

A TENDER CONSCIENCE

The Darky Had Both a Sin and a Love Affair on His Mind.

By HARRY VAN AMBURG.
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In the spring of 18— I went to Louisville, Ky. One of the servants in the house in which I was staying called Tom was the most melancholy negro I ever saw. He was an excellent man and extremely conscientious. Indeed, such trivial omissions or commissions in the line of his duty so troubled him that I was inclined to suspect him of hypocrisy. But, becoming curious to know whether or not he was honest, I purposely left money in an exposed position in my room, to which he had free access at any time. But Tom never took a penny. One day when he was brushing my clothes I said to him: "Tom, what makes you so lugubrious?"

"I's got a great sin on my conscience."

"Sin? What kind of a sin? You haven't ever killed any one, have you?"

"No; not dat."

"Well, confess to me, and I'll give you absolution."

"What dat?"

"Never mind. Tell me about this great sin you have committed."

"Well, sah, I don't b'long to dis state. I was borned down in Tennessee. De name o' de place war Athens. My mas'er owned a heap o' niggers on de plantation outside de town on de road leadin' up to Nashville. De manor house was a big square buildin', painted white, wid de galleries runnin' all around de four sides. Back o' dat war de nigger cabins, standin' all in a row an' whitewashed lak a tablecloth."

"Was all happy on dat plantation, fo' we had a good mas'er. Some ob de niggers dat abolitioners had been talkin' to war pinin' fo' liberty, as dey called it, but we didn't hab no use fo' dat on de Coolidge plantation, 'cause



"TO TURN 'LL COME SHIO."

Mars' Coolidge war de finest, kindest gen'tleman in de souf. He had de softest heart fo' niggers an' would worrit mo' if we didn't git eberything we wanted than he would ober he own chil'en."

"When de wah come on Mars' Coolidge he raised a regiment at his own expense an' war de cunnel ob it. I nigger fo'git de maw'nin' ob he went off wid de sojers down to Pittsburg Landin' to fight de Yankees. He sent one ob de niggers fo' me. When I went to him he was a-standin' on de gallery below stairs all dressed up in gray uniform wid a heap o' gold braid twisted on he arms, an' he said to me: "Tom, ob all de niggers on dis plantation I hab de mos' conference in yo'." I'm goin' to leab my family under yo' car."

"Mars', I said, de wet comin' into my eyes, 'I rudder hab a Yankee bayonet poked in bef my eyes dan be on-riechuous to de trust."

"Dat war in de spring ob de nex' yen' arter de beginnin' ob de wah. One maw'nin' some men comin' up de Tennessee riber said dat a terrible fight was a-goin' on at Pittsburg Landin'. Dat place war fa' away, but mist'ess an' de chill'n turned white at hearin' 'bout it. But dere was trouble nearer home dat we don't know nothin' 'bout."

"'Bout dis time a nigger named Mose Phillips, owned by Maja' Sam Phillips, ob de Columbia pike, died an' lef' he wife a widder woman. Dat man had got de gal I wanted. All de niggers wanted her. If dere is black angels dat gal was one o' 'em. Soon's I hearn Sam war dead I reckoned all dem niggers wha' wanted he wife and he puttin' in applications wid her mas' to marry her an' I wanted her 'fo' I'd befo' he fo'gin' 'bout, but 's' chunk in my own application. But de Phillips plantation was 'bout thirteen miles away—I mought a' knowed dat number ud bring bad luck—an' I had to go dere fo' to put in de application."

"What I gwine do? I didn't lak to leab mist'ess and de chill'n wid de Yankees fightin' down at de Landin', an' I knowed if I didn't I'd lose de widder. But I argyd it war mighty far down to wha' de fightin' war goin' on an' no sojers ud likely come up to de plantation. De debil tempted me, an' I mounted old Bill—de hoss I allus rode—to go ober to de Phillips plantation."

"Old Bill had de heaves an' was spavined, an' he had to go mighty slow. I rode under de stars twill I sor a light wha' de sun comes up, an' all of a sudden I hearn somethin' dat sounded lak thunder away off. I listened, an' I hearn anudder souff' lak de fus, den anudder an' anudder."

"It's cur'us how de debil makes us believe what habn't so. De sun war gwine to rise clear, an' dey wa'n't no sign o' storm, but if I gwine go on an' git de widder I got to b'lieve it war storm. Ef it war guns, dey war Yankee guns, an' I got to go back to look out fo' mist'ess an' de chill'n on de plantation. I tink nobody hab said nothin' 'bout Yankee sojers bein' souf of Nashville, so dat can't be Yankee guns. Dat make it sartin dat it's thunder. 'Git up, Bill, I says; 'I'm goin' on!'"

"'Fust ob I had bad luck gittin' dar when de funeral war goin' on. I knowed I musn't wait, but I sor Ben, de nigger wha' had de secon' chanct befo' de widder married Mose, crowdin' in to git de fust chanct now, an' dat made me hot to git ahead ob him. He sor me an' come up to me, an' he says, says he, 'Tom, yo' want de widder?' 'Yes, I says, says I, 'I does.' 'Got Mars' Phillips' p'mission?' 'No, I says, 'I habn't.' 'I hab,' he says."

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"Yo' mought try,' says I. 'Yo' know I wanted yo' befo' yo' married Mose.'"

"Reckon yo' did.'"

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"I got up mighty quick an' says goodby an' was goin' out when de widder called me back an' says, says she: "If Ben goes to glory befo' me I'll tak' yo, Tom. Don't feel bad 'bout it. Yo' turn'll come sho'."

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"I membered Kunnel Coolidge standin' in dat same place on de gallery an' sayin' to me, 'Tom, I'm gwine to leab my family under yo' car.' I jst dropped my head down, an' I habn't ris' it up since."

"Dem sojers come from anudder kentry wha' dey been used to Kerry off all de valuables dey kin git dere hands on, an' dey jst cleaned out de town an' all de plantations round it. Eberything Mars' Coolidge lef' in my car' war taken, 'cladin' de planny. Ef I hadn't been runnin' arter a 'owan dat war busy buryin' her fus' husband' an' had membered wha' Kunnel Coolidge said to me an' what I said to Kunnel Coolidge I'd been thar to hide all de valuables. I had a place all fixed fo' dat away up in de trunk o' one o' de trees wha' dere war a rotten hole. I war goin' to put 'em in a box I'd made fo' 'em a pupose, an' I had a ladder ready fo' to git up to de hole, dat war kivered all over wid branches. But goin' arter dat widder dat I didn't git nohow key' me from doin' all dis, an' I habn't nember fo'give' myself nohow."

"Tom finished his story, looking more distressed if possible than before. I gave him something to help him to feel better and asked: "Are you still hoping for third place with the widow?"

"Reckon not," he replied. "Ef I marry dat 'oman I hab my sin always befo' me."

On leaving Tom I told him he had better get married and have a family of his own. It might ease the burden he bore. He needn't wait for the woman who had slipped twice through his fingers. There were plenty of good women left."

But Tom said he had never loved but one woman, and he believed he would always have ill luck in proposing to her."

I left Tom as melancholy as when I first saw him. But a couple of years later I returned and found him a trifle more cheerful. The second husband of his love had died, and Tom was No. 3. I asked him if he had hurried away to put in his claim on hearing that she was in the market again."

"No, sah," he replied very soberly. "There war lots o' time. She'd had de smallpox."

Westminster Abbey.

The full legal title of Westminster Abbey is "the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster." Very few people have heard the famous burial place so designated. A collegiate church, as distinguished from a parish church, is one that is administered by a "college" of priests instead of an individual rector or vicar.—Westminster Gazette.

Jack Scored.

"Well, Jack," said a laid to one of his tenants, "you are getting very bent. Why don't you stand up straight like a man, man?"

"Eh, mon," replied Jack, "ye see that field of corn o'er there? Weel, ye'll notice that the full heads hang down an' the empty eens stan' strach' up."—London Telegraph.

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Planning to Convert the World

They Laid a Plot For Assassination and Were Betrayed.

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TO convert the entire world—this, in a nutshell, is the aim of a new religious movement that is attracting worldwide attention. The inspiration and backbone of this colossal undertaking is the laymen's missionary movement, which numbers among its supporters and workers men high in the world of finance and various lines of successful business life. They come from every Protestant church in the land regardless of creed and expect to carry the gospel to every non-Christian in the world within the next thirty-five years. The figures furnished by the laymen's missionary movement give one some idea of the humane task it has set out to accomplish. The population of the entire world is 1,500,000,000. Of this number only one-third are Christians, and to fulfill the vow taken will require a great sum, the amount needed being estimated at \$55,000,000 annually, which means \$1,925,000,000 to complete the work.

"This will strike many as some wild scheme that will fall through almost before the work has begun," said J.

Campbell White, general secretary of the laymen's missionary movement, in speaking of their plans recently, "but we have every assurance that this great religious propaganda, the greatest the world has ever known, will go on successfully to the end. Back of it are wealthy and enthusiastic men from all the Protestant churches, who will devote much of their time and money to the work. The common notion has been that so vast an undertaking would require several generations, if not centuries. The other belief is that when Christ said 'Preach the gospel to every creature' he meant his people in every age to do it—in other words, that it is the clear duty of the present generation of Christians to carry or send the message of Christ to the entire non-Christian world of our generation."

The chairman of the executive committee of the laymen's missionary movement is Dr. Samuel B. Capen, a Boston merchant. He is a member of the Boston chamber of commerce and serves on its committee on metropolitan and municipal affairs. Dr. Capen has recently been relieved of some of his business responsibilities in order that he may have more time to devote to the movement.

The movement has already begun with a three days' convention in Chicago, called to discuss ways and means for carrying on the propaganda. The addresses were not confined to the laymen, but included among others Dr. Isaac Taylor Headland, head of the Methodist university in Peking; the Rev. C. P. Anderson, archbishop of the West Indies; Silas H. McBee, editor of the Churchman, and Ambassador Bryce. It was the first time in the history of the world that Protestant churches, representing every denomination, met on common ground—wage the greatest propaganda Christianity ever known.

Parts of Speech.

Teacher—Thomas, what are the parts of speech?

Tommy Tucker (after an exhaustive mental effort)—It's the way a man talks when he stutters.

The Better Scheme.

The man who knows just what he wants is bound to be successful."

"Not half so much as the man who knows how to get what he wants."—Cleveland Leader.

Base gains are the same as losses.—Hesiod.

Exercise is the chief source of improvement in all our faculties.—Blair.

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He (impudently)—But you say yourself that your father is anxious to get you off his hands. She—Yes; that's why I don't think he'll listen to you.—Exchange.

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On the coast of the West Indian islands a curious kind of coral is found, called "millepoca." This has a most extraordinary property which makes the people who know it very shy of handling it. The moment you pick up a piece of electric thrill runs through you and an agonizing pain shoots through your jaws. You feel as if every tooth and every nerve and muscle connected with them was burning. The acute pain lasts generally for about half an hour and slowly passes off, but the effects do not disappear entirely for hours. The reason why I don't think he'll listen to you—

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THE FIVE CONSPIRATORS.

They Laid a Plot For Assassination and Were Betrayed.

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Prince Trebutsof, minister of the interior to the czar of Russia, sat in the office examining police reports. "This," he said to himself, "notes a conspiracy that gives no particulars. This charges one supposed to be deputed to the government with being implicated in a plot to assassinate the emperor on his coming trip to meet the kaiser of Germany."

At this moment an attendant entered and announced that a young man wished to speak with his highness on a matter of great importance to him. "Are you sure she has no weapon concealed under her clothes?" asked the minister.

"We can search her."

"Do so. Then if you are satisfied admit her."

Presently a girl of twenty, with the light hair and blue eyes of the north, entered. She was trembling.

"What do you wish?" asked the prince.

"To warn your highness of a conspiracy."

"What object have you in warning me? Do you act purely from loyalty?"

"No. I love one of the conspirators."

"What is the conspiracy?"

"A plot to assassinate you. There are five of them. They will station themselves at the bridge across the



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mistake made concerning him. The orders were to take the men separately into the prison yard, stand them up against a wall and proceed in accordance with the secret orders given the governor of the fortress.

At the same moment that the conspirators were arrested the police appeared at the home of Vera Scerevich, the girl who had given the information, and took her into custody. This was something on which she had not counted. She thought she had laid her plans so well that the minister would not dare to suffer harm to come either to her or to her lover. This move on his part filled her with alarm. Moreover, the police came upon her suddenly that she had no time to communicate a word to any one. She was taken to the same fortress as the conspirators.

In the morning, hearing a drumble under her window, she looked out between the bars and saw one of the men she had betrayed led across the prison yard. Several soldiers with muskets on their shoulders accompanied him. He was white as a sheet. Indeed, it was evident that he was going to his execution. The party disappeared behind a wing of the prison. Vera listened and presently heard a volley. Then she knew it was all over with the condemned man. She shuddered. For the first time the fearful selfishness of her treacherous act came to her in its full force.

Another drumble recalled her to the window. She would not have gone, but she wished to see if her lover would pass. No; it was another of the conspirators whom she had handed over to his death. He, too, was followed by a firing party. He, too, was dead. Like his predecessor, he was soon lost to view behind the prison wall. There was a horrible interval—a volley.

In like manner Vera saw four of the conspirators marched by her prison window. They disappeared—the interval of suspense, the volley. Every time one of the condemned men passed she vowed that she would not go to the window to see the next man marched to the death. But every time she was impelled to go lest the man should be her lover. By the time the fourth man had passed she had been thrown into a mental condition bordering on insanity. Surely she was being punished for her infamous act. She had lost all expectation that the minister would keep faith with her as to sparing Krikoff. When for the fifth time the drum sounded she saw her lover marched past her window. He looked up, and she saw an expression of loathing on his face at recognizing her. By the movement of his lips she knew that he cursed her. She gave a wild shriek. She knew that he had been told what she had done.

She heard the volley. Hardly had the echoes of the shots died away when again came the tap of the drum. She started. She had counted those who had passed, and there were five—all those concerned in the conspiracy, all the names she had given. For whose execution could this drum tap be the signal?

Suddenly the door of the room in which she was confined was thrown open, and there stood an officer of the prison.

"Come!"

Terror stricken, she arose and staggered out with him. He led her down a staircase and out into the prison yard. There stood a firing party. Supported, for she was unable to walk alone, she was marched around the wing behind which the others had disappeared. On reaching a certain spot she was placed with her back to the wall; her eyes were bandaged; she heard the words "Aim! Fire!" There was a volley. Consciousness left her, and she fell forward on her face.

Then she knew that she was not dead, for she felt herself shaken over paving stones. She was in a carriage. Gradually her full consciousness came back to her. She felt for a wound, but found none. She had not been executed after all.

The carriage stopped before the house to which she had gone the morning before to inform the minister of the conspiracy. A man got down from the box and, opening the door, commanded her to alight. She did so and tottered to the door, which stood open. An attendant conducted her to the office of the minister. He sat at his desk writing. Standing in a row near him were the five conspirators whom she had seen going to execution, every man alive. One of them was her lover. He did not look at her. The men stood rigid; the minister went on writing. The waiting for what should next come seemed as much of a suspense to Vera as the intervals between the disappearance of each one of these men and the sound of the volley that was supposed to have ended his existence.

Finally the prince ceased writing, looked up and said to her:

"You see that I have more than kept faith with you."

There was no reply.

"I have not only spared your lover, I have spared his associates."

Still there was no reply, merely a vacant stare.

The minister turned to the conspirators.

"I am considered by you to be one whom it is your duty to put out of the way, but you must admit that I am not devoid of justice. I could not bring myself to spare one of you equally guilty with the rest and execute the other four. You will be conducted to the frontier under guard. If any one of you ever returns to Russian soil he will stand again before a firing party, but not armed with blank cartridges."

As the men filed out Krikoff turned his back to Vera. She fell in a heap on the floor.

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HIS SUBSTITUTE.

A Long Absence That Nearly Lost a Loved One.

By LOUISE WINTER.
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"And there's this to be said in favor of marrying into the navy—you never lack for an escort. If your husband is away on sea duty there's always some classmate of his to tote you around and play substitute." Margery had listened at the time to this defense of the service, but as it was her cousin, not herself, who was marrying into the navy she did not pay much attention to the argument.

A year later, however, when she became engaged to Lieutenant Jim Allen she recalled it thoughtfully.

For Margery was a southerner. Her appearance proclaimed that fact even before her delightful accent established it beyond question. She met Jim while she was visiting her cousin at a northern navy yard and became engaged to him after three weeks of ardent wooing, and then she went home to Altamaha with his ring on her finger and his image firmly engraved on her heart. Jim went to sea. It was easy enough to be loyal while she stayed quietly in Altamaha, for she knew every man in the town and had been engaged to half the boys in her set, but being engaged really was different.

A cousin of her father's who lived in New York wrote and asked the girl to visit her for the winter. Her parents insisted upon her accepting the invitation. The day she arrived in New York she slipped Jim's ring from her finger and put it on the chain she wore about her neck. It would save her a lot of troublesome explanations.