



# MR. PRATT.

By Joseph C. Lincoln

AUTHOR OF "CAPTAIN ERIC" "PARTNERS OF THE TIDE"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY T. D. MELVILL

Mr. Solomon Pratt began comical narrative of his adventures in the West with Nathan Scudder of his town, and Edward Van Brunt and Martin Hartley, two rich New Yorkers seeking rest. Van Brunt was learned, was the successful suitor for the hand of Miss Agnes Page, who gave Hartley up. Adventure at Fourth of July celebration at Eastwick. Hartley rescued a boy, known as "Reddy," from under a horse's feet, and the archer proved to be one of Miss Page's charges, whom she had taken to the country for an outing. Van Brunt sent an island from Scudder and called it Ozone island. In charge of a company of New York poor children Miss Talford and Miss Page visited Ozone island. Eureka Sparrow, a country girl, was engaged as a cook and Van Brunt and Hartley paid a visit to her father, who for years had been claiming consumption for not working. Upon another island visit by Miss Page, Eureka diagnosed Hartley's case as one of love for Agnes. Hartley invented a plan to make Washington Sparrow work. In putting the plan into effect Hartley tore apart of Miss Page for whom the "sick man" sent. Agnes then appealed to Van Brunt. Sparrow to escape the treatment proclaimed him self well and went to work. Storm-bound on Ozone island, Van Brunt and Hartley tried to escape. Hartley suffered a broken arm while hunting a physician for "Reddy," supposed to be suffering from appendicitis.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

The lane of deep water narrowed up ahead of us and there was a kind of gate, as you might say, at the end. Hartley looked at me and I at him.

"Can you?" he asks. He was white as paper, but not from being scared I was sure. His left arm hung down straight and he kept rubbing it.

"Lord knows," I says. "Are you hurt?"

He didn't answer; just shook his head. On went the Dora Bassett. Bless the old girl's heart! She was doing her best to pull us through.

The gate was just in front of our nose. I set my teeth and headed her for the middle of it. A jiffy more, and the crazy breakers jumped at us from both sides. Their froth flew over us in shanks. Then we was through, and I fetched my first decent breath.

We was in a kind of pond now, where we had elbow room.

Martin looked astern. "Here comes a boat," says he.

"Was the lifeboat from the station. They'd seen our trouble and was coming full tilt. I hadn't ever been took off my own boat by no life-savers, and I wasn't going to begin.

"Haven't you?" hails the crew cap'n from the boat. "We're coming to take you off."

I didn't answer.

"Haven't you?" he yells again. "Heave to!"

I turned my head a little ways.

"Go home and get your breakfast," I sings out. "We're busy."

They kept on for a ways, and then they give it up. I ran two or three more of them lanes and then, when I had the chance, I dropped my mainsail and histed the jib. And with that jib and the car I picked my way for another spell, in and out and betwixt and between. At last we sid past the Wapatamac breakwater and up to the wharf. A nice piece of work for anybody's boat, if I do say it.

Hartley seemed to think so, too, for says he: "Skipper, that was beautiful. You're a wonder."

"Twenty minutes of six," says I. "We're on time."

There was an early-bird lobsterman on the wharf, come down to see how many of his pots had gone adrift in the night. He stood and stared at us.

"God sakes!" says he. "Where'd you come from?"

"Wellmouth," says I, making fast to a ring bolt.

"In her?" he says, pointing to the sloop. "In this gale? Never in the world!"

"All right. Then we didn't." I hadn't no time to waste arguing.

out a license. It's a slick, high-collared, fancy shirt-bosomed hotel clerk.

"What?" says the clerk, frosty and slow.

"Dr. Jordan of Providence. Is he here?"

His majesty looked at his book again afore he answered. Then he put his thumb between the pages to mark the place and condescends to draw out:

"What do you want with him?"

For once he'd made a mistake. There are times when it ain't wise to judge a feller by his general get-up. Martin stiffened, and he spoke clear and sharp.

"Answer my question, if you please," says he. "Is the doctor here?"

"No, he ain't."

"Where is he?"

"Gone."

I felt sick. Maybe Hartley did too, but he didn't show it.

"Where has he gone?" he asks.

"I don't know that I've got to—"

"I know. And for your own good, my friend, I advise that you tell me. Where is Dr. Jordan?"

The emperor come down off his throne a little. I calculate he figured that 'twas good policy.

"He's gone to Brantboro," he says. "He went yesterday morning and he's to leave there for Boston this forenoon. Then he's going to Bar Harbor for the rest of his vacation. Anything else you'd like to know?"

This last part was loaded to the gunwale with sarcasm.

"Yes," says Hartley emphatic. "Where is the doctor staying in Brantboro?"

"Cold Spring house. Want to know what he pays for his room?"

Martin didn't answer. He walked to the door. I stopped for a jiffy.

"See here, my smart aleck," says I to the clerk, "you'll have some more fun from this later on, when your boss hears of it. Do you know who 'tis you've been sassing? That young man is John D. Vanderbilt of New York."

There is some satisfaction in a first-class lie. It done me good to see that clerk shrivel up.

Martin was calling to me. "Sol," he asks, like a flash, "how can I get to Brantboro?"

"You can't—in time to catch that morning train. Brantboro's ten mile off, and the train that gets here at 25 minutes of eight leaves there at 7:15. That was the one we was to have the doctor on. And it's past six now."

He spun around on his heel. "Is the telegraph line to Brantboro working?" he asked the clerk.

"No, sir," says I. "My! but he was polite. 'I'm sorry to say not, sir.'"

"Can I get a horse here?"

"The livery stable is right around the corner; but I don't think—"

We was at that livery stable in less than two shakes. The feller that took care of the horses and slept in the stable loft was up and sweeping out.

"Have you got a horse that will take me to Brantboro in half an hour?" asks the Twin.

The feller stared at him. "Be you crazy?" says he.

Martin didn't answer. "Whose machine is that?" he asks.

He was pointing to a big automobile with a shiny painted hull and nickel-plated running rigging.

"Mr. Shearer's. He's away for a week and we're keeping it for him."

"Can I hire it?"

The feller's mouth fell open like 'twas on hinges.

"Hire it? Hire Mr. Shearer's automobile?" says he. "Well, I'll be darned!"

"Where's your employer?" asks Hartley, quick.

"Hey?"

"Your boss!" I sings out, dancing up and down. "For the land sakes wake up! Where is he?"

"In the house, I guess. Where do you—"

We met the livery stable owner just coming out of his kitchen with a pan of leavings for the pig. He'd just turned out. I knew him; his name was Ben Baker. Martin went at him hot-foot, speaking in short sentences.

"I want to hire that auto in your stable," he says. "I must get to Brantboro before seven o'clock. I'll pay any price. But I must have it."

Then there was more arguing. Baker said no. Was we crazy? He couldn't let another man's auto to the Almighty himself. And Mr. Shearer's auto, of all things! Why, Shearer would kill him. And so forth and so on.

But Hartley kept cool. He must have the machine. He'd be responsible for damages. He explained about the doctor.

"I'll pay you—so and so," says he. Never mind the price he offered. It was so big that I wouldn't be believed if I told it. Baker didn't believe it either till Martin pulled out a roll of bills and showed him.

"I'll buy the thing if necessary," says he. "But I'll have it. Come, skipper."

"The shof'er's up at Shearer's house," says Baker. "He—"

"Never mind the shof'er. I can run it. Send your man with us, and I'll leave the machine in his care at Brantboro. Then the shof'er can come after it. I'll write to Mr. Shearer and explain. Come on."

"It's all right, Ben," I says. "He'll do all he tells you, and more. You'll never make a chunk of money any easier."

Baker followed us to the barn, saying "No" all the time. He kept on saying it while the Twin was getting up steam, or some such trick, in the auto. He said it even after he'd got the money in his hand. The hired man climbed in behind. Hartley and me in front. We chuff-chuffed out of the stable door.

"For heaven's sake!" hollers Baker, "take care of the thing. I don't know what'll come to me for this job when Shearer hears of it."

We got down to the street. I looked at my watch. It was 25 minutes past six.

"Now, Sol," says Hartley, "you must help me if I need you. I can use only one hand, so you pull whatever lever I tell you to."

We went—oh, yes, we went! I never rode in a buzz cart afore and inside of five minutes I was figuring that I'd never live to ride in one again. Suffering! how we did fly!

Lucky 'twas early. We didn't meet a soul on the road. If we had they'd

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Easy.

Once there was an old woman who lived in a shoe. She had so many children that at first she didn't know what to do.

A friend of the family who happened to come along just then, however, made the following suggestions: To put one of them in a factory. To have a couple more operated on and otherwise fussed over by the doctors.

To put a couple of them in a coal mine.

To send one to a modern public school.

To bring up another on a pure food diet.

Which no sooner having been carried into effect than the old woman settled down to a life of ease and loneliness.—New York Herald.

Second Thought.

"It cannot be," sighed the maid. "I respect you highly, Mr. Hunter, but we are incompatible."

"Well, I suppose it cannot be helped," the young man replied, pocketing his chagrin and looking about for his hat. "But it defeats all my cherished hopes. I had planned a house, in which I fondly imagined we might be happy. It was to have had a pantry twice as large as the ordinary size, with a roomy closet in which to store away the new cooking utensils, and things that a woman naturally buys when a peddler comes around."

"Stay, George," she said falteringly "perhaps I have been too hasty. Give me a day or two to think it over. It is not impossible that—that—"

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Mourning Cans.

"When I was in Rome recently," says a New Yorker, "I saw an accessory of dress that I never saw anywhere else. It was a walking stick, an ebony stick, simply and beautifully fashioned and with a plain gun metal band near the handle.

"It was intended to go with mourning wear. There was a dull finish to the ebony that made the stick a fitting accompaniment to other trappings of woe, but the cane itself could have been carried without any suggestion of being in mourning.

"In fact, I never have seen anybody carry his mourning to the extent of a cane, and I imagine that most men would not care for it for that purpose."

Making Friends.

A man picked up a stone because he was afraid of dogs—the dogs growled at him. So he picked up more stones, and the dogs snarled at his heels; then he gathered still more stones. But when the stones became so heavy that he could carry them no longer, he threw them all away. And the dogs came and licked his hands.

Editor Rose to the Occasion.

On last Saturday evening, while the golden sun was gently thrusting forth its soothing beams, Quire B. F. Bushong pleasantly pronounced the beautiful and heart-wedding phrases that made Mr. Enoch Hubbard and Miss Stella Canady man and wife.—Medena Correspondence Princeton (N. Y.) Post.

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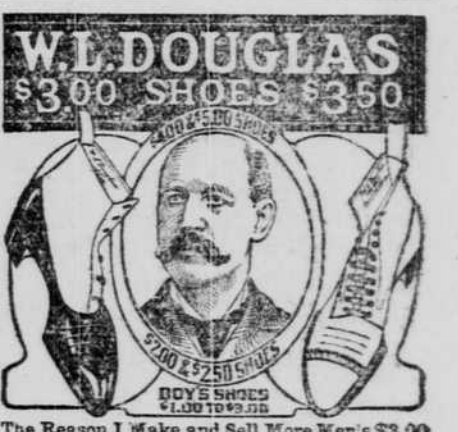
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