ALFRED HENRY LEWIS

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EAN 8596547058595

DigiCat, 2022
Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

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THE APACHES OF NEW YORK

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I.—EAT-'EM-UP JACK

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Chick Tricker kept a house of call at One Hundred and Twenty-eight Park Row. There he sold strong drink, wine and beer, mostly beer, and the thirsty sat about at sloppy tables and enjoyed themselves. When night came there was music, and those who would—and could—arose and danced. One Hundred and Twenty-eight Park Row was in recent weeks abolished. The Committee of Fourteen, one of those restless moral influences so common in New York, complained to the Powers of Excise and had the license revoked.

It was a mild February evening. The day shift had gone off watch at One Hundred and Twenty-eight, leaving the night shift in charge, and—all things running smoothly—Tricker decided upon an evening out. It might have been ten o'clock when, in deference to that decision, he stepped into the street. It was commencing to snow—flakes as big and

soft and clinging as a baby's hand. Not that Tricker—hardy soul—much minded snow.

Tricker, having notions about meeting Indian Louie, swung across to Roosevelt Street. Dodging down five steps, he opened the door of a dingy wine-cellar. It was the nesting-place of a bevy of street musicians, a dozen of whom were scattered about, quaffing chianti. Their harps, fiddles and hand-organs had been chucked into corners, and a general air of relaxation pervaded the scene. The room was blue with smoke, rich in the odor of garlic, and, since the inmates all talked at once, there arose a prodigious racket.

Near where Tricker seated himself reposed a hand-organ. Crouched against it was a little, mouse-hued monkey, fast asleep. The day's work had told on him. 'Fatigued of much bowing and scraping for coppers, the diminutive monkey slept soundly. Not all the hubbub served to shake the serene profundity of his dreams.

Tricker idly gave the handle of the organ a twist. Perhaps three notes were elicited. It was enough. The little monkey was weary, but he knew the voice and heard in it a trumpet-call to duty. With the earliest squeak he sprang up—winking, blinking—and, doffing his small red hat, began begging for pennies. Tricker gave him a dime, not thinking it right to disturb his slumbers for nothing. The mouse-hued one tucked it away in some recondite pocket of his scanty jacket, and then, the organ having lapsed into silence, curled up for another snooze.

Tricker paid for his glass of wine, and—since he saw nothing of Indian Louie, and as a source of interest had

exhausted the monkey—lounged off into the dark.

In Chatham Square Tricker met a big-chested policeman. Tricker knew the policeman, having encountered him officially. As the latter strutted along, a small, mustard-colored dog came crouching at his heels.

“What's the dog for?” Tricker asked.

Being in an easy mood, the trivial possessed a charm.

The policeman bent upon the little dog a benign eye. The little dog glanced up shyly, wagging a wistful tail.

“He's lost,” vouchsafed the policeman, “and he's put it up to me to find out where he lives.” He explained that all lost dogs make hot-foot for the nearest policeman. “They know what a cop is for,” said the big-chested one. Then, to the little dog: “Come on, my son; we'll land you all right yet.”

Tricker continued his stroll. At Doyers Street and the Bowery he entered Barney Flynn's. There were forty customers hanging about. These loiterers were panhandlers of low degree; they were beneath the notice of Tricker, who was a purple patrician of the gangs. One of them could have lived all day on a quarter. It meant bed—ten cents—and three glasses of beer, each with a free lunch which would serve as a meal. Bowery beer is sold by the glass; but the glass holds a quart. The Bowery has refused to be pinched by the beer trust.

In Flynn's was the eminent Chuck Connors, his head on his arm and his arm on a table. Intoxicated? Perish the thought! Merely taking his usual forty winks after dinner, which repast had consisted of four beef-stews. Tricker gave

him a facetious thump on the back, but he woke in a bilious mood, full of haughtiness and cold reserve.

There is a notable feature in Flynn's. The East Side is in its way artistic. Most of the places are embellished with pictures done on the walls, presumably by the old monsters of the *Police News*. On the rear wall of Flynn's is a portrait of Washington on a violent white horse. The Father of his Country is in conventional blue and buff, waving a vehement blade.

“Who is it?” demanded Proprietor Flynn of the artist, when first brought to bay by the violent one on the horse.

“Who is it?” retorted the artist indignantly. “Who should it be but Washin'ton, the Father of his Country?”

“Washin'ton?” repeated Flynn. “Who's Washin'ton?”

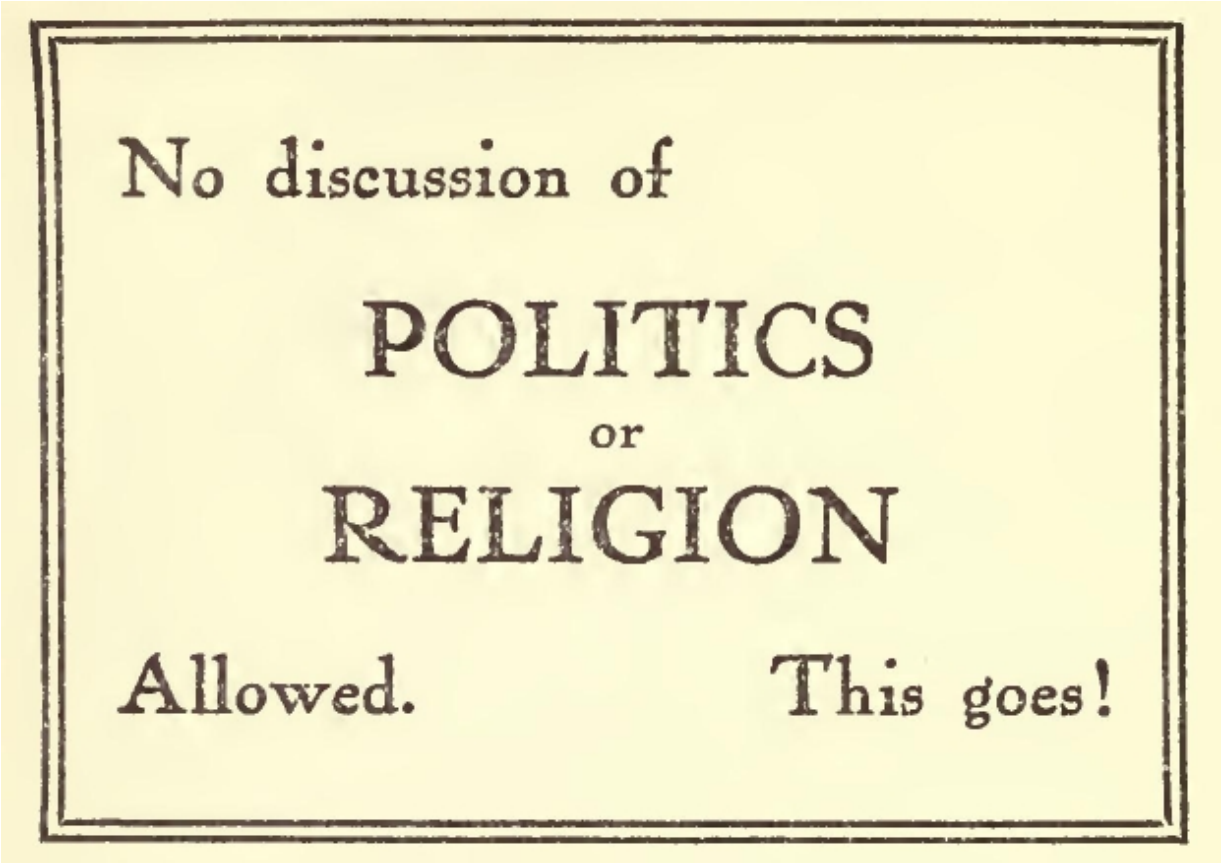
“Don't you know who Washin'ton is? Say, you ought to go to night school! Washin'ton's th' duck who frees this country from th' English.”

“An' he bate th' English, did he? I can well be-lave it! Yez can see be th' face of him he's a brave man.” Then, following a rapt silence: “Say, I'll tell ye what! Paint me a dead Englishman right down there be his horse's fut, an' I'll give ye foor dollars more.”

The generous offer was accepted, and the foreground enriched with a dead grenadier.

Coming out of Flynn's, Tricker went briefly into the Chinese Theater. The pig-tailed audience, sitting on the backs of the chairs with their feet in the wooden seats, were enjoying the performance hugely. Tricker listened to the dialogue but a moment; it was unsatisfactory and sounded like a cat-fight.

In finding his way out of Doyers Street, Tricker stopped for a moment in a little doggery from which came the tump-tump of a piano and the scuffle of a dance. The room, not thirty feet long, was cut in two by a ramshackle partition. On the grimy wall hung a placard which carried this moderate warning:



The management seemed to be in the hands of a morose personage, as red as a boiled lobster, who acted behind the bar. The piano was of that flat, tin-pan tone which bespeaks the veteran. It was drummed upon by a bleary virtuoso, who at sight of Tricker—for whose favor he yearned—began banging forth a hurly-burly that must have set on edge the teeth of every piano in the vicinity. The darky who was

dancing redoubled his exertions. Altogether, Tricker's entrance was not without *éclat*. Not that he seemed impressed as, flinging himself into a chair, he listlessly called for apollinaris.

“What do youse pay him?” asked Tricker of the boiled barkeeper, indicating as he did so the hardworking colored person.

“Pad-money!”—with a slighting glance. “Pad-money; an' it's twict too much.”

Pad-money means pay for a bed.

“Well, I should say so!” coincided Tricker, with the weary yet lofty manner of one who is a judge.

In one corner were two women and a trio of men. The men were thieves of the cheap grade known as lush-workers. These beasts of prey lie about the East Side grog shops, and when some sailor ashore leaves a place, showing considerable slant, they tail him and take all he has. They will plunder their victim in sight of a whole street. No one will tell. The first lesson of Gangland is never to inform nor give evidence. One who does is called snitch; and the wages of the snitch is death. The lush-workers pay a percentage of their pillage, to what saloons they infest, for the privilege of lying in wait.

Tricker pointed to the younger of the two women—about eighteen, she was.

“Two years ago,” said Tricker, addressing the boiled barman, “I had her pinched an' turned over to the Aid Society. She's so young I thought mebby they could save her.”

“Save her!” repeated the boiled one in weary disgust. “Youse can't save 'em. I used to try that meself. That was long ago. Now”—tossing his hand with a resigned air—“now, whenever I see a skirt who's goin' to hell, I pay her fare.”

One of the three men was old and gray of hair. He used to be a gonoph, and had worked the rattlers and ferries in his youth. But he got settled a couple of times, and it broke his nerve. There is an age limit in pocket-picking. No pickpocket is good after he passes forty years; so far, Dr. Osier was right. Children from twelve to fourteen do the best work. Their hands are small and steady; their confidence has not been shaken by years in prison. There are twenty New York Fagins—the police use the Dickens name—training children to pick pockets. These Fagins have dummy subjects faked up, their garments covered with tiny bells. The pockets are filled—watch, purse, card-case, handkerchief, gloves. Not until a pupil can empty every pocket, without ringing a bell, is he fit to go out into the world and look for boobs.

“If Indian Louie shows up,” remarked Tricker to the boiled-lobster barman, as he made ready to go, “tell him to blow 'round tomorry evenin' to One Hundred and Twenty-eight.”

Working his careless way back to the Bowery, Tricker strolled north to where that historic thoroughfare merges into Third Avenue. In Great Jones Street, round the corner from Third Avenue, Paul Kelly kept the New Brighton. Tricker decided to look in casually upon this hall of mirth, and—as one interested—study trade conditions. True, there was a coolness between himself and Kelly, albeit, both being of

the Five Points, they were of the same tribe. What then? As members of the gang nobility, had they not won the right to nurse a private feud? De Bracy and Bois Guilbert were both Crusaders, and yet there is no record of any lost love between them.

In the roll of gang honor Kelly's name was written high. Having been longer and more explosively before the public, his fame was even greater than Tricker's. There was, too, a profound background of politics to the New Brighton. It was strong with Tammany Hall, and, per incident, in right with the police. For these double reasons of Kelly's fame, and that atmosphere of final politics which invested it, the New Brighton was deeply popular. Every foot of dancing floor was in constant demand, while would-be merry-makers, crowded off for want of room, sat in a triple fringe about the walls.

Along one side of the dancing room was ranged a row of tables. A young person, just struggling into gang notice, relinquished his chair at one of these to Tricker. This was in respectful recognition of the exalted position in Gangland held by Tricker. Tricker unbent toward the young person in a tolerant nod, and accepted his submissive politeness as though doing him a favor. Tricker was right. His notice, even such as it was, graced and illustrated the polite young person in the eyes of all who beheld it, and identified him as one of whom the future would hear.

Every East Side dance hall has a sheriff, who acts as floor manager and settles difficult questions of propriety. It often happens that, in an excess of ardor and a paucity of room, two couples in their dancing seek to occupy the same space on the floor. He who makes two blades of grass grow where

but one grew before, may help his race and doubtless does. The rule, however, stops with grass and does not reach to dancing. He who tries to make two couples dance, where only one had danced before, but lays the bed-plates of a riot. Where all the gentlemen are spirited, and the ladies even more so, the result is certain in its character, and in no wise hard to guess. Wherefore the dance hall sheriff is not without a mission. Likewise his honorable post is full of peril, and he must be of the stern ore from which heroes are forged.

The sheriff of the New Brighton was Eat-'Em-Up-Jack McManus. He had been a prize-fighter of more or less inconsequence, but a liking for mixed ale and a difficulty in getting to weight had long before cured him of that. He had won his *nom de guerre* on the battle-field, where good knights were wont to win their spurs. Meeting one of whose conduct he disapproved, he had criticized the offender with his teeth, and thereafter was everywhere hailed as Eat-'Em-Up-Jack.

Eat-'Em-Up-Jack wore his honors modestly, as great souls ever do, and there occurred nothing at the New Brighton to justify that re-baptism. There he preserved the proprieties with a black-jack, and never once brought his teeth into play. Did some boor transgress, Eat-'Em-Up-Jack collared him, and cast him into the outer darkness of Great Jones Street. If the delinquent foolishly resisted, Eat-'Em-Up-Jack emphasized that dismissal with his boot. In extreme instances he smote upon him with a black-jack—ever worn ready on his wrist, although delicately hidden, when not upon active service, in his coat sleeve.

Tricker, drinking seltzer and lemon, sat watching the dancers as they swept by. He himself was of too grave a cast to dance; it would have mismatched with his position.

Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, who could claim social elevation by virtue of his being sheriff, came and stood by Tricker's table. The pair greeted one another. Their manner, while marked of a careful courtesy, was distant and owned nothing of warmth. The feuds of Kelly were the feuds of Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, and the latter knew that Tricker and Kelly stood not as brothers.

As Eat-'Em-Up-Jack paused by Tricker's table, passing an occasional remark with that visitor from Park Row, Bill Harrington with Goldie Cora whirled by on the currents of the *Beautiful Blue Danube*. Tricker's expert tastes rejected with disfavor the dancing of Goldie Cora.

“I don't like the way she t'rows her feet,” he said.

Now Goldie Cora was the belle of the New Brighton. Moreover, Eat-'Em-Up-Jack liked the way she threw her feet, and was honest in his admiration. As much might be said of Harrington, who had overheard Tricker's remark. Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, defending his own judgment, declared that Goldie Cora was the sublimation of grace, and danced like a leaf in a puff of wind. He closed by discrediting not only the opinion but the parentage of Tricker, and advised him to be upon his way lest worse happen him.

“Beat it, before I bump me black-jack off your bean!” was the way it was sternly put by Eat-'Em-Up-Jack.

Tricker, cool and undismayed, waved his hand as though brushing aside a wearisome insect.

“Can that black-jack guff,” he retorted. “Un'er-stan'; your bein' a fighter don't get youse nothin' wit' me!”

Harrington came up. Having waltzed the entire length of the *Beautiful Blue Danube*, he had abandoned Goldie Cora, and was now prepared to personally resent the imputation inherent in Tricker's remark anent that fair one's feet.

“He don't like the way you t'row your feet, eh? I'll make him like it.”

Thus spake Harrington to Goldie Cora, as he turned from her to seek out Tricker.

No, Gangland is not so ceremonious as to demand that you lead the lady to a seat. Dance ended, it is good form to leave her sticking in the furrow, even as a farmer might his plow, and walk away.

Harrington bitterly added his views to Eat-'Em-Up-Jack's, and something was said about croaking Tricker then and there. The threats of Harrington, as had those of Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, glanced off the cool surface of Tricker like the moon's rays off a field of ice. He was sublimely indifferent, and didn't so much as get off his chair. Only his right hand stole under his coat-skirt in an unmistakable way.

“Why, you big stiff! w'at be youse tryin' to give me?” was his only separate notice of Harrington. Then, to both: “Unless you guys is lookin' to give th' coroner a job, youse won't start nothin' here. Take it from me that, w'en I'm bounced out of a dump like this, the bouncin' 'll come off in th' smoke.”

Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, being neither so quick nor so eloquent as Tricker, could only retort, “That's all right! I'll hand you yours before I'm done!”

Harrington, after his first outbreak, said nothing, being privily afraid of Tricker, and more or less held by the spell of his fell repute. Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, who feared no man, was kept in check by his obligations as sheriff—that, and a sense of duty. True, the situation irked him sorely; he felt as though he were in handcuffs. But the present was no common case. Tricker would shoot; and a hail of lead down the length of the dancing floor meant loss in dollars and cents. This last was something which Kelly, always a business man and liking money, would be the first to condemn and the last to condone. It would black-eye the place; since few care to dance where the ballroom may become a battle-field and bullets zip and sing.

“If it was only later!” said Eat-'Em-Up Jack, wistfully.

“Later?” retorted Tricker. “That's easy. You close at one, an' that's ten minutes from now. Let the mob make its getaway; an' after that youse ducks 'll find me waitin' 'round the corner in Thoid Avenue.”

Tricker, manner nonchalant to the point of insult, loitered to the door, pausing on his way to take a leisurely drink at the bar.

“You dubs,” he called back, as he stepped out into Great Jones Street, “better bring your gatts!”

Gatts is East Sidese for pistols.

Harrington didn't like the looks of things. He was sorry, he said, addressing Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, but he wouldn't be able to accompany him to that Third Avenue tryst. He must see Goldie Cora home. The Police had just issued an order, calculated invidiously to inconvenience and annoy every

lady found in the streets after midnight unaccompanied by an escort.

Eat-'Em-Up-Jack hardly heard him. Personally he wouldn't have turned hand or head to have had the company of a dozen Harringtons. Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, while lacking many things, lacked not at all in heart.

The New Brighton closed in due time. Eat-'Em-Up-Jack waited until sure the junction of Great Jones Street and Third Avenue was quite deserted. As he came 'round the corner, gun in hand, Tricker—watchful as a cat—stepped out of a stairway. There was a blazing, rattling fusillade—twelve shots in all. When the shooting was at an end, Eat-'Em-Up-Jack had vanished. Tricker, save for a reason, would have followed his vanishing example; there was a bullet embedded in the calf of his leg.

Tricker hopped painfully into a stairway, where he might have advantage of the double gloom. He had lighted a cigarette, and was coolly leaning against the entrance, when two policemen came running up.

“What was that shooting?” demanded one.

“Oh, a couple of geeks started to hand it to each other,” was Tricker's careless reply.

“Did either get hurt?”

“One of 'em cops it in th' leg. Th' other blew.”

“What became of the one who's copped?”

“Oh, him? He hops into one of th' stairways along here.”

The officers didn't see the spreading pool of blood near Tricker's foot. They hurried off to make a ransack of the stairways, while Tricker hobbled out to a cab he had signaled, and drove away.

Twenty-four hours later!

Not a block from where he'd fought his battle with Tricker, Eat-'Em-Up-Jack was walking in Third Avenue. He was as lone as Lot's wife; for he nourished misanthropic sentiments and discouraged company. It was a moonless night and very dark, the snow still coming down. What with the storm and the hour, the streets were as empty as a church.

As Eat-'Em-Up-Jack passed the building farthest from the corner lamp, a crouching figure stepped out of the doorway. Had it been two o'clock in the afternoon, instead of two o'clock in the morning, you would have seen that he of the crouching figure was smooth and dark-skinned as to face, and that his blue-black hair had been cut after a tonsorial fashion popular along the Bowery as the Guinea Lop. The crouching one carried in his hand what seemed to be a rolled-up newspaper. In that rolled-up paper lay hidden a two-foot piece of lead pipe.

The crouching blue-black one crept after Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, making no more noise than a cat. He uplifted the lead pipe, grasping it the while with both hands.

Eat-'Em-Up-Jack, as unaware of his peril as of what was passing in the streets of Timbuctoo, slouched heavily forward, deep in thought, Perhaps he was considering a misspent youth, and chances thrown away.

The lead pipe came down.

There was a dull crash, and Eat-'Em-Up-Jack—without word or cry—fell forward on his face. Blood ran from mouth and ears, and melted redly into the snow.

The crouching blue-black one shrank back into the stairway, and was seen no more. The street returned to utter emptiness. There remained only the lifeless body of Eat-'Em-Up-jack. Nothing beyond, save the softly falling veil of snow, with the street lamps shining through.

II.—THE BABY'S FINGERS

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It was a Central Office man who told me how the baby lost its fingers. I like Central Office men; they live romances and have adventures. The man I most shrink from is your dull, proper individual to whom nothing happens. You have seen a hundred such. Rigidly correct, they go uneventfully to and fro upon their little respectable tracks. Evenings, from the safe yet severe vantage of their little respectable porches, they pass judgment upon humanity from across the front fence. After which, they go inside and weary their wives with their tasteless, pale society, while those melancholy matrons question themselves, in a spirit of tacit despair, concerning the blessings of matrimony. In the end, first thanking heaven that they are not as other men, they retire to bed, to rise in the dawning and repeat the history of every pulseless

yesterday of their existence. Nothing ever overtakes them that doesn't overtake a clam. They are interesting, can be interesting, to no one save themselves. To talk with one an hour is like being lost in the desert an hour. I prefer people into whose lives intrudes some element of adventure, and who, as they roll out of their blankets in the morning, cannot give you, word and minute, just what they will be saying and doing every hour in the coming twelve.

My Central Office friend, in telling of the baby's absent fingers, began by speaking of Johnny Spanish. Spanish has been sent to prison for no less than seven years. Dribben and Blum arrested him, and when the next morning he was paraded at the Central Office looking-over, the speech made upon him by Commissioner Flynn set a resentful pulse to beating in his swarthy cheek.

Not that Spanish had been arrested for the baby's lost fingers. That story in the telling came later, although the wrong it registered had happened months before. Dribben and Blum picked him up—as a piece of work it did them credit—for what occurred in Mersher Miller's place.

As all the world knows, Mersher Miller, or as he is called among his intimates, Mersher the Strong-Arm, conducts a beer house at 171 Norfolk Street. It was a placid April evening, and Mersher's brother, as bottle-tosser, was busy behind the bar. Mersher himself was not in, which—for Mersher—may or may not have been greatly to the good.

Spanish came into the place. His hat was low-drawn over his black eyes. Mersher's brother, wiping glasses, didn't know him.

“Where's Mersher?” asked Spanish.

“Not here,” quoth Mersher's brother.

“You'll do,” returned Spanish. “Give me ten dollars out of the damper.”

Mersher's brother held this proposal in finance to be foolishly impossible, and was explicit on that head. He insisted, not without scorn, that he was the last man in the world to give a casual caller ten dollars out of the damper or anything else.

“I'll be back,” replied Spanish, “an' I bet then you'll give me that ten-spot.”

“That's Johnny Spanish,” declared a bystander, when Spanish, muttering his discontent, had gone his threatening way.

Mersher's brother doubted it. He had heard of Spanish, but had never seen him. It was his understanding that Spanish was not in town at all, having lammistered some time before.

“He's wanted be th' cops,” Mersher's brother argued. “You don't suppose he's sucker enough to walk into their mitts? He wouldn't dare show up in town.”

“Don't con yourself,” replied the bystander, who had a working knowledge of Gangland and its notables. “That's Spanish, all right. He was out of town, but not because of the bulls. It's the Dropper he's leary of; an' now th' Dropper's in hock he's chased back. You heard what he said about comin' 'round ag'in? Take my tip an' rib yourself up wit' a rod. That Spanish is a tough kid!”

The evening wore on at Mersher's; one hour, two hours, three went peaceably by. The clock pointed to eleven.

Without warning a lowering figure appeared at the door.

“There he is!” exclaimed the learned bystander. Then he added with a note of pride, albeit shaky as to voice: “What did I tell youse?”

The figure in the doorway strode forward. It was Spanish. A second figure—hat over eyes—. followed hard on his heels. With a flourish, possible only to the close student of Mr. Beadle's dime literature, Spanish drew two Colt's pistols.

“Come through wit' that ten!” said he to Mersher's brother.

Mersher's brother came through, and came through swiftly.

“I thought so!” sneered Spanish, showing his side teeth like a dog whose feelings have been hurt. “Now come through wit' th' rest!”

Mersher's brother eagerly gave him the contents of the cash drawer—about eighty dollars.

Spanish, having pocketed the money, wheeled upon the little knot of customers, who, after the New York manner when crime is afoot, had stood motionless with no thought of interfering.

“Hands up! Faces to the wall!” cried Spanish. “Everybody's dough looks good to me to-night!”

The customers, acting in such concert that it seemed as though they'd been rehearsed, hands held high, turned their faces to the wall.

“You keep them covered,” said Spanish to his dark companion in arms, “while I go through 'em.”

The dark companion leveled his own pistol in a way calculated to do the most harm, and Spanish reaped an assortment of cheap watches and a handful of bills.