

## THE TALE OF A STRING.

"O we have a new roomer, a Mr. Noble" was one of the bon-mots in the bits of gossip imparted to me by my landlady's little daughter, on my return from a week's absence from my apartments. "He is the funniest little man—just sits and smokes all day, and says things about the weather that are horrid—that is, they would be, if they didn't make you laugh so." Very demurely this; then being a witching little creature and unable longer to control her mirth, she broke into a peal of laughter.

Shortly after this I called on my neighbor and welcomed him to the West and to our social circle. I found him to be a very erudite and entertaining young gentleman, fresh from Harvard, and notwithstanding the knowledge and learning with which that historic Alma Mater is said to abound, about as tender a "tenderfoot" as ever crossed the Missouri.

There was one thing, however, in which he excelled, and though it is not to be commended, or ever condoned, he was so skillful so adroit, and yet so grammatically correct in it—and that was the use of language profane, that one could not but admire his delivery.

In the course of one of our talks over an evening pipe, he informed me that he had been sent out from Boston by one of its wealthy citizens, then occupying a high official position on one of the leading trunk lines, to learn the railway business; also, that a college mate of his was soon to arrive bound on the same mission.

A few days later his classmate arrived and that evening I was introduced to him. A very handsome, intelligent and well appearing young man of twenty-four, with a commanding figure and a tendency to athletics was Mr. Baldwin, and we three soon were loyal friends, and as our apartments made up the ensemble of the entire upper

suite, our doors were ever open and we spent many happy hours together.

Baldwin I found to be equally as ignorant concerning the West as was his predecessor. "Why," said he, "my own people think me constantly beset by the dangers portrayed in the dime novels, and doubtless, are daily anticipating the news that I have been scalped." And I have ample evidence that people in the East to-day retain beliefs equally absurd.

If it was a visitation of Providence in retaliation for his frequent infractions of the third commandment or not, I am unable to say, but Christmas week poor Jack as we called the agreeable gentleman, who bore the lofty surname of Noble, was stricken with an ailment which in its progress, though not extremely painful, required that he recline in one position, and keep perfectly quiet: also that the room be kept extremely warm. Just how much Jack's exclamations contributed to the latter, I leave to the imagination of the reader, but as he was left to his own reflections and the exercise of his gifted powers the greater part of the day, our coal bill did not materially increase.

Matters had progressed in this fashion for a week, and on New Year's eve Baldwin and I were thoroughly exhausted from our nightly vigils and attendance on the sufferer, and as Jack appeared to be no better—and that little stove, seated just without my door and just within the room used as a study, being of a particularly intractable and self assertive character, liable to lapse into a state of frigidity at a time when heat was desired and to puff and swelter and get red all over at another time or do any of the obstinate things to which stoves are addicted—we were in a quandary just what to do.

It was finally agreed by all that the best expedient would be to fix the stove properly, so it would draw just as desired. "Then," said Baldwin, "you go in to bed, 'Squire,'" that being his favorite name for me, "and I'll make a 'shake down' here on the floor of the study, for I am tired enough to sleep on the