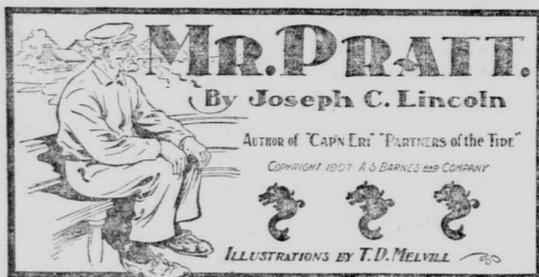




"If They Ain't Crazy, What Made 'Em Come to Live at Nate Scudder's?"



Author of 'CAPN ERN' 'PARTNERS OF THE TIDE' ILLUSTRATIONS BY T.D. MELVILLE

Mr. Solomon Pratt began comical narration of story, introducing well-to-do Nathan Scudder of his town, and Edward Van Brunt and Martin Hartley, two rich New Yorkers seeking rest.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

We cut across Sears' meadow, and the frogs was beginning to squeal and the crickets to chirp.

"Heavens, Van!" he says. "It sounds like the ticker," and he said it so prayerful and sad.

Van Brunt shook his head. "Don't it?" says he. "I can see the tape running off that tree."

I left 'em on the hill by the Baptist burying ground. I watched 'em walking down the road, big and straight and handsome, and I pitied 'em from the bottom of my heart.

"Sol Pratt," says I to myself, "here's a lesson for you. You're old and homely and your bank account is nothing, minus a good deal, divided by naught; but don't you never complain again."

And I thought about 'em and pitied 'em all that evening, while I was frying my herrings for supper. I hope I'll get credit somewhere for all that pity.

CHAPTER II. The Man.

I see 'em pretty often during the next week. They used to loaf down to the landing of a morning, smoking cigars, and with their hands in their pockets.

He was a kind of an exhibit for Wellmouth, as you might say. Leastways he was bran-new for me. Six foot two over all, I should judge, and about two foot in the beam.

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But Nate Scudder's private patients wa'n't that kind. Not that they wa'n't dressed. Land sakes! I don't s'pose they wore the same vests two days running.

"Hello, yourself," says I, keeping on with my work.

"Mr. Edward 'as ordered the boat for 'alf past 11," he says.

"I want to know," says I. "How'll he have it—'ric 11?"

"I know you did. And I asked if he'd have it fried."

This time that he wa'n't a book agent. What he was though I couldn't make out nor I didn't much care.

"Look 'ere," says he, after a minute. "Is your name Pratt?"

"Yup," I says. "On Thursdays it is. 'Thursdays' says he. 'Thursdays? What—what is it on Fridays?"

"Mister Pratt," says I, pretty average brisk. He seemed to be more muddled than ever.

"My man," he says, again. "My man—"

"Humph!" I interrupted. "Well, if I'm your man whose man are you?"

"Not Hopper," he says. "Opper." "Sure! Opper's what I said," says I.

"Oh, Hopper!" I says. "Of course," Opper, he says.

"I felt as if I'd been sailing a race and had made a lap and got back to the starting buoy."

"All right," says I. "What's an H or two between friends? How's your patients, Mr. Opper Hopper?"

"Look 'ere, my fine feller," he says. "You're too fresh. For a 'penny I'd come down and put a 'ead on you."

And right then I give up the idea that he was a retired parson. Parsons don't talk like that.

"You would?" says I. "Well, you go on putting 'eads on the poor lunatics you have to take care of and don't try any of your asylum games with me."

"I'm Mr. Edward Van Brunt's vally," he says—"is man-servant, and 'e 'as ordered you to—"

"His man-servant!" I sung out, setting up straight.

"Of course. Didn't I says so? His vally, an—"

Well, I'd made a mistake. I judged, if he was a servant he couldn't be the keeper. I cal'ated 'twas best to be a little more sociable.

"Humph!" says I. "I guess I'd ought to beg your pardon, Mr. Opper—"

"Opper!" he fairly hollered it. "All right. Never mind. Come on aboard and let's talk it over."

So aboard he come, making a land-lubber's job of it, and come to anchor on the bench in the cockpit, setting up as stiff and straight as if he'd swallowed a marlin-spike.

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"What kind of a servant did you say you was?" says I, breaking the ice.

"A vally, Mr. Edward's vally." "Vally, hey?" says I. "Vally! Hum! I want to know!"

I guess he see I was out of sound-ings, so he condescends to do some spelling for me.

"V-a-l-l-e-t," says he. "Vally." "Oh!" says I. "A vallet. Yes, yes; I see."

I knew what a vallet was—I'd read about 'em in the papers—but this feller's calling it a "vally" put me off the course.

"My good feller," he says. "Would you mind if I tried one of me own weeds? 'Ave one yourself," says he.

I took the cigar he handed me. It was one of Van Brunt's particular brand.

"Humph!" thinks I. "Your bosses may be simpletons for the love of it, Brother James, but not you, no, sir-ee! You're in it for the value of the man-ifest."

In another half hour or so the Heavenly Twins showed up alongside. And then 'twould have done you good to see that vallet's back get limber.

"Look here," says I. "You tell me straight. Ain't Van Brunt and Hartley out of their heads?"

"Out of their 'eads? 'Eavens, no!" He was so upset that he couldn't hardly speak for a minute.

Well, that was a kind of poser, even for Mr. James Opper Hopper Know-it-All.

He commenced to tell about society and pink teas—I guess 'twas pink; might have been sky-blue though—and races and opera parties and stocks, and "strenuous life" and the land knows what.

"So?" says I, thinking of how I had to scratch to keep body and soul together. "I've been right in style all my days and didn't know it. Hum! going crabbering and fishing and clamming and taking gangs of summer folks out on seastick parties is the proper thing, hey? And your boss and his chum want to live simple?"

"Yes, he said they wanted to live real simple."

"Well," says I, "if Huldy Ann Scudder cooks for 'em that's the way they'll live."

He went on with another rignarole about how the Heavens had lived in New York. Cutting out everything about himself and that British lord—which was two-thirds of the yarn—there was some stuff about a girl named Page that interested me.

"But, see here," I says, puzzled. "If she's engaged to Van why ain't he to home courting her instead of dissipating on baked beans and thin feller beds over to Scudder's? Why ain't he to home in New York getting ready to be married?"

Well, the marriage, so James said, was to be arranged later. Near as I could find out Van and this Agnes Page had mighty little to do with the marrying. 'Twas their folks that was fixing that up.

"Yes, yes," says I. "But how does Hartley like chumming around with the feller that's going to marry his old girl?"

It appeared that that was all right. Hartley and Van was chums; loved each other like brothers—or better. Little thing like a girl or two didn't count.

"But this Page girl?" says I. "How does she feel on the Natural Life question?"

"Oh, she believes in it too," says his lordship. "Only she's more interested in 'er charity and 'elping the poor and heducating 'em," says he.

I fetched a long breath. "Well, Mr. Opper—Hopper, I mean—" I says, "you can say what you want to, but I'll still hang on to my first notion. I think the whole crew is stark, raving crazy."

I'd noticed that he hadn't been pulling at my cigar much—a good five-cent Bluebell cigar 'twas, too. Now he put it down, kind of like 'twas loaded.

"My good feller," he says. "Would you mind if I tried one of me own weeds? 'Ave one yourself," says he.

"Humph!" thinks I. "Your bosses may be simpletons for the love of it, Brother James, but not you, no, sir-ee! You're in it for the value of the man-ifest."

"Aftermath" is a persistently ill used word. Early July is the time of the "math"; that is, the first mowing of the meadows.

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Dr. J.C. Tebbel* In Use For 30 Years.

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The keener the critic the more cutting the criticism.

"An' yer honor, would you be willing to take a working man by the hand?"

Mr. Longfellow gave the honest Englishman a hearty handshake. Later, in speaking of the incident, he said:

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It is taken directly from the blood and passes through the system. They cure one hundred dollars for any case of this nature. Send for circular and testimonials.

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"Yes," answered the unpoetic person; "it is something of a comfort to find the gas bills getting so much smaller."

Asthmatics, Read This. If you are afflicted with Asthma write me at once and learn of something for which you will be grateful the rest of your life. J. G. McBride, Steubenville, Ohio.

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Your use of leisure throws a light on the whole of your life.

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It costs more to get out of trouble than it does to keep out.

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There isn't much meat on the bone of contention.

Get your size in a pair of dainty White House Shoes. Slip your feet in. You'll find the shoes snug—pliable—smooth—graceful.

They are built over foot-form lasts. That's why they fit. If you want pretty, snug, easy-fitting new shoes, get a pair of White House Shoes.

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"gin ye dae, ye'll aye regret it. For a'm tellin' ye, when I marrit ye'r mither, I hadna but ae shillin', forby she had aughten pence. And for all the 15 year o' our marrit life, I n'er heard the last o' the odd saxpence."

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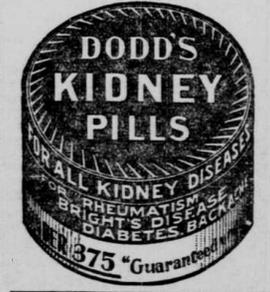
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Longfellow Appreciated the Praise of English Workingman. When Longfellow was in London, Queen Victoria sent for him to come and see her at the palace.

"My good man," he says, "you don't understand me. I said that Mr. Edward 'ad ordered the boat for 'alf past 11."

"I know you did. And I asked if he'd have it fried."

He seemed to be turning this over in his mind. And with every turn he got more muddled. I'd concluded by



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16oz.—One-Third More Starch.

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