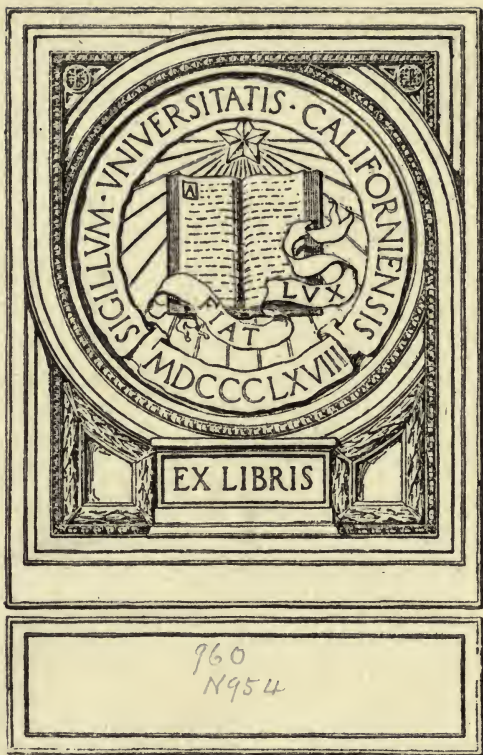


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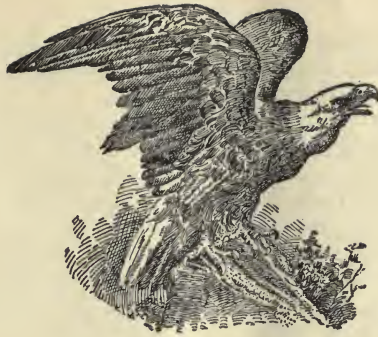


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The Modern Knight Errant.

CHARACTERS.

THOMAS SPINKWOOD.

JAKE BREDD.

NICHOLAS BOWLES.

JUDY SMALL.

JOHN ATKINS.

BIJAH SLOW.

JEREMIAH HAWKS.

JASON SPLASH.

SONG: Prelude.

List ye to the bells, so merrily ringing,
A thousand happy voices loud are singing,
A thousand scented groves are upward springing,
To usher in this freedom day;
Bear the merry sounds, ye breezes, bear them,
Bear the merry sounds to every shore.

See the flowery banners o'er us streaming,
And see the rosy youth with pleasure beaming,
O hear the thrilling strains that mock are dreaming,
'Tis music meet for freedom's day.
Bear the merry sounds, ye breezes, bear them,
Bear the merry sounds to every shore.

Land of Pilgrims, oh live ye forever,
Protect us, mighty God, protect us ever,
Let cries of war and evil never, never,
Go up to shade our freedom day;
Bear the merry sounds, ye breezes, bear them,
Bear the merry sounds to every shore.

JOHN ATKINS. More and more the world is becoming selfish. There seems no help for the human race. In the olden times men would readily help one another. They were a band of brothers—rejoicing in each other's happiness. Now it seems impossible to get

a man to do his fellow man a kindness unless he is sure of pay. He wants to be paid for everything. Our lot is cast in a hard world. Why, man is worse than the brute creation.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. My brother, I am sorry to hear you talk so. From my readings of history I see the world in quite a different light. It has all the centuries been growing better and better. In the ancient times there were a few intelligent men in the world, but they were governed by sordid views. Their philosophy was, that only one or two men in a million should be wise; the rest should all be serfs. If all were enlightened who would hew the wood and draw the water, and do the heavy work of the world? In their conceit they thought that they were doing the world a great benefit by inculcating this doctrine. There was no hope then for the masses, They were like beasts of burden. They knew nothing higher. They toiled—they ate common food—they slept—they multiplied; and this was all there was of life for them.

JOHN ATKINS. That is the way you interpret history. The world was far better off in those days. See the grand works—the grand architecture that has come down to us from these days, that you call dark. They were days of light. The poor were cared for. They had no thought of the morrow. The Brahmins of the world cared for them in every particular. They were happy—happy as children; no care. They sang—they danced; and when the labor of the day was over they enjoyed themselves; then, best of all, they had good refreshing sleep.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. What a queer view you take of the past, and what a mournful view you take of the present! I don't believe that you would have liked to live in those days, unless you could have been one of the Brahmin class.

JOHN ATKINS. You undoubtedly remember the old saying, "Where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise." If I were living then, and was of the pariah class, I would have been ignorant, so would have been contented with my lot. And so would the poor of to-day but for this higher education, and the thoughts of modern times that meet them at every turn. They are ever after some unknown *grail*—hunting, hunting, for what they know not.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. They know that their hunting, as you call it, has and is ever bringing forth good fruits—fruits that lift them up above the beast; and but for the stumbling blocks that the Brahmin class puts in their way this world would be happier; they would accomplish more with less effort.

JAKE BREDD. There is to be a great picnic next week, a sort of revival of the old Grecian games, when there will be prizes for almost everything—along all lines—intellectual, physical, musical,

literary. Then there will be lectures upon physical culture—how to care for the body—how to eat, drink and sleep.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. I am glad to hear that. We, you know, have been working for this a good many years. This is the first picnic on the basis of what is now come to be known as a Chautauqua. It is an experiment. I hope it will be a grand success. I shall help it along all I can—do all I can to get the young people interested, for on them depends the future welfare of the race. What do you think about our Chautauqua, Mr. Atkins?

JOHN ATKINS. Humbug! From beginning to ending. You have to go back to the doings of old Greece for enlightenment. What was the condition of the people then? Just what I have told you all along—a few great philosophers and artists, whose works live to-day, and which you are pleased to copy. There is no originality in this modern world, nor in this so-called modern advancement. The Greeks knew how to live.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. They knew some things well; we have always admitted that, and we have always been glad to have their credit, and to copy their best work, but the people were in a miserable condition. Fortunately for them they did not know anything higher or better; but to-day the people do know. They know that they, too, have rights, and that it is better for the world to extend these rights, and not, as in the days of Greece, confine them to the few.

JAKE BREDD. Mr. Bowles, glad to hear you talk thus. There are my sentiments. I have not reached a very high goal as yet, but when I go down into the slums of the city and see how miserable are the people there it makes me mad, and I say to myself, "Down the power that keeps the people in ignorance." It is perhaps bliss with them, but by slow degrees we are getting them out. Even sordid lucre is learning that there is money in good houses, in good localities, and every year they are building finer and better houses, and inviting these people of the alleys and courts to come and hire, and even buy their houses, and they make their terms easy. In a few years these miserable shanties in the alleys and courts will be things of the past. If a great fire would get in among them and consume them, it would be a blessing. They are a disgrace to our civilization.

JOHN ATKINS. You take a very rosy view of the situation. These new houses you talk about cannot be hired for anything like the price that these small houses in the alleys can. People will go where the rents are cheapest.

JAKE BREDD. But there is another factor—the more people are elevated the better prices they command for their work; and they will be willing to pay a little more for a higher and better comfort. A bathroom, for example, in a house is both a luxury and is elevating in

its influence. Get the people started on this track and there is no end, nor going back, when people have once felt the blessings of the modern house—out on the street; they will not go back to the alley; that is the place for the stable, the workshop, or the store-house.

JOHN ATKINS. Gentlemen, you seem to agree among yourselves pretty well; but bear in mind one thing, you are all poor folks. These fine houses that you talk about cost money, and it costs more to live in them, so don't be too sanguine; your ideal is many a year off.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. It may be, but we see progress all through these years. In my short lifetime I have seen the expansion and growth of our city towards the west; and it has given me great pleasure to see so many small houses with four and six rooms that are within the reach of the most humble citizen. Citizens that used to live in the alleys are moving into them. The coming out of the alley is a great theme for the poet. No, the world is progressing, notwithstanding your mediæval notions of society. I suppose you'll like to see again the days when they built a grand cathedral, like Cologne, Salisbury or Antwerp—a grand cathedral—a ducal palace, surrounded by huts, without floors; not even so good as our frontiersmen put up as a provisional structure. In a few years the log hut gave way to a comfortable house with its beautiful adornments and practical arrangements for comfort.

JOHN ATKINS. I adhere to my views. I have lived quite as long as you. I saw the old houses in my youth; I see them to-day; they are here to stay.

JAKEBREED. Mr. Atkins, I believe you are the man who invented a cheap stove, and made such experiments in cooking that you have reduced the expense of living to ten cents a day. Am I not right?

JOHN ATKINS. Yes, you have not misstated the fact. If you could only teach those poor people to live on ten cents a day, what a blessing it would be to them. They could save, where now they are all the while in hot water, "living from hand to mouth."

NICHOLAS BOWLES. You teach men to live on ten cents a day; the next step will be to get them to work for fifty cents a day. That is a good scheme of yours—for the contractor class; a grand day for them, but a miserable day for the poor alley people.

JAKE BREDD. No need borrow any trouble on that score, for that "good time (?) " is not coming right away. I'de rather see men able to live at the rate of a dollar a day, and even more. Mr. Atkins, I'll bet that it cost you two dollars or more a day to live.

JOHN ATKINS. A man has to live according to his surroundings. We are hemmed in by them. But we as a people pay too much for our living. We want to encourage thrift. As a nation we are extravagant, too much so.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. The more extravagant we get the higher we ascend, and the higher we ascend the more extravagant we become. Whatever carries us upward we do not regret. Your views would hold the world down. I suppose you have expended a great deal of money upon the education of your children. You have a boy in college, and your daughter is quite an accomplished artist. That's all right, but what you claim for yourself you should be willing to grant to others. Have not I as much right to live on a high plane as you, and have not all the same right?

JOHN ATKINS. He who can appreciate, let him have. The masses are lazy and intolerant. They have all they deserve. They must be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. Water must be drawn and wood must be cut. But we don't draw and cut now as they used to do in the past. The machinery that has been developed by our system has relieved man of much drudgery. Under your system—under the old Grecian system, with which you are so much in love—machinery was never dreamed of. The products of machinery are multiplying every day.

JOHN ATKINS. Talk is cheap, gentlemen! Machinery is a curse rather than a blessing. See how many lives are sacrificed every year by your machinery.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. We admit that some lives are lost in this way; probably more than they should, if we were more careful—but it is nothing compared with the plagues of ye olden times, with which you are so much in love, when fifty per cent of a large town were destroyed in a few months. Individually, Mr. Atkins, you are kind; collectively, you are cruel.

[A band of small boys and girls, poorly clad, go by, marching. For a drum they have a huge tin pan, a tin horn, all marching under the American flag. They stop and sing "The Rock of Liberty."]

The Rock of Liberty.

Oh, the firm old rock, the wave-worn rock,
That braved the blast and the billows' shock;
It was born with Time on a barren shore,
And it laughed with scorn at the ocean's roar.
'Twas here that first the Pilgrim band
Came weary up the foaming strand,
And the tree they reared in the days gone by,
It lives, it lives, it lives, and ne'er shall die.

Thou stern old rock, in the ages past
Thy brow was bleached by the warring blast;
But thy wintry toil with the waves is o'er,
And the billows bent thy base no more.
Yet countless as thy sounds, old rock,
Are the hardy sons of the Pilgrim stock
And the trees they reared in the days-gone by,
It lives, it lives, it lives, and ne'er shall die.

Then rest, old rock, on the sea-fast shore,
 Our sires are lulled by the breakers' roar,
 'Twas here that first their hymns were heard,
 O'er the startled cry of the ocean bird.
 'Twas here they lived, it 'twas here they died,
 Their forms repose on the green hillside,
 And the tree they reared in the days gone by,
 It lives, it lives, it lives, and ne'er shall die.

SCENE: The rooms of the Union Club.

ANDREW HAWTHORN. Our Chatauqua was a fine success, and we made considerable money by it.

JEREMIAH HAWKS. How much?

ANDREW HAWTHORN. A thousand dollars. It will be the nucleus of our charity fund next New Year, to send those poor alley folks a good dinner, with ample stores.

JAKE BREDD. Will you take me in?

ANDREW HAWTHORN. What do you want charity for?

JAKE BREDD. O, just to see how it seems.

ANDREW HAWTHORN. Well, we'll present you with a buck and saw, then you can go about the streets and pick up a few dimes. How'll that suit you?

JAKE BREDD. First-rate. I'll call on you for the first 'lob.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. I hear that they are working up Mr. Spinkwood for President. What do you think of him for a candidate?

ANDREW HAWTHORN. He is a mighty smart man, so far as smartness goes. But intellectually he is below par. A smart, hustling man, I admit, but no high moral principles. He's all things to all men. He'll do anything in the way of a bargain to secure this prize—when he is cowardly. He was first lieutenant in my battery during the war. Our captain was detailed much of this time as chief of artillery, so the command of the battery devolved upon him. Somehow he managed to keep the battery in the reserve most of the time; yet to hear him talk you would think that he was anxious to get into a fight. At Gettysburg our time came. He could not squirm out of it. They called out the reserve to oppose Pickett. Near our position was an old barn. So soon as we got into action he went and stood under the lee of this barn, and many of the men followed him. Fortunately for the battery the second lieutenant (Horton) was a brave and able man; but for him the battery would not have been of much credit to the State. With Horton virtually in command we covered ourselves with glory.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. Since the war Spinkwood has been pretty loud in his war talk. I thought that he was in almost every fight of the Army of the Potomac.

ANDREW HAWTHORN. Bah! He was never in but one fight, and, to put it humorously, he was not in that. After Gettysburg, when in winter quarters near Falmouth, one Sunday he was in a hurdle race, get thrown, right shoulder dislocated. It was reported broken. A brave man like Horton would not have lost a day of duty; but he had to go to the field hospital, from there was sent to a general hospital at Washington, and there he remained for months, and finally got his discharge for disability (!)

NICHOLAS BOWLES. This is news to me. I had all the while regarded him as a brave man. I knew he was shallow; a great blow-hard, and most selfish, but I did not know that he was so lacking in moral principle. But there is one thing that I have noticed among these men who went to the war. Those who saw the hardest fights, were in them, and targets for the enemy, say very little about their war experience. There is our friend Bredd; who ever heard him talk about the war, and boast of his valor, yet he was severely wounded, was dangerously ill, and has a hernia—wears a truss to-day.

ANDREW HAWTHORN. The greater part of that is new to me; I never heard him talk much about the war. At the camp-fires he will say something, but generally it is in praise of some comrade. He has a high opinion of Lieutenant Horton, and often tells of his heroism in the face of the enemy, and of his faith in the cause. But for Spinkwood he has the utmost contempt. Then, further, I hear that Spinkwood is to be married, and his engagement to Judge Atkins' daughter is soon to be announced. So look out for cards soon, very soon. The Judge is working for him, and the daughter is all aflame with glory; the prospects of being the Lady of the "White House," and the first lady in the land, is exciting her much, and she is working for the "General," as she calls him.

JAKE BREDD. "General!" He never was more than a captain, and was not even worthy of that rank. He's a dangerous man. I hope he'll get beaten, but if he gets the nomination it is equivalent to an election, and the wise ones know it. This is why he is so kind and polite to all, especially to the poor working classes. They think him their best friend, so they will vote for him. He has The Daily Citizen all bought up. He and his friends own the controlling stock in the paper; and it will champion his cause, from first to last. So General Spinkwood is the coming man?

NICHOLAS BOWLES. We all know it. All things are going his way. Nomination, then election. Yet, aint it strange that even the better and highly cultivated people will ignore his slang; take it as a joke; good bait with which to catch the common stock.

JAKE BREDD. I'd like to see some such a man as Jeremiah Hawks. His family are of old Mayflower stock. They were true

men from the first. Prominent in the war of the Revolution, and in the civil war he enlisted as a private, and came home, I believe, as a captain. Saw service. As for that Spinkwood, he is, I think, from old Tory stock. His great grandfather was a Tory. He and Atkins are as one. They belong to the past, and notwithstanding Atkins talks about the degeneracy of the times; that all the good, able and noble men are dead, and the present generation is a generation of weaklings, shallow and wanting in manliness, you will see that he is working for Spinkwood. Spinkwood is now on the top wave. He looks it, and his looks is inspiring to the weak. It is amusing to see with what deference they approach him; and if he only nods to them, off come their hats with the most profound bow. His expression, "Bully boy with a glass eye," is enchanting, and when he tells them how he waxed the enemy, *i. e.*, the enemy during the war, they applaud. He'll "send them all to Davy Jones' locker." The *loco-focos* are a hard crowd of dead ducks. Elegant, is it not, to come from a man who wants to be President, and whom so many are working so hard to put him there.

SCENE: In Club room—before gathering. Janitor JASON SPLASH and his friend BIJAH SLOW.

JASON SPLASH. Slow, what do you think of Spinkwood's chances?

BIJAH SLOW. His chances are good enough; too good—better than his sense.

JASON SPLASH. You seem to be agin him. Aint he a good man? Der people all seem to take to him.

BIJAH SLOW. Most of der people I'll-admit, but here's one that aint for him. I'se a poo' man. There's Mr. Hawks, he's the man I'de like to see elected. He's equal to any thing on this earth.

JASON SPLASH. You don't seem to like Spinkwood. Well, let's get the room in order.

[Sings the while]:

Old Mr. Toodle
 Bought his wife a dear little poodle,
 And Mr. O'Flarity,
 He is full of heathen charity,
 And Mr. Forgarity,
 He is noted for his hilarity.

[Some may think that it is because Splash is drunk, but it is all owing to a bottle of apple jack. His wife put into it some fine old whiskey, and it made him a little bit frisky.]

BIJAH SLOW. And it is all a little misty
 How Spinkwood is so crispy

[The members coming in. SPINKWOOD hears the last speaker.]

THOMAS SPINKWOOD. That is a fine rhyme.

And I was just in time,
I'll bet any gentleman a dime,
That it's all very fine,
Election is near
And Atkins is in good cheer.

JOHN ATKINS. Why take my name in vain?

THOMAS SPINKWOOD. We want to see what kind of stuff you've got in you. We want you for chairman of the convention that is to be held next week, and this meeting is a caucus. We want you to calk us—calk us up-well.

JOHN ATKINS. "Barkis is willing," if thereby he can serve his friend.

THOMAS SPINKWOOD. We want to go into the convention with an understanding between us. I learn that the Hawks crowd are going to pack the convention; we want to be prepared for them.

JOHN ATKINS. No danger from that source. We have the strength, we have the voices. Their force is like Pompey's legions, made up of all the nice citizens; while ours is like Cæsar's army, all old veterans, spoiling for a fight—we can lick them every time.

THOMAS SPINKWOOD. You's the man for us; with you in the chair we shall not fear.

[After adjournment.]

JASON SPLASH. Bijah, I don't know what you is thinking of all dis talk, but it was not the talk of gentlemen; you never heard Mr. Hawks talk like that. I have attended many a negro meeting, and I never heard such talk from even them poor ignorant people.

BIJAH SLOW. O, they don't mean anything by it; it was just good nature. Spinkwood gave me three fine cigars. Have one?

SCENE: Again in the Club. After the nomination.

JASON SPLASH. They had an exciting time at the convention it seems. When next you see Spinkwood you'll see as fine a pair of black eyes as you ever saw.

BIJAH SLOW. How's that?

JASON SPLASH. When the names were up for nomination, Mr. Hawks spoke—pretty plainly—against Spinkwood, and in his delicate yet forcible way he hit the General pretty hard on his slang talk. We want a man, he said, able to express himself in forcible, yet elegant, terms. We don't want any cow-boy slang. If he gets this nomination it is certain that he will be elected. Then the next and sure step is into the White House. I should dislike to see a man as President who condescends to the use of so much slang. What

will the cultivated people of other countries think of us? Then they will judge the whole nation by the man whom we have elected to represent us. "Mr. Chairman," he said, "we don't want a champion of slang in the Presidential chair. Think of the men who have occupied the position. I hope that this convention will think twice over the nomination of this year, ere they nominate a man so given to slang."

BIJAH SLOW. There was a great row in the convention hall. After the close General Spinkwood approached Mr. Hawks with up-lifted cane, and was about to deal him a heavy blow, but Mr. Hawks was too quick for him. He rushed under the cane, dealt Spinkwood a heavy blow, just below the solar plexus, following right up the body toward the head, and at the same time gave him a good kick in the shin. The General fell like a log; down he went, all in a heap, and like a tiger Mr. Hawks jumped upon him, and pounded him in both eyes, with both fists, and wound up by catching him by the throat. The crowd seemed paralyzed; it was all so sudden. They did not dream that Mr. Hawks was such a fighter. If the two men had been alone, I think Mr. Hawks would have killed him. His hold on the General's throat was like that of an enraged beast. The friends finally separated them. That account in the evening extra is false. It represents Mr. Hawks as a ruffian and Spinkwood as an innocent man attacked by a bully.

TEDDY VELT. We all know the two man. If either is a ruffian and bully it is Spinkwood. I was not present, but your account is evidently true.

SCENE—later.

JASON SPLASH. Did you ever hear Bowles when he has been knocked down and out? He wrote a fine account of the row, but it is not in *The Citizen*. They would not publish it; indeed they will not publish anything from him. To my knowledge he has sent to them a great variety of subjects, covering many fields. His paper on the Monroe Doctrine is the finest paper I ever saw on the subject. Then he writes upon art, physics, philosophy, calls attention to prominent questions, and wreathes into them a fine philosophy, ever on the side of Modern Knight Errant. By the way, his article on the Modern Knight Errant is fine. He himself is one great Modern Knight Errant. See what he is doing for mankind, ever exposing wrongs in all the lines of life; instructing the young. His lectures are fine and instructive to all.

BIJAH SLOW. Does he say anything about the ancient barons?

JASON SPLASH. Indeed he does. He exposes them, and he don't stop with the ancient barons; he attacks the modern ones, like Norman Steel, the great railroad man, who has wrecked more railroads and steamboat lines than any man up to the present time.

He sets his brokers to work to bear a particular road. He and his party buy in the stock, get men to win the road financially, even get tramps (we believe) to wreck trains. He and Spinkwood are silent partners, and when Spinkwood gets to be President, Steel will flourish. He is already worth fifty millions or more. These men in substantial things are not more able than other men, but they form their silent combinations, play into one another's hands. People think and speak of them as lucky, smart, etc. They are simply modern barons, even following the lines of the ancient ones.

NICHOLAS BOWLES, (coming in, hears the last few sentences). Gentlemen, I believe that the world will after awhile overthrow these modern barons, even as the people finally overthrew the ancient ones. Education is the main power against them; education along all lines, such as we see being developed in our schools, churches and lodges. The three go together and form the grand trinity of the world.

SCENE: In NICHOLAS SPINKWOOD'S private room. Sings and hums to himself—rather weird and pathetic in tone. Notes from the opera Traviata.

La, la, la, la,—La, la, la, la,
La, la, la, la,—La, la, la, la,

Also notes from Norma :

Di, di, di, di,—Di, di, di, di,
Di, di, di, di,—Di, di, di, di.

PSALM: "The name of the God of Jacob, defend thee—Grant thee thy heart's desire and fulfill all thy mind."—(Repeats.)

JASON SPLASH (coming in). Extras are out. Spinkwood is elected; and yet it is not so much he that it is elected as it is the principles. The Grand Old Party has so well built up the resources of the Government, when by it it has accomplished so much good; the people rallied about the polls and voted for the party. I don't believe they once thought of the man for whom they were casting their votes. The people could not sustain the other party. Its record is a blank, and what its orators have proposed, if elected, would put us back one hundred and fifty years; back to colonial times. It is strange these men like Atkins talk so well about the *good old* times. They want the people to return to the simple and honest ways of the past (so they say). These are their words. I don't believe one of them would want to go back to colonial times. The Grand Old Party that we now continue in power has built up this country, and made it what it is, a blessing to all—the poor as well as the rich. "There are more rich men to-day," cry these pessimists; they are reaping all the rewards, and the poor are being crushed. False! The very fact of the great number of rich and well

to do disputes their theory, and it is nothing but a theory—a miserable one at that. Then these circles of riches are the while getting larger and larger. We are parts of one stupendous whole. The parts proper, the whole proper, and the whole takes along with it the parts. See how many of the rich men of the country are founding libraries, giving their money to hospitals and churches.

BIJAH SLOW. If some of them would erect small houses for the poor it would be a great blessing.

NICHOLAS BOWLES. That will come in time. I believe that the spirit within them is willing, but it has not yet occurred to them. It will come. The spirit of the Knight Errant is developing.

SCENE: NICHOLAS BOWLES again in his room, singing and humming to himself; now defiant in tone.

He lay upon his dying bed,
His eyes were growing dim,
And with a feeble voice he called
His weeping son to him.
Weep not, my boy, the veteran said,
I bow to heaven's high will,
But quickly from yon antlers bring
The sword of Bunker Hill.

* * * * *

The son remains—
The sword remains,
It's glory growing still,
And twenty millions; yes, eighty millions!
Bless the sire
And sword of Bunker Hill.

When along the stormy ocean
Rush the winds in wild commotion,
And the heavy billows swell;
The cry that knows no slumber
Walks the waves and has their number;
He will guard his children well,
He will guard his children well.

SCENE: in the Club.

JUDY SMALL. Have you seen Bowles' circular, or little pamphlet, in drama form, on the Modern Knight Errant? He works it all out in dramatic form, and while he is not personal with Spinkwood, Atkins and the rest, he shows up their spirit to the world. He could not get it printed so has published it himself, with this note: "Published by the author because of his inability to otherwise reach the public." He tried a number of publishing houses, but his manuscript was returned, "not available." So, as with other papers, that have been thus refused, he has published this drama himself. These pamphlets and dramas will be in all of the great libraries of the country. What will the future think of our age? But Mr. Bowles

does not condemn the age or the people. He condemns these miserable modern barons, who at present rule. We optimists see the clouds breaking. The forces that we have referred to are working.

The good time's a coming,
'Tis almost here,
'Twas long, long on the way.
Wake me up, was his charge,
Wake me up at the great break of day,
Wake me up at the great jubilee.

Thus spoke Nicodemus. Nicodemus is getting his eyes open. His band is growing. Now, gentlemen, let's unite in singing that grand ode—

“When shall the nations all be free?”

Invite in the choir. Everybody sing.

ODE.

When Shall the Nations All be Free?

When shall the nations all be free
And Force no longer reign,
None bend to brutal Power the knee
None hug the gilded chain?
No longer rule the ancient wrong,
The weak be trampled by the strong?
How long, dear God in Heaven! how long?
The people wail in vain.

Do not the Archangels on their thrones
Turn piteous looks to thee,
When round them flock the prayers and groans
Of those that would be free?
Of those who know they have the right
To Freedom, though crushed down by might,
As all the world hath the light
And air which thou mad'st free.

The ancient Empires, staggering, drift
Along Time's mighty tide,
Whose waters, running broad and swift,
Eternity divide.

How many years shall pass before,
Over their bones, the sea shall roar,
The salt sands drift, the fresh rains pour,
The stars mock fallen Pride?

The issues are with God; to do,
Of right, belongs to us,
May we be ever just and true,
For nations flourish thus!
Justice is mightier than ships,
Right, than the cannon's brazen lips,
And Truth, averting dark eclipse,
Makes fortunes prosperous.

ISAAC P. NOYES.

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