
Gertrude the Governess

The Countess was struck by lightning. The two children fell down a well. Thus the happiness of Gertrude and Ronald was complete.

V.—A HERO IN HOMESPUN
or, The Life Struggle of Hezekiah Hayloft

“CAN you give me a job?”

The foreman of the bricklayers looked down from the scaffold to the speaker below. Something in the lad's upturned face appealed to the man. He threw a brick at him.

It was Hezekiah Hayloft. He was all in homespun. He carried a carpet-bag in each hand. He had come to New York, the cruel city, looking for work.

Hezekiah moved on. Presently he stopped in front of a policeman.

“Sir,” he said, “can you tell me the way to——”

The policeman struck him savagely across the side of the head.

“I'll learn you,” he said, “to ask damn fool questions——”

Again Hezekiah moved on. In a few moments he met a man whose tall black hat, black waistcoat and white tie proclaimed him a clergyman.

“Good sir,” said Hezekiah, “can you tell me——”

The clergyman pounced upon him with a growl of a hyena, and bit a piece out of his ear. Yes, he did, reader. Just imagine a clergyman biting a boy in open daylight! Yet that happens in New York every minute.

Such is the great cruel city, and imagine looking

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for work in it. You and I who spend our time in trying to avoid work can hardly realize what it must mean. Think how it must feel to be alone in New York, without a friend or a relation at hand, with no one to know or care what you do. It must be great!

For a few moments Hezekiah stood irresolute. He looked about him. He looked up at the top of the Metropolitan Tower. He saw no work there. He looked across at the skyscrapers on Madison Square, but his eye detected no work in any of them. He stood on his head and looked up at the flat-iron building. Still no work in sight.

All that day and the next Hezekiah looked for work.

A Wall Street firm had advertised for a stenographer.

“Can you write shorthand?” they said.

“No,” said the boy in homespun, “but I can try.”

They threw him down the elevator.

Hezekiah was not discouraged. That day he applied for fourteen jobs.

The Waldorf Astoria was in need of a chef. Hezekiah applied for the place.

“Can you cook?” they said.

“No,” said Hezekiah, “but oh, sir, give me a trial, give me an egg and let me try—I will try so hard.” Great tears rolled down the boy’s face.

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They rolled him out into the corridor.

Next he applied for a job as a telegrapher. His mere ignorance of telegraphy was made the ground of refusal.

At nightfall Hezekiah Hayloft grew hungry. He entered again the portico of the Waldorf Astoria. Within it stood a tall man in uniform.

“Boss,” said the boy hero, “will you trust me for the price of a square meal?”

They set the dog on him.

Such, reader, is the hardness and bitterness of the Great City.

For fourteen weeks Hezekiah Hayloft looked for work. Once or twice he obtained temporary employment only to lose it again.

For a few days he was made accountant in a trust company. He was discharged because he would not tell a lie. For about a week he held a position as cashier in a bank. They discharged the lad because he refused to forge a cheque. For three days he held a conductorship on a Broadway surface car. He was dismissed from this business for refusing to steal a nickel.

Such, reader, is the horrid degradation of business life in New York.

Meantime the days passed and still Hayloft found no work. His stock of money was exhausted. He had

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not had any money anyway. For food he ate grass in Central Park and drank the water from the Cruelty to Animals horse-trough.

Gradually a change came over the lad; his face grew hard and stern, the great city was setting its mark upon him.

One night Hezekiah stood upon the sidewalk. It was late, long after ten o'clock. Only a few chance pedestrians passed.

"By Heaven!" said Hezekiah, shaking his fist at the lights of the cruel city, "I have exhausted fair means, I will try foul. I will beg. No Hayloft has been a beggar yet," he added with a bitter laugh, "but I will begin."

A well-dressed man passed along.

Hezekiah seized him by the throat.

"What do you want?" cried the man in sudden terror. "Don't ask me for work. I tell you I have no work to give."

"I don't want work," said Hezekiah grimly. "I am a beggar."

"Oh! is that all," said the man, relieved. "Here, take this ten dollars and go and buy a drink with it."

Money! money! and with it a new sense of power that rushed like an intoxicant to Hezekiah's brain.

"Drink," he muttered hoarsely, "yes, drink."

The lights of a soda-water fountain struck his eye.

"Give me an egg phosphate," he said as he dashed

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his money on the counter. He drank phosphate after phosphate till his brain reeled. Mad with the liquor, he staggered to and fro in the shop, weighed himself recklessly on the slot machine three or four times, tore out chewing gum and matches from the automatic nickel boxes, and finally staggered on to the street, reeling from the effects of thirteen phosphates and a sarsaparilla soda.

"Crime," he hissed. "Crime, crime, that's what I want."

He noticed that the passers-by made way for him now with respect. On the corner of the street a policeman was standing.

Hezekiah picked up a cobblestone, threw it, and struck the man full on the ear.

The policeman smiled at him roguishly, and then gently wagged his finger in reproof. It was the same policeman who had struck him fourteen weeks before for asking the way.

Hezekiah moved on, still full of his new idea of crime. Down the street was a novelty shop, the window decked with New Year's gifts.

"Sell me a revolver," he said.

"Yes, sir," said the salesman. "Would you like something for evening wear, or a plain kind for home use. Here is a very good family revolver, or would you like a roof garden size?"

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Hezekiah selected a revolver and went out.

“Now, then,” he muttered, “I will burglarize a house and get money.”

Walking across to Fifth Avenue he selected one of the finest residences and rang the bell.

A man in livery appeared in the brightly lighted hall.

“Where is your master?” Hezekiah asked, showing his revolver.

“He is upstairs, sir, counting his money,” the man answered, “but he dislikes being disturbed.”

“Show me to him,” said Hezekiah, “I wish to shoot him and take his money.”

“Very good, sir,” said the man deferentially. “You will find him on the first floor.”

Hezekiah turned and shot the footman twice through the livery and went upstairs.

In an upper room was a man sitting at a desk under a reading-lamp. In front of him was a pile of gold. He was an old man, with a foolish, benevolent face.

“What are you doing?” said Hezekiah.

“I am counting my money,” said the man.

“What are you?” asked Hezekiah sternly.

“I am a philanthropist,” said the man. “I give my money to deserving objects. I establish medals for heroes. I give prizes for ship captains who jump into the sea, and for firemen who throw people from the

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windows of upper stories at the risk of their own; I send American missionaries to China, Chinese missionaries to India, and Indian missionaries to Chicago. I set aside money to keep college professors from starving to death when they deserve it.”

“Stop!” said Hezekiah, “you deserve to die. Stand up. Open your mouth and shut your eyes.”

The old man stood up.

There was a loud report. The philanthropist fell. He was shot through the waistcoat and his suspenders were cut to ribbons.

Hezekiah, his eyes glittering with the mania of crime, crammed his pockets with gold pieces.

There was a roar and hubbub in the street below.

“The police!” Hezekiah muttered. “I must set fire to the house and escape in the confusion.”

He struck a safety match and held it to the leg of the table.

It was a fireproof table and refused to burn. He held it to the door. The door was fireproof. He applied it to the bookcase. He ran the match along the books. They were all fireproof. Everything was fireproof.

Frenzied with rage, he tore off his celluloid collar and set fire to it. He waved it above his head. Great tongues of flame swept from the windows.

“Fire! Fire!” was the cry.

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Hezekiah rushed to the door and threw the blazing collar down the elevator shaft. In a moment the iron elevator, with its steel ropes, burst into a mass of flame; then the brass fittings of the door took fire, and in a moment the cement floor of the elevator was one roaring mass of flame. Great columns of smoke burst from the building.

“Fire! Fire!” shouted the crowd.

Reader, have you ever seen a fire in a great city? The sight is a wondrous one. One realizes that, vast and horrible as the city is, it nevertheless shows its human organization in its most perfect form.

Scarcely had the fire broken out before resolute efforts were made to stay its progress. Long lines of men passed buckets of water from hand to hand.

The water was dashed on the fronts of the neighbouring houses, thrown all over the street, splashed against the telegraph poles, and poured in torrents over the excited crowd. Every place in the neighbourhood of the fire was literally soaked. The men worked with a will. A derrick rapidly erected in the street reared itself to the height of sixteen or seventeen feet. A daring man mounted on the top of it, hauled bucket after bucket of water on the pulley. Balancing himself with the cool daring of the trained fireman, he threw the water in all directions over the crowd.

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The fire raged for an hour. Hezekiah, standing at an empty window amid the flames, rapidly filled his revolver and emptied it into the crowd.

From one hundred revolvers in the street a fusillade was kept up in return.

This lasted for an hour. Several persons were almost hit by the rain of bullets, which would have proved fatal had they struck anyone.

Meantime, as the flames died down, a squad of policemen rushed into the doomed building.

Hezekiah threw aside his revolver and received them with folded arms.

“Hayloft,” said the chief of police, “I arrest you for murder, burglary, arson, and conspiracy. You put up a splendid fight, old man, and I am only sorry that it is our painful duty to arrest you.”

As Hayloft appeared below a great cheer went up from the crowd. True courage always appeals to the heart of the people.

Hayloft was put in a motor and whirled rapidly to the police station.

On the way the chief handed him a flask and a cigar.

They chatted over the events of the evening.

Hayloft realized that a new life had opened for him. He was no longer a despised outcast. He had entered the American criminal class.

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At the police station the chief showed Hezekiah to his room.

“I hope you will like this room,” he said a little anxiously. “It is the best that I can give you to-night. To-morrow I can give you a room with a bath, but at such short notice I am sure you will not mind putting up with this.”

He said good night and shut the door. In a moment he reappeared.

“About breakfast?” he said. “Would you rather have it in your room, or will you join us at our table d’hôte? The force are most anxious to meet you.”

Next morning, before Hezekiah was up, the chief brought to his room a new outfit of clothes—a silk hat, frock-coat, shepherd’s-plaid trousers and varnished boots with spats.

“You won’t mind accepting these things, Mr. Hayloft. Our force would like very much to enable you to make a suitable appearance in the court.”

Carefully dressed and shaved, Hezekiah descended. He was introduced to the leading officials of the force, and spent a pleasant hour of chat over a cigar, discussing the incidents of the night before.

In the course of the morning a number of persons called to meet and congratulate Hezekiah.

“I want to tell you, sir,” said the editor of a great

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American daily, “that your work of last night will be known and commented on all over the States. Your shooting of the footman was a splendid piece of nerve, sir, and will do much in defence of the unwritten law.”

“Mr. Hayloft,” said another caller, “I am sorry not to have met you sooner. Our friends here tell me that you have been in New York for some months. I regret, sir, that we did not know you. This is the name of my firm, Mr. Hayloft. We are leading lawyers here, and we want the honour of defending you. We may! Thank you, sir. And now, as we have still an hour or two before the court, I want to run you up to my house in my motor. My wife is very anxious to have a little luncheon with you.”

The court met that afternoon. There was a cheer as Hezekiah entered.

“Mr. Hayloft,” said the judge, “I am adjourning this court for a few days. From what I hear the nerve strain that you have undergone must have been most severe. Your friends tell me that you can hardly be in a state to take a proper interest in the case till you have had a thorough rest.”

As Hayloft left the court a cheer went up from the crowd, in which the judge joined.

The next few days were busy days for Hezekiah.

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Filled with receptions, civic committees, and the preparation of the brief, in which Hezekiah's native intelligence excited the admiration of the lawyers.

Newspaper men sought for interviews. Business promoters called upon Hezekiah. His name was put down as a director of several leading companies, and it was rumoured that in the event of his acquittal he would undertake a merger of all the great burglar protection corporations of the United States.

The trial opened a week later, and lasted two months. Hezekiah was indicted on five charges—arson, for having burned the steel cage of the elevator; misdemeanour, for shooting the footman; the theft of the money, petty larceny; the killing of the philanthropist, infanticide; and the shooting at the police without hitting them, aggravated felony.

The proceedings were very complicated—expert evidence was taken from all over the United States. An analytical examination was made of the brain of the philanthropist. Nothing was found.

The entire jury were dismissed three times on the grounds of prejudice, twice on the ground of ignorance, and finally disbanded on the ground of insanity.

The proceedings dragged on.

Meanwhile Hezekiah's business interests accumulated.

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At length, at Hezekiah's own suggestion, it was necessary to abandon the case.

"Gentlemen," he said, in his final speech to the court, "I feel that I owe an apology for not being able to attend these proceedings any further. At any time, when I can snatch an hour or two from my business, you may always count on my attendance. In the meantime, rest assured that I shall follow your proceedings with the greatest interest."

He left the room amid three cheers and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

After that the case dragged hopelessly on from stage to stage.

The charge of arson was met by a *nolle prosequi*. The accusation of theft was stopped by a *ne plus ultra*. The killing of the footman was pronounced justifiable insanity.

The accusation of murder for the death of the philanthropist was withdrawn by common consent. Damages in error were awarded to Hayloft for the loss of his revolver and cartridges. The main body of the case was carried on a writ of *certiorari* to the Federal Courts and appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States.

It is there still.

Meantime, Hezekiah, as managing director of the Burglars' Security Corporation, remains one of the

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rising generation of financiers in New York, with every prospect of election to the State Senate.

VI.—SORROWS OF A SUPER SOUL

or, The Memoirs of Marie Mushenough

(Translated, by Machinery, out of the Original Russian)

DO you ever look at your face in the glass?
I do.

Sometimes I stand for hours and peer at my face and wonder at it. At times I turn it upside down and gaze intently at it. I try to think what it means. It seems to look back at me with its great brown eyes as if it knew me and wanted to speak to me.

Why was I born?

I do not know.

I ask my face a thousand times a day and find no answer.

At times when people pass my room—my maid Nitnitzka, or Jakub, the serving-man—and see me talking to my face, they think I am foolish.

But I am not.

At times I cast myself on the sofa and bury my head in the cushions. Even then I cannot find out why I was born.

I am seventeen.

Shall I ever be seventy-seven? Ah!

Shall I ever be even sixty-seven, or sixty-seven even? Oh!