JOHN HENRY IN A STREET CAR

By George V. Hobart

"'ME,' IN THE STREET CAR."

Throw me in the cellar and batten down the hatches.

I'm a wreck in the key of G flat.

I side-stepped in among a bunch of language-heavers yesterday and ever since I've been sitting on the ragged edge with my feet hanging over.

I was on my way down to Wall Street to help J. Pierpont Morgan buy a couple of railroads and all the world seemed as blithe and gay as a love clinch from Laura Jean Libbey's latest.

When I climbed into the cable car I felt like a man who had mailed money to himself the night before.

I was aces.

And then somebody blew out my gas.

At the next corner two society flashlights flopped in and sat next to me.

They had a lot of words they wanted to use and they started in.

The car stopped and two more of the 400's leading ladies jumped the hurdles and came down the aisle.

They sat on the other side of me.

In a minute they began to bite the dictionary.

Their efforts aroused the energies of three women who sat opposite me, and they proceeded to beat the English language black and blue.

In a minute the air was so full of talk that the grip germs had to pull out on the platform and chew the conductor.

The next one to me on my left started in:

"Oh, yes; we discharged our cook day before yesterday, but there's another coming this evening, and so——"

Her friend broke away and was up and back to the center with this:

"I was coming down Broadway this morning and I saw Julia Marlowe's leading man. I'm sure it was him, because I saw the show once in Chicago, and he has the loveliest eyes I ever looked at!"

I knew that that was my cue to walk out, kick the motorman in the knuckles, upset the car and send in a fire call, but I passed it up.

I just sat there and bit my nails like the heavy villain in one of Corse Payton's ten, twen, thir dramas.

That "loveliest eyes" speech had me groggy.

Whenever I hear a woman turn on that "loveliest eyes" gag about an actor I always feel that a swift slap from a wet dishrag would look well on her back hair.

Then the bunch across the aisle got the flag.

"Well, you know," says the broad lady who paid for one seat and was compelled by Nature to use three, "you know there's only five in our family, and so I just take five slices of stale broad and have a bowl of water ready in which I've dropped a pinch of salt. Then I take a piece of butter about the size of a walnut, and thoroughly grease the bottom of a frying pan; then beat five eggs to a froth, and——"

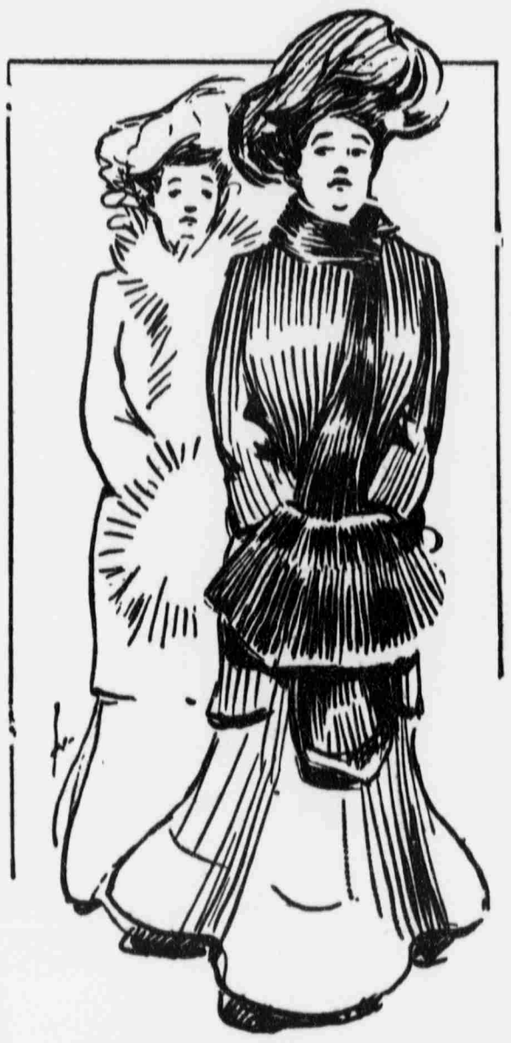
I'm hoping the conductor will come in and give us all a tip to take to the timber because the cops are going to pinch the room, but there's nothing doing.

One of the dames on my right finds her voice and passes it around—

"Oh, I think it's a perfect fright! I always did detest electric blue, anyway. It is so unbecoming, and then——"

I've just decided that this lady ought to make up as a Swede servant girl and play the part, when her friend hooks in:

"Oh, yes; I think it will look perfectly sweet! It is a foulard in one of those new heliotrope tints, made with a crepe de chine chemisette, with a second vest peeping out on either side of the front over an embroidered satin vest and cut in scallops on the edge, finished with a full ruche of white chiffon, and the sleeves are just too tight for any use, and the skirt is too long for any good, and I declare the lining is too sweet!



A COUPLE OF SOCIETY FLASHLIGHTS.

I just hate to wear it out on the street and get it soiled, and I was going to have it made with a tunic, and Mrs. Wigwag—that's my brother-in-law's first cousin—she had her's made to wear with guimps—and they are so economical! and——"

Think of a guy having to ride four miles and get his forhead fanned all the while with talk about foulard and crepe de chine and guimpes!

Wouldn't it lead you to a padded cell?

Say! I was down and out—no kidding!

I wanted to get up and fight the doortender, but I couldn't.

One of the conversationalists was sitting on my overcoat.

I felt that if I got up and called my coat back to Papa she might lose the thread of her story, and the jar would be something frightful.

So I sat still and saved her life.

The one on my right must have been the Lady President of The Hammer Club.

She was talking about some other girl and she didn't do a thing to the absent one.

She said she was svelte.

I suppose that's Dago for a shine.

That's the way with some women. They can't come right out and call another woman a polish. They have to beat around the bush and chase their friends to the swamps by throwing things like "svelte" at them. Tush!

WITH HIS MANDOLIN.

I tried to duck the foreign tattle on my right and by so doing I'm next to this on my left:

"Oh, yes; I think politics is just too lovely! I don't remember whether I'd rather be a Democrat or a Republican, but I think—oh! just look at the hat that woman has on! Isn't that a fright? Wonder if she trimmed it herself. Of course she did; you can tell by——"

I'm gasping for breath when the broad lady across the aisle gets the floor:

"No, indeed! I didn't have Eliza vaccinated. Why, she's too small yet, and don't you know my sister's husband's brother's child was vaccinated, and she is younger than our Eliza, but I don't just care, I don't want——"

Then the sweet girlish thing on my left gave me the corkscrew jab.

It was the finish:

"Isn't that lovely? Well, as I was telling you, Charlie came last night and brought Mr. Storeclose with him. Mr. Storeclose is awfully nice. He plays the mandolin just too sweet for anything, and——"

Me!—to the oyster beds! No male impersonators garroting a mandolin—not any in mine!

When I want to take a course in music I'll climb into a public library and read how Baldy Sloane wrote the Tiger Lily with one hand tied behind him and his feet on the piano.

So I fell off the car and crawled home to mother.

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