

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

BY HOWARD FIELDING.

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SYNOPSIS.

Mr. J. Woodbury Newcomb, an elderly student of criminology, returning to New York from a visit to King Sing prison, meets on the train Frank Gleason, Phil Harris and Jack Pinney, convicts who have just completed their terms of imprisonment, and who mistake Newcomb for a fellow convict. To draw them out, he assumes the character of a prisoner and tells them the story of his first crime. Frank Gleason then narrates an attempted crime, in which fortune puts him into the position of the rescuer of his intended victim. Phil Harris describes the unsuccessful burglary for which he has been doing time.

PART IV.

Jack Pinney, the second-story burglar, like his famous companion, Gleason, has seen almost all parts of the world. Travel had enriched his vocabulary to such an extent that few men could have followed with complete understanding the tale that he told. It was embellished with the cant of criminals in a hundred cities scattered over the globe; so that even Newcomb the student of unrighteousness, was frequently obliged to ask for a translation of some words or phrases. It will be impracticable, therefore, to reproduce the story literally in the present narration.

It appeared that on account of some infraction of the law, Pinney was obliged to quit his native land very suddenly and with all possible secrecy. A brief study of his extradition treaties inclined him in favor of Spain, and he



HE WAS A COLD-BLOODED YANKEE.

accordingly took passage in a steamer leaving New York for Mediterranean ports, and touching at various ports, and good fortune enabled him to elude the authorities on both sides of the water, and within a month he found himself in the Spanish capital, seemingly quite free from danger of annoyance by the police. But though he had outstripped the officers of the law, an enemy quite as deadly as he had, was overtaking him; namely poverty. His funds had been somewhat scanty when he left New York, and a thief is seldom frugal. He had hoped to thrive by his own ingenuities, but Spain is robbed too much by the Spaniards to afford a ready market for a stranger. His knowledge of the language was all that time very imperfect, and the deficiency hampered him. He could not easily form advantageous alliances with the members of his own profession, nor catch the hints that help a clever thief to his neighbor.

Pinney's last dollar was spent when, in an eating house that had once been frequented by English speaking people and still made some pretense of effort to supply their wants, he chanced to take up an American magazine wherein he read the story of the unucky ring of King Alfonso XII. That ring, as the reader may remember, was made for the father of the present king. It was a regal trinket, magnificently set with diamonds and pearls. Alfonso gave it to his cousin, Mercedes, on the day of their betrothal. It is said she valued it more highly than in common with the Spaniards, whom such baubles are familiar. Perhaps the occasion gave it worth, but we are not accustomed to regard the marriages of royal personages as matters of sentiment. However, Mercedes wore the ring for the brief day that remained to her of life, and when she was gone, Alfonso gave the gold circlet with its diamonds and pearls to Queen Christina, his grandmother. Her days were few, and the ring was the king's again. He bestowed it upon his sister, the Infanta del Pilar who survived the fatal gift about one month. The ring was then given to the youngest daughter of the Duc de Montpensier, and she died within three months.

Alfonso XII and all his court might well have viewed the ring with suspicion after such a series of events, and yet it never seemed more superstitious than other people. That it was so regarded by the king is a matter of record. He would not give it to anyone; yet strangely enough he allowed it to be put away in his own treasure box; and he died in less than a year.

Evidently no mortal life was proof against the evil power of the ring. The rulers of the state, after the king's death, so decided, and they ordered that the deadly ring should pass out of human keeping. It was suspended by a silken cord around the neck of the bronze statue of the Maid of Almodna, the patron saint of Madrid, whose sanctity was deemed more than sufficient to neutralize the malevolence of the demon that dwelt in the ring. Though the statue stood in a public square no watch was set to guard the costly trinket. Its story was thought quite sufficient to protect it, and the course of events seemed to prove the accuracy of that judgment. No thief in all Spain showed any disposition to barter his life for the ring, doubly protected by its own reputation and the sainted Maid to whose care it had been committed.

But Jack Pinney, who did not believe in anything, he did not even believe that the ring was there, after he had read the account of it in the magazine; but he thought it barely worth while to go and investigate. Much to his surprise he discovered that the story was true.

"When I found that out," said Pinney, "I made up my mind that all Spain needed was a roof over it to be a lunatic asylum."

The rascal plotted the remainder of that day in blessing the chance that had brought him to Madrid, and doubly blessing the hand that had laid that magazine in his way. There was little need for making plans. To steal the ring was, for a person of his abilities, as easy as knocking an apple off a tree, as easy as knocking an apple off a tree, as easy as knocking an apple off a tree.

was guarded. The square in which the statue stood was large and not well lighted. By night there were few people astray in its vicinity, and the police seemed never to look that way. So much he gleaned by one night's observation; and he decided to make the attempt. That he could secure possession of the ring and escape immediately was nearly certain. The only danger was that, as Spanish thieves were known to shun this adventure, there might be a "round-up" of all suspicious characters from foreign parts, as soon as the city's loss should be discovered. In that case, Pinney could not avoid being taken into custody, for he had not the means to leave the city on short notice. It would be necessary first to sell one of the smaller jewels from the ring.

These considerations impelled him to prepare a hiding place for the ring, and he decided to secure it in the heel of one of his shoes. With this end in view he removed the lowest "lift" of the heel and cut out enough of the leather beneath to make room for his precious booty. Then he replaced the lift in such a way that it could be quickly withdrawn, and he replaced it again with the ring beneath. His plan was to run for the nearest dark corner the instant that he had taken the jewel from the statue's neck; and, having hidden it, to return to the inn where he was living and there calmly await the lucky discovery.

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When his thoughts upon the ring he was much firmer. His breath ceased to come in gasps, and his heart made less noise in his breast. Slowly he began to creep around the base of the statue to the point which he had

selected for the ascent. Then, suddenly, he knew not how, he found himself facing a man—a man—

He was a cold-blooded Yankee who did not believe in anything, he did not even believe that the ring was there, after he had read the account of it in the magazine; but he thought it barely worth while to go and investigate. Much to his surprise he discovered that the story was true.

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when his enemy went down at a touch, gasping for mercy as he fell. And, to complete the miracle, Pinney recognized the half-mothered voice, and a moment later, the face of the man beneath him, shining white in the darkness.

"Doc, Braydon!" he cried. "In the devil's name what brought you here?" This Braydon-called "doctor" for some reason that neither he nor anyone else could remember—was an American criminal whom Pinney had known quite intimately in the old days. Upon recognizing him, Pinney leaped to his feet, but Braydon lay upon the stones, still begging for mercy.

"Shut up!" said Pinney, bending over him. "You're all right. Get a grip on yourself. I'm Jack Pinney. Don't you know me?"

It required several minutes for the truth to penetrate Braydon's mind. At last he staggered to his feet, Pinney supporting him with one arm. "Jack, is it you?" he rasped. "Well, this is awful. I never lost my nerve like that before."

"I was just a bit nervous myself," responded Pinney. "I suppose you're here on the same errand, and I don't mind admitting that it's a ticklish business."

"Where did you get that?" he demanded. "Give it to me!"

"It is the ring of Alfonso XII," said Pinney mechanically. "I took it from the statue."

The innkeeper suddenly held up the ring to the light. Then, uttering an oath, he threw the ring upon the floor and fled from the room.

Not even the death of his friend had impressed Jack Pinney as did the flight of this man. His face proclaimed him a hardened villain, and he had just proven himself a desperate thief. Yet, though the jewels in the ring were worth a dozen fortunes, he dared not hold it in his hand a moment.

"His conversation is my conversation," said Pinney's thought, as he pecked up the ring from the floor. Yet he had grown to fear the trinket as something accursed, and he was invariably prompted to leave it where it lay.

A moment later he heard the sound of many persons entering the stairs. A man in the Spanish language, and Pinney did not grasp the meaning; but the tone was official, and warned him that the police were upon him.

He hastily thrust the ring into the hiding place which he had prepared in the heel of his shoe. No sooner had he reached an unobtrusive nook than a little squad of uniformed men forced their way into the room. One of them told him in Spanish, and then in fairly intelligible English, that he was under arrest. When he assumed an air of innocence, and asked what crime was charged against him, he was informed without delay that he was accused of stealing the ring from the neck of the statue.

They searched him with a great show of care, but Pinney noticed that not one of them tried to find the ring. Incredible as it seems, he was not aware of the ill-fated bauble, and wished to shift the curse of it upon some culprit. Failing to find it upon the prisoner, they searched the room in the same cowardly fashion. Naturally the ring was not found.

There was a brief consultation, which resulted in Pinney's being taken before a high police official. He was charged with the crime, but he stoutly protested his innocence. Then he was thrust into a cell, where he remained nearly all day. Finally he was brought out before the court, which was backed on this occasion by a much more magnificent personage, whom Pinney took to be a direct representative of the crown.

The proceedings were conducted in Spanish, and he had little idea what was done. But at a certain official look in his charge, and informed him that his guilt had not been proven. It had been decided, however, to send him out of the country. The speaker had been detailed to conduct him to a steamer, where he would be sent to America. This leniency, he was given the ring, and was about to leave when he was heartily rebuffed. He believed that this leniency was a mask

for some unpeppable vengeance, and that he would never reach the coast alive. He had heard of the ruse by which a man is shown an apparent chance to escape, and are shot down at the first step. No such tricks should be played upon him, he told himself; and as a matter of fact, he stuck closer than a brother to his escort during the journey to the coast.

At last he found himself on the deck of a steam vessel that was bound for New York. The ring was still in the heel of his shoe. His escort bade him a courteous farewell, and went over the side into a waiting boat. Pinney was utterly dazed. Was it possible that Spanish superstition went so far that even the highest officials welcomed the chance to get the ill-fated ring out of the country? At any rate, he had it; and his fortune was made.

He had been informed that his passage to America had been paid, and that a stateroom had been assigned to him. Like a man in a dream, he went below, and in his stateroom, by the light that came through the open port, he gazed once more upon the burning jewels of the ring.

Some one shook the door, Pinney hastily thrust the ring into his pocket, and responded to the summons. To his great surprise Braydon entered. He had supposed that the man was dead. Every question that he had asked about Braydon had been answered evasively, yet in such a way as to leave the impression that his fate had overtaken him.

"Oh, I'm no cheat," was Braydon's greeting. "That bullet went through my hat, and trimmed my hair a little, but it was fear that knocked me over." "Heaven knows I'm glad to see you," cried Pinney, "though it costs me half my fortune."

fully locking the door of his room, and screening the window, he set down by a table and viewed the ring in the light of a candle. It was the most wonderful piece of jeweler's work that he had ever seen. The gems shot forth a thousand glittering rays. It seemed to him that the ring gave more light than the candle. It enchanted his eyes; and though he believed in his heart that it would slay his friend that night, and would cost him his life in the end, he could not dream of parting with it till he could transmute its jewels into gold.

How long he remained with his head bent over the ring, he could not say. A rough and grating sound startled him. He looked up hastily, and saw the landlord of the inn standing by the open door. There was a revolver in his hand, and it was pointed at Pinney's head. The thief remained motionless in his chair, staring into the black barrel of the weapon.

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"What do you mean?" "I mean the ring," whispered Pinney. "I've got it, Doc, and we're rich."

"Let me see it," said Braydon. Pinney took it from his pocket. Braydon snatched it, and made a motion to throw it through the porthole; but the other grasped his arm.

"Why, you madman!" gasped Pinney. "Are you still superstitious? Do you still believe—"

"Oh, nonsense, Pinney," said Braydon wearily. "I'm on to the whole business now. The man that brought me down here told me everything. That ring is bogus. The real ring has gone into the bottomless treasury of Spain long ago. They've had a fake ring on the statue for I don't know how long, and it's been stolen over and over again. That doesn't make any difference. They have a cartload of models like this, and every time one is taken, they hang up another. There was one on the neck of the statue when I passed it yesterday, after my arrest. And the worst of it is that we were the only two crooks in Spain who did not know it. Protected by superstition! What a fake! Why, every man in the kingdom has been on to the fact that that ring wasn't worth five cents, ever since the day after it was first hung up. Only the ignorant and superstitious believe in it, and the authorities work the trick to please them."

It took Pinney a long while to bring his mind around to this unwelcome truth, but careful tests of the supposed jewels at last forced conviction upon him.

He had some hope that the excellence of the imitation might make the trinket worth something as a basis for a confidence game, but unfortunately he was arrested on a cabbed information from Spain as soon as his ship reached New York, and the ring was taken from him.

"I couldn't have had worse luck," said he in conclusion, "if the thing had been genuine."

(To be concluded.)

EFFECTS OF CHEAP COINAGE. Who Suffer the Most from the Debasement of the Currency.

From Macaulay's History of England. The misgovernment of Charles and James, gross as it had been, had not prevented the common business of life from going steadily and prosperously on. While the honor and independence of the state were sold to a foreign power, while chartered rights were invaded, while fundamental laws were violated, hundreds of thousands of quiet, honest and industrious families labored and traded, ate their meals and lay down to rest in comfort and security. Whether Whigs or Tories, Protestants or Jesuits, were uppermost, the greater drove his heels to market; the grocer measured out his currants; the draper measured out his broad cloth; the farmer of buyers and sellers was as long as ever in the town; the harvest home was celebrated as joyously as ever in the hamlets; the oxen crowded the malle; the choicest of the apple juice flowed to the presses of Herefordshire; the piles of crockery cloved in the furnaces of the Trent, and the burrows of coal rolled fast along the timber railways of the Tyne.

But when the great instrument of exchange became thoroughly deranged, all trade, all industry, were smitten as with a gale. The soil was forsaken, and the plow in almost every place and by almost every class, in the dairy and on the treading floor, by the small and by the large, on the mill and in the factory, the work of the mine. Nothing could be purchased without a dispute. Over every counter there was wangling from morning to night. The soil was forsaken, and the plow in almost every place and by almost every class, in the dairy and on the treading floor, by the small and by the large, on the mill and in the factory, the work of the mine. Nothing could be purchased without a dispute. Over every counter there was wangling from morning to night. The soil was forsaken, and the plow in almost every place and by almost every class, in the dairy and on the treading floor, by the small and by the large, on the mill and in the factory, the work of the mine. Nothing could be purchased without a dispute. Over every counter there was wangling from morning to night.

No merchant would contract to deliver goods without making some stipulation regarding the quality of the money in which he was to be paid. Even men of business were often bewildered by the confusion into which all pecuniary transactions were thrown. The simple and the crafty were pillaged without mercy by extortioners, whose demands grew even more rapidly than the money market. The price of the same article of life, of shoes, of oil, of oatmeal, rose fast. The laborer found that the bit of metal which, when he received it, was called a shilling, would hardly buy a loaf of bread, no far as sixpence. Where artisans of more than usual intelligence were collected in great numbers, as in the dock-yard at Chatham, they were able to make their complaints heard and to obtain some relief. But the ignorant and helpless peasant was cruelly ground between two classes, which would give money only by taking another which would take it only by weight.

Art of Mixing Mustard. The art of mixing mustard is to have it perfectly smooth, and of the proper consistency. The liquid with which it is moistened should be added to it in small quantities, and the mustard should be well rubbed and beaten with a mortar. It should be of a creamy color, and of a seasonable of salt with two ounces of the flour of mustard, and stir to them by degrees sufficient water to reduce the whole to the consistency of a thick batter. It must always be sufficiently diluted to drop easily from the spoon.

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