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HENRY A. PARSONS, JR., EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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## MY OLD COAT.

BY MORTIMER COLLINS.

This old velvet coat has grown queer, I admit, and changed in the color, and loose in the fit; though to beauty it certainly can not aspire, 'tis a cozy old coat for a seat by the fire.

When I first put it on it was awfully swell: I went to a picnic, met Lucy Lepel, made a hole in the heart of that sweet little girl, and disjoined the nose of her lover, the Earl.

We rambled away o'er the moorland together; my coat was bright purple, and so was the Earl; and so was the sunset that blazed in the west, as Lucy's fair tresses were laid on my breast.

We plighted our troth 'neath that sunset alone, but Lucy retired to her Earl all the same; she's a granddama now, and is going down to sea with him.

But my old velvet coat is a friend to me still. It was built by a tailor of mighty renown, whose art is no longer the talk of the town; a magical picture memory was woven in it; when I thrust my three arms through its easy old sleeves,

I see in my fire, through the smoke of my pipe, sweet maidens of old that are long overgrown, and a troop of old cronies, right gay cavaliers, whose grins paid well for Champagne at Waterloo's.

A strong generation, who drank, fought, and bled, whose hands never trembled, whose shots never missed; who lived a quick life, for their pulses beat high; we remember them well, Sir, my old coat and I.

## "ME AND MY PAL."

A Tale of the Cuban Rebellion.

My associates through life have been many and various. I have hobnobbed with "noblemen, gentlemen of property, heirs to entailed estates, officers on full pay, and other responsible parties;" and I have fraternized with grogms, gamekeepers, jockeys, trainers, and founts. On one occasion, being belated in a heavy snow-storm at the Bald-faced Stag at Finchley, I saw the heart of an inebriated hearse-driver returning from Finchley Cemetery, that with a blind confidence, born of our host's good rum, he thrust whip and reins into my astonished hands, and climbing into the receptacle but recently vacated by a "fare," prayed me to pilot his somber chariot home. Which, first stipulating for a temporary exchange of hats and cloaks, I did, to the admiration of all Camden Town—the mutes attendant on the sad cortege following, appropriately speechlessly drunk, in a four-wheeler. But of all the strange companions into whose society I have ever been thrown by a perverse fate, or whose companionship I have sought from what my friends are pleased to denominate "a taste for low life" (no idea could be more erroneous; I only thirst for knowledge), the person whom I am going to tell you about was, *par excellence*, the strangest and the most inscrutable. I am going to tell you a tale without hero, and an "able-bodied gentleman" (if such a term is applicable) is alluded to in my title under "the first person singular, nominative case—me" (Mr. Squeers is my authority for this grammar); and the identity of myself—*moi qui vous parles*—is merged in the endearing epithet of "my pal."

This is rather perplexing; but as the whole title forms an expression which constantly fell from the lips of "my pal" when, in the intervals of professional discipline, he had occasion to allude to the unworthy narrator, I have chosen to preserve it in its entirety, in memory of the most extraordinary man I ever met.

His name was Jonas Baxter, and he was the most intrepid, desperate, and skillful burglar that ever laughed at Scotland Yard, or gossiped the New York police to anger by his sublime indifference to the terrors of the Tombs.

At the time of which I write (very recently), he had long been an absentee from England, having "quitted his country for his country's good," and arrived in New York via Australia, after holding a temporary position under Her Majesty's government in that colony. When my story opens, Mr. Baxter appears before the public as a filibuster, having (with a view to mental depression) volunteered to aid the oppressed in redeeming the "ever-faithful Isle" from the stigma of slavery; and the writer, tired of doing nothing, had also taken service under the "Lone Star" flag, and was appointed second in command of the expedition which had the honor of numbering that true patriot, Mr. Baxter, in its ranks.

I was ignorant, however, of the greatness thrust upon me by his enrollment in my command; and the day after we had left New York, when I had reason very heartily to be thankful for his enlistment.

The rank and file of the expedition were, as may be supposed, a "highly mixed-up" lot—Cubans, Swedes, Germans, Irish, Danes, Irish-Americans, Yankees, a very few English, and no Scotch.

Of these the most unruly and thoroughly brutal were the Irish-Americans, the sweepings of New York, the very scum of the Bowery. One of these fellows was standing, half-drunk, under the break of the poop, indulging in a string of such meaningless and awfully blasphemous oaths as can only be heard in the "down-town" spirit stores of New York or Chicago. I could not notice the intense annoyance, almost terror, of the commandant's wife (a Cuban lady), who was on the poop, unable to escape be-

hind ear-shot, and I accordingly ordered the ruffian to go forward. Excited by whiskey, he turned on me, and strewed such flowers of speech, in Bowery argot, on my head, that, lax as our discipline with the men was, I was bound to punish him, and I accordingly ordered him to be confined. Immediately drawing his formidable knife, the rascal (as the Yankees say) "went for me." I was standing on the after-hatch quite unarmed, having left my sword and pistols in the cuddy; and, providentially, as he hurled himself on to me, his foot tripped on the combings of the hatchway, and he fell almost at my feet, the murderous weapon aimed at my breast just grazing my thigh. He was up again in an instant, with arm uplifted for a second and more fatal stab, when a crack like the smash of a carriage panel was heard, and Private Felix O'Gorman dropped with a fractured skull on the deck before a blow from a handspike, wielded by Mr. Jonas Baxter, burglar and Cuban patriot. There was no mistaking the man's nationality for a moment, even before he spoke. Such corduroys (may I adopt the vernacular, and say "kickses") were never made out of Whitechapel; and when he said, in a drawing, quiet tone so common to his kind, that he'd be blessed if he'd see the captain bested by a Fenian, my memory flew back over the Atlantic; I was again in Bagin-spie; "I was it that did it. Seventy-four times did I travel down first-class by that very train from Victoria Station before I got the chance I wanted. There were four of us in it; and a very few more journeys would have broke us; for what with railway fares, cigars from Ponteb's, and brandy, such as Baron Rothschild drinks, at seven-and-twenty shillings a bottle, for the guard, it cost us a tidy lot before we landed. My pal got seven years, he did," he added, reflectively; but suddenly remembering that the sinister fate of his former associate might have a depressing influence on my budding enthusiasm, he hastily added, "But he was a fool—he was!"

With Machiavelian subtlety the worthy non-commissioned officer allowed me no time to reflect whether the folly of the gentleman on whom misfortune had fallen did not primarily consist in becoming the comrade of so desperate and skillful a villain as himself, but plunged anew into anecdote.

"I was I be asking proudly, who discovered how to split the Bank of England notes by placing them between steel plates covered with a strong cement, to which each surface of the note adhered; so that each half formed a perfect note, almost imperceptibly thinner than the entire one. I should have made a fortune then," he sighed, "only, while I was copying the notes at the rate of £100 a day, and often more, at Tottenham, my partner he went and rounded on me, he did."

"Did you ever commit murder?—That is, did you ever take human life?" I asked him one day.

"Never but once," said he; "and that was in self-defense. I had cracked a crib, alone, up Sixth Avenue, near the Central Park, and I was making my way down toward the river, with a basket with the swag in it on my arm, when I came full-butt on to a policeman. His revolver was out in a moment, but I was as quick as himself; and as his bullet whistled through my hat, mine went right through his brain. I heard afterward that he was the best shot in the force; but on that night, his own revolver being out of order, he had borrowed that of a brother officer, which he threw a little high, and he was not aware of it, or I shouldn't be here now telling you my adventures."

Thus the voyage passed away, each day leaving me more astonished at the extraordinary mixture of good and evil in this man's character. But for the *suavitas* I really think he might have been a respectable member of society. He never gambled, or quarreled, or drank, and seldom swore; but for gold he hungered and thirsted. He used to dream of it all night, he told me; and by day certainly his only theme was gold and his acquisition. On this point I am sure he was a monomaniac. For the paper currency of the United States, he had the greatest contempt. The yellow metal itself he was daring; and even while conversing he would keep nervously twisting in his strong, sinewy fingers a great twenty-dollar gold piece, which he said no privations would have induced him to change. But to the very last moment of his life—for I regret to say that poor Mr. Baxter, as you will hear, "died in shoes"—my property was sacred in his eyes. When my watch was appropriated by one of the enlightened patriots under my command, they had a very rough time of it between-deck until my indignant sergeant recovered the missing property, but gave the unlucky thief such a practical hum on the tenth commandment as I am sure he never forgot; and when subsequently our privations rendered the men so desperate that they stole and fought for each other's food, my ration always retained its place in the watchful care of poor Jonas Baxter.

I am not writing a history of the Revolution, so I will pass over all the details of my campaigning in the island, merely remarking that the men proved amenable to no discipline, and that they fought independently, as only reckless, desperate men, inured to bloodshed and the sight of death in every form, could fight. As for Jonas Baxter, he was a shot in himself. Every day's march brought him near the goal for which he panted. His precious tools, which he well knew, were concealed in his knapsack; and when he pillowed his head upon it at night, he betide the man who should attempt to deprive him of one of those aids to boundless wealth. But, alas,

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Mr. Baxter did reach P., and so did I; but it was as prisoners of war, taken in arms against the Spanish government, and with a pretty exact perception that scant courtesy from our captors would be afforded us.

We were lodged with other prisoners in a large cell in the town jail, which occupied one side of the principal place, and from the closely barred window we could see the very bank that had lured my poor, covetous comrade to his doom. He was almost grand in the sublimity of his despair. "Six million dollars in gold!" he would repeat gaz-

ing fixedly at the fatal building—"Six million dollars in gold!" I thought of Napoleon at St. Helena. But though his dearest hopes were frustrated, and all chance of escape was denied him, he behaved with a gameness and pluck I rarely saw equalled, never surpassed. I had been wounded, and was in the thought-guid state—not improved by the thought that I had been rather a fool to get into such a mess for no reason at all—and to procure me some little comforts (of which he persistently refused to partake) this hardened thief parted with his beloved twenty-dollar piece. Neither of us supposed for a moment that our lives would be spared, and though I escaped (how and why need not be detailed here), not many days had elapsed after our arrival in P.—when they took poor Jonas Baxter out to be hanged. The gallows was erected in the large place on which our window looked, and led by a horrible fascination, I drew near to it, and watched "the awful proceedings."

"Do you remember," said he, "when the D.—mail was robbed of £60,000 in specie?" "I was it that did it. Seventy-four times did I travel down first-class by that very train from Victoria Station before I got the chance I wanted. There were four of us in it; and a very few more journeys would have broke us; for what with railway fares, cigars from Ponteb's, and brandy, such as Baron Rothschild drinks, at seven-and-twenty shillings a bottle, for the guard, it cost us a tidy lot before we landed. My pal got seven years, he did," he added, reflectively; but suddenly remembering that the sinister fate of his former associate might have a depressing influence on my budding enthusiasm, he hastily added, "But he was a fool—he was!"

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## SKETCHES BY A COSMOPOLITAN.

Tricks of the Trade.

"For ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain," Washington market dealers are rather "peculiar." It may interest farmers and fruit growers to know how their produce is manipulated by these clever operators, more especially at this time, when the railroad enterprise promises to facilitate matters, so that at no distant day we may be engaged in raising produce, fruits, etc., for the insatiate man of Gotham.

And first as to the cherry buyers, who seem to be a class by themselves. They make their appearance during the balance week, furnished with spring balances, scales, lanterns, attendants, etc., and establish themselves at various points in the market, and throughout the entire night they lay in wait for game. Their men are sent out in the streets to intercept the countrymen as they cross the city, or drive down from Westchester county. Soon they begin to arrive, and then all is bustle, confusion and rascality.

The *modus operandi* is as follows: After making the price as low as possible (and being all combined, and having a perfect understanding, the price is about to weigh. The principal takes his place at the desk to enter the weights, a good operator engaged from year to year, and who is very skillful in this peculiar line, commences to weigh the baskets of luscious fruit. The countryman, intending to be very watchful, keeps his eye on the scales, but, bless your heart, he might just as well look at the back of his hand, for in the first place, the scales are "fixed" for the purpose; and besides that, they are carefully hung just the proper height that the operator, by clapping his foot under the baskets, his heel resting on the floor, and the basket resting down on his toe, so that it is made to weigh just what they please; by this means, together with some wild figuring when the point is made, why, the cherry trade is well worth looking after; more especially as they frequently buy up several tons in one night during the height of the season.

"Tabbing up" is a very interesting process that may be witnessed any morning before trade is commenced; it consists in emptying the greater part of a barrel of potatoes, apples, onions, etc., in a large tub, taking out the largest as they run out, then emptying the tub carefully back into the barrel, and place largely on the top; by this means a barrel not nearly full will be rounded up nicely, and look quite as good as its own. When potatoes are carried to the stands from the boats or cars, where they are in bulk, the dealers send good boys, boys, and they feel aggrieved if by using barrels they cannot make an extra barrel on every ten when they are sold out again.

Indeed, the business is transacted for the most part in a manner peculiar to the place. When a lot of peaches are landed on a stand, being covered with muslin covers, they are immediately turned upside down, and then the fruit is allowed to settle back again very carefully, and they are set down very carefully, and they are not disturbed. You see them dip a hand over the mouth of a strawberry basket (holding about a handful), turn it over, and jar it slightly, and set it carefully down, and thus everything is topped off, loosened up, and made the most of. One good church man was asked on one occasion, "How can you reconcile your plan of doing this to your profession of religion?" "The way you see them on the top, and shaking them up so that the baskets and barrels may appear fuller than they really are? Is it not a deception?" "Why, bless your simple heart, no," said he; "our customers know just how the matter is, and would be greatly deceived and disappointed if they did find them topped off." And when the women who sell apples and other fruit on the sidewalk by the post office and elsewhere would come flocking around the old "deacon" to replenish their stock. I have overheard them ask, "Arrah, thin, honey, tell us the thruth, for a decent old man that ye are."

"Well, Mary (all apple women are Marys), they're no larger or better in the bottom than you see them on top." And that was a nice assertion for the "deacon."

One word as to the commission dealers. Some of them are honest and upright in their transactions, but a great many are quite the reverse, being as arrant a set of knaves as can be found in any line of trade; and, it is disposed to be dishonest, opportunity is not wanting. The usual commissions allowed were five per cent for selling beef and horse, and shilling apiece for sheep, for poultry, eggs, butter, cheese, and general produce and fruit, the rate was ten per cent, the consignee paying freight and cartage. However, the producer was often at some remote place; perhaps in the far West, or South; and the dealers were, many of them at least, "far" in making out bills, so that their ten per cent would be doubled, and in some cases trebled. When there is a glut of perishable fruit in the market (which is often the case with peaches), then a wide margin is offered, that dishonest commission dealers are not slow to take advantage of. Peaches may be worth one dollar a basket in the morning, half a dollar at noon, and before night a drug at twenty-five cents, and end up by dumping the balance off the dock by cart loads to get the empty baskets and make room for fresh arrivals. This I have seen done repeatedly during the height of the season; not by any means worthless fruit, either, but just such as would bring a dollar more per basket under other circumstances. One night in particular, I remember that the denizens of Washington street and vicinity got wind of the dumping process, and literally swarmed, women and children, with baskets, pails, bags, and aprons; and the good natured boys that were busy clearing out not only filled their vessels, but dumped them over

their heads, pelted them from every point, and the rabble finally returned it with interest, until it became a scene of wild disorder; so would tax the pencil of Hogarth to depict or the pen of Dickens to describe. The *finale* was that we were obliged to clear the docks to save further deprivations, and that was no easy matter by any means. It was during such a season of plenty, when the market was overstocked every day, that one of the commission dealers showed me the following bill rendered to a fruit grower:

New York, Oct. 1880.	
Sold for Mr.—	
150 Baskets Peaches @ 15c.	\$22 50
4 Barrels Marion Squashes @ \$1.	4 00
826 50	
CHARGES.	
Commission on 150 baskets Peaches,	\$18 75
" " 4 barrels Squashes,	8 90
Freight and Cartage,	3 00
\$25 65	

Balance due, \$1.59. Please remit.

It is but justice to the dealer to say, however, that the shipper was but a transient customer, who would not have sent to him under other circumstances; but he confessed to having sold some of the fruit as high as fifty cents per basket, and from that to the price rendered in the bill. The request for a remittance was a bit of humor that pleased him immensely.

A few scenes more embodied in perhaps one "sketch," and ere we become tiresome, we will bid adieu to the classic locality known as the Washington market Docks, with its rude sheds, among which we have wandered, and over which we have watched so many dreary nights; and then, reader, with your kind permission, we may betake ourselves to "other fields and pastures new." We may not even confine ourselves to the city of New York, but, by virtue of a "roving commission" issued by our ancestors, may journey to other climes, the country, perhaps to the prairies of the far West, and compel them to furnish material for these "sketches" by a citizen of the world, for

"No pent-up Ulice contracts our powers,  
The whole, the boundless continent, is ours."  
L. R. T.

## Going the Rounds.

Once in a while a paragraph or an advertisement appears in some out-of-the-way newspaper that somehow or other seems to tickle the American journalist, who sets it a-going in such a way that it speedsily travels all over the country. For example: Some little time since a "broken-hearted woman" was called herself, Mrs. Laura Hunt, of Broadbalkin, Fulton county, New York, notified the public through the *American Intelligencer* that her dear husband, Josiah Hunt, had left her bed and board, and strayed to parts unknown; and she forbade all girls, old maids, and widows to marry or marry him under penalty of the law. She earnestly entreated all editors "throughout the world" to lay this information before their readers.

"Mrs. Hunt will please perceive that we have complied with her request,"—*Courier*. "And we (two) too,"—*Transcript*. "And we three,"—*Cincinnati Mirror*. "And we four,"—*Standard*. "And we six,"—*Western Methodist*. "And we six,"—*Zion's Herald*. "And we seven,"—*Maine Free Press*. "And we eight,"—*Mobile Free Press*. "And we nine,"—*Woodstock Whig*. "Leave her bed and board, the villain! And we ten,"—*National Eagle*. "And strayed to parts unknown, the vagabond! And we eleven,"—*Daily Advertiser*. "He left her bed and board, the vagabond!"—*Statesman*. "And we start him again,"—*Miner's Journal*. "Break a woman's heart, the fiend! Take that!"—*Telegraph*. "Go ahead, and hunt him, Laura,"—*Sentinel*. "Pass him around, and start him again,"—*Peer-so-around*. "Bids,"—*EDITOR'S DRAWER*, in *Harper's Magazine* for April.

## Critical Periods of Human Life.

From the age of forty to that of sixty a man who properly regulates himself may be considered in the prime of life. His matured strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to the attacks of disease, and all his functions are in the highest order. Having gone a year or two past sixty, however, he arrives at a critical period of existence; the river of Death flows before him, and he remains at a standstill. But atwart this river is a viaduct, called "The Turn of Life," which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley "Old Age," round which the river winds, and then flows beyond without a boat or causeway to affect its passage. The bridge is, however, constructed of fragile materials, and it depends upon how it is trodden whether it stands or breaks. Gout, apoplexy, and other bad characters, are also in the vicinity to waylay the traveller, and thrust him from the path; but let him gird up his loins, and provide himself with perfect composure. To quote a metaphor, the "Turn of Life" is a turn either into a prolonged walk or into the grave. The system and power, having reached their utmost expansion now begin either to close like flowers at sunset, or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant, a single fatal excitement, may force it beyond its strength; whilst a careful supply of props, and the withdrawal of all that tends to force a plant, will sustain it in beauty and in vigor until night has nearly set in.

## NITRO GLYCERINE AGAIN.

On Sunday morning, March 12th, seven hundred pounds of nitro glycerine exploded in a small woollen tunnel. The building was of course blown to splinters. The cans, in which the glycerine was kept, were spread out in ragged shreds, were spread out for a distance of twenty rods, the path being six rods wide. The trees, three inches in diameter, were torn and twisted into wiles. The village of North Adams, two and a half miles distant, was shaken as if by an earthquake. No lives were lost, but the explosion was terrific.

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

A writer in the *Golden Age* says that Miss Kellogg sings "Sweet Home" as if she lived in a hotel.

A clergyman in the West seeks damages of a journal which published a report of his lecture, "Mind and Matter," under the head of "Wind and Water."

"Pupmatio" is suggested as a new word admirably adapted to describe those individuals to whom the application of "dogmatic" would be too dignified.

A man from the country visited all the stores in Jasper, Ind., recently, to buy a divorce. He was told they were just out of divorce, but would have a full supply in a few days.

Richter says: "A man takes contradiction and advice much more easily than people think, only he will not bear it when violently given, though it will be well founded. Hearts are flowers; they remain open to the softly-falling dew, but shut up in the violent down-pour of rain."

"You haven't got such a thing as a pair of old trousers have you?" "No, my man," said the merchant; "I don't keep my wardrobe in my counting-house." "Where do you live?" rejoined Pat, "and I'll call in the morning for the old pair you've got on."

A minister once gave a commentary to an old Scotch lady who was well versed in the Scripture. He thought she would enjoy the explanations of her favorite passages. Calling on her a few days afterward, he said: "Did you like the book I gave you?" "Ay, mon, it's a guid book, and the Bible explains it amazingly."

A beggar asking alms under the name of a poor scholar, a gentleman to whom he applied himself asked him a question in Latin. The fellow, shaking his head, said he did not understand him. "Why," said the gentleman, "did you not say you were a poor scholar?" "Yes," replied the other, "a poor one indeed, for I do not understand one word of Latin."

In one of the pleasant villages in Western New York, the other day, a certain worthy housekeeper thought she would call on her nearest neighbor. She was about entering the door, but hesitated, thinking that the family might be taking their supper. "Come in," said the hostess, "we are having table set." "Yes," replied the visitor, "I thought I smell 'em."

A resident of Taunton, Massachusetts, has obtained his ice for summer use, for several winters past, in the following manner: Procuring about fifty empty flour-barrels, at a cost of twenty cents each, he gradually pours in water until each contains a solid mass of ice. The barrels are then put away in his cellar and entirely covered with sawdust. As ice is required, a barrel is tapped.

A negro boy who went to church was cautioned to remember the text, which was: "Why stand ye here idle? Go into my vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will pay thee." Tommy came home, and was asked to repeat the text. He thought it over a while, and cried out: "What'd ye stand round here doing nuffin for? Go into my barnyard and work. I'll make it all right with you."

The following recipe for the cure of inflamed eyes is given: "Take a potato, and after cutting away the whole heart as fine as possible, and place the gratings between a piece of cambric muslin. Place the potatoe over the eyes inflamed, and keep it there fifteen minutes. Continue the operation three successive nights, and a perfect cure ensues." It is worth trying by those afflicted with sore eyes.

It has been found by experiment that animals die in a few weeks when fed upon fine flour alone, but would live long when fed upon the whole flour. There is wisdom in the old-time practice of restricting prisoners to coarse bread, as when denied all other food, life could not otherwise be sustained for any great length of time. Coarse bread is also necessary for the proper growth and perfection of the teeth.

In the Arctic regions, the Esquimaux and Greenland live principally on the fat of seals, bears, and whales; by such food only are they enabled to endure the extreme cold without seeming to suffer more than we do in our southern winters—the resident of the tropics lives chiefly on watery fruits and vegetables, with very little oily food. From this we may learn to eat more of the oleaginous elements in winter than in summer, in order to keep up our animal heat.

A prize of ten dollars was recently offered to any member of the Georgia Teachers' Institute who would write and spell correctly the words in the following sentence: "It is an agreeable sight to witness the unparalleled embarrassment of a harnessed pedlar attempting to gauge the symmetry of a peeled onion, which a slyly has stabbed with a poniard regardless of the innuendoes of the lines of the cornelian hue." Thirty-eight teachers competed for the prize, but not one was successful.

A pretty good story is told of an Irishman named Billy, who had long been employed as a tomsnoper by the occupant of a coal wharf in Philadelphia. He was a fixture, and the owner thought he could not get along without Billy. But as both employer and man were the possessors of more or less intractability, frequent were their explosions, and Billy was discharged at least once a day; but though frequently discharged, he never went off. One day the employer, during one of these passages, burst out: "It's no sort of use, Billy; I can't learn you anything at all, and have been trying for years."

"Shure and yes have, then, lairnt me wan thing," said Billy.

"What is that?" was asked; "I shall be glad to hear of anything you have learned."

"Shure, sir, yez have lairnt me that fifteen hundred makes a ton!"

Billy knew too much to be spared.