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## The Elevator Boy

By M. QUAD  
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Many a young doctor or lawyer just starting his career has watched an elevator boy at work and said to himself: "Ah, what a profession! No disappointments—no carking care—no burdens on the young back. Why didn't I adopt it?"

And yet the young gentleman who elevates the elevator has hidden sorrows that the public wots not of.

These sorrows begin with the engineer.

In a certain building not long ago I sized up the enginee the very first day as a man who would make me trouble if he could. I learned that two of the window cleaners thought him a single man and both were a little gone on him. Also that his wife brought his lunch in regularly every noon. The next day at the proper time I scooted up to the eighth floor and found the Widow McCarthy wiping up the hall, and I said to her:

"Have you got your lunch with you, Mrs. McCarthy?"

"Indade and I have," she replied.

"And why don't you go down to the basement and eat it in company with Engineer Flynn? I know he would appreciate your company."

"That's true, me boy, and I'll get me basket and go down, especially as that cold faced grass widdy who calls herself Mrs. O'Shane, though she's no right to it in the law, seems to have finished her floor and gone home."

I took her down and then scooted for

the fifth floor and found Mrs. O'Shane and said to her:

"Why don't you take your lunch basket and go down and keep Mr. Flynn company?"

"Is it company he sighs for, me laddy? If so I'll go down and cheer him up with my presence," she replied. "And you'll find a place to warm up some cold tea if you want to."

"Thank ye, but that is a beautiful idea, and mebbe the good hearted man will have a cup wid me. How long ago did Mrs. McCarthy disappear, Sammis?"

"Oh, I took her down some time ago."

"She calls herself the Widdy McCarthy, Sammis, leavin' the 'h' out to put in her 'shugar,' I suppose, but is she a widdy, me boy? It's easy enough to say this and that, but where are the proofs? Has she ever shown anybody her husband's death notice as 'twas printed?"

"I never saw it, ma'am."

I dropped Mrs. O'Shane at the basement just as Mr. Flynn's wife came in with his lunch. There wasn't much said. The three women pitched into each other almost on sight, and they were pulling hair and banging into partitions and making the dust fly when I took a walk. Next day as I stopped at the sixth Mrs. McCarthy got sight of me and said:

"Sammis, I'm told that ye are an orphan boy all by yourself."

"Not strictly an orphan, only fatherless."

"So you've got a mother, have ye? Well, a poor fatherless boy can't be havin' too many mothers, and I'll also be a mother to ye."

"I hadn't better call you 'ma' when any one's around, had I, ma'?"

"I was ar-thinkin' about that, Sammis," she thoughtfully replied.

"No, I guess you hadn't. You see,

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it might lead to jealousy and more. Sammis, d'ye mind I went down to the basement to eat me lunch wid that spalpeen of an engineer the other day?"

"Seems as if I did. You thought Mr. Flynn would be a bit lonely, I believe. He didn't like to eat his lunch alone."

"Bad cess to his loneliness and his whole body! Sammis, me son, the man is a deceiver and ought to be dropped from the roof. He let on to me that he was a single man and dyin' fur some one to luv him. What d'ye think, Sammis? On the day I'm thinkin' of I had scarcely got out of the elevator and says 'good day' to him when she that calls herself Mrs. O'Shane cums after me, and right on her heels cums a woman wid a lunch basket—the engineer's own true and legal woife! Wasn't that a pretty mess, me son?"

"Did anything happen?"

"I'm not clear about it, Sammis, but I think somethin' did. I have a dim recollection of bein' banged on the chin, receivin' this blackness under me eye and of me heels flyin' away wid me and me bein' banged against the partitions, but I shall never be able to make it out to me satisfaction. All I'm sure of is that me head has been achin' ever since that hour, and every time I draw a breath I feel like hittin' that engineer over the head with me bucket."

"And we'll put up a job on him and get him bounced?"

"By and by, perhaps, but not now. We'll move slowly in this matter, Sammis, and meanwhile I'm lookin' for you to defend yer adopted mother's reputation should any gossip arise. Ye might deny that ye took me down that day. By the way, how's the mortgage on the home, Sammis?"

"I'm staggering under it yet, thank you."

"It's too bad, but keep up your courage. Here's a banniny to stay yer stummick till lunch time, and it's not the last ye'll eat by a jugful. Quiet is the word, Sammis—easy and quiet and no gossip—and ye'll bless the day that Mrs. McCarthy adopted ye for her very own."

Mr. Flynn may think he's up to a fodge or two, but so is SAMMIS,  
The Elevator Boy.

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