

## STORIES of New Jersey

pitch a ball that he could not catch barehanded, and announced to one of his older brothers that he was going to be a professional ball player.

In spite of his interest in horses, dogs, and baseball he was already beginning to show signs of his future ability. He had a talent for unusual words, even to the point of coining them to suit his meaning. His first step up the ladder of literary fame was taken when he interrupted his ball playing long enough to write an essay for a prize of a quarter.

The summer of his seventeenth year he went to work for his brother Townley in Asbury Park. He covered miles of hot sandy roads on a bicycle gathering news of the summer resorts and writing stories of clam bakes and sailing parties.

In 1889-90 he had two terms at Lafayette College, followed by a year at Syracuse University leaving in June 1891. While here he was correspondent for the New York Tribune and contributed articles to the Detroit Free Press and Syracuse Daily.

Anxious to be independent, he moved to East 23rd Street, New York, and proceeded to try to earn his living with his pen. As a newspaper reporter he was a hopeless failure. It was of more interest to him to describe accurately and vividly the color and action of a great fire than to tell where it happened or the building loss involved. For a time he tried business; but could not stand the restraint and discipline.

Meanwhile he was spending his spare time exploring the odd corners of the city, sitting in saloons and standing about on street corners listening to the conversation of the people about him. He had made up his mind that he was going to write a book about the people on the Bowery so he must see for himself how these people lived and talked. The book was written in the two days before Christmas of 1891. He called it Maggie, a Girl of the Streets. It so horrified the conventional-minded publishers of the day that, although they recognized that it was the work of an artist, they dared not undertake to print it.

All this time Crane was living in poverty and privation. He was too proud to ask help from his brothers who would have been only too glad to come to his aid if they had realized his need. He earned odd bits from special articles sent in to the newspapers. His brother Edmund was living in Lakeview, just outside of Paterson. It was no novelty for Stephen to walk the seven miles from the Hudson River to his brother's home for a square meal and a little rest. Perhaps it was at this time that he said "I would give my future literary career for twenty-three dollars in cash at this minute."

In the summer of '92 his brother Townley again gave him a job in Asbury Park writing stories for the New York Tribune. While Townley was away on an assignment there was a political parade in which a labor organization carried banners for Benjamin Harrison and Whitelaw Reid (then owner of the Tribune), Republican nominees for President and Vice-President. Crane, whose sympathies were with the poorer classes, was amused at the spectacle of these men who worked with their hands marching on behalf of capital. He forgot that Whitelaw Reid owned the paper and wrote a biting article that somehow got past the copy desk and was printed in one edition of the New York Tribune (August 21, 1892).