

THURSDAY

HALF WAS BLACK.

From 4:30 to 5:30 p. m. was Philo Freer, acute and queer, little as he could...

THE KING'S BUSINESS.

Slowly and aimlessly out of the village wandered poor, half-witted Nat that pleasant summer afternoon.

And so he moved onward in his drifting, uncertain way across the creek at the edge of the village, up the hill, until his stalwart form stood out against the sky...

But on this occasion a new fancy had taken possession of him—he was on business for the King.

"I'm on business for the King," he muttered, reaching up his great strong hand and wrenching a huge overhanging branch from its place and speedily converting it into a walking-stick.

He strode onward, murmuring his thoughts as he went, until after a time he came upon a public road which ran through the wood.

"Hello, Nat! What are you doin' here?" "I'm on business for the King," replied Nat, with dignity.

"That? Why that's only an advertisement," answered Tommy, his eyes opening wider in his astonishment.

"Yes, I know'd it! I know'd it!" exclaimed Nat, exultingly. "The King said take no money nor nothin' to eat, an' He'd take keer of me."

Tommy gazed after him a minute in bewildered silence, and then exclaimed, emphatically, as he turned away:

"My! but ain't he cracked!" With rapid steps Nat hurried forward, swinging his huge stick and talking to himself. He had taken the placard as a veritable command to go to Tracey's, and thitherward he directed his steps.

"I'm on business for the King, and I'm goin' to your house," he announced, with the dignified gravity that belonged to his royal commission.

"That's right—obey orders. Well, if you do go tell Mrs. Tracey I'll be home to-morrow night. Tell her, too, not to be uneasy about that money bein' in the house, 'cause I'll see to it when I come."

"What money's that?" asked a fellow workman as Nat turned away. "My pension. My claim was allowed last week, and I got my money—five hundred dollars—yesterday. I was foolish not to put it in the bank right off, but I didn't, and as I didn't have time to go to town yesterday I had to leave it at home. I reckon it's safe enough, though, till to-morrow night, and then—"

"Hist!" interrupted his companion, suddenly. "What's that?" Tracey paused to listen. "I didn't hear anything," he said.

"I thought I heard some one over there," pursued the other, pointing to a large, high pile of boards a few feet distant—the boards being piled in form of a square, with a large cavity in the center. "Most likely it was rats, though."

"More likely to be rats than anything else," there's so many about here," answered Tracey. Then he added jocularly: "Maybe, though, it's them burglars that's been playin' mischief 'round these parts for the last week or so—may be they're stowed away in that pile of lumber. My! if I really believed that I'd be uneasy myself, for the chaps would have heard all I said about my pension."

"What burglars is that?" inquired the other. "What burglars? Why, man, don't you read the papers? Why, only yesterday the Sheriff and his deputies rode by my house on the hunt for 'em. Last Saturday night they broke into Lawyer Burke's house, in the village, and carried off about a hundred dollars, and then on Sunday night they got into the railroad station, broke open the safe, and made off with about three hundred more. That's the biggest of their hauls, though they've entered several other places."

"Close shave that, as bein' as we was hid there all last night and all day till now," said one, as he pushed through the underbrush. "Yes; I thought as once them mill chaps was a comin' to look," responded the other. "Good for 'em as they didn't, an' took us for rats; 'cause the p'lice be on the look-out now an' we don't want to use no shootin' irons an' make things too hot. We must move out lively from 'ere, Bill."

"Not till we get that 'ere pension," answered Bill, significantly. "That lay-out were as good as pitched at us, an' it'd be a pity not to take it. 'Sides, the Gov'ment owes me a pension for all the time I've lost in jails and prisons, an' this 'ere's a good chance to get it. I knows where the crib is, 'cause we stopped there last week for somethin' to eat, don't you mind? This feller that owns it was there at the time. There is nobody but a woman an' two little uns, an' they're easy fixed, an' there ain't no other house nigh."

"But there's that 'ere other chap as said as he was a goin' there?" "Him? He's crazy, an' if he goes there at all he'll only stop a bit an' move on. A tap on the head'll settle him, anyway, if he's there—but then he won't be there."

During this time Nat was not idle. His tall form, with long and steady stride, was hastening forward—"on business for the King." It did not occur to him what he should do when he reached

Tracey's, and had been supplied with food. At present he was "obeying orders"—and beyond that his thought did not go. It was, indeed, a long walk he had undertaken, and it was just at dusk that he reached his destination. The Half-way House was a lonely hostelry, situated at the intersection of two roads, with no other house in sight, and was a common stopping-place for persons passing to and from the city. Nat stepped boldly upon the broad piazza in front, and with full consciousness of his right walked unhesitatingly into the pleasant sitting-room. Mrs. Tracey came forward to meet him.

"Why, Nat, is that you?" "Yes'm," he answered, gravely. "I was told to come here an' get a square meal. The King sent me." "The King sent you? Well, I guess I'll have to give you a supper then," said she. "And by the way, Nat, did you see my husband's your way here?"

"Yes'm; he told for me to tell you he'd be here to-morrow night, an' for you not to be uneasy 'bout that money." "O dear! I did so hope he'd come this evening," she sighed. She was, indeed, uneasy on account of the money in the house. She had slept but little the preceding night for thinking of it, and was worried about it all through the day, and now another lonely night was before her.

"I don't know whether it be orders," he answered, uncertainly. "Parson said the King sent out His messengers, an' they wasn't to take no money nor nothin' to eat, an' I don't know if it be right to stop."

"O yes it is," replied Mrs. Tracey, catching at once an idea of his thoughts. "I heard what the parson said too. When the King's messenger entered a house he was to abide there—that is to stop. Don't you remember?" Nat considered the proposition.

"Yes'm, that's His orders. I'll stop," he said. "And, Nat," pursued the lady, rendered eager by her success, "there's another thing the King said—you heard it at Sunday-school. He said: 'Suffer little children to come unto me'—that is, such little children as mine there," pointing to them as they stood at her side. "And the Kingsaid, too: 'Whoever shall offend one of these little ones it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.' The King doesn't wish any harm to come to his little ones, in any way—you remember that?"

"Well, then," continued Mrs. Tracey, driving the concluding nail into her argument, "if any bad men should come here to-night, and try to hurt me or these little ones that belong to the King, you would help us, wouldn't you?" She waited anxiously for the reply. Nat looked at her vaguely for a moment, and then his eyes wandered aimlessly around the room, and then back to her. Finally he said, quietly: "The King sort me. 'I'll obey orders.'"

How far he understood she did not know, and all her effort could draw out no more definite reply, and with that she was obliged to be content. As the evening grew late she provided her guest with a sleeping-place, in an adjoining room, by throwing a few quilts on the floor—for Nat would sleep nowhere else—and then she lay down without undressing, on a bed beside her children. But it was a long time before slumber visited her troubled spirit.

As for Nat, no thought of worry or anxiety for the future was on his mind, and he "slept the sleep of the just" and his dreams were peaceful. But after a time those dreams became disturbed and discordant—a voice seemed to be calling to him from his King, and presently he awakened with a start.

"Nat! help! Nat, the King wants you!" came in smothered tones from the other room. In an instant he sprang lightly to his feet, and grasping his stick he strode forward and opened the door. A fearful struggle met his view as he entered. Two rough, evil-looking men were there—one holding Mrs. Tracey, the other the children—and the villains were evidently trying to bind and gag their victims. As Nat witnessed the scene his tall form seemed to tower yet higher, and a strange, fierce light gleamed from his eyes.

"I belong to the King!" he thundered. How dare you offend His little ones?" At this unexpected intrusion one of the burglars released his hold of Mrs. Tracey, and sprang forward with an oath to meet him. But it was in vain. The great stick was whirled in the air, and then came down with fearful force on the head of the villain, and he sank senseless to the floor. The remaining burglar hastened to his comrade's assistance, but he was like a child in the hands of a giant, and in a moment he, too, was helpless and motionless. Nat stooped and drew the two insensible forms toward him.

"Now bring them ropes, and I'll hang 'em," he paused, and left the sentence unfinished. "But there ain't no millstones 'bout here to hang 'round their necks!" he added, looking up bewildered. "Do you b'lieve a big rock would do? I must obey orders."

"No, I don't believe a rock would do," replied Mrs. Tracey, smiling in spite of her alarm. "But they will be coming to presently; I would just tie their hands and feet and leave them until morning."

"Yes'm, so I will. The King said tie 'em hand and foot—that's His orders. They won't offend His little ones any more," and in a few minutes Nat had them safely secured.

I need not tell of the night that followed, of how Nat kept sleepless guard over his captives, and of how, when morning came and help came with it, the burglars were safely lodged in the county jail. All that is easily surmised. But at last Nat was a hero—not only in his own eyes but in the eyes of all others. He bore his honors meekly and with dignity, as a right belonging to a servant of the King. He accepted the numerous congratulations and hand-shakings, wondering, perhaps, what it all meant, and replying to the questions heaped upon him with the simple statement: "I just obeyed orders." Nothing, however, could induce him to accept any reward for his services. The royal command was to take no bread, no money in his purse, and he would not.

But Nat did not lack for friends after that. He still continued his wandering, and, as the story spread, homes and hearts were open to him everywhere. But it was at Tracey's that he was more especially welcomed, and as the years came and went it was noticed that his visits became more frequent and his stays more prolonged. Indeed, as Tracey expresses it:

"He'll get his orders to come here an' die yet, I reckon; an' he's welcome to all the care we can give him. An' I just believe that away up in that other world we read about, he'll be as clear-headed as any body, and in genuine earnest will forever be 'on business for the King.'—Our Continent.

Something About Tables.

The Greek lady of leisure in Athens employed herself at the spinning-wheel, and had little need of a table, and, beautiful in design and form as all Greek furniture was, one striking natural characteristic proclaimed itself in the furnishing of the homes. They never had that for which they could find no practical use, and, consequently, as tables were only needed for the purpose of meals, they appeared only at those times, and were mere slabs of wood, which were brought in at the dinner hour and set down loosely upon their legs.

The meal over, the table vanished with the empty plates. In Homeric days each person had a separate table, and it was only when luxury crept in that a larger table for the men became common, while the women dined at separate ones. Then the custom of lounging on couches, the elbows resting on the table, became usual, and the ladies were expected to sit while their lords assumed the most comfortable attitude they could find. Even then, however, the table played so entirely a subordinate part that we never read of it as being of handsomer material, or, indeed, as being of any importance at all, except to groan under the food, which was of the most luxurious description.

The Romans, on the contrary, held their tables in the highest estimation. They even made collections of them. Seneca possessed five hundred small ones. It is curious to trace, in the accounts of old writers give us of Roman luxury in this respect, a sort of likeness to the taste of modern days. No article of furniture in the Roman house cost so much as the table. Those with one foot or pedestal brought enormous prices. Pliny says that tables were brought in the first instance from the East, and were called orbes, not because they were round but because they were massive plates of wood, cut from the trunk of a tree in its whole diameter. Yet, oddly enough, we hear very little of tables in the East or in ancient history. Moses made a table for the Tabernacle, as if it were something uncommon, upon which to lay the show bread. Philo Judeus describes it as having been two cubits long and one and a half high, and dwells upon it as a remarkable piece of furniture. Fashionable tables in the luxurious Roman homes were called "monopodia," and were made of a massive plate of wood, resting upon a column of ivory; such tables were enormously expensive, and, according to Pliny, the wood was brought from Mauretania and cut from the trunk of the citrus tree. Some of these pieces of wood were four feet in diameter, and the ivory column which supported them was extremely massive. The greatest care was taken of such tables. They were polished and covered with thick cloths made generally of coarse linen, the first indication we meet with of the modern tablecloth. Cicero had such a table, for which he paid the enormous sum of 1,000,000 sesterces. Just as to-day the handsomest walnut-wood tables are those made of wood cut from the trunk nearest the root, so in the days of Roman magnificence highest prices were paid for the tables made from the last of the citrus tree, because the wood was dappled and marked.—Chamber's Journal.

The Cranberry ore vein, near Chattanooga, now being opened, promises to be the most remarkable in the country. A thickness of seventy feet has already been found, and it is thought it will reach 130 feet. The company operating it has spent \$1,000,000 on a railroad and land investment, and propose to mine one thousand tons per day.—Chicago Times.

The Baptists of New England are said to be gaining more rapidly than any other denomination.

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL.

—Twenty-seven missionaries for China and Japan left San Francisco recently in one steamer.

—The gifts of the late Edwin B. Morgan to Wells College, at Aurora, N. Y., foot up about \$364,000.

—The London Saturday Review classes Michigan University as a woman's college, because Ann Arbor is a feminine name!

—The School Directors of Monongahela City, Pa., require every lady teacher employed to sign a contract not to marry during the school year.

—The Irish Presbyterian Synod has adopted resolutions strongly condemning the growing practice of sitting instead of standing during prayers.

—A Union Church has been started at Newfield, Conn., comprised of thirty members—Adventists, Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists.—Christian Union.

—Colonel Shorter, the Rome, Ga., millionaire, left in his will a bequest of \$35,000 and one hundred shares of railroad stock to the college that bears his name, as a permanent endowment, the income therefrom to be used for the employment of teachers and the assistance of needy teachers.—Chicago Times.

—At the commencement of Mount Union College, Ohio, a few days since, it was stated that during the year the attendance had been 515, with a greater average attendance than formerly, and that the total number of students from the origin of the college had been 16,526, about one-fourth of them ladies, and over one-half teachers.

—The revision of Luther's Bible, begun in 1863, has just been finished. Of the thirty original members of the revision committee but fourteen live to see the revision completed. The work is now to be printed and submitted to the university faculties for criticism. It will probably be ready for the public in about two years.—N. Y. Independent.

—An English newspaper writer says: "Sermons, when for a charity, might be reduced in length were everybody to follow the example of a friend of mine. When 'sitting under' one of these sermons, he places twenty shillings in his pocket. After the sermon has lasted twenty minutes, he deducts a shilling for each extra five minutes, and only puts in the plate what remains."—N. Y. Post.

—It is gradually becoming impressed upon the public that to learn a few simple things intelligently and with the freshness of interest and liking is better for a child than to commit to memory in a perfunctory fashion a host of things which inspire it with nothing but weariness and a desire to get through quickly and be done with it. Exact teaching suffused with honest enthusiasm is the boon which the future will bring. The growth of public opinion in this direction has within the last two or three years been astonishing.—Chicago Journal.

—Bishop Loughlin, of Brooklyn, has suspended the Rev. J. Dougherty, of the Church of the Guardian Angel, at Brighton Beach, because he had accepted money that came from an "improper source." Father Dougherty accepted the offer made by Mr. Engemann of one day's proceeds of the race course. The day was set and the amount realized \$2,000, which has been returned to Mr. Engemann. The action of the Bishop has been approved by most of the clergy, but some of them think the rule should be extended so as to prohibit lotteries at church fairs.—Christian Union.

Treatment of Sunstroke.

Sunstroke is caused by excessive heat, and especially if the weather is "muggy." It is more apt to occur on the second, third, or fourth day of a heated term than on the first. Loss of sleep, worry, excitement, close sleeping rooms, debility, abuse of stimulants, predispose to it. It is more apt to attack those working in the sun, and especially between the hours of eleven o'clock in the morning and four o'clock in the afternoon. On hot days wear thin clothing. Have as cool sleeping rooms as possible. Avoid loss of sleep and all unnecessary fatigue. If working in doors, and where there is artificial heat—laundries, etc., see that the room is well ventilated.

If working in the sun, wear a light hat (not black, as it absorbs heat), straw, etc., and put inside of it on the head, a wet cloth or a large green leaf; frequently lift the hat from the head and see that the cloth is wet. Do not check perspiration but drink what water you need to keep it up, as perspiration prevents the body from being overheated. Have, whenever possible, an additional shade, as a thin umbrella, when walking, a canvas or board cover when working in the sun. When much fatigued do not go to work, but be excused from work, especially after eleven o'clock in the morning on very hot days, if the work is in the sun. If a feeling of fatigue, dizziness, headache or exhaustion occurs, cease work immediately, lie down in a shady and cool place; apply cold cloths to and pour cold water over the head and neck. If any one is overcome by the heat, send immediately for the nearest good physician. While waiting for the physician give the person cool drinks of water or cold black tea, or cold coffee, if able to swallow. If the skin is hot and dry, sponge with or pour cold water over the body and limbs, and apply to the head poultice ice wrapped in a towel or other cloth. If there is no ice at hand, keep a cold cloth on the head, and pour cold water on it as well as on the body.

If the person is pale, very faint and pulse feeble, let him inhale ammonia for a few seconds, or give him a teaspoonful of aromatic spirits of ammonia in two tablespoonfuls of water with a little sugar.—New York Board of Health.