

# JOEL PIKE

BY ALBION W. TOURGEE.

## CHAPTER IV.

Joel Pike was certainly a strange figure as he stood there with the door-knob in his hand, seemingly inclined to depart but held by some impulse almost against his will. His form was straight as an arrow, and despite his age, his face was sharp and severe in outline. The great ringed mittens hanging down below the cape of his surtout on either side fell free from the square shoulders; his pose was as firm and his manner as prompt and decisive as that of a man of thirty. Yet he had seen the great number of summers and winters. There was something strangely irreconcilable between the man's language and his appearance, between the reputation which he bore and the spirit he displayed. Just as he opened the door, Harmon called out:

"What is the business you have on hand, Joel?"

"I can wait," said he looking around with his hand still on the door-knob, "if it's not convenient."

"Of course you will wait," he answered the lawyer.

"If it won't be troubling you too much—I've had a writ served on me."

"You? A writ served on you?" exclaimed the lawyer, springing from his chair. "Who ever heard of such a thing? Squire Joel Pike? Who's been a fool enough to do it? You've had a tug with most everybody in the neighborhood, first and last, and some outside of it, but I never heard of anybody suing you before. You've always done the hard part of the job yourself. What's it for?"

The junior partner and the student were all attention, too.

"Sault an' battery," was the answer.

"Criminal?"

"Maggings, too."

"Civil and criminal; well, that looks like business. Who've you been fighting? I thought you'd quit that business since you licked Harrington, twenty years ago?"

"I had to do that, Squire," said the old man earnestly, "double the door and turning back into the room."

"Oh, no doubt. I expect he made some mighty provoking remarks to you."

"It wasn't that, Squire—it wasn't that. I wouldn't have minded anything he could say or do, but he spoke disrespectfully of—a woman!"

"You don't take up the defense of the whole sex, do you?"

"I wouldn't ever hear anybody speak ill—of her."

"His wife?"

"The other; did not answer."

"You? She hated you worse than poison?"

"That just shows how good she was; she had to take sides with one or t'other, you know."

"You speak as if you thought she could do anything always, and I thought of Susan Gedyne, Squire. Whether she could have done wrong, ain't the matter in question; it's certain she seldom did—'cordin' to her lights, that is."

"You mean, I suppose, that Harrington was in the plot to rob you?"

"Never had no doubt of it."

"That was the season he disappeared about time, I believe."

"Can't say—expect it was."

"Went into the army, didn't he?" asked Ruggles, who had turned from his desk and was listening interestedly to the conversation.

"Yes," answered the Senior, "went as a substitute—got a thousand dollars and sent it all home to his wife—about the only decent thing I ever knew about that man."

"That's a queer thing, Squire, that. By the way, Joel, did you ever know there was some talk about having you up for his murder?"

"Shouldn't have been surprised," was the cool response.

"Well, there was. Somehow it got out that there was an attempt to rob you on your way home; that he was in it; that you had shot him and concealed the body somewhere. A man came to me in dead earnest about it, and if Harrington's wife hadn't received the letter from her husband which she came to me and argued about the matter, I've a notion she'd have sworn out a warrant against you."

"More'n likely," said the old man, quietly.

"She was greatly elated over the letter and the check—especially the letter. I think she was positively glad to know that he had manhood enough to enlist. I remember a queer thing about it. She came here and showed them to me. The letter didn't contain a word about money sent, but said he had gone as a substitute and would send her money—when he drew his pay. The check was in my hands; the draft payable to Susan Gedyne [Harrington], with the Harrington in brackets. She called it to my attention and neither of us could imagine any reason for it. It was lucky for you that it came just when it did. I don't know what the neighbors would have done if it hadn't."

"It's just as well they didn't do anything," grimly.

"I don't see why people have such a spite against you, Joel."

"I haven't ever spent much money for trumpets."

"You send your own praise, eh? I believe you. Besides, you've insisted in living like a hermit and refusing to do what society requires that every one shall do, who desires its approval."

"I had to live my own life and prefer to do it in my own way."

"That's a mistake, Joel; you must do as others do, not as he wishes, if he wants to get along in this world."

"I hain't anything to complain of; of the neighbors let me alone, I'll let them alone; I'm satisfied if they are."

"They'll have to keep on wanting, I guess. But you know, Squire, that Josh Gedyne want no fool."

"Well, it would seem so; but there was something strange about the matter, for all that," said the lawyer thoughtfully.

"Probably always will be," was the composed reply.

"Oh, I suppose so," retorted the other impatiently; "one might as well try to worm a secret out of an oyster."

"A man's got a right, I believe, to keep still about his own matters when he don't choose to speak."

"Well, yes—that's the law. Sit down and let me see your papers."

The old man took off his mittens, unbuttoned his great-coat, turned his chair sidewise to the stove, sat down on the edge of it, removed his hat and took from it a thin package of papers which he handed to the attorney.

"The devil!" exclaimed the Senior, glancing at the indentures. "Of course you didn't do it?"

"Fraid I did," answered the other with a smile.

"You did? What did you hit her with?"

"It was jest as she says there; she wouldn't lie."

"With a horse-whip?"

"Wall—an ox-whip."

"Such as that?"

"That's the very one."

"What on earth induced you to do such a thing? When the girl had jilted you, why didn't you let her alone?"

"Perhaps I didn't like the company she was with?"

"Suppose you didn't? What was that to you? Joel Pike, for a man who is credited with common sense, and al-



lowed to go without a guardian, you are the most unmitigated fool I ever saw."

"I ain't payin' you to tell me that," said the client, sharply. "What I want is for you to appear an answer to them writs."

"You don't mean to defend? Why, man alive, you must be crazy. Here's a young lady walking along the public street with a young man, when an old fellow who had been persecuting her with his attentions—don't stop me; that's the way it will appear on the trial—comes up and feathers away at her with an ox-goad, even leaving welts and slashes on her! Why, it's one of the most aggravated cases I ever heard of."

"What damage do you suppose she'll get?" asked the client, apparently unmoved by his attorney's disgust.

"I should say a thousand dollars—perhaps more."

"The young man she was with is a hard case."

"Well, that got to go down, it?" interrupted the lawyer savagely.

"Well, I wasn't goin' to have him runnin' round with her, anyhow," decisively.

"He'll probably sue, too—"

"No, he won't."

"He's sure to recover."

"He'll lose more'n he'd gain. Fact is, he won't be seen round here—for a while, at least."

"Well, the girl will recover—get a big verdict."

"I don't mind the money, but I do hate to have a nevvy, and I thought of that. Couldn't you compromise with her somehow, so's to save a suit?"

"Not without I had something to go on—some reason to offer why they should drop it. But there is none; there's neither rhyme nor reason in the matter. It's best to talk to her counsel; you know and he'll know there's no possible excuse for what you've done. You see there's a guardian ad item in the civil suit; so it can't be settled with the girl."

"But I might beat 'em, Squire."

"Beat 'em? With such a case as that? Joel Pike, what luck at the law has been amazing—"

"Twenty suits, and four on 'em been to the Supreme Court—one on 'em twice," was the exulting response.

"Yes; it's a big record, but no luck could stand against such a case as this."

"It would be too bad to be beat on the twenty-first, wouldn't it?"

The old man rubbed his hands together and gazed anxiously at his counsel.

"Well, yes; it would be a little tough," laughed the lawyer.

"And by a child of a girl too?"

"Yes, the laugh would be on you, decidedly."

"I don't mind that—but the record—I hate awfully to have the record broke."

"But what can be done?"

"If it comes to trial, I'll have to fight—I don't want to, but I'll jest have to. I didn't think of that—at the time."

"What good will it do?"

"We should beat 'em, Squire—certainly—I should hate to do it, but I couldn't—not even for her sake."

"What do you propose?"

"She wants to get an edification, Squire—"

"Well!"

"I'll take her a long time to do it—teaching 'em summers an' goin' to school winters—"

"Of course."

"Why shouldn't she take the money—on a compromise, you know—just as much as she needs—an' not feel a bit cramped, go anywhere she chooses an' get the best there is?"

"You seem anxious to make her a present."

"Why not? Ain't she Joshua Gedyne's granddaughter?"

"But she wouldn't accept money from you."

"That's jest why I want it done by a compromise—let her think it's smart money—paid to escape trial, don't you see?"

The old man leaned forward eagerly, laying a slender forefinger on the lawyer's arm as he spoke.

"You think after she had once used the money she would be bound to show some consideration for her benefactor, eh?"

"I don't s'pose she'd ever know about it."

"Oh, that won't do, Joel; nobody'll believe that. If course I'd be willing to help you, but your plan won't work. You've either got to sum Fitch he can't win or else offer a sum so large as to excite suspicion of your motive. You can't do the first, and if you try the second the young lady will fling the money back in your face. It's no use, and you deserve it, too. There's no excusing your conduct on any grounds, legal or moral."

The young student, with flushed and angry face, nodded an emphatic assent to his conclusion.

The old man seemed strangely moved at these words. At length he threw back his coat, and opening his waistcoat, which buttoned to the chin, brought forth an old sheepskin pocket-book, from which he took a paper and handed it to the lawyer.

"What's this? Her mother's?"

"Jest before she died, sir," said the other, humbly.

"Dear Joel, you please, sir—"

He paused in embarrassment. The lawyer neither saw the gesture nor heard the words. His eyes were flashing back and forth across the page.

"Why this—man alive! We've got 'em!" He sprang to his feet, waving the paper aloft. "Joel, you're a brick! Luck's with you yet. We'll win this case, too, as sure as guns. Does she know about this—the girl, I mean?"

"If you'll read a little farther you'll see that—that."

He paused in embarrassment. The lawyer was again eagerly scanning the written page.

"Why this—I don't understand—"

He glanced at his client in wonder.

"If you please, sir—" The old man glanced at Ruggles and myself with an imploring look.

"Certainly, Mr. Pike," said the lawyer, answering the look rather than the words; "step this way, please."

He led the way into the back room of the office.

"Did I swear that?" exclaimed Ruggles.

"Think of it! The old man, too, who never spoke respectfully to him before in his life. I believe they're both crazy."

For myself I was too bewildered to make any comment.

From the consultation room came the sound of voices in earnest conversation. There was silence, and we heard the Senior pacing back and forth, as was his wont when in deep thought. Then there was silence again, and finally Mr. Harmon, opening the door, said, beckoning to his partner:

"Step this way a minute, Ruggles; you, too, young man, to me."

"Gentlemen," he said, after he had closed the door behind him, pointing to a document on the table; "this is the last will and testament of Mr. Joel Pike; he wishes you to attest it and also the codicil."

He looked at the other, who bowed with the grace and gravity of a courtier, as he said:

"The instrument was a voluminous one and written in a singularly even hand, except the codicil, which was in the sprawling, careless chirography of Mr. Harmon. Mr. Ruggles signed the attesting clauses, both of the will and the codicil. I stepped forward and took the pen to write my name under his."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said the Senior, taking the pen from my hand. "Come to think, you cannot witness this; I'll have to do it myself."

"So he signed, instead, and Mr. Ruggles and I withdrew. After a while the others followed us out. The great lawyer accompanied his client to the door, opening it for him and cordially shaking his hand, as he said:

"I'm sorry for it, Mr. Pike, but I've done wrong, great wrong."

"It's no matter," answered the old man in his thin, clear voice, "I'm used to it."

Yet there was an evident glow of satisfaction in his face as he spoke.

The Senior stood in the door and bade him adieu, calling out to him even after he had reached the sidewalk:

"I'll attend to the matter at once, Mr. Pike."

His partner and the student looked on in undisguised wonder. Joel Pike clambered into his wood-rack and creaked about it.

"Get 'bout!" we heard him say. The cracked bones creaked their heads, turned nimbly into the road and started in a contented trot towards home.

The Senior watched his departure from the window.

"Ruggles," he said after a moment, "could you do a little job for me?"

"I guess so—what is it?"

"If you would just take me out in the street there, and bring me around town for about half an hour, I'd be obliged to you."

"Why—what do you mean?"

"When you hear that will read you'll know. By the way, young man," he continued, addressing himself to me, "do you feel like taking a ride?"

"If you wish," I answered.

"I've got to see Sadie Harrington before this matter goes any farther."

"She's in Olmstead—ten miles away."

"How do you happen to know where she is?" he asked, giving me keenly. Perhaps my face flushed enough to betray some interest in the young lady, as I stated that I had accidentally heard of the fact.

"You know her then?"

"Slightly."

"Yes—and lots of spirit."

"I should imagine. Pretty? Of course you think so," he added, translating my confusion.

"Well—if you expect to settle this matter with old Joel Pike by paying her money, you might as well save yourself the trip," I answered, hotly.

"Don't you be in a hurry, son," he said, good-humoredly. "Got the best team you can find, and we'll be off so as to get there by dinner-time. By the way, I wish you'd stop in and ask Fitch if he won't stop over here a minute. Tell him I must see him on a matter of importance at once. He's younger than I am, and not afraid of rheumatism, either."

I did as directed, and when I returned with the team found the senior ready for the drive, Fitch saying as we started:

"It all depends on the young lady; if she's willing, of course we won't stand in the way. I take it she's one that knows her own mind."

"Knows her own mind," I said to myself. "They'll find out she does; and don't allow any limber-tongued lawyer to talk her out of it, either."

Of course, I assumed that they were talking of Sadie Harrington.

## The Art of Eating.

"When my children get to the proper age," said the man who was smoking a briar pipe, "I intend to have them taken in hand by some competent person and given a thorough instruction in the art of eating, and, further, in the science of finding out what to eat and ordering."

"What do you mean?" inquired the man who sat next to him.

"I mean this: The average American citizen is woefully deficient in knowledge of what he can get to eat. He falls down when it comes to ordering a dinner. The great majority of people in this country are brought up frugally at home, and do not know anything but the commonest dishes. The consequence is that when a man goes into a restaurant for dinner, or to a hotel, he gazes helplessly at the bill of fare and sees many things of which he does not know the component parts. He dares not order anything that he is not sure of, for fear of not eating, and he falls back on roast beef and mashed potatoes. The result is, he doesn't know anything but roast beef. Same way in a restaurant. When a waiter shoves a bill of fare under a man's nose, nine times out of ten he will look it over and then say: 'Gimme a steak and some fried potatoes.' Now, the man who does this, and nearly every one of us does do this day after day, doesn't want roast beef. He is sick unto death of steaks and fried potatoes. He loathes ham and eggs, and yet he keeps on ordering them in dreary and dyspeptic succession, because he doesn't know any better, and he is too proud to confess his ignorance. It's that way with me, and I'll bet it's that way with most of you. I am going to relieve my children of all these things. They're going to know what's what when it comes to eating. 'No roast-beef domination!' shall be my household slogan."

And the rest of the party, says the Buffalo Express, thought it over and concluded that he was pretty nearly right.

## The Bowery of New York.

The Bowery of New York was Peter Stuyvesant's bowery in 1664. There he had his house and his stiff Dutch garden. An old pear tree which he planted was cherished and protected by his descendants until a storm blew it down in 1867. The place contained six hundred acres. It was in 1664 that an English fleet appeared in New York harbor and demanded the surrender of the city. The townspeople and the burgomasters were eager to submit and avoid bombardment. Old Peter Stuyvesant refused to give up the city, and tore into fragments the letter which had been sent by the English commander. The old Dutchman then went to the fort and took his place behind the guns, ready to resist to the death. His more prudent counsellors gathered up the fragments of the letter, placed them together, read the letter to the people, and agreed with the terms of the surrender, which Stuyvesant was finally forced to ratify.

## Smallpox a Hundred Years Ago.

People who object to the injection of a little vaccine virus into their veins may read with profit the following extract from Mrs. Crosland's recently published memoirs: "Could modern opponents of vaccination," says Mrs. Crosland, "only behold the countenances, marred almost out of resemblance to human face divine, which were common everywhere seventy years ago, they would surely hide their own faces in shame. I really think that of the men and women born before 1750 half were more or less marked by the ravages of smallpox. Certainly for sixty years I have seen nothing comparable to the cleared faces so common in my childhood. Ladies so afflicted habitually wore the thickest veils out of doors."

In spite of all the Franco-Russian hobnobbing and the pow-wowing, which is deemed by the astute foreign correspondents to menace England as much as Germany, there is every reason to believe that further alliances between the English and Russian royal families are contemplated. First of all it is declared that the youngest daughter of the Prince of Wales is to be betrothed to the Czarowitz. Next the Grand Duke Paul, the Czar's younger brother, is billed to marry another of Victoria's grandchildren, and, last of all, if the young Grand Duke Michael will, the programme is carried out, wed a third of the Widow Wetlin's descendants as soon as he is old enough to marry.

## Beecher on His Own Career.

Hardly anything that could be desired in this life has been withheld from me; I have had that which many covet and seek for in vain; my life all through has been a very happy one. It may be said, without exception, taking it from beginning to end, to have been a life of extraordinary prosperity and happiness, although I have been a man of war. But there is nothing in this world, it seems to me, that is to be desired for one single moment in comparison with the life beyond. If that life is all that we have been taught it is—and I believe it to be that and abundantly more—then let no man wish to stay here. It is true that the going of one and another leaves a wound in the heart of those that are left behind, but it is true, also, that God heals such wounds speedily. I have seen a man who was a captain in the Army of the Republic, and who had been a member of the Board of the Unprinted Words in Ladies' Home Journal.

## LONDON'S NEW BIG BRIDGE.

The Hydraulic Principle Adopted to Assist of Large Vessels Passing.

The great new bridge across the Thames, opposite the Tower of London, is now nearly finished, says the New York Evening Post. It has been built upon the Buntley principle, in three spans, with two great masonry piers rising from the bed of the river. At this point the Thames is 940 feet broad, and the depth of water in mid-channel varies, according to the tides, from thirty feet to thirty-five six inches. At a distance of 270 feet from either bank these great piers—204 feet in length and 100 feet broad—are built, rising from foundations twenty-seven feet below the river bed, excavated in caissons through the London clay. They consist, including stacings, 210,122. The masonry of the piers is jointed Cornish granite lined internally with brickwork. Each pier contains a chamber in which works the heavily-weighted balance of the lower roadway leaf, each of these two leaves weighing little short of 1,000 tons. When the two leaves, each 100 feet long, are closed, the lower roadway of the bridge is practicable for all kinds of traffic, pedestrian and wheeled; but the space of thirty feet only between the roadway and high water is insufficient to allow of masted vessels passing. It is to allow tall ships to pass that the drawbridge principle comes into play. The powerful hydraulic machinery placed at the Surrey side of the bridge is capable of raising the 2,000 tons of iron and steel composing this movable roadway in two minutes, and it is confidently declared that the opening of the roadway, the passing of a ship, and the closing again will take only five minutes. Wheeled traffic will be delayed for that space of time, while the foot passengers will ascend by staircases or elevators, which will carry thirty persons at a time, to two parallel bridges that cross the center span at a height of 135 feet above high-water mark.

## The Girl Was a Tom-Boy.

A young woman who affected masculine get-up (says a writer in the Ladies' Home Journal) was invited to a dinner party. She announced that she intended to make a sensation by her costume, and it was generally believed that she was going to appear in some very beautiful gown. Imagine the horror of the hostess when she entered the drawing-room in a black broadcloth skirt that fitted her figure closely. With this she wore a full evening shirt, a black waistcoat, cut low to show the expanse of white linen, and a black swallow-tail. Her shirt-buttons were white enamel ones, so were the links in her cuffs, and her tie was a white lawn, arranged after the fashion affected by men in the evening. After she went away, the son of the hostess said to his mother:

"Never invite that girl to the house again. No woman with the least refinement would, even for a jest, appear dressed in that manner."

The mother gave a sigh of relief and said:

"My dear boy, I am glad to hear you say that. She is so bright and witty, and the men all seem to admire her so much that I was afraid you would not look at her dress with the eyes of a woman."

"No," he answered, "I am not looking at it with the eyes of a woman; I am looking at it with the eyes of a man; and to a man it is a thousand times more offensive than it would be to a woman."

## Men Fifteen Inches High.

A French mathematician has been pursuing studies which have led to curious results. He has been studying the records with a view of determining the height of men at different periods.

The recorded facts extend over nearly three centuries. It is found that in 1610 the average height of man in Europe was five feet nine inches. In 1750 it was five feet six inches. In 1820 it was five feet five inches and a fraction. At the present time it is five feet three and three-fourths inches. It is easy to deduct from these figures a rate of regular and gradual decline in human stature and then apply this, working backward and forward to the past and to the future. By this calculation it is determined that the stature of the first man attained the surprising average of sixteen feet nine inches. At the beginning of our era the average height of man was nine feet, and in the time of Charlemagne it was eight feet eight inches. But the most astonishing result of this scientific study comes from the application of the same law to the future. The calculation shows that by the year 4000 A. D. the stature of the average man will be reduced to three inches. At that epoch there will be only Lilliputians on the earth.

## BATTLE NOW BEGINS.

THE WILSON BILL IS LAID BEFORE CONGRESS.

Some of the Changes that Are Made and the Effects as Seen Through Democratic Eyes—Approved by the Ways and Means Committee.

The Fight Is On.

Washington dispatch: "The American people, after the fullest and most thorough debate ever given by any people to their fiscal policy, have deliberately and rightly decided that the existing tariff is wrong in principle and grievously unjust in operation." Such is the opening paragraph of the majority report submitted by the Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee. The report was written by Chairman Wilson, laid before his Democratic associates, and received their approval.

The report continues with an argument in support of a free tariff for revenue only, at the same time denouncing the existing tariff as an extreme system of class legislation, having no lawful or constitutional excuse. The argument is lengthy and exhaustive, dealing with the various phases of tariff legislation from 1789 to the present, and the welfare of the nation and the industries involved. A reduction of about one-third is made upon the larger sizes of plate glass. Iron ore is free, and a duty of 25 per cent. put on pig iron. In the remainder of a graded steel schedule, substantial reductions are made. Steel rails are put at 25 per cent., a rate calculated to protect the farmers from monopoly prices. The duty on tin plate is materially lessened.

The repeal of the sugar bounty is proposed, and a grade of cotton schedule, which shall not injure the industry nor be a source of loss to money at present invested. The rates on tobacco are left so high that ample protection is afforded. Agricultural implements are given a duty of five per cent. on binding twine and cotton twine. The tax on spirits and liquors is put at double the internal revenue tax on the same.

The cotton, flax, hop and jute schedule reductions have been in accordance with the general scheme of the bill, but they are not believed to be of such a marked character as to offer any special explanation. The placing of wool on the free list has justified a very substantial reduction of the duties on woolen goods. The carpet manufacturers have such a full control of the home market that they will not suffer from the free carpet wool. The average rate of duties levied under the existing law upon the