At Home With the Dillons by Sewell Ford.

BEING PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE'S ACCOUNT OF A NOTED SOCIAL EVENT ON TENTH AVENUE.

I WAS expectin' to put in a couple of days doin' the sad and lonely. Sadie having made a date to run out to Rockywold for the week end; but Friday night when I'm let off at the seventh floor of the Ferzazzer—and say, no matter how many flights up home is, there's no place like it—who should I see but Sadie, just takin' off her hat. Across by the window is one of the chambermaids, leanin' up against the casing and sniffin' into the expensive draperies.

"Well, well!" says I. "Is this a rehearsal for a Hank Ibsen sprinkler scene, or is it a case of missin' jewels?"

"It's nothing of the sort, Shorty," says Sadie, giving me the shut-off signal. Then she turns to the girl with a "There, there, Nora! Everything will be all right. And I will be around Sunday afternoon. Run along now, and don't worry." With that she leads Nora out to the door and sends her away with a shoulder pat.

"Who's been getting friendly with the help now, eh, Sadie?" says I. "And what's the woe about?"

Course, she begins at the wrong end, and throws in a lot of details that only lumbers up the record; but after she's been talkin' for half an hour—and Sadie can separate herself from a lot of language in that time—I gets a good workin' outline of this domestic tragedy that has left damp spots on our window curtains.

It ain't near so harrowin', though, as you might suspect. Seems that Nora has the weepin' habit. That's how Sadie come to remember havin' seen her before. Also it accounts for Nora's shiftin' so often. Folks like Mrs. Purdy Pell and the Twombley-Cranes can't keep a girl around that's liable to weep into the soup or on the card tray. If it wa'n't for that, Nora'd been all right; for she's a neat-lookin' girl, handy and willin'—one of the slim, rosy-cheeked, black-haired, North of Ireland kind, that can get big wages, when they have the sense, which ain't often.

Well, she'd changed around until she lands here in the fresh linen department, workin' reg'lar 12-hour shifts, one afternoon off a week, and a four-by-six room up under the copper roof, with all the chance in the world to weep and no one to pay any attention to her, until Sadie catches her at it. Trust Sadie!

When she finds Nora leakin' her troubles out over an armful of clean towels, she drags her in here and asks for the awful facts. Then comes the fam'ly history of the Dillons, beginnin' on the old rent at Ballyshannon and endin' in a five-room flat on Double Fifth avenue. When she comes to mentionin' Larry Dillon, I pricks up my ears.

"What! Not the old flannel mouth that's chopped tickets at the Thirty-third-street station ever since the L was built?" says I.

"He's been discharged," says Sadie. "Did you know him?"

Did I know Larry? Could anyone live in this burg as long as I have without gettin' acquainted with that Old Country face, or learnin' by heart his "Ha-a-a-ar-lem thr-r-rain! Ha-a-a-ar-lem"? There's other old timers that has the brogue, but never a one could touch Larry. A purple faced, grumpy old pirate, with a disposition as cheerful as a man waitin' his turn at the dentist's, and a heart as big as a ham, he couldn't speak a civil word if he tried; but he was always ready to hand over half his lunch to any whimperin' newsy that come along, and he's lent out more nickels than he'll ever see again.

But about the other Dillons, I got my first news from Sadie. There was four of 'em, besides Nora. One was Tom, who had a fine steady job, drivin' a coal cart for the Consolidated. A credit to the family, Tom was; havin' a wife and six kids of his own, besides votin' the straight Tammany ticket since he was 19. Next there was Maggie, whose man was on the stage—shiftin' scenery. Then there was Kate, the lady sales person, who lived with the old folks. And last there was Aloysius, the stray; and wherever he was, heaven help him! for he was no use whatever.

"I take it that 'Loyshy's the brunette Southdown of the Dillon flock," says I. "What particular brand of cussedness does he made a specialty of?"

Sadie says that Nora hadn't gone much into particulars, except that when last heard of he'd joined the Salvationists, which had left old Larry frothin' at the mouth. He'd threatened to break Aloysius into two pieces on sight, and he'd put the ban on speakin' his name around the house.

"Followin' the tambourine!" says I. "That's a a queer stunt for a Dillon. The weeps was for him, then?"

They wa'n't. 'Loyshy's disappearin' act had been done two or three years back. The tears was all on account of the fortieth weddin' anniversary of the Dillons, fallin' as it did just a week after Larry had the spell of rheumatism which got him laid off for good. It's a nice little way the Inter-Met. people has of rewardin' the old vets. An inspector finds Larry with his hand tied to the chopper handle, takes a look at his cramped-up fingers, puts down his number, and next pay day he gets the sack.

"So you've found another candidate for your private pension list, have you, Sadie?" says I.

But that's another wrong guess. The Dillons ain't takin' charity, not from anyone. It's the Dillon sisters to the rescue. They rustles around until they finds Larry a job as night watch, in where it's warm. Then they all chips in for the new Tenth-avenue flat. Maggie brings her man and the two kids, the lady Kate sends around her trunks with the furniture, and Nora promises to give up half of her twenty to keep things going.

And then the Bradys, who lives opposite, has to spring their blow out. They'd been married 40 years, too; but just because one of their boys was in the fire department, and Lizzie Brady was workin' in a Sixth-avenue hair dressin' parlor, they'd no call to flash such a bluff—frosted cake from the baker, with the date done in pink candy, candles burnin' on the mantelpiece, a whole case of St. Louis on the front fire escape, and the district boss drivin' around in one of Connelly's funeral hacks. Who was the Bradys, that they should have weddin' celebrations when the Dillons had none?

Kate, the lady sales person, handed out that conundrum. She supplies the answer, too. She allows that what a Brady can make a try at, a Dillon can do like it ought to be done. So they've no sooner had the gas and water turned on at the new flat than she draws up plans for a weddin' anniversary that'll make the Brady performance look like a pan of beans beside a standing rib roast.

She knows what's what, the lady Kate does. She's been to the real things, and they calls 'em "at homes" in Harlem. The Dillons will be at home Sunday, the 19th, from half after 4 until 8, and the Bradys can wag their tongues off, for all she cares. It'll be in honor of the fortieth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Dillon, and all the family connections, and all friends of the same, is to have a bid.

"Well, that's the limit!" says I. "Did you tell the girl they'd better be layin' in groceries, instead of givin' an imitation tea?"

"Certainly not!" says Sadie. "Why shouldn't they enjoy themselves in their own way?"

"Eh?" says I. "Oh, I take it all back. But what was the eye swabbin' for, then?"

By degrees I gets the enacting clause. The arrangements for the party was goin' on lovely—Larry was havin' the buttons sewed onto the long-tailed coat he was married in, the scene shifter had got the loan of some stage props to decorate the front room, there was to be ice cream and fancy cakes and ladies' punch, Father Kelley had promised to drop in, and all was runnin' smooth—when Mother Dillon breaks loose.

And what do you guess is the matter wiht her? She wants her 'Loyshy. If there was to be any fam'ly convention and weddin' celebration, why couldn't she have her little Aloysius to it? She didn't care a split spud how he'd behaved, or if him and his father had had words, he was her youngest b'y, and she thought more of him than all the rest put together, and she wouldn't have a hand in any doin's that 'Loyshy was barred from comin' to.

As Nora puts it, "When the old lady speaks her mind, you got to listen or go mad from her." She don't talk of anything else, and when she ain't talkin' she's cryin' her eyes out. Old Larry swore himself out of breath, the lady Kate argued, and Maggie had done her best; but there was nothin' doin'. They'd got to find Aloysius and ask him to the party, or call it off.

But findin' 'Loyshy wa'n't any cinch. He'd left the army long ago. He wa'n't in any of the 15-cent lodgin'-houses. The police didn't have any record of him. He didn't figure in the hospital lists. The nearest anyone came to locatin' him was a handbook man the scene shifter knew, who said he'd heard of 'Loyshy hangin' around the Gravesend track Summer before last; but there was no use lookin' for him there at this time of year. It wa'p't until they'd promised to advertise for Aloysius in the papers that Mother Dillon quit takin' on and agreed to wear the green silk she'd had made for Nora's christenin'.

"Yes, and what then?" says I.

"Why," says Sadie, "Nora's afraid that if Aloysius doesn't turn up, her mother will spoil the party with another crying spell; and she knows if he does her father will throw him out."

"She has a happy way of lookin' at things," says I. "Was it for this you cut out going to Rockywold?"

"Of course," says Sadie. "I am to pour tea at the Dillons' on Sunday afternoon. You are to come at five, and bring Pinckney."

"Ah, pickles, Sadie!" says I. "This is—"

"Please, Shorty!" says she. "I've told Nora you would.

"I'll put it up to Pinckney," says I, "and if he's chump enough to let himself loose in Tenth-avenue society, just to help the Dillons put it over the Bradys, I expect I'll be a mark, too. But it's a dippy move."

Course I mistrusted how Pinckney would take it. He thinks he's got me on the rollers, and proceeds to shove. He hasn't heard more'n half the tale before he begins handin' me the josh about it's bein' my duty to spread sunshine wherever I can.

"It's calcium the Dillons want," says I. "But I hadn't got to tellin' you about Aloysius."

"What's that?" says he. "Aloysius Dillon, did you say?"

"He's the one that's playin' the part of the missing prod.," says I.

"What is he like?" says Pinckney, gettin' interested.

"Accordin' to descriptions," says I, "he's a useless little runt, about four feet nothin' high and as wide as a match, with the temper of a striped hornet and the instincts of a yellow kyoodle. But he's his mother's pet, just the same, and if he ain't found she threatens to throw fits. Don't happen to know him, do you?"

"Why," says Pinckney, "I'm not sure but I do."

It looks like a jolly; but then again, you never can tell about Pinckney. He mixes around in so many sets that he's like to know most anybody.

"Well," says I, "if you run across Aloysius at the club, tell him what's on for Sunday afternoon."

"I will," says Pinckney, lettin' out a chuckle and climbin' into his cab.

I was hoping that maybe Sadie would renege before the time come; but right after dinner Sunday she makes up in her second best afternoon regalia, calls a hansome, and starts for Tenth avenue, leavin' instructions how I was to show up in about an hour with Pinckney, and not to forget about handin' out our cards just as if this was a swell affair. I finds Pinckney got up in his frock coat and primrose pants, and lookin' mighty pleased about something or other.

"Huh!" says I. "You seem to take this as a reg-lar cut-up act. I call it blamed nonsense, encouragin' folks like the Dillons to—"

But there ain't any use arguin' with Pinckney when he's feelin' that way. He only grins and looks mysterious. We don't have to hunt for the number of the Dillons' flat house, for there's a gang of kids on the front steps and more out in the street gawpin' up at the lighted windows. We makes a dive through them and tackles the four flights, passin' inspection of the tenants on the way up, every door bein' open.

"Who's comin' now?" sings out a woman from the second floor back.

"Only a couple of Willies from the stores," says a gent in his shirt sleeves, givin' us the stare.

From other remarks we heard passed, it was clear the Dillons had been tootin' this party as somethin' fine and classy, and that they wa'n't making good. The signs of frost grows plainer as we gets nearer the scene of the festivities. All the Dillon family was there, right enough, from the youngest kid up. Old Larry has had his face scraped till it shines like a copper stewpan, and him and Mother Dillon is standin' under a green paper bell hung from a hook in the ceiling. I could spot Tom, the coal cart driver, by the ring of durt under his eyelashes; and there was no mistakin' lady Kate, the sales person, with the double row of coronet hair rolls pinned to the top of her head. Over in the corner, too, was Sadie, talkin' to Father Kelley. But there wa'n't any great signs of joy.

The whole party sizes up me and Pinckney as if they was disappointed. I can't say what they was lookin' for from us; but whatever it was, we didn't seem to fill the bill. And just when the gloom is settlin' down thickest, Mother Dillon begins to sniffle.

"Now, mother," says Nora, soothin' like, "remember there's company."

"Ah, bad scran to the lot of yez!" says the old lady. "Where's my Aloysius? Where is he, will ye tell me that?"

"Divvle take such a woman!" says old Larry.

"Tut, tut!" says Father Kelley.

"Will you look at the Bradys now!" whispers Maggie, hoarselike.

It wa'n't easy guessin' which windows in the block was theirs, for every ledge has a pillow on it, and a couple of pairs of elbows on every pillow; but I took it that the Bradys was where they was grinnin' widest. You could tell, though, that the merry laugh was bein' passed up and down, and it was on the Dillons.

And then, as I was tryin' to give Sadie the getaway sign, we hears a deep honk outside, and I sees the folks across the way stretchin' their necks out. In a minute there's a scamperin' in the halls like a stampede at a synagogue, and we hears the "Ah-h-ha!" comin' up from below. We all makes a rush for the front and rubbers out to see what's happenin'. By climbin' on a chair and peekin' over the top of the lady Kate's hair puffs, I catches a glimpse of a big yellow and black-bodied car, with a footman in a bearskin coat holdin' open the door.

"O-o-o-oh! look what's here!" squeals eight little Dillons in chorus.

You couldn't blame 'em, either, for the hat that was bein' squeezed out through the door of the car was one of these Broadway thrillers, four feet across, and covered with as many green ostrich feathers as you could carry in a clothes basket. What was under the feather lid we couldn't see. Followin' it out of the machine comes somethin' cute in a butter-colored overcoat and a brown derby. In a minute more we gets the report that the procession is headed up the stairs, and by the time we've grouped ourselves around the room with our mouths open, in they floats.

In the lead, wearin' the oleo coat with yellow silk facin's, was a squizzled up little squirt with rat eyes and a mean little face about as thick as a slice of toast, and the same color. His clothes, though, is a pome in browns and yellows, from the champagne tinted No. 3 shoes to the tobacco colored No. 5 hat leavin' out the necktie, which was a shade somewhere between a blue store front and a bottle of purple ink.

Even if I hadn't seen the face, I could have guessed who it was, just by the get-up. Course, there's been a good many noisy dressers floatin' around the grill-room district this Winter, but there always has to be one real scream in every crowd; and this was it.

"If it ain't Shrimp!" says I.

"Hello, Shorty," says he, in that little squeak of his.

And at that some one swoops past me. There's a flappin' of green silk skirt, and Mother Dillon has given him the high tackle.

"Aloysius! My little 'Loyshy!" she squeals.

And say, you could have pushed me over with one finger. Here I'd been hearin' for the last two seasons about this jock that had come up from stable helper in a night, and how he'd been winning on nine out of every ten mounts, and how all the big racing men was overbiddin' each other to get him signed for their stables. Some of Pinckney's sportin' friends had towed Shrimp into the studio once or twice, and besides that I'd read in the papers all about his giddy wardrobe and his big Swede valet, and the English chorus girl that had married him. But in all this talk of Sadie's about the Dillon fam'ly, I'd never so much as guessed that Aloysius, the stray, was one and the same as Shrimp Dillon.

Here he was, though, in the Dillon flat, with Mother Dillon almost knockin' his breath out pattin' him on the back, and all the little Dillons jumpin' around and yellin', "Uncle 'Loyshy, Uncle 'Loyshy!" and Kate and Maggie and Nora waitin' their turns; and the rest of us, includin' old Larry and me and Sadie, lookin' foolish. The only one that acts like he wa'n't surprised is Pinckney.

Well, as soon as Shrimp can wiggle himself clear, and shake the little Dillons off his legs, he hauls Mrs. Shrimp to the front and does the honors. And say, they makes a pair that would draw a crowd anywhere! You know the style of chorus ladies the Lieblers bring over—the lengthy, high-chested, golden-haired kind? Well, she's one of the dizziest that ever stood up to make a background for the pony ballet. And she has on a costume—well, it goes with the hat, which is puttin' it strong.

If the sight of her and the circus-colored car wa'n't enough to stun the neighbors and send the Bradys under the bed, they had only to wait till the Swede valet and the footman began luggin' up the sheaf of two-dollar roses and the basket of champagne.

I was watchin' old Larry to see how he was takin' it. First he looks Shrimp up and down, from the brown hat to the yellow shoes, and then he gazes at Mrs. Shrimp. Then his stiff lower jaw begins saggin' down, and his knobby old fingers unloosens from the grip they'd got into at first sight of 'Loyshy. It's plain that he was some in doubt about that chuckin' out program he'd had all framed up. What Larry had been expectin', should the boy turn up at all, was something that looked like it had been picked out of the bread line. And here was a specimen of free spender that had "Keep the change!" pasted all over him. Then, before he has it half figured out, they're lined up in front of each other. But old Larry ain't one to do the sidestep.

"Aloysius," says he, scowlin' down at him, "where do ye be afther gettin' ut?"

"Out of the ponies, old stuff. Where else?" says Shrimp.

"Bettin'?" says Larry.

"Bettin' nothin'!" says Shrimp. "Mud ridin'."

"Allow me," says Pinckney, pushin' in, "to introduce to you all, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Shrimp Dillon, one of the best-paid jockeys in America."

"And what might they be payin' the likes of him for bein' a jockey?" says old Larry.

"Why," says Pinckney, "it was something like twenty thousand this season, wasn't it, Shrimp?"

"Countin' bonuses and all," says Shrimp, "it was nearer thirty-two."

"Thirty-two thou—" But Larry's mouth is open so wide he can't get the rest out. He just catches his breath, and then, "'Loyshy, me lad, give us your hand on it."

"Ahem!" says Father Kelley, pickin' up his hat, "this seems to be a case where the prodigal has returned—and brought his veal with him."

"That's a thrue word," says Larry. "'Tis a proud day for the Dillons."

Did they put it over the Bradys? Well, say! All the Bradys has to do now, to remember who the Dillons are, is to look across the way and see the two geranium plants growin' out of solid silver pots. Course, they wa'n't meant for flower pots. They're champagne coolers; but Mother Dillon don't know the difference, so what's the odds. Anyway, they're the only pair west of Sixth avenue.

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THE HAT WAS ONE OF THEM BROADWAY THRILLERS

"They're Only a Gang of Willies," Says the Gent.

MR. AND MRS. DILLON.

DOINGS OF SOME WOMEN IN PUBLIC EYE

Matrimonial Ambition of Princess Patricia—Mme. Schumann-Heink's European Trip.

MME. SCHUMANN-HEINK, SOME OF HER FAMILY AND HER INDIAN PROTEGE

DUCHESS DE ROHAN

PATRICIA OF CONNAUGHT

MRS. W. F. TUCKER

NEW YORK, Jan. 2.—(Special.)—The following paragraphs deal with a few women who are frequently in the public eye: One is the Princess Patricia, who wants to marry the brother of the Duke of Abruzzi, and who may be allowed to do so since the Abruzzi-Elkins fiasco. At least, so rumor has it in England. King Edward dearly loves his American cousins, but he is not the less an aristocrat and a great stickler for all the prerogatives of royalty. For a member of a royal family to ally himself with any one of less "noble" birth is a crime against the doctrine of "divine right." What will become of "divine rights" anyway if the descendants of coal barons are to inherit them? So it is said that King Edward conditioned the marriage of Princess Pat on the breaking off of the Abruzzi-Elkins engagement—all of which is to be taken with the usual grain of allowance for court gossip.

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The arrest of Colonel William F. Tucker, of the Army, while on his way to St. Louis recently, is the culmination of a domestic row of more than a year's standing between the Army officer and his wife. Mrs. Tucker is the daughter of the late John A. Logan, and her mother has taken a lively interest in stirring up the trouble between her son-in-law and wife. Mrs. Tucker's accusations against the Colonel are founded on jealousy of several other women. They were examined by the War Department once and the Colonel exonerated.

* * *

Mme. Schumann-Heink is in Europe, to be gone a year. It will be her first extended absence from this country since she came here a stranger and won her way into the hearts of the music-lovers of New York. Her first triumphs were in opera, but lately she has confined her activity to concert singing almost entirely.

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The Duchess de Rohan, a member of one of the proudest families in Europe, has put out a new volume of poetry. As a patron of letters and of struggling talent, the Duchess is immensely popular. Hers is one of the salons in Paris, once more numerous, where the chances of candidates for the academy are discussed, and where, perhaps, campaigns are organized to elect an immortal. The Duchess is akin to many families of the old French aristocracy. Her daughter is Princess Murat, so she is allied to the Bonapartist nobility, too. Both the Duchess and Princess Murat speak English perfectly. Americans occasionally find their way to her salon, but they must be distinguished in the realm of literature in some way.

Chinese Nation of Gamblers

New York Christian Advocate.

ONE nation on the "footstool" has long, long ago arrived at a point where gambling has become a National trait. Who can say that fact may not be one of the reasons for its being where it is today? There isn't anything, however trivial, that the Chinese won't take chances on. The itinerant tradesman, hucksters and others at the roadside have their bowls into which are thrown dice. Gambling-houses are everywhere, and, though nominally under the ban, continue to do a flourishing business by bribing the local officers. One can't expect anything better from the latter when they have been brought up to the same thing and always keep in practice themselves. Even the women in their own private apartments while away the hours with cards and dominoes. Gossip and gaming are about the only employments as well as recreation for the women of the upper and middle classes. Coolies between jobs spend most of their time and hard-earned cash gambling.

There are two things a Chinese coolie is very proficient at, sleeping and gaming. One writer on Chinese characteristics, to illustrate the former, pictures a Chinese asleep on a wheelbarrow with his head hanging down, backward, the hot sun pouring down his bare head and face, mouth wide open and a fly busily engaged buzzing around inside, to all of which he is soporifically oblivious.

The chairbearers and retinue of an official, as soon as the master enters the house, produce their cards and dice and squat down to a game. A very common game of luck played at Canton is fanta, though not played with cards, but with cash. "Quadrating cash" is what the name means. One man, who conducts the game, takes a double handful of cash and, putting it on a table, covers it with a bowl. Those who are in the game give their guess as to how many cash will be left after that pile is divided by four. The guess and stake of each player are carefully recorded and the banker proceeds to pick out the cash four by four. A lucky guess may be that one, two, three or none will be left over.

The Spaniards have their bull-fights, the Americans their pugilistic encounters, but the contest dear to a Chinaman's heart is a cricket fight. Two game crickets are placed in a large bowl, and when irritated with straws will go at each other with a spirit and vim one would hardly think possible. They keep at it until there is a loss of life or limb. Quails are sometimes pitted against each other, also. They are placed on a railed table and some grain sprinkled on top. When one of them begins to pick up the grain it is the red flag to the other, and the combat begins. Hundreds of dollars are lost and won on these contests.

On things of deeper import do the Chinese also gamble, even on life itself, taking wonderfully long chances. This may arise in part from the fact that they are more or less fatalistic in belief and that the great majority of them certainly have but little in their lives to make life attractive.

I was called early one morning, during my life in Pekin, to patch up some fellows said to have been wounded. It was a veritable labyrinth through which I was led to where my gambler patients were. A large revolver or two and a sword were much in evidence. There had evidently been a great game that night with a general mixup. Anyway, one of my patients was minus a finger, the stump of which I was called upon to treat and dress. As a last stake this man had put up a finger, and the winner, like Shylock of old, had demanded his flesh, and what is more, had taken it. It seems that this is the supreme stake put up in desperation as a last hope that luck would change and the "pot" would come his way. It is a test of courage and honor, and my patient had proved himself a game loser. It meant a good deal more, too, than evidenced on the surface, for a Chinese firmly believes that as he leaves this world so will he be in the next. On account of this belief it was often impossible to get consent to amputate a diseased or injured member, though the patient himself could see that it was his only chance. But his innate gambling spirit and his superstitious ideas made him willing to take the long chance.

In crossing the Pacific one gets a good idea of the universality of gambling among this people. On fair days the lower deck is often completely filled with groups of pig-tailed Celestials chattering and gesticulating as though they were bent on taking each other's lives over their cards, dice or dominoes.