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**An Old Family Builder.**

Major Dundas of Daddington, had an old servant, a "family piece," named William, familiarly addressed as "Wull."  
He was a characteristic specimen of the type which has become almost extinct, combining the most respectful and affectionate regard for the family, with a good deal of natural independence and frankness of expression. On one occasion the Major required to leave home early, and, for protection in travelling, meant to wear a heavy overcoat; but the coat was nowhere to be found. After searching for some time without success, the Major was becoming not a little irritated. His temper was not improved by seeing Wull walking up the avenue from the lodge where he lived, wearing the missing garment. On reaching the house, Wull was greeted with a violent explosion from his master, demanding what he meant by currying off his coat and keeping him searching for it everywhere. Wull stood it silently for a while, but at last gave vent to his sense of the Major's unreasonableness. "What's the sense o' a' this noise? Hoo could I ken that ye wantit, this coat? If ye had telt me, ye wantit it, I could as easily hae ta'en anither ane." It became necessary to add, a third story to the house, to meet the convenience of the family, but the additional stair was a grievance to Wull, who could not help showing it sometimes. Once, when Mrs. Dundas was seated in the drawing-room, the door was opened by Wull, who addressed her in a tone of severe dignity. "Gin ye hae any orders, mam, I'll tak' them noo, if ye please, fo' I'm gain' awa' up to the tap o' the house."

**The Old Songs.**

"Yes," she said, in answer to something he said, "the old songs are beautiful."  
"Beautiful!" he exclaimed enthusiastically; "beautiful hardly describes them. They are—they are—well, compared with them, the songs of to-day are trash, the veriest of trash." "I agree with you, yet the old songs sometimes contain sentiments that one cannot wholly approve." "I think you are mistaken." "I will give you an illustration. There is John Howard Payne's 'Home, Sweet Home,' for instance. You surely do not agree with all the sentiments it contains?" "Why not?" he asked warmly. "Why not?" "Because," she said, glancing at the clock, "because there is a line in that song which says 'There's no place like home.' Yet you do not believe that, do you?" Then he coughed a hollow cough and arose and went silently out into the night.

**George's Interruptions.**

"No, George," faltered the maiden, "I fear it cannot be. I admire you as a gentleman, I respect you as a friend, but—"  
"Laura!" he exclaimed, "before you pass sentence hear me out. A recent lucky stroke in business has enabled me to buy a beautiful home on Prairie Avenue, which shall be in your name. I will insure my life for \$25,000, and—"  
"George," calmly interrupted the lovely girl, "you interrupted me. I was about to say that the sentiments of respect and esteem I feel for you, though so strong, are feeble in comparison with the deep love which I have for you. I have long—don't, George, dear!" For George had interrupted her again.

**Bobby's Rejoinder.**

"A good story illustrating the rights of children to get in a question or two in reply to interrogatories by their elders was told by a prominent physician here to a lady patient a day or two ago.  
"Whose boy are you?" said the doctor to a bright-looking youngster who was playing in the patient's garden.  
"Mr. Jim—s. Whose be you?" was the unexpected rejoinder.

**Throwing Out Hints.**

Jane and Mr. Longwool were in the parlor, when Tommy burst into the room and began to cry out: "Top, mop, top, stop."  
"Why, what's the matter, Tommy?" interrupted Mr. Longwool. "I'm only doing what Sue told me to," cried Tommy. "She told me to come in here and call out a lot of words that rhyme with 'pop' to see if it would not bring you to your senses."

**The Beatitudes.**

Our bright little Nelly overheard some one speaking of the beatitudes, and on going to bed she said: "I know, mamma, what the beatitudes mean." Her mother asked her what, and counting off her rosy, dimpled toes, she replied:  
Any merry mony mi,  
Kis a boy and make him ki.

**Wanted two Bits.**

"Will you have a piece of this nice mince pie, Tommy?" said Tommy's aunt, with whom he was taking his dinner.  
"Please, ma'am," replied the little fellow, holding his plate, "but you might put two pieces on now; mamma has taught me never to pass my plate back for the second piece."

**How She Fell.**

A hoary-headed old gentleman, the father of a grown-up family, was very fond of carrying young girls. On one occasion he put his arm around an unusually bright and attractive one and remarked: "How do you feel to-day, my dear?" She replied: "I feel old age creeping over me."

**IN A WOMAN'S PRISON.**

Strange Experiences Related by the Warden.

I was for several years assistant warden in a state prison, where only male convicts were confined, and I left that to become warden of a prison where over 300 females were under lock and key, the year round. If forced to choose I would prefer to have charge of 500 males rather than 100 females. Most men enter prison feeling that they have deserved their punishment and anxious to make all the good time possible. No woman admits her guilt, and by the time she reaches prison she has convinced herself that she is a martyr. One not familiar with the workings of a female prison can have no idea of the trouble and annoyance an obstinate inmate can cause. A male convict who is obstinate, malicious, and bent on causing trouble can be punished and forced to give in, but you can only go so far in inflicting punishment on a woman, and the limit scarcely compels obedience to routine orders.

One of my first patients was a woman named Mary Noonan. She was on a life sentence for the murder of her husband, and had been in the prison five years. A change of wardens always renews the hopes of those looking for a pardon, and it always causes a change in the conduct of certain prisoners. I had not been in the new place a fortnight when I discovered that all the convicts except one were perfectly innocent of crime and had been sent up through mistake or malice. The exception was a youngish woman named Haskins, who had poisoned the man who betrayed her and was making ready to desert her. She not only acknowledged the crime, but felt that she had only done her duty in revenge for herself. The innocents were all agog for some change to benefit them, while at least a hundred expected me to recommend them for pardon. Mrs. Noonan sought an interview with me for the purpose of stating that she had discovered new evidence bearing on her case; evidence which would conclusively prove her own innocence. She had, in a fit of anger, as the records of the case showed, stabbed her husband with a butcher knife at nighttime and before her four children. It was the clearest case in the world, but she contended that a great wrong had been done her, and that the real murderer had escaped.

The new evidence had come to her in a dream. She had dreamed that a clerk in a certain grocery near her home had stabbed Noonan before he entered the house, and that the guilty man was now anxious to confess the fact and obtain her release. The idea was so absurd and silly that I could not promise her anything, and from that hour she determined to make me all the trouble possible. She first refused to work. I gave her a gay in which to think it over, and as she remained obstinate she was locked up in a dark cell with only bread and water. On the fourth day word was brought me that Mrs. Noonan was dead. I went with the prison doctor to the cell, and we found the body growing rigid and cold. Both of us had seen many cases of shamming, and while convinced that this was another, the counterfeit was startling. The jaw dropped, the half-shut eyes had the gleaze of death, and the flesh assumed that pallor which only death can bring. And yet we both felt that the woman was alive. Indeed, there was a flutter of the pulse and the heart to prove it. It was a case of animation suspended by will power. Perhaps not more than one person in ten thousand is able to control mind and muscle in this manner. It is, for a time, next door to actual death. It does not require nerve, as I understand it, but simply the power to collapse, as it were. Prisoners who have thus shammed on me, have explained afterward that they heard every word spoken around them, though no voice sounded natural. They did not realize any feeling except that of extreme lightness, as if all solidity had gone out of the body. It required no particular effort to hold the breath or keep the limbs rigid.

I ordered the body to be prepared and placed in a coffin and the coffin placed in a shed next to the laundry. I supposed this was what Mary wanted and had planned for. All the other prisoners believed her dead, and she had two or three particular friends who wept over her loss. The coffin was placed in the shed about sundown, and two men set to watch it. At midnight Mary rose up, climbed out, and was working to loosen a board when accosted by the watchers. She returned to her work next morning as usual, and refused to answer any questions or make any explanations. About once a week for the next five years she had some new scheme to annoy me, and I was ever wondering what she would do next. It is seldom that one hears of a woman escaping from a prison. This is not for the reason that they do not long for liberty, nor that some of them are not desperate enough at times to take any risk. One of the most deceptive of the inmates of the prison was a little woman of 30, all smiles and sunshine, who had been sent up for a number of years for committing a robbery. She was good-looking, well educated, and evidently of good birth. Every word and movement was ladylike, and during the six months she had served before I took charge she had quite won the matron's heart. She was placed in charge of twelve sewing women in a room on the second floor, fronting a side street. These women made the clothing of the inmates. This sewing room was lighted by two windows, defended by bars, of course. Off this room was a stock or store room, and Mrs. Newman, as the little woman was called, had the key to this and was in charge. There was but one window in this room. Mrs. Newman was the last person I should have picked out as a plotter. Indeed, I should not have expected her to go out had the doors been left open.

One mid-afternoon it was reported that the little lady was missing, and fifteen minutes later I had discovered that she had gone by the window. Where she got a file I never could learn, but she procured one somehow and filed off three bars. She was engaged at this work for three months. When she got ready to go she made a stout rope of cloth, fastened one end to a remaining bar, and then slid down to the earth in safety. She had secretly made herself a cap and a cloak, and she walked off two blocks, boarded a street car, and was soon out of the neighborhood. A trifling circumstance led to her capture that same night. If she had planned to meet friends, they had not come on. She had no money, and though the conductor did not put her off on this account, she was flurried by the situation. She got off at a street running out into the country, and walked briskly away. I happened to

take this same car two hours later, and overheard the conductor relating the circumstance. I caught at the idea that it was Mrs. Newman, and at 10 o'clock that night I found her in a farm house ten miles away. She laughed merrily, and hoped I would bear her no ill will.

The assistant forewoman in the laundry was a Mrs. Williams, who had been sentenced to seven years imprisonment for maiming a child she had adopted. She had been in three years when I took charge. She claimed to be the victim of a conspiracy, but seemed content to bide her time. Off the laundry was a large, badly-lighted room which had been intended for refractory cells, but which had never been finished up. The room was now used as a catch-all for the laundry. There were eleven women in the laundry, and in doing what she did Mrs. Williams had to blind them all. One end of this room was toward the side street, and the wall was three feet deep, and sunk six or seven feet into the ground. The floor was of concrete. A month before I came the forewoman was taken sick and Mrs. Williams was promoted to her place. She could now pass anywhere about the laundry unquestioned, and she at once began working on a plan to escape. Her tools were an old hatchet and a small fire shovel, and she began digging from the room described to undermine the wall. She was never absent from the laundry over a quarter of an hour at a time, and could not work at her digging over two hours per day. The other women saw her go and come, but it was not their business to inquire into her movements.

In about seventy days Mrs. Williams had gone down under the wall and was ready to break the surface of the ground on the other side. She would not risk daylight, as the other had done, but waited nearly a week until some extra wash gave her an excuse to remain in the laundry an hour later than usual. She had been gone half an hour before she was missed, and it was a full hour before the means of exit was discovered. The dirt had been carried to the rear end of the room and flung behind some old tubs and mangles, and she had done her work as well as the craftiest man. She had likewise got hold of bread and meat, and when she got into the street she only went two squares before hiding herself in a horse barn. The owner had no horse, and as it was summer time the woman could not suffer lying on the hay up stairs. There was water below, and she economized her food to make it last as long as possible. Immediately that her escape was discovered, I used every exertion to secure her recapture, having depots watched and the country scoured in every direction. A week past and I could not obtain the slightest clue. Then one night a barn on the opposite side the one she was hidden in was set on fire, and before the engines got to work the roof of the other was ablaze. I happened to be early on the spot, and what was my astonishment when Mrs. Williams quietly opened the door and walked plump into my arms. She shed tears of vexation when returned to her old quarters, having made up her mind that her escape was assured.

Another of the inmates who pulled the wool over my eyes for the moment was a Miss Hutchins who was serving a sentence for pocket picking. I give you her prison name but it was said that she was the wife of a notorious thief and bank sneak. He had exhausted the law in his endeavors to get her clear, and had made his boasts that she should not serve her time out. When I took charge I was warned to be on the alert, and I kept my eyes open as far as possible. Miss Hutchins and two others were employed in making fancy baskets, which were sold to procure books and papers for the prisoners. They had a small room off the hall leading from the corridor to the laundry, and were constantly under some one's eyes. I had been in in the place about three months when two young women called as visitors. It so happened that the matron was busy, and I volunteered to escort them about until she should be at leisure. We went to the bakery, kitchen, laundry, and other places, and would have passed by the basket room had they not particularly requested to enter it. Not a sign of recognition passed between the visitor and any of the three workers. A few questions were asked, some of the finished work admired, and we passed out. As the door closed behind us one of the visitors exclaimed: "Dear me, but I have lost my gloves. I must have left them on the table in the laundry."

I, of course, volunteered to go after them, and I found them on the table. I did not stop to speak with any one, and was not absent over seventy or eighty seconds. The owner of the gloves thanked me, complained of a sudden headache, and remarked that they would trouble me no further. I passed them through two wickets and the main hall and out of the front door, and had just got seated in the office to write a letter when a messenger from the matron said I was wanted at once. When I reached her she stood beside a sharp, good-looking young woman, who was in *diabaille*, and a stranger. She had been discovered in one of the cells almost by accident.

"What does this mean?" I asked, failing to connect her presence with an absence.  
"I do not know!" she replied, wringing her hands and looking in a helpless way.  
"Oh, sir, where am I, and won't you take me home?"  
I own up that she befuddled me neatly, and delayed me a quarter of an hour. It was a put-up job. The two girls had come in to do just what they did do. When I started for the gloves Miss Hutchins came into the hall. In the minute and a half she was clothed at the expense of one of the visitors, and the latter found refuge in an open cell. A carriage stood in front of the prison to carry them away, and they had a long start. There were two crooks in the job, and the party felt so elated over bamboozling me that they got drunk as they pushed along the highway for a town twenty miles off. Fifteen miles away the carriage was upset and broken, Miss Hutchins injured, and the other three arrested for brawling. Suspicion was aroused, and I was telegraphed to, and inside of twenty-four hours I had my prisoner back. Later on those who had helped her escape had to serve out sentences for six months, and the crooks were wanted for a job which gave them five years apiece.

The length of the Mississippi River has always been placed at 4,100 miles, but civil engineers familiar with the stream say that it has shortened itself over 400 miles in twenty years, and will do so well in the twenty to come.

**Five Weeks Beneath an Avalanche.**

A remarkable instance of three persons surviving an imprisonment of five weeks under an avalanche is recorded in "Narratives of Peril and Suffering." In the valley of the Upper Stura at the foot of the Alps, in the little hamlet of Bergoletto. In the winter of 1755 the falls of snow were uncommonly heavy. On the Nineteenth of March the parish priest, who was on his way to the church, heard a noise from the mountains, and, casting up his eyes, he saw two avalanches descending towards the village. He gave the alarm to some villagers, and then retreated into his own house.

The avalanches came and buried over thirty houses, and twenty-two persons were found to be missing,—among them the parish priest who had given the alarm. The amount of snow which lay over the ruined dwellings was about forty-two feet deep, two hundred and seventy feet long, and sixty feet wide.

When the surviving peasants had shaken off the terror and depression which such an event must necessarily cause, they set about trying to save any life or property possible. More than three hundred peasants from neighboring villages came to their assistance. But they could do little; the thickness of the snow mass was so great, and the snow continued to fall from the clouds in such amount that they were obliged to discontinue their fruitless exertions, and wait till the setting in of the warm April winds which would partly melt the gigantic piles.

On the Eighteenth of April the villagers returned to their melancholy task. It was with no hope of finding any human being alive. One of them named Roccio, whose whole family was beneath the avalanche, was most active in the search. By the Twenty-fourth of April he had advanced so far, that, after breaking through six feet of ice he could touch the ground with his long pole. Three friends worked with him.

The four worked vigorously, and made their way, at length, into Roccio's house, but no one, dead or living, was there. As it was probable that, at the fatal moment, the victims had sought shelter in the stable which was about a hundred feet from the house, Roccio and his companions directed their efforts in that quarter.

After they had burrowed for some time, one of them thrust a pole through an aperture, and, on withdrawing it, heard a hoarse, faint voice say:  
"Help, oh dear husband! Help, dear brother! We are alive."  
They now worked with redoubled activity, and soon made a considerable opening. And there, under the snow, Roccio, by his joy found his wife, daughter, and a sister-in-law.

The three sufferers were incapable of moving, and were shrunken almost to skeletons. They were carefully removed from their place of imprisonment and conveyed to the house of a friend, and proper measures adopted for their restoration. In a few days they were fairly recovered.

Their lives were preserved during these long five weeks, in the following manner: They had taken refuge in the rack and manger, which being strong, had withstood the strain, though the roof fell. Fortunately two goats were near them, which supplied them with goat's milk in quantity sufficient to sustain life.

To feed the goats was of prime importance. Immediately over the manger was a hole into the hay-loft, through this hole one of the women was able to pull down fodder into the rack, and when she could no longer reach it, the sagacious animals climbed upon her shoulders, and helped themselves.

Through the whole of their imprisonment they were in total darkness. After the first five or six days they suffered little from hunger, though a quart of goat's milk had to suffice for the three. They suffered far more from the excessive coldness of the melted snow water that trickled over them.

**A MARINE RAILWAY.**

One of Canada's Public Works Which May Greatly Develop Trade.

Among the Dominion's public works the Chignecto Marine Railway will not be the least important or the least interesting. By means of this road ships of all sizes and sorts, fully laden, will be conveyed across the neck of land that separates the Gulf of St. Lawrence from the Bay of Fundy. The distance is seventeen and a half miles. The vessel to be drawn from one body of water to the other is floated into a receiving dock at one end of the road. The dimensions of this dock are 500 feet long and 300 feet wide. Adjoining this is the lifting dock, which is 250 feet long and 60 wide. From the receiving basin the vessel is floated into the lifting dock. There she is placed on a "cradle" to which she is securely fastened. Two hydraulic lifts then raise the ship, cradle and all, a height of forty feet on to the rails. This cradle is really the car, on which the ship is conveyed across the isthmus. The railway will be a double track of steel rails. The rails are, of course, very heavy, weighing 110 pounds to the yard. So the cradle will run on four lines of rails instead of two, as an ordinary car does. It is expected that it will take two hours and a half to convey the ship from water to water. This includes the hoisting and lowering at each terminus. To vessels bound for the United States or anywhere south of the Gulf, this railway will save a long and, at some seasons of the year, a rather dangerous sail. The contractors are at work, and when the spring comes their force of men will be greatly increased. The marine railway when finished will, it is estimated, cost five and a half millions of dollars.

**Macaulay on British Politics.**

Macaulay had not an exalted idea of British politics. In a newly-published letter which he wrote to the late Duncan McLaren about the alienation of the Scottish Dissenters from the Whig Government, he said: "I am familiar, I am sorry to say, and so are all men in office, with the low selfishness of mankind. One man gives you to understand that unless his earldom is turned into a marquissate he cannot continue to support the Government." Another stays away from the House of Commons on an important division because his father is not made Lord-Lieutenant. Your precious townsman (but this is between ourselves)—tells me that he shall withdraw his support from me because I have positively refused to ask Lord Melbourne to make him a Grand Cross of the Bath. These things are pitiable, but I am used to them. I do hope, however, that the whole dissenting body of Scotland is not about to lower itself to the level of such people as I have mentioned."