

A SICK CONTRIBUTOR'S EXPERIENCES OF "OPIUM," AN  
"EXECUTION FOR RENT" AND A "SHERIFF'S SALE."

(Continued.)

When I awoke, Sandy was at my bedside in a great state of delight. It seems that, unsuccessful in his remonstrances with the bailiff, he had attacked the landlord on the subject of the footpan. Now, it so happened that, a few days before the seizure, the landlord's wife had lent a small tin bath to an opposite neighbour for the purpose of washing a baby. This article not being in the house at the time, had escaped the clutches of the bailiffs. The landlord had magnanimously suggested to Sandy; that if this baby's bath were substituted on the day of sale for his own heirloom, neither *Niger* nor *Albus* would be a whit the wiser. Sandy assented with a chuckle. I firmly believe that this was the only dishonorable transaction with which Sandy was ever connected, during the whole course of his life, and when we consider that the substitute was worth about twice as much as his own ancestral relic, (not that I would dare to tell him so,) it cannot be affirmed that justice was much defrauded. I was also informed that the sale would take place that day fortnight. Now the room in which I was lying, contained about all the moveable property, that I possessed in the world. It was not extensive, but every article had to me a value of a personal nature. There were some family portraits and all my books. I would not like to lose them; besides, why should I? I did not owe a cent to anybody, except to DIOGENES, for an advertisement. Bother the Cynic! He will send his collector some day. Here my reflections began to get misty and incoherent. DIOGENES had met Alcibiades at Alexander's. Alcibiades was being scolded by Socrates, for not having paid his subscription to the Montreal Hunt,—no—that was not it.—I swallowed another dose of opium and went to sleep again. I awoke again in the course of the evening and my thoughts began to arrange themselves into a better shape. I remembered that the villains had seized everything. It occurred to me that, for a sick man to be without a bed, would be at least inconvenient. It was certainly possible to place shirts and trousers on the floor, but I thought that they were better in a bureau. A bright idea struck me! Send for a lawyer! Now I love lawyers,—in private life. They are always pleasant fellows. I never had but two lawsuits in my life, I engaged in them, against my own will, but by advice of the lawyers, I lost them both! My reason was now sufficiently returned, to enable me to see clearly that, should I lose my property and incur legal expenses besides, the result would be still more inconvenient. I postponed the matter for further consideration. Next morning I sent for a lawyer. He sent word that he would be with me in three minutes. He arrived in three days.

On arriving, the learned gentlemen apologized deeply, for having been so remiss, but "a very important case in court," &c., &c., had prevented him from coming before. My case was a very simple one. He would draw out an opposition which nobody would contest, and file it in court. All I had to do was to give him ten dollars. Seeing that I was in for it now, I gave him the required sum, and—heard nothing more of him till the day preceding that of the sale. I was getting very nervous and irritable. I sent to his office; he was not in; to his house,—no better luck. At last, he was seen passing the door by my landlord and brought in, I believe by his right car. He informed me that everything was all right. Here was the opposition. (and he produced a document from his pocket.) It was only necessary that I should swear an affidavit as to its correctness. I told him that I was incapable of moving; could he not bring a commissioner to me? A commissioner would not do,—some of the judges objected to commissioners,—he would bring a prothonotary. A prothonotary was an absolute legal necessity. He then left me and in about an hour returned—with a commissioner! The affidavit was duly sworn,—the opposition duly filed. I was more comfortable and ten dollars poorer. The landlord and family left the house. I remained behind under the care of an old woman and the faithful Sandy McKinstrey.

Morn broke on the eventful day of sale,—no it did not,—morn would not break. This is only a poetical figure in the spirit of the great poet of the *Daily News*. It rained hard. Sandy alone was radiant. He had a new conundrum which he was about to send to DIOGENES. It ran thus:

Ques.—"Why is a cloudy day like a button-hole?"

Ans.—"Because it is overcast."

A lady has since explained to me the meaning of this, and Sandy, like all economical Scots, is very handy with his needle. I suppose you rejected this before; do please, put it in this time for Sandy's sake. I then received a series of distinguished visitors. First came *Niger* & *Albus*, to assure me that my property would be untouched, and that I should be undisturbed during the whole day. I thought this a very polite attention on the part of these gentlemen, and only regretted that I had not something at hand to offer them, "just to keep out the cold." I reflected that laudanum was not generally taken by bailiffs, on morns when morn refuses to break. My next visitors entered without knocking. They were two gentlemen with dark hair, aquiline noses, much jewellery and rather reprehensible shirt collars. I had had the pleasure of meeting with these gentlemen before, at other sales. They were Mr. Abrahams from the West, and Mr. Isaacs from the East. I assured them that nothing in my room would be sold. They smiled incredulously. Mr.

Abrahams enquired, how much that book-case had cost when new. I did not deign to reply. Mr. Isaacs went through a process of mentally valuing each article with his left eye and then finally asked me, whether I thought that "they" (meaning the sellers,) "would take a hundred dollars for the whole lot?" I opined not. The two gentlemen then began to talk general business, making of my room, a sort of commercial exchange. Had I been stronger, I should have thrown something at them. I became excessively indignant, instead, and requested them to leave the room. They took not the slightest notice, but subsequently finished their conversation and left, as unceremoniously as they entered,—taking the precaution of leaving the door wide open. I hate open doors and was not able to get up to shut it. My torments did not end here. In came two elderly females, a younger one and a small boy, who immediately made uproarious demonstrations in the direction of two oranges which were lying on the table. I begged the ladies to present him with one. He ceased crying but commenced sucking at the orange; the latter was, I think, the noisier process of the two. I told the ladies that nothing in this room was to be sold. One of the elder ones replied, that she was very sorry I was sick. "Oh my," said the younger one, "isn't she pretty?" Now, this remark was applied to a portrait of my good old maiden sister. This was a direct insult; *Jemima* never was good looking; she takes after *me*. The elder lady before mentioned, then stated that a relative of hers,—one Mrs. McCann,—had been through a course of *animated magnetics*, at the Mechanics' Hall, and had been much benefitted thereby, and recommended me to do the same. One of the legs of the stove was loose. During the intervals of sucking his orange, the small boy had been pounding vigorously at this with his heels. It suddenly gave way and the whole lighted stove was in imminent danger of falling. The ladies retreated in alarm. I have a constitutional objection to being set on fire. I hammered with all my might on the floor, with a stick. The faithful Sandy came and soon set things to rights. He informed me that the sale had already commenced, that some things were going very cheap and that he, (Sandy,) had bought a map of London, of the year 1837, a piece of oil-cloth full of holes, and a refrigerator which had lost its bottom. (By the way, Sandy still possesses these articles and is sorely puzzled what to do with them.) I thanked him for his attentions, requested him to lock the door and again composed myself to sleep.

Another awful row in the next room. It was *Albus* and Sandy this time. Sandy's duplicity was being *found out*. "It is not the same, sir, is it Jones?" The clerk confirmed the statement. Sandy was humiliated before the whole crowd. He was immediately despatched for the family footpan, which he had left in charge of a friend over the way. I regret to say that during his absence a conspiracy was organised. Every one knew that Sandy would buy his own ancestral relic. The heartless bidders agreed to run it up. This was done in such a way, that the article,—in itself, not worth fifty cents,—was finally bought by Sandy at three dollars and a half. Then followed another row. Sandy bought a bed and bedding. Mr. Isaacs declared that he was the highest bidder. The bailiff decided in Sandy's favor this time, and then came row number three. Sandy declared that somebody had stolen the sheets; that he had slept in that bed on the previous night, between two sheets; that his bed comprised the value of sheets and that sheets were down on the bailiff's inventory. "Quite true, sir," said *Niger*, "you were appointed guardian. Next lot!"

I need not proceed. Suffice it, that Sandy's sheets were not the only articles purloined on that occasion. Mutual and noisy recriminations followed, and continued the whole of the afternoon. I listened to the soothing sounds of taking down and moving bedsteads and stoves, which were occasionally dropped on the floor.

I was with difficulty moved the next day and caught cold in consequence.

I hereby register a vow, never again to live in a boarding house where there is the slightest probability of an execution for rent and a sheriff's sale.

### ELEGANT EXTRACT.

DIOGENES clipped the following notice from the *Witness* of Wednesday, May 12:

"Horse Strayed from Drummond street, yesterday afternoon.—Small black mare, with white foot and white spot on forehead. By giving information at 706 Craig street a reward will be given. Any person found harboring her after this notice will be prosecuted according to law."

This is literally and truly what our American cousins would call a "one-horse" advertisement. The passage about the reward is extremely unsatisfactory, because thoroughly "non-committal." Who, the Cynic asks, is to give the reward? Is it the advertiser or the finder of the lost quadruped? The former according to the principles of justice; the informer, apparently, according to the advertisement. But how, in the name of all that is wonderful, is a reward to be given by giving information at Craig street? DIOGENES can't see it!