Humor and Philosophy

By DUNCAN M. SMITH

PERT PARAGRAPHS.

MAN is born to be the prey of those who know how to play upon his vanity, just as stock is created to be watered.

No nervous dyspeptic ever was convinced that that is why the world is against him.

Most of us think we know a lot of people that Satan isn't sorrowing over.

When you think you are entitled to consideration and attention just endeavor to claim it and see where you get off.

The more graft there is the more respectability it appears to attain.

The man who understands women is the man who has a jolt coming to him and will be at home to receive it.

There isn't much doubt that old Mother Nature and Satan himself conspired when poison ivy was brought into existence.

A person who has to run up against a freight train before he can get an idea into his head is what you might call stupid.

A bank account is rarely one of the assets of a man who works nothing but his imagination.

The sweetheart of your youth is sure to turn up for the first time in ten years when you have a smudge on your nose and a week's dissipation to your discredit.

A girl hardly ever gets so mad that she will refuse a five pound box of candy.

Desirable Condition.

"I hear you are going in for physical culture."

"I certainly am."

"Why such rashness?"

"I have heard that it is possible to get too strong to work."

Cleared Up.

"Have you been reading the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy?"

"Every word of it."

"And what is your conclusion?"

"That somebody wrote it."

"Alias Jimmy Valentine"

Novelized by FREDERICK R. TOOMBS From the Great Play by PAUL ARMSTRONG

[CONTINUED.]

"And you are going to give it to him?"

"We will go to the governor. The matter rests entirely in his hands."

Rose threw her arm around her uncle's neck and kissed him fondly.

"The warden is very angry, and the man is helpless," she said fearfully. "Why, they might even kill"—

"Oh, no, Rose, not that."

"But you realize"—

"Yes, but I don't think they would dare since I"—

"But I am in a chill of fear. The warden's manner"—

"Most wardens are bullies, Rose, and I don't think this Handler an exception; I think a few words from me might"—

At this juncture Handler stormed into the office. He glared angrily at his visitors. At Fay's direction Rose went out into the waiting room.

"Finished your star chamber session, governor?" he asked sneeringly.

"Mr. Handler," sternly, "let me say something to you for your own benefit. You are an employee of the state. Employees have been removed, even wardens, for a speech no more discourteous than the one you have just made. When Valentine gets out—and I hope it will be soon—I am going to ask him how he was treated, and if he tells me you treated him any worse after today than before I came I promise you a little polite h—l. Good day, sir."

The lieutenant governor followed Rose.

Smith had come in with the warden. The latter turned to his secretary as Fay departed and snarled viciously, his teeth protruding like yellow fangs. "Valentine, eh? Get him!"

Smith, his face gravely set, obediently went out of the room.

CHAPTER V.

AS his secretary left the room to procure Valentine Warden Handler glowered darkly at the door that closed behind him and through which No. 1289 was to be unwillingly brought. He would show this man who had dared to talk to the lieutenant governor that Billy Handler was the boss of Sing Sing prison and no one else, even lieutenant governors to the contrary. Discipline must be preserved. Yes, that was it—the old explanation that always held good when a prisoner who offended the warden in any way was meted out the vengeance that the warden would not be denied. Once there was a thin chested, cough racked little election inspector "doing three" for crooked work at the polls who had had his front teeth kicked down his throat because he would not shine the warden's shoes. As for this slick Mr. Valentine, he was altogether too independent, too, and the warden would give him the lesson of his life. He would—

The door opened, and in came Smith, holding Jimmy Valentine by the arm.

The warden stood at his desk. "Bring him over here!" he cried hoarsely, pointing to the space in front of his desk.

The secretary slipped his hand up behind the prisoner's neck and with a violent heave flung Valentine forward so that he was barely able to prevent himself from falling flat on his face. Gritting his teeth, No. 1289 straightened himself and finally succeeded in suppressing the impulse that surged within him to spring at his cowardly assailant's throat. Probably it was the realization of the fact that he knew himself to be more than an equal for Smith in a hand to hand conflict that enabled him to restrain himself—the contempt of a strong, confident man for an ignoble inferior.

Smith was larger and heavier, yes, but the man who had hip locked the burglar Cotton and had thrown him headlong to his death from the window of a rushing railway train was not one to be trifled with. Besides, no less a personage than George Bothner, the world's lightweight wrestling champion, had taught Valentine the mysteries of the "grapevine," the "cross buttock," the "Cornwall heave," the "flying mare," the "back heel," the rib crushing "scissors," the waist and crotch holds and even the tortures of the deadly strangle holds, front and rear.

Handler bent over his desk, resting both his hands upon it, and sneered at Valentine.

"Why didn't you smash him when he hit you, you coward?" he asked the helpless prisoner in purposely aggravating tones. "You're losing your nerve in this little boarding house of mine; that's what's the matter with you. You haven't any manhood left in you. And, say, Valentine, when we have had you here as our guest two years more you'll be whining around like a puppy with the pink eye; that's what you're coming to. It's bound to get you—this life—just like it gets all the rest of you thin skinned guys. Only a bum can live this life and keep his mind and his manhood."

The cruel words of the warden sank deeply into Valentine's soul, as Handler well knew they would. But the prisoner was determined that he would show no signs of weakening before the two men who hated him.

"I didn't hit him because I'll square myself when I get out," answered Valentine defiantly, "and there are a few little things that I will square with you, too, Mr. Warden Handler. You know you have me in your power, and so do I. But, Handler, you're going to like me better from now on because, realizing my position, I have dared go against you."

But Valentine had mistaken his man. The respect that one fighting man has for another who fights him squarely found no place in the craven heart of Billy Handler. Valentine had yet something to learn of the psychology of jail wardens. Handler's face took on a malignant expression. "Oh," he sneered, "so I'm going to like you, am I? Well, just watch me. I'll burke you, you"—

Handler lunged around the corner of his desk at the prisoner.

"Don't burke me!" cried Valentine desperately.

Eyes gleaming with his vengefulness, with hands outstretched, the warden came headlong at Valentine, who braced himself to withstand the shock of the oncoming body. Crouching, the prisoner primed himself to clutch one of the warden's thumbs, which was carelessly extended outward from his hand—a trick Bothner had shown him. Once securing this thumb, it could be pulled back or twisted to the breaking point if necessary to cause an opponent to yield, or by drawing the outstretched arm over his shoulder, wheeling his back to his foe as he did so, Valentine could bend sharply forward and throw his assailant helplessly over his head and on to the floor in a heap with the disconcerting "flying mare."

But midway in his rush the warden stopped short. He had caught himself just in time. About to throw himself blindly at his intended victim, a thought (an inspiration he afterward considered it to be) flashed through his brain. The warden halted, much to the amazement of his secretary, Smith, who had been watching the proceedings with unconcern born of experience in like happenings. Then Handler turned away, rested one hand on his desk and with the other stroked his heavy, square chin reflectively.

"God!" he pondered. "Suppose the lieutenant governor should get on to those deals in the contracts for supplies? He might, and then I'd need him to be my friend."

Handler reached out, picked up a box from the desk and extended it to the now thoroughly thunderstruck convict, who was slowly recovering from the mental strain of the last few moments. "Have a cigar," smiled the warden graciously, with a sweeping bow. "Also permit me to offer you a chair, Mr. Valentine.

"By the way," he went on easily, "are you perfectly comfortable in your cell? If not, I want to know what I can do for you. I'm going to have Smith go to see you every day to do for you anything that you want, provided the rules of the prison permit, and maybe some things they don't."

Valentine, hardly believing what his eyes and ears told him actually to be occurring, dropped bewilderedly into the proffered chair and, taking a gilt banded Havana from the box, stuck it eagerly between his lips.

"Have a light," said the warden, striking a match and extending it to the end of Valentine's cigar.

The secretary stood across the room near a door, eyes staring in his wonder as No. 1289 leaned back luxuriously in his chair, crossed one striped leg over the other and sent fragrant clouds of blue smoke toward the ceiling.

"This'll be a regular Y. M. C. A. before we get through," he gasped. "I think I'll apply for a job as worsted holder for some old maids' sewing society. This prison is getting altogether too genteel to suit me."

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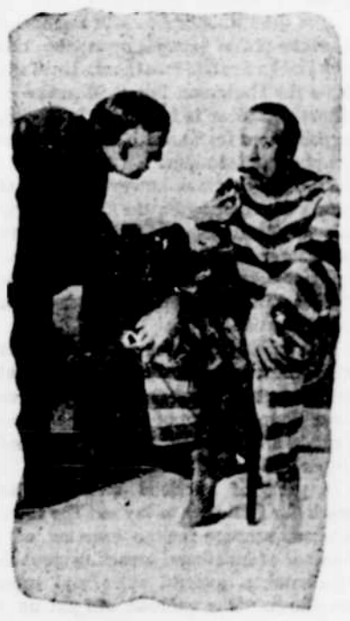
When a young lad of good parentage and of sound training and education begins to chafe under the restraint of parental discipline it is time for the parents to exercise the wisdom got only from the lessons taught in the great school of the wide, wide world.

Theories and principles expounded ever so convincingly will not keep the growing boy at home after 7 o'clock in the evening when there is a chance to escape into the streets to meet the "bunch," the alluring, versatile bunch whose plans so often include the annihilation of the Sioux warriors of the Dakota plains who have laid down the tomahawk to take up the agency clay pipe and store clothes.

That is to say, theories and principles merely will not suffice to restrain the impulsive, imaginative, action craving youths unless the parent combines with them enough knowledge of the world to convince the half formed, half trained youthful mind that the mentor has the best interests of the lad in mind, that he has been through it all himself and knows full well the joys and disappointments, the fears and hopes of early days.

And it is the habitually stern, optimistic, unyielding and academic parent who convinces the young lad that he knows nothing of the fascinating temptations of boyhood. The spirit of compromise is allowed to perish by such a parent; the spirit of rebellion grows in the son's heart; a spirit nourished on the decay of the respect and love thrust aside by the father who would not understand.

A certain lad of sixteen years found life in his New England home far more circumscribed than was that of his companions of the same age and same comfortable position. He was not allowed to go swimming in the lake because his young friend Tommy Clark had narrowly escaped drowning. The fact that Tommy Clark could not swim and was "taking a dare" on that memorable occasion when he verged



"HAVE A CIGAR."

on death near the county line road bridge and the fact that the lad we are considering could swim very well made no difference to the father as well as to the mother. The son must keep away from the water. That was final.

The further fact that this boy aspired to be a mining engineer made no difference to this father or to this mother. It had already been decided for him that he must study for the ministry.

Three years passed. The lad was in college. The study of theology did not suit his temperament or his desires. He wanted, above all things, to go out into the world of action, to battle with the might of the strong man he was becoming against big, tangible odds; out in the open air under the open heavens, down in the bowels of the earth or wherever there were mines to be dug and equipped and operated. He wanted to study the problems that faced the men who decoyed the glistening ores from secretive Mother Earth, and he thrilled with the idea that he could succeed in this profession.

He sat in his room in the college dormitory one sunny spring morning and wrote his father that he could not continue his study for the ministry; that he wanted above all other things in life to enter the school of mines at the university.

He waited five days. The answer came. The same night there were a vacant room and a vacant bed in the dormitory. Next morning came a search. Under a table was found a crumpled note that the tears of the lad had blurred as he read. The letter was taken to the president of the college. When this gray haired gentleman adjusted his spectacles he pressed the paper flat on his desk and read:

"If you do not continue your course in theology I will cease to pay your bills at college. Should you discon-

JIMMY VALENTINE'S FATHER, WHO BROKE THE SCHOOLBOY'S HEART.

tinue them you must return home, where I will secure you a position as bookkeeper at your uncle's store."

Signed to this eloquent, brief epistle was the name of the young man's father.

Several years have passed since that crumpled letter was picked up from the floor of the college student's room. Several years have passed since an aged couple, soon to eke out their meed of existence in a small country town, have heard news from the son who would not become a minister.

Several years have passed since a young college student appeared penniless and discouraged in a middle western city and vainly walked the streets for days, subsisting as best he might, in search of any kind of work that strong hands and arms could perform.

So there should be tempered judgment shown, say I, in dwelling on the present fate of Jimmy Valentine when it is considered that he was the ambitious lad who left the crumpled note lying on the floor in his bedroom and set out to fight the world single handed.

That Jimmy should have lost in his first grapple with life should afford no reasonable person ground for reproach. Those of us who have not lost as yet quite humanly perhaps incline toward comparisons which favor our own acknowledged virtues, but at the same time the environment of our fellow beings at critical periods in their lives should always be remembered when the final estimate is made. It is human to have human emotions. It is human to have inhuman ideas concerning some of our fellow men at various times; but, after all, why not adopt the optimistic philosophy of Jimmy Valentine himself? For was it not he who at the time "Frisco Eddie" bungled the "inside job" of a safe looting expedition in Omaha sought to soothe the latter's feelings by saying sympathetically:

"Nobody is a failure until he admits it himself. You will never admit you're a failure, Eddie, so cheer up. You, therefore, can never be one."

Consequently Jimmy Valentine must be given a chance. His doctrine is the doctrine of hope. Give him a chance to apply it to himself and await uncondemningly and dispassionately the result.

If he succeeds in making a man of himself, a man such as his Creator intended him to be, who is there to say that his past has anything in it to concern a critical world? Or who is there to deny to Jimmy Valentine his birthright if he should miraculously redeem it?

But should he fail in the great test—well, perhaps no word should just now be sent regarding him to the old home in the little town, to the father and the mother who would not understand.

CHAPTER VI.

THE weeks dragged slowly on for Jimmy Valentine after the momentous day when Rose Lane and Lieutenant Governor Fay visited the prison—weeks of wonder, weeks of hope, weeks of despair.

He concluded that the girl had forgotten him; that her interest in him had been but the evanescent manifestation of a fleeting impulse. Probably "Izzy" Snedden was right after all. Izzy, doing a bit of four for burglary, seemed to know a great deal about women, and he had assured Valentine that "a girl don't know what it means to keep her word, not that she don't mean to, but she just nat'rally talks so much that she can't remember half what she says."

The lieutenant governor, too, had apparently forgotten about the existence of No. 1289, and Valentine began deeply to wish that his hopes had never been aroused. Far better never to have risen to the heights of expectancy at all than on attaining them to be thus rudely cast from them.

But Valentine had not realized how slowly move the executive wheels of the government of a great and busy state. A governor is held to a strict accountability for his official actions, and in the important matter of the pardon of a man convicted to state prison for a felony haste is entirely out of the question. And it was one day when Jimmy Valentine had lost every vestige of confidence in Rose Lane and her uncle and in the lawyer whom he had retained that hurried footsteps resounded down the cell corridor. A paper, a glorious paper bearing the seal of the Empire State, was flashed before his eyes.

"You are pardoned!" came the welcome announcement. "The governor has released you!"

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In one of the parlors of the Ten Eyck hotel, in Albany, within two short blocks of the capitol, Mrs. Webster and Mrs. Moore sat patiently waiting.

"You don't suppose Mr. Valentine would feel uncomfortable in coming to meet our party in a nice respectable place like this, do you?" asked prim little Mrs. Moore of her coworker in the Gate of Hope society.

"No," was the positive response. "That young man wouldn't feel uncomfortable or embarrassed anywhere in the world. This is the first victory for the Gate of Hope, Mrs. Moore, and I trust your report will be such as to encourage others to join us."

"It will be exact, Mrs. Webster, of that you may rest assured. By the way, do you not think we should have had a few reporters here to give public notice of our first triumph?"

"Your report, my dear—we will send that to all papers," and Mrs. Webster smiled proudly as she spoke.

A messenger boy came in with a note from Valentine, who had come to Albany to thank the governor for his release and to meet the people who had worked to secure him his pardon. The note, written from the governor's executive chamber, notified the ladies that he would be with them in fifteen minutes.

Rose Lane and her father, William Lane, an Illinois banker, came into the parlor and greeted the two ladies, who informed the newcomers that Mr. Valentine would shortly arrive. Declining the invitation of Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Webster to join in light refreshments in the tea room on the mezzanine floor, Rose and her father remained in the parlor, while the two ladies departed.

Rose had not seen her father for months, and on his arrival in the east she persuaded him to accompany her to Albany to assure the governor that if he pardoned Valentine he would guarantee him a good business position. It is more than probable that this attitude on the part of a man of Mr. Lane's standing in the financial world had something to do with the final determination of the executive to sign the release papers. It tended to confirm in the governor his belief in the prisoner's innocence. Mr. Lane

"THIS IS THE FIRST VICTORY FOR THE GATE OF HOPE."

and his daughter had waited overnight in Albany after the granting of the pardon to meet the released prisoner, who was coming to the capital for the purpose already mentioned.

Rose, absolutely positive of her one time rescuer's innocence, had made a proposal to her father regarding the future of Jimmy Valentine. Her father, tall, well built, with beard and brown hair streaked with outcroppings of gray, smiled indulgently upon her. He had agreed on her account to place Valentine in a good salaried position, but as yet he had doubts as to whether he dared to secure for the ex-convict exactly the employment the girl demanded for him.

"Now, sit down and listen, dad," the girl said, crossing to a sofa.

"But, Rose, this is a most desperate thing to do—pick up an ex-convict and put him in a bank," Mr. Lane protested.

"Is he an ex-convict if he was convicted unjustly?" argued the girl. "Didn't Uncle George say he was innocent?"

"Not exactly. He said there was a chance that he might be."

"But the governor pardoned him."

"Guilty men have been pardoned." The girl would not be gainsaid.

"But I want you to give this man a chance, dad—a good chance. He risked his life once to save me from insult." She patted her father's shoulder pleadingly and affectionately.

"I know; I know," declared Mr. Lane.

"And you must see him." Rose was becoming fearful of the end.

"Oh, I'll see him, of course, but to put him to work in the bank—why, Rose, it seems like flying in the face of Providence."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Pitcher Plant.

One of the most remarkable carnivorous vegetables in the world is the pitcher plant of the tropics. It is safe to say at least that no other plant in its kingdom is more ingenious in catching its prey and in disposing of it afterward. The plant is shaped very much like a pitcher, with the mouth, of course, at the top. The pitcher is, moreover, perfectly water tight and is usually well filled with rainwater. The sides are very smooth and inviting. The plant, thus equipped, lies in wait, if the expression may be used, until some fly or small insect enters or falls into the water compartment. So smooth are the sides that when the prey is once in the water it has great difficulty in getting out and, as a rule, quickly drowns. The insect is then devoured by the plant.

What Oyster "Seed" Is.

By "seed" of oysters is meant the "milk," or spat or spawn, which is deposited during the breeding season (in summer) and adheres to some object or other in the vicinity of the "beds." As soon as the "milk" finds a resting place, helped by the action of the sea water, it begins to harden and to take form. Just as the white liquid china clay of the pate sur pate china decorations in its elevations and depressions hardens upon the side of a cup or vase and by the different thicknesses of its hardened layers forms the lovely figures we see in art collections, so the "milk" of the oyster grows into the shape intended for it by nature. Though the oyster shell is so uncouth and rough in outline, yet what wondrous skill is this!—Exchange.

Struck a Bargain.

An old woman recently entered an optician's shop and asked to look at some spectacles. Choosing a pair, she asked the price.

"Five shillings," was the answer.

"And how much are they without the case?"

"I could not sell them for less than 4s. 10d.," said the tradesman, who was determined to get all he could.

"Do you only take off twopence for the case?" queried the woman.

"That is all. The case is worth more than twopence," was the reply.

"That is good news!" ejaculated the old lady, with a sigh of relief. "I'll take the case for mine which I have lost."

So saying, she laid down the twopence and marched off with the coveted case before the astonished shopper had time to interfere.—London Answers.

Taking After Father.

"It has its father's nose!"

"And its mother's eyes!"

"And Aunt Alice's mouth!"

"And Uncle Ebenezer's ears!"

Such, multiplied by about a hundred, were the criticisms levelled by kind friends against the Fritz baby.

Then the unconcerned baby began calmly chew his big toe.

"Ah!" murmured Mr. Fritz. "Baby is certainly endowed with some of my wife's chief characteristics."

"Not to mention you, Fritz Fritzdle!" snapped his wife. "Baby never opens his mouth without putting his foot in it!"

Maternal Instinct.

We talk about "maternal instinct." There is no such thing. To be sure there are things that have to do with the young which females possess and males lack. The wasp lays its egg in the body of the caterpillar for the latter will never see. The hen sits on one days on any roundish, white object of the proper size. I have seen a children's party every time hens leave the supper table on the alert for a baby and every little boy goes on with his supper. But each hen mother has its own bundle of instinctive reactions. There is no "maternal instinct" in the abstract.—McClure's Magazine.

The Damper.

We love the game! We love to see
And hear the crowded bleachers cheer
In joyous victory, but—oh,
You losing streak!
—Indianapolis Star.

A Distinction of Terms.

"So Uncle Jasper has gone to raising chickens?"

"I didn't say he were raisin' 'em," replied Erastus Pinkly. "I said he were liftin' 'em."—Washington Star.