

Local Color

Jack London

"I do not see why you should not turn this immense amount of unusual information to account," I told him. "Unlike most men equipped with similar knowledge, *you* have expression. Your style is--"

"Is sufficiently--er--journalese?" he interrupted suavely.

"Precisely! You could turn a pretty penny."

But he interlocked his fingers meditatively, shrugged his shoulders, and dismissed the subject.

"I have tried it. It does not pay."

"It was paid for and published," he added, after a pause. "And I was also honored with sixty days in the Hobo."

"The Hobo?" I ventured.

"The Hobo--" He fixed his eyes on my Spencer and ran along the titles while he cast his definition. "The Hobo, my dear fellow, is the name for that particular place of detention in city and county jails wherein are assembled tramps, drunks, beggars, and the riff-raff of petty offenders. The word itself is a pretty one, and it has a history. Hautbois--there's the French of it. haut, meaning high, and bois, wood. In English it becomes hautboy, a wooden musical instrument of two-foot tone, I believe, played with a double reed, an oboe, in fact. You remember in 'Henry IV'--

"The case of a treble hautboy
Was a mansion for him, a court."

From this to ho-boy is but a step, and for that matter the English used the terms interchangeably. But--and mark you, the leap paralyzes one--crossing the Western Ocean, in New York City, hautboy, or ho-boy, becomes the name by which the night-savenger is known. In a way one understands its being born of the contempt for wandering players and musical fellows. But see the beauty of it! the burn and the brand! The night-savenger, the pariah, the miserable, the despised, the man without caste! And in its next incarnation, consistently and logically, it attaches itself to the American outcast, namely, the tramp. Then, as others have mutilated its sense, the tramp mutilates its form, and ho-boy becomes exultantly hobo. Wherefore, the large stone and brick cells, lined with double and triple-tiered bunks, in which the Law is wont to incarcerate him, he calls the Hobo. Interesting, isn't it?"

And I sat back and marvelled secretly at this encyclopaedic-minded man, this Leith Clay-Randolph, this common tramp who made himself at home in my den, charmed such friends as gathered at my small table, outshone me with his brilliance and his manners, spent my

spending money, smoked my best cigars, and selected from my ties and studs with a cultivated and discriminating eye.

He absently walked over to the shelves and looked into Loria's "Economic Foundation of Society."

"I like to talk with you," he remarked. "You are not indifferently schooled. You've read the books, and your economic interpretation of history, as you choose to call it" (this with a sneer), "eminently fits you for an intellectual outlook on life. But your sociologic judgments are vitiated by your lack of practical knowledge. Now I, who know the books, pardon me, somewhat better than you, know life, too. I have lived it, naked, taken it up in both my hands and looked at it, and tasted it, the flesh and the blood of it, and, being purely an intellectual, I have been biased by neither passion nor prejudice. All of which is necessary for clear concepts, and all of which you lack. Ah! a really clever passage. Listen!"

And he read aloud to me in his remarkable style, paralleling the text with a running criticism and commentary, lucidly wording involved and lumbering periods, casting side and cross lights upon the subject, introducing points the author had blundered past and objections he had ignored, catching up lost ends, flinging a contrast into a paradox and reducing it to a coherent and succinctly stated truth--in short, flashing his luminous genius in a blaze of fire over pages erstwhile dull and heavy and lifeless.

It is long since that Leith Clay-Randolph (note the hyphenated surname) knocked at the back door of Idlewild and melted the heart of Gunda. Now Gunda was cold as her Norway hills, though in her least frigid moods she was capable of permitting especially nice-looking tramps to sit on the back stoop and devour lone crusts and forlorn and forsaken chops. But that a tatterdemalion out of the night should invade the sanctity of her kitchen-kingdom and delay dinner while she set a place for him in the warmest corner, was a matter of such moment that the Sunflower went to see. Ah, the Sunflower, of the soft heart and swift sympathy! Leith Clay-Randolph threw his glamour over her for fifteen long minutes, whilst I brooded with my cigar, and then she fluttered back with vague words and the suggestion of a cast-off suit I would never miss.

"Surely I shall never miss it," I said, and I had in mind the dark gray suit with the pockets dragged from the freightage of many books--books that had spoiled more than one day's fishing sport.

"I should advise you, however," I added, "to mend the pockets first."

But the Sunflower's face clouded. "N--o," she said, "the black one."

"The black one!" This explosively, incredulously. "I wear it quite often. I--I intended wearing it to-night."

"You have two better ones, and you know I never liked it, dear," the Sunflower hurried on. "Besides, it's shiny--"

"Shiny!"

"It--it soon will be, which is just the same, and the man is really estimable. He is nice and refined, and I am sure he--"

"Has seen better days."

"Yes, and the weather is raw and beastly, and his clothes are threadbare. And you have many suits--"

"Five," I corrected, "counting in the dark gray fishing outfit with the draggled pockets."

"And he has none, no home, nothing--"

"Not even a Sunflower,"--putting my arm around her,--"wherefore he is deserving of all things. Give him the black suit, dear--nay, the best one, the very best one. Under high heaven for such lack there must be compensation!"

"You *are* a dear!" And the Sunflower moved to the door and looked back alluringly. "You are a *perfect* dear."

And this after seven years, I marvelled, till she was back again, timid and apologetic.

"I--I gave him one of your white shirts. He wore a cheap horrid cotton thing, and I knew it would look ridiculous. And then his shoes were so slipshod, I let him have a pair of yours, the old ones with the narrow caps--"

"Old ones!"

"Well, they pinched horribly, and you know they did."

It was ever thus the Sunflower vindicated things.

And so Leith Clay-Randolph came to Idlewild to stay, how long I did not dream. Nor did I dream how often he was to come, for he was like an erratic comet. Fresh he would arrive, and cleanly clad, from grand folk who were his friends as I was his friend, and again, weary and worn, he would creep up the brier-rose path from the Montanas or Mexico. And without a word, when his *wanderlust* gripped him, he was off and away into that great mysterious underworld he called "The Road."

"I could not bring myself to leave until I had thanked you, you of the open hand and heart," he said, on the night he donned my good black suit.

And I confess I was startled when I glanced over the top of my paper and saw a lofty-browed and eminently respectable-looking gentleman, boldly and carelessly at ease. The Sunflower was right. He must have known better days for the black suit and white shirt to have effected such a transformation. Involuntarily I rose to my feet, prompted to meet him on equal ground. And then it was that the Clay-Randolph glamour descended upon me. He slept at Idlewild that night, and the next night, and for many nights. And he was a man to love. The Son of Anak, otherwise Rufus the Blue-Eyed, and also plebeianly known as Tots, rioted with him from brier-rose path to farthest orchard, scalped him in the haymow with

barbaric yells, and once, with pharisaic zeal, was near to crucifying him under the attic roof beams. The Sunflower would have loved him for the Son of Anak's sake, had she not loved him for his own. As for myself, let the Sunflower tell, in the times he elected to be gone, of how often I wondered when Leith would come back again, Leith the Lovable. Yet he was a man of whom we knew nothing. Beyond the fact that he was Kentucky-born, his past was a blank. He never spoke of it. And he was a man who prided himself upon his utter divorce of reason from emotion. To him the world spelled itself out in problems. I charged him once with being guilty of emotion when roaring round the den with the Son of Anak pickaback. Not so, he held. Could he not cuddle a sense-delight for the problem's sake?

He was elusive. A man who intermingled nameless argot with polysyllabic and technical terms, he would seem sometimes the veriest criminal, in speech, face, expression, everything; at other times the cultured and polished gentleman, and again, the philosopher and scientist. But there was something glimmering; there which I never caught--flashes of sincerity, of real feeling, I imagined, which were sped ere I could grasp; echoes of the man he once was, possibly, or hints of the man behind the mask. But the mask he never lifted, and the real man we never knew.

"But the sixty days with which you were rewarded for your journalism?" I asked. "Never mind Loria. Tell me."

"Well, if I must." He flung one knee over the other with a short laugh.

"In a town that shall be nameless," he began, "in fact, a city of fifty thousand, a fair and beautiful city wherein men slave for dollars and women for dress, an idea came to me. My front was prepossessing, as fronts go, and my pockets empty. I had in recollection a thought I once entertained of writing a reconciliation of Kant and Spencer. Not that they are reconcilable, of course, but the room offered for scientific satire--"

I waved my hand impatiently, and he broke off.

"I was just tracing my mental states for you, in order to show the genesis of the action," he explained. "However, the idea came. What was the matter with a tramp sketch for the daily press? The Irreconcilability of the Constable and the Tramp, for instance? So I hit the *drag* (the drag, my dear fellow, is merely the street), or the high places, if you will, for a newspaper office. The elevator whisked me into the sky, and Cerberus, in the guise of an anaemic office boy, guarded the door. Consumption, one could see it at a glance; nerve, Irish, colossal; tenacity, undoubted; dead inside the year.

"'Pale youth,' quoth I, 'I pray thee the way to the sanctum-sanctorum, to the Most High Cock-a-lorum.'"

"He deigned to look at me, scornfully, with infinite weariness.

"'G'wan an' see the janitor. I don't know nothin' about the gas.'"

"'Nay, my lily-white, the editor.'"

"'Wich editor?' he snapped like a young bullterrier. 'Dramatic? Sportin'? Society? Sunday?

Weekly? Daily? Telegraph? Local? News? Editorial? Wich?

"Which, I did not know. *The Editor*,' I proclaimed stoutly. 'The *only* Editor.'

"Aw, Spargo!' he sniffed.

"Of course, Spargo,' I answered. 'Who else?'

"Gimme yer card,' says he.

"My what?'

"Yer card--Say! Wot's yer business, anyway?'

"And the anaemic Cerberus sized me up with so insolent an eye that I reached over and took him out of his chair. I knocked on his meagre chest with my fore knuckle, and fetched forth a weak, gaspy cough; but he looked at me unflinchingly, much like a defiant sparrow held in the hand.

"I am the census-taker Time,' I boomed in sepulchral tones. 'Beware lest I knock too loud.'

"Oh, I don't know,' he sneered.

"Whereupon I rapped him smartly, and he choked and turned purplish.

"Well, whatcher want?' he wheezed with returning breath.

"I want Spargo, the only Spargo.'

"Then leave go, an' I'll glide an' see.'

"No you don't, my lily-white.' And I took a tighter grip on his collar. 'No bouncers in mine, understand! I'll go along.'"

Leith dreamily surveyed the long ash of his cigar and turned to me. "Do you know, Anak, you can't appreciate the joy of being the buffoon, playing the clown. You couldn't do it if you wished. Your pitiful little conventions and smug assumptions of decency would prevent. But simply to turn loose your soul to every whimsicality, to play the fool unafraid of any possible result, why, that requires a man other than a householder and law-respecting citizen.

"However, as I was saying, I saw the only Spargo. He was a big, beefy, red-faced personage, full-jowled and double-chinned, sweating at his desk in his shirt-sleeves. It was August, you know. He was talking into a telephone when I entered, or swearing rather, I should say, and the while studying me with his eyes. When he hung up, he turned to me expectantly.

"You are a very busy man,' I said.

"He jerked a nod with his head, and waited.

"And after all, is it worth it?" I went on. "What does life mean that it should make you sweat? What justification do you find in sweat? Now look at me. I toil not, neither do I spin--"

"Who are you? What are you?" he bellowed with a suddenness that was, well, rude, tearing the words out as a dog does a bone.

"A very pertinent question, sir," I acknowledged. "First, I am a man; next, a down-trodden American citizen. I am cursed with neither profession, trade, nor expectations. Like Esau, I am pottageless. My residence is everywhere; the sky is my coverlet. I am one of the dispossessed, a sansculotte, a proletarian, or, in simpler phraseology addressed to your understanding, a tramp."

"What the hell--?"

"Nay, fair sir, a tramp, a man of devious ways and strange lodgements and multifarious--"

"Quit it!" he shouted. "What do you want?"

"I want money."

"He started and half reached for an open drawer where must have reposed a revolver, then bethought himself and growled, 'This is no bank.'

"Nor have I checks to cash. But I have, sir, an idea, which, by your leave and kind assistance, I shall transmute into cash. In short, how does a tramp sketch, done by a tramp to the life, strike you? Are you open to it? Do your readers hunger for it? Do they crave after it? Can they be happy without it?"

"I thought for a moment that he would have apoplexy, but he quelled the unruly blood and said he liked my nerve. I thanked him and assured him I liked it myself. Then he offered me a cigar and said he thought he'd do business with me.

"But mind you," he said, when he had jabbed a bunch of copy paper into my hand and given me a pencil from his vest pocket, 'mind you, I won't stand for the high and flighty philosophical, and I perceive you have a tendency that way. Throw in the local color, wads of it, and a bit of sentiment perhaps, but no slumgullion about political economy nor social strata or such stuff. Make it concrete, to the point, with snap and go and life, crisp and crackling and interesting--tumble?"

"And I tumbled and borrowed a dollar.

"Don't forget the local color!" he shouted after me through the door.

"And, Anak, it was the local color that did for me.

"The anaemic Cerberus grinned when I took the elevator. 'Got the bounce, eh?"

"Nay, pale youth, so lily-white,' I chortled, waving the copy paper; 'not the bounce, but a detail. I'll be City Editor in three months, and then I'll make you jump.'

"And as the elevator stopped at the next floor down to take on a pair of maids, he strolled over to the shaft, and without frills or verbiage consigned me and my detail to perdition. But I liked him. He had pluck and was unafraid, and he knew, as well as I, that death clutched him close."

"But how could you, Leith," I cried, the picture of the consumptive lad strong before me, "how could you treat him so barbarously?"

Leith laughed dryly. "My dear fellow, how often must I explain to you your confusions? Orthodox sentiment and stereotyped emotion master you. And then your temperament! You are really incapable of rational judgments. Cerberus? Pshaw! A flash expiring, a mote of fading sparkle, a dim-pulsing and dying organism--pouf! a snap of the fingers, a puff of breath, what would you? A pawn in the game of life. Not even a problem. There is no problem in a stillborn babe, nor in a dead child. They never arrived. Nor did Cerberus. Now for a really pretty problem--"

"But the local color?" I prodded him.

"That's right," he replied. "Keep me in the running. Well, I took my handful of copy paper down to the railroad yards (for local color), dangled my legs from a side-door Pullman, which is another name for a box-car, and ran off the stuff. Of course I made it clever and brilliant and all that, with my little unanswerable slings at the state and my social paradoxes, and withal made it concrete enough to dissatisfy the average citizen.

"From the tramp standpoint, the constabulary of the township was particularly rotten, and I proceeded to open the eyes of the good people. It is a proposition, mathematically demonstrable, that it costs the community more to arrest, convict, and confine its tramps in jail, than to send them as guests, for like periods of time, to the best hotel. And this I developed, giving the facts and figures, the constable fees and the mileage, and the court and jail expenses. Oh, it was convincing, and it was true; and I did it in a lightly humorous fashion which fetched the laugh and left the sting. The main objection to the system, I contended, was the defraudment and robbery of the tramp. The good money which the community paid out for him should enable him to riot in luxury instead of rotting in dungeons. I even drew the figures so fine as to permit him not only to live in the best hotel but to smoke two twenty-five-cent cigars and indulge in a ten-cent shine each day, and still not cost the taxpayers so much as they were accustomed to pay for his conviction and jail entertainment. And, as subsequent events proved, it made the taxpayers wince.

"One of the constables I drew to the life; nor did I forget a certain Sol Glenhart, as rotten a police judge as was to be found between the seas. And this I say out of a vast experience. While he was notorious in local trampdom, his civic sins were not only not unknown but a crying reproach to the townspeople. Of course I refrained from mentioning name or habitat, drawing the picture in an impersonal, composite sort of way, which none the less blinded no one to the faithfulness of the local color.

"Naturally, myself a tramp, the tenor of the article was a protest against the maltreatment of

the tramp. Cutting the taxpayers to the pits of their purses threw them open to sentiment, and then in I tossed the sentiment, lumps and chunks of it. Trust me, it was excellently done, and the rhetoric--say I Just listen to the tail of my peroration:

"So, as we go mooching along the drag, with a sharp lamp out for John Law, we cannot help remembering that we are beyond the pale; that our ways are not their ways; and that the ways of John Law with us are different from his ways with other men. Poor lost souls, wailing for a crust in the dark, we know full well our helplessness and ignominy. And well may we repeat after a stricken brother over-seas: "Our pride it is to know no spur of pride." Man has forgotten us; God has forgotten us; only are we remembered by the harpies of justice, who prey upon our distress and coin our sighs and tears into bright shining dollars.'

"Incidentally, my picture of Sol Glenhart, the police judge, was good. A striking likeness, and unmistakable, with phrases tripping along like this: 'This crook-nosed, gross-bodied harpy'; 'this civic sinner, this judicial highwayman'; 'possessing the morals of the Tenderloin and an honor which thieves' honor puts to shame'; 'who compounds criminality with shyster-sharks, and in atonement railroads the unfortunate and impecunious to rotting cells,'--and so forth and so forth, style sophomoric and devoid of the dignity and tone one would employ in a dissertation on 'Surplus Value,' or 'The Fallacies of Marxism,' but just the stuff the dear public likes.

"Humph!" grunted Spargo when I put the copy in his fist. 'Swift gait you strike, my man.'

"I fixed a hypnotic eye on his vest pocket, and he passed out one of his superior cigars, which I burned while he ran through the stuff. Twice or thrice he looked over the top of the paper at me, searchingly, but said nothing till he had finished.

"Where'd you work, you pencil-pusher?" he asked.

"My maiden effort,' I simpered modestly, scraping one foot and faintly simulating embarrassment.

"Maiden hell! What salary do you want?"

"Nay, nay,' I answered. 'No salary in mine, thank you most to death. I am a free down-trodden American citizen, and no man shall say my time is his.'

"Save John Law,' he chuckled.

"Save John Law,' said I.

"How did you know I was bucking the police department?" he demanded abruptly.

"I didn't know, but I knew you were in training,' I answered. 'Yesterday morning a charitably inclined female presented me with three biscuits, a piece of cheese, and a funereal slab of chocolate cake, all wrapped in the current *Clarion*, wherein I noted an unholy glee because the *Cowbell's* candidate for chief of police had been turned down. Likewise I learned the municipal election was at hand, and put two and two together. Another mayor, and the right kind, means new police commissioners; new police

commissioners means new chief of police; new chief of police. means *Cowbell's* candidate; ergo, your turn to play.'

"He stood up, shook my hand, and emptied his plethoric vest pocket. I put them away and puffed on the old one.

"'You'll do,' he jubilated. 'This stuff' (patting my copy) 'is the first gun of the campaign. You'll touch off many another before we're done. I've been looking for you for years. Come on in on the editorial.'

"But I shook my head.

"'Come, now!' he admonished sharply. 'No shenanagan! The *Cowbell* must have you. It hungers for you, craves after you, won't be happy till it gets you. What say?'

"In short, he wrestled with me, but I was bricks, and at the end of half an hour the only Spargo gave it up.

"'Remember,' he said, 'any time you reconsider, I'm open. No matter where you are, wire me and I'll send the ducats to come on at once.'

"I thanked him, and asked the pay for my copy--*dope*, he called it.

"'Oh, regular routine,' he said. 'Get it the first Thursday after publication.'

"'Then I'll have to trouble you for a few scad until--'

"He looked at me and smiled. 'Better cough up, eh?'

"'Sure,' I said. 'Nobody to identify me, so make it cash.'

"And cash it was made, thirty *plunks* (a plunk is a dollar, my dear Anak), and I pulled my freight . . . eh?--oh, departed.

"'Pale youth,' I said to Cerberus, 'I am bounced.' (He grinned with pallid joy.) 'And in token of the sincere esteem I bear you, receive this little--' (His eyes flushed and he threw up one hand, swiftly, to guard his head from the expected blow)--'this little memento.'

"I had intended to slip a fiver into his hand, but for all his surprise, he was too quick for me.

"'Aw, keep yer dirt,' he snarled.

"'I like you still better,' I said, adding a second fiver. 'You grow perfect. But you must take it.'

"He backed away growling, but I caught him round the neck, roughed what little wind he had out of him, and left him doubled up with the two fives in his pocket. But hardly had the elevator started, when the two coins tinkled on the roof and fell down between the car and

the shaft. As luck had it, the door was not closed, and I put out my hand and caught them. The elevator boy's eyes bulged.

"'It's a way I have,' I said, pocketing them.

"'Some bloke's dropped 'em down the shaft,' he whispered, awed by the circumstance.

"'It stands to reason,' said I.

"'I'll take charge of 'em,' he volunteered.

"'Nonsense!'

"'You'd better turn 'em over,' he threatened, 'or I stop the works.'

"'Pshaw!'

"And stop he did, between floors.

"'Young man,' I said, 'have you a mother?' (He looked serious, as though regretting his act! and further to impress him I rolled up my right sleeve with greatest care.) 'Are you prepared to die?' (I got a stealthy crouch on, and put a cat-foot forward.) 'But a minute, a brief minute, stands between you and eternity.' (Here I crooked my right hand into a claw and slid the other foot up.) 'Young man, young man,' I trumpeted, 'in thirty seconds I shall tear your heart dripping from your bosom and stoop to hear you shriek in hell.'

"It fetched him. He gave one whoop, the car shot down, and I was on the drag. You see, Anak, it's a habit I can't shake off of leaving vivid memories behind. No one ever forgets me.

"I had not got to the corner when I heard a familiar voice at my shoulder:

"'Hello, Cinders! Which way?'

"It was Chi Slim, who had been with me once when I was thrown off a freight in Jacksonville. 'Couldn't see 'em fer cinders,' he described it, and the *Monica* stuck by me.... Monica? From *Monos*. The tramp nickname.

"'Bound south,' I answered. 'And how's Slim?'

"'Bum. Bulls is horstile.'

"'Where's the push?'

"'At the hang-out. I'll put you wise.'

"'Who's the main guy?'

"Me, and don't yer ferget it."

The lingo was rippling from Leith's lips, but perforce I stopped him. "Pray translate. Remember, I am a foreigner."

"Certainly," he answered cheerfully. "Slim is in poor luck. *Bull* means policeman. He tells me the bulls are hostile. I ask where the *push* is, the gang he travels with. By *putting me wise* he will direct me to where the gang is hanging out. The *main guy* is the leader. Slim claims that distinction.

"Slim and I hiked out to a neck of woods just beyond town, and there was the push, a score of husky hobos, charmingly located on the bank of a little purling stream.

"Come on, you mugs!" Slim addressed them. "Throw yer feet! Here's Cinders, an' we must do 'em proud."

"All of which signifies that the hobos had better strike out and do some lively begging in order to get the wherewithal to celebrate my return to the fold after a year's separation. But I flashed my dough and Slim sent several of the younger men off to buy the booze. Take my word for it, Anak, it was a blow-out memorable in Trampdom to this day. It's amazing the quantity of booze thirty plunks will buy, and it is equally amazing the quantity of booze outside of which twenty stiffes will get. Beer and cheap wine made up the card, with alcohol thrown in for the *blowd-in-the-glass* stiffes. It was great--an orgy under the sky, a contest of beaker-men, a study in primitive beastliness. To me there is something fascinating in a drunken man, and were I a college president I should institute P.G. psychology courses in practical drunkenness. It would beat the books and compete with the laboratory.

"All of which is neither here nor there, for after sixteen hours of it, early next morning, the whole push was *copped* by an overwhelming array of constables and carted off to jail. After breakfast, about ten o'clock, we were lined upstairs into court, limp and spiritless, the twenty of us. And there, under his purple panoply, nose crooked like a Napoleonic eagle and eyes glittering and beady, sat Sol Glenhart.

"John Ambrose!" the clerk called out, and Chi Slim, with the ease of long practice, stood up.

"Vagrant, your Honor," the bailiff volunteered, and his Honor, not deigning to look at the prisoner, snapped, "Ten days," and Chi Slim sat down.

"And so it went, with the monotony of clockwork, fifteen seconds to the man, four men to the minute, the mugs bobbing up and down in turn like marionettes. The clerk called the name, the bailiff the offence, the judge the sentence, and the man sat down. That was all. Simple, eh? Superb!

"Chi Slim nudged me. 'Give'm a *spiel*, Cinders. You kin do it.'

"I shook my head.

"G'wan," he urged. "Give 'm a ghost story The mugs'll take it all right. And you kin throw

yer feet fer tobacco for us till we get out.'

"'L. C. Randolph!' the clerk called.

"I stood up, but a hitch came in the proceedings. The clerk whispered to the judge, and the bailiff smiled.

"'You are a newspaper man, I understand, Mr. Randolph?' his Honor remarked sweetly.

"It took me by surprise, for I had forgotten the *Cowbell* in the excitement of succeeding events, and I now saw myself on the edge of the pit I had dugged.

"'That's yer *graft*. Work it,' Slim prompted.

"'It's all over but the shouting,' I groaned back, but Slim, unaware of the article, was puzzled.

"'Your Honor,' I answered, 'when I can get work, that is my occupation.'

"'You take quite an interest in local affairs, I see.' (Here his Honor took up the morning's *Cowbell* and ran his eye up and down a column I knew was mine.) 'Color is good,' he commented, an appreciative twinkle in his eyes; 'pictures excellent, characterized by broad, Sargent-like effects. Now this . . . this judge you have depicted . . . you, ah, draw from life, I presume?'

"'Rarely, your I Honor,' I answered. 'Composites, ideals, rather . . . er, types, I may say.'

"'But you have color, sir, unmistakable color,' he continued.

"'That is splashed on afterward,' I explained.

"'This judge, then, is not modelled from life, as one might be led to believe?'

"'No, your Honor.'

"'Ah, I see, merely a type of judicial wickedness?'

"'Nay, more, your Honor,' I said boldly, 'an ideal.'

"'Splashed with local color afterward? Ha! Good! And may I venture to ask how much you received for this bit of work?'

"'Thirty dollars, your Honor.'

"'Hum, good!' And his tone abruptly changed. 'Young man, local color is a bad thing. I find you guilty of it and sentence you to thirty days' imprisonment, or, at your pleasure, impose a fine of thirty dollars.'

"Alas!" said I, 'I spent the thirty dollars in riotous living.'

"And thirty days more for wasting your substance.'

"Next case!" said his Honor to the clerk.

"Slim was stunned. 'Gee!' he whispered. 'Gee the push gets ten days and you get sixty. Gee!'"

Leith struck a match, lighted his dead cigar, and opened the book on his knees. "Returning to the original conversation, don't you find, Anak, that though Loria handles the bipartition of the revenues with scrupulous care, he yet omits one important factor, namely--"

"Yes," I said absently; "yes."