

# THE MALIBUSTO

## FIRST OF A SERIES OF ADVENTURES INTO HIGH SOCIETY LIFE, NARRATED BY PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE, PHYSICAL CULTURIST

BY SEWELL FORD

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HIM? Why, that's Rolly. Sure thing! No, I ain't looking for tips in the stock-market, I'm going to go straight to the old man and get 'em. Do I know the old man? Didn't I put him in shape to stand that gruelin' he got when U. P. was bumpin' the bumps? That's how it comes that Rolly's a student of mine.

Says the old man to me: "Rolly's a good boy—er he's a real boy. He's had enough on his mind in about two months, for I've fixed up a deal to marry him off; and after that I'm going to take him into the firm. He don't take very kindly to either proposition, so in the meantime, Shorty, I'm going to have him to you. He's just got back from broad with some fool notion or other in his head. I haven't had time to find out just what that is, but it's something you can knock out, hammer away."

So Rolly and me has been having two-hour sessions every day—gloves, mat, medicine ball, and all that—and for a youngster that began with a show of breath after the second round, he's turned out well. But say, there's a few things that's clean out of my line. Playin' sharp-shin, for instance, that's a wicked little blood-letter that ever came off the knife-rack. Half an inch of the blade sticks through the panel. Rolly, he looks at it, says: "That's a minute, and says: "Sillette, eh? Made in Firenze—that's Florence, Italy. Shorty, have you any friends from around that are in the habit of leaving their cutlery in place of visiting-cards?"

"I know folks as far west as Hoboken. If that's what you mean," says I, "but none of 'em are in the habit of leaving their cutlery in place of visiting-cards. When I picks up the handkerchief and takes a look at it."

"Hello!" says I. "There's writin' on this, writin' done in red ink."

"Read it," says Rolly. "I can't read it. I could play it better on a fute," says I. "You try."

He didn't have to try over his minute he'd done it. He says: "The minute he got loose like he'd stopped a body wallop with his short ribs. It's a message for me," he says.

"New kind of wireless from your wash-lin'," says I. "Shorty," says he, "lettin' my vaudeville lead go over his shoulder, 'come inside and shut the door. Then when he'd looked over his shoulder, he says: 'Did you ever hear of Sicily?'"

"Is it a breakfast food or a new kind of cigarette?" says I. "It's an island," says he, "off the toe of Italy. I was there last Summer. In Sicily I met a girl, a native, who—well she saved my life. She was in the Italian quarter, and she needs help. She's in trouble, serious trouble. I'm going out to look for her."

"It's quite likely," says he, "kittin' off his 'gym' shoes and reachin' for his shirt."

"Goin' alone?" says I. "Unless you're willin' to go along," says Rolly.

"Then that's a Hey Rube for me," says I. In ten minutes by the watch we were dressed and rattlin' down Broadway in one of those electric hansom cabs with the three ranks of seats.

"I know a Dago roundsman," says I. "No police in this," says he. "I'm going to call on the Italian Consul. He's a friend of mine. He'll get me a passport."

Maybe we broke the speed record some, but we were just in time to catch Mr. Consul on the fly, for he was about punctured by the time we got to his door when we blew in. He wore a rich set of Peter Cooper whiskers; but barring them he was a well-finished old gent. When Rolly let on who he was, he was as good as a low-down address of welcome all by itself, and the way he showed out leather chairs you'd thought he was makin' a present of 'em to us.

"It looks like the Malibustos," says Rolly. "They have a kind of headquarters over a basement restaurant. Perhaps they've been there, 'ere. We'll look at the place, anyway."

"A lot of good it did us, too! The spaghetti works was in full blast, with a gang of husky loafers goin' in and out, smokin' cheroots half as long as your arm, and acting as if the referee had just declared a draw. The opening for a couple of half-cent cigars was as hot as a red-hot iron. Not having their gips and passwords, we didn't feel as though we could make good in their lodge."

"I could rot in a game and then we could rot 'em," says I. "That wouldn't do," says Rolly. "Strategy is what we need here."

"I'm just out of the cards here," says Rolly. "Perhaps there's a back door," says I. "So we moans around the block huntin' for an alley. But that ain't the way they build down in Maliberry Bend. They checks their old rookeries slam up against one another, to keep 'em from fallin' over. Generally, though, there's some sort of a garlie line through the middle of the block; but you need a balloon to find it."



died pickaxe was the best I could do. We made the board-jumper fast inside and down I went. Then there was acrobatics; swingin' across to that three-inch window ledge, balancin' with one foot on nothing, and single-hand work with the pick-ax. Lucky that shutter-bar was half rusted away. She came open with a bang when she did come, and it nearly sent me down among the barrels. My eyelashes held, though, and there I was up against a dark window.

"It didn't come, instead there was let loose a Dago remark that wasn't any use at all to me. It sounded mighty business-like; though for all that the Dago didn't seem to be in a hurry. I wasn't scared a little bit. It wasn't no man's voice. I was sure of that."

"Guess your lady friend's here," I sniggle out to Rolly.

"Have you not?" says he. "No," says I. "She's got me."

"No sooner does she hear him than she lets go of me, shoves her head out of the window and calls up to him. Rolly says something back, and for the next two minutes they swaps Dago talk to beat the cars; so I knew we'd found the right girl."

"How shall I pass her up?" says I. "Just then she made a spring for that rope ladder of ours and overhauled us like a trapeze star. At me, thinkin' I was a Dago, she looked at me with a look that said she was a Dago, too. It wasn't no time for reunions at that stage of the game, nor for hard-luck stories either. None of us was plinn' to hold any schemes with the Malibustos. We quit the chowder club on the jump, streaked up the hill into Mott-st, and piled into one of those fuzzy two-wheeled cabs that keep hooked up for wedding and funerals."

"Where to?" says the bone-thumper. "Head her for Buffalo and let loose the 'Herald Express,'" says I; "but hunt for asphalt."

"That fetched us up to Second-ave, but there wasn't any conveyance done until we'd put 50 blocks behind us. Then I came to my senses and had my appetite whetted by a meal of the Malibustos. From the way he gave orders to steer for a food refinery she must have allowed that she had skipped a few. I kept hooked up for wedding and funerals."

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"Where'd she get 'em?" says I. "Rolly, he says as how them was the kind of legs she wears all the time she was to home. They were the kind he'd first seen her in, and he reckoned that she'd left in a hurry."

"I'll see about gettin' something more suitable for 'em," says I; "and orders up if kinds of skeezedsky, to be served in relay."

Miss Carrie Meyer, or whatever her name was, she had mislaid her suitcase, and while she was pitchin' into what passed for grub on Second-ave, she says Rolly the story of her life—least-ways, that's what it sounded like.

As I gets it from him afterwards it was like this: She'd had some kind of a run-in with the old folks, they wantin' her to marry a feller that owned a sulphur mine and was rich enough to pension off the rest of the family. But Miss Caramel wouldn't have it, for some reason or other that she didn't state; and when things got too hot for her she slid out the back door, booted it to town, takes out a yellow ticket on a few spars sparks, and buys a steerage berth for New York.

Well, she hadn't more'n got past Sandy Hook before a Malibusto runner spotted her. So she hid the advance man of another ship, and she had her real-money necklace and some of the other fancy furniture she spotted, and they invited her home to tea.



THE COUNTESS TELLS ROLLY THE STORY OF HER LIFE

bein' able to break into the Fifth-ave. joint where Rolly's old man lives, she had trailed Rolly to the studio and hung the message up on my door.

"So far it's as good as playin' leading heavy in 'The Shadows of a Great City,'" says I; "but what's down for the next act? Where does she want to go?"

"Say, you'd thought Rolly'd been nipped with the goods on. He goes strawb'ry color back to his ears. Next he takes a look across the street where she sits quiet and easy and as much to home as Lady Graftwad on the back seat of the tonneau. She was takin' notice of him too, kind of runnin' over his points case I was essential 'rich she'd wot at a raffle and was glad to get. But Rolly, he braced up and looks me straight in the eye."

"None at all, Shorty," says he. "I just asked if they would have room for three, and they said they would. I was just askin' if they would be nervous, does he? You know about the Van Urbans, don't you? They weigh in at something like unpeeped millions and are a good fifth on Mrs. Astor's list."

"Straight goods now," says I; "you don't reckon to spring this aggregation on the diamond horsehoe, do you?"

"We must put in the time somehow," says I. "I thought it might be all a grand josh until I'd watched some of his moves. First we hunt up one of those swell shops where I just says 'Robes' on a brass plate outside. Rolly stays in there four minutes and comes out with a piece of dry-goods that they must have stood him up a hundred for; kind of a black, ulster length, all rusty black silk outside and white lined. Miss Creamdrops, she puts it on with no more fuss than as if she'd been brought up on such things and had ordered this one a month ahead."

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About that time I got wise to the fact that Rolly and the girl were ringin' me into their talk, and I was gettin' curious. I wait here until I telephone some one, says Rolly.

"De-lighted!" says I. "Better ring up changed until he is now fairly deservin' of the title given him last year as 'the most distinguished private citizen in the world.'"

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"I had been having Mulberry Bend raised with a fine-tooth comb without findin' a trace of her, says she, before I saw her standin' up here in this box I knew her at a glance. Then he asked Miss Caramel if he hadn't called the trick, and she said he had."

"Sure," says she, "or something that means 'thank you' comes over after my best feller. I'm going to marry him, and with that she slips an arm around Rolly's neck, as cool as though they'd been a chum for years. Her conversation with the dock lanterns turned off."

Mr. Consul's face goes as red as a fireman's shirt. Mama Van Urban has been hangin' round ever since, and stares at Miss Padova like she was tryin' to see through her into the last of next week. Papa Van Urban side-steps as if he saw trouble comin' that way. She Van Urban was just breathin' hard and putting a \$40 ivory fan out of business between her fingers. When I see that I remember that the old gent had told me about Rolly's being booked to be married.

"Great ooper cuts" says I to myself. "That's the way."

Then I looks at Rolly. He hadn't budged or turned a hair. He just stands there, with the Sicily lady patting him on the shoulder.

"Lowered as expected," says he, "the honor is all mine." And say, you'd have thought he meant every word of it.

"A-hem!" says the consul, steadyin' himself with a grip on the curtains. "Perhaps it would be best to make some explanation."

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"Shuckin' that black cloak, she jumps up, drops one hand on her hip, holds the other to her lips, and peels off a kind of waltz you'd call that shakes the sky-balls between her ears and her shoulders. Little trifling pass of hers had 'em stung to a whisper. It cut through all that patter and screech like Trinity chimes. It was a old-time waltz, and it was as clear as the ring of silver sleigh-bells on a frosty night."

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## The World's Foremost Private Citizen

How Grover Cleveland Is Honored on His Birthday at His Own Home.

PRINCETON, N. J., March 14.—(Special Correspondence of The Sunday Oregonian.)—Aside from football games and other athletic contests, there is only one day in the year when this sleepy old town rouses from its lethargy and lets itself loose. That is the 18th of March, the birthday of Princeton's most distinguished resident, Mr. Grover Cleveland. On that day, every body who is anybody in the house which is called the big white mansion to pay his respects to the country's foremost messenger boys delivering telegrams addressed to the ex-President, and a crowd of college boys marches over to the front lawn of the Cleveland house singing songs and giving the Princeton yell in his honor.

The noteworthy thing about this demonstration of respect in honor of the only living ex-President is that it grows in volume with every recurring year. Every year the number of visitors, telegrams and letters grow larger, and this year, when Mr. Cleveland will be 71 years old, it is expected that the observance of the day will be more general than ever. The Sage of Princeton, who has come to be called, therefore presents the striking figure of an ex-President who, instead of dropping into comparative obscurity after leaving office, has steadily bulked larger and larger in the public eye. At the present time there is probably no man in the country whose opinions are so frequently sought by the newspapers or who receives so many requests for the endorsement of all sorts of reforms and faddist movements as not even Grover.

There have been some ex-Presidents who have been followed into retirement by the plaudits of the country and who were looked up to even more after leaving office than before. Washington, Jefferson, John Quincy Adams and Grant were examples in point. There have been others, like Tyler, Fillmore and Hayes, who dropped into comparative obscurity as soon as they left the White House. Cleveland's case is unique, in that when he quitted the Chief Magistracy after having been twice elected and a third time receiving a majority of the popular vote he was one of the best-hated men in the country. His own party had practically discovered him; he had been the target of violent personal abuse, and he was hailed as a traitor to the cause of 1863, just as a great many people are holding President Roosevelt responsible for the panic of 1907. Since that time, however, the public attitude toward Mr. Cleveland has



1896.—By John T. McCutcheon.

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