

UNCLE HENRY ON LUCK.

Some people say there ain't no luck in this world; they claim it's wisdom and hard work and pluck that bring folks wealth and fame; I don't deny that there's a pile of truth in what they say. But still it makes me kind of smile to hear 'em talk that way.

When Elder Johnson's oldest son, some dozen years ago, got tired farmin' here and ran away to join a show, it busted up, first thing he knew, and left him stranded far. Not knowin' what the deuce to do, except pass round the hat—

And then a doctor took him up, in some Kentucky town, and he's a famous surgeon now and sailin' money down.

There wa'n't no luck about that—no! No luck at all, you bet— But he'd be with the one-horse show, if it hadn't busted, yet. And last week old Dave Simpson's dog, while sort of snoopin' round, barked up a hollow, rotten log, and what d'you s'pose they found? Ten thousand dollars' worth of gold some robber'd hid one day—

Of course 'twas all Dave's wisdom made his dog take on that way. One time in church, when Dick Shaw's May got up to sing a tune, a stranger that was there that day got interested soon—

Just happened that he'd stayed because he'd missed his train, you know— But May's not workin' like she was in them days, long ago; The stranger took 'er off somewhere and trained 'er voice somehow, and she's his wife and lives in style, and sings in op'ry now.

No, there's no such a thing as luck to help a person through; It's wisdom and hard work and pluck makes folks do what they do— I s'pose if I'd been born in some big castle on a hill They'd drive me out, for I'm so dumb, and I'd be farmin' still.

—S. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

REVENGE BY TELEPHONE.

By John J. Armstrong.

THE papers in 'Rex v. Grimes,' said Johnson, my clerk, as he placed a bundle at my elbow. "Second cause in to-morrow's list."

"Oh, certainly," I said, looking up from the evening paper on my desk. "I shall stay here and digest them. The 'Monitor' seems to think the O'Leary couple got their just deserts."

"So they did, sir," returned Johnson; "but, by Coke, you never gave the defense a ghost of a chance! Marshall was as weak as water after you'd finished. Not that he could have done much for 'em anyhow. It's a good riddance to a dangerous lot, say I." He paused, and a serious look crept over his spectacled face.

"I don't want to pose as an alarmist," he said presently, "but if any man has made enemies who are to be feared to-day, you're that man. Until the other O'Leary is with his accomplices, I wouldn't like to be in your shoes."

Johnson was an old servant and held himself privileged accordingly. I laughed in his face. "You're getting quite an old woman," I cried. He shook his head in silent dissent. "Come here, you croaker. Open that drawer. There now, do you think I am able to take care of myself? Here, help yourself to a cigar and get off."

"Very good, sir," he said, as he shambled to the door. "If report speaks true of Tim O'Leary, I advise you to keep it loaded. Good night."

Johnson's getting decidedly shaky, I soliloquized. "I suppose he's seen me in a hundred cases for the Crown, and yet he breaks out like this when a couple of assassins are put out of the way of working further mischief through my instrumentality. There's some mitigation when a frenzied creature flies out at another in hot blood at an apparent injury. But anarchists—cold-blooded, indiscriminate murderers. Pah! For them there should be no mercy."

My musings were suddenly interrupted by a Br-r-r-r from the telephone bell. Striding over to the instrument I took the receiver.

"Hallo! that you, Dick?" came the voice of Marshall. "You got the kudos, to-day, my learned brother, hang you! Never gave me a look-in. That gentle restraint usually assumed by the leader for the Crown was strikingly conspicuous by its absence. Quite a shock to me, I declare. You shouldn't outrage legal canons in that way, my boy, without due notice to the defense. Shall I see you at the club? What's that—busy? So'm I. You're against me in Grimes to-morrow, aren't you? Well, grind on, and do your best—you'll want it! I'll come and dig you out in an hour's time. So-long." Br-r-r-r.

I resumed my seat with a smile. Though professional duty frequently made 'Bully' Marshall and myself legal adversaries, in private life we were close-knit friends. Bully and myself were adepts at forensic hair-splitting. His ponderous style, which gave nervous witnesses into his hands was a direct contrast to my suave, trenchant manner. When he shot up with his "Mind, I object!" the legal gentlemen in the well would look up with amused faces in anticipation of a wordy duel. No man better than himself knew how to bolster up a weak case. No man was quicker to seize an opening. A master of legal artifice, he had hoodwinked many a jury by unadulterated bluff.

fumes of chloroform assailed my consciousness, and I passed into a pleasant dream.

I came back to a knowledge of my surroundings to find myself gagged, and in a recumbent position on the floor. My arms had been trussed tightly behind my back and my legs were securely tied with a tough cord. My back was pressed against the bottom drawer in my heavy desk, and when I tried to move, I discovered that my body was fastened securely to it by a cord wound about its base. The knots cut into my flesh. My posture made struggling an utter impossibility.

Speechless and helpless, I gazed up bewilderedly at my assailant. He was enveloped in a black mackintosh, and my gaze lingered dazedly on the discoloured red lining inside the cape which was thrown over his shoulders. His sinister-looking face was distorted with a look of savage exultation as he noted my return to consciousness. The next instant an evil smile crept into his eyes—a horribly expressive smile that made my blood run cold, and left me eager for his speech.

Coolly annexing one of my cigars, he lit it, and, stooping, puffed the smoke deliberately into my eyes. "Good-evening, Richard Shenstone," he said quietly. "You're no doubt surprised to find yourself in your present constrained position. I regret the necessity, but do you the compliment of saying that with a slippery individual like yourself it is wise to take no risks. Richard Shenstone, I am come to kill you!"

He announced his purpose as coolly as if retelling an anecdote. For a brief second my heart seemed to cease its pulsation. The next instant I was straining at my bonds like a frenzied madman. His burst of mocking laughter fired me with the strength of a giant, but it was in vain. The fellow had secured me but too well. Overcome with my strenuous efforts I collapsed, while the fiend urged me with horrible chucklings to persist.

"Good!" he cried. "I like to see a man die game! Now, listen to me, Richard Shenstone! This day, through your malignant eloquence, you sent two men to a living death. You would say that you were but an instrument—their fate was assured, whoever had pronounced the indictment. Probably so, my learned friend; but I was in court, and knew you were glorying in the task. Dog that you are, you gloated over your victims as if you enjoyed the sport of it! Fool, and worse than fool, to imagine that you could defy us with impunity. But enough of this. There is one O'Leary left to act as avenger of his brothers. This night I strike a blow which will vindicate the brotherhood in the eyes of their comrades the world over, and by the same act punish you as you deserve. A shade of tolerance—a little restraint—and you would have been spared."

He threw the half-smoked cigar into the grate and, springing to his feet, crossed behind me to the door. As he rose, I noticed that his boots were covered with galoshes, which accounted for his noiseless entry. In a moment he was before me again, a small black bag in his hand. With staring eyes I watched him as he passed over to the telephone and set the bag down very carefully on the floor.

Fumbling in his pocket he produced what appeared to me the striker of an alarm clock, which he proceeded, with deft fingers, to attach to the hammer of the telephone bell. I followed his every movement as a trapped animal watches its destroyer.

From his lips there issued the sound of suppressed laughter as he rose and surveyed his work. Measuring off a space directly above the bell he screwed into the telephone box a little hook. Immediately below he screwed another, and then he turned and bent to open the bag.

"No common-place end shall be yours," he snarled malevolently. "You shall admit the method of your annihilation has the merit of originality at least. And, more than that, it shall be contrived by the hand of one as innocent of intent to murder as any child. Now watch me closely, my friend, and learn how the hand of death will strike you."

He plunged his fingers into the bag and drew out a glass jar full of water, in which there appeared suspended an inner glass tube filled with some yellow liquid.

"If you are anything of a scientist," he said, drawing it slowly out, "you will know that this little tube requires very delicate handling. Nitro-glycerine, Shenstone? Do you recognize its appearance? The least shock to that fragile receptacle, and—"

He elevated his eyebrows and smiled in my face significantly. "Now let me explain the modus operandi.

"You will observe here, let into the side of the tube, the necessary percussion-cap. You see, I attach the suspending wire to the hook—so, and this dependent wire to the other—so, which brings the little cap almost into contact with the extended hammer of the telephone bell. Now, my eloquent murderer, what do you imagine will happen when you are next rung up? Ring up! By heavens; that's the nearest touch of all!"

He laughed again—a hollow, mirthless laugh like that of a madman. "Take it away, you fool!" I wanted to shriek. "Don't you see that at any moment someone may call up?" My eyes must have flashed the words, for my lips were powerless to utter, for a sudden the fiend stooped, and, hitting me a stunning blow in the face, hissed:

"Curse you, you dog! Lie there, and think when you hear the door locked upon you that your remaining spell on this earth is in my hands. I will not do it too hastily. You shall have a few moments for reflection before you are launched into eternity. Oh, yes, it would be cruel to kill a man like you without allowing time for repentance. Ten minutes—or perhaps a little longer. Make the most of it, I beg. Think, amongst other things, of all the poor devils you have sent to perdition. A few short minutes, and then, the girl will ring you up. Ha! ha!"

He rose, a fiendish glare on his face, and sprang to the door. Unexpectedly his eye must have caught the electric switch, for the next second the room was plunged into darkness.

"A good idea," he snarled. "You shall wait for death in the dark—not knowing when it shall come upon you."

The door clicked behind him. I heard the key turn in the lock and withdrawn, and as the soft pad, pad of his footsteps died away along the corridor, I renewed my straining like a maniac. The cords tore into my flesh. The blood surged up in my head as if the veins that held it would burst. Knowing that every moment was vitally precious, I fought for my life with the desperate energy of despair, until, utterly exhausted, I collapsed and lay supine and impotent. The imminence of an awful death froze my blood. Merciful heaven! If I could only free one hand! If I could but scream! This utter helplessness was horrible.

The inexorable tick-ticking of the clock on the mantel maddened my brain. Suddenly it struck the half hour. The sound fired me from the coma of despair into which my unavailing efforts had plunged me to make another spasmodic effort; but it was useless. My constrained position neutralized my strength.

The infernal assassin had given me no chance. Ten minutes! Great heavens! Five must have flown already.

Great heaven! what was that—a footstep in the passage? My brain was surely fooling me! But no, it clanked nearer. Someone was rattling the handle of the door. "Hang the fellow, he's gone!" The voice—I knew it! It was Marshall—my friend Marshall—come before his time! Thinking me gone, he turned away.

Merciful Heaven, he must not go! With the frenzy of despair I beat a tattoo with my heel against the desk. "That's queer; it's all dark!" Marshall cried. "Dick, old chap," he shouted, "are you there?"

For answer I kicked the wood energetically. "By George," he muttered, "there's something wrong. I'm going to investigate."

In fancy I could see him as, planting his feet against the opposite wall, he applied his shoulder to the door, and with the purchase thus obtained thrust with all his mighty strength.

Would he succeed in forcing it? Again and again he tried, dashing himself against it, but in vain. Backing against the wall, he smashed at it with the flat of his heavy boot. The crash was followed by the sound of rending wood. It was yielding—it was yielding! Another mighty kick, and the hasp of the lock was torn bodily off, and the door flew open.

In an instant Marshall's fingers found the switch, and the room was flooded with light. "Heaven and earth!" he cried, as he caught sight of my helpless figure. "What devilry is this?"

Springing across the room, he forced the gag from my jaws and commenced to hack the bonds from me. My mouth was parched, and, utterly unstrung for a few seconds, although our very lives hung on it, I could say no word. Then suddenly the reaction came, and I shrieked in mortal terror:

"Marshall, the tube!" He followed my gaze, and jumped to his feet. "Nitro-glycerine!" I yelled madly. "Unhook it, quick, but carefully, Marshall, for your life! Place it in that jar."

In one bound he was at the telephone. The next second he had unhooked the dependent wire, and had drawn the tube away from the hammer. And, as he held it in his fingers, before he could detach it from the hook at the top the call came. Br-r-r-r! rang out the bell. When it ceased I was howling with mad, irrational laughter.

Marshall coolly unhooked the tube, suspended it in the jar of water, and took the receiver in his hand. "Hallo! who're you?" he yelled. He waited a moment for the answer, but receiving none, with that never-failing presence of mind that distinguished him, in a trice he had rung up the exchange.

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His View of It. Deacon Jones—About all women go to church for is to show their new clothes. Mrs. Jones—Well, they don't make a cloak of religion, anyway. Deacon Jones—Of course not. It's too plain and inexpensive.—Chicago Daily News.

His Opinion. "Do you believe in women's suffrage?" "Well," answered Mr. Meekton, "sometimes I think it would be a convenience if the ladies could go to the polls themselves instead of giving us instructions and taking chances on mistakes.—Washington Star.

Where He Excelled. Recently a letter of introduction was handed by an actor to a manager which described the bearer as an actor of much merit, and concluded: "He plays Macbeth, Richelieu, Hamlet, Shylock and billiards. He plays billiards best."—Tit-Bits.

Following It Up. "What was Marcy's subject when he graduated?" "Drop by drop." "Valedictorian, wasn't he?" "Yes. What's he doing now?" "Driving a sprinkling cart."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Something of a Champion. Patience—I hear her father is an awful kicker. Patrice—I should say so! Why, he's discouraged an even dozen suitors for his daughter's hand!—Yonkers Statesman.

Intelligent. Mrs. Medders—They say he's going to marry Sal Perkins for her land. Mr. Medders—That shows he's smart. Mrs. Medders—Oh, yes; he knows a lot—when he sees it.—Judge.

Unpleasant for the Dentist. Church—I see the definition of a gentleman is one who never gives pain. Gotham—I don't suppose my dentist would like it if I told him that.—Yonkers Statesman.

Great Head for Business. Barber—That man who just went out has a good head for business. Customer—That old, bald-headed gentleman? Barber—Yes; I sell him three bottles of hair tonic a month.—Tit-Bits.

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