

At the stroke of six Ikey Snigglefritz laid down his goose.

Ikey was a tailor's apprentice. Are there tailor's apprentices nowadays?

At any rate, Ikey toiled and snipped and basted and pressed and patched and sponged all day in the steamy feter of a tailor-shop. But when work was done Ikey hitched his wagon to such stars as his firmament let shine.

It was Sunday night, and the boss laid twelve begrimed and begrudged dollars in his hand. Ikey dabbed ~~discreetly~~ discreetly in water, donned coat, hat and collar with its frazzled tie, and chalcedony pin, and set forth in pursuit of his ideals.

For each of us, when ~~the work day is done~~ our day's work is done, must seek our ideals, whatever it be love or pinochle or lobster à la Newburg, or the sweet silence of the musty bookshelves.

Behold Ikey as he ambles up the street beneath the roaring 'El' between the rows of reeking sweetshops. Pallid, stooping, insignificant, squalid, doomed to exist for ever in penury of body and mind, yet, as he swings his cheap cane and projects the noisome inhalations from his cigarette, you perceive that he nurtures in his narrow bosom the bacillus of society.

Ikey's legs carried him to and into that famous place of entertainment known as the Café Maginnis - famous ~~bee~~ because it was the rendezvous of Billy McMahan, the greatest man, the most wonderful man, Ikey thought, that the world had ever produced.

Billy McMahan was the district leader. Upon him the Tiger poured, and his hand held manna to scatter. Now, as Ikey entered, McMahan stood, flushed and triumphant and mighty, the centre of a huzzaing concourse of his ~~lieutenants~~ lieutenants and constituents. It seems there had been an election; a signal victory had been won; the city had been swept back into line by a irresistible besom of ballots.

Ikey slunk along the bar and gazed, breath-quickenred, at his idol. How magnificent was Billy McMahan, with his great, smooth, laughing face; his grey eyes eye, ~~shrewd as a chicken's hawk's~~ shrewd as a chicken's hawk's; his diamond ring, his voice like a

bugle call, his prince's air, his plump and active roll of money his clarion call to friend and comrade - oh, what a king of men he was! How he obscured his lieutenants, though they themselves loomed large and serious, blue of chin and important of mien, with hands buried deep in the pockets of their short overcoats! But Billy - oh, what small avail are words to paint for you his glory as seen by Ikey Szigglefritz!

The Café Maginnis rang to the note of victory. The white-coated bartenders threw themselves feebly upon ~~bottles~~ bottle, ~~cork~~ cork and glass. From a score of clear Haranas the air received its paradox of clouds. The lead and the hopeful shook Billy McMahon's hand. And there was born suddenly in the worshipful soul of Ikey Szigglefritz an audacious, thrilling impulse.

He ~~steep~~ stepped forward into the little clear space in which majesty moved, and held out his hand.

Billy McMahon grasped it ~~unhesitatingly~~ unhesitatingly, shook it and smiled.

Made mad now by the gods who were about to destroy him, Ikey threw away his scabbard and charged upon Olympus. 'Have a drink with me, Billy,' he said familiarly, 'you and your friends.'

'Don't mind if I do, old man,' said the great leader, 'just to keep the ball rolling.'

The last spark of Ikey's reason fled. The bartender, waving a trembling hand.

'Wine,' he called to the bartender, waving a trembling hand. The corks of three bottles were drawn; the champagne ~~bubbled~~

bubbled in the long row of glasses set upon the bar. Billy McMahon took his and ~~nodded~~ nodded, with his beaming smile, at Ikey. The lieutenants and satellites took theirs and growled 'Here's to you.' Ikey took his nectar in delirium. All drank.

Ikey threw his week's wages in a crumpled roll upon the bar. 'C'rect,' said the bartender, smoothing the twelve one-dollar notes.

The crowd surged around Billy McMahon again. Someone was telling how Brannigan fixed 'em over in the Eleventh. Ikey ~~leaned~~ leaned against the bar a while and then went out.

He went down Hester Street and up Chrystie, and down Delancey

And there his womenfolk, a bibulous mother and three dingy sisters, pounced upon him for his wages. And at his confession they shrieked and oburgated him in the pithy rhetoric of the locality.

But even as they plucked at him and struck him, Ikey remained in his ecstatic trance of joy. His head was in the clouds; the star was drawing his wagon. ~~Compared to what he achieved~~ Compared with what he had achieved the loss of wages and the bray of women's tongues were slight affairs.

He had shaken the hand of Billy McMahon.

Billy McMahon had a wife, and upon her visiting cards was engraved the name 'Mrs. William Darragh McMahon.' And there was a certain vexation attendant upon these cards; for, small as they were, there were houses in which they could not be inserted. Billy McMahon was a dictator in politics, a four-walled tower in business, a mogul: dreaded, loved and obeyed among his own people. He was growing rich; the daily papers had a dozen men on his trail to chronicle his every word of wisdom; he had been honoured in caricature holding the Tiger cringing in leash.

But the heart of Billy was sometimes sore within him. There was a race of men from which he stood apart but that he viewed with the eye of Moses looking over into the Promised Land. He, too, had ideals, even as had Ikey Sniggelfritz; and sometimes, hopeless of attaining them, his own solid success was as dust and ashes in his mouth. And Mrs. William Darragh McMahon wore a look of discontent upon her plump but pretty face, and the very rustle of her silks seemed a sigh.

There was a brave and conspicuous assemblage in the dining-saloon of a noted hotel where Fashion loves to display her charms. At one table sat Billy McMahon and his wife. Mostly silent they were, but accessories they enjoyed little needed the endorsement of speech. Mrs. McMahon's diamonds were outshone by few in the room. The waiter bore the costliest brands of wine to their table. In evening dress, with an expression of gloom upon his smooth and massive countenance, you would look in vain for a more striking figure than Billy's.

Four tables away sat alone a tall, slender man, about thirty, with thoughtful, melancholy eyes, a van Dyke beard and peculiarly white, thin hands. He was dining on filet mignon, dry toast and apollinaris. That man was Cortlandt Van Duyck, a man worth eighty millions, who

inherited and held a sacred seat in the exclusive inner circle of society.

Billy McMahan spoke to no one around him, because he knew no one. Van Duyckink kept his eyes ~~at his plate~~ on his plate because he knew that every eye present was hungry to catch his. He could bestow knighthood and prestige by a nod, and he was chary of creating ~~too~~ a too-extensive nobility.

And then Billy McMahan conceived and accomplished the most startling and audacious act of his life. He rose ~~deliberately~~ deliberately and walked over to Cortlandt Van Duyckink's table and held out his hand.

'Say, Mr. Van Duyckink,' he said. 'I've heard you was talking about starting some reforms among the poor people down in my district. I'm McMahan, you know. Say, now, if that's straight I'll do all I can to help you. And what I says goes in that neck of the woods, don't it? Oh, say, I rather guess it does.'

Van Duyckink's rather sombre eyes lighted up. He rose to his lank height and grasped Billy McMahan's hand.

'Thank you, Mr. McMahan,' he said in his deep, serious tones. 'I have been thinking of doing some work of that sort. I shall be glad of your assistance. It pleases me to have become acquainted acquainted with you.'

Billy walked back to his seat. His shoulder was tingling from the accolade bestowed by royalty. A hundred eyes were now turned upon him in envy and new admiration. Mrs. William Derragh McMahan trembled with ecstasy, so that her diamonds smote the eye almost with pain. And now it was apparent that at many tables there were those who suddenly remembered that they enjoyed Mr McMahan's ~~acquaintance~~ acquaintance. He saw smiles and bows about him. He became enveloped in the aura of dizzy greatness. His campaign coolness deserted him.

'Wine for that gang!' he commented the waiter, pointing with his finger. 'Wine over there. Wine to those three gents by that green bush. Tell 'em it's on me. D-n it! Wine for everybody!'

The waiter ventured to whisper that it was perhaps inexpedient to ~~carry~~ carry out the order, in consideration of the dignity of the house and its custom.

⑤ 'All right,' said Billy, 'if it's against the rules. I wonder if I could do to send my friend Van Duyckink a bottle? No? Well, it'll flow all right at the caddy to-night, just the same. It'll be rubber boots for anybody who comes in there any time up to 2 a.m.'

Billy McMahan was happy.
He had shaken the hand of Cortlandt Van Duyckink.

The big pale-grey auto with its ~~shiny~~ shining metal work looked out of place moving slowly among the push-carts and trash-heaps on the lower East Side. So did Cortlandt Van Duyckink, with his aristocratic face and white, thin hands, as he steered carefully between the groups of ragged, scurrying youngsters in the streets. And so did Miss Constance Schuyler, with her dim, ascetic beauty, ~~sitting on his side~~ seated at his side.

'Oh, Cortlandt,' she breathed, 'isn't it said that human ~~big~~ beings have to live in such ~~wretchedness~~ wretchedness and poverty? And you how noble it is of you to think of them, to give your time and money to improve their ~~conditions!~~ condition!'

Van Duyckink turned his solemn eyes upon her.
'It is little,' he said sadly, 'that I can do. The question is a large one, and belongs to society. But even individual effort ~~are not thrown~~ is not thrown away. Look, Constance! On this street I have arranged to build soup kitchens, where no one who is hungry will be turned away. And down this other street are the old buildings that I shall cause to be torn down, and there erect others in place of those death-traps of fire and disease.'

Down Delancey slowly crept the pale-grey auto. Away from it toddled cores of ~~was~~ wondering, tangle-haired, barefooted, unwashed children. It stopped before a crazy brick structure, foul and awry.

Van Duyckink alighted to examine at a better perspective one of the leaning walls. Down the steps of the building came a young man who seemed to epitomize its degradation, squalor and infelicity - a narrow chested, pale, unsavoury young man, putting at a cigarette.

Obedying a sudden impulse, Van Duyckink stepped out and warmly grasped the hand of what seemed to him a living rebuke.

'I want to know you people,' he said sincerely. 'I am going to help

you as much as I can. We shall be friends.'

As the auto crept away Cortlandt Van Duyckink felt an ~~acustom~~^⑥
~~unacustomed~~ unaccustomed glow about his heart. He was near to
being a happy man.

He had shaken the hand of ~~Ikey~~ Ikey Sniggelritz.