**1**

Short stories from 100 Selected Stories*, by O Henry*

* **The Gift of the Magi**
* **A Cosmopolite in a Café**
* **Between Rounds**
* **The Skylight Room**
* **A Service of Love**
* **The Coming-Out of Maggie**
* **The Cop and the Anthem**
* **Memoirs of a Yellow Dog**
* **The Love-philter of Ikey Shorenstein**
* **The Furnished Room**
* **The Last Leaf**
* **The Poet and the Peasant**
* **A Ramble in Aphasia**
* **A Municipal Report**
* **Proof of the Pudding**

**2**

**I**

***The Gift of the Magi***

ONE DOLLAR AND EIGHTY-SEVEN CENTS. That was all. And sixty   
cents of it were in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by   
bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher   
until one's cheek burned with the silent imputation of parsimony   
that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it.   
One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be   
Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the   
shabby little couch and howl. So, Della did it. Which instigates the   
moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles,   
with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the   
first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat   
at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it cer­tainly had that word on the look-out for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter   
would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger   
could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing   
the name 'Mr. James Dillingham Young.'

The 'Dillingham' had been flung to the breeze during a former   
period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per   
week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of   
'Dillingham' looked blurred, as though they were thinking seri­ously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever   
Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat   
above he was called 'Jim' and greatly hugged by Mrs. James   
Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is   
all very good.

Delia finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the   
powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a   
grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. To-morrow   
would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to   
buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for

**3**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far.   
Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always   
are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy   
hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Some­  
 thing fine and rare and sterling - something just a little bit near to   
being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Per­  
 haps you have seen a pier-glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very   
agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence   
of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his   
looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the   
glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its   
color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair   
and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham   
Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold   
watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other   
was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the   
airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some   
day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had   
King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the   
basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he   
passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shin­ing like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and   
made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again   
nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood   
still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat.   
With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her   
eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the   
street.

Where she stopped the sign read: 'Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods   
of All Kinds.' One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, pant­ing. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the 'Sofronie.'

'Will you buy my hair?' asked Della.   
'I buy hair,' said Madame. 'Take her hat off and let's have a

sight at the looks of it.'   
Down rippled the brown cascade.   
'Twenty dollars,' said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced

hand.

**4**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**   
'Give it to me quick,' said Della.   
Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget

the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's   
present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one   
else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had   
turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple   
and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance   
alone and not by meretricious ornamentation - as all good things   
should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it   
she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and   
value - the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they   
took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents.   
With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about   
the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes   
looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he   
used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to   
prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the   
gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity   
added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends - a   
mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-  
 lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy.   
She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and   
critically.

'If Jim doesn't kill me,' she said to herself, 'before he takes a   
second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl.   
But what could I do - oh! what could I do with a dollar and   
eighty-seven cents?'

At seven o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on   
the back of the stove, hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and   
sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered.   
Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight,   
and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying   
little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now   
she whispered: 'Please God, make him think I am still pretty.'

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked   
thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two - and   
to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he   
was without gloves.

**5**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the   
scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an   
expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It   
was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any   
of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared   
at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.   
'Jim, darling,' she cried, 'don't look at me that way. I had me

hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through   
Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again - you   
won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully   
fast. Say "Merry Christmas!" Jim, and let's be happy. You don't   
know what a nice - what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you.'

'You've cut off your hair?' asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had   
not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental   
labor.

'Cut it off and sold it,' said Della. 'Don't you like me just as   
well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, am not I?'

Jim looked about the room curiously.   
'You say your hair is gone?' he said with an air almost of idiocy.   
'You needn't look for it,' said Della. 'It's sold, I tell you - sold

and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went   
for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,' she went on   
with a sudden serious sweetness, 'but nobody could ever count me   
love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?'

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his   
Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some   
inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week   
or a million a year - what is the difference? A mathematician or a   
wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable   
gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be   
illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon   
the table.

'Don't make any mistake, Dell,' he said, 'about me. I don't think   
there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo   
that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that   
package you may see why you had me going awhile at first.'

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then   
an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to   
hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment   
of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

**6**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

For their lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that

Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful   
combs, pure tortoiseshell, with jeweled rims - just the shade to   
wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs,   
she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them   
without the least hope of possession. And now they were hers, but   
the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were   
gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able   
to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: 'My hair grows so   
fast, Jim!'

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, 'Oh,   
oh!'

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to   
him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed   
to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

'Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll   
have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your   
watch. I want to see how it looks on it.'

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his   
hands under the back of his head and smiled.

'Dell,' said he, 'let's put our Christmas presents away and keep   
'Me awhile. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the   
watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you   
put the chops on.'

The magi, as you know, were wise men - wonderfully wise men   
- who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the   
art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no   
doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case   
of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely   
sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But   
in a last word to the wise of these days, let it be said that of all who   
give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive   
gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are   
the magi.

**7**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

**II**

***A Cosmopolite in a Café***

A T MIDNIGHT THE CAFÉ was crowded. By some chance the little   
table at which I sat had escaped the eye of incomers, and two   
vacant chairs at it extended their arms with venal hospitality to the   
influx of patrons.

And then a cosmopolite sat in one of them, and I was glad, for   
I held a theory that since Adam no true citizen of the world has   
existed. We hear of them, and we see foreign labels on much   
luggage, but we find travelers instead of cosmopolites.

I invoke your consideration of the scene - the marble-topped   
tables, the range of leather-upholstered wall seats, the gay com­pany, the ladies dressed in demi-state toilets, speaking in an   
exquisite visible chorus of taste, economy, opulence or art, the   
sedulous and largess-loving *garçons,* the music wisely catering to all   
with its raids upon the composers; the *mélange* of talk and laughter   
- and, if you will, the Würzburger in the tall glass cones that bend   
to your lips as a ripe cherry sway on its branch to the beak of a   
robber jay. I was told by a sculptor from Mauch Chunk that the   
scene was truly Parisian.

My cosmopolite was named E. Rushmore Colgan, and he will   
be heard from next summer at Coney Island. He is to establish a   
new 'attraction' there, he informed me, offering kingly diversion.   
And then his conversation rang along parallels of latitude and lon­gitude. He took the great, round world in his hand, so to speak,   
familiarly, contemptuously, and it seemed no larger than the seed   
of a Maraschino cherry in a table-d'hôte grape fruit. He spoke dis­  
 respectfully of the equator, he skipped from continent to conti­nent, he derided the zones, he mopped up the high seas with his   
napkin. With a wave of his hand, he would speak of a certain   
bazaar in Hyderabad. Whiff! He would have you on skis in Lap­  
 land. Zip! Now you rode the breakers with the Kanakas at   
Keala Kahiki. Presto! He dragged you through an Arkansas post-  
 oak swamp, let you dry for a moment on the alkali plains of his   
Idaho ranch, then whirled you into the society of Viennese arch­  
 dukes. Anon he would be telling you of a cold he acquired in a   
Chicago lake breeze and how old Escamilla cured it in Buenos   
Ayres with a hot infusion of the *Chuc hula* weed. You would have

**8**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
addressed the letter to 'E. Rushmore Colgan, Esq., the Earth,   
Solar System, the Universe,' and have mailed it, feeling confident   
that it would be delivered to him.

I was sure that I had at last found the one true cosmopolite since   
Adam, and I listened to his world-wide discourse fearful lest I   
should discover in it the local note of the mere globe-trotter. But   
his opinions never fluttered or drooped; he was as impartial to   
cities, countries and continents as the winds or gravitation.

And as E. Rushmore Colgan prattled of this little planet I   
thought with glee of a great almost-cosmopolite who wrote for the   
whole world and dedicated himself to Bombay. In a poem he has   
to say that there is pride and rivalry between the cities of the   
earth, and that 'the men that breed from them, they traffic up and   
down, but cling to their cities' hem as a child to the mother's   
gown.' And whenever they walk 'by roaring streets unknown' they   
remember their native city 'most faithful, foolish, fond; making   
her mere-breathed name their bond upon their bond.' And me   
glee was roused because I had caught Mr. Kipling napping. Here I   
had found a man not made from dust; one who had no narrow   
boasts of birthplace or country, one who, if he bragged at all,   
would brag of his whole round globe against the Martians and the   
inhabitants of the Moon.

Expression on these subjects was precipitated from E. Rush-  
 more Colgan by the third corner to our table. While Colgan was   
describing to me the topography along the Siberian Railway the   
orchestra glided into a medley. The concluding air was 'Dixie,'   
and as the exhilarating notes tumbled forth, they were almost over­  
 powered by a great clapping of hands from almost every table.

It is worth a paragraph to say that this remarkable scene can be   
witnessed every evening in numerous cafés in the City of New   
York. Tons of brew have been consumed over theories to account   
for it. Some have conjectured hastily that all Southerners in town   
hie themselves to cafés at nightfall. This applause of the 'rebel' air   
in a Northern city does puzzle a little; but it is not insolvable. The   
war with Spain, many years' generous mint and water-melon   
crops, a few long-shot winners at the New Orleans race-track, and   
the brilliant banquets given by the Indiana and Kansas citizens   
who compose the North Carolina Society, have made the South   
rather a 'fad' in Manhattan. Your manicure will lisp softly that   
your left forefinger reminds her so much of a gentleman's in Rich­mond, Va. Oh, certainly; but many a lady has to work now - the   
war, you know.

**9**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

When 'Dixie' was being played a dark-haired young man   
sprang up from somewhere with a Mosby guerrilla yell and waved   
frantically his soft-brimmed hat. Then he strayed through the   
smoke, dropped into the vacant chair at our table and pulled out   
cigarettes.

The evening was at the period when reserve is thawed. One of   
us mentioned three Wurzburgers to the waiter; the dark-haired   
young man acknowledged his inclusion in the order by a smile and   
a nod. I hastened to ask him a question because I wanted to try out   
a theory I had.

'Would you mind telling me,' I began, 'whether you are from - '   
The fist of E. Rushmore Colgan banged the table and I was

jarred into silence.   
'Excuse me,' said he, 'but that's a question I never like to hear

asked. What does it matter where a man is from? Is it fair to judge   
a man by his post-office address? Why, I've seen Kentuckians who   
hated whisky, Virginians who weren't descended from Pocahon­tas, Indianians who hadn't written a novel, Mexicans who didn't   
wear velvet trousers with silver dollars sewed along the seams,   
funny Englishmen, spendthrift Yankees, cold-blooded Southern­ers, narrow-minded Westerners, and New Yorkers who were too   
busy to stop for an hour on the street to watch a one-armed   
grocer's clerk does up cranberries in paper bags. Let a man be a man   
and don't handicap him with the label of any section.'

'Pardon me,' I said, 'but my curiosity was not altogether an idle   
one. I know the South, and when the band plays "Dixie" I like to   
observe. I have formed the belief that the man who applauds that   
air with special violence and ostensible sectional loyalty is invari­ably a native of either Secaucus, N.J., or the district between   
Murray Hill Lyceum and the Harlem River, this city. I was about   
to put my opinion to the test by inquiring of this gentleman when   
you interrupted with your own - larger theory, I must confess.'

And now the dark-haired young man spoke to me, and it   
became evident that his mind also moved along its own set of   
grooves.

'I should like to be a periwinkle,' said he, mysteriously, 'on the   
top of a valley, and sing too-Rallo-Rallo.'

This was clearly too obscure, so I turned again to Colgan.   
'I've been around the world twelve times,' said he. 'I know an

Esquimau in Upernivik who sends to Cincinnati for his neckties,   
and I saw a goat-herder in Uruguay who won a prize in a Battle   
Creek breakfast-food puzzle competition. I pay rent on a room in

**10**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
Cairo, Egypt, and another in Yokohama all the year round. I've   
got slippers waiting for me in a tea-house in Shanghai, and I don't   
have to tell 'me how to cook my eggs in Rio de Janeiro or Seattle.   
It's a mighty little old world. What's the use of bragging about   
being from the North, or the South, or the old manor-house in   
the dale, or Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, or Pike's Peak, or Fairfax   
County, Va., or Hooligan's Flats or any place? It'll be a better   
world when we quit being fools about some mildewed town or ten   
acres of swampland just because we happened to be born there.'

'You seem to be a genuine cosmopolite,' I said admiringly. 'But   
it also seems that you would decry patriotism.'

'A relic of the stone age,' declared Colgan warmly. 'We are all   
brothers - Chinamen, Englishmen, Zulus, Patagonians, and the   
people in the bend of the Kaw River. Someday all this petty pride   
in one's city or state or section or country will be wiped out, and   
we'll all be citizens of the world, as we ought to be.'

'But while you are wandering in foreign lands,' I persisted, 'do   
not your thoughts revert to some spot - some dear and - '

'Nary a spot,' interrupted E. R. Colgan flippantly. 'The Terres  
 trial, globular, planetary hunk of matter, slightly flattened at the   
poles, and known as the Earth, is my abode. I've met a good many   
object-bound citizens of this country abroad. I've seen men from   
Chicago sits in a gondola in Venice on a moonlight night and brag   
about their drainage canal. I've seen a Southerner on being introduced to the King of England hand that monarch, without batting   
his eyes, the information that his grandaunt on his mother's side   
was related by marriage to the Parkinses, of Charleston. I knew a   
New Yorker who was kidnapped for ransom by some Afghanistan   
bandits. His people sent over the money and he came back to   
Kabul with the agent. "Afghanistan?" the natives said to him   
through an interpreter. "Well, not so slow, do you think?" "Oh, I   
don't know," says he, and he begins to tell them about a cab-driver   
at Sixth Avenue and Broadway. Those ideas don't suit me. I'm not   
tied down to anything that isn't 8,000 miles in diameter. Just put   
me down as E. Rushmore Colgan, citizen of the terrestrial sphere.'

My cosmopolite made a large adieu and left me, for he thought   
that he saw someone through the chatter and smoke whom he   
knew. So, I was left with the would-be periwinkle, who was reduced   
to Würzburger without further ability to voice his aspirations to   
perch, melodious, upon the summit of a valley.

I sat reflecting upon my evident cosmopolite and wondering   
how the poet had managed to miss him. He was my discovery and

**11**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

I believed in him. How was it? 'The men that breed from them   
they traffic up and down, but cling to their cities' hem as a child to   
the mother's gown.'

Not so E. Rushmore Colgan. With the whole world for his -  
 My meditations were interrupted by a tremendous noise and

conflict in another part of the café. I saw above the heads of the   
seated patrons E. Rushmore Colgan and a stranger to me engaged   
in terrific battle. They fought between the tables like Titans, and   
glasses crashed, and men caught their hats up and were knocked   
down, and a brunette screamed, and a blonde began to sing 'Teas­ing.'

My cosmopolite was sustaining the pride and reputation of the   
Earth when the waiters closed in on both combatants with them   
famous flying wedge formation and bore them outside, still resist­ing.

I called McCarthy, one of the French *garçons,* and asked him the   
cause of the conflict.

'The man with the red tie' (that was my cosmopolite), said he,   
'Got hot on account of things said about the bum sidewalks and   
water supply of the place he come from by the other guy.'

'Why,' said I, bewildered, 'that man is a citizen of the world - a   
cosmopolite. He - '

'Originally from Metapackage, Maine, he said,' continued   
McCarthy, 'and he wouldn't stand for no knock in' the place.'

**III**   
**Between Rounds**

THE MAY MOON SHONE BRIGHT upon the private boarding-house   
of Mrs. Murphy. By reference to the almanac a large amount of   
territory will be discovered upon which its rays also fell. Spring   
was in its heyday, with hay fever soon to follow. The parks were   
green with new leaves and buyers for the Western and Southern   
trade. Flowers and summer-resort agents were blowing; the air   
and answers to Lawson were growing milder; hand-organs, foun­  
 tains and pinochle were playing everywhere.

The windows of Mrs. Murphy's boarding-house were open. A   
group of boarders were seated on the high stoop upon round, flat   
mats like German pancakes.

In one of the second-floor front windows Mrs. McCaskey

**12**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
awaited her husband. Supper was cooling on the table. Its heat   
went into Mrs. McCaskey.

At nine Mr. McCaskey came. He carried his coat on his arm and   
his pipe in his teeth; and he apologized for disturbing the boarders   
on the steps as he selected spots of stone between them on which   
to set his size 9, width Ds.

As he opened the door of his room, he received a surprise.   
Instead of the usual stove-lid or potato-masher for him to dodge,   
came only words.

Mr. McCaskey reckoned that the benign May moon had soft­  
 ended the breast of his spouse.

'I heard ye, ' came the oral substitutes for kitchenware. 'Ye can   
apologize to riff-raff of the streets for setting' her unhandy feet on   
the tails of their frocks, but ye'd walk on the neck of her wife the   
length of a clothes-line without so much as a "Kiss me foot," and   
I'm sure, it's that long from rubbering' out the windy for ye and the   
victuals cold such as there's money to buy after drink in' up her   
wages at Gallegher's every Saturday even in', and the gas man here   
twice to-day for his.'

'Woman!' said Mr. McCaskey, dashing his coat and hat upon a   
chair, 'the noise of ye is an insult to me appetite. When ye run   
down politeness ye take the mortar from between the bricks of the   
foundations of society. 'Tis no more than exercising' the acrimony   
of a gentleman when ye ask the dissent of ladies' block in' the way   
for step-in' between them. Will ye bring the pig's face of ye out of   
the windy and see to the food?'

Mrs. McCaskey arose heavily and went to the stove. There was   
something in her manner that warned Mr. McCaskey. When the   
corners of her mouth went down suddenly like a barometer it usually   
foretold a fall of crockery and tinware.

'Pig's face, is it?' said Mrs. McCaskey, and hurled a stewpan full   
of bacon and turnips at her lord.

Mr. McCaskey was no novice at repartee. He knew what should   
follow the entree. On the table was a roast sirloin of pork, gar­nished with shamrocks. He retorted with this, and drew the   
appropriate return of a bread pudding in an earthen dish. A hunk   
of Swiss cheese accurately thrown by her husband struck Mrs.   
McCaskey below one eye. When she replied with a well-aimed   
coffee-pot full of a hot, black, semi-fragrant liquid the battle,   
according to courses, should have ended.

But Mr. McCaskey was no 50-cent table d'hôtel. Let cheap   
Bohemians consider coffee the end, if they would. Let them make

**13**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

that *faux pas.* He was foxier still. Finger-bowls were not beyond   
the compass of his experience. They were not to be had in the   
Pension Murphy; but their equivalent was at hand. Triumphantly   
he sent the granite-ware wash-basin at the head of his matrimo­nial adversary. Mrs. McCaskey dodged in time. She reached for a   
flat-iron, with which, as a sort of cordial, she hoped to bring the   
gastronomical duel to a close. But a loud, wailing scream down­  
 stairs caused both her and Mr. McCaskey to pause in a sort of   
involuntary armistice.

On the sidewalk at the corner of the house Policeman Cleary   
was standing with one ear upturned, listening to the crash of   
household utensils.

' ' T I s Jawn McCaskey and his missus at it again,' meditated the   
policeman. 'I wonder shall I go up and stop the row. I will not.   
Married folks they are; and few pleasures they have. Twill not last   
long. Sure, they'll have to borrow more dishes to keep it up with.'

And just then came the loud scream below-stairs, betokening   
fear or dire extremity. ' 'Tis probably the cat,' said Policeman   
Cleary, and walked hastily in the other direction.

The boarders on the steps were fluttered. Mr. Toomey, an   
insurance solicitor by birth and an investigator by profession,   
went inside to analyze the scream. He returned with the news that   
Mrs. Murphy's little boy Mike was lost. Following the messenger,   
out bounced Mrs. Murphy - two hundred pounds in tears and   
hysterics, clutching the air and howling to the sky for the loss of   
thirty pounds of freckles and mischief. Bathos, truly; but Mr.   
Toomey sat down at the side of Miss Purdy, milliner, and them   
hands came together in sympathy. The two old maids, Misses   
Walsh, who complained every day about the noise in the halls,   
inquired immediately if anybody had looked behind the clock.

Major Grigg, who sat by his fat wife on the top step, arose and   
buttoned his coat. 'The little one lost?' he exclaimed. 'I will scour   
the city.' His wife never allowed him out after dark. But now she   
said: 'Go, Ludovic!' in a baritone voice. 'Whoever can look upon   
that mother's grief without springing to her relief has a heart of   
stone.' 'Give me some thirty or - sixty cents, my love,' said the   
Major. 'Lost children sometimes stray far. I may need car-fares.'

Old man Denny, hall-room, fourth floor back, who sat on the   
lowest step, trying to read a paper by the street lamp, turned over   
a page to follow up the article about the carpenters' strike. Mrs.   
Murphy shrieked to the moon: 'Oh, are-r-Mike, for God's sake,   
where is my little bit av a boy?'

**14**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
'When'd ye see him last?' asked old man Denny, with one eye

on the report of the Building Trades League.   
'Oh,' wailed Mrs. Murphy,' 'twas yesterday, or maybe four

hours ago! I Dunno. But it's lost he is, me little boy Mike. He was   
play in' on the sidewalk only this morning' - or was it Wednesday?   
I'm that busy with work 'tis hard to keep up with dates. But I've   
looked the house over from top to cellar, and it's gone he is. Oh,   
for the love av Heven - '

Silent, grim, colossal, the big city has ever stood against its   
revilers. They call it hard as iron; they say that no pulse of pity   
beats in its bosom; they compare its streets with lonely forests and   
deserts of lava. But beneath the hard crust of the lobster is found a   
delectable and luscious food. Perhaps a different simile would have   
been wiser. Still, nobody should take offence. We would call no   
one a lobster without good and sufficient claws.

No calamity so touches the common heart of humanity as does   
the straying of a little child. Their feet are so uncertain and feeble;   
the ways are so steep and strange.

Major Griggs hurried down to the corner, and up the avenue   
into Billy's place. 'Gimme a rye-high,' he said to the servitor.   
'Haven't seen a bow-legged, dirty-faced little devil of a six-year-  
 old lost kid around here anywhere, have you?'

Mr. Toomey retained Miss Purdy's hand on the steps. 'Think of   
that dear little babe,' said Miss Purdy, 'lost from his mother's side   
- perhaps already fallen beneath the iron hoofs of galloping steeds   
- oh, isn't it dreadful?'

'Isn't that, right?' agreed Mr. Toomey, squeezing her hand. 'Say   
I start out and help look for um!'

'Perhaps,' said Miss Purdy, 'you should. But oh, Mr. Toomey,   
you are so dashing - so reckless - suppose in your enthusiasm   
some accident should befall you, then what - '

Old man Denny read on about the arbitration agreement, with   
one finger on the lines.

In the second floor front Mr. and Mrs. McCaskey came to the   
window to recover their second wind. Mr. McCaskey was scoop­ing turnips out of his vest with a crooked forefinger, and his lady   
was wiping an eye that the salt of the roast pork had not benefited.   
They heard the outcry below, and thrust their heads out of the   
window.

' 'Tis little Mike is lost,' said Mrs. McCaskey in a hushed voice,   
'The beautiful, little, trouble-making angel of a gossoon!'

'The bit of a boy mislaid?' said Mr. McCaskey leaning out of

**15**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

the window. 'Why, now, that's bad enough, entirely. The chalder,   
they be different. If 'twas a woman I'd be will in', for they leave   
peace behind 'me when they go.'

Disregarding the thrust, Mrs. McCaskey caught her husband's   
arm.

'Jawn,' she said sentimentally, 'Missis Murphy's little bye is lost.   
'Tis a great city for losing little boys. Six years old he was. Jawn,   
'tis the same age our little bye would have been if we had had one   
six years ago.'

'We never did,' said Mr. McCaskey, lingering with the fact.   
'But if we had, Jawn, think what sorrow would be in our hearts

this night, with our little Phelan run away and stolen in the city   
nowhere at all.'

'Ye talk foolishness,' said Mr. McCaskey. ' 'Tis Pat he would be   
named, after me old father in Can trim.'

'Ye lie!' said Mrs. McCaskey, without anger. 'Me brother was   
worth tin dozen bog-trotting McCaskey's. After him would the bye   
be named.' She leaned over the window-sill and looked down at   
the hurrying and bustle below.

'Jawn,' said Mrs. McCaskey softly, 'I'm sorry I was hasty wide   
ye.'

' Twas hasty pudding', as ye say,' said her husband, 'and hurry-  
 up turnips and get-a-move-on-ye coffee. Twas what ye could call   
a quick lunch, all right, and tell no lie.'

Mrs. McCaskey slipped her arm inside her husband's and took   
his rough hand in hers.

'Listen at the crying' of poor Mrs. Murphy,' she said. ' 'Tis an   
awful thing for a bit of a bye to be lost in this great big city. If   
'twas our little Phelan, Jawn, I'd be break-in' me heart.'

Awkwardly Mr. McCaskey withdrew his hand. But he laid it   
around the nearing shoulders of his wife.

' 'Tis foolishness, of course,' said he, roughly, 'but I'd be cut up   
some me self, if our little - Pat was kidnapped or anything. But   
there never was any chalder for us. Sometimes I've been ugly and   
hard with ye, Judy. Forget it.'

They leaned together, and looked down at the heart-drama   
being acted below.

Long they sat thus. People surged along the sidewalk, crowding,   
questioning, filling the air with rum ours and inconsequent sur­  
 mises. Mrs. Murphy ploughed back and forth in their midst, like a   
soft mountain down which plunged an audible cataract of tears.   
Couriers came and went.

**16**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

Loud voices and a renewed uproar were raised in front of the   
boarding-house.

'What's up now, Judy?' asked Mr. McCaskey.   
' 'Tis Missis Murphy's voice,' said Mrs. McCaskey, harking.

she says she's after finding little Mike asleep behind the roll of   
old linoleum under the bed in her room.'

Mr. McCaskey laughed loudly.   
'That's her Phelan,' he shouted sardonically 'Devil a bit would a

Pat have done that trick if the bye we never had is strayed and   
stole, by the powers, call him Phelan, and see him hide out under   
the bed like a mangy pup.'

Mrs. McCaskey arose heavily, and went toward the dish closet,   
with the corners of her mouth drawn down.

Policeman Cleary came back around the corner as the crowd   
dispersed. Surprised, he upturned an ear toward the McCaskey   
apartment where the crash of irons and chinaware and the ring of   
hurled kitchen utensils seemed as loud as before. Policeman   
Cleary took out his timepiece.

'By the deported snakes!' he exclaimed, 'Jawn McCaskey and his   
lady have been fighting in' for an hour and a quarter by the watch.   
The missis could give him forty pounds weight. Strength to his   
arm.'

Policeman Cleary strolled back around the corner.   
Old man Denny folded his paper and hurried up the steps just

as Mrs. Murphy was about to lock the door for the night.

**IV**

***The Skylight Room***

FIRST M R S. 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

**17**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

was worth the $12 that Mr. Rosenberry 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 lambrequins. 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 cicerone of yours. 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 floorspace at the   
middle of the hall. On each side of it was a dark lumber closet or   
store-room.

In it was 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 coin. 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-Tuskegee Nial 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 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 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

**18**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
do look green. I'm just a poor little working girl. Show me some­  
 thing 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 lambrequins.'

'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 lambrequins and disappearing in a cloud of   
smoke like an aerial cuttlefish.

Presently the tocsin calls 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 blonde 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

**19**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

especially Mr. Hoover, who was forty-five, fat, flushed 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 was implacable.

• • • • •

I pray you let the drama halt while Chorus stalks to the foot­  
 lights 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 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 faith fullest   
heart above a 52-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 little gay   
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 Jack­  
 son.'

'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.'

**20**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
'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 for­  
 midtable papers home to copy. And when she went 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 'pirouette 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 hollowing 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.

'Good-bye, Billy,' she murmured faintly. 'You're millions of

**21**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

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 any­  
 thing else but darkness to look at, didn't you? . . . Millions of   
m I l e s . . .. Good-bye, Billy Jackson.'

Clara, the colored maid, found the door locked at ten the next   
day, and they forced it open. Vinegar, and the slapping of wrists   
and even burnt feathers, proving of no avail, someone 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 debonair, 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 rooms. 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 afterwards   
they're remained crumples 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 h - l, 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.

**22**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
It recounted the reception into Bellevue Hospital of a young

woman who had been removed from No. 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.'

V   
A Service of Love

WHEN ONE LOVES ONES ART no service seems too hard.   
That is our premise. This story shall draw a conclusion from it,

and show at the same time that the premise is incorrect. That will   
be a new thing in logic, and a feat in story-telling somewhat older   
than the Great Wall of China.

Joe Larrabee came out of the post-oak flats of the Middle West   
pulsing with a genius for pictorial art. At six he drew a picture of   
the town pump with a prominent citizen passing it hastily. This   
effort was framed and hung in the drug store window by the side   
of the ear of corn with an uneven number of rows. At twenty he   
left for New York with a flowing necktie and a capital tied up   
somewhat closer.

Delia Caruthers did things in six octaves so promisingly in a   
pine-tree village in the South that her relatives chipped in enough   
in her chip hat for her to go 'North' and 'finish.' They could not   
see her f -, but that is our story

Joe and Delia met in an atelier where a number of art and music   
students had gathered to discuss chiaroscuro, Wagner, music,   
Rembrandt's works pictures, Wald Teufel, wall-paper, Chopin, and   
Oolong.

Joe and Delia became enamored one of the other or each of   
the other, as you please, and in a short time were married - for   
(See above), when one loves one's Art no service seems too hard.

Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee began housekeeping in a flat. It was a   
lonesome flat - something like the A sharp way down at the left-  
 hand end of the keyboard. And they were happy; for they had them   
Art and they had each other. And my advice to the rich young man   
would be - sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor - janitor for   
the privilege of living in a flat with your Art and your Delia.

Flat-dwellers shall endorse my dictum that theirs is the only

**23**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

true happiness. If a home is happy, it cannot fit too close - let the   
dresser collapse and become a billiard table; let the mantel turn to   
a rowing machine, the escritoire to a spare bedchamber, the wash-  
 stand to an upright piano; let the four walls come together, if they   
will, so you and your Delia are between. But if home be the other   
kind, let it be wide and long - enter you at the Golden Gate, hang   
your hat on Hatteras, your cape on Cape Horn, and go out by   
Labrador.

Joe was painting in the class of the great Magister - you know   
his fame. His fees are high; his lessons are light - his high-lights   
have brought him renown. Delia was studying under Rosenstock -  
 you know his repute as a disturber of the piano keys.

They were mighty happy as long as their money lasted. So is   
every - but I will not be cynical. Their aims were very clear and   
defined. Joe was to become capable very soon of turning out pic­tures that old gentlemen with thin side-whiskers and thick pocket-  
 books would sandbag one another in his studio for the privilege of   
buying. Delia was to become familiar and then contemptuous with   
Music, so that when she saw the orchestra seats and boxes unsold   
she could have sore throat and lobster in a private dining-room   
and refuse to go on the stage.

But the best, in my opinion, was the home life in the little flat -  
 the ardent, voluble chats after the day's study; the cozy dinners   
and fresh, light breakfasts; the interchange of ambitions - ambi­tions interwoven each with the other's or else inconsiderable - the   
mutual help and inspiration; and - overlook my artlessness -  
 stuffed olives and cheese sandwiches at 11p.m.

But after a while Art flagged. It sometimes does, even if some   
switchman doesn't flag it. Everything going out and nothing   
coming in, as the vulgarians say. Money was lacking to pay Mr.   
Magister and Herr Rosenstock their prices. When one loves one's   
Art no service seems too hard. So, Delia said she must give music   
lessons to keep the chafing dish bubbling.

For two or three days she went out canvassing for pupils. One   
evening she came home elated.

'Joe, dear,' she said gleefully, 'I've a pupil. And, oh, the loveliest   
people! General - General A. B. Pinkney's daughter - on Seventy-  
 first Street. Such a splendid house, Joe - you ought to see the   
front door! Byzantine, I think you would call it. And inside! Oh,   
Joe, I never saw anything like it before.

'My pupil is his daughter Clementina. I dearly love her already.   
She's a delicate thing - dresses always in white; and the sweetest,

**24**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
simplest manners! Only eighteen years old. I'm to give three   
lessons a week; and, just think, Joe! $5 a lesson. I don't mind it a   
bit; for when I get two or three more pupils, I can resume me   
lessons with Herr Rosenstock. Now, smooth out that wrinkle   
between your brows, dear, and let's have a nice supper.'

'That's all right for you, Dele,' said Joe, attacking a can of peas   
with a carving knife and a hatchet, 'but how about me? Do you   
think I'm going to let you hustle for wages while I philander in the   
regions of high art? Not by the bones of Benvenuto Cellini! I   
guess I can sell papers or lay cobblestones, and bring in a dollar or   
two.'

Delia came and hung about his neck.   
'Joe, dear, you are silly. You must keep on at your studies. It is

not as if I had quit my music and gone to work at something else.   
While I teach, I learn. I am always with my music. And we can live   
as happily as millionaires on $15 a week. You mustn't think of   
leaving Mr. Magister.'

'All right,' said Joe, reaching for the blue scalloped vegetable   
dish. 'But I hate for you to be giving lessons. It isn't Art. But   
you're a trump and a dear to do it.'

'When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard,' said   
Delia.

'Magister praised the sky in that sketch I made in the park,' said   
Joe. 'And Tinkle gave me permission to hang two of them in his   
window. I may sell one if the right kind of a moneyed idiot sees   
them.'

'I'm sure you will,' said Delia sweetly. 'And now let's be thankful   
for General Pinkney and this veal roast.'

During all of the next week the Larrabee's had an early break­  
 fast. Joe was enthusiastic about some morning-effect sketches he   
was doing in Central Park, and Delia packed him off breakfasted,   
coddled, praised, and kissed at seven o'clock. Art is an engaging   
mistress. It was most times seven o'clock when he returned in the   
evening.

At the end of the week Delia, sweetly proud but languid, tri­umphantly tossed three five-dollar bills on the 8 by 10 (inches)   
center table of the 8 by 10 (feet) flat parlor.

'Sometimes,' she said, a little wearily, 'Clementina tries me. I'm   
afraid she doesn't practice enough, and I have to tell her the same   
things so often. And then she always dresses entirely in white, and   
that does get monotonous. But General Pinkney is the dearest old   
man! I wish you could know him, Joe. He comes in sometimes

**25**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

when I am with Clementina at the piano - he is a widower, you   
know - and stands there pulling his white goatee. "And how are   
the semiquavers and the demi-semiquavers progressing?" he   
always asks.

'I wish you could see the wainscoting in that drawing-room,   
Joe! And those Astrakhan rug *portieres.* And Clementina has such a   
funny little cough. I hope she is stronger than she looks. Oh, I   
really am getting attached to her, she is so gentle and high bred.   
General Pinkney's brother was once Minister to Bolivia.'

And then Joe, with the air of a Monte Cristo, drew forth a ten, a   
five, a two and a one - all legal tender notes - and laid them beside   
Delia's earnings.

'Sold that water-cooler of the obelisk to a man from Peoria,' he   
announced overwhelmingly.

'Don't joke with me,' said Delia - 'not from Peoria!'   
'All the way. I wish you could see him, Dele. Fat man with a

woolen muffler and a quill toothpick. He saw the sketch in   
Tinkle's window and thought it was a windmill at first. He was   
game, though, and bought it anyhow. He ordered another - an oil   
sketch of the Lackawanna freight depot - to take back with him.   
Music lessons! Oh, I guess Art is still in it.'

'I'm so glad you've kept on,' said Delia heartily. 'You're bound   
to win, dear. Thirty-three dollars! We never had so much to spend   
before. We'll have oysters to-night.'

'And filet mignon with champignons,' said Joe. 'Where is the   
olive fork?'

On the next Saturday evening Joe reached home first. He   
spread his $18 on the parlor table and washed what seemed to be   
a great deal of dark paint from his hands.

Half an hour later Delia arrived, her right hand tied up in a   
shapeless bundle of wraps and bandages.

'How is this?' asked Joe after the usual greetings.   
Delia laughed, but not very joyously.   
'Clementina,' she explained, 'insisted upon a Welsh rabbit after

her lesson. She is such a queer girl. Welsh rabbits at five in the   
afternoon. The General was there. You should have seen him run   
for the chafing dish, Joe, just as if there wasn't a servant in the   
house. I know Clementina isn't in good health; she is so nervous.   
In serving the rabbit she spilled a great lot of it, boiling hot, over   
my hand and wrist. It hurt awfully, Joe. And the dear girl was so   
sorry! But General Pinkney! - Joe, that old man nearly went distracted. He rushed downstairs and sent somebody - they said the

**26**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**   
furnace man or somebody in the basement - out to a drug store   
for some oil and things to bind it up with. It doesn't hurt so much   
now.'

'What's this?' asked Joe, taking the hand tenderly and pulling at   
some white strands beneath the bandages.

'It's something soft,' said Delia, 'that had oil on it. Oh, Joe, did   
you sell another sketch?' She had seen the money on the table.

'Did I?' said Joe. 'Just ask the man from Peoria. He got his   
depot to-day, and he isn't sure but he thinks he wants another   
parks cape and a view on the Hudson. What time this afternoon   
did you burn your hand, Dele?'

'Five o'clock, I think,' said Dele plaintively. 'The iron - I mean   
the rabbit came off the fire about that time. You ought to have   
seen General Pinkney, Joe, when - '

'Sit down here a moment, Dele,' said Joe. He drew her too the   
couch, sat down beside her and put his arm across her shoulders.

'What have you been doing for the last two weeks, Dele?' he   
asked.

She braved it for a moment or two with an eye full of love and   
stubbornness, and murmured a phrase or two vaguely of General   
Pinkney; but at length down went her head and out came the truth   
and tears.

'I couldn't get any pupils,' she confessed. 'And I couldn't bear to   
have you given up your lessons; and I got a place ironing shirt in   
that big Twenty-fourth Street laundry. And I think I did very well   
to make up both General Pinkney and Clementina, don't you,   
Joe? And when a girl in the laundry set down a hot iron on me   
hand this afternoon I was all the way home making up that story   
about the Welsh rabbit. You're not angry are you, Joe? And if I   
hadn't got the work you mightn't have sold your sketches to that   
man from Peoria.'

'He wasn't from Peoria,' said Joe slowly.   
'Well, it doesn't matter where he was from. How clever you are,

Joe - and - kiss me, Joe - and what made you ever suspect that I   
wasn't giving music lessons to Clementina?'

'I didn't,' said Joe, 'until to-night. And I wouldn't have then,   
only I sent up this cotton waste and oil from the engine-room this   
afternoon for a girl upstairs who had her hand burned with a   
smoothing-iron. I've been firing the engine in that laundry for the   
last two weeks.'

'And then you didn't - '   
'My purchaser from Peoria,' said Joe, 'and General Pinkney are

**27**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

both creations of the same art - but you wouldn't call it either   
painting or music.

And then they both laughed, and Joe began:   
'When one loves one's Art no service seems - '   
But Delia stopped him with her hand on his lips. 'No,' she said -

'just "When one loves." '

VI

***The Coming-out of Maggie***

EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT the Clover Leaf Social Club gave a hop   
in the hall of the Give and Take Athletic Association on the East   
Side. In order to attend one of these dances you must be a   
member of the Give and Take - or, if you belong to the division   
that starts off with the right foot in waltzing, you must work in   
Rheingold's paper-box factory. Still, any Clover Leaf was privi­leged to escort or be escorted by an outsider to a single dance. But   
mostly each Give and Take brought the paper-box girl that he   
affected; and few strangers could boast of having shaken a foot at   
the regular hops.

Maggie Toole, on account of her dull eyes, broad mouth and   
left-handed style of footwork in the two-step, went to the dances   
with Anna McCarty and her 'fellow.' Anna and Maggie worked   
side by side in the factory, and were the greatest chums ever. So   
Anna always made Jimmy Burns take her by Maggie's house every   
Saturday night so that her friend could go to the dance with them.

The Give and Take Athletic Association lived up to its name. The   
hall of the association in Orchard Street was fitted out with muscle-  
 making inventions. With the fibers thus builder up the members   
were wont to engage the police and rival social and athletic organiza­tions in joyous combat. Between these more serious occupations the   
Saturday night hops with the paper-box factory girls came as a refin­ing influence and as an efficient screen. For sometimes the tip went   
'Round, and if you were among the elect that tiptoed up the dark back   
stairway you might see as neat and satisfying a little welter-weight   
affair to a finish as ever happened inside the ropes.

On Saturdays Rheingold's paper-box factory closed at 3 p.m.   
On one such afternoon Anna and Maggie walked homeward   
together. At Maggie's door Anna said, as usual: 'Be ready at seven,   
sharp, Mag; and Jimmy and me will come by for you.'

**28**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
But what was this? Instead of the customary humble and grateful thanks from the non-escorted one there was to be perceived a   
high-poised head, a prideful dimpling at the corners of a broad   
mouth, and almost a sparkle in a dull brown eye.

'Thanks, Anna,' said Maggie; 'but you and Jimmy needn't   
bother to-night. I've a gentleman friend that's coming 'round to   
escort me to the hop.'

The comely Anna pounced upon her friend, shook her, chided   
and beseeched her. Maggie Toole catches a fellow! Plain, dear,   
loyal, unattractive Maggie, so sweet as a chum, so unsought for a   
two-step or a moonlit bench in the little park. How was it? When   
did it happen? Who was it?

'You'll see to-night,' said Maggie, flushed with the wine of the   
first grapes she had gathered in Cupid's vineyard. 'He's swell all   
right. He's two inches taller than Jimmy, and an up-to-date   
dresser. I'll introduce him, Anna, just as soon as we get to the hall.'

Anna and Jimmy were among the first Clover Leafs to arrive   
that evening. Anna's eyes were brightly fixed upon the door of the   
hall to catch the first glimpse of her friend's 'catch.'

At 8.30 Miss Toole swept into the hall with her escort. Quickly   
her triumphant eye discovered her chum under the wing of her   
faithful Jimmy.

'Oh, gee!' cried Anna, 'Mag isn't made a hit - oh, no! Swell   
fellow? Well, I guess! Style? Look at 'um.'

'Go as far as you like,' said Jimmy, with sandpaper in his voice.   
'Cop him out if you want him. These new guys always win out   
with the push. Don't mind me. He doesn't squeeze all the limes, I   
guess. Huh!'

'Shut up, Jimmy. You know what I mean. I'm glad for Mag.   
First fellow she ever had. Oh, here they come.'

Across the floor Maggie sailed like a coquettish yacht convoyed   
by a stately cruiser. And truly, her companion justified the   
encomiums of the faithful chum. He stood two inches taller than   
the average Give and Take athlete; his dark hair curled; his eyes   
and his teeth flashed whenever he bestowed his frequent smiles.   
The young men of the Clover Leaf Club pinned not their faith to   
the graces of person as much as they did to its prowess, its   
achievements in hand-to-hand conflicts, and its preservation from   
the legal duress that constantly menaced it. The member of the   
association who would bind a paper-box maiden to his conquering   
chariot scorned to employ Beau Brummel airs. They were not   
considered honorable methods of warfare. The swelling biceps,

**29**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

the coat straining at its buttons over the chest, the air of conscious   
conviction of the super-eminence of the male in the cosmogony of   
creation, even a calm display of bow legs as subduing and enchant­ing agents in the gentle tourneys of Cupid - these were the   
approved arms and ammunition of the Clover Leaf gallants. They   
viewed, then, the Gen flexions and alluring poses of this visitor   
with their chins at a new angle.

'A friend of mine, Mr. Terry O'Sullivan,' was Maggie's formula   
of introduction. She led him around the room, presenting him to   
each new-arriving Clover Leaf. Almost was she pretty now, with   
the unique luminosity in her eyes that comes to a girl with her   
first suitor and a kitten with its first mouse.

'Maggie Toole's got a fellow at last,' was the word that went   
round among the paper-box girls. 'Pipe Mag's floor-walker' - thus   
the Give and Takes expressed their indifferent contempt.

Usually at the weekly hops Maggie kept a spot on the wall warm   
with her back. She felt and showed so much gratitude whenever a   
self-sacrificing partner invited her to dance that his pleasure was   
cheapened and diminished. She had even grown used to noticing   
Anna joggles the reluctant Jimmy with her elbow as a signal for   
him to invite her chum to walk over his feet through a two-step.

But to-night the pumpkin had turned to a coach and six. Terry   
O'Sullivan was a victorious Prince Charming, and Maggie Toole   
winged her first butterfly flight. And though our tropes of fairy­  
 land be mixed with those of entomology they shall not spill one   
drop of ambrosia from the rose-crowned melody of Maggie's one   
perfect night.

The girls besieged her for introductions to her 'fellow.' The   
Clover Leaf young men, after two years of blindness, suddenly   
perceived charms in Miss Toole. They flexed their compelling   
muscles before her and bespoke her for the dance.

Thus, she scored; but to Terry O'Sullivan the honors of the   
evening felt thick and fast. He shook his curls; he smiled and went   
easily through the seven motions for acquiring grace in your own   
room before an open window ten minutes each day. He danced like   
a faun; he introduced manner and style and atmosphere; his words   
came trippingly upon his tongue, and - he waltzed twice in succes­sion with the paper-box girl that Dempsey Donovan brought.

Dempsey was the leader of the association. He wore a dress suit,   
and could chin the bar twice with one hand. He was one of 'Big   
Mike' O'Sullivan's lieutenants, and was never troubled by trouble.   
No cop dared to arrest him. Whenever he broke a push-cart man's

**30**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
head or shot a member of the Heinrick B. Sweeney Outing and   
Literary Association in the kneecap, an officer would drop around   
and say:

'The Capon'd like to see ye a few minutes round to the office   
whin ye have time, Dempsey, me boy.'

But there would be sundry gentlemen there with large gold fob   
chains and black cigars; and somebody would tell a funny story,   
and then Dempsey would go back and work half an hour with the   
six-pound dumb-bells. So, doing a tight-rope act on a wire   
stretched across Niagara was a safe terpsichorean performance   
compared with waltzing twice with Dempsey Donovan's paper-  
 box girl. At ten o'clock the jolly round face of 'Big Mike' O'Sullivan­  
 van shone at the door for five minutes upon the scene. He always   
looked in for five minutes, smiled at the girls and handed out real   
perfectos to the delighted boys.

Dempsey Donovan was at his elbow instantly, talking rapidly.   
'Big Mike' looked carefully at the dancers, smiled, shook his head   
and departed.

The music stopped. The dancers scattered to the chairs along   
the walls. Terry O'Sullivan, with his entrancing bow, relinquished   
a pretty girl in blue to her partner and started back to find   
Maggie. Dempsey intercepted him in the middle of the floor.

Some fine instinct that Rome must have bequeathed to us   
caused nearly every one to turn and look at them - there was a   
subtle feeling that two gladiators had met in the arena. Two or   
three Give and Takes with tight coat-sleeves drew nearer.

'One moment, Mr. O'Sullivan,' said Dempsey. 'I hope you're   
enjoying yourself. Where did you say you lived?

The two gladiators were well matched. Dempsey had, perhaps,   
ten pounds of weight to give away. The O'Sullivan had breadth   
with quickness. Dempsey had a glacial eye, a dominating slit of a   
mouth, an indestructible jaw, a complexion like a belle's and the   
coolness of a champion. The visitor showed more fire in his con­  
 tempt and less control over his conspicuous sneer. They were ene­mies by the law written when the rocks were molten. They were   
each too splendid, too mighty, too incomparable to divide pre­  
 eminence. One only must survive.

'I live on Grand,' said O'Sullivan insolently; 'and no trouble to   
find me at home. Where do you live?'

Dempsey ignored the question.   
'You say your name's O'Sullivan,' he went on. 'Well, "Big

Mike" says he never saw you before.'

**31**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

'Lots of things he never saw,' said the favorite of the hop.   
'As a rule,' went on Dempsey, huskily sweet, 'O'Sullivan's in this

district know one another. You escorted one of our lady members   
here, and we want a chance to make good. If you've got a family   
tree let's see a few historical O'Sullivan buds come out on it. Or   
do you want us to dig it out of you by the roots?'

'Suppose you mind your own business,' suggested O'Sullivan   
blandly.

Dempsey's eyes brightened. He held up an inspired forefinger   
as though a brilliant idea had struck him.

'I've got it now,' he said cordially. 'It was just a little mistake.   
You aren't no O'Sullivan. You are a ring-tailed monkey. Excuse us   
for not recognizing you at first.'

O'Sullivan's eye flashed. He made a quick movement, but Andy   
Geoghan was ready and caught his arm.

Dempsey nodded at Andy and William McMahan, the secretary of   
the club, and walked rapidly toward a door at the rear of the hall.   
Two other members of the Give and Take Association swiftly joined   
the little group. Terry O'Sullivan was now in the hands of the Board   
of Rules and Social Referees. They spoke to him briefly and softly,   
and conducted him out through the same door at the rear.

This movement on the part of the Clover Leaf members   
requires a word of elucidation. Back of the association hall was a   
smaller room rented by the club. In this room personal difficulties   
that arose on the ballroom floor were settled, man to man, with   
the weapons of nature, under the supervision of the Board. No   
lady could say that she had witnessed a fight at a Clover Leaf hop   
in several years. Its gentlemen members guaranteed that.

So easily and smoothly had Dempsey and the Board done them   
preliminary work that many in the hall had not noticed the check­ing of the fascinating O'Sullivan's social triumph. Among these   
was Maggie. She looked about for her escort.

'Smoke up!' said Rose Cassidy. 'Weren't you on? Demps Dono­  
 van picked a scrap with your Lizzie-boy, and they've waltzed out   
to the slaughter-room with him. How's my hair look done up this   
way, Mag?'

Maggie laid a hand on the bosom of her cheesecloth waist.   
'Gone to fight with Dempsey!' she said breathlessly. 'They've

got to be stopped. Dempsey Donovan can't fight him. Why, he'll -  
 he'll kill him!'

'Ah, what do you care?' said Rosa. 'Don't some of 'me fight   
every hop?'

**32**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**

But Maggie was off, darting her zigzag way through the maze of   
dancers. She burst through the rear door into the dark hall and   
then threw her solid shoulder against the door of the room of   
single combat. It gave way, and in the instant that she entered her   
eye caught the scene - the Board standing about with open   
watches; Dempsey Donovan in his shirt-sleeves dancing, light-  
 footed, with the wary grace of the modern pugilist, within easy   
reach of his adversary; Terry O'Sullivan standing with arm folded   
and a murderous look in his dark eyes. And without slacking the   
speed of her entrance she leaped forward with a scream - leaped in   
time to catch and hang upon the arm of O'Sullivan that was sud­denly uplifted, and to whisk from it the long, bright stiletto that   
he had drawn from his bosom.

The knife fell and rang upon the floor. Cold steel drawn in the   
rooms of the Give and Take Association! Such a thing had never   
happened before. Every one stood motionless for a minute. Andy   
Geoghan kicked the stiletto with the toe of his shoe curiously, like   
an antiquarian who has come upon some ancient weapon   
unknown to his learning.

And then O'Sullivan hissed something unintelligible between   
his teeth. Dempsey and the Board exchanged looks. And then   
Dempsey looked at O'Sullivan without anger as one looks at a   
stray dog, and nodded his head in the direction of the door.

'The back stairs, Giuseppi,' he said briefly. 'Somebody'll pitches   
your hat down after you.'

Maggie walked up to Dempsey Donovan. There was a brilliant   
spot of red in her cheeks, down which slow tears were running.   
But she looked him bravely in the eye.

'I knew it, Dempsey,' she said, as her eyes grew dull even in   
their tears. 'I knew he was a Guinea. His name's Tony Spinelli. I   
hurried in when they told me you and him was scrapping'. Them   
Guineas always carries knives. But you don't understand,   
Dempsey. I never had a fellow in my life. I got tired of Comin'   
with Anna and Jimmy every night, so I fixed it with him to call   
himself O'Sullivan, and brought him along. I knew there'd be   
nothing' doing' for him if he came as a Dago. I guess I'll resign from   
the club now.'

Dempsey turned to Andy Geoghan.   
'Chuck that cheese slicer out of the window,' he said, 'and tell

'Me inside that Mr. O'Sullivan has had a telephone message to go   
down to Tammany Hall.'

And then he turned back to Maggie.

**33**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

'Say, Mag,' he said, 'I'll see you home. And how about next Sat­urday night? Will you come to the hop with me if I call around for   
you?'

It was remarkable how quickly Maggie's eyes could change from   
dull to a shining brown.

'With you, Dempsey?' she stammered. 'Say - will a duck swim?'

VII   
The Cop and the Anthem

O N HIS BENCH IN MADISON SQUARE Soapy moved uneasily. When   
wild goose honk high of nights, and when women without sealskin   
coats grow kind to their husbands, and when Soapy moves   
uneasily on his bench in the park, you may know that winter is   
near at hand.

A dead leaf fell in Soap's lap. That was Jack Frost's card. Jack is   
kind to the regular denizens of Madison Square, and gives fair   
warning of his annual call. At the corners of four streets, he hands   
his pasteboard to the North Wind, footman of the mansion of All   
Outdoors, so that the inhabitants thereof may make ready.

Soap's mind became cognizant of the fact that the time had   
come for him to resolve himself into a singular Committee of Ways   
and means to provide against the coming rig ours. And therefore he   
moved uneasily on his bench.

The hibernator Al ambitions of Soapy were not of the highest.   
In them were no considerations of Mediterranean cruises, of   
soporific Southern skies or drifting in the Vesuvian Bay. Three   
months on the Island was what his soul craved. Three months of   
assured board and bed and congenial company, safe from Boreas   
and bluecoats, seemed too Soapy the essence of things desirable.

For years the hospitable Blackwell's had been his winter quar­ters. Just as his more fortunate fellow New Yorkers had bought   
their tickets to Palm Beach and the Riviera each winter, so Soapy   
had made his humble arrangements for his annual hegira to the   
Island. And now the time was come. On the previous night three   
Sabbath newspapers, distributed beneath his coat, about his ankles   
and over his lap, had failed to repulse the cold as he slept on his   
bench near the spurting fountain in the ancient square. So the   
Island loomed large and timely in Soap's mind. He scorned the   
provisions made in the name of charity for the city's dependents.

**34**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
In Soap's opinion the Law was more benign than Philanthropy.   
There was an endless round of institutions, municipal and   
eleemosynary, on which he might set out and receive lodging and   
food accordant with the simple life. But to one of Soap's proud   
spirit the gifts of charity are encumbered. If not in coin you must   
pay in humiliation of spirit for every benefit received at the hands   
of philanthropy. As Caesar had his Brutus, every bed of charity   
must have its toll of a bath, every loaf of bread its compensation of   
a private and personal inquisition. Wherefore it is better to be a   
guest of the law, which, though conducted by rules, does not   
meddle unduly with a gentleman's private affairs.

Soapy, having decided to go to the Island, at once set about   
accomplishing his desire. There were many easy ways of doing   
this. The pleasantest was to dine luxuriously at some expensive   
restaurant; and then, after declaring insolvency, be handed over   
quietly and without uproar to a policeman. An accommodating   
magistrate would do the rest.

Soapy left his bench and strolled out of the square and across   
the level sea of asphalt, where Broadway and Fifth Avenue flow   
together, Up Broadway he turned, and halted at a glittering café,   
where are gathered together nightly the choicest products of the   
grape, the silkworm and the protoplasm.

Soapy had confidence in himself from the lowest button of his vest   
upward. He was shaven, and his coat was decent and his neat black,   
ready-tied four-in-hand had been presented to him by a lady mis­sionary on Thanksgiving Day. If he could reach a table in the restau­rant unsuspected success would be his. The portion of him that   
would show above the table would raise no doubt in the waiter's   
mind. A roasted mallard duck, thought Soapy, would be about the   
thing - with a bottle of Chablis, and then Camembert, a demi-tasse   
and a cigar. One dollar for the cigar would be enough. The total   
would not be so high as to call forth any supreme manifestation of   
revenge from the café management; and yet the meat would leave   
him filled and happy for the journey to his winter refuge.

But as Soapy set foot inside the restaurant door the head   
waiter's eye fell upon his frayed trousers and decadent shoes.   
Strong and ready hands turned him about and conveyed him in   
silence and haste to the sidewalk and averted the ignoble fate of   
the menaced mallard.

Soapy turned off Broadway. It seemed that his route to the cov­eted Island was not to be an epicurean one. Some other way of   
entering limbo must be thought of.

**35**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

At a corner of Sixth Avenue electric lights and cunningly dis­  
 played wares behind plate-glass made a shop window conspicuous.   
Soapy took a cobblestone and dashed it through the glass. People   
came running round the corner, a policeman in the lead. Soapy   
stood still, with his hands in his pockets, and smiled at the sight of   
brass buttons.

'Where's the man that done that?' inquired the officer excitedly.   
'Don't you figure out that I might have had something to do

with it?' said Soapy, not without sarcasm, but friendly, as one   
greets good fortune.

The policeman's mind refused to accept Soapy even as a clue.   
Men who smash windows do not remain to parley with the law's   
minions. They take to their heels. The policeman saw a man half­  
 way down the block running to catch a car. With drawn club he   
joined in the pursuit. Soapy, with disgust in his heart, loafed   
along, twice unsuccessful.

On the opposite side of the street was a restaurant of no great   
pretensions. It catered to large appetites and modest purses. Its   
crockery and atmosphere were thick; its soup and napery thin.   
Into this place Soapy took his accusive shoes and tell-tale trousers   
without challenge. At a table he sat and consumed beefsteak, flap­  
 jacks, doughnuts and pie. And then to the waiter he betrayed the   
fact that the minutest coin and himself were strangers.

'Now, get busy and call a cop,' said Soapy. 'And don't keep a   
gentleman waiting.'

'No cop for Youse,' said the waiter, with a voice like butter cakes   
and an eye like the cherry in a Manhattan cocktail. 'Hey, con!'

Neatly upon his left ear on the callous pavement two waiters   
pitched Soapy. He arose, joint by joint, as a carpenter's rule opens,   
and beat the dust from his clothes. Arrest seemed but a rosy   
dream. The Island seemed very far away. A policeman who stood   
before a drug store two doors away laughed and walked down the   
street.

Five blocks Soapy travelled before his courage permitted him to   
woo capture again. This time the opportunity presented what he   
fatuously termed to himself a 'cinch.' A young woman of a modest   
and pleasing guise was standing before a show window gazing with   
sprightly interest at its display of shaving mugs and inkstands, and   
two yards from the window a large policeman of severe   
demean our leaned against a water-plug.

It was Soap's design to assume the role of the despicable and   
execrated 'masher.' The refined and elegant appearance of his

**36**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
victim and the contiguity of the conscientious cop encouraged him   
to believe that he would soon feel the pleasant official clutch upon   
his arm that would ensure his winter quarters on the right little,   
tight little isle.

Soapy straightened the lady missionary's ready-made tie,   
dragged his shrinking cuffs into the open, set his hat at a killing   
can't and sidled toward the young woman. He made eyes at her,   
was taken with sudden coughs and 'hems,' smiled, smirked and   
went brazenly through the impudent and contemptible litany of   
the 'masher.' With half an eye Soapy saw that the policeman was   
watching him fixedly. The young woman moved away a few steps,   
and again, bestowed her absorbed attention upon the shaving   
mugs. Soapy followed, boldly stepping to her side, raised his hat   
and said:

'Ah there, Bedelia! Don't you want to come and play in me   
yard?'

The policeman was still looking. The persecuted young woman   
had but to beckon a finger and Soapy would be practically *En route*   
*for his insular haven. Already he imagined he could feel the cozy*   
*warmth of the station-house. The young woman faced him and,*   
*stretching out a hand, caught Soap's coat-sleeve.*

'Sure, Mike,' she said joyfully, 'if you'll blow me to a pail of   
suds. I'd have spoken to you sooner, but the cop was watching.'

With the young woman playing the clinging ivy to his oak   
Soapy walked past the policeman, overcome with gloom. He   
seemed doomed to liberty.

At the next corner he shook off his companion and ran. He   
halted in the district where by night are found the lightest streets,   
hearts, vows and librettos. Women in furs and men in greatcoats   
moved gaily in the wintry air. A sudden fear seized Soapy that some   
dreadful enchantment had rendered him immune to arrest. The   
thought brought a little of panic upon it, and when he came upon   
another policeman lounging grandly in front of a resplendent   
theatre he caught at the immediate straw of 'disorderly conduct.'

On the sidewalk Soapy began to yell drunken gibberish at the   
top of his harsh voice. He danced, howled, raved and otherwise   
disturbed the welkin.

The policeman twirled his club, turned his back to Soapy and   
remarked to a citizen:

' 'Tis one of them Yale lads celebrating' the goose egg they give   
to the Hartford College. Noisy; but no harm. We've instructions   
to leave them be.'

**37**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
Disconsolate, Soapy ceased his unavailing racket. Would never a

policeman lay hands on him? In his fancy the Island seemed an   
unattainable Arcadia. He buttoned his thin coat against the chilling   
wind.

In a cigar store he saw a well-dressed man lighting a cigar at a   
swinging light. His silk umbrella he had set by the door on enter­  
 ing. Soapy stepped inside, secured the umbrella and sauntered off   
with it slowly. The man at the cigar light followed hastily.

'My umbrella,' he said sternly.   
'Oh, is it?' sneered Soapy, adding insult to petit larceny. 'Well,

why don't you call a policeman? I took it. Your umbrella! Why   
don't you call a cop? There stands one at the corner.'

The umbrella owner slowed his steps. Soapy did likewise, with a   
presentiment that luck would again run against him. The policeman   
looked at the two curiously.

'Of course,' said the umbrella man - 'that is - well, you know   
how these mistakes occur - I - if it's your umbrella I hope you'll   
excuse me - I picked it up this morning in a restaurant - If you   
recognize it as yours, why - I hope you'll - '

'Of course, it's mine,' said Soapy viciously.   
The ex-umbrella man retreated. The policeman hurried to assist

a tall blonde in an opera cloak across the street in front of a street   
car that was approaching two blocks away.

Soapy walked eastward through a street damaged by improve­  
 ments. He hurled the umbrella wrathfully into an excavation. He   
muttered against the men who wear helmets and carry clubs.   
Because he wanted to fall into their clutches, they seemed to   
regard him as a king who could do no wrong.

At length Soapy reached one of the avenues to the east were   
the glitter and turmoil were but faint. He set his face down this   
toward Madison Square, for the homing instinct survives even   
when the home is a park bench.

But on an unusually quiet corner Soapy came to a standstill.   
Here was an old church, quaint and rambling and gabled.   
Through one violet-stained window a soft light glowed, were, no   
doubt, the organist loitered over the keys, making sure of his mas­tery of the coming Sabbath anthem. For their drifted out to   
Soap's ears sweet music that caught and held him transfixed   
against the convolutions of the iron fence.

The moon was above, lustrous and serene; vehicles and pedes­trians were few; sparrows twittered sleepily in the eaves - for a   
little while the scene might have been a country churchyard. And

**38**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
the anthem that the organist played cemented Soapy to the iron   
fence, for he had known it well in the days when his life contained   
such things as mothers and roses and ambitions and friends and   
immaculate thoughts and collars.

The conjunction of Soap's receptive state of mind and the   
influences about the old church wrought a sudden and wonderful   
change in his soul. He viewed with swift horror the pit into which   
he had tumbled, the degraded days, unworthy desires, dead hopes,   
wrecked faculties and base motives that made up his existence.

And also, in a moment his heart responded thrillingly to this   
novel mood. An instantaneous and strong impulse moved him to   
battle with his desperate fate. He would pull himself out of the   
mire; he would make a man of himself again; he would conquer   
the evil that had taken possession of him. There was time; he was   
comparatively young yet; he would resurrect his old eager ambi­tions and pursue them without faltering. Those solemn but sweet   
organ notes had set up a revolution in him. To-morrow he would   
go into the roaring down-town district and find work. A fur   
importer had once offered him a place as driver. He would find   
him to-morrow and ask for the position. He would be somebody   
in the world. He would -

Soapy felt a hand laid on his arm. He looked quickly around   
into the broad face of a policeman.

'What are you doing' here?' asked the officer.   
'Nothing',' said Soapy.   
'Then come along,' said the policeman.   
'Three months on the Island,' said the Magistrate in the Police

Court the next morning.

**VIII**

***Memoirs of a Yellow Dog***

I DON'T SUPPOSE it will knock any of you people off your perch to   
read a contribution from an animal. Mr. Kipling and a good many   
others have demonstrated the fact that animals can express them­  
 selves in remunerative English, and no magazine goes to press   
nowadays without an animal story in it, except the old-style   
monthlies that are still running pictures of Bryan and the Mont   
Pelée horror.

But you needn't look for any stuck-up literature in my piece,

**39**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

such as Beiro, the bear, and Sanko, the snake, and Tamano,   
the tiger, talk in the jungle books. A yellow dog that's spent most   
of his life in a cheap New York flat, sleeping in a corner on an old   
sateen underskirt (the one she spilled port wine on at the Lady   
Longshoremen's banquet), mustn't be expected to perform any   
tricks with the art of speech.

I was born a yellow pup; date, locality, pedigree and weight   
unknown. The first thing I can recollect, an old woman had me in   
a basket at Broadway and Twenty-third trying to sell me to a   
fat lady. Old Mother Hubbard was boosting me to beat the band   
as a genuine Pomeranian-Hambletonian-Red-Irish-Cochin-China-  
 Stoke-Pogi's fox terrier. The fat lady chased a V around among the   
samples of Gros grain flannelette in her shopping-bag till she cor­nered it, and gave up. From that moment I was a pet - a mamma's   
own woot Sey squid Lums. Say, gentle reader, did you ever have   
a 200-pound woman breathing a flavors of Camembert cheese   
and Peou d'Epargne pick you up and wallop her nose all over   
you, remarking all the time in an Emma Eames tone of voice:   
'Oh, coo's um Odlum, hoodlum, Woolum, to Odlum, bitsy-witty monopodiums?'

From a pedigreed yellow pup, I grew up to be an anonymous   
yellow cur looking like a cross between an Angora cat and a box of   
lemons. But my mistress never tumbled. She thought that the two   
primeval pups that Noah chased into the ark were but a collateral   
branch of my ancestors. It took two policemen to keep her from   
entering me at the Madison Square Garden for the Siberian   
bloodhound prize.

I'll tell you about that flat. The house was the ordinary thing   
in New York, paved with Parian marble in the entrance hall and   
cobblestones above the first floor. Our flat was three Fl - well,   
not flights - climbs up. My mistress rented it unfurnished, and   
put in the regular things - 1903 antique upholstered parlor set,   
oil chromo of geishas in a Harlem tea-house, rubber plant and   
husband.

By Sirius! there was a biped I felt sorry for. He was a little man   
with sandy hair and whiskers, a good deal like mine. Hen-pecked?   
- well, toucans and flamingoes and pelicans all had their bills in   
him. He wiped the dishes and listened to my mistress talk about   
the cheap, ragged things the lady with the squirrel-skin coat on   
the second floor hung out on her line to dry. And every evening   
while she was getting supper, she made him take me out on the end   
of a string for a walk.

**40**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
If men knew how women pass the time when they are alone

they'd never marry. Laura Lean Jibbed, peanut brittle, a little   
almond cream on the neck muscles, dishes unwashed, half an   
hour's talk with the iceman, reading a package of old letters, a   
couple of pickles and two bottles of malt extract, one hour peeking   
through a hole in the window shade into the flat across the air-  
 shaft - that's about all there is to it. Twenty minutes before time   
for him to come home from work she straightens up the house,   
fixes her rat so it won't show, and gets out a lot of sewing for a   
ten-minute bluff.

I led a dog's life in that flat. 'Most all day I lay there in me   
corner watching the fat woman kill time. I slept sometimes and   
had pipe dreams about being out chasing cats into basements and   
growling at old ladies with black mittens, as a dog was intended to   
do. Then she would pounce upon me with a lot of that driveling   
poodle palaver and kiss me on the nose - but what could I do? A   
dog can't chew cloves.

I began to feel sorry for Hubby, dog my cats if I didn't. We   
looked so much alike that people noticed it when we went out; so   
we shook the streets that Morgan's cab drives down, and took to   
climbing the piles of last December's snow on the streets were   
cheap people live.

One evening when we were thus promenading, and I was trying   
to look like a prize St. Bernard, and the old man was trying to look   
like he wouldn't have murdered the. first organ-grinder he heard   
play Mendelssohn's wedding-march, I looked up at him and said,   
in my way:

'What are you looking so sour about, your oakum trimmed lob­ster? She doesn't kiss you. You don't have to sit on her lap and listen   
to talk that would make the book of a musical comedy sound like   
the maxims of Epictetus. You ought to be thankful you're not a   
dog. Brace up, Benedick, and bid the blues begone.'

The matrimonial mishap looked down at me with almost canine   
intelligence in his face.

'Why, doggie,' says he, 'good doggie. You almost look like you   
could speak. What is it, doggie - Cats?'

Cats! Could speak!   
But, of course, he couldn't understand. Humans were denied

the speech of animals. The only common ground of communica­tion upon which dogs and men can get together is in fiction.

In the flat across the hall from us lived a lady with a black-and-  
 tan terrier. Her husband strung it and took it out every evening,

**41**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

but he always came home cheerful and whistling. One day I   
touched noses with the black-and-tan in the hall, and I struck him   
for an elucidation.

'See, here, Wiggle-and-Skip,' I say, 'you know that it isn't the   
nature of a real man to play dry-nurse to a dog in public. I never   
saw one leashed to a bow-wow yet that didn't look like he'd like to   
lick every other man that looked at him. But your boss comes in   
every day as perky and set up as an amateur prestidigitator doing   
the egg tricks. How does he do it? Don't tell me he likes it.'

'Him?' says the black-and-tan. 'Why, he uses Nature's Own   
Remedy. He gets spifflicated. At first when we go out, he's as shy   
as the man on the steamer who would rather play Pedro when they   
make 'me all jackpots. By the time we've been in eight saloons he   
don't care whether the thing on the end of his line is a dog or a   
catfish. I've lost two inches of my tail trying to sidestep those   
swinging doors.'

The pointer I got from that terrier - vaudeville please copy - set   
me to thinking.

One evening about six o'clock my mistress ordered him to get   
busy and do the ozone act for Lovey. I have concealed it until   
now, but that is what she called me. The black-and-tan was called   
'Tweeness.' I consider that I have the bulge on him as far as you   
could chase a rabbit. Still 'Lovey' is something of a nomenclatural   
tin-can on the tail of one's self-respect.

At a quiet place on a safe street, I tightened the line of my custo­dian in front of an attractive, refined saloon. I made a dead-ahead   
scramble for the doors, whining like a dog in the press dispatches   
that lets the family know that little Alice is bogged while gathering   
lilies in the brook.

'Why, darn my eyes,' says the old man, with a grin; 'darn me   
eyes if the saffron-colored son of a seltzer lemonade isn't asking   
me in to take a drink. Lemme see - how long's it been since I saved   
shoe leather by keeping one foot on the footrest? I believe I'll - '

I knew I had him. Hot Scotches he took, sitting at a table. For   
an hour he kept the Campbells coming. I sat by his side rapping   
for the waiter with my tail, and eating free lunch such as mamma   
in her flat never equaled with her homemade truck bought at a   
delicatessen store eight minutes before papa comes home.

When the products of Scotland were all exhausted except the   
rye bread the old man unwound me from the table leg and played   
me outside like a fisherman plays a salmon. Out there he took off   
my collar and threw it into the street.

**42**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

'Poor doggie,' says he; 'good doggie. She shan't kiss you any   
more. ' S a darned shame. Good doggie, go away and get run over   
by a street car and be happy.'

I refused to leave. I leaped and frisked around the old man's legs   
happy as a pug on a rug.

'Your old flea-headed woodchuck-chaser,' I said to him - 'you   
moon-baying, rabbit-pointing, egg-stealing old beagle, can't you   
see that I don't want to leave you? Can't you see that we're both   
Pups in the Wood and the missis is the cruel uncle after you with   
the dish towel and me with the flea liniment and a pink bow to tie   
on my tail. Why not cut that all out and be pards for evermore?'

Maybe you'll say he didn't understand - maybe he didn't. But   
he kind of got a grip on the Hot Scotches, and stood still for a   
minute, thinking.

'Doggie,' says he finally, 'we don't live more than a dozen lives   
on this earth, and very few of us live to be more than 300. If I ever   
see that flat any more I'm a flat, and if you do, you're flatter; and   
that's no flattery. I'm offering 60 to 1 that Westward Ho wins out   
by the length of a dachshund.'

There was no string, but I frolicked along with my master to the   
Twenty-third Street ferry. And the cats on the route saw reason to   
give thanks that prehensile claws had been given them.

On the Jersey side my master said to a stranger who stood   
eating a currant bun:

'Me and my doggie, we are bound for the Rocky Mountains.'   
But what pleased me most was when my old man pulled both of

my ears until I howled, and said:   
'You common, monkey-headed, rat-tailed, Sulphur-colored

son of a door-mat, do you know what I'm going to call you?'   
I thought of 'Lovey,' and I whined dolefully.   
'I'm going to call you "Pete," ' says my master; and if I'd had

five tails I couldn't have done enough wagging to do justice to the   
occasion.

**IX**

***The Love-philter of Ikey Schoenstein***

THE BLUE LIGHT DRUG STORE is down-town, between the Bowery   
and First Avenue, where the distance between the two streets is the   
shortest. The Blue Light does not consider that pharmacy is a thing

**43**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

of bric-a-brac, scent and ice-cream soda. If you ask it for a pain-killer   
it will not give you a bonbon.

The Blue Light scorns the labor-saving arts of modern phar­macy. It macerates its opium and percolates its own laudanum and   
paregoric. To this day pills are made behind its tall prescription   
desk - pills rolled out on its own pill-tile, divided with a spatula,   
rolled with the finger and thumb, dusted with calcined magnesia   
and delivered in little round, pasteboard pill-boxes. The store is on   
a corner about which coveys of ragged-plumed, hilarious children   
play and become candidates for the cough-drops and soothing   
syrups that wait for them inside.

Ikey Schoenstein was the night clerk of the Blue Light and the   
friend of his customers. Thus, it is on the East Side, were the   
heart of pharmacy is not *glacé.* There, as it should be, the druggist   
is a counsellor, a confessor, an adviser, an able and willing mis­sionary and mentor whose learning is respected, whose occult   
wisdom is venerated and whose medicine is often poured,   
untasted, into the gutter. Therefore, Ikey's coniform, bespecta­cled nose and narrow, knowledge-bowed figure was well known in   
the vicinity of the Blue Light, and his advice and notice were   
much desired.

Ikey roomed and breakfasted at Mrs. Riddle's, two squares   
away. Mrs. Riddle had a daughter named Rosy. The circumlocu­tion has been in vain - you must have guessed it - Ikey adored   
Rosy. She tinctured all his thoughts; she was the compound   
extract of all that was chemically pure and officinal - the dispen­satory contained nothing equal to her. But Ikey was timid, and his   
hopes remained insoluble in the menstruum of his backwardness   
and fears. Behind his counter he was a superior being, calmly   
conscious of special knowledge and worth; outside, he was a   
weak-kneed, purblind, motorman-cursed rambler, with ill-fitting   
clothes stained with chemicals and smelling of Soco trine aloes and   
Valeria Nate of ammonia.

The fly in Ikey's ointment (thrice welcome, pat trope!) was   
Chunk McGowan.

Mr. McGowan was also striving to catch the bright smiles   
tossed about by Rosy. But he was no out-fielder as Ikey was; he   
picked them off the bat. At the same time, he was Ikey's friend and   
customer, and often dropped in at the Blue Light Drug Store to   
have a bruise painted with iodine or get a cut rubber-plastered   
after a pleasant evening spent along the Bowery.

One afternoon McGowan drifted in in his silent, easy way, and

**44**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
sat, comely, smoothed-faced, hard, indomitable, good-natured,   
upon a stool.

'Ikey,' said he, when his friend had fetched his mortar and sat   
opposite, grinding gum benzoin to a powder, 'get busy with your   
ear. It's drugs for me if you've got the line I need.'

Ikey scanned the countenance of Mr. McGowan for the usual   
evidences of conflict, but found none.

'Take your coat off,' he ordered. 'I guess already that you have   
been stuck in the ribs with a knife. I have many times told you   
those Dagoes would do you up.'

Mr. McGowan smiled. 'Not them,' he said. 'Not any Dagoes.   
But you've located the diagnosis all right enough - it's under me   
coat, near the ribs. Speak! Ikey - Rosy and me are going' to run away   
and get married to-night.'

Ikey's left forefinger was doubled over the edge of the mortar,   
holding it steady. He gave it a wild rap with the pestle, but felt   
it not. Meanwhile Mr. McGowan's smile faded to a look of   
perplexed gloom.

'That is, ' he continued, 'if she keeps in the notion until the time   
comes. We've been laying' pipes for the gateway for two weeks.   
One day she says she will; the same evening' she says nixie. We've   
agreed on to-night, and Rosy's stuck to the affirmative this time   
for two whole days. But it's five hours yet till the time, and I'm   
afraid she'll stand me up when it comes to the scratch.'

'You said you wanted drugs,' remarked Ikey.   
Mr. McGowan looked ill at ease and harassed - a condition

opposed to his usual line of demeanor. He made a patent-medi­cine almanac into a roll and fitted it with unprofitable carefulness   
about his finger.

'I wouldn't have this double handicap make a false start to-night   
for a million,' he said. 'I've got a little flat up in Harlem all ready,   
with chrysanthemums on the table and a kettle ready to boil. And   
I've engaged a pulpit pounder to be ready at his house for us at   
9.30. It's got to come off. And if Rosy don't change her mind   
again!' - Mr. McGowan ceased, a prey to his doubts.

'I don't see then yet,' said Ikey shortly, 'what makes it that you   
talk of drugs, or what I can be doing about it.'

'Old man Riddle don't like me a little bit,' went on the uneasy   
suitor, bent upon marshalling his arguments. 'For a week he hasn't   
let Rosy step outside the door with me. If it wasn't for losing' a   
boarder they'd have bounced me long ago. I'm making' $20 a week   
and she'll never regret flying' the coop with Chunk McGowan.'

**45**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

'You will excuse me, Chunk,' said Ikey. 'I must make a prescription   
that is to be called for soon.'

'Say,' said McGowan, looking up suddenly, 'say, Ikey, isn't   
there a drug of some kind - some kind of powders that'll make a   
girl like you better if you give 'me to her?'

Ikey's lip beneath his nose curled with the scorn of superior   
enlightenment; but before he could answer, McGowan continued:

'Tim Lacy told me once that he got some from a croaker up­  
 town and fed 'me to his girl in soda water. From the very first dose   
he was ace-high and everybody else looked like thirty cents to her.   
They were married in less than two weeks.'

Strong and simple was Chunk McGowan. A better reader of   
men than Ikey was could have seen that his tough frame was   
strung upon fine wires. Like a good general who was about to   
invade the enemy's territory he was seeking to guard every point   
against possible failure.

'I thought,' went on Chunk hopefully, 'that if I had one of them   
powders to give Rosy when I see her at supper to-night it might   
brace her up and keep her from reneging on the proposition to   
skip. I guess she don't need a mule team to drag her away, but   
women are better at coaching than they are at running bases. If   
the Stuff'll work just for a couple of hours it'll do the trick.'

'When is this foolishness of running away to be happening?'   
asked Ikey.

'Nine o'clock,' said Mr. McGowan. 'Suppers at seven. At eight   
Rosy goes to bed with a headache. At nine old Provenzano lets me   
through to his backyard, where there's a board off Riddle's fence,   
next door. I go under her window and help her down the fire-  
 escape. We've got to make it early on the preacher's account. It's   
all dead easy if Rosy don't balk when the flag drops. Can you fix   
me one of them powders, Ikey?'

Ikey Schoenstein rubbed his nose slowly.   
'Chunk,' said he, 'it is of drugs of that nature that pharma­

cueists must have much carefulness. To you alone of my acquain­tance would I entrust a powder like that. But for you I shall make   
it, and you shall see how it makes Rosy to think of you.'

Ikey went behind the prescription desk. There he crushed to a   
powder two soluble tablets, each containing a quarter of a grain of   
morphia. To them he added a little sugar of milk to increase the   
bulk, and folded the mixture neatly in a white paper. Taken by an   
adult this powder would ensure several hours of heavy slumber   
without danger to the sleeper. This he handed to Chunk

**46**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
McGowan, telling him to administer it in a liquid, if possible, and   
received the hearty thanks of the backyard Lochinvar.

The subtlety of Ikey's action becomes apparent upon recital of   
his subsequent move. He sent a messenger for Mr. Riddle and dis­  
 closed the plans of McGowan for eloping with Rosy. Mr. Riddle   
was a stout man, brick-dusty of complexion and sudden in action.

'Much obliged,' he said briefly to Ikey. 'The lazy Irish loafer!   
My own room's just above Rosy's, I'll just go up there myself after   
supper and load the shot-gun and wait. If he comes in my back­  
 yard he'll go away in an ambulance instead of a bridal chaise.'

With Rosy held in the clutches of Morpheus for a many-  
 hours' deep slumber, and the bloodthirsty parent waiting, armed   
and forewarned, Ikey felt that his rival was close, indeed, upon   
discomfiture.

All night in the Blue Light Store he waited at his duties for   
chance news of the tragedy, but none came.

At eight o'clock in the morning the day clerk arrived and Ikey   
started hurriedly for Mrs. Riddle's to learn the outcome. And, lo!   
as he stepped out of the store who but Chunk McGowan sprang   
from a passing street-car and grasped his hand - Chunk McGowan   
with a victor's smile and flushed with joy.

'Pulled it off,' said Chunk with Elysium in his grin. 'Rosy hit the   
fire-escape on time to a second and we were under the wire at the   
Reverends at 9. 3 0 1/4. She's up at the flat - she cooked eggs this   
morning' in a blue kimono - Lord! how lucky I am! You must pace   
up some day, Ikey, and feed with us. I've got a job down near the   
bridge, and that's where I'm heading for now.'

'The - the powder?' stammered Ikey.   
'Oh, that stuff you gave me!' said Chunk broadening his grin;

'Well, it was this way. I sat down at the supper table last night at   
Riddle's, and I looked at Rosy, and I say to myself, "Chunk, if you   
get the girl get her on the square - don't try any hocus-pocus with   
a thoroughbred like her." And I keep the paper you give me in   
my pocket. And then my lamps fall on another party present,   
who, I say to myself, is fail in' in a proper affection toward his   
Comin' son-in-law, so I watch my chance and dumps that   
powder in old man Riddle's coffee - see?'

**47**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

moment immovable. For this Oduor belonged to Miss Leslie; it   
was her own, and hers only.

The Oduor brought her vividly, almost tangibly before him. The   
world of finance dwindled suddenly to a speck. And she was in the   
next room - twenty steps away.

'By George, I'll do it now,' said Maxwell, half aloud. 'I'll ask her   
now. I wonder I didn't do it long ago.'

He dashed into the inner office with the haste of a short trying   
to cover. He charged upon the desk of the stenographer.

She looked up at him with a smile. A soft pink crept over her   
cheek, and her eyes were kind and frank. Maxwell leaned one   
elbow on her desk. He still clutched fluttering papers with both   
hands and the pen were above his ear.

'Miss Leslie,' he began hurriedly, 'I have but a moment to spare.   
I want to say something in that moment. Will you be my wife? I   
haven't had time to make love to you in the ordinary way, but I   
really do love you. Talk quick, please - those fellows are clubbing   
the stuffing out of Union Pacific'

'Oh, what are you talking about?' exclaimed the young lady. She   
rose to her feet and gazed upon him, round-eyed.

'Don't you understand?' said Maxwell restively. 'I want you to   
marry me. I love you, Miss Leslie. I wanted to tell you, and I   
snatched a minute when things had slackened up a bit. They're   
calling me for the 'phone now. Tell 'me to wait a minute, Pitcher.   
Won't you, Miss Leslie?'

The stenographer acted very queerly. At first, she seemed over­  
 come with amazement; then tears flowed from her wondering   
eyes; and then she smiled sunnily through them, and one of her   
arms slid tenderly about the broker's neck.

'I know now,' she said softly. 'It's this old business that has   
driven everything else out of your head for the time. I was fright­ened at first. Don't you remember, Harvey? We were married   
last evening at eight o'clock in the Little Church Around the   
Corner.'

**XVI**

***The Furnished Room***

RESTLESS, SHIFTING, FUGACIOUS as time itself, is a certain vast bulk   
of the population of the redbrick district of the lower West Side.

**48**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
Homeless, they have a hundred homes. They flit from furnished   
room to furnished room, transients for ever - transients in abode,   
transients in heart and mind. They sing 'Home Sweet Home' in   
ragtime; they carry their *Lares et penates* in a bandbox; their vine is   
entwined about a picture hat; a rubber plant is their fig tree.

Hence the houses of this district, having had a thousand   
dwellers, should have a thousand tales to tell, mostly dull ones, no   
doubt; but it would be strange if there could not be found a ghost   
or two in the wake of all these vagrant ghosts.

One evening after dark a young man prowled among these   
crumbling red mansions, ringing their bells. At the twelfth he   
rested his lean hand-baggage upon the step and wiped the dust   
from his hat-band and forehead. The bell sounded faint and far   
away in some remote, hollow depths.

To the door of this, the twelfth house whose bell he had rung,   
came a housekeeper who made him think of an unwholesome, sur­feited worm that had eaten its nut to a hollow shell and now   
sought to fill the vacancy with edible lodgers.

He asked if there was a room to let.   
'Come in,' said the housekeeper. Her voice came from her

throat; her throat seemed lined with fur. 'I have the third floor   
back, vacant since a week back. Should you wish to look at it?'

The young man followed her up the stairs. A faint light from no   
particular source mitigated the shadows of the halls. They trod   
noiselessly upon a stair carpet that its own loom would have for­  
 sworn. It seemed to have become vegetable; to have degenerated   
in that rank, sunless air to lush lichen or spreading moss that grew   
in patches to the staircase and was viscid under the foot like   
organic matter. At each turn of the stairs were vacant niches in the   
wall. Perhaps plants had once been set within them. If so, they had   
died in that foul and tainted air. It may be that statues of the saints   
had stood there, but it was not difficult to conceive those imps and   
devils had dragged them forth in the darkness and down to the   
unholy depths of some furnished pit below.

'This is the room,' said the housekeeper, from her furry throat.   
'It's a nice room. It isn't often vacant. I had some most elegant   
people in its last summer - no trouble at all, and paid in advance to   
the minute. The water's at the end of the hall. Sprowls and   
Mooney-kept it three months. They done a vaudeville sketch.   
Miss Bretta Sprowls - you may have heard of her - Oh, that was   
just the stage names - right there over the dresser is where the   
marriage certificate hung, framed. The gas is here, and you see

**49**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**   
there is plenty of closet room. It's a room everybody likes. It never   
stays idle long.'

'Do you have many theatrical people rooming here?' asked the   
young man.

'They come and goes. A good proportion of my lodgers is con­nected with the theatres. Yes, sir, this is the theatrical district.   
Actor people never stays long anywhere. I get my share. Yes, they   
comes and they go.'

He engaged the room, paying for a week in advance. He was   
tired, he said, and would take possession at once. He counted out   
the money. The room had been made ready, she said, even to   
towels and water. As the housekeeper moved away, he put, for the   
thousandth time, the question that he carried at the end of his   
tongue.

'A young girl - Miss Vashner - Miss Eloise Vashner - do you   
remember such a one among your lodgers? She would be singing   
on the stage, most likely. A fair girl, of medium height and slender,   
with reddish gold hair and a dark mole near her left eyebrow.'

'No, I don't remember the name. The stage people have names   
they change as often as their rooms. They come and they go.   
No, I don't call that one to mind.'

No. Always no. Five months of ceaseless interrogation and the   
inevitable negative. So much time spent by day in questioning   
managers, agents, schools and choruses; by night among the audi­ences of theatres from all-star casts down to music-halls so low   
that he dreaded to find what he most hoped for. He who had loved   
her best had tried to find her. He was sure that since her disap­pearance from home this great water-girt city held her some­  
 where, but it was like a monstrous quicksand, shifting its particles   
constantly, with no foundation, its upper granules of to-day buried   
to-morrow in ooze and slime.

The furnished room received its latest guest with a first glow of   
pseudo-hospitality, a hectic, haggard, perfunctory welcome like   
the specious smile of a demirep. The sophistical comfort came in   
reflected gleams from the decayed furniture, the ragged brocade   
upholstery of a couch and two chairs, a foot wide cheap pier glass   
between the two windows, from one or two gilt picture frames and   
a brass bedstead in a corner.

The guest reclined, inert, upon a chair, while the room, con­  
 fused in speech as though it were an apartment in Babel, tried to   
discourse to him of its divers tenantry.

A polychromatic rug like some brilliant-flowered, rectangular,

**50**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
tropical islet lay surrounded by a billowy sea of soiled matting.   
Upon the gay-papered wall were those pictures that pursue the   
homeless one from house to house - The Huguenot Lovers, The   
First Quarrel, The Wedding Breakfast, Psyche at the Fountain.   
The mantel's chastely severe outline was ingloriously veiled behind   
some pert drapery drawn rakishly askew like the sashes of the Ama­zonian ballet. Upon it was some desolate flotsam cast aside by the   
room's marooned when a lucky sail had borne them to a fresh port   
- a trifling vase or two, pictures of actresses, a medicine bottle,   
some stray cards out of a deck.

One by one, as the characters of a cryptograph become explicit,   
the little signs left by the furnished room's procession of guests   
developed a significance. The threadbare space in the rug in front   
of the dresser told that lovely woman had marched in the throng.   
Tiny finger-prints on the wall spoke of little prisoners trying to   
feel their way to sun and air. A splattered stain, raying like the   
shadow of a bursting bomb, witnessed where a hurled glass or   
bottle had splintered with its contents against the wall. Across the   
pier glass had been scrawled with a diamond in staggering letters   
the name 'Marie.' It seemed that the succession of dwellers in the   
furnished room had turned in fury - perhaps tempted beyond for­  
 bear Ance by its garish coldness - and wreaked upon it their pas­sions. The furniture was chipped and bruised; the couch, distorted   
by bursting springs, seemed a horrible monster that had been slain   
during the stress of some grotesque convulsion. Some more   
potent upheaval had cloven a great slice from the marble mantel.   
Each plank in the floor owned its particular cant and shriek as   
from a separate and individual agony. It seemed incredible that all   
this malice and injury had been wrought upon the room by those   
who had called it for a time their home; and yet it may have been   
the cheated home instinct surviving blindly, the resentful rage at   
false household gods that had kindled their wrath. A hut that is   
our own we can sweep and adorn and cherish.

The young tenant in the chair allowed these thoughts to file,   
soft-shod, through his mind, while there drifted into the room   
furnished sounds and furnished scents. He heard in one room a   
tittering and incontinent, slack laughter; in others the monologue   
of a scold, the rattling of dice, a lullaby, and one crying dully;   
above him a banjo tinkled with spirit. Doors banged somewhere;   
the elevated trains roared intermittently; a cat yowled miserably   
upon a back fence. And he breathed the breath of the house - a   
dank savor rather than a smell - a cold, musty effluvium as from

**51**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

underground vaults mingled with the reeking exhalations of   
linoleum and mildewed and rotten woodwork.

Then, suddenly, as he rested there, the room was filled with the   
strong, sweet Oduor of mignonette. It came as upon a single buffet   
of wind with such sureness and fragrance and emphasis that it   
almost seemed a living visitant. And the man cried aloud, 'What,   
dear?' as if he had been called, and sprang up and faced about. The   
rich Oduor clung to him and wrapped him about. He reached out   
his arms for it, all his senses for the time confused and commin­gled. How could one be peremptorily called by an Oduor? Surely it   
must have been a sound. But, was it not the sound that had   
touched, that had caressed him?

'She has been in this room,' he cried, and he sprang to wrest   
from it a token, for he knew he would recognize the smallest thing   
that had belonged to her or that she had touched. This enveloping   
scent of mignonette, the Oduor that she had loved and made her   
own - whence came it?

The room had been but carelessly set in order. Scattered upon   
the flimsy dresser scarf were half a dozen hairpins - those discreet,   
indistinguishable friends of womankind, feminine of gender, infi­nite of mood and uncommunicative of tense. These he ignored,   
conscious of their triumphant lack of identity. Ransacking the   
drawers of the dresser he came upon a discarded, tiny, ragged   
handkerchief. He pressed it to his face. It was racy and insolent   
with heliotrope; he hurled it to the floor. In another drawer he   
found odd buttons, a theatre program me, a pawnbroker's card,   
two lost marshmallows, a book on the divination of dreams. In the   
last was a woman's black satin hair-bow, which halted him, poised   
between ice and fire. But the black satin hair-bow also is feminin­ity's demure, impersonal, common ornament, and tells no tales.

And then he traversed the room like a hound on the scent,   
skimming the walls, considering the corners of the bulging mat­  
 ting on his hands and knees, rummaging mantel and tables, the   
curtains and hangings, the drunken cabinet in the corner, for a vis­ible sign unable to perceive that she was there besides, around,   
against, within, above him, clinging to him, wooing him, calling   
him so poignantly through the finer senses that even his grosser   
ones became cognizant of the call. Once again, he answered loudly,   
'Yes, dear!' and turned, wild-eyed, to gaze on vacancy, for he   
could not yet discern form and color and love and outstretched   
arms in the Oduor of mignonette. Oh, God! whence that Oduor,   
and since when have Oduors had a voice to call? Thus, he groped.

**52**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
He burrowed in crevices and corners, and found corks and ciga­rettes. These he passed in passive contempt. But once he found in   
a fold of the matting a half-smoked cigar, and this he ground   
beneath his heel with a green and trenchant oath. He sifted the   
room from end to end. He found dreary and ignoble small records   
of many a peripatetic tenant; but of her whom he sought, and who   
may have lodged there, and whose spirit seemed to hover there, he   
found no trace.

And then he thought of the housekeeper.   
He ran from the haunted room downstairs and to a door that

showed a crack of light. She came out to his knock. He smothered   
his excitement as best he could.

'Will you tell me, madam,' he besought her, 'who occupied the   
room I have before I came?'

'Yes, sir. I can tell you again. Twas Sprowls and Mooney, as I   
spoke. Miss Bretta Sprowls it was in the theatres, but Missis   
Mooney she was. My house is well known for respectability. The   
marriage certificate hung, framed, on a nail over - '

'What kind of a lady was Miss Sprowls - in looks, I mean?'   
'Why, black-haired, sir, short and stout, with a comical face.

They left a week ago Tuesday.'   
'And before they occupied it?'   
'Why, there was a single gentleman connected with the draying

business. He left owing me a week. Before him was Missis Crowder   
and her two children, that stayed four months; and back of them   
was old Mr. Doyle, whose sons paid for him. He kept the room six   
months. That goes back a year, sir, and further I do not remember.'

He thanked her and crept back to his room. The room was   
dead. The essence that had vivified it was gone. The perfume of   
mignonette had departed. In its place was the old, stale Oduor of   
moldy house furniture, of atmosphere in storage.

The ebbing of his hope drained his faith. He sat staring at the   
yellow, singing gaslight. Soon he walked to the bed and began to   
tear the sheets into strips. With the blade of his knife, he drove   
them tightly into every crevice around windows and door. When   
all was snug and taut he turned out the light, turned the gas full on   
again, and laid himself gratefully upon the bed.

• • • • •

It was Mrs. McCool's night to go with the can for beer. So, she   
fetched it and sat with Mrs. Purdy in one of those subterranean

**53**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

retreats where housekeepers foregather and the worm diet   
seldom.

'I rented out my third floor back, this evening,' said Mrs. Purdy,   
across a fine circle of foam. 'A young man took it. He went up to   
bed two hours ago.

'Now, did ye, Mrs. Purdy, ma'am?' said Mrs. McCool, with   
intense admiration. 'You do be a wonder for renting' rooms of that   
kind. And did ye tell him, then?' she concluded in a husky whisper,   
laden with mystery.

'Rooms,' said Mrs. Purdy, in her furriest tones, 'are furnished   
for to rent. I did not tell him, Mrs. McCool.'

' 'Tis right ye are, ma'am; 'tis by renting rooms we kale alive.   
Ye have the rale sense for business, ma'am. There be many people   
will reject the renting' of a room if they be told a suicide has been   
after dying' in the bed of it.'

'As you say, we have our living to be making,' remarked Mrs.,   
Purdy.

'Yes, ma'am; 'tis true. 'Tis just one wake ago this day I helped ye   
lay out the third floor back. A pretty slip of a colleen she was to be   
killing' herself wide the gas a swathe little face she had, Mrs. Purdy,   
ma'am.'

'She'd a-been called handsome, as you say,' said Mrs. Purdy,   
assenting but critical, 'but for that mole she had a-growing' by her   
left eyebrow. Do fill up your glass again, Mrs. McCool.'

**XVII**

***The Brief Debut of Tildy***

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW Bogle's Chop House and Family Restau­rant it is your loss. For if you are one of the fortunate ones who   
dine expensively you should be interested to know how the other   
half consumes provisions. And if you belong to the half to whom   
waiters' checks are things of moment, you should know Bogle's,   
for there you get your money's worth - in quantity, at least.

Bogle's is situated in that highway of *bourgeoisie,* that boulevard   
of Brown-Jones-and-Robinson, Eighth Avenue. There are two   
rows of tables in the room, six in each row. On each table is a   
castor-stand, containing cruets of condiments and seasons. From   
the pepper cruet you may shake a cloud of something tasteless   
and melancholy, like volcanic dust. From the salt cruet you may

**54**

**O HENRY - 1 0 0 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

'A very sad one,' says he, laying the points of his manicured fin­gers together. 'An utterly incorrigible girl. I am Special Terrestrial   
Officer the Reverend Jones. The case was assigned to me. The girl   
murdered her fiancé and committed suicide. She had no defense.   
My report to the court relates the facts in detail, all of which are   
substantiated by reliable witnesses. The wages of sin are death.   
Praise the Lord.'

The court officer opened the door and stepped out.   
'Poor girl,' said Special Terrestrial Officer the Reverend Jones,

with a tear in his eye. 'It was one of the saddest cases that I ever   
met with. Of course, she was - '

'Discharged,' said the court officer. 'Come here, Jonesy. First   
thing you know you'll be switched to the pot-pie squad. How   
would you like to be on the missionary force in the South Sea   
Islands - hey? Now, you quit making these false arrests, or you'll   
be transferred - see? The guilty party you've got to look for in this   
case is a red-haired, unshaven, untidy man, sitting by the window   
reading, in his stocking feet, while his children play in the streets.   
Get a move on you.'

Now, wasn't that a silly dream?

**XXXIII**

***The Last Leaf***

IN A LITTLE DISTRICT west of Washington Square the streets have   
run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called 'places.'   
These 'places' make strange angles and curves. One street cross   
itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility   
in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and   
canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself   
coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came   
prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century   
gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some   
pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and   
became a 'colony.'

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had   
their studio. 'Johnsy' was familiar for Joanna. One was from   
Maine, the other from California. They had met at the table   
d'hôte of an Eighth Street 'Delmonico's,' and found their tastes in

**55**

**O HENRY - 1 0 0 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint   
studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom   
the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching   
one here and there with his icy finger. Over on the East Side this   
ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet   
trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown   
'Places.'

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gen­tleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by Californ­ian zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed   
old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on   
her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch   
window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with   
a shaggy, grey eyebrow.

'She has one chance in - let us say, ten,' he said, as he shook   
down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. 'And that chance is   
for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-up on the   
side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopeia look silly.   
Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get   
well. Has she anything on her mind?'

'She - she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples someday,' said   
Sue.

'Paint? - bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking   
about twice - a man, for instance?'

'A man?' said Sue, with a Jews'-harp twang in her voice. 'Is a   
man worth - but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind.'

'Well, it is the weakness, then,' said the doctor. 'I will do all that   
science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish.   
But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her   
funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power   
of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new   
winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five   
chance for her, instead of one in ten.'

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom and   
cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into   
Johnsy's room with her drawing-board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with   
her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she   
was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to

**56**

**O HENRY - 1 0 0 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must have their way to   
Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors   
write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers   
and a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she   
heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the   
bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window   
and counting - counting backward.

'Twelve,' she said, and a little later, 'eleven'; and then 'ten,' and   
'nine'; and then 'eight' and 'seven,' almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to   
count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the   
blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy   
vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half-way up the   
brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from   
the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the   
crumbling bricks.

'What is it, dear?' asked Sue.   
'Six,' said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. 'They're falling faster

now. Three days ago, there were almost a hundred. It made me   
head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another   
one. There are only five left now.'

'Five what, dear? Tell your Suddie.'   
'Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls, I must go too.

I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?'   
'Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,' complained Sue, with

magnificent scorn. 'What have old ivy leaves to do with your get­  
 ting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl.   
Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that   
your chances for getting well real soon were - let's see exactly   
what he said - he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's   
almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on   
the street-cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth   
now, and let Suddie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the   
editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork-  
 chops for her greedy self.'

'You needn't get any more wine,' said Johnsy, keeping her eyes   
fixed out the window.

'There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. Those leaves   
just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then   
I'll go too.'

**57**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**   
'Johnsy, dear,' said Sue, bending over her, 'will you promise me

to keep your eyes closed, and not look out of the window until I   
am done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow. I   
need the light or I would draw the shade down.'

'Couldn't you draw in the other room?' asked Johnsy coldly.   
'I'd rather be here by you,' said Sue. 'Besides, I don't want you

to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves.'   
'Tell me as soon as you have finished,' said Johnsy, closing her

eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, 'because I want to   
see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I   
want to turn lose my hold on everything, and go sailing down,   
down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves.'

'Try to sleep,' said Sue. 'I must call Behrman up to be my model   
for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to   
move till I come back.'

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor   
beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses   
beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an   
imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the   
brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mis­  
 tress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but   
had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing   
except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising.   
He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in   
the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank   
gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the   
rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in   
anyone, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to   
protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his   
dimly-lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an   
easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive   
the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and   
how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself,   
float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his   
contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

'Vass!' he cried. 'Are deer people in de world met der foolishness   
to die because leaf's day drop off from a confounded vine? I have not   
heard of such a thing. No, I Vill not Bose as a model for your fool   
hermit-dunderhead. Vy, do you allow dot silly pushiness to come in   
der Prain of her? Ach, dot poor little Miss Johnsy.'

**58**

**O HENRY - 1 0 0 S E L E C T E D STORIES**

'She is very ill arid weak,' said Sue, 'and the fever has left her   
mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman,   
if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are   
a horrid old - old filbert-gibbet.'

'You are just like a woman!' yelled Behrman. ' who said I Vill   
not Bose? Go on. I come met you. For half an hour I have peen   
trying to say dot I am ready to Bose. Gott! dis is not any Blace in   
which one so got as Miss Johnsy shall lie sick. Someday I Vill Banit a masterpiece, and Ve shall all go away. Gott! yes.'

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the   
shade down to the window-sill and motioned Behrman into the   
other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the   
ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without   
speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow.   
Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner   
on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning, she   
found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green   
shade.

'Pull it up! I want to see,' she ordered, in a whisper.   
Wearily Sue obeyed.   
But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had

endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against   
the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark   
green near its stem, but with its serrated edges tinted with the   
yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch   
some twenty feet above the ground.

'It is the last one,' said Johnsy. 'I thought it would surely fall   
during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall   
die at the same time.'

'Dear, dear!' said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow;   
'Think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?'

But Johnsy did not answer. The Lonesomes thing in all the   
world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious,   
far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as   
one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were   
loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could   
see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then,   
with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed,   
while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down   
from the low Dutch eaves.

**59**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**   
When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded

that the shade be raised.   
The ivy leaf was still there.   
Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to

Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.   
'I've been a bad girl, Suddie,' said Johnsy. 'Something has made

that last leaf stays there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to   
want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk   
with a little port in it, and - no; bring me a hand-mirror first; and   
then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you   
cook.'

An hour later she said -  
 'Suddie, someday I hope to paint the Bay of Naples.'   
The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go

into the hallway as he left.   
'Even chances,' said the doctor, talking Sue's thin, shaking hand

in his. 'With good nursing you'll win. And now I must see another   
case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is -- some kind of an   
artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the   
attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital   
to-day to be made more comfortable.'

The next day the doctor said to Sue: 'She's out of danger.   
You've won. Nutrition and care now - that's all.'

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, con­tentedly knitting a very blue and very useless Woollen shoulder   
scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

'I have something to tell you, white mouse,' she said. 'Mr.   
Behrman died of pneumonia today in hospital. He was ill only two   
days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his   
room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were   
wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had   
been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still   
lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some   
scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colors   
mixed on it, and - look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on   
the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when   
the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece - he painted   
it there the night that the last leaf fell.'

**60**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

Presently Thomas moved tentatively in his seat, and thoughtfully   
felt an abrasion or two on his knees and elbows.

'Say, Annie,' said he confidentially, 'maybe it's one of the last   
dreams of the booze, but I've a kind of a recollection of riding in an   
automobile with a swell guy that took me to a house full of eagles   
and arc lights. He fed me on biscuits and hot air, and then kicked   
me down the front steps. If it was the *d t's,* why am I so sore?'

'Shut up, you fool,' said Annie.   
'If I could find that funny guy's house,' said Thomas, in conclusion,

'I'd go up there some day and punch his nose for him.'

**XLVII**

***The Poet and the Peasant***

THE OTHER DAY a poet friend of mine, who has lived in close   
communication with nature all his life, wrote a poem and took it   
to an editor.

It was a living pastoral, full of the genuine breath of the fields,   
the song of birds, and the pleasant chatter of trickling streams.

When the poet called again to see about it, with hopes of a   
beefsteak dinner in his heart, it was handed back to him with the   
comment:

'Too artificial.'   
Several of us met over spaghetti and Dutchess County chianti,

and swallowed indignation with the slippery forkfuls.   
And there we dug a pit for the editor. With us was Conant, a

well-arrived writer of fiction - a man who had trod on asphalt all   
his life, and who had never looked upon bucolic scenes except with   
sensations of disgust from the windows of express trains.

Conant wrote a poem and called it 'The Doe and the Brook.' It   
was a fine specimen of the kind of work you would expect from a   
poet who had strayed with Amaryllis only as far as the florist's   
windows, and whose sole ornithological discussion had been car­ried on with a waiter. Conant signed this poem, and we sent it to   
the same editor.

But this has very little to do with the story.   
Just as the editor was reading the first line of the poem, on the

next morning, a being stumbled off the West Shore ferryboat, and   
loped slowly up Forty-second Street.

The invader was a young man with light blue eyes, a hanging

**61**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**    
lip, and hair the exact color of the little orphan's (afterward dis­  
 covered to be the earl's daughter) in one of Mr. Blaney's plays. His   
trousers were corduroy, his coat short-sleeved, with buttons in the   
middle of his back. One bootleg was outside the corduroys. You   
looked expectantly, though in vain, at his straw hat for ear-holes,   
its shape inaugurating the suspicion that it had been ravaged from   
a former equine possessor. In his hand was a valise - description of   
it is an impossible task; a Boston man would not have carried his   
lunch and law books to his office in it. And above one ear, in his   
hair, was a wisp of hay - the rustic's letter of credit, his badge of   
innocence, the last clinging touch of the Garden of Eden lingering   
to shame the goldbrick men.

Knowingly, smilingly, the city crowds passed him by. They saw   
the raw stranger stand in the gutter and stretch his neck at the tall   
buildings. At this they ceased to smile, and even to look at him. It   
had been done so often. A few glanced at the antique valise to see   
what Coney 'attraction' or brand of chewing-gum he might be thus dinning into his memory. But for the most part he was   
ignored. Even the newsboys looked bored when he scampered like   
a circus clown out of the way of cabs and street-cars.

At Eighth Avenue stood 'Bunco Harry,' with his dyed mous­tache and shiny, good-natured eyes. Harry was too good an artist   
not to be pained at the sight of an actor overdoing his part. He   
edged up to the countryman, who had stopped to open his mouth   
at a jewelry store window, and shook his head.

'Too thick, pal,' he said critically - 'too thick by a couple of   
inches. I don't know what your lay is; but you've got the properties   
on too thick. That hay, now - why, they don't even allow that on   
Proctor's circuit anymore.'

'I don't understand you, mister,' said the green one. 'I'm not   
looking' for any circus. I've just run down from Ulster County to   
look at the town, being' that the Hayan's over with. Gosh! but it's a   
whopper. I thought Poughkeepsie was some punkies; but this here   
town is five times as big.'

'Oh, well,' said 'Bunco Harry,' raising his eyebrows, 'I didn't   
mean to butt in. You don't have to tell. I thought you ought to   
tone down a little, so I tried to put you wise. Wish you success at   
your graft, whatever it is. Come and have a drink, anyhow.'

'I wouldn't mind having a glass of lager beer,' acknowledged the   
other.

They went to a café frequented by men with smooth faces and   
shifty eyes, and sat at their drinks.

**62**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
'I'm glad I come across you, mister,' said Haylock's. 'How'd you

like to play a game or two of seven-up? I've got the kerns.'   
He fished them out of Noah's valise - a rare, inimitable deck,

greasy with bacon suppers and grimy with the soil of cornfields.   
'Bunco Harry' laughed loud and briefly.   
'Not for me, sport,' he said firmly. 'I don't go against that

make-up of yours for a cent. But I still say you've overdone it. The   
Rebus haven't dressed like that since '79. I doubt if you could   
work Brooklyn for a key-winding watch with that lay-out.'

'Oh, you needn't think I isn't got the money,' boasted Hay-  
 locks. He drew forth a tightly rolled mass or bills as large as a   
teacup, and laid it on the table.

'Got that for my share of grandmother's farm,' he announced.   
'There's $950 in that roll. Thought I'd come into the city and   
look around for a likely business to go into.'

'Bunco Harry' took up the roll of money and looked at it with   
almost respect in his smiling eyes.

'I've seen worse,' he said critically. 'But you'll never do it in   
the clothes. You want to get light tan shoes and a black suit and   
a straw hat with a colored band, and talk a good deal about Pitts­  
 burg and freight differentials, and drink sherry for breakfast in   
order to work off phony stuff like that.'

'What's his line?' asked two or three shifty-eyed men of 'Bunco   
Harry' after Haylock's had gathered up his impugned money and   
departed.

'The queer, I guess,' said Harry. 'Or else he's one of Jerome's   
men. Or some guy with a new graft. He's too much hayseed. Maybe   
that his - I wonder now - oh no, it couldn't have been real money.'

Haylock's wandered on. Thirst probably assailed him again, for   
he dived into a dark groggery on a side-street and bought beer.   
Several sinister fellows hung upon one end of the bar. At first sight   
of him their eyes brightened; but when his insistent and exagger­ated rusticity became apparent their expressions changed to wary   
suspicion.

Haylock's swung his valise across the bar.   
'Keep that awhile for me, mister,' he said, chewing at the end of

a virulent clay bank cigar. 'I'll be back after I knock around a spell.   
And keep your eye on it, for there's $950 inside of it, though   
maybe you wouldn't think so to look at me.'

Somewhere outside a phonograph struck up a band piece, and   
Haylock's was off for it, his coat-tail buttons flopping in the middle   
of his back.

**63**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**  
'Divvy? Mike,' said the men hanging upon the bar, winking

openly at one another.   
'Honest, now,' said the bartender, kicking the valise to one side.

'You don't think I'd fall to that, do you? Anybody can see he isn't   
no jay. One of McAdoo's come-on squads, I guess. He's a shine if   
he made himself up. There aren't no parts of the country now   
where they dress like that since they run rural free delivery to   
Providence, Rhode Island. If he's got nine-fifty in that valise it's a   
ninety-eight-cent Waterbury that's stopped at ten minutes to ten.'

When Haylock's had exhausted the resources of Mr. Edison to   
amuse he returned for his valise. And then down Broadway he gallivanted, culling the sights with his eager blue eyes. But still and   
evermore Broadway rejected him with curt glances and sardonic   
smiles. He was the oldest of the 'gags' that the city must endure.   
He was so flagrantly impossible, so ultra-rustic, so exaggerated   
beyond the most freakish products of the barnyard, the hayfield   
and the vaudeville stage, that he excited only weariness and suspicion. And the wisp of hay in his hair was so genuine, so fresh and   
redolent of the meadows, so clamorously rural, that even a shell-  
 game man would have put up his peas and folded his table at the   
sight of it.

Haylock's seated himself upon a flight of stone steps and once   
more exhumed his roll of yellow-backs from the valise. The outer   
one, a twenty, he shucked off and beckoned to a newsboy.

'Son,' said he, 'run somewhere and get this changed for me. I'm   
mighty nigh out of chicken feed; I guess you'll get a nickel if you'll   
hurry up.'

A hurt look appeared through the dirt on the news's face.   
'Aw, watchers'! Gwan and get her funny bill changed yourself.

Dey isn't no farm clothes her got on. Gwan wit her stage money.'   
On a corner lounged a keen-eyed steerer for a gambling-

house. He saw Haylock's, and his expression suddenly grew cold   
and virtuous.

'Mister,' said the rural one. 'I've heard of places in this here   
town where a fellow could have a good game of old sledge or peg a   
card at keno. I got $950 in this valise, and I come down from old   
Ulster to see the sights. Know where a fellow could get action on   
about $9 or $10? I'm going' to have some sport, and then maybe I'll   
buy out a business of some kind.'

The steerer looked pained, and investigated a white speck on his   
left forefinger nail.

'Cheese it, old man,' he murmured reproachfully. 'The Central

**64**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
Office must be bughouse to send you out looking like such a Gillie.   
You couldn't get within two blocks of a sidewalk crap game in   
them Tony Pastor props. The recent Mr. Scotty from Death   
Valley has got you beat a crosstown block in the way of Eliza­  
 Bethan scenery and mechanical accessories. Let it he skiddoos for   
yours. Nay, I know of no gilded halls where one may bet a patrol   
wagon on the ace.'

Rebuffed again by the great city that is so swift to detect artifi­cialities, Haylock's sat upon the Kreb and presented his thoughts to   
hold a conference.

'It's my clothes,' said he; 'durned if it isn't. They think I'm a   
hayseed and won't have nothing' to do with me. Nobody never   
made fun of this hat in Ulster County. I guess if you want folks to   
notice you in New York you must dress up like they do.'

So, Haylock's went shopping in the bazaars where men Spake   
through their noses and rubbed their hands and ran the tape line   
ecstatically over the bulge in his inside pocket where reposed a red   
nubbin of corn with an even number of rows. And messengers   
bearing parcels and boxes streamed to his hotel on Broadway   
within the lights of Long Acre.

At nine o'clock in the evening one descended to the sidewalk   
whom Ulster County would have forsworn. Bright tan was his   
shoes; his hat the latest block. His light grey trousers were deeply   
creased; a gay blue silk handkerchief flapped from the breast   
pocket of his elegant English walking-coat. His collar might have   
graced a laundry window; his blond hair was trimmed close; the   
wisp of hay was gone.

For an instant he stood, resplendent, with the leisurely air of a   
boulevardier concocting in his mind the route for his evening   
pleasures. And then he turned down the gay, bright street with the   
easy and graceful tread of a millionaire.

But in the instant that he had paused the wisest and keenest eyes   
in the city had enveloped him in their field of vision. A stout man   
with grey eyes picked two of his friends with a lift of his eyebrows   
from the row of loungers in front of the hotel.

'The juiciest jay I've seen in six months,' said the man with grey   
eyes. 'Come along.'

It was half-past eleven when a man galloped into the West   
Forty-seventh Street police-station with the story of his wrongs.

'Nine hundred and fifty dollars,' he gasped, 'all my share of   
grandmother's farm.'

The desk sergeant wrung from him the name Jabez Bull tongue,

**65**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
of Locust Valley Farm, Ulster County, and then began to take   
descriptions of the strong-arm gentlemen.

When Conant went to see the editor about the fate of his poem,   
he was received over the head of the office boy into the inner   
office that is decorated with the statuettes by Rodin and J. G.   
Brown.

'When I read the first line of "The Doe and the Brook," ' said   
the editor, 'I knew it to be the work of one whose life has been   
heart to heart with nature. The finished art of the line did not   
blind me to that fact. To use a somewhat homely comparison, it   
was as if a wild, free child of the woods and fields were to don the   
garb of fashion and walk down Broadway. Beneath the apparel the   
man would show.'

'Thanks,' said Conant. 'I suppose the cheque will be round on   
Thursday, as usual.'

The morals of this story have somehow gotten mixed. You can   
take your choice of 'Stay on the Farm' or 'Don't write Poetry.'

**XLVIII**   
**The Thing's the Play**

BEING ACQUAINTED WITH a newspaper reporter who had a couple   
of free passes, I got to see the performance a few nights ago at one   
of the popular vaudeville houses.

One of the numbers was a violin solo by a striking-looking man   
not much past forty, but with very grey, thick hair. Not being   
afflicted with a taste for music, I let the system of noises drift past   
my ears while I regarded the man.

'There was a story about that chap a month or two ago,' said the   
reporter. 'They gave me the assignment. It was to run a column   
and was to be on the extremely light and joking order. The old   
man seems to like the funny touch I give to local happenings. Oh   
yes, I'm working on a farce comedy now. Well, I went down to the   
house and got all the details; but I certainly fell down on that job. I   
went back and turned in a comic write-up of an east side funeral   
instead. Why? Oh, I couldn't seem to get hold of it with my funny   
hooks, somehow. Maybe you could make a one-act tragedy out of   
it for a curtain-raiser. I'll give you the details.'

After the performance my friend, the reporter, recited to me the   
facts over the Würzburger.

**66**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

racking, petitionary music of a violin. The hag, music, bewitches   
some of the noblest. The Daws may peck upon one's sleeve with­  
 out in injury, but whoever wears his heart upon his tympanum   
gets it not far from the neck.

This music and the musician called her, and at her side honor   
and the old love held her back.

'Forgive me,' he pleaded.   
'Twenty years is a long time to remain away from the one you

say you love,' she declared, with a purgatorial touch.   
'How could I tell?' he begged. 'I will conceal nothing from you.

That night when he left, I followed him. I was mad with jealousy.   
On a dark street I struck him down. He did not rise. I examined   
him. His head had struck a stone. I did not intend to kill him. I   
was mad with love and jealousy. I hid nearby and saw an ambu­lance take him away. Although you married him, Helen - '

*'Who are you?'* cried the woman, with wide-open eyes, snatching   
her hand away.

'Don't you remember me, Helen - the one who has always   
loved you the best? I am John Delaney. If you can forgive - '

But she was gone, leaping, stumbling, hurrying, flying up the   
stairs toward the music and him who had forgotten, but who had   
known her for his in each of his two existences, and as she climbed   
up she sobbed, cried and sang: 'Frank! Frank! Frank!'

Three mortals thus juggling with years as though they were bil­liard balls, and my friend, the reporter, couldn't see anything   
funny in it!

**XL1X**

***A Ramble in Aphasia***

M Y WIFE AND I PARTED on that morning in precisely our usual   
manner. She left her second cup of tea to follow me to the front   
door. There she plucked from my lapel the invisible strand of lint   
(The universal act of woman to proclaim ownership) and bade me   
take care of my cold. I had no cold. Next came her kiss of parting   
- the level kiss of domesticity flavored with Young Hyson. There   
was no fear of the extemporaneous, of variety spicing her infinite   
custom. With the deft touch of long malpractice, she dabbed awry   
my well-set scarf-pin; and then, as I closed the door, I heard her   
morning slippers pattering back to her cooling tea.

**67**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
When I set out, I had no thought or premonition of what was to

occur. The attack came suddenly.   
For many weeks I had been toiling, almost night and day, at a

famous railroad law case that I won triumphantly but a few days   
previously. In fact, I had been digging away at the law almost   
without cessation for many years. Once or twice good Doctor   
Volney, my friend and physician, had warned me.

'If you don't slacken up, Belford,' he said, 'you'll go suddenly to   
pieces. Either your nerves or your brain will give way. Tell me,   
does a week pass in which you do not read in the papers of a case   
of aphasia - of some man lost, wandering nameless, with his past   
and his identity blotted out - and all from that little brain-clot   
made by overwork or worry?'

'I always thought,' said I, 'that the clot in those instances was   
really to be found on the brains of the newspaper reporters.'

Dr. Volney shook his head.   
'The disease exists,' he said. 'You need a change or a rest.

Court-room, office and home - there is the only route you travel.   
For recreation you - read law books. Better take warning in time.'

'On Thursday nights,' I said defensively, 'my wife and I play   
cribbage. On Sundays she reads to me the weekly letter from her   
mother. That law books are not a recreation remains yet to be   
established.'

That morning as I walked, I was thinking of Doctor Volney's   
words. I was feeling as well as I usually did - possibly in better   
spirits than usual.

I awoke with stiff and cramped muscles from having slept long   
on the incommodious seat of a day coach. I leaned my head   
against the seat and tried to think. After a long time, I said to   
myself: 'I must have a name of some sort.' I searched my pockets.   
Not a card; not a letter; not a paper or monogram could I find.   
But I found in my coat pocket nearly $3,000 in bills of large   
denomination. 'I must be someone, of course,' I repeated to   
myself, and began again to consider.

The car was well crowded with men, among whom I told myself,   
there must have been some common interest, for they intermingled   
freely, and seemed in the best good-humor and spirits. One of   
them - a stout, spectacled gentleman enveloped in a decided Oduor   
of cinnamon and aloes - took the vacant half of my seat with a   
friendly nod, and unfolded a newspaper. In the intervals between   
his periods of reading, we conversed, as travelers will, on current

**68**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
affairs. I found myself able to sustain the conversation on such sub­  
 jects with credit, at least to my memory. By and by my companion   
said:

'You are one of us, of course. Fine lot of men the West sends in   
this time. I'm glad they held the convention in New York; I've   
never been East before. My name's R. P. Bolder - Bolder & Son,   
of Hickory Grove, Missouri.'

Though unprepared, I rose to the emergency, as men will   
when put to it. Now must I hold a christening, and be at once   
babe, parson and parent. My senses came to the rescue of me   
slower brain. The insistent Oduor of drugs from my companion   
supplied one idea; a glance at his newspaper, where my eye met a   
conspicuous advertisement, assisted me further.

'My name,' said I glibly, 'is Edward Pink hammer. I am a drug­  
 gist, and my home is in Corno polis, Kansas.'

'I knew you were a druggist,' said my fellow-traveler affably. 'I   
saw the callous spot on your right forefinger where the handle of   
the pestle rubs. Of course, you are a delegate to our National   
Convention.'

'Are all these men druggists?' I asked wonderingly.   
'They are. This car came through from the West. And they're

your old-time druggists, too - none of your patent tablet-and-gran­  
 ule pharma shootists that use slot machines instead of a prescription   
desk. We percolate our own paregoric and roll our own pills, and   
we aren't above handling a few garden seeds in the spring, and carry­ing a sideline of confectionery and shoes. I tell you, Ham pinker, I've   
got an idea to spring on this convention - new ideas is what they   
want. Now, you know the shelf bottles of tartar emetic and Rochelle   
salt Ant. et Pot. Tart. and Sod. et Pot. Tart. - one's poison, you   
know, and the others harmless. It's easy to mistake one label for the   
other. Where do druggists mostly keep 'me? Why, as far apart as   
possible, on different shelves. That's wrong. I say keep 'me side by   
side so when you want one you can always compare it with the other   
and avoid mistakes. Do you catch the idea?'

'It seems to me a very good one,' I said.   
'All right! When I spring it on the convention you back it up.

We'll make some of these Eastern orange-phosphate-and-mas-  
 sage-cream professors that think they're the only lozenges in the   
market looks like hypodermic tablets.'

'If I can be of any aid,' I said, warming, 'the two bottles of - er - '   
'Tartrate of antimony and potash, and tartrate of soda and

potash.'

**69**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
'Shall henceforth sit side by side,' I concluded firmly.   
'Now, there's another thing,' said Mr. Bolder. 'For an excipient

in manipulating a pill mass which do you prefer - the magnesia   
carbonate or the pulverized glycyrrhiza radix?'

'The - er - magnesia,' I said. It was easier to say than the other   
word.

Mr. Bolder glanced at me distrustfully through his spectacles.   
'Give me the glycyrrhiza,' said he. 'Magnesia cakes.'   
'Here's another one of these fake aphasia cases,' he said,

presently, handing me his newspaper, and laying his finger upon   
an article. 'I don't believe in 'me. I put nine out of ten of 'me   
down as frauds. A man gets sick of his business and his folks and   
wants to have a good time. He skips out somewhere, and when   
they find him he pretends to have lost his memory - don't know   
his own name, and won't even recognize the strawberry mark on   
his wife's left shoulder. Aphasia! Tut! Why can't they stay at home   
and forget?'

I took the paper and read, after the pungent headlines, the fol­lowing:

'DENVER, June 12. - Elwyn C. Belford, a prominent lawyer, is mysteri­ously missing from his home for three days ago, and all efforts to locate him   
have been in vain. Mr. Belford is a well-known citizen of the highest stand­ing, and has enjoyed a large and lucrative law practice. He is married and   
owns a fine home and the most extensive private library in the State. On the   
day of his disappearance, he drew quite a large sum of money from his bank.   
No one can be found who saw him after he left the bank. Mr. Belford was a   
man of singularly quiet and domestic tastes, and seemed to find his happiness   
in his home and profession. If any clue at all exists to his strange disappear­ance, it may be found in the fact that for some months he had been deeply   
absorbed in an important law case in connection with the Q. Y. and Z. Rail­  
 road Company. It is feared that overwork may have affected his mind. Every   
effort is being made to discover the whereabouts of the missing man.'

'It seems to me you are not altogether uncynical Mr. Bolder,' I   
said, after I had read the dispatch. 'This has the sound, to me, of a   
genuine case. Why should this man, prosperous, happily married   
and respected, choose suddenly to abandon everything? I know that   
these lapses of memory do occur, and that men do find themselves   
adrift without a name, a history or a home.'

'Oh, gammon and jalap!' said Mr. Bolder. 'It's larks they're   
after. There's too much education nowadays. Men know about   
aphasia, and they use it for an excuse. The women are wise, too.

**70**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
When it's all over they look you in the eye, as scientific as you   
please, and say: "He hypnotized me." '

Thus Mr. Bolder diverted, but did not aid me with his com­ments and philosophy.

We arrived in New York about ten at night. I rode in a cab to   
a hotel, and I wrote my name 'Edward Pink hammer' in the regis­ter. As I did so I felt pervade me a splendid, wild, intoxicating   
buoyancy - a sense of unlimited freedom, of newly attained possi­bilities. I was just born into the world. The old fetters - whatever   
they had been - were stricken from my hands and feet. The future   
lay before me a clear road such as an infant enters, and I could set   
out upon it equipped with a man's learning and experience.

I thought the hotel clerk looked at me five seconds too long. I   
had no baggage.

'The Druggists' Convention,' I said. 'My trunk has somehow   
failed to arrive.' I drew out a roll of money.

'Ah!' said he, showing an auriferous tooth, 'we have quite a   
number of the Western delegates stopping here.' He struck a bell   
for the boy.

I endeavored to give color to my role.   
'There is an important movement on foot among us Western­ers,' I said, 'in regard to a recommendation to the convention that   
the bottles containing the tartrate of antimony and potash, and the   
tartrate of sodium and potash, be kept in a contiguous position on   
the shelf.'

'Gentleman to three-fourteen,' said the clerk hastily. I was   
whisked away to my room.

The next day I bought a trunk and clothing, and began to live   
the life of Edward Pink hammer. I did not tax my brain with   
endeavors to solve problems of the past.

It was a piquant and sparkling cup that the great island city held   
up to my lips. I drank of it gratefully. The keys of Manhattan   
belong to him who is able to bear them. You must be either the   
city's guest or its victim.

The following few days were as gold and silver. Edward   
Pink hammer, yet counting back to his birth by hours only, knew   
the rare joy of having come upon so diverting a world full-fledged   
and unrestrained. I sat entranced on the magic carpets provided in   
theatres and roof-gardens, that transported one into strange and   
delightful lands full of frolicsome music, pretty girls and   
grotesque, drolly extravagant parodies upon humankind. I went   
here and there at my own dear will, bound by no limits of space,

**71**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
time or comportment. I dined in weird cabarets, at weirder tables   
d'hôte to the sound of Hungarian music and the wild shouts of   
mercurial artists and sculptors. Or, again, where the night life   
quivers in the electric glare like a kinetoscope picture, and the   
millinery of the world, and its jewels, and the ones whom they   
adorn, and the men who make all three possible are met for good   
cheer and the spectacular effect. And among all these scenes that I   
have mentioned I learned one thing that I never knew before. And   
that is that the key to liberty is not in the hands of License, but   
Convention holds it. Comity has a toll-gate at which you must   
pay, or you may not enter the land of Freedom. In all the glitter,   
the seeming disorder, the parade, the abandon, I saw this law,   
unobtrusive, yet like iron, prevail. Therefore, in Manhattan you   
must obey these unwritten laws, and then you will be freest of the   
free. If you decline to be bound by them, you put on shackles.

Sometimes, as my mood urged me, I would seek the stately,   
softly murmuring palm-rooms, redolent with high-born life and   
delicate restraint, in which to dine. Again, I would go down to the   
waterways in steamers packed with vociferous, bedecked,   
unchecked, love-making clerks and shop-girls to their crude plea­  
 sures on the island shores. And there was always Broadway - glis­tening, opulent, wily, varying, desirable Broadway - growing upon   
one like an opium habit.

One afternoon as I entered my hotel a stout man with a big nose   
and a black moustache blocked my way in the corridor. When I   
would have passed around him, he greeted me with offensive   
familiarity.

'Hallo, Belford!' he cried loudly. 'What the deuce are you   
doing in New York? Didn't know anything could drag you away   
from that old book den of yours. Is Mrs. B. along or is this a little   
business run alone, eh?'

'You have made a mistake, sir,' I said coldly, releasing my hand   
from his grasp. 'My name is pink hammer. You will excuse me.'

The man dropped to one side, apparently astonished. As I   
walked to the clerk's desk I heard him call to a bell-boy and speak   
something about telegraph blanks.

'You will give me my bill,' I said to the clerk, 'and have my bag­  
 gage brought down in half an hour. I do not care to remain were   
I am annoyed by confidence men.'

I moved that afternoon to another hotel, a sedate, old-fashioned   
one on lower Fifth Avenue.

There was a restaurant a little way off Broadway where one

**72**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
could be served almost *alfresco* in a tropic array of screening flora.   
Quiet and luxury and a perfect service made it an ideal place in   
which to take luncheon or refreshment. One afternoon I was there   
picking my way to a table among the ferns when I felt my sleeve   
caught.

'Mr. Belford!' exclaimed an amazingly sweet voice.   
I turned quickly to see a lady seated alone - a lady of about

thirty, with exceedingly handsome eyes, who looked at me as   
though I had been her very dear friend.

'You were about to pass me,' she said accusingly. 'Don't tell me   
you did not know me. Why should we not shake hands - at least   
once in fifteen years?'

I shook hands with her at once. I took a chair opposite her at   
the table. I summoned with my eyebrows a hovering waiter. The   
lady was philandering with an orange ice. I ordered a *crème de*   
*menthe.* Her hair was reddish bronze. You could not look at it,   
because you could not look away from her eyes. But you were con­scious of it as you are conscious of sunset while you look into the   
profundities of a wood at twilight.

'Are you sure you know me?' I asked.   
'No,' she said, smiling, 'I was never sure of that.'   
'What would you think,' I said, a little anxiously, 'if I were to

tell you that my name is Edward Pink hammer, from Coraopolis,   
Kansas.'

'What would I think?' she repeated, with a merry glance. 'Why,   
that you had not brought Mrs. Belford to New York with you, of   
course. I do wish you had. I would have liked to see Marian.' Her   
voice lowered slightly - 'You haven't changed much, Elwyn.'

I felt her wonderful eyes searching mine and my face more   
closely.

'Yes, you have,' she amended, and there was a soft, exultant note   
in her latest tones; 'I see it now. You haven't forgotten. You   
haven't forgotten for a year or a day or an hour. I told you you   
never could.'

I poked my straw anxiously in the *crème de menthe.*   
*'I'm sure I beg your pardon,' I said, a little uneasy at her gaze.*

'But that is just the trouble. I have forgotten. I've forgotten   
everything.'

She flouted my denial. She laughed deliciously at something she   
seemed to see in my face.

'I've heard of you at times,' she went on. 'You're quite a big   
lawyer out West - Denver, isn't it, or Los Angeles? Marian must

**73**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
be very proud of you. You knew, I suppose, that I married six   
months after you did. You may have seen it in the papers. The   
flowers alone cost two thousand dollars.'

She had mentioned fifteen years. Fifteen years is a long time.   
'Would it be too late,' I asked somewhat timorously, 'to offer

your congratulations?'   
'Not if you dare do it,' she answered, with such fine intrepidity

that I was silent, and began to crease patterns on the cloth with me   
thumb-nail.

'Tell me one thing,' she said, leaning toward me rather eagerly -  
 'a thing I have wanted to know for many years - just from a   
woman's curiosity, of course - have you ever dared since that   
night to touch, smell or look at white roses - at white roses wet   
with rain and dew?'

I took a sip of *crème de menthe.*   
*I t would be useless, I suppose,' I said, with a sigh, 'for me*

to repeat that I have no recollection at all about these things.   
My memory is completely at fault. I need not say how much I   
regret it.'

The lady rested her arms upon the table, and again her eyes dis­dained my words and went travelling by their own route direct to   
my soul. She laughed softly, with a strange quality in the sound -  
 it was a laugh of happiness yes, and of content - and of misery. I   
tried to look away from her.

'You lie, Elwyn Belford,' she breathed blissfully. 'Oh, I know   
you lie!'

I gazed dully into the ferns.   
'My name is Edward Pink hammer,' I said. 'I came with the del­egates to the Druggists' National Convention. There is a move­ment on foot for arranging a new position for the bottles of   
tartrate of antimony and tartrate of potash, in which, very likely,   
you would take little interest.'

A shining landau stopped before the entrance. The lady rose. I   
took her hand, and bowed.

'I am deeply sorry,' I said to her, 'that I cannot remember. I   
could explain, but fear you would not understand. You will not   
concede pink hammer; and I really cannot at all conceive of the -  
 the roses and other things.'

'Good-bye, Mr. Belford,' she said, with her happy, sorrowful   
smile, as she stepped into her carriage.

I attended the theatre that night. When I returned to my hotel,   
a quiet man in dark clothes, who seemed interested in rubbing his

**74**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D STORIES**    
finger-nails with a silk handkerchief, appeared, magically, at me   
side.

'Mr. Pink hammer,' he said casually, giving the bulk of his atten­tion to his forefinger, 'may I request you to step aside with me for   
a little conversation? There is a room here.'

'Certainly,' I answered.   
He conducted me into a small, private parlor. A lady and a

gentleman was there. The lady, I surmised, would have been   
unusually good-looking had her features not been clouded by an   
expression of keen worry and fatigue. She was of a style of figure   
and possessed coloring and features that were agreeable to me   
fancy. She was in a travelling-dress; she fixed upon me an earnest   
look of extreme anxiety, and pressed an unsteady hand to her   
bosom. I think she would have started forward, but the gentleman   
arrested her movement with an authoritative motion of his hand.   
He then came, himself, to meet me. He was a man of forty, a little   
grey about the temples, and with a strong, thoughtful face.

'Belford, old man,' he said cordially, 'I'm glad to see you again.   
Of course, we know everything is all right. I warned you, you   
know, that you were overdoing it. Now, you'll go back with us,   
and be yourself again in no time.'

I smiled ironically.   
'I have been "Bell forded" so often,' I said, 'that it has lost its

edge. Still, in the end, it may grow wearisome. Would you be will­ing at all to entertain the hypothesis that my name is Edward   
Pink hammer, and that I never saw you before in my life?'

Before the man could reply a wailing cry came from the woman.   
She sprang past his detaining arm. 'Elwyn!' she sobbed, and cast   
herself upon me, and clung tight. 'Elwyn,' she cried again, 'don't   
break my heart. I am your wife - call my name once - just once! I   
could see you dead rather than this way.'

I unwound her arms respectfully, but firmly.   
'Madam,' I said severely, 'pardon me if I suggest that you

accept a resemblance too precipitately. It is a pity,' I went on,   
with an amused laugh, as the thought occurred to me, 'that this   
Belford and I could not be kept side by side upon the same shelf   
like tartrates of sodium and antimony for purposes of identifica­tion. In order to understand the allusion,' I concluded airily, 'it   
may be necessary for you to keep an eye on the proceedings of   
the Druggists' National Convention.'

The lady turned to her companion, and grasped his arm.   
'What is it, Doctor Volney? Oh, what is it?' she moaned.

**75**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
He led her to the door.   
'Go to your room for a while,' I heard him say. 'I will remain

and talk with him. His mind? No, I think not - only a portion of   
the brain. Yes, I am sure he will recover. Go to your room and   
leave me with him.'

The lady disappeared. The man in dark clothes also went out­  
 side, still manicuring himself in a thoughtful way. I think he   
waited in the hall.

'I would like to talk with a while, Mr. Pink hammer, if I   
may,' said the gentleman who remained.

'Very well, if you care to,' I replied, 'and will excuse me if I take   
it comfortably; I am rather tired.' I stretched myself upon a couch   
by a window and lit a cigar. He drew a chair nearby.

'Let us speak to the point,' he said soothingly. 'Your name is not   
Pink hammer.'

'I know that as well as you do,' I said coolly. 'But a man must   
have a name of some sort. I can assure you that I do not extrava­gantly admire the name of pink hammer. But when one christens   
one's self, suddenly the fine names do not seem to suggest them­  
 selves. But suppose it had been Scharringhausen or Scroggins! I   
think I did very well with pink hammer.'

'Your name,' said the other man seriously, 'is Elwyn C. Belford.   
You are one of the first lawyers in Denver. You are suffering from   
an attack of aphasia, which has caused you to forget your identity.   
The cause of it was over-application to your profession, and, per­  
 haps, a life too bare of natural recreation and pleasures. The lady   
who has just left the room is your wife.'

'She is what I would call a fine-looking woman,' I said, after a   
judicial pause. 'I particularly admire the shade of brown in her   
hair.'

'She is a wife to be proud of. Since your disappearance, nearly   
two weeks ago, she has scarcely closed her eyes. We learned that   
you were in New York through a telegram sent by Isidore   
Newman, a travelling man from Denver. He said that he had met   
you in a hotel here, and that you did not recognize him.'

'I think I remember the occasion,' I said. 'The fellow called me   
"Belford," if I am not mistaken. But don't you think it about time,   
now, for you to introduce yourself?'

'I am Robert Volney - Doctor Volney. I have been your close   
friend for twenty years, and your physician for fifteen. I came with   
Mrs. Belford to trace you as soon as we got the telegram. Try,   
Elwyn, old man - try to remember!'

**76**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
'What's the use to try!' I asked, with a little frown. ' You say you

are a physician. Is aphasia curable? When a man loses his memory,   
does it return slowly, or suddenly?'

'Sometimes gradually and imperfectly; sometimes as suddenly as   
it went.'

'Will you undertake the treatment of my case, Doctor Volney?'   
I asked.

'Old friend,' said he, 'I'll do everything in my power, and will   
have done everything that science can do to cure you.'

'Very well,' said I. 'Then you will consider that I am your patient.   
Everything is in confidence now - professional confidence.'

'Of course,' said Doctor Volney.   
I got up from the couch. Someone had set a vase of white roses

on the center table - a cluster of white roses freshly sprinkled and   
fragrant. I threw them far out of the window, and then I laid   
myself upon the couch again.

'It will be best, Bobby,' I said, 'to have this cure happen sud­denly. I'm rather tired of it all, anyway. You may go now and   
bring Marian in. But, oh, Doc,' I said, with a sigh, as I kicked him   
on the shin - 'good old Doc - it was glorious!'

**L**

***A Municipal Report***   
***The cities are full of pride,***

Challenging each to each -  
 This from her mountainside,

That from her burthened beach.   
R. KIPLING.

Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee!   
There are just three big cities in the United States that are 'story cities' - New   
York, of course, New Orleans, and, best of the lot, San Francisco. - FRANK   
NORRIS.

EAST IS EAST, and West is San Francisco, according to Californi­ans. Californians are a race of people; they are not merely inhabitants of a State. They are the Southerners of the West. Now,   
Chicagoans are no less loyal to their city; but when you ask them   
why, they stammer and speak of lake fish and the new Odd Fellows   
Building. But Californians go into detail.

**77**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
Of course, they have, in the climate, an argument that is good

for half an hour while you are thinking of your coal bills and heavy   
underwear. But as soon as they come to mistake your silence for   
conviction, madness comes upon them, and they picture the city   
of the Golden Gate as the Bagdad of the New World. So far, as a   
matter of opinion, no refutation is necessary. But, dear cousins all   
(From Adam and Eve descended), it is a rash one who will lay his   
finger on the map and say: 'In this town there can be no romance   
- what could happen here?' Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to   
challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and   
McNally.

NASHVILLE. - A city, port of delivery, and the capital of the State of Ten­nessee, is on the Cumberland River and on the N.C. & St. L. and the L. & N.   
railroads. This city is regarded as the most important educational center in the   
South.

I stepped off the train at 8 p.m. Having searched the thesaurus in   
vain for adjectives, I must, as a substitution, hie me to comparison   
in the form of a recipe.

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20   
parts; dewdrops, gathered in a brickyard at sunrise, 25 parts; odor   
of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix.

The mixture will give you an approximate conception of a   
Nashville drizzle. It is not so fragrant as a moth-ball nor as thick   
as pea-soup; but 'tis enough - 'twill serve.

I went to a hotel in a tumbril. It required strong self-suppres­sion for me to keep from climbing to the top of it and giving an   
imitation of Sidney Carton. The vehicle was drawn by beasts of a   
bygone era and driven by something dark and emancipated.

I was sleepy and tired, so when I got to the hotel I hurriedly   
paid it the fifty cents it demanded (with approximate lagniappe, I   
assure you). I knew its habits; and I did not want to hear it prate   
about its old 'Marster' or anything that happened 'before' de Wah.'

The hotel was one of the kinds described as 'renovated.' That   
means $20,000 worth of new marble pillars, tiling, electric lights   
and brass cuspidors in the lobby, and a new L. & N. time table   
and a lithograph of Lookout Mountain in each one of the great   
rooms above. The management was without reproach, the atten­tion full of exquisite Southern courtesy, the service as slow as the   
progress of a snail and as good-humored as Rip Van Winkle.   
The food was worth travelling a thousand miles for. There is no

**78**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**

other hotel in the world where you can get such chicken livers *En*   
*brochette.*

At dinner I asked a negro waiter if there was anything doing in   
town. He pondered gravely for a minute, and then replied:   
'Well, boss, I don't really reckon there's anything at all doing'   
after sundown.'

Sundown had been accomplished; it had been drowned in the   
drizzle long before. So that spectacle was denied me. But I went   
forth upon the streets in the drizzle to see what might be there.

It is built on undulating grounds; and the streets are lighted by electricity at   
a cost of $32,470 per annum.

As I left the hotel there was a race riot. Down upon me charged   
a company of freedmen, or Arabs, or Zulus, armed with - no, I   
saw with relief that they were not rifles, but whips. And I saw   
dimly a caravan of black, clumsy vehicles; and at the reassuring   
shouts, 'Kyra you anywhere in the town, boss, Fuh fifty cents,' I   
reasoned that I was merely a 'fare' instead of a victim.

I walked through long streets, all leading uphill. I wondered how   
those streets ever came down again. Perhaps they didn't until they   
were 'graded.' On a few of the 'main streets' I saw lights in stores   
here and there; saw street-cars go by conveying worthy burghers   
hither and yon; saw people pass engaged in the art of conversation,   
and heard a burst of semi-lively laughter issuing from a soda-water   
and ice-cream parlor. The streets other than 'main' seemed to   
have enticed upon their border's houses consecrated to peace and   
domesticity. In many of them lights shone behind discreetly drawn   
window shades; in a few pianos tinkled orderly and irreproachable   
music. There was, indeed, little 'doing.' I wished I had come before   
sundown. So, I returned to my hotel.

In November, 1864, the Confederate General Hood advanced against   
Nashville, where he shut up a National force under General Thomas. The   
latter then sallied forth and defeated the confederates in a terrible conflict.

All my life I have heard of, admired, and witnessed the fine   
marksmanship of the South in its peaceful conflicts in the tobacco-  
 chewing regions. But in my hotel a surprise awaited me. There   
were twelve bright, new, imposing, capacious brass cuspidors in   
the great lobby, tall enough to be called urns and so wide-  
 mouthed that the crack pitcher of a lady baseball team should

**79**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
have been able to throw a ball into one of them at five paces dis­  
 tant. But, although a terrible battle had raged and was still raging,   
the enemy had not suffered. Bright, new, imposing, capacious,   
untouched, they stood. But shades of Jefferson Brick! the tile   
floor - the beautiful tile floor! I could not avoid thinking of the   
battle of Nashville, and trying to draw, as is my foolish habit,   
some deductions about hereditary marksmanship.

Here I first saw Major (by misplaced courtesy) Wentworth   
Caswell. I knew him for a type the moment my eyes suffered from   
the sight of him. A rat has no geographical habitat. My old friend,   
A. Tennyson, said, as he so well said almost everything:

'Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,   
And curse me the British vermin, the rat.'

Let us regard the word 'British' as interchangeable *ad lib.* A rat   
is a rat.

This man was hunting about the hotel lobby like a starved dog   
that had forgotten where he had buried a bone. He had a face of   
great acreage, red, pulpy, and with a kind of sleepy massiveness   
like that of Buddha. He possessed one single virtue - he was very   
smoothly shaven. The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a   
man, until he goes about with a stubble. I think that if he had not   
used his razor that day I would have repulsed his advances, and the   
criminal calendar of the world would have been spared the addi­tion of one murder.

I happened to be standing within five feet of a cuspidor when   
Major Caswell opened fire upon it. I had been observant enough   
to perceive that the attacking force was using Gatlings instead of   
squirrel rifles; so, I side-stepped so promptly that the major seized   
the opportunity to apologize to a non-combatant. He had the   
blabbing lip. In four minutes, he had become my friend and had   
dragged me to the bar.

I desire to interpolate here that I am a Southerner. But I am not   
one by profession or trade. I eschew the string tie, the slouch hat,   
the prince Albert, the number of bales of cotton destroyed by   
Sherman, and plug chewing. When the orchestra plays Dixie, I do   
not cheer. I slide a little lower on the leather-cornered seat and,   
well, order another Würzburger and wish that Longstreet had -  
 but what's the use?

Major Caswell banged the bar with his fist, and the first gun at   
Fort Sumter re-echoed. When he fired the last one at Appomattox

**80**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
I began to hope. But then he began on family trees, and demon­  
 started that Adam was only a third cousin of a collateral branch of   
the Caswell family. Genealogy disposed of, he took up, to my dis­  
 taste, his private family matters. The spoke of his wife, traced her   
descent back to Eve, and profanely denied any possible rumor   
that she may have had relations in the land of Nod.

By this time, I began to suspect that he was trying to obscure by   
noise the fact that he had ordered the drinks, on the chance that I   
would be bewildered into paying for them. But when they were   
down he crashed a silver dollar loudly upon the bar. Then, of   
course, another serving was obligatory. And when I had paid for   
that I took leave of him brusquely; for I wanted no more of him.   
But before I had obtained my release he had prated loudly of an   
income that his wife received, and showed a handful of silver   
money.

When I got my key at the desk the clerk said to me courteously:   
'If that man Caswell has annoyed you, and if you would like to   
make a complaint, we will have him ejected. He is a nuisance, a   
loafer, and without any known means of support, although he   
seems to have some money most the time. But we don't seem to   
be able to hit upon any means of throwing him out legally.'

'Why, no,' said I, after some reflection; 'I don't see my way   
clear to making a complaint. But I would like to place myself on   
record as asserting that I do not care for his company. Your town,'   
I continued, 'seems to be a quiet one. What manner of entertain­ment, adventure, or excitement have you to offer to the stranger   
within your gates?'

'Well, sir,' said the clerk, 'there will be a show here next Thurs­  
 day. It is - I'll look it up and have the announcement sent up to   
your room with the ice water. Good night.'

After I went up to my room I looked out of the window. It was   
only about ten o'clock, but I looked upon a silent town. The driz­zle continued, spangled with dim lights, as far apart as currants in   
a cake sold at the Ladies' Exchange.

'A quiet place,' I said to myself, as my first shoe struck the ceil­ing of the occupant of the room beneath mine. 'Nothing of the   
life here that gives color and variety to the cities in the East and   
West. Just a good, ordinary, humdrum business town.'

Nashville occupies a foremost place among the manufacturing centers of the   
country. It is the fifth boot and shoe market in the United States, the largest   
candy and cracker manufacturing city in the South, and does an enormous   
wholesale dry goods, grocery and drug business.

**81**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
I must tell you how I came to be in Nashville, and assure you

the digression brings as much tedium to me as it does to you. I   
was travelling elsewhere on my own business, but I had a com­  
 mission from a Northern literary magazine to stop over there and   
establish a personal connection between the publication and one   
of its contributors, Azalea Adair.

Adair (there was no clue to the personality except the handwrit­ing) had sent in some essays (lost art!) and poems that had made   
the editors swear approvingly over their one o'clock luncheon. So   
they had commissioned me to round up said Adair and corner by   
contract his or her output at two cents a word before some other   
publisher offered her ten or twenty.

At nine o'clock the next morning, after my chicken livers *En bro*­*chette* (try them if you can find that hotel), I strayed out into the   
drizzle, which was still on for an unlimited run. At the first corner   
I came upon Uncle Cæsar. He was a stalwart negro, older than the   
pyramids, with grey wool and a face that reminded me of Brutus,   
and a second afterwards of the late King Cutaway. He wore the   
most remarkable coat that I ever had seen or expect to see. It   
reached to his ankles and had once been a Confederate grey in   
colors. But rain and sun and age had so variegated it that Joseph's   
coat, beside it, would have faded to a pale monochrome. I must   
linger with that coat for it has to do with the story - the story that   
is so long in coming, because you can hardly expect anything to   
happen in Nashville.

Once it must have been the military coat of an officer. The cape   
of it had vanished, but all adown its front it had been frogged and   
tasseled magnificently. But now the frogs and tassels were gone.   
In their stead had been patiently stitched (I surmised by some sur­viving 'black mammy') new frogs made of cunningly twisted   
common hempen twine. This twine was frayed and disheveled. It   
must have been added to the coat as a substitute for vanished   
splendors, with tasteless but painstaking devotion, for it followed   
faithfully the curves of the long-missing frogs. And, to complete   
the comedy and pathos of the garment, all its buttons were gone   
save one. The second button from the top alone remained. The   
coat was fastened by other twine strings tied through the button­  
 holes and other holes rudely pierced in the opposite side. There   
was never such a weird garment so fantastically bedecked and of so   
many mottled hues. The lone button was the size of a half-dollar,   
made of yellow horn and sewed on with coarse twine.

This negro stood by a carriage so old that Ham himself might

**82**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**  
have started a hack line with it after he left the ark with the two   
animals hitched to it. As I approached, he threw open the door,   
drew out a leather duster, waved it, without using it, and said in   
deep, rumbling tones:

'Step right in, Suh; aren't a speck of dust in it - jus' back from a   
funeral, Suh.'

I inferred that on such gala occasion's carriages were given an   
extra cleaning. I looked up and down the street and perceived that   
there was little choice among the vehicles for hire that lined the   
Kreb. I looked in my memorandum book for the address of Azalea   
Adair.

'I want to go to 861 Jessamine Street,' I said, and was about to   
step into the hack. But for an instant the thick, long, gorilla-like   
arm of the old negro barred me. On his massive and saturnine face   
a look of sudden suspicion and enmity flashed for a moment.   
Then, with quickly returning conviction, he asked blandishingly:   
'What are you Gwyne there for, boss?'

'What is that to you?' I asked a little sharply.   
'Nothing', Suh, jus' nothing'. Only it's a lonesome kind of part of

town and few folks ever have business out there. Step right in. The   
seats are clean - Jes' got back from a funeral, Suh.'

A mile and a half it must have been to our journey's end. I could   
hear nothing but the fearful rattle of the ancient hack over the   
uneven brick paving; I could smell nothing but the drizzle, now   
further flavored with coal smoke and something like a mixture of   
tar and oleander blossoms. All I could see through the streaming   
windows were two rows of dim houses.

The city has an area of 10 square miles; 181 miles of streets, of which 137   
miles are paved; a system of waterworks that cost $2,000,000, with 77 miles of   
mains.

Eight-sixty-one Jessamine Street was a decayed mansion. Thirty   
yards back from the street it stood, out merged in a splendid grove   
of trees and untrimmed shrubbery. A row of box bushes over­  
 flowed and almost hid the paling fence from sight; the gate was   
kept closed by a rope noose that encircled the gate-post and the   
first paling of the gate. But when you got inside you saw that 861   
was a shell, a shadow, a ghost of former grandeur and excellence.   
But in the story, I have not yet got inside.

When the hack had ceased from rattling and the weary   
quadrupeds came to a rest I handed my jehu his fifty cents with an

**83**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
additional quarter, feeling a glow of conscious generosity as I did   
so. He refused it.

'It's two dollars, Suh,' he said.   
'How's that?' I asked. 'I plainly heard you call out at the hotel:

"Fifty cents to any part of the town." '   
'It's two dollars, Suh,' he repeated obstinately. 'It's a long way

from the hotel.'   
'It is within the city limits and well within them,' I argued.

'Don't think that you have picked up a greenhorn Yankee. Do you   
see those hills over there?' I went on, pointing toward the east (I   
could not see them, myself, for the drizzle); 'well, I was born and   
raised on their other side. You old fool nigger, can't you tell   
people from other people when you see me?'

The grim face of King Cutaway softened. 'Is you from the   
South, Suh? I reckon it was the shoes of your fooled me. There   
is something' sharp in the toes for a Southern gentleman to wear.'

'Then the charge is fifty cents, I suppose?' said I inexorably.   
His former expression, a mingling of cupidity and hostility,

returned, remained ten minutes, and vanished.   
'Boss,' he said, 'fifty cents is right; but *I need* two dollars, Suh;

I'm *obliged* to have two dollars. I'm not *demand in'* it now, Suh;   
after I knows whir You's from; I'm just' saying' that I *has* to have   
two dollars to-night, and business is mighty po'.'

Peace and confidence settled upon his heavy features. He had   
been luckier than he had hoped. Instead of having picked up a   
greenhorn, ignorant of rates, he had come upon an inheritance.

'You confounded old rascal,' I said, reaching down into me   
pocket, 'you ought to be turned over to the police.'

For the first time I saw him smile. He knew; *he knew;* HE KNEW.   
I gave him two one-dollar bills. As I handed them over, I noticed

that one of them had seen parlous times. Its upper right-hand   
corner was missing, and it had been torn through in the middle   
but joined again. A strip of blue tissue-paper, pasted over the split,   
preserved its negotiability.

Enough of the African bandit for the present: I left him happy,   
lifted the rope and opened the creaky gate.

The house, as I said, was a shell. A paint-brush had not touched   
it in twenty years. I could not see why a strong wind should not   
have bowled it over like a house of cards until I looked again at the   
trees that hugged it close - the trees that saw the battle of   
Nashville and still drew their protecting branches around it   
against storm and enemy and cold.

**84**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
Azalea Adair, fifty years old, white-haired, a descendant of the

cavaliers, as thin and frail as the house she lived in, robed in the   
cheapest and cleanest dress I ever saw, with an air as simple as a   
queen's, received me.

The reception-room seemed a mile square, because there was   
nothing in it except some rows of books, on unpainted, white-pine   
bookshelves, a cracked, marble-top table, a rag rug, a hairless horse­  
 hair sofa and two or three chairs. Yes, there was a picture on the wall,   
a colored crayon drawing of a cluster of pansies. I looked around   
for the portrait of Andrew Jackson and the pine-cone hanging   
basket, but they were not there.

Azalea Adair and I had conversation, a little of which will be   
repeated to you. She was a product of the old South, gently nur­tured in the sheltered life. Her learning was not broad, but was   
deep and of splendid originality in its somewhat narrow scope. She   
had been educated at home, and her knowledge of the world was   
derived from inference and by inspiration. Of such is the precious,   
small group of essayists made. While she talked to me, I kept   
brushing my fingers, trying, unconsciously, to rid them guiltily of   
the absent dust from the half-calf backs of Lamb, Chaucer,   
Hazlitt, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne and Hood. She was exquis­ite, she was a valuable discovery. Nearly everybody nowadays   
knows too much - oh, so much too much - of real life.

I could perceive clearly that Azalea Adair was very poor. A   
house and a dress she had, not much else, I fancied. So, divided   
between my duty to the magazine and my loyalty to the poets and   
essayists who fought Thomas in the valley of the Cumberland, I   
listened to her voice, which was like a harpsichord, and found   
that I could not speak of contracts. In the presence of the Nine   
Muses and the Three Graces one hesitated to lower the topic to   
two cents. There would have to be another colloquy after I had   
regained my commercialism. But I spoke of my mission, and   
three o'clock of the next afternoon was set for the discussion of   
the business proposition.

'Your town,' I said, as I began to make ready to depart (which is   
the time for smooth generalities), 'seems to be a quiet, sedate   
place. A home town, I should say, where few things out of the   
ordinary ever happen.'

It carries on an extensive trade in stoves and hollow ware with the West and   
South, and its flouring mills have a daily capacity of more than 2,000 barrels.

**85**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
Azalea Adair seemed to reflect.   
'I have never thought of it that way,' she said, with a kind of sin­

cere intensity that seemed to belong to her. 'Isn't it in the still,   
quiet places that things do happen? I fancy that when God began   
to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have   
leaned out one's windows and heard the drop of mud splashing   
from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills. What did the   
noisiest project in the world - I mean the building of the tower of   
Babel - result in finally? A page and a half of Esperanto in the   
North American Review.'

'Of course,' said I platitudinous Ly, 'human nature is the same   
everywhere; but there is more color - er - more drama and   
movement and - er - romance in some cities than in others.'

'On the surface,' said Azalea Adair. 'I have travelled many   
times around the world in a golden airship wafted on two wings   
- print and dreams. I have seen (on one of my imaginary tours)   
the Sultan of Turkey bow-string with his own hands one of his   
wives who had uncovered her face in public. I have seen a man in   
Nashville tears up his theatre tickets because his wife was going   
out with her face covered - with rice powder. In San Francisco's   
Chinatown, I saw the slave girl Sing Yee dipped slowly, inch by   
inch, in boiling almond oil to make her swear she would never   
see her American lover again. She gave in when the boiling oil   
had reached three inches above her knee. At a euchre party in   
East Nashville the other night I saw Kitty Morgan cut dead by   
seven of her schoolmates and lifelong friends because she had   
married a house painter. The boiling oil was sizzling as high as   
her heart; but I wish you could have seen the fine little smile that   
she carried from table to table. Oh yes, it is a humdrum town.   
Just a few miles of redbrick houses and mud and stores and   
lumber yards.'

Someone knocked hollowly at the back of the house. Azalea   
Adair breathed a soft apology and went to investigate the sound.   
She came back in three minutes with brightened eyes, a faint flush   
on her cheeks, and ten years lifted from her shoulders.

'You must have a cup of tea before you go,' she said, 'and a   
sugar cake.'

She reached and shook a little iron bell. In shuffled a small   
negro girl about twelve, bare-foot, not very tidy, glowering at me   
with thumb in mouth and bulging eyes.

Azalea Adair opened a tiny, worn purse and drew out a dollar   
bill, a dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn in

**86**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**

two pieces and pasted together again with a strip of blue tissue-  
 paper. It was one of the bills I had given the piratical negro - there   
was no doubt of it.

'Go up to Mr. Baker's store on the corner, Impey,' she said,   
handing the girl, the dollar bill, 'and get a quarter of a pound of tea   
- the kind he always sends me - and ten cents worth of sugar   
cakes. Now, hurry. The supply of tea in the house happens to be   
exhausted,' she explained to me.

Impey left by the back way. Before the scrape of her hard, bare   
feet had died away on the back porch, a wild shriek - I was sure it   
was hers - filled the hollow house. Then the deep, gruff tones of   
an angry man's voice mingled with the girl's further squeals and   
unintelligible words.

Azalea Adair rose without surprise or emotion and disappeared.   
For two minutes I heard the hoarse rumble of the man's voice;   
then something like an oath and a light scuffle, and she returned   
calmly to her chair.

'This is a roomy house,' she said, 'and I have a tenant for part of   
it. I am sorry to have to rescind my invitation to tea. It was impos­sible to get the kind I always use at the store. Perhaps to-morrow   
Mr. Baker will be able to supply me.'

I was sure that Impey had not had time to leave the house. I   
inquired concerning street-car lines and took my leave. After I was   
well on my way I remembered that I had not learned Azalea   
Adair's name. But to-morrow would do.

That same day I started in on the course of iniquity that this   
uneventful city forced upon me. I was in the town only two days,   
but in that time, I managed to lie shamelessly by telegraph, and to   
be an accomplice - after the fact, if that is the correct legal term -  
 to a murder.

As I rounded the corner nearest my hotel the Afritel coachman   
of the polychromatic, nonpareil coat seized me, swung open the   
dungeon door of his peripatetic sarcophagus, flirted his feather   
duster and began his ritual: 'Step right in, boss. Carriage is clean -  
 jus' got back from a funeral. Fifty cents to any - '

And then he knew me and grinned broadly. ' 'Scouse me, boss;   
you are de gentleman what rid out with me dis Manwin'. Thank you   
kindly, Suh.'

'I am going out to 861 again to-morrow afternoon at three,' said   
I, 'and if you will be here, I'll let you drive me. So, you know Miss   
Adair?' I concluded, thinking of my dollar bill.

'I belonged to her father, Judge Adair, Suh,' he replied.

**87**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

'I judge that she is pretty poor,' I said. 'She hasn't much money   
to speak of, has she?'

For an instant I looked again at the fierce countenance of King   
Cutaway, and then he changed back to an extortionate old negro   
hack-driver.

'She isn't Gwyne to starve, Suh,' he said slowly. 'She has Resorces,   
Suh; she has Resorces.'

'I shall pay you fifty cents for the trip,' said I.   
'Dat is perfectly correct, Suh,' he answered humbly; 'I just' *had*

to have data two dollars dis Manwin, boss.'   
I went to the hotel and lied by electricity. I wired the magazine:

'A. Adair holds out for eight cents a word.'   
The answer that came back was: 'Give it to her quick, you

duffer.'   
Just before dinner 'Major' Wentworth Caswell bore down upon

me with the greetings of a long-lost friend. I have seen few men   
whom I have so instantaneously hated, and of whom it was so dif­ficult to be rid. I was standing at the bar when he invaded me;   
therefore, I could not wave the white ribbon in his face. I would   
have paid gladly for the drinks, hoping thereby to escape another,   
but he was one of those despicable, roaring, advertising bibbers   
who must have brass bands and fireworks attend upon every cent   
that they waste in their follies.

With an air of producing millions, he drew two one-dollar bills   
from a pocket and dashed one of them upon the bar. I looked once   
more at the dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn   
through the middle, and patched with a strip of blue tissue-paper. It   
was my dollar bill again. It could have been no other.

I went up to my room. The drizzle and the monotony of a   
dreary, eventless Southern town had made me tired and listless. I   
remember that just before I went to bed, I mentally disposed of the   
mysterious dollar bill (which might have formed the clue to a   
tremendously fine detective story of San Francisco) by saying to   
myself sleepily: 'Seems as if a lot of people here own stock in the   
Hack-Driver's Trust. Pays dividends promptly, too. Wonder if - '   
Then I fell asleep.

King Cutaway was at his post the next day, and rattled me   
bones over the stones out to 861. He was to wait and rattle me   
back again when I was ready.

Azalea Adair looked paler and cleaner and frailer than she had   
looked on the day before. After she had signed the contract at eight   
cents per word she grew still paler and began to slip out of her chair.

**88**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
Without much trouble I managed to get her up on the antediluvian   
horsehair sofa and then I ran out to the sidewalk and yelled to the   
coffee-colored Pirate to bring a doctor. With a wisdom that I had   
not suspected in him, he abandoned his team and struck off up the   
street afoot, realizing the value of speed. In ten minutes, he returned   
with a grave, grey-haired and capable man of medicine. In a few   
words (worth much less than eight cents each) I explained to him   
my presence in the hollow house of mystery. He bowed with stately   
understanding, and turned to the old negro.

'Uncle Cæsar,' he said calmly, 'run up to my house and ask Miss   
Lucy to give you a cream pitcher full of fresh milk and half a tum­bler of port wine. And hurry back. Don't drive - run. I want you   
to get back sometime this week.'

It occurred to me that Dr. Merriman also felt a distrust as to the   
speeding powers of the land pirate's steeds. After Uncle Cæsar was   
gone, lumberingly, but swiftly, up the street, the doctor looked me   
over with great politeness and as much careful calculation until he   
had decided that I might do.

'It is only a case of insufficient nutrition,' he said. 'In other   
words, the result of poverty, pride, and starvation. Mrs. Caswell   
has many devoted friends who would be glad to aid her, but she   
will accept nothing except from that old negro, Uncle Cæsar, who   
was once owned by her family.'

'Mrs. Caswell!' said I, in surprise. And then I looked at the   
contract and saw that she had signed it 'Azalea Adair Caswell.'

'I thought she was Miss Adair,' I said.   
'Married to a drunken, worthless loafer, sir,' said the doctor. 'It

is said that he robs her even of the small sums that her old servant   
contributes toward her support.'

When the milk and wine had been brought, the doctor soon   
revived Azalea Adair. She sat up and talked of the beauty of the   
autumn leaves that were then in season, and their height of color.   
She referred lightly to her fainting seizure as the outcome of an   
old palpitation of the heart. Impey fanned her as she lay on the   
sofa. The doctor was due elsewhere, and I followed him to the   
door. I told him that it was within my power and intentions to   
make a reasonable advance of money to Azalea Adair on future   
contributions to the magazine, and he seemed pleased.

'By the way,' he said, 'perhaps you would like to know that you   
have had royalty for a coachman. Old Cæsar's grandfather was a   
king in Congo. Cæsar himself has royal ways, as you may have   
observed.'

**89**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
As the doctor was moving off, I heard Uncle Cæsar's voice

inside: 'Did the git bore of dem two dollars from you, Mis' Zalea?'   
'Yes, Cæsar,' I heard Azalea Adair answer weakly. And then I

went in and concluded business negotiations with our contributor.   
I assumed the responsibility of advancing fifty dollars, putting it as   
a necessary formality in binding our bargain. And then Uncle   
Cæsar drove me back to the hotel.

Here ends all the story as far as I can testify as a witness. The   
rest must be only bare statements of facts.

At about six o'clock I went out for a stroll. Uncle Cæsar was at   
his corner. He threw open the door of his carriage, flourished his   
duster and began his depressing formula: 'Step right in, Suh. Fifty   
cents to anywhere in the city - hack's perfectly clean, Suh - jus' got   
back from a funeral - '

And then he recognized me. I think his eyesight was getting   
bad. His coat had taken on a few more faded shades of color, the   
twine strings were more frayed and ragged, the last remaining   
button - the button of yellow horn - was gone. A motley descen­dant of kings was Uncle Caesar.

About two hours later I saw an excited crowd besieging the   
front of a drug store. In a desert where nothing happens this was   
manna; so, I edged my way inside. On an extemporized couch of   
empty boxes and chairs were stretched the mortal corporeality of   
Major Wentworth Caswell. A doctor was testing him for the   
immortal ingredient. His decision was that it was conspicuous by   
its absence.

The erstwhile Major had been found dead on a dark street and   
brought by curious and ennuied citizens to the drug store. The   
late human being had been engaged in terrific battle - the details   
showed that. Loafer and reprobate though he had been, he had   
been also a warrior. But he had lost. His hands were yet clenched   
so tightly that his fingers would not be opened. The gentle citi­zens who had known him stood about and searched their vocabu­laries to find some good words, if it were possible, to speak of him.   
One kind-looking man said, after much thought: 'When "Cas"   
was about fifteen he was one of the best spellers in school.'

While I stood there the fingers of the right hand of 'the man   
that was,' which hung down the side of a white pine box, relaxed,   
and dropped something at my feet. I covered it with one-foot qui­etly, and a little later on I picked it up and pocketed it. I reasoned   
that in his last struggle his hand must have seized that object   
unwittingly and held it in a death-grip.

**90**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

At the hotel that night the main topic of conversation, with the   
possible exceptions of politics and prohibition, was the demise of   
Major Caswell. I heard one man say to a group of listeners:

'In my opinion, gentlemen, Caswell was murdered by some of   
these no-account niggers for his money. He had fifty dollars this   
afternoon which he showed to several gentlemen in the hotel.   
When he was found the money was not on his person.'

I left the city the next morning at nine, and as the train was   
crossing the bridge over the Cumberland River I took out of me   
pocket a yellow, horn, overcoat button the size of a fifty-cent   
piece, with frayed ends of coarse twine hanging from it, and cast it   
out of the window into the slow, muddy waters below.

*I wonder what's doing in Buffalo!*

**LI**   
**Compliments of the Season**

THERE ARE NO MORE Christmas stories to write. Fiction is   
exhausted; and newspaper items the next best, are manufactured   
by clever young Journalists who have married early and have an   
engagingly pessimistic view of life. Therefore, for seasonable   
diversion, we are reduced to two very questionable sources - facts   
and philosophy. We will begin with - whichever you choose to   
call it.

Children are pestilential little animals with which we have to   
cope under a bewildering variety of conditions. Especially when   
childish sorrows overwhelm them are we put to our wits' end. We   
exhaust our paltry store of consolation; and then beat them, sob­bing, to sleep. Then we grovel in the dust of a million years, and   
ask God why. Thus, we call out of the rat-trap. As for the chil­dren, no one understands them except old maids, hunchbacks,   
and shepherd dogs.

Now come the facts in the case of the Rag-Doll, the Tatterde­malion, and the Twenty-fifth of December.

On the tenth of that month the Child of the Millionaire lost her   
rag-doll. There were many servants in the Millionaire's palace on   
the Hudson, and these ransacked the house and grounds, but   
without finding the lost treasure. The Child was a girl of five, and   
one of those perverse little beasts that often wound the sensibili­ties of wealthy parents by fixing their affections upon some vulgar,

**91**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**

'P-pardon, lady,' he said, 'but couldn't leave without exchanging'   
comments season with lady the' house. ' 'Gains principles   
gentleman do show.'

And then he began the ancient salutation that was a tradition in   
the House when men wore lace ruffles and powder.

'The blessings of another year - '   
Fuzzy's memory failed him. The Lady prompted:   
' - Be upon this hearth.'   
' - The guest - ' stammered Fuzzy.   
' - And upon her who - ' continued the Lady, with a leading

smile.   
'Oh, cut it out,' said Fuzzy ill-manneredly. 'I can't remember.

Drink hearty.'   
Fuzzy had shot his arrow. They drank. The Lady smiled again

the smile of her caste. James enveloped Fuzzy and re-conducted   
him toward the front door. The harp music still softly drifted   
through the house.

Outside, Black Riley breathed on his cold hands and hugged the   
gate.

'I wonder,' said the Lady to herself, musing 'who - but there   
were so many who came. I wonder whether memory is a curse or a   
blessing to them after they have fallen so low.'

Fuzzy and his escort were nearly at the door. The Lady called:   
'James!'

James stalked back obsequiously, leaving Fuzzy waiting   
unsteadily, with his brief spark of the divine fire gone.

Outside, Black Riley stamped his cold feet and got a firmer grip   
on his section of gas-pipe.

'You will conduct this gentleman,' said the Lady, 'downstairs.   
Then tell Louis to get out the Mercedes and take him to whatever   
place he wishes to go.'

**LII**   
**Proof of the Pudding**

SPRING WINKED a vitreous optic at Editor Westbrook, of the *Min­erva Magazine,* and deflected him from his course. He had lunched   
in his favorite corner of a Broadway hotel, and was returning to   
his office when his feet became entangled in the lure of the vernal   
coquette. Which is by way of saying that he turned eastward in

**92**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
Twenty-sixth Street, safely forded the spring freshet of vehicles in   
Fifth Avenue, and meandered along the walks of budding Madison   
Square.

The lenient air and the settings of the little park almost formed   
a pastoral; the color motif was green - the presiding shade at the   
creation of man and vegetation.

The callow grass between the walks was the color of verdigris,   
a poisonous green, reminiscent of the horde of derelict humans   
that had breathed upon the soil during the summer and autumn.   
The bursting tree-buds looked strangely familiar to those who had   
botanized among the garnishing's of the fish course of a forty-cent   
dinner. The sky above was of that pale aquamarine tint that hall-  
 room poets rhyme with 'true' and 'Sue' and 'coo.' The one natural   
and frank color visible was the ostensible green of the newly   
painted benches - a shade between the color of a pickled cucum­ber and that of a last year's fast-back caravanette raincoat. But, to   
the city-bred eye of Editor Westbrook, the landscape appeared a   
masterpiece.

And now, whether you are of those who rush in, or of the gentle   
concourse that fears to tread, you must follow in a brief invasion   
of the editor's mind.

Editor Westbrook's spirit was contented and serene. The April   
number of the *Minerva* had sold its entire edition before the tenth   
day of the month - a newsdealer in Keokuk had written that he   
could have sold fifty copies more if he had had 'me. The owners of   
the magazine had raised his (the editor's) salary; he had just   
installed in his home a jewel of a recently imported cook who was   
afraid of policemen; and the morning papers had published in full   
a speech he had made at a publishers' banquet. Also, there were   
echoing in his mind the jubilant notes of a splendid song that his   
charming young wife had sung to him before he left his uptown   
apartment that morning. She was taking enthusiastic interest in   
her music of late, practicing early and diligently. When he had   
complimented her on the improvement in her voice she had fairly   
hugged him for joy at his praise. He felt, too, the benign, tonic   
medicament of the trained nurse, Spring, tripping softly adown   
the wards of the convalescent city.

While Editor Westbrook was sauntering between rows of park   
benches (already filling with vagrants and the guardians of lawless   
childhood) he felt his sleeve grasped and held. Suspecting that he   
was about to be panhandled, he turned a cold and unprofitable   
face, and saw that his captor was - Dawe - Shackleford Dawe,

**93**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**

dingy, almost ragged, the genteel scarcely visible in him through   
the deeper lines of the shabby.

While the editor is pulling himself out of his surprise, a flash­  
 light biography of Dawe is offered.

He was a fiction writer, and one of Westbrook's old acquain­tances. At one time they might have called each other old friends.   
Dawe had some money in those days, and lived in a decent apart­ment-house near Westbrook's. The two families often went to   
theatres and dinners together. Mrs. Dawe and Mrs. Westbrook   
became 'dearest' friends. Then one day a little tentacle of the   
octopus, just to amuse itself, ingurgitated Dawe's capital, and he   
moved to the Gramercy Park neighborhood, where one, for a   
few groats per week, may sit upon one's trunk under eight-  
 branched chandeliers and opposite Carrara marble mantels and   
watch the mice play upon the floor. Dawe thought to live by writ­ing fiction. Now and then he sold a story. He submitted many to   
Westbrook. The *Minerva* printed one or two of them; the rest   
were returned. Westbrook sent a careful and conscientious per­sonal letter with each rejected manuscript, pointing out in detail   
his reasons for considering it unavailable. Editor Westbrook had   
his own clear conception of what constituted good fiction. So, had   
Dawe. Mrs. Dawe was mainly concerned about the constituents   
of the scanty dishes of food that she managed to scrape together.   
One day Dawe had been spouting to her about the excellences   
of certain French writers. At dinner they sat down to a dish that   
a hungry schoolboy could have encompassed at a gulp. Dawe   
commented.

'It's Maupassant hash,' said Mrs. Dawe. 'It may not be art, but I   
do wish you would do a five course Marion Crawford serial with   
an Ella Wheeler Wilcox sonnet for dessert. I'm hungry.'

As far as this from success was Shackleford Dawe when he   
plucked Editor Westbrook's sleeve in Madison Square. That was   
the first time the editor had seen Dawe in several months.

'Why, Shack, is this you?' said Westbrook somewhat awk­wardly, for the form of this phrase seemed to touch upon the   
other's changed appearance.

'Sit down for a minute,' said Dawe, tugging at his sleeve. 'This   
is my office. I can't come to yours, looking as I do. Oh, sit down -  
 you won't be disgraced. Those half-plucked birds on the other   
benches will take you for a swell porch-climber. They won't know   
you are only an editor.'

'Smoke, Shack?' said Editor Westbrook, sinking cautiously

**94**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
upon the virulent green bench. He always yielded gracefully when   
he did yield.

Dawe snapped at the cigar as a kingfisher darts at a sunporch, or   
a girl pecks at a chocolate cream.

'I have just - ' began the editor.   
'Oh, I know; don't finish,' said Dawe. 'Give me a match. You

have just ten minutes to spare. How did you manage to get past   
my office-boy and invade my sanctum? There he goes now,   
throwing his club at a dog that couldn't read the "Keep off the   
Grass" signs.'

'How goes the writing?' asked the editor.   
'Look at me,' said Dawe, 'for your answer. Now don't put on

that embarrassed, friendly-but-honest look and ask me why I   
don't get a job as a wine agent or a cab-driver. I'm in the fight to   
a finish. I know I can write good fiction and I'll force you fellows   
to admit it yet. I'll make you change the spelling of "regrets" to   
"c-h-e-q-u-e" before I'm done with you.'

Editor Westbrook gazed through his nose-glasses with a sweetly   
sorrowful, omniscient, sympathetic, skeptical expression - the   
copyrighted expression of the editor beleaguered by the unavailable   
contributor.

'Have you read the last story I sent you - "The Alarum of the   
Soul"?' asked Dawe.

'Carefully. I hesitated over that story, Shack, really, I did. It had   
some good points. I was writing you a letter to send with it when   
it goes back to you. I regret - '

'Never mind the regrets,' said Dawe grimly. 'There's neither   
salve nor sting in 'me anymore. What I want to know is why.   
Come, now; out with the good points first.'

'The story,' said Westbrook deliberately, after a suppressed   
sigh, 'is written around an almost original plot. Characterization -  
 the best you have done. Construction - almost as good, except for   
a few weak joints which might be strengthened by a few changes   
and touches. It was a good story, except - '

'I can write English, can't I?' interrupted Dawe.   
'I have always told you, 'Said the editor, 'that you had a style.'   
'Then the trouble is the - '   
'Same old thing,' said Editor Westbrook. 'You work up to your

climax like an artist. And then you turn yourself into a photogra­pher. I don't know what form of obstinate madness possesses you,   
Shack, but that is what you do with everything that you write.   
No, I will retract the comparison with the photographer. Now

**95**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**    
and then photography, in spite of its impossible perspective, man­  
 ages to record a fleeting glimpse of truth. But you spoil every   
denouement by those flat, drab, obliterating strokes of your brush   
that I have so often complained of. If you would rise to the liter­ary pinnacle of your dramatic scenes, and paint them in the high   
colors that art requires, the postman would leave fewer bulky,   
self-addressed envelopes at your door.'

'Oh, fiddles and footlights!' cried Dawe derisively. 'You've got   
that old sawmill drama kink in your brain yet. When the man with   
the black moustache kidnaps golden-haired Bessie you are bound   
to have the mother kneel and raise her hands in the spotlight and   
say: "May high heaven witness that I will rest neither night nor   
day till the heartless villain that has stolen me child feels the   
weight of a mother's vengeance!" '

Editor Westbrook conceded a smile of impervious complacency.   
'I think,' said he, 'that in real life the woman would express her­

self in those words or in very similar ones.'   
'Not in a six hundred nights' run anywhere but, on the stage,'

said Dawe hotly. 'I'll tell you what she'd say in real life. She'd say:   
"What! Bessie led away by a strange man? Good Lord! It's one   
trouble after another! Get my other hat, I must hurry around to   
the police-station. Why wasn't somebody looking after her, I'd   
like to know? For God's sake, get out of my way or I'll never get   
ready. Not that hat - the brown one with the velvet bows. Bessie   
must have been crazy; she's usually shy of strangers. Is that too   
much powder? Lordy! How I'm upset!"

'That's the way she'd talk,' continued Dawe. 'People in real life   
don't fly into heroics and blank verse at emotional crises. They   
simply can't do it. If they talk at all on such occasions they draw   
from the same vocabulary that they use every day, and muddle up   
their words and ideas a little more, that's all.'

'Shack,' said Editor Westbrook impressively, 'did you ever pick   
up the mangled and lifeless form of a child from under the fender   
of a street-car, and carry it in your arms and lay it down before the   
distracted mother? Did you ever do that and listen to the words of   
grief and despair as they flowed spontaneously from her lips?'

'I never did,' said Dawe. 'Did you?'   
'Well, no,' said Editor Westbrook, with a slight frown. 'But I

can well imagine what she would say.'   
'So can I,' said Dawe.   
And now the fitting time had come for Editor Westbrook to play

the oracle and silence his opinionated contributor. It was not for an

**96**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
unarrived fictionist to dictate words to be uttered by the heroes and   
heroines of the *Minerva Magazine,* contrary to the theories of the   
editor thereof.

'My dear Shack,' said he, 'if I know anything of life, I know that   
every sudden, deep and tragic emotion in the human heart calls   
forth an opposite, concordant, conformable, and proportionate   
expression of feeling? How much of this inevitable accord between   
expression and feeling should be attributed to nature, and how   
much to the influence of art, it would be difficult to say. The sub­limely terrible roar of the lioness that has been deprived of her   
cubs are dramatically as far above her customary whine and purr as   
the kingly and transcendent utterances of Lear are above the level   
of his senile vaporing's. But it is also true that all men and women   
have what may be called a subconscious dramatic sense that is   
awakened by a sufficiently deep and powerful emotion - a sense   
unconsciously acquired from literature and the stage that prompts   
them to express those emotions in language befitting their impor­tance and histrionic value.'

'And in the name of seven sacred saddle-blankets of Sagittarius,   
where did the stage and literature get the stunt?' asked Dawe.

'From life,' answered the editor triumphantly.   
The story-writer rose from the bench and gesticulated elo­quently but dumbly. He was beggared for words with which to   
formulate adequately his dissent.

On a bench near by a frowsy loafer opened his red eyes and   
perceived that his moral support was due to a down-trodden   
brother.

'Punch him one, Jack,' he called hoarsely to Dawe. 'Wat ' s he   
come making' a noise like a penny arcade for amongst gentlemen   
that comes in the Square to set and think?'

Editor Westbrook looked at his watch with an affected show of   
leisure.

'Tell me, 'Asked Dawe, with truculent anxiety, 'what especial   
faults in "The Alarum of the Soul" caused you to throw it down.'

'When Gabriel Murray,' said Westbrook, 'goes to his telephone   
and is told that his fiancée has been shot by a burglar, he says - I   
do not recall the exact words, but - '

'I do,' said Dawe. 'He says: "Damn Central; she always cuts me   
off." (And then to his friend): "Say, Tommy, does a thirty-two   
bullet make a big hole? It's kind of hard luck, aren't it? Could you   
get me a drink from the sideboard, Tommy? No; straight; nothing   
on the side." '

**97**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
'And again,' continued the editor, without pausing for argu­ment, 'when Berenice opens the letter from her husband inform­ing her that he has fled with the manicure girl, her words are - let   
me see - '

'She says,' interposed the author: ' "Well, what do you think of   
that!" '

'Absurdly inappropriate words,' said Westbrook, 'presenting   
an anti-climax - plunging the story into hopeless bathos. Worse   
yet; they mirror life falsely. No human being ever uttered banal   
colloquialisms when confronted by sudden tragedy.'

'Wrong,' said Dawe, closing his unshaven jaws doggedly. 'I say   
no man or woman ever spouts highfalutin talk when they go up   
against a real climax. They talk naturally, and a little worse.'

The editor rose from the bench with his air of indulgence and   
inside information.

'Say, Westbrook,' said Dawe, pinning him by the lapel, 'would   
you have accepted "The Alarum of the Soul" if you had believed   
that the actions and words of the characters were true to life in the   
parts of the story that we discussed?'

'It is very likely that I would, if I believed that way,' said the   
editor. 'But I have explained to you that I do not.'

'If I could prove to you that I am right?'   
'I'm sorry, Shack, but I'm afraid I haven't time to argue any

further just now.'   
'I don't want to argue,' said Dawe. 'I want to demonstrate to

you from life itself that my view is the correct one.'   
'How could you do that?' asked Westbrook in a surprised tone.   
'Listen,' said the writer seriously. 'I have thought of a way. It is

important to me that my theory of true-to-life fiction be recog­nized as correct by the magazines. I've fought for it for three   
years, and I'm down to my last dollar, with two months' rent due.'

'I have applied the opposite of your theory,' said the editor, 'in   
selecting the fiction for the *Minerva Magazine.* The circulation has   
gone up from ninety thousand to - '

'Four hundred thousand,' said Dawe. 'Whereas it should have   
been boosted to a million.'

'you said something to me just now about demonstrating your   
pet theory.'

'I will. If you'll give me about half an hour of your time, I'll   
prove to you that I am right. I'll prove it by Louise.'

'Your wife!' exclaimed Westbrook. 'How?'   
'Well, not exactly by her, but with her,' said Dawe. 'Now, you

**98**

**O HENRY - 100 SELECTED STORIES**   
know how devoted and loving Louise has always been. She thinks   
I'm the only genuine preparation on the market that bears the old   
doctor's signature. She's been fonder and more faithful than ever,   
since I've been cast for the neglected genius part.'

'Indeed, she is a charming and admirable life companion,'   
agreed the editor. 'I remember what inseparable friends she and   
Mrs. Westbrook once were. We are both lucky chaps, Shack, to   
have such wives. You must bring Mrs. Dawe up some evening   
soon, and we'll have one of those informal chafing-dish suppers   
that we used to enjoy so much.'

'Later,' said Dawe. 'When I get another shirt. And now I'll tell   
you, my scheme. When I was about to leave home after breakfast -  
 if you can call tea and oatmeal breakfast - Louise told me she was   
going to visit her aunt in Eighty-ninth Street. She said she would   
return home at three o'clock. She is always on time to a minute. It   
is now - '

Dawe glanced toward the editor's watch pocket.   
'Twenty-seven minutes to three,' said Westbrook, scanning his

timepiece.   
'We have just enough time,' said Dawe. 'We will go to my flat

at once. I will write a note, address it to her and leave it on the   
table where she will see it as she enters the door. You and I will be   
in the dining-room concealed by the portieres. In that note I'll say   
that I have fled from her forever with an affinity who understands   
the needs of my artistic soul as she never did. When she reads it   
we will observe her actions and hear her words. Then we will   
know which theory is the correct one - yours or mine.'

'Oh, never!' exclaimed the editor, shaking his head. 'That would   
be inexcusably cruel. I could not consent to have Mrs. Dawe's   
feelings played upon in such a manner.'

'Brace up,' said the writer. 'I guess I think as much of her as you   
do. It's for her benefit as well as mine. I've got to get a market for   
my stories in some way. It won't hurt Louise. She's healthy and   
sound. Her heart goes as strong as a ninety-eight-cent watch. It'll   
last for only a minute, and then I'll step out and explain to her.   
You really owe it to me to give me the chance, Westbrook.'

Editor Westbrook at length yielded, though but half willingly.   
And in the half of him that consented lurked the vivisectionist that   
is in all of us.

Let him who has not used the scalpel rise and stand in his place.   
Pity 'tis that there are not enough rabbits and guinea-pigs to go   
around.

**99**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**    
The two experimenters in Art left the Square and hurried east­

ward and then to the south until they arrived in the Gramercy   
neighborhood. Within its high iron railings, the little park had put   
on its smart coat of vernal green, and was admiring itself in its foun­tain minor. Outside the railings the hollow square of crumbling   
houses, shells of a bygone gentry, leaned as if in ghostly gossip over   
the forgotten doings of the vanished quality. *Sic transit gloria Urbis.*

A block or two north of the park, Dawe steered the editor again   
eastward, then, after covering a short distance, into a lofty but   
narrow flat house burdened with a floridly over-decorated façade.   
To the fifth story they toiled, and Dawe, panting, pushed his   
latch-key into the door of one of the front flats.

When the door opened Editor Westbrook saw, with feelings of   
pity, how meanly and meagerly the rooms were furnished.

'Get a chair, if you can find one,' said Dawe, 'while I hunt up   
pen and ink. Hallo, what's this? Here's a note from Louise. She   
must have left it there when she went out this morning.'

He picked up an envelope that lay on the center-table and tore   
it open. He began to read the letter that he drew out of it; and   
once having begun it aloud he so read it through to the end.   
These are the words that Editor Westbrook heard:

DEAR SHACKLEFORD, -  
 'By the time you get this I will be about a hundred miles away

and still a-going. I've got a place in the chorus of the Occidental   
Opera Co., and we start on the road to-day at twelve o'clock. I   
didn't want to starve to death, and so I decided to make my own   
living. I'm not coming back. Mrs. Westbrook is going with me.   
She said she was tired of living with a combination phonograph,   
iceberg and dictionary, and she's not coming back, either. We've   
been practicing the songs and dances for two months on the quiet.   
I hope you will be successful, and get along all right. Good-bye.

'LOUISE.'

Dawe dropped the letter, covered his face with his trembling   
hands, and cried out in a deep vibrating voice:

*'My God, why hast Thou given me this cup to drink? Since she is*   
*false, then let Thy Heaven's fairest gifts, faith and love, become the*   
*jesting bywords of traitors and friends!'*

Editor Westbrook's glasses fell to the floor. The fingers of one   
hand fumbled with a button on his coat as he blurted between his   
pale lips:

**100**

**O HENRY - 100 S E L E C T E D S T O R I E S**   
'Say, Shack, aren't that a hell of a note? Wouldn't that knock you off

*your perch, Shack? Isn't it hell, now, Shack - aren't it?'*

**LIII**   
**Past One at Rooney's**

ONLY ON THE LOWER East Side of New York do the Houses of   
Capulet and Montague survive. There they do not fight by the   
book of arithmetic. If you but bite your thumb at an upholder of   
your opposing house you have work cut out for your steel. On   
Broadway you may drag your man along a dozen blocks by his   
nose, and he will only bawl for the watch; but in the domain of the   
East Side Tybalt's and Mercutio's you must observe the niceties of   
deportment to the wink of an eyelash and to an inch of elbow-  
 room at the bar when its patrons include foes of your house and   
kin.

So, when Eddie McManus, known to the Capulets as Cork   
McManus, drifted into Dutch Mike's for a stein of beer, and came   
upon a bunch of Montagues making merry with the suds, he began   
to observe the strictest parliamentary rules. Courtesy forbade his   
leaving the saloon with his thirst unslaked; caution steered him to   
a place at the bar where the mirror supplied the cognizance of the   
enemy's movements that his indifferent gaze seemed to disdain;   
experience whispered to him that the finger of trouble would be   
busy among the chattering steins at Dutch Mike's that night.   
Close by his side drew Brick Cleary, his Mercutio, companion of   
his perambulations. Thus, they stood, four of the Mulberry Hill   
Gang and two of the Dry Dock Gang minding their P's and Q's so   
solicitously that Dutch Mike kept one eye on his customers and   
the other on an open space beneath his bar in which it was his   
custom to seek safety whenever the ominous politeness of the rival   
associations congealed into the shapes of bullets and cold steel.

But we have not to do with the wars of the Mulberry Hills and   
the Dry Docks. We must to Rooney's, were, on the most   
blighted dead branch of the tree of life, a little pale orchid shall   
bloom.

Overstrained etiquette at last gave way. It is not known who   
first overstepped the bounds of punctilio; but the consequences   
were immediate. Buck Malone, of the Mulberry Hills, with a   
Dewey-like swiftness, got an eight-inch gun swung round from his