

BALDOON

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Balloon by Le Roy Hooker

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LE ROY HOOKER

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BY
LE ROY HOOKER,
AUTHOR OF
"ENOCH THE PHILISTINE."



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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE FORKS	9
II. "MY DAUGHTER JANE"	22
III. OUR VILLAGE SATIRIST	54
IV. OLD GEORGE'S DETERIORATION	74
V. A CASE OF BASE DECEPTION	94
VI. MYSTERY AT BALDOON HOUSE	113
VII. THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST PROF. GRISDALE	148
VIII. TRAGEDY AT BALDOON	168
IX. GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?	199
X. MATH AND AFTERMATH	247

FOREWORD.

"I think that the handsomest infant I ever saw! Most babies at this age look deformed about the head, but this one doesn't! And such lovely dimples in its features!"

So discoursed to me a happy young father over the cradle of his first-born child,—a living mite, with the blackest of black hair, a very red face of no particular shape as yet, and not a dimple in it. By the way, the site of the old "Baldoon House" was little more than a mile distant from the spot where the above remarks were made.

The story of "Baldoon" is my precious child, but I shall not speak of it as did that father of *his* offspring — whatever I may think.

The chief object of this preliminary chat with the reader is to make the honest con-

fession that whatever in this book most effectively expresses the humor, pathos, and strong passion of human life is mine only as I have had eyes to see and ears to hear that which was being done and suffered and enjoyed and said round about me.

I knew the man, by another name, who, in the zealous effort to marry off his daughters, said: "Bless my soul, boy! Ef any young man comes to see my daughter Jane I'll put him an' his hoss in the stable an' give him plenty hay an' oats to eat!"

He was a real man who said to the ox-teamster, in my hearing, "Yer cattle will pull jest es well fer 'teapot' es fer cuss-words, ef ye only lay on the gad after sayin' it!"

The man called Bill Wilson is not a creature of the imagination, but a real and well known character who confessed to fighting, drunkenness, lying and stealing, but scorned to swear, and accounted for his peculiarity by saying: "Ef I should swear I shouldn't hurt the other chap by it, an' I should hurt