

Unfortunately, there seemed to be no observers, and this was rather bitter.

An old lady, obviously wishing she had not worn her black velvet cloak on such a warm morning, sat across the aisle; a district messenger boy, bearing a large bunch of pink and white lilac, to which was attached a note in a blue envelope, occupied the front seat, from which post he enlivened the journey by whistling a waltz in a way melodious enough to cause the fact that nature was doing her best rapidly to fill the gap that enabled him to do it, to be a source of regret to people who enjoy the piping of black-birds.

Drello, a short, stout young man of twenty-four, gazed at these people, and their as unappreciative neighbours, with a face and expression of disgust, and taking a corpulent stylographic pen from his pocket, gave himself up to the joys of once more reading the story which was to be the beginning of his fame. His own foreign travels up to that period consisted of a dash to Paris, via Boulogne, on which expedition he was absent from home only seventy-three hours; and what its organizer poetically called "A Week in Tulipland," on which occasion Mr. Drello had been whisked from Amsterdam to Rotterdam and thence to several cities and towns which he henceforth humorously characterized as Otherdams.

Yet the feuilleton, the first instalment of which he was now for the fourth time anxiously correcting, was concerned with the adventures of a maiden