

ladies — mother and daughter — were expensively and fashionably attired. The table was laid by one of the first caterers. Dodsworth was engaged for the music. Waiters were called in, dressed in the clerical garb of black and white. The hour came on, but not so the guests. No excuses came. In nothing are the New Yorkers more skittish than about the acquaintances they form and the parties they attend. They will give all they are worth for a ticket to a ball, party, reception, or for a levee where great folks are to be, but they will not accept miscellaneous invitations, though there is plenty to eat. The persons who got up this party were unknown. Strings of young men drifted by the house during the evening. Brilliantly lighted, it attracted general attention. But the bell was silent, and the steps deserted. The curious could see anxious persons peering through the cracks of the blinds at the passers by, supposing themselves unobserved. At a late hour the gas was turned off. During the whole evening the parlors were deserted, the splendid table untouched, and the family, late at night, turned to their couches, with feelings better imagined than described. The candidates for fashionable society were sadly disappointed.

VI.

MRS. BURDELL-CUNNINGHAM.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM AS A HOUSEKEEPER. — AS A WIDOW. — HER MARRIAGE. —
HER DAUGHTERS.

THE noted premises, 31 Bond Street, in this city, were occupied by Dr. Harvey Burdell. He was a dentist, lived in good style, and was reputed to be a man of wealth, and a gentleman. He had a housekeeper in the person of Mrs. Cunningham, to whose character and position he was no stranger. He had known her from her youth. She was reputed to be clever, and to have talents. She was poor, with no visible means of support, and with grown-up daughters on her hands. She kept house for Dr. Burdell, and entertained such company as she chose to receive. She lived in luxury, and passed her summers among the gay and fashionable at Newport and Saratoga. One morning the murdered form of Dr. Burdell was found lying upon the carpet in his office, weltering in his blood. The family who occupied the upper part of the house were absent. Men of political distinction had rooms over Dr. Burdell's apartments. They came in at eleven o'clock at night, and all was still. There was no noise or outcry; no struggle heard during the night. All eyes turned in search of the murderer. The public voice cried for justice. Every ear was alive to the

slightest suggestion, every foot quick to chase the most improbable rumor. Men and women were put on trial for their lives. Nothing was proved against them. The perpetrator of the bloody deed may never be known till he stands at the bar of God.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM AS A WIDOW.

When it was known that Dr. Burdell was dead, his housekeeper proclaimed herself his widow. She fell on his mangled body, and shouted out her grief in paroxysms of woe. She clothed herself in deep mourning, and took the name of her husband. She was tried for the murder of Dr. Burdell, and acquitted. She went from the Tombs to the house of Dr. Burdell, and repaired it and furnished it in great style. She went before the surrogate with her claims as a widow. Had he decided the case on the evidence before him he must have granted her suit. While the matter was on trial, a trap was laid for her by the district attorney and others, into which she fell. All hope of a favorable decision in her case was dashed to the ground. She was indicted by the grand jury, incarcerated in the Tombs, bail denied her, in obedience to popular clamor and public indignation, although the crime for which she was indicted was clearly aailable one.

HER MARRIAGE.

On her trial before the surrogate, the confusion, want of self-possession, and contradictory statements of the officiating clergyman left the surrogate no alternative but to reject his testimony. The statement of the daughter that she was present at the wedding,

availed nothing. Yet, if human testimony can be relied on, and any marriage can be proved, it is very certain that Dr. Burdell was married to Mrs. Cunningham. The officiating clergyman was Rev. Mr. Marvin, then settled over the Bleecker Street Reformed Dutch Church. Outside of the court-room his testimony is clear, consistent, and positive. He expresses himself as positive that he married the parties as that he is married himself. The circumstances connected with the marriage were such as to make it morally impossible that he could have been deceived. Dr. Burdell visited Mr. Marvin's house in Hudson Street, one pleasant afternoon, and made arrangements for the proposed marriage. It was a clear, bright day, and the sun was shining in the parlors. Dr. Burdell stated his wishes, told where he resided, what his business was, what his purposes were, and informed him that as soon as his business would permit, after his marriage, he intended to travel in Europe. He made quite a visit. At the appointed time, the same party, accompanied by Mrs. Cunningham, came to his house, and was married. One of the daughters accompanied her mother. The marriage was not hurried, and the parties remained some time in conversation. A few days after the marriage, Dr. Burdell called for a certificate. He remained some time in easy general conversation. He examined the certificate carefully, and pointed out some errors in it, which were corrected. He leisurely departed, carrying the certificate with him. The same person who made the arrangement for the marriage, and was married at the time agreed upon, and who subsequently called for the certificate and carried it away, was known

to be the very person who was murdered in Bond Street, and who was carried to his burial as Dr. Harvey Burdell. Just before the marriage testified to by Mr. Marvin, Dr. Burdell visited Saratoga with Mrs. Cunningham, and took rooms at Congress Hall. A daughter of Mrs. Cunningham was at the Seminary kept by Rev. Dr. Beecher. The next morning after the arrival, Dr. Burdell and Mrs. Cunningham visited the Seminary, and had an interview with Dr. Beecher. Up to this time Dr. Burdell had paid the board and tuition bills of the young lady. He now stated to Dr. Beecher that he had come up to make arrangements for the expenses of the young lady during his absence from the country, as he expected soon to sail for Europe. He made arrangements for Dr. Beecher to draw on New York for the monthly and quarterly payments as they should become due. He stated that his absence from the country would make no difference with the regular payment of the bills. Mrs. Cunningham was in the room while these arrangements were being made. Turning towards Mrs. Cunningham, Dr. Beecher jocosely said, "I presume you do not intend to go to Europe alone." Dr. Burdell replied by a loud laugh, a shrugging of the shoulders, and other indications, that he intended to take the lady with him. Mrs. Cunningham was silent, but smiled, and blushed an assent. These facts did not come out on the trial.

HER DAUGHTERS.

While in prison, Mrs. Cunningham was confined in a small, narrow cell, which was full of bugs, fleas, and vermin, and which was lighted by a hole in the wall

for a window. Three persons could scarcely remain in the cell at one time. She seemed to be about forty years of age; stout, but well formed, very tasty in her dress, hair raven black, eyes sharp and sparkling, handsome features, complexion pale, and her whole contour attractive and handsome. Crowded into this narrow cell were her two daughters. Their devotion to their mother was remarkable. They shut themselves out from society, and passed every day in the close and heated cell. In prison and out they worked for their own and their mother's support. Handsome, and polished in their manners, every one spoke well of them for their quiet and modest deportment. The jailer never flung open the gates of the prison so early in the morning that he did not find these daughters outside waiting for admission. When the iron doors closed on their mother at night, the officers had to use force to put them on the pavement, over which they trod to find some friendly shelter for the night, only to return at early dawn and renew their toil in the society of their mother. There are millionnaires in New York who would give half their fortune to receive from their children such assurances of filial affection.

VII.

SHARP BUSINESS, AND ITS VALUE.

TWO KINDS OF BUSINESS. — TWO MACADAMIZED ROADS. — CASES IN POINT. —
A HARD CREDITOR. — A SHARP MERCHANT. — TWO SHARPERS. — MATRI-
MONIAL SHARPNESS.

THERE are two kinds of business men, and two kinds of business, in this city. The old-school merchants of New York are few. Their ranks are thinning every day. They were distinguished for probity and honor. They took time to make a fortune. Their success proved that business integrity and mercantile honesty were a good capital. Their colossal fortunes and enduring fame prove that to be successful men need not be mean, false, or dishonest. Astor, Cooper, Dodge, Stewart, Stuart Brothers, the Phelps, in business, are representatives of the same class. When John Jacob Astor was a leading merchant in New York, he was one of the few merchants who could buy goods by the cargo. A large dealer in teas knowing that few merchants could outbid him, or purchase a cargo, concluded to buy a whole ship-load that had just arrived and was offered at auction. He had nobody to compete with, and he expected to have everything his own way. Just before the sale commenced, to his consternation he saw Mr. Astor walking leisurely down the wharf.

He went to meet him, and said, "Mr. Astor, I am sorry to see you here this morning. If you will go to your counting-room, and stay till after the sale, I'll give you a thousand dollars." Without thinking much about it, Mr. Astor consented, turned on his heel, and said, "Send round the check." He found that he had made one thousand dollars, and probably had lost ten thousand dollars. But he kept his word, and that is the way he did his business.

The lease of the Astor House ran out some time since. Just before it expired some parties from Boston tried to hire the Astor House on the sly, over the heads of the Stetsons. In a private interview with Mr. Astor, they wanted to know his terms. He replied, "I will consult Mr. Stetson, and let you know. I always give my old tenants the preference." To consult Mr. Stetson was to defeat the object they had in view, and they pressed it no farther. No one asks a guarantee of an old New York merchant that he will not cheat in the commodity which he sells.

TWO MACADAMIZED ROADS.

The path to success is plain. It can hardly be missed. Yet success is the exception. The road to commercial ruin is as broad and well known as Broadway, yet it is crowded. Some men always get along. Throw them up anywhere and they will come down on their feet. Thus continued prosperity follows a well-known law. One of the best known presidents of one of our banks began his career by blacking boots. He came to New York a penniless lad, and sought employment at a store. "What can you do?" said the mer-

chant. "I can do anything," said the boy. "Take these boots and black them, then." He did so, and he blacked them well; and he did everything else well. Quite a young man has been promoted to be cashier over one of our leading banks, and that over older men. His associates dined at Delmonico's. He ate a frugal dinner daily in one of the rooms of the bank. Industry, integrity and pluck are at a premium in New York. Men envy Stewart's success who never think of imitating his toil, or his business integrity. Mr. Claffin, the rival of Stewart, works more hours a day than he requires any employee to do. Till quite recently he made his own deposits in the bank. Yet defalcations are many. Cases of embezzlement abound. Revelations of fraud are daily and startling. Men of high standing are thrown down, and desolation carried to their homes. Dishonesty, rash speculations, stock gambling, expensive horses, with women, wine, fast and high living, tell the story. Most of our large houses and enterprising merchants and rich men have at one time or another gone under. Many such have taken off their coats, rolled up their sleeves, and gone at it again, seldom without success. Many have given up hope, and taken to the bottle. New York is full of wrecks of men, who, because they could not pay their notes, have flung away character, talent and all.

CASES IN POINT.

In one of the tenement-houses in this city, a benevolent lady, searching for a poor family, found a woman, who, two years before, was a leading belle at one of the fashionable watering-places. She had been lost sight

of for a year by her fashionable acquaintances. She did not appear in her accustomed haunts. When found, she occupied rooms in a crowded tenement-house in the lower part of New York. Her story was the old one — business reverses, the bottle, poverty and want, like armed men. On the floor of the room, rolled up in rags, in a corner, lay her husband, a degraded sot. Two years before he was a bright and successful merchant.

A HARD CREDITOR.

In one of the small streets of lower New York, where men who are "hard up" congregate, where those who do brokerage in a small way have a business location, a name can be read on a small tin sign, that is eminently suggestive. The man who has desk-room in that locality I have known as a leading merchant in New York. His house was extensive, his business large. He was talked of as the rival of Stewart. No store in New York was more celebrated. He was sharp at a trade, and successful. He was a hard creditor, and unrelenting. He asked no favors, and granted none. It was useless for a debtor to appeal to him. "Settle, sir!" he would say, in a sharp, hard manner, "settle, sir! How will I settle? I will settle for a hundred cents on the dollar, sir." Nothing could induce him to take his iron grasp off of an unfortunate trader. Over his desk was a sign, on which was painted in large letters, "No Compromise." He answered all appeals by pointing to the ominous words, with his long, bony fingers. His turn came. He went under — deep. All New York was glad.

A SHARP MERCHANT.

In travelling, I passed the night with a wealthy merchant. His name on 'change was a tower of strength. He had made his fortune, and was proud of it. He said he could retire from business if he would, have a fortune for himself to spend, and settle one on his wife and children. He was very successful, but very severe. He was accounted one of the shrewdest merchants in the city. But he had no tenderness towards debtors. In the day of his prosperity he was celebrated for demanding the full tale of brick, and the full pound of flesh. A few months after I passed the night with him he became bankrupt. His wealth fled in a day. He had failed to settle the fortune on his wife and children, and they were penniless. He was treated harshly, and was summarily ejected from the institutions over which he presided. He complained bitterly of the ingratitude of men who almost got down on their knees to ask favors of him when he was prosperous, and who spurned and reviled him when he fell. If in the day of his prosperity he had been kinder and less exacting, he might have found friends in the day of his adversity.

TWO SHARPERS.

A noted sportsman, taking dinner at one of our clubs, exhibited a diamond ring of great beauty and apparent value on his finger. A gentleman present had a great passion for diamonds. After dinner, the parties met in the office. After much bantering, the owner consented to barter the ring for the sum of six hundred dollars. As the buyer left the room, a suppressed tittering

struck his ear. He concluded that the former owner had sold both the ring and the purchaser. He said nothing, but called the next day upon a jeweller, where he learned that the diamond was paste, and the ring worth about twenty-five dollars. He examined some real diamonds, and found one closely resembling the paste in his own ring. He hired the diamond for a few days, pledged twelve hundred dollars, the price of it, and gave a hundred dollars for its use. He went to another jeweller, had the paste removed, and the real diamond set. His chums, knowing how he had been imposed upon, impatiently waited for his appearance the next night. To their astonishment they found him in high glee. He flourished his ring, boasted of his bargain, and said if any gentleman present had a twelve hundred dollar ring to sell for six hundred dollars, he knew of a purchaser. When he was told that the ring was paste, and that he had been cheated, he laughed at their folly. Bets were freely offered that the ring did not contain a real diamond. Two men bet a thousand dollars each. Two bet five hundred dollars. All were taken: umpires were chosen. The money and the ring were put into their hands. They went to a first-class jeweller, who applied all the tests, and who said the stone was a diamond of the first water, and was worth, without the setting, twelve hundred dollars. The buyer put the three thousand dollars which he had won quietly in his pocket. He carried the diamond back and recalled his twelve hundred dollars, and with his paste ring on his finger went to his club. The man who sold the ring was waiting for him. He wanted to get the ring back. He attempted to turn

the whole thing into a joke. He sold the ring, he said, for fun. He knew that it was a real diamond all the time. He never wore false jewels. He could tell a real diamond anywhere by its peculiar light. He would not be so mean as to cheat an old friend. He knew his friend would let him have the ring again. But his friend was stubborn — said that the seller thought that it was paste, and intended to defraud him. At length, on the payment of eight hundred dollars, the ring was restored. All parties came to the conclusion, when the whole affair came out, that when diamond cuts diamond again some one less sharp will be selected.

MATRIMONIAL SHARPNESS.

New York merchants frequently sell their daughters as well as their goods. It is quite a common thing to put respectability and standing against money. One of our most unscrupulous politicians became rich, as such men do sometimes. He wanted respectability and social position. He proposed to attain them through a reputable marriage. He proposed for the hand of one of the fair damsels of Gotham. His political position was high, his future prospects dazzling. The lady's father, with mercantile frankness, offered the hand of his daughter, on condition that a hundred thousand dollars were settled upon her, secured by real estate. The proposal was accepted, and the wedding preparations went on. An elegant house, in an aristocratic locality, was purchased. It was fitted up in great style. The young lady was congratulated on her fine prospects. More than once, as the time drew near for the marriage, the father hinted that the little preliminary

transaction should be attended to. "O, yes! O, yes! Certainly, certainly," the bland politician would say. His brother was absent; the papers were not complete; but it would be all ready before the marriage. It was not till the afternoon of the wedding that the papers, in due form, were laid before the gratified father. The wedding came off in great style. Marriage in high life greeted the eye in all the papers. A subsequent examination showed that the property conveyed to the bride was covered with a mortgage of ninety-five thousand dollars. It bore date of the same day of the settlement, but was prior to it, and duly recorded before the settlement was made. The mortgage conveyed the property to a near and sharp relative of the bridegroom. On the return from the bridal trip, the party receiving the mortgage refused to deliver it up to the bridegroom, alleging that the mortgage was genuine, and that for it he had paid a legal consideration. Whether New York will be electrified with a lawsuit between the parties remains to be seen.