

AN ESCAPE FROM PRISON.

Abe Cronkite Makes a Connection Between Things Seemingly Unrelated.

Abe Cronkite often thought of Donald the prison shoemaker, as he had last seen him, mounted on a box in the Bowery and extolling the merits of packages of soap, price a dime, into each one of which he apparently slipped a bright half dollar. He had no fears that the old rascal was engaged in an unprofitable business; that would be more preposterous than the eye of a cambric needle to a full sized camel. But the many half dollars were undoubtedly in his possession, however misleading their destination might be. Hence the question arose, was this money genuine or had the discharged convict once more entered upon the manufacture of the queer which had caused him to pass behind the bars fully half of the forty years of his wandering in the criminal desert, after leaving the slums of Manchester, England, for the good of that municipality. The former detective's interest was, in the main, a kindly one; he recognized Donald's faults, as indeed any one must, since with out them the man would be devoid of substance as an echo; but the humor which was their inherent quality somehow appealed to him. For this reason he had determined to seek out the shoemaker and inquire into his calling, when an event occurred which at first drove the solution from his mind, only to bring it back again to be put into execution.

This event was nothing less than the sudden disappearance from home of the young and charming wife of Zenas Coombs the great iron founder. In the early days, of the septuagenarian's second marriage his friends had predicted that trouble would come from so unequal a union. But the dignity with which Mrs. Coombs maintained her position and the tranquil happiness of their domestic life had long since silenced such comments. Now, however, she was missing, though not without a note of explanation, and this her husband in his uncertainty and distress, bore straightway to his lawyer, Judge Josiah Marcellus, for advice and direction.

The note was singularly brief and peremptory, announcing that the writer had left her husband forever, and solemnly forbidding him to attempt to find her. There was, however, a chord of self-abnegation running through it, which the lawyer was swift to detect and interpret. 'She seems to be convinced that she is acting for your good,' he said, 'and doubtless she is. No woman would leave such a home without adequate cause which in your case must be extraneous to you. I shall not dwell on painful conclusions; my advice is, let well enough alone.'

'Never,' cried Mr. Coombs passionately. 'My Eleanor is a pure noble woman; she may have been deceived by circumstances, she may have lost her reason. I will spend every dollar I have to regain and protect her!'

The lawyer bowed submissively. 'In that event,' he went on, 'it is necessary for you to tell me all about your acquaintance with your wife and her manner of life when it began. Don't mind him,' he added reassuringly, as the merchant glanced dubiously toward the desk in the corner where Abe Cronkite sat, with back turned indeed, but clearly within earshot: 'don't mind him, he is close mouthed. And we must have some such agent you know.'

'Then let him listen with care and act with skill, and I will make his future secure,' returned the old man with trembling eagerness. 'I met my wife, then Mrs. Eleanor Calderwood, in Manchester, England, under somewhat romantic circumstances. She was a widow, acting as governess in a family I visited. One night the house took fire, and we should have all perished had it not been for her coolness and intrepidity. As soon as she perceived my interest in her, of her own volition she told me her story. Calderwood a small attorney of the place, it seems, suddenly became well supplied with money. This aroused his wife's suspicions and she soon learned that he had connected himself with a gang of coiners; whereupon she at once left him and undertook her own support. Six months later he was arrested and convicted and the following year was drowned while attempting to escape from prison, though his body was never recovered. These facts were vouched for by the good people with whom she lived, who both honored and loved her for her cheerful patience under suffering.'

'If you please, sir,' asked Abe Cronkite, swinging around. 'Did Mrs. Coombs have any particular plans for the day she disappeared?'

'Yes, she was under promise to go with

other ladies of the Dorcas Society on a distributing tour among the poor. I have, of course, kept her mysterious absence a secret, but it came naturally to my knowledge that she did go with them into the Bowery, where they separated, each one to make the calls on the list assigned to her. That is the last trace I have. But why do you ask?'

'For a definite starting place, to be sure,' replied Abe Cronkite, easily. 'In order to thread a maze you must first get into it. Our maze evidently begins in the Bowery, and with your permission I will enter it there at once, reporting this evening what I may have learned and before other suggestion or amendment could be offered he was out of the office, determined to put into operation that resolution, often recurring, to see Donald, the shoemaker, and inquire into the sources of his livelihood.

For to the former detective's practical mind accident should be ignored as a reason for the linking together of circumstances seemingly foreign to one another. A coincidence to him was but an excuse to sluggishness of thought. So, while there might not be any connection between Mrs. Coombs' disappearance and the likelihood that Donald, the shoemaker, saw her while passing through the Bowery, the fact that he was a Manchester man who returned frequently to his native city, and while there, as elsewhere, was a chronic counterfeiter, seemed to predict a relation which should be examined with care. Suppose Donald had been an associate of Calderwood; suppose, he had recognized his former pal's widow in the richly apparelled lady, engaged on a mission of mercy. What would be the first impulse to arise in his mind; what, but some working of his insatiable greed? Given such conditions, and the answer to the problem might well be a woman fleeing from a blackmailer.

Abe Cronkite was, to wise to seek the shoemaker's confidence. He knew that he was far more wary on the defence than when urged to an attack by hope of gain; and so though he passed by Donald's stand he did so hurriedly, and as if anxious to avoid recognition. That was sufficient; in another moment there were rapid steps and oily salutations; and Donald, darting ahead, turned and confronted him.

'I'll not stand for it, Abe,' began the old shoemaker, all aglow with honest cordiality 'to have an old acquaintance pass me by as if but was remove from a pist hole. Admittin' y'are a iminent lagal character, with more cases to keep than a busted faro sharp, does that do away with the necessity of soc'al relaxatum? When travellin' in Sahary, don't you need to have your skin full, and what is the law but a disert with plenty of sand on all sides and a fresh, green thing only to be found be fits and starts? Come, this, I have the price for a wet, and our frind beyant has the wet for the price. As the Ziphyr said to the lovesick shepherd, 'I'll blow yer.' And, jingling a handful of bright half dollars. Ronald led the way across the street, into the rear room of a Bowery saloon.

When a libation had been poured out to friendship, Donald, wiping his chops with the back of his hand and scanning his companion slyly through the corners of his little red eyes, began the fishing excursion, out of which he hoped he might have some possible profit for himself.

'It's lucky y'are, so p'are, Abe,' he said, 'to hev' business trippin' over your heels like hoboos hurryin' the day man? A misun' witness to a will or some divorce complicitum? If there's anythin' in the natur' of an affidavit I cud oblige you with, I stand ready and anx'us to sign at the bottom of a page to onct, and you kin fill in what you dum please at your convenience.'

Abe Cronkite declined this handsome offer with thanks. There was really no way, he said, in which the shoemaker could assist him. The matter he had in hand was not a complicated one, though there was big money in it for the man who furnished the desired information. He had been instructed to get the record of a Manchester lawyer named Calderwood: a legacy depended upon whether he was alive or dead; and hearing that there was Englishman from those parts in a hotel on the next block, he was on his way to see him.

'A Manchester Englishman,' repeated Donald, with a high note of scorn, 'and isn't it meself that's Manchester born and bred, with cinsus of the entire popelatum in me nut? Calderwood, lyar Calderwood,

a wum-eaten little man, who was pinched for kinin' in '92, I don't know him needer, I s'pose? Well, we sported the same bracelets for some consid'able time, and I don't see how two blokes cud be more hand in hand than that. You needn't go no furd'er, Abe. Here all the straight goods of informatun your bosses kin require, with cash arter delivery. An' seein' it's you will have the fixin' of the reward, I don't mind advancin' a few soads, as evidence of my ginerous intintuns whin the long greens is paid over.' A d the shoemaker fairly forced a dozen of the bright half dollars into the detective's hand.

'Y'are all alike, Old Donald went on exultantly, 'from the Supe at Headquarters to the cop on the beat. Sure, if you don't git what you want, pay for it, is the thrue rule of livin'! Will, thin, the preliminaries bein' settled, and you pljded to the most loocorative drag-off the succumstances will permit, I'll g'wan with me story, as the mason said when he finished the fust flure.'

'It was in the fall of '92, Abe, so it was, I was jest arter finishin' a five-specker, whin I struck a fit of hum-sickness that clung to me like the lock-stip to an old lag. There was nothin' for it but I must revisit the purlaws of Manchester, even if I did run the risk of the purlice revisitin' me at about the same time. So off I put in a cattle steamer well contint to eat the husks that the steers t'run away, sence I was returnin' to me fayther's house. In course, Abe, this last sintamint was largely hypobographical, seein' as from all accounts I was born under a hedge; but all the same there was lashins of booze whin I showed me phiz in a certing shebang down near the statun, and if the fattest calf wasn't trotted out, it was only because he had devilled into as foine a cut of roast beef as you'd find in the food kingdoms. There was a old pal of mine named Cassidy who set up it; and whin the udders had been swept out, overcome by their own and the landlurd's flow of sperruts, him and me, arter a turn under the pinstock, set down to the consideratum of ways and means—the ways of makin' the queer and the means of gittin' it in succulatum.

'It was finally agreed that sence me hand had lost none of its ancient cunning' for which I offers t'anks were due, I should cook up the mitals, while Cassidy polished off the moulds and that the most available distributin' agent for the outpout would be was Calderwood, a lyar with even less practice than repperratum, which is about as clus a definitun of starvin' as I kin give. Wery good; we started off with flatterin' prospects, which the results fairly put into crape. Niver did I do better work; why we need to rub a bit of muck over the shiners whin they kem out of moulds for fear list their splindor should give humgridge to the Ryal Mint. And Calderwood stuck to his graft with credit to bot' his head and his heart, stockin' up the retail dealers with the queer to such an ixtint that an inroine gueina was as scarce in his neighborhood as it is in a collectun box. Yet trade was niver brisker, which goes to show the truf' of that ould maxim of political economy that anny kind of money is as good as the bist so long as it passes free and buys as much.

'But luck will turn: if it didn't, you know, it wud be succus. Calderwood got keemless and wan day give a client for whom he had a bit of business four pund, nineteen shillin and sixpence for a twintypund note. That was too much of a good thing or two little, by the mark; for of that whole kit of kine the sixpence was the unly genuoine piece. Now this man was of a savin' dispositun and soaked away whatever he cud in his sock to bum, but allus arter he did so he tried ivery scad with his feet'. Arter he had like to choke to deat' from a mout'ful of compositun he complained to the authorities. The bobbies kem down upon us, and at jest the wrong moment; for I was stirrin' in the antimony, and Cassidy he was a sandpaperin' dorins, and Calderwood, he was a castin' accounts and diwidin' up the profits. What cud we do when ketched in the very act but put up a beef to the court for musey, which the Big Wig seemed to understand jest the udder way. At anny rate, he give the full extinct doin' his little all for us, and in a mont's time we t'ree was a makin' jumpin' jacks of ourselves in the treadmill at Maidstond Prison, divarsified, ivery udder day, by tin hours in water waist high, a layin' docks and be dammed to thim.

'Ah, that's a terrible place, Abe; well may we boast of our free institootuns in comparison. Afore I'd been there a yap I felt older than Metusally wud it he'd done a life sintince in sackcloth knickerbockers, a slapin' on a board, with no tobacco, and with salt horse and a dab of molasse for the bist of the prog, and a wad of half-baked sawdust for the wust. I swear, I'd hev croked and t'ank'ul if it hadn't been for wan thing, and that was Cassidy. He were a plausible cuss, he were, and it wasn't long afore he got on the soft side of

an old keeper, good-natured and rather stupid, who they put in charge of the hall at odd times whin only a few was locked. At sech times he used to give Cassidy a chance so stritch his legs and chin a bit, and he so managed to slip the wud to me of what he had desolved to do. Christmas Eve kem, the wan fialst event of the year, me and Calderwood played sick and sulky whin all the odder men was unlocked and marched off to chapel, and Cassidy he set on a table at the end of the corridor givin a werval song and dance to his frind the keeper. The hall was dark and lonely, with now and then the sound of the singin' of gleees, and stompin' and slappin' comin' from the udder wing.

Cassidy, he did the job handily. Jest whin the bust of applause was the loudest, he give it to the keeper plum in the peepers with a handful of dried weed he had found out on the embankment which had an awful smart. The keeper give wan yell, and struck out right and left; but quicker'n I kin tell you, Cassidy had a gag in his mout' and a slip-noose over his arms and legs; in a couple of moments that keeper was as helpless as a trussed turkey, and damn sight less comfortable. Up on the tines slipped Cassidy, with the masterkey; a turn here, a turn there, and me and Calderwood had jined him. We locked the poor turnkey up in a vacant cell, with a pile of blankets over him, and thin out into the yard in a jiffy! On the sout' side there was a moat, about twenty feet across, half-filled with slimy water, and we knowed if we cud git over this there was a fightin' chanct of escape t'roo some of the workmen on the canal who had nuts nearby. So we mounted the wall by the guards' ladder and ran along, lookin' for the safest spot. Blew me, but it was a tearsome sight, full t'irty feet sheer down, with that greenish gruel at the bottom; but what waited us inside was wuss, if we didn't get away. Cassidy leaped way over and spied a ledge about tin feet from the bottom, and t'roo the moat just there a streak of marsh grass that look ed as if it might hold. We had a rope just about long enough, and no time to waste, so there we made 'em attempt.

Calderwood went first, down the rope to the ledge and thin plump, out to the little clump of grass, well-nigh to the middle of the moat. But there he seemed to stick, and we cud hear him cussin' at fust and thin moanin' like a sick baby. 'He's in a blue funk, growled Cassidy, 'but he can't phaze me.' And down the rope he slid, with so many a jerk and pull, that it gave way, coiling about him as he landed on the ledge, and there was I left high and dry, with a sound from within as if the performance was over.

'I leaned over and looked down. It was a cur'us sight, Abe, and wan hard to size. Cassidy had sprung out onto Calderwood's shoulders and was balancin' there for dear life. Calderwood had grown shorter for some reason, and had reached both hands up and grabbed Cassidy, eeder holdin' him on or tryin' to shake him off, I couldn't tell which. I looked back at the buildin'; there were lights here and there, and the sound of officers calling. Something must be done to onct it at all. I stood on the very edge. Twenty feet below were the two men, one on top of the udder, like acrobats in a succus. Tin feet beyond thim was a clump of low trees and bushes on the furder shore. If I cud lesp so as to land in that clump I wud be saved and I felt that I cud make it if unly, it unly, I cud have the advantage of a spring whin halfway over. Why not jump for Cassidy's shoulders, techin' thim lightly yet gittin jest the impetus needed to sind me over? There was no time to hesitate; the lights were out in the yard. I sprang out and down, spurnin' his shoulders with my feet and landin in the clump like a bird.

'It must have been the kick back that done it, Abe, upsettin' whatever stability there might have been to the quicksand, and sendin' thim down and down like a shot; for whin I looked for my frinds they was gone, unly a bubble of muddy water markin' the spot where this fatal catastrophe occurred! They found Cassidy's body the next day I believe, his outstretched hands bein' about two feet below the surface; but Calderwood was niver heard of, perhaps he's still slippin' t'roo that slimy stuff in his way to bedrock or Chinay And that's the story, Abe, and the man whose ligacy depends on his deat', ought to come down for it, especially whin he considers the provident'ial part I've played in his fortunes. There's Calderwood's widow, too, who might have a claim agin him. What if I kin lay me hand on her—Hold up there Abe, whatever are you doin'? Have you gone daft, man? The shoemaker's voice died away in a wail of terror, for Abe Cronkite, reaching over, had grasped him by the throat and swung down on the floor by his side.

'Where is she, you scoundrel?' demanded the detective.

Old Donald shook himself free, and sat up scowling and impudent. 'Thin that

was your game, arter all,' he muttered; 'thin damme me for a loose jawed idjit, and damn you for bloody beak that betrays his friends! I won't tell you, that's flat.'

'Not half so flat as this queer of yours, retorted Cronkite as he ground one of the half dollars under his heel.

'For the love of mussy, Abe,' groaned the old cadger, 'don't give me graft away and I'll tell you iverything. Sure I unly said to her that I knew where her husband was; and wasn't that Gospel truf? And it's tonight it is, she's to meet me, and free y'are to tske me place. There's nothin' in the plant at bist, except the pawnin' of her rings that she's to give me for tellin' her how to avide Calderwood. I'll take you to her and wilcome. Abe jest for the re-tarn of thim half dollars.'

And so it came about that Abe Cronkite was able to bring tranquillity to the mind of a half-distraught woman; and to restore the happiness of the Coombs household. Old Donald was suffered to resume his slight-of-hand trafficking unmolested; Judge Marcellus sagely remarking that it was idle to prosecute one who seemed so bent on convicting himself.

A WOMAN'S FACE

PLAINLY INDICATES THE CONDITION OF HER HEALTH.

Beauty Disappears When the Eyes are Dull the Skin Sallow, and Wrinkles Begin to Appear How One Woman Regained Health and Comeliness.

Almost every woman at the head of a home meets daily with innumerable little worries in her household affairs. They may be too small to notice an hour afterwards, but it is nevertheless these constant little worries that make so many women look prematurely old. Their effect may be noticed in sick or nervous headaches, fickle appetite, a feeling of constant weariness, pains in the back and loins, or in a sallow complexion, and the coming of wrinkles, which every woman who desires comeliness dreads. To those thus afflicted Dr. Williams' Pink Pills offer a speedy and certain cure; a restoration of color to the cheeks, brightness to the eye, a healthy appetite, and a sense of freedom from weariness.

Among the thousands of Canadian women who have found new health and new strength through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is Mrs. Francis Poirier, of Valleyfield, Que. Mrs. Poirier was a sufferer for upwards of seven years; she had taken treatment from several doctors, and had used a number of advertised medicines, but with no good results. Mrs. Poirier says:—'Only women who suffer as I did can understand the misery I endured for years. As time went on and the doctors I consulted, and the medicines I used did not help me, I despaired of ever regaining health. There were very few days that I did not suffer from violent headaches, and the least exertion would make my heart palpitate violently. My stomach seemed disordered, and I almost loathed the food I forced myself to eat, I was very pale, and frequently my limbs would swell so much that I feared that my trouble was developing into dropsy. I had almost constant pains in the back and loins. It was while I was in this sad condition that I read in La Presse of the cure of a woman whose symptoms were much like mine through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills! I told my husband and he urged me to try them, and at once got me three boxes. Before I had used them all I felt better, and I got another supply of the pills. At the end of the month I was strong enough to do my household work, and before another month had passed I had entirely recovered my health. I am sorry that I did not learn of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills sooner, for I know that they would have saved me several years of sickness and misery, and I feel that I cannot too strongly urge other sick women to use them.'

The condition indicated in Mrs. Poirier's case shows that the blood and nerves needed attention, and for this purpose Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are woman's best friend. They are particularly adapted to cure the ailments from which so many women suffer in silence. Through the use of these pills the blood is enriched, the nerves made strong, and the rich glow of health brought back to pale and sallow cheeks. There would be less suffering if woman would give these pills a fair trial. Sold by all dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Little Janet noticed that all the others helped themselves to mustard, but none was given to her.

So, when no one was looking, she spread some on her bread and took a big mouthful. Her hand immediately went up to her burnt mouth, but too proud to cry out she only put the bread away, remarking, in a voice that showed tears were near the surface:

'I think I'll wait till that jelly gets cold.'

'Dad,' asked little Freddy, 'how is it the baby fish don't get drowned before they learn to swim?'

'But he is quiet, dear.'

'Yes, mummy, but every time I hit him on the head with dad's walking stick he screams; an' I must hit him, 'cause it's the game!'