

verily and truly was considered a *leading* man; but, unfortunately, his *loose* habits of late and his irresistible (!) tendency to become frequently and injuriously *tight*, precluded the possibility of his attaining to such an enviable position in the sensitive and ambitious little town of R—. The interview with Abbott subsequent to the casual meeting at the hotel revealed the fact, that if he had only kept within the paths of sobriety, he would doubtless have been an important element in village form of government. Alas! it was otherwise; his morning glass was his only breakfast, dinner time came, and brought a far greater craving for another. His evenings, spent around taverns and drinking saloons, were engaged in silly gossip, the few sales of ready-made clothing gradually became fewer, and the orders for making garments on the shortest notice were, to use a familiar phrase, 'like angels' visits, few and far between.' Poor Christopher was, therefore, at the time of Abbott's arrival, a helplessly broken-down merchant—so everybody thought in his own neighborhood. It was universally believed that there was no salvation from the miserable end which awaited him; his little shop window, begrimed with dirt, whispered neglect to the passer-by; and the counter and shelves, with divers articles of ready-made clothing strewed thereon, all sprinkled and stained with mould and dust, mourned because no customer came to effect a purchase with the 'Bos.' In Christopher's absence none was there to attend to calls, save an only daughter of ten years old, whose presence was of no further use than the prevention of petty larceny by any persons who might be disposed to help themselves without fear of detection. Christopher being a tailor, people naturally came to the conclusion that his *goose* was a 'gone' one; and also holding the title of merchant, they as logically inferred, for the reasons just given, that sooner or later he must shut up shop. The Fates, however, did not rule it so; for when his goose had grown icy cold, and perchance in a few days would have been pronounced 'gone' by

the sheriff's auctioneer, and when the shop was about to be *shut* by the same obliging official, it was decreed that Christopher Frow must yet prosper, and that he must be rescued from impending business dissolution by the person of Harman Abbott. In a lucid interval, one morning, a few weeks after Abbott's entry to the village, as he sat on a three-legged stool before a cavernous-looking desk in the shop, and looked sadly over the diary and ledger of the past year; both of which essential records were faithfully kept—that is so long as there was anything to be recorded—by an accommodating young clerk in an establishment opposite, the remuneration for which was an annual suit of clothes; a thought struck him, and his conscience smote him at the same time—and well it was so, for were it not for this mental assault, this striking and smiting of an intangible, invisible power, Christopher Frow would this day have been numbered amongst the fallen to his own pernicious habits.

'Wretch that I am!' said he, as he turned over page after page and then glanced round upon his limited stock; 'ah!—yes; poor, miserable, degraded wretch—a *leading* man indeed! Little they know of me away from home; but let me see: there may be a chance yet, it's not too late. Yes, sir-ree, I've got it! This is my stock; and supposing I make a sale of all to Abbott—that is a bogus one—he then is sole proprietor; I'm his salesman. *Secretly*, I'm a sleeping partner; he keeps the books, does business up brown, and I give him half the profits, and, to crown all, not a glass of liquor shall pass my lips from this day forth; and who knows but Chris. may yet be the first man in town?—reeve, councillor or magistrate, something in that line anyhow, supposing he shouldn't happen to have much larnin' itself; for that ain't of much account in this country when a man's doing well and making the chink.'

Christopher, winding up these solemn reflections, brought down his fist upon the desk as a token of firm determination, and with a sudden spring off the three-

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