

[Continued from page 25.]

Imogene gave up searching for princes, then and there. The shock made her very ill, and when she recovered, it was observed that she was not quite so aristocratically exclusive in her tendencies. Fay Somers was not the man to triumph over a fall of any kind, but his remark was characteristic.

"Hem, that fellow a runaway bartender!—Well, I thought his cobblers and billiards had professional excellence about them."—[*Boston Sunday Leader*.]

## CONSTITUTIONALLY BASHFUL.

I suppose there is no doubt but I was born with bashful tendencies, and "what is bred in the bone stays long in the flesh," to use the words of some wise individual, who like many another great genius, shunned notoriety, and had for his *nom de plume*, Anonymous.

My mother tells me that when an infant I had the ridiculous habit of turning over my face in the cradle when there was company, and if the visitors happened to belaudies, I turned red in the cheeks and purple about the eyes, to such an alarming degree as could not fail of exciting wonder and awe in the heart of the most indifferent beholder.

I remember that when a child I used to take refuge behind the great eight day clock whenever my mother had callers; and once I came near being frozen to death in the refrigerator, where I had ensconced myself on the appearance of a couple of lady visitors.

Throughout my boyhood it was the same only, decidedly more so. My *debut* at school was like an entrance into the ancient halls of torture.

The austere schoolmaster with his dread insignia of birchen rod, steel-bowed spectacles and swallow-tailed coat, was bad enough; the grinning, mischief-loving and at times, beligerent boys, were worse.

But the girls! Heavens! I feared them more than any suspected criminals of old did the terrible Council of Ten! All on earth they seemed to find to do was to giggle at me! Of course I was the object of their sport; for they peeped at me over the tops of their books, from behind their pocket-handkerchiefs, through the interstices of their curls—and made me hopelessly wretched by dubbing me "Apron-string."

The third day of my attendance at school was stormy, and my home being at some distance, I was obliged to remain, with most of the others, through the noon intermission. The little girls got to playing at pawns, I retreated to a corner near the door, and stood a silent and not untrifled spectator.

By and by a cherry-lipped little girl had to pay a forfeit, and one of her school mates pronounced the sentence in a loud voice.

"Kiss Apron-string, Sunderland!"

That meant me. There was a wild scream of laughter, in which all joined, and I took ingloriously to flight, with the Cherry-lips close at my heels. I strained every nerve and sinew—it was a matter of life and death to me—and I have no doubt but that I should have won the race in fine style, if I had not, unfortunately, in my blind haste, run against Miss Patty Hanson, the primmest and most ill-tempered spinster in Hallswell.

My momentum was such that I knocked Miss Patty from *terra firma*, very much as the successful ball knocks down the nines; and from the debris of the wreck—consisting of a fractured umbrella, torn calico gown, and a fearfully dislocated bonnet—Miss Hanson rose up—a Nemesis! And such a thrashing as I received, at her hands, would have made the blackest villain out of purgatory confess his sins without prevarication!

I have heard my mother say that no one died till their time had come, and I felt satisfied that my time had come. I vainly endeavored to repeat,

"Now I lay me down to sleep!"

as both fitting and appropriate to the occasion, but Miss Patty thumped the words out of me to the tune of the Umbrella Quickstep, in staccato.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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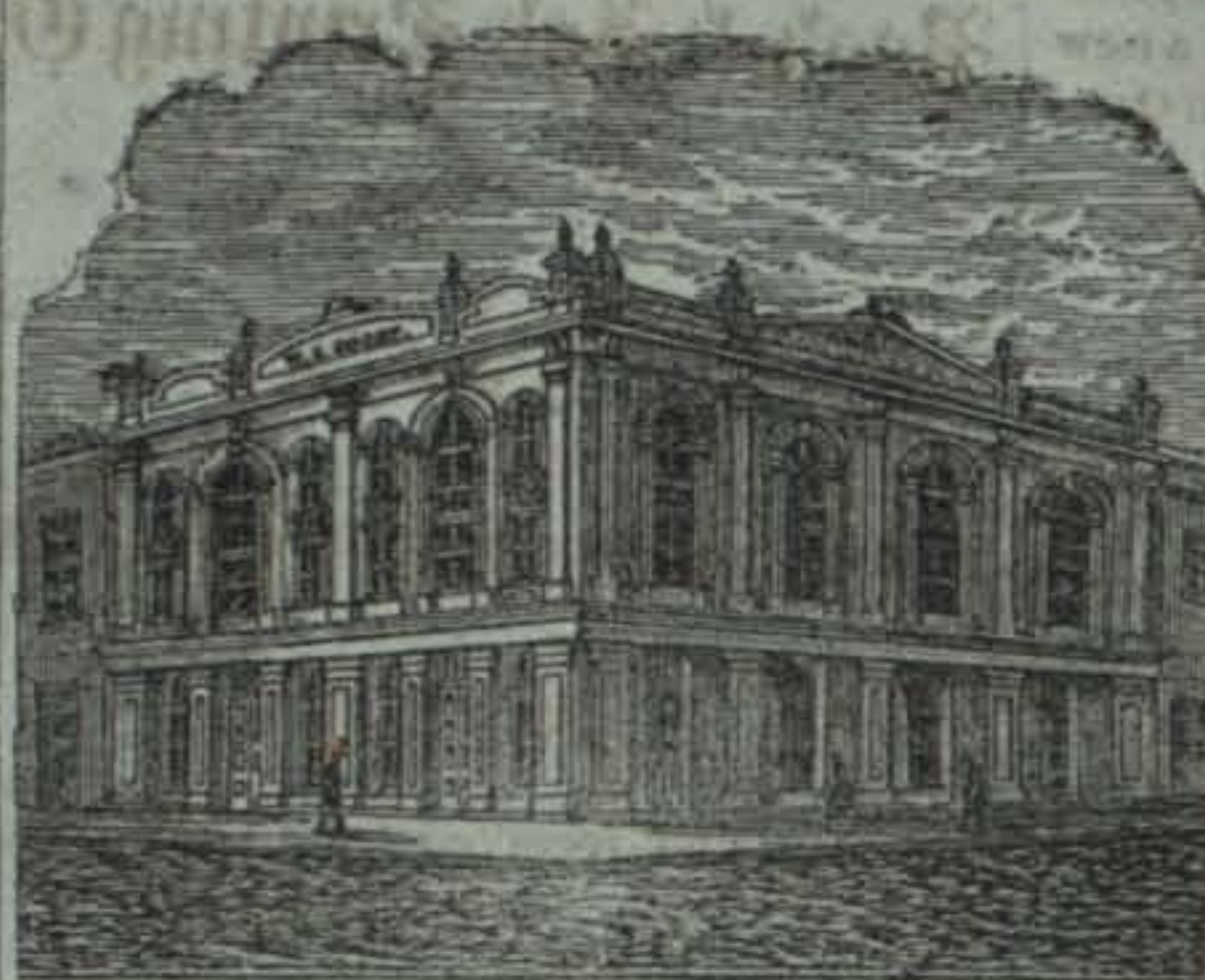
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