

# A YOUTHFUL MUNCHAUSEN.

## SOME REMARKABLE YARNS TOLD AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS BY MASTER ARGHIBALD HUTCHINSON.

### Living on an East Indian Plantation with Ten Thousand Slaves and His Subsequent Misadventures by Land and Sea.

A large, soft, lazy-looking boy of fourteen or thereabouts sat huddled up by the stove in the room of Mr. Gerry's Society at the corner of Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue, yesterday morning. He looked unhappy and scratched his head meditatively now and then, as though something were worrying on his mind. There was, he was trying to think of a new lie. By strict attention to business and great ingenuity of detail he had exhausted his Munchausen resources for the time being, and was casting

about in the dull and dusty recesses of his brain for further fables with which to impress Supt. Jenkins.

#### A CHAMPION PREVARICATOR.

His name, according to his own testimony, is Archibald Hutchinson. Taking his age and experience into consideration he is without doubt, the champion ground and lofty liar of the world. This is rather a broad statement to ding in the faces of Eli Perkins and other well-known and able exponents of the art, but it is the belief of those who have listened

to Archie, when he is feeling good, that he can give points to any of them.

Archie is a slow talker and lies with great solemnity and deliberation. He has a voice that is a cross between that of Jay Gould and a backwoods deacon. His eyes are light blue and his hair a sort of terra-cotta brown. For three days Archie has had several unhappy detectives chasing about the city and vicinity and telegraphing over the country in search of visionary antecedents and impossible clues. In the mean time he has sat by the stove in Police Headquarters, presumably cogitating upon the mutability of human affairs and speculating upon the possibility of springing further inventions upon the long-suffering detectives.

#### HIS STORY AS HE TELLS IT.

That Archie was born in a very warm climate there can be no reasonable doubt. When seen by a world reporter he was hugging the hot stove as though his existence depended upon it. When questioned in regard to his parentage, Archie said:

"My father's dead 'n I don't know where my mudder is."

"Where were you born?"

"I was born in India 'n I lived dere till I was nine years old."

"Go on and tell us about it," said one of the officers standing near.

A PLANTATION WITH 10,000 SLAVES. Then Archie, speaking slowly and care-

fully, said: "It was close by Ismail Kadurah where I was born. Me fadder was overseer of a plantation, where dere was about ten thousand niggers, and dey used to work in de field wid nawthin on 'em but a breech cloth, or whatever you call it. Dey were all our slaves. Me mudder stayed at home and did nawthin but get fanned by de punkah. I had a crab, who used fer to take care of me. Sometimes it would rain and rain and rain until everything was soaking sometimes for two months at a time. Den de sun would come out hot enough to roast a body and it was awful. Me nurse used fer to take me out down a long red road after de sun went down, and one time we saw a tiger and a snake. De tiger leped over de bushes easy like, and de crab screamed and grabbed me by de hand and run back toward de house, and just den we saw de snake. It stood up in de road on its tail and blowed at us, but we run around it. After dat, me mudder wouldn't let me go out any more. I didn't have nobody to play with but a little mussel-shell boy, and I had a hard time."

#### A PROCESSION OF FIFTY ELEPHANTS.

"One day me fadder die, an' de next day all de coolies came around de house and knelt down and put 'ere faces on de ground and bollered like dey was sayin', 'Baga! regai! botties!' I couldn't understand what dey said, but it sounded like that. Den me and me mudder got on an elephant. We

had a procession of fifty big elephants, an' rode down to a town on de ocean where dere was steam cars and ships."

Here Archie paused for a minute, as though to tie together the thread of his narrative, and then continued:

#### OVERBOARD IN MID-OCEAN.

"We took a big ship and him over to a place called England, wet was me mudder's home, and lived dere for two years. When we was comin' over on de ship I fell overboard, but one of de sailors, named John Honba, fished me out. When we had lived in England two years we got on anoder ship and came over here. I didn't want to come, because I liked England."

"Did you go to school dere?" was asked.

"Naw," he replied; "I never went to school in me life. When we got over here, me mudder 'oun' a cure for rickets an' begin to sell it. She made lots of money an' we lived in Chester, Pa."

#### A \$25,000 "BOOMERANG" CURSE.

Up to this point the boy's story had been told in a straightforward and connected way. He now began to grope for his "facts" and to stumble in his continuity. "Me mudder," he continued, "bought \$25,000 wort' of gas stock from Isaac Gayer in Coney Island, but de big flood came an' carried it away and she didn't get no interest until two weeks ago. Den she was offered \$25,000 for her cure for rickets, but she wouldn't sell it. Finally I got

tired of Chester, an' made up me min' to skip out.

#### ADVENTURES IN THE SOUTH.

"Two weeks ago one night I tied up me clothes in a bundle an' got on a freight car an' started south. I didn't have no money an' most froze before mornin'. De conductor put me off, an' I went to a house an' a woman give me a slice of bread an' meat an' I got on another train. I was put off about fifteen times before I got to Savannah an' once I had to walk an awful long way in de night an' fell down in a trade an' almost broke my leg. Den I got to Savannah, but didn't like it. I foun' a pocket-book dere containin' \$200, but I restored it to de owner, who gave only 25 cents. I wanted to go back to India where it was warm an' where dey don't have any snow. I slipped on a steamer one night an' hid an' de next day we was out on de sea. One of de sailors caught me an' de captain swore awful an' threatened to hang me. I thought we was goin' to England, but we came to New York. I got off an' hustled around an' got somethin' to eat an' den asked fer de boat to England. I foun' de pier an' began to look aroun' it, waitin' for a chance."

#### A \$50-SNAKE ARRESTS IN THE EYES OF THE LAW.

"One day I met two boys an' dey wanted me to slip into de Superintendent's office an' rob de drawer, where dey said dey was money. I wouldn't do it an' dey was goin'

to do me up, when I run away agin an' went up North about twenty-five miles. Den I foun' a snake and caught it an' brought it back to Central Park. It was about ten feet long an' I sold it to one of de men in de show-house for \$20.

"I came back to de pier an' told one of de Superintendents about it, an' he told me not to mind de boys or go wid 'em any more. I told him where I had been an' what I had done, an' de next day he brought me to de police. Dat's all I know about it."

The boy gazed stolidly around as if to ascertain the effect of his remarkable narrative on his hearers. He had told the same story before, with many picturesque variations, and three detectives had been sent out to hunt up his parents or relatives, but without success.

#### TOO INDOLENT TO WASH HIMSELF.

When questioned about the boy, Matron Webb's assistant at Police Headquarters, said: "That boy beats all. He talks, oh, that nice, and that smooth and low, that you would think he never told a lie in his whole life. He is a great, big fat boy, and so lazy that it takes him a minute to put one foot before de other. I could not get him to wash himself without an argument. I said to him this morning: 'Come here you big baby and let me wash you for breakfast.' He came out with his slow, lazy step, and I actually believe he would have let me wash him, but I got miffed and wouldn't do it. He

looks like he was thinking up a lie all the time. I believe he has escaped from some institution, he is that lazy. Yesterday mornin' he put a chair with its back six inches from the red-hot stove and sat there till I thought he would surely catch fire or be roasted. He said that he was cold. I never saw such a boy. The officers can't find his mother, and he will not tell where she is."

Archie is down on the police records at headquarters as being fourteen years old and of English parentage. He was taken to headquarters by an employee of the White Star Steamship Company, who said that the boy had been loafing around the pier for several days, and that he had told some great stories about foreign life, about his father's plantation, his mother's fortune and his travels by land and sea.

#### MR. GERRY WILL STRUGGLE WITH HIM.

Early yesterday morning Archie was taken before Justice Ford by Officer Eliah L. Austin and was committed to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It is evident, however, that nobody had been cruel to Archie, unless his own fertile imagination is a torture to him. At any rate, he will be taken good care of by the Society, and it is hoped that as he grows older he may make at least a passing acquaintance with the truth and prudence thereby.

Just at present his imagination is too numerous for every-day life.