

ABOUT HOPKINS.

By Wm. Emmett.

I hope that what I am going to tell you about Hopkins will not convey a false impression.

Hopkins is not an ass,—that is to say, not always—on the contrary, I should say that Hopkins is, if not clever, quite above the ordinary in intelligence. He is recognized about town as an all-round, capable, business man. But Hopkins, like you and I and other great men—has his weaknesses, and, perhaps, the particular weakness, which caused the trouble of which I am about to speak, is one that Hopkins has a special fondness for. That's the way it always happens—who is it that says something about the gods making whips of our darling sins and stinging us with them? Well! there is no doubt about the whips this time, nor the “stings” either, if I could judge by Hopkins' groans—but I anticipate.

You see, a few years ago, when we were both younger, although, for the matter of that, Hopkins is as young now as he ever was—I had foolishly allowed Hopkins to acquire the custom of dropping into my rooms at all hours. The result is, that although I have learned to abhor going out and have developed a weakness for early hours, I might as well have Hopkins' habits and adopt his mode of living, for let there be any particular evening when I have promised myself a nice quiet night of undisturbed reading, and have, revelling in the anticipation, settled down, in my slippers and capacious armchair, before the

grate—that is the night Hopkins will turn up. On a night when I have made up my mind to turn in early and have a good long sleep, I will no more than have got comfortably stowed away, snuggling with delicious drowsiness between the covers, when there he is again. On my word, I'm a patient man, but there are times when I could throw Hopkins out of my window with considerable pleasure. However, it's a long lane that has no turning, as somebody says, and if I refrained—but I must come to the point of my story.

On Thursday night of last week, or rather, to be more accurate, on Friday morning, for it was some time after midnight,—I was disturbed in the course of a most delightful sleep by a sudden sensation of acute torture, and after much confusion as to its cause, during which I ascribed it variously to the knowing of wild beasts at my vitals, to being stabbed repeatedly with bowie knives, and to having my ribs powdered with a pile-driver, I awoke to the fact that Hopkins was standing by my side, coolly poking me in the ribs with his cane. I will not dilate on my feelings at that moment; they can be better imagined than described, to use a story book phrase.

There he was, with a big cigar in the corner of his mouth, his hat tilted jauntily on one side and the most matter-of-fact expression on his impudent countenance, as if it was the most reasonable thing in the world to walk into a man's