

rage. For a moment he stood glaring at me like a jungle lion, then his berserk rage exploded.

"It's that cursed brat!" he roared; "that scoundrel that I picked out of the gutter and tried to make something of. This is how he repays me—has the audacity to ask for my daughter's hand in marriage! The gutter-snipe!"

"You mean Milton Cherry?"
"Who else in his position would dare to even think of such a thing?"

"But isn't he doing well?"
"What's it matter what he's doing. The daughter of a Morgan married to a Cherry! Good God! What impertinence!"

I calmed the irascible old gentleman as best I could, though, to tell the truth, I was not overburdened with sympathy for him.

"Said they had it all settled and that only my consent was lacking!" he stormed. "As though that were a mere detail, hardly worth their notice. You watch me fix that scoundrel right now." He grabbed the telephone:

"Hello! Hell-o! Give me Bloomenthal's store. Bloomenthal?
Yes—this is Judge Morgan. Say, you have a clerk there named Cherry. What's that? Best man you've got? Well, I want him fired."

"Yes, I said fired! . . . All right."

He rang off with a grim smile. "I guess that will teach one conceited puppy his place. Rattle-brained girl—I wonder what girls are coming to? They weren't like that in my days. That's what comes of uplifting white trash. I got that place for him. . . . Yes, of course, the store is mine; didn't you know that?"

Next day Milton Cherry was behind the grocery counter of his first employer, affable as ever, facing misfortune with the fortitude of a soldier.

A month later I again sat in Judge Morgan's office. Across the street, on Market Square, the band discoursed and below the open window the customary crowd of band-night rowdies held forth. Presently I noticed Milton promenading up the street with a lady—Alice Morgan. The old judge's face went black as a thunder-cloud.

As the daring couple neared the corner a figure started from the rowdy group and lurched into Milton. The disturber laid a filthy paw on the girl's arm, and like a flash Milton's open hand whipped into his face.

"Git the skoit out'n the way an' I'll show you up," gritted the slapped one.

Alice came bounding up the stairs to the office. No sooner had she left than the rowdy sprang at Milton like a wild-cat. Never had I seen so ferocious an assault. The man's simulated inebriety vanished in a twinkling and he ripped into Milton with a repertoire of blows that only an experienced ring man could command. If Milton ever thought of his solar-plexus punch he had no chance to use it. Before one could count thirty he had gone down under a bone-smashing rain of swings, jabs and uppercuts, and, as he sank to his knees, his assailant vanished amidst the shrieking applause of the hoodlums.

In an instant pandemonium reigned. The band stopped playing. Some one shouted that there had been a murder. The street was in an uproar.

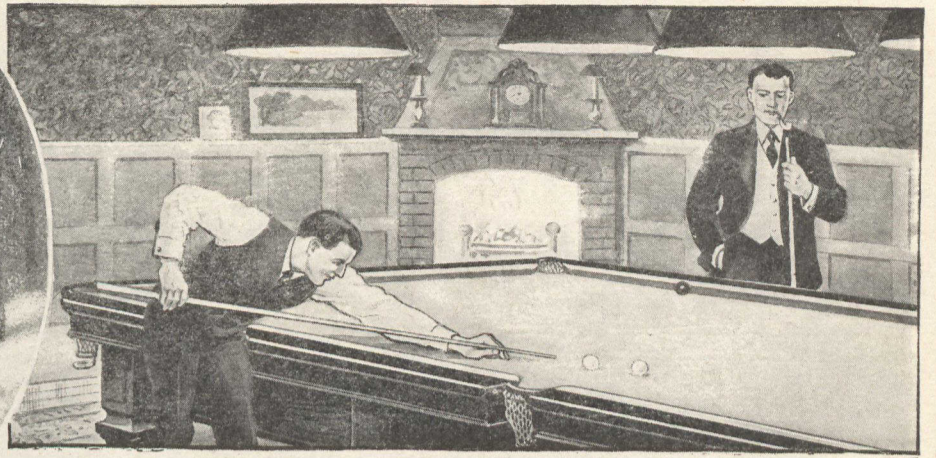
"Air! Air! Give him air!" bel-lowed some one.

Ready hands assisted Milton to his feet. He leaned on his benefactor's arm for a moment, mud-bespattered and bloody-faced, then he smiled a wan smile and turned to his gleeful rowdies:

"Well, boys," he said, "you did the job up brown, didn't you? There's one consolation, though: You imported a real prize-fighter. I hope you're satisfied—because if you are, I am, and we'll just let it go at that."

Some one yelled "Three cheers for Milton Cherry," and a mighty wave of sound broke on the air like a cannonade.

Judge Morgan grasped my arm: "Bring him up here!" he commanded, and as I rose to go I could hear him say to his daughter: "You win, girl."



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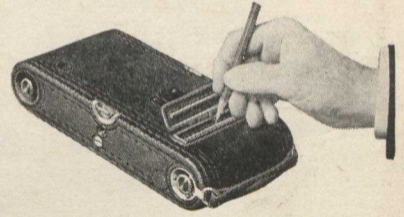


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