The Grateful Reporter.

BY OCTAVE THANET.

"Sure, it's sorry I am for the creachure," said Mrs. Patrick Fitzmaurice to her only son, Tommy. This was in the year when Tommy was in training as a candidate for mayor; indeed, the primaries were to be held that week. As the little Irishwoman spoke, she glanced up wistfully at Tommy's handsome face and brushed an imperceptible trace of dust from his coat sleeve. Tommy began to guess what was coming.

"And what does he want you to do, ma?" said he, slipping his arm about her waist and looking fondly down at the face that was pretty to him, still, though to most people it was but a wrinkled little Irish face with violet eyes and a long upper lip, "she's after you for something, that I know."

"Why, she has no since at all, Tommy; and she puts me out of my temper with the way she goes on, till I clean forget she is me third cousin on me step-mother's side; and I want to tell her to be quiet; but then, I think of how old she is and with no children; never a chick ner a child did Tim and she have to bless them, Tommy; and many's the time she looks at you, and I can see the sigh in her eyes that she's too proud to let drop from her lips; and then, I think, 'Well, if she does make a time over an ould box, it's hers, and maybe the forlorn creachure vallys it, maybe, not having any humans to love she has to take it out on her things.'

"That box she lost in the custom house in Chicago, I supose," says Tommy, patiently, "she isn't nagging you to have me go to Chicago, is she?"

"Well, that very same she is, Tommy. And I tould her, says I, he's busy wid important business of the election, says I, and he ain't got the time! But the creachure don't seem to have good since, for all she says, 'It was owing to him I took it to Chicago instid of to New York to the customs there; and now it's lost!' Meself, I wonder she didn't lose ivery box she had, comin' a wake before she was ixpectid, and we not meeting her, for she can't so much as go down town alone."

Tommy was swallowing his annoyance. He loved his mother, whatever he might think of her stepmother's third cousin, and he knew how his mother must have been harried to bring her to the point of asking a journey of him, this particular week. It was a nuisance, and it might well be a risk to leave just now, but he would chance it, and having resolved to chance it, he would not spoil a kind act by an ill grace in the doing. Therefore, he laughed as he smoothed his mother's thin but silky hair, and told her that he could manage to get off to Chicago, and that she might assure Mrs. Sullivan that he would look up every unclaimed article of luggage in the Chicago customs.

He might have felt repaid had he seen his mother that evening, wiping her eyes while she repeated the scene to his father, who puffed hard on h's pipe. "And you won't deny, Pat, he is the bist son in the country!"

"I ain't thinkin' of sons," said the ex-saloon keeper grimly. "I'm thinkin' of mothers that lets their sons throw away their chances to gratify the fool whims of a doddering ould woman. Tom is no business to be out of town this wake, and well he knows it."

"And for why not, Pat."

"For why? Because he has to go tomorrow, no later, to the meeting and Paulsen will be at the meeting and the other men; and 'specially for Paulsen they want Tommy to be there. Ye know how Tommy talks and the persuasiveness of him"—the father could not hide a lurking smile—"well, they're hoping whin Paulsen hears him, he'll listen to reason and go in for him. And Harry Lossing he's going to see Paulsen and persuade him how sound Tommy is about kaping the saloons down and yit raising enough rivinue for the expenses and how he'll pave the city, but he'll look moighty scharp after the contracts and there won't be no boodlin' games countenanced noways. Av coorse, Tommy can't be telling what a foine mayor he'll make for himself, but Harry will say it, and mere, and then at the meeting he'll ask Tommy any quistions that Paulsen will want answered or that he hears Paulsen will want; and Tommy will have his innings, thin. Do you see? But now wid your blethering ould cousin and her box ye'll git him aff and maybe he'll not be back; there was a washout only yisterday on the road and loike enough there'll be another, and Tommy'll be losing the mayor's office to git—"

"Oh, Pat, is it that bad?" cried the mother, clasping her hands, "sure I'll drive to the depot and beg him to stay!"

She meant her words and her hand was on the door knob, but her husband stopped her. "Ye will not, Ellen," said he with an ironic chuckle, "for it's off already he is. Ye will set down and hope ye ain't done much harm sindin' him off!"

"And who would harm him,sure?"

"Well, there is Alderman Wade, who is after Paulsen from morning till night, pecking at him with 'Tommy is an Irishman, Tommy is shly. Tommy hates the Dutch'—you'll see—that's the way he gets at him, making him think Tommy wouldn't cross the street to save a German's life! And Paulsen has got a tremenjis lot of pull wid the Dutch and that's the fact; he ain't, so far's I kin find out, he ain't opened the mouth of him yit whether it's for or whether it's agin Tommy. But Tommy best be round when he does, that's all."

"But why would Alderman Wade be wanting to hurt Tommy? I mind well whin you had the place down town, how he always had his drinks free, and he always asking afther your foine young son at the university."

TOMMY READ THE GRATEFUL OFFERING OF THE REPORTER.

Old Patrick humped his shoulders and muttered, "Things was different, thin; I'm thinkin', meself, that he wants to be greased and Tommy won't grease him!"

Mrs. Fitzmaurice, as innocent a soul as ever was sent into a wicked world, had lived too long with Patrick not to understand. She sighed. "Is he loike that, thin? I didn't think it. And is Mr. Paulsen the same?"

"I guess not"—with a short laugh—"you couldn't buy Paulsen any more than you could coax a mule with a greenback. Oh, he's honest, but he's obstinate, and it's like a mule, that way, too; you niver know which end of him is going to kick! Harry Lossing was tilling me he mistrusted he'd be fighting us."

"Well, you'll find Tommy'll match him," said the mother confidently, to which the father only grunted—being, however, like many husbands, secretly cheered by his wife's unreasoning hope.

But she, poor woman, staid awake all night, wondering whether indeed she had jeopardized her son's prospects by sending him away, and struggling darkly in her mind after some way to reach the incorruptible and obstinate Paulsen.

Tommy, meanwhile, had gone easily to Chicago, and the next morning, having found the box, was loitering with a conscience at rest, among a hundred odd people who were at the sale of "unclaimed and seized merchandise," in the government warehouse. Next to Tommy stood a yellow haired young man with his hat on the back of his head and a pad bulging his breast pocket. Tommy and he were the only persons present not bidding.

"Live in Chicago?" said the young man.

Tommy, flattered by the inference, shook his head and named his town. "Pretty town," said the young man. "I used to live there; I used to be on the Evening Scimitar, now," he flung his coat open, disclosing his reporter's badge. Tommy read the name of the great city paper with a tinge of respect. The reporter asked questions about familiar names, ending with Tommy's own personality. "Fitzmaurice? Fitzmaurice? You aren't—"

"I'm Patrick Fitzmaurice's son," said Tommy, composedly; "his place was down on Third street."

The reporter eyed Tommy askance. He could not place this well dressed, well mannered young man, with his handsome Irish Norman face (that clean cut delicate face which is no more like the caricatures of the Irish Celtic face than—the newspaper Celt is like the man himself); he knew Pat Fitzmaurice's place, but here was a flower from a saloon window; he did not quite know how to take Tommy's calmness. "I must have been out at the university when you were there," said Tommy, still unconscious, "for I don't remember you."

"They had a son at school. Mrs. Fitzmaurice used to tell me about him. I hope your mother is well, Mrs. Fitzmaurice; she was an angel of mercy to me. One awfully cold night when I was out on an assignment about a fire, I got wet through and my clothes froze on me. I went in and she made me hot coffee, herself. She said I was too young for whisky, loaned me some of your clothes, by the way, to get home in—all got knowing I wasn't reeling off a lie to her."

"Well, the clothes came back," said Tommy. "I heard about it; mother's always up to such tricks."

"Mothers are a big thing; they keep a fellow sure there's some good left in the world; and yours was one of the motherliest mothers going."

Tommy blushed with pleasure, but could think of nothing better than to hand the reporter a cigar. And it was just at this softened moment that his eyes fell on an old woman that had just entered. She was poorly clad in a worn, limp black skirt, made short enough to show her coarse shoes, and a bask of that unchanging model affected by elderly German women of the humbler kind. The hair under the old fashioned bonnet was gray, almost white. She walked in with a quick step, like one in haste, her dim eyes wandering anxiously over the array of boxes on the platform. Then, she whispered to the young girl at her side, who seemed to be a servant, and was a comely, fresh colored, honest looking lass, in the cheap travesty of the fashion that so soon replaces the trusty old blue stuffs, in this country. The girl glanced about her, and, after a second's hesitation, whispered to Tommy, "Is dose tings on der platform all vot dey is sale?"

"So far," says Tommy, "yes ma'am." He spoke the last words to the old woman and he smiled reassuringly. She seemed so feeble, so agitated and so lost among the crowd of idle men and junk dealers that he was minded to comfort her.

She gave him a grateful glance. Her hands were clasped, one over the other. They were hands disfigured and roughened by toil, with the prominent veins and distorted knuckles and withered cleanliness of years over the washboard. Tommy remembered how in his youth he had resolved that one day his mother should have white, soft hands, like the mother of his school friend, Harry Lossing, and how he had spent some of his first earnings in a weird assortment of cosmetics, which his mother faithfully used.

His mother's hands were white now and there were rings on them, but Tommy remembered how they used to look.

Lot after lot was disappearing and being bundled down to the new owners. The old woman, who had slowly regained composure, all at once rose suddenly from her seat and instantly sank back again, clutching the purse in her hand. Her face had gone a dull gray, the streaks of red were ebbing slowly from her cheek. Tommy heard her thin elderly pipe, "One dollar." "One dollar!" called the girl in a louder key. "I'm bid $1," began the auctioneer, " one—do I hear $2? Thank you, sir. Two dollars, two dollars."

"And 5 cents," called the girl, while the woman's eyes strained after every twist of the auctioneer's head, every swing of his hand.

"Dollar five, dollar five, yes, sir, thank you, sir. Three dollars—"

Here a man shouldered his way through the crowd, a stout, florid man in a checked suit, baggy as to the knees of the trousers and illuminated as to shirt front by a vivid but soiled red scarf.

This man glanced keenly at the box and from the box to the woman and threw a "five dollars" carelessly at the official.

"West side dealer," commented the newspaper man in an undertone to Tommy. "He thinks there's something in it."

The old woman raised the bid—as before by a nickel; as before the man jumped the intervening cents to a dollar. The old woman, her agitation momentarily increasing, repeated the same maneuver, with the same result on the part of her opponent. The uneven bidding continued until the bids were $27, bid by the dealer. The old woman turned desperately to the girl and the latter in a second chilled loudly a raise of 10 cents.

"Twenty-eight!" shouted the man.

The woman sank back into her chair; she trembled so violently that for a second Tommy thought that she might faint and he hurried to put a flask to her lips, while the newspaper man ran for water. She motioned the flask away. Her eyes went piteously to the girl.

"Come, mother," said she; "come, dear mother." Sha'n't I help you out?" said Tommy—the words rolled back in the roof of his mouth at the girl's expression. "We don't have got no more money," said she stolidly; "the mother has been saving for this year, and I also; and it was $27, but we haf also the car fare; we bid all, it was not enough—no, don't look, don't look!" she cried in her own tongue. But the old woman rose, and watched the successful bidder lift down the box, an irrepressible moan bursting through her lips. "Say, why do you want the box," asked Tommy; "can't I—"

"It was by mine vater," said the girl, "dey vas lif-tirty-dree years by vun anudder und dey vas nefer qvarel, but ven dey coom over he vas die on der road, and dey put him in der sea, she didn't have nofings, no grave; und dey vas charge so mooch vat you call it duty dat ve don't can take der box und so she und I ve save, but it vas no use. Koom, koom."

She declined the tin cup which the reporter was holding rather helplessly at them; and would have supported her mother out of the room. The old woman looked dizzy; she only said, in German, "It was his picture, my Emil's picture."

"You wait a minute," said Tommy, don't you stir from her, and I'll see if I can't buy that back—there is nothing of value—no money? no watch?"

He hardly waited their denial to rush off with the unheeded and amused reporter at his heels. The latter thoughtfully poured the water on the floor before he put the tin cup on a window sill.

The junk dealer had his box on the floor, meditating over it, a screw driver in his hand, as if preparing to open by the hinges. It was a clumsy box of wood with iron hinges. A friend, near by, wagged a sympathizing and curious head on the other side.

"Invoiced at $12," said the friend, "that ain't no $12 box, Dorry!"

Tommy, whose hurry had been displaced by the idlest sauntering air, craned his neck forward: "That's right," said he, "there ain't $12 worth of truck in that box; the government's got a great head, running this kind of lottery business. Things of value are bound to be claimed."

The junk dealer playfully cocked one eye. "You trying to buy that box, my Christian friend?"

"Big finds in those boxes, sometimes," said the junk dealer's crony.

"Big disappointments, too," said Tommy. "I bet that you'll be swearing mad when you open that box."

"How much do you bet?" sneered the junk dealer, trying his screw driver on the heads of the screws.

"Well, I bet $5 to a nickel you can't sell the whole contents of that box for $12; how's that?"

Two or three men drew nearer, and instantly a dozen more were drawn by the sight of them, as is the way of a crowd.

"Is it a kind of game?" said one man.

"I'm not likely to make much by it," said Tommy, "$5 to a nickel!"

"Let's see your money," said the reporter, glancing out of the tail of his eye at the dealer, whom he knew slightly.

The dealer laughed, he wasn't afraid of games, he said, and he proffered his nickel to the reporter. Tommy gravely placed a bank note beside it.

"Well," said the dealer, "I don't object to giving you all a peep, but who's to decide as to the value?"

"You can pick two men and I'll pick one," said Tommy, carelessly. As he anticipated, the dealer chose his friend and the reporter. Tommy hit at random a grave and rubicund man who had the attitude and the wide-footed standing posture of a steamer deck.

The dealer found little difficulty in wrenching one-half of the hinges free. He lifted the lid and forced it back on the lock.

"Let the referees take out the things," said Tommy.

There was revealed at first glance nothing better than a neatly folded layer of coarse and worn woolen clothing, the cause of the heavy duty. These displaced by the seaman, there came a cheap German bible, a pair of heavy, patched shoes and a small box ornamented with shells, most of which were broken. At the sight of the box the dealer's color turned and he held out his hand. "I'll take that," said he, "the value of the box is in there!"

"No, you won't take it; play fair," said Tommy; "but I guess you are right about the value of the box being there. Please open it, captain."

The sailor—he really was a first mate, but he took the title without wincing—lifted the unlocked cover of the box and took out a photograph of a man. The man, in his ill fitting, tidy holiday suit, with a smile on his honest face, and both large, toil-marked hands spread on his knees, was, one could easily guess, the owner of the clothes in the box.

"That's all," said the sailor.

The reporter and the other representatives of the junk dealer quickly verified h's words. That was all. An oath slid between the dealer's teeth, he seized on the clothes and examined every pocket, every seam; someone made a jocose comment, and the crowd laughed. It laughed again as he snatched at the carte. In the same movement Tommy's strong white fingers grasped his puffy, red ones. "You drop that," said he. "No, I won't take your money; I knew what was in that trunk, and that poor old soul, who had been saving for a year, knew, too. Gentlemen"—he turned to the crowd, a sizable number by this time, and agog with curiosity, "let me explain."

So Tommy, with all the fiery Irish eloquence in his power, explained. And then, while the crowd settled closer, he flung his offer at the bewildered dealer. "Yep, sir," to the reporter, "pass the hat; let that $5 stay in; look here, what will you sell for? that $5 bill?"

"No, I won't," said the dealer. "I can get more from the old woman."

Tommy darted a glance at the reporter, and that nimble-witted young man promptly took his cue. "She's gone," said he, looking in another direction from the place where they had left the two Germans. "I can't see her."

"Then, I don't care to do anything," returned Tommy, giving himself an irritable shake. "Hand me my bill."

"I'll make it $10," said the dealer quickly; "come now; you can find her! I'm sorry for the old party, too."

"Eight," said Tommy, making as if to go.

"Nine," said the dealer in a dying voice.

"Make it nine; we'll all chip in," called the most distant man in the crowd. The hat went round with Tommy's bank note and $1 from the reporter. It returned laden with $8.90; and Tommy grimly threw in a cigar which he said he bought in Chicago for 15 cents. It was not five minutes before the sailor man headed an interested procession, bearing the box back to the old woman.

"And really," said Tommy to the reporter, about two hours later, "she took it well. A kind of dignity."

"I guess we shan't be any the worse off for her prayers," said the reporter, thoughtfully, "but say! you've missed your train, and you had an important appointment, didn't you say? That was taking grandma home, yourself in a carriage."

"She wasn't fit to walk," said Tommy; "if—if she's been my mother, I'd have wanted her taken home."

"That's right," said the reporter. He did not say anything else, though he looked at Tommy with a kind of lightning of his sharp smile; and just then, Tommy hailed a cab to save the next train if he could, and so they parted.

Tommy was not lucky enough even to catch his second train, wherefore he was obliged to pass the night in the city and return home in the very early morning hours, in a decidedly irritable frame of mind. He did not repent of his humanity, but I must confess that he did wish that his mother had not put him in the way of being humane.

Harry Lossing and another rooffast political friend, were waiting at the depot, nor did their aspect of reproachful gloom tend to ease his mood.

"How are things?" he adventured, after they had silently taken his bag and walked him into the street.

"If you mean the election," said Harry, "everything is going wrong. Paulsen is on his high horse."

"Why didn't you show up at the meeting?" asked McGinnis, the other friend, in the tone of an executioner demanding of his victim which side of the block he preferred.

"I missed the train," said Tommy meekly.

"Ye missed the train!" McGinnis' heavy voice rose a note in caustic sarcasm. "Well, Tom, I didn't think ye was the kind of man to miss trains or I'd never have gone in for you. Did ye have a pleasant time—I hope that much, for you're likely to miss your nomination, too!"

"Drop that, McGinnis!" said Lossing, "you know perfectly well Fitzmaurice isn't that kind. What was the matter? Paulsen makes a great offense of your not coming, says you are not to be depended on, and this shows it, and a lot of rot—"

"Aw, Paulsen is only talking for a blind, he won't vote for an Irishman, nohow; and that's where the hair is thin. I heard he said he never knowed a Irishman would do a good turn to a German and he had it from Wade, who'd knowed you from a boy, that you was too slick to be honest. Maybe if you could have got at him, yesterday, you might have done something for him. Mr. Lossing and me, we couldn't move him!"

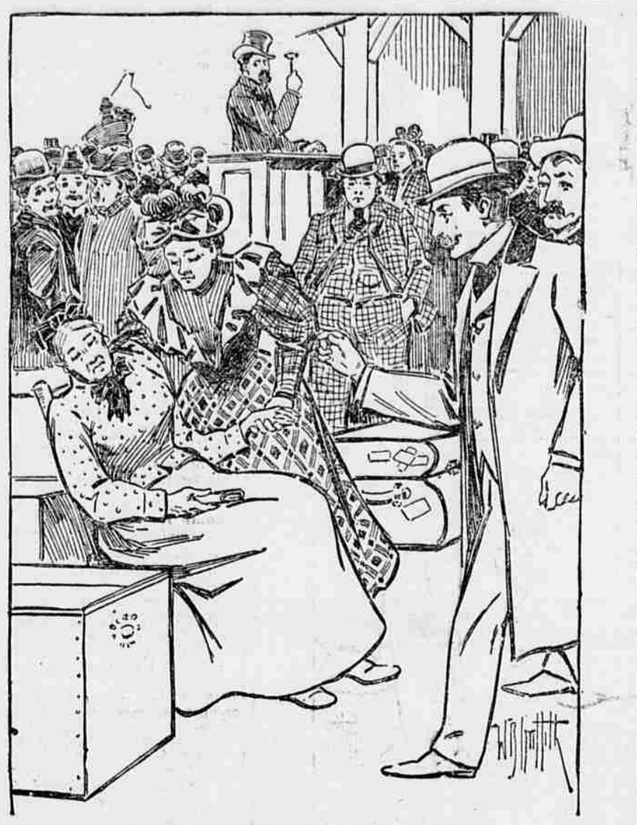
"Well, I'm sorry," said Tommy, ruefully, but he didn't explain why he missed his train, not even when Alderman McGinnis capped Lossing's "I think if you promise the chief of police to a German we may do something," with, "I think it's awful to help fools!"

"No," thought Tommy, "I mean to be a gentleman, and a gentleman does not brag of being barely decent; and if Paulsen were to hear of it, he'd think I was a fool for sure to lose my train that way." And these mixed motives prompted him to say, "I missed that train doing a kindness to somebody, if you must know; and that's all there is about it."

Alderman McGinnis drew a long, sad sigh from the depths beneath his glossy shirt front. "Only tell me it ain't a woman, Tommy, that's all I ask!" he moaned.

"It was a very nice, respectable old woman," said Tommy, firmly.

"And no young woman for a daughter or a niece or somewhere hitched in the outfit? Good Lord, Tom, you ain't blushing! Tom, this is awful! What made me bet on you? One big thing was you didn't seem to know the difference between a pretty girl and a homely one; but if you are going to



THE WOMAN SANK BACK INTO HER CHAIR.

let the women come the mother over you and miss trains—why, Great Scott, boy, what will you do when we send ye to the legislature and they git at you for the clerkships and them offices, and —"

Again Lossing, looking thoroughly annoyed, but loyal even in this stress, interfered to rescue Tommy and to again propose the offering of the head of the police on a charger to the powerful Paulsen.

Tommy went home, red with chagrin.

But he is glad to this day that he swallowed his feelings and bore his father's reproaches in silence. The old man was broken-hearted at the prospect of losing the office, and the more that Wade made a handle of Tommy's not coming on time and tales not fitted for Tommy's mother's ears were bandied about among the enemy.

Paulsen had been seen. Paulsen had been offered the disposal of office. And Paulsen had declined to commit himself. "I'm looking round for der best man," said Paulsen. Which was discouraging.

Tommy had not reproached his mother. In fact, he had been more than ordinarily kind and gentle to her, for the poor soul was in such deep tribulation that to be cruel to her would have required a heart of stone. Patrick, the sorely wronged and disappointed Patrick, himself did not go beyond an eloquent dumbness at meals.

And Tommy, in pity, ate so much—to show that he appreciated the special dainties prepared for his consolation—that he was like to add the discomforts of dyspepsia to his mental griefs.

The morning of the primaries, absorbed as both men were, they nevertheless perceived that Mrs. Fitzmaurice was agitated beyond all control. She sweetened Tommy's coffee twice, which did not matter, for Tommy gulped it down, unheeding; but she omitted to sweeten Patrick's cup at all, which was quite another thing. Yet as he raised his eyebrows preparatory to the just rebuke, the look on her face made him suddenly give her the kindest smile in days. "I declare, you're worriting yerself sick, Ellen!" said he; "come what may it ain't a killing matter for Tommy; if they down us this time, we'll down them next."

"Of course, mother," said Tommy, and he went over and kissed her. He did not pay any special attention to her broken murmur of meaning it for the best, and she never meant to hurt him; he said, "That's all right, mother, you're the best mother in the world!" and kissed her again, and so left her comforted.

"Well, I'm glad ye ain't taking it out on the wimmin," said Patrick; "I ain't axed ye anny questions about what I heard from McGinnis, but if it's—"

"It's nothing I'd be ashamed to tell you or mother," Tommy burst out, "and I will tell you now if you like—"

"Ye needn't; I believe you," said Patrick; "and I say ag'in, this day ain't no killing matter. But what's Paulsen got there?"

Paulsen was haranguing a crowd. "A young man! Well, what's the matter of a young man? I found oudt all about Thomas Fitzmaurice. I said I wait till I find oudt; now, read that paper and you seet what kind of a man he vas!"

Tommy could see a paper fluttering from hand to hand. A trusty henchman was instantly dispatched for the paper which Patrick awaited in a stony calm. At intervals he patted Tommy on the back.

"Don't you mind what they say," he repeated over and over. "I ain't going to be worried; don't you be! And we'll pay 'em up!"

The messenger returned, grinning. He handed the paper to Patrick, and over his father's shoulders, Tommy read, in bold headlines, the grateful offering of the reporter that his mother had warmed: "The Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice of Iowa, has a Heart. But He is No Fool, Either. How the Dealer Outbid the Aged Widow and the Hon. Thomas Bunco'ed the Dealer and Restored a Cherished Treasure. A Pathetic Happening in Real Life." And there, beneath, was the story of Tommy's humanity. It was fluttering all around the field.

Tommy grew a rose red and looked wildly about him. It was at this instant that he beheld Harry and McGinnis—beaming.

"It's all right! Paulsen's all right!" says Harry.

"But that confounded paper" (thus is the mercies of the press slighted!) do you—Harry, you don't suppose I'"—

"My dear boy, calm yourself, the paper was sent to your mother; and she sent it to me and to Paulsen, of course; she was tickled with it, I suppose, or she thought it would do good. It did. It hit Paulsen just right. I fancy, old man, you'll owe your election to your mother."

Tommy was standing, very thoughtful. "More than you think, maybe," said he.

OCTAVE THANET.

A FARMER'S RAILROAD.

The Prophet of a New Era of Railroad Building.

In the village of Drayton, on the North Dakota side of the Red river of the north, lives a remarkable character known throughout that region as Farmer Hines. He is regarded by his neighbors, says the Chicago Times-Herald, as the prophet of a new era in railroad building and operating, when roads will be built to primary markets by the producers in the country they traverse, capitalized for their actual cost, and operated with the closest possible economy. Farmer Hines has been preaching his faith at country school house meetings throughout the Lower Red River valley for two or three years past, and last summer he began putting his theories into practice. By his talks and by the distribution of circulars he succeeded in enlisting so large a body of adherents that he commenced to build a railroad without money and without credit and actually finished forty miles of grade before the frost came.

Farmer Hines studied the map carefully and found that the grain from any central point in the Lower Red River valley—say Grafton—is hauled 412 miles over the Great Northern line to reach the primary market at Duluth, whereas, a direct line from Grafton to Duluth would be only 281 miles long, saving 131 miles. The Great Northern has four lines in that part of the valley, running north and south and converging in a main line, which goes away off to the south as far as St. Cloud, Minn., before it strikes out direct for the head of Lake Superior. The Northern Pacific has only one line in that part of the valley. This parallels the Great Northern roads and gives a grain route to Duluth about eighty miles shorter from competing points than the Great Northern's average haul. Farmer Hines' railroad runs across the valley east and west, and is to go through the wood region of northern Minnesota to a connection with the Duluth and Winnipeg road, already running for a distance of about 125 miles west of Duluth.

Hines calls his road the Farmers' railroad, and thus far all the work on it has been done by North Dakota and Minnesota farmers. His financiering methods are unique. He has now about 200 men at work in the northern Minnesota woods cutting trees and clearing the right of way. Each man gets his necessary provisions, $18 a month in the stock of the company, and $2 a month in money—barely enough cash to buy his tobacco and pay for an occasional glass of beer. The men are enthusiastic converts to the Hines' theory of railway construction.

Hines is a sturdy, nervous, indefatigable sort of a man, only 34 years old. The merchants of Duluth recently made up a car load of provisions and shipped them out to his camps south of Red lake. A few thousand dollars in money has also been subscribed to aid his enterprise. Hines told the Duluth people lately that he will have 100 miles of road graded and furnished with ties ready for the rails by the end of next summer.

Some Recent Judicial Decisions.

In Virginia a certain contract under which lambs were shipped provided that the company should not be liable for injury to the stock until they were "loaded into the car and the car door fastened by the conductor." The supreme court rules that this did not exempt the carrier from injury caused by its negligence in allowing the lambs to drink salt water before they got on the cars.

In Texas it is held that the fact that plaintiff's contract with defendant called for thirty-four-foot cars, and that defendant represented the cars supplied to be that size, will not justify plaintiff in loading the number of cattle usually carried in thirty-four-foot cars after he discovered it could not properly be done.

In New York a carrier contracting with the agent of the owner of goods for their transportation is not affected by a limitation of the agent's authority to agree on the terms of transportation.

In the federal court it is ruled that the same degree of care is required of carriers in handling and transporting explosives and combustible oils as is exercised by merchants and insurers in dealing with such articles.

In Missouri it is held that bills of lading constitute the only evidence of the final contract between the parties.

In the federal court it is decided that a railroad on whose tracks a collision has occurred between a train and a number of tank cars containing petroleum, some of which have been broken, and the oil set on fire by the collision, and which neglects for two hours to remove the other cars of oil, in consequence of which some of them are set on fire by the burning oil and explode, is liable to one who is injured by such explosion.

In Iowa it is laid down that since the common law, as such, is no part of the national jurisprudence, and since the exclusive right to regulate commerce is vested in congress, overcharges for freight on an interstate shipments, involving unjust discrimination made prior to the interstate commerce act, cannot be recovered.

In Texas a railroad is liable for the overflow of land caused by its negligent construction of an embankment to protect a bridge without sufficient waterways therein to allow the overflow of a river to pass off in its proper and usual course.

Reducing Cost of Equipment.

A rather surprising feature of railway management was brought out during a recent discussion before the New York Railroad club as to whether it is good policy for a railway company to manufacture to any considerable extent articles for repairs that can be purchased in the open market. Mr. H. H. Vreeland, president of the Metropolitan Traction company of New York City, said he found it a fairly common experience that electric railway companies had begun the manufacture of various parts in order to force down prices. Five years ago one company paid $3.50 each for trolley wheels; now it makes them itself for 75 cents, and the manufacturers' price has gone down to 65 cents. The motor equipment for a car cost $2,500 four years ago, but he recently placed an order at $675, and competition and specialization have gone so far that the company does not find it profitable to manufacture repair parts. Mr. Coleman of the Lehigh Valley railroad said that his company found it preferable to buy material in the market as a rule, but there were a few specialties which were still manufactured. It made about 45 per cent of its car bolts from old bolts and rods, and saved a large percentage of the cost of new material in this way. It buys its brass castings, bearings and engine castings, but is making gray iron castings cheaper than any manufacturer has yet offered to furnish them. Mr. Mitchell of the Erie road was of the opinion that railway companies were giving up manufacturing because their shop tools were becoming antiquated. While an old engine frame slotting machine will slot one pair of frames, the Baldwin Locomotive works have a machine that will slot four pairs. A Daniels planer in a railroad car shop planes one side of a timber at the rate of 4 feet a minute, but modern planers owned by the car-building companies will plane four sides at sixty feet a minute. Railroads cannot afford to put in new tools every ten years to keep up with the times, as can the regular manufacturers. Mr. Park of the Westinghouse Air-Brake company said the special machinery enabled manufacturers to turn out most goods much more cheaply than the railroad companies, and cited as an instance of this the fact that the standard brake gear is sold today for about one-third of the cost of production in railway shops, as estimated by master car builders.

Train Flagged with a Match.

Martin Troy is an old railroad man, and was down at the East Bristol bridge watching the men at work, relates the Hartford Courant. When the 4:48 train from Bristol came along the bridge was noticeably weak. The train stopped before entirely crossing the bridge, and the passengers got out and walked across. At that time the bridge sank about two feet, the weight of the train so jarring it that all the wooden piling under it was carried away. Troy then went down under the bridge.

When he saw that the piling had been carried away and the bridge had sunk he hurried up the bank to flag the 4:20 train from Hartford, which would arrive at this point about 5 p. m. It had grown quite dark by this time and Troy had no lantern. But as the train came along he took matches from his pocket and lit them for a danger signal, and stopped the train just as the engine was about to go on the bridge.

His self-possession and presence of mind undoubtedly saved the passenger train and the lives of those on board. When the gang of workmen came along they tried to induce Troy to go to work with them on the bridge, but he refused to do so, claiming that the bridge was likely to go at any minute.

Troy was on the east end of the bridge watching the work as it was proceeding in spite of the warning. He felt the first tremble of the bridge and shouted: "Boys, look out, she's going!" But his warning came too late. Before they could leave the bridge the collapse came.

Metallic Ties.

Metallic railway ties to the number of about 800, which were laid on the New York Central road at Garrisons in 1889, have given such satisfaction and required so little care to be maintained in good condition that others of much the same type are now being used on a part of the tracks of this road in New York City. At this place about 500 trains a day are moved over four tracks, three-fourths of them during the daylight hours, and it is correspondingly difficult to keep the roadbeds in good condition and make the necessary repairs. The ties are stamped from quarter-inch soft steel plates, and measure 7 feet 10 inches in length by about 10 inches in width. Each one is an inverted trough, so curved that all parts except those on which the rails rest are covered and held by the ballast. The weight of each of the ties is about 100 pounds, and its cost is $2.50. They would have been laid several years ago were it not for the fact that a system of block signaling is used on this line, in which an electric current passes through the rails, requiring them to be insulated from the ties. As this system of signaling is also employed on some new viaducts where the rails are to be attached to metal floors, it became absolutely necessary to devise some means of insulation. Accordingly, one of the company's engineers, F. W. Wilson, worked out a method, which consists in placing pieces of insulating fiber between the rail and all metallic surfaces on which it rests or by which it is held. The fiber is from an eighth to a quarter of an inch thick, and is expected to prevent the leakage of the current from the rail to the ties or floor sufficiently to allow the signals to operate properly. An evident objection to the plan is the fact that the insulation will be broken whenever much water collects around the fastenings, but the importance of this defect, if it be one, can be determined by experience alone.

AT THE CREIGHTON THEATER TONIGHT

YOU CAN HAVE

AN EVENING WITH CAPTAIN JACK.

The Famous Scout Captain Jack Crawford to give Omaha an Evening's Entertainment.

OMAHA, March 9, 1896.

Captain Jack Crawford: This city has been the home of Henry M. Stanley and Generals Ord, Crook and others of fame in frontier history have lived with us, but of all the brave and true men who have helped to carve an empire from the wilderness, it has been said, and it is probably true, that no one ever lived in Omaha who so universally won the hearts of our people as yourself. You are our ideal scout.

We remember the protection your rangers were to the Black Hills and how grandly you led the scouts in the terrible Custer campaign.

We recall your long career, filled with splendid achievements, and especially the defeats and annihilation or capture of hostile bands in Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona.

But "peace hath her victories," and with the pen you have achieved greater conquests than you have gained on southern battle fields or in frontier fights.

Your poetry is western, it is your own.

No one will ever steal your lines or charge you with stealing their's.

The mines, the ranches, the forts, the plains, the mountains and the men and women of the west are painted by a master's hand in your dialect pieces of poetry and prose.

As a correspondent for The Bee, you made cities hundreds of miles from the nearest railway and brought to the Black Hills the men who honeycombed the mountains and are now securing millions in gold as a return.

You risked your life to get news to your paper and made the most hazardous ride on record, one that will live in story while the Sioux campaign has a place in history.

At your entertainments we have listened, wept, laughed, screamed, and wondered how one man could capture thousands and do it so simply and yet so perfectly.

Your rapidity of action, your voice, your magnetism, your stories, songs and uproarious fun, combined with the dress, manners, style and physique of a chief of scouts, constitutes that which pleases all, and the fact that your life, your songs and your stories are full of true nobility and teach great lessons, causes every one of us to honor your name.

We ask that you will do us the favor to select a night when we may, in our chief place of entertainment (the Creighton theater), enjoy an evening with you.

We note that London, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, San Francisco and our state capital (Lincoln) have been repeatedly favored, much to their delight and greatly to your profit, but we want you to know that you are "not without honor" in your old home, and that there is a western welcome awaiting you here. Very sincerely your friends,

E. ROSEWATER,
THOMAS L. KIMBALL,
CHARLES F. MANDERSON,
A. HOSPE. JR.,
JAMES I. WOODWARD,
EUCLID MARTIN,
W. W. MARSH,
C. H. FREDERICK,
R. M. STONE, M. D.,
GEORGE B. TZSCHUCK,
LAFAYETTE ANDERSON,
T. S. CLARKSON,
JAMES CREIGHTON,
C. B. RUSTIN,
FRANK W. OBER,
JOHN L. WEBSTER,
N. P. FEIL,
JOHN H. PIERCE,
and others.

ON THE TRAIL, March 11, 1896.

Messrs. E. Rosewater, Thomas L. Kimball, Charles F. Manderson, A. Hospe, jr., James I. Woodward, Euclid Martin, W. W. Marsh, C. H. Frederick, R. M. Stone, M. D., George B. Tzschuck, Lafayette Anderson, T. S. Clarkson, James Creighton, C. B. Rustin, Frank W. Ober, John L. Webster, N. P. Feil, John H. Pierce, and others:

Replying to your favor of March 9, let me say, first, I thank you. It is indeed gratifying that after twenty years since I was a citizen of Omaha, in my conduct and character as a soldier, scout, rancher, miner, and frontiersman, and more recently as a public entertainer, I have been enabled to retain the friendship and favor of such friends.

"Ten thousand, thousand thanks and more,
I send with heart and soul aglow,
For kindly words from Memory's store
That makes my keepers overflow.
Ten thousand thanks, my friends, to you
Because in this I recognize
The fact that boy or man, if true,
Will some day win a worthy prize.

What better prize than honest friend,
Secured and held for twenty years,
'Mid toil and strife, where shadows blend
With faith and hope, with smiles and tears?
And so you bid me come,
Queen Omaha, 'all others far above.'
If I was deaf and dumb
I'd hear and answer, Yes, my love."

Faithfully yours in clouds or sunshine,
J. W. CRAWFORD,
(Captain Jack).

"P. S. I have instructed my agent at Chicago to arrange a date with my old friend, Colonel Pierce, who will notify you in due time. J. W. C."

CREIGHTON THEATER,
OMAHA, March 13, 1896.

Colonel J. H. Pierce, Dear Sir: In common with every citizen of Omaha the managers of this theater are anxious to give Captain J. W. Crawford a grand reception by a crowded house.

We know his ability to entertain and it is second to none.

We know his history as a soldier and a scout, and it is grand.

We admire his genius as a poet and correspondent.

Our theater is yours for Saturday night, March 21. W. J. BURGESS,
For PAXTON & BURGESS,
Lessees and Managers.

ORCHESTRA CHAIRS, 50c, BALCONY, 25c.

It's just as easy to try One Minute Cough Cure as anything else. It's easier to cure a severe cough or cold with it. Let your next purchase for a cough be One Minute Cough Cure. Better medicine; better result; better try it.