

In the Next Century.

A STORY TURNED IN BY THE POLICE COURT REPORTER, A. D. 1906.

"Prisoner," said the judge, "would you like to address the jury before it retires to consider your case?"

The prisoner was a young man. It was his first offence, and the evidence had shown that he was guilty of embezzling a vast amount from his employer. The faces of the jurywomen were stern and relentless. It was evident that the verdict would be "Guilty."

"Thank you, judge," said the prisoner, rising; "there are a few words I would like to address to the jury."

Then turning to the jury, he bowed. "Ladies of the jury," he said, "it is with pain that I find myself here to-day in this disgraceful position."

"A year ago I was not as I am now. My head was then free from the charges that are now heaped upon it, and my hands unstained by crime. Some of you knew me in those halcyon days. It was then that I first met your worthy forewoman, Mrs. Odigo-Jones. We were introduced by Mr. Odigo-Jones I had asked for the introduction. I had said, 'Jones, old man, give me a knock-down to that stunning young lady you so often walk with.' And he said, 'that's my wife.' 'Your wife?' I cried, 'No! your daughter!' My mistake, ladies of the jury, was natural, for where is one more fair or younger than the beautiful accomplished Mrs. Odigo-Jones?"

The prisoner paused a moment, overcome by his emotion, and then proceeded.

"Then, too, it was that Mr. John Van-John took me home with him one day to dinner. Never shall I forget that delightful meal. Especially shall I remember little Willie Van-John, whose bright and witty sayings enlivened the table, and whose perfect manners made me wish that all mothers were Mrs. Van-Johns. But, alas! When I emerge from my prison little Willie will be a man, and I will no more see him in his childish merriment!"

Here the prisoner raised his shackled hands and wiped away a tear.

"Ladies of the jury, it humiliates me to be obliged to stand a wretched criminal before the eyes of that queen of charity and righteousness, Mrs. Cornelia Hobbs. Many a time have I kept my eyes upon her as I sat in St. Simon's church, forgetful of preacher and sermon, and finding a better sermon in that graciously benevolent face, so full of the glory of the kingdom. It was that face that kept my hands from wickedness for years, and had she not journeyed to foreign climes and thus removed her helpful influence from me, I should not now be here."

Mrs. Hobbs was observed shedding tears, and the sobs of the prisoner were so powerful as to stop his utterance for many seconds. When he had regained his self-control, he continued:

"Ladies of the jury, in the box before me I see nine radiant, beautiful young women, any one of whom might claim for herself the wealth and titles of foreign lands. But with the nobleness of true born American citizens they scorn such paltry baubles, and, thrusting them aside, choose to retain for awhile the mantles of virginity."

Here the nine spinsters were observed to assume less severe countenances.

"But, ladies of the jury, although the weight of my coming punishment hangs heavily upon me, there is a still greater pain that wracks my whole being. Must I confess? Alas, yes! Why should I conceal at this time what I have so long hidden in my heart? Ladies, I have loved—loved deeply and passionately and beyond my station. For a year before my apprehension I had in silent faithfulness cherished in my heart the image of one of the young ladies of the jury, but I was poor. In my love and desperation I allowed myself to go astray. Thinking the sooner to be able to lay my life and love at her feet, I let my hands fall upon my employer's wealth, and for her sake I became a criminal. Ladies, I will not subject the object of my love to the infamy of being named in this place. It is enough that she sits in yonder box, a paragon of youth and beauty, the star of my life; she who has so long been the unconscious prize for which I labored. And now, alas! the prize is torn from my grasp, my poor heart is crushed, and my life becomes a dark, dismal dungeon! Oh, ladies! it is not for freedom I plead, it is for respite, that I may be bound by the chains of loving wedlock to the angel of my dreams."

The prisoner could no longer contain himself. He sank into his chair and buried his head in his arms, while his sob seemed to shake the room.

The jury filed slowly out of the court room.

In a minute they filed slowly back. The forewoman arose.

"Ladies of the jury," said the judge, "have you well considered your verdict?"

"We have," replied the forewoman,

firmly.

"Guilty or not guilty?"
"Not guilty!" cried the entire jury, in one voice.

And that evening the embezzler received twelve invitations to tea.—*Puck.*

Preferred the Ague.

THE MOUNTAINEER'S OBJECTION TO WORK WAS INERADICABLE.

On a log at the door of a dug-out sat a man with his back all humped up, his lips blue and his teeth chattering, and it was needless to ask if he had ague. His general appearance went to show that he had been "enjoying" chills and fever for many a long day.

"Got a family?" I asked, after passing the time of day.

"Yes, got a woman, but she's gone over to Johnson's," he answered.

"You haven't done much work on your claim, I see?"

"No, sir. Can't do no work with chills and fever hangin' about."

"How long have you been afflicted?"

"'Bout two years."

"But I should have thought you would have cured yourself before this."

"Stranger," he said, as he looked up at me in a doubting way, "do you carry a package of quinine about with you?"

"I do."

"And the stuff will break up these chills inside of a week?"

Perhaps not as soon as that, but inside of a fortnight, at least."

"No mistake about that?"

"None whatever."

"And you are goin' to leave me enough to make a well man of me?"

"Certainly. I shall be very glad to do so."

"Thankee, stranger, but I don't want it!" he said as he rose up and sat down again. "It's a big piece of luck that the old woman happened to go away an hour ago!"

"Don't you want to be made a well man?" I asked in astonishment.

"No, sir—not if the court knows herself, and you bet your life she do! If I'm cured of these chills I'll hev to work on this claim, and I'd rather hev seven chills a week than work one day! No quinine, stranger, and if you meet the old woman on the road and she says anything about me tell her it's a hard case and she needn't look fur me to git well under five y'ars!"

A Popular Misconception.

"There never was a bigger fool notion in the world," said young Fullback, pulling on his padded trousers, "than this idea that football is a dangerous game. These reports about boys getting hurt," he continued, adjusting his shinguards and fastening them on securely, "are half the time exaggerations and half the time they're made out of the whole cloth. A fellow simply can't get injured in a game," he proceeded, stuffing a quantity of wadding about his hip bones and around his shoulders and chest, "unless he just wants to injure himself and does it on purpose. Now, I've been in a dozen games this year"—here he strapped his earguards round his head—"and with the exception of a black eye now and then and one or two fingers dislocated, or something like that, I haven't had the slightest injury."

Here the young man put on his nose guard and mouth protector, and shortly afterwards went forth to engage in a harmless little game of football.—*Chicago Tribune.*

Henry Irving's New Horse.

A good joke is told on Henry Irving, who, being anxious to buy a new horse, attended an auction sale of blooded (?) beasts in London, where he purchased a fine-looking chestnut mare for \$40. Irving could not imagine how a good animal could be procured for so small an amount, so he bribed the groom and asked him how it was.

"The 'orse 'as two faults, sir," replied the man. "The first is, when e's hin the pasture hand you wants to catch 'im, yer can't do it, yer know, because 'e runs haway hall hover the bloomink field."

"Not a bad fault," remarked the great actor; shows he is spirited. What about the other failing, my man, eh?"

The groom scratched his head, and eventually replied: "Well, Mr. Irving, to tell you the honest truth, when you do catch the haimal it hain't worth a ——"—*Cincinnati Commercial.*

Justice—You are charged with trespassing on this gentleman's grounds and with shooting frogs in his private pond.

Prisoner—Your honor, I was not accountable for what I was doing. I had drunk several bottles of beer; in fact, your honor (jocularly) I was in the same condition as the frogs.

Justice—How so?

Prisoner—I was full of hops.

Justice—(sternly)—Thirty days in jail and \$100 fine, with costs of court.

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