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At the foot of Gentries' Trail.

When I was at Harvard, my roommate and bosom friend was Charley Despard. He was of very good family, but not very well off, and when our college career was concluded, and I took my seat in Bates & Blog's office to court the Goddess Themis, he went off to push his fortune in the Golden State.

Charley was a queer sort of a fellow—capable of great exertion, but deplorably lazy, always making good resolutions, and never carrying them into execution; without an atom of vice in his constitution, and yet always getting into scrapes. After he went to California, we corresponded pretty regularly, and from his letters I learned that he was experimenting in a new business every other week. Now he was in a soft goods store in San Francisco; then he ran a paper in Denver; then he drove a stage between Auburn and Forrest Hill; then he was billiard maker in San Francisco; and finally he told me he was in for a big thing in gold mines at Green Flat, and inclosed his photograph to show how he looked in his working clothes. I could scarcely recognize my uddy friend of former days in the lanky figure pictured on the card board. A slouch cap perched on the back of his head, a wisp of handkerchief tied around his neck, while hirsute appendages of Samsonean dimensions covered and encircled the place where his face ought to have been. But his big eyes were there, looking out just as true and honest as ever, and so I knew it was Charley, even though he did wear big boots, and carried a six shooter slung at his side.

He stuck to the mines all Spring and Summer, and his letters were full of hope and radiant with success, until at once they stopped suddenly, and nothing more was heard of him. I was wondering what had become of him whether he had come to grief and was ashamed to write me bad news, or whether a worse fate had overtaken him in the wilds of the far West, and made inquiries of some of his friends, but none of them could tell me anything about him, so I was fain to sit still hoping against hope that he would turn up.

One evening I was all alone in my room, watching the flickering light of the fire play over each familiar article of furniture, too lazy to get up from a chair to light the gas, when I heard a violent ring at the door, and presently a figure stood in the doorway. At first I did not recognize my old chum, but when I heard the accents of his voice my fears and doubts all faded away, and I welcomed him as one come back from the dead.

"Why, Charley, is that you? Where have you been? When did you get to the town? How's things in general?"

"Yes, it is me. Got in from California this morning. Things is first-rate."

"Why, what a swell you are. Why didn't you come right here? Where have you been? I know there's something up."

"Guess you're about right. Hit it thar, pard. You bet."

And then he relapsed into silence, and demolished a lavender kid glove in trying to take it off.

"What's up, old man? Let's have it. Go ahead."

"Well, I ain't right sure what's up. I've struck a lead, and it looked no end of good, and now when I take the dust to the store it won't sell."

"Please to interpret; and bear in mind that I am not so learned in mining just as you are."

"Well, then, here goes." But it didn't go.

"Hard up? You don't look like it."

"No. Got half a million to my credit with Clews?"

"Woman?"

"Yes, and she's the best little woman in the world—at least I thought she was." And here the other kid glove burst up in a most decided manner.

"Now, see here; you have come to a professional man, and if you want solace and advice make a clean breast of it, and tell me all your story."

"Well, then, you know my last letter to you was from Green Flat, the one with the photo."

"Yes, I got it. There you are, over the mantle-piece, in the costume of the period."

"That mine turned out a real good thing. We washed out about twenty thousand in two months, and then we got rid of the concern to a 'Friscan' company at a million and a half, so I am pretty happy that way."

"Glad to hear it. But about her ladyship?"

"Well, when the thing was done, and the money at the First National, we all went off to the bay, and Irish Ned got shot one night. He lived just long enough to make his will, and split his share between me and old Tom Norris."

"I regret the untimely departure of Irish Ned, but I congratulate you that he was able to dispose of his property satisfactorily. But the lady?"

"I'm a comin' to her. There was a lot of legal foolin' after Ned's death about the inquest and the probate of his will, and I got tired of loafing at 'Friscan, so I made tracks up country and had a look around the Flat. That was rather worse in the way of poison, so one morning I went and took Buckler out of the corral, hitched him up, got on top, and set off for a slashing gallop. All of a sudden I took a notion I'd never seen the Yosemite valley, and, as it wasn't much of a ride from the Flat, I went right on. Buckler and I got along first-rate, and we were down to the foot of the Gentries trail just after sundown two days afterward."

"Here the romance commences. Go on, I begin to see fight."

"There wasn't much to be seen there, I can tell you. Those high cliffs and those big trees cut it rough on sunshine. Why, I nearly rode over her before I saw what I was doing."

"Her?"

"Yes; she was lying in a bundle in the middle of the road, and only Buckler shied or we'd have given her hoofs and no mistake."

"Her? Who? Was it an intoxicated Injun squaw?"

Here Charley burst into cursory remarks which I shall not repeat, and then went on:

"No, the darlinest, dearest little atom of feminine humanity that ever claimed the assistance of mortal man."

"Bravo! Encore! So you did not pass by on the other side, like the man who fell among thieves?"

"No, I got off and tied Buckler to a tree, and then picked her up."

"What did she say? This is becoming dramatic."

"She didn't say nothing. She was in a faint, and all over mud."

"I pardon your grammar. But what did you do?"

"Well, I took a chaw, and then I went down to the river and filled my hat with water, and splashed it right in her face."

"What did she say to that?"

"She said 'Oh!'"

"Don't wonder much. What next?"

"Well, I thought she might have

got to much water, so I poured some whisky down her throat."

"Spiritual consolation for temporal misfortune. How did she take it?"

"She coughed like fits, and then sat up straight and looked up."

"What next?"

"She said 'Oh, dear,' and tried to get up, but she couldn't do it, and then she screamed and fell back."

"Pleasant. How did you proceed?"

"I talked civil to her. I'd almost forgotten how, but my Sunday go-to-meeting manners came back wonderfully, and I tried to persuade her I was not a Hoodlum."

"In which I presume you succeeded."

"Yes. After a while she put up her back hair, and then told me that she had tumbled off her horse and sprained her ankle, but didn't know how to get to Hutchings' Hotel."

"Charming situation. You enacted the role of ministering angel?"

"You bet. Whipped out my bowie, and had her boot and stockings in tatters in two minutes.—Took the sleeves of my shirt, and bound a cold water bandage on. Then kicked Buckler in the ribs, and when he was getting his breath hoisted her up, and so we proceeded along the trail until we got to Hutchings, where we found the house in a muss, and papa awful skeered."

"So there is a papa in the business?"

"Yes; good old fellow, too; was tremendously obliged to me, and offered me some coin."

"The reward of merit."

"I got riled at that, showed him my six-shooter, and asked him if he wanted to insult me, whereupon he apologized like a gentleman and we all had a drink."

"Including her ladyship."

"No, confound you, the women folks had taken her off."

"Proceed with papa."

"We had another drink, and got talking, and I found out that he was Tom Kemble's father."

"What! Tom that was in our year! That delicate little fellow you used to make such a pet of?"

"That's about it. Poor Tom had petered out, and the old gentleman and his daughter had taken a trip West."

"The family acquaintance facilitated friendship?"

"I suppose it helped. At any rate I stuck to them, and we went around together, and Nellie and I (that's her name, Nellie Kemble) got nuts, and I spoke out to the old man and showed him my hand, and told him hearts were trumps, but that I could spot diamonds if I'd a mind."

"He told me to come up to New York and he'd see about it."

"Provident paternal. So you came up, accordingly?"

"Got in this morning. Went and got fued up square, and started right off to Gramercy Park."

"To be received with outstretched hands, and open arms?"

"Missed the post that time. Sent up my card, but they'd gone to a matinee at the opera."

"Where you followed without delay?"

"Straight off. That fellow at the office owes me some change, for I gave him a fifty and didn't wait for my stamps."

"Prices are high, but not so bad as fifty."

"I ran around the house until they wanted to put me out. Said I was mad."

"A conclusion uncharitable in the extreme, but pardonable under the circumstances."

"We were having a talk about

that when the people came out, and they let me go, and I waited to see the crowd pass, and Jack, when she and her father came along, I felt all of a heap, and just stood still and looked right at them, and she looked right straight in my face and never stopped, and she's forgot me, and I'm going back to California." Here poor Charley covered his face with his hands and broke down.

"Hold on, did you get shaved to-day?"

"Pretty much all over."

"The tonsorial operation may have altered your identity."

He lifted his face up, and a gleam of hope flashed over his features. I took down the photograph and led him to the glass.

"See there. Look on this picture and on that."

"I—don't—think—I shall go back to the Flat to-morrow. What shall I do?"

Interval for reflection.

"Was your address on the card?"

"Yes, St. Nicholas."

"Just you stay here to-night, and we'll have a chat, and see if they don't call to-morrow or write. Perhaps there is a letter there now."

"By Jove, your're right. Let's go and see, right off."

"Do take it quietly. I don't expect any such thing."

"But I do. Will you come, for if you won't I'll go alone."

Up he got, and *notens volens*, I was obliged to accompany him, for I feared that he might do something rash in his frenzy. We arrived at the St. Nicholas, and sure enough a letter awaited him, with N. K. monogrammed on the fold. He opened it, and read as follows:

"Wednesday evening, Gramercy Square.—My Dear Mr Despard:—I am so glad you have come.—Could it have been you I saw at the Academy? It was not a bit like you, and yet I think it was. Please call soon. Ever yours,

"NELLIE KEMBLE."

Charley yelled, "She signs herself 'Ever yours,'" and wanted to shout for the crowd; but a happier thought struck him, and before I knew what he was up to he leaped on to the box of a carriage and went up Broadway in the same style he used to steer his team among the stumps and boulders of the California wilds. I followed him in another with the coachman, and in due time found Charley's trap in charge of an astonished darkey at the abode of his lady love.

I came away then. Below you have the latest news from the scene of action:

DESPARD—KEMBLE—At the residence of the bride's father, January 16, by Rev. George Newton, D. D., Charles Despard, late of Green Flat, California, to Miss Nellie Kemble, only daughter of Thomas Kemble, of Gramercy Park, New York.

Masquerade weddings are the last feature of connubial fun in Indiana. The minister is masked, the bride is masked, ditto the groom, attendants and guests. The groom trusts to luck, and sometimes finds he has married the wrong woman, but trivial occurrences do not make sadness in that State.

A Tennessee belle lately punished a suitor who sought to gain her hand through false aspersion of his rival by going with him to the altar, and then responding "No!" at the most critical moment, and completing the ceremony with the calumniated one.

An Indiana paper has already hoisted its ticket for 1870. It is Oliver P. Morton for President, and Benjamin F. Butler for Vice-President.

HUMOROUS.

A man over-bored—An editor. An unsatisfactory meal—A domestic broil

A "young shaver"—A barber's baby.

An Idaho miner lately fell several hundred feet out of a "bucket" without kicking it.

Boys are like vinegar: the more "mother" there is in them, the sharper they become.

A pious young man paid \$118 for a penwiper at a church fair in Brooklyn, New York, recently; and though he smiled sweetly on the girl as she took the money, his room mate says he cursed like Captain Kidd that night after he retired to his couch.

A San Francisco widow keeps the skull of her deceased husband in a glass case. She once remarked to a friend who was viewing the remains: Alas! how often have I banged those bones with a broomstick. I am sorry for it now.

An attorney, in Dean Swift's company, once asked him. "Supposing, doctor, that the parsons and the devil should litigate a cause, which party do you think would gain it?" "The devil, no doubt," replied the dean, "as he would have all the lawyers on his side."

A school girl in one of the rural districts of Pittsfield, Mass., was overheard trying to convince a schoolfellow that she liked him better than she did some other urchin of whom he seemed jealous. "Of course I like you better than I do Bill," she said, for don't I miss words in my spelling lesson on purpose, so as to be down to the foot of the class where you are!"

Punch says: Herr Professor, "Iss it not a schdrainch ting laties, dat de Latin rase gas not aguire the Enklish pronouncy-ation? I had choost dis momend bardet from an Idalian chentleman who has lifed in London almoste as long as I hav—divendy-vife ceers—and root you pelief it? He sbecks Enklish vite a sdhrong voreign indonation. How do you agound vor a zo eggshdra-ordinary zeergomshdanz as dat?"

A writer on monkeys tells us a story of one of these female undeveloped species of humanity, who, having lost her infant, adopted a kitten. One day, the kitten scratched this affectionate baboon, who, much astonished at being scratched, immediately examined the kitten's feet, and, without more ado, bit off the claws. And yet some people do not believe in Darwin's theories.

He had been keeping St. Patrick's day and was homeward bound. While going up Union street hill, working long longitudes rejoicing under the influence of about 1,000 drops of oil of joy, he ran against a hydrant which he in his befuddled condition mistook for a little nig. "Skuse me, sonnie," said he patting the hydrant paternally; "I didn't run yer down because yer was black. Grow up (hie) and be a useful man. Imitate (hie) my example. Here's quarter for yer—(hie) spick it up." And he went on with a lighter heart and the satisfaction that he had made one poor soul happy.

"Pa," said Billy to his father, "what is meant by 'chip of the old block?'" "Why my son, do you ask the question?" "Because I was in Endfield this morning, and told them gentlemen that while hunting I saw fifty squirrels up one tree. They kept trying to make me say forty-nine, and because I wouldn't say so, they said I was a 'chip of the old block.'" "Well, my son, they only meant that you was smart and honest like your pa. You can go to play now."