

## MYRA'S EMPLOYER.

Rudolph's was a snug little restaurant situated in the heart of the business portion of the city, but so hidden away in a nest of obscure cross-streets and alleys as to make it a difficult spot for one unacquainted with the neighborhood to discover. The furnishings were simple almost to plainness, but the interior was always warm and comfortable, and the atmosphere mild and cheerful. The bill of fare contained nothing of elaborate order, but the provender that Herr Rudolph set before his guests was, though simple, the best in the market.

The proprietor Herr Rudolph, was a rather mysterious personage. He was a grave, benevolent-looking little man, with a smooth bald-head, a habit of incessantly wiping his gold-rimmed spectacles, as he chatted with a patron. To such of his customers—and he had many regular ones who boarded with him from year to year—as made hap-hazard inquiries of him as to his antecedents and life history, he preserved an air of genial reticence, parrying their inquiries amiably without losing offense. It was, of course, well known that he hailed originally from the Fatherland but his manner and speech were alike indicative of an extended residence in this land of liberty and intellectual enlightenment. Yet, though to a certain extent Americanized, the "Herr" adhered to him; as "Herr Rudolph" he was known in the neighborhood, and spoken of in his absence.

The majority of Herr Rudolph's regular customers were students from the big college building in the next block. They constituted as reckless, light-hearted, careless, indifferent, blithesome set of fellows as the average college can produce. They came and went at all hours of the day, depleting Herr Rudolph's nourishing larder with a prodigality that brought him his reward for the unceasing efforts made by him to fittingly provide for their wants. With the students Herr Rudolph was as popular as it was possible for a man in his position to be. He was made, to an extent, the companion of their idle after-supper moods, and was as often the recipient of their confidence as the butt of their jokes. He submitted to their good-humored pleasantries with the same grace that he respected their confidences, preserving always a courteous deportment, and never for a minute crossing in the slightest degree the social boundary that separated purveyor from patron.

Herr Rudolph's "help" was all feminine. He evinced great tact, when he decided that this feature would serve to enhance the popularity of his establishment in the eyes of his younger guests. The table offices were performed by four young girls, who were assisted at regular meal time by as many more from the outside who were merely brought in as "subs" to tide over the rush. As only one member of Herr Rudolph's staff is especially concerned in this narrative, it is not necessary to describe her companions. The young person in question was—Myra.

Of course, she was the prettiest of the lot. She was a plump little person of, perhaps, 18 years, with the rare combination of a flaxen head of hair and a pair of snapping, wicked black eyes. No one knew whence she came, except that she had appeared on duty about a year before. If any one had had the presumption to question her about herself, the result of such questioning was not known. The sternness with which Herr Rudolph had repelled the solitary young man who had summed up courage enough to ask him about Myra, had prevented any imitation of his offense by the others. As for Myra herself the general run of the boys idolized her; they made a sort of a pet of her, and scrambled and disputed for the privilege of dining at the particular table over which she presided. Of course she had to submit to a good deal that young women in her position are usually subjected to, but if she experienced any annoyance thereat, her manner did not show it. She was as merry as a cricket, as contented as a pig in a sty, and had a smile and a easy word for everybody. But anything in the way of attention outside of her regular round of duties, Myra parried with a dexterity that would have done credit to a young woman in a much more elevated

sphere of life. There was not one of her many admirers amongst Herr Rudolph's clientele who could boast that he had received more encouragement than another.

It was perhaps this latter fact that added to the general consternation when there appeared upon the scene a new customer who, from the very outset, appeared, in the jealous eyes of the habitués of the place to distance all competitors in the passage to Myra's favor. He was a young man of elegant attire, stalwart figure, and an air that bespoke considerable of an acquaintance with worldly things. He dropped in by chance one evening, within an hour of closing time, and Myra waited on him. He entered into an interchange of remarks, and, to the astonishment of five or six of the "boys," who sat over in another corner smoking, she appeared to evince anything but a distaste for his conversation. When he left, he bade her a smiling good-night, and expressed an intention to call again.

And he did call again—many times. And the oftener he came the longer he stayed as the conversations with Miss Myra were extended far beyond the limit allowed to the most favored of her old friends. The jealousy of these old friends was passionate but ineffective. They reproached Myra for her conduct, in her new admirer's absence, but she turned aside their sallies with the same air of dexterity with which she parried advances of all sorts. She did not discontinue her cordial treatment of the stranger, and his visits to Rudolph's became more and more frequent.

Two or three of the students took it upon themselves to speak of Myra's new acquaintance to Herr Rudolph, and with sundry hints and prophecies, endeavored to point out to him the unwise course she was pursuing. The complainants, it is to be feared, experienced not a little gratification on beholding the effect of their remarks upon mine host. He professed indifference, but it was easy to see that it was unreal. It was not to be supposed that Herr Rudolph had not noticed the advent of the stranger, but his intercourse with Myra had, apparently, been a matter of little interest to him. He rarely moved from his post at his little counter except to occasionally pace the floor in an abstracted fashion, as was his wont, his hands clasped behind him, and his eyes fixed upon the floor. But if the realization of what was going on caused him any inward uneasiness, he did his best to conceal the fact from the young men who brought it to his notice. And if he failed to do so, it was surely not his fault.

Matters had progressed in this way for several weeks, when Herr Rudolph was made the recipient of something resembling a stroke of paralysis, by the appearance of a stranger at the restaurant, one evening, at the hour when Myra usually set out for home. The young man passed a civil remark about the weather, sat himself down in a chair near the door, and asked carelessly if Myra was ready. What Herr Rudolph would have replied will never be known, because Myra appeared at that instant, nodded a good-night to her employer, placed a very neatly gloved hand upon the arm of her escort, and vanished gracefully through the door.

But Herr Rudolph's astonishment was nothing to the indignation of his regular patrons when they were aware of what had transpired. None of them would have dared to seek a privilege of this sort, and their resentment at its having been sought and secured with such apparent ease by the new-comer was boundless.

The culprits were not at all abashed by this, for the performance was repeated a few evenings after that, and pretty soon became a regular thing. Five evenings out of six the interloper strolled into the establishment within a few minutes of closing time, and after a brief wait carried Myra off in triumph.

Any one who had taken the trouble to watch Herr Rudolph closely during the next few weeks, would have noticed that his demeanor lost a good deal of the genial serenity which had heretofore been its distinguishing feature. His laugh was less boisterous and hearty, his gait less spirited and self-assertive, and his general behavior anything but that of a cheerful man. His young patrons remarked on this among themselves; one or two of them railed at him about it, but all sympathized with him. His griev-

ance was, to a certain extent, their own. They knew he loved Myra like a father, and felt a good deal the same way themselves.

One day Myra did not come to her work at all, which, for her, was something altogether new. She was a model of punctuality, and her employer did not know what to make of it. What he endured that day it will do no good to enquire into, but on the following morning, when Myra walked in, a sudden impulse prompted him to follow her into a little room where she was divesting herself of her wraps, close the door, and enter into conversation with her. A few moments afterwards the girl emerged suddenly, with angry tears coursing down her cheeks, and went silently about her duties, while Herr Rudolph, heaving a deep sigh, followed suit. His effort to gain her confidence had been a distinct failure.

Myra went home early that evening, and as a consequence, her new friend met with a disappointment when he made his appearance as the clock struck eight. The little restaurant was empty, with the exception of its proprietor, who was toiling over a comfortable pile of bills on his little marble desk. With the same impulse that prompted him to question the girl, Herr Rudolph now addressed himself to the young man. In polite terms he informed him that no possible good could come of his acquaintance with his charge. He told him of the girl's friendless position, alone in the city, without friends, and without money—himself her only protector, and asked him if he would not be generous enough to let the girl go on her way unmolested. There was a manly sparkle in his eye as he closed his remarks with the assertion that in him Myra had a faithful protector—one who would note any wrong done to her, and resent it as his own. The young man was silent for several minutes after Herr Rudolph had ceased speaking, then he answered him in quiet tones with a ring of allied manliness and courtesy in them:

I appreciate what you have told me, he said, and it is now your turn to listen to me. I give you my word that in looking in the way you have done at our acquaintance, you have done Myra and me a deep injustice. I do not mind telling you—for she has told me how good you have been to her—that my regard for her is as deep and as honest as any that I have ever known. To speak plainly, I love Myra and wish to marry her.

Herr Rudolph's face was as expressionless as a stone, as he looked the young man straight in the eye. He apparently became convinced of his honesty in that brief scrutiny, for he bowed gravely to the youth and apologized for what he had said. A few moments more passed, and then the young man bade him good night and left.

Myra was on duty the next morning as usual, and Herr Rudolph lost no time in seeking her out. He went up to her, possessed himself of both her hands: Forgive, my child, he said. I did this wrong, dear, he went on, sinking for a moment into his old, paternal way of speaking, and it breaks my heart to think of it. I have been good to thee, have I not?

You have, Herr Rudolph, answered the girl in a half whisper.

It grieved me to think of thee doing that which was not right. I have watched thee grow from child to woman, each day adding to thy beauty, and thou art now as dear to me as any child of my own could be. But the young man looks good, and true, brave. He told me last night that he loved thee well and would marry thee if he could.

The girl hung her head and said nothing. Herr Rudolph's voice trembled a little as he went on. And thou wilt wed him, child, wilt thou not?

Myra's answer was a sudden burst of tears. Then all at once she lifted her graceful young head and ejaculated: No, I will not!

Over Herr Rudolph's face there swept a sudden light. And why? he whispered, ashamed of his eagerness, as he noticed how the girl trembled.

Myra, placed a very pretty hand lightly upon his coat sleeve, and replied, I have told him that I cannot marry him, Herr Rudolph, because I do not love him. He is a brave fellow, and once knocked a man down who insulted me—though he bade me never tell of that—and that is how we became friends. Yet, he was not contented, and said he would make

me love him, but I cannot, cannot—how can I when—?

Bending down over her closely, Herr Rudolph looked into her eyes long and earnestly. What he saw there had a remarkable effect, for the next moment he had—

But why go into details?

## A QUEER INCENDIARY SCHEME.

I have a plan that will help us out. It is a last resort, and desperate, I know, but it is safe.

The speaker was a well dressed, fine looking man, apparently not older than 30. His cold, gray eyes, aquiline and rather prominent nose and heavy chin were the unmistakable indices of a calculating, bold and resolute character. He spoke to a man of at least 50 years, neat in appearance, but whose face betrayed anxiety and discouragement.

The words were spoken in a down town Broadway restaurant, near midnight, as the men described took seats at a table toward the rear of the room, in front of a mirror in which a reporter saw them. The newspaper man had lunched and was reading a novel. A partition concealed him from the strangers vision.

Well what is it asked the older man, after the drinks had been set before them.

It is, as I said, a desperate scheme, but it will put us on our feet again. I do not see any other way for us to avoid a failure from which we cannot recover.

What is the plan.

There is an insurance of \$14,000 on the stock and the building.

The speaker paused but his companion did not speak. They eyed each other intently and the younger man continued in a subdued voice:

We have stood by each other in hard times before this. You have paid for insurance policies for many years. If the store should happen to burn and there were no evidences the fire was not accidental, we would start out anew in splendid shape. But accidental fires do not come when they ought, and—

I will not consent to any such thing as you are driving at.

But think of it. You are on the verge of ruin. You need not do anything to incur risk. Your part will be to keep silent, and not to interfere. In trust the business wholly to me. On a certain night a small box would be placed in the cellar among the oils and paint stuffs, and where it would not be seen. You might be out of town. You would be summoned home to find the store in ashes or badly damaged. We could meet our notes and have fair sailing.

If the attempt is detected we would be disgraced, even if we escaped state prison. I would rather assign than try your scheme.

Put confidence in me, persuasively urged the younger man, and you will be in no peril and you will not regret your trust.

What would be in the box?

A mouse, a piece of cheese stuck nearly full of matches, the heads appearing, and some oil soaked combustibles. The mouse will not be able to know out, and, getting hungry, will attack the cheese and ignite a match. The box will quickly be on fire and the flames will spread like a flash and before the burning is discovered the box will have been consumed. Then there will be no evidence. The fire would get such a start the store would be very likely to go. It would undoubtedly burn the night the box was hidden.

A novel idea, said the older man, evidently relenting, yet looking very grave; we'll think it over well before we take such a step.

It's perfectly safe, I tell you, rejoined the schemer. You stay in New York a few days and let me go back and do the job. Then you will be safe from suspicion. I would not have mentioned it to you if I had not feared you might discover the box and give the thing away.

After a few minutes of silence the men drained their glasses and left the place.—New York Press.

## Sisters Instantly Killed.

PHILADELPHIA, February 27.—Julia and Kate Ford, sisters, aged 15 and 25 years respectively, were run over and killed at Frankford station, this evening. They had alighted from the train and were crossing the track, when the Southern Express came along, killing them instantly.

## AN UNBIASED OPINION.

Little Nellie said her prayers one night before Christmas and concluded: O, God, best papa and mamma and best my brother George, who is away at school and bring him safe home so he can give me a nice present and take me out on his sled, amen.

That is saying two words for yourself and one for George, said mamma. A few days ago the little girl went with her mamma to hear Sam Jones.

What do you think of Sam Jones, Nellie? she was asked that evening.

I think he is saying two words for Sam Jones and one for Dad, answered the little miss with great earnestness and gravity.—Kansas City Star.

## CURIOUS FREAK OF AN OWL.

Conductor Prescott, of the Lowell system of the Boston and Maine road, had a passenger on the 7.05 run from Boston to Arlington Tuesday night whom he could not collect a fare from. The road for which he works demands that fares be collected for each passenger, but Mr. Prescott will not lose his position for this one oversight of the rules. The passenger was an owl, an ordinary, every day owl, and could furnish neither a fare nor a pass.

It was between North Cambridge Junction and Lake street that the passenger got aboard. He was not a particular owl, and so contented herself with a position on the head of the engine, above the headlight. That was about fourteen minutes past 7. The train ran on to Arlington, making all the usual stops and noise, and still the owl sat still. At Arlington the engine changed ends with the train, but did not turn round itself. The work of switching backward and forward did not cause the owl any uneasiness, and when the engine was ready to make the return trip to Boston he still manfully held his position and continued his refusal to pay his fare.

At 8.10 the train reached Boston, and then the train crew, consisting of Conductor Prescott, Engineer Blood, Fireman Newhall and Brakemen Lovjoy and Parker gathered about and attempted to make the owl explain his position. The conductor reached up to lift his serene highness from his breezy perch, and was welcomed with a stinging rebuke in the shape of a peck from the bird's beak. Force was used, and now the owl "sits like a major" on a rod in the home of the firemen, a captive, and a willing one, too. He will be cared for by the men. His ride was a strange one, and his serenity startling.

## NOTES CONCERNING NOTABLES.

Kossuth is the healthiest man for his age in Europe. He is 86.

Sam Small says that nine-tenths of the rows at home among the children are started by the girls.

Senator Cockrell is credited with having used three gallons of ink in his private correspondence last year.

George Gould's head is larger than his father's. The son wears 6-7-8 hat, while that of Gould pere is only a 6-1-4.

Bismarck has boycotted James Gordon Bennett's Cable company because James Gordon Bennett's Paris paper abused Bismarck.

The Marquis of Ailsa is the only nobleman in Scotland who can style himself a ship-builder. For years the marquis has carried on a business of this kind at Culzean, on the Ayrshire coast. He does not care whether the lord's school keeps or not.

Mrs. Christine Nilsson says in a letter to a Philadelphia friend that she is a constant rheumatic sufferer, and she fears that she will be obliged to close her professional career at once. She adds that she has not even contemplated another American tour.

Whistler has published in London 100 sets of lithographs engraved on the stone with his own hand and printed by Way. He is said to have shown his usual spirit and artistic worth in this revival of an art almost extinct in our day among a taste of repute.

Although Miss Louise M. Alcott lives in that town of literary inspiration, Concord, Mass., she does most of her writing in Boston. There she takes a room where she can be perfectly retired and quiet, and with a bottle of ink by her side and a lap tablet on her knee, she writes until her task is done. She says that there

is something in the east winds of Boston that stimulates her brain.

Frank R. Stockton, the novelist, said recently that he first worked on the Philadelphia Post and found the work not very hard. Then he went to New York as a writer of short editorials on a weekly called *Hearth and Home*, and he found the work there much harder. Then he tried Scribner's Monthly, where the work became harder still, and he feared that he might be employed on an annual and break down.

The Safety Valve says that the "chemist of the Alpha Oil Company, of Port Sarais, Ont., is a young lady, an adopted daughter of Mr. Hall-Hall, whose process of refining is in use in the establishment. She is very skillful in her profession, and recently succeeded in analyzing the oils treated at the works, by means of a spark from a Bunsen battery in an apparatus of her own design. She accomplished the separation of the carbons into grains while collecting the gases in separate chambers.

Harriet Beecher Stowe is intensely interested in the ministerial work of her son, the Rev. Charles Stowe, who has a church in Hartford, Conn., Mr. Stowe is a Congregationalist, with radical tendencies. He is a strong preacher and his mother, who is now an old and feeble woman, finds her greatest pleasure in listening to his sermons. His church is some distance from Mrs. Stowe's house, but no matter what may be the weather, the famous writer of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" never fails to occupy her pew on Sunday morning.

Harry Harland, the young gentleman who writes over the pen name of "Sidney Luska," has been accused of being unfriendly to the Jews, and a few nights since he appeared in his own defense before a society of Jewish young men in New York. The amusing part of this accusation is that Mr. Harland writes so enthusiastically of the Jewish race, and makes the heroes and heroines of all his novels of that faith, that those who only know him by his writings supposed of course that he was a Hebrew. He is not, however, but comes of an old New York family. He did not even marry into the race he admires so much. His wife is the daughter of Mr. James S. Merriman, a well known New York lawyer.

## A BOY NEEDS A TRADE.

What about a boy who does not take up with a trade or a profession? Look around you and the question is speedily answered. He must cast his hook into any sort of a pond, and take such fish as may easily be caught. He is a sort of tramp. He may work in the brick yard to-day, and in the harvest field tomorrow. He does the drudgery and gets the pay of the drudge. His wages are so small that he finds it impossible to lay up a dollar, and at fortnight of idleness will see him dead broke.

The other night I saw a man dragging himself wearily along, carrying a pick on his shoulder.

Tired, John?

More so than any horse in Detroit.

What do you work at?

I am a digger. Sometimes I work for gas companies, but oftener for plumbers.

Good wages?

So good that my family never has enough to eat, let alone buying decent clothes. If it wasn't for my wife and children I'd wish for the street car to run over me.

Why didn't you learn a trade?

Because nobody had interest enough to argue and reason with me. I might have had a good trade and earned good wages, but here I am working hard for \$8 or \$9 a week than any man does to earn \$18.

And now, my boy, if men tell you that the trades are crowded, and that so many carpenters, blacksmiths, and painters, and shoemakers, and other trades, keep wages down, pay no attention to such talk. Compare the wages of common and skilled workmen. Take the trade which you seem fitted for. Begin with the determination to learn it thoroughly, and to become the best workman in the shop. Don't be satisfied to skin along from one week to another without being discharged, but make your services so valuable by being a thorough workman that your employer cannot afford to let you go.—Detroit Free Press.