

"Well, he calls himself Smith," answered Braidy, "and others call him Shiny, I suppose because in slang phrase it is his nature to be constantly 'cutting a shine.'"

"What is he at all?" I asked, for I felt curious upon the point, having already been turning it over in my mind without arriving at any conclusion. My first impression had been that he was simply a swell-mobsmen, but that idea had not borne reflection. Swell-mobsmen are birds of prey that flock together, and I knew that there was no nest of them in my district.

"What is he!" echoed Braidy, who for the moment seemed puzzled by the question; "well, I think he would be best described as regular scribe and irregular lawyer to the doubtful and dangerous classes hereabout."

"A lawyer!" I exclaimed significantly; "*that* accounts for his interesting himself so warmly about the defence of this woman."

"I did not know he was interesting himself in the matter," Braidy answered; still, if he is, it does not follow that he is doing so selfishly. He is a bad man, and yet not wholly bad. Not that he is particularly exceptional in that; few people that haven't lived among such a set as I have done would credit the amount of good—I mean goodness of heart and kindness of feeling—there is latent among bad people. I often think that with better chances many of them would have been better men. Not that that applies to Shiny. I feel convinced that he in his day has had good chances. He is one of the might-have-beens, but I have not given up hope that he is yet among the may-bes. More than once when I have been with him it has struck me that his flourishing manner is put on to stifle the still, small voice; and where conscience wants 'putting down' there is always chance of amendment."

Before any reply could be made Shiny Smith joined us, and in his most rattling manner saluted Braidy—

"Ah, here you are then!" he exclaimed seizing his hand. "Glad to see you taking an interest in poor Sal's case; been on the hunt for you to speak to you about her; thinking of getting up a whip round; wanted to see what you thought of it; like the idea myself; think it sounds well, you know: 'The Sugar-Bags Defence Fund.'"

"I am going to her room to take possession of a few little