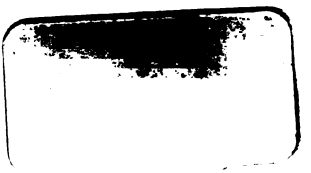

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF A NEW YORK HOTEL SCRUB

BY ADA BLOM.

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New York Hotel Scrub.

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ADA BLOM,
303 East 71st Street,
NEW YORK.

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CHAPTER I

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

I WAS born in Sweden, of Swedish parents. When I was fourteen years of age I ran away from home, on account of a too severe father, who was a learned man—self taught—a country school teacher, who, on a small salary, did his best to aid an ailing wife.

My father's thought was to have his two oldest children, my brother and myself, educated so as we could be of assistance to him in the future. My brother, who was much older than I, was sent to Gotenborg, while I remained at home under the tutelage of my parents.

Until that time I had been allowed all the freedom I wished—roamed as my fancy dictated among the wildly beautiful picturesque scenery that surrounded my father's little Hydda, and that I loved so well and never grew tired of. The long winter evenings were spent by the fireside near father and mother, playing with my rag dolls and watching father carving, of wood, all kinds of playthings for his little Ada to play with; yes, from a doll cradle up to the University in Uppsala, where he had great hope that my brother Axel would finish his studies. Or, if father's schoolhouse was too remote and he did not come home at night, I would then forget my playthings and sink down on my new little "pall," latest present of father—near mother and her spinning-wheel, continually watching that sweet, pale face and the expressions shifting upon it, and worshipping her when she, with a strange, sweet vibrating voice, sang sentimental and beautiful old folk melodies or verses out of Fritoff Saga,

Fritoff ock Underborg, or that Axelock Maria, Esias Skalldestycken—alas!

One evening my father took me on his knee and showed me a little book. "Here, my child," he said, "papa is going to teach you the contents in this little book, and I now hope that little Ada will be everything I hope her to be, and the pride of her father."

"Yes, papa," I said, and sprang upon his lap in high glee. It was the Lutheran catechism. He gave me one lesson from the book, the First Commandment—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

My mother, who thoroughly believed every word in the Old and New Testament, took care to explain to me in the meantime that our God or Lord had sent down this little book, and if I did not strictly obey all that was said in the same, I would, when dead, be damned—be sent to hell and there be burned, burned, burned for eternity.

"Amen," said my mother, then with a deep sigh of relief, she folded her hands in deepest reverence and sank down to pray—no doubt thinking she had spoken for my welfare. But I am afraid my mother's well-meant enlightening was too strong for my sensitive nature. Terror befell me when my father, a few days afterward, called out, with a book in hand: "Forsta Budet, Ada."

"We shall have no other gods than this extraordinarily cruel one?"

"Hwad ar det?"

"I don't see why we should, papa! Are the other gods as bad as this one, and if we——"

A penetrating look shot from my father's gray-blue eyes into my own and struck down into my heart and vibrated the whole bunch of my nerves. My little limbs shook as if I had received an electric shock which vibrated my wholy body—played havoc with my whole being for some time, then ended in my boots and there vibrated for a little while in one of my little toes which was peeping out a little.

Silently he handed me the book; then he wheeled over toward mother and her spinning-wheel and administered on her, I think, the same electric stroke.

A few more days passed and I heard with horror the words: "Audra Budet, Ada."

"We shall honor God's name, father."

"Hwad ar det?"

"That God is very particular. He wants us to be good and if we are not he simply burns us up. May I tell you the Third Commandment, papa? I like that better, and it says that we shall honor Sunday, the holy day, and I love to follow mother to Tanums Kyrka on Sunday and listen to the black-dressed man who stands up there and talks, and talks, and talks, and talks until all the people in the church sink down on the floor and groan, until that other man comes along with a long stick in his hand and push in among them for payment. Then we take our dinner by the sea—i Mouke kyrkan—and you tell mother about the Catholic priests who hid themselves there in dread of Martin Luther, and about Victor Hugo and Bulwer Lytton and all these wonderful men; and then when you start in to disagree about Eugene Aram and Walter Scott, and papa has one of Dickens' novels in his pocket, and you kissed and made up again, and papa starts in to read and mamma laughs and cries alternately; then I am so very happy because I am allowed to run down to the sea and to my heart's content watch the wonderful, majestic billows follow each other in quick succession right to where I am. When they see me run away they moan and groan like the people in the church. They would like to follow me but the hard, stony rocks prevent them, and out of anger they strike themselfs against the granite mountains, shattering themselfs to death, then vanish—and then you call me to pick wood for to boil the coffee, then, then—— When will brother Axel be to home from school, mamma?"

"Fierde Budet, Ada?"

"I shall honor the both of yours——"

"Hwad ar det?"

"To jump on your lap and kiss and hug you, papa."

"Not at all! Pay attention! Stand before me. You are to rehearse your lessons and answer me the way they are written, and obey me. If not—this rattan will teach you how to do it."

I could not, and I must say that one cruel blow from my father's rattan on my little finger settled it. I became hysterical, laid sick for some time, and my brother Axel

came home for his vacation, I found that I loved my big, tall handsome brother Axel very much and was near him when I could be. In the evenings when father rested after his long walk from the schoolhouse and daily school duties, we three, mother, brother and I, would take long rambles in the moonlit evenings in some romantic chasm. We would settle and sit and talk until late in the night. Brother played a musical instrument and had learned to sing, "Edite bedite collegeattus, Psalmetta seculla poculla nulla," then interrupting himself, he called out: "Ah, mother, if I only had THAT book so as I could learn the Greek language."

"Give Axel my book, mother," I consoled. "I cannot learn the Commandments." I had not seen the catechism lately, but I was afraid, afraid it was still in existence.

I was permitted to my brother's private study. There were books in plenty. I fingered them, of course, and wondered how he could learn so many big books when I could learn none. A small book interested me very much on account of the pictures therein. My mother's voice called me. I put the book in my pocket and ran off to answer her summons.

"Let the girl go to play with the other children," my brother called out when he saw me. "Children must play. She has plenty of time to learn yet, and if she don't learn she is better off. Go, Ada. I wish I had never seen a book—out and play, Ada! Oh, mother, if I only had that book. I cannot learn the Greek language."

I ran off to a little cave in a gloomy-looking rock nearby. There I sank down in a corner and started to find out all about that fascinating picture in the book which I took from my brother's room and put in my pocket. It was a male and female, both squeezed in each other's arms. "They are cold," I thought. They fascinated me strangely. They looked extremely sorrowful. It was Adam and Eve, driven from Paradise, an extraction.

I finished the book and ran to home. Horror! Had I been absent so long? *Tey,* there stood father in the kitchen door, but no fair necessary. My brother was there, also they were deep in discussion over the Bible and ancient languages. I crept between my brother's long

limbs and into the kitchen. Our supper was served and we went to the table. Mother mumbled the prayer and father and brother were still discussing the Greek.

I crept under the table, as was customary when father's eyes began to change color as they did now.

"You shall honor your father, the Book says, and I daren't interrupt, father, but—but brother, I don't know—Axel," I called out, "you are wrong about the Bible. Shall I correct you?" "Yes," he replied simply, and took me into his arms absentmindedly, and the small book I had read in the afternoon in the cave in the gloomy rock was rattled up in a hurry.

"God take mercy on our sorrowful bones," my father called out. "The brain is there. The girl has brains, and you, my son, shall teach her; I cannot."

Following morning I was with reverence sent to brother's study. He was sitting at the table. On the table laid the Lutheran Catechism—and the rattan. I saw a shadow at the window. "The Fourth Commandment!" I screamed in terror. "Axel, I cannot learn that book, and they will burn me in hell if I don't."

The rattan disappeared and soothingly Axel said:

"Would you do something for me, Ada, if I ask you?"

"Anything you ask," I said, and sat down at the table squinting.

"Well, then, will you tell me the first Commandment?"

"Certainly. You shall have only me, love and cherish me, otherwise I'll burn you up! On Sunday go to church and mamma says it won't take you long before you stand up there and preach yourself, Axel, because you learned the Catechism in no time. Then—yes, then comes the Fourth, we shall honor father and mother, Axel, but I hate papa. He struck me——"

Heaven and hell! There stood father in the open window. Had he heard me? Yes, and no mother or brother could help me. The rattan was used. My brother was not strong enough to break the door and fly for assistance. My mother fainted, and I am fainting myself when I think of it, well!

"Where is Axel, mamma?" I questioned when I opened my eyes, "and why am I lying in this room? Have I been sick?"

"Gone, Ada, gone, and no letters. Yes; you have been sick for a long time. Father was too quick for brother. Brother spitted in father's face and slowly walked out of the door, and never, never will he return. Yes, yes, yes, I say I know where he is. I shall send for him. Sleep child, you are still sick. Mamma will send to find him."

Years elapsed. I was now a girl of fourteen and had passed my confirmation, through father's assistance, I presume. The New Testament, the book of honor, was also presented to me, and there I stood reading a letter from brother. We had received letters lately—mother had, but father should not know. Money he wanted—money from mother to buy books for.

"I have," he said in his last letter. "I have at last found out where I can get that book. It is to be sold on an auction, no one knows its great value. Oh, mother, try to send me some money."

We starved ourselves and scraped together and sent him some, but never received any satisfactory replies. Emile Zola and Nana was mingled with money and books. The Greek language was not mentioned. Still, mother had hopes and so had I.

"I'll go out in the evening and sell candy to the farmers when they come to town for their fish and Brandwin," I said to mother.

We lived now in a fisher village and father came to home on Saturdays only and seldom spoke to any one. "Father won't know and Axel must have money to buy books for." I did and made out very nicely the first week, but the second I was, strange enough, two kroner behind in my accounts, and the baker lady, who thought, of course, that I had eaten the stuff, threatened to report to father if I did not make good immediately. Report to father! I thought, "anything but that." It was Saturday night, and father was expected to home at any minute. A sudden thought struck me. I ran to Mr. Lundid, a prosperous tailor, opposite our house, and borrowed the two kroner on my father's name, hoping of course by gaining time I could repay it before he would find out.

The lady was paid. I was promised that business could continue, and there I stood before the window in our front

room seeing father approaching, but to my horror I also saw Mr. Lundid, the tailor, coming out of his house. They both met, stopped and shook hands, talked for some minutes, then my father gave a start, and his cane fell from his hand. He stooped to pick it up. He cast a quick glance over to our window and saw me standing there watching them.

"Escape him!" I thought, "before he flays you." I fled through the rooms, not heeding my mother's call. I cut over the flower-beds in the back garden, rushed through some gooseberry bushes, not feeling the thorns, over a rocky height, on through a narrow winding lane, crept under a warehouse and came to a boat landing. I loosened one of the many rowboats, laid out the oars and rowed with all my might until I fell to the bottom of the boat in a collapse. After some time I came to myself and found my boat and myself floating among "Skaren," I, a runaway, a criminal, hungry, homeless, hatless, and extremely thirsty. What next? I thought, and fell asleep on the bottom of my boat.

When awakened, which was early the following morning, I rowed hence and landed at one of the many fishing huts. I asked for a drink of water, begged a piece of bread and borrowed a "duk" to tie over my head, and so I went on until I came to Lysekil, a pretty bathing resort. There I landed and left the boat and sneaked through the village and hid in a rock, and there, in another beautiful, picturesque chasm I sat and meditated how I could hide myself on the steamer which I knew landed there and would, if I succeeded, take me to Gotenborg, to my brother Axel and his books.

Looking before me I saw a farmer wagon arriving. "Will I?" I thought; "yes, I think I will." The farmer had to pass near where I was sitting. "High there!" I called out. "Erterna dryfer ur seckens!" The farmer looked over to me, then he stopped and climbed off and saw right enough his green peas dripping out of his sack. There was a hole in the sack.

I took a hair pin from my hair and approached. "Far jag lofa att hora mig till brygan sa skall jag selpa Hern?" I asked, and, awaiting his reply, I with the hairpin

wrung together the hole in the sack and got the farmer in a contented mood.

"Tack skall jungfrau ha and sik war so good."

I climbed onto the wagon and we rattled down to the boat landing and, as I was taken for the farmer's daughter, no one paid attention to me, and I flim-flammed myself on the steamer and hid among the crop, and the steamer, the crop, myself and lots of other things landed some time afterward all right enough at Gotenborg. Stiff, sore and hungry, I stood before my brother Axel's given address and, with a pounding heart, I rang the doorbell.

"Fluftat sin wag," some one said, opened the door and slammed it to again. I was fast growing bold now. I rang the bell again, the door was re-opened and I clung to the knob. "When, why and where to? I am his sister and coming from a distance. I must see him. I am hungry and tired and a strange——"

"Flyttat, flyttat, flyttat, flyttat."

"What next?" thought I. At the Elementary Leroverk, where my brother was supposed to study, I was informed that he had discontinued his studies a long time ago and none of the students knew his whereabouts. There I stood, and I tell you the good, honest truth I was crying now.

"What are you crying about?" A policeman accosted me.

"For nothing at all," I said, and thinking of father and his rattan, I instinctively walked hence and holding the "duk" before my face as if I had a severe toothache, I slowly tramped ahead and let the tears flow to my heart's content.

By resting now and then and picking a piece of cold potato or bread from the garbage I was now away out of town and had arrived at some bushwood. "Ah-h—here will be my grave," I thought, "and God take mercy on my sorrowful bones," as my father used to say when he was happy. Here shall my sorrowful bones mould away, and I vanished among the scrubwood, sank down and said my prayers.

"God morgen, jungfrau, lilla har junfren savet got?"

I looked before me where the voice came from—the head of a human being, or what is it?

"Good morning," I hurriedly answered to a head of a human being sticking up among the bushwood. Then I mumbled my morning prayer, watching keenly the withered head, including body, slowly creeping out of the bushes and slowly advancing toward me.

A stick was on his shoulder, and after watching me a few moments, he removed the stick with the bundle, placed it on the ground before me, then he took from his pocket a large clasp-knife, opened it, and there he stood watching me in deep meditation. He drew the finger over the knife. "Mother!" I screamed. "God take mercy on my sorrowful bones!" I think he said:

"I won't harm you. I am only a poor wanderer like yourself. With this knife I'll cut some wood and we'll have some coffee. In the bundle is coffee, bread, cheese and curbock kakar, stackens lilla flicka. Don't cry. Look up there. There up there is my Hildegarde—Hildegarde! After Hildegarde left me I cared no more, and I am happy with my life."

We spent the morning in eating and talking and trying to console each other. "There lies a steamer with Skippbron," he said. "On that steamer is an agent who hires help for the farmers in Germany. Go and inquire there, and if you are not accepted come back here and Jag skall tiggrarbrod for er, until you find a position."

I saw the agent, was accepted and after some time we arrived at Lyberk in Germany. A moving wagon was awaiting us. We drove through the city and arrived at a cottage where there was a lot of farmers waiting for us. One of them wanted poor me. I could not learn the Catechism, but I had learned to speak German and my employer explained to me that I was by him hired for one year, and was to receive as wages for my work one homespun woollen skirt, and ditto vest, a pair of leather shoes, and a pair of wooden ones, the wool for two pairs of stockings, linen yarn to weave myself two shifts of linen and fifteen kronen in cash.

"Bully for you," I said, and climbed, with the farmer's assistance, on the wagon and we went off at high speed. But some one yelled behind us to stop and return to the cottage, as we had forgotten something that was absolutely necessary that we should not forget, and the farmer

returned with me and his wagon. A tall, gaunt female stood in the front entrance of the cottage. She winked us inside into the house and out into a large kitchen, where there was a table set, and good-smelling food tempted my nostrils. "Ah," I thought, "I wish I could sit down and——"

"The dian has kin eden pad, sitt ye man dall min lotje dian and aid man tow."

"Plattdeutch, wahrcheinlich unt sa mint mich. Danke! Fes tens, zehr gearte da me," I said, and caught a hold of the large snow-white wooden spoon swung over the bench, and started in to fill up from the plain but well-tasting food.

The farmer paid little attention to the table. He, the agent and the tall, gaunt female were arguing in Platt-deutch about me. The agent seemingly wanted to keep me where I was, as an assistant to the tall, gaunt female, who was his wife, but she objected. I was too plump for my age, I think she said, and my eyes were too large and changed color, and that she said was a very bad sign. I was satisfied when my farmer haled me from the table and out to his wagon, and again we set off and arrived late at night at a castle-looking building. We drove to the back entrance. We climbed off the wagon. The farmer rattled on a door with great vigor and called out, "Trinea, Trinea!" a few times and then went off and let me stand in the dark watching the large trees surrounding the castle, which bowed and bowed to poor me as if I had been a very great personality.

Some one opened a door and fumbled for me in the dark. I got hold of a woman's skirt, and the owner of that skirt was Trinea. We both entered a dark hall and into a room where there was a small light lit. In the room were two beds, two young girls fast asleep in one of the beds and Trinea and myself took possession of the other and we started in to converse. I could not very well understand her language and she not mine, but I understood at last that I was in Schloss Kaltenhoff, by Dassow Mecklenburg-Swerin, and that I was expected to rise at four in the morning and milk cows.

I was not successful in milking cows. They did not like my handling them, and looked at me, hit me with

their dirty *swanges* continually, and after a couple of weeks of torture in the line of milking cows, I, with great diplomacy, received a little money in advance and set out for Dessau, and there I bought a fourth-class ticket back to Lyback. Arrived in Lyback, I went into a bakery and inquired for a position. "Down stairs," the baker lady said. I went down and was accepted there, and then as a vendor in vegetables. After a week, I again received a little money, as I had to look tidy in the store. I needed a couple of aprons. I set out to buy the aprons, but instead of the aprons I bought a fourth-class ticket to Hamburg, and there I stood on the Jungfrau Stig and looked down deep in the Allster—a few tears fell into the deep water. "How is mamma?" I thought.

Hamburg is Hamburg, like New York is New York. Not long and I saw an intelligence office. I entered. "Yes," the young girl said. "There is a position open by a hair-dresser." I received the address of the hair-dressing establishment, and went there, and saw the proprietress of the place. "Yes; I make full switches from the combed off hair for the servant girls and others," she said. "Will you accept the position?"

"Yes," I said, and stayed there three months.

One evening I was sitting alone and combing hair; for pastime I was singing, trying to imitate mother's voice, which was easy to do, because I was also crying to beat the band. Some one spoke in the other room. I stopped and listened. After some time I heard some one saying:

"Das maischen singt wunderbar. Un St. Pauly konte see schones deld fordinen. Nicht wahr du?" "Yes," the other voice said. My heart jumped and I jumped, as the boss of the place arrived. It was her two brothers who had spoken. I yelled and sang by every opportunity after that until it became unendurable for the proprietress, who upbraided me.

"Please hand what I have earned," I said. "I will not stay where I cannot sing."

She did and I packed my trunk—no, I didn't. I wrapped my second shift in a newspaper, placed it under my arm and said good-by with a high "Hawl L. lulua," and there I stood on the street in front of a baker shop and candy store. "I think I will invest the little money I

earned at the hair-dressing establishment in the cake and candy business," I thought, when a voice behind me said: "God aton, Froken lilla; skall dat wara en copp caffee derrime kenhenda?"

A long, tall Swedish-looking sailor man stood beside me. "Tackar so mockett," I said with a graceful bow. We went in and sat down at one of the tables and coffee was brought us. "Mitt namm ar Peterson," the sailor introduced himself. "I went ashore for some amusement this evening. Would you like to come with me to St. Pauly?"

"'God take mercy on my sorrowful bones,' my father used to say when he was happy. St. Pauly! Most decidedly, sir," I said and jumped up with a jerk. The sailor settled for the immense coffee and cake I had consumed. We went out and boarded the car which passed and drove to St. Pauly.

St. Pauly is a place of amusement. We went into a concert garden and sat down. A young girl came to wait on us. "Carnegie porter," the sailor said. The girl brought it and sat down beside us ready for our second order. One bottle settled my modesty, and I and my sailor friend joined in the chorus. The people applauded. They were men only, and an elderly, nice-looking lady came over to us and sat down and introduced herself as "Old Mother Groan," the proprietress of the place, asking me if I belonged to the profession, and I guessed what she meant. I said: "Yes, zehr hockgeahrte frau."

Where had I appeared?

At Stockholm Royalty Theater, Walhalla in Berlin, Student Society at Heidelberg, Weisbaden, Baden-baden, Bonn, Bingen, Coblentz and Cologne on the Rhine, wonchen se feligh, the Lorely sa haren meine dame?

"Yes, to-morrow night." She squited at my newspaper bundle in my lap. Then she said: "Will you sing here in my place, $20 a month and board? I need another singer immediately. You can come up to the room right now. Will you accept?"

Again I stood up with a jerk, and forgetting my sailor friend, who had helped me to all this good luck, I followed the lady upstairs.

A month soon passed hence, and very pleasant indeed,

after my sad experience at home. It was pay day. I received my first month's salary; that is, a written account of my stage finery and, there, what was that? Yes, cash money also. I grasped the cash and ran off to the post-office, my heart beating with wild joy when I scribbled the words:

"DARLING FATHER: Inclosing you will find the amount of money I borrowed on your name. Good-by, most beloved father and friend. Ada is dead, and you, father, has killed your child."

CHAPTER II

AMSTERDAM

REVENGE is sweet indeed. I felt almost happy. "Ah," I thought, "his rattan cannot reach me here, which it would if he knew that I was not dead at all. Why, I would not dream of dying now, now when I have become a great singer. Yes, I am now way up in life. Just think, if father could see me sitting on that stage, where I now sit every night—if he could see all this. Well-dressed men with funeral hats on their heads coming into the place every night. How gracefully they raise that black silk hat toward me and the other ladies before they take a seat! My! and then the bottles come—champagne, mind you, father. I wonder if father ever tasted champagne. No, no, he didn't. And then the basket of fruit comes along. Ah, what lovely oranges and figs and nuts and candy—and—the flower man comes in and, mind you father, he stands right in front of me, with one eye on me and the other on the gentlemen, and how the little bouquets fly up in my lap! The lady, Mother Groane, is going to have programmes printed and distribute them through St. Pauly and pack the place, she says. I will send one of them programmes to my father—no—ain't I dead? That wouldn't do, to come to life again so quickly as all that—let papa bleed for a while. I remember that rattan. It hurts me yet!

The gentleman who stated in the slip of paper which

was tucked among the roses in that bouquet he throwed to me, with many kisses, that he wished to make me his own for life. Oh, if I could only show papa that little billet! How sorrowfully he would ask my forgiveness, having a daughter who can marry a man who wears a silk hat and can pay two dollars for a bottle of champagne. Of course, if I marry this gentleman who has fallen in love with me and wishes to make me "his own for life," I will become rich and I can travel, travel all over the beautiful world and see, myself, all the wonderful things I have read about, but we will go to Sweden first. I want to make good for the boat I borrowed, and the "duk" I lent from the poor woman in the fisher hovel and the piece of bread she gave me. Ah, I'll pay her good, good! She shall live in a castle. I'll build her a castle instead of a hovel. A little island will I select where this magnificent castle shall stand and where it can be seen from far distant. Then, when my husband and I return from our long travels we'll land there at that rock in a little fisher-boat—fisher-boat? I'll notify the people whose boat I was compelled to borrow that I wish to buy that boat, immediately, and I am going to pay for it. In that boat my husband shall row me to our castle, in that boat I shall land and welcome that poor, old, crippled fisher woman who gave poor unhappy Ada her last crust of bread. What name shall I have put on that castle? Ah, I'll call it after mamma, mamma. God to heavenly God and father, have mercy on my exceedingly sorrowful bones, as father used to say when he was very happy. How, oh, how could I have forgotten mother? Oh, mamma; yes, father was right. I am wicked, wicked. I forgot mother because I have become rich and powerful. How can I atone? I have no money and Axel wants money from mother to buy books for. I cannot ask the gentleman for money before I have become his wife. I'll tell him to hurry up, though. There are so many things to attend to and it all takes money. I'll hurry to home and get paper and ink from Mother Groane, and then I'll sit down and write a long letter to mother and tell her all about it, and then? Yes, then I'll have some crying for a long time, because I am so very, very, very happy.

Following evening I was again sitting in the middle of

the stage, the place of honor. My white tulle dress, covered with flounces, and the trail of the dress reaching near the foot lights—no, there were no footlights, but should have been; my beautiful blonde hair covered my neck and shoulders. One shoulder peeped out a little, because the stagemanager, which was Old Mother Groane herself, said it was exceedingly pretty. A string of large imitation pearls rested on my bosom and arms. A large fan manufactured from pink satin and chicken feathers, I hold in both hands, and squinting over to the other ladies, I tried to imitate their graceful movements with fan, head arms and eyes, and just think of it, the very first man who entered the place was the gentleman with the funeral hat, and gloves in his hand. He bowed and he sat down before me and whispered to the waiter girl that the performance could begin in the line of a three-dollar bottle, and the piano player, who looked at his watch, tinkled his bell, after hastily swallowing a glass from the three-dollar bottle, played the introduction of my sweetest Swedish folk song, and poor me stood in front of my affinity and warbled to him every bit of happiness and joy which was to bless him after I had become his wife. The man with the funeral hat winked at the waitress, and there she stood before me and placed another three-dollar bottle. Pop said the cork and then Mother Groane's youngest daughter appeared on the scene for the first time and handed me, with the sweetest of smiles and winks, an immense bouquet of the reddest of roses. I approached to the front of the stage and swinging my beflounced train, hitting over the glasses, I blushingly received the bouquet from her hand, and sitting down and smelling the beautiful flowers, saw a letter tucked in amid the roses—and thorns.

Blushingly I left the stage to read my first love letter. My future husband belonged to a large firm in Amsterdam, Holland. He belonged to a diamond concern there and had for me in readiness a diamond without surpass, which would be mine and would be placed on one of my little fingers if I would promise that I would be his own—yes, his highest desire in this world was to make me his own for life. He was the possessor of immense wealth, and since he had seen me, and heard my wonderful "Hawk

Lula," by Mother Cran, had no other desire than to make me his own for life—yes, forever and ever, amen.

"I am without near relations, but of course we have to appear in society, and searching for trouble they may try to find flaws in your education, pardon me, my little sweet darling. The society I belong to is strict, so I think it is necessary that you should first appear on the stage in Amsterdam, and there you will, with your beautiful singing, prove to my friends who will hear and see you on the stage that you are worthy enough for any man, with or without education.

"Again pardon me that I took French leave—most pressing business awaits me in Holland, which I can neglect no longer, and feeling too tempted to take you with me at once, which couldn't be done, he, with many kisses, bade me good-by. Enclosing you will find a card from a good theatrical agent in Hamburg. Go immediately to see this gentleman. He will attend to matters. Don't show this letter to any one, as they would use means to prevent you to leave Mother Cron—you know the reason why."

I cannot describe the feeling I experienced after reading this letter. Intense joy overwhelmed me, mingled with a strange, cloudy foreboding as if there was an abyss before me which I dreaded to fall into, but the glittering diamond and the wonderful things I could do with this great fortune which belonged to my future husband and which would also be mine if I married him, fascinated me—yes, I thought "I will marry him." I said to myself, "Can he not at once relieve all this misery which surrounded them at home? Poor father, how tired he is walking miles and miles, and climbing rocks and hills and springing over clefts and rifts, always in great danger of falling into the stream. And, in the winter, winter? How cold and frozen he is when he, after several hours' struggle with the elements, knee deep in the snow, and not sure if he steps on solid ground or no, arrives at the schoolhouse and has to sit all day long and plague himself to slam knowledge into those little dense heads, who cannot have very much brain on the food they get from their poverty-stricken parents—and mother, and brother and all. Yes, I'll marry him. But the "Oleke," what will she

say to this? She certainly will not like it. That can't be helped, though, I thought to myself, and instead of going back to the stage I went up to my room and laid down, saying I had a headache.

The agent which my future husband recommended was an intellectual man. After a short conversation I signed a contract. Three hundred gulden, the contract said, "resgeld unt forshuss" to bind the contract. I was to arrive at my earliest convenience to appear at the Alhambra theater, Amsterdam, Holland. I set off at high speed to tell Mrs. Crome about all this. I think she was weeping and bemoaning her bad luck. "Who would have thought that of that slip of a girl with that newspaper in her lap?" I heard her say to some one when I entered. "Had I known that stove-pipe hat fellow was after her I would have had my best girl after him and we would have got every cent out of his pocket."

"Don't weep, Mother Olache, darling," I said, with a pat on her cheek. "I'll do something for you in return for your assistance to all this wonderful luck which has befallen me so suddenly. I'll start in right away to learn the Holland language, and when I can sing in Hollandish I'll return to you and sing and draw every Hollander in St. Pauly, Hamburg and surrounding places into your place, and I'll do all the treating myself—at least I'll be the starter. Then you'll take in so much money that you won't be in need to sell any more three dollar bottles and be afraid of your persons being taken away. That big trunk up there in the hall, mother, will you sell me that, and how much? It is only in the way, you know, going up and down the stairs, and——"

"If I knew you were sure to come back I would give it to you for nothing as a memory from me."

"Yulely, Olache," I Hawl L. lulaoed, and ran up stairs to pack my large theatrical trunk.

On the bottom of the trunk came first a heap of old books I had picked together. They I intended to send to my brother as soon as I knew where he was. Then came my runaway attire I had on when I was cruising among the Swedish Sharen as a fugitive. The "duk" I swiped—no, I borrowed it—was well taken care of in a pretty little fig box by itself. Then came my pretty stage attire, and

my trunk was ready, and was sent to the depot, and I myself was soon ready to start on my journey, and I said good-by to the bunch, including the Olache, gave her another pat on the cheek and followed my large, promising-looking theatrical trunk, and we both arrived without incident or accident at Alhambra Theater in Amsterdam.

"Gotfordomme!" I was greeted. "You letteks swerlap, be ye gekkomme! Ye leife leckertje? How are ye, younge janfrau? Shall ye have a litterje? Or do ye take absinthe? And will ye have a butter-ametje when ye wait for the dinner?"

"The notes? Never mind younge jufrau, I play better by ear," the leader of the orchestra said, and after a little rehearsal with the orchestra I was called inside to the dining room and sat down among the many other performers and enjoyed a good, hearty Holland dinner. Then I rested until six o'clock, and started in to prepare to fulfill my engagement, and there I stood, ready to appear when my turn came in the well-mirrored and well-illuminated dressing room, squinting at the other ladies dressing, trying to monkey after their movements, goo-goo-eyeing and graceful swinging of their large trains, by those who wore train dresses. Most of the performers wore tights.

A most beautiful, heavenly strain of music came before my eyes. Before me sat mother, with her spinning wheel and a little girl with a rag doll was playing near her on the bare, snow-white, scoured floor. A tall, handsome man was sitting in a chair under the "tran lamp" reading "Pip," or was it Oliver Twist, as mother was laughing and weeping alternately.

Forgetting where I was, I set out in hysterical weeping myself. The director came into the dressing room to see what was the matter that I did not appear when my overture was played.

"I am homesick, sir," I said, answering his questioning look, "I am homesick, and would prepare to return to home at once."

"Bage bedondert! Jaunge janfrau! Beje rgech gewore? 'Ye want to go home to mother.' Hey, there, announce on the stage there that the new singer is so—Gotferdamme rehech gewore and put on the *Aecrabales!*

What has befallen you, younge yungfrau? The audience is waiting for you. The flower has arrived. The table is set in the large hall. Your friend with the stove-pipe hat sits in front of the stage. The audience is hissing as if they would Gottferdamme break down the house, and you are sitting here and weep as if your heart would break. What has befallen you, Jounge Jungfrau?"

I felt myself standing on the stage now; how I had come there I don't know, but I stood there in the middle of the stage.

All sorts of variations was played, from the sweetest Swedish folk melody down to the latest Holland rag-time, then it went into Madame Angot for to get some chorus going to gain time.

The leader of the orchestra swinged his baton to give the chorus a good start. That reminded me of father and his rattan, and I hastily started into a rabble of some-sort in a singing voice.

"We got her!" mumbled the experienced leader. "Lay for her. Get it going!" and slowly and soothingly they variated on their instruments, watching the expression on my face, no doubt to see how they could angle me, and they had it!

Ach wermeland du sjona du Trerliga land.
Du trona bland shea ricke strender.

I was now singing between Heaven and earth; singing and singing, for God knows how long, and had appeared and disappeared from the stage several times, when some one from the audience called out, "Hawl L. lulua! Echoes from the Swedish mountains we want. Leader, echoes from the Swedish mountains."

"Come, save something for another day, sweety; the rest of the evening you belong to me, you little grasshop. How I am going to hug, hug you! Give me a kiss! No? Why not, may I ask? Well, come on, the supper is waiting us.

"And you should like to travel? Well, I think we could take a little pleasure trip somewhere; to Cologne on the Rhine, for instance; a trip down the Rhine, and see the Lorely. How about that, darling? No? Not

proper? Proper enough. I shall the very first thing in the morning write to your father, and by him ask for this lovely little hand which I now hold in mine. The answer of the letter shall be sent to Cologne, and while waiting for the letter why should we not amuse ourselves, darling? Your father is sure to give his consent, so there is nothing to dread whatsoever. Say yes, my little darling; say yes. I cannot marry you before I get your father's consent; it would sure get me into trouble. You are all right in my hands, surely. I shall be like a father to you on the journey. No harm will befall you whatsoever. You are going to be mine for ever and ever, and I'll see that you don't slip out of my fingers. Oh, no! I'll hold you fast, well enough—everything will be in readiness, and as soon as the letter arrives we will be married, and Cologne is just the right place for such matters. Your wardrobe has to be looked after—that will take some time—do not hesitate, honeysuckle. Will you be mine or not? Yes or no? Yes; all right, sweety; kiss me. No? Well, then, later on; waiter, another bottle. Keep the glasses filled; don't stare on my little sweety, here—you are too young, boy. Where is the proprietor of the place? Tell him I want to see him—we have a nut to crack together, but I'll best him. Young ladies, have an eye on my little fairy, here, so as she don't fly away—I'll be back directly."

"What is the name of the author who describes the Rhine and the Lorely so beautifully, sir?"

"The Lorely? Oh, there are many. First we'll have breakfast, then the wardrobe, then the Droshenfelsen—no the Thiergarten, we'll visit first—no, we'll see to the clothes first; you look too shabby. I think this is a fine place for breakfast, and a very good one we will have. My, my! How can I act so silly? After you are dressed up a little we'll go to the Colner Doom; there you'll hear music, I can assure you.

"Draskenfellsen, Hoenfellsen, Bonn, Coblenz and Bingen—the Dutchmen call it a slip of the Paradise. It is fine here. We'll be happy, darling! How I love you. Here, my sweetheart, here on this slip of Paradise on earth that I shall make you my own or die for it. Yes, with hask or crod, or good words and money I shall make

you mine. Yes, in this slip of Paradise on earth you shall submit to my wishes."

"What is that, sir?"

"What is that, sir? I'll show you what it is—just wait a while. Heaven, those eyes of yours, they'll drive me mad. Ah, I better tell you, I think. You like unusual things of all description, you say. Well, I thought I'll compose a pretty poem as one of your wedding presents—won't go through; I'm no shiner, neither can I get the matter into my head, so I decided on prose. Prose is easier, and of course I want to make a hit with that book and I mumble and think, study and mumble and mumble and swear, but nothing doing. High and low and up and down my thoughts wander for to get the thing together. My orthography I thought—but no, later on you'll get that, and I'll let you write it for me. I have, of course, met with some bad people in my life, and often I think about those things, and the book is for you as a wedding present. Now—well, it's hard to write books and I want to be nice, you see. It is sentences from the books which I am repeating to myself—pay no attention, little one; we'll be happy yet. After dinner we'll enjoy the beauty surrounding this fasmerken. Do you sing the Lorely? Yes; well, well, we'll have some dinner first, then comes the Lorely.

"Why are you so restless, child? You weep—why? You feel unhappy with me? Am I rude? Well, I will not be so any more. I think that we better return to Cologne. Your father's letter may have arrived there now. It is my highest desire on earth to take your little body and eat it up, but you are a hard nut to crack."

"What is that, sir?"

"That goes in the book, of course. Now, dry your tears and sing 'The Wacht Am Rhine.'"

It is exceedingly unpleasant and not necessary that I should write about what happened in the hotel. Fourteen days had passed hence under excuse that we were both waiting for the letter from home. I am alone—why don't he return? Where is he? It is now two days since I have seen him. "Where can he be?" I moaned. Horror for my future overwhelmed me. I must inquire about him, I thought, and rang the bell, which was answered

directly by one of the attendants, who handed me a letter. I tore open the letter. It was from him.

"MY OWN DARLING, MY GRASSHOP, MY HONEYDEW:

"I had to return to Amsterdam at once. I had not the courage to tell you. I regret that you must either wait at the hotel or travel back to Amsterdam alone. It was an urgent business matter, which could stand no delay, which tore me from your side in such a hurry. I left money by the manager for immediate expense. Get it from him. In my imagination I squeeze you in my arms and take a bite of your beautiful shoulder, which you showed me for the first time by 'Olche' in Hamburg—I wish you hadn't done it—I'm mad with love of you, my little cabbage head, and I'll kiss you half dead when I again meet you in Amsterdam, darling.

"Your HOUNTZ."

Do what you have to do before you do what you want to do, and as I can't do what I want to do I better do what I have to do, I read some place—so I did what I had to do. I returned alone to Amsterdam. In my lodgings was a letter for me.

"Come to Weisbaden, beloved. I wait you there with open arms. I'll meet you in the evening in the Cairgarden. They have wonderful Wiener schnitzel in the restaurant, and see to it that you are hungry. The music here is wonderful, of course, and you'll like it better than any place we have visited yet. Don't let me die of disappointment, and cut out all scruples and come at once or I'll be after you.

"P.S.—I forgot to state that I had forgotten to post the letter which I wrote to your father. I found it on my writing table when I arrived at my residence in Amsterdam. I wrote another and posted it at once. The answer will arrive here—come."

"It's something radically wrong in all this, and I better go to Weisbaden and find out at once," I thought and set out for Weisbaden.

I arrived in Weisbaden very early in the morning. It

was too early to call on my intended husband, so I went to the "Brunnen."

A tall, giant female stood near the Brunnen and drank tepid water, like I did myself. Was it intuition or what was it? I kept my eyes on the lady, but walked away so as she shouldn't observe me, but still I watched her from a distance. Ah, who was that? I started. It was he, but how changed. He walked with a stoop and his hair and moustache, which were jet black, had turned into the pepper and salt cellar. He approached the tall female person near the Brunnen and raised his hat to her and gave her his arm and they walked off towards the park. I followed behind them. They arrived to a seat and sat down, and I sneaked in among the trees and sat down in the grass behind them and stretched both my ears towards them so as I could hear what they said.

"It was big money in the tobacco business," said my fiance to the female. "It was I who struck on the idea to send Frettzer to tobacco to Havana and there have the tobacco into genuine Havana cigars and from Havana import them to Germany as genuine Havana cigars. The boxes was fine labelled with 'Obscuro and Maduro,' and the trick was very paying, but there is so many in that business now and there is not much money in it."

As I had gathered that the female person was no other than my future husband's wife, I slowly sneaked away from my hiding place and made my way to the place where I had left my baggage.

"That, indeed, beats my father's rattan," I thought, and I wished I had stayed at home and let him kill me with it —"ticket to Amsterdam, sir."

CHAPTER III

THE WOMAN WITH A PAST

WHAT cannot be cured must be endured, say the Germans—no, the Americans. I returned to Amsterdam with a Gotferdam in my mind, and saw the director of the Alhambra Theater and was of course gladly accepted

and started again to Howl L lulua in a most pitiful manner.

I soon commenced to realize that some of the singers in the place had a "past," and as a past is necessary to a woman if she wants to be a great singer, I commenced to console myself, but did not love the fellow—what a pity I didn't. It was his money and diamonds I was after, I am afraid. The castle in the beautiful, wild, picturesque Sweden Skaren will not be erected at present. Well, I can't help it. They have to wait. As a pastime I started into smoking cigarettes to stop me from crying, and found it a pleasant salve in my sorrow, and there I was sitting alone in my room in my leisure hours and moaned and groaned and puffed and puffed away until I fell on the floor in a dead faint.

The "stove-pipe hat man" annoyed me. He was always in the theater, and on the rehearsals, trying to speak to me, and laid for me when I went and came from the theater and tried to bribe my landlady to give him an opportunity to let him trick himself into my room, and for to escape his annoyance I escaped to Hamburg on the Elbe, but as under the circumstances I could not fill my promise to appear at Mother Crone's and fill her place with Hollanders, I passed up to Altona, and there hired a small furnished room by a female physician.

What happened after then cannot be described. I will only say that married men who do these things continually should be punished in that way this man—what is his name?—was punished. No, don't shoot a man like that. Have a ring builded in an obscure corner in the *thauran,* put this man into the ring after his commitment and then set the street urchins after him and let them deal with him at their pleasure.

How foolish, how very foolish, was that noble-blooded gentleman—what's his name—shooting a polluted, diabolical creature to death there and then, and for that—yes, for doing that—was committed to an insane asylum. But reading between the lines it may have been that for shooting this object that the man—what's his name—sent him there as a punishment for such an error. But that lovely angel wife of his, though? Yes, ye are all cruelly mis-

taken. In spite of you women she is doing well. How do you like it, lady?

Money, money, money! Always in need of money. I have heard it from earliest childhood, and I hear it to-day —money, money, money; I am in need of money. How will I get it? And so was I myself thinking how will I make some money now?

Sing? Why not? Go and howl out your sorrow on the street, or in one of the many obscure concert halls; you are good enough for that yet. And so one day I took courage, as I had to, drove from Altona and down deep in the mire of Hamburg, and there in a small concern in that line I found an engagement, and there in that place I could howl for fair, and started in to scrape and save, together by singing and selling a three-dollar bottle and flim-flam myself to change of many fellows who came into these places *deekink affembis.*

My room rent comes first, I thought, as there was three in the room. Then came mother. I'll do the best I can when I write to her. I must tell her some story to calm her down. I will receive news from home, at least, and she is likely to be glad that I am alive and doing——

"Your father is dead, Ada. He died of grief, realizing that his hope was shattered—that there was no hope for atonement, that he had lost his two oldest children by cruelty. Father was smart, Ada. I had been telling him about how I had received letters from Axel clandestinely, and he laid for the letters from you and he got them and read them well, looking for trouble between the lines of your letters."

Those news knocked me out for a while and I stopped singing, but when there came a letter from my little sister stating that mother was suffering from cancer, but could be cured by a smart man who practised without a diploma, but had to be paid well for his visits attending to mother's illness.

"Now, I need money," I thought, and went with the little I had on a fourth-class ticket to Weisbaden to see a man who could be known by his pepper and salt mustache and his stove-pipe hat, and met with him, but I wasn't in it any more.

"In Amsterdam I strived so hard; oh, so hard, to do all

I could to atone for the misery I put you in, but you cruelly ran away and left me in the lurch, and now you come back here and beg money from me for doctor's bills for your mother's fake attendance. Cancer cannot be cured, anyhow. You will get no money out of me. I haven't got any. You can do nothing to me. I am a married man."

After that I went to Rotterdam with another Godferdamme in my heart, and after some time I received an engagement in another Alhambra Theater in Harte Hochstraat of that name. As I wasn't any more what I had been, the salary was very small, and I studied and thought and studied and thought what I could do to earn good money, until inspiration whispered in my ear, or brain: "America, the land of gold. Ada, go there." I did, and I jumped from Weisbaden, Germany, and landed in America.

Fate juggled me here and there, up and down, for some time in New York City, until fate got me where it wanted to have me, at No. 27 Bowery, America, the land of fakirs and fakism.

One dollar of every five dollar bottle of champagne and five cents commission on every small drink, I was told, and I of course started in to howl and drink and cry there and then, and by all that brought in money. "Mother," I sighed every night on going to bed, "you will be cured from your illness. You'll have all the money from me you want. Mother, I was born to make money, and now I have found the right place and a dollar on every bottle! America, the land of gold!"

Man has been the bane of my life. Two brown eyes mesmerized me—mesmerized the people in the place—mesmerized the proprietor of the place and went outside and mesmerized the Swedish sailors to come in and listen to their countrywoman singer—mesmerized them to call for wine—mesmerized them to pay for it—mesmerized them if they squealed afterward—mesmerized the cop when he came in to huck him, and in the end mesmerized me to marry him.

"DEAR SISTER:

"Mamma is dead. She died from an operation per-

formed on her in Udewalla Hospital, and lies buried there. Seek solitude and weep, Ada, it relieves the pain.

"Your sister,

"ZELA."

Solitude and weep—on the Bowery!

What God has joined together no death can put asunder. Why, oh, why did I marry? And no money. My poor, poor little sister! How must she feel? Mother is dead, mother is dead, mother is dead—my poor little sister and no money!

"You shall have all the money you want. I'll make it for you. There isn't a ——— in the place who can make money like I. Here is a five note; give it to the first holy Sister who comes into the place and let her have prayer in the church said for your mother. Mother, mother, mother! When my mother died over in Ireland I couldn't stand it any longer, and I ran away from home. Here, drink this down. That'll knock you out for some time. There isn't a ——— of a woman in all this world who has a better husband than you have. Show me the man or woman who says anything against either you or your mother! Get your little sister over here. I'll make money enough for both of youse. I don't want you to sing any more. I am man enough to support a wife. If I wasn't I wouldn't have married you. I knowed the very first I set my eyes on you that you was the best woman in all the world. She sleeps! Come, boys, we'll carry her up stairs."

Poor John. He meant well enough, poor fellow, and he would have been all right hadn't it been for his loafer friends, who clung to him now more than ever, since he had married a great singer. John was good-natured and spent his money freely. It came easy and it went easy. If he tried to save they would touch on his weak point. He was jealous—insanely jealous—but there was no earthly reason why he should be jealous. His "friends" observed that he was insanely jealous and used means to arouse him to doubt his good, honest and true wife. This always happens in the saloons. The saloons had been his home before he married me, and he cannot get out of the habit. On account of that he took great interest in poli-

tics. He was a backer of John J. O'Brine and Silver Dollar Smith, and the politics and jealousy mingled in together put his head in a whirl, and the bartenders, with the assistance of the loafers, would get every cent out of poor John's pocket before he left the saloon. Then he would come home late in the night and raise a terrible racket, that he would keep up several days. He would pawn everything he had worth money and borrow where he could get trust. Then when there was nothing more doing he would slowly and hesitatingly get himself to home. If the door was locked on him he would simply burst it open, and without a word creep under the dining room table and sleep off his jag. And then he would lie and mumble and pray, "Mary, Mother of God, look down upon me. Mary, Mother of God, brain those loafers who won't let me alone. Mary, Mother of God, let me make money so I can get out of those d——n liquor saloons. Mother, Mary of God, let me make money so as I can have a saloon of my own. Mary, Mother of God, tell my wife to forgive me this time and I shan't take a drink again as long as I live, and I like to see any ——— make me do it."

Sometimes I would get tired of all this and send a letter to the Myerhoffen theatrical agent near-by and hastily pack up my wardrobe and send it out to some town near-by, but John would reform there and then, save up every cent and follow me and stay sober long enough until he had overtalked me to forgive him and return with him to New York.

God, our lover and protector, forgives, I thought. You must do the same, Ada, and John and I would kiss and make up and return to New York and the Bowery, and I would sing and he would sing until we had sung and slung in the money we had squandered without having had the least fun of it, and so on.

This outgo I commenced to realize. Years fly away; I am getting older, John is getting poorer and I am as poor as I ever was. I must make a break, and as I had heard that the *Ninth* in Philadelphia was beating the Bowery in New York in the line of wine commission, I said good-by to John in an undertone when he was lying under the tablecloth and sleeping off his jag. "Yes, I

am going to leave you forever, John. You'll never see me again." And so I died, or at least I tried, and had my name changed from Ada into Stella Anderson. One fine evening I arrived in Philadelphia and became known in that town as Stella, the Swedish Nightingale, which made me very proud, and as a grass widow I could take privileges and flirt, and I flirted and sang and drank fake drinks and wine and the commission floated into my pocket. Every week I went to the bank, and Stella Anderson will soon become a wealthy woman, I thought, and buy a residence on Fifth Avenue in New York City and live there in seclusion with her little sister, surrounded with every luxury in the line of books by favored authors, poets, painters, flowers, pet animals, including a monkey and parrot. Sister would live in a Paradise on earth, and die there as two old maids—*punctum.*

"Depot for Chicago, driver, and be quick about it. John is after me again! Poor, poor John," I said when I and the driver set out in great speed towards the depot. "Poor, poor John. I wish I was dead and buried!"

There was no wine commission in Chicago, and Harry Hill was my next place; and hurrah for Billy MacGlory! Billy MacGlory had at that time a very reasonable orchestra, a good stage and good performers. His show commenced at ten o'clock in the evening, and as I took unusual things of all kinds this came handy.

The first part was over; I lingered behind the stage until it was my turn to appear. "What will I sing?" I thought. I never gave notes—I had none, I said. The echoes from the Swedish mountains, or Lindernau? Lindernau, I decided. "Play a variation in C, dure," I said to the leader of music. "Never mind me. You'll see me when I feel like it. I'll be there before you, but, mind you, sir, and pay attention."

"By Billy MacGlory, you have to wear tights, Ada," they told me on the Bowery, and poor Ada was rigged out in flesh-colored tights, white satin costume covered with glittering beads and white kid gloves reaching to the elbow. I had to wear gloves with or without tights; my hands were still red and swollen from the cow-milking business in Schloss Hatenhoff, Mecklenborg Schwerin, Germany. Yes, I had to wear gloves.

"Ah-h-h!" they said before me. "Ah-h-h!" the crowd said away out in the hall, and stopped in their high kicking, drinking and dancing. "Ah-h-h!" I said in an undertone to the leader of music. "You and your gang will do," and started in to sing and perform there and then. I had translated Lindernau from German into English. It is catching music. I couldn't do much with Lindernau. Ah, yes, wait and you'll see, and you won't interrupt me. Again I sang.

Now here I am you see,
To sing a song, oh pray,
I'll try my best, please gentlemen, don't run away;
I like to show my style,
Yes, every bit for a while,
I like to please in every way, give me a trial.

"Tralla-lalla-lalla-lalla-lah-ah-ah," says the orchestra, and I am there ready to do my duty to the trallaing. What do I do?

Why in the first place you prepare your face for the occasion. Mouth and eyes have to be just so. When that is done you seek with your eyes among the audience until you find a suitable face. That face must be exceedingly good-looking, but the head point of all is that the eyes in that face must magnetize your own eyes. If they do your tralla is all right and you are ready for work. The leader of music raises his baton, swings it to right and left to notify his gang to wake up and watch, as there will be something doing. When he has got them the way he wants them he will be after me—and, poor me takes a scrape with the left heel, until the heel fastens to the floor. Then, with ears keenly on the orchestra and the eyes on the face with the magnetic eyes, I raise both arms in a most lounging and graceful manner toward the man with the face, as if I could stand it no more, but as he can't answer me there and then among all those people I take the arms back again and raise them to the imagined sky above me. My head and eyes follow the arms, but as I receive no answer there, either, I gaze and google over to the man with the face and soak in another electric stroke. That works, and "Trallallallallalalla a-h-h" say

the orchestra, as if they were influenced by the magnetism themselves—and where am I? Yes, there; stand fast on my heel and swing my whole body, swing, swing, swing, without moving my head, which is raised to Heaven, as if my heart was breaking, that's all.

The audience, of course, gets in a terrible racket and wants more of it, but Billy MacGlory is no dummy. "It's enough," he says to his floor manager. "Smith, get her off the stage and get her 'doing,'" and in comes a colored waiter huck act before me, with his black hand and a tray under his arm. I understand him and follow him—I had been on the Bowery. In we comes among some parties; a man sits on the table; on the table is a large bottle. The colored waiter puts me in a chair before the man. I look up and before me I see the man with the face and the eyes in it.

"I am the man you was blinking at when you sang that shocking song, and as I thought that you acted as if you wanted to make me your own for life, there and then, I'd better submit to your wishes, and as I was told by the floor manager that I could have a private interview in here, that we could be all alone by ourself I would say——" but that was all he could say, as the colored waiter came in with another bottle, cracked it and the wine floated by accident around the man and his face and breeches, and then the poor waiter had, of course, to get another bottle. The man would pay for it. Then Mr. Smith, the floor manager, came in and there was a lot of more bottles. And as Mr. Smith did the most of the talking the man with the face had very little to say, and as no one cared if he spoke or not, as long as he paid for the bottles regularly he didn't need to say a word.

CHAPTER IV

MR. GAMBASSY, 207 BOWERY

"Some one wants to see you, Miss Stella, come out here. We can't let him inside—he's too drunk and wants to raise a racket. Give me your consent and I'll fire him."

John, John, John, John! He's paralyzed and has on a silk hat and evening suit. "Is some one dead, or did he remarry?"

"I ain't so drunk as you think I am, and I won't take another drink as long as I live, and I have been pleading of Mary, Mother of God, that this sucker of a dive-keeper would fire you so you'll be compelled to come to me. I am man enough to support my wife—you old drunken ———, and you can ask every man in the bar-room what they are going to have, and tell that damned sucker of a dive-keeper that I have money enough to pay for it."

"This gentleman is my husband, Mr. MacGlory; what am I to do?"

"What are you to do? Take your husband into one of the boxes and simply 'pull his leg.' Smith, attend to this lady and gentleman. I won't have a hand in that, though. I feel sorry for both of them. It's a wonder what drink can do."

Forgive me, my dear reader—reader? Will any one read this? They ought to—well, no, they won't—not until after I am dead. I have to die, just like the rest of us. That Ibsen fellow was in the same boat as I am, striving and striving with Peer Gynt, or poor gent, or what was it? No, they didn't want it until after he was dead, that of course, and there was poor me. He is way up, I think, because he has a monument—the devil! If I work hard and pack my room full of unavailable manuscripts and lie down and die, then, then they'll be after me for good and for fair, and buy you! I ought to have a monument, no use talking. As I said, will any one read this? No, it wasn't that I was going to say. What was it? Oh, yes; John. Reader or no reader, I took poor John into one of the boxes and started in to "pull his leg good and hard," but after the first bottle was opened I discovered that he only had a dollar to pay for the five dollar bottle, and I had to pay for the bottle.

"Not by your tintype!" said Billy. "Ladies don't pay in my place. Smith, attend to this gentleman."

If any one thought that they could "do" John they were quite mistaken. Not even Billy MacGlory could; no, sir!

John kept annoying both Billy and me until I got sick of it and went down to Gambassy, on the Bowery.

Gambassy wore a funeral hat and gave wine commission. Gotte—no, Gambossy on the Bowery reminds me of an old gentleman over in Sweden. His name was Bellman. He was a poet half-born and a drunkard. D—— if I don't think he got a monument. Yes, he did, and it is erected on Gustaf Adolpsborg. Well, this Hoffnar poet and drunkard, like Gambassy on the Bowery, had a great time with his stove-pipe hat.

When Bellman was drunk and kept up drinking the king became disgusted and fired him, and poor Bellman got on the bum, and there he was sitting in his scanty home, thinking and stroking his battered silk hat. "Something must be done," he thought. "I'm dry."

As the man was a man of genius inspiration came. "There's one fellow from whom I may squeeze out a little change. I'll try it," so he went to the undertaker, rang the bell and stood waiting, and the undertaker soon appeared.

"Pardon me, my dear sir; I came here to bid you my last farewell. You see for yourself that my time is short here on earth. My pulse is weaker than ever—everything is in readiness for you. To-day I was refused a treat. So I go home, if I can go so far, and lay down beside my poor, starving cat and say my last prayer, but I have a favor to ask you. After my death my bones is yours. You have paid for them. All my unavailable MSS. is yours. I have testamented that in your favor. The cat is yours. I have testamented the cat in your favor, but to keep the cat alive until you come after me I need a little change for liver for her, and ask you kindly, my dear sir, to slam in another half a kronen on the bargain," and he raised his black, battered stove-pipe hat and assumed a most pitiful position, and so he stood for some time before the gaping undertaker, awaiting his reply.

"Begone!" said the undertaker, who knew Bellman of old. "Feda, come here!" Now, as Bellman was a born aristocrat, he made use of it, and as he saw no hope to get the price for a drink here, either, he changed his position like a flash and stood before the undertaker and his dog, a strong, healthy man, and raising his stove-pipe in a most

aristocratic and sarcastic manner to the undertaker, he turned to depart, but Feda, the dog, snapped him in the pants and held him fast.

The dog might have meant well, but as Bellman saw no reason why he should stay, started in to free himself from the dog, who was persistent in holding him fast for his own welfare, no doubt.

"You bought the bones of a Hoffnar drunkard, and poet for little and nothing; here is a juggler in the bargain," he said to the waiting undertaker, and removing his hat from his head he gave it a swing toward the dog, which hastily snapped at it and held it fast, and wagging his tail, he held it toward the undertaker as if it was of more worth than the whole man, dead or alive.

This put the undertaker in a good mood, and taking the hat from the dog's mouth, he put his hand in his pocket and drew out the only piece he happened to have, a silver crown and swung it before Bellman's feet and disgustedly swung the hat after him, and Bellman had won his game.

What was I talking about before I went over to Sweden? Yes, Mr. Gambassy, at 207 Bowery. If any one was seeking engagement of Gambossy you could tell his answer by his hat. If he took off his hat and caressingly stroked it five times and then replaced it on his head that meant no. If he snapped off the stove-pipe and gave it a swing so as it fell back on his head, that meant yes.

"Cut out the notes. I never give notes. If I do you'll hustle my business. If you ain't satisfied tell Gambossy, and I can go back to Billy MacGlory, where I came from," I said to the leader of music on rehearsal.

"She is right," said a little fellow with glasses, who stood near me. "I'm the violin from Gambossy's other place. He wants me to play here to-night for a change, and of course I will be the leader also."

"Suit yourself, then," said the piano player, and called for another schooner.

The devil and no one else must have sent this violin player over, and not Gambossy, because this man turned out to be another bane of my life.

Standing and giving ideas to the leader, I listened with

one of my ears to a conversation behind me. It was the violin and trombone who were talking.

"You'll never catch her spending a cent for a treat. She has several bank books in her bustle. She wouldn't give you a drink if you were dying for one. She is a married woman, but has, I hear, commenced divorce proceedings, and I don't blame her. Her husband is the worst man on the Bowery."

This tale was seemingly interesting to the violin, as he started in to flirt with me to beat the band of music he was leading. This time it was a cat who has been another bane of my life—made me marry. I have always been very fond of cats. A little kitten had crept under the leader's chair, seeking protection, and there mewed most pitifully, and I of course came out of the dressing room to get the kitten. Good opportunity, thought the violin, and it took him rather long to produce the kitten into my keeping.

The music became interrupted, and Gambossy came over to see what was the matter, and seeing the leader of music stroking the kitten instead of his violin, he discharged the leader, but sympathetic me interfered by saying, "Mr. Gambossy, if that leader, who is kind to animals, must leave I shall go also." That worked and we both became chums after that.

It is fate, I suppose, who does these things. Well, one evening the leader offered to carry the kitten home for me, as I intended to keep it.

"The Limburger cheese is without surpass in this place," said the leader of music, when we passed a basement saloon in Sixth Street. "Will you come in?"

"Certainly," I said, and we both went into the place. There we met other performers from the Bowery, and as we knew each other we became jolly and the violin player was at his best that night.

"Come in here, you," a voice said through the partition. "Come in here, or I'll be after you."

"*Dapsdumme frauenzemer,*" sneered the violin to me, and stroked the slumbering kitten on my lap. "Mich can see ja dock nicht wallen, I been shan lange satt from ur geworden. She is wasting her time running after me, that's all."

After some little time "das dumme Frauenzemer" came in and hit the leader of music in the eye and broke his glasses, and as he was helpless without his glasses I and the kitten were compelled to help the leader of music to his lodgings.

To make a long story short, the leader, the cat and I doubled up and went light housekeeping, and thought that we were happy, but as all good leaders of music smoke cigarettes and drink beer from early morning to late at night, through him I acquired the habit. I drank beer and smoked cigarettes from early morning to late at night, and got myself into such a miserable state that even Reagan, at 27 Bowery, refused me an engagement, and I was no good any more, but as something had to be done so I could make some money, as I wanted that residence on Fifth Avenue, I thought I'll invest my saved together, hard-earned cash in real estate.

As Rocks, as I will call him after this, wanted me to invest in the delicatessen business, we argued, and it took me nearly a half year's time before my money was invested properly. Then my "husband" lost his job. Yes, but as I was now the owner of a high stoop, four-story brick, basement and cellar, twelve rooms and bath, all new improvements, no yard, but a fire escape in front of the house, I did not care very much, but started in to make business there, and then let the leader of music help me. The house was packed with nice people, gentlemen only, and we were both in high glee, playing pinochle, petting the cat and smoking cigarettes and working the growler, when the roof started in to leak over our heads.

"The devil," I thought. "Who would have thought that a roof would leak in a house with all new improvements?" But as there was a man in the house he went up to the roof and did the best he could with it, then he came down and he started in to smoke cigarettes, as we had to talk the matter over.

"Isn't these real estate agents fakes?" I said for to say something. "Yes," said Rocks, and went over to the corner store to get a pint. The tenants complained that the water streamed down in their beds, but as Rocks was a good musician, he was, and I had been a good singer once, we made music every night in the parlor and the tenants

listened the whole night and did not feel that the water was dripping, dripping in their faces, and so on.

When the weather was good, which did not happen very often, the leader got his tools and started in to prepare to fix the roof good and solid this time, but as I and the cat and the can and the cigarettes and matches had to accompany Rocks on the roof, so he wouldn't feel lonesome up there, it took some time before he was ready to go up, and it started in to rain again, and we had to let it go, and what else could we do but sit down and play pinochle and go and get a pint and a pack and kiss and make up? Still, I was prosperous, and there was big hope for me in the future, and I thought I'd better get another house, which I did in the same street farther down. That is, I leased the building and filled it with good people, and was just looking for another house to fill up when some one handed me the Morning News and told me to read it.

A whole block in the street beyond my property had in the middle of the night been raided and bad characters of all kind had been scattered homeless and penniless all over town. The man—what's his name?—needed money, the paper said, as he wanted to go to Switzerland in the summer and live in a high-stoop, brown-stone house—all improvements in the winter, had smelled rats in that block and put his nose into it, but made himself too nosey and all the unfortunate creatures were driven out in the rain without a wink and warning and the property stood there, empty and lonely, but as the agents are wide awake they hired a new colored woman and took in a ton of coke, closed the doors and drew up the blinds, heated up the house and put out a bill saying, "Furnished rooms; gentlemen only. All new improvements and $1.25 and upwards," and so-so. I thought $1.25 per week, Rocks and I with all our music-making won't be in it any more—neither we was.

Since that time I have been a bitter hater of whiskers. Whenever I see a whiskered man I lay for him with the scissors, but what good will that do me? That don't bring me back my lost wealth, neither is there any hope of the residence on Fifth Avenue, and forget him. He has made himself scarce, anyhow, I heard. Maybe he hides in the wilds of Switzerland, or maybe they lies about him.

but what is the difference? He made money; I lost, so he was smarter than I, so forget him.

CHAPTER V

THE ECHO FROM THE SWEDISH MOUNTAINS

I DID not give up then and there, and I clung to the property. The leader of music drank whiskey now to give himself brain, he said, but the more whiskey he consumed the less brain he got, and in his drunken stupor he hinted that I was not the very freshest peach in the basket, neither was I the cream of the milk any more. Those days was passed, the whiskey in him asserted. "I'll get rid of you," I thought, and rigged him out and sent him with the Haverly Minstrels, which I knew would for sure bust on the road. Some they fire out, and I wanted never to see him again. Can you blame me? No, of course not. Never tell a woman that she is getting old and unattractive. That don't work, and I think it was very ignoble of the leader of music to say such mean things to his "Stella, the star who was going to be his starlight forever."

Now I'll give you some fun to break the monotony.

Ada Stella, the star, was in love for the first time. Listen and you shall see how it happened. The front door-bell rang and I answered. And there he stood. Whom? The echo from the Swedish mountains.

Who is that? That party I had Hawl L. Luluaed after right along. Yes, I opened and gasped. "Why didn't you show up before?" I said in a querulous tone. "Where have you kept yourself? Didn't you hear my voice howling for you wherever I went? Well, better late than never, they say, and please step inside and take a rest, sir."

"Take a seat yourself, young lady, and pardon me, madame. Did I hear a sweet voice like yours whispering to my heart now and then? But as I am a very busy man and had learned not to give those voices any hearing any more, and as intuition taught me that you were

very occupied and well supplied, I lingered until now, but I felt that now is the time to show up, and here I am now for you and await your command."

"Brain," I thought. "He has brain, like my father said to my brother away over in Sweden one evening: 'The girl has brain and what more do they want? I am the father of a praying child, my son,' he said. Was he right or not?"

Of course you want to know what this *"Imarable"* looks like. When I start in to criticise a person I always begin at the lower, and, firstly, he wore commonplace, soft-leather shoes. I find these new styles abominable. It is something radically wrong about the man who wore them. I'll climb a little. Then there comes an evening shirt, stiff and stately. Then there is the head to describe, and I commence with the ears. The ears were deceiving, though. I'll tell you that some other time. Blonde, curly hair, having the latest style of tint. The forehead was innocent and humorous—eyes with a sad longing in them like some little children have when they are out for mischief. A beauty mole on the right cheek, a good nose, a teasing-looking mustache of the right kind and a chin which said: "I am going to have it, but if I don't get it I don't care." That was the look of the Echo from the Swedish mountains.

Fair, fat and forty, he is, I thought, and he shall be mine with hook or crook, and went before him up stairs to show him the furnished room he was looking for. He rented the room from me and I was in Heaven, and after paying the $1.25 room rent required, he, with a graceful bow and a meaning look, said, "So long," and went off.

Arriving in the basement I first peeped into the mirror. Heavens above! I was grayheaded. Well, that can be attended to. There is no color at all in my face. Well, that can be attended to. Oh, dear! I am standing in a bent position—when did I acquire that habit? Well, I'll get out of that at once. What have I got on? Oh, my! A soiled blue calico wrapper. How and where and when did I get a calico wrapper? That won't do, Ada, and my finger nails; I ought to be ashamed of myself. No more pints and cigarettes for me! The cigarettes stain the fingers and teeth and the beer makes me blue in the face

and bloated, and give your eyes a glaring look. Didn't I have Madonna eyes once? They said I had. That boney woman in Lybeck said my eyes changed in color—there is no color at all in my eyes. They are watery and weak-looking, and "I was too fat." Why, the bones are protruding at the neck and elbows. Oh, my! That's very sad indeed! I was not aware that I had evoluted from an angel into an old-looking witch. Stick out your tongue, Ada-Stella. Draw it in again. Don't show your tongue at all—you have to stop wagging it; it is all brown from nicotine—brown from nicotine. I wonder where I could find a butt and a match? I have to sit down and see what can be done to all this. I have to go under repair, and that before my fat, fair and forty sees me again, otherwise there is no hope for me.

From this monologue, my dear reader, read or not—I don't care—you can gather that I was in love, for the first time in my life. How old am I? Never mind. That can be attended to. He isn't so young himself. I'm glad of that. Oh, dear, how happy we will be! But now I must be doing.

Is it want of providence, Fate or God who ordains us to pass through these things which happen to us so unexpectedly? With all their millions, observance and study they can seemingly not find out for sure—the deepest study of science is too little avail. So, it must be God, as well.

Now to go into details, what happened and how I became nearer acquainted with this individual is not necessary that I should waste time on. It's too much of these things. Why dwell on it? No; but some years after this I saw myself lying deadly sick in a rickety-rackety folding bed in a room upstairs and looking before on a rickety-rackety old cooking range which had seemingly many tales to tell about its adventurous life, had it had the power of speech. Anyhow it kept my eyes off the men sitting on an old rickety-rackety parlor sofa, without legs and with the springs coming out here and there, where you had to feel and move your body until you found a hole where you could find peace and rest for a few minutes.

One of the men sitting on this sofa was a little soft fel-

low whom I had nicknamed the "Whispering Jack." The other man, who was a great deal larger and fatter than the other, was The Echo from the Swedish mountains.

"It won't take much longer," whispered the Echo from the Swedish mountains. "She has the life of a cat. She says she used to live mostly on some kind of grass which growed somewhere among the rocks in Sweden, which is the cause of her extraordinary vitality. I wish I knowed what it was, and I would sure make money on it. She won't tell, though, and I can't pump it out from her, as she says she ain't sure if it isn't a sin to do so. She says all those people which she has encountered in her very busy life don't deserve to live any longer than they do."

"Where do she keep the money she got from the sale of her property?"

"In her left leg sock, nineteen hundred dollars in cash money. Tempting, isn't it?"

"I don't see how you can stand it, Charley. I sympathize with you. How long has she been that way?"

"Ah, the selling of this old sagging building broke her heart, she says, but her heart has been broken so many times—yes, over and over again. I broke it, she says, but it won't stay broken long, for she has found a remedy for that malady also. She is smart, I have to acknowledge so much. She says that when she gets tired running around with a broken heart she swallows some plaster of Paris and that settles on her heart and mends up the rent in no time, and she gets just as fresh as ever, preventing me to go into the place when I feel like it. She can live without food, but I am a strong healthy man, sit in the open air in the Park a good deal—where else can I go? When I can't jolly her and she fires me out. My dear, she's—no one knows the reason why I am compelled to live on a woman. You, at least, ought to give me justice. Though I look strong and healthy, I am a very sick man. As I have told you before, I am suffering with bladder trouble, chronic constipation, *flexiause* and kidney disease."

"Nearly two thousand dollars. How can you stand it, Charley? Nearly a hundred in cash money in the left leg of a corpse. If I were you—I don't want to advise you wrongly—but, she is your wife; leg and money is yours——"

"Twenty years State's Prison if one rob a corpse, my boy."

"But she ain't dead yet, and as I said before, she is your wife—common law wife—she wasn't lawfully married to that other fellow either, you said—never could get divorced from John—wasn't he my namesake? So I don't see any difficulty."

"Twenty years in State Prison if one robs a corpse, my boy."

"Twenty years in State Prison I ought to have for marrying you, my boy! What did I eat last night, Charley darling? How are you Jack? You are looking younger. Twenty years in State Prison if I ever do it again. I dreamt of my money, Charley. That's lucky to dream of money,—and let us have a drink. I feel better; that sleep did me good. Go down and get something to drink, Charley, my boy. Take your friend with you—he needs a stimulant, poor fellow, and so do I. Twenty years in State Prison if one rob a corpse."

"I am afraid she heard you, Charley. I think she heard what you said."

"The only fault I have to find of you, Jack, you speak too loudly. She heard every word you said—and now beware of her. She is no dummy, as I said—there you got it. She is a phenomenon surely—a freak of nature—just as lively and fresh as ever."

"Now we have to be wide awake—that old cat didn't die this time, either," whispered the Echo from the Swedish mountains to his friend, the whispering Jack, going down stairs.

I had indeed been very sick this time, but hearing that I was a corpse and was going to be robbed, that encouraged me and got me on my feet again, and I stood up and was just as happy as ever. I then went downstairs to the basement, snapped up an old shawl, throwed it over my head and went down to the drug store and telegraphed to an old friend of mine to come to my house immediately, as I had sold my property; Charley wasn't there; I was alone and in need of his assistance. This man whom I had telegraphed to I had nicknamed "Jack the Lover." He had always been in love with me, he asserted—Platonic

love only, he said, as an excuse for loving so many other women, I suppose.

I trusted, yes, I had absolute trust in this fellow at that time, and therefore sent for him as I was very weak and involved and certainly had to entrust myself into some one's caretaking, and there I sat and waited for him to arrive. There was no fear that the Echo and his friend would return that day, as I gave the Echo from the Swedish mountains a ten bill to buy the drink for us and hurry back.

I told Jack: "And I have money to burn. Go immediately out and find me a room in a quiet and refined house—sunshine I need. See to it that the room is sunny, and it must be situated so that I can, at night when I cannot sleep, open the window and listen to the southwest wind answering to my moaning and console me. You hear, don't forget that; and here is the money. Be off! Don't let them see you, and if they should, speak to them and take them in and treat them as if you had come over to see me just the same as ever."

"Here is the address," said my only friend, Jack, returning. "Don't lose it. Put it in your pocket for safe keeping."

"The room is very quiet," said the landlady, "and as sunny and windy as one can wish for."

Jack said then: "I feel rather tired. I was up too early. I have to look for work now, you see, Ada. I have to go to work, the brewer say he won't trust me any more, as he say there is nothing doing any more. For the man—what's his name—is too persistent. Don't worry, and eat plenty. Don't forget that you have money to get it and don't stinge about the price now any more. I'll be back in a minute. Don't sit there in that corner and freeze and worry about the grate fire. I'll be back and light it for you—you have money for coal and wood now, so don't worry."

"Charley! D—n it, there they are coming, and mind and mind you, Charley has dishes in his hands—Charley! No, a hopeless case! Twenty years State Prison if you rob a corpse. Ain't I an old cat? Shame in you, Ada-Stella, shame in you, I say."

Big, fat, fair and forty, with his big belly and dishes,

came staggering into the room, the little whispering Jack creeping behind him, and pushing him before to give him courage. Charley dropped his dishes on the floor and fell over in the corner and laid there. Whispering Jack casually followed him and sank down beside him and started to whisper in his ear.

My only friend Jack also came along after some time, staggered into a chair and sank into it, cracking the legs of the old rickety-rackety easy chair and sank on the floor in the middle of the room near the dishes with food which Charley had brought for me and dropped on the floor. Jack was with his glaring eyes peeping out from that bloated, blurred face of his, watching the food before him which I now discovered consisted of a Welsh rarebit.

Now I knew what that glaring look from honest Jack's eyes signified! "They have bought that in place of knock-out drops. Had I known that she had sold out I would have got next to her in an easier manner than that, but I am always slow—always was slow. Well, I know where she lives. It was I who rented the room, saying I was a brother to my ailing sister. Shy! But I'm smart, though!"

Yes, he was smart, but I did not know it that time.

If I am right that it is so bad as all that, I better be off to my new quarters and see for myself how it looks like there. I better get a pack of Cicle cigarettes and a box of matches. I could certainly not sleep. It is only five o'clock in the morning and I'll be very lonesome in my new home. What use is it reflecting over those things? I have heard and seen enough, I should think, and taking a last look at the rarebit on the floor, I left my house and my slumbering sweetheart lying, never, never, never to return.

"Get me a pack of the Cicles, the only ones I smoke. I have some, they are no good, though. What is that chain on the door for? Never mind, I know. Don't forget the matches, or you have to go again."

I opened my eyes. I had been sleeping. Who can that be? The figure reminds me of some one. I have seen that figure before—before—and that gray homespunnen shawl. I have seen that before—before.

Did I not help to card the sheep's wool of that gray

homespunnen shawl some place? Did I not rattle down that wool yarn on the spinning-wheel, drawing out the smooth, snow-white "triller," and singing:

"Spinn, spinn, doteren min,
I morgon nammer friaren din,
Dock flickan pan spanzack tararn a roun,
Man friarer, friaren come eckextahaun,"

some place? I cannot recall.

"Who are you and how did you come into the room? The chain was on the door when I fell in sleep. What do you want? You are sitting on my feet—remove your shawl so as I can see your face. Are you afraid to show your face? Answer, I say, or it must be something radically wrong about you. They sent you after me, I perceive. We'll see about that. Hand me the matches from the mantel. No? Well, I can get them myself. I need a puff, anyhow."

I striked a match and held it over toward the bed. The figure was there. I burnt my fingers. "The devil," I thought, as I struck another match. The figure, like in the Eden Musée, was absolutely human-like, but without a quiver or move. Ghost stories,—they are only stories though? Again the room was in darkness and I was shivering all over.

"Speak or begone, woman," I hissed, "or I'll knock you out. In my stocking is my money," I thought; "I wish it wasn't. Miserable being, come here to me, and I'll fight you!

"Say your baby prayer, Ada, 'Taar war sam ar i himmelen. Heligaattwarde dittnamm,'" I said, and slowly drawed my head toward the bed to hear the woman's breathing. She had no breath. No, I with my intensely keen ears, heard no one breathing in the room, but I perceived that the figure was still sitting there.

"Tillcamae ditt rike ack she din welje. Du some i himmelen so ack pa jorden," I said, and took a step toward the bed. "Tartal ass alla wara synder—Gif ass i dag worth dagliga brod ack war mad ass ass alla lider," I said and reached out and caught a hold of the mute figure on the bed, and felt nothing—saw nothing. I struck a

After some little time "das dumme Frauenzemer" came in and hit the leader of music in the eye and broke his glasses, and as he was helpless without his glasses I and the kitten were compelled to help the leader of music to his lodgings.

To make a long story short, the leader, the cat and I doubled up and went light housekeeping, and thought that we were happy, but as all good leaders of music smoke cigarettes and drink beer from early morning to late at night, through him I acquired the habit. I drank beer and smoked cigarettes from early morning to late at night, and got myself into such a miserable state that even Reagan, at 27 Bowery, refused me an engagement, and I was no good any more, but as something had to be done so I could make some money, as I wanted that residence on Fifth Avenue, I thought I'll invest my saved together, hard-earned cash in real estate.

As Rocks, as I will call him after this, wanted me to invest in the delicatessen business, we argued, and it took me nearly a half year's time before my money was invested properly. Then my "husband" lost his job. Yes, but as I was now the owner of a high stoop, four-story brick, basement and cellar, twelve rooms and bath, all new improvements, no yard, but a fire escape in front of the house, I did not care very much, but started in to make business there, and then let the leader of music help me. The house was packed with nice people, gentlemen only, and we were both in high glee, playing pinochle, petting the cat and smoking cigarettes and working the growler, when the roof started in to leak over our heads.

"The devil," I thought. "Who would have thought that a roof would leak in a house with all new improvements?" But as there was a man in the house he went up to the roof and did the best he could with it, then he came down and he started in to smoke cigarettes, as we had to talk the matter over.

"Isn't these real estate agents fakes?" I said for to say something. "Yes," said Rocks, and went over to the corner store to get a pint. The tenants complained that the water streamed down in their beds, but as Rocks was a good musician, he was, and I had been a good singer once, we made music every night in the parlor and the tenants

listened the whole night and did not feel that the water was dripping, dripping in their faces, and so on.

When the weather was good, which did not happen very often, the leader got his tools and started in to prepare to fix the roof good and solid this time, but as I and the cat and the can and the cigarettes and matches had to accompany Rocks on the roof, so he wouldn't feel lonesome up there, it took some time before he was ready to go up, and it started in to rain again, and we had to let it go, and what else could we do but sit down and play pinochle and go and get a pint and a pack and kiss and make up? Still, I was prosperous, and there was big hope for me in the future, and I thought I'd better get another house, which I did in the same street farther down. That is, I leased the building and filled it with good people, and was just looking for another house to fill up when some one handed me the Morning News and told me to read it.

A whole block in the street beyond my property had in the middle of the night been raided and bad characters of all kind had been scattered homeless and penniless all over town. The man—what's his name?—needed money, the paper said, as he wanted to go to Switzerland in the summer and live in a high-stoop, brown-stone house—all improvements in the winter, had smelled rats in that block and put his nose into it, but made himself too nosey and all the unfortunate creatures were driven out in the rain without a wink and warning and the property stood there, empty and lonely, but as the agents are wide awake they hired a new colored woman and took in a ton of coke, closed the doors and drew up the blinds, heated up the house and put out a bill saying, "Furnished rooms; gentlemen only. All new improvements and $1.25 and upwards," and so-so. I thought $1.25 per week, Rocks and I with all our music-making won't be in it any more—neither we was.

Since that time I have been a bitter hater of whiskers. Whenever I see a whiskered man I lay for him with the scissors, but what good will that do me? That don't bring me back my lost wealth, neither is there any hope of the residence on Fifth Avenue, and forget him. He has made himself scarce, anyhow, I heard. Maybe he hides in the wilds of Switzerland, or maybe they lies about him.

but what is the difference? He made money; I lost, so he was smarter than I, so forget him.

CHAPTER V

THE ECHO FROM THE SWEDISH MOUNTAINS

I DID not give up then and there, and I clung to the property. The leader of music drank whiskey now to give himself brain, he said, but the more whiskey he consumed the less brain he got, and in his drunken stupor he hinted that I was not the very freshest peach in the basket, neither was I the cream of the milk any more. Those days was passed, the whiskey in him asserted. "I'll get rid of you," I thought, and rigged him out and sent him with the Haverly Minstrels, which I knew would for sure bust on the road. Some they fire out, and I wanted never to see him again. Can you blame me? No, of course not. Never tell a woman that she is getting old and unattractive. That don't work, and I think it was very ignoble of the leader of music to say such mean things to his "Stella, the star who was going to be his starlight forever."

Now I'll give you some fun to break the monotony.

Ada Stella, the star, was in love for the first time. Listen and you shall see how it happened. The front door-bell rang and I answered. And there he stood. Whom? The echo from the Swedish mountains.

Who is that? That party I had Hawl L. Luluaed after right along. Yes, I opened and gasped. "Why didn't you show up before?" I said in a querulous tone. "Where have you kept yourself? Didn't you hear my voice howling for you wherever I went? Well, better late than never, they say, and please step inside and take a rest, sir."

"Take a seat yourself, young lady, and pardon me, madame. Did I hear a sweet voice like yours whispering to my heart now and then? But as I am a very busy man and had learned not to give those voices any hearing any more, and as intuition taught me that you were

very occupied and well supplied, I lingered until now, but I felt that now is the time to show up, and here I am now for you and await your command."

"Brain," I thought. "He has brain, like my father said to my brother away over in Sweden one evening: 'The girl has brain and what more do they want? I am the father of a praying child, my son,' he said. Was he right or not?"

Of course you want to know what this *"Imarable"* looks like. When I start in to criticise a person I always begin at the lower, and, firstly, he wore commonplace, soft-leather shoes. I find these new styles abominable. It is something radically wrong about the man who wore them. I'll climb a little. Then there comes an evening shirt, stiff and stately. Then there is the head to describe, and I commence with the ears. The ears were deceiving, though. I'll tell you that some other time. Blonde, curly hair, having the latest style of tint. The forehead was innocent and humorous—eyes with a sad longing in them like some little children have when they are out for mischief. A beauty mole on the right cheek, a good nose, a teasing-looking mustache of the right kind and a chin which said: "I am going to have it, but if I don't get it I don't care." That was the look of the Echo from the Swedish mountains.

Fair, fat and forty, he is, I thought, and he shall be mine with hook or crook, and went before him up stairs to show him the furnished room he was looking for. He rented the room from me and I was in Heaven, and after paying the $1.25 room rent required, he, with a graceful bow and a meaning look, said, "So long," and went off.

Arriving in the basement I first peeped into the mirror. Heavens above! I was grayheaded. Well, that can be attended to. There is no color at all in my face. Well, that can be attended to. Oh, dear! I am standing in a bent position—when did I acquire that habit? Well, I'll get out of that at once. What have I got on? Oh, my! A soiled blue calico wrapper. How and where and when did I get a calico wrapper? That won't do, Ada, and my finger nails; I ought to be ashamed of myself. No more pints and cigarettes for me! The cigarettes stain the fingers and teeth and the beer makes me blue in the face

"Yes, indeed; but he'll bail you out when you're in the hole."

"The gas fixtures belong to the landlord? Yes? The window shades, clock and glasses, napkins, etc., you bought on time?"

"You are well informed. I did. It is ten cents a week only, though, and you won't feel paying it."

"Yes; I have been there. Excuse me, I always take a puff when I have business before me which has to be attended to. Have you got a match? Thank you. Wait a minute, let me think a little first."

Those fellows sitting there in the corner squinting over here to me and my butt remind me of Charley and his intimate friend, Whispering Jack—that fellow—he is very fat and bloated, behind the counter pretending to be busy—reminds me of honest Jack, who got me that room in the quiet house where I had so much fun that night. It was quiet there enough. What's that? Free lunch? Yes, well that reminds me of the rarebit which Charley with his leprosy hands dropped on the floor in front of honest Jack's glaring eyes, and well——

"The price is small indeed, but so is the saloon. I have to think the matter over. I'll be back in a day or so and let you know."

"Rockaway Beach! I intended to settle in Far Rockaway, but as there is no rocks I may as well stay where I am," I said to a saloonkeeper, who saw me from a distance huddling along in the deep sand, and winked me into his place, and asked me to sit down and rest myself, hoping to take in a nickel, I suppose.

I rented a small hotel the same day and paid four hundred dollars down on the lease. The beautiful weather changed. It commenced to drizzle a little. I ordered in furniture, linen, silver, etc., and paid four hundred and fifty dollars down. It was raining. I took possession of the place and the water floated down from heaven. The streets was full of streamlets. I was chilly and crept into bed to get warm, and some one knocked at the door. "Come in," I called out, and the door opened and in walks my old friend, honest Jack. He was the man who understood his business.

"I suppose you are dry, Jack; get a few bottles of beer, then sit down and tell me all about it."

He did. He won. Why not? He is Norwegian, and I'm only Swede. Some time after this I stood in a street in New York City, homeless, hatless, penniless, bald and half blinded from crying, and not a butt in my pocket. No, sir, not a butt in my pocket, not the smallest scrap of tobacco I can feel. "Not a butt, not a butt, not a butt in my pocket," I moaned and sank down on a doorstep and fell in sleep.

"Take a move on you there or I'll lock you up. I know you are an old offender in this neighborhood—move on, or I'll lock you up." said a cop, and swinged his club in a threatening manner.

"Yes, sir," I said, "you do know me, and I know you." I tried to struggle on my feet, but sank down again. "Has it come to this?" I thought and looked before me. I was sitting in front of my former home. That tall four-story brick building had been mine once. That high stoop I could sit on as much as I wanted. Them dirty basement windows I had been washing many and many a time, and that roof up there, ah, could I go up there with the cat and the can and watch the violin player mending the roof and smoke cigarettes and drink beer, and kiss the cat and kiss me? "Ah, God, let me die!" I moved and looking at the cop, who was still standing near me, I slowly walked hence until I came to the next avenue, and there I sat down on another doorstep and wept, hiding my face from the pedestrians passing.

"Excuse me, could you tell me where there is an intelligence office?"

"I cannot see very well, but I think it is one across the street."

"Let's go over there. I hate to go alone, but I must have something to do, and you also, I suppose."

"Yes," I said, and we both went in and climbed up the stairs and entered the office.

"Got a place for you," the lady attendant said. "One dollar, please. You have not a cent in your pocket? Well, I am going to trust you as an exception. You look as if you are going to pay me when you have money. Yes? Well, here is the address on my card. They are always

short on help there, so you are sure to be accepted. Be sure to come and pay me when it is pay-day."

"Yes," I said and crept downstairs. Arrived in the street, I asked of some one to read the address for me, as I could not see to read.

"Buckingham Hotel, 50th Street and Fifth Avenue."

"I wonder," I thought; "I wonder what that can be," and walked ahead until I came to the place. Buckingham Hotel. "Here it is," I ejaculated and walked in the front entrance. A large fellow with white gloves on his hands turned me around and told me to go through the basement. I did and stood by the door and waited.

"Do you want to see the housekeeper?" some one asked me.

"Yes," I said, for to say something.

"Well, go over there and wait awhile, and she will see you."

I was accepted and my home was on Fifth Avenue. I resided on Fifth Avenue indeed, after all, but not as a property owner, society woman or a recluse either, but as one of the scrubbers in the Hotel Buckingham.

CHAPTER VI

THE INTEREST ON THE MORTGAGE—THE COMPOSITION OF "MY HUSBAND'S DREAM"

A CENT was lying on the table before me where I was sitting. My trunk was full of ragged clothing. The rent for my small hall room was due in a few days and—I was starving!

"Shall I buy a roll or the morning paper for the penny?" I thought. The thought of a fresh roll tempted me, but as the morning paper was my only hope, I went and got it and sat down to study the advertisements.

"Dishwasher wanted. Come ready for work; five a week and meals."

Meals, meals, yes, I am coming, and I lifted the lid of my battered trunk in the hope to find an apron suitable for the position. My hand caught hold of a shabby-looking

bundle. Outside of the bundle I read the words, "Ada, save this."

Pshaw! Save! What good did all my saving and scraping and saving do me? I have lost everything I had in the world. And wiping my streaming eyes, I threw the bundle over on the bed and sank down in the chair behind me, wondering where I could obtain a calico apron.

Looking over the room, on the rags hanging around, my eyes again fell on the small paper bundle on the bed. "Ada, Ada, do save this," I imagined the letters pleaded. My eyes stuck fast on the words. There was a strange pleading appeal in those long shaky strokes written with a bad pen. Where and when could I have made that bundle? I thought, and rose and peeped into a closet, if there was nothing at all left to eat, as my stomach plagued me with hunger. A crust of bread, a raw potato and an onion I found. Bully for you, Ada, you saved that for a rainy day; yes you did. I know you did. Well, that will feed me for to-day. I really would like to take a look in that bundle. How shall I cook that onion and the potato? The oilstove is empty. Glory! There is the lamp and a little oil in it still. I placed my provisions over the lamp to boil, then reached for the bundle, opened it and read:

"SEA BEACH, PABST HOTEL, CONEY ISLAND.

"DEAR MADAM:

"I should take it as a favor if you would grant me a copy of 'My Husband's Dream.' I am a composer myself, and so, pleased to play new works of others. I am yours sincerely, I. JOSE BLOOD."

I rose and took a look at the tomato can on the lamp; the potato and onion were cooking fine. He is a composer himself? And wants a copy of a dream. That is too difficult to figure out on an empty stomach. I'd better eat my potato first. There was no old love letters in the bundle, only a scrap of paper with the words "Howl L. lulua" marked under with kisses, whatever that meant, and another scrap of paper with the words "Leila H.," also kissed. The rest was rubbish only. Had I not found that

potato I would now have been on my way to work! Sorry, sorry indeed. That potato was a Jonah to me and so was the onion. What is that? Another scrap of paper. Something of a copy of a dream again. I can't make it out. The paper is too greasy, and—and—it smells from beer. It is a letter well enough, but, but, there is neither commencing or end to it—it is seemingly torn off.

The potato was a Jonah but it feels well in the stomach. I try and figure out what this exceedingly dingy looking paper has got to say about this dream.

"When resting in Atlantic City I met with a gentleman and his wife by the name of Speer. They had a copy of your composition, 'My Husband's Dream.' We looked it over and thought it very pretty. You would greatly favor me if you would send me a copy . . . leave for Europe . . . return in a few years——". That was all I could make out.

I have a whole day to figure out what those two men mean about this dream. It's one of my many names well enough. They meant me, well enough. I'll bite that hard bread also. That might give me a little more brain.

I was the owner of a small house and lot in the heart of New York City. My neighbor needed that small piece of ground to benefit his own holding and he was still angling to get it. Yes, he wanted that lot and was going to have it by hook or crook.

I had no near friend nor relation and although I had a husband, I may say I was alone in that house, which I had let out for furnished rooms. This way I have managed well enough, but I was sick, very sick. Solid food never entered my mouth. I lived on what I could swallow down without chewing it, and that, of course, by degrees, got myself into a terrible state. I became exceedingly nervous and suffered with intense chills, lameness, lumbago and insomnia. I spent most of my time huddled up in a corner near the grate fire, trying to heat me, and became warm on one side, but as the door of the room was opened continually, as I had so many visitors going in and out, and they never thought of closing the door behind them, I shivered fearfully on one side of my body. All those visitors, who insisted one by one that he or she was the only sincere friend I had in the world, were exceed-

ingly poor like myself but rather beery. They needed food, shelter and drink and did not care to work and earn it, and by degrees they smuggled themselves into my well wishes, saying they strived hard to obtain work but could not get it and did not care, as they said they enjoyed themselves so much in my company, and had to be around me so they could show their devotion by looking after my welfare.

Among those friends was a lady in particular. "Call me anything else," she used to say, "but don't call me by my right name." So I shall introduce her to you by the name of Elsa Banana.

This Elsa Banana was well known in the neighborhood and was nicknamed "the walking gin mill;" also known as the banker's daughter. This lady was exceedingly intelligent, was the possessor of a good tongue, and some education, which I was myself, consequently we sympathized that two such wonderful women as her and I should be down in life. A beautiful grate fire would delight Elsa like myself, and there we would sit and talk and look and study that grate fire—that is, when there was one, until we were so infatuated in that grate fire and imagined that she and I could see our darlings and their doings when they neglected us too much and we did not see them day after day, and did not know where they could be found.

When there was no coal in the cellar, or rags or old shoes, or anything at all to burn in the grate—then she would handle the cards.

"I am born with a veil," she used to say. "I can look into the life of others, not through the cards but by instinct, as when I slumber. I see everything before me then, though I hope—yes, I hope that I may be mistaken in the visions I see before my face. They are horrid, horrid for both you and I—for you in particular. If you are ordained to pass through what I see in my slumber, I pity you indeed—I pity you indeed, and I hope it is only visions, delusions wrought from an over worried brain."

When I thought it the right time for me to get some sleep, I had observed that there was sleep to be obtained through beer or porter; that is, if there was no new great worriment on my mind and the house was very quiet, a

couple of glasses of beer or porter would make me drowsy and I would slumber for a while. I accordingly was compelled to get it now and then. Mostly I did so in the middle of the night, thinking that no one observed me. But they did, and thought me a most wicked woman to slink out with the tin can at such hours in the night and that miserable condition I was in, crooked up, sooty from meddling with the grate, trying to make it go from nothing with my poor, lame, frozen fingers, then absentmindedly attending to my poor leaking nose and dripping eyes when there was no rag near at hand.

I was certainly a sight and I don't blame them for gossipping, but I was at such times always interrupted by poor Elsa rapping on the basement window for admittance from the cold and for to take some slumber, as she had met with neither her husband or the man in the "Old Willow Tree Inn," and had to go into a somnambulistic condition to see where they could be found. I regretted to be interrupted in my sleep, but was also glad because when Elsa wagged that brain and tongue of hers she was a great consoler in my trouble.

"I must have money," I said to Elsa, one night when I opened the basement door to let her in. "I must have money—no matter from where or how, I'll get it. Money I must and shall have, some way or other. He shan't have this house if I can possibly help it. Elsa, money is needed. Tell me how I can make it."

"Why don't you write for the magazines?—you have ample time to do it. You are a wonderful woman, and a brainy woman—write for the magazines instead of wasting your time in entertaining those people who you know well enough are only a detriment to you. I am the only devoted friend you have. Yes, write, woman, write. That's the only way to make money now. The Literary Digest—no, the Town Topics is sure to accept your writing and Charley will be your assistant. He knows every episode in your life from here to away over in the deepest wilds of Sweden and Norway by heart—ought to—and instead of sitting there and sucking on that empty pipe, and agreeing with you with his baby legs—baby eyes I mean—he may just as well do something to help you along—and whatever you do or don't do, don't give up

your home—home, Ada. You don't know what it means to be without a home. I know. How I have suffered, how I have suffered—through him—through him, my darling. He got from me all I had—my diamonds, my money, my wardrobe, fourteen double-sized trunks I had when I left England, and now? Now, what am I but a homeless tramp, cast on the mercy of others, a blindfolder, a schemer, a fortune-teller and humbug, a fake and a drunkard, and—and—and, oh, oh,—oh—oh—oh, how I love him still!"

I did try to write, but to write stories as a beginner in a furnished house for light housekeeping people is impossible, as there is a continual trouble of some kind—poetry in a house like that, no hope until one evening my tenant yelled down that the bathroom was out of order. I could not afford to mingle with plumbers, so I always attended to that myself. But my stomach was weak just then—let them wait, though. Let them, S——, suffer for a while. I'll creep down in the cellar and hide. They'll think I am out. And in that cellar was this seemingly much-sought-for "My Husband's Dream" composed. Yes, in that old cellar, huddled up on an old straw mattress and the heavy bed comforter over my head, and shivering most unmercifully, I composed part of "My Husband's Dream," but as bad luck always followed me up, before I had thought out the end some imagination, I think, got into my head. Elsa, my bosom friend, interrupted me with her screeching voice, asking if I was down there. I became wild with rage.

"Consider yourself dead now, woman! You are dead already. Come here to me. Your croaking voice interfered with my business. I was making money. Hand me that kitchen table-leg there, and come here to me. I could have bought all the gin in the United States for the money I was making here on the mattress; yes, as the greatest poet of the world and gin would have been floating right and left. Come here, I say! and I'll give you a swallow and a nickel for your sip you came for."

My thoughts had been on the bathroom plumber bills, light housekeeping people, money lenders, lawyers' bills, real estate fraud Charley and the green-eyed monster.

It was not dreams I was making down there. It was

justice, vengeance or something like it I was manufacturing on that mattress, but justice and vengeance or vengeance and justice has never been fully produced yet and likely never will be. How it came to be a dream. Elsa told Charley when they met in a saloon of the occurrence in the cellar. Two heads know more than one. I was out of my mind, of course, and they both were watching me after that. I took in some money by letting the front parlor to some professional singers, and sent Charley down town to divide it among my many money lenders, and thinking deeply of the quarter he would receive so as he could go and get his bosom shirt from the Chinaman when he returned with good news, he made them give me black and white that I was not to be threatened with letters for a whole month to come, and "one month, you know, means lots," he said, and got his quarter for his bosom shirt.

"I'll show you both if I am crazy or not," I thought, when Charley and Elsa and I were sitting there and nothing doing. I stood up to surprise them by reciting my inspiration in the cellar, and there I stood in the middle of the room, facing the firegrate, which was seemingly the cause of the jealousy, devil and devilment I mumbled together on the mattress in the cellar, and dramatically I reached out my arm toward the grate and commenced:

"Weary of toil my wife sank on a carpet near the grate fire—fire—fire," I said. The fire was out and the grate was full of ashes and half-burned coke, and did not inspire me, but reminded me of the empty coal bin in the cellar. Carpet? Carpet? Where am I? The carpet had not been swept for a long time and did not invite me to rest on it before the grate and black hole leading up through the dirty mantel roof and crooked its way up and down and right and left until it reached up to the roof in my tall old building, its destination the broken-down chimney-piece.

A heavy snore from Elsa's chair, where she was sitting in a somnambulistic condition, drew my attention in that direction.

"Clean the grate, and sweep the carpet, and light the fire, and do something for your lodging, or get," I yelled at her.

"Never mind, Ada," said Charley, "some other time will do very well. Can you spare the price?"

"Certainly," I said, and handed him a dime, and he went to the corner store.

"Charley," I spoke up to him one day when he was sitting there looking at me, "draw the window blinds up. Draw the table near the window; get the tin can good and full—place it on the table near the window, so it can be seen from the street, then sit down again and see how it works. You have to attend to the basement bell."

Right enough. There was the basement bell ringing. "Attend," I said.

"How are you, Josey?"

"I had a strange dream about you, Ada, and as I am the only true and sincere friend you have in this world I had to come and see you. You look ten years younger. Are you working, Charley? How are you, Elsa? I'm sorry I haven't got the price——"

"There is a can full waiting for you. How is your husband?"

"Well; he went to look for work. I told him to meet me here. There, he is coming."

"How are you, Kitty. Have a beer? It was waiting for you. Ah, there is my brother-in-law!" I ejaculated. "Have a beer? It was waiting for you, Larsen. How are things with you? How is your brother?"

"He went to look about his license. I told him to meet me here—he is coming."

"How are you, Larsen? Have a beer; it was waiting for you. What, the can empty? Well, go and get another."

"Your dream, Josie Staley! You dream has come true, and here it is," and then I stood up before my many friends and recited:

Weary of toil, my wife sank on a carpet near the grate-
fire;
So innocent and trusting she had always been to me;
I thought myself a man, but we know that Satan does
inspire
The best of men on earth; he was my steady company.

He entered here one night in the form of a young woman.
Think! just one floor above where my sweet tired wife
laid at rest.
And her tittle-tattle friend with her never ceasing "tea
can"
Passed the door and saw the young girl fast to my
bosom pressed.
Forever must I moan and groan upon my sweetheart's
grave.
Can this now be the fault of me that badly I behave?
Her heart was pure, my action base,
Could she endure my sin to trace?
No, and I kneel and mourn and weep upon her grave.

They say that heaven can relieve all earthly human
sorrow,
I with bad repentance gained forgiveness by thee;
Miraculously send to me what lies in this deep furrow,
O God, with bended knees I pray, give Ada back to me.
I see her face—through mould and clay her yearning eyes
beseech me.
To pray and hope united we beyond the grave will be:
"Charles, old boy, the woman's dead, a drink will stimu-
late thee.
A master stroke, you took the glass and sold your soul
to me;
And you shall stay and mourn and weep upon that
woman's grave,
And know that's the fault of me, that badly you behave;
Your heart was pure, my action base,
Could she endure your sin to trace?
No, so kneel and mourn and weep upon her grave."

What does it mean, what can it be,—have I so long been
sleeping,
And where is she, my darling wife, my treasure and
my love?
I dreamt I was in sorrow and in agony and weeping,
And she was with the angels in the heaven high above.
Ah, here she is, I hear her voice, she's softly to me singing.
She will forgive as she has done, she is from God
ordained,

To purify me; wicked man, I practice inebriating,
Intoxicated, beastly full, I fell asleep and dreamed,
That she was dead and I, myself, was raving on her grave.
Can this, man, be the fault of mine that so beastly I behave?
Her heart is pure, my action base;
I must start in my sin to trace,
Or I'll mourn and weep and moan upon her grave.

"A genius! A star! A poetess for fair and for good!" they all yelled out in ecstacy after they had first emptied their cups and glasses, and refilled them again. "Our friend is a wonderful woman, and I'll treat. Where is Charley?"

"I'll tell you what to do, Ada," my brother-in-law spoke up. "Make some music to that song, have it printed, and come over to my saloon and sing it. That'll draw a crowd. The Swedish sailors will all buy a copy each, a dollar a copy, and if not I'll make them. That song is great. It is a Sara Bernhardt lost in you, Ada. Why didn't you stay on the Bowery where you belong, instead of investing in real estate? I don't know what it is all about, but you need money and so do I, and what is the difference if they understand it or not as long as we get the money?"

As I had known my brother-in-law to be a good hustler I thought I'd take his advice. I sat up the whole night and wrote down the rudiments to the music, with the assistance of my zither, and the following morning I went down town and found a publisher by the name of H——, and for the sum of thirty dollars he asserted that he was capable to make a wonderful piece of work from the rudiments I showed him and I was, of course, in high glee.

About thirty days after this occurrence, coming up from the cellar, I heard Elsa playing the Tannenbaum, an old German melody, on the piano. I took the broom and hit with the handle in the ceiling, as I was not in the humor to listen to it.

"Why, Ada, that's your music from the composer. It just arrived and I thought I'd try it. The music is rather familiar—I think it is pretty, though."

"Familiar and pretty, though. Are you not fooling me,

Elsa? You don't mean to say that you were playing 'My Husband's Dream' just now. You frighten me."

"Come up and play it yourself, and you'll see if I am fooling or not."

"God, oh, my God! What is to be done now? Everything will be taken away from me if I don't show up with some money soon. They will come up after the piano and the rest will follow. Why, Elsa, that isn't even my own words, at least they are topsy turvy. He'll foreclose the property on me—water, Elsa! I am dying."

"Ada, pshaw! That's nothing," said Elsa, "the man has to return the thirty. I'll make him. And the mortgage-holder will have to give you more time. What is the matter with them down there, anyhow? The property improves most wonderfully in value, and I don't see —give me a nickel and I'll be off and be back as soon as I can."

Elsa went, but took a peep into the Old Willow Tree, and returned hours and hours after that, beastly intoxicated.

"I'll let you know in a couple of days," I said to my neighbor, who rang the basement bell and inquired if I felt inclined to take the price he had offered. He could stand in his entrance and hear everything that was going on in my basement.

"Skip, man," I said then, and wrote to all my debtors again and gained a few days' time, with more interest to be paid to the "halsabschneeders." I let Elsa sleep off her jag and went up to set the front parlor aright, as it was again idle and had to be rented. A lady upstairs came into the parlor to get her mail.

"What is that?" she said, looking at the pile of music lying on the piano, and I told her of my misfortune by the composer.

"Give me a sheet and I'll show it to my husband," she said. "He writes his own music for the stage—we are theatrical and leave here for Atlantic City. I'll let you know what my husband thinks of your poem before we leave your house."

A week later they said adieu and left for Atlantic City, and did not allude to my composition whatever, and I took it for granted that I'd better forget it, and so that

very evening burned my thirty dollars' worth of fame and fortune in the grate, sitting and watching my great plan fly away forever.

It was now August and I did all I could with the house, trying to get a better class of tenants in the future. I was just busy painting the grating of my basement window with some Paris green which I found in the cellar, and which apparently had been lying there for years.

I drew forth a lot of comment from the passers-by, of course, seeing a woman painting the outside of a house, but I closed my ears and painted away. A painter's wagon came along and stopped in front of the house. The men watched me for a while with curiosity. They seemed to be arguing that I was meddling with what they should have done, and they called out, asking if I belonged to the Union. This joke drew a lot of children on the street around me, and my neighbor, whom I dreaded more than my mortgage-holder, also on the scene. The letter carrier came and handed me a letter and, glad to find an excuse to enter the house, I took the letter and went inside.

I threw the letter upon the table without looking at it. I thought it came from down town, as usual, and that I knew its contents. I sat down in the corner and watched the children, hoping they would soon disappear, so as I could finish my job, and then I saw my friend Elsa stalking in on her high heels, muttering to herself as she saw the new line my industry had taken. She was sober.

"You are a wonderful woman," she said. "Why don't you open the letter and read it?"

"What is the use of reading it? There isn't a cent in my pocket. What——"

"DEAR MADAM:—When resting in Atlantic City I met with a gentleman and his wife by the name of Speer. They had a copy of your composition, 'My Husband's Dream.' We——"

"Hold your terrible gin gape, woman! My dream, my dream! They had a copy of my dream—— "We looked it over and thought it exceedingly pretty and you would

greatly favor me if you would send me a copy before I sail for Europe with a theatrical company——"

"What is the matter with you, Ada? Are you dying?"

"Heavenly angels look down upon Mrs. Speers and the man and the copy, and the banker's daughter. Elsa, here is a nickel. I had one, but was afraid to let you know. Go and get it, and leave me alone for awhile. My Lord, my Lord! Take my humble thanks out from the depths of my broken heart. Can you bless people on earth like that? What can I do for you in return? Put it into my heart, as I am not clever in doing what is right. Shall I stop that horse-beating out there? Yes? Shall I put the stableman who owns the horses on the bum? Yes? Am I allowed to go to Udewalla in Sweden and pray on my mother's grave? Yes? Can I drop a nickel to the little starving children on the street wherever I go? Yes? Whenever I meet with a miserable unfortunate drunken outcast, can I give him a dime for good luck? Yes? If I see a bad boy torture a homeless cat or dog, can I lick him? Yes? Will I rent a large *Magasine* some place and can I there preach and tell the people what I think? Yes? And what I think, is it right? I think so, let me hear it."

"I shall prove the needless terror of hell, if one live in righteousness; that You have given us Paradise already on earth; that is, if your heart is free from sins and without remorse and regret, and that money is not everything. A little money, isn't it? Yes, and that they must not think that to obtain money they dare rob and swindle themself to it, thinking we will have time enough to say a prayer before we die, and we will be forgiven. You ain't such a softy as that, sir. No, and that they ought to pass through the same misery which they have inflicted on others before. You are going to forgive them? Yes? And will you forgive me that I was a Bowery dive singer? Yes? But let me hear the reason why you sang on the Bowery.

"Because I worshipped my mother, but I was sore against her. She had belittled me and I wanted vengeance and justice. My mother told her friends that I was no one and nobody. I was wilful, she said—a sloth, good for nothing but climbing rocks, trees and playing with the boys instead of the girls; that I always looked untidy,

neglected my little sister and lived on grass only. I'll show you, mother. I thought how you have wronged me, that I can do more than climb rocks and play with the boys. I can sing, mother, and go to home and kiss and hug you, but I wanted to make a hit. I wanted to be dressed magnificently then—finest of linen, the finest velvet and cashmere, exquisite colors—things that no one else could buy. My only perfume was the gentian, Johan Maria Farina—all others offended my nostrils. I wanted a diamond on my finger, purest water, a ruby in my locket. I wanted trunks full of books by my favored writers, pictures a la Quintian. My dear sir, talking about Quintian, I am telling you a lie, sir, and I could cry when I see your beautiful vision up there, like Quintian did, but I did not mean to lie. It was in Germany, on the Rhine, I was, when building these castles in the air—not on the Bowery. I went on the Bowery later and after you got sore on me for being too proud and punished me for it. But didn't I suffer bravely, though? Yes, and the Echo from the Swedish mountains. May I——"

"Hush, he's coming. Get up and don't let him see that you are as crazy as all that!" shrieked Elsa, my bosom friend, coming in. Yes, there he was, my blond angel in reality. I worshipped the rascal.

"Sit down, sir," I said very indifferently, "and Elsa, please re-read that letter—I mislaid my glasses. I did not quite understand the meaning of it."

"MISS ADA BLUM,

"DEAR MADAM:—When resting in Atlantic City I met with a gentleman and his wife by the name of Speer. They had a copy of your composition 'My Husband's Dream.' We looked it over and we were impressed. You would greatly favor me if you would send me a copy before I sail for Europe—go with a theatrical company. We return in two years. Yours sincerely,

"JOSEPH O'MARA."

"Shall I open, Ada? It may be one of your friends? Don't blame it on me if——"

"Open the basement door at once, sir."

"How are you, Josey Staley? Your dream about

Charley and myself came true. Read the letter, Elsa. Open, sir."

"How are you, Kittie Sweeny? No growler working to-day. Read the letter, Elsa. Open the door, sir——"

"I am on Blackwell's Island, Ada, and I may as well tell it—but now I can make my home with you and you will take care of me, and as I have said right along, I'll will you everything! You deserve it, and you shall have it. The pawn ticket of my diamond locket, my property in Staten Island, my wardrobe, my poems, Thomas Moore and all the rest of it, which would have been coming to you long before had you been willing to accept it. Give me your Bible, Charley—give me Ada's Bible. I'll kiss it and swear off after I have been treating you all. Charley, go and get it."

"My prophecy will come true! You shall suffer, woman, and your sufferings begin now," mumbled Elsa, who sat and rested in a somnambulistic sleep. "You shall suffer, but the heart of queen which you go in—no—it won't kill you. I saw you kneel on a cool, marble floor wiping your streaming eyes with a scrubbing rag. I see you writing and wiping your streaming eyes with the back of your hand. I see—I see—I see Charley, your idol, coming with a tin can in his hand. I see, ah, I see, and in his right hand pocket he holds his right hand—he carries something; what is it? Joy, it is booze and smells like booze; it *is* booze!"

"Did you get Ada her Cicle cigarettes, Charley? Yes?"

"Did you get some beef stew, Charley? No? Well, never too late to mend. Get a big pot full. Here's the money."

"I cannot be mean now, Charley. If she don't get it here, out she'll go. She has been scrubbing in the Grand Union Hotel for some time and saved every penny—to come here and see me. She has about $10 in her rags. That has to be blown in—she'll go to the saloon and be paralyzed in an hour, and be on the sidewalk and a term on the Island. So soon as her money is spent she'll sober up, you know."

"Don't sit and suck on that butt, Ada; get her a fresh pack, twenty for a nickel. Here is a ten bill. I worked

hard for it, so let it go. Don't forget the matches, or you have to go again."

"I'll have your roof mended for you, so don't worry. Did you get your house insured? No? How about the toilet? Very bad? Indeed? Well, I'll take one room and pay you for it. I don't mind if it leaks. Did you pay something on the interest? No? Well, here is a dollar. How about the piano? Still here? and the zither? Only one string on it. But you have the zither key and the ring. Well, that will do you. Why don't you have the grates fixed? I smell no smoke in the house—you fixed that anyhow. There is Charley, he always gets a good pint. Go and get a pig's head and don't forget the cabbage, or you have to go again. Have you got wood? Open the door for Josey, Charley."

"You look fifteen years younger, Ada, since I saw you last. Have you been eating grass again? Let me tell you my dream. I dreamed that you were standing on a peak of a rock and Charley was trying to climb up to you, but he slipped and slipped and slipped. Why don't you drink, Charley? I'll give you a little straight, anyhow. Here is a dime. I hocked my coat to get that dime and carfare for my husband—he was promised a job in Astoria, and was to go to work right away—ah, Jesus! there he is! Bad luck again, poor fellow."

"Get me some matches, Staley. And don't forget to come back again. Well, well, Kitty Sweeney."

"How many lawsuits have you to attend to, Ada? And, have you got a good lawyer? I gave my property in a street down town to a party. He got my property, and through that piece of promising ground in Staten Island got away up in the world and I—well, I don't mind if I have to scrub for a living—it's honest earned. Go and get a pint, Charley, and don't forget the matches. Where is your cat, Ada? Did you hock it? Poor Staley, look at him. He is fast asleep in the corner there, poor fellow. Poor, poor Elsa, how she nods. How can she sleep like that sitting in a chair? I am getting sleepy myself. There is Charley and the cat in his bosom and the tin can in his hand—the other hand is in his pocket. Elsa, get the pig's head ready and I'll take a nap myself while I wait for it. Don't forget the cabbage or you'll have to go again."

"I am glad that they are all sound asleep. Now you and I can have the pint to ourself, Ada. You have to sleep yourself, my dear woman—now more than ever. Yes, take some of this beer. I'll see to the house. It will be all right. Drink, don't worry. I am here to look after your interests, as usual."

"Madam, madam! Wake up. Your cellar is full of water!"

"My cellar full of water? Where is Charley, and where are the others? Take me in the arms and raise me up. Lumbago, beer and friends again. Yes, indeed, the cellar is half full of water and it's slowly increasing. Where can that water come from? Ah, I see. The plumber was here yesterday! The washtubs were stopped up. I had only two dollars in my pocket. He had to cut a hole in the cellar, he said, otherwise he could do nothing. The water from the bathroom and all the water they use upstairs is coming through the hall in the cellar. What can be done now? Nothing, nothing, thank you, lady, and so long! The house will be unhealthy in a week. The cellar full of stagnant water, the few people upstairs must be notified. They have to move and I have to move. Yes, there is no hope any more. He'll get the property after all —after all! Well, he shall have it."

Tearing down an old, red plush hanging and wrapping it over my head, I went into my neighbor's door and sold and lost everything I had in this world, and that is the history of the house 144.

CHAPTER VII

THE MAN WITH THE HIDEOUS TONGUE

"THE above named defendant, in answer to the complaint herein of the above named plaintiff, denies each and every allegation contained in said complaint; first, denies that she promised one hundred dollars, but promised him fifty to protect her interest in a suit, vice G—— versus herself. The above named service he agreed to render for the sum of fifty dollars. Being desirous to avoid a lawsuit, and obliged thereat in financial difficulties, she agreed to sell the property in question to Mr. G——. She noti-

fied the lawyer, Mr. W——, of her intention to sell her property and requested his attendance of the sale for the protection of her interests.

"The aforesaid lawyer, Mr. W——, failed to appear, and the mortgage-holder on said property, being himself a lawyer, attended to the sale, and received the fifty dollars for his services rendered. Testimony of this the mortgage-holder and others present at the sale can be secured to the truth of the above statement. As he rendered no services, but neglected to do so when asked, our petitioner respectfully asks for the dismissal of the above complaint."

A doctor, an expert in nervous breakdown, and who had gained experience by studying human nature, and cured most cases with consolation, had handed me this petition to take to court on the coming Saturday, hoping for the Judge to read it and give me a hearing, so as I could prove that the petition told the truth. The session was over and the lawyer W—— had not showed up in court, and I was very disappointed, as I wanted very badly to expose him as a warning to other lawyers who when they know that a poor, lone widow happens to have something worth while left, to squeeze it out of her and keep up soaking and bleeding, and her only hope then is to go and find an honest lawyer to get her out of the spiderweb.

As I had in my life come across capable, honest lawyers but had lost their address, I went to this lawyer, Mr. W——. He had a good reputation, I was told.

Caressingly squeezing this petition in my cold, lame and sooty fingers, I watched the court proceedings, and saw that the Court prepared to go for their luncheon.

"Not at all. Wait a little, you hear?"

"Sir, I want to see you," and staggering over to an officer in attendance, I held out in front of his face the petition.

"She is drunk," they thought. And the officer pushed me back. That hurt my pride and got my blood in circulation and gave me strength enough to call out loud enough to draw the attention of the Judge to me:

"What is the matter with you? I came here to pay my debt"—thinking of the old saying that "money talks,"

and right enough, the Judge lingered and I was admitted to his presence and handed to his honor the petition.

"You say here that you do not owe Mr. W—— anything," and his keen eyes searchingly and swiftly tried to size me up.

"Neither I do," I said, "but I thought that I had better come up here and face him and ask him if it was one hundred dollars instead of fifty. He made me sign that morning when his runner came up to the basement in the house 144, and there found me in a most pitiful condition, stiff, sore and nearly sightless—no one to assist me, and telling him in my feeble way that it was absolutely impossible for me to sign anything as I couldn't see without my glasses, which some one had borrowed from me and, as usual, had forgotten to return, and that I did not change my name from Mrs. Stella Preckwell to Mrs. Shea on account of non-payment of debts, but to escape my friends and their beer can and whiskey bottles, and to ask him if it was the image of an angel with a voice like the harp of David in heaven who sent this scoundrel of a lawyer after me to plague me again, and to tell him to try to notify his friends, the other lawyers, that it was no use to try to start into any business with me, that I had no more real estate, thanks to God, and wanted to be left alone after this so as I could have a chance to lie down in my bed and die as a human being."

"Have you got anything to pay with?" the Judge interrupted me. "You state here that you have no money."

"Yes, sir; I have twelve hundred dollars in the bank and a well-going furnished room house for temperance light housekeeping people, 323 East One Hundred and Sixteenth Street."

"Mr. W—— is not here in court, and you can't pay when you haven't got anything. Case dismissed."

I perceived the word "dismissed," and some one turned me around and out I was in the street again.

The worst of all misfortunes which may befall you—still worse than to be in the hands of a lawyer, is when you fall into the hands of a "mixed ale" party, but so I did, yes.

Previous to this occurrence a young Irish woman, by the name of Eliot, had taken a room on the top floor.

She was the mother of a nice boy who was the assistant to a large butcher concern in a store on Third Avenue, and a cute little baby. Her husband was a street laborer and on a strike, and had to get along with the wages which the boy received by the butcher, and that she was absolutely temperance.

The thought flashed into my head to let this woman take charge of my business until I felt well enough to do it myself.

After giving her all directions necessary concerning the house and tenants therein, I laid down, hoping to get some sleep for once in my life, and had just commenced to doze away when some one shocked me and announced that my people were all going to move, there and then, as they would not live in a house where there was growler working going on.

"Growler working?" I said in surprise. "Where, when, who?"

"In the kitchen, by your new housekeeper lady."

I went into the kitchen, and there right enough stood the Prince of Darkness in all his glory on the kitchen table, in shape of an old, battered-looking tin can filled with mixed stuff, seemingly.

Mrs. Eliot stood up and introduced to me her sister Maggy; her oldest brother, John; her husband's sister's oldest brother, John, and a couple more Johns, Marys and Maggys, who had heard of her good luck and had come to congratulate her and, of course, treat her,—as an exception only.

I explained to my housekeeper that under no circumstances, even if her husband's greatest great-grandfather's eldest brother's eldest brother John, and his two sisters, Mary and Maggie, came right out from the invisible to congratulate her, they could do so with their highest of pleasure to themselves and her, but I wouldn't allow them to come down, or maybe up, from their abode and into my temperance kitchen and rush the growler. *Punctum and punctillita.*

"And, madam, pardon me, but you are from me hired in the purpose to take all my worriment from my mind, so as I can get some necessary sleep, and if you are not obeying my commands I shall very hastily see to it that you

will be with all the punctuality due to you fired out; so long, lady."

It worked! I was slumbering, but what a terrible yell from a little baby's voice, shrieked out, quivering, complaining, sing-song: "Mother, I am hungry. I want something to eat."

Something hit on the door to my room where I was lying and broke. It was glass—an empty whiskey-bottle which was seemingly aimed for the baby's head, to stop her from hanging her mother for the crime that she was starving the child to save the incoming boy's wages for the beer can.

Now I was wide away again, but by thinking over matters, how I could get rid of this creature without any disturbance in the neighborhood, I dozed away again, but the most hideous dreams commenced to torture me. I saw the ugliest of sights and physiognomies reaching out their tongues toward me in bed where I was lying, and disappear and reappear in quick succession, like moving pictures.

One of the faces, a most hideous visage, kept standing there in the double doors to the room. His tongue was hanging from his leprous mouth. I tried to open my eyes and reach out my voice and tell the fellow to begone, but seeing the tongue commencing to move and wag I held my own tongue and let him have the floor, as the poor man had seemingly something to say to me. Who the devil was it? Yes; it was the husband of my new housekeeper. And, what did he want? He wanted me to put a piece of food on that diabolical red tongue of his. He was hungry, he said.

"Run over to the saloon and get a can of beer, poor man! When people have been starved for a long time they will suffer more from thirst than hunger. I am very thirsty myself, and Borden's milk bottle is not in the window this morning."

That was the word of magic. The man in the door changed him at once into a very sensible and decent-looking human being, and I raised myself up to a sitting position and——

"Give me a swallow from that tin can, Mister Eliot, and then give away the rest, after you have satisfied your

thirst. Judging from that tongue of yours, it must be unbearable. Then tell your wife to come in and get her dispossess papers, that is, if she don't want me to halloa through the windows for an officer to take her away from my sight."

What was in that beer I drank? One good swallow only I took to quench my thirst, but anyhow I was paralyzed. I could not move. I produced money and sent for clam juice. The clam juice didn't come. I produced money and sent for Dr. O'Brian. Dr. O'Brian didn't come. I sent for the ambulance. The ambulance came and I was haled to the Harlem Dispensary, and there I was received as a helpless drunkard and imbecile and cigarette fiend. What happened to me there I shall cut out, but not long after that I was haled to Bellevue in Twenty-second Street, or Twenty-sixth, and there I was laid on the floor among a heap of misfortunates with empty stomachs, and I suffered the tortures of hell until the following day at about two o'clock in the afternoon, when the doctor came to look after our welfare.

"Thank God for that!" I sighed when I saw the doctor's face. "You are no dummy," and I was right.

He stood before me and I stood up and bowed and tried to look my best. "Pardon me, doctor, but I am here by mistake. May I explain how I came to be here?"

"Yes," he replied simply.

"Well, I am a sufferer from insomnia. I have passed through extreme misery of all varieties in latter years and have been growing despondent. I thought that I was done with sorrow and trouble when I moved from Thirty-third Street to escape the growler and my friends in Harlem. I thought, I can live in respectability as a recluse in my basement and make my living by renting rooms to temperance people only, and did so the whole winter, until my sweetheart—well, I'll cut that out, but then a lawyer, an old acquaintance, wanted to see me in the court. Then I met with a mixed ale party, and she—it was a woman—and she, her husband and her children put me on the bum for fair and for good, and I suffered one night from nightmare. I saw a man standing in my room with a tongue in his mouth, and reaching it out toward me in my bed. I yelled out in terror and took a swallow from the beer

can, which he held concealed behind his back, and had you been there, doctor, you would have done the same, and here I am before you, sir, and my humble pardon and your kind consent for my release from this very respectable place, which I presume is the alcoholic ward in the Bellevue Hospital, one of the greatest concerns in the world."

"Where do you live?"

"No. 323 East 116th Street."

"Can you find your way home? Yes? Well, I'll give an order for your relase."

"What's your name?" I was asked a few minutes afterwards.

"Mrs Shea."

"And where do you live?"

"No. 323 East 116th Street.

"Can you sign your name?"

"Yes, if you will put your finger on the spot where you wish me to sign. I'll sign well enough, but it will do you no good, lady. My signature isn't worth a puff. I'm no property owner any more, and——"

"Sign." I did. "Can you find your way home?"

"Sign." I did. "Did you have anything in your pocket?"

"Yes, there is my scissors and my thimble, and a summons from a lawyer by the name of Mr. W——, two bank books, Harlem and Battery savings banks, containing the amount of $1,200, and an old love letter."

"Sign."

"Oh, I forgot, there is nineteen cents and a postal card also in my pocket in the underskirt."

"Sign." I did, and my belongings were brought to me.

"Is it all right?" she asked.

"Yes," said I, "it is all there."

"Sign." I did.

She tied a down comfortable, which I always had around me, in a bundle. I didn't need it—it was warm. She tied a prison towel over my head, and she and the other young nurses made fun of me, which I didn't begrudge, as I thought it was funny myself, and this lady had saved my life by ordering them to give me a glass of

milk and to dress me so I shouldn't freeze to death. She was a head nurse, and in the meantime I was awaiting the doctor. I felt very grateful, of course, and grasped her well-kept hand in my clumsy and dirty fingers, and with great enthusiasm I pressed her hand to my heart, and saying that I'll never forget her kindness and, forgetting where I was, I gave her my promise that I'll be up and see her as soon as possible. I meant this very earnestly, indeed, but the young nurses who were there to assist the head nurse, busted out laughing and I took a tumble myself and said a hasty good-by. One of the little good-natured, freshy nurses calling after me to beware of the man with the hideous tongue, and his beer can and my housekeeper with her mixed ale party.

CHAPTER VIII

ROCKAWAY BEACH, A SEQUEL TO THE MAN WITH THE HIDEOUS TONGUE

I WAS born a roamer. I left home when I was very young, and since then I travelled from one place to another. If there were unpleasantness crossing me in any form or manner, off I went to some other place, but now, on account of ill health, I stuck fast—I could roam no more.

But now my brain was bad—yes, I was suffering with weakness of the brain and nervous break down. "I better try to help me out of that myself," I thought. The doctors are, some of them, inexperienced—they are looking for lunatics and seemingly glad if they have found some one whom they can denounce as one. I am sure that happens over and over again.

Yes, and in the month of May, 1903, I drew the little cash I still had from the Bowery Savings Bank. Then I threw away my rags and dressed up, bought a fine-looking travelling bag. I put a large quantity of cough mixture—a bottle of Duffy's Malt whiskey, some beef juice and a few raw eggs and a novel into that bag. There I stood and said good-by to my surroundings, and with a

tear-stained face and cracked voice I sang out my sorrow to them as a memoir, and then I stood on the street and looked up and down. "Where will I go to?" I thought. "I can only do what I used to do years ago, when I was young. I'll go toward the sun and let fate do the rest." And I boarded a car. It did not in the least interest me where the car went to. I sat there with my satchel on my lap, looking before me on nothing, thinking of nothing, until the car stopped and I was told to go out, which I did.

I was staggering. They turned and looked at me. "She has taken too much," they thought, which I had. I had taken a teaspoonful of Duffy's Malt, according to directions, and that was too much for me. I was too weak to stand it. So they were right.

Looking before me I saw a park and staggered over there and sat down on one of the benches.

"I'll see you in the park yet," said a beggar to me when I refused him money. He snorted at me—his prophecy came true. There I was, sitting, sick, homeless and helpless in the park—no, I was not helpless. I had $1,200 in my stocking.

Look out for that cop, Ada; he has his eyes on you, and for Heaven's sake don't start in to cry or he'll have you in his clutches, and they'll send you, God knows where to. Beware, woman, beware! I must hide some place before it is too late—too late—the hardest words in the language—too late! I read some place that a clever fortune-teller could pick out lucky and unlucky letters in the alphabet. Which letter shall I try? We'll start in with A—Ada. It is a bad letter for fair. B—beauty; no, I have lost all my former attraction. C—constable; look out, woman, he is watching you behind a tree. D—damnation. Just as bad as the cop there. E—eternity! eternity! My brain is too weak just now. F—freedom. Yes, I am free to go where I like, do what I want, but that is, I think, what makes me so miserable. I am alone, alone! No one to speak to; no one to confide in; no one to seek advice from—they do not understand me. Yes, the more I speak the less they know what I am talking about, and they all think I am either intoxicated or looney. Is there no one like myself? With the same

thoughts and feelings? No, and I don't want their company. They bore me and the end of it is they have some selfish purpose in view. They start in to borrow something right in the beginning of our friendship. "Can I have the lend of your scissors?" "Yes," I have to say, of course; I cannot refuse my friend the lend of my scissors. "Are you using your thimble?" "No, of course I'm not." "Have you got an umbrella? My husband has to go out and it looks like rain." "Suppose I took the notion to go out myself," I think, but I say nothing and hand her over my umbrella with a smile. "I forgot to tell you, I can't pay you the rent this week, but you won't mind, will you? We are good friends and you know I'm good for it. I had to get me a pair of corsets." "Yes," I say, and grind my teeth. And the friendship in a man! Lewdness! At least the men I have met with; so I think to be alone is preferable, but I am so lonely—so lonely. Freedom! Where was I? Yes, G—grave. The grave, Ada; that is your only hope, my poor woman.

H—hell. Shysh! Shut up. I—— His image, his image; I used to see his image before me, but we are parted, parted forever, and his image don't sway for my vision any more. No; forget it. J—jealousy. Yes, that is the course of my lady. I was jealous, and maybe I had no reason to be jealous; but K—kalsomine. Not at all. I don't paint and powder any more. For whom should I bother? L—lament. Yes, but not here in the park. M—money; money. Yes, the little I have left. What can I do with it alone and in a sore dilemma, sick and sorrowful? N—name and nobody he called me. No one and nobody. That was our last word of parting. Am I nothing at all? No, I suppose not. Well, O—ordained. Am I ordained to this continued suffering? Yes, I suppose I am. P—Paradise. Yes there is a Paradise at least; that is if one can eat substantial food and drink plenty of water only; then you can work with brain or body and you'll get tired and you'll sleep—sleep. If I only could sleep. No, I only slumber now and then, and then I am plagued with the nightmare and see hideous sights before my face. Q—yes, that is the question. Where will I go to? R-R-R—R reminds me of something. R—what was it? I hear a violin around me and

I see a sweet, severe face, the chin resting on a white silk handkerchief, and both caress the violin through his glasses. I can see two noble, brown eyes watching me on the stage. With his right arm he holds the violin bow and caressingly and very carefully he strokes the violin until he has let me find my B, *moll*, tune and then we both join in together and tell each other through wonderful music how good, how true, what a happy life we could live together. But no; we both drank beer—could not afford to buy good beer, but had the tin can filled with cheap stuff, and then didn't we both smoke cigarettes? Yes, we had enjoyed a cigarette before our acquaintance, which is no harm whatsoever, but we overdid it. Between every kiss we had to take a puff—a kiss and a puff, and a kiss and a puff. Then the kiss was too long and the cigarette went out, and striking a match we took no time to let the sulphur burn off and sucked the poison from the burning match into our system. Heavens! How many times have I done that, even lately, and that was the cause of it; that only a puff from the cigarette made me deadly sick, so I got frightened, threw away the butt between my fingers in horror and for hell or Heaven, and sank on my knees, called before my vision the image of our Lord and protector Jesus Christus, to hold His protecting hand over my head if I should happen to absent-mindedly, hastily snap up a butt and striking a match suck up to my poor, weak, but active brain nicotine and sulphur, which, both combining, is sure to send me to hell, where I do *not* belong. Then we got deadly sick, and we had to attend to business and drank strong black coffee to make us going. And we knew that coffee in great quantities produces insomnia, and night and day we were in delirium and imagined horrid things. I, for instance, imagined that he was the devil and had one of his horns in his pocket, which he held there in his hand, caressing and ready for the chance to poke it into my clouded and nicotine and sulphur-steeped brain, and I stood ready—ready with my fists to meet his diabolical assault, and I hit him in his glasses and he, of course, returned it—not with one of his broken-off horns, but with that lovely, trusting bow of his, which he used—the violin bow, so beautifully used. Then I had a sore, bleeding nose, and poor Ladgen Carl

had no glasses and no money to buy any, and we sat sobered up and weeping and wondering how we could have sank so, but the butts and bad matches were always at hand, and we both started in to poison ourselves, and the same scene was repeated. Then God thought He better part us for some time, which He did—which he did. Then—what was I talking about? The cop? No, the letter R. Rocks. Shallhatta Waterfall at Stockholm? No, Rocks—I think I'd better take a spoon of this wonderful cough mixture—I am choking—Rocks—Rockaway Beach, Rocky way. A rocky way—way, all hills and chasms and wild, beautiful sceneries. I'll pick out a cave and there I'll creep in and lie down and die, and whoever may find me he will feel my pulse, no my leg—I mean to see for sure if I am stiff; then he'll discover my boodle in the safe and have a good time, which I don't begrudge him or her. Is he or she honest they'll bury me decently. If not—well, what do I care? The people in Potter's Field are the first who will be welcomed by the bearer of the key. Rocks! "Mister, which way do I turn if I want to go to Rockaway, please?"

"Rockaway? Oh, yes; turn around to your left, then take your right-hand street until you come to the corner, then again turn around and you'll see the boat before you and there you are."

That's rather hard for my memory just now. Suppose you took a very small swallow from the other bottle? Could you stand it, Ada? Yes, I can like a man, and the large quart bottle was in my shaky grasp, and the swallow was down.

"What are you doing there? Take a move on you or I'll lock you up."

"Yes, sir, thank you very much, sir," I answered the park policeman, who stood near my side, and I made a spring, and with a sweet smile I winked my other eye to the cop, gave him a handkiss and said: "Ah, there! Stay there!" The Duffy's Malt had done that, and I huddled off.

Some way or other I came on the boat, and there on the boat I had a snooze. "Rockaway!" I heard some one calling, and I crept out after the other passengers, and there I sat in the sand. I opened the satchel and took

some Peruna, as my stomach started in to cough, so as I was nearly choking, but as it did not relieve me I took a swallow from the other bottle. That was better. I started in to sing, and of course to weep. There is a good many things can be done in the sand, you know, sir, and I started in to sing and yell and cry out my sorrow to the swells, which I think could hear me as they came nearer, and by opening my mug good and hard the sea air sneaked into my stomach and not long after I drank two raw eggs. Then I opened the umbrella and kept up gaping and looked into the valise. Ah, oh dear! A novel, by, and for sure and for fair it was by Emma Southworth, "The Family Dome."

As Emma knows how to set a good table which will arouse your appetite, the book came very handy. Not long and I was on the road up to look for a meal, and got it in the Hotel Klondike, on Sea Beach Walk, and there also I took shelter for the night, and there I had twelve hours sleep.

The following morning I went out and sat down and had breakfast—yes I did, a regular meal, for the first time in many years, and looking down on the other side of the street I saw a sign and called Mrs. Klondike over and told her to read the sign, as my eyes were very weak.

"We hust! And hast du gesh? You will make a good business in that hotel, and I will call the owner here so you can see him."

"Go ahead," I replied. "It don't matter. If he wants to come let him come."

The agent came and I agreed that I would rent the hotel as soon as I had telegraphed to my old friend Jack in Brooklyn.

My telegram was sent off, and there, there far distant I saw the red and bloated face of Jacob Larsen coming among other passengers from the train.

This old friend of mine, Mr. Jacob Larsen, robbed me of every cent I had in this world and left me behind to perish, but I have to tell you how he accomplished this great work.

My friend Jack is a big, fat man, and one can see him and know him miles away on the color on his face. It is violet. This Jack could make himself exceedingly

pleasant and amiable, and his face was smiling all over when he saw me. "Go over to the People's Hotel and take a look at the place, Jack," I said.

"What! That strange feeling again! What can that be? And—yes, mother's spirit flashed before my face just now. Pshaw, a sick brain, that's all," I thought. "Well, Jack?"

"Take the place by all means, Ada; all new improvements and the landlord is ready for you to sign the lease, and we can move in there, and then I'll do all I can to help you, and you'll never be sorry that you sent for me. I am your brother-in-law's brother. We were sweethearts once, and would have been man and wife to-day, only your dead sister, Zela, interfered and influenced you to think ill of me. But I love you with the same ardent passion, and if you could give up Charley Gates we would get married there and then."

"Thank you, Jack; but we will cut that out."

"What! Oh yes; certainly. Here is some cash. Let's go and eat."

A platter with an extra large bone sirloin steak and French fried potatoes to match the bone sirloin and a half a dozen bottles of imported beer, etc.

"Oh, my!" I thought, "what will become of me? I am the one who have to pay for all that, but who is going to eat it?" By Jove, the bone sirloin, potatoes and beer disappeared behind handsome Jack's big mouth in no time; even the bone he ate. At least I did not see it on the platter, neither on the table cloth. I became sick and I returned alone to the Klondike Hotel.

"What do you think of that, Miss Ada Blum? I am so sorry, for one season would have made you rich if the season stays so fine as it is now."

"What is it, Mrs. Klondike?"

"People's Hotel is taken. As soon as they saw that big, handsome fellow was after it a man who had been hesitating the whole winter made up his mind to take it; come running as he turned his back to return over here, and signed the lease."

"Thank God for that, Mrs. Klondike. I am sick again and I am not fit for anything." I did not care to entrust my $1,200 into Jack's care after I had seen him dining.

It was in the autumn of 1903, as stated before, and it started in to rain, and poor me laid sick in bed among strangers, and I was in the hands of "my old friend Jack."

"I got another place, Ada, just as good. It's on the Boulevard, and all you have to do is to come with me and sign the lease. You can go so far. It's only to the agent's office, near the police station. Come; I'll help you out of bed. What? Don't mind me, as I told you before my love for you is only pure platonic. I'll help you to dress and if you can't walk I'll carry you up there."

"All new improvements," the agent commenced, seeing us enter his place. "Yes, everything is in good order. All necessaries for a hotel. You can take immediate possession."

"Very well, sir; this gentleman has seen the place and I rely on his judgment. Make out the lease and it will be signed."

"Why don't you marry me, Ada?" Jack whined in my ear, and removed from his pocket a large handkerchief and stroked it over his eyes. "Marry me, Ada, won't you?"

"I cannot marry you now, Jack. At least just now. My body is sick, my brain is weak and my heart is sorely wounded. But if—— Well, we'll see about it, Jack," I said consolingly in an undertone not to disturb the agent, who was sitting at his desk writing at the lease. "I can swallow laundry soap when my stomach gets too bad, and maybe a little plaster of Paris taken internally would heal the rent in my heart, but I shall, to show my gratitude for your kindness, make you, not my partner in life, but in business. That's something, ain't it, Jack? Mister, slam into that lease this gentleman, Mr. Jacob Larsen Hoagland; born in Stawenger, Norway; sailor by birth and bartender by profession; thirty-eight years old, very fat and well meaning, as my partner in the hotel business.

"Stop that crying, Jack, and I'll tell you what the Klondike said. You was a regular advertisement on the beach, and as soon as you looked at a place some one came and snapped it, and if we should get broke after all, you don't need to saw wood for my support, as you said you weigh 220 pounds and you have a strong arm for toil,

but you don't need to toil. Take a place by a real estate man and they can live on your income.

"Oh, that's the lease, hey? Read it, Jack, aloud, so I can hear what it says. What was that?" I gasped. "My mother's face again before me!" I looked at Jack and felt faint at heart. He had his face wide into the contract, and his neck and face were purple. His big, blue eyes were bulging from his head like the lobster which he bought for me on the night he robbed me. "That is all right, Ada," he spoke up at last. "Sign it."

"Read the lease aloud, sir agent," I said. "I like to know. You may have made some error." But no, I detected none whatever. I signed, Jack signed and the agent had $400 of my hard-earned money in his hand and an hour afterward we were in our new place. I crept up and went to rest and left Jack Larsen to attend to matters in our hotel.

After a while my friend Jack knocked at my door and said:

"I can't make a fire. There is no pipe on the cooking range, Ada. What shall I do? I want to make some coffee."

"We'll make some coffee holding the pan over the gas, Jack, dear."

"There is no gas in the house, and all the fixtures in the place are broken off and seemingly stolen during the night."

"Make me a cup of extraordinarily strong coffee on a few sticks of wood in a dry corner of the yard."

"There is no water in the house, but I gave one of the 'handy men' a quarter to go and get some; 'get a whole pail full of water,' he said, for that money, and he needed water, for he was going to wash windows."

"Save the water for drinking purposes, and tell the men to first clean the place from plaster. Is it very dirty? I saw it when I went through it, and give me a glass of water when the men come back."

"No, siree! Water will kill you, Ada; you are too sick to drink water. I need some cash, of course, and I'll get a few bottles of beer."

"Never mind the beer. Drive to the agent's office and tell him I want him immediately."

"I can do nothing for you. I acted in the behalf of the landlord. You write to him and I will be here to see to it. So long, my good woman. I hope you'll make out well."

The landlord sent a postal, and said: "I'll be over as soon as it stops raining," and that I should let the agent attend to the matter. The agent sent a card over and said he couldn't go out because it rained. No one showed up in the place because it rained. Nothing but half-rotten food could be bought on the beach because it rained. We had no water, light or anything in the line of comfort in the place because it rained. I wrote over to New York for a person to come and help me as companion. She sent a card that she'll be over as soon as it clears up a little. Jack went over to Brooklyn because it rained, and came back four days after because it was raining in Brooklyn. "I'll get you a fresh lobster, Ada. You can eat the roe and I'll eat the rest, and I'll get you plenty of beer in. I'm sure you can't lie there and starve because it rains.

"I won't stay long because it is raining out and I'll get wet through and through. You stay right where you are and cover yourself warm and good because it's raining very badly. There is only one bed in the place. I'll throw me alongside of you to-night. My love for you is too platonic to think of any wrongdoing. I always get the blues when it rains. Well, rain or no rain, I have to go and get you something to eat."

"I had to pay a dollar because it has been raining right along," he said. "Now, Ada, first take a swallow of whiskey. I bought it in the drug store, I did. It is Hunter's whiskey. It'll warm you and it'll make you eat."

I did, and the following morning I awakened alone in the house. I felt a draft in my wrapper in the back. I felt for the money which I carried there. I felt a large rent—my money was gone. It was knockout drops in the whiskey. He cut a hole in the back of my clothes and stole every cent I had in the world and left me behind to perish, and so you can see, my dear sir, or madam, that there is no luck in the letter R—at least not for me.

What next? Yes, I'll try another letter. R was un-

lucky, but what is the matter with the letter S? Suppose I take a move on myself and get out of bed and try again. Says Waterhouse:

"All shame to rugged heart and brain,
When Fate has pressed them sore;
Who cannot rise above their pain,
And cast the dice once more."

"And then be brave," says another poet. Well, Ada, you have got to get out of here, anyhow. You can't stay here forever. Suppose I try and get up. The sun is shining at last. Oh God! I am snow white, and this cannot be yourself, Ada! What has become of your eyes? They are away back in your skull, and your cheek bones are protruding. Your nose is swollen and a skin bag is hanging under your chin, and your cheek is hollow, and there isn't a thing in this place to swallow—not even a drink of water. There is no one calling on me any more because they see the cigarette butts lying around. Well, they take me for a very bad woman, I suppose.

Let them think what they like. I am glad that I am under no obligation to anyone. I'll take the twenty-five dollars that the landlord offered me for the lease and the twenty which my friend Jack paid deposit to the gas company, though he knew there was no gas fixtures.

Well, twice twenty-five makes fifty. I'll go and get the money and be off, and go toward the sun again and let fate and the letter S do the rest.

"What is the price of those two rooms, madam? Six dollars and fifty cents? Very well. Here's the money. I'll move in now. I'm just after burying my husband, and after I laid him in the grave there was very little money left, and I have now to look around how I can make my living? Could you, maybe, advise me, Mrs. —— Well, some other time will do. I'll take it for a few days and rest myself. My furniture will be here right away, and you don't need to bother; I'll take care of them myself when they come. So long," I said and went down and bought me a tin can and a pack of Cicle cigarettes and a loaf of bread and a glass. Returning I took one of the drawers out to the front room and placed it

on the floor in the best corner of the room, set the beer can, cigarettes, matches and the bread on the floor and sat down myself and took a long, long gulp from the beer can. How nice it was! Then I struck a match and lit a cigarette. That was still nicer. Then I took another draught from the tin can. Never mind the bread. I can't swallow it, so beer will feed me well enough, and I took another draught and another and another, until the tin can was empty, then I went down and had it filled again with mixed stuff, as it took me too much money to have myself knocked out so I could relieve my agony in sleep. They say that only cowards commit suicide. I think it takes a very brave person to do it, I mumbled, and that is all I can remember until one morning early I awakened, still sitting on that drawer. I was hungry. The bread was lying near me. I took it up to bite on it. It was hard—hard. Could the bread get so hard in one night? Impossible. It would take a month to harden this loaf of bread. Did some one exchange it? Did I lock the door? Yes, I did. Oh, oh, oh! Not a cent in my pocket. Yes, three cents is there among the rubbish of paper. I had nearly fifty dollars when I came in here and sat down on that box. I must go out and hang up the bartender for a pint until I can find my money, I thought, and took the can and sneaked out and down stairs, when I heard a voice calling after me,

"Come here, you! You can't rush that can any longer in my house. You are a disgrace to the neighborhood, and if you don't stop you have to get out, and besides your rent is due to-day."

"My rent due to-day, madam, impossible. I moved in yesterday only."

"Indeed, it is a month to-day since you took the rooms, and the landlord will be here after his rent."

"Madam, I deeply regret— but what is the use talking? Will you trust me another day until I come to my senses, and I'll do my best?"

"I'll keep your trunk, though; but no, there isn't anything in it worth the while, so my boy can carry it up stairs for you. Jimmy, come here to me. Carry up the trunk for the poor creature. I think I saw a piece of

soap in it and some old rubbish will enable you to wash your face."

"You are indeed good, madam," I said, and went and got three bananas for the three pennies I felt in my pocket. Then I went up stairs and looked at my trunk. It came from Baltimore. Baltimore, and I had it sent to New York from Rockaway Beach, and did not direct it to any place, as I did not know where I would find a home. How did that trunk take the notion to travel to Baltimore? Well, enough; by mistake, I suppose, but how in the name of everything that is good did the trunk come back to New York and right up here to me? The landlady's son carried it up, so it did not walk up. Where did I get that trunk, anyway? Yes, it belonged to a fellow who came to my house to rent a room. After paying the rent for the room he told me that he was a sailor, and had for many years saved up his money, so he could go to Sweden and there live in happiness with his old mother. Yes, then he came back in a day or two and told me he had met with a little young angel-looking fairy in the form of a girl with "all new improvements." He couldn't help it, he said. They went to a Raines law hotel and some hours afterward he stood in the front of the hotel absolutely bare of his belongings. Yes.

I let him come and go and take from the trunk all until the trunk was empty then. I was sick at the time; yes, and he came and went over to the couch where I was lying and took my hand in his. "Keep the trunk as a memory of me, madam; you will never see me again."

He then turned and groaned and went towards the door.

"Come here to me," I said. "A shelter and a crust you will find here until you——"

Oh, there! Oh, dear, he was gone! and I never saw him since. But oh, dear me; how silly I am. The man is in Baltimore, but intuition or something invisible told the trunk to follow the man to Baltimore, but the man, as he was "only a man," may have stranded and raised sail with another little angel girl, with all the new improvements, and the trunk got disgusted and returned to poor, poor me.

Yes, but the letter S. Yes, and the landlord will be

here for his money to-day. I don't want to see him. I'll go over to the park and think the matter over. There is no hope to think out a thought in this place. It is too noisy.

Now I am sitting in the park, and the beggars' prophecy is come true. S-S-S—Selma! My dead sister Selma. Where was I last night? I saw myself sitting on my sister's grave. I felt her skeleton form in my arms, pressed her to my bosom. She kissed me and said:

"The letter S is the one. Sing, Ada; go out in the world and wander and wander from yard to yard, and play your zither and sing. He will hear you. He is hid somewhere. As he is in letter for the electric chair. He only robbed you when you were dead, but me, he poisoned and let me be in Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and suffer the same poignant torture which the oil king was inflicting on those little baby kittens. The poison he had received from a foreign sailor friend. He used to threaten me with it when he was intoxicated because I interfered between him and you. I did not want my good, noble sister to marry a thief and male prostitute—no. Yes, Jacob Larsen Hoagland poisoned me, but he was the brother of my husband and he was your idol at that time. It would have killed my only darling sister to have seen her sweetheart die in the electric chair. Take this voice from my lips, Ada! My spirit, my voice is in you now. Go out and sing and travel all over the world, from North to South pole. He will hear you and see before his face my skeleton bones. How I shall creep in to him. How I shall torture him—not because he killed me—I was glad to die, as my husband, Emanuel Larsen Hoagland was not true to me, anyhow, but because I loved *him.*"

CHAPTER IX

THE SIGNING OF AN OPTION

MR. AND MRS. BROWN, by producing good references, rented the front parlor in my house and took possession of the room at once.

"Bills in my hand again, thank God," I thought, with the intention to watch them when they were going in and out. He was an elderly, well-dressed and exceedingly respectable-looking gentleman; she, large, stout, well-dressed and refined in appearance. They are seemingly all right, I thought. A week had passed and I had seen nor heard nothing wrong about my new tenants in the parlor. A sign I had hung in the front hall, which read, "To whom it may concern: Can rushing is not tolerated in this house, neither are intoxicated people. Rent must be paid in advance, or one day's notice to seek another home. No noisy or disorderly conduct in this house. Pay attention. Strictly obey this or I'll be up with the hatchet—a very large one—blade and club combined. Though crippled in body, in justice I have a strong arm.

"Signed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Landladies who let out furnished rooms for their living."

"It knocked on my door."

That knock! Ah, Heaven be praised! No, Heaven forbid.

"Who is there?" I called out in a vibrating voice. "What, who?"

A nasal voice responded: "The coal man."

The coal man. Pshaw, no one else. 'Twas the coal man, no one else; the Italian; the same magnetic touch in his knocks as the Echo from the Swedish mountains. "Come in," I called out indifferently, without looking up from my knitting. "Bring five cents worth of coal in and two cents of wood. No change to-night. Good-night, sir."

"Good-evening, Ada."

"Oh, my darling—not at all! Rascal! How dare you call on me again? If you sit down I'll dump you from the chair; so begone."

"In a short, little while, Ada; may I take me time to explain?

"I had a falling out with my sister, by whom I reside when I am absent from here, and had not a cent in my pocket and had to tramp all the way from Brooklyn. My feet pain me very badly. May I make use of your foot-pan to cool off my burning feet? Then I'll be off again;

that is, if you insist that I shall go; that is, of course, never to return to this house any more. It is a hopeless case to convince you how ardently I love you. Never mind a woman's looks, it is the good qualities a man appreciates in a woman. Five long years I have strived; I have done my utmost to please you. Ada, Ada, why, oh, why do you not trust in me?"

"I worship you, Charley."

"You say that to me over and over again, 'Charley, how I love you.' Well, if you do believe and trust in me let's get married. If I ask you to come with me to the City Hall now will you come? Five years from thirty-five to forty—the last five years until now I am a middle-aged man. I have devotedly spent those most precious five years in your house looking after your interests, and here I am a homeless wanderer.

" 'When in the wide world I wander,
My thought shall always be with you:
Oh, I love you better than none other;
Yes, Ada, I love you better than you knew.' "

It knocked at the door. Shall I open?

"I saw the sign in the hall, and thought I better pay attention," said Mrs. Brown with a smile, entering. "And could Charley go for me to the drug store? I hate to dress and don't feel very well. I must take something. Would you mind if he goes for me, Mrs. ——

"Why, certainly not, Mrs. Brown. Will you oblige the lady, Charley?"

"With the greatest of pleasure," Charley said, rose and with a bow to both of us followed the lady out of the room.

"Charley, Charley; she called him Charley. They have met before probably. Poor, sweet, handsome darling. How I love him. Yes, sweet pet. You shall have your foot bath. I myself shall prepare it for your poor, tired feet. Charley, she called him; strange, though. How gracefully he swings one limb over the other. What a fascinating movement. Charley, she called him. I wonder what I dreamed last night? Did I dream of angels? No, horror; I had, I think, a nightmare. What is that?

Some one was falling up stairs. Yes, they are shoving each other up stairs in the parlor. Fun only, but it has been so quiet up there. What does that hubbub mean? I better go up and listen. What keeps Charley so long away?"

"Open, Mrs. Brown; I am the landlady. It's too much racket in there, you'll break down the chandelier, I am afraid." No answer, so I opened the door and stood on the threshold in a very perplexed way, looking around the room.

The table before me was covered with full and empty whiskey bottles, cigarette butts and burned matches. My new red plush fancy tablecloth was ruined. The whiskey was dripping on my new carpet, bought on the instalment plan. In the lap of a very intoxicated man sat Mrs. Brown, also intoxicated. Both had very little clothes on. Charley was lying beastly drunk, prattling and glaring at me in the door where I stood and brandishing one of the legs broken off the newly-repaired sofa.

"My dear Mrs. Brown, your references asserted that you were a most desirable tenant for my parlor, and——"

"Down where you belong! Charley is an old friend of mine, and as long as I tip him I can do what I like in this house, and get out of that door or I'll soon show you that you have not Mrs. Brown to deal with but 'Big Lou,' the terror of the town."

"I beg your pardon, Madam Big Lou," I said with a shaking voice. "That man there on the lounge will be nabbed in the morning if he is still in my house. I shall put him under bonds to stay away from here. I intended to do so long ago, but his friend Jackson asserted that as soon as he is under lock and key I would relent and hock my socks to take him out again, and as I am well aware that my socks would not be accepted in the pawn house, I hesitated to do so, besides I hoped against hope that he would——"

"Throw her out, Lou. Throw her out. You got the courage to do it. She is half dead, anyhow. Or tell her to blow herself. I ain't going to sit down and listen to her idiotic rumble. Get at her, Lou; get at her, you and I, Lou; you and I."

The big woman snapped up a whiskey bottle and came staggering toward me, and I skipped.

Now, Ada, will you be good? Will this do you? Is there no shame in the man? Is he a parasite? Yes, I suppose so. I was in love with a man who is crippled in his mind. He is a parasite, and this lady is a prostitute. Well, I have to wait until morning. If I ask an officer to come in he'll refuse to do so; he refuses to go in a house without a warrant. In the station house they tell me to go to court and swear out a warrant and have her dispossessed. That will cost me three dollars, and there is only a nickel in my pocket. Is a man as rotten as all that, and are there no more respectable women? In New York references are no good. Fire one and there comes another and poke herself into my house. But I must sleep. Put yourself to sleep or you'll never get to Fifty-second Street in the morning. But where is the dime to get the sleeping draught? Oh, oh! I'll hang up Billy, on the corner, for a pint. But where is the can? If I only had a butt I could find that can in a minute. No butt, no can, no Charley, no marriage. No, no, no, no; but find something to get some beer in and sleep, woman. To-morrow morning you have to attend to business. Where is that tin can? The tin can after all. The tin can after all. Ah, here it is in the window. I planted flower seed in it. Well, take a sauce pot. If I don't sleep I'll go insane. Hawl L. Lulua, I moaned and fell in sleep in the old arm chair in the corner in my small front basement room. "Howl L. Lulua," I groaned, opening my eyes and realizing the misery which surrounded me. A paper warrant. Yes, there is such a thing as a paper warrant, I think. Five cents clam juice will help you on your feet, Ada; the nickel you have got. Go and get it. Howl L. lulua, I sang when returning with the oysters—he had no clams. Howl L. lulua, I moaned, casting my eyes over the Waldorf Hotel, seeing Swedish mountains in my imagination. "How are you, Mr. G——? Isn't it lovely weather, sir? And now to business."

"How is business with you, poor woman? Trouble in the house again I see. Why don't you sell the property and be done with it?"

"Always be truthful, sir. You did not see, but you heard it. Yes, sir, I'm in the same boat again. I have to go to court this morning, and I don't see how I'll get up there. You, sir, could help me some way if you wanted to do so."

"Why certainly I'll help you all I can. Is any one in the basement but yourself? I want to have a talk with you."

"No, Mr. G——, I am all alone in there. Come right in."

"Where is your husband, the violin player, and who is that bleach-blonde lady who comes and goes, and why don't you sell out and get out of all this? I'll get you a buyer for your property, and——"

"My husband! Bah! I borrowed money on him to pay the interest on the furniture and interest on interest, and interest is due long ago. Yes, but it wasn't him that I was going to talk about. It was Big Lou, the terror of the town. Go up stairs to the front parlor and see and act in my behalf, and I'll treat you when you come down again. No, I cannot. I haven't got a cent in all the world."

"You'll clear about fifteen hundred dollars. With that money you could go back to Sweden and live in happiness with your friends, who would love and cherish you, as you deserve. Have you no relation in this country?"

"Selling, selling, selling. No selling for me, as I with a couple of dollars in my pocket can subdue my creditors, so I don't need to sell. No, sir, in Sweden you have to pay your way just as well as here, and to sponge on charitable people is not my desire; besides, they wouldn't let me, so I stay where I am. Go up and fire that Big Lou for me. Get a cop in and let him nab that good-looking Charley and make that visitor pay for the damage done there to the room. Then come back and I'll hang Billy for a pint so as I can treat you for your kindness. Hurry up! Are you afraid? I'll go with you. Come on; I'll introduce you as the landlord. It'll work fine. Come on."

"I'll tell you what to do. Sign a paper so as I have something to show for myself if they are obstinate."

"Not necessary. Those white people are cowards when

they see their master. They have no baggage to bother them and she can be ready to leave in an hour's time."

"You better sign a paper so as I have something to show. The house is in a very bad condition, I think, isn't it?"

"It is, of course. It has been leaking continually. Your working men walking on my roof with nails in their shoes made holes in that fake tin which that fellow that lived on Third Avenue charged me seventy-five dollars for and guaranteed it would last forever. Now, when I come to think of it, was it you who sent the building department to me late on Christmas eve? Yes, it was. The inspector said the complaint came from No. ——, next to my house. He said that."

"Why don't you sit down? What are you looking for?"

"I am hunting for a butt. Well, I'll try to speak without one. I slept well last night. I had to drink a whole can to get that sleep, though—Howl L. lulua, Howll-ll, 'the dark secret,' one flight up. As long as I have granted you an interview we may as well have it out. The little dark room up stairs which I have nicknamed 'the dark secret,' and I'll tell you the story. I let that one day to a poor sucker for a dollar a week, to pay me when he could. To make the room pleasant I hung a lace curtain for the blind windows. Well, the man came home tired out from hard work all day and went to bed. There was but little oil in the lamp. The poor fellow had to go to work early in the morning and was afraid to oversleep himself, sprung out of bed, stepped in a pool of water. It had been raining hard, as bad luck wanted it, and had been leaking. He fumbled around for his clothes, felt the lace curtains, peeked out, hit his head against a wall, felt under the bed for his 'flask,' couldn't find it, but saw the hole in the wall under the window, peeped in and saw the remnants of a great war, yelled out in terror, fled from the house in a nude condition and I have never seen him since. The following day I read in the paper that a raving maniac, flying through the streets and screaming at the top of his voice, that he was the only living man left in Santiago, and that he was the great Mr. Roosevelt. Now, all this is your fault, sir. You or your working man has made

that hole, and as it is your hole you ought to see to it. You couldn't expect me to do that. I have holes enough of my own to see to. I do wish I could find a butt. I am so hungry. Poor Mr. Wilmer, who helps me out a little, told a little on hearing the building department inspector on Christmas eve calling for the lady of the house; he came running down stairs to receive the man, but instead of turning the oil stove down before leaving the room he stood aghast. The hall room was dense with smoke. He got the window open; the smoke streamed from the window. Jubely, my neighbor, yelled, 'Fire at 144!' The fire engine came, but there was nothing doing, and my neighbor's green shutters were again closed with a bang-bang. Well, poor Mr. Wilmer tried to get along in the room; got himself so full of smoke inside and outside and had to leave the Bohemian singer where he was employed that time and take a position as a chimney sweeper, so as he could continue, he said, to pay me his rent for the hall room very punctually, one dollar and twenty-five cents every Saturday night at the stroke of nine. I found a butt, sir."

"Here is a match. Light it. So there, now, sit down and let us talk business. Where is your zither? I have not heard it lately."

"Stolen, sir; stolen. Those foul thiefs steal everything. Howl L. lulua. Howl L. lulua, Howll-ll."

"How is your cellar? Is there water in it?"

"No, sir, the cellar is dry, like myself. A good place for inspirations, though. My husband's dream. You've got a piece of sculpture in your art gallery which is worth a fortune. Where did you get it? What? The Board of Health! No, sir, my house is in a sanitary condition. Was it you who builded onto the woman who owned this house before me? No? But you shouldn't have done it. Mrs. Palmer said you, her lawyer, skinned her, and she lost $4,000; at least she said so. Deprived the poor, lone widow from air, sunshine and the expenses."

"How is the roof—no, I mean—are you troubled with bedbugs?"

"You are too inquisitive, sir. You should have had half the expenses of the fire escape. Your building was more dangerous to the neighborhood than mine, as yours

was a glass factory. I—oh, you wanted to know about the roof. The chimney, you mean, don't you? I told you already about the roof. Well, there were a few bricks off that chimney; the violin player went up to mend it one morning—to mend it. He was clever about repairing, but careless. He sprang on the chimney to look into it, as it smoked a little. The bricks gave way; he fell on his back—bump, bricks and plaster on top of him, and there I found him when I went up, but as it was the highest time for his rehearsal on, his friends were waiting for him—they were dry and so was he. He shaked off the plaster and off he went, and there I stood, alone on the roof, and looked at the disaster done. Hand me a match. He has gained his highest desire in life, though. He is a leader of music. I saw him in Coney Island; his silk handkerchief between violin and chin. His face was as sad and pretty as ever. I saw no baton in his hand, but he was leading the waiters to and fro, the cheepies was happy with their handled glasses. I wish I had another butt. I am so hungry. Can you hear them up stairs? No?"

"Well, I'll lay them bricks and stop that smoking for you, lady, for the price of a pint. I never have a cent, though I earn four dollars a day. My wife takes possession of everything, and it all goes down into her colossal belly. I can do nothing with it—her, I mean. What am I up against, anyhow? Well, lady, I'll fix that chimney with or without beer. She is after me. I must run. Heaven, there was indeed the Colossus voice—a bassoon. There! A bottle crashed through the window in the roof door and the filthiest language followed the bottle. She is only envious. I have to go and pacify her. A pint will do it. Well, sir, failure after failure."

"You need a man who can handle a saw and a hatchet, lady. That curley-headed fellow going in and out with that sooty tin can is no good. He is silly, but cotton will keep you warm. I'll do all the repairing your property is in need of. Pay me when you can. You are not a bad-looking woman, not by a long shot. Get rid of that silky fellow, who has hair in his head. I'm bald, but own a cottage in the country—all new improvements——"

"But you go up and fix that chimney and I'll consider

matters." He did, but did you see that smoke afterwards? Yes, you did. It smoked so we couldn't make a cup of tea in the whole house. How is it you know who it was? It was McGrath, so I wrote to the man to come and he came right away.

"I didn't think it necessary to replace the pipes on the chimney; I left them on the roof. I know who swiped them pipes, though."

"Let this old ramshackle building go and marry cotton instead of silk—in my house you have all new improvements."

"Father, mother sent me after you. She is getting worse. She thinks she is going to-day—and father, you have to lend me a dollar. I ain't got a cent in my pocket."

"You confounded rascal! You animal, you! How dare you follow me up? I'll have you sent away for hanging your own father. Fetch back the pipes which you stole from this woman. When your mother is dead there is no one to lick you, so I thought this lady here might help me out. Good-day, lady," said the man and went off. Did you hear all this through the basement window? Yes, you did. Your right-side ear is moving a little—where is my glasses? Can you hear them up stairs? No? Well, the gate surrounding my building is coming down. The area to my building is sinking down. The stoop to my building is sagging, and all through your heavy concerns going in and out daily. When you build and rebuild your many concerns in there, see to it, I say, or I'll sue you for damages. What?"

"Your rooms need painting, I think. Who broke down that hall door? Help me to find my glasses and look for a butt. I am starving to death. Thank you, sir, but find a match so I can light it. Thank you, sir. That machine of yours which you had when your place was a glass factory shaked my building night and day, and two women in my house became insane throught it. One of the women, she had the skylight room, got in her head that the Gerry Society was telephoning for the police to come and take her children away from her, and Palm Sunday I was occupied on that roof trying to fix it up with some metallic paint. The woman in the skylight

room came on the roof with her youngest in her arms, both stone-blind drunk, he naked. I guessed her intention to throw the baby over the roof. I grasped the child and hid it. Then I tried to get the mother from the roof, but she was out for a fight, and knocked me out in the first round. I yelled for the police. The police same eve came and treated her to a pint and business was at an end. Did you hear and see that, sir? No, maybe you don't. But, well, the other woman was, I think a lunatic when she moved in. Her husband was a drug clerk out of work. She used to yell so when the building was shaking, and thinking he could cure her he took her one evening to your hole in the wall. She saw and yelled worser than ever. I got them out of the house some way, but she came back at night and broke every window in the basement. He did come, mind you—the police, I mean—and got away with them. The following morning there came a police officer to me and told me that I was accused for wholesale murder and had a private graveyard in the house. Go up and look into Mr. G——'s hole in the wall, I told him, and you will see the graveyard, but he said I'd better come up, and I had to go. The woman was loony, of course, and was sent to an asylum for the insane, and I thought I was rid of her, but no; one day I went up to answer the door bell, and there stood my lunatic in the company of the fair, fat and forty. As the lady asked one of the men. 'Yes,' said my loony in reply. He passed me by and went down stairs, but returned in a few minutes.

"Two flights up; first door you come to. Look under the window and you'll undersand, sir. 'Good enough for a novel,' he said, smiling, and took the woman under his arm and led her off. The other man lingered and told me that the woman had come to the police headquarters in Mulberry Street in great excitement, stating that she had fled from a house where there was a most horrid-looking ogress sitting in a corner chair and every one who came down with the room rent and did not hand back the soiled linen after they had received the clean would be put through a machine and murdered. She had seen, she said, skulls, hands, bones cut from bleeding feet, and all these horrid things is going on in your hole, sir. Can

you blame me that I am mad? No—Heavens, they are moving up stairs. Go up, man."

"Sign a paper and I will."

"My poor brain, sir, is at a standstill. I must have a fresh cigarette."

"What kind do you smoke? I'll go and get you some."

"Cicle. No others; twenty for a nickel. Don't forget the matches or you'll have to go again."

"Puff away now. They smoke in high society, and the Cicle is the pack at present."

"You said some time ago that you would sell your property if you got a good price. Name the price and I'll see about it."

"I said at that time, and I say it again, that after satisfying my creditors I must clear $5,000. But you know, and I know, that the property is not worth that much now; that maybe in the future—I can wait, though, punctum."

"You would be a great deal better off now in a nice new flat, with all the new improvements."

"A bath would do me good, sir, I don't deny that. But what would become of me with the $1,500 seeking a home among strangers? This house, though miserable, is anyhow a home, where I can to a certain degree live independent. I suffer most from insomnia. Do you know what that means? Sitting night after night without sleep. Slumber lightly now and then. Sure in this room I can pace the floor, sing and moan in my misery. I disturb no one. I can wrap myself in a comforter and lie underneath the stoop. No one sees me. The fresh air arouses my appetite and I can creep down the avenue and get some clam juice. Oh, there stands the five cents worth of oysters. I cannot swallow them. If I wish to cry I can klipper on my zither and my eyes are flooding and it relieves me. Can I do this in a strange place? No. So cut out the selling part. I shall not sell without I could move to the country."

"I see, my dear woman, that I have to speak more plainly with you. Are you aware of the appearance of the house, and the comment in the neighborhood, and do you know the house has a bad name?"

"My house has what, sir?"

"A very bad name, and the police may come any moment and raid you."

"For what, may I ask? There must be some reason."

"For running a disorderly house. You are, as you know, housing disorderly people."

"Whose fault is that, sir? Could I last night have got in an officer my house would be clean now. Now, I have to drag myself to court. 'She owns real estate,' they will say, so there is no hope of a postponement for me. You are my only hope, sir, and go up and get them out. Strike a match, sir. These prostitutes have ruined my life, sir; my brain and my body are gone. Go and get a pint and a pack, and don't forget the matches or you have to go again."

"By and by. Listen to me. If I can find a customer who will buy your property and give you the price you ask will you sell? Yes or no."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, women are changeable, and you are one of them. This paper here states that if I have found a buyer for your property who will buy your house and lot—the furniture I don't want—you cannot draw back. You will be bound to sell. I have three months' time to attend to this. Read and sign."

"Why are you so anxious that I shall sell, sir? Even if I changed my mind, that wouldn't hurt you any."

"For my own benefit. Your house looks disorderly, is disorderly, and I am your suffering neighbor. Have you understood me? If you should change your mind in selling I stand there like a fool, and that I will not risk. So come and sign your name to this paper and let us be done with it. Big Loo will be ousted from your place and you can go and get your pint and your pack and your matches and go to bed and sleep."

"Oh, my, there she is. She fell against the piano, and it is not mine. If she falls into the pier mirror she will break it; blood will be running. The neighbors will yell murder, the police will then come running, my house will be pulled, I will be nabbed—no one to bail me out. I will yell and scream. The ambulance will nab me and I go to the lunatic asylum. There I'll get crazy; I'll get crazy—

I am crazy. Hold your finger where you want me to sign, and I'll sign." Signed!

"Are you Big Loo, the terror of the town? Yes? Well, I give you half an hour to get out. Good-morning, lady."

"Good-morning, Elsa. How are you, Elsa? I did not see you for a long time. Where have you been?"

"You are a wonderful woman, Elsa. What did Mr. G—— do in here?"

"He only helped me to get rid of an undesirable tenant. Where have you been so long?"

"You are a wonderful woman. He had a paper in his hand, and looked so satisfied. Did you sell? I hope not. The property is going up in value. You did not sign anything, did you?"

"Yes, I signed an option, he called it, for the full amount I asked for the house. Where have you been so long?"

"You are a wonderful woman, Ada, but I want to see that paper."

"Go in and see, but don't stay too long."

"You are a wonderful woman, Ada, but you have signed over your house and home to Mr. G——n for the sum of $7,000. What is the matter? She is dying. Get some whiskey, quick, quick—gin, whiskey or beer or cigarettes, or water—anything. Yes, Charley, she is dying. Get the doctor, and don't forget the gin, or you have to go again."

"I heard that you have been sick, lady. We came here to see what we can do for you. Do you need any money? Here is some; take it. You can have more at any time. You only need to sign for it."

"Don't touch that money, madam, by your life and soul, don't touch it," came from a voice in the open door. It was Wilmer, in the sooty hall room. "What do you want with this sick woman?" said Wilmer to the gentlemen who stood before me, one holding a paper dollar in his hand.

"We have business transactions to perform with the lady, not concerning you whatsoever. Who are you, anyhow?"

"My name is Wilmer, in the theatrical business; at present with the Bohemians, a tenant of this lady, and as I am a man of punctuality I pay my room rent, one dollar and twenty-five cents per week, every Saturday night at the stroke of nine. Business transactions you have with this woman?"

"With an imbecile."

"She is tortured into that condition."

"Money, money, money she yells night and day. Ah, give me a dollar to send down to C—— or he forecloses. Ah, give me a dollar to send to Maryhill or he takes the piano. Ah, give me a dollar to send to Nassau Street and he won't take the furniture—only a dollar to each of them, she says——

"Well, here is one dollar to begin with. Take it, lady, and sign your name here."

"Don't take that dollar and sign your name to nothing. Good-by, gentlemen, I want to close the door after me."

"Why, Mrs. Parker, I am very glad to find you here, but how did you get in?"

"I crept through the window, Mr. Wilmer. I found a key for the door in her pocket and I have been hustling. Indeed, I have pushed a whole pound of raw beefsteak down in her stomach. Then I had to go myself and have the can filled. I made her drink the most of it. She will sleep now for about twelve hours, so we can talk the matter over. What has happened to her now again?"

"The trouble is I have very little knowledge of her affairs. She cannot speak coherently. She only yells for money. The house is nearly tenantless, and those who are there don't pay, I am afraid."

"After I have heard her story to-morrow I shall write to my father in Nyack and ask his advice. He has been a prosperous lawyer in his time. He has retired. He is getting old, but not rich. One don't get rich when one is good and honest, Mr. Wilmer. Are you still with the Bohemians, sir?"

"Yes, Mrs. Parker, and we are booked for Atlantic City next summer. I must be off now. I am very glad that you are here, and let no one come near the poor creature. I'll see you when I come back."

"My Dear Daughter:

"Tell the lady, that the signature is binding if she signed her name in the presence of a witness and took a dollar. She has then to give up the property without she could prove that she was intoxicated or not in her right mind, or if she did not know what she was signing. Then the man has committed a serious crime, but these things have to be proved, my daughter. She must have a lawyer. I wish I could go over to New York myself, but feel I am getting old and dare not attempt to do it. See that she has an honest lawyer. A lawyer she must have. How are you, dear daughter? A kiss from your old father, who loves you best of all.

"Your Loving Father."

"I did not take a dollar. He did not offer me anything. Had he done so I would have taken it quick enough, not knowing. We were all alone in the basement. My condition at that time I cannot tell, but I was aware that I signed something. My brain is not strong to figure out what it was, Leila. Lawyer. Lawyers, and li—I hate the very sound of the name."

"I am afraid that the man has put his foot into it, and tries to draw it out again. Shall I go in and see what he has got to say? Yes? Keep the door locked."

"He turned purple in his face. He hinted about a nice present if I could square up this matter between you and him. He said he was willing to pay a little more for the property if this could be arranged. He was sorry for you, he said, and meant it for the best. Shall I go through the house and look things over? Yes?

"I did not know that your house was in such a terrible state. Be brave and listen. Part of the ceiling has come down in the back parlor of the house, and the floors are covered with plaster. I found one poor woman sick in bed; poor fellow—her husband I mean—was sitting on the bed crying. I left a little change on the table and told them in your name not to worry about the sign in the hall. The skylight has come off. The plaster in the halls threatens to come down. Wilmer's room is covered with soot an inch thick, but the worst is the toilet. The crockery has come off, the water is running through—so, don't

jump. Now, what can you do? Sell, I say, and make the best of it. Come with me to the country. My papa has promised me one thing, a pony. I will rent a cottage —heavens—maybe you are thinking that I am working for that present from Mr. G——. Not at all, my papa gives me what I ask. Get yourself out of this unutterable misery and move with me to the country and regain your health. That's all. Now suit yourself."

"Go and get me another pound of raw beef, and a pint and a pack, and in twenty-four hours I shall try once more. I have grown to love this old building, and it is so hard to give it up."

"Ain't it lovely weather, Wilmer? Go and get an oxtail, and a large marrow bone and some soup greens, and you and I, Wilmer, are going to cook some soup. I got a good letter from mother. My father is dying and wishes to see me. I must be off to Nyack at once. Give me my hat and gloves, and cook the soup, and feed her and feed yourself. There is some more in my clothes. Shut the basement door after me, both of you."

Following morning I went out to the gate and looked up and down, and there right enough came a despondent-looking tramp along.

"There is some oxtail soup left in the pot and in my pocket is a dime, but you have to work for it. Come inside, and I'll explain."

"Mary, Mother of God, will bless your good heart, lady. I am your man and I'll do all I can for you."

The plaster soon disappeared, with the assistance of a couple more fellows. We washed up the room the best we could. The ceilings we covered with sheets the same color of the ceiling. I then advertised furnished rooms for light housekeeping people, children and washing allowed, no references required; $1.10 and upwards. It worked fine! At five in the morning both bells rang. Room after room was let. The house was packed with people and when I retired in the evening I discovered that my stocking resembled the sack of a ragpicker.

"Are you Mrs. R.? Yes? Well, I've got a letter for you. Take it!"

A large envelope was in my hand, and the man who put it there was gone.

"*Arth thous* there, Wilmer? Don't stay there but come in and read this. It's a summons from a lawyer in Trinity Building, named V—r:

"'We want you in court to tell the Judge why you should not give up your house and home to the man next door.' Shall I go in and see him? He must be a ——, but he has an honest face, though."

"Yes, but get a pint and a pack, and don't forget the matches or you have to go again."

"I wouldn't rush the growler for Queen Victoria, and as I am an honest man and a man of punctuality, and pay my room rent, $1.25, very punctually every Saturday night at the stroke of nine, I'll go in and see that this man G—n gets hung, including his friend W—r, and the real estate agent in 34th street."

I dreamed that I was hanging to a cornice outside of my four-story brick building and supported myself by the pit of my thumb.

"Say, Ada, why don't you seek the assistance of the L—— Aid Society? They help poor people. I'll take you down there."

"Wilmer, go over to Billy on the corner and tell him from me to borrow me a quarter on that alarm clock and you and I will drive to the L—— Society. Go across the street to my former tenant and borrow from him my bloodhound to watch the house until we come back. Take little Wiking with you. The bloodhound is a thoroughbred and Wiking is a freak of nature. Two-ta, two, you know the bloodhound will handle G—n and little Wiking will handle H—n, and don't forget the matches or you have to go again."

Five cents entry fee I paid, and was admitted to the L—. I paid and was admitted, sat down to watch the show; and not long and I was admitted to the head man, a lawyer by the name of L——. This gentleman started in to pump me good and hard for half an hour, and with great satisfaction I went with Wilmer, who was waiting outside for me to go home.

There are only three days left and no letter from L——. I dreamed of the letters S-E-T-L-O-W. "Wilmer, go down to the L—— Society and find out what my dream meant. Give me a match and be off."

"I saw him, and I saw the letters. He wanted to know who I was; I told him, of course, that I was rather sooty, but I was an honest man; that my name was Wilmer, a tenant of your house, in the theatrical business, with the Bohemians—booked for Atlantic City, and as I was a man of punctuality, I paid my room rent, $1.25 per, every Saturday night at the stroke of nine. I put the thumb screws on him and he telephoned to the lawyer, W——. You'll have a bitter fight with him in the morning."

"Begone, woman," I hissed to a head in the broken window-pane. "If no cop has the courage to lock you up, I'll do it myself, so as I have done one thing to be proud of before I lie down to die."

Elsa, my bosom friend, the woman who was born with a veil before her face, stood before me waggling from one French heel to the other. Her beflounced silk skirts held gracefully in one hand, and an empty gin bottle in the other.

"You are a wonderful woman! How I came in through this window? Future will tell you. Let me have a nickel. The old man in the Willow Tree is sick in bed. The bartender has no heart. I am your only bosom friend and I would run my feet off for you—to save you trouble."

"Throw her out, Wilmer. We have business to attend to."

"Throw me out? Me, the banker's daughter? Curse you, creature, imbecile, cigarette fiend, can-rusher and money-lender, skinner, a sceptic and unbeliever. She denies her Lord, Jesus Christus, and take my curse with you to the grave. Go, woman, and from to-day you shall scrub, and I shall be your head cleaner. Dare steal the sapolio or the scrubbing brush!"

"You are no bosom friend of mine, but I'll press you to my bosom in spite of all. Come here, darling!" said Wilmer, and he took the woman in his arms and lifted her up and both disappeared through the broken window frame, and I have not seen them since; her, I mean. Wilmer returned through the basement door, as he had a key for the door in his pocket.

"The heart of queen is turning up again, the poor woman said, and you will be rewarded, she told me to tell you, and she is sorry for what she said."

The heart of queen which I gave in as poor, unhappy Elsa's prophecy, has to turn up in the end. No letter from Mr. L——, the lawyer of the L—— Society, so I have to go down myself and show him the mug of the heart of queen.

"We can do nothing for you, madam. We only help the poor in their wages. You are not poor. You are the owner of real estate."

"But why did you not say so before? To-day is Saturday, and at Monday morning at the strike of nine I have to meet G—n, H—m, and W—r, in court, to show cause why they can't take my house and home from me."

"You'll get a lawyer, and you'll have to excuse me. We are over busy just now."

"Wet a rag and rub some of the dirt off my face, and pin up my hair, and lift me out of bed. It is Monday morning and I have to stand in front of the court and waggle my tongue before the Judge. So, that will do. Isn't it lovely weather? No, it is raining; so long."

I stood in the court room and some one turned me around to the door, and I stood outside and looked at a man who was sweeping around the courthouse.

"Ah-h-h," he said, "another real estate owner. Run, woman, and get a lawyer. You can't run? Well, creep, then. Across the street, then, you'll get one. Be off, and I'll help you across the street."

I got scared and huddled myself through the park and there I stood in the middle of the street again in a very perplexed attitude, as I saw the cars coming and going, and stood nailed to the ground, but yelled out in deadly terror.

I felt two strong arms encircling poor me and I was lifted over to the sidewalk, the summons in my sooty, lame fingers disappeared.

"Take Heaven's mercy on me! Where did you get that piece of humanity, officer? What is your name, young lady?"

"The heart of queen, sir, and Elsa, my bosom friend, told me that I had to turn up in the end and here I am. I want a lawyer, sir."

"I can do nothing with a woman who cries. Officer, take her over to Chambers street, to the *deutchan*. You

have plenty of time, young lady. Officer, I can do nothing with a woman who cries."

What does Rossini, the wonderul poet, say in his best poem?

"The wind flapped loose, the wind was still;
Taken out dead from tree and hill;
I have waked at the wind's will."

"I sit now before you, Sir Lawyer, as the wind has stopped blowing. What have you got to say in behalf of *this* summons?

"'Between my knees my forehead was—
My lips drawed in said not, alas,
My hair was over in the grass;
My naked ears heard the telephone going;
My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten "runners" to fire upon.
Among those runners, a particular one
I had met on the Battery, and had had a cup with him.
From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory:
One thing, *that heart,* remains to me,—
The Bowery runner was a Jonah to me.'

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir. My name? Look at the summons in your hand and you'll see all my names before you, sir. Pick out a couple of the best and attend to business. As you are a lawyer, you have to be smart. Who is this young lady? Oh, your stenographer? Yes? She is both young and pretty, but her hair is colored and I don't like her. Who are you, sir? I have certainly seen your face before? Wasn't you cleaning out my chimney for me once?"

"No, as long as you don't know a friend because he has cleaned himself I hope to introduce myself to you, madam. My name is Wilmer, in theatrical business, at present booked with the Bohemians, booked in Atlantic City for the season, a tenant in your house, and as I am

at the stroke of nine, and I am here awaiting your command."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Wilmer, and, as I was thinking, need we bother these people here? I think we met some of them before—the 'runner,' for instance, and the lawyer I saw and talked to in Second Avenue when I wanted to be divorced from my husband, John Shea, who slumbers in his grave, poor fellow; and, Mr. Wilmer, tell the lawyer Mr. W—r, that he is seemingly the man with the hideous tongue and I have mentioned him in my book that I intend to write, as soon as I have gathered enough information about all of them."

THE END