she sleep in one monument and for final judgment, let us leave her to the mercy of the most High and Infinite, with whom mercy lies at the right hand, and whose rod and staff may comfort her along.

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NOTE.—Morphine Annie was not a fictitious character. Her real name was Annie Forsythe and the San Francisco papers repeatedly referred to her as "The Madonna of the Slums," from the fact that she rescued many waifs from the polluting influences thereof. She died July 22nd, 1905.

## CHAPTER XXV

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### A MORPHINE FIEND IS BELIEVED

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*Duke: "Are you acquainted with the difference that holds present question in the court?"*

*Portia: "I am informed thoroly of the cause. Which is the merchant here and which the Jew?"*

—*Merchant of Venice.*

It was one sultry July evening that I first met the Swede in Billy, the Mug's saloon Seattle, Wash., where, after many flagons of the pale brew and as many stoops of red-eye, mutual confidences were exchanged. In fact, we had imbibed so many rounds of drinks that our garrulity became incoherent and our pins unsteady. It was a confidential drunk and the more foaming mugs from a cool cellar that we unloaded, the fraternal bond became so strong that it contributed to an elasticity of mutual *camaraderie*.

It has been said that misery makes sport to mock itself, and it may also be urged that the invisible spirit of wine, like pork barrel politics, makes strange bed fellows.

As our heads began to swim in a tide of delectable conviviality, the Scandinavian son invited me to feast with him, the *piece de resistance* being the succulent bivalve. I straightway accepted the invitation and we sought a cozy corner in a grill a few doors from the Madhouse.

The wise one from the shores of snuff and sardines thereupon ordered two plates and we discussed the menu with epicurean relish. When we had finished dining, the Swede became a trifle cocky, and this became more manifest when on retiring from the cafe, he refused to liquidate for the oysters and intimated that your humble servant was the paymaster. Ordinarily this would have been according to the ritual of ethics observed by old gamblers like myself, but at this time I was "broke." To create more of a rough house, the Swede landed a heavy on the waiter's sinciput. In addition to this, he grabbed the tablecloth, bur-

dened as it was with divers dishes and swept them to the floor in atoms, and then lifting the dining table by one of its legs, shivered it into toothpicks against the wall. This whole proceeding fell upon me as a surprise and I was sunk in the mere stupidity of wonder and the idea began to dawn upon me that the Swede was a nasty chap to deal with when he had his topmasts lowered; and seeing that he was about to take a smash at my gourd, I ducked and countered by landing a jolt on his left window, leaving it somewhat ecclymosed. The melee developed into a free for all, and by the time that the Black Maria arrived upon the scene four of us were bleeding from wounds and lacerations. Without ceremony Alphonse and Gaston were gathered into the bowels of the hurry-up, and finally thrown without the usual benefit of clergy, into the town bagne, where the steam was actually turned on in July. This phase I afterwards found out was a measure designed as a part punishment for breaking into jail.

Well knowing before hand that we would be relieved of any superfluous paraphernalia or personal impedimenta, I attempted in the interval of arrest and search to cache the morphine layout, but by reason of the eternally vigilant eye of the arresting officer it was discovered, and I was plunged into the municipal hoosgow minus this *sine qua non*. But a feeble "shot" had been injected into me earlier in the evening and I was accustomed at this time to forty grains of morphine rations per day.

Dope fiends hate prison walls, and their impetuous and fiery nature breaks out in a storm of rebellion.

About this time the drug began to make its demands with dreadful punctuality; the devil's dance of twitching limbs and intolerable restlessness announced its approach. I was being devoured by the hungry flames of lustful nerves. My forehead was moist and my pulse feeble, and I was indulging in fits of pandiculation. I was fretting with crawling skin and muscles spasmodically twitching for the calming potion. The pupils of my eyes were in a midriatic condition. I was in need of a "shot" and informed the turnkey. This twig of the law was sheathed in ice but for cold storage it would be odious to compare him to the medicine man of the city subway. This croaker now made his rounds, and to him I related my tale of abjectness, and for my pains he gavè me the cemetery stare and regarded me with a cold professional air. I made an insistent appeal to him in the strained voice of the morphine fiend, but I soon found that my thunder was spent upon a human gargoyle.

The gift of innate antipathy is heaven-sent. It is certain that if one may love, no less surely one may hate at first sight,

and as our eyes met, hatred was surely born in his, while mine as like as not, told thru their steady stare of aversion and dislike. He was a sullen fellow, lean and tall, with black crafty eyes set near together, a thin nose, shaped like a vulture's beak, a small peaked beard and black hair closely cropped, a crafty, cunning, cruel, ungenerous looking skunk. Being in the shape of a man, God must have made him, therefore, I shall have to pass him for a man, but the meanest of these animals.

I am an acute judge of character and of human nature. Let me measure him in no uncertain tongue, and such measurement will apply to the average official doctor dowered with the care of those who are unfortunate enough to become inmates of eleemosynary institutions in general. He seemed to be the very prototype of dull, unfeeling, barren, short-armed and deformed ignorance. In physique, he was an attenuated, puny, sepulchral spectacle and from my visual survey of his all together, he in no wise reflected the Hippocratean disciple. I possess the heavenly spark of sizing this class of officials up in their true sheep's clothes, and when I had finally classified him I felt like planting a Palmer uppercut on his lantern jaw. How he ever got thru his varsity curriculum, God only knows! I do not believe that he would offer a glass of water to a dying man. The tartness of his face would sour ripe grapes. I hastily concluded that further argument with one of his compass of mind was a lever without a fulcrum, an astronomer without a telescope, and to argue with one who has forsaken his reason is like giving medicine to the dead. They even deny the probable and believe in the impossible. They argue against a dead wall of stony fact. They have a way *de nier ce qui est et d'expliq uer ce que n'est pas*, and the more I think of them the better I love rattlesnakes. Enough!

Failing to move the pill box, I turned my wits to the essential crux of germinating in my mind some hocus pocus, whereby I could prick any bubble of the jabberwock Swede, as my teeth clenched in an agony of tortured nerves.

I juggled with the facts and permitted my imagination to run riot in the construction of some fabricated defense that would dovetail in, and be supported by the events that immediately preceded and followed our arrest, assuming that the Swede's insulated conscience would urge him to falsify *ab initio*. This to me was a postulate. I believed that he was a rubber-tired liar, and in all truth had Ananias and Eli Perkins stopped a thousand ways. No exquisite adjustment could be made, and I knew that it is a problem beyond the capacities of the human mind to falsify a transaction that looked plausible *prima facie*, and

that if the Swede undertook the impossible labor of denying everything material to force culpability upon him, he would be lifting his own hands against his liberty, that he would be sawing off the branch that he was sitting on; if given enough rope he would hang himself, if given a glass of water he would drown himself.

And the suppression of the truth would be the suggestion of falsehood. As for myself, I had no gold to plate sin with, or shove by justice by offense's gilded hand, even assuming my guilt, hence I resolved to stick to the truth—truth so clear that it would glimmer thru a blind man's eye. I reflected: "Plato is my friend, Socrates is my friend, but truth, the gold coin of the New Jerusalem, is more my friend." After having resolved it over, I finished in an abiding faith that the strong lance of justice could not pierce it. And even assuming that the shallow wit would lie in his throat, that he would perjure himself like Epaminondas, I thought of having introduced at the bearing the simple and suggestive test of respiration on him, and just as soon as he uttered a false statement an increase of respiration would be discovered; and had this investigation been one portentous of a forfeit of my life or affected my liberty for any indefinite period, I would have forced this unerring and unequivocal test, or perhaps, experimental psychology, viz, the wonderful subliminal memory that records every face, fact and happening from the cradle to the grave, when helped by another wonderful subconscious faculty, the association of ideas, the psychological factor of the character and rapidity of the mental process known as this association of ideas.

The awful glut of vengeance was in me, was gnawing at my soul.

When we were summoned into court to explain in this court of summary conviction where insistence upon form is brushed aside unceremoniously, I surprised myself by telling the truth. I offered a calm appeal to reason, and subsided like a lion that had just made a full meal of his victim. At this stage of the proceedings, the occasion acquired an idyllic flavor by a voice from the mourner's bench, and this completed the thrill of my fanciful nerves. It was the voice of a uniformed foreman *sua sponte*.

As the mighty Ingersoll in one of the greatest appeals for sympathy in a homicide case closed abruptly when a juror of the panel entirely overcome by the convincing logic of the invincible orator, rose in court and virtually announced the ver-

diet before the jury's retirement, so I sat down without rocking the boat.

The Swede on his part now indulged in a collection of idiocies—sentimental rhapsodies—in long-drawn phrases of saccharine tenuity, and finally he drowned his thoughts in a flood of empty words. He swore by Woden and Thor and Freya, and looked like a papajex. The court seeing this, did not permit him to get to the end of his latin, and consigned him to six months languishment within the pale shades of the city bilboes, and the morphine fiend who stuck to the truth, was released.

So far as my own case is concerned, had it been otherwise adjudged, I know that one of two things would have happened. Had I been returned to this or any other calaboose for even ten days, and the morphine suddenly withdrawn, I would have either died or would have become an irreconcilable lunatic.

Falsification is the inevitable accompaniment of morphia, and this episode is related more for the purpose of showing that altho' a chronic liar even when telling the truth is not to be believed, this is an instance where a dope fiend told the truth and was believed.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### TOO MUCH HYPODERMIC NEEDLE

*“With juice of cursed hebenon \* \* \* whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with the blood of man,  
That quick as quicksilver it courses thru  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigor it doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk  
The thin and wholesome blood.”*

—Hamlet.

I retain a memory of Salt Lake City that refers neither to the Latter Day Saints, polygamy or the Danites.

In the Mormon Capital I unwittingly flirted with the undertaker; I nearly knocked my candle out; I danced upon the edge of my own sepulchre.

On the occasion I had punctured a vein with the hypodermic needle.

The veins of the body lie closer to the skin than the arteries, and this is the reason that they are more liable to be punctured in the ordinary use of the “gun” by a dopehead. The severance of a vein is accompanied by a needle pricking sensation, a flushing of the face and the cervical region, a pounding sensation in the head and suspended respiration. In that of an artery, the same needle pricking confined to the entire body, throbbing in the head, difficult respiration, an inordinate flow of blood to the head, together with a sense of impending dissolution. In either case there is the presence of syncope.

All of the former I felt in the superlative degree, and this is how it happened.

During the taciturn watches of the night, I awoke from the umbrage of a ghoulish nightmare in a cheap lodging house on Commercial street, the Whitechapel, the Broomielaw, the *Cour Des Miracles*, the Bowery, the Barbary Coast of Salt Lake. In and about this street at the time I write, was domiciled the *demi-monde*, where women who emerged from the depths flaunted their libidinous personalities, lewdly and lasciviously consorted with the opposite sex, sold their virtue, their bodies and their

souls for "thirty pieces of silver" and threw out other baits to tempt the exiguous purses of the greenhorns from the cactus belts. In travels abroad I have seen and visited many red-light districts, and in the U. S. A. I have seen all of them, and here on Commercial street, Salt Lake City, is the first and only place where I saw scarlet women arrayed in transparent flummery or nearly undraped, who chortled exhortations proclaiming their unhallowed avocations from the tops of stairways leading to their bagnios. I have been in Pompeii, and among the ruins there, I clearly distinguished the names of the brothels carved on the stone over the doorways, simple announcements of the scarlet merchandise to be had there; but here in Salt Lake I was greeted for the first time with signs on the windows of these second-story bagnios which read: "Locks picked here," "Tickets punched here." Compared with all of the restricted districts visited by me, these seemed utterly abandoned. In fact, they were as intemperate in blood as Venus or those pampered animals that rage in savage sensuality. In select chambers of these bagnios in an atmosphere of subdued lights and dilatory music, *Nymphs du pave* and cabaret chickens arrayed as Eve After The Fall, danced the shuttle-fox trot before tango lounge lizards, wall geccos and society blades lazily lolling on tiger skins and Persian mattresses. Other unwholesome fads even over the rim of disgusting immoralities, and unmentionable here because tabooed by the *beau monde*, were daily practised. Below these peculiar haunts of questionable entertainment were dives of disreputable dispensaries, where bubble-water flowed knee deep, and on a stage brazen hussies sang langorous chansons, and *ballet danseuses* and *cafe chanteuses*, naked as the dawn itself, did the can-can.

For some days antecedent to my arrival in this city, I had followed a heavy-headed revel, so that when I retired to couch in a curious bed, I was thoroly impregnated with the besom of destruction, so much so, that, due to aphasia, I had not administered the evening hypodermic injection before retiring. When I so awoke, I felt as if released from the tentacula of some ghostly hobgoblin and undergoing the agony of whisky cramps.

To allay this condition, I hastily assembled together in the darkness of the room, the poppy-seeded wine. I dissolved the "snow" in a spoon, drew up a barrel of the ebullition and into the popliteal space of my left limb, I injected above the knee a syringeful. I withdrew the needle and started to refill the cylinder of the "gun," when I was served with notice of the needle pricking sensation referred to. It was the on rush of the poisonous blood.

*I had struck a vein.*

I was *au fait* as to the therapeutics of the case, and straightway set about to put certain theoretical knowledge to a practical test. I sought the open air in order to get the strong tonic elixir represented by a draught of cool, spring air, rich with the scent of mother earth, and otherwise get the soft ministrations of the good nurse, nature, which would put my blood in circulation and fill me with a gentle vegetable pleasure. As I reached the street my head pounded like an eccentric. I imagined that my heart was passing the limit of elasticity, and would fly to pieces like some overdriven flywheel. I imagined that my head would blow off as great pressure blows off a crown sheet. I trembled; a cloud darkened my eyes; the arteries beat with violence. I was stunned with a rushing as of a mighty wind; everything about seemed to whirl round, and suddenly all grew dark—dark beyond all expression. I found myself running round and round in a circle, shouting incoherently, frothing at the mouth, until I fell exhausted, a twitching, moaning, writhing, senseless heap. I imagined that this was the death struggle, and really had thoughts of my body being in the morning the subject for clinical surgery. This reflection brought about a terrible spasm of brain and heart, and I mechanically arose and kept moving in my contentions with the pestilent scythe of death. The very thought of death culminated in the fullness of that joy of living which sparkles most brightly under its very shadow. There came a deep inspiration, and I knew that the worst was “on the toboggan.” My vision became clearer, and I was “out of the woods.”

As the moon was wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze, I returned to the lodging house and “shot” the remainder of the solution into the tissues, and, climbing into bed, I slumbered until awakened by Bridget, the Irish chambermaid of this three jitney stable for human lice.

This was the closest rubber, the most ticklish tournament that I ever had with the Pale Rider in all my drab life on the shifting, sinking sands of time as a player upon its stage of fools, and I was so impressed that I sought the dicta of respectable sawbones to get analytic dogma. These croakers were unanimous that I was close to the vague and shadowy boundaries. They said that it was *in articulo mortis*. It was *in articulo* something, for I never thereafter introduced the needle without first spotting a Broadway on the skin that looked good to me beneath the glare of Old Sol or the mellow haze of a friendly light, in response to instinct rather than fear, the instinct of prudence which guides all beings and makes them clear sighted in danger.

## CHAPTER XXVII

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### A NIGHT IN BUGVILLÉ

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*"Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more'."—Macbeth.*

Morphine is as many sided as clouds are many formed, and this panacea *de luxe* performs more remedial offices than any other drug in the world's pharmacopoeia. A bolus of it will rock the cradle of infancy as well as emblam old age to the Nirvana of dreams. Judiciously used it is both prophylactic and therapeutic, while on the other hand it is capable of producing an Iliad of woes more death dealing than the deadly Upas tree of the Patagonian sands.

Truly a ship that sails under so many colors is not to be trusted!

In all my wanderings round this world of grief and care, while I was a wanton slave to this drug, I found but a single instrumentality that defied its power. Strange to say, more strange to tell:

*It was an army of bedbugs.*

Let me tell it aloud.

FATE, the jester, put me to bed one sultry July evening in a cheap lodging house on Pacific street, San Francisco. It was at a time when day still lingers but some few stars began faintly to pierce the twilight. The place was an unpretentious three-story frame shack which clearly showed the ravages of time upon its exterior, and which was even more accentuated by an examination of its bowels. It was a cloth and papered house, so called because the ceilings were not plastered but simply covered by stretched whitewashed cloth. On this occasion I especially needed the honey-heavy dew of slumber, for had I not just that same evening annihilated the distance from Denver in three days and nights with such disturbed rest as was afforded by the rocking and jerking of freight trains over the summits and thru the defiles of the Rockies?

So as the gray fog deepened into night and the street lamps

started into shivering light, my eyelids were weighed down by the arrears of long-deferred slumber. Before I swung into bed, however, I commenced an examination of the linen and covers on the bed assigned me, and while I found that the latter betrayed evidences of having had a grudge at the Chinese laundry, the sheets and pillow cases were as spotless as a virgin's virtue. I knew that I was in a region where flies and gnats went off duty at sundown or on the approach of night and that although mosquitoes did duty until the cock's shrill clarion, the windows were heavily screened to stop their assaults. Now, it is the vogue among knights of the road upon retiring to disrobe entirely, so that his undergarments may not become contaminated by what are in the parlance of the ghetto known as "circus bees," that old Mosaic plague of lice visited upon Pharaoh and the ancient Egyptians. In obedience to this ethical dictum, I peeled off everything. Being dog-tired and benumbed by the encroachments of slumber, I failed to observe anything unusual in the appointments and settings of the room, and, after having anointed myself for sleep by the customary "shot" of morphine, I was soon flopping *deshabille* upon the snowy bosom of the "doss," as Night, sable goddess, from her ebon throne, in rayless majesty stretched forth her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world.

In the very nature of things I could not have dozed very long for I was abruptly awakened by the sense of sharp and tingling bites at different stations of my body which actuated me to change my position on the slats. Another lapse followed this disturbance when I was again aroused by similar irritations and they became so regular that I was constrained to repeatedly change my position from one side of the bed to the other and also to alternately lie face down, and then belly-up. As a result of these changes of position I stole some fleeting seasons of sleep, but only to awake to the dreadful sensibility of assaults from all conceivable vantage points.

My mind became at once very active in a contemplation of sand flees, galnippers, chiggers and other pestiferous creatures, and yet so far as I knew, the native habitat of the first named is the State of Arkansaw and the galnipper was far away in Jersey, and so far as chiggers was concerned, it was impossible. These contemplations solaced my reflections and I forthwith instituted a search for lice. As I focussed the incandescent bulb upon the linen, brown specks were at once disclosed to my gaze and upon still closer inspection these were transformed to moving, gyrating, pulsating, throbbing parasites, the linen and bedding being literally alive with bedbugs. With this flooding of

the light upon the bed, the elusive insects scampered for cover in a bedlam of precipitancy. They were hurrying here, there, and everywhere upon the undulating folds. An examination of the ceiling and the walls brought to light not hundreds, not thousands, but it seemed millions of brown specks tattooed thereon, and closer scrutiny revealed infinitesimal holes, ostensibly the nests and feeding grounds of incestuous bedbug germination. Their scamperings were plainly indicated in zigzag movements of the sagging cloth, and they became visible when the light was turned on by finally dropping thru the holes they had worn in it. Countless caravans of all sizes engaged in a distracted riot of stampede. Evidently they were all heads of families with large progenies.

I was intent upon further discovery, and like the old maid who looked under the bed before retiring and found a man there, and as this man tried to make his getaway was forcibly detained by her, and who afterwards married him, so the story goes, so I followed her example and found the legs of the bed imprisoned in certain queer looking receptacles which looked like innocent lard cans, betrayed the odor of lard cans, and in fact were lard cans. Each of these lard cans was filled to the brim with some subtle liquid, possibly the fine liquid of nature, and the genius of intuition taught me that they were so installed to frustrate any pragmatic encroachments of the bugs upon the bed. An improvised moat was thereby created but without the usual draw-bridge—a fabrication of human ingenuity invented for the occasion and for which no patent has been issued as yet, so far as I know.

Upon a visualization of these things, I became brick-red with perturbation, “blew out the gas” and again clambered onto the slats, this time urged to combat the kisses of sleep and await any developments fostered by the tyranny of time. But even at that I was up against the proposition that the artificial means employed to coax the purple lidded goddess never failed, and perhaps I might yet yield to the hypnotic lullaby of its susurrations in the face of these resolutions to fight against its advance. I did not believe then, but I do verily believe now that had I succumber to the seductions of the fickle goddess of morphia, which would have plunged me into the arms of the soft-eyed goddess of sleep, I would finally have been wrapped in the arms of death.

However, my brain was alert upon the theme of bugs, bugs, bugs, and if they did not materialize in reality, they would be there in my fancy. I had not long to wait, for the bugs came on schedule time. The itching sensations upon my skin seemed to me as if small particles of foreign matter had fallen, riposting

thuds that sounded like dripping rain. Then there followed pricking punctures and a zig-zag crawling over my body like hounds in the chase. Although I was reclining on my back, I felt insistent prods in that region as if forcing all the arts of modern offensive warfare. These became so intolerable that I whirled out of bed in agonized corporal torment and mental distemper. I was in the mood to desert the ship, but I finally compromised by invoking the Calculus of Probabilities, and here I tossed up a Lincoln penny and this was irretrievably lost by falling thru a crack in the floor. To be thus diddled, I saw that I was out of luck and prepared another "shot" of the narcotic, and as I jabbed the hypodermic in my arm I thought that this "shot" was as sweet as remembered kisses after death. I then extinguished the filament, laid down upon the bed and called into requisition every known modus to entice the dewy-feathered sleep. I counted from one to one thousand forty times; I alternately raised my limbs and they fell in rythmical cadence upon the slats, and during the mental count I concentrated my mind upon the single theme of sleep, sleep, sleep. Thus did I assume the role of an auto-hypnotist and banked strongly on suggestive therapeutics. But, strange to say, in spite of all of these expedients, I might have tried to dissolve by spontaneous combustion. My eyes were wide open and staring into blank obscurity, while the bugs touched the button and did the rest. They swarmed about me in a perfect bedlam of restless activity and the impetuous spirit of sleep refused to take its airy rounds.

It was now about the middle watch of the night, and I sat down upon the bed and abandoned myself to the most dismal reflections. These reflections were but momentary, for some unseen demon hunched me to apish acrobatism, and I rolled upon the floor for some minutes in order to tire myself out. After this, I relumed the light and scrutinized my body and saw revealed thereon the havoc made by the pests. I was literally tattooed *cap-a-pie* with crimson stains. The sanguinary fluid stood out in multiplied spots showing irregular splotches and contorted knots as red as the flag of anarchy, or of that unmentionable organ in the anatomy of the jaybird during the poke-berry season. I hustled into my breeching and made still another examination. I found also upon the walls hordes moving with great celerity on a pilgrimage to the ceiling, from which I noted that they fell upon the bed, while those on the floor in myriad numbers rambled toward the lard cans with the evident purpose of gaining access to the bed by this means. I flashed my searchlight upon the cans and my reflections were confirmed, for the bugs by some subtle instinct of sixth sense were rapidly

crossing an improvised "Bridge of Sighs" made by a parlor match floating upon the surface of the fluid. As they were being systematically ferried across there came in fancy to my ears the familiar strains of that undying selection, "Life on the ocean wave."

I was amused at this scheme of the bugs and I gave myself over to thoughts about the poetic versification that these varmints have no wings but they get there just the same.

I now turned the mattress of the bed over and the offensive stench that filled the chamber nearly stifled me. On its under side whole broods of them resided in confused masses and the place was smudged in bedbug perfumery. In this dilemma, I called for help sharply, and I might as well have asked the dead to rise. No voice issued from the tomb-like repose.

What could I do?

I could not suffer myself to return to the bed and give myself over to these pestiferous critters. I could not very consistently "carry the banner," and thereby subject myself in this great city to arrest by some shadbelly of the night police and take a chance of passing the remainder of the morning within the sombre precincts of the city *conciergerie*. My Lincoln penny was gone, so I compromised by sitting up in a chair. In this situation I tried every known effort to beguile the time until the advent of day. But here I had no time to even assume a restful state for I at once felt a suspicious sting in the region of the cervix, and, placing my hand there in an effort to scratch the part, I glommed a corpulent wingless bird. Of course, I assassinated it *vi et armis*, the operation precipitating an engorgement of loathsome blood which squirted in the perfumed atmosphere.

I was now thoroly alarmed.

My duds were aglow with bugs and I observed them coming in droves from the inner recesses thereof. I had murder in my heart and I believe that had I encountered the pie-faced, pig-headed old nozzle of a proprietor of that cheap lodging house at the moment, I would have tried to throttle him willy nilly. I hated him from the bottom of my heart with all the fierce old anger which then would have filled me with delight and pride if I could have had his anointed blood smoking in the runnels of my sword.

I heard the siren whistle for morning work and betook myself

to a nearby steam beer saloon and there baptized myself with several flagons of this Pacific Coast brew until I heard the shrill clarion of the cock—the rosy fingered daughter of the morn—and saw the gray shadows of returning day. I noticed that some of the unwelcome guests had quietly slipped from my attire, but to make assurance doubly sure, I moped to the outskirts, and peeling off my garments there in the foggy dawn, and while yet the thickets were bearded with the million jewels of the morning and the earth breathed of repose and sleep, I subjected each piece to a thoro shaking and jarred Mr. Johnsing loose.

Buoyed up by a few calabashes of jitney bubble water, I returned to the lodging house, confided to the landlord my woes, and indulging in a volcano of choice expletives, threatened to sue him and publicly advertise him if he refused to redress my wrongs. He stood up like a stricken deer at bay. I was smarting under the scourge of my martingale and he was blowing hot and cold alternately. While we argued the pros and cons and balanced the whys, the wherefores, the becauses and whereupons, I lawyerlike and he liarlike, I incidentally noticed a stallion bedbug crawling over the hotel register. I called the attention of the landlord to this fantastic phase, at the same time facetitiously remarking that the bedbug was in all probability searching for the number of some lodger's room. Although in a measure still sheathed in ice and holding his own against odds, I became aware of the possibility that old stoneheart was weakening and that evidently my shares had risen in value with him. I then got hold of the right end of the string thread, so that the skein could not unravel and called his bluff. But he actually seemed upset as he called out the name of "Rachel" in a hoarse exclamation. Of course, I had prior to this concluded that he was of Hebraic faith and when he called his wife's name I knew that she must be one of Judah's daughters and he a circumcized Jew. When she appeared upon the scene we both dilated on the facts of the case and finally agreed that Rachel should be both judge and jury, and I played my last trump card by inviting her to observe an extraordinarily obese bug crawling upon old crooked face's immaculate collar. When Parthenia saw the bug she said to Ingomar: "Pay the man."

"Is it so nominated in the bond?" inquired the wise owl.

"It is not so expressed; but what of that?"

“Twere good you do so much for charity” replied Parthenia.

“A Daniel come to judgment”; I buttinskied.

It is an awful responsibility to get to a point like this in a story where the author has to either make good or quit. But I am going to do both. The tale is practically ended anyway.

Owing to the rough house that the company was making on this early Sunday morning, a policeman entered and threatened to pinch the bunch *en bloc*; whereupon the Jew drew from his wallet a crisp \$50 bill and handed it to your orator, who on the instant left this notorious hotbed of bugology, resolved never to return while the sunlight of his reason should exist and memory holds a seat in this distracted globe.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

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### BEAUTY WITHOUT VIRTUE IS A FLOWER WITHOUT PERFUME

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*"This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran upon the greensward."—The Winter's Tale.*

There has been embalmed to the perpetuity of accumulated wisdom the philosophy that there is no disputing taste, and this is *in ipsissimis verbis* what the cow said when it kissed the mush-faker.

I believe that men more readily renounce their interests than their tastes, and when one sets up an idol upon a pedestal as his paragon of perfection and excellence, as the very personification of his ideality, as the very mirror of his hyperbolic dreams, such an idol may be shattered by one of antipodal intellectual relish, for once I heard a wag declare that the most beautiful creature in the world, barring the women of course, is the real python snake. I have perforce concluded that some critics are without souls, and are like judges who know all the points of procedure but have no grasp of the principles of law and no insight into its equities. Speculative criticism is generally futile, and when dogmatic is disgusting.

It is axiomatic that there are no two persons precisely alike in physiognomy, but what is more wonderful than that the countless sands of the seashore reflect dissimilarity under the most powerful microscopic lens?

So far as female loveliness is concerned, it has been the polestar of singularly diverse arbitrament from the birth of time, whenever that was, to the present epoch, and will continue to rivet the popular mind as a *crux criticorum*, long after the last picture of earth is painted, and the tubes become twisted and dried. The beauty of women is like music, captivating and alluring, and all poets have felt that there is nothing in the world so lovely as a lovely woman. The ineffable and transcendent

lure of women they have woven in the threnody of verse; and painters have vividly portrayed in the prismatic nuances of the rainbow their delicate lines, symmetrical curves and angelic ensembles. Typical goddesses have been extolled in both grandiose magniloquence and prismatic tints, from the rustic dairy-maid robed in linsey-woolsey to society queens. But plainly the rare gift of beauty must come from Heaven. I opine that no other bard has portrayed in the genius of versification such a coterie of women as has Shakespeare. In the witchcraft of his tongue he forces them upon the stage from Isabella, the votaress, Ophelia, the rose of Elsinore and Juliet, the white dove of Verona, from the saucy ones habited in doublet and hose, Viola, Rosalind, Julia and Jessica to royal wenches on and off a throne.

In my migratory peregrinations, my footsteps brought me to many strands, and this sight of diverse femininity developed in me the quality of selection, if not the capacity of a connoisseur. I have mingled with the real Geisha girls of the Orient. Under court escort, I have invaded the Harem of the Ottoman Sultan. I have touched the hems of the garments of the Egyptian, Grecian, Castilian and French exemplars; the Russian, the Levantine, the Teutonic, the Tyrolean type, the Algerian beauty, the light-hearted blonde Circassian, the English "princess," the "braw" Scotch lassie, the wild Irish mavoureen. Each in her singleness of individuality challenged my emotions, but at last it remained for the United States of America to furnish me in my *outré* aestheticism and serve predilections of feminine charm, an exemplar that at once arrested my concentrated idolatry and sent the blood rushing thru me like unto the shock from an electric battery.

Let not the reader by hypnotized into the belief that for the reason that I was hypnotized by morphine and other narcotics upon the occasion of my focussing this charming female, that I was thereby stripped of the capacity to differentiate nice distinctions, or that I possessed the facility to soar into the regions of the purely ideal. Rather believe that these drugs afforded me the divine nature, the heavenly spark of discriminating instinct of the most exacting and extortionate critic.

This woman thrilled me, maddened me, absolutely sent my soul to perdition with her inimitable fascination.

The occasion was a trolley ride from Boulder, Colo., to Denver. My queen was already seated in the car when I entered about one o'clock in the afternoon of a sultry day in June, a day when all nature was trickled in holiday attire. Many passengers were lazily filling up the car as my human doll lazily perused the pages of *De Profundis*. In her right hand she held a tiny

- fan and as I strode down the aisle, she looked up in roguish *hauteur* and vamped the car with her violet eyes, which shone with mystic light, in one comprehensive sweep of her inflammatory glance.

Truly a woman's eyes are mirrors in which a man can see the whole world if love is the telescope thru which he looks.

I felt an inward shock, and her mere glance sent a thrill right thru my heart, causing a delicious flutter there, and I really thought that there was a faint trace of coquetry in her that the angels would have pardoned.

The magic of a lovely face in woman is a power which the aesthetic mortal finds it impossible to resist. But here was facial beauty personified, incarnate, the beau-ideal of my wildest and most enthusiastic visions. The head rivalled the Greek Psyche in outline. In beauty of face, no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of an opium dream. She had a Madonna-like air and a calm-eyed aplomb that proclaimed her the highest product of a classic caste of beauty, possibly better conveyed by the Homeric epithet *hyacinthine*.

Around her there was an odor of chastity, a charm of virtue. Her gestures, all the harmonious lines that composed her gracious form were instinct with the charm of modesty. There was an intangible, gripping lure about her personality. All that I had ever seen or dreamed of loveliness was in that matchless living picture by the hand of the divine artist.

Before Miss Petticoats lowered her eyes to Wilde's pages, I flashed back a smile, but at that I was painfully conscious of a rudeness, yet so dominated by the emotion inspired by that vision of incomparable beauty that my pretense was less poignant than it should have been.

Her dress was despairingly common, but *en regle*, being a singular exception to the eternal rule which ordains that "fine feathers make fine birds," but it was *comme il faut*, the soft pink fabric of her decollete gown, revealing all the translucent loveliness of her enamelled arms and neck and shoulders, harmonizing with the color of her fan. She wore a narrow-brimmed leghorn hat, wreathed in ostrich plumes with a gold cord round its crown with all its becomingness and picturesque audacity; a flannel shirt belted in at her slight waist with a band of yellow leather defining her comely biceps and short, straight pleatless skirts that fell to her trim ankles and buckled leather keds. Where the tight bodice was cut away over her white bosom, she had pinned a peony of flaming scarlet, full-blown. She was fresh and cool, wholesome and clean.

I paid flattering homage to this queenly apparition for some

lazy minutes, as if I had been suddenly converted to stone. While I was thus wrapped in admiration of this lovely vision, the fact that other oculars were glued upon her in ravished wonderment, did not escape my notice. From the time of departure at Boulder until arrival at Denver, this beauty was the target of more leering rubber-necks, amatory surfeiters, "sissy-boy" ogglers, callow blades, Broadway Johnnies and marble-top baldheads that ever assaulted the side door of a theatre awaiting the egress of a chorus girl.

An array of swell female frills was in the car, and these prurient souls continually goggled her by rotating in their seats, fastening wondering gazes upon her and quizzically focussing her from different axes of vision, as in a parallax of the moon. In fact, one of these lady passengers had the abnormal temerity to train a pair of opera glasses on the poor thing, and a fuzzy-wuzzy rouse sporting a cluster of weeping-willoy "galways" and a giraffe neck, surpassed all limits by adjusting his monocle and rubbering her for further orders.

The pivot of this indiscriminate concentration eclipsed a smile and answered her pestiferous slaves with *les doux yeux*. This latter involved a slight shifting of her person. Such an unconscious revelation of her charms stimulated more shuffling and commotion among her ardent, amorous idolators and passionate lustiheads, which now engendered an attitude of icy reserve on her part, and what might have happened about this time had the car not reached Denver, I cannot conjecture. As the car slowed up to permit passengers to alight, the gazabo with the cluster of grapes and a lady-killing cheap flash of a dude seeing that Fluffy Ruffles had closed her volume of the apostle of sunflowers, leaped out of the car and stood ready to receive the descending goddess, while an elderly concupiscent grabbed her book, her fan and her chatelaine bag. In this multiplicity of attention there was some momentary confusion and delay. The aforementioned grasped her hands and with that decision and positiveness which a hesitating and undecided sex know how to admire, in an instant with majestic dignity, they had dextrously and gracefully swung her to earth. For this courtesy she sent them a butterfly kiss from the tips of her fingers and walked away with unfettered freedom of limb. As she did so, I thought that Paradise opened and Heaven walked on earth—that all the birds of Paradise sang round her in the shining and perfumed air.

Her royal highness was a faultless, hydrogenated blonde—a real Titian—a young creature of opulent charms—about twenty years of age, in stature tall and somewhat *svelte*. I do not say that she was handsome; this living, breathing beauty

was pretty. Such a rare beauty was never before seen thru Bohemian eyes. Never was Umbrian or Iberian girl like her.

I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease of her demeanor or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. Her features were singularly fine and delicate. She had a face of ruddy ivory. Her violet eyes and corn-silk coiffure hinted of Irish ancestry; her hair curled prettily about her ears; her flocculent blonde curls fell in a wall of gold like the delicate gossamer tangles spun on the burnished disk of the marigold and were brushed back from her forehead *a la pompadour*. These sunny locks hung on her temples like a golden fleece and they gleamed in the sunshine like the locks of the young goddess Medusa; and here I thought that the painter played the spider and wove a golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men faster than gnats in cobwebs. A pearl collar clasped her white throat, a throat whiter than the slivered dove and her neck was like white melolite. She had a gypsy head and a wasplike waist. There was a warm glow in her cheeks—a *couleur de rose*—cheeks that were like the fading stain where the peach reddens to the South, or like the sun seen thru a shell, a pale flush, an agitated whiteness; two dimples sported in them, and when not in repose, the teeth glanced back with a brilliancy almost startling every ray of the holy light which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. In this smile there were revealed even rows of teeth of the bluish milky whiteness of the pips of Indian corn.

She was a priestess of the spirit of summer. Her aplomb was religiously symmetrical. She seemed as fresh as the morning dew, and her lips which were made to kiss, were like unparagoned rubies. White and violet-laced were those languishing mercurial windows of the soul—lights that do mislead the moon. For downright beauty, neither art nor Venus herself had anything on her. Dolls and angels didn't even have a look-in. Truly, she could pose for Mercury!

Whether queen or courtesan, saint or sinner, she was the cunningest pattern of excelling nature—the most radiant, exquisite and unmatched beauty that I had ever beheld. To me she seemed lovelier than Diana's purple robe. She was the necromancy, the very apotheosis of female loveliness. She was in fact the queen of the fairies. In feminine charm she eclipsed even the Serpent of the Nile. She was a perfect beauty that would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel. Verily, her beauty would have restored a mad man to his senses.

Her complexion was like an unbleached rose, with classic lines; an alluring, stunning, delirious, seductive, ravishing, amor-

ous, killing, thrilling, distracting, bewitching voluptuousness marked her *tout ensemble*—a theme for poets, the despair of painters. Mere words are soundless to convey the least flicker of an estimate.

“The senate house of planets all did sit  
To knit in her their best perfections.”

She seemed the prototype of virginity; she reflected the tyranny of beauty; she looked an iridescent dream; she posed as an incandescent lily.

Now, I do confess that the only justification for the continuation of this episode, is in consideration of its climax. I realize that the narrative thus recalled in such detail as I can remember, deals simply with a dope fiend's estimate of a charming female face and form, and the natural and regular thing would be to end it here. Nevertheless I write again, not a whit the worse for a mischance which would have silenced many a man, and in a mood to tell you of this climax, wonderful enough to strain the sides of your shallow modern skepticism, as new wine stretches a goat-skin bottle.

Permit me, then, to intoxicate the impressionable senses of the reader.

I was inclined to the belief that our heroine belonged to the blue-stocking set, and yet, so far as I knew, she might, perchance, belong to the lower middle class or else a unit of the bottom stratum of society, and as to this latter speculation, I ought to have considered the significance of the red peony, the emblem of sin upon her bosom. I therefore followed her with the idea uppermost in my mind of determining this to my entire satisfaction. How far I was from the truth may be educed from the fact that she continued on her way after having alighted at Sixteenth and Curtis streets, to Sixteenth and Market streets. I had half expected, however, that when she so alighted at 16th and Curtis streets, she would move toward the State Capital, where the nobbiest homes are located. At Sixteenth and Market streets she proceeded along Market street to the restricted district. I was close to her heels and as I fox-trotted along, I read the names on the doors of the one-story houses, viz, Lizzie, Marie, Annie, Flossie, Ruth, Mamie, Daisy, Penelope and a host of others on either side of the street. She halted before the door of one of these squatty and dingey bagnios where the name Beryl was written with some artistic touch. Here she “picked the lock” and trickled into its depth, and it was at this time that

I knew that she had committed that sin that caused her sister women to draw their skirts closer to them on the street when they passed her. At this turn of events, I fell back absolutely mortified and stung, for she was a princess of the demi-monde, a damsel of licentious pleasure, a daughter of joy, an angel of darkness, a feminine apache of the red-light, in short, a scarlet woman—a vampire soul behind a lovely face.

## CHAPTER XXIX

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### MAROONED BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA

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*"If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have wakened death."  
—Othello.*

In the cloudless blue of an April sky I climbed into the bowels of an empty box-car in the railroad yards at Grand Island, Nebraska. The car was a long string of empties going West on the Union Pacific line. I had just prior to this injected twenty grains of morphine, so that there might follow sufficient physical relaxation and mental exhilaration for the long trip to Denver. I distinctly recall the familiar highball out, the consequent jerk of the cars and a rumbling sound as the flanges gripped the metals and the train moved along indicating a full head of steam over the glistening rails. Under its aegis and the thrill of the "shot," I was resting, as with the droop of tired wings, in one corner of the car. The last thing I remember is that the scarlet bars of sunset lay in the sea-green meadows of the sky.

I have no clear recollection after this of anything until I awoke in utter darkness and found my temporary abiding place switched to a siding in an apparently lonely place. I fancied with the bard, that it was about the witching time of night, when graveyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion to this world.

A contemplation of the terrible experiences I had in that car almost freezes the blood and truly harrows the soul, and I am inclined to believe that the bard was right notwithstanding that still another poet has versified that midnight is the holy hour when silence like a gentle spirit, broods o'er the still and pulseless world. And it is quite likely that each of these poets has hallowed the time in keeping with his sentiment.

I declare with final emphasis, that from the time that I so awoke in that car up to the time that the usual calm succeeds the pandemonium of the elements, there was no silence brooding o'er, no gentle spirits hovering about.

As I arose from my temporary sleeping quarters in the corner

of the car, I searched my partially drenched habiliments to see that my morphine layout was safely stored therein. This is the primary instinct of the dope fiend. Having found it intact, I looked out one of the doors of the car, both of which were wide open. It was raining, and the earth opened its pores to the first round drops that pattered on the car roof, and the thunder began to murmur distantly under the purple mantle of the coming storm. The car was swaying from side to side under the tumult of the wind like a dory at the mercy of a choppy sea. On the outer atmosphere was Cimmerian, Egyptian darkness—a black sweltering desert of ebony, a vast livid opacity. I thought that I was one thousand miles from nowhere. I was afraid of my own voice, altho' it would have been drowned in the prevailing din. The wind howled like unloosed demons and the air grew cold; the deep and dreadful organ pipe of thunder bellowed with ominous detonation; no light broke the smooth velvet darkness except red-toothed lightning, which danced in the horizon to a broken tune played by the far-off thunder. Its flashes illuminated the heavens and the land prospect in a shimmering brightness, and by this means I soon discovered that my car was in the midst of a boundless prairie without even the semblance of a human hut within the purview of my searching gaze indicated by a light. The earth seemed soaked and sodden and brooded over by sullen clouds, which hung like crape hammocks beneath the starry cope of night. I was all by my lonesome, a pivot for the malice of the elements on that vast floor of the heavens.

Fear, craven fear now seized me and in order to quiet it, I injected another "shot." Fears make devils of cherubims, and with this injection I felt equal to scorning any danger, even to facing the Prince of Darkness himself and the general powers of darkness. Did I fear now? I who had been a dope fiend for many years and who could inject a hypodermic of morphia, cocaine, chloral or hasheesh when a train hurried along at eighty miles per hour?

John Barleycorn conveyed Tam O'Shanter and his gray mare over a running stream cursed by a malediction, and under its dominion men are known to have challenged the Duke of Hell. Fortified by the "shot" I bent up each corporal agent to defend against the assaults of the elements and buckled on the armor of resistance with a determination and nerve to fight to the last trench. I therefore mocked the wild gossip of the storm and grimly wove the infernal whispers of the place into the thread of my fancies. O, thou mighty mandragora, thou givest courage to the helpless and thou holdest out hope to the lost!

Up to this time, however, I had not reckoned with another

enemy more dreadful than the heaven's frown. I was to be assaulted by an annoyance of an entirely different character. It has been said that if one speak of the wolf, his tail will be seen. The gaudy, babbling and remorseless day is crept into the bosom of the sea and now loud howling wolves arouse the jades, who, with their drowsy, slow and flagging wings, clip dead men's graves and from their misty jaws breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.

From the meagre knowledge that I had absorbed touching lupine ferocity I was inoculated with the belief that fire was a deterrent. But they now seemed to be attracted by this preconceived barrier, for in taking the "shot" of morphine I had lighted several matches, and my form could be seen in the intermittent flashes of lightning as I passed to and fro in the car. By this same means I saw a band of them madly bounding toward me. They snarled and snapped and their eyes glistened with a hellish hate, their tongues lolled out in the fury of bestial hunger. Between the flashes of heaven's light, I was enabled to almost count the ribs that stood out like the undulations of corrugated iron. Their eyes were afire, their fangs were a gleam and slaver was driveling from their famished mouths. They gave the appearance of having been already half devoured by the cannibal pack.

The windows of heaven were now opened wide, and the rain roared on the roof and pelted and drove its bolts like buckshot against the car. The wild fantastic uproar of the tempest forced the rain streaks thru the clefts of my retreat, gusts were driven thru the open doors and a thunderous tattoo played upon the roof. The heavens sent down enough rain on that night that washed the earth clean. These impacts spelled fearful omens for me. It might readily be reflected that such a tremendous clatter would contribute to a diminution of the lupine instinct of ferocity, but from the babel of snarling and bellowing outside the car, together with their dare-devil assaults upon it, I was forced to swallow the unpalatable pill that this had a tendency to further infuriate them. In fact, they were getting perilously close to bounding headlong into the drenched bowels of the car. One of their number with bristling hair and arched back and eyes glistening like two stars, actually leaped upon the floor of the car and sprang into the raven blackness of the night thru the opposite door. No sooner had this animal leaped from the car when another of the band, a black shaggy wolf, grim and cadaverous as no mortal ever saw, sprang upon the floor of the car from without. It was red and wavering in the intermittent flashes of lightning and possessed of two fiery, gleaming eyes

that were bent upon me with a horrible fixity. That monstrous shadow and I glared at each other until my breath almost went out. Almost as quick as thought, he, too, leaped out of the opposite door of the car which seemed to be the signal to the whole pack to follow, for instantly scores of them dashed thru the car and leaped out the same way as the first mentioned, returning to the night and darkness while I held a blazing newspaper in my hands and waved it to and fro in frantic terror.

I was between the Devil and the deep sea.

The impulse corralled me to at least make a feeble effort to close the doors and thus become my own jailer. Under the conditions, I could not build a smudge for the dampness, so I applied the match to some old newspapers which I had used as "California blankets." With this blaze in my hand, I passed the dreaded openings and tried to close one of the doors. It finally yielded, and I drove it full tilt; but the remaining door seemed off it's trolley. So I burned the old papers, inhaled the smoke and suffered other discomforts as a reprisal of freedom. A thousand ideas percolated thru my tired brain, and among these was the fact that I had read in some ancient volume of forgotten lore that the rattle of chains was a deterrent to hungry wolves of the prairie and I instantly coveted one that would rattle as loud as Apaches on the war path.

There was no way of reaching the roof of the car with impunity, and it was out of the question to obtain waste from the journal boxes, so I kept mumbling to myself that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" in disconnected monotone, simultaneously burning the old newspapers and tossing them out the door of the car that refused to close. The elements were wrathful; the air quaked with dissonant alarums, and then it seemed all on a sudden a mighty gust of wind swept down upon the roof, shaking the car terribly, and had the car turned turtle on the side where the open door was, I was a prisoner and my own turnkey without a key. What would have happened should the car capsize the other way, I fear to speculate upon. Every possible eventuality came to my fevered brain, even that of its derailment should the storm move it along the metals to the D-rail or the point of switching to the main line. At least these were preferable to being torn to pieces by the wolves. I knew no way of selling my liberty except by the feeble resistance that a morphine fiend could put up against a horde of famished wolves, and I knew that should they once taste human blood, I might just as well commence singing "Nearer, my God to Thee!" Who, but he who has actually been in the same situation can conceive my feelings? Nature is irresistible, and her workings for a

while overpowered even the belief in my mysterious sentence. The thought has terribly returned but the moment of energy has ever extinguished it, the hurrying and swallowing current of my heart rolled over it as the white torrent rushes over the tomb on its brink.

The lightning ceased to flash at this stage of the game, and while thick night was palled in the dunnest smoke of hell, heaven's artillery still thundered in the sky. It was pitchy night when screech owls cry and ban-dogs howl, when creeping murmur and the poring dark fill the wide vessel of the universe and thru it all I heard the wolves long, hungry howling. Yet, at this juncture I began to conclude that the wolves had nothing on me, for the reason that I was buoyed up by the drug for even supernatural stunts of supererogation, and that they were becoming exhausted by their ceaseless activity and would perforce of this soon desist under the pressure of diminished vitality.

The passage of time was fraught with an eternity of dismal speculations and the fact of being myself waterlogged, added to the general discomfiture and I felt the usual drowsiness stealing over me. Nature could endure it no longer, my overtaxed senses gave way, no doubt superinduced by the morphine, and a swoon providentially prevented me from sinking under this terrible ordeal. From this state of insensibility I was aroused by feeling a cool wind blowing upon my brow, as I lay there upon the husks. I had dreamed the vivid and disturbing dreams of the opium-eater. As a first *Coup d'oeil*, the beams of day percolated thru the open door; and Rip Van Winkle like I peered into the light of the morning. There had been no night's candles to extinguish and I greeted in wild jubilee the crimson dawn, now as red as that which rose on doomed Carthage. The prospect round about was as clear as the crystal that shines within the heart of hail, and the landscape was aureoled with puddles that reflected brilliantly under the beams of the god of day. Not a ripple agitated their glistening surfaces and the only sounds that reached the ear were being made by the galloping waters of the mad Platte and other streams, swollen to angry torrents that surged their way in a riot of disordered cadence to join the brimming river. The long, slender bars of cloud that were left in the sky floated like fishes in a sea of crimson light. It was the unspeakable calm that succeeds the storm. Better still the wolves had vanished. A trouble overcome is a strength gained.

I leaped to the earth and began to speculate as to ways and means of resuming my journey to the Colorado capital. I was on the line of one of the greatest trunk lines of transcontinental travel, and surely some caravan must plow thru soon as my eyes

traced the shimmering lines of steel. Slowly into the field of my vision a black speck arose upon the horizon. I became reckless and concluded that no matter if the train was a money train, the overland Mail or a special, I would flag it *Coute qu'il coute*. Truly, there are epochs in men's lives when perils litter their pathway in the face of which they will do things that appal the senses after the crossing of bridges. In this instance there was no time for sentimentality, as the train was thundering along and would pass me in a jiffy. So I took a position between the rails and flaunted my bandana in restless motion, and I stopped only when I noticed a marked slackening of speed in the great fortress of moving steel towering before me. It soon came to a full stop, the engine hissing and sputtering like some breathless red-hot monster.

It was the Overland Mail.

On the steps of the smoker stood the conductor, and his visage reflected a picture of dignified astonishment. I passed him some guilders to cover the fare to Julesburg and stepped up, the train began to move and I was seated. As it gained momentum, he approached and asked in no uncertain esperanto:

"Say, old campaigner, do you know what the penalty is for delaying the United States Mail?"

It was now time for the finest Italian handicraft and in speech stripped of all meretricious finery and hot off my brain, I said without stuttering:

"I have, among others, three separate reasons to offer: First, self-preservation, second, the preservation of your life and the lives of passengers because of weakness of bridges, spreading of rails due to washouts and third, I have paid my fare."

"Notwithstanding, I shall be obliged to hand you over to the United States Marshal at Julesburg," said the conductor.

"All right, sir, I shall include you as a party defendant with the railroad company in a suit for damages." I retorted.

The train arrived at Julesburg on schedule time and the conductor said to me in a tone of mingled acidity and jest:

"Say, old trapper, on the level, you have the monumental gall, the sublimated audacity, the transcendent impudence, the immaculate nerve, the triple-plated cheek, the brass in solid slugs of a government mule" or words to that effect.

To which I replied: "And you are a hog-tight, dyed-in-the-wool, home-knit, all-wool, plush-lined, glass-blown, nickel-plated, kiln-dried, cast-iron, 6-cylinder, gilt-edged, copper-distilled, bottled-in-bond, Morocco-bound, double-barreled, 22-carat, rubber-tired, ball-bearing, insulated, extralubricated, automatic, aged-in-the-wood conductor."

## CHAPTER XXX

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### A CHLOROFORMED JURY

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*“Crack the lawyer’s voice,  
That he never more may false title plead  
Nor sound his quillets shrilly.”*

—*Timon of Athens.*

The facts here exhale the odor of the bizarre, and this is my apology for embalming them in the perpetuity of prose. The scenes are laid in Kansas—the mother of fools—about which state some wag has versified that it is the land of the three S’s. It is axiomatic that it has produced more human freaks, human jumping jacks, human clowns, human carbuncles, human mavericks, human fantasies and museum specimens than any state, with the possible exception of Arkansaw. Poets have sung of the hoosiers, suckers, pukes, crackers and tar heels of other states, but it remains for some writer of elegiac verse or some future Ironquill of poetic fire to woo the muses and spin a paeon in the elegance, facility and golden cadence of poesy about the Kansas Jayhawker. For general cussedness, for downright orneryness, this *rara avis* has them all skinned. The commonwealth is infested with a grotesque flotsam and jetsam of Mutts and Jeffs, punks, lame ducks, cave-dwellers, popinjays, dingbats, coffee-coolers, pudd’n-heads, star gazers, lost chords, back numbers, simple Simons, callous clods, lunkheads, leatherheads, square-heads, bumpkins, varlets, gobs, false alarms, sizzerbills, alarmists, cynics, troglodites, moon calves, dunderheads, mudheads and sons of asses. The strange things we see and the strange things we do, savor of Kansas. Nothing strange can happen in a state that has given to the world such lemons as has Kansas. It is not strange, therefore, that the women wear pants and the men cultivate green whiskers; where roosters lay eggs and pigeons give milk; where both “wets” and “drys” guzzle Peruna and Hostetter’s Bitters. As the Egyptians eat the sycamore figs, flies and all, Kansas jayhawkers fry eggs and eat them with the

shells on, and boil spuds and eat them skins and all. Arkansas has her tow-haired angels of the swamp, Kansas her tow-haired angels of the odd. I am thoroly acquainted with their life and manners, and I unhesitatingly declare that they are as odd as Chinese images.

The episodes I herein relate are so strange, so nearly impossible, that I hesitate to set them down, lest the reader should call me untruthful and a *jongleur*, or a dreamer of dreams; nevertheless they are told as they occurred and the reader must believe them as he may. But they are true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk.

Many experiences have I had there of strangeness and oddity, and this one I unfold for the first time in the frank light of publicity, culled from the vague congregation of shadows called the past. It is said that truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because fiction is obliged to stick to facts, truth is not. So, hold your horses!

On an extremely cold night in the month of February many years ago, a collection of knights-errant dropped anchor from the bowels of a possum-belly, in the railroad yards at Winfield, on the Southern Kansas line of the A. T. & S. F. Ry. This town is what bos denominated "hostile," meaning thereby that the nesters there were inimical to the event of bums who roam about aimlessly. The bums referred to constitute that tatterdemalian regiment of itinerants divided squarely into two classes, namely those who follow it from the very fascination of it, others who are driven to it by the dark fatalities of life.

It is a fact garnered from long experience of "roughing it," a fact unseen by the cynics who look thru smoked glasses, like scurvy politicians, that good men take to the rods, trucks, possum bellies, brake-beams and side-door Pullmans to slay distance, and this is a distress of social inequality and injustice. For this condition, since we cannot reform it, let us revenge ourselves by railing at it, and fix the cause upon the system. For in this age of refrigerated commercialism, where wealth accumulates and men decay; where abject privation mingles with boundless luxury; where the poor work like the helots of heathen antiquity, living under the yoke of oppression, and where the born bondsman lingers out life in thankless toil; where gross materialism with an excess of wealth and squalid poverty as its extremes, rank injustice, and oppression, dirt, disease and crime exist, it is not surprising that an uneven distribution of the loaves and fishes exists, and that the paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor. I cannot stand up against the voice of universal man which has cried out that thus it shall be, but when so-

ciety shall have progressed as far as to reach a common level, then earth will be a paradise, one nation and one blood.

On the February night referred to, the whole country was blizzard driven. The February storms had pitched their tents. The mercury froze in December and didn't thaw out until the following March. The wind blew as if it had blown its last. A fearful north blast had swept down from off the icy plains of Manitoba and which in turn came out of the bowels of the sub-Arctic laterals, like an inroad of trumpets and enveloped the middle West in a swirling snow-cloud. The country was piled high with glittering drifts, traffic was materially stopped and the walks had been swept bare by the biting blast.

The bums with empty pockets spotted a pile of dry ties on the right of way and this was at once made a pyre for the flames. A smudge was applied and soon the whole was in a blaze which irradiated the heat. This soon warmed up the corporal agents and the shivering thews. Reducing this to embers, the brands were carried to still another pile of ties, and while the same was glowing with heat, the bums were rudely "pinched" *en bloc*, by the town hangman and a railroad "bull," and the word was authoritatively given to "line up." A dozen noses were counted and this apostolic number proved a charm.

In the meantime the fire had spread to two buildings of the railroad company which were readily licked up by the flames, and had it not been for the heroic work of the citizens of Winfield, the railroad depot would have been destroyed.

The bums languished over night in the county bandhouse, and on the following morning the bunch was conducted before the village burgess charged with criminal trespass, malicious mischief, arson, and a dragnet of other depredations as long as the moral code. After the information had been read and pleas of not guilty entered, I solemnly announced to Justice Shallow that I was a barrister in good repute before the Supreme Court bar, and that altho' I was at that particular moment slightly disfigured by fickle fate, I still had a good fight left in me, and I announced my purpose of conducting the defense single handed, and demanded that the twelve bums be tried without a severance and forthwith demanded a jury of peers. My manner here must have borne the impress of freedom from simulation for this Justice of the ten-pound court recognized me and certified the proceedings to the District Court of the county then in session. During the night I prepared our defense, and rested up after a period of hardships as a rambling rake of poverty upon the geographical gravel.

The criminal information which was filed direct in this court

represented that the property damage amounted to \$30,000 and it was by reason of this glaring fact that the cause was advanced on the criminal calendar, as it seemed evidently the aim of the railroad company's counsel to "railroad" the bums. Promptly at nine o'clock on the following morning the chain gang was conducted into court and from a venire facias a jury was struck and the trial proceeded. The prosecution introduced its evidence and "rested." Altho' lawyerlike, I admitted nothing, yet it was quite patent to the most rubified yap that we were guilty as charged and being in the enemy's country, the single thing remained was an impassioned and sympathetic exhortation to the men in the box in order to evoke a popular judgment of the gods; altho' it seemed that there was no more mercy in that jury of Kansas nesters than there is milk in a male tiger, and I could neither hope to convince or persuade.

The County Attorney opened for the State, and in an exhaustive presentation demanded conviction. He unmasked batteries of legal authority which were paralyzing. His introduction was masterly, his exordium profound. He was followed by the divisional counsel who had been hastily summoned from Wichita, and this gentleman in an address of great elaboration, thundered in speech and asked for the blood of the bums in no uncertain diction. His speech was crowded with such startling imagery, ambitiously marshalled in lines of such lurid impressiveness that it would bewilder the aesthetic sensibility of a Titan.

Up to this stage it seemed that the situation required the application of a very sulphurous match to the bomb-proof credulity of the jury. As a forensic orator, I leaped into the arena, full-armed, like Minerva from the brain of Jove and applied the match. In this I was amply fortified, as the lynx-eyed hawkshaws of the law neglected to find my dope kit, and just before entering the court room, I shot a full syringe of morphine and cocaine into myself in the bull-pen.

In behalf of the defendants I opened by announcing the time-honored doctrine of self-preservation, and I depicted in lurid language the zero weather, the prevailing blizzard—and the actual fact that the mercury registered thirty degrees below the point; that the bums were habited in mosquito bar garments, and that thus the weather was not tempered to the shorn lamb. I declared that birds had their nests, foxes their holes, but that the sons of men had no place whereon to lay their heads and must wander wearily and bruise their feet and drink wine with salt tears. I delved in disputable and indisputable presumptions and urged with relentless logic America for Americans, and the

constitutional freedom of travel. The Holy Bible was quoted about Heaven's manna and the parable of Elijah and the ravens, and other references which would appeal to the hardshell Baptist, the Howling Methodist, the Dunkard and the worshippers of Baal. I urged that in any aspect of the case, necessity would have provoked the breaking of laws, human and divine, and I begged them to take the matter to their fireside hearts and decide the issue, assuming that the twelve bums were their own sons. Would they suffer them to freeze when an opulent corporation had not only money but wood to burn under the conditions? As well might one place before a hungry nigger a bowl of clam soup, and expect him to cast it to one side or cloy the hungry appetite by the bare imagination of a feast! During an hour's degladiation, studded with adjective-starred panegyric, (opium-engendered, of course) I congratulated this jury upon its intelligence and upon its conception of fair play to the under dog, (which was a forced put with me,) and finally even admitting the truth set out in the indictment, the soulless Santa Fe could well afford to sacrifice the rotten timbers in a cause of human woe, and this latter was the sharpest reason that I urged to defeat the law and make the ugly deed look fair. I talked to that jury of Kansas sizzerbills, brawny, sunburnt men in leather hobnails, until my collar wilted on this February day. At last, indulging in a peroration in which I injected a torrent of rhetoric, interspersed with felicitous phrase, glittering generalities, figures of imagery, melodious trifles and grand-stand spellbinding, I prayed acquittal. I reasoned with myself that I was certainly casting pond lilies to razorbacks, but in consideration of the climax, the end justified the means. The jury followed my discourse as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon. A feather was never so lightly blown to and fro as this jury of Kansas punks. There must have been something irresistibly conclusive in my logic for I was applauded to the echo, shown in the interchange of glances and in answering smiles.

There were twelve bums and there were twelve jurors. I do not ask the reader to believe the declaration following, unless he be free from Pythonism concerning incredible coincidences. So far as I myself am concerned I may say that I have always believed in the doctrine of chance, commonly known as the Calculus of Probabilities, and I felt sure that at this stage of the trial all in the court room were prepared for a verdict of guilty, and yet in all legal investigations there may be what is called an unaccountable verdict, and for the philosophical investigator myself to ascertain the why and the wherefore he would find himself much like the gink who set about to solve the Baconian theory

who was likened to one who left the well paved streets of a modern city, and in journeying along came to a country road, which brought him successively to a lane, a cow-path, a squirrel track and finally up a tree; or possibly like the geekerino who knew he was lost in the woods, because he had been describing that mysterious and hopeless circle familiar to those in such straits. This is the dictum of a certain Kansas Justice who believed that justice was unevenly balanced: "On the whole justice is done, for, while many cases go to the defendant that should have gone to the plaintiff, an equal number go to the defendant that should have gone to the plaintiff." For what really occurred in this case, it was quite impossible that any of the Kansas moon calves could have been prepared. It was one of those surprises that one meets up with round the corner of the street of life and bearing this in mind, I will always believe that this was a chloroformed jury.

The bald fact remains to be recorded that at twelve minutes to twelve o'clock as I watched the face of that clock in the solemn court room on the twelfth day of February, and within twelve minutes after the jury had retired to deliberate on the issues, this jury returned into court and announced a verdict of "not guilty."

"Gentlemen of the jury, you are excused," said the judge, bowing to them in his usual Draconian sternness.

"Hear ye! hear ye!" roared the tipstaff. "All persons having business with the court held in and for Cowley County will now depart. This court stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at half-past nine o'clock."

## CHAPTER XXXI

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### SLIPPING ONE OVER ON THE JUDGE

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*"The quality of mercy is not strained."—The Merchant of Venice.*

In the pursuit of a vagrant itinerary across the continent from the Pacific sands, I dismounted and found myself before the gilded windows of a local saloon, unannounced by any flaming scareheads on the dead walls of Jimtown, New York. The breeze that blew me into this burg was one of the kindest that ever stirred my weathered sails. The trip itself was being prosecuted by easy relays, the whole characterized by uninterrupted enjoyment in wine and a passionate enslavement to the cursed elixir that sweetened my blood, so much so, that upon my arrival in the Chautauqua town, I was so gilded with grand ale that I feared not fly-blowing. Dope and rum do not act in harmony, and while one is surcharged with this union, he is liable to be thrown into a state of Amnesia in the state of New York. A state of Aphasia is usually succeeded by a state of Amnesia in the said state of New York, and while in this state I was rudely thrown into the bowels of the bridewell. It must certainly have been Aphasia, for I harbor not even a bromidic idea of the matters and things appertaining to my hectic career immediately preceding my arrest by the village executioner. This unit of the constabulary afterwards informed me that I offended all sense of order by impetuous zigzags and unexpected halts, which brought me into collision with peaceful boulevardiers as they catapulted along. I therefore must have left my sea legs at home, wherever that was.

In order to satisfy the outraged majesty of the blind deity, I was without benefit of clergy, consigned to the city tombs. I was frisked of all personal property except the morphia layout, and this I had securely sewed into an improvised scabbard of my under flummery, free from the fingers of pragmatic authority. I really had secreted in this recess enough morphine and cocaine to send a regiment of infantry to the murky shades of the Sty-

gian river, and my name, Hiram Skinner from Bingville Centre, was entered on the police blotter, like Caesar's wife, "above suspicion." And when one soberly reflects what means of death and destruction I had upon my person which escaped the eternal vigilance of the rustic "bulls," calm surprise is succeeded by petrified wonder.

In the tombs I was overpowered by the joint dominion of the gods of alcohol and narcotism, and these anodynes brought surcease and steeped my senses in soft and delicate Lethe. It was not a dreamless sleep, yet it was as sweet as the slumbering Amaryllis. I dreamed all dream that light, the alchemist, has wrought from dust and dew, and stored within the slumbrous poppy's subtle blood. I viewed numberless buildings of the most regal designs which rose about me; the walls of some magnificent interior were covered with sculptures of the most extraordinary richness. On the exterior I rode in a barouche where noble statues lined the public ways, and where wealth in the wildest profusion was visible all about; endless ranges of porphyry and alabaster columns glittered in the noonday sun. Superb ascents of marble steps mounted before me to heights that strained the eye; arch on arch studded with the lustre of precious stones climbed until they lay like rainbows in the sky; colossal towers circling with successive colonnades of dazzling brightness ascended—airy citadels looking down upon earth, and tintured with the infinite dyes and lustres of the clouds. Of that beautiful painting to the ear, music, I heard an echo. This chant ascending with a native richness, floated upward like a cloud of incense, bearing the inspiration of holiness and gratitude to the throne of Him, whom man hath not seen nor can see—harmonies that transported the spirit beyond the cares and passions of a troubled world.

From this dream I awoke in a chimera, my excretory organs at high pressure. The *locale* of my imprisonment was at once told me by a cursory inspection of the surroundings. As I looked about I thought of Patrick Henry's liberty or death, and its force descended upon me with thundering emphasis. Recollection came to me, and I knew that I had been drunk and disorderly and had refused to fight, and that therefore I was as culpable as sin itself. As a penance, I might be visited with swift and inexorable penalties and these might carry with them denial of the drug, and I would perchance become a helpless morphinomaniac in the throes of intellectual torpor and physical collapse, a living death in a living, breathing hell.

The situation was both tense and critical.

I therefore set to work and rummaged thru the dismal cran-

nies of my brain to concoct some moral defense to spring to the court at the morning line-up; because *pro confesso*, there remained no legal one. I must depend upon some subtle, Machiavelian defense. I accordingly concluded to make a sympathetic appeal, a strong oratorical effort and a high, emotional exhortation. I would indulge in the flimsiest sophistries, to bamboozle the court with blarney and palaver. I proposed to stab truth in the dark, and this slaughter of the gold coin of the New Jerusalem would be compatible with the settled doctrine that untruth is the inevitable attendant of morphia. At the same time I knew that altho' truth is a good dog, one must beware of barking too close to the heels of an error, lest one gets one's brains knocked out.

There was a line-up next morning representing a miscellaneous assembly of frowsy, disreputable bums, together with a bunch of morally submerged fleusies, and strange to say the name of Hiram Skinner was the first called.

I rose to the psychology of the occasion, and was well fortified for it, for had I not injected twenty grains of morphia into my blood circulation just a moment before in the seclusion of my cell? I'll say so.

To the Court I frankly acknowledged my lapse from orthodox grace. It was my first offense in Jimtown. And it was a mere peccadillo at that. And further, I was at the very time on a holy mission—to see my four helpless children at the moment writhing in the terrible throes of smallpox in the detention hospital in Buffalo. It was an unholy lie, and I will swear to it. I told the Judge a ready, fair and pleasing lie of the very largest size. This falsehood wore the garb of truth, and I sang a solo with grandiose volubility from the Merchant of Venice, and I said that if the Court had any fairies in his home, he knew the rest. The judicial heart might be some times like unto strings of steel; let it in this instance be as soft as the sinews of a newborn babe. If the Court did not believe me, let the great axe fall, let the gods be ready with all their thunderbolts; let the phial of the court's vengeance pour upon my head and the condemnation of the fates descend even upon my life. But that if there be yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity as a wren's eye, mete it out. I swore that after this debauch to have the top of my pewter mug roofed over and forever sealed. Thus, trumpet tongued, I pleaded for freedom.

My smooth words must have bewitched the court's heart.

A man's voice is sometimes his fortune.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt, but being seasoned with a gracious voice, obscures the show of evil!

I might have spared my arithmetic, however.

The Court seemed perceptibly agitated by my pompous and illuminating phraseology, and wiped the judicial goggles. He then looked me squarely in the eye like the ancient mariner, and delivered his dictum with slow and implacable deliberation. He told me that my conduct according to my own *ipse dixit* was heathenish, and added that my offense was an infraction of the highest ordinances in the code of domestic relations. I was excoriated in a tirade of caustic philippics and roasted on the griddle of judicial condemnation. But, after all, I readily saw that it was a play to the galleries, and any looker on in Vienna would be similarly impressed—that it was a veil used to smother his paternal affection—a lever utilized to keep back the tears. I could see imaged in the Court's brain the picture of his own flaxen-haired babies swinging on the gate waiting for the Judge. And therefore, while the Court's opinion was tinged with Homeric gravity, it was interspersed with caustic humor and stinging epigrams.

I had seen the under side of the cards.

From him who sees much that is hidden, plain things are sometimes veiled.

Having perforce nurtured some feeble adumbrations of the judge's actions, I mentally congratulated myself upon a speedy ticket-of-leave, but even here I was tempted to smile at my bare-faced sophistry. Of course, when the holy water of the Court was sprinkled, I was not surprised.

"You are discharged. Call Peter Jimjam, *alias* Pennsylvania Slim."

In my haste to enjoy freedom again, I had forgotten to claim certain documents and a few oboluses, and I returned to the city hall to get them, and superveniently encountered the old judge in the rotunda. Here we rehearsed the whole matter about the babies until he got black and I got red, in the face. But in a final farewell, he clasped my hand overcome with emotion, and as he did so, he glued to its palm a \$20 bill.

Upon boarding an interurban car going north a few minutes after this, I laconically remarked to the conductor: "Put me off at Buffalo."

The face is the mirror of the soul.

And what but the mind forms the countenance?

So intricate is the connection between soul and body that every emotion is painted upon the surface of that crystal mirror, the human countenance.

The conductor was absorbed at this intimation, and critically scrutinized my face to discover some suspicion of sarcasm de-

pected thereon. I could not blame him, for had he known of the "job" that I put up on the judge, he would have put me off at Hades, if this were a station on his line.

The old judge never knew that I was at the time inextricably bound in the vassalage of narcotism, and I hope that he will never know, but it was necessary that I perpetrate this bluff to be saved from a living death in a living hell, or what is worse, a status of involuntional insanity. The tale here told is for the purpose of showing that morphine fiends are capable of framing up on the devil himself. The episode has no merit except this and without which it would have no conclusion.

## CHAPTER XXXII

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### CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

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*"Trifles light as air  
Are \* \* \* confirmation strong  
As proofs of Holy Writ."*

—*Othello.*

To quote the example of Thoreau, circumstantial evidence is occasionally convincing; as when we find a fish in the milk.

Men have been hanged on this character of testimony, and wholesale convictions have been predicated upon its sufficiency. The danger from the elastic nature of circumstantial evidence to wanderers who rotate from place to place in aimless meanders, has played upon the theater of philosophical minds for ages, and no remedy has ever been schemed out to cure the mistakes of this class of proof when a wanderer is caught unjustly, except the possible remedy of damages. But damages do not turn the hands of the clock back, and they do little to appease the anguish and bitterness of a lacerated heart. And as for the stigma, it is *never* removed.

Judges and lawyers well know that any number of bare suspicions do not even approach the worth of a single legal proof, and yet men are hanged on a mere suspicion or by reason of prejudice. In the vast mosaic of events, every transaction is a piece. Its borders are infinitely irregular, and thus it would seem that no mistake could possibly be made. Yet the records disclose instances of innocent men having undergone vicarious atonement, not like Damon of old, but as a result of circumstantial evidence. On the other hand, real culprits have escaped criminal penalties by and thru an event arbitrarily created by a human agent, or by some explanation or theory arbitrarily created to explain a certain sequence of events fabricated for the purpose.

Verily, there are at times evil blasts and heroic blasts that come over the souls of men!

I escaped hanging once by coolly walking into a county jail. It happened in this wise.

Indulgence in the wine Medea brewed, bringing about the many physical and mental havocs attendant thereupon, consigned me one April evening to an early bed in a rooming house in Albuquerque, New Mexico. From this drunken slumber, I awoke about the holy hour, deluged by a hive of bad thoughts. Being ungovernably thirsty, I drank cold water with unbridled avidity. Acting upon a passing impulse, I left the house to seek the coolness of the night air, and to lave my grimy skin in baptismal waters. A brief ramble brought me to a stream of water, and here I took a "shot" of morphine and bathed my head in the stream.

While so indulging I heard behind me the rhythmic tramp of a body of men on the gravel, a sharp voice of command, and then after a brief pause, the heavy multiple tramp again resounding thru the stillness louder and louder in its approach. The moon being stripped of her misty vestiture, I was able to discern that the company was rapidly approaching in my direction. I saw something coiled round the arm of one of the party. It was a rope. Coming within a few feet of me with leveled carbines, one of them, evidently the herdsman of the beastly plebeians, ordered me to hold up my hands. This command was like a cold shower, but nevertheless the hands went aloft. I felt like a man who had first gone blind, and then seen hell. My person was then systematically searched for cannons. The order was then given "Right about face" and the whole party commenced a deep throbbing thru the silence of the night, the track from there to the county hoosgow being coursed and trodden by a multitude of swiftly tramping feet. In this bull-pen I was bottled with a dozen others whose detention was predicated upon a cabalistic murder committed some few days before, and to these suspects I was added.

Suspicion, with its slimy head, was in the air.

Half an hour after my incarceration, the jail door was opened and two "greasers" were called out. I found out afterwards, that owing to provincial prejudice against the garlic-smelling "greasers," the angry crowd hungered for a propitiatory sacrifice and here was presented their game. They were accordingly sentenced to be offered up to Baal. The mob then carried out the infernal ceremonial, the detestable orgy of cracking the "greasers'" necks just outside the prison walls. I distinctly heard the "greasers" exclaim "*Ora pro nobis, sancta homines, pax vobiscum.*" After this the dislocation of necks succeeded, and this was accompanied by the usual dull, sickening thuds and

all was again still. This was lawlessness curbed under the rude mantle of frontier justice.

Regardless of the exciting moments just passed, I slept soundly under the influence of the morphine, and I had neither figures nor fantasies which busy care draws in the brains of men. Thruout I was a clam with shell closed. I knew that timid dogs bark loudest, and kept my own counsel. And then none of them knew that I was actually Jack the Kisser, and I knew that murder will sometimes speak out of stone walls.

Notwithstanding all this, I was wrapped in a cloud of speculations, and I comforted these emotions with the knowledge that I was in fact a murderer and that the victim was no other than myself; for was I not assassinating my body and soul by the wanton use of honeyed drugs?

What defense had I against the insuperable circumstance of suspicion in this case?

Yet I had been so many times within sight of the rope and all other expeditious modes of paying the only debt I ever intend to pay, and that only because it is the last, that I cared as little about the venture as any broken gambler about his last coin.

During the early morning a party of the sheriff's office arrived at the jail, and this party conducted me to a room behind grilled doors. It was a sort of a "sunrise court," a "star-chamber" proceeding. Here I was to be subjected to the grilling and gruelling of the "third degree." It was a proceeding calculated to winnow the canker worm of truth from falsehood. In a game of cards, it counts to play the right card at the right time, and in this instance I utilized the indefinable, the exquisite, the extremely delicate quality, difficult to define, hard to cultivate, but absolutely indispensable to one about to turn a trick, of tact. The situation was clearly one where it was freely translated, "When a feller needs a friend." I therefore begged permission to administer to myself a usual dose of medication, as I was a dope fiend, body and soul. I told them that it would give a fillip to my jaded sensibilities. As Archimedes wanted a lever, so I wanted those sullen-blooming poppies—those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep—some slumbrous anodyne for wasted lives, for lingering wretchedness. The suggestion was duly winked at, whereupon I extricated from a secret recess of my duds the morphine layout scabbarded there. This is one of the ruses adopted by dope fiends to circumvent the possibility of detection of the dope paraphernalia. Affecting that I was suffering from and writhing in the clutch of the horror of lustful nerves, with my drug-tremulous fingers I prepared a "shot" of about fifteen grains, and this I injected into the marble rind of my left leg.

In two minutes the little clutch at my midriff told me that the morphine was at work. The sheriff's party stared with repulsion at the countless purplish knots surrounding the point of incision. They represented great serpent-like marks of tattoo engrossed upon my cuticle. My arms and legs bore a mighty maze, a pictorial web of blue myth and marvel. It was a veritable skin tattoo, and besides this I exhaled a peculiar drug-like odor which all together confirmed my assertion of chronic addiction.

The "third degree" involved an ineffectual examination as to my personal movements and actions immediately preceding my advent to Albuquerque. It might have involved a severe shaking of my person in order to precipitate the truth by specific gravity. Yet they went thru a test of a very searching character up to a certain time, and that time was when I told them that I loved the name of honor more than I feared death, and would tell the truth, even if it shamed His Excellency the Devil himself. And all of my contentions were reinforced by the exhibition of documentary exhibits, which did not complete the circle of identification, together with a copy of the New Testament, which I invariably carried as a bluff. This seemed to the party as of higher evidential value than anything else, and the presumption that the Indian sign was on me, was removed.

After leaving the jail, I walked along the outside and I saw the bodies of two "greasers" dangling from an electric elevated support.

A mob is an unreasoning element; it is a chance-blown convention of destructionists, as savagely brainless as a pack of timber wolves. They are the fool and barbarous multitude, the *canaille*, the rabble; they are alcaldes and jurors alike; and had it not been for the part played by the poison, I might have had trouble with my necktie or been bowstrung like the duo of "greasers." In view of the fact that a mob's inclination is to act first and reflect later, I consider this a close call and I attribute my salvation in this instance to the instrumentality of morphine. Besides this, it is a fixed police dogma, a hoary truth, that a hophead, by the menace of fear, is absolutely incapable of committing murder. They are *doli incapax*. Indulgence in the drug is the whole of their care; in the fets of Plumpy Bacchus their cares are drowned.

Whether the facts were essential to the moral conveyed in these pages, I leave the reader to judge.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

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### MAY THE EARTH LIE LIGHTLY ON THY GRAVE

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*"Lay her i' the earth,  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring."*

—Hamlet.

In their tenement of clay in a little city of the dead, upon the very hem of a little city of the living, two souls dwell in the serenity of death.

In the same rude sarcophagus in a retired spot in this campo santo, a Madonna and her babe have slumbered for more than two decades.

Unknelled, unwept and unknown, side by side they have slept thru all these passing years.

'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful, the tragic story of a young girl's sacrifice—of a passion fled—and 'tis strange, 'tis passing strange, that in TIME'S far apogees no message has come to fix her identity before a curious world. Yet, it may be best that a mere name survive the silence of the soundless tomb.

In the flush of unsullied purity of character and as ignorant of forbidden things as a Carmelite Nun, in a moment of confident resignation when the blood is warm, and overcome by the blandishments of a libertine, she surrendered to him the jewel in her dower and went tripping to her death. It is the old story of the moth and the flame and the singeing of pretty wings, and it teaches the old moral. It is the price paid to folly.

More than twenty years have come and gone since a company of players invaded the little town of Missoula, Montana, for a one night's stand. It was chaperoned by a histrionic boniface, who, in his day, shone as a matinee idol in the spotlight of comedy. So that the purblind public be not tricked, it may be proper to state that this effulgent star is a benedict no less than five times and just recently broke thru the literary horizon by

the publication of a brochure, pregnant with amatory conquests of the clinging vine.

With this company was a pretty and attractive *ingenue*, who, upon arrival was sick unto death. The potentialities of medical science and surgical skill conjoined, however, proved abortive, and when too late, mercy was extended to the unhappy sufferer, and she died, giving birth to her stillborn child.

From the shards and splinters obtained, I gather that this company responding to a signatory date, effected a hasty hegirs to the next town, disregarding the formality of any provision looking to the customary aid and comfort, much less the promise of Christian interment of this unfortunate girl. From some of the staid matrons of Missoula, who have not forgotten this unforgettable incident, I am indebted for the facts here recorded.

During the evening of the day upon which she died, she was buried, no mourners accompanying the simple cortege to its narrow cell, no padre uttering a salvo. With the poet, it seemed that this soul was

“*One more unfortunate,  
Weary of breath;  
Rashly importunate,  
Gone to her death.*”

In the gloaming of the gelid moon she was borne to the tomb with her babe. She was truly more to be pitied than censured.

But for the tender ministrations of the women of Missoula, who have constantly sweetened it with the fairest flowers of the field, this grave would have mouldered to decay and the memory of its sleepers wafted to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust; but it remained for George M. Cohan, one of the foremost projectors in the theatrical firmament, who some years ago visited the town *en tour*, to perpetuate its memory in enduring form. Two monolithic shafts now stand sentry over the holy dust with the words etched in the black Egyptian marble: “In memory of May Durfee.”

These stones arise as a simple and unaffecting memorial *in aeterna*, dedicated to virgin sacrifice, and a remediless wrong that cries out in mute accusation of her seducer, that in the courts of High Heaven it be righted. It is a monument symbolizing that virtue survives the grave.

The last time that I was there—it was in June—when all nature was revitalized with renewed love and joy and song, this grave was festooned with “violets dim and sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes or Cytherea’s breath,” garnered by loving hands

and strewn there by the women of Missoula, who would in reverential commiseration

*“Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashioned so slenderly,  
Young and so fair.”*

Let us believe that as we draw the veil over woman's frailty and the duplicity of man, and drop the tear of pity upon the emerald verdure that blankets the dead, that these two canonized souls have been transported to the "Real Wonderland," where they are now wooing each other in the soft, sweet music of angel's whisper.

Let us believe, too, that in the dispensation of Heaven, an avenging Apollyon will visit retributive justice to the assassin of her virtue when he comes out of life's trance, and the moment arrives for the mysterious fingers of death to pluck the soul, and he ascends to a paradise of folded arms in that city of sighs and tears, in the valley of silent men.

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NOTE.—The author practiced law here from 1909-1916.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

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### WHAT TURNED MY HAIR WHITE

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*"Why, one that rode to's execution, man  
Could never go so slow; I have heard of riding wagers,  
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands  
That run i' the clock's behalf."*

—*Cymbeline.*

I am a little past the grand climacteric of life. My frame is lithe and agile; my step is steady and elastic; my vision is clear. My hair, though, is as silvered as the gray hairs of Nestor, and this I attribute to the horrors of a single night. Even now as I recall the events that surge for recognition upon the tablets of memory, and stand like ghosts on the battlements of yesterday, I am driven to seek solace in the drowsy blood of the poppy or drown the memory of it by a religious devotion to the alcoholic king.

Although a lustra of time has passed since the events which I am about to record happened, each night that I have closed my eyes in resignation to slumber, I have seen the same scenes re-enacted and suffered nightmares of reverie which only stilled by the hypnotic virtues of morphia or by the subtle agency of rum. Colossal efforts have I made to blot them from my memory by auto-suggestion, but all in vain, for, like Banquo's ghost, they will not "down" and only when dissolution folds me in its bosom, will the recollection of them be entombed in the musty necropolis of oblivion. I marvel at my own survival when it is considered that my body was actually fanned by the wings of death, that within the thousandth part of a second, I would have been dashed to pieces upon the rail or swallowed up in swirling quicksands. I cannot figure out the why or the wherefore, except that I am always conscious of the latent powers of the human spirit, and of the direct intervention into human life of outside forces which mould or modify our actions. Materialists would attribute my salvation to blind and ungoverned chance,

animists would arrogate it to God. While we are in this mood, let me uncork a phial of one night's horror.

The shades of night had just made the empyrean blue rayless, as I started on a pedestrian excursion counting the ties over the line of the B. & M. railway from Ashland, Neb., to Omaha. Before the flower of this beautiful May day had entirely disappeared, however, I had administered to myself the usual "shot" of morphine, as an especial boost for the trip. All nature was redolent with the ambrosial perfume of vernal flowers and fruit blossoms; yet in spite of these, I realized that I was down on my luck. I was down on my luck because the meagre silver that I had that day fell into the melting pot of the green cloth, as a five-dollar jackpot is hard to leave. Like most gamblers, I had sacrificed the necessary in the hope of gaining the superfluous, and had lost. It was by reason of this that I was impelled to sordid frugality in employing this unconventional means to reach a destination where I could by dextrous, if not sharp practices, retrieve my villanous hap.

I trudged along the steel pathway in the uncertain gloom and the solemn stillness of the night, the only sounds that broke the silence coming from my personal tread and the beetles' drone. I inhaled with wholesome avidity the ethereal ozone as I thought of the morrow, and what it would bring to me, whether a triumph or a void. I yearned for a change of luck in a desperate tournament with the card sharps of Nebraska's mother city. This latter reflection held the center of the stage of my brain, as I heard the rush of water thru the darkness. It was a faint but distinct trickle. I at once divined the local topography as the swirling, swishing, cavorting, eddying waters of the Platte.

I was aware that it was a channel fraught with treacherous sands and whirlpools, and still more so at this season of the year. I knew that the bridges that spanned its uncertain currents were prey to the torrential washouts that follow in its wake. I became therefore mentally excited, and redoubled my speed in breathless haste to find some means of crossing the bridge that must wind over its surface. The tumult of the waters soon served notice of my near approach. I heard the voice of the river as it swirled and eddied in a monotone of ominous portent. It seemed to me that the very torrent roared tumultuous threats. I heard nothing but this music, and saw nothing in the terrible gloom of the night.

We cross many bridges in life, but if we only knew what was in store for us on the other side, in a great number of instances, we would stay on this side. In my case, it was one more river to cross and thus leave the Shadbellies behind.

I therefore commenced stepping the ties, first making sure by feeling my way that I was between the rails. I supposed the bridge to be about a mile in length, so that I was constrained to make such haste as was compatible with safety in minimizing the liability of being caught up by a passing train. I knew of the projecting platforms erected on both sides of the bridge, but to these I gave no thought, the single idea being to gain the farther approach in one forward plunge. My eyes were useless on this Stygian night, except that I could discern a light ahead and in the rear. My ears were acute for any sound above the waters.

As I was thus forging ahead, I perceived a *demi-jour*, but there was no accompaniment of sound, and I dismissed the reflection from my mind, believing that if it were anything, it was a lantern in the hands of some gandy-dancer or watchman of the bridge. It seemed like a jack-o-lantern in the solemn gloom.

But just then my sight was jaundiced by sinister forebodings for the flicker grew in proportions, and there came with it a tintinnabulation like muffled thunder. In the darkness this sound was dreadful. I stopped and noticed its growing luminosity, the weird rumble augmenting above the roar and swell of the waters beneath my feet. This gave cause for the most serious alarm.

Now, it is a very common thing for the imagination to paint for the senses, both in the visible and the invisible world. My heart beat with the confused fear of something invisible.

Could I be disillusionized? Could my vision and hearing, at all times normal, deceive me now? Could I be the victim of some extraordinary illusion? I knew that even a contradiction, an anomaly, an apparent impossibility may be a truth.

So I decided to right about face and come what might come, I would race to reach the southern approach of the bridge that I had so recently left. I had no ghost of a look-in in any other direction. With the Thane of Cawdor, I mused: "If 'twere done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly." I devoured this with all the madness of despair, and decided to give no thought to the projecting platforms of the bridge, for, in any attempt to locate one of them, and failing, one of two alternatives presented itself, that of my body being mangled on the rail or a precipitous plunge into the seething, tumultuous turmoil below. I could at least choose the manner of my death.

He who pursues two hares catches neither, and all that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men, so I decided to follow my nose.

Retracing my hayfoot strawfoot, I started on a run, resolving that should there be any liability of my being overtaken in the

interim by the train, I would jump from the structure to the left into the waters below, preferring to take a chance in the boiling quicksands rather than certain death upon the rail.

My sensibilities were flooded by a rush of possibilities and probabilities, and among mental calculations there arose the idea of lying prostrate between one of the outer rails and the ends of the ties, but its feasibility was of fleeting moment, for I reasoned that I might in such case be brushed off, or instantly annihilated by the steps or other projections from the cars.

I continued sprinting over the ties, being particularly cautious of floundering, which would precipitate a stumble and fall, but before I had gone ten yards I tripped on a tie and in another moment, had fallen prone. I picked myself up and continued the race for life. The train was thundering along at a terrific rate. The oil burner of the caravan was a dim one, and the steel steed was getting perilously close to my heels. In the teeth of this danger I did some running and leaping and hopping and skipping over those bridge ties, as tho' the silver wings of Mercury were on my heels, and with belly to the wind I split the air. As I resolve in my mind the fox-trotting and the maxixe balancing that I executed in that mad Olympian dash, I am instantly reminded of Atlanta. Were it possible to be photographed, the film would surely be a sight to shake the midriff of despair with laughter. It was no hesitation waltz, no gliding panther trot. The headlight shone more luminous and streamed before me, thus rendering the pathway more clear, and this urged me on to increased celerity. Although I was running fast, I felt cold in my arms and legs. It was the terrible shiver of dread. The pilot was now within a few feet of my heels. All the forces of my life were suddenly concentrated at the core of my being, marshalled and crowded there for that impending supreme effort which the outposts of instinct announced as perilously near. I knew that if I were on that track another single second, I would be ground into shapeless atoms. My fermented brain was tortured by a bedlam of swarming ideas.

With a wavering, aimless fall, I pitched headlong into the sterile darkness to my left into supposedly suffocating depths—the black curtain of dissolution fell over the painted picture of the world, there was the noise of a thousand rivers tumbling into a bottomless cavern, and I seemed to expire. My feet seemed to touch a sandy bottom, and I rose to the surface. I was beaten down by the billows, was swept along those narrow channels of rock, until half suffocated. The torrent seemed stronger than a mill sluice, and tugged and worried at my limbs like the fingers of a fury; I felt the pebbly gravel sifting and rolling

beneath my feet, and the strong lift of the water as it swirled, flying by in the utter darkness, hissing and bubbling at my heaving chest in a way that frightened me. At last with every muscle on fire, with the strain and turmoil and my head giddy with the dancing torrent all about me, I heard the lapping of waters to my right, and heaving a heavy sigh of relief, collected myself for one more crowning effort. But as I turned now from going down stream, as I thought, to reach the supposed shore, I was swept over and over in a drowning, bewildering cascade of foam away down the stream.

It was the wildest swim that ever a mortal took. So fiercely did I spin and fly that heaven and earth seemed mixed together. I am a good swimmer, but who could make the bank in such a cauldron of angry waters? One moment I was on top; in another I was under; and as I rose, an angry, foamy wave would strike me full tilt in the face. Presently a mighty log came foaming down upon me, laboring thru the torrent surf like a full-sailed ship. As I passed it, I threw an arm over a strong root, and thus for an hour or more behind that black midnight javelin, I flew downwards, I knew not whither. Then it presently left the strong stream, and towing me towards a soft alluvial beach just as dawn was breaking in the East, deposited me there, and slowly disappeared again into the void, and then to my sensibilities all was blank, although at the very time I was vaguely aware of strong arms around my body, under my arms, and half lifting me and dragging me along.

When consciousness came to my eyes again, everything around me was altered and strange. The very air that I drew in with my faint breaths had a taste of the unknown about it, an impalpable something that was not before, speaking of change and novelty. As for surroundings, it was only dimly that any fashioned themselves before those dull and sleepy eyes of mine, that hesitated as they drowsily turned about whether to pronounce this object, and that true material substance, or still the idle fantasy of dreams. As time went on certainty developed out of doubt, and I found myself speculating on a strangely furnished chamber. All round the walls were icons and crucifixes and golden ewers and miniature statues of saints, a pallid, pearly transcript of the Mother and her Nazarene babe, all in silver and opal tints upon the sacred woodwork, and images of saints and martyrs. Overhead the ceiling was a maze of cunningly wrought and carved woodwork, dark with time, and harmonized with the assimilating touches of age.

I sat up in bed and felt my pulse, while gusts of alternate dread and hope swept thru the leafless thickets of remembrance.

A wave of unconsciousness again submerged me for but a moment, and with returning consciousness came the twilight of a dream. I came back to supposed life with a sharp tingling of my whole frame as if pierced with a thousand needles. I had no clear consciousness of my own existence, except that I nursed a hazy thought that I was planted on the banks of another river. But in the disorder of my brain and the strange circumstances which had filled the latter days, in that total feebleness, too, in which I could not move a limb or utter a word, a persuasion seized me that I was already beyond the final boundary of mortals. Presently my meditations were disturbed by some very different outward sensations. There came stealing over the paved floor a crisp, starched figure, and to this white angel I have a vague, indistinct, confused perception of having said:

"I died last night, and is this the other life? It seems as long already as the other one?"

"Say bo, come out of the clouds; we found some damaging merchandise in your duds last night. Are you a 'snowbird'? Do you need a 'shot'?" she inquired with cheerful simplicity.

With the sense of security announced by the ineffable neatness about me, the fine cambric pillows and all the rest, reflecting snowy vestiture, and the fact that night had been succeeded by day, I sensed the pregnancy of her question and impulsively retorted, I fear, in the strained, faltering, sobbing accents of the morphine fiend emerging from an atmosphere of coma into the luminous day of consciousness, into a sense of the dark reality of existence.

"You may shuffle the cards," I replied.

Whereupon, she handed me the hypodermic and the morphia, and I rammed the instrument with the aluminum horns, and a sting of living fire into the scarf-skin. This action on my part engendered some skepticism in the nurse as to the sincerity of my intentions, and evidently she thought that I entertained the terrible project of suicide. As irrefutable proof of my addiction, I exhibited the purple tattoo on my arm and then she believed me. Yet, as I injected not one, but two barrels thru the cuticle of my arm, she nearly fainted and in a moment was beside the telephone. At this juncture, a sad-faced Benedictine sister entered the room, and seeing me in the act of using a hypodermic, made the beads run thru her fingers quicker than water runs from a spout after a summer's thunder shower. "*Misericordè, Domine nobis*" she murmured, as she pressed a crucifix and rosary into my hand.

Following this singular adventure, I ascertained that some fishermen found me unconscious upon a sandy shoal of the river

just as the vertical beams of the sun pierced the matutinal dew, and they had me removed to St. Elizabeth's hospital in Lincoln.

I know that had I been suddenly killed by the tremendous impact or been drowned in the boiling stream, one dope fiend would have thus been snatched from the galaxy of those who tread the primrose paths of dalliance and no regrets. But little wonder is it that I did not dissolve from sudden shock, or worse still, been reduced to incurable lunacy. One phase, however, remains as a sequel to this unique experience, and this is that I had a sense of being a thousand years old, and was not pierced with astonishment when, on gazing into a dreadful mirror a few days afterward, upon the discovery that my hair had turned as white as swansdown, so much so that my most intimate buddy would have warrant to exclaim: "*Quantum mutatis ab illo?*"

And I know further that had I not had a copious dose of morphine hypodermically injected into me just prior thereto, I would not have had the emotional stability to have accomplished my salvation.

## CHAPTER XXXV

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### THE DOPE DOCTOR

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*"Tis Butts,  
The king's physician; as he passed along,  
How earnestly he cast his eyes upon me."*

—*King Henry VIII.*

In the great city of New York, between Madison and Fifth avenues about twenty-five years since, was located one Doctor B———. At this time, the locality was a fashionable part of the residential district of Gotham, and nearby was the Stewart marble mansion.

Aimlessly wandering about this part of the city in quest of a dope depot where morphine could be dispensed to me, I pushed the great physician's bell. An obsequious lictor conducted me to the presence of the doctor, who received me with the usual display of affability common to medical men when approached by a prospective patient supposedly with an inflated wallet. He had a frank, manly countenance that invited address, and there was a fascination about him which I could not resist. Suddenly, after a few minutes' conversation, he seemed already to be installed in my intimacy. We had evidently reciprocal sympathy, similar tastes, equal intellectual culture. We therefore thawed into good fellowship, drawn together by these mutual attractions, or possibly animal magnetism or some power of magic. In other words, we must have read (and I know that I myself did), in each other's eyes, the sincerity of honest souls.

I believe that the countenance is the portal and picture of the mind, and I further believe that mind is master of matter and the laws of matter, and man can summon both to work against themselves. I also believe in the strange pseudo sciences of animal magnetism and electro-biology, and that it is possible for man to exercise a magical charm and dominion over his fellows. And I further believe that there is a simple intuition of friendship in some lonely self-abstracted nature that is nearly

akin to love at first sight, and I am certainly a believer in intuition and direct perception in the unconscious sagacity of the right-minded man.

"I hope that you are a mind reader, doctor," I ventured.

"I know what you need; I have been waiting for you to put the question. Which arm?"

I thereupon rolled up the sleeve of my left arm and the man of science grabbed his hypodermic.

"Will you permit me to cook the soup, doctor?" I asked.

"This is a general dispensary for dopeheads, and you are free to act. Proceed, my humble guest," he replied.

I shot twenty grains of morphine into the tissues of my left arm with professional dexterity, and then thanked the doctor for the accommodations extended.

After this I became loquacious, and we exchanged polite amenities and everything was well with my soul here on earth and beyond the veil.

Among the things which he told me relative to the dope habit, he said that from 7:30 p. m. until midnight, each evening it required the combined efforts of himself and the services of his two assistants, working indefatigably as a hive of bees, to minister to the requisitions of patients addicted to the use of narcotic drugs. He declared that very often a little brown glass or silver amphorae of tablets was as much a necessity to some women of the smart set as cosmetics. His patrons embraced the exclusive of the tenderloin, the elect, the chosen people, the true aristocracy, who found it requisite in order to maintain the rounds of social conventionalities. Out of nervous wrecks, it made beautiful creatures, with brilliant myopic eyes, flushed cheeks and youths again. Elderly matrons, mothers of families, middle aged spinsters, debutantes, elderly men and some bachelors constituted his *clientele*. It kept them fast and furious in the social whirl. He maintained that people think that drugs are a curse only to the underworld, but the public had no idea what inroads the habit made in the upper world, too. The doctor also said that if the general public was aware of the large traffic in narcotism as an agency to sustain the animal economy in a super-erogatory channel, it might precipitate a general rattling of dessicated bones and the laundering of soiled linen in many family closets.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

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### A PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE

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*“What can be avoided  
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?”  
—Julius Caesar.*

Do things happen by coincidence and chance, or is there a mind that directs them?

It is an incontrovertible truth that a stranger in dub towns thruout the country without visible means of subsistence, is liable to be placed under the ban of suspicion and gathered in for investigation. This is peculiarly true should the stranger's sartorial integuments betray the ravages of time and his visage show "allegiance to the Society of Ben Franklin." The indication of reduced circumstances in the male of the better class are first visible in the boots and shirt—the boots offensively exhibiting a degree of polish inconsistent with their dilapidated condition, and the shirt showing an extent of ostentatious surface that is invariably fatal to the threadbare waistcoat that it partially covers. To the boggle-eyed villagers and the town "bull," small vices appear in tattered clothes. A suspicious appearance, that indescribable something which all understand and none can define, is sufficient reason that society should take a man by the collar. Conversely, should our stranger sport a "presentable front," suspicion is disarmed, and by a course of "keep off the grass" deportment, calculated to divert official surveillance, his domiciliation in the civic gates may be prolonged *sine die*.

It was after a week's sojourn in the Dalles, Oregon, during which time I played to the limit the saloons and red light district among dope fiends as blanched as the pallid bust of Pallas, and indulged in the most riotous orgies and maudlin seances at the altars of Bacchus and Gambrinus and wallowed in the lowest depths of the city's dunghills, that I was finally driven out by the town dogberry. The offense that I was more guilty of lay in the fact that I had worn my welcome out until it actually

frayed at the edges, and although I sported a decent exterior and possessed some of the root of all evil, I stood not upon the order of my going, but cut loose without the formality of a second warning. It was only the fear of remaining over Sunday in the detestable city jail, and the abominable provender there, and the usual line-up on the following Monday morning before the judicial abortion that sent me thus afield.

I counted the ties out of town for about two hours, arriving at a water tank about dusk, and the weather being tempered to the shorn lamb, I camped here *a la belle etoile* over night. On Sunday morning I got as far as Biggs, a benighted, rough-neck hole, and here I prepared to rest thru the Lord's day as a blessed soul doth in Elysium after much turmoil.

Biggs is a junction point between the Dalles and Pendleton on the O. R. & N. company's line. It is nestled amid Oregon pines, gums, cypresses and tall green cane, and besides this is a blue-ribbon burg. There is here a depot, a bum hotel, a few scattered dwellings, and lastly a railroad warehouse. So far as any bustle is concerned the town evidently long ago made its peace with the world and had sunk to a gentle, unmolested decay, for there appeared absolutely nothing to divert the attention or arouse the interest of the most lethargic stranger within its walls. In fact, the town was in a state of innocuous desuetude, whatever that may be. I thought of attending divine devotion, something that I hadn't observed since I left the parent bungalow, but in this geographical fly speck there was not even a church. Unable therefore to worship God and get down on my marrow bones and ask absolution of the throne for the many wanton remissnesses of the week just faded away into history, I cast about to find some haven of rest, some obscure and sequestered place where one addicted to soliloquies might muse unmolested, and where philosophy might apply the first dressing to wounded feelings.

Soliloquy is the smoke exhaled by the inmost fires of the soul.

The warehouse mentioned here looked inviting, and in this *entrepot*, I would rusticate thru the day. Here I would be exempt from public haunt. Here there would be nothing to disturb the serenity of my meditations, and my rest would be unbroken by sounds of toil, traffic and idleness, and I could indulge in reviving a thousand dormant germs of meditation in the deep oblivion of solitude.

It was filled with bags of wheat to the ceiling at the farther end, while near the entrance there was still some floor space left. The bags were littered in an indiscriminate heap, without pretense of either order or symmetry. The sun's rays flooded thru

the windows at the entrance and threw silver and black trceries amid twinkling vistas of line and shadow, upon the opposite wall. I decided to lie down upon these cushions; so, after having taken a "shot" of morphine in order to soften my craven and abject condition, I reclined midway up this mountain of wheat bags, lighted a cigarette and smoked away for some minutes the lazy foot of time. At last I felt a kindly blank steal over my senses, and I succumbed to the pleasant dreams of opium.

I had been wrapped in the arms of Morpheus but a brief season, when I became disturbed by a sensible shifting of the bags, and I visualized that they were slowly moving, and that I was being carried along with them. Notwithstanding these things, I remained impassive and from acute drowsiness forced by the drug, I was again about to surrender myself to the goddess of the soft eyes and her blandishments, in slowly stealing my senses away, when a bag from aloft struck me a terrific jolt on the head. Ordinarily such a *contretemps* would serve notice upon any person, whether surcharged with morphine or not so surcharged, to change his position or seek safety below. Tracing the course of events afterwards, I believe now that had I clambered aloft, I would have escaped any appreciable discomfort.

But the mighty gods purposed otherwise.

As I attempted to rise, the entire mass began to shift. As they slowly descended, I was irreclaimably buried under an avalanche of wheat bags, and in a moment of time as if in response to some fairy wand, their further descent was arrested, but not until I found myself penned in as by a vise, my head and arms alone being free. I was almost buried alive beneath tons of weight. I endeavored to move my lower sinews, but they refused to budge, and I was as supinely helpless as a moat caught in the wheels of the world. And I was faced with the proposition that the least exertion on my part would start the ball again, and I might encounter a living death without the faintest promise of ultimate rescue. It was with difficulty that I indulged in respiration, and if I breathed at all, it was mechanical.

It seems inconceivable that I bore the weight that I did and lived to tell it. I mused: What would this blind cave of eternal night be like? To me necrophobia was but a theory; now it is a plain fact, so easy and simple. I thought, however, that if the God out of the machinery didn't come soon, I would be functus. And as this awful conviction forced itself into the innermost chambers of my soul, I was dumfounded. I thought that being early in the day, someone might hear my lamentations of distress, should I dare utter them with impunity.

For some minutes after this fancy possessed me, I remained

without motion. I could not summon courage to budge. I was in a state of helpless bewilderment, yet I called out in as vociferous a voice as I could muster up, a yell that expired in the vast vacuum of silence. It would obfuscate the arithmetic of memory to tell of the flood of recollections that came surging for recognition, and the thousand and one ideas that clamored for utterance. I lived my entire life over again in a medley of recollections. Atoms of time dragged themselves into ages, and a minute seemed eternity itself. In such tenseness an hour eats up years. I thought that if I could but lapse into hypnotic sleep, superinduced by the copious "shot" of morphia that I had just recently taken, in all probability there would be one morphine fiend less in the world to tread the vermillion way. Could I have reached the stuff in my trousers pocket I would have taken an overdose, and let her go at that. I couldn't reach the poison, so in utter abandon I again cried aloud in a long, wild and continuous shriek of agony which resounded thru the realms of space. In answer, there came the silence of the sea that o'erwhelms. A benumbing peace seemed to fall from the warehouse walls, the peace of utter seclusion, isolation, oblivion, death. The torture of meditation was excessive, and I was descending slowly into the everlasting valley of despair. I felt a torpid uneasiness—an apathetic endurance of dull pain. There came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.

It was the beating of the watch of time, my heart.

Moralizing in the retrospect, it seems a miracle that I did not dissolve from suppressed emotion, like a gambler awaiting the toss of the high card.

When nature could endure wakefulness no longer, it was with a struggle that I consented to sleep for I shuddered to reflect that upon awakening I would find the blackness of Black Night. And when finally I sank into slumber, it was only to rush at once into a world of phantasms above which, with vast, sable, overshadowing wings hovered predominant the innocuous defunctitude of oblivion.

I am albeit a skeptic and unorthodox man. I am neither interested in the claims of the adherents of design or those of coincidence who contend with the bayonet; I care nothing about materialism, idealism or transcendentalism; but I do say that what is termed Providence or the thing behind the machinery of the universe—mind, impulse, call it what you will—is a deity of deliverance and that in my case he intervened in my rescue. A contemplation of this fact made me a believer in the faith of Israel, and I clung to it with the nervous violence of one who, in

a shipwreck feels that his only hope is in the plank in his grasp, and that some more powerful hand is tearing even that plank away. A sensation like that of a sickly propensity to sleep bound up my faculties, and whether I slept or fainted, I for a time lost all recollection.

From the throes of an opiate sleep before the flower of the day was gone, I awoke and found the warehouse on fire. The flames were shooting in a thousand spires and coiled and sprang against the roof, the walls and the floor. To remain where I was, was to be burned to cinders. The catastrophe was inevitable. I must perish in a lingering misery, of all miseries the most appalling, and with the bitter aggravation of perishing unknown, worthless, useless. I knew that I was "broke" and that the world has no use for one whose pockets are empty—his day is done, and he might as well be dead. Then why should I repine?

Yet, instinctively I indulged in a Comanche yell more now with the eagerness of hope than the apathy of despair, in a voice as hard as Rhadamanthus, in abject desperation.

This proved to be a fortuitous occurrence. It was like the hand of God. It was manna dropped from Heaven, and it saved my bacon.

There is no distress so complete, but that even in the most critical moments, the inexplicable sunrise of hope is seen in its depths.

And on what mere chance, good or evil, do great events depend?

Thru smoke and fire rude nesters of the village rushed to me, and one quick-witted rube shouted an order, and in a twinkling the atmosphere grew electric with the tension of high-pressure activity. There was heard a clang of doors and the weight against my body became lessened, and willing workers set about frantically shifting the bags. Soon a sufficient breach was made, and I heaved a sigh of relief like one coming to the surface after a long dive. In a riot of intoxicating joy I staggered forth from what threatened to be my tomb, bubbling over with gratitude to my saviors and to whom I owed my safety in a most miraculous manner. With my eyes glassy with unshed tears, I resolved the sense of service rendered me in mortal distress as a sort of guerdon of riches of the soul, and sought the outer atmosphere. My mind now being released from its tension, my premier impulse was another "shot" of the dope. This may seem strange, inasmuch as I had just taken a "shot" prior to having reclined upon the bags; but it is a fact that the morphine habit grows on one and the morphine fiend is goaded with the heresy that it is necessary willy nilly. Notwithstanding my re-

cent experience, I maintained the emotional stimuli to administer it hypodermically, and as I displayed the tools and the poison, the whole company of bonehead eoliths looked at me onion-eyed as they regarded the strange experiment with eyes bugged out and mugs agape; and my hands trembled as I overheard one of their number mumble in subdued monotone something about the grandeur of pagan philosophy.

The old warehouse was now under the influence of a dense and vivid mass of ungovernable fire, and in this rude, one-horse dub hamlet, there being no protection against its ravages, it burned to the ground while the astonished boneheads stood idly round in silent and pathetic wonder; but as the smoke finally ascended over its ashes, I clearly distinguished in its curls the distinct outline of a—*hypodermic syringe*.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

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### WAS IT EXCUSABLE HOMICIDE?

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*"The great king of kings  
Hath in the table of His law commanded  
That thou shalt do no murder. \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* For he holds vengeance in his hand  
To hurl upon their heads that break his law."  
—King Richard III.*

Altho' eleven suns have passed down the laddered way of gold and eleven pale moons have breathed their orisons to the chaste stars, their confessors, his youthful face haunts me to this hour. If he came from distinguished lineage, was a pampered son of some *noblesse oblige*, or rose from the abysmal slums, he was still some mother's boy. As I chew the bitter fruit of memory and muse upon the proposition that he would be now a living, sentient being, a violet in the youth of primy nature, but for my inexcusable act, an act albeit prompted by the most obliging motives, I shudder as I kneel at the cross where I seek for hope in the shadow of the altar which restores peace to my soul. As a conscience-stricken sinner confesses to the Holy Father, I fall upon my knees and lift my clasped hands to God. I seek thus with tears and prayers to smother down the crowd of hideous images and sounds with which my memory swarms against me, and still, between the petitions, the ugly face of my iniquity stares into my soul. For my crime no earthly court can decree damnation, but the query forces itself unremittingly upon me: "Will I jump the life to come?" I muse: "In the law of God is there any statute of limitations for one whose hands are spotted with the crimson badge of blood?" I ask myself: "Is this deed chronicled in Hell?" "Has the recording angel written down the crime of murder against my soul in letters as durable as eternity?"

And the mournful reflection is, that, disregarding theological dogmas and ethical rules, I deserted that outcast corpse alone to

the frantic savagery of preying varmints, a grave on the bosom of God's wide earth, a place where no visitors come, no flowers are strewn, no tears are wept. The thought is more than I can bear and its memory shall stick with me until the earth shall open at my side and my last hour has come. And yet I consider it an act as well might cleanse the stain of real sin from the soul. And I believe that man, altho' fallen into sensuality, is never quite without the moral sentiment. If it be an act of euthanasia, I am as innocent as a child crooning a plaintive lullaby to its doll, and I am ready to stand at the divine bar for a thousand murders such as this. And I believe that there is no crime but has some time been a virtue, and further, that crimes are but mistakes. If it be not excusable homicide, then by Saints Peter and Paul there is no Gehenna deep enough and hot enough to receive my guilty and craven spirit. O, coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!

I am an old man now, and like many other old men, feel like making confession of a moral sin. It may afford the public that mixture of the whimsical and tragic, which is the most stimulating to the popular imagination.

As I drilled along the steel metals of the Salt Lake, San Pedro and Los Angeles railway one morning which breathed the incense of summer, and just as the lightening east was tremulous with the faint, fluttering wings of flying dawn, on a pedestrian journey to a haven in southern California laved by the tepid waters of the sunlit Pacific, my sensibilities were suddenly startled by hearing the most unearthly, soul-harrowing sound that ever broke the silence of man or nature. It was a wailing cry like that of a sinking soul, and it presumably emanated from some being in an agony of pain.

The sky was so clear that it seemed as just having been washed by the angels—so clear that a single strand of cobweb dangling before one could readily be distinguished by the naked eye, and besides this, a delicate odor was being borne on the wings of the morning breeze.

As I saw no one, I stood bewildered, my hair on end in a kind of ecstatic delight.

Continuing this pedal mulling, I soon beheld the certain form of a person lying at the bottom of a steep embankment to my right. The subject was evidently writhing in mortal terror as he gesticulated lamentations of distress upon the rocks below. I could discern as I came closer, that his hands were saturated with blood as he lay prostrate there, and in general he presented the verisimilitude of a soul in the throes of both mental anguish and

intense bodily pain. He was shivering from his arched neck to his sensitive haunches, his very flanks pulsating with terror.

Overwhelmed as I was by a tide of cankering fears, I sought his side without delay. As I came up, a spasm of pain crossed his face and I put the question to him touching the cause of his lamentations, and his only answer was drowned in voicings of general distress. As I pressed him for details, he said that during the gloom of the night he had been violently hurled from the top of a passenger coach as the Los Angeles Express dashed along the rails at furious speed, while he wooed the soft-eyed goddess on the bosom of the diner.

To support the theory, I readily visualized that at this particular point along the route there was a tortuous curve, and I fixed in my mind's eye the awful impact upon the great blocks of lava below.

On the instant I was sunk in a lethargy of mingled wonder and meditation. A blind man instantly restored to sight could not wonder more, and to say the least, the situation was both novel and strange.

Now, by the favor of Providence, during my many-sided career I had snatched up some superficial smattering of plastic surgery, medical philosophy and experimental psychology, and this fact assisted me in summing up the diagnostic phase of the case. Consumed with curiosity as I was, I therefore commenced a rather perfunctory examination of his torso and limbs with all the ease of a practical observer and an experienced man of the world, and I satisfied myself that he had sustained a compound fracture of the left leg, a single fracture of the right, a fractured ulna of the right arm and in addition to this a survey of the intercostal region developed two smashed ribs on the left side. Abrasions of the skin revealed themselves at different portions of his body, and his flesh was torn and lacerated about the face. His silver skin was laced with his golden blood.

The prodigal was not over the jejeune age, and to my aesthetic susceptibilities his normal features would be of a rather elegant caste. The first silky down fringed his blushing cheeks and his young limbs were strong and brown, and all together he had that adolescent freshness 'ere the world's glad youth had touched his prime. He was, according to Hippocrates, in the period of lusty youth. He was not garbed in the habiliments of the tramp, nor yet did he reflect the hobo, and I finally categorized him after some visual measurement and mental resolving, as one temporarily down and out and in quest of new pastures offering inducements consonant with his whims, and that he had undertaken to annihilate distance by the unconventional means

employed by him of beating his way, as I myself had chosen to cover the miles by hayfooting it along the ties. This evidently is what forced him to such a crazy ride, and it is a wonder that I had not availed myself of such means, for my own shipwreck was due to having become a booby by losing at cards among the knights of the green baize and tournament jousts in the mining camps of Nevada, and that I was perforce drifting with every wind as a desert rat on the wide sea of misery. In other words, I had gone out for wool, and had come back shorn.

In this point in the physical topography of the state, the prospect was yet wild and uninhabited, for the reason that here and apparently for broad expanses about, nature afforded no advantages looking to fruitful toil to the husbandman, and altho' from a general visualization of the rugged and picturesque scenery spread before the gaze, the adaptation to industrial mining seemed practical from all angles, energies in this direction were nil. And furthermore, the country had undergone such geological changes that no artificial guano seemed potent enough to convert it to fecundity. It was as barren as a single sex. The whole immensity round about constituted an unclaimed and untamed desert. A simple and kindly nature brooded o'er. Its rusticity was genuine, yet there was a charm of poetry in it. Silence reigned in majesty over all these parts, which were possibly unknown to the tax-collector. It was truly an enchanted spot—distressing in its silent desolation. In fact, a more barren, dreary, monotonous and uninviting spectacle never stretched before human eyes.

The granite took on itself the most fantastic shapes. The bare, bleak cliffs were pictures of wild and barren desolation and here and there were split open by fissures. There were a few stunted cacti, devoid of plant life and certain repulsive plants that were native in their haggard and desert beauty. Craters of old-world volcanoes abounded, and round about there was a dream of color, a play of ever-shifting iridescent hues like those on a pigeon's breast. The entire prospect was a vista of treeless waste, with the single exception of these poisonous cactus fungi and the low-growing shrubs here and there pushing forth from this natural panorama—this wilderness of rock and sand. Due to the painful aridity of this God-forsaken country, God's best and greatest gift to man, water, was an unknown quantity, and for one to even contemplate wresting from the vaults of nature this matchless nectar, he would be compelled to bore thru to China before it gushed forth. It looked like a forgotten corner and seemed like the end of the earth.

Among the varmints peculiarly indigenuous to this terrestrial

zone, I doubt not but that the species of prodigious spider known as the tarantula, had his natural habitat here, and that the centipede was another venom of the desert wastes. The golden lizard of inordinate size, with jeweled head, the very genius of desolate stillness, and the dreaded Gila monster disported themselves upon the ledges and in the treacherous quicksands, and flat-headed spectacled vipers and big diamond backed rattlers—bad medicine in hot weather—as well as other pirates of the hummocks, writhed their snaky terrors, coiled their vermicular bodies, cast their sloughs and rolled their leaden eyeballs while the hot sun blazed in his tower of blue.

The whole represented the *Malpais* of Nevada.

Such was the character of the region thru which I traveled at that time, and where I met up with this raving and disconsolate boy, undergoing, as was quite apparent to me, a globe-trotting “rounder,” the agonies of hell, the tortures of the damned.

With aching sides and quivering nerves, with a feeling of weariness pervading the marrow of his bones and of his spine, he called out:

“For the love of Mike, kill me now, and put me out of this terrible pain; I can’t move, and the pain is awful to bear,” he said in an explosive and febrile manner.

These exclamations he voiced over and over again in monotonous appeals, addressed to me and to the Ascendant God. It was quite a queer and dreadful position for me, and I quivered with horror and stood like a frozen image and glared at the sight. I had a sense of vague and undefined terror, which are the most appalling to the imaginative soul.

As he tried to move his limbs, his distress was undoubtedly terrible, and I commenced to apply bandages with professional dexterity. I massaged his head so as to bathe it in the blithe air, and in another moment he fainted dead away.

I here thought of the trembling immateriality, the mist-like transience of his seemingly solid body wafted to inertia by sudden shock, which might culminate in dissolution before my petrified gaze.

For fully five minutes he lay in this torpor, while I fanned him back to sentience and to life. Slowly his lips quivered, his breast heaved and he revived.

Now, in truth and in fact here was presented a case where a morphine addict, such as I was at the time with body and soul anaestheticised in the shackles of morphia, might play the Good Samaritan role, and at least relieve the pain which was obvious, and which I had reason to believe was the direct sequelae of the

alleged terrific plunge from the top of a passenger coach thundering along at express speed.

Slowly and gradually as I stood there a plan was germinating in my mind in the curious automatic way in which plans do form. My future movements were decided upon without my having been conscious of any process of thought. My sense of duty and my conscience warred with each other and between these contending emotions, whether I stood in the smile of heaven or not, and at the same time believing that God was abolished in the year One, I was fully resolved. One ego argued with the other, and never did I realize as on this occasion the existence in us of two rival personalities, one desiring a thing, the other resisting, and each winning the day in turn. A man must be infinitely kind and above all, clear-sighted to deal with the simplicity of childhood, the experience of man and the subtlety of the savage. I formed a resolution, therefore, which may seem foolish, yet had I to do it over again, I believe it the best course open. It was an instinct that irresistibly inclined me toward one course. My scientific and accurate mind allowed of no errant fancy, and above all I knew that my mind was conscious of rectitude, and all of these at once decided me on a magnanimous course of conduct. After final decision, I was taught that there are two personalities in every individual—one which does things, while the other stands by and watches. One may do a thing even tho' warned by one's second and judicial self that it is unwise or wrong, and that if my second self reproached me in this moral delinquency in so concluding, I must have lost my self-respect in so doing.

So I turned to my subject and said: "Possess yourself in peace. I know that it is out of the question for you to be calm under the conditions. In your case, the chances of life and death are evenly balanced. Hence I believe that it would be the very apotheosis of innate beneficence and in accord with the doctrine of euthanasia, a doctrine practiced in European and Asiatic countries for centuries, to administer to you a slug of medication to which I myself am no stranger, so that you may thereby plunge into the torpor of artificial sleep, which will at least be temporary oblivion. Therefore, while I transport you to the seductive delirium of opium, let me be your physician, but not your executioner. I shall now give you a 'shot' in the arm and on your eyelids let me crown the god of sleep. Let me diffuse thru your general circulation the elixir of life, the blessed anodyne of both body and conscience. Let me cure both mind and body with the same prescription. I want you to lose yourself

in the Nirvana of sleep, the blessed relief to those who are sorely tried."

Between his sobs, he nodded assent, murmuring something about home, sweet home.

Whereupon, I uncovered from an unmentionable portion of my clothing the morphine salts and the hypodermic syringe secretly cached there. I boiled in water poured from a bottle which I invariably carried as a part of the dope impedimenta, in or out of desert, one-fourth of a grain of morphia crystals, the normal adult dose, which by ocular measurement under the conditions could not be pedantically accurate, and I drew the solution into the hypodermic. I next rolled up the sleeve of his jumper, caught up a pinch of flesh on the recumbent arm, and into his quivering cuticle I suddenly slipped the little sting of shining steel and glass and injected the juice of the poppy. Then with my nimble digits I smoothed down the epidermis at the point of incision and the usual inflation I noticed at once. All of this I accomplished with the applause of my conscience.

"This may kill you, but it will not torture you. Like cyanide, it is painless to mind and body," I remarked consolingly.

Thru the dim vista of time, evidently conscious of a Samaritan act, I can hear his answer now: "I wish I were dead; send me home."

I had administered to him the poison that holds out its vampire arms to destroy—the poppy-seeded draught which brings soft, purple-lidded sleep.

My protracted habituation to narcotics had schooled me to the therapeutics of the case, and thus it was with unalloyed interest that I maintained unceasing vigil over my patient as I watched the insidious liquid creeping drop by drop thru his veins. As a confirmed dopehead I knew that the least scruple of an overdose meant dissolution, in which case the patient, being incapable of bodily locomotion, would lapse primarily into the coma of blissful somnolence and finally into the rigid arms of death. It is in harmony with medical philosophy that the subcutaneous injection of morphia carries with it almost instantaneous effect. It is a postulate that the essential virtues are quickly disseminated and the poison is conveyed simultaneously with the blood. I had not long to wait, therefore, in noting the succeeding phases produced by the injection. First, there appeared the unmistakable signs of physical exhilaration and mental clarification in my patient, as he indulged in banalities and insipidities. He became a trifle loquacious as the virtues of the drug began to steal slowly over his senses. So far as physical pain is concerned, any manifestations were wanting in his gen-

eral deportment. He recalled the past and suddenly became optimistic of the roseate hues of fortune, so tightly locked in the future. He seemed *en rapport* with the stirring impulses of a high ambition. In his fitful fancy he dwelt with fascination on visions of personal distinction, of future celebrity, perhaps even of enduring fame. Evidently he had high resolves and daring thoughts, and was blessed with that tenderness of soul which is sometimes linked with an ardent imagination and a strong will.

Thru it all remorseless time wore on, and as is the case with those not tolerated to the drug, there appeared here the semi-delirium of feverish intoxication which burned his brain. It was as if Numidian javelins pierced thru and thru his wild and whirling brain and his nerves thrilled like throbbing violins in rhythmic pulsation. Finally as his eyelids closed down, I concluded that he became a prey to the maleficent power which acts relaxingly upon us by the fluid circulating thru our nerves, and his whole frame seemed gradually to experience a dissolving process. He must have felt the anguish of these throes passing thru him in waves and the cliffs and rocks and the broad expanse itself to surge to and fro in a mist before his eyes.

His orbs were now tightly lidded.

He apparently drifted into strange, vague dreams such as morphia produces. He was perhaps dreaming of that tomorrow which awaits us all, and in which is hidden that mystic *perhaps* which places us all on an equality.

I know not why I attempted to awaken him if he were really asleep, but as I did so by the usual lateral and downward passes, I found that he was beyond question locked in the most rigorous hour of slumber. He seemed to sleep as soundly as the slumbering Amaryllis. There was no abeyance of the will under the mesmeric manipulations and I let him sleep on. Yet I was conscious of a strained feeling of expectancy which was painful, as I watched the ever-changing panorama conjured up by his evidently delirious brain, for he was certainly in the magic land of sleep with its attendant dreams and visions produced by morphia, where, amid many shimmering and shifting wonders of darkness and light the palace of vision stands uplifted, stately and beautiful, with golden doors set open to the wanderer, enchanted precincts, a million halls of marvel as yet unvisited under a dome which seemed of crystal lit with fire. He was reveling in the scenes that had heaped upon him all the horrid sensations that a piece of opium can produce.

As for my own sensibilities at this time I was transported to a delirium of pensive speculation as I resolved in my mind the possibility of an overdose. I quivered in marble fear in every

limb, and to support my jaded senses, I jabbed the hypodermic into the tissues of my own arm. Shortly thereafter, I must have absorbed the contagion, for in another moment I was casting about for some shady alcove whereon to catch some wild and bitter sleep. I stretched myself upon a boulder and soon gave myself up luxuriously to dreams of youth and love and former days.

Sleep killed my eyes, and this same sleep finally killed my patient. I dreamed that I was in a region where unseen fountains perpetually played, and fairy guitars, struck by invisible fingers, sent forth an eternal harmony.

How long I dozed I can but conjecture, but it must have been an hypnotic trance, for when I lay down the sun was beating down with insufferable effulgence on the glistening sand, and when I awoke the long red fires of the dying day burned in the West. The events of the day again came before me strangely mingled with those of my past life and with others of which I could form no waking resemblance.

The first impulse directed attention to my sleeping patient, and as I appeared at his side I was horrified at the horrible passiveness, the dreadful inertness of his body, and I thought that the shadow of death began to cross his life.

Of my own feelings, now it is folly to speak. In the hope that I might get some ante mortem utterance from the subject, I again made the mesmeric passes in an endeavor to awaken him, but there was absolutely no susceptibility to the magnetic influence.

I became oppressed with dark thoughts and I gave myself over to an agony of shame and self-reproach. My eyes smarted with the moisture of shame and the scarlet blood dyed my neck and temples. I bent my forehead to the dust in a delirium of ascending thoughts as I asked the Madonna for guidance. Remorse gnawed at my soul as my conscience accused me of believing in the heresy of Cain in thus letting my brother go to the devil in his own way. Suddenly in the top fit of my delirium, I was struck thru the heart with a cold thrill of terror. My love of life, a life albeit surrounded with phantoms, darkened with delirium, enfeebled by vice and misery, was screwed to the topmost peg. Now, by the wrath of my eternal soul, should I flee from the scene like a stricken deer and let this foul deed smell above the earth with a carrion man groaning for burial?

The air was red about me. The very stars seemed to dart at me fiery tongues of flame.

A great shudder shook the limbs of my patient. His lips parted, showing a glimmer of pearly teeth within, in the ghostly

semblance of a smile. His features were pallid. The contorted agony of their last expression was already freezing under my very gaze into a marble-like rigidity. He looked ghastly. The eyelids rolled back, and the glassy orbs stared at me with a fixed and pertinacious solemnity.

Was this the hideous skeleton, DEATH? Was it grisly DEATH, with chill and nipping frost?

I placed my hand on his chest. There was no resistance. His body was absolutely soft and limp. It was like pressing a sawdust doll. I then put into execution the unerring test of the steel needle into the flesh and having a gambler's mirror with me, I applied it to the lips and nostrils. There was no resistance to the puncture of the needle, and the mirror afforded no evidence of respiration. I tried to draw blood from the arm, but with negative results. I felt his pulse. It was stone-still.

*He was dead.*

His prayer had been answered and he had gone home. Not to that home fashioned by the wisdom of man, but to that one set apart from the foundations of the world, for the wisest as well as the meanest of His creatures.