

THE SKYLIGHT ROOM.

How Dr. Billy Jackson Found the Girl It Sheltered.

By O. HENRY.

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First Mrs. Parker would show you the double parlors. You would not dare to interrupt her description of their advantages and of the merits of the gentleman who had occupied them for eight years. Then you would manage to stammer forth the confession that you were neither a doctor nor a dentist. Mrs. Parker's manner of receiving the admission was such that you could never afterward entertain the same feeling toward your parents, who had neglected to train you up in one of the professions that fitted Mrs. Parker's parlors.

Next you ascended one flight of stairs and looked at the second floor back at \$8. Convinced by her second floor manner that it was worth the \$12 that Mr. Toosenberry always paid for it until he left to take charge of his brother's orange plantation in Florida, near Palm Beach, where Mrs. McIntyre always spent the winters that had the double front room with private bath, you managed to babble that you wanted something still cheaper.

If you survived Mrs. Parker's scorn you were taken to look at Mr. Skidder's large hall room on the third floor. Mr. Skidder's room was not vacant. He wrote plays and smoked cigarettes in it all day long. But every room hunter was made to visit his room to admire the lambrinquins. After each visit Mr. Skidder, from the fright caused by possible eviction, would pay something on his rent.

Then—oh, then—if you still stood on one foot, with your hot hand clutching the three moist dollars in your pocket, and hoarsely proclaimed your hideous and culpable poverty, never more would Mrs. Parker be clerone of you. She would honk loudly the word "Clara!" She would show you her back and march downstairs. Then Clara, the colored maid, would escort you up the carpeted ladder that served for the fourth flight and show you the skylight room. It occupied 7 by 8 feet of floor space at the middle of the hall. On each side of it was a dark lumber closet or storeroom.

In it were an iron cot, a washstand and a chair. A shelf was the dresser. Its four bare walls seemed to close in upon you like the sides of a coffin. Your hand crept to your throat, you gasped, you looked up as from a well—and breathed once more. Through the glass of the little skylight you saw a square of blue infinity.

"Two dollars, suh," Clara would say in her half contemptuous, half Tuskegean tones.

One day Miss Leeson came hunting for a room. She carried a typewriter made to be lugged around by a much larger lady. She was a very little girl, with eyes and hair that had kept on growing after she had stopped and that always looked as if they were saying: "Goodness me! Why didn't you keep up with us?"

Mrs. Parker showed her the double parlors. "In this closet," she said, "one could keep a skeleton or anesthetic or coal."

"But I am neither a doctor nor a dentist," said Miss Leeson, with a shiver.

Mrs. Parker gave her the incredulous, pitying, sneering, icy stare that

pearing in a cloud of smoke like an aerial cuttlefish.

Presently the tocsin call of "Clara!" sounded to the world the state of Miss Leeson's purse. A dark goblin seized her, mounted a stygian stairway, thrust her into a vault with a glimmer of light in its top and muttered the menacing and cabalistic words "Two dollars!"

"I'll take it," sighed Miss Leeson, sinking down upon the squeaky iron bed.

Every day Miss Leeson went out to work. At night she brought home papers with handwriting on them and made copies with her typewriter. Sometimes she had no work at night, and then she would sit on the steps of the high stoop with the other roomers. Miss Leeson was not intended for a skylight room when the plans were drawn for her creation. She was gay hearted and full of tender, whimsical fancies. Once she let Mr. Skidder read to her three acts of his great (unpublished) comedy, "It's No Kid; or, The Heir of the Subway."

There was rejoicing among the gentlemen roomers whenever Miss Leeson had time to sit on the steps for an hour or two. But Miss Longnecker, the tall blond who taught in a public school and said "Well, really!" to everything you said, sat on the top step and sniffed. And Miss Dorn, who shot at the moving ducks at Coney every Sunday, and worked in a department store, sat on the bottom step and sniffed. Miss Leeson sat on the middle step, and the men would quickly group around her.

Especially Mr. Skidder, who had cast her in his mind for the star part in a private, romantic (unspoken) drama in real life. And especially Mr. Hoover, who was forty-five, fat, flush and foolish. And especially very young Mr. Evans, who set up a hollow cough to induce her to ask him to leave off cigarettes. The men voted her "the funniest and jolliest ever," but the sniffs on the top step and the lower step were implacable.

I pray you let the drama halt while Chorus stalks to the footlights and drops an epicedian tear upon the fatness of Mr. Hoover. Tune the pipes to the tragedy of tallow, the bane of bulk, the calamity of corpulence. Tried out, Falstaff might have rendered more real romance to the ton than would have Romeo's rickety ribs to the ounce. A lover may sigh, but he must not puff. To the train of Momus are the fat men remanded. In vain beats the faithful heart above a fifty-two inch belt. Avaunt, Hoover! Hoover, forty-five, flush and foolish, might carry off Helen herself. Hoover, forty-five, flush, foolish and fat, is meat for perdition. There was never a chance for you, Hoover.

As Mrs. Parker's roomers sat thus one summer's evening Miss Leeson looked up into the firmament and cried, with her gay little laugh:

"Why, there's Billy Jackson! I can see him from down here too."

All looked up, some at the windows of skyscrapers, some casting about for an airship, Jackson guided.

"It's that star," explained Miss Leeson, pointing with a tiny finger. "Not the big one that twinkles—the steady blue one near it. I can see it every night through my skylight. I named it Billy Jackson."

"Well, really!" said Miss Longnecker.

"I didn't know you were an astronomer, Miss Leeson."

"Oh, yes," said the small star gazer; "I know as much as any of them about the style of sleeves they're going to wear next fall in Mars."

"Well, really!" said Miss Longnecker.

"The star you refer to is Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia. It is nearly of the second magnitude, and its meridian passage is—"

"Oh," said the very young Mr. Evans, "I think Billy Jackson is a much better name for it."

"Same here," said Mr. Hoover, loudly breathing defiance to Miss Longnecker. "I think Miss Leeson has just as much right to name stars as any of those old astrologers had."

"Well, really!" said Miss Longnecker.

"I wonder whether it's a shooting star," remarked Miss Dorn. "I hit nine ducks and a rabbit out of ten in the gallery at Coney Sunday."

"He doesn't show up very well from down here," said Miss Leeson. "You ought to see him from my room. You know, you can see stars even in the daytime from the bottom of a well. At night my room is like the shaft of a coal mine, and it makes Billy Jackson look like the big diamond pin that Night fastens her kimono with."

There came a time after that when Miss Leeson brought no formidable papers home to copy. And when she went out in the morning, instead of working, she went from office to office and let her heart melt away in the drip of cold refusals transmitted through insolent office boys. This went on.

There came an evening when she wearily climbed Mrs. Parker's stoop at the hour when she always returned from her dinner at the restaurant. But she had had no dinner.

As she stepped into the hall Mr. Hoover met her and seized his chance. He asked her to marry him, and his fatness hovered above her like an avalanche. She dodged and caught the balustrade. He tried for her hand, and she raised it and smote him weakly in the face. Step by step she went up, dragging herself by the railing. She passed Mr. Skidder's door as he was red-inking a stage direction for Myrtle Delorme (Miss Leeson) in his (unaccepted) comedy, to "prouette across stage from L to the side of the count." Up the carpeted ladder she crawled at last and opened the door of the skylight room.

She was too weak to light the lamp or to undress. She fell upon the iron cot, her fragile body scarcely follow-

ing the worn springs. And in that Erebus of a room she slowly raised her heavy eyelids and smiled.

For Billy Jackson was shining down on her, calm and bright and constant, through the skylight. There was no world about her. She was sunk in a pit of blackness, with but that small square of pallid light framing the star that she had so whimsically and, oh, so ineffectually named. Miss Longnecker must be right—it was Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia, and not Billy Jackson. And yet she could not let it be Gamma.

As she lay on her back she tried twice to raise her arm. The third time she got two thin fingers to her lips and blew a kiss out of the black pit to Billy Jackson. Her arm fell back limply.

"Goodby, Billy," she murmured faintly. "You're millions of miles away, and you won't even twinkle once. But you kept where I could see you most of the time up there when there wasn't anything else but darkness to look at, didn't you? Millions of miles. Goodby, Billy Jackson."

Clara, the colored maid, found the door locked at 10 the next day, and they forced it open. Vinegar and the



LET LOOSE THE PRACTICED SCALPEL OF HIS TONGUE.

slapping of wrists and burnt feathers proving of no avail, some one ran to phone for an ambulance.

In due time it backed up to the door with much gong clanging, and the capable young medico, in his white linen coat, ready, active, confident, with his smooth face half debonaire, half grim, danced up the steps.

"Ambulance call to 49," he said briefly. "What's the trouble?"

"Oh, yes, doctor," sniffed Mrs. Parker, as though her trouble that there should be trouble in the house was the greater. "I can't think what can be the matter with her. Nothing we could do would bring her to. It's a young woman, a Miss Elsie—yes, a Miss Elsie Leeson. Never before in my house—"

"What room?" cried the doctor in a terrible voice, to which Mrs. Parker was a stranger.

"The skylight room. It—"

Evidently the ambulance doctor was familiar with the location of skylight rooms. He was gone up the stairs, four at a time. Mrs. Parker followed slowly, as her dignity demanded.

On the first landing she met him coming back, bearing the astronomer in his arms. He stopped and let loose the practiced scalpel of his tongue, not loudly. Gradually Mrs. Parker crumpled as a stiff garment that slips down from a nail. Ever afterward there remained crumpled in her mind and body. Sometimes her curious roomers would ask her what the doctor said to her.

"Let that be," she would answer. "If I can get forgiveness for having heard it I will be satisfied."

The ambulance physician strode with his burden through the pack of hounds that follow the curiosity chase, and even they fell back along the sidewalk abashed, for his face was that of one who bears his own dead.

They noticed that he did not lay down upon the bed prepared for it in the ambulance the form that he carried, and all that he said was "Drive like sin, Wilson," to the driver.

That is all. Is it a story? In the next morning's paper I saw a little news item, and the last sentence of it may help you as it helped me to weld the incidents together.

It recounted the reception into Bellevue hospital of a young woman who had been removed from 49 East—street, suffering from debility induced by starvation. It concluded with these words:

"Dr. William Jackson, the ambulance physician who attended the case, says the patient will recover."

A Quaint Tract.

A quaint tract entitled "Woe to Drunkards," being a sermon by Samuel Waid, preacher of Ipswich, was printed in London in 1627. The preacher based his remarks upon Proverbs xxiii, 29-32, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red," etc., and illustrated his arguments by examples from various parts of the kingdom of "God's judgments on drunkards." Among other instances he quotes the following one from Tenby: "At Tenby, in Pembrokeshire, a Drunkard being exceedingly drunk broke himself all to pieces off an high and steep rock in most fearful manner, and yet the occasion and circumstances of his fall so ridiculous as I think not fit to relate, less in so serious a judgement I should move laughter of the Reader."—Cardiff Times.

SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS

By REV. F. E. DAVISON
Rutland, Vt.

THAT BLESSED HOPE.

International Bible Lesson for
Aug. 8, '09—(1 Thess 5: 12-24).



Of the twenty-one epistles of the New Testament at least thirteen bear the name of Paul. He wrote one letter to Romans, eight to Greeks, and four to individuals. These letters are not bound up in the Bible in the order in which they were written.

The first letters which the apostle wrote were the 1st and 2nd epistles to the Thessalonians, and they were written upon just one theme, the second advent of Christ.

History Unrolling.

The Jews for hundreds of years had been living in anticipation of the coming of a Messiah. For them, world-history had unrolled itself in this order, viz.: a chosen man, Abraham, was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, and this chosen man had become the head of a chosen family, Hebrews, and this chosen family had become a chosen nation, Israelites, and this chosen nation should produce a chosen, supreme teacher, Jesus. That was as far as they went. And right here the apostles took up the chart, and taught that this chosen Jewish Messiah is the Saviour of all men, and that this chosen Supreme teacher has founded a chosen church, and that to this chosen church shall ultimately be given all nations.

The Gentiles on the contrary—the Greeks, Romans, and barbarians could not be reached by that argument. The Old Testament, and the Jewish prophets were nothing to them. Whether Christ was the Messiah or not was of no particular force so far as they were concerned. What they wanted was a living Lord, a mightier divinity than Jupiter, or Jove, one who could appropriately be termed King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. To them, therefore, Paul preached a Mighty Redeemer of all men, now enthroned in heaven, a victor over death and the grave, and a king who was destined sooner or later, to ride down the skies in clouds and great glory, to judge the world in righteousness. The thought of the imminence of the second advent, that the judge was even then at the door, that the trump of the archangel might shake the earth at any moment, was a mighty incentive to repentance, and a cordial for every fear in the days of fiercest persecution.

The King's Return.

It is doubtless true that the early church anticipated that Christ would return to earth in person within the lifetime of those then living. They felt that they were living in the last days and they looked with longing eyes for the absent King to burst upon the world with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, destroy their enemies, restore the ancient glory of David's kingdom, and make the twelve apostles his prime ministers of state, to rule over nations.

The tendency of the doctrine was to make people indifferent to anything that made for permanency. If everything was going to be so completely revolutionized so soon, what was the use of trying to evangelize the world, or establish institutions only to have them wiped out of existence when He came. Therefore, to correct that error, Paul wrote his second letter, not to deny what he had already proclaimed in any way, but to dispel the idea that Christ had already returned or was just on the eve of it.

Two thousand years have rolled away and the Parousia or appearing of Christ has not yet taken place. Two thousand years is a long time as men count time, but not in the clock of eternity. According to the chronology of heaven, "a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is passed." And, "A thousand years is with the Lord as one day." That being so, it follows that it is not yet two days since Christ ascended from Olivet, and it is still perfectly proper to say, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Now, suppose the tidings should suddenly go forth that He was coming to-morrow. Suppose it should be definitely established that at precisely 12 o'clock, noon, August 9, 1909, the heavens would roll together like a scroll, the throne of the universe would appear in the clouds, and every eye should see Him, on whose head are many crowns! What do you suppose would happen? Wouldn't there be some revolutions in society? What would happen in the individual life? In the homes of the people? In business, in legislation, crooked things would be made straight, injustice and oppression would cease, the churches would be crowded, the halls of pleasure would be deserted. Well, if these things would happen then in view of His coming, can any one give any good and sufficient reason, why they should not take place now?

ROADS AND ROADMAKING

A GOOD ROADS BOOM.

Present Impulses Toward Their Building Never Equalled.

There has been manifested in the several States of the East and South, the past year, an impulse toward the construction and maintenance of good roads, that has never been equalled in the past and that is likely to grow as the years come and go. In almost every one of the older commonwealths there has been an awakening to the economic value of such improvement. Perhaps the multiplication of automobiles has been one of the impelling causes of this larger movement but the farmers and all others interested in local transportation have caught its spirit, and have come to realize that business as well as pleasure would be promoted by the establishment of those conditions toward which it tends. When a husbandman masters the simple calculation that because a span of horses can draw twice as much over a good road as a poor one he is therefore getting twice as much service at no additional expense, he is pretty sure to give his approval and support to the enterprise.

Almost every State along the Atlantic slope has taken action within the past year looking to the betterment of its highways. Although Massachusetts has been a leader in this respect for a number of years, the new distribution of a percentage of the appropriation made for this purpose among the small towns is bound to show material improvement in a very short time. It will not give all sections such roads as the highway commission constructs for demonstration purposes, yet it will inevitably raise the general standard and stimulate local interest to a larger extent in this form of improvement. New Hampshire has projected a decided advance in this respect by taking steps to build three trunk highways through the State. New York has bonded herself for millions for a like purpose and the result will doubtless promote her internal interests to a greater extent than her barge canal and at a much earlier date. By much pressure the governor of Pennsylvania succeeded in having authority given by the recent Legislature for the construction of a great highway between the principal cities of the State, representing the eastern and western halves. With her comparatively limited resources, Maryland has appropriated millions for this purpose and in conjunction with West Virginia has arranged for a highway that will be a revelation to the people of those States.

Similar action, even if on a less extended scale, might be instanced in other States, but, comparatively speaking, Georgia seems to have grided up her loins for the most significant advance in the whole sisterhood.

COVERS THE HOT WATER JUG.

Simple Cozy That Will Aid in Keeping the Contents Warm.

It is quite as necessary to keep the hot water warm that has occasionally to be added to the teapot as it is to keep the tea itself warm. It is, therefore, a good plan to make a cozy of a similar nature to the ordinary tea cozy, but of course, differing in shape, to fit the hot water jug. A simple cozy of this kind is shown in

our sketch, with the picture of a hot water jug embroidered on one side. It is edged with a stout cord, with three loops at the top to form a handle by which it may be lifted when required. A cover of linen or cambric that can be removed is nice, as it can then be frequently washed. A wadded foundation covered with saten should be made, then the cover should be a trifle larger so as to slip on easily, and button at the lower edge to buttons on the foundation.

The French Method.

The excellence of the French road is due not to the superior quality of the material used in their construction, as the same materials exist most everywhere, or to the perfection of the French method of construction, for their roads are built according to the Macadam plan, which is also used in this country, but to the superiority of the French method of administration, which places all roads under constant and intelligent supervision.

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"I'M JUST A POOR LITTLE WORKING GIRL," she kept for those who failed to qualify as doctors or dentists and led the way to the second floor back.

"Eight dollars?" said Miss Leeson. "Dear me! I'm not Hetty, if I do look green. I'm just a poor little working girl. Show me something higher and lower."

Mr. Skidder jumped and strewed the floor with cigarette stubs at the rap on his door.

"Excuse me, Mr. Skidder," said Mrs. Parker, with her demon's smile at his pale looks. "I didn't know you were in. I asked the lady to have a look at your lambrinquins."

"They're too lovely for anything," said Miss Leeson, smiling in exactly the way the angels do.

After they had gone Mr. Skidder got very busy erasing the tall, black haired heroine from his latest (unproduced) play and inserting a small, roguish one with heavy, bright hair and vivacious features.

"Anna Held 'll jump at it," said Mr. Skidder to himself, putting his feet up against the lambrinquins and disap-