

A MATTER OF JUSTICE

—BY—
CUTCLIFFE HYNE

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The ex-freeman spluttered, but he did not continue the contest. He recognized that he had to deal with a master in the cheerful art of insult, and so he came back sulkily to business.

"Will you give Rad dem rides, you low white fellow?"

"No, I won't, daddy."

"Very well. Den we shall spiculate you till you do," said the man, and after that Kettle heard his slippers shuffling away.

"I wonder what spiculating is?" mused Kettle, but he did not remain coddling his brain over this for long. It occurred to him that if this negro could come and go so handily to the outside of this underground prison, there must be a stairway somewhere near, and though he could not enlarge the slit to get at it that way, it might be possible to burrow a passage under the wall itself. For a tool he had spied a broken crock lying on the floor, and with the idea once in his head, he was not long in putting it to practical effect. He squatted just underneath the slit and began to quarry the earth at the foot of the wall with skill and determination.

But if Kettle was prompt his captors were by no means dilatory. Between Kettle's prison and the mate's was another of those bottle-shaped oubliettes, and in that there was presently a bustle of movement. There came the noises of some one lighting a fire and coughing as he fanned smoldering embers into a glow with his breath, and then more coughing and some cursing, and the fire lighter took his departure. The door above clapped down into place, and then there was the sound of some one dragging over that and over the doors of the other two prisons what seemed to be carpets or heavy rugs.

There was something mysterious in this maneuver at first, but the secret of it was not kept for long. An aerial smell stole out into the air, which thickened every minute in intensity. Kettle seemed dimly to recognize it, but could not put a name to it definitely. Besides he was working with all his might at scraping away the earth from the foot of the wall and had little leisure to think of other things. The heat was stifling, and the sweat dripped from him, but he toiled on with a savage gleam at his success. The foundations had not been dug out; they were "floating" upon the earth surface, and the labor of undermining would, it appeared, be small.

But Murray, in the other prison, had smelled the reek before and was able to put a name to it promptly. "By my love, captain, he's digging lustily from the distance," they're going to smoke us to death; that's the game."

"Looks like trying it," panted the little sailor, from his work.

"That's dried camel's dung they're burning. There's no wood in Arabia here, and that's their only fuel. When the smoke gets into your lungs, it just tears you all to bits. I say, skipper, can't you come to some agreement with Rad over those blessed rifles? It's a beastly death to die, this."

"You aren't doing a long chalk—yet. More'n I'd hate to be—smoke dried like a ham—but I don't start in—to scorf the cargo—on my own ship—at any bally price."

There was a sound of distant coughing, and then the misty question, "What are you working at?"

"Taking—exercise!" Kettle gasped, and after that communication between the two was limited to incessant staccato coughs.

More and more acid grew the air as the burning camel's dung saturated it further and further with smoke, and more and more frenzied grew Kettle's efforts. He felt that the hacking coughs were gnawing away his strength, and just now the utmost output of his thews was needed. He had given up his original idea of mining a passage-way under the wall. Indeed this would have been a labor of weeks with the poor broken crock which was his only tool, for the weight of the building above had turned the earth to something very near akin to the hardness of stone. But he had managed to scrape out a space underneath one brick and found that it was loosened and, with trouble, could be dislodged, and so he was burrowing away the earth from beneath others to drop more bricks down from their places and so make a gangway through the solid wall itself.

But, simple though this may be in theory, it was tediously difficult work in practice. The bricks jammed even when they were undermined, and the wall was four bricks thick to its farther side. Moreover, every attempt at a space was compromised, and the workman was rapidly becoming asphyxiated by the terrible reek which came billowing in from the chamber beyond.

Still, with aching chest and bleeding fingers and smarting eyes Kettle worked doggedly on and at last got a hole made completely through. What lay in the blackness beyond he did not know. Either Rad el Moussa or the freeman might be waiting to give him a coup de grace the moment his head appeared. But he was ready to accept every risk. He felt that if he staid in the reek of that burning camel's dung any longer he would be strangled.

The hole in the brickwork was not large, but he was a slightly built man, and with a hard struggle he managed to press his way through. No one opposed him. He found and scraped his only remaining match and saw that he was in another bottle-shaped chamber, similar to the one he had left, but in this there was a doorway. There was pungent smoke reek here also, and though its slenderness came to him as a blessed relief after what he had been enduring, he lasted desperately for a taste of the pure air outside.

The door gave way to his touch, and

he found a stair. He ran up this and stepped out into the corridor, where Rad had lured him to capture, and then walking cautiously by the wall so as not to step into any more booby traps he came to the place where he calculated, from their conversation, Murray would be jailed. A large, thick carpet had been spread over the door so as to prevent any egress of the stinging smoke or any ingress of air, and this he pulled away and lifted the trap.

There was no sound from below. "Great heavens!" he thought. "Is the mate dead?" He halted sharply, and a husky voice answered. Seeing nothing else at hand that would serve, he lowered an end of the carpet, keeping a grip on the other, and presently Murray got hold and clambered up beside him.

In a dozen whispered words Kettle told his plans, and they were on the point of starting off to carry them out when they heard slippers made their hoarse, rattling advance down the corridors. Promptly the pair of them sank into the shadows, and presently the ex-freeman came up, whistling cheerfully an air from some English music hall. He did not see them until they were almost within hand grips, and then the tune froze upon his lips in a manner that was ludicrous.

But neither Kettle nor his mate had any eye for the humors of the situation just then. Murray plucked the mate's hair artistically from beneath him, and Kettle gripped his hands and throat. He thrust his savage little face close down to the black man's. "Now," he said, "where's Rad? Tell me truly, or I'll make you into dog's meat, and speak quietly. If you make a row, I'll gouge your eyes out!"

"Rad, he in divan," the fellow stammered in a scared whisper. "Sort of front shop, you savvy, sar? Don't kill me."

"I can recommend my late state-roomer," said Murray. "Just the ticket," said Kettle. So into the oubliette they toppled him, clapping down the door in its place above. "There you may stay, you black beast," said the judge, "to stew in the smoke your raised yourself. If any of your numerous wives are sufficiently interested to get you out, they may do so. If not, you pig, you may stay and cure into bacon. I'm sure I shan't miss you. Come along, Mr. Mate."

They fell upon Rad el Moussa placidly resting among the cushions of the divan, with the stem of the water pipe between his teeth, and his mind (probably figuring out plans of campaign in which the captured rifles would do astonishing work.

Kettle had no revolver in open view, but Rad had already learned how readily that instrument could be produced on occasion, and had the wit to make no show of resistance. The sailor went up to him, delicately extracted the poignard from his sash and broke the blade beneath his feet. Then he said to him, "Stand there" pointing to the middle of the floor, and seated himself on the divan, in an attitude of a judge.

"Now, Mr. Rad el Moussa, I advise you to understand what's going to be said to you now, so that I'll be a lesson to you in the future."

"I came to you not very long ago, asking for your card to the cad. I told you my business was about the mate here, and you said you were cndi yourself. Whether you are or not I don't know, and I don't vastly care, but anyway I paid for justice in hard money, and you said you'd give up the mate. You didn't do that; you played a trick on me, which I'll own up I was a fool to be caught by, and I make no doubt that you've been laughing at me behind my back with that nasty nigger partner of yours. Well, prisoner at the bar, let me tell you I don't stand either being swindled out of justice when I've paid for it or being played tricks on afterward. So you are here by sentence of the fine of one bag of pearls, to be paid on the spot, and, furthermore, to be incarcerated in one of those smoke boxes down the alleyway yonder till you can find your own way out. Now, prisoner, don't move during the next quarter, or I'll shoot you. Mr. Mate, you'll find a small bag inside the top part of his nightgown, on the left hand side. Got 'em?"

"Here they are, sir," said Murray.

"Where's Rad? Tell me truly, or I'll make you into dog's meat!"

"Thanks," said Kettle, and he put the pearls in his pocket. "And now, if you please, Mr. Mate, we'll just put his whiskers into that collar with the nigger and leave him there to get smoked into a better and we'll hope a more penitent frame of mind."

They completed this pious act to their entire satisfaction and left the house without further interruption. The townspeople were just beginning to move about again after the violence of the midday heat, but except for curious stares they passed through the narrow streets between the whitewashed houses quite without interruption, and in due time they came to the beach and hired a shore boat, which took them off to the steamer.

But here Kettle was not inclined to linger unnecessarily. He saw Grain, the second mate, and asked him how much more cargo there was to come off.

"The last lighter load is alongside this minute, sir."

"Then hustle it on deck as quick as you can and then call the carpenter and go forward and heave up."

Grain looked meaningly at Murray. "Am I to take the fore deck, sir?"

"Yes; I appoint you acting mate for three days, and Mr. Murray goes to his room for that time for getting into trouble ashore. Now, put some hurry into things, Mr. Grain. I don't want to stay here longer than's needful."

Grain went forward about his business, but Murray, who looked somewhat disconsolate, Kettle beckoned in to the chart-house. He pulled out the board book and emptied its contents on to the chart table. "Now, look here, my lad," said he, "I have to send you to your room because I said I would and because that's discipline. But you can pocket a thimbleful of these seed pearls, just to patch up your wounded feelings, as your share of old Rad el Moussa's fine. They are only seed pearls, as I say, and aren't worth much. We were due to have more as a sheer matter of justice, but it wasn't to be got. So we must make the best of what there is. You'll bag £20 out of your lot if you sell them in the right place ashore. I reckoned my damages at £500. I guess I've got there £200."

"Thank you, sir," said Murray. "But it's rather hard being sent to my room for a thing I could no more help than you could."

"Discipline, my lad. This will probably teach you to leave photographing to your inferiors in the future. There's no persuading me that it isn't that photograph job that's at the bottom of the whole mischief. Hello! There's the windlass going already! I'll just look up these pearls in the drawer, and then I must go on the bridge. Er—and about going to your room, my lad—as long as I don't see you for three days you can

do much as you like. I don't want to do too hard. But, as I said to old Rad el Moussa, justice is justice, and discipline's got to be kept up."

"And what about the rifles, sir?"

"Captain Kettle winked pleasantly. "I don't know that they are rifles. You see, the cases are down on the manifest as 'machinery,' and I'm going to put them ashore as such, but I don't mind owing to you, Mr. Mate, that I hope old Rad finds out he was right about his information. I suppose his neighbors will let him know within the next week or so whether they are rifles really or whether they are not."



A Lesson In Politeness.

When Alonzo B. Cornell was governor of New York, he had a clerk so ungracious in manner that he frequently remained seated while callers at the capital were obliged to remain standing as they attempted to transact business with him. One day a delegation came from a city in the western part of the state to plead for the life of a condemned man. The governor was seldom known to grant a pardon, but the visitors hoped, at least, that they would be accorded a proper hearing. After the clerk had kept them waiting for two hours in the outer hallway he admitted them and accorded them permission to state their case to the governor, all standing. The executive refused to interfere and told his visitors so.

The Spokesman of the Little Party

was Grover Cleveland, then a Buffalo attorney. In one year after the trip referred to he was himself elected governor of the state. When he visited the executive chamber a few days thereafter, Governor Cornell showed him over the apartments and inquired if there was anything he wished to have done in advance of his inauguration.

"There is just one thing you can do for me, if you will," said Grover Cleveland, "and that is to remove the clerk who kept me waiting outside so long when I was last here. It may teach him a lesson in politeness." The clerk was removed.—Success.

George III and the Wigmakers.

When George III ascended the throne of England, his wealthy subjects were beginning to leave off wigs and to appear in their own hair. "If they had any!" As the sovereign was himself one of the offenders, the peruke makers, who feared a serious loss of trade, prepared a petition, in which they prayed his majesty to be graciously pleased to "shave his head" for the good of distressed workmen and wear a wig, as his father had done before him.

When the petitioners walked to the royal palace, however, it was noticed that they wore no wigs themselves. As this seemed unfair to the onlookers they seized several of the leading petitioners and cut their hair with any implement that came most readily to hand.

From this incident arose a host of curious caricatures. The wooden leg makers were said to have special claims on the king's consideration, inasmuch as the conclusion of peace had deprived them of a profitable source of employment; hence the suggestion that his majesty should not only wear a wooden leg himself, but enjoin the people to follow his laudable example.

A Nice Family Mix Up.

A widower with a number of small children married a widow who was similarly blessed. In due time the newly married couple added to the number. Hearing a voice in the yard one day, the father went out to see what was the matter.

"Well, what was it?" asked his wife as he returned out of breath.

"Your children and my children were quarreling with our children," was the reply.—London Answers.

AN INDIAN CIGAR SIGN.

The Fate That Overtook One Aggressive Wooden Savage.

The city of Little Muddy, on the upper Yellowstone, was an exceedingly wide awake town in 1887. When it reached the mature age of 3 months, every kind of business man was represented except the cigar dealer, and the next week a man from Chicago named Stark opened a tobacco store, with a large, gaudy and aggressive wooden Indian in front, holding a tomahawk savagely in one hand and a bunch of cigars in the other. It would take a chapter to tell of all the trouble Stark had with that wooden aborigine. This variety of sign was rare in that region, and gentlemen not unconnected with the stock growing industry who came in from the ranges wearing spurs and weapons would resent his threatening attitude—for that matter, no Indian, even the most peaceably disposed, was popular. He was knocked off his pedestal half a dozen times a day. Stark learned to know what had happened whenever he heard a dull crash in front and would step outside and restore his fallen warrior.

But the red man did not meet his Waterloo till Toke Hartley and a friend, preserved to us under the name of Long Isaac, came in from the Lightning Nest neighborhood. A close friendship existed between these two gentlemen. It was their first vacation from the ranch for several months. They wandered about town in a receptive mood and sought to enjoy their visit. No facts are extant concerning their condition after some hours, but we may perhaps be allowed our suspicions. Finally they separated, and Toke, coming along to the Indian and not noticing his upraised hatchet, sat down at his feet to rest. He soon fell asleep and sank lower. At this juncture Isaac came around the corner and took in the tragic situation at a glance. "Killed my partner for a simple bunch of cigars, did you?" he cried. "Well, we'll see about it!" and he produced his firearms and began shooting accurately and rapidly. At the end of ten minutes Stark gathered up his no more savage in a basket, while the resuscitated Toke and the avenging Isaac moved off arm in arm.—Harper's Magazine.

BATTLES OF NATURE.

Unceasing Struggles Which End in Survival of Fittest.

We read the tablets of long ago which the geologist has deciphered for us, and we find them an endless story of battles. The successful species which occupy the great geological horizons have come out of great struggles. The fossils and stone images of the tertiary period, the gigantic club moss and fluted sigillarians of the coal age, the enormous ammonites of the Jurassic and chalk epochs, the mighty elephants and majestic deer forms of the tertiary era are magnates of the times and masterpieces of the struggle. They have been redeemed at great price, even of a thousand species and tens of thousands of individuals who fell short of the typical fitness and were killed out. These magnates, each in its turn, were pioneers of progress, like the scouts of a great army and were caught in a physiological ambush.

The pedigree of the horse in the most recent past has been made out, traced shall we say, for a hundred thousand years before man came on the scene (for Lord Kelvin asked the geologist to hurry up and not be too lavish with time or we should have said 250,000 years before man). The fleetness, grace and strength of the horse are owing to his ability to walk on one toe, to which have been correlated the wonderful instincts by which he has become the partner of man in his industries and struggles. He has been derived in almost a strict gradation from the two-toed three-toed, four-toed and five-toed ancestors which flourished in the ages which preceded man. Myriads of individuals and all the species and varieties died out to make room for the one toed selection to enable this favorite to occupy the ground unharmed by crossing or by recurrence to average forms. He was redeemed at a great price and has come through a great tribulation.—Contemporary Review.

Only a Lawyer.

When Justice Bookstaver was on the supreme court bench, he had as special officer or attendant a punctilious old German, who always stood guard at the door leading to the justice's private chambers when the justice was within. One day a prominent lawyer and two of his clients called and asked if justice would receive them.

The officer threw open the door and called out loudly to the justice: "Shudge! Two sheentmans und a lawyer wants to speak mit you."

The three gentlemen laughed. "Vor what you laff, eh?"

"Don't you count me a gentleman?" asked the lawyer.

"Ach, you're a lawyer only; dat's different."—New York Mail and Express.

Cause of Talleyrand's Lameness.

The cause of Talleyrand's lameness has long been a matter of dispute. Some stories have it that the defect was congenital; others that it was occasioned by an accident which befell him in his infancy. The most serious explanation of all is that offered by a writer in The Quarterly Review. "To quote the very words of our informant, an eminently distinguished diplomat," says the writer, "Talleyrand's Vienna colleague, Baron Wessenberg, told me years ago that his lameness was owing to carelessness of his nurse, who laid him down in a field while she flirted with her sweetheart and on coming back to her charge found some pigs dining on the infant's legs. I am sure that Wessenberg told me this as an established fact, and I am all but sure that his authority was Talleyrand himself."

Very Meek.

"Did you trump me, dear?" asked Mr. Meekton, who was his wife's partner at whist.

"I did," she rejoined sternly. "What of it?"

"I merely inquired to relieve my mind," he answered, with a gentle smile. "It is a great comfort to know you trumped it. If any one else had trumped it, you know, we should have lost the trick."—Exchange.

A CULINARY GENIUS.

Cooked Dinner in His Home While at Business in His Office.

The ordinary man is nowhere more out of place than in the kitchen. All rules have their exceptions, however, and a correspondent sends a story of a man who might have led armies perhaps, but was certainly equal to culinary emergencies.

In the absence of his wife and family it became necessary, as he thought, for him to cook his own dinner, and in view of the fact that he was a man of business his presence was also needed down town at his office.

Now, the same body cannot be in two places at once, and this well known consideration would have settled the question for an average man. He would have either spent his forenoon in the kitchen or gone to his office and lunched out. This, however, was a man to whom physical laws do not courtesy even as custom to great kings. The case stood thus:

He was to have a boiled dinner and would have it done to a turn, piping hot and ready to serve at his home coming. The meat, turnips and beets, therefore, which require a longer time, he put on before leaving the house. The potatoes and cabbage, needing less time for cooking, were put on the cover of the pot.

Then he dropped a string through a hole in the edge of the cover, ran it through a loop suspended from the ceiling and thence down to the sink. In the sink hole he firmly stuck a candle, to which, two inches below the top, he tied the string.

Last of all he lighted the candle and went to his business. In two hours, or about half an hour before he was to return, when it was time for the vegetables on the cover to go to their appointed place, the slowly descending flame burned the string, which released the otherwise unsupported edge of the cover, which dropped its burden into the pot and fell back where it belonged.

When the genius reached home, his dinner was ready.—Youth's Companion.

Visitors Not Wanted.

People Who Want to See Greenland Must Get a Royal Permit.

Greenland is governed in a grandmotherly way by Denmark; but, as it consists of a group of colonies which would not under any circumstances attract many tourists or traders, no outsider complains of the exclusiveness of the Danish authorities. Trade always has been and still is monopolized by the state, and only government vessels are allowed to sail in Greenland waters. For foreign travelers also Greenland is a closed country unless the traveler in question has beforehand obtained the permission of the Danish government.

The monopoly of the trade is said to protect the Greenlanders from being deceived by unscrupulous merchants. The administration settles a fixed price both for the goods the Greenlanders purchase and for the products they sell. In this way all are treated in the same manner, and the business being carried on by the state is a guarantee that the natives are not imposed upon.

Furthermore, the members of the administration are enjoined to take care that the natives do not leave themselves short of produce by selling more than they can dispense with, so that they are destitute of needful food and clothing when the slack time arrives. The native Greenlanders never have been, neither is he now, able to purchase a single drop of spirits from the administration.

The exchange of goods between Greenland and Denmark is, as a rule, carried on exclusively by means of the nine vessels belonging to the Greenland company—viz. five briggs, three barkis and a small steamer having a total register of about 2,000 tons net. Several of these vessels, which are suitable for sailing through the drift ice, make two voyages a year and the steamer, as a rule, three voyages.—Montreal Herald.

Womanly Tenderness.

"Don't talk to me of the tenderness of woman's heart," said the man who hates women, though he has never been married. "She hasn't any. I was traveling recently on a through train to New York from the west, and in the morning, just after most of us had dressed and were sitting in the end of the car, the conductor came and called two men away. One of them belonged to an intelligent and well dressed woman sitting opposite me, and when he came back she asked him what the conductor wanted.

"Why," said the man seriously, 'the man in lower 8 has been found dead.'"

"The woman's eyes widened, and I thought she was going to say something sweet and sympathetic, but she didn't. What she said was:

"Why, how thoughtless of him, in a car with all these women too!"

"Don't talk to me about women."—Washington Post.

Not Entirely Alone.

As he entered the car he saw at a glance that there was one seat with a young lady in it, and he marched straight down the aisle, deposited his overcoat, sat down and familiarly observed:

"I entirely forgot to ask your permission."

"That's of no consequence," she replied.

"Thanks. Just arrived in the city, I presume," he ventured to remark as he glanced at the bundles and grips on the floor near by.

"Not exactly."

"You're all alone, eh?"

"Almost, but not quite. My husband is the conductor on this car, the motor man is my cousin and my father and a brother are in the seat back of us."

"Aw! Aw! I see," gasped the man and the floor of the car suddenly became so red hot that he lit out without another word.—Salt Lake Herald.

A Crownless Coronation.

A coronation without a crown sounds distinctly Irish, yet such was in effect the ceremony in which Henry III took the most prominent part at Gloucester on Oct. 28, 1216. On this occasion a plain circle was used instead of a crown, which had been lost with the jewels and other baggage of King John in passing the marshes of Lynn or the Wash near Wisbech.—London Telegraph.

Cholly Cityfeller (in country, with bally lively horse)—Beg pardon, sir, but what do you do when youah horse balks?

The Farmer—Trade him. Git up, Bill!—Puck.

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Cases of Queer Revenge.

In England, where men have more time for everything, including revenge, some queer methods of playing even have come in the course of the years.

Albert Bewley of Leeds had a dog that howled at night. A naturalist next door did not like it, but had no legal recourse.

One day ants of the minute red variety began to overrun Bewley's house. Nothing that could be done headed them off. They grew worse and worse. He had made up his mind to break his lease and move when one night he heard a noise in his dining room. Slipping down, he found the naturalist emptying a bag of ants on the floor.

In court the naturalist paid damages, but he did it sulkily.

Rowley, the late English violinist, was hard to beat on his perseverance against one who had incurred his ill will.

Rowley had a quarrel with a horse dealer named Brant. It was a trivial matter, but Rowley took the next house to Brant, set up a piano, bought a cornet and proceeded to make insomnia for Brant.

After one or two assault cases in court Brant moved. Rowley bought out the next door neighbor and followed with piano and cornet. Brant went to law, but found he could do nothing. Failing, he took a detached house. Then Rowley hired brass bands and organs and assailed him. This was actionable, and Rowley paid £1,000 for his revenge.—Chicago Tribune.

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The Mayor Who Couldn't Spell "E."

During the several terms that Tim Campbell served in congress he was always prominent before the house. One of his colleagues from Manhattan was Colonel Jack Adams, who, a lawyer, while he and Mr. Campbell were in congress together spent most of his time working off practical jokes at the expense of the east side statesman. Tim had been in and out of Tammany Hall several times, those changes depending on whether his claims were recognized or repudiated.

A very hot political canvass found Tim one of the staunchest adherents of the Hall. Colonel Jack had been talking out with the powers and, as strong on the other side, this very much to heart, as an ammunition for his fellow congressman was very strong. He concluded that, while all others had failed to bring Colonel Jack back into the fold, he (Tim) could succeed.

"Now, Jack," Tim said insinuatingly, "what do you want to go and fight the mayor for? Sure, he's a fine young fellow, bright and enterprising and one of the best educated men in America."

"Educated!" exclaimed Colonel Jack contemptuously. "Educated, did you say?"

"Sure, he's one of the very best educated young fellows in this city."

"Educated!" reiterated Adams, putting an extra dose of contempt into his voice. "What would you say, Tim, if I told you that he was so little educated that he spells 'if' with only one 'f'?"

"Does he do that?" responded Tim with a heartbroken tone.

"He does."

"Well, then, I have nothing further to say. I don't blame you."—Saturday Evening Post.

Buying Molasses.

She was newly arrived from the old country, and she went to the store for sirup.

"Give me a pound of treacle," she said to the grocer.

"Treacle!" repeated the grocer. "You mean molasses."

"Possibly."

"We don't sell it by the pound, but by the measure."

"Oh, then give me a yard!"—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Japanese Story Tellers.

Professional story tellers roam from house to house in Japan to spin their yarns. In the city of Tokyo there are about 600 of these professional romancers. Their pay averages 20 cents an hour. When the story teller discovers that his romances are becoming dull from frequent repetition, he moves to a new district.