

## FRANKISON'S PLOT.

A few days ago my friend Robson, late superintendent of the detective department of a large city in the North, was entertaining me with a few reminiscences of his past career.

You ask me, he replied, to a question I had put to him, if it is not the case that some person having a knowledge of an unpunished crime often uses the power his knowledge gives him to compel the offender to execute deeds he previously would not have dreamed of. Such may be the case in a good many instances, though the average criminal has natural propensities which generally enable him to circumvent the intimidator and relieve himself of the threatened danger without incurring further risks. Such a propensity is, I think, in the possession of every man, and unless the will-power has been utterly wrecked by dissipation, it is impossible for anyone to be forced against his will into committing an offence against the laws. I recollect a case bearing on the subject, which I will give you. As it was purely a family affair, and the persons interested were unwilling to create a scandal, the facts never became public property.

About ten years ago a man named Grimes returned to M—, after serving a term for some offence, the nature of which I have forgotten. He was, without exception, the most daring, cunning, and resourceful scoundrel that ever breathed. Originally an actor, he was a past-master in the art of disguises; in fact, the time of his downfall dated from the day on which he impersonated the manager of the company he was travelling with, and absconded the treasury. Somehow, other people's clothes seemed to have a fascination for him, which naturally created a large amount of ill-feeling on the part of the true owner, and a lot of work for us.

Soon after his arrival he received a letter from a gentleman giving the name of Frankison, making an appointment for the following night, and having nothing better to do he called upon him.

For a time Frankison confined his conversation to commonplace matters, as though afraid of introducing the subject for which the interview had been arranged. Seeing this, Grimes, who had on several occasions previously been engaged on shady jobs by gentlemen equal in position to the one who stood before him, proceeded to enumerate some of the most daring cases he had been employed upon, and successfully carried through—when the necessary reward was forthcoming. This had the desired effect.

"I noticed your case in the papers," commenced Frankison, "and intended when you came out of your temporary confinement to offer you a position in which you could not only be a swell, but probably settle down in life and become a useful member of the community."

Grimes thanked him, but added that if it was intended to try and reform him: it was a hopeless task. He loved the profession too much to settle down into the dull, monotonous round of a respectable existence.

"But this case," returned Frankison, "offers excitement sufficient for the most daring." Grimes nodded his satisfaction.

"How would you like to get married?" continued Frankison. "Say, to a lovely girl with an income of about two thousand a year?"

"I'd like that immensely," said Grimes, with a grin. "But unfortunately I have already got two wives living, and it's as much as I can possibly do to keep out of their way."

"But this one," replied Frankison, "will only be two pleased to make you a handsome allowance to leave her."

"Then what on earth does she want to marry me for?" questioned Grimes.

Frankison smiled at his astonishment, and handed him a photo of an exceedingly pretty girl. Grimes held it at arm's length for a few moments, without speaking.

"It's no use," he said, with a sigh; "a young lady so good-looking as she is will have no difficulty in obtaining lovers enough, without having to descend to take on a well-goal-bird. Out with it; I suppose you have some job or other on hand."

Frankison sat down and swallowed a stiff glass of whisky, then, after a momentary hesitation, commenced to unfold his scheme.

"The young lady whose photo I have just shown you is my cousin. From a child she has been of a delicate nature, and is even now recovering but slowly from the effects of a dangerous illness. This illness, I may tell you, was the cause of her wedding being postponed. Now that she is convalescent, however, her lover insists upon the marriage taking place at once, in order that he may take her abroad to try and regain her health. This wedding must not take place."

"Why?"

"Because," he continued, drawing his chair closer and lowering his voice, "because, in the event of her dying before marriage, her property, in accordance with her father's will, reverts to me. If she marries, she is perfectly at liberty to dispose of it as she thinks fit."

"And, naturally, you intend to get the

money," returned Grimes. "But how? I'll tell you candidly I'm no good at murders."

"Well, I want you," continued Frankison, "to put this fellow Thompson out of the way the night before the ceremony. You will then take his place at the church next morning, disguising yourself, in the manner you understand so well, to pass for him, and get married to the young lady. Immediately after the affair is over you will make some excuse for retiring a few moments and clear off. Your absence will probably have the effect I require without resorting to further measures, but to make assurance doubly certain you will take care to acquaint her, by letter, with the exact state of affairs, laying particular stress on the fact that you have more than a passing acquaintance with the inside of a prison. The latter portion of your letter will make you particularly objectionable in her eyes, and will doubtless make her agree to your terms for silence. The false position she will be placed in and the scandal likely to accrue from the publication of the true facts of the case will, to her mind, assume such fearful proportions that they will, I am certain, preclude the possibility of any action being taken to declare the marriage null, or of prosecuting you. Nevertheless, her grief and mortification will be none the less poignant, and eventually prey upon her mind to such an extent, even if she survives the shock of your disclosures, that I shall soon be the richer by about two thousand a year. For your part in the matter, I propose to pay you the sum of five hundred pounds."

Grimes held out his hand dramatically. "Shake," he said. "If I admire anything, it is a man good at his business. I've seen a good many villains, but, man, you could give them all points. 'Nevertheless,' he continued, adopting a familiar tone, now that Frankison had divulged his secret, "this is a matter that requires thoroughly reviewing, old chap. You want me to engage myself in the most cold-blooded scheme ever concocted, take all risks, do away with a fellow (who, for anything I know, will probably cause a lot of trouble), get married—the attendant risks of which are, under the best of circumstances, worth more than the amount you so generously offer—morally, if not legally, murder a girl, and leave the country—it can't be done—for five hundred pounds."

Frankison eyed him savagely, and paced the room in thought. He resented the familiarity in the man's voice. "Six hundred," he exclaimed, at last. Grimes shook his head negatively.

Frankison sat down white with anger. "Suppose I tell you a little story," he commenced; and without waiting for an answer proceeded. "A few years ago a young swell entered one of the principal banks in London and cashed a cheque for a fairly large amount. This was, of course, discovered to be forgery. A few months afterwards he attempted the same trick, but with disastrous results. He was immediately recognised, although to a certain extent disguised, and detained. He accomplished his escape, however, by killing his captor. No doubt you know the man." He ceased, and smiled grimly at the confusion plainly showing itself on Grimes's features.

"I do not think you have been charged with that matter yet," he continued. "Shall we say six hundred; it is a good price to pay for what cannot be called other than a little deception."

Grimes swore horribly. The story cast a reflection on his professional capabilities that affected his mind more than the danger he was menaced with. Before leaving the house, however, he had been forced into giving a reluctant consent, and received final instructions. The course of action was left entirely to him, so long as he kept to the main details of the plot.

His first procedure was to obtain an introduction to the same club that Thompson frequented, and once there his insinuating, pleasing exterior soon won him an acquaintance with the person he desired. This soon ripened into a friendship so close that an observer would have been under the impression they had known each other for years.

After a fortnight's time Grimes conceived the idea of testing his power to carry through the scheme successfully, and with this object in view called upon Frankison in disguise. The deception was complete. He was received and entertained for over an hour without his disguise being penetrated, and whatever doubts Frankison had of the ultimate success of his plot they were dispelled when Grimes revealed himself.

On several occasions afterwards he called to us to report, as requested—sometimes disguised and at others not. So exceedingly clever was the man, and so well had he studied the character of the man he intended to personate, that these visits completely mystified his employer, who, in order to disarm suspicion, outwardly evinced the warmest friendship for the man he intended to so cruelly wrong, and was, there, always at a loss to know whether he was receiving the real Thompson or Grimes in disguise.

At length the night prior to the marriage arrived. Frankison nervously paced his rooms, waiting impatiently for an indication of the successful issue of the first part. As the time passed slowly on the suspense became terrible. The fearful consequences of failure and exposure took possession of his brain until at last he could bear it no longer, and, seizing his hat, he rushed into the street. He had not gone many yards before his arm was grasped by a man coming from the opposite direction. It was Grimes.

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"I had for a long time been thinking of trying the Tasteless Samaria Prescription treatment on my husband for his drinking habits, but I was afraid he would discover that I was giving him medicine, and the thought unnerved me. I hesitated for nearly a week, but one day when he came home very much intoxicated and his week's salary nearly all spent, I threw off all fear and determined to make an effort to save our home from the ruin I saw coming, at all hazards. I sent for your Tasteless Samaria Prescription, and put it in his coffee as directed next morning and watched and prayed for the result. At noon I gave him more and also at supper. He never suspected a thing, and I then boldly kept right on giving it regularly, as I had discovered something that set every nerve in my body tingling with hope and happiness, and I could see a bright future spread out before me—a peaceful, happy home, a share in the good things of life, an attentive, loving husband, comforts and everything else dear to a woman's heart; for my husband had told me that whiskey was vile stuff and he was taking a dislike to it. It was only too true, for before I had given him the full course he had stopped drinking altogether, but I kept giving him the medicine till it was gone, and then sent for another lot, to have on hand if he should relapse, as he had done from promises before. He never has and I am writing you this letter to tell you how thankful I am. I honestly believe it will cure the worst cases."

## HER FATHER WAS A DRUNKARD

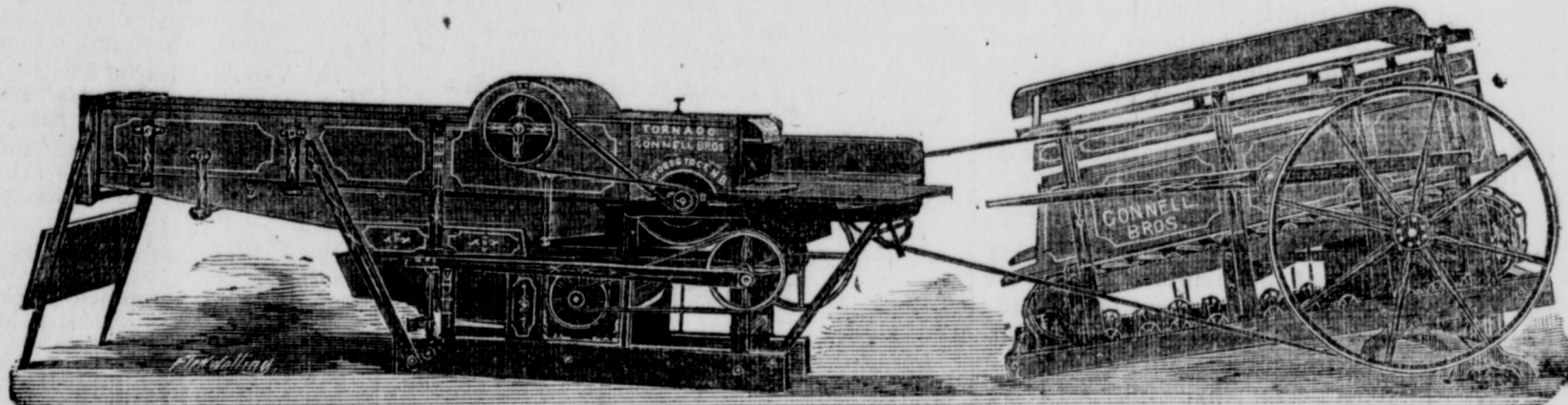
A Plucky Young Lady takes on Herself to Cure her Father of the Liquor Habit.

STORY OF HER SUCCESS.



A portion of her letter reads as follows:— "My father had often promised mother to stop drinking, and would do so for a time but then returned to it stronger than ever. One day after a terrible spree, he said to us: 'It's no use. I can't stop drinking.' Our hearts seemed to turn to stone, and we decided to try the Tasteless Samaria Prescription, which we had read about in the papers. We gave him the remedy, entirely without his knowledge, in his tea, coffee, or food regularly, according to directions, and he never knew he was taking it. One package removed all his desire for liquor, and he says it is now distasteful to him. His health and appetite are also wonderfully improved, and no one would know him for the same man. It is now fifteen months since we gave it to him and we feel sure that the change is for good. Please send me one of your little books, as I want to give it to a friend."

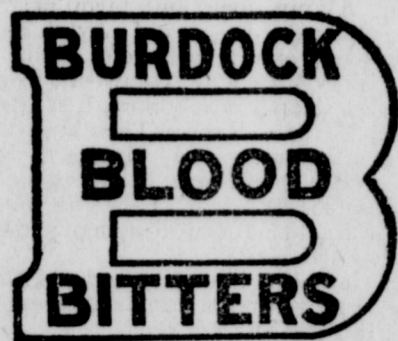
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"Quick—tell me," he said, in a hoarse whisper. "Is all safe?"

Grimes laughed at the terror betrayed in his voice before replying: "Of course it is."

Frankison grasped his hand with a sigh of relief. The chief difficulty had been overcome—success was practically certain. Returning to his rooms he listened eagerly to a recital of Thompson's capture, and gave expression to his satisfaction by presenting Grimes with a cheque for half the amount agreed upon.

Next morning, as an invited guest, he joined the wedding party, and in due time arrived at the church. Not a sign was to be seen of his confederate, but presently the bride entered and took up her position by the altar rails. She looked fearfully ill, and

leaned heavily on the arm of an old gentleman, a friend of the family, who was to give her away. Frankison gazed upon her with an almost satanic look upon his features, and saw with intense satisfaction the surprised expression on her face give way to one of absolute pain as the time passed and no bridegroom appeared. He himself had tasted suspense the night previously, and calculated to a degree the effect it was having upon her. The whispered expectancy of the congregation lapsed into a low murmur of consolation and sympathy for the bride, and even Frankison began to anticipate failure.

Suddenly the sound of a carriage being driven rapidly in the direction of the church was heard, and an audible "At last!" went round the building as the bridegroom, flushed with haste and excitement, appeared. As he hurried up the aisle his eyes sought those of Frankison, and the prearranged signal of success was given.

The ceremony was at once proceeded with, and soon the assumed bridegroom led his almost fainting bride away.

Arrived at home, as soon as it was decently possible Frankison gave Grimes the sign to retire, and after apologizing to his guests he did so. Frankison would have enjoyed the sight of the newly-made bride's agony on being made acquainted with her true position, but considering the possibility of danger arising he denied himself the pleasure, and soon afterwards departed.

Grimes, who had removed his disguise, was awaiting his arrival at the place appointed, with the news that the letter had already been dispatched. After congratulating him upon the success of the plot Frankison handed him a cheque for three hundred and fifty pounds, being, with the amount already received, fifty more than the total agreed upon.

He could afford to be generous; the manner in which the suspense in the church had affected his cousin convinced him he would not have to wait long for his increased income, and, moreover, the fact that Grimes had already purchased his ticket and made arrangements for leaving the country that very day was worth more than the extra amount he had given, for now that the scheme had been carried through he felt an aversion akin to fear of his accomplice.

Bidding Grimes farewell he sought the club, and afterwards joined a music-hall party. It was early morning when he arrived at home. His first thought was the gratifying one that Grimes would by that time be on the sea. Obtaining a light he was surprised to find two letters awaiting him. Tearing open the first he read as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—It will probably interest you to know that Grimes, the man you employed, decoyed me into a house last night, but instead of making me a prisoner, as you desired, entertained me with an account of your diabolical scheme. I am at a loss to know the reason of this confession—probably his better manhood prevailed—we will hope so. Acting upon his suggestion, for neither of us doubted that you would resort to more extreme measures if you had the slightest suspicion he had turned informer, I stayed with him all night and never found a more entertaining host. The arrangements for keeping up the deception we intended practising upon you were the cause of my late arrival at church this morning. When I obeyed your signal and left my wife, I simply retired until you had departed.

I understand you have had a large call upon your purse of late, and would suggest the advisability of your recouping the stock in other regions, otherwise I must request my friend, Detective Superintendent Robson, to call upon you in his official capacity.—Yours truly, WILLIAM THOMPSON.

The second letter was from Grimes:— DEAR SIR,—In future I would advise you never, under any circumstances, to endeavor to intimidate a man with more brains than yourself. If you want to succeed in our profession, be less of a coward, take equal risks with your accomplice, and for a time operate only on such fools as yourself.

The reaction was too much for Frankison. The rapid change from anticipation to complete failure stunned him. For a time he sat speechless with surprise, and when at last he recovered some of his scattered senses he took the advice contained in the first letter, and made speedy preparations for a departure to a more congenial climate.

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