

high estate. That story, however, has nothing to do with Hector.

"Church" had been in for fully an hour one Sunday afternoon, and the devotees were in various stages of beer-induced felicity, when a knock came to the front door. The door was not opened. Not on Sundays. But six months is a long time to be away, and Hector always was forgetful. Presently he remembered, went round by the big gate, and in full view of a pair of very keen eyes came to the side door, which opened to him without resistance. Whether it would have opened at all had the visitor been unknown, does not matter here.

Let us pass over the first greetings. When men are in that state, inquiries are apt to be confused somewhat. But in the end Hector, disregarding the others, fixed his eye on the Englishman and began to answer a question that had been put to him pretty often.

"Say, just you hold on and I'll tell you all about it. You don't believe I've been in Heaven, do you? Eh? Course not, and dat's only natural wid youse. I wouldn't have believed it meself. Six months ago I wouldn't have believed it meself, dee ye see?"

Hector was one of the tough sort. He was one of the few men in his stratum of society, who would rather fight than eat. He has been known to leave the delights of the table more than once on purpose to gratify his keener appetite. Whether there was a single grain of gentleness in his make up was a question. He himself would have laughed at the notion. "My old mother don't know whether I'm alive or not, and I'm just as glad she don't," was a remark he made once or twice, and one which will display his opinion of himself.

One day Hector had been taking a sleep in a cozy spot on one of

the docks. Weather being favorable, he preferred sleeping off a spree in this airy place—to putting himself under the lash of sharp tongues at any of the hotels about. The place was well concealed from every one, so what need he care for comforts.

He was awakened by the cry of a child. Voices of men would have had no effect on his slumber, but the cry of a child was sufficiently unusual to at once arouse him.

It was part of Hector's economy to lie in such a position, that by merely turning upon his side he brought his eye to a small space between two boards, which he had long ago somewhat enlarged with his big clasp knife. Looking out now, he saw that two of the toughest wharf rats of the vicinity had brought a well dressed child of five or six years out of sight of passers-by, and while one was relieving her of a gold brooch the other was removing the child's little lace-covered dress. Now had that been some one who should have been able to take care of himself, Hector would probably have looked on complacently while the rogues went through his pockets, and then have cudgelled his brains to know how he could come in for a share of the spoils. But this was a child, and robbing children was a pastime that had not hitherto come under Hector's certainly varied experience. So pulling himself together with the alertness that is part of a sailor's training, he tipped out of his crony hole, and to their infinite astonishment grabbed both his disreputable acquaintances by the collar, shook hard, once, twice, and called to the little girl to run. She ran, and was already at the street entrance to the dock before Hector realized the size of the contract he had undertaken. Still when a man would