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## THE GUNMAKER OF MUSCOW. A TALE OF THE EMPIRE UNDER PETER THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.  
The time at which we open our story is mid winter, and towards the close of the seventeenth century. Russia is the scene.

In the suburbs of Moscow, and very near the river Moskwa, stood a humble cot, which betrayed a neatness of arrangement and show of taste that more than made up for its smallness of size. Back of the cot was artisan's shop, and other out buildings. This shop was devoted to the manufacture of fire-arms, mostly. Some swords, and other edged weapons, were made here upon special application.

The master of this tenement was the hero of our tale, Ruric Nevel. We find him standing by his forge, watching the white smoke as it curled up towards the throat of the chimney. He was a young man, not over three-and-twenty, and possessed a frame of more than ordinary symmetry and muscular development. He was not large—no above a medium size—but a single glance at the swelling chest, the broad shoulders, and the sinewy ridges of the bare arms, told at once that he was master of great physical power. His father had been killed in the then late war with the Turks, and the son, leaving his mother with a sufficiency of sustenance, went to Spain soon after the bereavement. There he found work in the most noted armies; and now, well versed in the trade, he had returned to his native city to follow his calling, and support his mother.

Near by stood a boy—Paul Peepoff—a bright, intelligent lad, some fifteen years of age, who had bound himself to the gunmaker for the purpose of learning the art.

Claudia Nevel, Ruric's mother, was a noble looking woman, and the light of her still handsome countenance was never brighter than when gazing upon her boy. She had a thankful, loving heart, and a prayerful, hopeful soul.

"It is snowing again, faster than ever!" remarked Paul, as he took his seat at the supper-table, in company with the others.

"Ah," returned Ruric, resting his knife a few moments while he bent his ear to listen to the voice of the storm. "I had hoped 'twould snow no more for the present. The snow is deep enough now. And how it blows!"

"Never mind," spoke the dame, in a trustful, easy tone, "it must storm when it listeth, and we can only thank God that we have shelter, and pray for those who have none."

"Amen!" responded Ruric, fervently. The meal was at length eaten, and the table set back, and shortly afterwards Paul retired to his bed.

Ruric drew his chair close up to the fireplace, and leaning against the jam, he bowed his head in absorbing thought. This had become a habit with him of late. His mother having observed these fits of abstraction, became uneasy and pressed Ruric to tell her what it was over which he was so constantly and so moodily brooding. Being thus urged, Ruric confessed that it was of Rosalind Valdai (the orphan daughter of a nobleman, and now the ward of Olga, the powerful and haughty Duke of Tula) he was thinking. Ruric's father, and the father of Rosalind, had been comrades in arms in their youth, and their children had been playmates. But when the elder Nevel was slain in battle, Ruric was yet a boy, and the widow and her son remained poor and obscure; while Valdai, more fortunate, had risen to a high rank, and dying, left Rosalind a title and a fortune.

The young people, however, had not forgotten each other. Ruric loved Rosalind with all the fervor of his being, and he felt assured that Rosalind returned his love. As he and his mother sat debating the matter on that stormy night, a loud knock upon the outer door startled them.

"Is there any one here?" the gunmaker asked, as he opened the door, bowing his head and shielding his eyes from the falling snow with one hand.

"Yes," returned a voice from the Stygian darkness. "In God's name let me in, or I shall perish."

"Then follow quickly," said Ruric. "Here—give me your hand. There—now come."

The youth had found the thickly gloved hand—gloved with the softest fur—and having led the invisible applicant into the hall, he closed the door, and then led the way to the kitchen. Without speaking, Ruric turned and gazed upon the new-comer. The stranger, who was equally desirous of ascertaining what manner of man Ruric was, was a monk—and habited something like one of the Black monks of St. Michael. He was of medium height, and possessed a rotundity of person which was comical to behold.

At length, after warming himself by the fire, the guest asked if he could be accommodated with some sleeping-place, and being answered in the affirmative, Ruric showed him to a chamber, and then retired himself.

The next morning, after breakfast, the Monk went with Ruric to his shop, and examined with much interest the various weapons therein. Ruric questioned him closely as to whether he had ever met him before, but the Monk replied evasively, and after saying that in case the gunmaker

should ever, in any great emergency, need a friend, that he might apply to him, he took his leave.

Towards the middle of the afternoon, just as Ruric had finished tempering some parts of a gun-lock, the back door of his shop was opened, and two men entered. They were young men, dressed in costly furs, and both of them stout and good-looking. The gunmaker recognized them as the Count Conrad Damonoff and his friend Stephen Urzen.

"I think I speak with Ruric Nevel," said the Count, moving forward.

"You do," returned Ruric, not at all surprised by the visit, since people of all classes were in the habit of calling at his place to order arms.

"You are acquainted with the Lady Rosalind Valdai?" he said.

"I am," answered Ruric, now beginning to wonder.

"Well, sir," resumed Damonoff, with much haughtiness, "perhaps my business can be quickly and satisfactorily settled. It is my desire to make the Lady Rosalind my wife."

Ruric Nevel started at these words, and he clasped his hands to hide their tremulousness. But he was not long debating upon an answer.

"And why have you come to me with this information, sir?" he asked.

"Ruric Nevel, you shall not say that I did not make myself fully understood, and hence I will explain." The Count spoke this as speaks a man who feels that he is doing a very condescending thing, and in the same tone he proceeded: "The Lady Rosalind is of noble parentage and very wealthy. My own station and wealth are equal with hers. I love her, and must have her for my wife. I have been to see the noble Duke, her guardian, and he objects not to my suit. But he informed me that there was an impediment, and that was her love for you. He knows full well—as I know, and as all must know—that she could never become your wife; yet he is anxious not to interfere too much against her inclinations. So a simple denial from you, to the effect that you can never claim her hand, is all that is necessary. I have a paper here all drawn up, and all that I require is simply your signature. Here—it is only a plain, simple avowal on your part that you have no hopes nor thoughts of seeking the hand of the lady in marriage."

As the Count spoke he drew a paper from the bosom of his marten doublet, and having opened it he handed it towards the gunmaker. But Ruric took it not. He drew back and gazed the visitor sternly in the face.

"Sir Count," he said, calmly and firmly, "you have plainly stated your proposition, and I will as plainly answer. I cannot sign the paper."

"Ha!" gasped Damonoff, in quick passion. "Do you refuse?"

"Most flatly."

"But you will sign it!" hissed Damonoff, turning pale with rage. "Here it is—sign! If you would live—sign!"

"Perhaps he cannot write," suggested Urzen contemptuously.

"Then he may make his mark," rejoined the Count, in the same contemptuous tone.

It might not require much more urging to induce me to make my mark in a maner not at all agreeable to you, sir, the youth retorted, with his teeth now set, and the dark veins upon his brow starting more plainly out. "Do you seek a quarrel with me?"

"Seek?—I seek what I will have. Will you sign?"

"Once more—No!"

"Then, by heavens, you shall know what it is to thwart such as me! How's that?"

As these words passed from the Count's lips in a low, hissing whisper, he aimed a blow with his fist at Ruric's head. The gunmaker had not dreamed of such a das tantly act, and he was not prepared for it. Yet he dodged it, and as the Count drew back Ruric dealt him a blow upon the brow that fell him to the floor like a dead ox.

"Beware, Stephen Urzen!" he whispered to the Count's companion, as that individual made a movement as though he would come forward. "I am not myself now, and you are safest where you are."

The man thus addressed viewed the gunmaker a few moments, and he seemed to conclude that he had better avoid a personal encounter.

Conrad Damonoff slowly rose to his feet, and gazed into his antagonist's face a few moments in silence. His own face deathly pale, and his whole frame quivered.

"Ruric Nevel," he said, in a hissing, mad-dened tone, "you will hear from me. I can overlook your plebeian stock."

And with this he turned away.

"Paul," said the gunmaker, turning to his boy, after the men had gone, "not a word of this to my mother. Be sure."

On the following morning, as Ruric was preparing for breakfast, he saw Olga, the Duke's pass by, and strike off into the Borodino road. Now, thought he, is the time to call on Rosalind; and as soon as he had eaten his breakfast he prepared for the visit.

He dressed well, and no man in Moscow had a nobler look when the dust of toil was removed from his brow and garb.

He took a horse and sledge, and started off for the Kremlin, within which the duke resided.

In one of the sumptuously furnished apartments of the palace of the Duke of Tula sat Rosalind Valdai. She was a beautiful girl; molded in perfect form, with the full flush of health and vigor, and possessing a face of peculiar sweetness and intelligence. She was only nineteen years of age, and she had been ten years an orphan. There was nothing of the aristocrat in her look—noting proud, nothing haughty; but gentleness and love were the true elements of her soul.

"How now, Zenoble?" asked Rosalind, as her waiting-maid entered.

"There is a gentleman below who would see you," the girl replied.

"Then tell him I cannot see him," said Rosalind, trembling.

"But it is Ruric Nevel, my mistress."

"Ruric!" exclaimed the fair maiden, starting up, while the rich blood mounted to her brow and temples. "O, I am glad he has come. My prayers are surely answered. Lead him hither, Zenoble." The girl departed, and ere long afterwards Ruric entered the apartment. He walked quickly to where Rosalind had arisen to her feet, and taking one of her hands in both of his own he pressed it to his lips. It was with difficulty he spoke. But the emotions of his soul became calm at length, and then he received Rosalind's promise that she would never permit her hand to be disposed of to another by the Duke of Tula. Ruric informed her of the visit of Count Damonoff to his shop, its purpose and the result. Rosalind was astonished and alarmed.

Still, she could not believe that the Duke meant to bestow her hand upon Damonoff. The Duke owed him money, she said, and might perhaps be playing with the Count.

Ruric started as a new suspicion flashed upon him. Had the Duke sent Damonoff upon that mission on purpose to get him into a quarrel. "Aye," thought the youth to himself, "the Duke knows that I have taught the sword play, and he knows the Count would be no match for me. So he thinks in this subtle manner to make me an instrument for ridding him of a plague."

But the youth was careful not to let Rosalind know of this. He thought she would be unhappy if she knew that a duel was likely to come off between himself and the Count.

After some minutes of comparative silence, Ruric took leave of Rosalind, and was soon in the open court. Here he entered his sledge, and then drove to the barracks in the Khlitagorod, where he inquired for a young friend named Orsa, a lieutenant of the guard. The officer was quickly found, and as he met Ruric his salutation was warm and cordial. After the first friendly greetings had passed, Ruric remarked, "I may have a meeting with Count Damonoff. He has sought a quarrel—insulted me most grossly—aimed a blow at my head—and I knocked him down. You can judge as well as I what the result must be."

"Most surely he will challenge you," cried the officer excitedly.

"So I think," said Ruric, calmly. "And now will you serve me in the event?"

"With pleasure."

And thereupon Ruric related all that had occurred at the time of the Count's visit to his shop and then took his leave.

He reached home just as his mother was spreading the board for dinner. She often went away on business, and she thought not of asking him any questions.

On questioning Paul, in the shop, in the afternoon, Ruric, to his great surprise, learned that the Black Monk had been there during his absence, to purchase a dagger; that he had drawn out of the boy a minute account of the visit of Urzen and Damonoff, and that he seemed to be much pleased with Ruric's conduct. As they were talking, Urzen called and presented a challenge from the Count. Ruric at once referred him to his friend, and he took his leave.

That evening about eight o'clock, a sledge drove up to Ruric's door, and young Orsa entered the house. He called Ruric aside, and informed him that the arrangement had all been made.

"Damonoff is in a hurry," he said, "and we have appointed the meeting at ten o'clock to-morrow forenoon. It will take place at the bend of the river just beyond the Viska Hill."

"And the weapons?" asked Ruric.

"Swords," returned Orsa. "The Count will bring his own, and he gives you the privilege of selecting such an one as you choose."

"I thank you, Orsa, for your kindness thus far, and you may rest assured that I shall be prompt."

"Suppose I call here in the morning for you?" suggested the visitor.

"I should be pleased to have you do so," the gunmaker said; and thus it was arranged.

On the following morning Ruric was up betimes, and at the breakfast table not a word of the foregoing theme was uttered. After the meal was finished the gunmaker went out to his shop, and took down from one of the closets a long leather scabbard, in which were two swords. These were Toledo blades, and of most exquisite workmanship and finish. Ruric took out the heavier one, which was a two edged weapon, with a cross hilt of heavily gilded metal. He crossed the point upon the floor,

and then, with all his weight he bent the blade till the pommel touched the point. The little steel sprang back to its place with a sharp clang, and the texture was not started. Then he struck the flat of the blade upon the anvil with great force.—The ring was sharp and clear, and the weapon remained unharmed.

"By St. Michael," said the gunmaker to his boy, "Moscow does not contain another blade like that. Damascus crows saw a better."

"I think you are right, my master," the boy returned, who had beheld the trial of the blade with unbounded admiration.—"But," he added, "could you not temper a blade like that?"

"Perhaps, if I had the steel. But I have it not. The steel of these two blades came from India, and was originally one weapon—a ponderous, two handed affair, belonging to a Bengal chieftain. The metal possesses all the hardness of the finest razor, with the elasticity of the most subtle spring. My old master at Toledo gave me these as a memento. Were I to mention the sum of money he was once offered for the largest one, you would hardly credit it."

After this Ruric gave Paul a few directions about the work, promising to be back before night. Just then Orsa drove up to the door.

Ruric was all ready. His mother was in the kitchen. He went to her with a smile upon his face. He put his arms about her and drew her to his bosom.

"God bless you, my mother. I shall come back." He said this and then kissed her.

He dared stop to speak no more, but opened the door and passed out.

"Have you a good weapon?" asked Orsa, as the horse started on.

"I have," Ruric said, quietly; "and one which has stood more tests than most swords will bear." And after some further remarks he related the peculiar circumstances attending the making of the sword, and his possession of it.

At length they struck upon the river, and in half an hour more they reached the appointed spot. The day was beautiful. They had been upon the ground but a few minutes when the other party came in sight around the bend of the river. The monk was there also.

As soon as the Count and his second and surgeon had arrived, and the horses had been secured, the lieutenant proposed that they should repair to an old building which was close at hand.

"Aye," added Damonoff—"Let us have this business done, for I would be back to dinner. I dine with Olga to-day, and a fair maiden awaits my coming."

"Notice him not," whispered Orsa, who walked close by Ruric's side. "That is one of my chief points to get you angry, and so unhinge your nerves."

"Never fear," answered the gunmaker. "The party halted when they reached the interior of the rough structure, and the Count threw off his pelisse and drew his sword. Ruric followed his example.

"Sir Count," the latter said as he moved a step forward, "ere we commence this work I wish all present to understand distinctly how I stand. You have sought this quarrel from the first. Without the least provocation from me you have insulted me most grossly, and this is the climax. So, before God and man, be the result upon your own head."

"Out, lying knave!"

"Hold," cried the surgeon, laying his hand heavily upon the Count's arm. "You have no right to speak thus, for you lower yourself when you do it. If you love your life you will do it. If you have come to fight do so honorably."

An angry reply was upon Damonoff's lips, but he did not speak it. He turned to his antagonist and said,—

"Will you measure weapons, sir? Mine may be a mite the longest. I seek no advantage; and I have one here of the same length and weight as my own if you wish it."

"I am well satisfied as it is," replied Ruric.

"Then take your ground. Are you ready?"

"I am!"

The two swords were crossed in an instant, with a clear, sharp clang.

The above is all of this story that will be published in our columns. We give this as a sample. The continuation of it from where it leaves off here can only be found in the New York Ledger, the great family paper, for which the most popular writers in the country contribute, and which is for sale in all the stores throughout the city and country, where papers are sold. Remember and ask for the New York Ledger of March 19, and in it you will get the continuation of the story from where it leaves off here. If you cannot get a copy at any book store, the publisher of the Ledger will mail you a copy on the receipt of five cents.

The Ledger is mailed to subscribers at \$2 a year, or two copies for \$3. Address your letters to Robert Bonner, publisher, 44 Ann Street, New York. It is the handsomest and best family paper in the country; elegantly illustrated, and characterized by a high moral tone. Its present circulation is over four hundred thousand copies, which is the best evidence we can give of its merits.

## AUDUBON'S BIRDS.

People of taste, and all the patrons of natural history and the fine arts, will be gratified to learn that the great work of J. J. Audubon is now in course of republication in this city, by Mr. J. W. Audubon, under the superintendence of the lithographic engraver, Mr. J. Bien, who executes the plates. We have examined seven of these that have just been completed, forming the first number of the serial issue.—They are much superior as works of art to the engravings executed in England under the personal superintendence of the distinguished ornithologist.

While examining the work, the engraver gave us an explanation of the methods employed by him of producing the plates, the finest and most costly varieties of lithographic printing. The original paintings of Audubon, from which Mr. Bien makes his engravings, present a variety of colors which it is, of course, impossible to produce by one impression from a lithographic stone. To evade this difficulty, three, four or even five stones of large size are prepared for the same picture; the plates are 27 by 40 inches in dimension.

Upon each of the stones an exactly similar outline is made, representing, for example, a magnificent group—a celebrated one of Audubon's—of a hawk pouncing upon a brood of chickens. The talons of the bird are thrown forward, right and left, in a kind of sparring attitude, as if he would clasp the entire brood, or at least clutch as many chickens as possible in each foot. The wings slightly retracted, the head with glittering eyes ready to assist the savage poise of the talons; the terrified prey, struggling vainly to elude the winged death; it is carnivorous nature caught and fixed in one of her most brilliant and transient attitudes.

Four outlines made upon the four stones are each for a separate color. The yellow comes first. Wherever there is yellow to be represented in the picture—not only as a body or surface color, but as a basis for the other colors through which it is to show transparently—the drawing is completed upon the stone.

A very finely prepared yellow oil paint is put upon the stone by a roller; but, by the usual art of lithography, it adheres only where it should, to the parts of the drawing intended to be yellow. From this yellow impressions are taken. These are then printed with red or brown, which goes partly over the yellow, and covers some of the paper itself. Then comes other colors, concluding always with blue, to give sky, distance, air, perspective and shading.

Very fine paints, ground with extraordinary care, have to be used in this style of art. The best are those that show no traces of oil, or are what painters call "dead color," the most difficult of all to obtain. Ordinary paints have a gloss or shine from the oil contained in them, which is highly injurious in lithography. The result of Mr. Bien's labors upon this work has been the production of colored plates equal in effect to fine oil paintings. In the English engravings of Audubon's work, the skies were omitted, and very lean foregrounds and accessories introduced. All the parts have been carefully restored by Mr. Bien, who not only surpasses the foreign engraver in his detail, but in giving the full artistic effect, covering the entire plate with landscape, figures and foliage.

In order to save space and reduce the cost of the work to subscribers, Mr. Bien has in some instances combined several of the original pictures in one plate. In the English edition, a single small bird and nest might be seen spotting the middle of a vast expanse of paper. This tasteless and expensive waste of paper in an ocean of page has been properly and skillfully avoided.

The expense of the entire work will be less than half the price of the original English edition.—*New York Century.*

How melancholy the moon must feel when it has enjoyed the fullness of prosperity, and got reduced to its fast quarter.

In ancient days the precept was, "Know thyself." In modern times, it has been supplanted by the far more fashionable maxim, "Know thy neighbor, and everything about him."

"Yours is a very hard case," said the fox to the oyster.

An ignorant man from the country inquires whether mock turtle soup is made out of tortoise shell cuts?

It is said some babies are so small they can creep into quart measures. But the way some adults can walk into such a measure is astonishing.

Labor lost—an organ grinder playing at the door of a deaf and dumb asylum.

Buffet complains that the opera gives him a singing in the ears.

A heart full of love and human sympathy always looks out through the window of a cheerful face, and speaks to you in a gentle tone of voice.

Our perfect emotions are the birds of Paradise, which, if they were let to the earth, could seldom rise again.

"Mother," said a little boy, "I'm tired of this pug nose; it's growing bigger and bigger every day."

## HISTORY OF THE PIANO.

The Boston Express has an interesting article on the Piano, a condensation of which we think will be of interest to our readers. Fifty years ago the instruments, though very inferior to those of the present day, commanded extravagant prices, and were within the reach of but few. Piano forte players, too, were quite as rare as the instruments; but now, when the prices of the instruments bring them within the means of almost all classes, a knowledge of the piano constitute the chief part of a lady's accomplishments.

The writer proceeds to say that the Piano forte of to-day was not an invention by itself—no one pretends to find a claimant for it. It has been perfected step by step, through a succession of ages; and probably the thing first conceived, which ultimately led to something like a Piano, more resembled a Piano-forte than a boat-jack resembles one of Grover & Baker's nicely working sewing machines.

The first approach to it, or the first idea which finally developed the Piano, was an instrument called the *psalterion* or *tympnum*, which was simply a box, across which strings or wires were placed, and turned so as to form the common scale in music.—The sounds were produced by striking the strings or wires with two light hammers, one held in each hand. It was an instrument of Greek origin, though much in use by the Hebrews. The instrument known as the Dulcimer of the present day, bore a nearer resemblance to it than any instrument with which we are acquainted.

The invention of the *Clavichord* was the next step towards the manufacture of the Piano-forte. This instrument was an improvement on the *psalterion* or *tympnum*, a key-board for the first time being used, by which small plates of copper were made to act upon the strings. After the *Clavichord* another instrument called the *Clavictherion*, in which catgut strings were substituted for wires, and acted upon by soft leather hammers.

Another instrument, which it is said Queen Elizabeth was fond of playing upon, was called the *Virginal*. It was a keyed instrument, wire metallic strings vibrated by quills attached to the ends of levers. It probably derived its name from the fact that the Virgin Queen held it in high estimation.

The *Spinnet* was of similar construction to the *Virginal*. It was formed, however, like the square Piano of a much later period.

The *Harpichord*, a much later invention, was first known about the year 1530. Its shape was similar to that of the grand Piano-forte, had two rows or banks of keys, and could be used together or separately, the lower bank giving at the same touch the notes of the upper. In this instrument the *jack*, with a movable tongue, through which was passed a quill, was first used, but so different in its effects upon the string that some writer satirically describes the tone as "a scratch with a sound at the end of it." However harsh and disagreeable the tones of this instrument must have been, compared to the poorest Pianos now used, we would remind the instrument connoisseur that the fine productions of the Bachs, Beethovens, Handel, Mozart, Clementi and others were composed upon it.

Many years later, a maker of musical instruments of Paris, by the name of Marius, improved the action by the substitution of small hammers instead of quills.—A Florentine, by the name of Christophero, so much improved the discovery of Marius, that it may be said to form the basis of most of the subsequent improvements, and, in fact, he may claim to have the first Piano-forte. It could be made to play both *loud* and *soft*—hence the name of Piano-forte. The next great improvements were made about the year 1860, by Zumppe of London, who met with so great success that he realized a handsome fortune in the manufacture of them, the demand for his instruments being greater on the continent than at home.

A rival establishment to Zumppe's was soon in operation in Germany, under the auspices of Silberman, and another at Paris, by the brothers Erard. Still the English Pianos maintained their superiority for some time, and Clementi, Kirkman, and one or two others, divided the business; if not the honors, with Zumppe, of making the best Pianos for many years. The celebrated instruments of Broadwood are of later date.

The descendants of the Erards, however, now claim to make the best Pianos in the world, and we understand that English makers do not pretend to dispute their claim to superiority.

The writer then states that in this country that class Pianos have not been made more than a quarter of a century, and claims that the world is indebted to the late Jonas Chickering, of Boston for his perseverence and ingenuity in perfecting the instrument. He made his Piano in 1829, and by 1835, he had made a number of twenty thousand have been manufactured by him and his successors, Messrs. Chickering & Sons. "There are nearly three hundred manufacturers, whose efforts, the writer says, are well appreciated by the community, and whose Pianos are held in deserved estimation. He mentions no manufacturers of the instrument out of Boston—not even Knabe, of Baltimore, whose instruments are fast coming into notice and popular favor.

## ANTECEDENTS OF LEADING ACTORS.

"Honor and shame from no condition rise. Act well your part—there all the glory lies."

Mrs. Siddons was formerly a lady's waiting maid; Forrest, the American "howler," was an errand boy in a Philadelphia grocery store; Murdoch is the son of a baker, and used to serve his father's customers from a large basket which he carried on his head; Billy Burton was once a printer's "devil" in a London printing office; Sol. Smith is also a practical printer; Barney Williams was, for many years, a regular New York "dock whalper;" J. P. Scott, when a "poetical boy," served as a cabin flunky on an oyster vessel in the Philadelphia trade; Charlotte Cushman, before she turned actress, made a living for herself and mother and sister by the needle (all honor and praise to her); Collins, the Irish comedian, served an apprenticeship under a Dublin barber, and is even today reckoned an excellent "shaver;" Charles Matthews was a "gentleman born," but was so unfortunate as to lose his title; J. B. Roberts is the "son of a gunsmith," still living in Wilmington, Delaware; J. E. McDonogh, was formerly a butcher, and used to "kill for Keyser," whose slaughter house was in Spring Garden, Philadelphia; one of the California "stars" is a native of Newfoundland, and is the son of a mackerel catcher—(we wouldn't give his name for the world, he'd be "dead" of us); Ned Bingham was first a gallant soldier, next a clever actor, and now a vendor of first rate cigars and tobacco; George Jordan, the handsome and talented "fop" actor, served an apprenticeship to the printing trade, and is said to be one of the most rapid typesetters ever "turned out" of Baltimore—*en passant*, we hear that George has become disgusted with the stage, and intends resuming his "career" at the stand; Prudence commenced his public career by playing second fiddle on a Mississippi flat-boat; F. E. Johnson was once a pill-maker in London, but finding it not to be the better kind of medicine, he cast aside his mortar and pestle, and turned his attention and talents to comic singing, at which he is "stunning;" Garrick's father kept a tennip alley; Laura Keane was once a bar maid in a London saloon, and could mix a "gin-sling" and a "brandy-smash" with a bit of the best of them; of McKeen Bichmann's early life we know nothing—like "Topsy," we "guess he wasn't born, but grew;" Bourciant is the son of a Worcestershire gardener, which pursuit he followed several years before going on the stage—(this will account for his "cabbaging" propensities; John Brougham was raised in a charitable soup house, in Dublin, hence he is called a "broth" of a boy; Chautauq is a carpenter by trade; Charles Wheatleigh served several years at the tailoring business. A number of California actors rose from obscurity. One of the most "airy" of them sold "swill-milk" on the Five Points, New York, several years prior to his debut on the stage. It will be seen from the above that "poverty and low birth, the twin jailers of the daring heart," are not barriers to the attainment of fame and position in the dramatic profession.

*A Spiritualist on Spiritualism.*—I most solemnly affirm that I do not believe that there has, during the past 500 years, arisen any class of people who were guilty of so great a variety of crimes and indecencies as spiritualists of America. For a long time, I was swallowed up in its whirlpool of excitement, and, comparatively, paid but little attention to its evils, believing that much good might result from the opening of the avenues of spiritual intercourse; but, during the past eight months, I have devoted my attention to a critical investigation of its moral, social, and religious bearing, and I stand appalled before the revelations of its awful and damning realities and would flee from its influence as I would from the miasma, which would destroy both soul and body. Spiritualism and prostitution, with a rejection of Christianity, are twin sisters, which everywhere go hand-in-hand. With but little inquiry, I have been able to count up over seventy mediums, most of whom have wholly abandoned their conjugal relations, others living with