

I PAY MY OTHER BET

"What is it?" asked Mary, lookin' to see what had run across my bows to bring me up into the wind so sudden.

"Nothin' serious," says I; "but, unless my eyesight is goin' back on me, this shop we're in front of is what I've been huntin' for."

She looked at the shop I was p'intin' at. The window was full of hats, straw ones mainly.

"Why?" says she, "it's a hat store, isn't it? You don't need a new hat, Zebulon, do you?"

"You bet I do!" says I, chucklin'. "I need just as much hat as there is. Come in and watch me buy it."

I could see she was puzzled, but she was more so after I got into the store. A slick-lookin', but pretty condescendin' young clerk marched up to us and says he:

"Somethin' in a hat, sir?"

"Yes, sir," says I; "*everything* in a hat."

He didn't know what to make of that, so he tried again.

"One of our new straws, perhaps?" he asks. "The fifteenth is almost here, you know."

"Maybe so," I told him, "but I don't want any straw, the fifteenth or the sixteenth either. I want a plug hat, a beaver hat — that's what I want."

The clerk was a little set back, I guess, but poor Mary was all at sea.