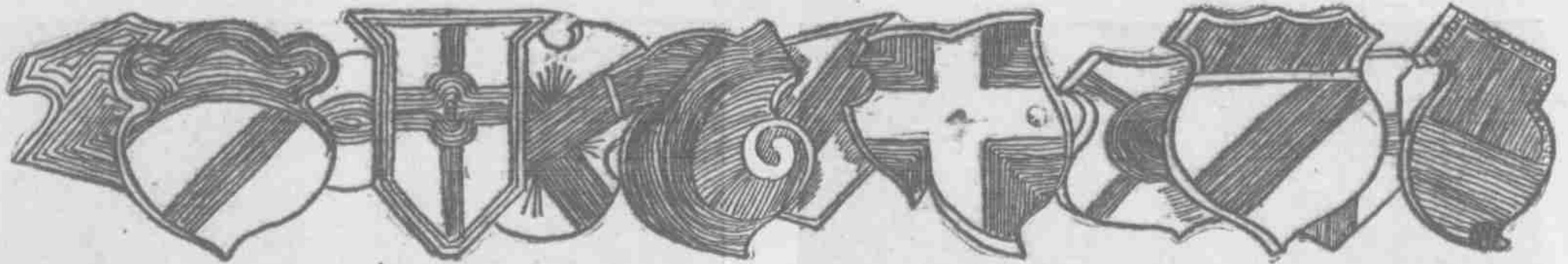


O'Keefe, Akoond of Swat: A Tale of Modern



Methods and Luck of a Lucky Man---By Wm. H. Osborne

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CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

JOHAN LORIMER had found it so. He was poor. The little building that served him as an office and a shop, served him as a home also. Few knew this and fewer cared. Yet he had some reputation in Monroe. Many people knew him as an individual and as a chemist, and respected him; but few had occasion to patronize him. This is an age of enormous output, and of output which is claimed to be chemically pure and chemically exact. Great food companies, asphalt concerns, mining corporations are constantly employing chemists of ability. Lorimer was a chemist of ability. He had made the attempt, not once, but many times, to swing himself into something that was worth while; that would not only pay him, but would advance him. But though he still tried, he had been beaten every time he had made the attempt. He was without influence. But he was young and he had his career before him, and he was not discouraged. He worked hard and to the purpose.

Lorimer was not a rolling stone. He had established himself a few years before in the place where he was now, and he had stayed there through thick and thin. He could not assure himself that his business had materially increased; but he kept his spirits up. He hoped against hope; he worked away and squared his square jaw uncompromisingly at fate.

Constitutional Smith had once entered the shop of John Lorimer, the chemist. That was upon the day preceding the night when Billington O'Keefe met his fate in the dark street. Constitutional had worn no chain, but Lorimer had mistaken him, nevertheless for Billington O'Keefe. Smith had counted upon this, and he had purchased, without any inquiries on the part of Lorimer, a few ingredients with which he had saturated that little rag a few hours later. Constitutional never used plain chloroform—there was too much tendency in the victim to gag and strangle. He had a little recipe of his own which made the dose an easier one, and which for his own delectation he was wont to call by the name of "Constitutional's dope." Lorimer little knew to what task his chemicals were to be devoted. If he had, it is a question, as subsequent events will show, whether he would have been glad or sorry.

Lorimer possessed one quality that few men today possess. He had a beautiful baritone voice—not the church or concert voice, but a voice which was untrained and had in it all the tones of the free air and the hills. And he had an old-fashioned habit—when he was alone he sang at his work. And he sang old-fashioned songs; and they were mostly songs of sentiment. And there was a reason for all this. For within a small box within his room in the rear of the little shop, John Lorimer kept his private correspondence. And if the casual observer had had an opportunity to examine this correspondence he would have found that much of it was signed with the name of a girl who wrote in a large feminine hand. And the name was "Margaret Robeson," forsooth. And by that token the song that he most often sang was an old song that ran about like this:

When I first saw sweet Peggy
Twas on a market day,
A low-backed car she drove,
And sat upon a truss of hay;
And when that hay was blooming grass,
And decked with flowers of spring,
No flower was there that could compare
With the charming lass I sing.

As she sat in the low-backed car,
The man at the turnpike bar
Never asked for his toll,
But just rubbed his poll
And looked after the low-backed car.

I'd rather own that car, sir,
With Peggy by my side,
Than a coach and four and gold galers
And a lady for my bride;
For the lady would sit forlornest me
On a cushion made with taste,
But Peggy would sit beside me,
With my arm around her waist.

As she sat in the low-backed car,
The man at the turnpike bar
Never asked for his toll,
But just rubbed his poll
And looked after the low-backed car.

It was a song that mothers sang to their sleepy children, that nurses crooned to babies, that old grannies warbled over a bit of mending or a pot of tea.

But John Lorimer sang it when he was alone and it became his song.

And he was singing it on a certain day when his back was to the door, and for an instant he had forgotten his surroundings. Unknown to him, a man had entered and stood silently waiting, nodding his head to the tune as Lorimer sang it.

"I don't know—" began this individual. Lorimer swung about in astonishment, and then flushed to the roots of his hair, half in anger and half in embarrassment.

"I don't know," went on the visitor, "ex-

consider it a bit of impertinence for him to ask.

So he made them up in the shortest possible time and handed them over, as he thought, to Billington O'Keefe.

"Much obliged," said Billington O'Keefe, "for these and for the—song about Sweet Peggy."

His visitor retired and strode down the street. He was not Billington O'Keefe. He was Constitutional Smith. And he left the shop with enough "dope" to stupefy a half dozen men, and enough of his own partic-

At the corner he stopped for a moment and looked back at the quaint little shop and nodded his head approvingly.

"An all right sort of shop it is," he remarked to himself, "and an all right sort of fellow in it, too." Then the man Smith turned the corner and, as Smith, disappeared completely from the face of the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

Patricia Jelliffe Robeson—A Match-Making Mother.

No. 17 Southerton avenue was situated



"FOR THE LAST TIME, YOU—YOU MUST KISS ME."

actly who "Sweet Peggy" is, but I'll bet dollars to doughnuts that she's sweet enough to be sung about in that way."

Lorimer saw that the man was Billington O'Keefe—Billington O'Keefe, but without the golden chain.

Lorimer assumed a short, sharp manner. "What can I do for you?" he asked shortly.

The visitor plunged immediately into the present business. He had a small list of things that he wanted. Lorimer lifted his eyebrows as he looked them over. He had half a notion to ask this man for what purpose he wanted these chemicals. Then he changed his mind. He knew O'Keefe was constantly engaged in experiments, and he knew further that O'Keefe would

lar explosive to blow up half a dozen safes. It is always safer, so Constitutional thought to himself, to have too much than too little. This was the day, as has been said, prior to the evening upon which Billington O'Keefe, in a supine condition, boarded the "Sarah Margaret" for parts unknown.

This was the first time that Constitutional Smith ever came into contact with John Lorimer, the chemist.

Smith was not an appreciative man, and his success in life had been largely due to his rarely falling judgment of men in general, from their manner and appearance at first blush; and he appreciated John Lorimer, the chemist, as a young man at once businesslike and correct, and artistic and unusual in the bargain.

in a highly respectable portion of Monroe; but not in a decidedly prosperous neighborhood. It had been at one time a wealthy neighborhood, but it had fallen into decadence, and was now the home of good and fairly high-priced boarding houses. Here and there an old family clung to a house with bull dog tenacity. In the midst of a number of old homes stood the home of the Robesons. They did not own it; never had, in fact. It was large, and rambling and ramshackle, inside and out—and it was cheap. A family of two—and a mythical servant, to boot—would have been much better satisfied in a smaller place at the same rent. Miss Margaret Robeson would have preferred it. But Mrs. Patricia Jelliffe Robeson, widow, was differently