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The Chestertown Transcript.

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Fall Goods !

Fall Goods !

JUST RECEIVED AT

J. H. Simpers'

Chestertown, Md.

A LARGE STOCK OF

DRY GOODS,

NOTIONS,

BOOTS AND SHOES,

HATS AND CAPS,

QUEENSWARE,

GROCERIES, &c.,

Which he offers

At LOWEST PRICES.

Call and examine goods and prices.

J. H. SIMPERS.

Sept. 23, 1886.

Dry Goods !

HAMILTON EASTER & SONS,

BALTIMORE STREET,

East of Charles St., White Marble Building,

BALTIMORE,

ARE

Large Importers, Jobbers & Retailers

—OF—

Dry Goods.

Their assortment includes goods of every class that pertain to a well arranged, first-class Dry Goods House.

We aim to keep nothing that will not prove of good value to purchasers for the money paid, and the best goods for the price can invariably be found with us.

Our business reputation for the past 56 years, and the fact that every article has the price marked on it in plain figures, thereby giving the assurance to those who do not know the value of goods, that they are paying no more than those who do, is a great inducement to deal with us.

In addition to our Retail Trade, Country Merchants can buy from us the better class of goods, not usually found in Jobbing Houses, at the Wholesale Price.

We send Samples when we receive plain and explicit direction in regard to color, and about the price wanted. s.23-3m.

COAL. COAL.

TO ALL CONCERNED

We would be pleased to call your attention to the fact that we are this season buying direct from first hands and at first cost which will enable us to sell at low figures. The buying community will find it to their interest to give us a call before purchasing elsewhere. Will be receving monthly until further notice.

Respectfully,

July 9. J. D. BACCHUS.

THE CELEBRATED

FRANK B. CONVERSE BANJO.

Manufactured by John F. Stratton, 49 Maiden Lane, New York.

Nov. 25, 1886—y.

DO YOU WANT

YOUR CARRIAGES PAINTED & REPAIRED

If you do, go to Chapman & Lambert's. They will give you firstclass work and at a low figure. They have in their employ one of the best painters who has ever been in the State

JOHN D. URIE,

ATTORNEY AT LAW

OFFICE ADJOINING STORE OF T. W. ELIASON, JR.

Will practice in Kent and Queen Anne couns. sep16.

PLOWS. PLOWS. PLOWS

The ROLAND CHILLED PLOW, Nos. 43 33, 23, 13, 133 and ORIOLE PLOWS.

For sale by

J. K. ALDRIDGE.

OUR PRICES for all grades of Canton Flannel—quality considered—are hard to beat and see for yourself.

J. H. SIMPERS.

NEW Stock of Horse-Collars and Bridles Halters, Traces and Plow-Lines at

WROTH & ALDRIDGE'S

A LETTER FROM KRIS.

KRIS-KINGLE CASTLE, Nov. 24, 1886.

Friend Cummings & Co.—We have had many a jolly good time together. I am bound to make all the people happy at the Holidays, and am never kept from making up my usual things, and visiting my favorite locatities and customers by any rumors of hard times or calamities that may reach me here. While you and the other good people of Chestertown have been enjoying the fruits of your beautiful country, and the sunshine and flowers, my workmen and myself have been as busy as bees here in our workshop amidst snow and ice, and have made and fashioned a great stock of new and handsome things for the little children and big folks, that all may have some sort of present for the Merry Christmas of 1886. I await an answer at your earliest convenience and can assure you that I shall make you and all your friends glad when you get the many elegant things which I have prepared for you upon your counters on Main street.

CUMMINGS & CO. ANSWER THE LETTER

Chestertown, Md., Nov. 25.

My Dear Friend Kris—We always read your annual letter with much pleasure and profit. It brings with it cheer, and leaves the impress of a merry heart which "doeth good like a medicine." We always enjoy our beautiful seasons, and the fruits and flowers you mention in your letter, but at the Merry Christmastide we turn with equal zest to the enjoyment of all that you have prepared for us in the shape of articles, useful and ornamental. Your list of presents this year embraces an infinite variety, and you make your characteristic offer which we accept, because we know they have been made expressly for us, and with a fine appreciation of our wants which is begotten of long experience on your part. We have received from your agent an unusually large stock of Holiday Goods—the largest ever in Chestertown. We have Wagons, Doll Carriages, Sleds, Wheelbarrows, Carts, &c. We have the best selection of Dolls you ever saw; we have Mechanical Toys; also, a large variety of Toy Animals, such as Horses, Dogs, Cows, Goats and Pigs. In fact so many things that I cannot tell you all.

In Confections we do not carry anything but the very best articles, no second-class or inferior goods can be found in our store. We have the Finest line of Confections ever offered in this town. We also have Raisins, Figs, Prunes, Dates, all kinds of Nuts, Walnuts, Pecans, Paper-Shell Almonds, Cream Nuts, and all the good things you can possibly need at Christmas time. Besides, Kris, if you want a good Stew or Pan or Fry of Oysters, we can get it up for you, and if you like them raw we have the best that can be found; or, if you would like to take some home with you, we sell them by the quart or gallon. Ice Cream made to order during the winter.

Respectfully yours,

CUMMINGS & CO.

INFORMATION

MANY PERSONS at this season suffer from either Headache, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, Pains in the Limbs, Back and Sides, Bad Blood, Indigestion, Dyspepsia, Malaria, Constipation & Kidney Troubles.

VOLINA CORDIAL

VOLINA CORDIAL CURES RHEUMATISM, Bad Blood and Kidney Troubles, by cleansing the blood of all its impurities, strengthening all parts of the body.

VOLINA CORDIAL CURES SICK-HEADACHE, Neuralgia, Pains in the Limbs, Back and Sides, by toning the nerves and strengthening the muscles.

VOLINA CORDIAL CURES DYSPEPSIA, Indigestion and Constipation, by aiding the assimilating of the Food through the proper action of the stomach; it creates a healthy appetite.

VOLINA CORDIAL CURES NERVOUSNESS, Depression of spirits and Weakness, by enlivening and toning the system.

VOLINA CORDIAL CURES OVERWORKED and Delicate Women, Puny and Sickly Children. It is delightful and nutritious as a general Tonic.

Volina Almanac and Diary for 1887. A handsome, complete and useful Book, telling how to CURE DISEASES at HOME in a pleasant, natural way. Mailed on receipt of a 2c. postage stamp. Address

VOLINA DRUG & CHEMICAL CO. BALTIMORE, MD., U. S. A.

Sept. 23, 1883.

UNION HOTEL.

PRATT AND CHARLES STS., BALTIMORE

WM. J. LLOYD, Proprietor.

On the European Plan.

Rooms 25, 50 and 75 cents. Table Board $3.50 per week. Meals 25 cents, or $1 per day. Permanent Board, $4 to $7 per week. Livery Stable attached. Hacks and Express Wagons for hire. March 18.

BOOKS.

A Choice Selection very handsomely gotten up. We have some finely illustrated which we would like you to look over. Irene Jerome's Nature's Hallelujah, Message of the Blue Bird, Harper's Happy Hunting Grounds, by Gibson; The Classic Land of Greece, are only a few of the many books we have in stock.

NEW FALL STYLES IN HATS & CAPS for Gents and Boys.

J. H. SIMPERS

THE STORY OF A MINE.

By BRET HARTE.

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CHAPTER IX—CONTINUED.

Mr. Wood reproduced the file. Garcia ran over it with trembling fingers until at last he clutched the fateful document. Not content with opening it and glancing at its text and signature, he took it to the window.

"It is the same," he muttered with a sigh of relief.

"Of course it is," said Mr. Wood sharply. "The papers are all there. You're a fool, Victor Garcia!"

And so he was. And, for the matter of that, so was Mr. Saponaceous Wood, of counsel.

Meanwhile Miss De Haro returned to San Francisco and resumed her work. A day or two later she was joined by her landlady. Mrs. P. has too large a nature to permit an anonymous letter, written by her own hand, to stand between her and her demeanor to her little lodger. So she coddled her and flattered her and depicted in slightly exaggerated colors the grief of Don Royal at her sudden departure. All of which Miss Carmen received in a demure, kitten-like way, but still kept quietly at her work. In due time Don Royal's order was completed; still she had leisure and inclination enough to add certain touches to her ghastly sketch of the crumbling furnace.

Nevertheless, as Don Royal did not return, through excess of business, Mrs. Plodgitt turned an honest penny by letting his room, temporarily, to two quiet Mexicans, who, but for a beastly habit of cigarrito smoking which tainted the whole house, were fair enough lodgers. If they failed in making the acquaintance of their fair countrywoman, Miss De Haro, it was through that lady's pre-occupation in her own work, and not through their ostentatious endeavors.

"Miss De Haro is peculiar," explained the politic Mrs. Plodgitt to her guests; "she makes no acquaintances, which I consider bad for her business. If it had not been for me, she would not have known Royal Thatcher, the great quicksilver miner—and had his order for a picture of his mine!"

The two foreign gentlemen exchanged glances. One said, "Ah, God! this is bad," and the other, "It is not possible;" and then, when the landlady's back was turned, introduced themselves with a skeleton key into the then vacant bed room and studio of their fair countrywoman, who was absent sketching. "Thou observest," said Mr. Pedro, refugee, to Miguel, ex-ecclesiastic, "that this Americano is all powerful, and that this Victor, drunkard as he is, is right in his suspicions."

"Of a verity, yes," replied Miguel, "thou dost remember it was Jovita Castro who, for her Americano lover, betrayed the Sobriente claim. It is only with us, my Pedro, that the Mexican spirit, the real God and liberty, yet lives!"

They shook hands nobly and with sentimental fervor, and then went to work, i. e., the rummaging over the trunks, drawers and porto-manteaus of the poor little painter, Carmen De Haro, and even ripped up the mattress of her virginal cot. But they found not what they sought.

"What is that yonder on the easel, covered with a cloth?" said Miguel; "it is a trick of these artists to put their valuables together."

Pedro strode to the easel and tore away the muslin curtain that veiled it; then uttered a shriek that appalled his comrade and brought him to his side.

"In the name of God!" said Miguel, hastily, "are you trying to alarm the house?"

The ex-vaquero was trembling like a child. "Look!" he said hoarsely, "look; do you see? It is the hand of God!" and fainted on the floor.

Miguel looked. It was Carmen's partly finished sketch of the deserted furnace. The figure of Concho, thrown out strongly by the camp fire, occupied the left foreground. But to balance her picture she had evidently been obliged to introduce another—the face and figure of Pedro, on all fours, creeping toward the sleeping man.

PART III.

IN CONGRESS.

CHAPTER X.

WHO LOBBIED FOR IT.

GASHWILER.

IT was a midsummer's day in Washington. Even at early morning, while the sun was yet level with the faces of pedestrians in its broad, shadeless avenues, it was insufferably hot. Later the avenues themselves shone like the diverging rays of another sun—the Capitol—a thing to be feared by the naked eye. Later yet it grew hotter, and then a mist arose from the Potomac and blotted out the blazing arch above, and presently piled up along the horizon delusive thunder clouds, that spent their strength and substance elsewhere, and left it hotter than before. Toward evening the sun came out invigorated, having cleared the heavenly brow of perspiration, but leaving its fever unabated.

The city was deserted. The few who remained apparently buried themselves from the garish light of day in some dim, cloistered recess of shop, hotel or restaurant, and the perspiring stranger, dazed by the outer glare, who broke in upon their quiet, sequestered repose, confronted collarless and coatless specters of the past, with fans in their hands, who, after dreamily going through some perfunctory business, immediately retired to sleep after the stranger had gone. Congressmen and senators had long since returned to their several constituencies, with the various information that the country was going to ruin, or that the outlook never was more hopeful and cheering, as the tastes of their constituency indicated. A few cabinet officers still lingered, having by this time become convinced that they could do nothing their own way, or indeed in any way but the old way, and getting gloomily resigned to their situation. A body of learned, cultivated men, representing the highest legal tribunal in the land, still lingered in a vague idea of earning the scant salary bestowed upon them by the economical founders of the government, and listened patiently to the arguments of counsel, whose fees for advocacy of claims before them would have paid the life income of half the bench. There was Mr. Attorney General and his assistants still protecting the government's millions from rapacious hands, and drawing the yearly public pittance that their wealthier private antagonists would have scarce given as a retainer to their junior counsel. The little standing army of departmental employes—the helpless victims of the most senseless and idiotic form of discipline the world has known—a discipline so made up of caprice, expediency, cowardice and tyranny that its reform meant revolution, not to be tolerated by legislators and lawgivers, or a despotism in which half a dozen accidentally-chosen men interpreted their prejudices of preference as being that reform. Administration after administration and party after party had persisted in their desperate attempts to fit the youthful colonial garments, made by our fathers after a by-gone fashion, over the expanded limits and generous outline of a matured nation. There were patches here and there; there were grievous rents and holes here and there; there were ludicrous and painful exposures of growing limbs everywhere; and the party in power and the party out of power could do nothing but mend and patch, and revamp and cleanse and scour, and occasionally, in the wildness of despair, suggest even the cutting off the rebellious limbs that persisted in growing beyond the swaddling clothes of its infancy.

It was a capital of contradictions and inconsistencies. At one end of the avenue sat the responsable high keeper of the military honor, valor and warlike prestige of a great nation, without the power to pay his own troops their legal dues until some selfish quarrel between party and party was settled. Hard by sat another secretary, whose established functions seemed to be the misrepresentation of the nation abroad by the least characteristic of its classes, the politicians—and only then when they had been defeated as politicians, and when their constituents had declared them no longer worthy to be even their representatives. The national absurdity was only equaled by another, wherein an ex-politician was for four years expected to uphold the honor of a flag of a great nation over an ocean he had never tempted, with a discipline the rudiments of which he could scarcely acquire before he was removed, or his term of office expired, receiving his orders from a superior officer as ignorant of his special duties as himself, and subjected to the revision of a congress cognizant of him only as a politician. At the further end of the avenue was another department so vast in its extent and so varied in its functions that few of the really great practical workers of the land would have accepted its responsibility for ten times its salary, but which the most perfect constitution in the world handed over to men who were obliged to make it a stepping stone to future preferment. There was another department, more suggestive of its financial functions from the occasional extravagances or economies exhibited in its payrolls—successive congresses having taken other matters out of its hands—presided over by an official who bore the title and responsibility of the custodian and disburser of the nation's purse, and received a salary that a bank president would have sniffed at. For it was part of this constitutional inconsistency and administrative absurdity that in the matter of honor, justice, fidelity to trust and even business integrity, the official was always expected to be the superior of the government he represented. Yet the crowning inconsistency was that, from time to time, it was submitted to the sovereign people to decide these various inconsistencies were not really the perfect expression of the most perfect government the world had known. And it is to be recorded that the unanimous voices of representative, orator and unfettered poetry were that it was!

Even the public press lent itself to the great inconsistency. It was as clear as crystal to the journal on one side of the avenue that the country was going to the dogs unless the spirit of the fathers once more reanimated the public; it was equally clear to the journal on the other side of the avenue that only a rigid adherence to the letter of the fathers would save the nation from decline. It was obvious to the first named journal that the "letter" meant government patronage to the other journal; it was potent to that journal that the "shekels" of Senator X really animated the spirit of the fathers. Yet all agreed that it was a great and good and perfect government—subject only to the predatory incursions of a hydra-headed monster known as a "ring." The ring's origin was wrapped in secrecy, its fecundity was alarming; but although its rapacity was preternatural, its digestion was perfect and easy. It circumvolved all affairs in an atmosphere of mystery; it clouded all things with the dust and ashes of distrust. All disappointment of place, of avarice, of incompetency or ambition, was clearly attributable to it. It even permeated private and social life; there were rings in our kitchen and household service; in our public schools, that kept the active intelligences of our children passive; there were rings of engaging, handsome, dissolute young fellows, who kept us moral but unengaging seniors from the favors of the fair; there were subtle, conspiring rings among our creditors which sent us into bankruptcy and restricted our credit. In fact it would not be hazardous to say that all that was calamitous in public and private experience was clearly traceable to that combination of power in a minority over weakness in a majority—known as a ring.

Haply there was a body of demigods, as yet uninvoked, who should speedily settle all that. When Smith, of Minnesota, Robinson, of Vermont, and Jones, of Georgia, returned to congress from those rural seclusions so potent with information and so freed from local prejudices, it was understood, vaguely, that great things would be done. This was always understood. There never was a time in the history of American politics when, to use the expression of the journals before alluded to, "the present session of congress" did not "bid fair to be the most momentous in our history," and did not, as far as facts go, leave a vast amount of unfinished important business lying hopelessly upon its desk, having "bolted" the rest as rashly and with as little regard to digestion or assimilation as the American traveler has for his railway refreshment.

In this capital, on this languid midsummer day, in an upper room of one of its second rate hotels, the Hon. Pratt C. Gashwiler sat at his writing table. There are certain large, fleshy men with whom the omission of even a necktie or collar has all the effect of an indecent exposure. The Hon. Mr. Gashwiler, in his trousers and shirt, was a sight to be avoided by the modest eye. There were such palpable suggestions of vast extents of unctuous flesh in the slight glimpse offered by his open throat that his dishabille should have been as private as his business. Nevertheless, when there was a knock at his door, he unhesitatingly said, "Come in!" pushing away a goblet crowned with a certain aromatic herb with his right hand, while he drew toward him with his left a few proof slips of his forthcoming speech. The Gashwiler brow became, as it were, intelligently abstracted.

The intruder regarded Gashwiler with a glance of familiar recognition from his right eye, while his left took in a rapid survey of the papers on the table, and gleamed sardonically.

"You are at work, I see," he said apologetically.

"Yes," replied the congressman, with an air of perfunctory weariness, "one of my speeches. Those d—d printers make such a mess of it. I suppose I don't write a very fine hand."

If the gifted Gashwiler had added that he did not write a very intelligent hand, or a very grammatical hand, and that his spelling was faulty, he would have been truthful, although the copy and proof before him might not have borne him out. The near fact was that the speech was composed and written by one Expectant Dobbs, a poor retainer of Gashwiler, and the honorable member's labor as a proof-reader was confined to claim. He is a worthy young man. Although not a public officer, yet he is so near to me that perhaps I am wrong in permitting him to accept a fee for private interests. An American representative cannot be too cautious, Mr. Wiles. Perhaps you had better have also a blank transfer. The stock is, I understand, yet in the future. Mr. Dobbs, though talented and praiseworthy, is poor; he may wish to realize. If some—ahem! some friend—better circumstanced should choose to advance the cash to him and run the risk—why it would only be an act of kindness."

The introduction of such words as "anarchy," "oligarchy," "satrap," "palladium" and "Argus-eyed" in the proof, with little relevancy as to position or place, and no perceptible effect as to argument.

The stranger saw all this with his wicked left eye, but continued to beam mildly with his right. Removing the coat and waistcoat of Gashwiler from a chair, he drew it toward the table, pushing aside a portly, loud-ticking watch—the very image of Gashwiler—that lay beside him, and resting his elbows on the proofs, said:

"Well?"

"Have you anything new?" asked the parliamentary Gashwiler.

"Much! a woman!" replied the stranger.

The astute Gashwiler, waiting further information, concluded to receive this fact gaily and gallantly. "A woman?—my dear Mr. Wiles—of course! The dear creatures," he continued, with a fat, offensive chuckle, "somehow are always making their charming presence felt. Ha! ha! A man, sir, in public life becomes accustomed to that sort of thing, and knows when he must be agreeable—agreeable, sir, but firm! I've had my experience, sir—my *own* experience"—and the congressman leaned back in his chair, not unlike a robust St. Anthony who had withstood one temptation to thrive on another.

"Yes," said Wiles, impatiently, "but d——n it, she's on the *other side*."

"The other side!" repeated Gashwiler, vacantly.

"Yes, she's a niece of Garcia's. A little she devil."

"But Garcia's on our side," rejoined Gashwiler.

"Yes, but she is bought by the ring."

"A woman!" sneered Mr. Gashwiler? what can she do with men who won't be made fools of? Is she so handsome?"

"I never saw any great beauty in her," said Wiles, shortly, "although they say that she's rather caught that d—d Thatcher, in spite of his coldness. At any rate she is his protege. But she isn't the sort you're thinking of, Gashwiler. They say she knows, or pretends to know, something about the grant. She may have got hold of some of her uncle's papers. Those greasers were always d—d fools; and, if he did anything foolish, like as not he bungled or didn't cover up his tracks. And with his knowledge and facilities, too! Why, if I'd—" but here Mr. Wiles stopped to sigh over the inequalities of fortune that wasted opportunities on the less skillful scamp.

Mr. Gashwiler became dignified. "She can do nothing with us," he said potentially.

Wiles turned his wicked eye on him. "Manuel and Miguel, who sold out to our man, are afraid of her. They were our witnesses. I verily believe they'd take back everything if she got after them. And as for Pedro, he thinks she holds the power of life and death over him."

"Pedro! life and death—what's all this?" said the astonished Gashwiler.

Wiles saw his blunder, but saw also that he had gone too far to stop. "Pedro," he said, "was strongly suspected of having murdered Concho, one of the original locaters."

Mr. Gashwiler turned white as a sheet, and then flushed again into an apoplectic glow. "Do you dare to say," he began as soon as he could find his tongue and his legs, for in the exercise of his congressional functions these extreme members supported each other—"do you mean to say," he stammered in rising rage, "that you have dared to deceive an American lawgiver into legislating upon a

"Deceive an American lawgiver."

measure connected with a capital offense? Do I understand you to say, sir, that murder stands upon the record—stands upon the record, sir—of this cause to which, as a representative of Remus, I have lent my official aid? Do you mean to say that you have deceived my constituency, whose sacred trust I hold, in inveigling me to hiding a crime from the Argus eyes of justice?" And Mr. Gashwiler looked towards the bell-pull as if about to summon a servant to witness this outrage against the established judiciary.

"The murder, if it was a murder, took place before Garcia entered upon this claim, or had a footing in this court," returned Wiles, blandly, "and is no part of the record."

"You are sure it is not spread upon the record?"

"I am. You can judge for yourself."

Mr. Gashwiler walked to the window, returned to the table, finished his liquor in a single gulp, and then, with a slight resumption of dignity, said:

"That alters the case."

Wiles glanced with his left eye at the congressman. The right placidly looked out of the window. Presently he said quietly, "I've brought you the certificates of the stock; do you wish them made out in your own name?"

Mr. Gashwiler tried hard to look as if he were trying to recall the meaning of Wiles' words. "Oh!—ah!—umph!—let me see—oh, yes, the certificates, certainly! Of course you will make them out in the name of my secretary, Mr. Expectant Dobbs. They will perhaps repay him for the extra clerical labor required in the prosecution of your ing that this was an intimation that the interview was over, the new private secretary, a little dashed as to his near hopes, but still sanguine of the future, humbly took his leave.

But here a certain providence, perhaps mindful of poor Dobbs, threw into his simple hands—to be used or not, if he were worthy or capable of using it—a certain power and advantage. He had descended the staircase, and was passing through the lower corridor, when he was made the unwilling witness of a remarkable assault.

It appeared that Mr. Wiles, who had quitted Gashwiler's presence as Dobbs was announced, had other business in the hotel, and in pursuance of it had knocked at room No. 90. In response to the gruff voice that bade him enter, Mr. Wiles opened the door, and espied the figure of a tall, muscular, fiery-bearded man extended on the bed, with the bed clothes carefully tucked under his chin, and his arms lying flat by his side.

Mr. Wiles beamed with his right cheek, and advanced to the bed as if to take the hand of the stranger, who, however, neither by word or sign, responded to his salutation.

"Perhaps I'm intruding?" said Mr. Wiles blandly.

"Perhaps you are," said Red Beard dryly.

Mr. Wiles forced a smile on his right cheek, which he turned to the smiter, but permitted the left to indulge in unlimited malevolence. "I wanted merely to know if you have looked into that matter?" he said meekly.

"I've looked into it and around it and across it and over it and through it," responded the man gravely, with his eyes fixed on Wiles.

"You are proverbially generous, Mr. Gashwiler," said Wiles, opening and shutting his left eye like a dark lantern on the benevolent representative.

"Youth, when faithful and painstaking, should be encouraged," replied Mr. Gashwiler. "I lately had occasion to point this out in a few remarks I had to make before the Sabbath school reunion at Remus. Thank you, I will see that they are—ahem!—conveyed to him. I shall give them to him with my own hand," he concluded, falling back in his chair, as if the better to contemplate the perspective of his own generosity and condescension. Mr. Wiles took his hat and turned to go. Before he reached the door Mr. Gashwiler returned to the social level with a chuckle:

"You say this woman, this Garcia's niece, is handsome and smart?"

"Yes."

"I can set another woman on the track that'll euchre her every time!"

Mr. Wiles was too clever to appear to notice the sudden lapse in the congressman's dignity, and only said, with his right eye:

"Can you?"

"By G—d, I *will*, or I don't know how to represent Remus."

Mr. Wiles thanked him with his right eye, and looked a dagger with his left. "Good," he said, and added persuasively: "Does she live here?"

The congressman nodded assent. "An awfully handsome woman—a particular friend of mine!" Mr. Gashwiler here looked as if he would not mind to have been rallied a little over his intimacy with the fair one; but the astute Mr. Wiles was at the same moment making up his mind, after interpreting the congressman's look and manner, that he must know this fair incognito if he wished to sway Gashwiler. He determined to bide his time, and withdrew.

The door was scarcely closed upon him when another knock diverted Mr. Gashwiler's attention from his proofs. The door opened to a young man with sandy hair and anxious face. He entered the room deprecatingly, as if conscious of the presence of a powerful being, to be supplicated and feared. Mr. Gashwiler did not attempt to disabuse his mind. "Busy, you see," he said shortly, "correcting your work."

"I hope it is acceptable?" said the young man timidly.

"Well—yes—it will do," said Gashwiler; "indeed I may say it is satisfactory on the whole," he added with the appearance of a large generosity; "quite satisfactory."

"You have no news, I suppose," continued the young man, with a slight flush, born of pride or expectation.

"No, nothing as yet." Mr. Gashwiler paused as if a thought had struck him.

"I have thought," he said, finally, "that some position—such as a secretaryship with me—would help you to a better appointment. Now, supposing that I make you my private secretary, giving you some important and confidential business. Eh?"

Dobbs looked at his patron with a certain wistful, dog-like expectancy, moved himself excitedly on his chair seat in a peculiar canine-like anticipation of gratitude, strongly suggesting that he would have wagged his tail if he had one. At which Mr. Gashwiler became more impressive.

"Indeed, I may say that I anticipated it by certain papers I have put in your charge and in your name, only taking from you a transfer that might enable me to satisfy my conscience hereafter in recommending you as my —ahem!—private secretary. Perhaps, as a mere form, you might now, while you are here, put your name to these transfers, and, so to speak, begin your duties at once."

The glow of pride and hope that mantled the cheek of poor Dobbs might have melted a harder heart than Gashwiler's. But the senatorial toga had invested Mr. Gashwiler with a more than Roman stoicism toward the feelings of others, and he only fell back in his chair in the pose of conscious rectitude as Dobbs hurriedly signed the paper.

"I shall place them in my portman-tell," said Gashwiler, suiting the word to the action, "for safe keeping. I need not inform you, who are now, as it were, on the threshold of official life, that perfect and inviolable secrecy in all affairs of state"—Mr. G. here pointed toward his portmanteau as if it contained a treaty at least—"is most essential and necessary."

Dobbs assented. "Then my duties will keep me with you here?" he asked doubtfully.

"No, no," said Gashwiler hastily; then, correcting himself, he added: "that is—for the present—no!"

Poor Dobbs' face fell. The near fact was that he had lately had notice to quit his present lodgings in consequence of arrears in his rent, and he had a hopeful reliance that his confidential occupation would carry bread and lodging with it. But he only asked if there were any new papers to make out.

"Ahem! not at present; the fact is I am obliged to give so much of my time to callers —I have to-day been obliged to see half a dozen—that I must lock myself up and say 'Not at home' for the rest of the day." Feel-

"And you have perused all the papers?" continued Mr. Wiles.

"I've read every paper, every speech, every affidavit, every decision, every argument," said the stranger, as if repeating a formula.

Mr. Wiles attempted to conceal his embarrassment by an easy, right handed smile, that went off sardonically on the left, and continued: "Then I hope, my dear sir, that, having thoroughly mastered the case, you are inclined to be favorable to us?"

The gentleman in the bed did not reply, but apparently nestled more closely beneath the coverlids.

"I have brought the shares I spoke of," continued Mr. Wiles, insinuatingly.

"Hev you a friend within call?" interrupted the recumbent man, gently.

"I don't quite understand?" smiled Mr. Wiles. Of course, any name you might suggest——"

"Hev you a friend, any chap that you might waltz in here at a moment's call?" continued the man in bed. "No? Do you know any of them waiters in the house? Thar's a bell over yan?" and he motioned with his eyes toward the wall, but did not otherwise move his body.

"No," said Wiles, becoming slightly suspicious and wrathful.

"Mebbe a stranger might do? I reckon thar's one passin' in the hall. Call him in—he'll do!"

Wiles opened the door a little impatiently, yet inquisitively, as Dobbs passed. The man in bed called out, "Oh, stranger!" and, as Dobbs stopped, said, "Come yar."

Dobbs entered a little timidly, as was his habit with strangers.

"I don't know who you be—nor care, I reckon," said the stranger. "This yer man" pointing to Wiles—"is Wiles. I'm Josh Sibblee of Fresno, member of congress from the Fourth congressional district of Californy. I'm jist lying here with a derringer into each hand—jist lying here kivered up and holdin' in on'y to keep from blowin' the top o' this d—d skunk's head off. I kinder feel I can't hold in any longer. What I want to say to ye, stranger, is that this yer skunk—which his name is Wiles—hez bin tryin' his d—dest to get a bribe onto Josh, and Josh, outo respect for his constituents, is jist waitin' for some stranger to walk in and stop the d—dest fight——"

"But, my dear Mr. Sibblee, there must be some mistake," said Wiles, earnestly.

"Mistake? Strip me!"

"No! No!" said Wiles, hurriedly, as the simple-minded Dobbs was about to draw down the coverlid.

"Take him away," said the Hon. Mr. Sibblee, "before I disgrace my constituency. They said I'd be in jail afore I get through the session. Ef you've got any humanity, stranger, shake him out, and pow'ful quick, too."

Dobbs, quite white and aghast, looked at Wiles and hesitated. There was a slight movement in the bed. Both men started for the door, and the next minute it closed very decidedly on the member from Fresno.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW IT WAS LOBBIED FOR.

MRS. HOPKINSON.

THE Hon. Pratt C. Gashwiler, M. C., was, of course, unaware of the incident described in the last chapter. His secret, even if it had been discovered by Dobbs, was safe in that gentleman's innocent and honorable hands, and certainly was not of a quality that Mr. Wiles, at present, would have cared to expose. For, in spite of Mr. Wiles' discomfiture, he still had enough experience of character to know that the irate member from Fresno would be satisfied with his own peculiar manner of vindicating his own personal integrity, and would not make a public scandal of it. Again, Wiles was convinced that Dobbs was equally implicated with Gashwiler and would be silent for his own sake. So that poor Dobbs, as is too often the fate of simple but weak natures, had full credit for duplicity by every rascal in the land.

From which it may be inferred that nothing occurred to disturb the security of Gashwiler. When the door closed upon Mr. Wiles he indited a note which, with a costly but exceedingly distasteful bouquet—rearranged by his own fat fingers, and discord and incongruity visible in every combination of color—he sent off by a special messenger. Then he proceeded to make his toilet—an operation rarely graceful or picturesque in our sex, and an insult to the spectator when obesity is superadded. When he had put on a clean shirt, of which there was grossly too much, and added a white waistcoat, that seemed to accent his rotundity, he completed his attire with a black frock coat of the latest style, and surveyed himself complacently before a mirror. It is to be recorded that, however satisfactory the result might have been to Mr. Gashwiler, it was not so to the disinterested spectator. There are some men on whom "that deformed thief, Fashion," avenges himself by making their clothes appear perennially new. The gloss of the tailor's iron never disappears; the creases of the shelf perpetually rise in judgment against the wearer. Novelty was the general suggestion of Mr. Gashwiler's full dress—it was never his habitude—and "Our Own Make," "Nobby," and the "Latest Style, only $15," was as patent on the legislator's broad back as if it still retained the shopman's ticket.

Thus arrayed, within an hour he complacently followed the note and his floral offering. The house he sought had been once the residence of a foreign ambassador, who had loyally represented his government in a single unimportant treaty, now forgotten, and in various receptions and dinners, still actively remembered by occasional visits to its salon, now the average dreary American parlor. "Dear me," the fascinating Mr. X. would say, "but do you know, love, in this very room I remember meeting the distinguished Marquis of Monte Pio;" or perhaps the fashionable Jones, of the state department, instantly crushed the decayed friend he was perfunctorily visiting by saying: "'Pon my soul, you here! Why, the last time I was in this room I gossiped for an hour with the Countess de Castenet in that very corner." For, with the recall of the aforesaid ambassador, the mansion had become a boarding-house, kept by the wife of a departmental clerk

Perhaps there was nothing in the history of the house more quaint and philosophic than the story of its present occupant. Roger Fauquier had been a departmental clerk for forty years. It was at once his practical good luck and his misfortune to have been early appointed to a position which required a thorough and complete knowledge of the formulas and routine of a department that expended millions of the public funds. Fauquier, on a poor salary, diminishing instead of increasing with his service, had seen successive administrations bud and blossom and decay, but had kept his position through the fact that his knowledge was a necessity to the successive chiefs and employes. Once, it was true that he had been summarily removed by a new secretary, to make room for a camp follower, whose exhaustive and intellectual services in a political campaign had made him eminently fit for anything; but the alarming discovery that the new clerk's knowledge of grammar and etymology was even worse than that of the secretary himself, and that, through ignorance of detail, the business of that department was retarded to a damage to the government of over half a million of dollars, led to the reinstatement of Mr. Fauquier—at a lower salary. For it was felt that something was wrong somewhere, and as it had always been the custom of congress and the administration to cut down salaries as the first step of reform, they made old Mr. Fauquier a notable example. A gentleman born, of somewhat expensive tastes, having lived up to his former salary, this change brought another bread-winner into the field, Mrs. Fauquier, who tried, more or less unsuccessfully, to turn her old southern habits of hospitality to remunerative account. But as poor Fauquier could never be prevailed upon to present a bill to a gentleman, sir, and as some of the scions of the best southern families were still waiting for, or had been recently dismissed from, a position, the experiment was a pecuniary failure. Yet the house was of excellent repute and well patronized; indeed, it was worth something to see old Fauquier sitting at the head of his own table, in something of his ancestral style, relating anecdotes of great men now dead and gone, interrupted only by occasional visits from importunate tradesman.

Prominent among what Mr. Fauquier called his "little family," was a black-eyed lady of great powers of fascination, and considerable local reputation as a flirt. Nevertheless, these social aberrations were amply condoned by a facile and complacent husband, who looked with a lenient and even admiring eye upon the little lady's amusement, and, to a certain extent, lent a tacit indorsement to her conduct. Nobody minded Hopkinson; in the blaze of Mrs. Hopkinson's fascinations he was completely lost sight of. A few married women with unduly sensitive husbands, and several single ladies of the best and longest standing, reflected severely on her conduct. The younger men, of course, admired her, but I think she got her chief support from old fogies like ourselves. For it is your quiet, self-conceited, complacent, philosophic, broad-waisted pater-familias who, after all, is the one to whom the gay and giddy of the proverbially impulsive, unselfish sex owe their place in the social firmament. We are never inclined to be captious; we laugh at as a folly what our wives and daughters condemn as a fault; our "withers are unwrung," yet we still confess to the fascinations of a pretty face. We know, bless us, from dear experience, the exact value of one woman's opinion of another; we want our brilliant little friend to shine; it is only the moths who will burn their two-penny immature wings in the flame! And why should they not? Nature has been pleased to supply more moths than candles. Go to! Give the pretty creature—be she maid, wife or widow—a show! And so, my dear sir, while mater-familias bends her black brows in disgust, we smile our superior little smile, and extend to Mistress Anonyma our gracious indorsement. And if giddiness is grateful, or if folly is friendly—well, of course, we can't help that. Indeed, it rather proves our theory.

I had intended to say something about Hopkinson; but really there is very little to say. He was invariably good humored. A few ladies once tried to show him that he really ought to feel worse than he did about the conduct of his wife; and it is recorded that Hopkinson, in an excess of good humor and kindness, promised to do so. Indeed, the good fellow was so accessible that it is said young DeLancy, of the tape department, confided to Hopkinson his jealousy of a rival; and revealed the awful secret that he (De Lancy) had reason to expect more loyalty from his (Hopkinson's) wife. The good fellow is reported to have been very sympathetic, and to have promised DeLancy to lend whatever influence he had with Mrs. Hopkinson in his favor. "You see," he said explanatorily to DeLancy, "she has a good deal to attend to lately, and, I suppose, has got rather careless—that's women's way. But if I can't bring her round I'll speak to Gashwiler—I'll get him to use his influence with Mrs. Hop. So cheer up, my boy; he'll make it all right."

The appearance of a bouquet on the table of Mrs. Hopkinson was no rare event; nevertheless, Mr. Gashwiler's was not there. Its hideous contrasts had offended her woman's eye—it is observable that good taste survives the wreck of all the other feminine virtues—and she had distributed it to make boutonnieres for other gentlemen. Yet, when he appeared, she said to him hastily, putting her little hand over the cardiac region:

"I'm so glad you came. But you gave me *such* a fright an