

light a match in it. "Here Ponto! Blast the dog. I suppose he's twenty-five miles from here. Hector! What are you lookin' at, you gimlet-eyed old Bedlamite?" he savagely growled, apostrophizing a sweet-faced old lady with silky white hair, who had just looked out of her window to see where the fire was, or who was being murdered. "Here, Ponto! here, Ponto! Good doggie, nice old Pontie, nice old Heckie dog—Oh-h-h," he snarled, dancing up and down on the porch in an ecstasy of rage and impatience, "I'd like to tramp the ribs out of the long-legged worthless old garbage-eater; here, Ponto, here!"

To his amazement he heard a canine yawn, a long-drawn, weary kind of a whine, as of a dog who was bored to death with the dismal weather; then there was a scraping sound, and the dog, creeping out from under the porch, from under his very feet, looked vacantly around as though he wasn't quite sure but what he had heard some one calling him, and then catching sight of his master, sat down and thumped on the ground with his tail, smiled pleasantly, and asked as plainly as ever dog asked in the world,

"Were you calling me?"

Mr. Gerolman, for one brief instant, gasped for breath. Then he pulled his hat down tight on his head, snatched up his umbrella with a convulsive grasp and yelled "Come ere!" in such a terrific roar that the white-haired old lady across the way fell back in a fit, and the dog, surmising that all was not well, briefly remarked that he had an engagement to meet somebody about fifty-eight feet under the house, and shot under the porch like a shooting dog-star. Mr. Gerolman made a dash to intercept him, but stumbled over a flower stand and plunged through a honey-suckle trellis, off the porch, and down into a raging volcano of moss-rose bush, straw, black dirt, shattered umbrella ribs, and a ubiquitous hat, while far under the house, deep in the cavernous darkness, came the mocking laugh of an ashes of roses dog with seal brown spots, accompanied by the taunting remark, as nearly as Mr. Gerolman could understand the dog,

"Who hit him? Which way did he go?"

Singular Transformation.

It appears that during vacation Master Bilderback, having fallen behind in his studies last term, was compelled by his ma to read his school books certain hours of the day, until he escaped that tyranny by going out to his uncle Keyser's farm. In order to make his study as light as possible, this ingenious boy had dissected, or rather skinned his books, and neatly inserted in their covers certain works of the most thrilling character

known in modern literature. When he came back from the farm this transformation business had entirely escaped his memory, and it was not even recalled when he heard his mother tell the teacher, who called in the hopes of learning that that bean had sprouted and grown into his brain and would probably terminate fatally, that he was the best boy to study during vacation she ever saw, and would pore for hours over his books, and even seem anxious to get at them. Master Bilderback had forgotten all about it, and only thought it was some of his mother's foolishness, of which he believed her to possess great store. As for the bean, the amazed teacher learned that it never was discovered, it never came out and it never hurt him a particle, and had just naturally ceased to be. And the teacher went sadly away, moralizing over this case, and that of little Ezra Simpson, the best and most obedient, and most studious, and quietest, and most lovable boy in her school who, one day stumbled and ran the end of a slate pencil into his nose and died the next day. And long, long after she had got out of sight of Bilderback's house, she could hear the hopeful Master Bilderback shouting, "Shoot that hat!" and "Pull down your vest!" to gentlemen driving, with their families or sweethearts, past the mansion. Dreadful boy, she thought, he will surely come to some end, some day.

Well, it was only the next day when the reading class was called, Master Bilderback took his place for the first time. The boy next to him had no book, and as he was called first, he just took Master Bilderback's, who turned to look on with the boy on the other side. The class was reading the selection from "Old Curiosity Shop," and a girl had just finished reading the tender paragraphs, "She was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. Her little bird—a poor slight thing the pressure of a finger would have crushed—was stirring nimbly in its cage, and the strong heart of its child-mistress was mute and motionless forever."

Imagine the feeling of the teacher when the boy who got up with Master Bilderback's reader went on:

"'Black fiend of the nethermost gloom, down to thy craven soul thou liest,' exclaimed Manfred, the Avenger, drawing his rapier, 'Draw, malignant hound, and die!'"

"'Down, perjured fool! Villain and double dyed traitor, down with thy catiff face in the dust. Dare'st thou defy me? Beast with a pig's head, thy doom is sealed!' exclaimed the Mystic Knight, throwing up his visor. 'Dost know me now? I am the Mad Muncher of the Bazzarooks!'"

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