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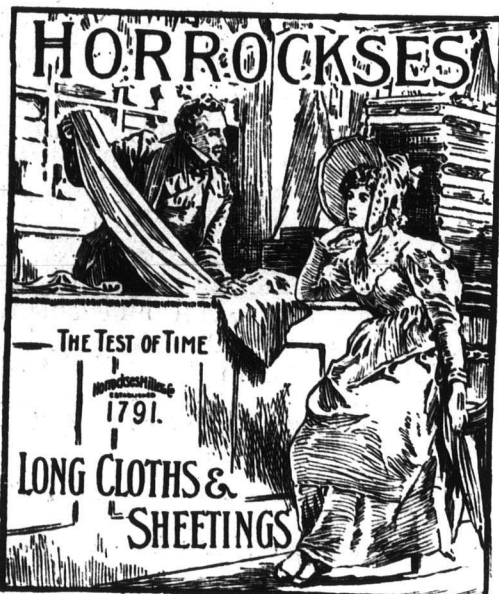
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**How Toomey Willed his Govern-  
ment Job**

By Robert Shackleton

"**I** BEING in sound mind and body, do hereby resign my position in the Custom-house; and, being after dying, as I fully believe, and of sound mind and body as aforesaid, do hereby will my job, which I have held so long, to my good friend Dennis Duggan; and I hope Michael McShea will agree to this, and I hereby ask him to give the job to Duggan, this being my last will."

It was in broken sentences, for he was very weak, that old Toomey slowly dictated the document, and it was with evident pride in the composition. "You see how careful I am to put that in about being in sound body and mind?" he said, as Duggan slowly wrote down the words. "It's points like them that spoils many a will, Duggan; but you see I look out for you—I look out for you, Dennis."

"Yes," said Duggan, sighing deeply; and he caught the eye of the comely Mrs. Toomey, so soon to be a widow, and she sighed mournfully in return. "Yes, Toomey, and there's only one point more. It isn't signed yet, and many a will's been lost through not being signed—many a will's been lost through that. Will you sign it now, Toomey?"

Toomey answered with a touch of irritation. "Oh, I'm not so near going as that, Dennis. I've life in me yet, even though my time may be near at hand."

"The—the doctor—" sobbed Mrs. Toomey. She was thinking of the doctor's prophecy as to the few hours of life remaining to her husband. Now, Toomey never liked to hear Mrs. Toomey sob, and so, to divert her mind from her grief, he said: "Here, Duggan, give me that pencil, and after I sign it Mary'll sign as a witness." And so Toomey signed the will, and Mary witnessed it; and then he signed another will, giving to his wife all of his property, "both really and in person," as he expressed it; and then he lay back wearily, and his face grew ashen pale. Little by little he gasped out:

"It'll be all right now—it'll be all right. There's nobody to dispute the money with you, Mary, but brother Tim's children and my cousins. But you'll file the will at court, and there's \$2,300 in the three banks, and you'll get it. And the other will, Duggan, it don't need to be filed in any court, for it concerns a job that's nobody's business but McShea's and mine."

His earthly business thus concluded, he turned his face toward the open window, and looked out across the tenement street, and listened to the myriad of sounds that floated up to him. And again Duggan dolefully sighed, and again sighed the comely widow that was to be. It was a hot evening in mid-summer, following a torrid day; and Eldridge Street is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods of that most densely crowded portion of New York. Toomey had lived in his simple rooms, on the top floor of his particular tenement, for a quarter of a century, and had grown to love all of the neighborhood sights and sounds.

"Who's any happier than me?" he was wont to say. And tonight, as he looked and listened, the thought came to him, more bitterly than at any previous time in the course of his illness, that it was very hard to go away and leave all this. For many classes and conditions go to the making up of the life of the great East Side. There is poverty there, and there is inconceivable crowding, and there is lack of food and air, and there is unspeakable misery; but there is also much of happiness, and there are many who have plenty of money for comforts and gaieties. Squalor and prosperity are constant neighbors, not only on the same streets, but in the same huge tenements.

Toomey looked at the scores of people who hung sprawlingly on the iron fire-escapes and balconies that gridironed the fronts of the buildings—and grid-irons they in very truth still were, as

the sun, after baking them to a furious heat, was but a short time set, and the iron was still warm. But the population of the street, men and women and children were mostly ambulatory, and moved aimlessly about, and shifted back and forth on the pavement and sidewalks below. The shuffling of feet, the chirring hum of talk, the screams of children as they played together or savagely tore at each other in wrath, came up to Toomey, and he thought again of how sad it was to lose it all. To a stranger, the sounds would have been an indistinguishable medley, but the practised ear of Toomey could dis-associate each from each.

He heard the vibrant clink of glasses in the nearby saloon. He heard the sinister clang of the patrol wagon, while it was still two blocks away, but to him it was but one of the many sounds that united to enhance the attractiveness of the street. "I wonder if it's Tim Hogan, and if he's been beating his wife again," he murmured. Above the confused dissonance he caught the distant sounds of a Salvation Army squad, and gently smiled as he listened to the notes of "There's a Land that is Fairer than Day."

The tune ceased, and he half-whispered; "Yes, and that's where I'm going. And I only hope the district leader up there will be as square as Michael McShea, for if he is I'll be all right." He paused a moment. "They're kneeling now," he said. And his wife and Duggan looked at each other and commiseratingly shook their heads, thus mutely agreeing that poor Toomey was becoming delirious.

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