

**SCROPE, OR, THE LOST
LIBRARY: A
NOVEL OF NEW
YORK AND HARTFORD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649377190

Scrope, or, The lost library: a novel of New York and Hartford by Frederic B. Perkins

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FREDERIC B. PERKINS

**SCROPE, OR, THE LOST
LIBRARY: A
NOVEL OF NEW
YORK AND HARTFORD**

SCROPE;

OR,


THE LOST LIBRARY.

A NOVEL OF

NEW YORK AND HARTFORD.

BY FREDERIC B. PERKINS.

WITH PAULINE SARRIYER.



BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1874.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by
ROBERTS BROTHERS,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

BOSTON:
EASE, AYKEN, & CO., STEREOTYPERS AND PRINTERS.

CONTENTS.

PART I.	
	PAGE
The Book Auction; Scropes and Van Braams; The Detective	7
PART II.	
The Shadowing Wings and the Nigger Baby; Mr. Tarbox Button, the Subscription-Book Publisher; He trains a Conrasser; The Scrope Will and Signature	30
PART III.	
Gowan's Second-hand Book Catacomb; Mr. Van Braam and Jacob Bohmen; The Unique Scrope Genealogy; A Broadway Paradise	51
PART IV.	
A Billiard Saloon; Mr. William Button wins of Mr. Oppenheimer; A Faro Bank; <i>The Solidarité de l'Arcueil</i>	84
PART V.	
A See-ance at Mrs. Babbles's; The Great Philosopher, Mr. S. P. Quinby Ankettell and the Development of the Germ; Mr. Ankettell's New Language	109
PART VI.	
The Death of a Walter-Girl; Dr. Toomston's Sermon, with Pictures of the Doctor's Hands	123
PART VII.	
A Theological Dinner at Mr. Button's; The Scrope Association and the Estate in England	139
PART VIII.	
A Party at Mr. Button's, with Indian Philology, a Ghost Story, and a Love Song	151

	PAGE
PART IX.	
Adrian's Meditations; He declines Mr. Button's Business Offer, and receives a Pair of Mittens	173
PART X.	
An Old Hartford House and an Old Hartford Lady; Mr. Jacob the Book Can- vasser and his Customer; Adrian searches a Paper-Mill, and finds Some- thing	188
PART XI.	
The Scrape Chest; Adrian as a Sick Nurse	204
PART XII.	
Adrian as a Defender of the Oppressed; A Broadway Fire; Inside the Building .	218
PART XIII.	
The Police Station Cells; The Morning Jail Delivery	233
PART XIV.	
The Culmination of Mr. Button's Career; Adrian gets rid of one of his Mittens; The Finding of the Lost Library	247

SCROPE; OR, THE LOST LIBRARY.

CHAPTER I.

"HALF-A-DOLLAR, halfadollarfadol-
lafadollafadollafadollathat's bid now,
give more if ye want it! Half-a-dollar
five-eighths three-quarters — Three-
quarters I'm bid: — will you say a
dollar for this standard work octarvo
best edition half morocker extry?
Three-quarters I'm bid, three-quarters
will ye give any more? Three-
quarters, threequartthequartthee-
quawttheequawttheequawt one dol-
lar shall I HAVE?"

Thus vociferated, at a quarter past
five o'clock in the afternoon of Tues-
day, January 9th, A. D. 186—, with
the professional *accelerando* and with
a final smart rising inflection, that
experienced and successful auctioneer
Mr. Howland Ball, a broad-shouldered
powerful looking man of middle
height, with a large head, full eyes, a
bluff look, spectacles and plenty of
stiff short irongray hair.

A tall personage, old, gaunt and
dry, but apparently strong, with dus-
ty black clothes and a "store-pipe"
hat, pulled down over his eyes, in the
front row of seats, a little to one side
of Mr. Ball's desk, answered in a
grave dry deliberate voice,

"Seven-eighths. But it's damaged."

"No tain't either" sharply an-
swered the auctioneer, "what do ye
mean, Chase?"

"Catalogue says so. It says the
titlepage is greasy."

Every man at once examined the
catalogue he held in his hand, and a
laugh arose as one and another detect-
ed the mistake that old Chase was jest-
ing about. The printer's proof-reader
— as sometimes happens even to proof-

readers — had been half learned, and
out of the halfness of his learning had
substituted "lubricated" which he
knew, for "rubricated," which he did
not, and the catalogue bore that the
book had a lubricated titlepage. Ev-
erybody laughed except Chase, whose
saturnine features did not change.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Ball, "pay
no attention to Chase's jokes, but go
on with the sale. Seven-eighths I am
bid. Seven-eighths, sevntesantesnate-
snatesnate say a dollar, somebody!"
implored he in his strong harsh voice.
Then he paused a moment and
looking around upon his hearers with
an earnest expression, he slowly lifted
his right hand as if about to make
oath before any duly qualified justice
of the peace or notary public:

"Going. Will nobody give me one
dollar for that valuable and interest-
ing work, octarvo best edition half mo-
rocker extry, cheap at five dollars?" —
A pause — "Genel Chase at seven-
eighths."

As he said "Gone," down came his
hand with a slap. The hand is in
these days often used for the tradi-
tional hammer, as a decent dress-coat
is instead of the judge's ermine. The
following words were his announce-
ment to his book-keeper of the cus-
tomer's name and the price; and then
Mr. Ball, turning again to the audi-
ence, observed with a grin and a queer
chuckle — "And a good time mister
Chase'll have a gittin his money
back!"

A young man in a back seat whis-
pered to his neighbor,

"He said Chase. Isn't that Gow-
ans?"

"What's the next line?" sung out Ball at this moment to an assistant at the side opposite to the book-keeper, always behind the long desk or counter which separates the high-priest from the votaries in such temples as this— "What's the next line? Oh yes, number ninety-three, gentlemen. 'Requiel de Divers Voyges.' Something about the pearl fisheries I guess. How much offered for th' Requiel, gentlemen? Full of valuable old copperplate illustrations; rare, catalogue says,—I s'pose that means isn't well done (chuckle)—rare and interesting old book"—

"Yes. He always buys by that name," briefly answered the young man's neighbor, looking up a moment from entering "7-8 Chase" in the margin of his catalogue against No. 92.

"Do they all do so?" queried the young man.

"A good many. You see"—

"Shut up there, Sibley!" broke in the strong business voice of the auctioneer. "Order in the ranks! I can't hear myself think, you keep up such a racket!"

The words were sufficiently rough, but the speaker's bluff features wore a jolly smile, and he ended with a short chuckle. He was right, too, in substance, and the person he called Sibley did "shut up," though a kind of sniff and a meaning smile and look at his young companion intimated the dissent of superior breeding as to the manner of the request.

The sale was one which might be classed as "strictly miscellaneous." It is true that a hasty glance at the title-page of the catalogue informed the reader in "full faced display type" that there was a "valuable private library;" but a closer inspection would show that like those speakers who go

at once from whisper to shout, this deluding inscription leaped from small "lower-case" to a heavy "condensed Gothic," somewhat thus:

"CATALOGUE
of books, including
A VALUABLE PRIVATE LIBRARY,
etc, etc."

No doubt it was "valuable" in a sense. So is dirt. But assuredly no human being having his wits about him, would give shelf-room to such a mess as this was, taking it all together, unless for purposes of commerce. It was one of those sales that are made up once in a while from odds and ends of consignments, with some luckless invoice of better books mingled in, to flavor a little, if it may be, the unpleasant mass. But the plan is sure to fail; poor Tray is judged by his company; the good books go for the price of poor ones, the poor ones for the price of "paper stock;" the account-sales ends with a small additional charge over and above receipts against the consignor to meet expenses, cataloguing and auctioneer's commissions; and the consignor, using indefensible terms of general reproach, goes through the absurd operation of paying money for the loss of his property. The auctioneer's shelves are cleared, at any rate, and ready for replenishment with those gorgeous or rare books which he loves to sell, feeling his commission rising warm in his very pockets, as the emulous calls or nods or delicate wafts of catalogues or tip-ups of fore-fingers flock up to him from every part of the room, and his voice grows round and full as he glances hither and thither, hopping up the numeration table ten dollars at a time.—

How still the room grows, when such a passage-at-purses soars aloft

like the spirits of the dead soldiers in Kaulbach's "Battle of the Huns," into that rare and exhausting two-or-three-hundred-dollar atmosphere!

But there was none of that, on this occasion. The number of "lines" or lots, in the catalogue, was only two hundred and eighty-nine, in all. In the New York book-auctions, somewhat more than a hundred lots an hour are commonly despatched; the cheaper the lots the faster they must be run off; and in the present instance a single sitting of two hours or so was deemed an ample allowance. The actual bulk, or weight, or number, whichever category you may prefer, of volumes, however, was very considerable, as the common practice had been pursued of "bunching up" five, ten or twenty of the miserable things, into parcels with a string, and cataloguing them somewhat thus:

245. Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* etc. 5 vols.

246. *Patent Reports* etc. 10 vols. Some valuable.

247. *School-books*. 20 vols.

Well; the sale went on, Chase buying an extraordinary number of lots, and a small, short, bushy-bearded and wonderfully dirty Israelite who sat next him, and whom the bluff auctioneer irreverently saluted when he first bid with "Hallo! you there, father Abraham?" buying a very few bundles at two cents or three cents per volume. The securing of one of these small prizes by the dirty man seemed to irritate worthy Mr. Ball; for having offered to the company the succeeding lot, and there being a moment's pause in which no one bid, the auctioneer with much gravity exclaimed,

"Put it down to Chase at five cents!"

"I won't have it!" said the old man.

"Ye *shall* have it — what's the next?" was all the auctioneer replied, with a facetious chuckle and an assumption of great violence, and down it went to Chase, while Mr. Ball, without heeding his remonstrances, went straight on with the next lot. This was a worn looking octavo volume, with what is technically called a "skiver" or "split sheep" back and old-fashioned marbled board sides.

"Number 109," cried the auctioneer; "Reverend Strong's oration sermon and so forth. Valuable old pamphlets, and what'll you give for it?" — with a quaint sudden stress on this seldom emphasized pronoun, as if Mr. Ball had meant that the poor neglected thing should find one at least to think it of some weight.

"Ten cents," said old Chase, in his grave dry voice — "what's the book?"

"Twenty-five," said somebody.

"Thirty," called out the young man who had asked about Chase. His voice was eager, and no doubt more than one of the sharp veterans present said to themselves, at that intonation, "Ah, I can put *him* up if I like!" But the sale was dull; as it happened no one did "put him up."

"Thirty cents I'm bid," proceeded Mr. Ball; "Thirty, thirty, thirty. Say thirty-five. Thirty-five shall I HAVE? And gone [snap] for thirty cents whizziz?"

"Cash," was the reply to this inquiry for a name; and the buyer, stepping up to the desk, paid his money and took his book.

"Mark it delivered," resumed the auctioneer; "The next is number 110, *Life of Brown*. How much will you give for it? How much for Brown? The celebrated Brown! Come, be