



The Fortunes of Oliver Horn

Francis Hopkinson Smith

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"[...]where they had slept. Two windows which peered out from under bushy eyebrows of tangled honeysuckle gave the only light; a green-painted wooden door, which swung level with the moist bricks, the only entrance. It was at this green-painted wooden door that you would have had to knock to find the man of all others about Kennedy Square most beloved, and the man of all others least understood—Richard Horn, the distinguished inventor. Perhaps at the first rap he would have been too absorbed to hear you. He would have been bending over his carpenter-bench—his deep, thoughtful eyes fixed on a drawing spread out before him, the shavings pushed back to give him room, a pair of compasses held between his fingers. Or he might have been raking the coals of his forge—set up in the same fireplace that had warmed the toes of the pickaninnies, his long red calico working-gown, which clung about his spare body, tucked between his knees to keep it from the blaze. Or he might have been stirring a pot of glue—a wooden model in his hand—or hammering away on some bit of hot iron, the brown paper cap that hid his sparse gray locks pushed down over his broad forehead to protect it from the heat. When, however, his ear had caught the tap of your knuckles and he had thrown wide the green door, what a welcome would have awaited you! How warm the grasp of his fine old hand; how cordial his greeting. "Disturb me, my dear sir," he would have said in answer to your apologies, "that's what I was put in the world for. I love to be disturbed. Please do it every day. Come in! Come in! It's delightful to get hold of your hand."[...]".



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