

"I ain't got any boy in the grocery over there," protested the old gentleman, very much perplexed.

The paint man cut down his smile one half, as he observed, "Then you ain't the proprietor of this house?"

"Yes, I am."

"How's this?" demanded the man on the roof, while the light, airy look went out of his face, and left it of a deathly and most disagreeable colour. "The young man over at the grocery said his father lived here, and that the roof wanted painting, and I am the agent of a new paint for roofs, and so I came over here, at his suggestion, to take the measure of the roof, so as to give the figures."

As the paint man said this, he looked at the ladder, and mechanically took in its might and size.

The owner of the house looked at his wife.

"It's young Bobbs, over at the grocery; but it can't be him," she said.

Her husband turned to the paint man.

"That young man over there is not my son."

"Don't his father own the hotel?" gasped the owner of the extraordinary paint.

"Certainly not. He ain't got any father; he's been dead ten years."

What the introducer of a new and valuable roof paint thought, as he strained his tendons in lugging that ladder back home, was awful; what he said was simply appalling. It is more than likely that had he not been a stranger, with the timidity inseparable from that relationship, young Bobbs would have been ground into an indistinguishable pulp.

RAILWAY STATION SIGHTS.

The position which a plug hat occupies in a railway station late at night is no sinecure. Net by any means. A January midnight in the winter of 1877 found a plug hat thus situated, in the station at Milwaukee. The owner of this hat was a little man in rusty black clothes, just as rusty as the hat itself. He was short in legs, short in body, and short neck; but he had long hair, and a long chin. His hair was a pepper and salt, straight, thick, and undressed. It was a short plug hat, with a rather rakish brim of some width. It was almost one o'clock. Some twenty people were waiting for the train, in that peculiarly aimless way in which people wait for a train late in the night. There were men cramped upon the seats, and trying in their sleep to do what they never could succeed in doing if awake, to keep comfortable in them. There was a man who had a husky voice which found no expression, but I knew by his clothes, and the hairy appearance of his neck,

that his voice was husky; he had a big bundle on the seat beside him, and a humble valise between his legs. He looked straight ahead, and neither turned his eyes to the right nor to the left. There was a youth with long, uncombed hair, and a timid, expressionless face, and a valise. He didn't sit down, but moved around staring at the time-cables and advertisements. In a corner with a lantern between them were three tobacco chewers in coarse clothes, who were attaches of the railway, and who were straining their ears to catch every word, as is common with men when they have got nothing of their own to interest them. Every few minutes some one would come in, and by so doing attract the liveliest attention of every one awake, and would then go out again. At regular periods a man would come in,—a man smelling of oil,—set down a lantern, draw off a pair of gloves, deliberately look about the room, put on his gloves again, take up his lantern, and disappear. At about the same interval a tall, slim young man in a straight, long, black overcoat buttoned up to his neck, with a light growth of side whiskers on his face, a straight, emotional mouth, and calculating eyes,—a man about twenty-eight years old, but with a face that will look no different when he is sixty-four,—would appear, his antics making one nervous by their mutilated precision. Then a short, thick-set man in a short-tailed coat came in, went through a side door, and presently a glass slide, over which were the words "Ticket Office," flew up, and the well-kept face of the short, thick-set man appeared at the opening, and looked over the assembled passengers very much as a well-to-do farmer would look over a flock of his sheep.

All this time the plug hat was at work. The owner of the plug, not contemplating taking a sleeper on the coming train, had time by the forelock, and was doing his level best to keep hold. Being a little man, he got out as far as possible on the edge of the seat, and being a man of dignified proclivities, he instinctively crossed his legs. Thus lying back, he sought sleep. The part which the plug hat took in the performance was most creditable. It was perched across his forehead, with a view, I think, to shut out the glare of the gaslight from his eyes. A more uneasy plug hat never went travelling with a well-disposed man. No sooner would he get it located just right, and proceed to close his eyes, when it would instantly tilt over to one side, calling forth the most surprising activity on his part to save it from going to the floor. He never lost his faith, or his courage, or his hope. After every failure he would patiently replace it, close