

THE STROLLERS

By FREDERIC S. ISHAM, Author of "Under the Rose"

Copyright, 1902, by THE BOWEN-MERRILL COMPANY

"Then I shall sleep on down. I haven't a chance—with a sigh—to damage my conscience lately. But when I strike civilization again—and Susan shook her head eloquently to conclude her sentence. "Oh, yes; if beds depend on conscience, beds would be feathers for me tonight," with which half laughing, half defiant conclusion Susan tripped to the chair, pausing a moment, however, to cast a reproachful glance over her shoulder at Saint-Prosper before vanishing in the cavernous depths of the vehicle of the muses.

Her departure was the signal for the dispersing of the party to their respective couches. Now the fire sank lower, the stars came out brighter, and the moon arose and traveled majestically up the heavens, taking a brief but comprehensive survey of the habitations of mortals, and then, as if satisfied with her scrutiny, sailed back to the horizon and dropped out of sight.

CHAPTER VIII

SHORTLY after the departure of the strolling players from the tavern Mauville summoned his servant and ordered his equipment to be taken to the dining room, which, dismantled of the stage, by very contrast to the temporary temple of art turned his thoughts to the players. The burlesqueness of the room accented with the memory of those performances, and he laughed ironically to himself that he should thus revert to them. But as he scoffed inwardly, his eyes gleamed with vivacity, and the sensations with which he had viewed the young girl night after night were reawakened. What was one woman to him? His egotism whispered, He had parted from many as a gormand leaves one meal for another. Yes; but she had not been his, insulated vanity; another had whipped her off before his eyes.

"Why the devil didn't you tell me he was going with them?" he demanded of the landlord while settling his account. "He—who?" asked the surprised innkeeper. "That adventurer you have been harboring here. How far is he going with them?" "I don't know. The night after the performance I heard the manager ask him to join the company; to write a temperance play."

"Temperance play?" sneered Mauville. "The fool's gone with them on account of a woman." "I did think he was mighty attentive to one of the actresses," said the landlord reflectively. "The one with them melting eyes. Purty good looking! Quiet and ladylike, too! So he's gallivanting after her? Well, well, I guess actresses be all alike."

"I guess they are," added the bell-man. "And this one took me in, be thought I know as I understand you quite," replied the landlord with sudden dignity. "But here's your carriage and your things are all on. I guess you're gone."

Dominion Brewery Company Limited, Brewers and Malsters, Toronto, Ont. Ales and Porter, White Label Brand, Wm. Ross, Manager, 1904 WARD 5 1904

RE-ELECTION OF Ald. WM. L. BELL AS ALDERMAN FOR 1904 Election, Jan. 1st (New Year's Day) POLLS CLOSE AT 5 P.M. Only Three Aldermen are to be Elected the coming year. WARD No. 5 1904 Your Vote and Influence are Requested for the Election of PEOPLE'S CANDIDATE PETER B. STOCK

oly-kocks are not bad. I suppose this man, Ten Breeches, or whatever he is called, is at once cook and house-keeper. Although I don't think much of his house-keeping, I must say Mauville as he observed a herculean spider weaving a web from an old volume of Giraudus Cambrensis, antiquary, to the classical works of one Joseph of Exeter. There is a strong sympathy between wine and cobwebs, and Mauville watched with increasing interest the uses to which these ponderous tomes had sunk—but serving the blood-thirsty purpose of the nimble architect evolving its delicate engineering problem in midair.

A great blundering fly had just bobbed into the net, and the spider, with hideous, carnivorous zest, was scrambling for it when the guardian of the manor returned with the family solicitor, a little man who bore in his arms a bundle of papers, which after the customary greetings he spread upon the table. He helped himself to a glass of burgundy and proceeded forthwith to enter into the history of his trust.

Myneer the patron, Mauville's predecessor, a lonely, arrogant man, had held tenaciously to the immense tracts of land acquired in the colonial days by nominal purchase. He had never married, he desired for an heir being discounted by his aversion for the other sex, until as the days dragged on he found himself bedridden and childless in his old age. Unfortunately the miser cannot take his acres into paradise, and the patron, with many an inward groan, cast about him for some remote relative whom he would reluctantly transfer his earthly hereditaments. These were two—one a man of piety, who prayed with the tenants when they complained of their lot; the other, Mauville, upon whom he had never set eyes.

When the earliest patrons had made known to the West India company their intention of planting colonies in New Netherlands, they had issued attractive maps to promote their colonization projects. Among those who had been lured to America by these enticing advertisements was an ancestor of Edward Mauville. Incurring the displeasure of the governor for his godless views, this Frenchman was sent to the pillory, or whipping post, and his neighbors were about to torture the devil of irreverence in good old fashioned manner when one of the governor's daughters interested, carried off the handsome miscreant, and such was her impetuous way, married him. He was heard in after years to aver that the whipping would have been the milder punishment; but he that as it may, a child was born into the world, and the father and mother, deserted his home, joined hands with some ocean rover and sailed for that pasture ground of buccaners, the Caribbean sea. Of his subsequent history various stories may be found in the chronicles of New Orleans and Louisiana.

The only other person who might have any pretensions to the estate was a missionary among the Indians, preaching from a stump, and called Little Thunder by the red men because of his powerful voice, a lineal descendant of the Rev. Dr. Johannes Vanderkloek, the first of the patroons, who served for 1,000 guilders, payable in meat or drink, twenty-two bushels of wheat and two firkins of butter. He saved the souls of the savages, while the white men cheated their bodies. Now and then, in those early days, the children of the forest protested against this evangelizing process and carried off the good dominion of the patroon stake, where they plucked out his finger nails, but he returned with as much zeal to his task of landing these simple souls in paradise as those who employed him displayed in making an earthly paradise out of the lands the red men left behind them.

When by this shrewd system the savages were granted, and they henceforwardly exterminated, Little Thunder's occupation was gone, and he became a peoniser of myneer the patroon, earning his bread by an occasional sermon to the tenants, exhorting them to thrift and industry, to be faithful and multiply and to pay their rents promptly. As myneer's time drew near he left the good dominion of the patroon stake, where they plucked out his finger nails, but he returned with as much zeal to his task of landing these simple souls in paradise as those who employed him displayed in making an earthly paradise out of the lands the red men left behind them.

When by this shrewd system the savages were granted, and they henceforwardly exterminated, Little Thunder's occupation was gone, and he became a peoniser of myneer the patroon, earning his bread by an occasional sermon to the tenants, exhorting them to thrift and industry, to be faithful and multiply and to pay their rents promptly. As myneer's time drew near he left the good dominion of the patroon stake, where they plucked out his finger nails, but he returned with as much zeal to his task of landing these simple souls in paradise as those who employed him displayed in making an earthly paradise out of the lands the red men left behind them.

"Take or hypocrite!" he exclaimed the second time. "Devil or pharisee?" he cried the third time. He peered over the coin and sent for his attorney. His soul passed away, mourned by Little Thunder until the will was read, when his lamentations ceased. He soundly berated myneer the patroon in his coffin and refused to go to his burying. Then he became an ardent antireater, a leader of "bolters," a thunderer of the people's cause, the devoted enemy of land barons in general and one patroon in particular, the foreign heir to the manor.

"But let him thunder away, sir," said Scroggs soothingly. "The estate's yours now, for the old patroon can't come back to change his mind. He's buried sure enough in the grove, a dark and somber spot as befitted his disposition, but restful withal. Ay, and the marble slabs above him, which reminds me that only a month before he took to his bed he was smoking his pipe on the porch when his glance fell upon the lifting stone. Suddenly he strode toward it, bent his back and raised it a full two inches. 'So much for age!' said he, scoffing-like. But age heard him and now he lies with a stone on him he cannot lift, while you, sir, to his listener deferentially, 'are sole heir to the estate and to the feud.'"

"A feud goes with the property?" remarked Mauville carelessly. "The tenants object to paying rent," replied Scroggs sadly. "They're a sorry set!" "Evade their debts, do they?" said the land baron languidly. "What presumption to imitate their betters! That won't do. I need the money." "They claim the rights of the land lord originated in fraud," said Mauville. "No doubt," yawned "my ancestors were rogues!" "Oh, sir," deprecatorily. "If the tenants don't pay, turn them out," interrupted Mauville listlessly. "If you have to depopulate the country."

Having come to an understanding with his client, the lawyer arose to take his departure. "By the way," he said obsequiously selecting a yellow, well worn bit of paper from his bundle of documents. "It may interest you to keep this yourself. It is the original deed for all these lands from the squaw Pewasch. You see they were acquired for a few dollars' worth of wet and dry goods and seventeen and a half eils of duff."

"The old patroons could strike a rare bargain," muttered the heir as he casually surveyed the ancient deed and then, folding it, placed it in his breast pocket. "For a mere song was acquired." "A vast principle," added the solicitor, waving his hand toward the fields and meadows far in the distance.

CHAPTER IX HAVING started the wheels of justice fairly moving, with Scroggs at the throttle, the new land baron soon discovered that he was not in consonance with the great commoner who said he was savage enough to prefer the woods and wilds of Monticello to all the pleasures of Paris. In other words, those rural delights of his forefathers, the pleasures of a closer intimacy with nature, awake no responsive chord in Mauville's breast, and he began to tire of the life of a patriarchal existence and crullers and oly-kocks and playing the fine lord in solitary grandeur.

To further add to the land baron's dissatisfaction over his heritage, "rent day," that all important day in his olden times when my lord's door had been besieged by the willing leaseholders, cheerful as rendering unto Cæsar what was due Cæsar, seemed to have been dropped from the modern calendar. "Your notes, Scroggs, were wasted on the desert air," said the patroon grimly to that disappointed worthy. "What's the use of tenants who don't pay? Playing at feudal lord in modern times is a farce, Scroggs."

That evening when the broad meadows were inundated by the shadow of the forest the great baron ordered lights for every room. The manor shone in isolated grandeur amid the gloomy fields, with the forest wall around it, radiant as of old, when strains of music had been heard within and many figures passed the windows. But now there was light and not life, and a solitary antireater on the lonely road regarded with surprise the unusual illumination. "What does it mean?" asked Little Thunder, for it was, he was waiting and watching as without the gates of paradise.

connoisseur sampling a cellar. He was unduly dignified and stately, but the attorney appeared decidedly groggy. "Lord! How you go on!" exclaimed Scroggs. "What with sampling this and sampling that, my head's going round like a top. If there's anything in the cellar the old patroons put down we haven't tried, sir, I beg to defer the sampling. I am of the sage's mind—'Of all men who take wine, the moderate only enjoy it,' says Master Bacon or some one else."

"Pass the bottle," answered the other. "Gently, man! Don't disturb its repose, and remember it disdains the perpendicular." "So will I soon!" muttered Scroggs. "I hope you'll excuse me, sir, but that last drop of Veuve Clignon was the whipcord that started the top going, and, on my word, raising his hands to his head, 'I feel like holding it on to keep it from spinning off.'"

"Spinning or not, you shall try this vintage!" the young man's eyes gleamed with such fire as shone in the glass—"and drink to Constance Carew!" "Constance Carew?" stammered the other, desperately swallowing the toast. Mauville slowly emptied the glass. "A balsamic taste, slightly piquant, but agreeable," he observed. "A dangerous wine, Scroggs. It carries no warning. Your older kind is like a world worn coquette whose glances at once place you on the defensive. This maiden vintage, just springing into glorious womanhood, comes over you like a springtime dream."

"Who—who is she?" muttered Scroggs. "She is not in the cellar you prepared for my lamented kinsman, eh? No title, man; not even a society lady. A stroller, which is next door to a vagrant." "Well, sir, she's a woman, and that's enough," replied the lawyer. "And my opinion is it's better to have nothing to do with 'em."

With this sententious remark Scroggs gave a sudden lurch forward and quietly and naturally slid under the table. The patroon arose, strode to the window, which he lifted, and the night air entered, fanning his hot brow. The leaves on high rustled like falling rain. The elms tossed their branches, striking one another in blind confusion.

As he stood there the stars grew pale. The sky trembled and quivered before the advent of morn. A heavy footstep fell behind him, and, turning, he beheld the caretaker. "Not in bed yet, oly-kocks?" cheerfully said the land baron. "I am just up."

"In that case it is time for me to retire," returned the master, with a yawn. "This is a dull place, oly-kocks; no life, no variety. Nothing going on!" The servant glanced at the formidable array of bottles. "And he calls this a quiet life!" thought the caretaker, losing his impatience and winking the table with round eyed wonder.

"Nothing going on?" he said aloud. "Myneer the patroon complained of too much life here, with people taking farms all around. But if you are dull, a farmer told me last night there was a company of strolling players in Vanderdonkville!"

To be Continued. Every new force is born of a new idea. The only aim that some people seem to have is to live within a stone's throw of other people who occupy glass houses. Beauty may be only skin deep, but it generally manages to get a seat in a crowded car. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but you can't make the sword swallow believe it. Tourist—Did you ever—ever shoot a man? Oregon Bill—No, indeed; I've plugged a few Indians, a Hunan, a duffer; but I never killed a human. Fond Mother—What does Henry say in his letter, paw? Fond Father—He sez that if he had my whiskers on his head he could get on to the football team this fall. corporations on an American continent. Mrs. De Style—That complexion wash you gave me has worked like a charm, and my skin is as soft as a rose leaf. Physician—Did you follow my directions, and use that and nothing else? "Not another thing, not even powder. But I am going away, and you must tell me how to make it." "Certainly." "What are the ingredients?" "Soup and water."

Furs For Wintry Days. At the first dawn of the New Year, winter has well begun. Its fur time—every day of it for the next three or four months. When you can secure the comforts of Furs at such prices as this, why not? Western Sable Scarfs 45 in long, 6 and 8 tails \$5, \$6, and \$7. Alaska Sable Scarfs, extra full furred \$10. Mink Scarfs \$12. Mink Stoles \$20. Sable Fisher Stoles, silk trimmings special \$16.50. Western Sable Muffs, \$6.50. Alaska Sable Muffs \$9. Men's Fur Caps from \$3.50. Children's Grey Lamb Caps, \$2.50. Children's Grey Lamb Scarfs, \$3.50. J. W. T. Fairweather & Co. 446 Queen West. 84-86 Yonge St.

UNION MEN Chew the BEST BRITISH NAVY. STRICTLY UNION MADE. McALPINE TOBACCO CO., TORONTO, CAN. When you are buying a Cigar, look for this Label. IT SIGNIFIES BEST WORKMANSHIP. UNDER BEST SANITARY CONDITIONS. Human rules scrape very little together. The trouble with the average hero is that he hasn't sense enough to stay upon his pedestal. Every mother imagines her baby's toes look like rosbuirs. There is something beyond intellectual aristocracy, and that is the aristocracy of the skies. Health and Vigor depend upon the quality and quantity of the blood—HUMANTARIAN!

Gold Seal EXPORT LAGER. The Perfect Beer. The Sleeman B. & M. Co. Limited, Guelph, Canada. Dr. Carson's Tonic Stomach and Constipation Bitters. Have long been recognized as the sovereign treatment. These are made from the formula of an eminent Canadian physician, who has used the prescription and the blood becomes purified, causing many unpleasant symptoms, such as indigestion, languid feeling, indisposition to attend to duties, pain in back or shoulders, sour stomach, constipation, dryness of the skin, vertigo, nervousness at night, etc. If these symptoms are not dealt with immediately, they become aggravated so as to induce severe illness. To relieve at once and cure permanently.

DAVIES Brewery CO. TORONTO. CELEBRATED CRYSTAL AND ALES PORTER AND LAGER Tonic MALT Extract Temperance VIENNA BEER LITHIUM MINERAL WATER.

WARD No. 4. Your Vote and Influence are Requested for the Election of S.A. JONES AS ALDERMAN.

Vol. IV THE HO... 3... PA... Trade Marke... Special Attentio... Ridou... 103 B... Hotel... 824 Queen... J. J... Fidelity Union... Anyth... From... The Way... and the... Fa... The Tay... Sign of the... PA... FETHE... TORO... FU... Elect... THE C... WILL... ST... Moo... A PRETTY G... and dively... M... J... 556... M... F... Everyt... Don... READ T...