

the winder when the lights was put out, was just exactly like the motion of a bat. He fell on the pavement as a sack of grain does that slips out of the slings. It's the way to make vegetable marrow when you're in a hurry. Throw a pumpkin up in the air, and it will come down squash. Well, New Orleans, arter a while, began to get too hot for me, for I never could keep cool anywhere; so one fine mornin' I found myself a goin' up the Mississippi first rate. When we arrived opposite Vixburg, a gambler came on board with that very identical beard on you saw me wear, and the way he fleeced the river people was cautionary. Secin' me there lookin' pretty stupid drunk, for I pretended to be hardly able to stand, he challenged me to try my luck, and I fairly cleaned him out, broke him all to snash like a shut-up bank. I bagged three thousand dollars, and staggered off as if nothin' above partikelar had happened. As for him, he looked like a feller who, when it rains mush, has got no spoon. There was a young cotton-trader on board at the time whose life I had saved onet in a mass meetin' row about Cuba, for party spirit ran high, you know, at New Orleans just then. So sais I:

"'Friend, what do you think I had best do to avoid that critter? for he would think no more of dirkin' me than stickin' a suckin' pig!'"

"'Go to bed,' said he, 'and I will go with you, and we will concoct a plan.'"

"No sooner said than done. He turned into the off-side of a berth, and took charge of my money, and I took out the pocket-book, and folded up a newspaper and put in it, and stowed it all away in my pocket, and then emptied out a carpet-bag, and stuffed some of the bed-clothes in it, and locked it, and sot down, pretendin' to be too screwy to talk sense. Presently in comes the gamblerman, but without his beard, but that made no difference. I had watched his eye too keen to be deceived, and he slipt into the berth on the other side of the state-room, and pretended to go to sleep.

"'Do come to bed, Mr. Starrat,' said cotton-trader to me (for we had agreed upon a false name); 'give me your hand, and I will try to help you in.'"

"'Can't,' sais I; 'I'm too drunk; if I lift my leg up, I shall fall, as sure as fate. I want three legs to-night — and besides, who the devil are you? I won three thousand dollars to-night, and there it is,' takin' out my pocket-book and slappin' it with my hand, 'and a thousand dollars of my own with it to keep it company, like two in a bed.'"

"'Well, give it to me,' said he, 'and I will take care of it for you.'"