

## My Convict

By JOHN Y. LARNED

I was running my auto leisurely along a road in the country and slowed up even from that pace to turn a sharp bend in the road when suddenly a heavy weight dropped from an overhanging branch into my car directly behind me. Turning, I saw a man in convict stripes rising to his feet.

"Put on full speed," he said in a tone to indicate that he would be obeyed. I did not see that he possessed any weapon with which to enforce his demands, but it was evident that he was an escaped jailbird and as such was likely to be desperate. As soon as I had turned the head I obeyed his order, my speed gauge registering forty miles an hour. The man climbed over the back of the seat and sat down beside me. The road before me needed all my attention, but I took time to glance aside at him. Now that he was fleeing at so rapid a gait his whole expression was changed. Despite his stripes, I saw in him a man of refinement. He met my gaze with an honest look and said:

"My friend, if you knew that instead of defeating justice you are trying to undo a frightful act of injustice you would be better satisfied. I have been the victim of a conspiracy to defraud a bank of which I was cashier and was sent to the penitentiary for ten years. My noble wife sent me surreptitiously saws, with which I effected my escape. My object is to get out of the country, send for her and our children and begin life anew."

While he was making this brief statement I kept one eye on the road and the other on him. I doubt if any man can lie to me and impress me that he is speaking the truth. I did not know that the man was sincere, but I felt his sincerity. Knowledge may be defective; intuition, at least with me, is perfect.

"There is nothing," I replied, "that would give me greater satisfaction than to enable you to carry out your purpose. Where shall I take you?"

"First you must throw my pursuers off my track. They are not far behind."

"Get back there and cover yourself up to the chin with the wraps."

He did so, and his stripes were concealed, but he was bareheaded. I gave him my cap. Seeing a man ahead of me wearing a common woolen hat, I stopped long enough to buy it, giving him three times its value. Then, entering upon a long stretch of comparatively straight and level road, I put on the balance of my power, making fifty miles an hour.

"Do you know anything of the pursuit?" I asked.

"Only that my flight must have been discovered long ago."

"We must have another suit of clothes," was my next remark. "We shall have to stop and buy one."

My passenger gave me some idea of the sizes he had worn before his incarceration, and at the first opportunity I bought him the necessary outfit. He spoke of paying me for them some day, but I told him what I would require would be his vindication or, at least, a surety that he was what he purported to be. He managed to change his clothes under the wraps and, crossing a bridge, threw his stripes into water flowing rapidly. After this I decreased my speed somewhat, for I believed that with the start and advantage we possessed my man would not be retaken, at least for some time.

Passing through a town where I had business acquaintances, I procured funds and supplied him with what he would require. Then, stopping at a railway station, I secured a time table showing trains for New York and, by taking a longer route than the rails, put him on a train without his being obliged to wait at a station.

Meanwhile he had given me the address of his wife and asked me to call upon her to receive confirmation of his story. When he parted from me his efforts to express his gratitude overcame him, and he could say nothing. All he could do was to look it.

As soon as he had left me I began to realize my position in having aided a convict to make good his escape, and it was then that doubts began to trouble me. I did not go to see his wife for a considerable time after he and I parted, fearing that she might be watched and my visit would put the authorities on to my infringement of the law. I saw in the newspapers notices of the escape from prison of a bank embezzler, and after the stir had quieted down I made the call.

Some time after my call I received a letter written with great caution from the convict, mailed at an inland city of South America. He was paying the way to send for his wife and children, which would be a difficult matter without putting the authorities on his track.

His plan was never carried out, for one of the conspirators who had ruined him was brought to trial for certain irregularities, and the facts of the other matter came out. The convict's wife applied for a new trial for her husband, but by this time the whole matter was patent. Instead of a new trial it was decided to apply for a pardon. This, after much delay, was granted, and the pardoned man returned to his home.

I had the satisfaction of giving the reunited family a ride in the very auto that had made good the father's escape.

## ONLY ONE PLACE FOR HIM

It was almost 7 o'clock, says the Newark News, when Mr. Hillside reached home the other evening, and his wife was waiting for him with a look of concern and inquiry on her face.

"Why so late?" she asked.

"Extra work at the office," Hillside answered, shedding his overcoat. "I couldn't break away until 6, and a trolly block did the rest."

"Supper's all cold," said his wife.

"I'm sorry, my dear, but I couldn't help it."

"You could help it if you would," said Mrs. Hillside. "You let the office people impose on you too much. You're an easy mark and you know it."

"My dear, perhaps you don't understand what I'm up against at the shop."

"I do understand, and I know very well that the whole trouble comes back to you and your easy ways. You don't fight those people. They load you down with enough work for two men, and you simply bow your head and do it. You're too humble for your own good. People run over you, and you meekly pick yourself up and don't even look after them to get their number. I never saw a man with so little spunk and spirit. Do you ever complain? Do you ever assert yourself? Do you ever talk back?"

"My dear," replied Mr. Hillside, with a wink to his small and sympathizing son, "there are some people who simply won't tolerate being talked back to."

"If you mean anything personal by that," retorted Mrs. Hillside "I as-

sure you that your sarcasm is entirely out of place."

After supper she went at him again.

"Here's the whole evening gone, just because you haven't the nerve to stand up for your rights. Tomorrow, I suppose you won't get home till 8; and by and by you'll grow so meek and lowly that the office won't let you come home at all. They'll keep you at night in a little stall down there and send your meals in to you from a restaurant. I've decided to have supper at 6 o'clock after this, whether you are here or not. It isn't right to send the children to bed so soon after eating."

"My dear," said Hillside, sadly, "don't you suppose that I suffer enough without getting roasted besides?"

"Roasted!" cried she; "I'm not roasting you, and you have no right to call it that. You always put a wrong construction on what I say to you. You have no right to talk that way to me when you know that the reason I say what I do to you is because you are so meek and submissive. If you would only fire up once in a while at the office the way you do at home it would be better for us all. But you never do: you're not built that way. You wouldn't get mad at your employer if he came up here and took the roof from over our heads. You don't dare to call your soul your own. Where are you going?"

"Only down cellar."

"To smoke your smelly old pipe, I suppose."

"It's about all the consolation left for me, my dear."

"I'd be ashamed!" said Mrs. Hillside.

Mose, returned from conveying his wife with a solemn countenance to find that Sue had prepared a cup of tea for him and had it set out on the table with a piece of corn pone.

"I thought yo' d' come home needin' somepin to brace yo' up, Mr. Jones," said the girl.

Her thoughtfulness braced up Mose as much as the refreshments.

"How did yo' leave yo' po' wife?" she asked.

"Porely."

"Is she gwine to pull through?"

"Don' know; she's powerful sick." Mrs. Jones lost instead of gained. She was worried about her children and Mose found it necessary to tell her that he had secured the services of some one to take care of them. He did not tell her that he had got a young woman, for he had seen evidences already that she was expecting to step into his wife's shoes, and he knew that this would worry her.

Perhaps it would have gone well with Sue had she curbed her impatience. Though Mrs. Jones was reported getting weaker every day, she hung on in a very aggravating way. Sue got tired asking Mose after his visits to the hospital how he had found his wife, hearing only the repetition, "Porely, very porely; she's gwine down hill powerful fast." So it occurred to the girl to go to the hospital and ask questions on her own account. She bought a five cent posy and, appearing at the hospital door, was received by an attendant.

"Tell Mrs. Jones," she said, offering the posy, "dat a frien' ob de family brought her de flowers and hopes she's gettin' better."

The attendant took the flowers and was turning away when Sue asked:

"Mrs. Jones mighty sick?"

"She's very low."

"Not long to lib, I reckon?"

"Not long."

"Bout how long she gwine to las'?"

"The doctor doesn't expect her to live the week out."

Sue took her departure, greatly comforted. The attendant took the posy to Mrs. Jones with the message. Mrs. Jones was too ill to appreciate the kind attention, but the faculty of curiosity had not yet deserted her, and she asked if the frien' of the family had left a name. The nurse said she had not, whereupon Mrs. Jones asked for a description of her and was told that she was a trim colored girl about twenty years old.

That night a hurry call was sent for Mose to come to the hospital to see his wife before she died. Mose obeyed the summons and found the invalid in a state of collapse. When told that her husband was there she rallied, and Mose went to her bedside.

"Mose," she said, "tak' good care ob de chillen when I'm daid."

"Sartin'."

"Gib all my frien's my lub, and thank de cull'd gal fo' de flowers she bring me de udder day."

"Wha' cull'd gal?"

"Dunno. She said she was a frien' ob de family."

"I wond'!"

Mose checked himself, but too late. Urged to tell what he wondered at, he admitted that Sue might have left the flowers, and when asked who Sue was he admitted that she was the woman who was taking care of the children. Perhaps it was Mose's evident desire to keep something back. At any rate, the mother took fright. She raised herself with marvelous strength consid-

ering her condition and between the nurse and her husband got the story, including some admissions from the latter as to Sue's kind solicitude in his behalf.

"Yo' Mose," she said, "yo' waitin' fo' me to die to marry dat gal?"

"I hain't no sech thing."

"De gal's waitin' fo' me to die to marry yo'. Yo' s'pose I gwine to turn my chillen ober to a gal like dat? No, sah. I's gwine to get well. Call de ambulance. I's gwine home right off."

She was not permitted to carry out her assertion, but she rallied from that moment and a week later was back in her own domicile. Miss Brown was warned by Mose of her coming and departed in time to avoid a scene.

The Test.

It is the things a man could do but does not which stamp him as incompetent.—Judge.

A PITHY SERMON.

Here is about the pithiest sermon that was ever preached: "Our ingress into life is naked and bare, our progress through life is trouble and care, our egress out of it we know not where; but, doing well here, we shall do well there. I could not tell more by preaching a year."

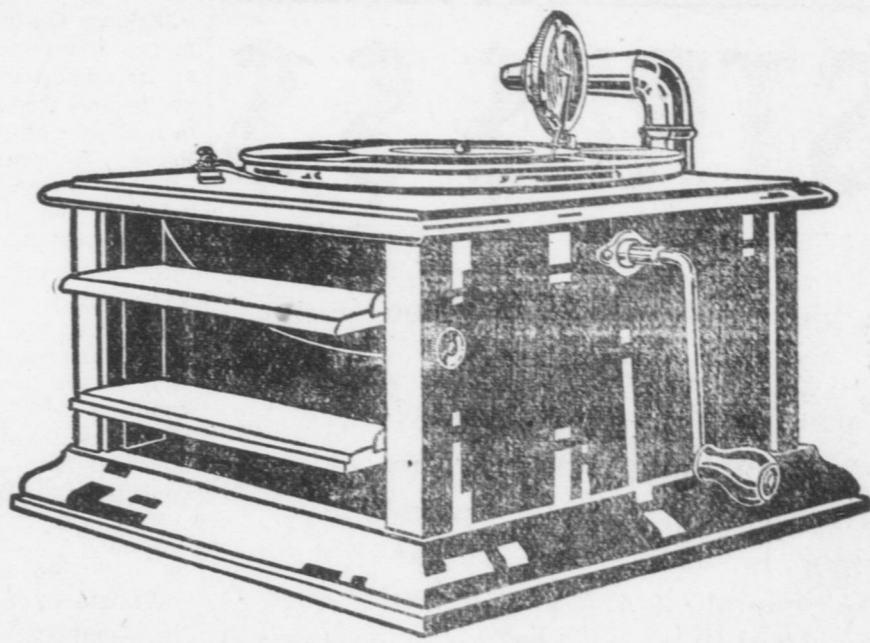
An Inspiration.

Lionel was at a matinee with his father, and when a trapeze acrobat failed to catch the object at which he flew through the air and fell sprawling into the net the boy was greatly excited.

"They are never hurt," explained his father. "It is a regular trick to make such a miss once or twice to give the audience an idea of the difficulty of the feat and thereby intensify the applause when it has been successfully performed."

Lionel thought a moment and then, with a bright smile, said:

"Papa, do you think I could make a hit with my teacher by following this circus stunt and missing my lessons once in awhile?"—Puck.



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PENNSYLVANIA

## A Powerful Stimulant

By OSCAR COX

"Miss Brown, ef yo' don' mind I like to have yo' come take keer ob de chillen. Ma wife's powerful weak and can't do nothin' at all. She's goin' to de hospittle dis artnoon."

Miss Brown, a colored girl twenty years of age, said she wouldn't mind obliging Mr. Jones. It occurred to her that if Mrs. Jones should die she might be Mrs. Jones herself. Jones was a well to do darky on the shady side of forty and had three pickaninnies. Miss Brown supported herself by washing and ironing and thought that if she could permanently change her occupation to taking care of a family it would be an advantage.

"When do yo' want me to come, Mr. Jones?" she inquired.

"Ma wife's gwine to de hospittle about 4 o'clock. Reckon yo' mought come round about half past 4."

"All right, Mr. Jones; I'll be dar."

Mrs. Jones was removed in the hospital ambulance on time, and half an hour later Miss Brown, who was commonly called Sue by her employers, settled herself down in her place. The children were playing in the street, and Sue did not disturb them. She was taking an eye inventory of the premises and making a mental rearrangement of the furniture when Mrs. Jones would be removed from the hospital to the cemetery. Mr. Jones, whose name, stripped of euphony, was simply



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