

Rhymes of a Rounder

went figuring another mode of time, wherein the world and all is more happily perceived. To my immediate environment, however, I was recalled by a delighted exclamation from the boy. He had his eye on a gory picture, displayed in a shop window, by which he halted. There was a battle scene from some belated Christmas annual; furious masses of men; trampling horses; the glint of sword and bayonet; the reek of cannon; uproar, blood, and fire. He wanted the picture very much, and that morning found that so far as I was concerned to ask was to receive.

The shop from the outside was dingy and altogether unpromising. But within there seemed to me a perfect treasure-trove of books. They were stacked in rather disorderly fashion on counter and shelves; many books greatly valued by a few, others to meet a more general taste, but little of the whole store really popular except the magazines. Because of dusty panes, and patches of brown and yellow paper pasted on them where the sun shone through, there was an atmosphere in the shop that made me think of amber and meerschaum. There were bluish rays through it from two small windows at the rear. The bibliopole in charge looked like a wood-cut from an early edition of Dickens or Balzac. He was rather tall and spare of frame, with a thin gray whisker, and he peered at me with eyes guileless as those of a baby or an old sea captain. His manner was courteous, but all the while he seemed intent on something quite apart from his