MY BUTCHER.

The shop was cool and sweet-smelling. there was freshly sprinkled sawdust on the floor, and all the roasts and joints were put away in the cold storage room. Only a few fresh fish lay on ice in one window, and green lettuces and young onions in the other. It was cool and pleasantly dark after the glare of the street. Summer is a dull time for business in New York, and the big shop was empty. My butcher looked up with a welcoming smile as I entered.

My methods of marketing are unique. I laid a quarter, a dime, and a nickle on the counter of freshly scrubbed wood.

"What can I get for that?" I asked. My hutcher regarded the outlay thoughtfully.

"Say!" he said; "You take two butterfish and five chops. How'll that do?"

"Beautifully!" I said, and followed him to the back of the shop to see him clean the fish. He is a nice looking butcher, with a good figure and pleasant brown eyes; his bair is curly, and slightly gray at the temples, and his complexion is beautiful as a girl's. I wonder why butcher's have such lovely color-though some, to be sure have too much. My butcher must be conscious of his good complexion, for he always looks as though he were fresh from the barber's hands, newly shaved and powdered, and his even white teeth add to the attraction of his pleasant face. I leaned against the big box that holds the vegetables, and looked at him, intent upon his work, with considerable admiration. His white sleeve covers and his long white apron gave him a cool, clean look that was refreshing on a hot day.

"They call these Lafayette tish," he said, as he turned the water on and skillfully scraped off the scales.

"Why?" I asked. I knew by the deliberate way he was doing his work that he meant to take his time about it, and was glad to have someone to talk to.

"They were never heard of in America," he went on, "until Lafa; ette landed here, and the country people and the fisher-folk noticed that, and so they called 'em his fish. The other name is just butter-fish; that's all I know."

"That's strange," I said, "for, you know, in the Sandwich Islands there is a superstition about fieh. Just before a member of the royal family dies a lot of red-fish are seen in the harbor. I lived there many years, and several of the princesses died, and every time the redfish came into the harbor first."

"Did you ever hear," he said, "of the great plague in London, years and years ago? Well, there were some prisoners in the Tower, and some doctors wanted to make experiments, so they got the jailer prised. to help them. They told a prisoner who was condemned to death that if he'd sleep in the bed of a man who had died of the plague and did not get the disease he'd be let of free. Well, the prisoner took the chances; he slept in the bed, and he got the plague, and he died." Here he threw the two little tish in a equare of Lrown paper and began rolling them up, looking at me very impreseively as he said: "Only, the point is that nobody had slept in that bed before! It was all imagination!"

"Goodness!" I said.

"All imagination!" he repeated; and here we crossed the shop to the wide, si/tooth, wooden counter. He brought a shoulder of mutton from the ice-room and began to slice off the chops. "And that's what I think about your Honolulu kinge," he went on, "They knew the red fish were in the harbor, and so somebody had to die. Oh, nothing frightens me so much as the unknown; it's the unreal that's terrifying. Now those faith cure people and the Christian is after that crowded ballroom. I felt Scientists-"

I opened my eyes.

'Oh, I don't believe in them a little bit," he said, "but all the same there's with you.

some truth in it. They get at just that weak-minded superstitious part of us and work on that. And say! I guess the weaker a man's mind is, the more easily he's influenced to die of imegination, or live when he's got a mortal sickness. D'ye want the chops trimmed?'

"Mm!" I nodded.

He defuly sliced off the mest from the bone, and with a big cleaver made a big chop in the right place, and then carefully trimmed each little cutlet very neatly, while I looked on. He glanced at me for a moment with some interest.

"Say!" he remarked; "that feather in your hat's an eagle's plume, ain't it? How much did you pay for it?"

"Three dol!are and fifty cents," I said. "Well," he replied, "my brother knows a man that's in the business. They call 'em eagle's plumes, but they ain't. He pays about three cents a dozen for 'em and I guess they're chicken feath-

"I suppose it's only the fashion that makes them expensive," I said, not wanting to defend my hat particularly.

'That's always the way," he said. "Why, a few years ago you couldn't get fifteen cenus for a mink skin. But the dealers were slowly gathering them in, and, flop! all of a sudden you couldn't get a mink-skin for four dollars. If I'd had any sense I'd laid in a lot of mick furs. But I ain't a business man. I don't seem to have the knack. I tell you what's the matter with me-I was born to late. I ought to have lived in the old times."

"I saw a man the other day," I said-"he was captain of a canal-boat on the Erie Canal, and he's seventy nine years old. He told me he could remember his grand father's stories of fighting bears and Indians right here in the state of New York, and he remembers the clearing in the woods where he used to live, and the old log cabin."

"Did you ever read Fenimore Cooper? Say! you'd like him-he's great. He tells all about the Indiaus and log cabins, and he calls white folks pale-faces. That's when I ought to have lived. If I were rich now I'd have a house with rafters on the ceiling, and a big fireplace, and old andirons-don't you like old andirons?"

'There's a a coal-scuttle in our family," I said, "that belonged to my greatgrandfather. It's brass, and when the firelight shines on it it's lovely."

"But it isn't the beauty so much you think about," he said, "but the feeling that it's old-that it was in the world and used before ever you were born. Would you like a hand-made brick?"

"A what?" I asked, somewhat sur-

"I've got a brick that my grandmother brought over from Holland. It's handmade, and it was old when she got it. They brought over a lot to make a fireplace or something, and there are two or three left.

I'd like it very much."

"My grandmother was a great old lady," he said. "She was rich in Holland, or her people were, but she gave up everything to follow her husband to America. Sometimes," he said, reflectively, "I almost think it is a mistake to love.

"That's where all our real sorrow comes from," I said. "The more people you love and care for, the more liable you are to heartache. After all"-it is the selfish people who care for nobody but themselves that are the happiest."

"But, ah!" he said, following me to the door, "they have an aching void somewhere. -The Bazar.

She-What a relief this conservatory as though I should be crushed to death. He-Yee it was rather close.

She-But I fee! perfectly safe in here

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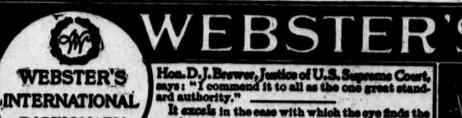
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