

CAPITAL CITY COURIER

"A POPULAR PAPER OF MODERN TIMES"

VOL. 5 NO 44

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1890.

PRICE FIVE CENTS



HIS FLEETING IDEAL

The Great Composite Novel

THE JOINT WORK OF
W. H. Ballou, Ella Wheeler Wilcox,
Maj. Alfred C. Calhoun,
Alan Dale, Howe & Hummel,
Pauline Hall, Inspector Byrnes.
John L. Sullivan,
Nell Nelson, Mary Eastlake,
P. T. Barnum, Bill Nye.

III.—A MIXING OF PICKLES.

By Maj. ALFRED C. GALHOUN. Illustrated by T. A. FITZGERALD.

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Henry Henshall was in despair.

In vain he tried to banish the shadowy ideal from his heart by a greater devotion to his art. Whether he worked at a landscape or a marine scene the face of the beautiful girl he had seen or risen from the cars would appear in the foliage or rise from the waters like another Undine.

A hundred times he would turn away from the canvass, thinking by force of will to dispel the torturing illusion, but as it was the creation of his own brush it would not vanish.

One afternoon he dashed his palette and brushes on the studio floor, and, springing to his feet, called out in a voice of agony:

"Merciful powers! Am I never again to paint anything but that face? Can I never again think of anything but that face?"

As if in reply to his question quick double rap sounded on the door behind him, and in response to his nervous "Come in" Tom Wogly, his own private detective, stood before him, his face as impassive as a tobaccoist's Indian.

"Any news, Tom?" cried the desperate young man, and he looked as if an immediate homicide would follow a reply in the negative.

But Tom Wogly showed no alarm. Shaking out the crown of his soft felt hat he looked carefully inside, as if trying to discover how he had lost the lining, and then answered with that double antiquity for which ancient oracles and modern detectives are alike:

"Well, sir, there ain't nothin' as you might call downright startling to report. I ain't got what I'd call a reg'lar straight tip on the gal, but I kinder think I'm on the heavy villain, gent, judgin' entirely by the face in the pictur'. If you dored that face right, why—"



"Any news, Tom?"

"Where did you see him?" interrupted Henry Henshall, and he picked up his hat to be ready to dash out when he got the information.

"It was last night, sir, a talkin' to a mysterious woman, whose face was hid by a veil. Them two was right under Lafay's stater, on Union square, and the woman acted as if herlander was up and she didn't care who knowed it; and the man he tried to soothe her and set her an example of street etiquette by talkin' low."

"Well, I sneaked round to see what I could hear, but the man got onto my little game, and hurried to a cab that was standin' near, and as he drove off he called out, 'I'll see you, Louise, some hour to-morrow night; then I tried to talk to the veiled lady, but she threatened to call the police. I apologized, and she started off at a go-as-you-please gait that would have won first money at a walking match if she could keep it up."

"I shadowed her to Second avenue, near Seventeenth street, where she vanished into an every day kind of boarding house. That's the report, sir, and if you could let me have another fifty to hire a side partner, for I've got to have one or die for the want of sleep, why, I'll credit you with it when the job's over, which I hope'll be very soon."

After this long speech Tom Wogly coughed into his hat until the crown threatened to burst, and Henry Henshall handed him five ten-dollar bills.

The young man was about to question the detective further when a heavy step was heard outside; then the door opened without any preliminary knock, and hand-some old gentleman, with a troubled face, entered and said:

"Harry, my son, I must see you alone at once."

The detective jammed the money into his pocket and his hat on his head, and vanished with a curt "Good day, gents!"

"What is the matter, father? You look troubled," said Henry, as he placed a chair for his unexpected visitor.

"Then I look as I feel," replied Mr. Henshall, with a groan that came from his heart. "On the top of the failure of Higgins & Lewis, our western agents, I this morning learned that my sister has been faithless. He fled to Canada on Saturday, and a hurried examination of his books shows that he has robbed me of at least \$20,000."

"But you are rated at a million; surely you can weather the storm," said Henry, hope rather than reason prompting his words.

"If you were a business man, as I wanted you to be," said Mr. Henshall impatiently, "you would know that a man's rating by an agency is never an evidence of the cash he can command."

Then, rising from his chair, he laid his hands on his son's shoulders, looked eagerly into his eyes and added, "Harry, you can save me if you will!"

"I, father?" and behind the old gentleman Harry Henshall saw the Undine face peering at him from the pictured water on the easel.

"Yes, you, Harry. Sit down and when I have told you all I am sure you will fall in with my purpose, for I have been to you a good father, and I feel that you will be to me a dutiful son."

Harry sat down, and taking a chair facing him his father went on to explain his troubles.

"I am in the power of one man," he said, "and by a scratch of his pen he can ruin or save me."

"Who is that?" asked Henry.

"Edward Hartman."

"The banker?"

"Yes, Edward Hartman, Lena Hartman's father. Harry, you and Lena played together as children, and Mr. Hartman and I—we were neighbors and good friends. In those days—often laughingly spoke of the marriage of you and Lena. From that time to this she has loved you. She is only child and her father is worth \$6,000."

"If you will call on her at once I may get time to think, and if you ask her to marry you it will save me and your mother from an old age of poverty, and in the end you will bless the day that you took my advice."

Mr. Henshall held out his trembling hands appealingly, and Henry, who sat with his back to the picture, took them and said impulsively:

"I would give my life gladly to save you from trouble, father, so I will do as you request; though it will be unjus to Lena Hartman to offer her my hand when I cannot give her my heart."

Rejoicing much at his son's obedience Mr. Henshall left the studio.

Then Henry turned to the easel, and more distinctly than it had yet appeared he saw the beautiful, mysterious face looking up appealingly from the water.

He contrasted this exquisite ideal with the real Lena Hartman, the art child that haunted him sleeping and waking with the large, full faced and stupidly good natured banker's daughter.

Henry Henshall's mind was certainly in an unusual state of perturbation, but it was placidity itself compared with the condition of his unknown idol.

The sudden disappearance of Mr. Crawford and his family from No. 8 West Thirty-eighth street was at the suggestion of Dr. Watson, whose keen ears and sharp eyes were quick to discover the hourly increasing curiosity of their neighbors in the apartment house, and it was Dr. Watson who secured the new and more sequestered quarters on Kowenhaven place, near Sixty-seventh street and Central park.

Being retired, well furnished and on the ground floor, the new apartments were preferable to the old ones, and Miss Brown, the governess, who of late had shown a coquettish interest in Mr. Crawford, declared to Edna that it was "a perfect little paradise of a home."

To Edna Crawford, who seemed to have lost interest in life, it mattered not where she was or whether she went, so that the place offered her a refuge from the haunting eyes of Dr. Watson.

To avoid meeting this man at table she feigned sickness and had her meals served in her room; but the very means used to avoid him brought him into her presence with an eager tender of his professional services.

When he was out of sight she loathed him; when he was near, with his strange eyes burning into her face, or his fingers pressing her pulse, while he pretended to look at his watch, she was as powerless to resist as a bird under the fascination of a snake.

Fortunately, the doctor was now away the greater part of every day, and Edna would take advantage of his absence to comfort herself with the magic violin.

She shunned her father, because he was forever sounding the praises of the doctor; and, for the same reason, she avoided Miss Brown as much as possible, though that lady's increasing devotion to Mr. Crawford did not escape her notice.

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After the doctor had gone out Mr. Crawford came into his daughter's room, and to his great delight she was less excitable and more demonstrative in her affection than usual.

After an hour's talk she kissed him good night, saying that she felt weary and [continued on page 3]

THE TRIFLER.



SAID a well known citizen, who travels frequently between this city and Omaha, to me the other day: "Have you never been struck with the fact that so many of our best people do their shopping in Omaha? Those who have free railroad transportation are not the only ones who go to the metropolis to buy goods, either. People go, even if they have to pay their fare, and why? Simply because our own stores do not keep the class of goods they want to buy. Our merchants have been afraid to order the finest stock. True, there has been considerable improvement in the last few years, but there is room for a good deal more. Lincoln is big enough now for her merchants to deal in the best goods. This wholesale buying in Omaha ought to stop, and I think it will when all wants can be supplied at home."

* * *

I see that the courts have decided that Tolstoi's "Kreutzer Sonata" is not a suppressible book. Judge Thayer of Philadelphia, in delivering the opinion in a recent test case, said: "Kreutzer Sonata" may contain very absurd and foolish views about marriage; it may shock our ideas of the sanctity and nobility of that important relation; but it cannot, on that account, be called an obscene libel," and the judge adds: "Although the czar of Russia and the post office authorities have condemned it as an unlawful publication, neither of them has ever been recognized in this country as a binding authority in questions of either law or literature."

The following is William Dean Howells' opinion of the book: "It will be remembered that Howell has been for years a strong admirer of Tolstoi. "I think it is a great work. It is the offspring of a master mind, and I do not think that the critics are right in their opinion of its evil tendencies. The novel is true to life, and you can expect no other ending for such a man and such a woman than that laid out for Posdnichoff and his wife. It is not I, think, the kind of a book that would attract the young. It is more a book for men and women of mature years and experience. I do not know that it would be fit reading for young girls, but it seems to me that the young men who read it will get from it a lesson in the direction of purity and good living."

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The thought occurs to me that Howell's estimate of "Kreutzer Sonata" may be slightly influenced by his previous commendation of the work of the noted Russian. He says, "You can expect no other ending for such a man and such a woman than that laid out for Posdnichoff and his wife." That may be; but the question is, are Posdnichoff and his wife types? Is their life in any way typical of the life of even a very small portion of living men and women? If the lesson it teaches to young men is in the direction of purity and good living, as Mr. Howell says, a great many thousand young men must be better than they were a few months ago. But it is doubtful if anybody can derive good from even the best of modern erotic literature.

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Somebody on the *Journal* must have been reading the *Arizona Kicker*. An article referring to the Lincoln correspondent of the *Bea*, which appeared the other day, had this unique heading: "Young-Man-Stuck-on-Shape." Then this young man is spoken of as "the piping curlew which dishes up infinite sensations" as a "courageous sand piper," etc., etc. Not bad for the *Journal* which some people think so proso.

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It may be lots of fun to make love to several different girls at the same time, but it is attended with some danger, as the pastor of the Christian church of Bedford, Ia., who was engaged to five members of the church choir at once, found out to his sorrow one day last week, when the trustees demanded his resignation.

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How appropriate of the publishers of Ward McAllister's "Society as I Have Found It" to issue an edition de luxe of four hundred copies!

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