



"THE MEANS WHEREBY."

BROWN—"And you're really in need of assistance, are you?"
MOSE—"Yes, sah; votes wuz quoted mighty low dis yeah."

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

JACK LUCKPENNY was one of my classmates at Toronto Normal School, that Alma Mater of so many pedagogical lights. Jack had neither the perseverance of the tortoise nor the speed of the hare, so in the race for knowledge he invariably dropped behind. His examination papers were mere tissues of falsehoods, and the A.B.C.'s, whose acquisition is so greatly coveted by "children of a larger growth," seemed quite beyond his grasp. As he himself used to say, it would have required the final letters of the alphabet to fitly express his erudition which chiefly consisted of unknown quantities.

Some years after leaving the Normal, I spent a summer vacation in "doing" the province on a bicycle. Passing through a picturesque Western village, I was struck with the appearance of a handsome cottage on a high bluff. It was surrounded by neat fences which enclosed a thriving garden and orchard. Above the front gate appeared in a crescent of ornamental ironwork, the name "Star of Hope Villa." And on the lawn playing with a pair of chubby little boys, was my old friend Jack Luckpenny. He recognized me as I came up, and after we had exchanged greetings insisted that I should remain to dinner to talk over old times. I readily consented, for I was curious to know the secret of Jack's evident prosperity.

"You are surprised to see me so well fixed Lashum," said my friend, divining my thoughts. "But you will wonder still more when I tell you I've got it all by competitive examinations. You know I wasn't very good at them long ago."

"Why Jack," I replied, "I always thought if you had set your mind to it——"

"O you needn't beat about the bush," he interrupted "I was a booby, that's the long and short of it. The only thing of value I learnt at the old Normal was that it wasn't my normal sphere."

Jack led the way into the house and introduced me to his wife, a pretty, young matron, whose slightly nasal accent revealed her American origin.

"Now then, old chap," said my friend, "while Mrs. L—— and Biddy get the dinner ready, I'll just show you into my study and spin you a yarn."

"Your study!" I cried in amazement, "I thought you had given up the worship of Minerva."

Jack laughed his loud, jolly laugh as he opened the door of a small, neatly furnished room. "I was not a very successful votary at her shrine in Auld lang syne, but I have a study still, or at least I call it one, though it does not look much like the common run."

It certainly did not. There was a centre table holding a large Bible, a concordance, an unabridged dictionary, and writing materials. There was neither library nor bookshelf in the room.

"There, old chum," said Jack, handing me a chair and seating himself in another, "to begin at the beginning, I didn't stay long at the Normal after you left. I got discouraged, and when a cousin who was ranching it out west sent me an invitation to spend the summer with him I determined to accept. But funds were pretty low and after paying bills I found I hadn't enough left for the journey. An aunt, my only living relative, had been paying my school expenses, but I did not like to ask her to pay for holiday jaunts. So I was in a fix. But one day passing down Yonge street I saw in a shop window a jar full of beans, and a notice to the effect that whoever guessed nearest the number it contained would win \$100.

"I tumbled to the scheme at once. I took a jar of the same size as the one in the window, filled it with beans, counted them, sent in my guess and won the money. This success was the starting point in my career.

"I went West to my cousin's, saw the country, and had a fine time generally. But my money soon ran low. I lost ten dollars in a horse race, and then and there resolved to give up all kinds of gambling, a resolution I have never broken.

"Looking about to see what I could do, an advertisement in the papers caught my attention. It announced that a young lady of great beauty and accomplishments, but without fortune, having resolved to marry, took the following plan of bestowing her hand. Up to a certain date she would receive offers of marriage, each offer to be accompanied by \$25 in cash and a list of words compiled from the sentence 'Is marriage a failure?' The competitor who sent in the longest list would take the girl, with the dowry thus provided.

"I spent my last \$25 in this contest, and thus won my wife whom you have just seen, with a fortune of \$10,000. Wishing to spend our honeymoon in Europe, I competed for a trip abroad advertised in a weekly paper, winning as usual. We spent several months in Switzerland and Italy.

"Then of course we wished to settle down, and for that purpose required a house and lot. I had now begun to look upon my necessities as so much cash in hand. So I searched the papers for advertisements, and soon found that a weekly journal offered a house and lot to the subscriber who sent in the first correct answer to a certain Bible question. I won the prize in which you are now seated. The only condition attached was that the name of the paper be left on the gate as you see it is.