# THE HALF SIR

By GERALD GRIFFIN

## CHAPTER I.

A gentleman that loves no noise—The Silent Women.

"Poh, what *whish*? Let him give us something like a gentleman, and we'll whisht as much as he pleases."

"Are ye tired o' ye'r lives? He's like a madman all night. There's nothen for ye."

"D'ye hear what he says, as if it was to a beggarman he'd be talken? Go along in—take your head out o' that, Remmy, if you love it. Nothen for us!—Take your head out o' that again! if you haven't a mind to lave it after you—and no great prize 'twould be to the man that would get it in lose afther you, either.'

"It may be a very bad one," said Remmy O'Lorne, "and an ill-looking one enough may be, but I'd look a dale droller widout it for all that."

"Well, an' are we to get nothen for the Wran? Is that the way of it? Come, boys, one groan for the old miser—"

"Whisht! agin! O boys, for shame! Well, aisy a while and I'll see what's to be done. But don't make a noise for your lives, for he didn't lave his room yet."

Renny withdrew his head from the window, replaced the newspapers, and walked in a meditative way along a dark flagged hall leading to many of the principal sleeping chambers of the old mansion. He paused near one of the doors, and after many gestures of agitation and distress, he tapped softly with the knuckle of his forefinger upon the centre panel, bending his ear toward the key-hole to ascertain as much as possible of the effect which his intrusion produced.

"Who's there?" was asked in a tone of some vexation.

"Are you a wake, sir?" said Remmy, in a soft and conciliating accent, such as a man might use in making acquaintance with a fierce mastiff.

"If I were asleep, do you think I'd ask the question, Remmy?"

"Wisha then, no, surely, sir," said the man, "I dun know what came over me to ask *my* question."

"Well, what's the matter now?

"Come to see you they are, sir."

"Who, man?" was asked in some little alarm.

"The Wren-boys, sir."

"The Wren-boys!"

"Yes, sir, in regard o' Saint Stephen."

"The Wren-boys come to see *me* in regard of Saint Stephen!" was repeated in a slow and bewildered tone.

At the same time the party without, a little impatient at Remmy's delay, recommenced their noisy harmony—

"The Wran—the Wran, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's day was caught in the furze,
Although he's little ——"

The strange disturbance seemed to aggravate the wrath of the secluded tenant of the chamber——"What's all this din, you ruffian?" he said to Remmy in a furious tone.

"Themselves that's singing it, sir."

"What? who are they, sir?"

"The Wran-boys."

"The Wren-boys again! Who are the Wren-boys? what the plague do they come clattering their old pans and kettles here for? What do they want, Remmy?"

"Money I believe, sir, and liquor."

"Money and liquor! From whom, pray?"

"E'then from your honor — sure 'tisn't from the likes o' me they'd be expecten it?"

"Why, are they creditors of ours, Remmy?"

"O not they, sir, one of 'em—sure yourself knows *we* owe no money. But they want a little by way of a compliment in regard o' Saint Stephen?"

"Saint Stephen! Why, what the mischief, I ask you again, have I to do with Saint Stephen?'

"Nothen, sure, sir, only this being the day, whin all the boys o' the place go about that way, with the wran, the king of all birds, sir, as they say, (bekays wanst when all the birds wanted to choose a king, an' they said they'd have the bird that would fly highest, the aigle flew higher than any of 'em, till at last whin he couldn't fly an inch higher, a little rogue of a wran that was a-hide under his wing, took a fly above him a piece and was crowned king of the aigle an' all, sir,) tied in the middle o' the holly that way, you see, sir, by the leg that is. An old custom, sir. They hunted it this morden, and stoned it with black thorn sticks in regard o' Saint Stephen. That's because he was stoned be the Turks himself, sir, there's a great while there sence. With streamers and ribbins flyen about it. Be the leg they tie it in the middle o' the bush within. An' they sing that song that way for the gentlemen to give them a trate, as it were, 'Get up, ould 'oman, an' give uz a trate,"—or, 'get up—fair ladies——or—'we hope your honor,' as the case may be, all in regard o' Saint Stephen. And they dressed out in ribbins, with music an' things. Stoned be the Turks he was, Saint Stephen, long ago. Bad manners to 'em (an' sure where's the good o' wishen 'em what they have before?) wherever they are, for so doen. Is indeed, sir."

"So I am to understand from you that a number of young men come to demand money from me, because they got up this morning and hunted a little wren, tied it in the middle of a holly bush, and stuck a parcel of ribbons on the boughs. Is that the utmost extent of their claim on me?"

"O then, Lord help uz!" said Remmy, greatly perplexed—"if one was to go to the rights o' the matter, that way, sarrow a call more have they to you, I b'lieve, sir."

"Well, then, let those gentlemen take their departure as soon as they please. They shall seek their reward elsewhere, for it is an exploit which I am incapable of appreciating."

"O sir, sure you wouldn't send them away without any thing, to disgrace us?"

"Go along, sir, and do as you are directed."

"Well, well, to be sure, see what this is," Remmy O'Lone muttered in great distress, as he paced reluctantly along the hall, revolving in his mind the manner in which he should most palatably announce this disagreeable intelligence to the crowd without. They were preparing to renew the chorus when he opened the massive hall-door, and proceeded to address them. As his master had not permitted him to gratify his auditors in the substantial way, Remmy thought the least he might do, was to take what liberties he pleased with the form and language of the refusal.

"Boys," said he, "Mr. Hammond is in bed, sick, an' he desired me to tell ye that he was very, very sorry intirely that he had nothen to give ye. He desired his compliments, an' he's very sorry intirely."

"I knew he was a main wretch!" exclaimed the wren boy—"He a Cromwaylian—he Bag-an'-Bun! Bag an' baggage! O, 'pon my word, he's a great neger."

"Houl your tongue, I tell you, Terry Lenigan," said Remmy. "Don't anger me, I'd advise you."

"Remmy, would you answer one question," said Terry, "an' we'll be off. Who is it milks Mr. Hammond's cows?"

To understand the point of this query, it is necessary the reader should be informed that, in consequence of Mr. Hamond's allowing no dairy woman a place in his establishment, which was solely composed of Remmy and his old mother, a false and invidious report had been circulated that the office alluded to in the last speech (which in Ireland is looked upon as exclusively womanish and unworthy of the dignity of man,) was fulfilled by no less a personage than the redoutable Remmy O'Lone himself. This disgraceful charge, though frequently and indignantly rebutted, was the more maliciously persevered in, as it was found to answer its chief object not the less effectively—that of irritating the temper of its subject, and furnishing the spectators with what Hobbes would call a spectacle exceedingly gratifying to their vanity—a man in a state of comically passionate excitation. It lost nothing of its usual force by its total unexpectedness at the present moment.

Remmy plunged forward toward the speaker, then remained fixed for a few moments in an attitude minative of offence—the consummation of his desires being checked by a rapid and almost involuntary reflection on the little glory he would be likely to reap from an engagement in which the odds would be so awfully against him. Then suddenly recollecting himself, he stood erect putting his little finger knuckle between his lips, and blew a whistle so shrill and so loud that the echoes of the broken hills which surrounded the castle,—and in the fine phrase of the Spanish poet, stood aloft in their gaint stature, ruffling their foreheads against the morning sun,

—Este Monte eminente
Que arruga al Sol en seno de su frente.

returned the unwonted sounds in an hundred varied tones. This was not the response, however, which Remmy ambitioned, so much as the yelling of a leash of beagles, who presently made their appearance, though not in time to do any considerable damage amongst the aggressors, who retreated in double quick time, making such a din as no power of language that the writer possesses could possibly convey to the reader.

"I'll not be able to stand this long, mother," said Remmy, as he returned to the kitchen, where old Minny O'Lone was quietly seated by the breakfast-table, making as rapid progress as her toothless jaws would permit her to do, through the reeking mountain of sleek-coated potatoes and virgin white milk that covered the board. "My master an I'll never agree together, I see that: an' if I once get my character from him, I'd cut my stick to day before tomorrow, that's what I would. See what this is! A decent, well commended, notable lad, with as much papers in characters in me chest as 'nd be the maken of a grocer if he got it for waste paper—a lad with as strait an' round a log," he added, extending one which certainly (notwithstanding Remmy's wig) justified the commendation—"as ever stood in white cotton on a dickey—and I don't care whose the other is—a leg that never thought 'twould be forced to mount a brogue again any way; here am I now in the flower o' my days, cook, ostler, groom, herdsman, gorsoon, gard'ner, steward, and all, in this old box pitched up on the top of a hill, and shaking to every blast o' wind like a straw upon the waters—as bad as the Darbyshire stone that me master an' meself seen once in our travels in foreign parts, sarven a man that has such quare ways—disgracen himself an' all belongen to him. There'll be a holy show made of us with the Wran-boys. I set the dogs after 'em—for—that's more of it, too. Another job they give me, as if I hadn't enough."

The ringing of a bell cut short the train of Remmy's murmurings.

"That's for his tay, to have it ready for him," said he, stirring the fire and arranging the kettle, "if he wasn't so sickly (an' a body don't know the time he'll go)—an' there's no sayen what sort of a will he has made, but if Remmy O'Lone isn't high in the sheep skin, Mr. Hamond is not the man he ought to be. Sure he has no rilations, an' if he had itself what are they, only as you may say the casual gifts o' forten, whereas, a good sarvant is a man's own choice, that ought to be esteemed according."

"How do you know will the master ever die?" said the mother.

"Eh?"

"How do you know is it himself that's there at all? When he got the sickness that was goen last summer, by being so mooch in the houses o' the poor people, do you know what I done? I tak a bit o' the—but it's a sacret—the herb they say that tells for life or death by boiling it in a skillet, and if it turns green, the man recovers, if black, he dies surely—an' I put it down here on the fire about the dead o' night, when ye were all in bed, an' he was just drappen off in his crisis, despaired of be the doctors, and I looked into the skillet by'n by, and sure there it was, no change at all in it, only just the same color it was when I put it down."

"Oh, that's all nonsense—poh! that's ye're shooperstishions," said Remmy, whose travels with his master had taught him to despise the legends of his native soil, at least in outward appearance and in the day time. "If it wasn't himself, do you think he'd be so wild when he heard o' Miss Emily's misforten? Oh, the poor lady! Ah, mother, that was the real lady—Heaven rest her, this day! 'Twas she that had the open hand to the poor servant—an' she'd slip it into your hand as soft as if she didn't feel herself given it into your hand that way, an' she looken another way, or may be smilen at you an' sayen, 'Remmy, I gev you a dale o' trouble this while back;' or, 'Remmy, here's a keepsake for you,' with a voice that would raise the very cockles o' ye'r heart with its sweetness. And such a fine proud step with her for all! An' the way she used to walk along," Remmy continued, standing up and forgetting his half peeled potato in his enthusiasm, while he imitated the action he described—"springen off the ball of her little foot, and looken out from under the eyebrows as if it was out of the clouds she come. An' to think, mother," he added, standing erect and staring on the old woman, "to think that all that should go for nothing! The match made—the wedded fixed—the day coom a'most all but one—the favors given out—the gloves sent round—the bride-cake baked—the dresses both for herself and himself finished off—the music ready—the priest at hand—the frinds *convanient*—and hoop! whisk!" Remmy continued, slapping both hands together with a loud report, and then tossing them up to their furthest extent over his head to express suddenness—"all gone! as you'd puff the down off a clock! (The seed-bud of a common weed so-called) Slap! as if you rubbed your eyes an' saw the saa where the mountain is overright us. Whack! no more sign o' the whole affair than of a sperrit that 'ud vanish you'd think! She was a high lady in her time—low enough she lies now. The pace an' the light of heaven lies with her where she lies, forever!"

And having unburthened his heart by this panegyric, Remmy resumed his place and his toil at the breakfast-table.

## CHAPTER II.

I know not what the matter is, but I am grown very kind and am friends with you—You have given me that will kill me quickly, but I'll go home and live as long as I can.

—Beaumond and Fletcher.

Detesting from our hearts all unnecessary mystery, which is no less repulsive in a narrative, we apprehend, than in the transactions of social life, we shall proceed to lay before the reader a few events in the life of the proprietor of Castle Hamond, in the course of which he will find an explanation of the allusions contained in Remmy's last oration.

It will be needful, moreover, that we take the reader for a short time out of Munster, the general scene of action which we have selected for the conduct of these histories; promising him, that as we tread but tenderly on other ground, the period of our absence shall be limited to as brief a space as may suffice to make him comprehend the chain of the story.

There are no classes of beings, either in the social or natural world, so distinctly separated one from the other, that an intermediate species may not be observed, partaking of the nature of both, and generally combining their least tolerable peculiarities. Those amphibious monsters are generally found, in social life, to consist of the vain and the vulgar; and I believe there is no country in the world where a class of persons may not be observed who stand thus between humble and "respectable" life—drawing the external fopperies and gaudiness of the one over the coarseness of the other, and hanging like the link of an ill-favoured chain between the two diamonds, simplicity and refinement. Disowned by the class to which they would aspire, and disliked by that which they have deserted, these people would lead very miserable lives, if it did not happen providentially enough that they are burthened with no inconvenient quantity of feeling, and find in the gratification of their vanity a happiness more than commensurate to the mortification which they *ought* to receive from the repulsive scorn of those above and the insolent reproaches of those below them. In this genus may be classed the long array of coarse faces that one finds astray in Leghorn bonnets—the splay feet in silk stockings—the half educated pretenders in conversation, who steer a clear course between the natural wit of the lower and the fine taste and acquirement of the higher orders—the shock heads that have discarded the lowly felt, and glisten in beaver—all, in short that is tawdry, and coarse, and flippant in society.

It does not always happen, nevertheless that the individuals whom Fortune, not Choice, has thrown into this class, are totally destitute of sensibility, and when the contrary is the case, the reader (possessing a due proportion himself) may easily imagine how much more acute it is rendered by the absence of sympathy consequent on its very rarity. This was the situation, in early life, of the hero of our tale, and it was rendered still more distressing by the natural disposition of the man, which was so morbidly sensitive that it would have required much care and a vigorous exertion of mind in any station, to save him from the perils of disgust and misanthropy.

The nearest relative of his own that Eugene Hamond had been ever acquainted with, was an old man—a second-cousin of his father's—who returned to his native isle (with a fortune made of sugar and tobacco in the Illinois), just in time to see poor Hugh made an orphan, and to grant the dying request of his father, that he would see the child taken care of—a promise which he made with an ill grace and performed with a worse. This old fellow was one of those selfishly generous beings who confer a favor for their own sakes alone—and while they mingle so much ungracious rudeness with their liberality, as to make it a pain, not a pleasure to the receiver, yet look for as warm and abundant a show of gratitude as if the gift were not entirely a selfish action. A show of gratitude, we say, for as it is a gaudy vanity which prompts the benefit, so an ostentatious gratitude will amply suffice to repay it. The old man possessed not the silent feeling of generosity in himself, and had not faith in the silent gratitude of his young protege. The shy temper of the latter recoiled from the blazonry of affection which was thus required from him—and moreover, felt it wearisome and annoying to be constantly reminded of benefits which had been conferred on him at an age when he was incapable of appreciating the consequences of laying himself under an obligation, and of course could exercise no election in the matter. Old Hamond had been an enthusiast in his youth, and had left home with the hope of procuring in a distant land the means of rendering himself respected and beloved in his own. No person could have set out with kinder or more affectionate intentions—but their performance was fixed for a period too remote (as is, we fear, only too frequently the case with young adventurers); he convinced himself entitled, on the strength of the ultimate designs, to omit all those intermediate and minor attentions to his friends at home, which duty, gratitude and affection demanded from him.

"It is no matter," he would say to himself, when the post brought him a letter full of gentle murmurings and affectionate reproaches from a mother who loved him well, and whom he loved in turn, taxing him with a long series of letters unacknowledged, and fondness apparently forgotten—"It is no matter, I am getting on rapidly here. 'Twill be only a few years more, and I'll have a fortune made here and *then* I'll show my mother that she mistakes my character; that it is not for myself only I am toiling—and that she has not been forgotten, as she supposes. I'll return to her with the means of increasing her comfort, and that will be a better proof of my love than a mere string of empty words, which can answer no good purpose but that of putting half-a crown into the king's pocket. Besides, I will answer this letter at any rate *to morrow*." And then he would apply himself more vigorously to business than ever—he would overwork his slaves—seek new connexions, and swifter means of profit—new wealth would flow in—his hope would become brighter—his wishes would swell with his prosperity—he would no longer content himself with the prospect of rendering his parents, comfortable in their station—he would lift them above it. They would become the the envy of the country side. His father should be a gentleman and his mother a lady. He would buy out Mr. Moore's estate (a ruined mortgaged property,) and give it to his father. They should cut the Ryans out of the field, and distance the Heaveners—the most rapidly improving Palatines in the country. In the midst of these day-dreams a letter of fresh complaints would appear like a spectre before his eyes—to pass away and be forgotten in a similar manner. The renewal of those charges, however, could not but disturb him; and while he could not shut up the ears of his heart to the reproaches of his own conscience, he endeavored to shift his vexation from his own neglect, to what he was pleased to term the importunity of his friends; and making as much account of his intentions, as if they were benefits actually conferred, he began to treat those latter with much ill-temper, as if he were suffering under some considerable injustice. The longer he delayed writing, the more impressed he became with the belief that some more substantial apology than a mere statement of facts would be required from him, and he had not yet contented himself with the extent of his property. All communication, therefore, shortly ceased between them. In the selfishness of his own heart he had vilely undervalued the sterling worth of human nature altogether; he considered not how much more precious to the heart of a fond mother would be one token of affection, one word, one remembrance from an absent child, than if he could pour out the wealth of all the nations at her feet.

He did not consider this, neither did it once occur to him that any change could have taken place at home, while time was laying its white hand upon his own head in a foreign clime. He was astonished, therefore, to find, on returning (with a fortune sufficient even to satisfy his own longing) to his native village, that while he had been revolving a fine scheme for the elevation of his parents, death had laid them low in the grave. They had died in want, and left their son no blessing.

What was he now to do with the heap of yellow trash which he had been forty years in amassing? It lay, a dead weight, upon his hands. Mr. Moore, the Ryans, and the Heaveners, the objects of his love and his envy, were alike vanished from the face of the soil—and he turned in disgust and impatience from the crowd of new faces that stared upon him from the haunts of his boyhood. The only one of his old companions that remained was the father of our hero, and *he* tarried no longer than just sufficed to tell him the manner of his parents' death, and to place in his hands the child he was about to leave otherwise utterly destitute.

This little relic of his father's house was not prized by the old man so highly as might have been expected. It was a long time before old Hamond could bring himself to look upon the boy in any more tolerable light than that of a usurper, who had suddenly darted upon him, and snatched away the prize which he had treasured up for dearer friends. In the process of time, however, the child won somewhat upon his regard; and we have already seen the manner in which his awakened kindness began to expand itself. His still unextinguished vanity, moreover, had a large share in the motives which occasioned Eugene's good fortune. As he could no longer make ladies and gentlemen of his dead friends, he determined to do as much as his fortune would enable him to accomplish in that way, with respect to his protege. But he took especial care that no benefit was ever conferred without making the latter as perfectly sensible as words could render him, of its extent and munificence; and while he thus dragged, as it were, from the heart of the latter, a timid and hesitating expression of the ardent gratitude which he felt, he was naturally dissatisfied with the faltering manner of the boy, whose excessive timidity of disposition rendered him very unwilling to enter into a perfect confidence and intimacy with a nature so coarse, so ungentle, and so unlike his own. What we are endeavoring, and very faintly, to convey to the reader in narrative, may, however, be much more clearly laid before him, by transcribing a scene which took place between our hero and his benefactor, on an occasion when the latter formed the resolution of removing to Dublin for a few years—as much (but this he reserved to himself) for the purpose of relieving his own eyes from the sight of objects which were to him all tinged with the gloom of some mournful recollection, as with the intention of completing the education of his young heir and relative.

He had been meditating, during the morning, on the benefit which the latter would receive from the measure he was about to adopt, and had placed the gratification of his own wishes so much out of sight, that he presently persuaded himself that nothing but Eugene's advantage was influencing him in the step: and he was in consequence wrapt into a perfect admiration of his own munificence when the youth entered the room, his face glowing with exercise, and a small hurly and ball in his hand. As is generally the case with all morose people when they have brought themselves to resolve upon a liberal action, his heart warmed toward the object of it, and he held out his hand with a smile of readier kindness than usual, and beckoned him toward the sofa, where he sat in his long brown great-coat and Leghorn hat, with a Havannah cigar half-burnt in his mouth.

"Come here, Hugh, my lad—give me your hand, sir. Ha!—what have you been at, child? You're like my poor mother in the eyes, I guess, you are."

"Playing goal, sir, I was—with little Remmy O'Lone,"

"Remmy O'Lone! Fie, you grovelling little animal, that's no companion for you. Was that what I have been toiling and moiling for these forty years, scraping and saving, up early and late, working and wearing the flesh off my bones, and all for your benefit. Eh? sir?"

A pause.

"To have you spend your time playing goal with Remmy O'Lone! Come here, Hugh. Is there anything you are in want of now?"

"N—o—no! sir," said Hugh, hesitating between his fear of giving offence by a refusal and accepting an unnecessary obligation; for youth as he was, he had already begun to discover the inconveniences of the latter course.

"Because if you do, Hugh, you know you have nothing to do but to command me. What have I all this wealth for, but for your use? What have I been struggling and laboring for during my whole life but for your benefit? And you are welcome to it, Hugh, as welcome as if you were my own child, for you are a good lad, Hugh, you are."

"I declare—I'm greatly obliged to you, uncle——"

"Pah! now that's what I hate! Do you think 'tis thanks I'm looking for, sir? Come here to me, what do you think I'm going to do for you now, guess?"

TO BE CONTINUED.

## A TEN-THOUSAND DOLLAR PRIZE.

Cranston knew by the step on the stairs that Hawkins had an idea and was bringing it up. The young man dropped his pen and turned with an annoyed air toward the window. He loved to write, but hated to listen, especially to Hawkins. He had hoped to be alone with his work, but now instead he must be alone with Hawkins and his idea.

Hawkins was owner and publisher of the Sweetstake Literary Monthly, and ran things to suit himself: Cranston was the editor and wrote things to suit others—and Hawkins.

The publisher threw a closely-written sheet before Cranston, and without a word sat down at his own desk at the other end of the office. The sheet contained the details of "The Greatest Prize Offer Ever Put Before the American People." The capital prize was $10,000.

"What do you think of it?" asked Hawkins, when the editor had finished.

"Can the magazine afford it?" asked the editor. Hawkins merely chuckled in reply. "It seems to me too much to offer in prizes," continued Cranston; "I do not believe the returns will justify it."

"Think so?" asked Hawkins.

"I certainly do," replied Cranston.

"That's because you don't understand it," remarked Hawkins, going off into another chuckling heat.

"Very well then explain," said Cranston, impatiently, after waiting until Hawkins' chuckle had worn itself into the frayed end of a conceited grin.

"Cranston," began the publisher, with a patronizing wave of his right hand, "you're a pretty good writer, but you're a poor devil just the same. Here you dabble away in ink ten hours a day and I pay you a hundred dollar, a month for it—and, by the way, you are to be cut down to seventy-five after this week; you don't earn more than that—while I use my wits about four hours a day and have an income of several thousand.

"You wonder how I can make that prize offer because you are dull when it comes to things pertaining to the world, the flesh and the devil. You think I really mean to pay ten thousand good dollars to the first idiot who works a puzzle that a two-weeks'-old calf could see into?"

"Is it a strange steal?" asked the editor.

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The publisher chuckled again. "No, sir, my innocent; yours truly is not fool enough for that."

"Now, Cranstan, I'm really interested in you and I'm going to give you a lesson. If you don't take it, but go on mooning until you land in the poor-house, don't blame me.

"Now look here! I offer a prize of ten thousand dollars and a few others of trifling amounts. Anyone can work that puzzle but it costs him a dollar for his pains. One of the items, the tenth, I believe, may be answered either Washington or Emmett, and every one of them will say Washington, while, of course, the correct answer will be Emmett."

"Then you will not award the prize?" asked the editor.

Hawkins chuckled. "There is where your dullness shows. Any fool can plan it that far, but it takes a smart man to stop up all the loopholes so there will be no peeping. Of course, I will award the prize, announce the name of the winner and publish a facsimile of the check."

"Then how will you avoid paying it?" asked Cranston, really curious.

"Dull again," chuckled the publisher. "No use to give you lessons; you couldn't see an oil well on fire through this moonshine in your brain.

"Here," and Hawkins dropped his voice to a confidential pitch. "We give the solution of the puzzle and every one of them sees he, or rather she—most of them will be shes—missed that Emmett business. But we announce that Miss Somebody of some country cross-roads postoffice won the prize. I mail her a check. In five days it comes back. I deposit it in my bank, and the banker keeps his mouth shut and I keep the rest, see?"

"And the people?" queried Cranston.

"Get the magazine," promptly replied Hawkins, with a chuckle. "Now run that on a good showy page," he continued, rising, "and remember that is my last lesson. If you don't profit by it and get some fleece from the dear lambs, hanged if I care if you do go to the soup house." With that Hawkins went down the stairs feeling good.

Cranston went to the window and leaned his face against the pane. The snow lay like a torn and soiled pall over the haggard city. The dull, gray sky and the coming darkness but reflected the shadow and gloom in the young editor's soul. He remembered but one thing Hawkins had said—that his salary was to be reduced. It was bitter to think that in spite of his incessant drudgery and his high ideals, he was going down instead of up; but there was a keener hurt in his heart.

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The desolate city slipped away from his sight in the gathering night and he forgot it and his disappointment. He was far away in the country, standing under an old apple tree sweet with bloom. A pair of soft hands were locked about his neck, and from love-lit eyes upturned to his the tears were trickling, while a sweet voice said, in broken sobs.

"Good-bye, dear, good-bye. I'll be brave, but its so lonesome when you are gone. Come back for me soon, won't you?"

The vision vanished. He sighed wearily as he turned from the window. It had been three years, and still the little girl waited while he worked and grew poorer every year. He turned on the light, went to his desk and began to work out an idea that had just occured to him. As he worked he smiled over the possibility of its success.

It was the day after the contest closed. Hawkins came up to the editor's office with an unusually patronizing chuckle. The prize offer had been a great success. The publisher had garnered in more than six thousand dollars and every one had answered, "Washington."

Hawkins sat down at the other end of the room and put his feet on his desk.

"Who shall we announce won the prize?" asked Cranston. "Shall I make up a name?"

"Not much," replied Hawkins, "I do those things myself. Let me see," and he stared at the wall as he always did when he was trying to think. "Say Miss M-i-t-t-i-e L-u-f-f-e-y, Mittie Luffey won the prize."

"Where?" asked the editor.

"Anywhere most where they never heard of the Sweetstakes Monthly. Let's see, Bowers Mill, Mo.—that'll do."

It was so announced in the May number of the magazine, and a ten thousand dollar check was mailed to the address given.

A week passed and the letter had not returned. Hawkins grew nervous. Eight, nine, ten, days and still the letter did not return. Hawkins watched the mail like a criminal for a reprieve. He quit chuckling and took to whistling "John Brown's Body Lies Mouldering in the Grave." When two weeks had gone and still no letter returned, he went to Cranston.

"Say, Cranston," he began without any preliminaries, "something must be wrong with that Bower's postoffice."

"No, I guess not; postmaster just away fishing, I guess, answered the editor, cheerfully.

"Not much. Something's wrong down there, and I'm going down to inquire into into it."

That evening a fat man with a red face bought a ticket to Springfield, the nearest railroad point to Bowers Mill. When he arrived at Springfield the next day, he learned that it was twenty miles over land to the Mills. It was a very rough road and a hot day. About 4 o'clock, hot, tired and dirty, Hawkins drew up at the Bowers house. Without waiting to wash or even to interview the landlord, he dropped his grip on the porch and hurried off in search of the postoffice. "Has a letter for Miss Mittie Luffey come to this office?" he asked abruptly.