

"They have gaped upon me with their mouth: they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully: they have gathered themselves together against me." Job, XVI, 10.
 "I also will shew mine opinion." Ibid., XXXII, 17.

The Second Book of the Chronicles.

CHAPTER I.

THE THREE WICKED BRETHERN.

In the days of the reign of Ulysses, the Great King, who ruled over the mighty Nation of the West, there arose out of the land of Tar and Turpentine, three men of Belial, of great stature and rotundity, and mighty in their own conceit.

And the name of the one was Timotheus, who was surnamed "The Bald," because his head was bare from his birth, even like unto the palm of his hand, and he was a political acrobat from his youth up. His cheek was of brass; his legs of spring steel; his back of whale-bone, and his feet of splayed lead; so that he could leap more political high fences, and fall squarer upon both feet in the camp of the enemy, than any other man that lived in that generation.

Now, Timotheus was a Hubite, and in those ancient days, when Ulysses was captain of the Hosts of Abraham the King, there was war in the land, and the Hubites sent armed men unto the King, to fight against his enemies, even many companies, with guns and swords and horses and chariots, a great multitude sent they him, like unto the sands of the sea; and they placed over them captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and of fifties and of tens, to go with them into battle; and these were mighty men of valor. Now, Timotheus was captain of tens in the ninth company of the Hubites. On his shoulders was a blue coat with brass buttons; a red sash was girded about his loins, and he carried a sword and looked fierce—for the enemy were yet many days' journey away when he thirsted for their blood and their spoil.

But it came to pass that on the second day of the eleventh month, in the first year of the reign of King Abraham, the two hosts met and pitched their tents over against one another for battle, and behold it was night, and darkness spread over the land as a blanket—that they could not distinguish one from another. So they laid them down and slept, and when they arose on the morrow for battle, lo! Timotheus wasn't there! for he had gone on a long journey upon urgent business in the way they had come, and they wist not that he would return, for he had been dismissed the King's service! So they chose from among them a captain in his stead, and he was known of them no more forever.

Now in the fifth year of the reign of King Abraham, in the fourth month, and about the twentieth day of the month, the hosts of Abraham the King, having overcome all their enemies, were assembled in a certain place in the land of Tar and Turpentine, and they were resting from their labors, for peace had been proclaimed, and there was to be no more war in all that land. And about that time there came forth from the assembled multitude of armed men, one of giant stature, arrayed in the garb of a camp bummer; and he lifted up his voice and spake, saying:

"Leave me have tin doollars!"

And they knew him for Timotheus the Sutler; who was also the father of them that were called carpet-baggers in those days. And he abided among them.

And the name of another was Loge, who was also called "Coon," because he hasted to "come down" when the assembly of the people looked darkly upon him in the Temple of Justice wherein he dwelt, so that he died, politically; and it hath come to pass that because there was none to bury him in the tomb of his fathers, he walketh to and fro and up and down in the earth to save funeral expenses, doing evil continually, even unto this day.

And lo! he is a daisy from a-way-back!

And the name of the last is Ralesch, surnamed Up-at-the-Church, because he affecteth piety, and preyeth there on his knees all day Sunday, and on his neighbors all the rest of the week. Moreover, unlike David the King at the threshing-floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, he taketh that which is not his own, and offereth burnt offerings without cost; for his deb's are many, and his creditors cry in vain for payment.

Now it came to pass in his salad days when he was green, when the eider-down, that sweet forcrunner of the *toga virilis*, was yet a stranger to his lip, that he grew bucolic, and joined himself unto the Home Guards of the land in which he then was, and, journeying unto the camp of the men of war taken in battle, he was set to guard the sick, the wounded, maimed and dying of the enemy who were lodged there, lest they rise upon their legless trunks and crawl upon their empty bellies unto the camp of the army of King Davis and devour it, for they had not tasted flesh for many days. And lo! as he watched he fell asleep; and as he slept he dreamed dreams; and in his dream he saw a vision; and in his vision he saw the ghastly skeletons of the sheeted dead rise from their unnoted graves and point their long fleshless fingers at him; and he awoke affrighted. His skin rose in tittering goose-flesh, and each individual hair stood on end, like quills upon the fretful porcupine. And it was so, that he dropped his arms, and fled in terror through the spooky night and fell among the campfires of the enemy; and they took him away and carried him into a far country, even unto the camp that is called "Chase," and after that they had anointed his creeping flesh and greased and soaped down his rampant hair, they gave unto him the oath of allegiance and a square meal, and let him go. So he meandered southward at his own sweet will, and gat himself unto his own land among his own kin, and hath since been heard to declare that but for these vile guns, and the villainous saltpetre, digged out of the bowels of the harmless earth to destroy a fellow, he would have been a soldier!

"But he wasn't"; for he joined himself unto one Isaac, who was a Farmer of the King's Revenue, and together they defrauded the King and oppressed the people grievously, until, in the day of their sore distress, they cried out unto the King with a loud and a bitter cry; and when he had taken them and brought them before his Judges, they were tried before them, and many grievous things were alleged and proven against them—so that they trembled in their places before the assembly of the offended people, lest they be stript of their official robes and cast into the dungeon of the malefactor.

And the outcome of that great trial, and the manner of it, lo! it is written by himself in auto-biograph, in the Book of Job, in the XIXth chapter and 20th verse, and the last part of the verse, q v.

And about that time these three men met, and as they gazed into the countenances, one of another, lo! they were Brethren—for they were of a feather; fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.

Now the Acts of these Three Brethren, when they had joined themselves together and conspired to deceive and rule over the people to their hurt; how they parted their treasure among them, and for the vesture of office did cast lots; the folly and crime of their wicked reign, and the cause and manner of their overthrow, which is yet to come, lo! it is written in the coming chapters of these Chronicles, and shall appear after seven times, to be read and known of all men; and while these seven times pass over the three lone brethren wandering about the fountains of the river that is called Salt, let them tune their voices to the lyre's note and sing as it were a new song, and this shall be the refrain thereof:

"Tell all the people," we know not why,
 But "we never speak" as we pass by!

SELAH.