# The Duke of Acres in Town.

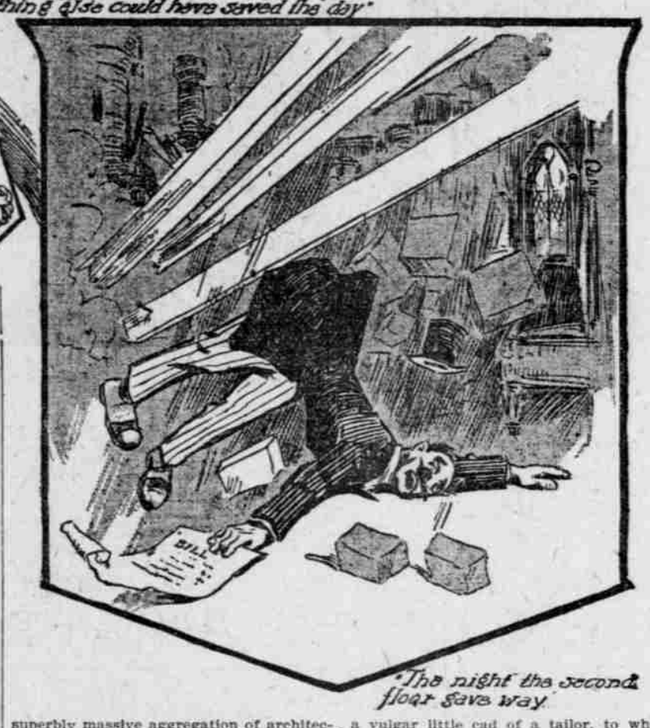
By John Kendrick Bangs

"How very awkward of me"

"Nothing else could have saved the day"

Miss Marjorie Goldrox.

"He made him Duke of Acres"



"The night the second floor gave way"

HIS name took up pretty nearly a whole page of the register, so much of it, in fact, that a Chicago gentleman, who was glancing over the book in search of the signature of a friend, observed to the clerk, "I say, young feller, did this chap arrive all at once, or in sections?" In general, the distinguished visitor's title is the Duke of Acres. Specifically, and in detail, he is George Herbert Fitzmarmalade Albert Henry Hugo Postelthwaite James Warren Cholmondelly Victor de Smythe Cavendish Seymour Hicks Wintringham. He is the man of whom a famous Radical, on seeing his name for the first time, observed that he must have been christened on a windy day and, since it was generally understood that he had come to this country for the purpose of securing a Duchess to restore the plumbing of Castle Wintringham to its ancient splendor, I resolved to call upon him at his apartment in the Walledoff Castoria and see what he had to say for himself. The Purchaseable Duke is an entertaining development in modern sociology, and everybody has talked about him but himself. All sides of his story, save his own, have been told over and over again, and it seemed to me that it was only fair that he should have the opportunity to be heard.

He did not keep me waiting long. Barely five minutes had elapsed since the sending up of my card through a pneumatic tube when the voice came hurling down through the pipe:

"His Graciousness says to show that feller up."

And up I went.

The Duke is a short, squat-figured gentleman with a florid complexion and a tendency to effective waistcoats- nu anu n tleman, with a florid complexion and a tendency to effective waistcoats. To say the truth, as I entered the room in the rather dim light of the afternoon, I thought at first that he was the back of a heavily upholstered arm chair, his expansive waistcoat contributing largely to that impression. The result was that I bumped rather unceremoniously into him before I realized the true state of affairs, and so found myself face to face with an awkward moment. You can't very well tell a man that in the dim light and owing to the somewhat overweighty color scheme of his centrifugal dimensions you have mistaken him for a plush-backed easy chair, and I was up against a very difficult proposition as to how best to excuse myself. Fortunately, however, the Duke was affability itself.

"How very awkward of me," he cried, when he had recovered his second wind, "to stand where you must inevitably stumble over me. Fact is, I didn't expect you quite so soon, or I should have got out of the way. I forgot that your American lifts are so much faster than our English ones, and in consequence I did not think you would be up here for a half hour yet. It would have taken you quite 20 minutes to get up two stories in a British hotel."

"Don't mention it, Your Grace," said I, resolved not to be outdone in affability. "The fault is wholly mine. We Americans haven't yet learned how to enter drawing-rooms properly—that is, not more than four hundred of us at the outside. For the most part, we stick to the old catapult method, which is indeed awkward in its results, especially in these days of waxed floors and rugs. Only last night I slid through three cases of bric-a-brac at the home of a friend of mine, owing to the impetuous way in which I landed upon the rug at the entrance of the parlor."

"It is one of your very great charms," suggested the Duke. "It is indeed a compliment for a gentleman to enter his host's presence with such evident eagerness, and I sincerely hope I shall always find so cordial a manifestation of interest in my poor self."

"It was lucky I didn't try to sit down on you," I blurted out, forgetting for the moment that the true inwardness of my error was wholly unknown to the Duke.

"Ah—beg pardon?" he answered.

"I—ah—what I mean is," I stammered, "that I—er—it was fortunate I didn't bowl you over and fall on you."

"Very," said the Duke. "Considering that you must weigh in the neighborhood of 15 stone, it strikes me as being eminently fortunate. And now to business. You are the agent of Miss Marjorie Goldrox, of Duluth, I understand. Of what, precisely, does Miss Goldrox's fortune consist? I like her picture very much—quite a sweet little thing, and while, of course, not the conventional type for a Duchess, she might make a very successful one on the mere basis of the difference."

"Well, you see, Duke," I began, rather disturbed to discover that, after all, I had been received by mistake.

### A Practical Lover.

"I shall require a certificate in detail of all the lady's property, of course," said His Grace, interrupting me, "and an advance of $1000 before I can consider her application at all. You see, it is expensive business coming all the way over here to look up the financial antecedents of your would-be noblewomen. I should prefer not to ask for an advance, but circumstances over which I have little control seem to make it desirable that I should. My friend, the Duke of Herring, who was over here last year, told me that he wasted six months running down bogus applications, and when finally he was acquired by his present very charming Duchess, who was Miss Mamie Copperking, of Arizona, it took pretty nearly all the first payment to settle up his accrued American debts, to say nothing of the creditors at home. So I have adopted the advance payment system, which protects me against frivolous applications and enables me to settle my bills promptly a year after presentation."

"Suppose the application is ultimately rejected" I asked. "What becomes of that advance payment?"

"It is returned—or rather I have a blank form, which I call a 'negotiable receipt,' which I return in lieu of the cash," explained His Grace. "It is made payable to the applicant, and the lady is at liberty to negotiate it whenever and wherever and for whatsoever sum she sees fit. Is Miss Goldrox prepared to comply with this formality?"

"Well, Duke——" I began again, resolved to undeceive him as to my identity.

"Of course," he interrupted a second time, tapping his fat fingers together reflectively and glancing at the photograph of Miss Goldrox on the table, "of course, if she isn't, on the ground that $1000 is too high a figure, I might, in view of her beauty, take $750, but if I did I should wish it regarded as a strictly confidential transaction. It would never do to have the impression get abroad that I am one of those cut-rate Dukes, such as you find in the Italian market."

"There's none of the job lot about Your Grace," I said.

"I hope not," he replied. "Indeed," he added with a sigh, "I am as genuine as my necessities, and I certainly do not propose to let myself go cheap, though in your case I am prepared to make a reasonable concession, because I like Miss Goldrox's looks. She has all the piquancy of what we call the chorus-girl Duchess, without her reputation, which I think is a very desirable combination."

"Well, now, see here, my dear Duke," I began a third time. "I don't want to get anything out of you under false pretenses, and I've tried to tell you three times that I am not—"

"You need have no delicacy in coming to that point, my dear fellow," said the Duke, leaning forward in his chair and patting me pleasantly upon the knee. "Of course, I know what you would say. Miss Goldrox desires some information as to my title, the exact state of my fortune, my personal character, and all that. Indeed, she said as much in her letter answering my advertisement, and stating that you would call at 4 this afternoon. Why should she not seek and receive that information?"

"No reason in the world, Duke," I replied. "Only I am not—"

"There is really nothing to be ashamed of in my career," he ran on. "The title is one of the oldest in England, my castle is in an awful state of disrepair, and my debts—well, they are ducal. As for the title, it was conferred upon the original Duke, Peter Wintringham, of Wassailbowl, who, at the battle of Marston Moor, gave William the Conqueror a good drink of rum at a time when nothing else could have saved the day. As William said, after he had put Edward the Confessor to flight, 'by my faith, an' it were not for that dram, Lord Buckingham, my Lord of Axminster would have sat on the British throne this night.' He thereupon summoned my ancestor into his royal presence and made him Duke of Acres. It was because of this episode that we took the whisky jug as a symbol for our crest, and the phrase 'Magister biburdi' for our family motto. Three centuries later Queen Elizabeth, in testimony of her regard for the sixth Duke, Henry Charles St. Vincent Wintringham, who wrote a triolet to Her Majesty's eyebrows, built for him at a cost of £200,000 sterling the present Castle Wintringham and granted him an allowance of £10 a year for its maintenance. From that day to this Castle Wintringham has been a millstone around the family neck. You can't run a castle very fast on £10."

"That's a bad place to get a millstone," I observed.

"Quite so," he replied. "Of the subsequent Dukes of Acres—you of course are familiar with English history, so it is unnecessary for me to tell you of their achievements. It is true most of these are recorded between the lines, but, as Kipling says, 'they also serve who only stand and wait.'"

"The title is evidently all right," said I. "But see here, Duke——"

"And so is the castle all right, my friend," continued the Duke. "It is a superbly massive aggregation of architecture, to which the tourists flock annually in great numbers—fact is, in too great numbers, for actually last year they took away with 'em about four thousand bricks from the family chapel as souvenirs. The only trouble with the castle is that it has no roof, and the second floor has fallen two flights into the cellar, incidentally carrying the first floor with it. There is only one whole pane of glass in the whole edifice, and the plumbing—well, it was the plumbing that first convinced me that I owed it alike to my ancestors and my posterity to come over here and find a Duchess who could put it in order. Why, really, sir, the justification for my presence here, should Miss Goldrox require something of that nature, lies in the fact that in the matter of repairs alone my castle is so badly off that even my creditors, anxious as they are to get their money, never dare call at my ducal home, for fear some loose wing or tottering belfry may fall over upon them. Indeed, one man, a vulgar little cad of a tailor, to whom I owed £600, ventured there the night the second-story floor gave way, and is said to have lost his life in that disaster."

"Said to have? Didn't they know? Did you find the body?" I cried.

"We never looked for it," replied the Duke calmly. "In the first place, I hadn't the money to pay for lifting the floor out of the cellar, and, in the second place, I considered it undignified of me to go hunting for a tailor's body, anyhow. I think, in all probability, his bones will be found underneath that floor, however, for I haven't received another bill from him from that day to this. But enough of that. I think I have told you enough about the state of disrepair into which my castle has fallen to convince you and Miss Goldrox that I am not trifling when I offer myself and title in the American market. I estimate that it will require £200,000 to get Castle Wintringham in shape again, to say nothing of refurnishing. The loss of the roof and the caving in of the second floor haven't done the old furniture much good."

"It wouldn't seem likely," said I. "And now as to your moral character, Duke," said I, for I felt now that I must humor him in his misidentification. I had heard too much to undeceive him at this point, and so resolved to follow the thing through to the end.

"Well," he answered, with a short laugh, "since everybody shut down on my credit it's been pretty good. You can't lead a rollicking life on nothing a year."

"But you are of domestic inclinations?" I asked.

"As to that, I can't say as yet," he said, with a pleasing show of frankness. "You see, I've never had a home to go to nights. Castle Wintringham has been more of a brickyard or a quarry than a home for as long as I can remember. I think, though, that if I had a chance I could become very, very domestic in my tastes. With Castle Wintringham turned into a cosey home, with billiard rooms, squash and racket courts, greenhouses, wine cellars, Roman baths, and a nice little Duchess to preside over it—well, I am quite convinced that you would find me at home Sundays, anyhow. You see I promise nothing, however, for I should not want Miss Goldrox later to say that I had deceived her."

"Well, Duke," said I, rising, "I have no doubt that Miss Goldrox will be satisfied with what you have told me. She is estimated at $46,000,000——"

"In money or industrials?" asked the Duke, anxiously.

"Oh, real money," said I. "And you will investigate?"

"Certainly," he answered. "Of course—and—er—that little check? I might even be satisfied with $500 down."

I hadn't the heart to deceive him, and so, taking a blank check from my pocket, I drew a draft for the Duke as follows:

Duluth, Oct. 30, 1903.
The Nineteenth National Bank,
Duluth, South Carolina.
Pay to the Order of George Herbert et cetera Wintringham,
Five Hundred ..... Dollars
$500. MARJORIE GOLDROX,
Per William H. Jones, Atty.

In return the Duke handed me one of his negotiable receipts and I departed. I heard yesterday that somebody at the Walledoff Castoria had been arrested for trying to cash a bogus draft, but whether it was the Duke or not I have not heard, but I hope it wasn't, for I should hate to think of one with so refined a taste in fancy waistcoasts as His Grace having to wear the distinctly unpleasing stripe pattern garments now in vogue at Ossining. Moreover, the Duke was a good fellow, and I am sure was perfectly sincere in coming to this country to sell himself in order to pay his debts and restore his family grandeur to its pristine splendor.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## RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF THOMAS FITCH

NO. X
THE SUN-KISSED LAND

THE moon behind a cloud whose edges were tipped with silvery radiance, the stars blazing through the darkness, the distant mountains with purple summits stretching upward to the very gates of heaven, plains brown and drear, seamed with bending orchards and vales like the lawn of paradise, the upper Gila tumbling in cascades, the Colorado foaming through gorges a mile in depth, giant cactus uplifting their ghostly arms in the gloom, the electric air, the indescribable charm of the desert, and then, as the night skies began to be pencilled with the dawn, the song of the lark, "the herald of the morn," bubbled up in matchless melody over the rim of the dark, and it was morning in Arizona.

Poor old Arizona! For 25 years her matchless resources have been almost untouched, and her people have growled a little, and hoped a good deal, and waited with longing and impatience for the toga viriles of statehood, whose enfranchising touch will invigorate the life and spur the energies of Arizona, and bring other capital and people to develop her wonderful wealth of field and forest and mine.

Yet for the delay in achieving local self-government, Arizonans themselves have been not altogether blameless, when there was a Democratic majority in Congress they would elect a Republican delegate to Congress, and when Congress was Republican they would hasten to roll up a Democratic majority. Before 1880 parties were not organized there, and all candidates were "independent," for the people regarded both political parties much as the South Sea islander looked upon the new-born twins of which he was the father. They were too small to fight, and too lean to be eaten, and so he neither loved nor respected them.

Other cities of "the sun-kissed land" may have a grander future than Prescott, but none has greater beauty of location. It is nestled in a charming mountain valley, girt with pine-clad hills and boasting of a stream—the Hassayampa—which, unlike some other streams in Arizona, very often has water in it. The railroad which now reaches it has deprived it of its former charm of isolation, when it was a little world in itself. And a world that was up to the times. It was adjacent to Fort Whipple, the headquarters of a military department. There was a brilliant coterie of officers and their families, and there was always "something doing." Private theatricals, masked balls, dinners and other functions kept the military bands busy and the young men in an impecunious condition. The citizens were enterprising and liberal, the mines were rich, money was plentiful, and a little theater, costly nearly $10,000, was erected by voluntary subscriptions. Waifs of all kinds drift into mining camps. We found a lawyer, who had once been a scene painter at Wallack's; a banker's assistant, who was an ex-stage carpenter, and amateur actors were as plentiful as frogs in April. A Colonel at the fort was as clever a light comedian as ever walked the boards, his wife was a renowned Washington beauty and a clever actress. A signal service operator proved an excellent character actor. He has since gained fame and fortune in New York as the author of "My Friend From India," "The Man From Mexico" and other dramatic successes. Murat Masterson, not only was an artist with the brush, but he played Joseph in "Richelieu" and Damon in "Damon and Pythias," and the violin in the Oasis saloon, with equal success. He was a many-sided genius, for he had been first officer of a Confederate cruiser, had taught mathematics in a Kentucky academy, and was a leading lawyer in Arizona and a member of the Legislature. The best furniture and draperies and bric-a-brac of Prescott houses adorned the stage on occasions, and when we needed a cardinal's guard for "Richelieu" we had at our service a company of real soldiers from Fort Whipple, who dropped to their knees like hot potatoes when His Eminence pronounced the curse of Rome.

I was stage manager, and it is my proud boast that I kept the company together in perfect harmony, with one exception, during 14 consecutive weekly performances, which included the dramas of Bulwer, Robertson, Sardou and Boucicault, Shakespeare we did not attempt. We contemplated presenting "Hamlet," but the gentleman who was to delineate the melancholy Dane insisted upon introducing some original features, which he claimed were justified by the text, such as a flute solo by Hamlet, in the second act, accompanied by a terpsichorean divertisement. When we refused to allow him to have his way, he grew insubordinate and left the company, with a threat to shoot up the town, and to begin his career by making a target of any gentleman who should attempt the part of Hamlet in his place. As nobody desired to become a shining mark for him, we substituted "East Lynne."

I had a large extension bed-chair in my office, which at night was occupied as a couch by our clerk. This was carried over to be used as a bed for little Willie, when in the last act he passes in his checks. The part of William was taken by a 5-year-old girl, who was one of our "troupe." The stage official, who set the scene, neglected to shoot the bolt, which kept the two ends of the chair in place, and when Mrs. Fitch, who played the Earl's daughter, threw herself, in an agony of grief, upon the couch of the dying child, the head and footboard of the contrivance shut up with a click, like a country jackknife, and as the curtain went down there was visible a pair of gaiters poised toward the ceiling, while the dying child howled, "let me out, let me out."

It is only a fair tribute to the histrionic powers of the lady to relate that when the tangle was unraveled, the bedstead restored and the curtain raised, the roar of laughter which greeted the catastrophe was hushed to respectful silence and the scene was duly finished amid the tears and cheers of the audience.

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Let not distinguished counsel from Eastern or Western cities sneer at any territorial bar or bench. The litigation—lucrative to lawyers—which attends upon rich mineral discoveries, often tempts the keenest intellects to the frontier forum. But there were large fees paid to attorneys in Arizona, in former years, and there was as able a bench as could be found in any Eastern city. Judge Charles A. Tweed—dead now, of course; it seems to me sometimes as if everybody who is anybody is dead—was a priest, a philosopher and a wag. On one occasion a motion had been made before him to discharge from attachment a very valuable pair of buggy mules, and on the last day of the term it was argued at great length before him. The Judge was due to open court at Mineral Park, a hundred and forty miles distant, the following week. He was the possessor of a light ambulance which he used in traveling the circuit; but he owned no horses, finding it more convenient and economical to hire animals for each journey. "Gentlemen," said the court, "this motion which you have so elaborately and ably presented will involve for its determination the examination of a large number of authorities, and I will not have time to look into them until after my return from Mineral Park. I will therefore take the motion under advisement until then. And gentlemen," said His Honor urbanely, "I understand that you are both going to Mohave County to attend court. I will be glad to have you occupy seats in my ambulance during the journey, and I suggest that it will promote both the ends of justice and our personal comfort if I also take the mules under advisement. The court hears no objection. Mr. M. you represent the plaintiff in the case and you are a native of Missouri and naturally understand the needs and characteristics of mules. I appoint you judicial equerry for the trip. Mr. F., your rotund form suggests familiarity with the good things of life and where to get them. I appoint you judicial commissary and remind you that we shall probably be obliged to camp out one or two nights, and that the water to be obtained is not good. Is that all satisfactory? Quite so. The mules will, I am sure, enjoy the trip. Mr. Sheriff, adjourn court to meet next Monday at Mineral Park."

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Chief Justice French was a learned and able lawyer, who possessed a private fortune and who accepted the position of Judge because he liked the work. He was not in the least taciturn and was not disposed to sit mum and allow the lawyers to do all the talking. He would "chip in," and participate in any discussion before him with questions and dissertations and side-bar remarks, and if the case at bar did not offer opportunities for him he would refer to some other case. Those lawyers who understood this idiosyncrasy of the Judge always humored him, and listened patiently until he was through, and then proceeded with the trial of the pending case.

But there was one member of his bar who was annoyed at this habit of the Judge and who determined to express his objection at the first opportunity. One warm afternoon in August, when the valley of the Gila was seething and all the idlers in Florence were sweltering under the shade of the dirt-roofed piazza, which surrounded the old adobe building which served for a Courthouse, this gentleman, who was employed for the defendant in a noted divorce case, was contending before Judge French that the rule of law that the residence of the husband is the residence of the wife did not prevail in an action for divorce brought by a non-resident wife against a resident husband. Counsel paused for a moment in his argument to pour for himself a glass of water.

"Mr. Blair," said the court, "I am satisfied that the decision of the Supreme Court of California is not law. I am satisfied that in an indictment for stealing bullion from a Mining Company it is not necessary to state whether the company is a corporation or an individual— Go on Mr. Blair." The counsel stood quietly and received the interruption. The remarks of His Honor referred to a bullion stealing case in the trial of which Mr. Blair had participated a week previous. In that case he had vainly endeavored to procure a dismissal of the indictment, on the ground now referred to by Judge French, but the jury had subsequently acquitted the defendant and the case was at an end.

"Go on with your argument, Mr. Blair," said the Judge. "If your honor pleases," said Blair, "I know that the statute provides that neither party shall be allowed to testify as to verbal declarations made by the other party, where the other party is dead; but I submit that the statute does not apply to cases where the pleadings are verified and one of the parties dies during the trial." Mr. Blair's argument was with reference to an action concerning a farm, which had been tried a month before, and in which action the plaintiff died while the case was on trial. "Your honor will pardon me," said Mr. Blair, "for this digression, but since the case at bar seems not to interest your honor, I thought while we were reviewing old cases, I might with advantage offer a few remarks on this most interesting question."

"The court accepts your explanation, Mr. Blair," said Judge French, "and does not wish to interrupt you. Indeed, you are throwing about as much light upon the case at bar now as you were when the court interrupted your original argument."

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"Mr. Blank," said Judge Tweed, "this is the time appointed for sentencing Patrick Brunagan, who has been convicted of housebreaking. His counsel, I learn, is ill. Will you please appear for the defendant, for the purpose of receiving sentence." Mr. Blank signified his acceptance of the duty required of him. "Patrick Brunagan," said his honor, "stand up and receive your sentence." Brunagan, who was a little measly Irishman, with mutton-chop whiskers and one bad eye, turned deprecatingly toward the counsel appointed for the nonce. "Mr. Blank," said he, "I'm not feeling very well this morning. Won't you plaze shtand up and receive my sintence for me?"

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Judge J. B. Southard, familiarly known as "Ben" Southard, was a hater of shams. A pretentious Arizona jurist, who owed his elevation to the bench to his cousinship to a President's wife, was one day vaunting his own character and career before Ben Southard. "I made it a rule," said the boaster, "when I was on the bench, never to know a friend from an enemy. I would decide a case in favor of an enemy and against a friend just as soon as I would the other way." "That was my rule exactly," replied Ben. "But when my enemy swore one way and my friend another, I always believed my friend."

"Prisoner," said Judge Southard to a culprit, who stood trembling before him. "You have pleaded guilty to the charge of bigamy. Who is twice married is twice punished. This court will let you off with one hour's imprisonment and $1 fine."

"When I lived in Sonoma County," said the Judge, "I expounded religion. I used to hold court on week days and preach on Sundays. I found an old volume of the sermons of Henry Ward Beecher—the grandest man that ever lived—and I took the pains to commit them to memory, and I used to preach them to my congregation, and those Yahoos would go to sleep under them, and when I preached a sermon of my own composition they would snivel and howl and cry 'Amen.' Well, that let me out. I threw up my job as a preacher and never took it up again."

Judge Southard's death was as genial and as filled with good fellowship as his life. He was seated on the hotel piazza at Santa Rosa, conversing with some friends. Suddenly he sprang to his feet. "Good-bye, boys," said he, "I'm off," and he dropped lifeless at their feet.

(Copyright, 1903, by Thomas Fitch.)

### Talk Won't Go.

Brooklyn Eagle.

The candidate now passes 'round
Sweet taffy to the voters,
But at the polls it will be found,
This does not catch the floaters.

Man wants but little here below,
But 'round about elections
He wants that little paid in dough,
Not vocalized confections.


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Can only be cured by the marvellous serum toxin discovered fifteen years ago by Doctor Francis A. Sieber. This treatment can be taken at home with the same marvellous results as though administered at any one of the branch Institutes of this Company in Chicago, New York, Boston, St. Louis, Pittsburg, Hot Springs, etc. All pimples, eruptions, mucous patches, sores, pains, rheumatism, etc., are removed during the first month, and **the very worst cases completely cured** during the full course of three months. Every case accepted for treatment is guaranteed a complete cure or all money refunded. Dr. Sieber's serum toxin treatment is the only human agency through which contagious blood poison can ever be eradicated from the human system. If you have tried everything else and failed, come to us, we will cure you. Remember that your guarantee is signed by the largest Medical Institute in the world, capital $1,000,000. Before writing us ask any Mercantile Agency, or your own banker, as to our financial responsibility and business standing. Wasend free, upon application, a thirty-page Treatise on contagious blood poison fully describing the Sieber serum toxin treatment, and how you can be completely cured while you remain at home and attend to your regular duties.

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