

We went to the village druggist and borrowed a skeleton. The skeleton didn't belong to the druggist, but he had imported it for the village doctor, because the doctor thought he would send away for it, having some delicacy about using—well, the price of the skeleton at that time was fifty dollars. I don't know how high they go now, but probably much higher, on account of the tariff.

We borrowed this skeleton about 9 o'clock at night, and we got this man—Nicodemus Dodge was his name—we got him down town out of the way, and then we put the skeleton into his bed. He lived in a little one-storeyed log cabin in the middle of a vacant lot. We left him to get home by himself. We enjoyed the result in the light of anticipation; but by-and-by we began to drop into silence; the possible consequences began to prey upon us. Suppose that it frightens him into madness, overturns his reason, and sends him screeching through the streets! We shall spend sleepless nights the rest of our days. Everybody was afraid.

By-and-by it was forced to the lips of one of us that we had better go at once and see what was happening. Loaded down with crime, we approached that hut and peeped through the window. That long-legged critter was sitting on his bed, with a hunk of gingerbread in his hand, and between the bites he played a tune on a jew's harp. There he sat, perfectly happy, and all around him on the bed were toys and jimcracks and striped candy. The darned cuss has gone and sold the skeleton for five dollars. The druggist's fifty-dollar skeleton had gone.

We went in tears to that druggist and explained the matter. We couldn't have raised fifty dollars in two hundred and fifty years. We were getting board and clothing for the first year, clothing and board for the second year, and both of them for the third year. But the druggist forgave us on the spot, but he said he would like us to let him have our skeletons when we were done with them. There couldn't be anything fairer than that; we spouted our skeletons and went away comfortable. But from that time the druggist's prosperity ceased. That was one of the most unfortunate speculations he ever went into.

After some years one of the boys went and got drowned; that was one skeleton gone, and I tell you the druggist felt pretty bad about it. A few years after that another of the boys went up in a balloon. He was to get five dollars an hour for it. When he gets back there will be owing him a billion dollars. The druggist's property was decreasing right along. After a few more years the third boy tried an experiment to see if a dynamite charge would go off. It went, all right. They found some of him—perhaps a