The Bookworm Discusses the Magazines

"How on earth did you get here?"

"I landed in the feather boa of a charming young lady."

By John Kendrick Bangs.

"I sampled all the liquids in the book."

"The picture was called 'The Triumph Sprite.'"

THERE were no two ways about it, the cry was unmistakable. Twice it fell upon my hearing, and somehow or other there was a strain of familiarity in the voice, although I could not quite place it.

"Surely," I muttered, walking to the window and looking out upon the snowy night; "surely, somebody I know or have known is calling for help. I wonder who it can be. It sounds, too, as if it came from something that was being smothered. Can it be that out beneath yonder drifting snow—

The inquiry was immediately answered by a repetition of the cry, but this time directly at my side.

"Help! help! I say!" came the cry again, a little more sharply, but its whereabouts was more mysterious than ever, for the only thing at my side at that precise moment was a table covered with magazines, and they were one and all so fat and prosperous looking that surely they needed assistance from no one.

"What the dickens!" I began, when I was interrupted by a deep groan that emanated from nothing less than the Christmas number of Mulligatawney's Monthly.

"Quick, or I shall be no more!" gasped the voice, and then I guessed the truth. My bookworm was in trouble again. Quickly lifting the magazine from the table, I began to run over its pages, when the imploring voice broke out:

"Not there—not there—back here, in the advertising pages, crushed between a grand piano and an electric runabout, with a fountain pen sticking in my eye and a patent Gladstone bag resting on the small of my back," groaned the sufferer. "Page 203 of the advertiser," he gasped again, and then all was silence. Evidently the poor little fellow had fainted.

I ran over the pages as hastily as I could, but it was by no means a quick matter, for, although there were no more than the usual number of reading pages in the issue, the advertising had run up to enormous proportions, and it was no easy job to find page 203, as the sufferer had requested. Finally, however, I came upon him, exactly where he had said I should find him. His sufferings must have been poignant, for the grand piano was a huge one, and the automobile was not in any sense a light and airy thing, while the bag on his back and the fountain pen that touched his cheek just below the left eye were in themselves enough to work irreparable damage to a creature of his rather diminutive stature.

"Well, I declare!" I said, as I extricated him from his predicament. "How on earth did you get here? I thought I left you in a volume of Scott in the British Museum."

"So you did," he answered, sadly, as he pulled himself together and rearranged his more or less disordered person. "So you did, but that cursed habit of roving that has resulted in the destruction of so many thousands of my ancestors seems to have fastened its grip pretty firmly upon me. I didn't stay in my dear old Abbotsford 48 hours after you restored me to the home of my youth—it was too still, too sort of high class. I'm a trifle of a Bohemian, you know, so I decided to try my luck again. Sneaked out of Abbotsford one morning. Crawled along the shelf until I saw a convenient place to drop off. Landed in the feather boa of a very charming young lady, who was in the library looking up something about 'The Influence of Ibsen on the Panama Canal.' Escaped in this to the Hotel Monopple, where she was staying. Sneaked into a letter addressed to some chap here in New York. Was mailed. Carried across the sea. Jumped into the first magazine I saw, and, by jingo! next thing I knew was nearly drowned in a quicksand of advertisements."

A Bookworm's Diet.

"Well, you are a great adventurer," said I, with a laugh. "A bookworm brought up on Scott is up against it for fair in one of these modern magazines."

"Don't you suppose I know that?" groaned the little victim, "without your telling me so. Haven't I traveled through that copy of Mulligatawny's and fed on—Lord, such food—for the last six weeks?"

"Poor Wormy!" I ejaculated. "You must have had a terrible time of it, especially in Mulligatawny's. It's a good magazine, but—well, we all have our ideas, you know. Tell me of some of your adventures. Did you fall into the middle of it where the reading matter was or—"

"I jumped in right by the Table of Contents," was his reply. "It looked mighty attractive, and I began on that. It promised a lot of fine things, and I tell you I nibbled away at it with a positive relish! 'Who'd stay at Abbotsford with a Table of Contents like that staring him in the eye?' I cried. 'Not me,' says I, 'nor no other worm of sense neither.' And then I started in eagerly to get at the first of its promised dainties, an article on 'Christmas in the Antilles.' That piqued my curiosity. I've always wanted to know about the Antilles, especially about Christmas in them. I've read about 'Christmas in the Philippines' and 'Christmas in Patagonia,' and the 'Yuletide in Scandinavia,' and 'Santa Claus in the Sierras,' and all that, but 'Christmas in the Antilles'—here at last was something new and I plunged in with vigor and—"

"Found the same old article with a new geographical setting," I interrupted.

"Not immediately," sighed the Bookworm. "I naturally thought it would be on the next page, you know; but, alas! when I got to where I thought it was, what do you suppose happened?"

"Found your way blocked by a—by a whisky ad," I suggested.

"Pretty much luck," groaned the Bookworm. "I came through on to a bookcase full of green cloth volumes with paper labels called 'The World's Most Fictitious Fiction, in Fifty Volumes.' The whole thing, case and all, could be had for a dollar, provided you snipped off a dog-ear at the lower corner of the page and mailed it to the Hawaiian Novelty Company, of Brattleboro, Me., before 6 o'clock, December 23. By return express you get the library and further information as to what to do next. Honestly, it took me a week to get past that page, and then where do you suppose I found myself?"

"Give it up," said I.

"Stymied by 67 pages of publishers' announcements, with the portrait of some author or other to be devoured on each one of 'em," groaned the Bookworm. "Think of me, brought up on Scott, nibbling at the curls of Flora Annie Bosbyshell, biting my way through the collar of Richard Dundum Sparrowhawk, chewing my path through the glittering red necktie of Barlow Binks, the Poet of the People, and so on for 67 pages! From Scott to Binks! It's as bad as if you were to come down from canvasback ducks to canned canary birds."

"And then the Antilles?" I asked.

"Heavens, no!" cried the Bookworm. "Not yet awhile. After I'd finished up with the authors I wandered pleasantly for several days through a maze of young ladies' seminaries, each one of which was the best that had ever been known, and then, at last, came a blank page. 'Good!' I cried, 'here is a respite. Once through this and all will be well. Ho for the Antilles and the joyous Yule therein!' But woe is me, my worst trouble was on the other side of that page. It was the back of a colored frontispiece, and when I had penetrated to the front of it I fell head first into a deep sea of red, white, green, yellow and blue ink, that nearly drowned me—and, oh, how it tasted, and what a dickens of a time I had in getting out!"

High Living in the Magazines.

"We're rather proud of the colored frontispieces in our magazines," said I, a little nettled at the Bookworm's remark, for this especial frontispiece was a favorite of mine. It represented a very lovely pink Goddess of Hope, clad in a diaphanous garment of yellow sea foam and wearing six electric light bulbs in lieu of a tiara on her head, rising from a mauve and shrimp-colored ocean, on the far side of which were three palm trees and a couple of rhododendrons in full bloom. The picture was called "The Triumph Sprite," and was drawn by the artist to illustrate a little poem of mine which was to have appeared in that number, but was crowded out by an extra pressure of automobile advertising that came in at the last moment. I have forgotten now what the poem was about, but I do know that the frontispiece was a most excellent illustration of its motif, and the sneering attitude of contempt toward it on the Bookworm's part was galling. "You don't appreciate high art," I sneered.

"No; I prefer codliver oil," he answered. "The oil seems fresher and sweeter. But that is all a matter of taste," he continued, with a trace of apology in his tone. "As long as you don't try to eat them maybe these high art frontispieces are all right. It all depends on how you consume them as to whether you like them or not.

"Well," he resumed, after a moment's pause, "I finally escaped the color scheme but I was the most iridescent Bookworm you ever saw by the time I had floundered out into the Antilles."

"Ah! You got there at last, eh?" said I.

"I thought I had at first," said the Bookworm, "but I was mistaken. The first paragraph that I consumed in that article opened with the words, 'From an atmospheric point of view, Christmas day in the Antilles reminds one of the Fourth of July in a quiet New England town.' And then the author discussed for three columns the joys of the Fourth of July in a quiet New England town, and when I gave up the printed matter and fled to the margins for rest, at the end of three days, the nearest he had got to the Antilles was a place called Gloucester, Mass. Where is Mass., anyhow?"

I started to enlighten my little guest, but he did not wait.

"I spent a couple of days on the margins of the Mulligatawney pages, and then I ran up against a short story called 'The Joy of Little Elizabeth.' 'Now for something gay and joyous,' said I. Well, what do you suppose the joy of Little Elizabeth was? It was to die of yellow fever the day before her mother passed away from a violent attack of apoplexy, and a week after her big brother had been sent to jail to save her father from disgrace. The child was glad to go—and I don't blame her—but the story of her life for a Christmas magazine struck me as being a trifle teary. And speaking of that, the sanitation of these magazines, it seems to me, must be pretty bad. The death rate in that copy of Mulligatawney's is 561 thousandths. That's pretty high. There was a funeral coming on almost every page. I was figuring it out before the piano fell on me, and in 90 pages of reading matter there'd been 64 deaths, and every one of them in homes where tobacco is not used. How do you account for that?"

"I don't," said I, "save on the ground that the modern magazine story must be realistic and people have got to die sooner or later."

"Oh, as for that," said the Bookworm, "I was mighty glad they did die."

"You bloodthirsty little worm!" I cried.

"Certainly I was," he ejaculated. "Because it put us all out of suffering. If they hadn't died they'd have had to suffer again in some future number of the magazine and dragged us into it. It's only characters like Sherlock Holmes who can die two or three times without anybody losing anything by it. But I vow your magazines are bad places to live in if the death rate means anything."

Serials and Cereals.

"Did you fall into any serials?" I asked.

"Here are serials and cereals," said the Bookworm. "In the advertising pages there were breakfast foods to burn, whether you had to cook 'em to eat 'em or not. If you mean that kind of cereal, I fell in and have been all of a dope ever since. If you mean the kind of serial that is continued in our next, my answer is, 'Nay, nay, Pauline.' I never ate my way through but one serial in my life, and I didn't tackle that until the last chapter."

"Then you didn't wade through it," I suggested.

"Oh, yes I did," said the Bookworm. "I found the last chapter fairly interesting and then went back."

"Oh, like a woman, eh, who reads the last chapter first and finishes the book afterwards?" I jeered.

"Not exactly," smiled the Bookworm. "I read the last chapter and then chewed my way through the synopsis printed at the head of it. That's the only way to read a serial novel these days—or any other, for that matter. Get it in tabloid form. There's a future awaiting the man who will take your modern novel and put it on a postal card."

I was silent, for I realized the truth of the Bookworm's observation. If there is anything harder than writing a 150,000-word novel, it is reading it after it is written with intervals of rest of one month between installments.

"And the poetry, Wormy," said I. "Did you have any trouble with that?"

"No," said he. "You see, I ate through the top of Mulligatawny's, and the poetry of the magazines nowadays is always printed at the bottom. I suppose it is on the principle that in your magazines there's never any room at the top."

"And how did you happen to get in that awful fix with the piano and the automobile in the advertising pages?" I asked, putting him down on my table with his back against the soft velvet of my penwiper.

"I am not sure how that came about," said he. "It all happened so suddenly. But I think it was because after all those funerals I'd been through I got reckless and sort of went off in a maze. I sampled all the liquids in the book, and last night, after eating my way through a perfectly fine bottle of apple jack on the 201st advertising page, I found myself up in front of a morphine cure."

"Oh!" said I.

"Precisely!" he replied. "And I swallowed that, too. And when I got through with it you could have dropped a Flatiron building on me, for all I cared, until I woke up. When I woke up there was that piano and automobile pressing me on either side, the fountain pen in my eye and the Gladstone bag on my back."

"In short, Wormy," said I, with a laugh, "you were intoxicated."

"Well, who wouldn't be after an orgy like that?" he demanded. "That's the sort of reading that maketh the full man."

SISTER CELESTE'S MATIN

By Hugh Herdman

SISTER CELESTE lay on the board that served for her bed in an almost bare room in the Carmelite nunnery of Saint Teresa. Since her return from the cold chapel, after the midnight hour of prayer, spent on the chill stones before the altar, she had not closed her eyes. Instead of the wonted peace and comfort and spirit that her devotions filled her with, there was an uneasiness of mind and body. She was usually unmindful of the discomforts which the rule of her order enforced upon its members, but in returning to her cell-like room, she had shivered with cold and trembled at the echoes and the gloom of the long corridors. The dim outline of one of her sisters, moving in reverent silence in the distance, had filled her with a sudden fright. Only the habit of years of silence, which her vow bound her to observe, had kept her from crying out. Seizing her rosary and mumbling a prayer, she had hastened to her room and thrown herself upon her hard bed.

But sleep would not come. She had fingered her rosary many times over, she had pressed the crucifix to her lips and prayed that her sin be made known to her, but still her mind remained active and her body restless. At last, an hour before dawn, she rose, and going to her one little window and leaning upon the stone sill, looked out upon the beauty of the night. The sky was cloudless and the stars and moon bathed the earth in subdued splendor. Sister Celeste, for years a nun of the most recluse order on earth, seldom indulged herself the pleasure of God's handiwork. But the memories of her life before she took her vow had not been dimmed by time, and now they swarmed forth from the recesses of her brain and swept all else aside. She became, instead of the silent, devout Sister Celeste, the piquant, vivacious, thrilling Celeste LaClede of ten years before. As she pushed back her scapulary, which she had drawn over her head and face, she seemed to thrust back with it the years that had dragged by since she first drew it on, and she felt herself again a girl of 20.

A picture of her old Southern home in New Orleans arose before her. She saw the house as it looked on such a night as this, with its large, square windows, its spacious verandas, covered with wisteria and honeysuckle; she wandered along the broad, winding paths, lined with roses and hyacinths and tulips, and arched with cool, shady arbors of wildgrape and Virginia creeper; and she sat under the magnolia trees and drank in the heavy, opiate fragrance of their lily-white blossoms. The warm zephyrs from the south played iwth the loosened tresses of her wavy, golden-brown hair, and pressed Nature's love-kiss upon her lips and cheeks. She heard the cardinals and the mocking-birds calling in the sensuous joy of existence to their mates and carolling the glad paean of life and liberty. She sat at her piano and played and sang the lullabies and melodies of that dear old Southland, while her white-haired father and mother listened, sitting hand in hand, and sighed in sympathy with the joy and the pain and the love and the sorrows of the songs.

The scene changed. She saw herself in Paris, working hard but joyously under the master Manon, and thrilling all who heard her with the exquisite sweetness and sympathy of her voice. She listened, blushing, to the impassioned plaudits of her teacher, but remained incredulous when he predicted that she would astound the world and arouse in her hearers such emotions of joy and of pain, of hope and of despair, as they had never felt before. She went on working until even Manon was content. And then came the great day.

Ah! how sweet it was in its beginning, how bitter in its ending! On that day, the day of her debut in opera, her emotional soul received its complement of love from Paul Mantell and welled up its flood of love in return. She could sing before, but now she could not help singing. When she, in the role of Carmen, and Campelli, the most famous of all Don Joses, sang together, the audience was surprised out of its accustomed insouciance, and when she sang alone she moved them to a frenzy of ravishment and proved the truth of Manon's prophecy. And then at the end, when the elation over the discovery of another great contralto, if not the greatest, was at its height, when she stood half hidden in flowers, bowing in response to the applause and the praise, her eyes fixed in love on the face of him for whom and to whom she had sung, when she felt that she could not endure the ecstacy longer, just then came the piercing cry of "fire"! Rigid with fright, she saw the audience transformed into a raging mob, whom fear, fury, dismay and death ruled. She beheld in terror the darting tongues of flame leap out and envelop the box where Paul stood imprisoned by the surging crowd. She stretched out her arms to him, and he, smiling, waved her kiss after kiss, and then—that was all.

She shuddered with horror at the recollections and covered her eyes with her hands. When she removed them she was calmer, and only the memory of her love stirred her. How deeply she loved him, and how happy they would have been in its consummation! And what a blessing, she thought, is a love like hers and Paul's! Equal, almost, to—nay it is, a vision of paradise. What would her life have been without it? True, it had been the cause of her renunciation of the world and her vow to devote her life to the services of the order of Carmelites; but in that service she had received her meed of religious fervor and of consolation. It had stripped her of fine raiment and clad her in the coarsest of wool; it had deprived her of tempting food and placed before her the meanest of fare; it had removed her from all worldly pleasures and intercourse; and it had imposed upon her eternal silence, save only in prayer; but it could not erase from her memory the record of her love; only it dimmed it by the love and service of Another. Rigid rule, unvarying practice, and devoted associates kept the one ever before her; a loving, constant heart treasured the other in secret.

Sister Celeste should have counted her beads and murmured the Te Deum; Celeste LaClede, leaning far out of the window that overlooked the garden of the nunnery, mused of her love. There was no bitterness in her disappointment, only thankfulness for the gift and the joy that it brought. Spring had come and rejuvenated nature was again pulsing with the warm blood of life. Trees and flowers were in bloom, and the sweet perfume of their blossoms was wafted to the sensitive nostrils of the lonely watcher. The birds nestling together in the apple and cherry trees chirped and twittered, impatient for the day, and their cries added one more element to her loneliness. Soon the sky became gray, and as the first rays of light tinged the edges of the clouds, the cocks began their lusty crowing. The red birds and robins and thrushes sent up their harmonious matins to the giver of life and love, and the world awoke. Then, high and shrill and clear arose the hyma of a lark as he soared from the couch of his bride and towered aloft to the gates of heaven. Celeste watched him as he arose, and just as his last notes were dying away in an ecstatic crescendo, his mate took up the song, and flew to join him in the sky. Enraptured by the parallel to her love, Celeste forgot all else and began to pour forth her soul in song. The contralto that had thrilled surfeited Paris, rose sweet and full and rich. Sweeter and fuller and richer it grew as the pent passions of love and music that surcharged her heart came swelling forth in accents of undying devotion.

I love thee, O beloved,
Wheresoe'er thou art;
I love thee, O beloved,
Tho' Death do us part.

I love thee, O beloved,
In Time's evil hour;
I love thee, O beloved,
Spite of Fates most dour.

I love thee, O beloved,
As long as Time last;
I love thee, O beloved,
Till Eternity's past.

Thus did Sister Celeste break the silence of years with a matin of pure passion. As she panted forth the flood of rapture on the calm morning air, she swayed and trembled with the intensity of her emotion. She seemed like one inspired, and as the last note rose in triumphant strength and purity, she dropped her head on her folded hands, and with her eyes still fixed on the heavens, sank slowly to her knees, as if in prayer.

The other nuns had assembled in obedience to the chapel chimes, and were just beginning their matins when Celeste began her song of devotion. When the passionate words, permeating every nook and corner of the old building in which the natural human voice was all but unknown, intruded upon them at their prayers, they were thrown into consternation. In the memory of the eldest of them, no such music had ever desecrated their holy of holies. They had not missed her before, but now many a covert glance was stolen to see whom of them was recreant. Was it Celeste? She so faithful, so pure, so devout! Surely not Celeste! Yes, Celeste, for her place was vacant. Many a mind wandered and many a matin was jumbled before they finished and were motioned to their rooms by Sister Magdalene.

When all again was quiet, Sister Magdalene knelt at the feet of the crucifix and prayed for strength and guidance. Rising, she passed slowly and sadly out of the chapel, down the long corridor, and paused before Sister Celeste's room. No sound came from within, and with a prayer on her lips, Sister Magdalene softly pushed open the door and entered. Sister Celeste still knelt at the window, her eyes still fixed as if on the beatific vision. Silently the Sister Superior advanced to her, and, with face averted to hide the tears, she placed one hand on the shoulder of the derelict, and with the other she pointed sternly towards the open door. Still Celeste did not move or change her gaze. The hand pressed more firmly on the shoulder, and the finger pointed more sternly towards the door. Yet the kneeling one moved not. Then Sister Magdalene turned quickly and looked into the upturned face. Without a sound she dropped on her knees beside her sister, and murmured "Requiescat in pace."

Count Notapenni—Last night I give ze leetle heart to Miss Rozley sat I vould like she should marry wiz me. Ascum—And did she give you any encouragement? Count Notapenni—I do not know. She simply say to me: "What kinds ze nerve food do you use?"—Philadelphia Press.

CHIMMIE FADDEN STORIES

"IT'S too bad," says Whiskers, "dat de good old fashion of New Year's calling is cut out. I remember when I was a young man dat we started out soon after noon on dat welcome day, and made our way up town by easy and joyous steps, till we had got as far as Washington Square, where de last of de houses we was to visit was open; and den made our way back to de Broadway stage, or a sleigh, if dere was snow on de ground, and went to a dance in de evening where every one we'd called on was and notting doing de next day."

"Why not?" asks Miss Fannie.

"Well, me dear," says Whiskers, winking at Mr. Paul, "in dose days if was not such a sin for a man to take enough champagne on New Year's day to keep him in good heart over his swear off. During de day we had egg nogg dat de fair hostesses made wit deir own hands, and in de evening we had odder tings too numerous to mention, or to remember de next day. Den it was easy to swear off. Now folks goes out to de country like we is, on New Year's, and plays golf, or hockey, or rides after anise-seed bags, or loses deir boodle at bridge, or talks politics, or does any old ting except have a good time in de good old way."

"De wold is too dry," says Mr. Paul.

"I regrets dat I did not live in de days when a man might have a toist, and not have to go behind de door to get a drink of water, even. In your days, sir, gents had a fair show to prove dat a man is known by de number of bottles he keeps under his belt, and none de woise for it. De agony dat society now suffers to keep its belt line down, and to keep in training to go tru a knot hole, if called upon for to do so, cause me such pain dat only a small bottle can give me a relief. Chames," he says, "fetch a bottle, and see can I induce me fadder-in-law to remember de good old days."

So I pulls de plug from a bot, and when Mr. Paul had said "How!" to Whiskers, he says, "But dere is hope dat we will drift back to de times when men will be men again, and not boys running after balls and strange gods and athletic records. I see a silver lining to de cloud, a rosy glow of dawn and a future not all dark and dry."

"What has lit up de future?" asks Whiskers, getting interested.

"War!" says Mr. Paul. "I was counting up dis morning how many wars we has signed for, and if I'm right dere will be enough of 'em to keep everybody busy fighting for de next hundred years, if we takes our wars in toin and not all togedder. We is dated for a warlet wid Colombia over Panama; we is sassing Tolkey, until de Sultan must give us a fight or see his name in de papers as a has-been. De war wit England is dated for any old time we has no odder engagement on hand, unless Canada gets gay and says we must fight her soon, or give up de belt. I hears from one of our fighting Admirals dat war wit Germany is already in storage, and can be took out and warmed up at short notice. We is fussing about Corea, waiting for Russia to get into de ring, and San Domingo is already making faces at us in a most disrespectful manner. Dese is a few, only, of me observations of de times, but dey is enough to show dat before I gets too old to carry a surgeon's case, I'll be made a Major-General by and wit de consent of de Senate—or without it. I am already studying medicine. What, sir, will happen when we is launched on de full flood of war; when we has set our hands to de plow, and our feet on de deck, and our eyes on de flag, and de tramp of armies drowns de roar of de elevated roads. Why, sir, de martial spirit will come back, man will not be denied his grog, and if he calls on a lady on New Year's, she will not ask him does he take one or two lumps of sugar in his tea. De Nation will abandon golf and go in for war; tennis racquets wil be laid aside, and de sword of our fadders will be put to de grindstone; de poets of passion will be toined to de wall, and de ballads of bullets will have its day again. De times is out of joint, and—Chames, dat was only a pint you brung. Fetch anodder."

Dat's like all swells. Dey tink dat if dey don't do a ting, dat it ainit done. Listen: Dat New Year's calling game dey was chinning about is de proper ting down our way, and when I sees him alone I tells Mr. Paul dat if he was looking for trouble of dat kind I'd show him a job lot.

I says dat to him, because Mr. Paul likes to chase down my way now and den. He and me modder is great pals, and him and Murphy! Say, dey is like old college chums. Mrs. Murphy says dat if Mr. Paul wasn't a swell, he could come down to de Bowery and take de leadership out of Charley Murphy's hand, even if Charley is a namesake of hers. It's too bad, she says, dat Mr. Paul was spoiled by being borh rich, for if he had to get rich no man she ever piped off could win more votes dan he.

So I say to him dat me and Duchess would be down to our home wit me modder and Murphy in de afternoon, for to help 'em give de glad hand to few frens, and dat if he liked to call, de old ladies wouldn't ask him wodder it would be one or two lumps.

Dat's what he done. Listen, he never makes de break of dressing any less sweller when he goes wit me to dat end of town, dan he does anywhere else. Dat always puts a mug on de bum wit my kind of folks. If dey knows you are a swell, and you don't dress swell when you goes amohg 'em for politics or fun, den dey cops you for a shine—not de real ting, but a butter-in who can't make good.

Well, me and Duchess gets a half day off and chases into town, and down to my home; and dere was Mrs. Murphy and de old lady, dressed up in deir Sunday best, and having a gossip and a can of beer wit some of deir frens; and de New Year's calling going on all over de tenement like Whiskers says it used to be in de diamond-back end of town, when his belt line was ten inches less dan it is now, and de stages run on Broadway. Duchess is a pretty good mixer, too, when she has a mind to be, and she sheds her outside duds and gets into de game with de old ladies, and jollies de callers like she was as good American as de best of 'em.

We soon had de pick of de bunch dere; Kel, de barkeep, and some of his Roseleaf frens, and some of deir lady frens, and a couple of de old ladies' chums, and tings was gaily-gaily, wit a string out of de front window to de poor of de place on de corner under de window, so dat de can could be lowered and filled wit no one leaving de room. Den Mr. Paul chases in. He couldn't been sweller dressed if I'd dressed him meself, instead of his Jap valet doing it. He gives me a hand shake and a howdy to de old ladies, gets a knock-down to de ones he didn't know; and when he had a mug in his hand, and had blew de frot off de top of it, he says: "What is New Year's," he says, "witout a song from me old fren Mrs. Murphy?"

Well, Murphy has a kink in her singing voice, and she give us "Here's a Healt to Martin Halligan's Aunt," in a style dat would put Patti on de blink if ever she heard it, wit Mr. Paul coming in strong an "Den fill up your glass and never let de toast pass; how do ye know but your neighbor's dry?"

Of course, I had to oblige wit "On de Banks of de Bronx," and Duchess wit a caffy shanty, and den two of de Roseleaf ladies dey sings, "Dere's No Harm in a Kiss—If It's Pinched." Kel was wotking de can at de end of de string, and we was all doing well wit de chorus, "Foist pinch a poise, den pinch a kiss, and you'll be it for Roseleaf bliss," when Mr. Paul's coachman butts in wit a basket as big as a barrel. He puts it in de middle of de floor, and chases himself out, and Mrs. Murphy says: "What's happened de man? We're not taking in washing on dis day."

Mr. Paul winks to me to open de basket, and it was filled with dude grub.

"I knowed you'd be too busy getting your swell gown ready yesterday for to do de family baking," says Mr. Paul to me modder, "so I has taken de liberty for to supply de larder."

He wouldn't let nobody but him and me and Duchess solve de grub; and when everybody had fed deir faces full he sings a song himself, and den he goes.

"Sure," says Mrs. Murphy, "it's a shame he don't break into politics; he'd make as fine a Congressman as Tim Sullivan himself," and de rest of de gang says: "De best ever!"

Dat evening after dinner I hears Whiskers ask Mr. Paul what he'd been in town for. "You must been de only souf in de city," says Whiskers.

"De only one," says Mr. Paul, passing me a wink.

"No one on de avenoo?"

"Desolted, sir."

"And de clubs?"

"Empty, sir."

"You must like a lonely life," grumbles Whiskers. "What did you go in for?"

"Just to see how Manhattan looks when dere is no one dere. It's a strange sight, indeed. Not much like dose good old times you was telling us of when folks still made New Year calls and took a drink when dey was toisty. What did you do on dose happy, happy days dat is past besides have a cup wit de ladies of de house?"

"Ah!" says Whiskers, "dose was simple days, and folks was not ashamed to have a good time. Why, Paul, in dose days, besides having a cup wit de ladies of de houses, dey gives us good tings to eat—and I could eat in dose days! We had music—singing, you understand—and de lads and lasses joined in de choruses. Dere is notting doing like dat in dese days. It's been as dull as ditchwater here all day, and I suppose everywhere else. New York desolted by de well-to-do; and de poor all talking anichy and strikes. De wold is gone to de bad!"

"It has, sir, it has," says Mr. Paul. "I suppose if de poor had a chance to be happy in de way you used to, dey wouldn't take it."

"Soitainly not!" says Whiskers. "De poor is filled wit unrest and bad whisky. I should tink dat in deir humble way dey would be content to copy our ways of enjoying life, and not always be trying to disrupt de anchor of society, and de bulwarks of republican institutions."

"Dey is uncor'gble," says Mr. Paul.

"Dey is!" says Whiskers. "Where is Fannie and Mrs. Harding? Can't we get up a game of bridge? I'm bored to deat."

Dat night Duchess says to me:

"Cheems," she says, "de rich folks of dis country has no enjoyment of deir life. Why is it? Dey is all of de unrest. Why don't dey copy de poor, if dey has no odder way of having a good time? Dey won't have a republic in dis country much longer, if de rich keeps on trying to be like de king countries of Europe and London."

"On your way, woman!" I says. "What'ell?" I says.

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