



IN SEARCH OF AN IDEA.

I am a journalist struggling against fate. I have received special orders from GRIP to contribute something brilliant, nay electric, but as I seat myself the electric portion of my intellect begins to flicker, and as I take up my pen, flops out completely, leaving me a helpless literary wreck, without thought or idea. An electric something must be evolved from my chaotic brain, at all hazards. I close my eyes and try to conjure up old friends who may assist me, but all is blank. I wander around my study. I shoot off guns in my back lot. I fall down the cellar steps, thinking thereby to wake up a current of ideas; but evidently such a proceeding is not concurrent with the electrical portion of the work. The idea will not come. A thought strikes me—I will look through my library, I will plagiarize. I look through, carefully, and find nothing but—well, I may as well own the truth—what I have used before. I give that up. Again a thought haunts my mind. I will seek the presence of my mother-in-law—previously an eyesore to me, but now, with the prospect of an idea from her, a dear delightful old lady, and coax her to unfold something original. After a long hunt, I find her in the pantry tasting the pickles. I drag her into a secluded corner, and beseech her to relate a story, something original," I impress upon her. She scratches her head with one of her knitting needles, assumes a look of terrible importance, and proceeds to tell of the time when their old horse Jack fell into the duck pond, and how it took the united efforts of herself, my respected father-in-law, and several neighbors, to drag him forth and set him on his legs. Profusely thanking her, I quit her presence to muse over that story, but the more I muse the less I see of the electrical brilliancy to be obtained from it. I am now becoming desperate, maddened. If some idea does not loom forth from my befogged brain, it will be necessary for the printer's devil to convey me to an asylum instead of my copy to the office. I review the events of the day, will not they give me an idea! I pause. A weary head and wandering brain give me back no answer. I see a spider crawling up the wall—I see him fall—he crawls up again—perseverance conquers—I take up my pen to write—why confound it! This idea has been used up ages ago. Dashing my quill at a bust of Shakespeare which stands grinning before me, I dash into the street. Another thought presses itself upon me. I will sally down the side streets and seek the idea there. I do so and get it. As I turn a corner, three men attack me, bring back the electric light to my eyes, and ease me of my watch and jewelry, besides a purseful of dollars received this morning from GRIP; my salary in fact. What care I for these? I have got my idea. I drag myself home to write it up. I fortify myself with a dash of

blood-bitters, and proceed. I have scarcely written two pages when I hear a bang-bang at the street door, and almost immediately the red head of the P.D. is thrust within my sanctum, with the intimation that I have to hurry up with my copy. With my brain almost at fever heat I have thoughts of annihilating that P.D., but wiser thoughts prevail and I treat him with candies to suck, whilst I pen a note, sweeter than the candies, to the editor, asking for grace to complete my electric composition. The P.D. hurries off. I plod my weary way. Half an hour elapses. I receive a reply. It gives me, in sweeter terms that I can command, every opportunity to present to my sketch that literary polish which the readers of GRIP usually associate with my compositions:

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—The contents of the note referred to read as follows: "You literary imbecile, had you written the truth, you would have told us you had been imbibing ideas, strong ones too, in some low saloon. As for the robbery story, we don't believe a word of it. This is the first intimation we ever had of you possessing any jewelry at all. The salary you received from us would barely buy salt. Send the copy, but it is the last we receive from your pen. The man who searches for ideas in back alleyways cannot be retained upon the staff of GRIP."

THE BARON BOLD AND THE BEAUTEOUS MAID.

An Old Time Melodrama (Adapted.)

Characters: BARON BERASCO; FATHER TWOOTS; MAURICO, THE LOVER; BLANCHE, THE MAID.

ACT I.

SCENE. A woodland dell. Cottage left. (Enter Baron, enveloped in black mantle.)

BARON.—I lee-ove her. She shee-all be mee-ine Bee-utiful Bel-anche, poor but per-oud. Why does she secc-orn me? 'Tis the varlet Maurice that lies in my pee-ath. Cur-r-rse him! He shall be despatched. (Draws a tremendous horse-pistol.) No, I will not soil my hands in his gee-ore. My ter-usty retainers shall end his life this day. (Enter Father Twoots.)

TWOOTS.—Good morrow, Baron, how goes it with you?

BARON.—But ill, Father Twoots. Thou know'st I lee-ove thy daughter, but she secc-orns my simple love.

TWOOTS.—Has she dared to do that, Baron? May the curses of an only father—

BARON.—Nay, Twoots, no sentiment. If she be not mine ere another day, thou shalt pay the forfeit. Do'st understand?

TWOOTS.—I doth. I will call her. (Goes to cottage and calls. Enter Alice.) What is this I hear of thee? Thou scornest the Baron's suit.

BLANCHE.—Father, I love him not! my heart pants for another.

BARON (aside).—She shee-al be mee-ine.

BLANCHE.—Would'st thou have me enter a madhouse; for there I shall go if thou press the suit.

BARON.—Beauteous Blanche, I will not press the suit if it fits thee not. Another day I'll woo. Adios. (Exit Baron, with curses on his lips.)

ACT II.

SCENE.—A lane leading to the castle. (Enter Baron.)

BARON.—This night shee-al Maurice be swept from my path. (Calls) Tipcat and Slugger! (Enter Tipcat and Slugger.) Are your weapons ready and your nerves steady?

T. AND S.—They are, me lud!

BARON.—Good! You know your mee-an? T. AND S.—We doth.

BARON.—Then get you to your hiding per-lace, and await the signal. (Exit T. and S.) (Exit Baron, right. Enter Blanche, left.)

BLANCHE.—My lovely Maurice, why comes he not? 'Twas here he promised to meet me. (Enter Baron.)

BARON.—Thy loe-oved one is here. Why elevate thy sweet pug nose at me thusly! I'll give thee castles and gee-old galore, if thou wilt be mine.

BLANCHE.—Never!

BARON.—Then by St. Christopher thou shalt! (Seizes her, they struggle. Enter Maurice.)

MAURICE.—Hold! rash man! (Baron calls for Tipcat and Slugger.) Aha! thou call'st in vain! They are no more. Finding them hiding amidst the trees, I administered them a dynamite pill and scattered them at my feet. (They struggle. Maurice throws the Baron to the ground, and places his knee upon the Baron's third button.) Now, wretch, I have thee! Thy life shall be spared on one condition, that thou ne'er more accost the gentle Blanche. Do'st promise?

BARON.—I do. I do.

MAURICE.—Then got you gone. (Flings Baron to wings, then exits with Blanche.)

ACT III.

SCENE. The same as Act I. Enter Twoots.

TWOOTS.—My daughter shall be Baroness Berasco. Let that rascal Maurice approach my humble dwelling, and by my big boots he shall suffer. (Enter Baron.)

BARON.—Thy daughter has again repulsed me. And more, my honor has been brought to the ground by the varlet Maurice. Cur-r-rse him. Where is Blanche? (Twoots calls. Enter Blanche.)

BLANCHE.—Spare me, father.

TWOOTS.—Thou shalt be the Baron's bride. Take her, Baron. (Baron advances to take her, when Maurice enters and pushes him away.)

MAURICE.—Father Twoots hear me. I can a tale unfold. I have powerful and convincing proofs that that man (points to Baron) is a traitor to his country. I can prove he is an accomplice of the "brawling brood," that he writes editorials for the Globe, and that he furnished sketches to the New York Police News.

TWOOTS.—Can this be true? (Wrings his hands.) (Baron during this denunciation hangs his head. He makes a sudden movement, then falls. They rush to him.)

MAURICE.—Heavens! He has stabbed himself, and his life is fast obbing away.

BARON.—Gather round me friends, I am dying. How sweetly the birds sing, and how lovely looks the forest. Ah me! I admit all that Maurice has said, and more; I poisoned my dear kind grand-mother and one maiden aunt, I cremated my two wives and—and—I—(Baron dies, and Blanche, Maurice and Twoots form a mournful tableau around the body.)

CURTAIN.

TITUS A. DRUM.

Although Grant was the most gifted president the country ever had he is now penniless, excepting a half-million dollars he doesn't count.—The Eye.

"Herr Meyer, I suppose you understood that every one was to bring along something to the picnic. What have you brought?" Herr Meyer—"My two boys, as you see."—German Joke.

A tailor of melancholy temperament was observed recently sitting cross-legged on the Canada shore, gazing intently at the Horse-shoe Fall, with its thick cloud of spray. A reporter stole up unobserved and heard him mutter, "What a place to sponge a coat!"