

rous eyes, and with an air of magnanimity he placed a filled-in order for £55 before Mr. Huton, and begged of him as a mere matter of detail to affix his signature. "I'm sure," he added, "it does you credit to show such enterprise in supporting a work of this high-class character."

"Yes! Yes!" muttered Huton as he signed, in a tone that seemed to suggest that Hustler had given him credit for more enterprise than he possessed. But the hearty handshake of Hustler made him temporarily forget he had been a fool.

Half an hour after the office boy was asked what the devil he meant by showing people into Huton's private office before ascertaining their business.

Hustler entered his cab with all the style of a fashionable doctor, and bade the driver take him to Edwards, the music dealers. Hustler rubbed his chin meditatively as they spun along. Suddenly he spied Mr. Salamander, the fresh food and vegetable man, standing in the centre of the road with hands outstretched, almost barring the cab's progress.

"Drive like blazes, Bob!" he cried. "That beast wants a cheque," he muttered.

Bob whipped the horse up, and they fairly flew past the astonished Mr. Salamander. Hustler stared straight in front of him. Intimacy with impatient creditors was not his weakness. Then just as they were reaching Mr. Edward's place, he told Bob, in a voice of honey, to go round to Mr. Salamander's, get five shillings worth of asparagus, two pairs of fowls and ducks, and a turkey, besides fish for his lunch, and to explain, with Mr. Hustler's compliments, that he left his cheque book at home, but would call in tomorrow and pay the small account (it was only £15).

Mr. Edwards was now receiving Hustler's hospitality. Edwards, however, was a nervous man. He was a creature who wanted to ask his wife first. Hustler said he would

be only too pleased to drive round in the evening. He asked Mr. Edwards when they were married, what Sunday School his wife taught before the happy day, and if she was still a member of the choir? Then the children came. Freddie had won a scholarship, and Ethel was head of the Wesley Latin class. All this information appeared in the article when it was read to Mrs. Edwards. An order was signed for £20.

But evil days fell on Hustler. He had agreed to take the half of £50 "out," from a wine and spirit merchant's house. For a fortnight he was in another world. His bright clothes were all soiled, and he no longer looked the splendid, radiant, Bond Street swell. He was very low-spirited, and by the aid of half a bottle of whiskey he raised his weary head. Bob took his clothes to a cleaner, whilst Hustler stayed in bed awaiting their return. His second suit was in pawn, his jewellery was there too.

Once more the cab rolled out with Hustler almost his old self. A Turkish bath and two whiskies and soda made him feel solid, and as he strode into Smirk and Sage's, the drapers, he felt he was bound to win. He received their order for £50, and on the strength of his "front," he obtained goods to the value of £25. Although the firm paid up "fair and square," to use the language of Hustler, Smirk and Sage were subsequently plaintiffs in a debt case, and Hustler was the defendant.

The grocerman was sick of it. He'd stand no more blooming nonsense. He'd just been driven past too often, and it was a summons or cash for him. He told Hustler this in his best mustard and pepper style. Hustler resorted to one of his last tactics. He wept. The tears streamed down his fat cheeks. The grocer gave him another week.

Publishing day had at last arrived, and upon the delivery of the books I knew Hustler would be