



GIANT JOHN A.
STRIDING OVER FORTY YEARS OF PUBLIC LIFE.
(After George Cruikshank.)

THE ROMAN COACHMAN.
A PARTIALLY TRUE STORY.
CHAPTER I.

"Marcus Aurelius!"

No answer: The boy, with his feet dangling in a little estuary of the yellow Tiber, knew his mother's voice well, but chose to disregard it, as, at this moment, a particularly fine maskenonge was sniffing the bait on the boy's hook. The boy was not on his own hook but his bait was, and it looked very much as if that big fish would soon be there also.

"Marcus Aurelius!"

Once more those shrill tones smote upon the lad's ear, and now he knew he could trifle with his mother no longer, for the temper of Mrs. Sempronia Gracchus was none of the best, and she had before now been known to make that portion of Rome howl wherein the domicile of the Gracchi was situated: so the boy, hooking the fish, hooked it himself and walked leisurely to the spot whence the voice proceeded.

"Why came ye not when I first called?" enquired the lad's mother.

"Ma, I cannot tell a lie," replied Marcus A., "I did not hear you."

"Well, I want thee to take thy father's dinner pail up to him at the sub-way of the Neapolitan R. R., thou knowest where it is; round there at the foot of the Quirinal hill; here, begone; and take him that fish also; he likes 'em raw."

The lad obeyed and departed.

This chapter has nothing to do with the rest of this tale, but is introduced to show that manners and customs have not changed much since the period of which I write.

CHAPTER II.

Virginia Cordelia Gracchus was, perhaps, the prettiest and most captivating girl in Rome. She was finishing her education at the renowned female Seminary of Madame de la Trausseau, where French was the language spoken. Many a youth who had but recently assumed the *l'oye virilis* spent sleepless nights on account of the fair young girl, and though her father was but the foreman of a gang of navvies working on the sub-way already mentioned, he had secured several civic contracts, and by using very inferior brick and other material and neglecting to pay his men, was already looked upon as being on the high road to wealth. As he himself said,

"*Scio res aut dum. Honestas omnis meus oculus est. Butyrus consilium et tu es omnis dexter.*" Which, being translated, means "I know a thing or two; honesty is all my eye; just butter the city council and you're all right," which shows that old Gracchus was up to snuff.

However, to return to Virginia. She was very beautiful.

CHAPTER III.

"Pompeius," said Mrs. Gracchus to the fine, tall, athletic, well-educated, handsome, accomplished and prepossessing coachman, "harness the horses to the chariot and proceed to the Seminary of Madame de la Trausseau and bring back Miss Virginia. Her vacation commences to-day. See that you don't stop at many saloons on the way, and if you *must* take a snifter, put a little Falernian into an amphora and take it with you. If you get boozy, over the Tarpeian rock you go as sure as eggs is eggs."

"Yes'm," replied Pompeius, and proceeded to obey the commands of his mistress.

Ah! how would the young Roman bloods envy this gallant coachman his task.

CHAPTER IV.

The chariot of the Gracchi dashed up to the domicile of the same family, the fiery steeds being driven by the charming Miss Virginia, her lovely cheeks glowing with the exercise of controlling them, and the swift motion through the pure Italian air.

Prono on the floor of the vehicle, snoring for all he was worth, lay Pompeius, the coachman. The Falernian had done its work. He was as tight as a biled owl.

There had been no elopement, as my readers doubtless expected, and they are therefore, most confoundedly sold. Miss Virginia looked with loathing and disgust on the stentorously breathing coachman.

"How d'ye do, Virginia?" said her mother, coming to the door of the house and welcoming her daughter; and then, catching sight of the unfortunate Pompeius she sprang into the chariot, drove to the summit of the Tarpeian rock and, without further ado, bundled him over.

Such were Roman mothers; such were Roman coachmen; such were Roman daughters; such were—good-bye.



SNOWSHOES.

A REMINISCENCE OF A BYGONE CHRISTMAS.

It was Christmas Day a few years ago. I was rather young at the time and, I doubt not, foolish. My friends tell me I have not got over the latter trait in my character yet, but that's nothing. As a drunken man thinks everybody else is in his own condition, so do fools imagine that they alone are exempt from being classed as such.

As I was saying, it was Christmas Day, and I had been invited to spend it at the house of a gentleman with several daughters, pretty, too, most of them, and where a large party of friends were assembled.

The snow was very deep and very soft, and after we had exhausted all our ingenuity in devising amusements, some fiend in the guise of a creature with long side whiskers, who had been assiduously paying attention to my especial favorite, Miss Fanny, all the morning, said