And so, young Orpiment having come into his fortune, and Mr. Gamboge having come into his kingdom, Mr. Orpiment's lease upon posterity was cancelled, and he really was dead at last.

## ROBERSON'S MEDIUM.

IT was Rowney Mauve who described Roberson as being like one of his own still-lifes: a lot of queer stuff badly composed and out of drawing, and with his perspective all wrong. And I regret to add that it was Miss Carmine, when she heard this description, and recognized its accuracy, who giggled. To say that Violet Carmine was a pickle, is presenting a statement of the case that is well within bounds.

The arrival of this somewhat erratic young person in New York was unexpected, and had a rather dramatic touch about it. On a warm evening in September, while yet the dying splendor of sunset hung redly over the Jersey Highlands, Mr. Mangan Brown was sitting in a wicker-chair on the veranda of his own exceedingly comfort-

able home in West Eleventh Street. He was in the perfectly placid frame of mind that is the right of a man who has dined well, and who is smoking a good cigar. In another wicker-chair, similarly placid, similarly smoking a good cigar, sat Vandyke Brown. And between the two sat Rose: whose nature was so sweet at all times, that even after-dinner cigars (supposing that she had been inclined to smoke them, and she was not) could not have made it one particle sweeter. These three people were very fond of each other: and they were talking away pleasantly about nothing in particular, and were gently light-hearted, and were having a deal of enjoyment in a quiet way, as they sat there, beneath their own vine and ailanthus tree, in the light of the mellow after-glow left when the sun went down. Their perfect peacefulness can be likened only to that of a tropical calm: and, therefore, the unities of the situation were preserved, though its placidity was shattered, when the calm was broken by what with a



tolerable degree of accuracy may be described as a tropical storm.

Out of a coupé, that stopped with a flourish in front of Mr. Mangan Brown's gate, descended a tall young woman, with a good deal of color in her cheeks and a good deal of black hair and a pair of exceptionally bright black eyes. She carried a cage, in which was a large white cockatoo, in one hand, and with the other she opened the gate in a decisive sort of way, as though she had a right to open it; and in a positive, proprietary fashion she traversed the walk of flags to the veranda steps. Mr. Mangan Brown arose from his wicker-chair—somewhat reluctantly, for he was very comfortable—and advanced to meet her.

"You must be my cousin Mangan. I am very glad to see you, cousin Mangan. Won't you take the parrot, please?" and the young person held out the cage in her left hand, and also extended her right hand with the obvious purpose of having it shaken.

Mr. Mangan Brown did his best to discharge simultaneously the two duties thus demanded of him, but as this involved crossing his hands in an awkward sort of way, the result was not altogether graceful. "My name *is* Mangan Brown," he said diplomatically.

"Of course it is," answered the young woman with a smile that showed what a charming mouth and what prodigiously fine teeth she had. "And my name is Violet Carmine. Don't you think Violet rather a pretty name, cousin Mangan? My mamma gave it to me out of a novel. And don't you think that I speak very good English? I haven't a strawberry mark on my left arm, nor anything like that, you know, to prove it, but I am your cousin, your second cousin once removed, just as much as though I had strawberry marks all over me. Don't look at me in that doubtful sort of way, cousin Mangan, it makes me feel quite uncomfortable. I'm sure if I am willing to believe in you, you might be willing to believe in me. But



here's papa's letter; just read it, and then you'll believe in me, I'm sure."

Mr. Mangan Brown, who was rather dazed by this assault, took the letter and began to read it.

"You're cousins, too, I suppose," said Miss Carmine, turning to Van and Rose. "Long cousin, won't you please go out to the carriage and pay the man and bring in my things?" As to you, you dear, little, blue-eyed cousin, I think that you are simply delightful, and I know that I shall love you with all my heart, and I must kiss you right away." And this Miss Carmine did with a fervor that was quite in keeping with the energy of her manner and words.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear," said Mr. Mangan Brown, who had finished the letter. "This is my nephew, Vandyke Brown, and this is his wife, my niece Rose, and I am sure that we all will do our best to make you comfortable while you stay with us. If—if I was not quite so cordial as I might have been just now, you must under-

stand that your sudden arrival rather took me by surprise, you know. Rose, take your cousin Violet up to Caledonia's room, and make her comfortable. Van will carry up her bag."

"And, Rose dear," said Miss Carmine, precisely imitating Mr. Mangan's tone and manner, "take your cousin Violet to where she will get something to eat, please. I assure you that she is almost starving." In her own proper voice she continued: "You sweet, little, blue-eyed thing, it was worth while coming all the way from Mexico just to have a sight of you. You are a lucky fellow, Van. I don't believe you half deserve her. Tell the truth now, do you? But, of course, he'll say yes, Rose, so we need not wait for his answer. Take me along, dear, and let me wash myself and get some food. You really have no idea how hungry I am." And Miss Carmine, with her arm around Rose's waist, vanished through the open door.

"Cool sort of hand, this cousin of ours," said Van to Mr. Mangan, when the bag and



the parrot had been carried up-stairs and Van had come down again to the veranda. "And who is she, anyway? She really is our cousin, I suppose."

"Yes," said Mr. Mangan, in a tone that did its best to be cheerful, "there is no doubt about the relationship; though it certainly is rather a distant one. Her great-grandfather Carmine married my grandfather's, Bone Brown's, sister. Carmine had a cochineal plantation in San Domingo, and he was killed in the time of the insurrection. In fact, his slaves burnt him. His son got away and went over to Mexico, and the family has been there ever since. The present Carmine, Violet's father, has a big *hacienda* somewhere or another. We have a consignment of hides from him every year, and that's pretty much all that I know about him; except that in one of his letters he once said that he had married an American, and was bringing up his daughters—I don't think he has any sons—on the American plan; teaching them to be self-confident,

and that sort of thing. And," continued Mr. Mangan reflectively, "if this young person is a fair specimen of the family, I should say that his educational methods had been, ah, quite a remarkable success."

"Yes," answered Van, dryly, "I think they have. But to what fortunate circumstance do we owe the pleasure of her descent upon our inoffensive household?"

"Don't be inhospitable, Van. I'm sure she's a nice girl, though she certainly is a little—a little odd, perhaps. Why, her father writes that he has sent her up to see something of American life under my care—he seems to take it for granted that I am married and have a lot of daughters—and when her visit is ended (he suggests that she shall stay with us for a year, or for six months at the least), he wants me to come down to his place with all my family and stay a year or so with him. It's Mexican, I suppose, visiting in this fashion. I always have understood that they did not make much account of time down there."



"But how on earth did she get here? Surely she did not come up alone?"

"Really, Van," said Violet, stepping out upon the veranda briskly, just in time to hear these questions. "Really, Van, you don't look stupid, but I think you must be. I came, sir, in a delightful Pullman car, and the Señor and Señora Moreno—I wonder if they can be distant relations of yours, cousin Mangan? It's the same name, you know—and all the thirteen, no, the fourteen, little Morenos and their nurses and servants brought me. We just filled the car nicely. And oh! we did have such a good time! Did you ever go anywhere in a Pullman car, cousin Mangan? If you didn't, you don't know at all how nice it is. Not a bit like the horrid *diligencia*, you know. And we did have such fun! I had my dear Pablo—he's the parrot, you know; and the Señora Moreno had a—I don't know what the English name is: it's a bird that whistles and sings wonderfully; and little Joséfita had a yellow kitten; and at Chihuahua each of the

seven boys bought a dear little dog. When Pablo was screaming, and the bird was whistling, and the kitten was fighting with all the little dogs at once, really, we could not hear ourselves speak. It was so funny that we were laughing every bit of the time.

"And, cousin Mangan, Señor Moreno wanted to come here with me and give me into your hands. But I wouldn't let him. They all stopped at a little hotel quite near here, where Spanish is spoken—for Señor Moreno does not speak a word of English, and I have done all the talking for him ever since we left Paso del Norte; you have no idea what nice things the conductors and people have said to me about my English—and I begged Señor Moreno to let me come in the carriage by myself. I wanted to surprise you, you see. *Have* I surprised you, cousin Mangan? Tell me truly, *have* I!"

And Mr. Mangan Brown answered, in a tone that Miss Carmine, possibly, thought unnecessarily serious: "Yes, my dear, I



believe that I may say with perfect truth—you have!"

NATURALLY, so quiet a household as was this of Mr. Mangan Brown's was a good deal upset by having interjected into it such a whirlwind of a young woman as was this Miss Violet Carmine. The household was quieter than ever, of course, now that Miss Caledonia and Verona were married off. The wedding, by the way, was a prodigious success. Mr. Mangan Brown gave away the brides, successively, with a defiant one-down-and-t'-other-come-on air that was tremendously effective; and young Orpiment went through with the ceremony gallantly; and Mr. Gamboge, who was badly scared, most certainly would have said "Under these circumstances Mr. Orpiment would have said 'I will,'" if Miss Caledonia, being on the lookout for precisely this emergency, had not pinched him; and Miss Caledonia looked so young and so pretty in her gray silk and new back hair that nobody ever would have

thought her a day over forty; and Verona just looked like the lovable, dignified angel that she was.

But while Miss Carmine found no difficulty in filling with her belongings the two rooms lately occupied by Miss Caledonia and Verona, it cannot be said that she herself filled precisely the place in the household which had been filled by these its departed members. Mr. Mangan tried loyally to make the best of his Mexican kinswoman, but even he found her at times—as he deprecatingly admitted to Rose—a little wearing. He tried to convince himself that Pablo's violent remarks, in the Spanish tongue, at atrocious hours of the morning, did not disturb him; he tried to believe that he admired the spirited playfulness of the seven little Moreno boys when they came to visit their countrywoman, and with their countrywoman and their seven Chihuahua dogs raced in and out of the parlor windows and up and down the veranda steps and all over the flower beds in the front garden; and he tried to think



that his kinswoman's habitual tendency toward the violent and the unexpected did not annoy him. But it is certain that his efforts in these, and in various other, directions were not at all times successful. And yet when Violet was not doing something outrageous—which, to be sure, was not often—she was such a frank, affectionate body that not to love her was quite impossible.

"It's not herself, it's her extraordinary education that's at fault, Van," Mr. Mangan declared in extenuation of her expedition with Rowney Mauve and without a chaperon to Coney Island. "She's a good little thing, but what with her queer life on her father's *hacienda*, and the queer doctrines which her father and mother have got into her head, it's no wonder that her notions of propriety are a little eccentric."

Being lectured about her Coney Island trip, Violet manifested only astonishment. "Why, cousin Mangan, I thought that here in America girls could do just as they pleased. That's what mamma has always told me.

I'm sure that *she* did what she pleased when she was a girl. And mamma was very carefully brought up and moved in very elegant society, you know. Grandpapa, you know, sold outfits at Fort Leavenworth to people going across the Plains; and he did a splendid business, too, in the Santa Fé trade. That was before the railroad, of course. Were you ever out along the Santa Fé trail before the Atchison road was built, cousin Mangan? It was a splendid trip to make. Mamma came out that way to Santa Fé in 1860 with grandpapa. They had a lovely time; just as full of excitement as possible. They had one fight with Indians before they were fifty miles out from Council Grove, and another just as they struck off from the Arkansas, and another at the crossing of the Cimarron; and they were caught in a tremendous snow-storm in the Raton Mountains; and in fording the Pecos they lost a wagon and its team of six mules—and grandpapa was so angry with the head teamster for his carelessness, that he just picked him



up bodily and chucked him in after the mules, and then shot at him when he tried to swim ashore; and mamma used to say in her droll way that they never knew whether that teamster died of drowning or shooting.

"It was in Santa Fé, you know, that papa met mamma and fell in love with her. It was very romantic. Mamma had made a bet with one of the officers of the garrison that she could ride a mustang that never had been broken; and it ran away with her—which mamma did not mind a bit, of course—and just as she was waving her handkerchief to the men to show that she was winning the bet she found that the mustang was heading right for the edge of the bluff—she was riding on the *mesa* close by old Fort Marcy—and as she couldn't turn it she knew that they both were going to have their necks broken. And then papa, who was with the officers, saw her danger and galloped up just in time to lift her right out of the saddle while both horses were running as hard as ever they could run; and papa man-

aged to turn his horse on the very edge of the bluff, and the mustang went over the bluff and was done for. Of course, after he had saved her life this way, and after he had fought a duel with the officer that mamma bet with, because he said that mamma had not won the bet after all, mamma had to marry him. They had a lovely wedding in the old church of San Miguel, and all the officers were there—the officer whom papa wounded was ever so nice about it and came on crutches—and all the best people of the town were there too, and they had a splendid banquet at the Fonda afterward. You see, there was no trouble about their being married, for mamma was born in the Church. Her mother's folks, the Smalts, were German Catholics, and, of course, her father was a Catholic too, for he was Don Patricio O'Jara, you know. The O'Jaras are a very noble family, cousin Mangan; some of them once were kings, mamma says.

"And because she belonged to such a grand family, and because grandpapa was so



rich, mamma moved in the very highest circles of Leavenworth society, you see; and I am sure that she went around with young gentlemen just as much as she pleased, for she has told me so, often. So what was the harm in my going to Coney Island with Mr. Mauve, cousin Mangan? And we did have *such* a lovely time! Now you aren't angry with me, are you? Then kiss me, and say you're not—so. That's a dear. And now we never will say another word about the horrid place again."

Rowney Mauve, of course, knew that the Coney Island expedition was all wrong; and he had the grace to profess to be sorry when Van took it on himself to give him a lecture about it. Rowney was a rather weak vessel, morally—as he admitted with a charming frankness when anybody spoke to him on the subject—and he never made any very perceptible effort to strengthen himself. It wasn't his ambition to be a whited sepulchre, he would say, with an air of cheerful resignation that, in its way, was quite irresistible.

But, after all, he was not half a bad fellow at bottom. His besetting sin was his laziness. Unless he had some scheme of pleasure on hand—when he would rouse up and work like a beaver—he was about as lazy as a man well could be. Had he ever buckled down to work, there was the making of a first-rate painter in him. Two or three landscapes which, by some extraordinary chance, he had finished, had been quite the talk of the town and had sold promptly. But there he stopped.

"Of course, old man, I know that I could sell a lot of pictures if I painted them," he would say when Van upbraided him for his laziness. "But what's the good of it? I don't need the money. I've got more now than I know what to do with." And then he would add, in the high moral key and with the twinkle in the corners of his blue eyes that always came there in nice appreciation of his own humbug, "And I don't think it's right, Van, you know, to sell my pictures and so take the bread out of the mouths of the men who need it. No, I pre



fer to be as that cheerful old father-in-law of yours once said to me when he sent his 'Baby's First Steps' to the Young Genius's exhibition, and the Young Geniuses cracked it right back at him—'a willing sacrifice for Art's great sake to other men's success.' That's a noble sentiment, isn't it? And now, what do you say to joining me on board the yacht to-morrow and sliding down to Saint Augustine for a week or two? There are some types among those stunning Minorcan girls down there that will make you a bigger swell in art than ever if you will catch them in time for the spring exhibition." The fact of the matter was that Rowney Mauve, in the matter of laziness, simply was incorrigible.

In connection with Miss Carmine, however, not the least trace of Rowney's laziness was perceptible. In her service he was all energy. Why, he even went so far as to finish one of his numerous unfinished pictures because, when Van and Rose brought her to his studio one day, she took a fancy to it and told him that she would like to see

it completed! Among the people who knew him this outburst of zealous labor was regarded as being little short of miraculous; and Rowney, who was rather given to contemplative consideration of his own actions, could not help at first feeling that way about it himself. As the result of careful self-analysis, however, he came to the conclusion that his sudden access of energy was not the result of a miracle, but of love!

Being really in love was a new experience for Rowney, and he did not quite understand it. At one time or another he had been spoons on lots of girls; but being spoons and being genuinely in love, as he now perceived, were conditions of the heart which have no relation to each other whatever. Looking at his case critically, he was satisfied that his decline and fall had begun on that October day, now four months past, when he and Miss Carmine had defied the proprieties by going down together to Coney Island. They had seen the races, which Violet enjoyed immensely, and had had a



capital little lunch; and after the lunch they had taken a long walk on the deserted beach toward Far Rockaway. Rowney knew all the while, of course, that they hadn't any business whatever to be off alone on a cruise of this nature; and his knowledge, I am sorry to say, made him regard the cruise in the light of a lark of quite exceptional jollity. Violet, not having the faintest suspicion that she was anything less than a model of American decorum, simply was in raptures. With a delightful frankness she repeatedly told Rowney what a good time she was having; and how like it was to the good times that her mother, the scion of the royal house of O'Jara, used to have in company with the young Chesterfields of Fort Leavenworth society.

Altogether, it had been an original sort of an experience for Rowney; and for this easy-going young gentleman original experiences had an exceeding great charm. Looking back, therefore, in the light of subsequent events, upon that particular day, he

decided that it was the Coney Island expedition that had sapped the foundations of his previously well-fortified heart. Anyhow, without regard to when it began, he felt satisfied in his own mind that he was in love now, right over head and ears.

Roberson, whose studio was just across the passage, happened to drop in upon him at the very moment that he had arrived at this, to him, astonishing conclusion. Roberson was not a very promising sort of a specimen of a confidant, but Rowney was so full of his discovery that before he could check himself he had blurted out: "Old man, I've been and gone and done it! I'm in love!"

"No! Are you though, really?" said Roberson, in his funny little mincing way. "Why, that's very interesting. And who are you in love with?"

By this time Rowney had perceived the absurdity, not to say the stupidity, of taking Roberson into his confidence. So he laughed and answered:

"With my own laziness, of course. I've



been thinking what a precious ass I have been making of myself in working over this confounded picture. Now that it's finished, I don't know what to do with it, and I've wasted a solid month that I might have devoted to scientific loafing. And it's because I see my folly and am determined to be wise again that I've fallen in love with my own laziness once more."

"Oh!" said Roberson, in a tone of disappointment, "I thought that you were in earnest; and I was ever so glad, for I really am in love, Rowney, in love awfully! And—and I thought that if you were in love too, you'd like to hear about it. Wouldn't you like to hear about it anyway?"

"Of course I would, old man. Just wait till I fill my pipe; I can be more sympathetic over a pipe, you know. Now crack away," Rowney continued, as he settled himself comfortably in a big chair and pulled hard at his pipe to give it a good start. "Now crack away, my stricken deer. Though the herd all forsake thee, thy home

is still here, you know. Rest on this bosom and tell your tale of sorrow. Are you very hard hit, Roberson?"

"Oh! I am, indeed, I am," groaned Roberson. "You see, its—its this queer Mexican girl who is staying with the Browns——"

"The dickens it is!" exclaimed Rowney, suddenly sitting bolt upright in his chair, and glaring at Roberson through the smoke as though he wanted to glare his head off.

"Don't, please don't look at me like that, Mauve. Surely there's no reason why you should be angry with me."

"N—no," answered Rowney slowly, "I don't think there is." And then, as he sank back in the chair, and his ferocious expression gave place to a quiet grin, he added briskly: "No, I'm sure there's not. I was surprised, that's all. I always look like that when I'm a good deal surprised."

"Well, I must say I'm glad I don't surprise you often. You have no idea how savage you looked, old fellow. I'm not



easily frightened, you know," and the little man put on a look of inoffensive defiance as he spoke that gave him something the air of a valorously-disposed lamb; "but I do assure you that the way you looked at me gave me quite a turn. Just let me know, won't you, when you feel yourself beginning to be surprised the next time, so that I may be prepared for it?"

"I'll do better than that, Roberson; I'll promise not to let you surprise me. And now go ahead with the love story, old man; I'm quite ashamed of myself for having interrupted you so rudely."

"There isn't any more of it to tell," said Roberson, dolefully. "I wish there was."

"Nonsense, man! Why, that isn't any love story at all. There *must* be more of it. What have you said to her? What has she said to you?"

"Nothing," answered Roberson, dismally. "That's just it, you see. That's what makes me so low in my mind over it. I haven't said anything, and she hasn't said anything.

If either of us had said anything I'd know better where I was. But neither of us has spoken, and so I don't know where I am at all—not the least bit in the world." Roberson hid his face in his hands and groaned.

Presently he went on again: "I have made efforts to speak, Rowney; I've made repeated efforts—but, somehow, they've none of them come to anything. Indeed, I've never had but one fair chance, for every time, just as I've got to the point when I was ready to say something, something that really would have a meaning to it, you know, something has happened to stop me."

"And what stopped you that one time when something didn't happen to stop you?"

"You mustn't think me weak, Rowney, but—but the truth is that I was so dreadfully upset that what I wanted to say wouldn't come at all. We were sitting on the veranda, the moon was shining, and all the rest were inside listening to Mrs. Orpiment singing. I couldn't have had a better chance, you see."



"I should think not!" growled Rowney.

"But the more I tried the more the right words wouldn't come. And what do you suppose I ended by asking her?"

"If she didn't think you were an infernal idiot. And of course she said yes."

"Don't be hard on me, Mauve. You've no idea what a trying situation it was. No, what I ended by asking her was, what was the food most commonly eaten in Mexico. I didn't say it in just a commonplace way, you know. I threw a great deal of feeling into my voice, and I looked at her beseechingly. And—and I think, old fellow, that she knew that my words meant more than they expressed, for there was a strange tremor in her own voice as she answered, 'tortillas and frijoles;' and as soon as she had uttered those brief words she got up and rushed into the parlor, as though something were after her. This was a very extraordinary thing for her to do, and it shows to my mind that she did not dare to trust herself with me for a moment longer. And I am

the more confirmed in this opinion by the fact that when I followed her, in a minute or two, for at first I was too much surprised by her sudden departure to stir, I found her leaning upon Mrs. Brown's shoulder in hysterics—laughing and crying all at once, I solemnly assure you. Don't you think there's hope for me in all this, Rowney? Don't you think that her saying 'tortillas and frijoles' in that strange, tremulous tone, and then having hysterics after it, meant more than I could understand at the time?"

"Yes," answered Rowney, decidedly, "I think it did. To be quite frank with you, Roberson, I don't think that you fully understand just what she meant even yet."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Mauve. You don't know how much good you are doing me by your kind, encouraging words."

Rowney's conscience did prick him a little when Roberson said this—but only a little, for his resentment of what he styled in his own mind Roberson's confounded impudence in venturing to make love to Violet,



was too keen for him to give the unlucky little man mercy in the least degree.

For a while there was silence. Mauve pulled away steadily at his pipe, and Roberson stared gloomily into vacancy and gently wrung his hands. At last he spoke:

"Rowney, do you believe that there is anything in—in spiritualism?"

"There's dollars in it, if you only can make it go. Why? Are you thinking of taking it up as a profession? It's rather a shady profession, of course; but you ought to make more out of it than you do out of your still-life stuff. The properties wouldn't take much capital to start with. Two rooms in an out-of-the-way street—Grove Street would do nicely; some curtains, and a table; that's all you'd need to begin with. If things went along well, and you found that there was a paying demand for materializations, then you'd have to get some costumes. And what awfully good fun it will be!" Rowney continued, as he warmed up to the subject. "Do you know, I've a great

mind to go in with you. It will be no end of a lark."

"Oh, you don't understand me at all, Mauve. I don't want to be a medium. What I mean is, do you believe in the reality of spiritual manifestations?"

Rowney was about to say "spiritual fiddle-sticks," but checked himself, and answered diplomatically: "Well, you see, I haven't much experience in that line, and so my opinion isn't especially valuable. Have you ever tackled the spirits yourself, Roberson?"

"Ye-es," answered Roberson, hesitatingly, "I have."

"And what sort of a time did you have with them?"

"Well—but you won't laugh at me, will you, Mauve? I'm really in earnest, you know, and if you only want to make a joke of it, I won't go on."

"Don't you see how serious I am?"

"Well, some of the spirits did tell me very wonderful things. Do you remember



that picture that I painted a year ago last winter—peas, and asparagus, and Bermuda potatoes, and strawberries, grouped around a shad—that I called 'The First Breath of Spring?' I don't think that you can have forgotten it, for it was a noble work. Well, the spirit of Jan Weenix told me to paint that picture, and promised me that it would bring me fortune and fame."

"Why, I saw it in your studio only yesterday, with a lot of other stuff piled up in a corner. Not much fame or fortune there, apparently. If that's the sort of game that the spirits come on you, I should say that they lie like Ananias and Sapphira."

"Hush! don't speak that way, please. We never know what Form hovers near." (Roberson said this so earnestly that, involuntarily, Rowney glanced over his shoulder.) "It is true that the promise made by the spirit of Jan Weenix has not yet been fulfilled; but, you know, there's no telling at what moment it will be. Every time that I hear a strange step on the stairs,