

PICTURES IN THE NIGHT

Written by Eugene Ackerman

THE picture hangs in the Cosmopolitan Museum, in that section devoted to modern portraits, where you may see it any day. It is a portrait of Douglas Matthews, the Western lumber magnate, who died six months ago, and it was completed a few weeks before he fell ill for the last time.

Critics say that the young artist flattered his subject, softening the ruthless eyes and drawing away to tender hues the harsh lips. He has made of him a majestic, kindly old man, who seems to peer out at you as if he were vainly seeking something which he lost—or never had.

As the world knew him this was not Douglas Matthews. One commentator, bolder than the rest, summed up his career when he said "Matthews was the most powerful and notorious man of his time."

So I stood before this picture and wondered what the great master of millions had thought as he gazed upon it. The hand which was leading him away from the world was then heavy upon him. Before him stretched the terrible infinite; behind him, the sullied years. As I lost myself in retrospection there was a footfall at my side and "Red Pete" Dugan stood before me. His face wore a strangely gentle expression, and there was a suggestion of quaint melancholy in his close-set, sharp eyes as he shook his head in answer to my astonished gasp.

"You're wrong, pal," he said, divining my thoughts before I could speak. "The old boy looked just that way when I seen him last, and I bit his smiling like that when he goes away for good, even if he does spend his life growlin' at the world."

"Just a moment, Pete," I begged. "What are you doing in an art gallery, and where did you meet Matthews?"

For answer "Red Pete" winked slowly.

"I'm the best friend he's got once," he answered after a moment. "Now, 'Red Pete,' creature of stivatic impulses, has trod strange paths in his thirty-odd years of life. 'Thief' though he is, there is within him a strain of Celtic chivalry that has brought him adventures vouchered to but few. Born in another age he would have carried to victory or death the colors of his lady. Thrust into the drab life of an East Side tenement district in this age, he early sought the highways of adventure, unburdened by any moral code."

He has been in many places in varied capacities—at all times frowned upon by the law; traveling always in a circle, which brings him back at intervals to his beloved East Side and "Murphy's" tawdry dance hall. Here, while a wicked musician exorcises a long-suffering piano, "Red Pete" dispenses magnificently of his gains. Here it is that I have met him occasionally, and when he is in the humor have been regaled with Homeric tales of his exploits.

But there is a wide variance between "Murphy's" and the Cosmopolitan Museum, which lies in a district of such aristocracy that "Red Pete's" kind seldom venture there unless on business bent; so when I found voice I grasped "Red Pete's" arm and said:

"You were Matthews' friend?"

"Sure I am," "Red Pete" answered firmly. "He says so and gives me this to prove it," and he displayed in his tie a magnificent black pearl. "I'll tell y' how it was if you want an earful."

Desirous of the "earful," I piloted "Red Pete" forth from the sanctified holiness of the Museum, and forth also from the velvet richness of the neighborhood, into the gracious and noisy welcome of "Murphy's."

"This is a couple o' years ago," "Red Pete" began. "I'm in Oshkosh, workin' alone, on a hunch I had that there's a lot o' easy money in these medium sized burrs."

Oshkosh is where old man Matthews was born and where his homestead is, but he don't ever come there. His wife, he ain't lived with for over thirty years, drops in once a year, the natives say.

"I'm curious to see the old guy's entrance court, so the second night I'm there I roam up Algoma street, which is the burr's main alley, and flash an old, ramblin' structure that makes me think o' red-faced sports sittin' before grate fires, playing poker and drinkin' swell booze. I likes it so well I'm for goin' and lookin' it over."

"That's easy. This house is like a big chair in the woods, it's that surrounded by brush. I opens a long window around at the side o' the house that's shielded by a old arbor seat and chambers in."

"I lands in a little sort of conservatory that leads into a big room and goes a fine shot. I ain't alone."

"Sittin' before a weakenin' grate fire is an old guy, who I thinks at first is asleep. I'm goin' away, because I don't want to start anything, when I gets my second shot—the old boy is talkin'. He's talkin' to something above him, and it's certainly a sad line o' word endeavor he's pushin'."

"I look where he's gazin' and sees he talkin' to two pictures on either side of the grate. I can't get 'em plain, but one is of a young buck, with a soup and fish shirt, a floatin' tie and a lot of hair, and the other is a girl, with her hat slammed against her back, and a couple o' balloons for sleeves."

"I does a brodie under a couch inside the big room, so I hear this queer monolog, just as he gets up and stretches his arms—and I nearly go out for the count."

"This conversin' person is Matthews. Yessir, and he holds his arms up to the picture of the Jane and says:

"Oh, the wasted years—the wasted years! Then he climbs up on his chair and gets close to it."

"Dead," he rambles on, and his voice ain't comfortin'. "Dead in your youth and beauty—it's all withered with sorrow, which I bring you."

"And then he turns to this other picture and shakes his fist."

"And you're dead, too! And you're such a fine lad when you're young. Now you love everybody, specially her. And how you used to sit in this very chair at night and say out loud to her, while she sat with you: 'I love you—I love you'—and sometimes she laughs lik little bell, and



And then he turns to this other picture and shakes his fist.

at other times she cries and gets close to you."

"Say, by this time I'm sittin' on top of this couch and my eyes is rollin'."

"And she wouldn't forgive you that time, and you goes away," Matthews keeps on, still teetering on that chair, 'till I'm afraid he busts his neck."

"You go away and steep yourself in sin, and now look at you."

"And he jumps off his chair and slams himself on the chest—so hard he coughs. Without ever thinkin' o' what I'm doin', I pipes out:

"You poor old sport!"

"You hear me with a little gurgle and fixes me with them glims o' his, which they say makes kings buy him a drink. This don't ease me any. But he weakens."

"You—you hear me? he asks."

"Sure I hears you," I says. "I'm interested, too. Go on," I advises. "I'll go away and never say a word, but on the square, pal I feel for y'."

"At this he walks towards me."

"Y're a thief! he says. 'Y' come here to rob the house!"

"Y're a good guesser, Mr. Matthews," says I. "I'm that."

"Ah, you know me, eh?" he asks.

"Sure, I know y'. I answers, 'Dye think I'm a rube? But, on the level, I don't come here to steal. I just dropped in to look around a little. hearin' this is your old joint. I don't think there's any one here, but I finds you."

"A likely tale—a likely tale—he begins."

"Aw, pull that line," I says. "I'm on my way and I'm not stoppin' for some time. So call y'r bulls, and I'm aimin' for the window when he calls me back."

"Wait," he says. "You say you're sorry for me."

"And I mean it," I says. "Y're makin'

a home run when y' talk this lost my life."

"With that he takes me by the arm and leads me up to this picture of him. self. I can only see it dim, in the fire from the grate. It's of a big, open-faced young guy, with a protrudin' dome and a long nose. He's wearin' a chin like a lightwight's, and all his time looks as if he spends all his time learnin' new laughs. He talks of this picture to me like he's conversin' of some one he used to know."

"He's a fine lookin' boy," he says. "Now ain't he? He's a sturdy young fellow, with a laugh and a joke all the time. He ain't got no enemy in the world, and he ain't ever hurt no one. And here's that boy again, and he slaps himself and smiles. It's the worst smile I ever see, includin' Hair Lip Charlie's when he's sore."

"I'm certainly sorry for you, pal," I says. "Ain't you no chance o' you old folks gettin' together?"

"They ain't no chance," he breaks in. "And if there is, does that bring back the years we lost, does it make us young again and let us have kids that'll kick around? No, it don't. Nothin' can. We're dead, he adds, and our souls is dead as if we ain't ever been born."

"And he sits down in the chair and puts his face in his hands. I'm just patten' him on the back when I hear the front door open. So does he, and he sits up. There's a ratlin' and a bangin' and some gasps from a guy I learn is his secretary. Then a woman says, sharp and calm:

"Call my motor back, please. I shall leave at once. I didn't know Mr. Matthews is here or I certainly would not intrude."

"Matthews raises slowly out'n his chair. His face gets so purple I'm sure he busts in a minute."

"Steady, pal, steady," I advises. "My wife," he groans. "My wife."

"And then in through the door swings a little party in a big coat. As she breezes along I sneak behind the couch again, not wishin' to intrude on the act. Matthews bows slight, and his face is like iron."

"I'm very sorry," he says, up stage like."

"The old lady jumps at his voice."

"You in here?" she says, and it looks like she's goin' under. Matthews starts towards her, but she moves away."

"I beg pardon," says he. "I ain't poison. I thinks then you're goin' to faint."

"Thank you," the old girl answers. "I ain't needed y'r assistance for over thirty years."

"You know whose fault that is," he barks.

"Does that matter now?" she asks and there's a funny little catch in her voice. Say, I'd a laughed at them old geezers only I'm sorry for 'em. Fightin' right off the bell, see?"

"This secretary, John, is hoverin' around like a chicken without a head. Matthews pipes him."

"John," he yells, "we're goin' away immediate!"

"The old lady busts in."

"You needn't," she says. "I'm goin'."

"I'm having the motor telephoned for."

"I can't allow that," says Matthews.

"Good-by," says Matthews, movin' toward the door."

"The old lady whirls."

"It's unnecessary for you to go," she says. "I go. I hear your health ain't no good, and—"

"No, it ain't, thank God! Matthews answers with a yell. And I'm glad when it goes altogether, and he rushes

for the door, when I rise up from behind that couch."

"Wait a minute, sport," I says. "Y're clean forgotten me, but he turns."

"Oh," he says. "I thinks you're gone. Here," and he tosses me his roll. "Get out the way you come, and get quick."

"Aw, put that stuff away," I answers. "Say," I continues, turning to the old lady, who's watching my play with some amusement, "I drops in on you blowin' through this shack and finds him, and he tells me about you."

"At least," she says, turnin' to Matthews, "I may ask you to keep this fellow from insultin' me."

"Ma'am," says I, "I ain't insultin' you. I'm tryin' to tell y' what a lot o' bunk this enemy stuff is between you two. When I runs into your husband tonight he's weepin' before y'r picture and a-kissin' it."

"At this the old lady rustles up to me. She puts her hands on my shoulders."

"You see him kissin' my picture?" she asks. "You see him? Oh, tell me all of it."

"Well, I tells her. Her face gets red and white and her eyes has tears in 'em. When I finishes she turns toward Matthews."

"Is this true, Douglas?" she says. "Say, he's a fine sport—fine! He walks up to her."

"Yes, it's true," he says, kind o' low. "I'm hungerin' for you, since you throws me out. I'm no good now, but you ain't takin' away the memories of them two years we have together. And now, good-by to you," and he's off again toward the door."

"Doug—Doug," the old lady yells. "Oh, Doug, forgive me," and she rushes to him and gets in his arms. He gives a funny little grunt, and I thinks he's goin' to break her in two."

"Doug," she says, "hold me tight. I'm a bad, wicked old woman and a fool, but ever since you went away I been dreamin' that some time you're goin' to hold me this way and say you love me. It's been my pride that's kept me from you."

"It's my fault," he says. "It's my fault. Oh, Myra, the weary, tired years we lost."

"Oh, I so want you to hold me like this," she answers. "I think always that you'll never do it again like this in this world."

"I love you always," he says, "even when I'm worst." And, pal, he wears that map then you see in the picture. I sneak out the window, and they never notice I'm goin'."

I lays down on the old arbor seat outside, listenin' to their voices. Before I can beat it out they stop. Both's been cryin', and they make straight for where I'm lyin'. I try to sneak, but they see me."

"Here! Come here," says Matthews. "On the level," I tell him, "I meant to get away without you seein' me."

"Both of them hold out their hands. The old lady peeps up at me."

"You should be a good boy," she says. "Matthews takes this pin. I get here out of his scarf and slips it to me."

"Young man," he says, "y' give me back tonight what is worth more than my soul, but I gets that, too. Go straight, it's the only way you get anywhere. Come and see me in New York and we'll talk matters over."

"Red Pete" was silent a moment, and again I saw that quaintly melancholy smile light up his face."

"The last time I see 'em," he concluded, "they're warblin' at each other in that arbor. I hears later that she goes West with him, and is with him when he passes in."

"Didn't you try to see Matthews in New York?" I asked. "Why, he'd have made you."

"Red Pete" shrugged his shoulders. "I gets in bad in Ohio the next month or so. Anyhow, I'm not a flunkie. I ain't lookin' for tips for what I do."

GOING WRONG AND GETTING RIGHT AGAIN

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instruction to report at once for another position."

He got the new job, began again and in six years he was receiving \$1800 a year. Then he received an offer from another company, which accepted his record in the two recent positions without questioning his past. He made good, and is now drawing \$4000 a year as salesmanager. He has nothing now to fear from the police, for he is a new man, his alertness, his decisiveness turned to new use."

In the 15 years of its existence the Central Howard Association has assisted 12,587 men, just emerged from prison, to begin life over again, acting as the mediator between the prisoner and the rebuffs of "outrageous fortune." Most of them secured employment with broad-minded business men who were willing to give the man an opportunity."

Eighty per cent of all the men who have come to the association during the 15 years of its activity have made good, and thousands of them, are now established as good citizens throughout the country. By their own unaided efforts they have made a new life for themselves, and have won since they came in most cases without money, experience or adequate initiative."

In 1914 the association assisted 2200 men at an average cost of \$5.49. Of this number 147 were paroled to the superintendent, and the earnings for these men for themselves, as given upon the association's records of monthly reports, amounted to \$58,441.

The estimated earnings, upon the same basis, of the 2200 discharged men brings a total of approximately \$880,000. Add to this amount of earnings the \$330,000 that it might otherwise have cost society to keep these men in prison, and we have a net gain of \$1,210,000 to the public of main-taining the Central Howard Association."

The Nation-wide responsibility of the association for the proper care of the ex-prisoner is shown by its records, indicating the nativity of each applicant. From 14 countries came some 350 prisoners, for whom, as a foster country, we have assumed the obligation of freedom and justice. Every state in the Union furnished one or more of these men who applied to the association for aid. Inasmuch as not more than one-fourth of these men belonged to any one state, either by reason of nativity or incarceration, it is apparent that the problem of caring for them is interstate and National. No state can assume its obligation alone, since other states are necessarily already caring for some of its delinquent citizens."

The important thing for these men, and for any community into which they come, is not what they have been, but what they will become if given an opportunity. The question as to where they were born and why, when and where they were imprisoned, fades in the face of the pressing need for work and a chance to prove their worth. This need the Central Howard Association is seeking to supply. The fruit of its endeavors is shown not only in the number of men it has encouraged, advised and aided in a material way, but in the continued and rapid changes taking place in public sentiment toward the offender and in the new freedom given to those in bondage everywhere."

One of the finest tributes ever paid the Central Howard Association is contained in the following, which came unsolicited from a discharged prisoner whom the association had once befriended:

"A little more than a year ago I was discharged from a prison in New York State, where I had just finished serving a term for highway robbery committed in New York City. There I was born and there I had for a number of years pursued a criminal career."

"Before obtaining my freedom I had resolved to reform, to get work and lead an honest life."

"My best efforts to get a job of any sort were unsuccessful, so about a month later I left New York with \$5

in my pocket and an unbroken resolution to stick to living on the 'square.'"

"Last October I arrived in Chicago on a Wabash boxcar—ragged and friendless—after a zig zag chase of that will-o'-the-wisp, a job, covering over two thousand miles. In a couple of days the few dimes I had were gone for food and lodging. So that I presently found myself homeless, jobless and broke."

"In casting about for means of obtaining the material with which to write East in an endeavor to get some money, I decided to ask a prison association to oblige me in this regard."

"A search of the city directory yielded the address of the Salvation Army prison bureau. Going there I told the officer in charge that I was an ex-convict and would appreciate the favor of writing materials, etc. He said that there were no facilities there for writing, that I would perhaps find better accommodations at the Central Howard Association. He very courteously invited me to return to his office if I met with failure there."

"On the 12th floor of a large office building in the heart of Chicago I found the Central Howard Association."

"It was my lucky day—in that small suite of offices I was to find more than I consciously sought, or from my previous experience had been led to hope for."

"On explaining my errand briefly, a littered table was cleared for me. Pen, ink and paper provided; no questions asked and, I proceeded to write for two hours. When I finished and prepared to leave, I was called into a small private office."

"You are a stranger here? Looking for a job? Have you a place to sleep tonight; to eat? The man asked these questions, gave me money for my supper, lodging and breakfast and told me to come there in the morning. That he would then send me some places where I might get work."

"I left there that late afternoon with a heart beating high with hope, with a new grip on my resolve to stay straight."

"No word had been spoken of reform, no mention of religion made, no machine-made charity doled out, no maudlin pretense there, but instead the square dealing of practical help and understanding."

"The next morning I was given several cards and directions. Each card bore an application for work addressed to an employer specifying the job sought and my name. Each bore the signed recommendation of F. Emory Lyon, superintendent of the Central Howard Association."

"The European war was on, business unusually depressed and jobs more than scarce. Every day I went there for these cards until I finally secured a job. Every day for two weeks I found the same unflinching willingness to help me get work. Every night I was given money for food and lodging. Every day many others were receiving the same help and encouragement."

"Chicago may well be proud of the work of this prison association, of the work of Dr. Lyon and his associates. The reform of a criminal is generally considered a rather hopeless proposition, both by the public and by the criminal himself, and with good reason. That good old reason is that the spirit and efficiency of the Central Howard Association is rare, indeed."

DRIVEN FROM BOTH ENDS.

Several of the European armies now engaged in war are using an American-made armored motor car which is designed to be driven from either end. It has four forward and reverse speeds, enabling it to be driven as rapidly in one direction as in the other and away from the necessity of having to turn the machine around before it can proceed in a direction opposite to that in which it has been traveling. It drives, brakes and steers on all four wheels, and has a place at each end for a chauffeur. The man at the front of the car has complete control of it when it is going forward, but when it is run backward, the steering wheel, brakes and clutch are operated by the rear driver.—Popular Mechanics.

Most Irish and Scotch banks have the power to issue bank notes of their own.