

SAM, THE GRAFTER.

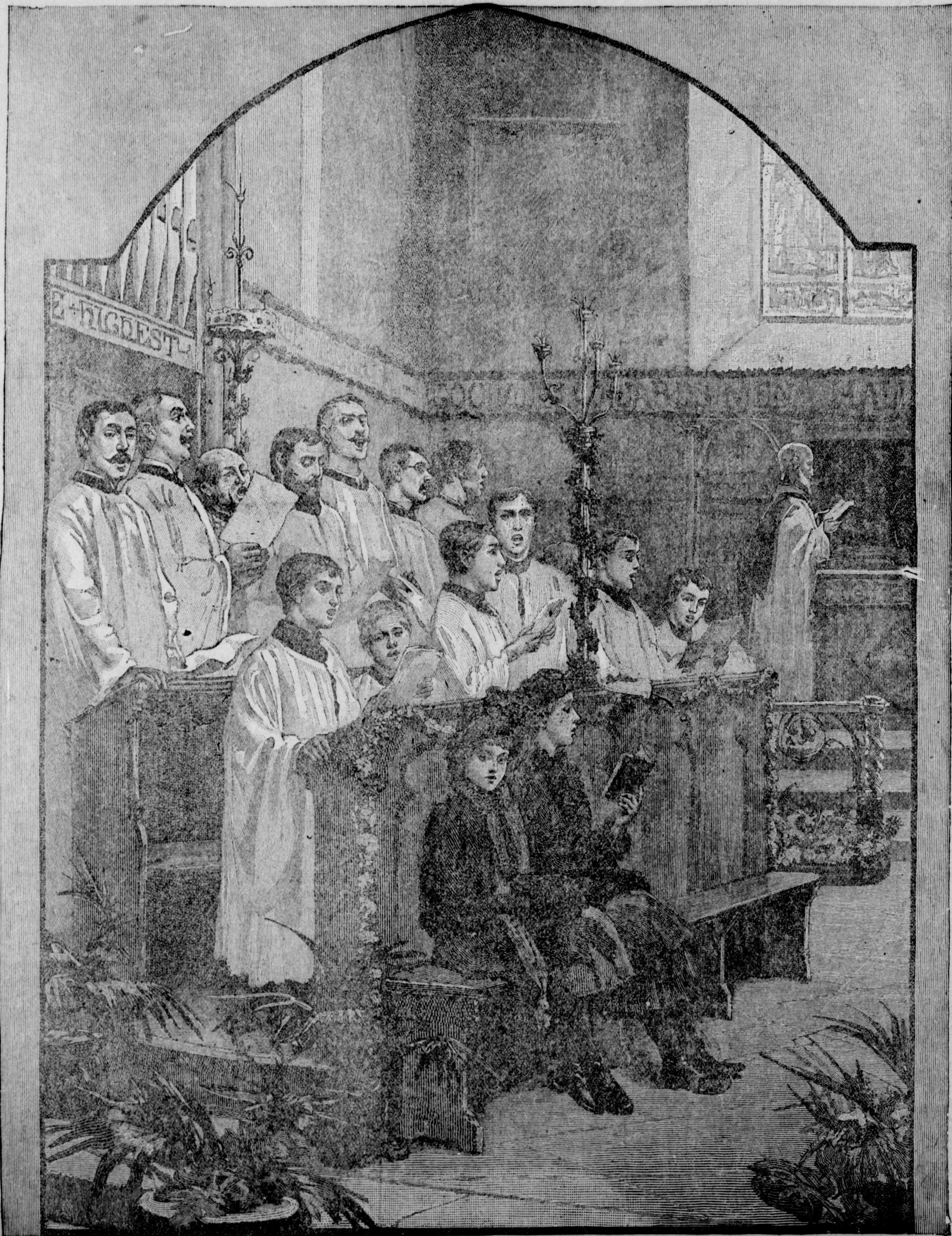
'This is my birthday,' said Sam, the telegraph boy.
 'Wish you many happy returns,' remarked the stenographer.
 'The superintendent gave me a dollar,' continued Sam.
 'That was nice,' agreed the stenographer.
 'Miss Goode, across the hall, gave me a box of candy,' persisted Sam.
 'How sweet of her!' exclaimed the stenographer, addressing an envelope.
 'I like to get presents,' said Sam.
 'So I infer,' replied the stenographer, looking at the clock.
 'Say, your clock's slow,' commented Sam, waiving the birthday question.
 'Thank you. Glad you happened to mention it,' and the stenographer applied herself to the typewriter.
 Thus discouraged and having no alternative, Sam returned to the telegraph department. He was soon in evidence again.
 'Time, please?' said the stenographer, moistening the tip of her pencil and reaching for the telegraph sheet.

'I ain't got no telegram,' confessed Sam, with a prefatory accent.
 'What for are you down here, then?' queried the stenographer. 'Broke out with another birthday, have you?'
 'I'm going on a trip,' said Sam. 'Guess I'll go to Denver.'
 'On your way now? Well, so long; hope you'll have a good time. If you hurry a bit, you won't be missed from your office; they'll think you had more than one telegram to deliver.'
 'Oh, I'll be gone a week,' he remarked. 'Do you think Denver is a good place to go?'
 'Yes, if you don't have to stay more than a week and it is the right season. Why don't you go to Port Arthur and see the ships come in?'
 'I don't know nobody here,' Sam objected.
 'That is nothing against the town. Go down and get acquainted. They'll know you—next time.'
 'Er huh!' said Sam.
 'By all means. Meet the hotel runners, advertising solicitors, promoters. Take

stock in everything. Say you are from the effete East. You let that typewriter alone.'
 'Would you like to take a chance on a typewriter?' asked Sam, producing a handful of small yellow envelopes.
 'Positively, I would not. I have already taken the main chance on a typewriter. I don't think it is a good chance.'
 'I know you will,' cooed Sam, turning to the acting chief clerk.
 'I expect it would save time, and time is money in a railroad office,' said the acting chief clerk, meaningly.
 'Oh I ain't going to make you take it. I won't have no trouble getting rid of these few chances. There are only about fifteen left, and they run small numbers. If you care to take one I'll give you a tip.' Sam's voice lowered: 'The smallest numbers are in the middle.' He held out the envelopes temptingly, fumbling the corner of one. The acting chief clerk wavered on the danger side. 'Do you guarantee it will not be more than nineteen cent?' he asked.
 'Sure,' said Sam, 'It'll not be over that if it's under.'
 The acting chief clerk drew the envelope, opened it, extracted the slip. The number was 53.
 'Done!' he cried, waving the slip, 'and by you, villain! Who would ever have guessed you were that much smarter than you look?'
 'Say,' insinuated Sam, encouraged to boldness, 'would you rather be as big a

fool as you look, or look a bigger fool than you are? Pay your money and take your choice.'
 'Is 53 one of the small numbers you are offering at special rates this morning?' said the acting chief clerk.
 Sam's eyes twinkled. 'Better take another,' he suggested. 'You are sure to get a small number if you keep a-taking them.' Jim Haggle, he took four chances, and they counted up less'n 30 cents.
 'I guess he felt like 30 cents before he got through with you. Get out with your lotteries. If you come here with another, I will have you arrested.'
 Sam had a busy spell for a day or two, and delivered his message hurriedly. His cheerful whistle was not heard in the hall nor his double shuffle at the door.
 'Sam,' called the acting chief clerk one afternoon as Sam was making haste to get on his favorite side of the door.
 Sam spun around. 'Well, I'm in a hurry. I have to go up on the eighth door, and it is 4 o'clock now.'
 'Go 'long, if it please you. I only wanted to show you the carbon of a letter I wrote to your superintendent. I thought perhaps you might wish to take some action. I am no man to work underhandedly. When I am taken in on a straight business proposition I saw wood and say nothing; but when I am tricked, duped, held up to ridicule, I exercise the divine right of self-protection and appeal to justice through arbitration. You will see

by this letter that I have been perfectly arbitrary.'
 The acting chief clerk leaned solemnly back, took his right hand out of the upper atmosphere where it had been exercising the spirit of justice, and lit a cigar. He puffed it rapidly, while Sam carefully read and re-read the following letter addressed to the superintendent of telegraph:
 'You are doubtless aware that tramps, beggars and solicitors are not allowed in this building, and in view of this fact I am surprised to learn that someone in your department has been going from office to office presenting a lottery scheme. Thinking possibly this may have been done without your knowledge, I deemed it advisable to lay the matter before you for your explanation and recommendation before taking it up with the president, who is the proper person to handle an infringement of this building.'
 'As this is rather a delicate matter for all concerned, I prefer not to mention any names at this writing; but I would add, for your information that my acting chief clerk was inveigled into taking a 'chance,' and drew No 53, after having received positive assurance from the 'grafter' that the number would be less than 20, in proof of which I enclosed said number (53). I would further add for your information without mentioning the name, that this person is very careless in the handling of telegrams of importance to this department seriously interfering with the detail of this office.
 I respectfully await your prompt reply.'
 The letter was signed 'General Agent,' and marked 'Copy to President.' Sam's countenance paled and elongated as he read. 'I didn't know it was against the rules. I didn't mean to do nothing wrong. One of the other boys done it.'
 'What's his name?' said the acting chief clerk, quickly. 'Expose him, and save yourself. We'll make an example of him.'
 'No, you don't do no such a thing. I don't give nobody away. You don't have to pay it. I don't need 53 cents. I got a dollar.'
 'I'll pay my 53 cents. It is not the money I care for; it is the principle. You have been trying to run some kind of a graft in this office ever since you entered the service of this company. Your effort must cease. My lady stenographer there is a woman. My office boy will soon be a young man. My clerks have no thought of schemes and stratagems. Shall the innocent confidence of these persons be abused by an underling from the telegraph office? Shall their hardearned gold be seduced in to the treasury of an embryo gambler? N-y, I swear not by my father's clerk, bringing both hands out of the upper atmosphere.'
 Sam laid the letter on the desk, drew a long sigh, looked a vain appeal for sympathy, and passed out of the office thinking paragraphs between every step.
 'You had better walk up stairs,' called the acting chief clerk. 'You haven't time to wait for the elevator.'
 Sam returned in a half hour. 'I have been talking with the chief dispatcher,' he said. 'I find there is no objection to my selling chances as long as I don't bother nobody about his work. He said, and I think so, too, there wouldn't be no use writing to the president about it. I ain't going to sell no more after these are gone. You needn't pay for yours until the first of the month. I give them all to the first.'
 'That was a clever idea,' remarked the acting chief clerk. 'You will need all the money you can raise on the first. No telling how long you may be out of a job. Maybe if you offer to work cheap you can get in at the Western Union. They are not very particularly whom they employ.'
 'Do I look like a Western Union boy?' grumbled Sam.
 'You might if you were not washed,' said the acting chief clerk.
 'You don't mean to say,' appealed Sam; 'that you have done went and took my job?'
 'Of course not. I don't want your job. Man alive, I get twice as much money as you do, have money in the bank and I have rich and influential friends, people who would give me any amount necessary to get me out of town, whether or not I expressed a wish to go.'
 The acting chief clerk was out when Sam next had business in the office.
 'I don't like that man,' he confided to the stenographer. 'He's the stingiest, meanest man I ever saw. I found out I can make him pay for getting me into trouble, and if lose my job I'll make it hot for him. I have not broke any rules of this building, neither. Every day I see people in here trying to sell something. There's a Salvation Army girl in the hall



THE CHOIR.

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