

Humbug on the Hudson — Crib Sheet — (2 pages)

Titles

Humbug was frequently used to mean deception, or nonsense, often involving hypocrisy. Bunk—as in the subtitle, *Bunk for Two*—can be either a bed or a short form of bunkum, meaning bombast or nonsense. Each of the chapter titles refers to a book of the period, most of them low-brow and likely known to Harry or the other characters.

Taking Chances (1900) is a book of gambling anecdotes by Clarence Louis Cullen.

Women and Economics (1898) was written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman before her better-known work on home décor.

Hawk-eye Returns refers to James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Though from a much earlier time, it was still immensely popular and would have been required reading when Harry was in school.

A Day in Ten Bar-rooms pokes fun at *Ten Nights in a Bar-room* (1854), a mawkish temperance novel that had become a target of ridicule by 1900.

The Tyranny of Tears (1899) was one of the many frivolous stage comedies of the period.

A Mad Betrothal (1890) by Laura Jean Libbey was a sort of dime novel of the sentimental type.

Madame Butterfly (1898) by John Luther Long was first a weepy short story. In 1900, David Belasco made a one-act play out of it to accompany his too-insubstantial comedy *Naughty Anthony*. Puccini's opera came out in 1904.

Terms & Characters

faro: A card game with a banker and several players, usually fixed.

poolroom: A gambling establishment that receives sporting event results via telegraph.

Mrs. Butler: Proprietress of a colorful boarding house in Glens Falls.

Scott Breen: A lawyer in Glens Falls.

Dwight Chambers: A real-estate agent in Glens Falls.

Estelle (aka **Annie**): A young woman capable of speedy social evolution.

Mr. Holt: A guest at Mrs. Butler's establishment.

Samuel Keegan: The proprietor of the Gotham Insurance Bureau.

Ed Ketchum: An insurance investigator who specializes in arson and naïveté.

McGee: A man of unpleasant disposition, but unusual skills.

George Phelps: A young dime novel reader and valuable witness.

William Spier: The wealthy owner of a horse farm in Glens Falls.

