

He was a snivelling rascal, a man who had a tear and a white over at his command, and could vary both with mock professions of pure motives and generous intent, of a clean heart and a white conscience. He ceased from both for a moment occasionally to wheedle a coin from your pocket or to extract a promise of an old hat or pair of boots.

You felt instinctively that he was a Charlatan. There was no spark in him of the manhood which refuses to be entirely degraded. He was a mere piece of sordid flesh and bone—as sordid as his dirty neckerchief, or his greasy coat, or his battered torn hat, or his boots, purposely full of holes to attract sympathy.

'No,' said he in a tragic tone, 'I want no better life than this. What care I for life? Nothing—nothing!'

The fellow was furtively eyeing his listener, and already wondering what sort of subject he would prove.

'And yet,' he exclaimed, with his arms thrust out, 'tis an evil Fate that holds me to it! His tone had now descended to the pathetic. 'That fate is here—here—here!' He tapped his forehead; he had once been 'super' in a small theatre, and retained some of 'the profession's' mannerisms.

'Me ber-rain is seared by the memory of me ker-rime! Yet it was no ker-rime. I dip me brother no intentional hurt—and I followed him mourning to the ker-ave!'

Charlie was better off than I was, better dressed than I was, better looking than I was. Though, added the rascal in a tone of self-conscious pride, I was not ill favoured in me time.

I took his money readily. I acted as he asked. I sang his praises in every place. I swung the censor of incense eternally in his face, and Charlie—poor duped—believed all I uttered.

Dick, said he to me one day, I mean to marry little Nellie Armstrong.

Never I said I.

'I said he. Had you penetrated me nmost soul you would have seen there, written large, rage, 'ate, malice, and all huncharitableness. I loathed the well-groomed top! How the rascal sneered! His love-making proceeded well.

Everybody felt that it was a most suitable match—everybody but me. I made myself pleasing and presentable to Nellie. She never had the slightest idea of the maddening passion that possessed me—neither had Charlie.

'He told me of their love-moments, of the vows they had exchanged, of the hopes they cherished. And I 'ated—'ow I 'ated him!—though houtwardly I was all congratulations.

'Charlie went one day to see his uncle, an old man who lived thirty miles away, and from whom he was expected to inherit a fortune. He was to return next day.

'What a night divided them two days! No man or woman could remember another like it. The country seemed a

I was at the Armstrongs' that night, and I shared with Nellie—that is, apparently I did—her glad joy that Charlie was not riding home until the morrow. Old Mr. Armstrong had been persuading me to stop there that night, and just as I had consented there came a crash as though the very 'avens had been rent asunder. We knew it was not thunder—we knew that there had been a more material cause than that. Some of us rushed out. The cause was then made apparent. There, not a hundred yards before us, the road, sodden with continuous rain, built on an uneasy foundation, had disappeared!

'The thought came upon me even as I looked that this was a repetition of the sunken road at Waterloo. You remember the incident? Napoleon had bidden the flower of his cavalry 'url all that might against us. They galloped on in all their paoopled fury. They knew not that the road had sunk in the night. First one or two of the vanguard went over, then tens and twenties, then 'undreds—until that gulf was a 'ideous mass of dead men and horses—mutilated, 'opeless, crushed.

'What if Charlie had been riding along that road. That was my thought.

'I looked at Nellie. She was pale as death, and trembling; the same thought had come to her. A mock compassion beamed from my eyes as we exchanged a glance of sympathy.

'I left the Armstrongs betimes, and my first care was to walk five miles away to the 'Orange Tree' inn—I knew Charlie

'I know my man. I know that thought would keep him from his sweetheart's side, and that once his horse was refreshed he would gallop to her with all the speed the animal could command.

'I thought of this speed with 'appy gratitude. It would not allow him to perceive the gulf. Over and over he would go, and in my madness I revelled in the thought! Oh, in' human me!

All at once, I stopped paralysed with fear. What if my letter were found upon his body? It would be no evidence against me; but it would show that, consciously or unconsciously, I had lured him to his doom.

I must get that letter. But 'ow? As good luck would have it, I had left a book at the Armstrongs'. I determined to make that my excuse for going towards the house just at the hour when Charlie would be hurrying thither.

'I crept to the side of the road. Concealed by an over-reaching tree and by the darkness of the night, I listened intently. It was a moment of maddening suspense.

'Suddenly the sound of 'orses 'oo's fell on my hanzious ear! I listened more intently. The 'orseman was coming towards me at a breakneck speed. It was Charlie! He would soon be a 'uddled inert mass mingling with mother earth. And Nellie would be free for me to woo! Oh, yes, I would win her—of that I felt certain!

The 'orse was on the very verge of

There a heavy mass lay—It was the poor 'orse, broken necked and dead. I stumbled over something else—it was a man, Charlie—for I felt it was he—moaned in his dying anguish.

I ran my hand through his pockets and seized every scrap of paper. Then I sped, shouting wildly, to the Armstrongs. The door was thrown open, and there in a flood of light stood—Charlie David!

What hideous nightmare was this. Had Charlie already come to accuse me of my crime? Did his ghost already menace me.

I stumbled and fell, and Charlie caught me. His hands were flesh and blood, there there was no doubt about that!

Why, I gasped, I thought you were over the sunken road!

Oh, he replied, with a merry laugh. I received your note at the Orange Tree, and galloped over here while it was starlight. I saw the danger in time.

Who, then, was the victim?

'Oh, I know, old man, he added, seizing me by the hand. 'You had forgotten the sunken road when you wrote that note, so you hurried up here to warn me. I say, Nellie,' said he turning to his sweetheart, 'it isn't every fellow who has a friend like Dick, is it? You're to be my best man, old chap. We've decided that tonight.'

'I turned cold at these words, but colder still at the thought of the poor fellow who had gone headlong, shrieking, into that pit of death. I knew I might have saved him.

'But, Charlie,' I hurriedly asseverated, 'somebody went over into that terrible depth. I heard his shriek. Quick—give me a lantern!'

'Hushed, walking cautiously, peering anxiously, with lanterns flashing hither and thither, we approached the awful gap.

'Charlie was the first to reach it; a cry came from him—'Dick go the house! Dick, go away!' He was bending over a body.

'I cast one glance on that form. I knelt by it. I knew the victim at once. It was my own brother—Jack! It was he who had gone to his doom!

'In a moment the full 'ideousness of my crime burst upon me. With a cry I rushed away blindly through the black fury of the gale. Somehow I got home at last, and in my pocket found the papers I had taken from Jack. One was in my father's writing, and addressed to me.

'Come, my dear boy, come at once,' it ran. 'Jack will tell you more; your poor mother cannot live through the night. She has had a terrible accident. Come, my dear Dick! She is calling for you.'

'Well, mother died, and Nellie married Charlie, and I—became what I am!

'Thanks,' said the fellow a moment later with a grin, as his glance alighted upon the coins that had been slipped into his hand—'thank you kin dy! Glad you liked the yarn. Come again, and I'll commit half a dozen more murders for the money.

He grinned an adieu, and once more took his stand on the kerb.

'Please buy a box of matches to help me to get a night's lodging! I only want thruppence, gen'l'men,' he whispered plaintively to the first comer.

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**On the Bargain Counter.**  
A well known society woman was taking a drive in the park, says the New York Times. The coachman was too lively in his use of the whip, and nearly run it into another vehicle.

'James,' said the lady after they had returned home, 'you were very careless today. What was your head given you for if not to use?'

'Pardon, mem,' replied James. 'If I had any head I'd not be workin' for thirty five dollars a month!'



On The Balcony