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***THE HISTORY  
AND RECORDS  
OF THE ELEPHANT  
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**Q. K. Philander Doesticks, Edward F.  
Underhill**

# **The History and Records of the Elephant Club**

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# History and Records.

How They Met.

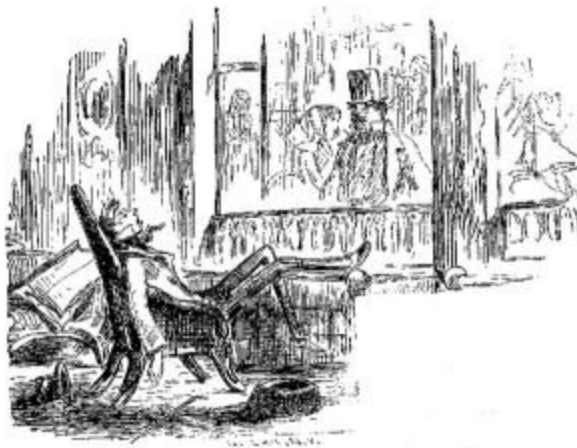
[Enter with a Flourish of Trumpets.]

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**THERE** were *no* two horses to be seen winding along the base of a precipitous hill; and there were *no* dark-looking





riders on those horses which were not to be seen; and it *wasn't* at the close of a dusky autumn evening; and the setting sun *didn't* gild, with his departing rays, the steep summit of the mountain tops; and the gloomy cry of the owl was *not* to be heard from the depths of a neighboring forest—first, because there *wasn't* any neighboring forest, and, second, because the owl was in better business, having, some hours before, gone to bed, it now being broad daylight. The mountain tops, the lofty summits, the inaccessible precipices, the precipitous descents, the descending inaccessibilities, and the usual quantity of insurmountable landscape, which forms the stereotyped opening to popular romances, is here omitted by particular request.

The time and place to which the unfortunate reader's attention is particularly called, are four o'clock of a melting afternoon in August, and a labyrinth of bricks and mortar, yclept Gotham. The majority of the inhabitants of the aforesaid place, at the identical time herein referred to, were perspiring; others were sweltering; still others were melting down into their boots, and the remainder were dying from sun-stroke.

At this time, a young gentleman seated himself behind the front window of the reading and smoking-room of the Shanghae Hotel, in Broadway. The chair he occupied was

capacious, and had been contrived originally, by ingenious mechanics, for the purpose of inducing laziness. The gentleman had taken possession of this article of furniture for the double purpose of resting himself from the fatigues of a month's inactivity, and also securing a position where he could see the ladies pass and repass, in hopes that the sight might dispel the dull monotony of a hotel life in the city, during summer. On this occasion, to secure additional ease, the individual had adopted the American attitude of raising his feet to a level with his head, by placing them upon a cast-iron fender behind the window—an attitude, by the way, not particularly characterized by its classic grace.

There was nothing remarkable in the dress of the person to whom we have alluded. He was evidently a victim to the popular insanity of conforming to fashion. So strictly were his garments cut and made in accordance with the prevailing style, no one could doubt for a moment that the taste, or want of taste, manifested in his dress, was not his own, but the tailor's. In his hand he held a small cane, with which he amused himself, first, by biting the ivory head, then by making it turn summer-saults through the fingers of his right hand, after the manner in which Hibernians are supposed to exercise their shillelahs.

Whether the activity in the streets, the appearance of the ladies with every variety of dress, or the gymnastic eccentricities of his cane, were particularly entertaining, is very questionable; certain it is, that the expression of his eyes showed gradually less and less of animation. By degrees his eyelids closed. His head soon vibrated with an irregular motion, until it found a support against the back of the chair. His hat fell from his head, and his cane dropped from his fingers. His muscles became fully relaxed. He was, undeniably, asleep.

He had been sleeping nearly a half hour, when an individual, who was walking leisurely down Broadway, casually glanced in the window of the Shanghae, where our first person singular was sleeping, with more seeming comfort than real elegance of position. He seemed struck with the appearance of the sleeper, and pausing for a brief time to survey his form, contorted, as it was, into all sorts of geometrical irregularities, curves, angles, and indescribable shapes, he entered the hotel, passed around into the room where the sleeper was, and did not stop until at his side. He again stood for a moment, silently contemplating the form and features of the sleep-bound stranger.

The second person was also singular. He was, apparently, about twenty-five years of age, with a full, florid, and expressive face. His body was quite rotund, even to corpulency; and, save a heavy moustache, his face was closely shaven. His clothes were of the thinnest material, and well adapted to secure comfort during the hot season. His expression, as he stood watching the first person singular, seemed full of doubt. At last, as if determined to remain in doubt no longer, he touched the somnolent first person lightly on the shoulder. First person singular opened his eyes with a spasmodic start, stared wildly about him for a moment, until his eyes rested upon the disturber of his slumbers.

"Excuse me, sir," said second person singular, "but an irresistible impulse led me to awaken you. The fact is, sir, a few years since, I had an intimate friend who was lost at sea, and such is the resemblance you bear to him, the thought struck me that you might be he. Were you ever lost at sea, sir?"

First person singular looked with some little astonishment upon his interrogator. He wiped the perspiration from his

forehead, assumed an erect position in his chair, and replied:

"I don't think I ever was."

"It may have been your brother," said second person singular.

"It couldn't have been, for I never had a brother. By the way, I did have an uncle who, on one occasion, when hunting in Illinois, some fifteen years since, was lost on a prairie. Perhaps it's that circumstance to which you refer?"

"No, it was at sea. I'm sorry, sir, that I disturbed your sleep."

"You needn't be," was the reply, "for I went to sleep without intending to do so."

"Do you ever imbibe?" was the next interrogation.

First person singular said he was guilty of no small vices, though he didn't care if he did take a brandy smash. The parties then adjourned to the inner temple of the Shanghae. Second person singular ordered the smash for his companion, and a sherry cobbler (so called from its supposed potency in patching up the human frame, when it is about falling to pieces under the influence of weather of a high temperature) for himself. A succession of singular coincidences followed. Each party suggested at the same moment, that it was confoundedly hot in the sun. Both simultaneously imbibed. Each said he felt better after it, and each undoubtedly told the truth. Both arose at the same instant, inquired who the other was, whereupon two autobiographies were extemporized in brief. They disclosed the following facts. First person singular's name was Myndert Van Dam; he was a descendent of one of the Dutch families who originally colonized Manhattan Island. He had been three years absent in Europe, and on returning a few

weeks before, found most of his acquaintances had left the city on account of the hot weather, and his experience had been one of uninterrupted dullness. Second person singular rejoiced in the appellation of John Spout. His genealogy was obscure, but so far as he could learn, he was descended in a direct line from his great grandfather on his mother's side. If his ancestry had ever done anything which would entitle their names to a place in history, it was very certain that historians had failed to do their duty: for he had never found the name of Spout recorded in connection with great deeds, from the robbing of a hen roost down to cowhiding a Congressman. He was by profession an apothecary, and was laying off for a few weeks' relaxation. Mr. Spout concluded his personal narrative by suggesting the following proposition:

*Whereas*, We have demolished a smash, and annihilated a cobbler;

*Resolved*, That we now proceed to devastate a couple of segars.



Mr. Spout adopted the resolution unanimously, and by a further singular coincidence, they lighted their segars, and

left the place for a promenade. A brisk rain beginning to fall, they sheltered themselves under an awning. A pair of gold spectacles containing a tall, sharp featured man, adorned with an unshaven face and a brigandish hat, approached them, and asked Mr. Spout for a light. Mr. Spout acquiesced. The party in attempting to return the cigar, accidentally touched the lighted end to Mr. Spout's hand, and not only burned his hand slightly, but knocked the cigar out of the fingers of third party; whereupon, Mr. Spout extemporized a moderate swear. Third party apologized, and offered a cigar to Spout and Van Dam from his own cigar-case, which they accepted; and he hoped that in their future acquaintance, should they feel disposed to continue it, he would not again involuntarily burn their fingers. He announced himself to be Mr. Remington Dropper, a two years' importation from Cincinnati, and a book-keeper in the heavy hardware house of Steel, Banger & Co., down town.

"Mr. Dropper," said Spout, "I am happy to have made your acquaintance. My name is Spout—John Spout—chemist and apothecary, with Pound & Mixem, No. 34, opposite the whisky-shop. Allow me to make you acquainted with my old and valued friend Mr.—Mr.—what the devil did you say your name is?" said he, addressing Van Dam, aside.

"Myndert Van Dam," suggested the gentleman speaking for himself.

"Yes," resumed Spout, "Myndert Van Dam."

As they shook hands, Mr. Dropper's attention was called in another direction. He desired his companions to notice the fact that a man was approaching with his umbrella, and having bought and lost too many articles of that description, he should not stand unmoved, and see the last one vanish from his sight.



An individual of small stature, apparently about forty-five years of age, with hair of an undeniable, though not an undyeable red approached, holding over his head a silk umbrella.

Mr. Dropper stepped forward and confronted him. He said he was aware that if every man were compelled to account for the possession of that which he claimed as his own, the world would hear some rich developments, in a moral point of view, respecting the tenure of property; and it was precisely for this reason that he had stopped him in the street. He inquired of fat party with the silk umbrella, if he saw the point of his remark. Fat party confessed his inability to comprehend its intent. Mr. Dropper then proceeded to state that when he called fat party's attention to the subject of titles to property in general, he did suppose that fat party would be led to ask himself whether he had a legal and equitable title to the umbrella in particular which he was then under. Fat party fancied that he *did* perceive a lurking innuendo that he had stolen somebody's umbrella. Mr. Dropper was gratified to discover fat party's readiness of comprehension; at his request fat party brought down the

umbrella, which discovered the following words painted conspicuously on the cloth outside:

"STOLEN FROM R. DROPPER."

Mr. Dropper insisted that there was the evidence, "R. Dropper," meaning Remington Dropper—Remington Dropper being himself—"Stolen from R. Dropper," by whom?—He would not assert positively that fat party was a hall-thief, but he would say and he did say, that his umbrella was found in fat party's possession, without his permission. Some old stick-in-the-mud had said somewhere, to somebody, sometime, that an honest confession was good for the soul, and if fat party would acknowledge the unbuilt whisky, he wouldn't appear against him on his trial for petty larceny. Fat party repudiated the idea that he was a thief. As far as Mr. Dropper's recollection assisted him he had always noticed that the biggest rascals protested their innocence the most emphatically. Fat party appealed to Mr. Dropper's magnanimity to hear his explanation, which Mr. Dropper consented to do.

The explanation developed the fact that fat party was Mr. James George Boggs, late of the Department of the Interior, at Washington, who had arrived that afternoon in the city with his sister, Mrs. Banger, wife of Mr. Banger, of the firm of Steel, Banger & Co., who, it is already stated, were Mr. Dropper's employers. They went directly to Mr. Banger's counting-room, and whilst there it commenced to rain; Mr. Banger offered Mr. Boggs Dropper's umbrella to walk up with, Boggs accepted it, and on his way up had been stopped on suspicion of theft.

Dropper made a humiliating apology, swore eternal friendship to Boggs, introduced him to Van Dam and Spout, and invited the party to his room to spoil a snifter from his private bottle. They accepted the invitation with



commendable alacrity, and soon arrived at Mr. Dropper's cozy apartment, which was situated on one of the streets intersecting Broadway. At Mr. Dropper's request, they seated themselves in a circle around the table, with the view of calling up the spirits, but whether saintly or satanic, the compilers of these records do not venture an opinion. After sitting three minutes and twenty seconds in solemn silence, it was discovered that Dropper was a medium, as he was enabled to bring up the spirits in tangible and unmistakable shape from his closet, and forthwith communications of a very satisfactory character were made to the circle. Indeed, the opinion was very generally expressed, that the spirits were genuine spirits, and the medium an excellent test medium, through which they should delight, in future, to have further communications.

As they finished their wine a knock was heard at the door. Dropper responded with a "Come in." An Irish servant put her head within the apartment:

"Plase, sir," said she, "I have a caird here that a gintleman at the door towld me to give to the red-headed gintleman as just come in."

Dropper viewed the card, and the four looked at each other for a moment, apparently with a view of discovering who it was that answered the description of a "red-headed gintleman." At last, Boggs spoke.

"I think it must be me," said he, receiving the card from Dropper, and reading aloud, from the back of it, as follows:

"Sir, an old acquaintance desires to see you for a moment, in relation to a matter involving your own interest."

"Show him up," said Dropper, "it will only make one more—that is, if Boggs is agreed."

Mr. Boggs had no objections to such course being taken, though he was deeply puzzled to know who the old acquaintance could be.

In a moment, the servant introduced into the room a tall, spare individual, of about thirty-two years of age. He was ordinarily attired, and, though not seedy, his garments were by no means new. His face was closely shaven, and surrounded by a large standing collar. He looked around the room upon the different parties present, until his eyes rested upon Boggs. He then ventured to speak.



"Gentlemen," said he, "excuse this interruption. The fact is, I have been seeking this gentleman for nearly three years past, and observing him in company with you, I could not forbear following to seek a brief interview."

Boggs turned pale. Visions of cowhides and pistols came before his mind.

"You are perfectly excusable," said Dropper. "We will leave the room, if you desire."

"N-n-not for all the world," ejaculated Boggs, hastily. "I have not the slightest objection to your remaining."

"Nor I," said the tall gentleman. "Your name," continued he, addressing Boggs, "is Johnson, I believe."

Nothing could have relieved Boggs from the suspense under which he was laboring more than this last remark. The gentleman had evidently mistaken him for one Johnson, who had, probably, insulted or injured the tall individual, on some previous occasion. The blush again returned to Boggs' cheeks.

"You are mistaken," said he, at last. "My name is Boggs."

"Boggs—so it is," said the tall stranger. "My bad memory often leads me into errors. But the mistake is very natural—Johnson sounds so much like Boggs; but, whether Johnson or Boggs, you are the individual whom I seek."

This announcement caused Boggs's courage to again descend into his boots.

"It is three years since I have seen you," said the tall individual. "During that length of time, a person would be likely to forget a name. But your person, sir, that I could never, never forget," continued the tall man, solemnly, and throwing in a little melo-dramatic action, as he spoke, which made Boggs shudder.

"C-c-certainly," said Boggs.

"Mr. Boggs," said the stranger, "you probably don't recollect me."

"C-can't say that I do," stammered Boggs.

"That need make no difference," said the stranger, mysteriously. "I know you."

The stranger then commenced feeling in his coat pockets with his hands.

Boggs sprang to his feet, observing this movement, fully satisfied that the stranger was seeking his revolver or bowie-knife.

"Sir," said Boggs, hurriedly, "if I have ever unconsciously done you an injury, I am ready to apologize. I can see no good reason why this apartment should be made the scene of a sanguinary conflict."

"Sanguinary conflict—apology"—said the other, somewhat astonished. "My dear sir, the apology is due to you."

Boggs's equanimity was once more restored. "You don't know how happy I am to hear you say so," said he. "Could you make it convenient to apologize at once, to fully relieve my mind of the frightful anticipations?"

"With the greatest pleasure in the world, Mr. Boggs," said the stranger. "I apologize."

"And I cheerfully forgive you," said Boggs.

"Then you recollect the circumstance, do you?" asked the stranger.

"Hang me if I do," said Boggs.

"Then you forgive me in anticipation."

"Certainly," replied Boggs. "But what the devil were you feeling in your pockets for so mysteriously?"

"My *porte-monnaie*," replied the stranger, who at length succeeded in finding the object of his search. He took from it a gold dollar, two dimes and a cent, and placed them on the table before Boggs. "There," said he, "is the sum of one

dollar and twenty-one cents, United States currency, which amount is justly your due."

"What the deuce does all this mean?" asked Boggs, in his bewilderment; "for between being waylaid in the street, accused of petty larceny, anticipations of being murdered, receiving apologies for unknown injuries, and the proffer of money from a total stranger, I hardly know whether I am standing on my heels or my head."

The mysterious stranger then proceeded to make his explanation.

"About three years ago," said he, "I invited a lady friend to the theatre. She signified her intention to accept the invitation. In the evening I called for her, attired in my best, and found her seated in the parlor attired in *her* best. We arrived at the theatre. I had taken with me only a small sum of money—amounting in the aggregate to one dollar and thirty-seven and a half cents. I took the dollar from my pocket, and passed it to the ticket-seller, who took occasion to pass it to me again immediately, and putting his physiognomy before the seven by nine aperture through which the money goes in and the pasteboard comes out, he announced to me, in effect, that the bank note aforesaid, of the denomination of one dollar, was a base imitation. This was a perplexing position. Had I been the fortunate possessor of another dollar on the spot, I should not have been troubled. The lady's acquaintance I had but recently formed. My pride would not permit me to announce to her my true financial condition at that moment. Between pride and a hurried contemplation of the prospective frightful results of my monetary deficiency, I was completely bewildered. I stammered out something about having nothing with me except two or three shillings and a fifty dollar bill—the first of which, gentlemen, existed in the innermost recesses of my vest pocket, and the last in my

imagination. I was wondering what the devil I should do next, when a gentleman with red hair addressed me. "Good evening, sir," said he, touching his hat, "did you say you have difficulty in getting a bill changed?" Without waiting for me to speak he said, "here's a dollar; you can return it to me to-morrow, when you call at my office to transact that matter of which we were speaking yesterday. Good evening." I looked in my hand, and found in it two half dollars and a card, upon which I perceived a name and address written. I was more bewildered than ever, owing to the unexpected deliverance, from what a moment before, I had believed to be an inextricable difficulty. I thought that heaven had deputed some red-haired angel to come to my relief. Then I doubted whether it was not a dream; but the weight of the two half dollars satisfied me that the whole thing was a tangible reality. The difficulty was dissipated, the funds were provided, and the necessary tickets purchased. Next morning I resolved to visit my deliverer, and give him my heartfelt thanks and a dollar. As I was about to leave on my joyful errand, I felt in my pocket for the card; it was gone. I was horror-stricken. I searched everywhere, but could not find it. I tried then to recall to my mind the name; but having read it under considerable excitement, it had not impressed itself upon my memory. I went to the theatre, in hopes to find it there, but in vain. For three months, gentlemen, all my spare time was employed in perambulating Broadway, and standing at the entrance of the theatre, in hopes of meeting my deliverer. Many are the short and red-haired gentlemen whom I have vainly pursued. A half hour since, as I was riding down Broadway in a stage, I saw my deliverer turning the corner of this street, in company with three other gentlemen. I stopped the stage, gave the driver a quarter, and without waiting to receive the change, I made a rush for the stage door, stepped on the silk skirt of a lady passenger, kicked a fat gentleman on the shins, knocked a baby out of an