

**ALFRED  
LEWIS**

THE APACHES  
OF NEW YORK

Alfred Lewis

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# **Alfred Henry Lewis**

## **The Apaches of New York**

### **TO ARTHUR WEST LITTLE**

These stories are true in name and time and place. None of them in its incident happened as far away as three years ago. They were written to show you how the other half live – in New York. I had them direct from the veracious lips of the police. The gangsters themselves contributed sundry details.

You will express amazement as you read that they carry so slight an element of Sing Sing and the Death Chair. Such should have been no doubt the very proper and lawful climax of more than one of them, and would were it not for what differences subsist between a moral and a legal certainty. The police know many things they cannot prove in court, the more when the question at bay concerns intimately, for life or death, a society where the “snitch” is an abomination and to “squeal” the single great offense.

Besides, you are not to forget the politician, who in defense of a valuable repeater palsies police effort with the cold finger of his interference. With apologies to that order, the three links of the Odd Fellows are an example of the policeman, the criminal and the politician. The latter is the middle link, and holds the other two together while keeping them apart.

*Alfred Henry Lewis. New York City, Dec. 22, 1911.*

## I. – EAT-'EM-UP JACK

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?"

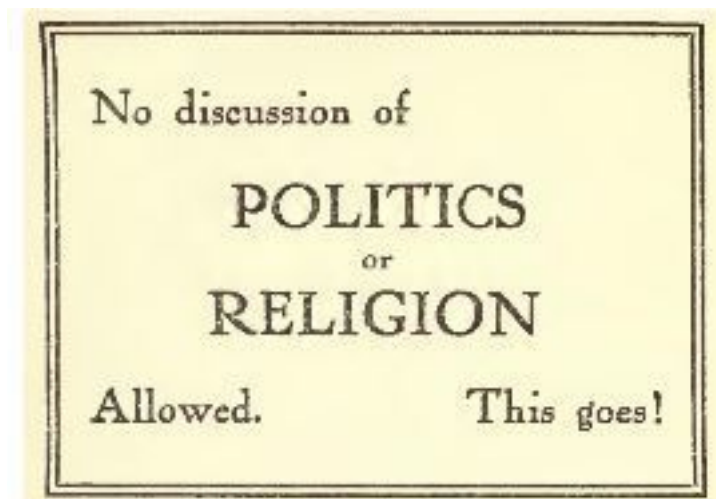
"Don't you know who Washin'ton is? Say, you ought to go to night school! Washin'ton's th' duck who frees this country from th' English."

"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 doggerly 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 mebbly 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 tomorri 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

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 you?”

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.

Spanish came round on Mersher’s brother. The latter had stooped down until his eyes were on a par with the bar.

“Now,” said Spanish to Mersher’s brother, “I might as well cook you. I’ve no use for barkeeps, anyway, an’ besides you’re built like a pig an’ I don’t like your looks!”

Spanish began to shoot, and Mersher’s brother began to dodge. Ducking and dodging, the latter ran the length of the bar, Spanish faithfully following with his bullets. There were two in the ice box, two through the mirror, five in the top of the bar. Each and all, they had been too late for Mersher’s brother, who, pale as a candle, emerged from the bombardment breathing heavily but untouched.

“An’ this,” cried Ikey the pawnbroker, ten minutes after Spanish had disappeared – Ikey was out a red watch and sixty dollars – “an’ this iss vat Mayor Gaynor calls ‘outward order an’ decency!’”

It was upon the identification of the learned bystander that Dribben and Blum went to work, and it was for that stick-up in Mersher’s the two made the collar.

“It’s lucky for you guys,” said Spanish, his eye sparkling venomously like the eye of a snake – “it’s lucky for you guys that you got me wit’out me guns. I’d have croaked one of you bulls sure, an’ maybe both, an’ then took th’ Dutch way out me-self.”

The Dutch way out, with Spanish and his immediate circle, means suicide, it being a belief among them that the Dutch are a melancholy brood, and favor suicide as a means of relief when the burdens of life become more than they can bear.

Spanish, however, did not have his gun when he was pinched, and therefore did not croak Dribben and Blum, and do the Dutch act for himself. Dribben and Blum are about their daily duties as thief takers, as this is read, while Spanish is considering nature from between the Sing Sing bars. Dribben and Blum say that, even if Spanish had had his guns, he would neither have croaked them nor come near it, and in what bluffs he put up to that lethal effect he was talking through his hat. For myself, I say nothing, neither one way nor the other, except that Dribben and Blum are bold and enterprising officers, and Spanish is the very heart of quenchless desperation.

By word of my Central Office informant, Spanish has seen twenty-two years and wasted most of them. His people dwell somewhere in the wilds of Long Island, and are as respectable as folk can be on two dollars a day. Spanish did not live with his people, preferring the city, where he cut a figure in Suffolk, Norfolk, Forsyth, Hester, Grand, and other East Side avenues.

At one time Spanish had a gallery number, and his picture held an important place in Central Office regard. It was taken out during what years the inadequate Bingham prevailed as Commissioner of Police. A row arose over a youth named Duffy, who was esteemed by an eminent Judge. Duffy's picture was in the gallery, and the judge demanded its removal. It being inconvenient to refuse the judge, young Duffy's picture was taken out; and since to make fish of one while making flesh of others might have invited invidious comment, some hundreds of pictures – among them that of Spanish – were removed at the same time.

It pleased Spanish vastly when his mug came out of the gallery. Not that its presence there was calculated to hurt his standing; not but what it was bound to go back as a certain incident of his method of life. Its removal was a wound to police vanity; and, hating the police, he found joy in whatsoever served to wring their azure withers.

When, according to the rules of Bertillon, Spanish was thumb-printed, mugged and measured, the police described him on their books as Pickpocket and Fagin. The police affirmed that he not only worked the Broadway rattlers in his own improper person, but – paying a compliment to his genius for organization – that he had drawn about himself a group of children and taught them to steal for his sinful use. It is no more than truth to say, however, that never in New York City was Spanish convicted as either a Fagin or a pickpocket, and the police – as he charges – may have given him these titles as a cover for their ignorance, which some insist is of as deep an indigo as the hue of their own coats.

Spanish was about seventeen when he began making an East Side stir. He did not yearn to be respectable. He had borne witness to the hard working respectability of his father and mother, and remembered nothing as having come from it more than aching muscles and empty pockets. Their clothes were poor, their house was poor, their table poor. Why should he fret himself with ideals of the respectable?

Work?

It didn't pay.

In his blood, too, flowed malignant cross-currents, which swept him towards idleness and all manner of violences.

Nor did the lesson of the hour train him in selfrestraint. All over New York City, in Fifth Avenue, at the Five Points, the single cry was, Get the Money! The rich were never called upon to explain their prosperity. The poor were forever being asked to give some legal reason for their poverty. Two men in a magistrate's court are fined ten dollars each. One pays, and walks free; the other doesn't, and goes to the Island. Spanish sees, and hears, and understands.

"Ah!" cries he, "that boob went to the Island not for what he did but for not having ten bones!"

And the lesson of that thunderous murmur – reaching from the Battery to Kingsbridge – of Get the Money! rushes upon him; and he makes up his mind to heed it. Also, there are uncounted scores like Spanish, and other uncounted scores with better coats than his, who are hearing and seeing and reasoning the same way.

Spanish stood but five feet three, and his place was among the lightweights. Such as the Dropper, who tilted the scales at 180, and whose name of Dropper had been conferred upon him because every time he hit a man he dropped him – such as Ike the Blood, as hard and heavy as the Dropper and whose title of the Blood had not been granted in any spirit of factitiousness – laughed at him. What matter that his heart was high, his courage proof? Physically, he could do nothing with these dangerous ones – as big as dangerous! And so, ferociously ready to even things up, he began packing a rod.

While Spanish, proceeding as best he might by his dim standards, was struggling for gang eminence and dollars, Alma, round, dark, vivacious, eyes as deep and soft and black as velvet, was the unchallenged belle of her Williamsburg set. Days she worked as a dressmaker, without getting rich.

Nights she went to rackets, which are dances wide open and unfenced. Sundays she took in picnics, or rode up and down on the trolleys – those touring cars of the poor.

Spanish met Alma and worshipped her, for so was the world made. Being thus in love, while before he, Spanish, had only needed money, now he had to have it. For love's price to a man is money, just as its price to a woman is tears.

Casting about for ways and means, Spanish's money-hunting eye fell upon Jigger. Jigger owned a stuss-house in Forsyth Street, between Hester and Grand. Jigger was prosperous beyond the dreams of avarice. Multitudes, stabbing stuss, thronged his temple of chance. As a quick, sure way to amass riches, Spanish decided to become Jigger's partner. Between them they would divide the harvest of Forsyth Street stuss.

The golden beauty of the thought lit up the dark face of Spanish with a smile that was like a splash of vicious sunshine. Alma, in the effulgence of her toilets, should overpower all rivalry! At rout and racket, he, Spanish, would lead the hard walk with her, and she should shine out upon Gangland fashion like a fire in a forest.

His soul having wallowed itself weary in these visions, Spanish sought Jigger as a step towards making the visions real. Spanish and his proposition met with obstruction. Jigger couldn't see it, wouldn't have it.

Spanish was neither astonished nor dismayed. He had foreseen the Jiggerian reluctance, and was organized to break it down. When Jigger declined his proffered partnership – in which he, Jigger, must furnish the capital while Spanish contributed only his avarice – and asked, "Why should I?" he, Spanish, was ready with an answer.

"Why should you?" and Spanish repeated Jigger's question so that his reply might have double force. "Because, if you don't, I'll bump youse off." Gangland is so much like Missouri that you must always be prepared to show it. Gangland takes nothing on trust. And, if you try to run a bluff, it calls you. Spanish wore a low-browed, sullen, sour look. But he had killed no one, owned no dread repute, and Jigger was used to sullen, sour, lowbrowed looks. Thus, when Spanish spoke of bumping Jigger off, that courtier of fortune, full of a case-hardened scepticism, laughed low and long and mockingly. He told the death-threatening Spanish to come a-running.

Spanish didn't come a-running, but he came much nearer it than Jigger liked. Crossing up with the perverse Jigger the next evening, at the corner of Forsyth and Grand, he opened upon that obstinate stuss dealer with a Colt's-38. Jigger managed to escape, but little Sadie Rotin, *otat* eight, was killed. Jigger, who was unarmed, could not return the fire. Spanish, confused and flurried, doubtless, by the poor result of his gun-play, betook himself to flight.

The police did not get Spanish; but in Gangland the incident did him little good. At the Ajax Club, and in other places where the best blood of the gangs was wont to unbuckle and give opinions, such sentiment-makers as the Dropper, Ike the Blood, Kid Kleiney, Little Beno, Fritzie Rice, Kid Strauss, the Humble Dutchman, Zamo, and the Irish Wop, held but one view. Such slovenly work was without precedent as without apology. To miss Jigger aroused ridicule. But to go farther, and kill a child playing in the street, spelled bald disgrace. Thereafter no self-respecting lady would drink with Spanish, no gentleman of gang position would return his nod. He would be given the frozen face at the rackets, the icy eye in the streets.

To be sure, his few friends, contending feebly, insisted that it wasn't Spanish who had killed the little Rotin girl. When Spanish cracked off his rod at Jigger, others had caught the spirit. A half dozen guns – they said – had been set blazing; and it was some unknown practitioner who had shot down the little Rotin girl. What were the heart-feelings of father and mother Rotin, to see their baby killed, did not appeal as a question to either the friends or foes of Spanish. Gangland is interested only in dollars or war.

That contention of his friends did not restore Spanish in the general estimation. All must confess that at least he had missed Jigger. And Jigger without a rod! It crowded hard upon the unbelievable,

and could be accounted for only upon the assumption that Spanish was rattled, which is worse than being scared. Mere fear might mean no more than an excess of prudence. To get rattled, everywhere and under all conditions, is the mean sure mark of weakness.

While discussion, like a pendulum, went swinging to and fro, Spanish – possibly a-smart from what biting things were being said in his disfavor – came to town, and grievously albeit casually shot an unknown. Following which feat he again disappeared. None knew where he had gone. His whereabouts was as much a mystery as the identity of the unknown whom he had shot, or the reason he had shot him. These two latter questions are still borne as puzzles upon the ridge of gang conjecture.

That this time he had hit his man, however, lifted Spanish somewhat from out those lower reputational depths into which missing Jigger had cast him. The unknown, to be sure, did not die; the hospital books showed that. But he had stopped a bullet. Which last proved that Spanish wasn't always rattled when he pulled a gun. The incident, all things considered, became a trellis upon which the reputation of Spanish, before so prone and hopeless, began a little to climb.

The strenuous life doesn't always blossom and bear good fruit. Balked in his intended partnership with Jigger, and subsequently missing Jigger – to say nothing of the business of the little Rotin girl, dead and down under the grass roots – Spanish not only failed to Get the Money! but succeeded in driving himself out of town. Many and vain were the gang guesses concerning him. Some said he was in Detroit, giving professional aid to a gifted booster. The latter was of the feminine gender, and, aside from her admitted genius for shoplifting, was acclaimed the quickest hand with a hanger – by which you are to understand that outside pendant purse wherewith women equip themselves as they go forth to shop – of all the gon-molls between the two oceans. Others insisted that Spanish was in Baltimore, and had joined out with a mob of poke-getters. The great, the disastrous thing, however – and to this all Gangland agreed – was that he had so bungled his destinies as to put himself out of New York.

“Detroit! Baltimore!” exclaimed the Dropper. “W’y, it’s wise’n bein’ in stir! A guy might as well be doin’ time as live in them burls!”

The Dropper, in his iron-fisted way, was sincere in what he said. Later, he himself was given eighteen spaces in Sing Sing, which exile he might have missed had he fled New York in time. But he couldn't, and didn't. And so the Central Office got him, the District Attorney prosecuted him, the jury convicted him, and the judge sentenced him to that long captivity. Living in New York is not a preference, but an appetite – like drinking whiskey – and the Dropper had acquired the habit.

What was the Dropper settled for?

Robbery.

It's too long to tell here, however, besides being another story. Some other day I may give it to you.

Spanish, having abandoned New York, could no longer bear Alma loving company at picnic, rout and racket. What was Alma to do? She lived for routs, reveled in rackets, joyed in picnics. Must these delights be swept away? She couldn't go alone – it was too expensive. Besides, it would evince a lack of class.

Alma, as proud and as wedded to her social position as any silken member of the Purple and Fine Linen Gang that ever rolled down Fifth Avenue in her brougham, revolved these matters upon her wheel of thought. Also, she came to conclusions. She, an admitted belle, could not consent to social obliteration. Spanish had fled; she worshipped his black eyes, his high courage; she would keep a heart-corner vacant for him in case he came back. Pending his return, however, she would go into society; and, for those reasons of expense and class and form, she would not go alone.

Alma submitted her position to a beribboned jury of her peers. Their judgment ran abreast of her own.

“A goil would be a mutt,” they said, “to stay cocked up at home. An’ yet a goil couldn't go chasin’ around be her lonesome. Alma” – this was their final word – “you must cop off another steady.”



“But what would Johnny say?” asked Alma; for she couldn’t keep her thoughts off Spanish, of whom she stood a little bit in fear.

“Johnny’s beat it, ain’t he?” returned the advisory jury of friends. “There ain’t no kick comin’ to a guy what’s beat it. He ain’t no longer in th’ picture.”

Alma, thus free to pick and choose by virtue of the absence of Spanish, picked the Dropper. The latter chieftain was flattered. Taking Alma proudly yet tenderly under his mighty arm, he led her to suppers such as she had never eaten, bought her drinks such as she had never tasted, revolved with her at rackets where tickets were a dollar a throw, the orchestra seven pieces, and the floor shone like glass. It was a cut or two above anything that Spanish had given her, and Alma, who thought it going some, failed not to say so.

Alma was proud of the Dropper; the Dropper was proud of her. She told her friends of the money he spent; and the friends warmed the cockles of her little heart by shrilly exclaiming at pleasant intervals:

“Ain’t he th’ swell guy!”

“Betcher boots he’s th’ swell guy,” Alma would rejoin; “an’ he’s got money to boin a wet dog! Th’ only t’ing that worries me,” Alma would conclude, “is Johnny. S’ppose he blows in some day, an’ lays for th’ Dropper?”

“Th’ Dropper could do him wit’ a wallop,” the friends would consolingly return. “He’d swing onct; an’ after that there wouldn’t be no Johnny Spanish.”

The Round Back Rangers – it was, I think, the Round Backs – gave an outdoor racket somewhere near Maspeth. The Dropper took Alma. Both were in high, exultant feather. They danced, they drank, they rode the wooden horses. No more gallant couple graced the grounds.

Cheese sandwiches, pig’s knuckles and beer brought them delicately to the banquet board. They were among their friends. The talk was always interesting, sometimes educational.

Ike the Blood complained that certain annoying purists were preaching a crusade against the Raines Law Hotels. Slimmy, celebrated not only for his slimness, but his erudition, declared that crusades had been the common curse of every age.

“W’at do youse know about it?” sourly propounded the Humble Dutchman, who envied Slimmy his book-fed wisdom.

“W’at do I know about it?” came heatedly from Slimmy. “Do youse think I ain’t got no education? Th’ last time I’m in stir, that time I goes up for four years, I reads all th’ books in th’ prison library. Ask th’ warden if I don’t. As to them crusades, it’s as I tells you. There’s always been crusades; it’s th’ way humanity’s gaited. Every sport, even if he don’t go ‘round blowin’ about it, has got it tucked somewhere away in his make-up that he, himself, is th’ real thing. Every dub who’s different from him he figgers is worse’n him. In two moves he’s out crusadin’. In th’ old days it’s religion; th’ Paynims was th’ fall guys. Now it’s rum, or racin’, or Raines Hotels, or some such stall. Once let a community get the crusade bug, an’ something’s got to go. There’s a village over in Joisey, an,’ there bein’ no grog shops an’ no vice mills to get busy wit’, they ups an’ bounces an old geezer out of th’ only church in town for pitchin’ horse-shoes.”

Slimmy called for more beer, with a virtuously superior air.

“But about them Paynims, Slimmy?” urged Alma.

“It’s hundreds of years ago,” Slimmy resumed. “Th’ Paynims hung out in Palestine. Bein’ they’re Paynims, the Christians is naturally sore on ‘em; an’ so, when they feels like huntin’ trouble, th’ crusade spirit’d flare up. Richard over in England would pass th’ woid to Philip in France, an’ th’ other lads wit’ crowns.

“How about it?” he’d say. ‘Cast your regal peepers toward Palestine. D’you make them Paynims? Ain’t they th’ tough lot? They won’t eat pork; they toe in when they walk; they don’t drink nothin’ worse’n coffee; they’ve got brown skins. Also,’ says he, ‘we can lick ‘em for money, marbles or chalk.

W'at d'youse say, me royal brothers? Let's get our gangs, an' hand them Paynims a swift soak in behalf of the troo faith.'

"Philip an' the other crowned lads at this would agree wit' Richard. 'Them Paynims is certainly th' worst ever!' they'd say; an' one woid'd borry another, until the crusade is on. Some afternoon you'd hear the newsies in th' streets yellin', 'Wux-try!' an' there it'd be in big black type, 'Richard, Philip an' their gallant bands of Strong-Arms have landed in Palestine.'"

"An' then w'at, Slimmy?" cooed Alma, who hung on every word.

"As far as I can see, th' Christians always had it on th' Paynims, always had 'em shaded, when it comes to a scrap. Th' Christian lads had th' punch; an' th' Paynims must have been wise to it; for no sooner would Richard, Philip an' their roly-boly boys hit th' dock, than th' Paynims would take it on th' run for th' hills. Their mullahs would try to rally 'em, be tellin' 'em that whoever got downed fightin' Christians, the prophet would punch his ticket through for paradise direct, an' no stop-overs.

"That's all right about the prophet!' they'd say, givin' th' mullahs th' laugh. An' then they'd beat it for th' next ridge."

"Them Paynims must have been a bunch of dead ones," commented the Dropper.

"Not bein' able to get on a match," continued Slimmy, without heeding the Dropper, "th' Paynims declinin' their game, th' Christian hosts would rough house th' country generally, an' in a way of speakin' stand th' Holy Land on its head. Do what they would, however, they couldn't coax th' Paynims into th' ring wit' 'em; an' so after a while they decides that Palestine's th' bummiest place they'd ever struck. Mebby, too, they'd begin havin' woid from home that their wives was gettin' a little gay, or their kids was goin' round marryin' th' kids of their enemies, an' that one way an' another their domestic affairs was on th' fritz. At this, Richard'd go loafin' over to Philip's tent, an' say:

"Philly, me boy, I don't know how this crusade strikes youse, but if I'm any judge of these great moral movements, it's on th' blink. An' so,' he'd go on, 'Philly, it's me for Merrie England be th' night boat.'

"Wit' that, they'd break for home; an', when they got there, they'd mebby hand out a taste of th' strap to mamma an' th' babies, just to teach 'em not to go runnin' out of form th' next time father's far away."

"Youse don't bank much on crusades, Slimmy?" Ike the Blood said.

The Blood had more than a passing interest in the movement, mention of which had started the discussion, being himself a part proprietor in one of those threatened Raines Law Hotels.

"Blood," observed Slimmy, oracularly, "them moral movements is like a hornet; they stings onct an' then they dies."

Alma's attention was drawn to Mollie Squint – so called because of an optical slant which gave her a vague though piquant look. Mollie Squint was motioning from the outskirts of the little group. Alma pointed to the Dropper. Should she bring him? Mollie Squint shook her head.

Leaving the Dropper, Alma joined Mollie Squint.

"It's Johnny," gasped Mollie Squint. "He wants you; he's over be that bunch of trees."

Alma hung back; some impression of peril seized her.

"Better go," whispered Mollie Squint. "He's onto you an' the Dropper, an' if you don't go he'll come lookin' for you. Then him an' the Dropper'll go to th' mat wit' each other, an' have it awful. Give Johnny one of your soft talks, an' mebby youse can smooth him down. Stall him off be tellin' him you'll see him to-night at Ding Dong's."

Mollie Squint's advice seemed good, and as the lesser of two evils Alma decided to go. Mollie Squint did not accompany her.

"Tell th' Dropper I'll be back in a moment," said Alma to Mollie Squint, "an' don't wise him up about Johnny."

Alma met Spanish at the far corner of the clump of trees. There was no talk, no time for talk. They were all alone. As she drew near, he pulled a pistol and shot her through and through the body.

Alma's moaning cry was heard by the Dropper – that, and the sound of the shot. When the Dropper reached her, she was lying senseless in the shadow of the trees – a patch of white and red against the green of the grass. Spanish was nowhere in sight..

Alma was carried to the hospital, and revived. But she would say nothing, give no names – staunch to the spirit of the Gangs. Only she whispered feebly to Mollie Squint, when the Dropper had been sent away by the doctors:

“Johnny must have loved me a lot to shoot me up like he did. A guy has got to love a goil good and plenty before he'll try to cook her.”

“Did youse tell th' hospital croakers his name?” asked Mollie Squint.

“Of course not! I never squealed to nobody. Do youse think I'd put poor Johnny in wrong?”

“Then I won't,” said Mollie Squint.

An attendant told Mollie Squint that she must go; certain surgeons had begun to assemble. Mollie Squint, tears falling, kissed Alma good-by.

“Give Johnny all me love,” whispered Alma. “Tell him I'm no snitch; I'll stick.”

The Dropper did not have to be told whose bullet had struck down his star, his Alma. That night, Kid Kleiney with him, he went looking for Spanish. The latter, as jealous as Satan, was looking for the Dropper. Of the two, Spanish must have conducted his hunting with the greater circumspection or the greater luck; for about eleven of the clock he crept up behind the Dropper, as the latter and Kid Kleiney were walking in East Broadway, and planted a bullet in his neck. Kid Kleiney 'bout faced at the crack of the pistol, and was in fortunate time to stop Spanish's second bullet with one of the big buttons on his coat. Kid Kleiney fell by the side of the wounded Dropper, jarred off his feet by the shock.' He was able, however, when the police came up, to help place the Dropper in an ambulance.

Spanish?

Vanished – as usual.

The police could get no line on him, did get no line on him, until months later, when, as related – the Dropper having been lagged for robbery, and safely caged – he came back to stick up the joint of Mersher the Strong-Arm, and be arrested by Dribben and Blum.

The baby and I met casually in a Williamsburg street, where Alma had brought it to take the air, which was bad. Alma was thin-faced, hollow-eyed, but I could see that she had been pretty. She said she was twenty and the baby less than a year, and I think she told the truth.

No one among Alma's friends finds fault with either the baby or herself, although both are without defence by the canons of high morality. There is warmth in the world; and, after all, the case of Alma and the baby is not so much beyond the common, except as to the baby's advent, which was dramatic and after the manner of Cæsar.

Folk say the affair reflects illustriously upon the hospital. Also, what surgeons officiated are inclined to plume themselves; for have not Alma and the baby lived? I confess that those boastful scientists are not wanting in excuse for strutting, although they ought, perhaps, in honor, to divide credit with Alma and the baby as being hard to kill.

It is not an ugly baby as babies go. Not that I pretend to be a judge. As I paused by its battered perambulator, it held up a rose-leaf hand, as though inviting me to look; and I looked. The little claw possessed but three talons; the first two fingers had been shot away. When I asked how, Alma lowered her head sadly, saying nothing. It would have been foolish to ask the baby. It couldn't talk. Moreover, since the fingers were shot away before it was born, it could possess no clear memory as to details.

It is a healthy baby. Alma loves it dearly, and can be depended upon to give it every care. That is, she can be if she lives; and on that head her worn thinness alarms her friends, who wish she were fatter. Some say her thinness is the work of the bullet. Others believe that a sorrow is sapping her heart.

### III. – HOW PIOGGI WENT TO ELMIRA

The Bottler was round, inoffensive, well-dressed, affable. He was also generous, as the East Side employs the term. Any one could touch him for a quarter upon a plea of beef stew, and if plaintively a bed were mentioned, for as much as fifty cents. For the Bottler was a money-maker, and had Suffolk Street position as among its richest capitalists.

What bridge whist is to Fifth Avenue so is stuss to the East Side. No one save the dealer wins at stuss, and yet the device possesses an alluring feature. When the victim gets up from the table, the bank under the descriptive of viggresh returns him one-tenth of his losings. No one ever leaves a stuss game broke, and that final ray of sure sunshine forms indubitably the strong attraction. Stuss licks up as with a tongue of fire a round full fifth of all the East Side earns, and to viggresh should be given the black glory thereof.

The Bottler owned talents to make money. Morally careless, liking the easy way, with, over all, that bent for speculation which sets some folk to dealing in stocks and others to dealing cards, those moneymaking talents found expression in stuss. Not that the Bottler was so weak-minded as to buck the game. Wise, prudent, solvent, he went the other way about it, his theater of operations being 135 Suffolk. Also, expanding liberally, the Bottler endowed his victims, as – stripped of their last dollar – they shoved back their hopeless chairs, with not ten, but fifteen per cent, of what sums they had changed in. This rendered 135 Suffolk a most popular resort, and the foolish stood four deep about the Bottler's tables every night in the week.

The Bottler lacked utterly the war-heart, and was in no wise a fighter. He had the brawn, but not the soul, and this heart-sallowness would have threatened his standing save for those easy generousities. Gangland is not dull, and will overlook even a want of courage in one who, for bed and beef stews, freely places his purse at its disposal.

There are two great gangs on the East Side. These are the Five Points and the Monk Eastmans. There are smaller gangs, but each owes allegiance to either the one or the other of the two great gangs, and fights round its standard in event of general gang war.

There is danger in belonging to either of these gangs. But there is greater danger in not. I speak of folk of the Bottler's ways and walks. The Five Points and Eastmans are at feud with one another, and the fires of their warfare are never permitted to die out. Membership in one means that it will buckler you against the other while you live, and avenge you should you fall. Membership in neither means that you will be raided and rough-housed and robbed by both.

The Bottler's stuss house was – like every other of its kind – a Castle Dangerous. To the end that the peril of his days and nights be reduced to minimum, he united himself with the Five Points. True, he could not be counted upon as a *shtocker* or strong-arm; but he had money and would part with it, and gang war like all war demands treasure. Bonds must be given; fines paid; the Bottler would have his uses. Wherefore the Five Points opened their arms and their hearts to receive him.

The Eastmans had suffered a disorganizing setback when the chief, who gave the sept its name, went up the river for ten years. On the heels of that sorrowful retirement, it became a case of York and Lancaster; two claimants for the throne stood forth. These were Ritchie Fitzpatrick and Kid Twist, both valorous, both with reputations of having killed, both with clouds of followers at their backs.

Twist, in whom abode the rudiments of a savage diplomacy, proposed a conference. Fitzpatrick at that conference was shot to death, and Kid Dahl, a near friend of Twist, stood for the collar. Dahl was thus complacent because Fitzpatrick had not died by his hand.

The police, the gangs and the politicians are not without a sinister wisdom. When life has been taken, and to punish the slayer would be an inconvenience, some one who didn't do the killing submits to arrest. This covers the retreat of the guilty. Also, the public is appeased. Later, when the public's memory sleeps, the arrested one – for lack of evidence – is set at liberty.

When Fitzpatrick was killed, to clear the path to gang leadership before the aspiring feet of Twist, the police took Dahl, who all but volunteered for the sacrifice. Dahl went smilingly to jail, while the real murderer of Fitzpatrick attended that dead personage's wake, and later appeared at the funeral. This last, however, by the nicer tastes of Gangland, was complained of as bordering upon vulgarity.

Fitzpatrick was buried with a lily in his hand, and Twist was hailed chief of the Eastmans. Dahl remained in the Tombs a reasonable number of weeks, and then resumed his position in society. It was but natural, and to the glory of stumbling human nature, that Dahl should dwell warmly in the grateful regard of Twist.

Twist, now chief of the Eastmans, cast about to establish Dahl. There was the Bottler, with his stuss Golconda in Suffolk Street. Were not his affiliations with the Five Points? Was he not therefore the enemy? The Bottler was an Egyptian, and Twist resolved to spoil him in the interest of Dahl.

Twist, with Dahl, waited upon the Bottler. Argument was short and to the point. Said Twist: "Bottler, the Kid" – indicating the expectant Dahl – "is in wit' your stuss graft from now on. It's to be an even break."

The news almost checked the beating of the Bottler's heart. Not that he was astonished. What the puissant Twist proposed was a commonest step in Gangland commerce – Gangland, where the Scotch proverb of "Take what you may; keep what you can!" retains a pristine force. For all that, the Bottler felt dismay. The more since he had hoped that his hooking up with the Five Points would have kept him against such rapine.

Following the Twist fulmination, the Bottler stood wrapped in thought. The dangerous chief of the Eastmans lit a cigar and waited. The poor Bottler's cogitations ran off in this manner. Twist had killed six men. Also, he had spared no pains in carrying out those homicides, and could laugh at the law, which his prudence left bankrupt of evidence. Dahl, too, possessed a past as red as Twist's. Both could be relied upon to kill. To refuse Dahl as a partner spelled death. To acquiesce called for half his profits. His friends of the Five Points, to be sure, could come at his call. That, however, would not save his game and might not save his life. Twist's demand showed that he had resolved, so far as he, the Bottler, was concerned, to rule or ruin. The latter was easy. Any dozen of the Eastmans, picking some unguarded night, could fall upon his establishment, confiscate his bankroll, and pitch both him and his belongings into the street. The Five Points couldn't be forever at his threatened elbow. They would avenge him, certainly; but vengeance, however sweet, comes always over-late, and possesses besides no value in dollars and cents. Thus reasoned the Bottler, while Twist frowningly paused. The finish came when, with a sickly smile, the Bottler bowed to the inevitable and accepted Dahl.

All Suffolk Street, to say nothing of the thoroughfares roundabout, knew what had taken place. The event and the method thereof did not provoke the shrugging of a shoulder, the arching of a brow. What should there be in the usual to invite amazement?

For six weeks the Bottler and Dahl settled up, fifty-and-fifty, with the close of each stuss day. Then came a fresh surprise. Dahl presented his friend, the Nailer, to the Bottler with this terse remark:

"Bottler, youse can beat it. The Nailer is goin' to be me partner now. Which lets you out, see?"

The Bottler was at bay. He owned no stomach for battle, but the sentiment of desperation, which the announcement of Dahl provoked, drove him to make a stand. To lose one-half had been bad. To lose all – to be wholly wiped out in the annals of Suffolk Street stuss – was more than even his meekness might bear. No, the Bottler did not dream of going to the police. That would have been to squeal; and even his friends of the Five Points had only faces of flint for such tactics of disgrace.

The harassed Bottler barred his doors against Dahl. He would defend his castle, and get word to the Five Points. The Bottler's doors having been barred, Dahl for his side at once instituted a siege, despatching the Nailer, meanwhile, to the nearest knot of Eastmans to bring reinforcements.

At this crisis O'Farrell of the Central Office strolled into the equation. He himself was hunting a loft-worker; of more than common industry, and had no thought of either the Bottler or Dahl.

Happening, however, upon a situation, whereof the elemental features were Dahl outside with a gun and the Bottler inside with a gun, he so far recalled his oath of office as to interfere.

“Better an egg to-day than a hen to-morrow,” philosophized O’Farrell, and putting aside for the moment his search for the loft-worker, he devoted himself to the Bottler and Dahl.

With the sure instinct of his Mulberry Street caste, O’Farrell opened negotiations with Dahl. He knew the latter to be the dangerous angle, and began by placing the muzzle of his own pistol against that marauder’s back.

“Make a move,” said he, “and I’ll shoot you in two.”

The sophisticated Dahl, realizing fate, moved not, and with that the painstaking O’Farrell collected his armament.

Next the Bottler was ordered to come forth. The Bottler obeyed in a sweat and a tremble. He surrendered his pistol at word of the law, and O’Farrell led both off to jail. The two were charged with Disturbance.

In the station house, and on the way, Dahl ceased not to threaten the Bottler’s life.

“This pinch’ll cost a fine of five dollars,” said Dahl, glaring round O’Farrell at the shaking Bottler. “I’ll pay it, an’ then I’ll get square wit’ youse. Once we’re footloose, you won’t last as long as a drink of whiskey!”

The judge yawningly listened, while O’Farrell told his tale of that disturbance.

“Five an’ costs!” quoth the judge, and called the next case.

The Bottler returned to Suffolk Street, Dahl sought Twist, while O’Farrell again took the trail of the loft-worker.

Dahl talked things over with Twist. There was but one way: the Bottler must die. Anything short ‘of blood would unsettle popular respect for Twist, and without that his leadership of the Eastmans was a farce.

The Bottler’s killing, however, must be managed with a decent care for the conventionalities. For either Twist or Dahl to walk in upon that offender and shoot him to death, while feasible, would be foolish. The coarse extravagance of such a piece of work would serve only to pile needless difficulties in the pathway of what politicians must come to the rescue. It was impertinences of that character which had sent Monk Eastman to Sing Sing. Eastman had so far failed as to the proprieties, when as a supplement to highway robbery he emptied his six-shooter up and down Forty-second Street, that the politicians could not save him without burning their fingers. And so they let him go. Twist had justified the course of the politicians upon that occasion. He would not now, by lack of caution and a reasonable finesse, force them into similar peril. They must and would defend him; but it was not for him to render their labors too up-hill and too hard.

Twist sent to Williamsburg for his friend and ally, Cyclone Louie. The latter was a bull-necked, highly muscled individual, who was a professional strong man – so far as he was professionally anything – and earned occasional side-show money at Coney Island by bending iron bars about his neck and twisting pokers into corkscrews about his brawny arms.

Louie, Twist and Dahl went into council over mutual beer, and Twist explained the imperative call for the Bottler’s extermination. Also, he laid bare the delicate position of both himself and Dahl.

In country regions neighbors aid one another in bearing the burdens of an agricultural day by changing work. The custom is not without what one might call gang imitation and respect. Only in the gang instance the work is not innocent, but bloody. Louie, having an appreciation of what was due a friend, could not do less than come to the relief of Twist and Dahl. Were positions reversed, would they not journey to Williamsburg and do as much for him? Louie did not hesitate, but placed himself at the disposal of Twist and Dahl. The Bottler should die; he, Louie, would see to that.

“But when?”

Twist, replying, felt that the thing should be done at once, and mentioned the following evening, nine o’clock. The place should be the Bottler’s establishment in Suffolk Street. Louie, of whom the

Bottler was unafraid and ignorant, should experience no difficulty in approaching his man. There would be others present; but, practiced in gang moralities, slaves to gang etiquette, no one would open his mouth. Or, if he did, it would be only to pour forth perjuries, and say that he had seen nothing, heard nothing.

Having adjusted details, Louie, Twist and Dahl compared watches. Watches? Certainly. Louie, Twist and Dahl were all most fashionably attired and – as became members of a gang nobility – singularly full and accurate in the important element of a front, *videlicet*, that list of personal adornments which included scarf pin, ring and watch. Louie, Dahl and Twist saw to it that their timepieces agreed. This was so that Dahl and Twist might arrange their alibis.

It was the next evening. At 8.55 o'clock Twist was obtrusively in the Delancey Street police station, wrangling with the desk sergeant over the release of a follower who had carefully brought about his own arrest.

"Come," urged Twist to the sergeant, "it's next to nine o'clock now. Fix up the bond; I've got a date over in East Broadway at nine-thirty."

While Twist stood thus enforcing his whereabouts and the hour upon the attention of the desk sergeant, Dahl was eating a beefsteak in a Houston street restaurant.

"What time have youse got?" demanded Dahl of the German who kept the place.

"Five minutes to nine," returned the German, glancing up at the clock.

"Oh, t'aint no such time as that," retorted Dahl peevishly. "That clock's drunk! Call up the telephone people, and find out for sure."

"The 'phone people say it's nine o'clock," reported the German, hanging up the receiver.

"Hully gee! I didn't think it was more'n halfpast eight!" and Dahl looked virtuously corrected.

While these fragments of talk were taking place, the Bottler was attending to his stuss interests. He looked pale and frightened, and his hunted eyes roved here and there. Five minutes went by. The clock pointed to nine. A slouch-hat stranger entered. As the clock struck the hour, he placed the muzzle of a pistol against the Bottler's breast, and fired twice. Both bullets pierced the heart, and the Bottler fell – dead without a word. There were twenty people in the room. When the police arrived they found only the dead Bottler.

O'Farrell recalled those trade differences which had culminated in the charge of disturbance, and arrested Dahl.

"You ain't got me right," scoffed Dahl.

And O'Farrell hadn't.

There came the inquest, and Dahl was set free. The Bottler was buried, and Twist and Dahl sent flowers and rode to the grave.

The law slept, a bat-eyed constabulary went its way, but the gangs knew. In the whispered gossip of Gangland every step of the Bottler's murder was talked over and remembered. He must have been minus ears and eyes and understanding who did not know the story. The glance of Gangland turned towards the Five Points. What would be their action? They were bound to avenge. If not for the Bottler's sake, then for their own. For the Bottler had been under the shadow of their protection, and gang honor was involved. On the Five Points' part there was no stumbling of the spirit. For the death of the Bottler the Five Points would exact the penalty of blood.

Distinguished among the chivalry of the Five Points was Kid Pioggi. Only a paucity of years – he was under eighteen – withheld Pioggi from topmost honors. Pioggi was not specifically assigned to avenge the departed Bottler. Ambitious and gallantly anxious of advancement, however, he of his own motion carried the enterprise in the stomach of his thoughts.

The winter's snow melted into spring, spring lapsed into early summer. It was a brilliant evening, and Pioggi was disporting himself at Coney Island. Also Twist and Cyclone Louie, following some plan of relaxation, were themselves at Coney Island.

Pioggi had seated himself at a beer table in Ding Dong's. Twist and Louie came in. Pioggi, being of the Five Points, was recognized as a foe by Twisty who lost no time in mentioning it.

Being in a facetious mood, and by way of expressing his contempt for that gentleman, Twist made Pioggi jump out of the window. It was no distance to the ground, and no physical harm could come. But to be compelled to leave Ding Dong's by way of the window, rubbed wrongwise the fur of Pioggi's feelings. To jump from a window stamps one with disgrace.

Twist and Louie – burly, muscular, strong as horses – were adepts of rough-and-tumble. Pioggi, little, light and weak, knew that any thought of physical conflict would have been preposterous. And yet he was no one to sit quietly down with his humiliation. That flight from Ding Dong's window would be on every tongue in Gangland. The name of Pioggi would become a scorning; the tale would stain the Pioggi fame.

Louie and Twist sat down at the table in Ding Dong's, from which Pioggi had been driven, and demanded refreshment in the guise of wine. Pioggi, rage-swollen as to heart, busied himself at a nearby telephone. Pioggi got the ear of a Higher Influence of his clan. He told of his abrupt dismissal from Ding Dong's, and the then presence of Louie and Twist. The Higher Influence instructed Pioggi to keep the two in sight. The very flower of the Five Points should be at Coney Island as fast as trolley cars could carry them.

"Tail 'em," said the Higher Influence, referring to Twist and Louie; "an' when the fleet gets there go in wit' your cannisters an' bump 'em off."

While waiting the advent of his promised forces, Pioggi, maintaining the while an eye on Twist and Louie to the end that they escape not and disappear, made arrangements for a getaway. He established a coupé, a fast horse between the shafts and a personal friend on the box, where he, Pioggi, could find it when his work was done.

By the time this was accomplished, Pioggi's recruits had put in an appearance. They did not descend upon Coney Island in a body, with savage uproar and loud cries. Much too military were they for that. Rather they seemed to ooze into position around Pioggi, and they could not have made less noise had they been so many ghosts.

The campaign was soon laid out. Louie and Twist still sat over their wine at Ding Dong's. Now and then they laughed, as though recalling the ignominious exit of Pioggi. Means must be employed to draw them into the street. That accomplished, the Five Points' Danites were to drift up behind them, and at a signal from Pioggi, empty their pistols into their backs. Pioggi would fire a bullet into Twist; that was to be the signal. As Pioggi whispered his instructions, there shone a licking eagerness in the faces of those who listened. Nothing so exalts the gangster like blood in anticipation; nothing so pleases him as to shoot from behind.

Pioggi pitched upon one whose name and face were unknown to Twist and Louie. The unknown would be the bearer of a blind message – it purported to come from a dancer in one of the cheap theaters of the place – calculated to bring forth Twist and Louie.

"Stall 'em up this way," said Pioggi, indicating a spot within touching distance of that coupé. "It's here we'll put 'em over the jump."

The place pitched upon for the killing was crowded with people. It was this very thronged condition which had led to its selection. The crowd would serve as a cover to Five Points operations. It would prevent a premature recognition of their assailants by Twist and Louie; it would screen the slayers from identification by casual citizens looking on.

Pioggi's messenger did well his work, and Twist and Louie moved magnificently albeit unsteadily into the open. They were sweeping the walk clear of lesser mortals, when the voice of Pioggi arrested their attention.

"Oh, there, Twist; look here!"

The voice came from the rear and to the right; Pioggi's position was one calculated to place the enemy at a double disadvantage.



Twist turned his head. A bullet struck him above the eye! He staggered! The lead came in a storm! Twist went down; Louie fell across him! There were twelve bullets in Twist and eight in Louie. The coroner said that they were the dearest people of whom he owned official recollection.

As the forethoughtful Pioggi was dashing away in his coupé, a policeman gave chase. Pioggi drove a bullet through the helmet of the law. It stopped pursuit; but Gangland has ever held that the shot was an error. A little lower, and the policeman would have been killed. Also, the death of a policeman is apt to entail consequences.

Pioggi went into hiding in Greenwich, where the Five Points had a hold-out. There were pullings and haulings and whisperings in dark political corners. When conditions had been whispered and hauled and pulled into shape satisfactory, Pioggi sent word to a favorite officer to come and arrest him.

Pioggi explained to the court that his life had been threatened; he had shot only that he himself might live. His age was seventeen. Likewise there had been no public loss; the going of Twist and Louie had but raised the average of all respectability. The court pondered the business, and decided that justice would be fulfilled by sentencing Pioggi to the Elmira Reformatory.

The best fashion of the Five Points visited Pioggi in the Tombs on the morning of his departure.

“It’s only thirteen months, Kid,” came encouragingly from one. “You won’t mind it.”

“Mind it!” responded Pioggi, in disdain of the worst that Elmira might hold for him; “mind it! I could do it standin’ on me head.”

## IV. – IKE THE BLOOD

Whenever the police were driven to deal with him officially, he called himself Charles Livin, albeit the opinion prevailed at headquarters that in thus spelling it, he left off a final ski. The police, in the wantonness of their ignorance, described him on their books as a burglar. This was foolishly wide. He should have been listed as a simple Strong-Arm, whose methods of divorcing other people from their money, while effective, were coarse. Also, it is perhaps proper to mention that his gallery number at the Central Office was 10,394.

It was during the supremacy of Monk Eastman that he broke out, and he had just passed his seventeenth birthday. Being out, he at once attached himself to the gang-fortunes of that chief; and it became no more than a question of weeks before his vast physical strength, the energy of his courage and a native ferocity of soul, won him his proud war-name of Ike the Blood. Compared with the herd about him, in what stark elements made the gangster important in his world, he shone out upon the eyes of folk like stars of a clear cold night.

Ike the Blood looked up to his chief, Monk Eastman, as sailors look up to the North Star, and it wrung his soul sorely when that gang captain went to Sing Sing. In the war over the succession and the baton of gang command, waged between Ritchie Fitzpatrick and Kid Twist, Ike the Blood was compelled to stand neutral. Powerless to take either side, liking both ambitious ones, the trusted friend of both, his hands were tied; and later – first Fitzpatrick and then Twist – he followed both to the grave, sorrow not only on his lips but in his heart.

It was one recent August day that I was granted an introduction to Ike the Blood. I was in the company of an intimate friend of mine – he holds high Central Office position in the police economy of New York. We were walking in Henry Street, in the near vicinity of that vigorous organization, the Ajax Club – so called, I take it, because its members are forever defying the lightnings of the law. My Central Office friend had mentioned Ike the Blood, speaking of him as a guiding light to such difficult ones as Little Karl, Whitey Louie, Benny Weiss, Kid Neumann, Tomahawk, Fritzie Rice, Dagley and the Lobster.

Even as the names were in his mouth, his keen Central Office glance went roving through the open doorway of a grogshop.

“There’s Ike the Blood now,” said he, and tossed a thumb, which had assisted in necking many a malefactor with tastes to be violent, towards the grogshop.

Since to consider such pillars of East Side Society was the great reason of my ramble, we entered the place. Ike the Blood was sitting in state at a table to the rear of the unclean bar, a dozen of his immediate followers – in the politics of gang life these formed a minor order of nobility – with him.

Being addressed by my friend, he arose and joined us; none the less he seemed reticent and a bit disturbed. This was due to the official character of my friend, plus the fact that the jealous eyes of those others were upon him. It is no advantage to a leader, like Ike the Blood, to be seen in converse with a detective. Should one of his adherents be arrested within a day or a week, the arrested one reverts to that conversation, and imagines vain things.

“Take a walk with us, Ike,” said my friend.

Ike the Blood was obviously reluctant. Sinking his voice, and giving a glance over his shoulder at his myrmidons – not ten feet away, and every eye upon him – he remonstrated.

“Say, I don’t want to leave th’ push settin’ here, to go chasin’ off wit’ a bull. Fix it so I can come uptown sometime.”

“Very well,” returned my friend, relenting; “I don’t want to put you in Dutch with your fleet.”

There was a whispered brief word or two, and an arrangement for a meet was made; after which Ike the Blood lapsed into the uneasy circle he had quitted. As we left the grogshop, we could hear him loudly calling for beer. Possibly the Central Office nearness of my friend had rendered him thirsty.

Or it may have been that the beer was meant to wet down and allay whatever of sprouting suspicion had been engendered in the trustless breasts of his followers.

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