

THE Saturday Gazette

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THE SATURDAY GAZETTE

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He knelt, was hidden to enter and found his father standing in front of the forced drawer, to which he pointed as he spoke. "This is a most extraordinary thing," said he. "I have never rubbed it before." "I was afraid you would notice it," observed his son; "it made such a beastly hash of the table." "You were afraid I would notice it?" repeated Mr. Nicholson. "And, pray, what may that mean?" "That it was a thief, sir," returned Alexander. "I took all the money in case the servants should get hold of it; and here is the change and a note of my expenditures. You were gone to bed, you see, and I did not feel at liberty to knock you up; but I think when you have heard the circumstances you will do me justice. The fact is, I have reason to believe there has been some dreadful error about my brother John; the sooner it can be cleared up the better for all parties; it was piece of business, sir—and so I took it, and decided, on my own responsibility, to send a telegram to San Francisco. Thanks to my quickness we may hear to-night. There appears to be no doubt, sir, that John has been abominably well."

PUGSLEY BUILDING, COR. PRINCE WM. & PRINCESS STS. DIRECTORY. This Floor—Princess from Princess St. Rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Second Floor. Rooms 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150. Third Floor. Rooms 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200. Top Floor. Rooms 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220. WANTED—50,000 MEN to have their Collars and Cuffs laundered at USMAN'S SPECIAL LAUNDRY.

A CHRISTMAS STORY. The Misadventures of John Nicholson.

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. [The commencement of this story will be found in the CHRISTMAS GAZETTE, which can be had from all newsdealers.] We have seen John in nothing but the stormiest conditions; we have seen him look desperate, tried beyond his powers; and his daily self, cheerful, regular, not unshrilly, we have seen nothing and it may thus be a surprise to the reader, he may think he was a man of a different sort. This favorite preoccupation now avails. He was to sit there and die of cold; there would be mighty little gained; better the police cell and the chance of a jury trial, than the miserable certainty of death at a like side before the next winter's dawn, or death a little later in the gas lighted wards of an infirmary. He rose on aching legs, and stumbled here and there among the rubbish heaps, still incumbered by the yawning crater of the quarry; or perhaps he only thought so, for the darkness was already dense, the snow was growing thicker, and he moved like a blind man, and with a blind man's terrors. At last he climbed a fence, thinking to drop into the road, and found himself staggering, instead, among the iron furrows of a plowland, endless, it seemed, as a white country. And next he was in a wood, heading among young trees; and then he was aware of a house with many lighted windows, Christmas carriages waiting at the doors, and Christmas drivers for Christmas has a double edge becoming swiftly hooded with snow. From this glimpse of human cheerfulness, he stepped like Cain, wondering if the night, unplored, careless of whether he went; fall, and lay, and then rose again and wandered further; and at last, like a transfused man, he beheld him in the lighted jaws of the clock, staring at a lamp which had already come thickly now, a "Foggy Storm," and while he yet stood blinking at the lamp, his feet were buried. He remembered something like it in the past, a street lamp crowded and caked upon the windward side with snow, the wind uttering its mournful howl, himself struck too shortly on his wife, and memory failed him as to the date and sequel of the reminiscence. His next conscious moment was on the Dean bridge; but whether he was John Nicholson of a bank in California street, or some former John, a clerk, in his father's office, he had now clean forgotten. Another blank, and he was thrusting his pass key into the door lock of his father's house. Hours must have passed. Whether crunched on the cold stones or wandering in the fields among the snow, was more than he could tell; but hours had passed. The flag of the clock was close on 12; a narrow peep of gas in the hall lamp shed shadows; and the door of the back room—his father's room—was open, emitting a warm light. At 10 late an hour, all this was strange; the lights should have been out, the doors locked, the pool of ink safe in bed. He marveled at the regularity, leaning on the hall table, and marveled to himself there; and thawed and grew once more hungry, in the warmer air of the house. The clock uttered its premonitory catch; in five minutes Christmas day would be among the days of the past—Christmas! what a Christmas! Well, there was no use waiting; he had come into that house he scarce knew how; if they were to thrust him forth again, it had best be done at once; and he moved to the door of the back room and entered. Oh, well, then he was insane, as he had long believed. There, in his father's room, at midnight, the fire was roaring and the gas blazing; the papers, the sacred papers—50 lay a hand on which was criminal—had all been taken off and piled along the floor; a cloth was spread and a supper laid upon the business table, and in his father's chair a woman, habited like a nun, sat eating. As he appeared in the doorway the nun rose, gave a low cry and stood staring. She was a large woman, strong, calm, a little masculine, her features marked with courage and good sense; and as John blinked back at her, a faint remembrance dodged about his memory, as when a tune haunts us and yet will not be recalled. "I dare say I'm mad," said John, unconsciously following King Lear; "but, upon my word, I do believe you're Flora."

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