

MAN ABOUT TOWN.

An Elusive Individual and How He Was Finally Caught.

By O. HENRY.

There were two or three things that I wanted to know. I do not care about a mystery. So I began to inquire.

It took me two weeks to find out what women carry in dress suit cases. And then I began to ask why a mattress is made in two pieces. This serious query was at first received with suspicion because it sounded like a conundrum. I was at last assured that its double form of construction was designed to make lighter the burden of woman, who makes up beds. I was so foolish as to persist, begging



A SALVATION LASSIE SHOOK HER CONTRIBUION RECEPTACLE.

to know why, then, they were not made in two equal pieces. Whereupon I was shunned.

The third draft that I craved from the fount of knowledge was enlightenment concerning the character known as "a man about town." He was more vague in my mind than a type should be. We must have a concrete idea of anything, even if it be an imaginary idea, before we can comprehend it.

Now, I have a mental picture of John Doe that is as clear as a steel engraving. His eyes are weak blue, he wears a brown vest and a shiny black serge coat, he stands always in the sunshine chewing something, and he keeps half shutting his pocket-knife and opening it again with his thumb. And, if the man higher up is ever found, take my assurance for it he will be a large, pale man with blue wristlets showing under his cuffs, and he will be sitting to have his shoes polished within sound of a bowling alley, and there will be somewhere about him turquoises.

But the canvas of my imagination, when it came to limning the man about town, was blank. I fancied that he had a detachable sneer (like the smile of the Cheshire cat) and attached cuffs, and that was all, whereupon I asked a newspaper reporter about him.

"Why," said he, "a man about town is something between a rounder and a clubman. He isn't exactly well, he fits in between Mrs. Fish's receptions and private boxing bouts. He doesn't—well, he doesn't belong to the Lotus club or to the Jerry McGeoghghan Galvanized Iron Workers' Apprentices' Left Hook Chowder association. I don't exactly know how to describe him to you. You'll see him everywhere there's anything doing. Yes, I suppose he's a type. Dress clothes every evening, knows the ropes, calls every policeman and waiter in town by their first names. No, he never travels with the hydrogen derivatives. You generally see him alone or with another man."

My friend the reporter left me, and I wandered further afield. By this time the 3,126 electric lights on the Rialto were alight. People passed, but they held me not. Paphian eyes raved upon me and left me unscathed. Diners, heimzagers, shopgirls, confidence men, panhandlers, actors, highwaymen, millionaires and millionaires hurried, skipped, strolled, sneaked, swaggered and scurried by me, but I took no note of them. I knew them all. I had read their hearts; they had served. I wanted my man about town. He was a type, and to drop him would be an error—a typograph. But, no, let us continue.

Let us continue with a moral digression. To see a family reading the Sunday paper gratifies. The sections have been separated. Papa is earnestly scanning the page that pictures the young lady exercising before an open window and bending—but there, there, Mamma is interested in trying to guess the missing letters in the word N—w Yo—k. The oldest girls are eagerly perusing the financial reports, for a certain young man remarked last Sunday night that he had taken a fier in Q. X. and Z. Willie, the eighteen-year-old son, who attends a New York public school, is absorbed in the weekly article describing how to make over an old skirt, for he hopes to take a prize in sewing on graduation day.

Grandma is holding to the comic supplement with a two hours' grip, and little Tottie, the baby, is rocking along the best she can with the real estate transfers. This view is intended to be reassuring, for it is de-

scribable that a few lines of this story be skipped, for it introduces strong drink.

I went into a cafe—and while it was being mixed I asked the man who grabs up your hot Scotch spoon as soon as you lay it down what he understood by the term, epithet, description, designation, characterization or appellation—viz, a "man about town."

"Why," said he carefully, "it means a fly guy that's wise to the all night push—see? It's a hot sport that you can't bump to the rail anywhere between the Flatirons—see? I guess that's about what it means."

I thanked him and departed. On the sidewalk a Salvation lassie shook her contribution receptacle gently against my waistcoat pocket.

"Would you mind telling me," I asked her, "if you ever meet with the character commonly denominated as 'a man about town' during your daily wanderings?"

"I think I know whom you mean," she answered, with a gentle smile. "We see them in the same places night after night. They are the devil's bodyguard, and if the soldiers of any army are as faithful as they are their commanders are well served. We go among them, diverting a few pennies from their wickedness to the Lord's service."

She shook the box again, and I dropped a dime into it.

In front of a glittering hotel a friend of mine, a critic, was climbing from a cab. He seemed at leisure, and I put my question to him. He answered me conscientiously, as I was sure he would.

"There is a type of 'man about town' in New York," he answered. "The term is quite familiar to me, but I don't think I was ever called upon to define the character before. It would be difficult to point you out an exact specimen. I would say offhand that it is a man who had a hopeless case of the peculiar New York disease of wanting to see and know. At 6 o'clock each day life begins with him. He follows rigidly the conventions of dress and manners, but in the business of poking his nose into places where he does not belong he could give pointers to a civet cat or a jackdaw. He is the man who has chased Bohemia about the town from rathskeller to roof garden and from Hester street to Harlem until you can't find a place in the city where they don't cut their spaghetti with a knife. Your 'man about town' has done that. He is always on the scent of something new. He is curiosity, impudence and omnipresence. Hansoms were made for him and gold banded cigars and the curse of music at dinner. There are not so many of him, but his minority report is adopted everywhere."

"I'm glad you brought up the subject. I've felt the influence of this nocturnal blight upon our city, but I never thought to analyze it before. I can see now that your 'man about town' should have been classified long ago. In his wake spring up wine agents and cloak models, and the orchestra plays 'Let's All Go Up to Maud's' for him by request instead of Handel. He makes his rounds every evening, while you and I see the elephant once a week. When the cigar store is raided he winks at the officer, familiar with his ground, and walks away immune, while you and I search among the presidents for names and among the stars for addresses to give the desk sergeant."

My friend the critic paused to acquire breath for fresh eloquence. I seized my advantage.

"You have classified him," I cried with joy. "You have painted his portrait in the gallery of city types. But I must meet one face to face. I must

study the man about town at first hand. Where shall I find him? How shall I know him?"

Without seeming to hear me the critic went on—and his cab driver was waiting for his fare too:

"He is the sublimated essence of butt in; the refined, intrinsic extract of rubber; the concentrated, purified, irrefutable, unavoidable spirit of curiosity and inquisitiveness. A new sensation is the breath in his nostrils; when his experience is exhausted he explores new fields with the indefatigability of a"—

"Excuse me," I interrupted, "but can you produce one of this type? It is a new thing to me. I must study it. I will search the town over until I find one. Its habitat must be here on Broadway."

"I am about to dine here," said my

friend. "Come inside and if there is a man about town present I will point him out to you. I know most of the regular patrons here."

"I am not dining yet," I said to him. "You will excuse me. I am going to find my man about town this night if I have to rake New York from the Battery to little Coney Island."

I left the hotel and walked down Broadway. The pursuit of my type gave a pleasant savor of life and interest to the air I breathed. I was glad to be in a city so great, so complex and diversified. Leisurely and with something of an air I strolled along, with my heart expanding at the thought that I was a citizen of great Gotham, a sharer in its magnificence and pleasures, a partaker in its glory and prestige.

I turned to cross the street. I heard something buzz like a bee, and then I took a long, pleasant ride with Santos-Dumont.

When I opened my eyes I remembered a smell of gasoline, and I said aloud, "Hasn't it passed yet?"

A hospital nurse laid a hand that was not particularly soft upon my brow that was not at all fevered. A young doctor came along, grinned and handed me a morning newspaper.

"Want to see how it happened?" he asked cheerily. I read the article. Its headlines began where I heard the buzzing leave off the night before. It closed with these lines:

"Bellevue hospital, where it was said that his injuries were not serious. He appeared to be a typical man about town."

What Deep Breathing Did.

I had suffered several days and nights from severe pain resulting from rheumatism and neuralgia. The relief afforded by all suggested home remedies had been only temporary. My neck was raw from a mustard plaster blister. I'd slept poorly several nights from pain. Again it was night. I was quivering with pain and unable to rise to a sitting posture. To turn from back to side, or vice versa, was agonizing. I did not wish to call any of the family, knowing their duties for the following day. How I longed for sleep! Then I remembered reading somewhere that deep, abdominal breathing persisted in would induce sleep. I resolved to try it. Assuming a position as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, I began deep, abdominal breaths. My head soon became light, or, rather, dizzy; my body relaxed. After a few minutes I was asleep. After a nap I awoke, squirmed about to a new position, repeated the deep breathing and fell asleep again. I kept this up during the night, thus securing a fair night's rest.—Harper's Bazar.

Two Texts.

Two stories are told in a magazine of ministers stumbling on texts of a humorous personal application.

One was a very young minister, having charge of his first church and preaching a series of sermons on the life and utterances of St. Paul. The last one of these was given just before taking his leave, and during his absence he expected to take unto himself a wife, his engagement having been announced. After turning over the leaves of the Bible thoughtfully he said, "I invite your attention this evening to these words of the great apostle, 'I am ready now to be offered up.'"

The other minister was a widower who had remarried within a year after his first wife's death. His friends and congregation thought him very expeditious, and on the next Sunday, when his text was announced, they could scarcely control themselves. He rose in his place in his pulpit and said, "My beloved brethren, you will find my text in the seventeenth verse of the fourth chapter of II Corinthians, 'Our light affliction, which is for the moment.'"

"Just Helping."

A gentleman fitting up his house in the country had brought from a neighboring town a considerable force of carpenters, plumbers and the like. After superintending them for a few days he grew to know them all by sight. One day suddenly he spied a new face among them. It was a cheerful face, and its owner was busying himself most actively carrying things up and down stairs and otherwise being useful. Nevertheless the owner of the house beckoned to him.

"Who are you?" he inquired.

"Oh, I'm just helping," answered the mysterious one, with an engaging smile.

"Carpenter or plumber?"

"No; just helping." And off he went with a boxful of crockery.

The owner called the boss carpenter aside. The boss carpenter eyed the cheerful helper; then he smiled.

"In the next township," he said, "there is a lunatic asylum. I'll make inquiries."

Next day the willing helper was not on the job.—Exchange.

Not His Fault.

Irate Woman—These photographs you made of myself and husband are not at all satisfactory, and I refuse to accept them.

Photographer—What's wrong with them?

Irate Woman—What's wrong? Why, my husband looks like a baboon!

Photographer—Well, that's no fault of mine, madam. You should have thought of that before you had him taken.—Chicago News.

A Boston Husband.

Mrs. Caudle—I think there's a man downstairs.

Mr. Caudle—I thought I heard some one. Suppose you go down and ask him what he wants. Even a burglar wouldn't strike a woman, you know.—Boston Transcript.

C. D. RAY.

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NOTICE.

North Carolina: Granville County. In Superior Court, May Term, 1910. W. L. Nevins,

vs.

South Hill Mfg. Co.

The defendant above named will take notice that an action as entitled as above has been commenced against it in the Superior Court of Granville County to recover the sum of \$1,000 for a breach of a contract entered into by plaintiff and defendant for the sale and purchase of a certain lot of timber and lumber situate in said County and fully described in the above referred to contract; Said defendant will further take notice that it is required to appear at the next term of the Superior Court of said county to be held at the court house at Oxford on the 2nd day of May, 1910, and answer or demur to the complaint in said action or the plaintiff will apply to the court for the relief therein demanded.

This 24th day of March, 1910.

J. G. SHOTWELL, C.S.C. Lanier & Hicks, Attys for P.H.

SALE OF LAND.

By virtue of sale contained in a certain deed-in-trust, executed to me on January 20, 1909, by T. W. Stovall and wife Buna V. Stovall, and duly recorded in deed in trust book 70, page 540, of the office of the Register of Deeds of Granville County, I shall, on

MONDAY, MAY 16TH, 1910,

sell to the highest bidder, by public auction, for cash, at the court house door in Oxford, the following described lot or parcel of land:

Situate in the town of Stovall, N. C., and bounded on the East by the public road leading to Bullock, N. C.; on the North by Macadam road of E. N. Dickerson; on the west by a strip of land owned by the estate of Dr. F. R. Gregory; and on the South by the Oak Hill public road, containing about 4 or 5 acres, and upon which are located the dwelling of T. W. Stovall, the dwelling occupied by H. M. Stovall and the dwelling occupied by T. A. Hostetler.

Time of sale: Between 12m. and 1:30 p. m. This April 8, 1910.

F. W. HANCOCK, Trustee.

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION.

Having qualified as administrator of William Pettiford, dec'd, late of Granville county, N. C. This is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 23rd day of March, 1911, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement.

T. LANIER, Admr.,

This 22nd day of Mar. 1910.

Sale of Land For Nonpayment of Town Taxes.

Under authority of an ordinance of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Oxford, I will on

MONDAY, MAY 2ND, 1910,

at 12 o'clock, m., it being the First Monday in May, 1910, sell at public auction at the Court house door in Oxford, for the nonpayment of town taxes for the year 1909, the following described lots or parcels of land in said town of Oxford:

Mrs. C. H. Landis Williamsboro St. \$22.70

Willis Moss Hillsboro St. 4.77

Lee Ragland, near Foundry Branch. \$5.37

Mrs. Ellen Bryan, on High St. \$4.36

This April 1, 1910.

J. F. ROYSTER, Apr. 8 4t. Tax Collector, Treasurer.

EXECUTRIX NOTICE.

Having qualified as Executrix of the will of the late Elijah Green, before the Honorable J. G. Shotwell, Clerk of the Superior Court of Granville County, notice is hereby given to all persons indebted to said estate to come forward and make immediate payment and save costs.

Persons holding claims against said estate will present them to me on or before the 22nd day of March 1911, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery.

This the 22nd day of March, 1910.

BETTIE GREEN, A. A. Hicks, Attorney. pd.

NOTICE.

North Carolina: Granville County. In the Superior Court. S. H. Tingen Admr. of Ellender D. Tingen,

vs.

Benjamin Duncan and Joanna Duncan his wife, Ellie Humphries and Louis Humphries her husband, John C. Tingen, Emma Franklin and Dic Franklin her husband, Ada Long and Joe Long her husband, Graham Arrington, Hattie Humphries and Ben Humphries her husband, husband, Jack Arrington and Cameron Arrington.

The defendants above named will take notice, that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Granville County by S. H. Tingen, Admr. as aforesaid for the purpose of obtaining an order for the sale of the land of the said Ellender D. Tingen, and particularly the Jim Roe Evans tract for assets with which to pay the debts of the said Ellender D. Tingen and the said defendant will further take notice that they are required to appear at the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court in Oxford in the said county on Wednesday the 11th day of May, 1910 and answer or demur to the petition filed in said court or the petitioner will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in said complaint.

This the 1st day of April, 1910.

J. G. SHOTWELL, C.S.C.