



—“ AND STILL THE WONDER GREW,
THAT ONE SMALL HEAD COULD CARRY ALL HE KNEW!”

ED. “MAIL.”—Ross has had no share of the culture of his time.
WEST MIDDLESEX GRIT.— And what about Johnston?

ED. “MAIL.”—You semi-civilized Booby—Have you never heard of Johnston’s Dictionary?

HUMBLING HAUGHTY HOPSTON.

A THRILLING STORY OF FILIAL SOLICITUDE AND A THIRSTY TRAMP’S DAISY RACKET.

CHAPTER I.

He was a man to all the bibbers dear,
And passing rich by making ale and beer.
—*The Desorted Brewery.*

“Silence, young man! What in—”
John Hopston, Sr., wheeled about in his luxurious adjustable office-chair, a blaze in his eyes. His lips also were about to add—that is to say he might have continued with more fiery emphasis had not the overturning of a costly spittoon withdrawn his attention at the instant. The young man to whom he had addressed himself thus significantly heaved a sigh of most pronounced regret and, with a troubled look on his noble face, passed outside and walked absently into a billiard-room.

“The gall of that boy lecturin’ his father about writin’ an’ spellin’!” muttered the angry man to himself as he deftly rescued the blot-pad from the amber flood on the floor. “Let school-masters an’ college fellers show off their writin’ and spellin’, but gimme brains! Brains is what’s seen me through so far, an’ I guess my business kin git along still with the sort of learnin’ I’ve got. I never lose by it anyhow, and I mean to chance it right ahead.”

The haughty brewer, as he resumed the letter he was writing, and which stated by means of an undisguised snake-fence that “trad was sunnwhat dul,” indulged in a self-satisfied smile.

In the subdued light of the sample-room other self-satisfied smiles were being indulged in—the *dram-atis personæ* being seven brewery hands and a fresh-tapped keg.

CHAPTER II.

Oh! let us pity the tramp man—
He has no mother-in-law to jaw
No wife to buy him booze.

—*James Avid Dodgar.*

“I’m travelling for Smith & Co., of Chicago, who are getting up a work on the extent of the brewing interests of this continent. With your permission I shall take a few notes of your business, or if too busy yourself your manager or head brewer will answer.”

The visitor was perhaps a gentleman travelling *incoy*. His clothes were fully ripe. He looked tired. And had a sort of desert air about him. His nose, too—but Mr. Hopston had an extensive and peculiar acquaintance with reporters, and dismissed every suspicion. Pencilling some weird characters on a business card he handed it to the distinguished journalist saying, impressively but kindly, “Mr. Williamson in the despatch room back there will give you all the points.” The eminent *litterateur* passed to the rear with a frank, anticipatory beam on his face. The proud brewer took another chair and forgot the stranger in anxious thoughts about a new kind of barrel bung. Ah! little did he reckon that this visit was to be a veritable turning-point in his eventful life.

But this is emphatically a short-chapter novel.

CHAPTER III.

The night-school crushed to earth
Will rise again.

—*Hon. Geo. Washington R. Oss.*

“Shall I book this order to yourself, father?” was the question abruptly put to John Hopston, Sr., by John Hopston, Jr., in a cold tone. It was the day succeeding the stirring incidents faithfully recorded in the previous chapters. John Hopston, Jr., spoke in a cold tone, for it was a cold day for him. He had felt so sure the night previous that he could give the real estate agent five in a fifty game. It proved a ten-dollar error of judgment.

“Order?” The Lager Prince took the outstretched card and glancing at it, contemp-

tuously observed, “Near sight specs is what you want, young man, if you ain’t a half eijut. That’s just a line to Williamson to post a reporter about the brewery. Williamson!” he called; and that valued servant appeared as it by steam. “Give bearer all points,—ain’t that what you made of this here card?”

“No, sir, promptly answered Mr. Williamson. “When this card was handed to me yesterday I took it for ‘give bearer doz. pints,’ the party was beginning to say something about representing someone or something, but I was busy and hurried to fill the order after reading it out and asking if it was all he wanted. He said yes, and wouldn’t have it delivered, but promised to bring back the basket in half-an-hour. And he ain’t done so yct. And—”

Here something dawned on Mr. Williamson and he silently withdrew. The spittoon was a complete wreck.

“Whom shall I book this order to, father?” The impress of the cut-glass inkstand remains to this day on the junior partner’s office door.

Ten minutes later.

“Father, can I do anything for you?” His sire was plunged in deep but silent grief and it touched young Hopston. Further there was a little matter of a small cheque.

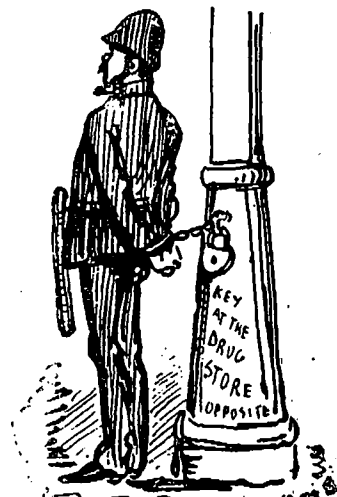
“Yes, John,” replied the elder Hopston in hollow tones. “But come right in, don’t be afraid. What you can do for me is buy me a copy-book and a speller, and never give this thing away. You’ve downed me on the learnin’ business for sure.”

It was a scene for a painter or a night-school teacher.

The question of the Hour—What time is it?

The Ragan illustrated lectures at Shaftesbury Hall are proving as popular here as they have been in other cities. The pictures are wonderful, while Mr. Ragan’s powers as a speaker are correspondingly high. As the advertisement states, the auditor enjoys all the pleasures of travel without its discomfort.

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PATENT POLICE REFORM.

Suggested by the N. Y. *Life* as a settlement of the question, “Where are the police?”