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asked for a "ticket clean to Ferginny, to Fairmont Landin', sah. A lady's ticket. Colored lady? Naw sah, naw sah! A rale lady, what is a lady! My ole Mistis, sah. Mrs. Gen'al Jones ap Jones, sah—"

A touch on Pete's shoulder: "Old man, where's my possum?"  
It was the young lawyer who had trusted Pete for his good face. Was victory now to slip from the feeble old hands?

"De ticket, Marse," stammered the old man; "it was des for the ticket."

The young man had a good face. Pete in his turn trusted a good face, and told it all—all the story of the skylight room, the cooking on the gas ring, the fruits of the Jersey farm that was not, even to the finding of the opossum and its several sales.

"I des studied dat I'd take Mistis de ticket, and she never would know how I git it, and let her git home for Christmas dinner. Dey young mistresses dey is ma'y'd and widlers now, and dar's grandchillen too, an' I studied as I'd get Mistis to dem all for de Christmas dinner."

"What were you going to do then?"

"Who—me? La, Marse, I gwine to stay heah till Mistis send fer me, ef she kin send fer me." The old man's eyes watered with the negro's infrequent tears when he thought of how little prospect there was that Mistress would ever be able to send for him.

"Take your mistress the ticket," said the young man. "I knew General Jones. My father was his aide. There'll be a carriage sent to bring Mrs. Jones here tomorrow in time for her to take the boat. You bring your baggage and be here too."

"Baggage? Marse, I got no baggage but dis switchel," showing the limp carpetbag.

Christmas Eve and Mrs. General Jones ap Jones alighted from the carriage; she carried a bouquet of roses sent her by the son of one of her late husband's staff officers. On deck she found herself surrounded by fruits and flowers, gifts from the several survivors of Jones' Brigade now living in New York. They had but just now heard of the residence in the city of General Jones's widow. The

young lawyer was there to say, at once, a word of greeting and of farewell. Also the Good Fellow and his jolly wife. When the wife had heard over the telephone of a certain story of an opossum, she recalled the fact that she was third cousin, one degree removed, of Mrs. Jones's stepsister and therefore accounted "kin." The Good Fellow felt his sides incline to shake with laughter like Bre'r Possum's whenever he thought of how his wife had failed to bag the game. And he felt his eyes grow humid when he looked at the erect, proud little figure of Mrs. Jones now so graciously receiving the belated homage of many, and when he recalled the story, as related by the young lawyer, of her wearisome struggle and of the faithful loyalty of an old slave.

With that elasticity of the Southern temperament, Mrs. Jones was basking in present pleasure and joyous anticipation, already the keen edge gone off the remembrance of her hardships.

With a ticket for himself slipped into his hand by the young lawyer, Pete kept well in the background.

Before New Year's Day Curator and keepers of the Brinx Zoo were rejoicing at the recovery of their fine specimen of Didelphys Virginiana, brought about by the exertions of a Broadway policeman. But all the squad could find no trace of a decrepit old negro who had sold the specimen to the proprietor of a popular restaurant.

That old negro was just then somewhere down in Virginia teaching a little boy how to make of a turkey bone a whistle that would, he declared, "des natchally draw a wild turkey fum de woods right up to de gun of de man dat whistled right in it."

"Uncle Pete," asked the little boy, "will you take us boys on a possum hunt tonight?"

"Um. Now you got me," said the old darkey. "Right dar you got me in a tight place. I dunno 'bout dat, honey. Possum is a mighty 'ticular critter. I dunno as I feel right ready—just yet—fer ter hunt Br'er Possum with de gun and de dogs. Not yit, I ain't reasy. Not just yit."

## The Hatred of Nicholas Hallard.

By ADELINE SARGEANT.



THE "Fleetwood Arms" was a country inn which had once been well known for its prosperity and air of homely comfort; but it was a patent fact that of late it had been going down in the world. It stood at the end of a narrow lane which branched off from the main road, and this was the reason of its declining success. For though it was still frequented by those who had known it of old—by country laborers, commercial travellers, even by gentlemen farmers and their like—cyclists, motorists, and even the ordinary pedestrian who did not know the country very well, would pass it by without a glance, especially as the lane between it and the high road was often deep in mire. The old red-brick building passed for a farmhouse, rather than a respectable inn. A mile or two further ahead, on the high road, there was a Cyclists' Rest, while still further lay the country town of Burley, which boasted of at least one hotel, and innumerable public houses.

It is to be feared, also, that the modern traveller prefers modern furniture and electric light to the old-world appurtenances of the "Fleetwood Arms." Everything in the old house was certainly spotlessly clean, and the oak furniture was polished until it shone like a mirror; nevertheless, there were signs of decay about the place, for things that were broken were not always repaired, and it was rumored that the roof was in need of mending, and that the stables and out-houses were growing mouldy from want of use.

Amidst the desolation of declining

prosperity there was still one ray of sunshine in the inn, and this lay in the presence of Margaret Elwyn, who had lived there ever since she was a child of eight, and she was now just over twenty-three. She was a distant relation of the late proprietor of the house, and had been almost like a daughter to his wife, Mrs. Hallard, who was left a widow when Margaret was twelve years old, and had much ado to keep things going and make ends meet. But the widow always comforted herself with the thought that her son Nicholas, who was thirteen when his father died, would build up the prosperity of the house once more, when he attained to years of discretion. But eleven years had come and gone, and affairs had grown from bad to worse. Nicholas was a fairly good man of business, but he was not a good innkeeper, seeing that he was inclined to be sullen, morose, and overbearing, his presence did not tend to make the guests comfortable, and, in homely words, they very greatly preferred "his room to his company." Even old customers were driven away by his want of courtesy and conviviality. Old Mrs. Hallard looked on despairingly, and did her best to remedy matters by her kindly cheeriness; but as her health declined, and her days advanced, this became clouded over, so that all the brightness that the house afforded came from the girl Margaret, who had grown up with a really beautiful face, a strong yet graceful figure, and a gay voice, with which she carolled about the dark passages like a lark. "The old inn would be nothing without Margaret," the guests used to murmur sometimes; and it was certainly she who proved the centre of attraction to young and old. As long as Margaret remained at the "Fleetwood