

"Alias Jimmy Valentine"

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

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[CONTINUED.]

seated himself beside a convenient table. He picked up a magazine and began to peruse its pages in seemingly unconcerned fashion.

"Hello, Jimmy?"

With these words Detective George Doyle entered the room. Garmented in the latest cut of fashionable clothing, panama hat and patent leather ties with batwing laces, he appeared the dilettante, the man about town, rather than the tracker of desperate men—the man of leisure, every inch of him, an uninitiated observer would have pardonably judged not only from his attire, but also from his debonair, blasé manner. Any one describing Doyle as the man who broke up the "Five Points" gang and the "Whyo" gang in New York city would have been laughed at for his folly, yet such was his record. His work in scattering the troupes of election and primary day "floaters" and "repeaters" in some of the most disreputable districts was equally meritorious.

And yet Doyle had his other side. He was growing fond of the easy life that came from having a staff of "stool pigeons" to do his work for him.

Jimmy Valentine turned his head slightly to answer Doyle, who, he well knew, came on no errand that would benefit a released prisoner.

"How are you, Doyle?" he replied indifferently.

Doyle's shifting, farsseing eyes, however, caught the nervous twitching of Valentine's fingers as they ran over the edges of the magazine.

"You're perfectly innocent now, I hear," went on Doyle, a sarcastic note coming into his voice.

"Perfectly," Valentine's voice was as even as though conversing with his most intimate friend.

"So you told the governor?" commented the detective.

"Oh, yes?"

"I've seen the governor too."

"He didn't have much to do this morning, did he?" humorously.

"Very pretty, Jimmy. Let me ask you a question. Do you think I would be your friend if I could?"

"Do you think so yourself?"

"Yes, if you were willing to exchange the ordinary courtesies between friends."

"Meaning exactly what?"

"Favors. Now, I'll do the first one." He seated himself opposite the ex-convict.

"Thank you," in gay mood.

"Sarcastic won't win you anything with me, Jimmy. I said I'd do you a favor."

"What is it?" Valentine began to inspect his visitor anxiously.

The detective paused momentarily. Then he said deliberately:

"I'll forget—that job—you—did—at Springfield—three—years—ago."

The detective leaned back in his chair, inserted his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and gazed fixedly at Jimmy Valentine.

The eyes of the man addressed became directed at the cover of the magazine he still held, but only for an instant. He shot a defiant glare at Doyle.

"I was never in Springfield in my life," he said indignantly.

"Which Springfield?" asked Doyle significantly.

"No Springfield."

"You dodge it nicely."

"I don't see how."

"Now, which Springfield did I think you were going to say?"

"I have no idea."

"Good again. Well, I'll tell you," continued Doyle. "I meant Springfield, Mass."

Valentine raised his brows doubtfully, innocently.

"I don't think I was ever in the state of Massachusetts."

"I can prove you were in Springfield, Mass., the night the safe in the savings bank was grabbed."

"Oh, no, you can't."

"Believe me, Jimmy, I can. The witness may be a bit disreputable, but I can prove it."

"You can job me, you mean. You can get fake witnesses?" Valentine asked excitedly.

"I can send you for five at least, my boy."

"But you won't if I do you a favor?"

"You are a very good guesser, James."

"Well?"

"I want Avery."

"Avery?"

"Bill Avery, who finished a nine year stretch a month ago and joined up with your old friend Red Flanagan."

Bill Avery, concealed behind the portieres with Red, gave a violent start as he heard Doyle's words. Red had all he could do to quiet him. The aged thief, however, managed to draw a .38 caliber revolver from a side

pocket in his coat—quicker to get at than the hip pocket, and then this arrangement enables a man to stand with a hand carelessly thrust into a pocket and to discharge the pistol through the coat when dire emergency threatens.

"Curse him!" he whispered to Red. "I told him I'd get him if he turned square, and when Doyle goes I'll bore him through the mouth and into his brain."

"Serve him right!" hissed Red. "And two chances for a slick getaway. No guy can go on the square without getting crooked with his pals."

CHAPTER VIII.

LITTLE knowing of the serious conspiracy that was forming but a few yards away behind the thick velvet curtains, Valentine gave verbal and mental battle to the detective. Already he was beginning to see that the way of the transgressor was hard not only while he was in the legal toils, but also after he became free and supposedly in a position to build a new life if he so desired. But Jimmy Valentine was only at the beginning of a knowledge of the conditions and trials and set backs he must face, for so long as men make laws and administer them so long will the guilty and the innocent as well suffer and endure, sometimes justly and sometimes unjustly. This also is a law of life.

Valentine went on to insist that he didn't know where Avery was, hadn't seen him since his release from Sing Sing, was glad of it, didn't care



"THAT'S A LIE! YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS," where he was and didn't purpose to care. Of all this he was absolutely sure.

"Well," stated Doyle, "he held up a citizen just three days after he got out, and I want him."

"And I'm to tell you where he is and you will send him up for highway robbery?" questioned Valentine.

"The man he stuck up may die."

"And you expect me to hunt him up and deliver him to you?"

"And you are going to. That's the odd part of it. And possibly I'll make an eyewitness out of you."

"It would be odd if I sent Avery away for life. It would indeed."

"Then I'll slough you for that Springfield job," Doyle rose abruptly.

"Then you may as well do it now," said the other defiantly.

"No hurry. I've got a little work on the case yet, and I'll find you when I want you." Doyle's grin showed his teeth.

"I'm not going to run away."

"Look here, Valentine, this Avery isn't worth this. He's as wrong as ever lived. He'll cross you or any one else. I should think when a bum resorts to blackjacking an old man that would put him out of your class."

"I don't know where he is. I don't know that he did blackjack anybody, and I wouldn't know him if I saw him."

"That's your spiel, eh?"

"That's the truth," Valentine rose as though to end the distasteful interview.

"That's a lie! You know where he is better than any one. If you don't find him, and I want him. One month to turn him up, and if you don't I go after you, and if I go after you I get you."

"Well, get me."

"I will. It will take a little time—a year, perhaps ten—but as long as we're both alive I'm after you. Good day," Doyle strode angrily away.

As the broad shouldered form of the "headquarters man" disappeared Valentine stood gazing reflectively after him. His back was turned to the portieres. Bill Avery, seeing his chance, crept stealthily out. In his right hand gleamed the barrel and the chamber of his .38 buldog. He felt secure. He had the versatile Red to aid in the necessary getaway. The hotel corridors were opportunely deserted and the noise of the elevator and of the street cars outside would dull the sound of the buldog's bark.

Another step; he raised the weapon; his forefinger began to tighten on the trigger. But Valentine's keen ear caught the sound of the creak of Avery's stiffening elbow joint as it straightened. Wheeling with his old time alacrity, the ex-convict saw his

danger, struck down the firearm with his powerful left hand and wrested it from his would be assailant's grasp. He broke the weapon open and saw that all the chambers were loaded. Snapping it shut, he thrust it into his pocket and hurried the now cowering Avery from him to the door.

"You fool!" sneered Valentine. "Get up and be a man."

The former prison mate of his conqueror stiffly regained his feet.

"I'll kill him—I'll kill him yet!" he exclaimed to Red, who had followed him from behind the curtain.

"Too bad you didn't get him," growled Red disgustedly.

Valentine, however, cut short their talk by warning them of their loud tones. At his pronouncement that they were both crazy Red reminded him of what he had told him about the detectives and their stool pigeons.

"It was a lie, too," put in Avery. "I never stuck that old man up. I'm talking on the level."

"I know Doyle was lying," answered Valentine reassuringly. "It's a hard game we're up against."

Red agreed with the speaker.

"Well, now, maybe you believe that it ain't so easy to turn square. Listen, Jimmy, Avery and me have got a job worked out. We know every twist and turn of the joint. I've provided it twice. We were going to use the soup. He showed a bottle. 'See, old nitroglycerin, but we heard you were going to be sprung, and we waited. You can grab that gopher tonight, and you can bet with us outside no one can get to you."

Red and Avery eyed him anxiously, expectantly.

"I've opened my last safe, Red," was the calm rejoinder.

"So you're going to work, eh, with a copper at your heels?" snarled Red.

"I'm going to work, and I won't be a stool pigeon."

"You're going to give up the game, a graft like you got—up with you?"

"I'm done."

"Well, what in heaven's name—I got it—it's a woman!"

"I have met a decent girl, Red, the kind I knew as a boy—my sister's kind. It was she who got me out of that hole at Sing Sing, and I have promised myself—"

"You don't think she or her folks would stand for you, do you?"

"If I was on the level she just might."

"With a copper telling how about you to her folks unless you delivered me or Red?" interpolated old Avery.

"Jimmy, for God's sake don't go against that straight girl game. It'll only break your heart, then what?" asked Red earnestly.

The released prisoner was thoughtful a moment.

"I've thought it out," he finally said. "She'll be back any minute, and I'm going her way, boys. Yes, and if I do there's a chance that I may win her some day and be able to take her to my old home and my father and mother, who haven't heard of me for years. They didn't seem quite to understand me when I was a lad, boys, nor I them, but I can see now that they meant all right by me. I've learned it all from this girl, though she's almost a complete stranger to me."

Valentine's voice began to waver, and he inclined his face to one side to hide the evidences of the emotion that threatened to overwhelm him.

To Red Flanagan and Bill Avery the situation was a trying one, desperate indeed. One of them was all too young and inexperienced to execute alone the delicate, sure, nerve racking "inside" job of a safe looting sortie, the other was too old and feeble for anything but a berth as "outside" man, to detect approaching danger and give due warning thereof. They absolutely required the partnership of Jimmy Valentine.

Yet here was Valentine, as Avery described him in a reproachful whisper to Red: "Here he is, crazy stuck on a skirt, an' him th' only man in

vict. "I wonder if he"—

"You can bet on it," put in Avery.

"A little sympathy, Jimmy, that's all," suggested Red. "She just came to cheer you on the right path. Ain't you on?"

"Don't say that, Red. Don't you say that!"

"It's a cinch Doyle has queered the play," went on Avery.

Valentine moved angrily at the speaker.

"It wasn't a play, Avery. I'll strangle you if you speak that way again."

Red was again scornful and said:

"Oh, rot! They're playing you, and you don't see it. And for being spoken nice to you're going to blow the softest graft a man ever had."

"I know what I'm doing," insisted Valentine, who began winking nervously up and down the floor.

"Yes, you do. If you had a chance—I'd stick, and you know it, don't you?"

"I don't know anything about it."

Avery, catching a significant glance from Red, continued the shrewd attempt to cause Valentine to lose faith in Rose Lane.

"Did the girl wear pink roses," he said excitedly, "and was the guy with her gray haired and carried a gold headed cane?"

"Yes."

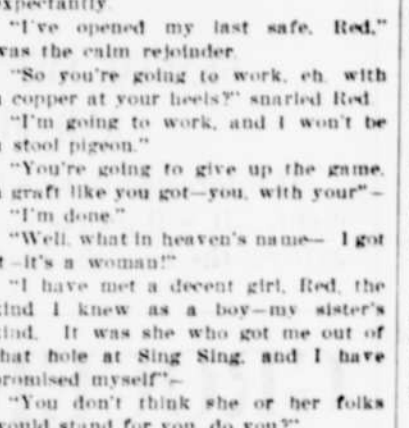
"When you was talking to Doyle here and we was planted there"—he indicated the portieres—"I saw them pass here going toward the depot."

Valentine stopped short in his nervous pacing. He glared in astonishment at the old thief, who stood at one side of the room gripping the rim of a slouch hat, one that could be pulled down over the eyes, to partially conceal the face when the wearer was in a public place.

"They went to the station," Valentine gasped. "Then—they—are—not—coming—to—to—"

Red saw the impression Avery's words had made on his former pal. He saw that possibly very little would now be needed to cause No. 1289 to return to the old ways with the old friends.

"Surest thing you know, Jimmy," he announced, "I saw them too. She had on a shimmering dress with pink flowers in her bonnet, and she looked perfectly happy, too, like she was glad to get away from this town."



HE WRESTED THE WEAPON FROM AVERY.

CHAPTER IX.

SILENCE ensued. Valentine was plainly suffering from the blow. Then an expression of confidence came into Valentine's face. He seated himself on a sofa at the left of the room.

"She'll be back," he said. "You fellows are just like Izzy Snedden. He always said women didn't amount to much. Guess that was because one of the barnsides at the Cheshire Cheese in London peached on him to the Scotland Yard bulls, and he had to make a quick getaway hidden under the coal in a freight steamer. But this girl is different from the kind of women you and I have known, boys. She saw there was something good in me, even when I wore the stripes, and she took me out of the reach of Warden Handler and 'solitaire'—solitaire, boys. Does that mean anything to you?" Valentine's voice rose higher. "Yes, and she's going to do one thing more for me. She's coming back to help me start on the square."

Red stepped close to Valentine, gripped his arm and hissed determinedly into his ears: "You know she won't. You don't think a straight girl would stand for a crook like you, do you—you, with the coppers always after you on account of some of the old stuff we did? Don't kid yourself, Jimmy. It's no go."

"If any other crook had dreamed a dream like that, what a laugh it would be, but now you go, Red—you and Avery."

Red rose quickly.

"What do you mean?" suspiciously. The light of resolution shone in Valentine's eyes.

"I've quit," he said.

"What?" snapped Red and Avery together.

"I've quit."

"What about Doyle?" put in Avery.

"He's heavy on your mind, ain't he, Avery? I can beat Doyle."

"You ain't going to lose that coin I've got staked out for an hour's work?" wailed Red. "Seven thousand if there's a dime?"

"Yes, I'll lose that."

"And a trip abroad to brace you up—a month in Paris?"

"Yes, I lose that too."

Red went on excitedly, bending tensely toward Valentine:

"But you won't lose the old thrill of going into a bank just before dawn,



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America as can open a twelve bolt safe by th' sense o' touch. Ain't it th' limit for a gen-ooz like him to waste his talents an' go on the square?"

Valentine faced his friends of the past.

"When did you see her—the girl?" queried Red Flanagan of him.

"Right here today," Jimmy Valentine's face brightened as he thought of her. "Met her father too. She said she would be back."

"And you think she'll come?" sneered Red. "Why, we been here a half hour, and it's a cinch Doyle has reached her father."

Valentine gave a sudden start. Red inwardly rejoiced as he saw that his shot had taken effect.

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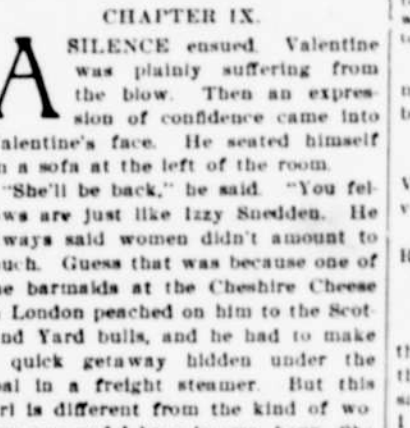
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"And make a clean getaway?" foreshadowed Avery.

"And the long jump and the landing in at a swell cafe, Jimmy—eating the breakfast of the millionaire?" sang out Red.

"With the coin in your kick?" added Avery.

"And reading the papers and laughing our heads off at what suckers we made of the coppers—you ain't going to lose that, Jimmy?" Red pleaded, with every ounce of effort he could control.

Indecision had begun to show in Valentine's face, and now his surrender was complete.

"You got to me, Red," he announced, then added eagerly: "Where is this layout you got? Can we get to it tonight?"

"Sure! It ain't two hours from here."

"It's a cinch," commented Avery delightedly.

Jimmy Valentine had surrendered indeed. His two one-time accomplices had cunningly played on his weakness for the thrills of the "crooked game." The thrills of it to him were more precious than the rewards. They were his rewards. Besides, the girl had not returned. She had paid the debt she owed to her rescuer, and that was all. Well, let her go, reasoned Valentine. Never again would he commit the folly of placing faith in a straight girl!

"Wait!" he cried. "My hands are pretty tough. I couldn't feel the tick of grandfather's clock the way they are now, but I can beat that. I can sandpaper them down till I can feel the pulse in a dead man's wrist. Where's the?"

"We got him," whispered Bill Avery excitedly to Red. "We got him, an' he'll stick."

Hardly had Jimmy Valentine made his declaration to again join interests with Red Flanagan and Bill Avery than a bellboy entered the parlor, joggling the name of "Mr. Valentine." Jimmy stepped forward hastily, seized an envelope bearing his name which the boy carried and excitedly tore it open. He found a brief note written in feminine penmanship. He read these words, and the color surged to his cheeks:

"Please don't leave till I return. I enclose you a note Mrs. Webster asked me to give you. We saw her at the depot, where we went to reserve sleepers for tonight. ROSE LANE."

"What is it?" asked Avery, drawing near. "Something from Doyle, I'll bet."

"Yes, what is it?" questioned Red.

"It is the return of hope," answered Valentine, his emotion causing his voice to shake.

"You've weakened again?" sneered Red.

"No, I'm strong again."

"You mean that's from the girl?"

"She is coming back, Red, and there's nothing on this earth or in hell that can make me go wrong. You said a minute ago that if you thought I had a chance you'd stick."

"I said it."

"Then I hold you to that."

"Good God!" exclaimed Avery. "You're not goin' to turn square, too, Red?"

"I'm going with Jimmy. If I'd do a bit for him I got to go if he asks it."

"What am I goin' to do?" asked Avery plaintively.

Valentine drew close to him.

"I've got you a job, Bill, a good one," he announced.

"Me a job? Where?"

Valentine read from a note Mrs. Moore had left with him.

"Listen," he said. "This will introduce the man you promised the position as watchman of one of your grain elevators. The wages at \$2.50 a day are satisfactory to him."

Intense disgust spread over Bill Avery's face.

"Two-fifty a day," he sneered. "A man can't live on that."

Valentine laughed.

"It costs 31 cents a day to keep a man in Sing Sing," he reminded the thief.

"I don't want a job," snarled Avery. "Only the suckers work for a living."

"Yes, you do want one," returned Valentine, "and this is just your kind, Avery. And let me tell you something that you think I don't know. You're tired of being a crook—tired to death. I know that when we were inside. But you are afraid of what a lot of old pals will say. Well, let them say. What they got? Did you ever see a crook with anything? What do they amount to? They haven't the standing of a house dog. You're tired of it, Bill, and ashamed of the years you've lost, and I know it. Now here's your chance, your day of salvation. There's the letter and here's the coin to get there." He handed Avery some bills. "It's way out west where no one knows you, and you've got a chance. Just think, back to a mother and then ahead to—"

The hardened look began to fade from the thief's face.

"Give it to me." He clutched the money in his hand. "I'll try, by God, I'll try." Tears trickled down Avery's prison paled cheeks.

"That's the talk—that's the heart," spoke Valentine sympathetically.

"And if I fall I'll end it," said Avery.

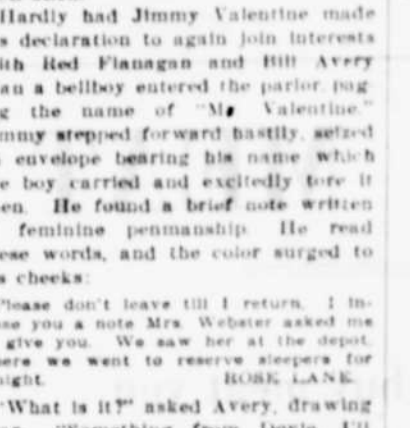
"You won't fall. It's only the suckers that fall. Make the next train—beat Doyle. Get away."

Avery turned toward one of the entrances.

"Goodby, Jimmy. Goodby, Red," he cried, and he was gone.

"I tell you, Red," said Valentine, looking after him, "there isn't a crook you know who wouldn't go straight if he could."

"God," exclaimed Red feelingly,



"I KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE OF ME."

ment, which occupation he followed until a new district leader was elected. One night during horse shoe week the sound of rusty ax blows in the armored front door struck terror into the hearts of the employees of the fashionably attired players of faro, roulette, baccarat and poker.

The lad's truthful testimony at the trial which followed so enraged his uncle that Red no longer found a home with him. Cast on his own resources, he was attracted by the glittering promises of an expert pool and faro dealer whom his uncle had employed. He joined with him in several trips on coasting steamers, "bitting in" with the gambler in pool games with the passengers and exchanging signals with him concerning the cards they held. He learned the art of denting the corners of the markings, queens and jacks with his thumb nails so that in dealing with fingers sandpapered or worn almost to the bleeding point with pumice stone he could detect these indentations and know when and to whom he was dealing the high cards. From this it was only a step to a partnership with the great Jimmy Valentine, the man who could "cop a gopher" without any official aids.

All this was well known to Valentine. He himself had drifted into bad company in a manner somewhat similar. He could see in the lessons of his own experiences that Red's misdeeds were not entirely blamable at Red.

He was about to inform Red of his intention to aid him in a new career when he heard in the corridor the voice of Rose Lane addressing some one he believed must be her father.

"Here she is, Red," whispered Valentine, rising quickly. "You must get out till they go." But too late. At that instant Rose Lane entered, followed by her father. They saw Valentine standing by a suspicious looking young man with very red hair.

Valentine, realizing that he was on the verge of absolute ruin in the estimation of the girl and her already suspicious father, for he could hardly explain Red's presence, turned coolly toward the thief.

"I'm very sorry, sir," he said in different tones, "but I don't know the man you are inquiring for. Never heard of him. Guess you had better inquire of the clerk at the hotel office."

Red, catching the hint, replied: "Thank you, sir; I will do so," and went out of the room, concealing a grinning face behind his hat.

"but you know what's inside of a man."

"I know what's inside of me, and I dare face it."

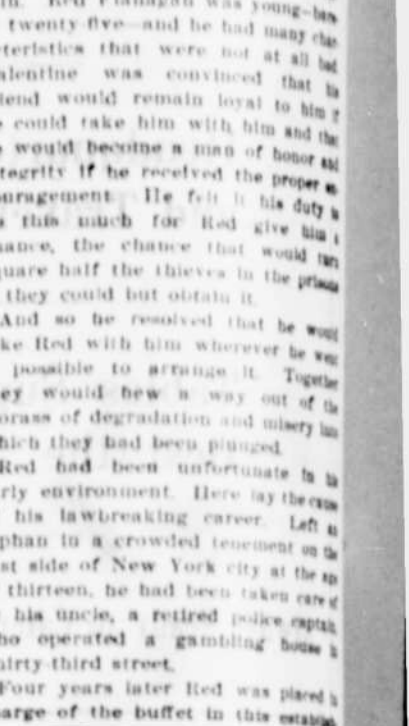
Jimmy Valentine crossed to a window and peered out into the street. No one in sight that he knew, yet he had lost all doubt that Rose Lane would return. Her message had calmed his fears, and, more than that, it had come in time to save him from thrusting aside the one chance in the world to redeem his lost years.

Another thought rose strong within him as he returned to the sofa, seated himself and saw Red standing disconsolately near the table. Something had to be done for Red—that was certain. Red Flanagan was young—barely twenty-five—and he had many characteristics that were not at all bad. Valentine would remain loyal to him if he could take him with him and that he would become a man of honor and integrity if he received the proper encouragement. He felt it his duty to do this much for Red give him a chance, the chance that would turn a square half the thieves in the prisons if they could but obtain it.

And so he resolved that he would take Red with him wherever he went if possible to arrange it. Together they would brew a way out of the morass of degradation and misery into which they had been plunged.

Red had been unfortunate in his early environment. Here in the case of his lawbreaking career. Left an orphan in a crowded tenement on the east side of New York city at the age of thirteen, he had been taken care of by his uncle, a retired police captain, who operated a gambling house in Thirty-third street.

Four years later Red was placed in charge of the buffet in this establish-



"I KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE OF ME."

ment, which occupation he followed until a new district leader was elected. One night during horse shoe week the sound of rusty ax blows in the armored front door struck terror into the hearts of the employees of the fashionably attired players of faro, roulette, baccarat and poker.

The lad's truthful testimony at the trial which followed so enraged his uncle that Red no longer found a home with him. Cast on his own resources, he was attracted by the glittering promises of an expert pool and faro dealer whom his uncle had employed. He joined with him in several trips on coasting steamers, "bitting in" with the gambler in pool games with the passengers and exchanging signals with him concerning the cards they held. He learned the art of denting the corners of the markings, queens and jacks with his thumb nails so that in dealing with fingers sandpapered or worn almost to the bleeding point with pumice stone he could detect these indentations and know when and to whom he was dealing the high cards. From this it was only a step to a partnership with the great Jimmy Valentine, the man who could "cop a gopher" without any official aids.

All this was well known to Valentine. He himself had drifted into bad company in a manner somewhat similar. He could see in the lessons of his own experiences that Red's misdeeds were not entirely blamable at Red.

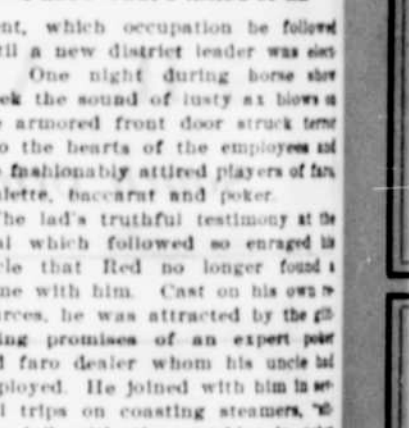
He was about to inform Red of his intention to aid him in a new career when he heard in the corridor the voice of Rose Lane addressing some one he believed must be her father.

"Here she is, Red," whispered Valentine, rising quickly. "You must get out till they go." But too late. At that instant Rose Lane entered, followed by her father. They saw Valentine standing by a suspicious looking young man with very red hair.

Valentine, realizing that he was on the verge of absolute ruin in the estimation of the girl and her already suspicious father, for he could hardly explain Red's presence, turned coolly toward the thief.

"I'm very sorry, sir," he said in different tones, "but I don't know the man you are inquiring for. Never heard of him. Guess you had better inquire of the clerk at the hotel office."

Red, catching the hint, replied: "Thank you, sir; I will do so," and went out of the room, concealing a grinning face behind his hat.



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