

How Mr. Harding Conducted the Defense

By DWIGHT NORWOOD

"Mr. Harding," said Captain Wainwright, handing his glass to his first mate, "what do you think of that thing over there?"

"I think," said Harding, "that it is one of those devilish Chinese pirates that infest these waters."

This dialogue occurred on the American tramp steamer North Star in the Java sea, a region dreaded by mariners for the villainous characters who infest it.

"What do you think of our chances in case they attack us?" asked the captain.

"That depends on our ingenuity. We can't sink them before they reach us. We'll have to prevent their boarding us if we can, and if they board us we will have to fight them for our lives."

"How can we prevent their boarding us?"

"By so manning the points that get on deck. One American sailor armed should be able to keep off three Chinese men from climbing a perpendicular ship's side. But excuse me, captain, I see that the villains are plotting for us; I must go below and order up the arms."

Harding left the captain peering at the junk. It was a small vessel, smaller than the North Star, but its deck was literally swarming with copper-colored devils ready for loot and murder. It had no ordnance of any caliber; it had been armed and equipped by men who had no special means to equip it, and, as Harding said, relied on taking such ships as it could over power by boarding.

Soon after the first officer had gone below the men began to bring up guns, pistols and cutlasses and distributed them, with ammunition to fit, along the bulwarks.

"Where's Mr. Harding?" the captain demanded of one of the men. "What's he doing below when we're in peril for our lives?"

"He's in the engine room," was the reply.

At that moment a diabolical shout went up which diverted the captain's attention from the delinquent Mr. Harding. It was a bloodthirsty cry of triumph. The pirates, having come near enough to the North Star to make sure that she had no means of sinking her adversary, were in a very hilarious state. Their junk was a tolerably good sailer, and the wind was fair to enable them to bear down on their enemy. The North Star, though a steamer, was a tub and could barely do so, on an miles an hour.

On came the junk, her murderous crew dancing and shouting and chattering and brandishing their weapons. The captain of the North Star was so terrified that he took no action whatever, but the second officer, Mr. Melgus, was quietly arranging the men in groups along the bulwarks and giving them their orders. There were a few hand grenades in the stock of explosives, and Melgus ordered them on to the forecabin, where it was expected the Chinamen would attempt to climb the bowsprit chains, for the North Star was part steamer and part sailer. The crew was divided into two sections, the one forward, the other aft.

"Why are you leaving the ship clear for the devil's amidships, Mr. Melgus?" wailed the captain. "Don't you suppose they've got sense enough to come aboard where they have the least height to climb?"

"It's Mr. Harding's orders, sir."

"Harding's orders? What's he doing giving orders from the engine room?"

Again the captain's attention was attracted by a yell from the pirates, who were right under the North Star's stern. There was a volley from the men posted there, and a grappling hook that was thrown and caught on the gunwale was cast off.

Then the Chinamen were seen talking to their boats with the evident intention of stringing the fight out so far that the little crew of the North Star would not be able to keep them off from all points at once. A boat load of men well armed and with hooks and rope ladders attacked the stern, another the bow, while a boat was sent on each side.

At this time Harding, dragging a hose, and the fireman, dragging another, came up the companionway.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked the captain.

Harding had no time to reply in words, but he did reply in action. Two or three of the Chinamen had climbed up the unprotected port side, and one of them had a leg over the gunwale. Harding led drive at him with a half inch jet of steam from the boiler, and he went back over the side, doubtless glad to get into the cold water below.

At the same time the fireman opened up on another party about to jump down on to the deck on the starboard side. Both Harding and the fireman, having cleared the gunwale, carried the hose to the side and, pointing the stream downward, gave a death snail to every one in the boats below. The how and stern being well protected by legitimate arms of warfare and the sides being impregnable against a jet of hot steam, the pirates withdrew.

Harding, who had saved the ship by his admirable foresight and resource, became the idol of the crew, while all respect for the captain was gone. When the North Star sailed again from an American port Harding was her master.

by with many kisses. She was going to Rome to visit an aunt. The compartment she entered was occupied by one person only—a man. He was small and clean shaven, and the train had not gone far into the country when he began to notice Lita, as if taking note of her height and weight. Presently he said:

"Signorina, will you please take off your hat and give it to me?"

Lita looked at him as if she did not comprehend his meaning. The man jerked her hat off her head and put his own on hers. By this time she was thoroughly frightened and made no resistance. The man forced her to exchange her outer garments with him, and when this was done he pulled a veil down over his face.

"When we make a stop," he said, "I will get out—that is, unless I see danger. If you betray me I will kill you. I am a bandit. I have been making a rich haul in Naples. The police got on to my being there, and I am surprised that they have permitted me to get out of the city. Indeed, I suspect some game on their part, and I should not wonder if they were on the lookout for me."

Lita was thoroughly cowed. Indeed, it was all she could do to keep from fainting. But she kept up till the train reached the first stop, hoping then to be relieved of him. When the train pulled up at the station the man looked at her, but drew back immediately, and Lita saw that she would not be afraid of him. The conductor came to the door of the compartment and put a woman into it. Lita noticed that she slipped him for finding her a seat. The newcomer was a comfort to the poor girl, though she wished she had been a man. She noticed, however, that the woman was big and strong, while the bandit was small, though wiry.

The train had scarcely pulled out of the station when the new passenger began to look scrutinizingly at Lita. As for the man, he leaned back in a corner with the veil over his face, and no one would have had reason to suspect that he was not a woman.

"Where are you going, signor?" asked the woman of Lita in a cooing voice.

"To Rome, signora."

The woman looked intently at the girl, evidently being somewhat mystified at her appearance and especially at her voice, which was thoroughly feminine.

"When the train left Naples," continued the woman, "was there not a man in this compartment?"

Lita, whose eye was fixed on the bandit, saw his fingers twitching. She interpreted it to mean that she must reply in the negative.

"There was no one, signora, except who are now here."

There was a pocket in the woman's dress, and Lita noticed that she kept her right hand in this pocket. When she asked the question she looked at the figure leaning back in the corner, apparently asleep.

"Signora," called the new passenger, "can you tell me the hour this train reaches Rome?"

The only reply was a snore.

Lita would have warned the woman that the person she addressed was a man and a bandit and begged her to let him alone, fearing that he would murder them both, but she dared not do so. The woman made no further attempt to extract information from the sleeper; instead she began to look Lita over, her attention being riveted on the girl's figure that looked different from a man's.

"You're not a man," she said; "you're a woman."

Lita made no reply. The man in the corner snored on. The woman turned her attention to the sleeper.

"Signora!"

The man stirred, then asked what was wanted in a feigned voice.

"At what hour does this train reach Rome?"

"I do not know."

"What's the matter with your voice? Have you got a cold?"

"Pardon me. I am sleepy. I have been up very late every night for a week."

"Was there a man in this compartment when the train left Naples?"

"Yes; the young gentleman opposite you."

"She's not a man; she's a woman."

"Well, I have nothing to do with that, nor do I care what she is."

This was said angrily, and the bandit, losing control of his voice, betrayed his sex. Suddenly the woman's hand came out of her pocket and with it a cocked revolver, with which she covered the bandit.

"Throw up your hands, Andrea Carpi!"

The hands went up at once. The woman leaned forward and snatched away the veil.

"You are very smart, Signor Carpi, but you can't fool us carabinieri all the time. I thought that by changing sex I could bag you and have succeeded. I see that you have changed clothes with this young lady."

He threw off his cloak and displayed the uniform of the national police.

Lita breathed a breath of relief. She regained her clothes, and the bandit returned with his capter by the next train to Naples.

THE MAN UP A TREE

By M. QUAD

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I am something of a reformer not only in theory, but in practice, and when I discovered the man up a tree I determined to try my hand at elevating his moral standard.

I had extended sympathy and more or less financial aid to this man up a tree. In a burst of confidence he had confessed to me that he had been a swindler, a gambler, a confidence man and a great deal more. He had come to me as a man who had at least seen the error of his ways and sighed to take another track and be counted with the good and respectable. He had given me the name of H. Jones-Jones. When he threw himself upon my mercy, as it were—when he made a clean breast of his wicked career and added that if any one would

him he would turn into honest paths and travel on without a limp—I agreed to take him in hand. I gave him money for a week's vacation from crime and when the vacation was over was to see what further could be done. I took my week off at the same time and brought up amid the fresh butter-milk and dew kissed goldenrod of the country.

On the second night of my stay, as I sat by my open window at midnight to finish the last of my cigar and wonder if my Jones-Jones had kept straight during the last forty-eight hours, I suddenly caught sight of him on the ground below. It was a farmhouse hotel at which I was stopping. I had a corner room, and at that corner of the house stood a large apple tree. I had observed that a big limb branched out so close to my window that I could have descended by it. What you can descend by you can also ascend by. I had no sooner caught sight of Jones-Jones at the foot of the tree at an hour when everybody was supposed to be in bed than I understood that he intended to pay me a secret visit. Mr. Jones-Jones had no sooner begun to climb that apple tree than I made ready to receive him with all due hospitality. There was no club in the room, but the water picher had been filled for the night and made a good weapon.

I waited with patience until he had reached a particular position and then brought the picher down upon his head. The idea was to administer an anesthetic, and it was a success. He pitched forward into the room with a long drawn sigh. Then I forced brandy between his teeth and bathed his face with water, and in the course of a quarter of an hour my midnight visitor had so far recovered his senses that I ventured to remark:

"Well, Jones-Jones, why didn't you tell me that you were coming, that I might be on the lookout for you?"

"Sir, my name is Brown-Brown, and I don't exactly understand the situation. Am I in your room, or are you in mine?"

"I believe it's my room," I replied.

"Now, then, Mr. Ashmore, as to the business in hand," said Brown-Brown to me. "If you think you can advance me \$500 I am sure I can make a go of it."

It took me a little while to catch on, but by and by I discovered that Jones-Jones had been knocked out and Brown-Brown had taken his place. Jones-Jones was a crook who wanted to reform. Brown was a poor but honest man who wanted to go into the making of shirts.

I had turned Jones-Jones the crook back into Brown-Brown the honest man by a knock on the head. When my week was up we went back to town together, and I gave Brown-Brown money enough to set up in shirt-making.

My man prospered wonderfully well. People said he was a little eccentric, but he was honest and a hard worker. In one year he had paid me back half my money and built up a good business. One day a detective entered the store to make a purchase. He had known Jones-Jones as a crook. He knew that Jones-Jones had a crooked finger on his right hand and a mole on his left cheek. When he discovered that Brown-Brown had these same identification marks he began to look at him more closely, and by and by he made up his mind that the old crook stood before him. He was so sure of it that he set out to make an arrest. Brown-Brown was an honest man, but in his surprise he started to make a bolt of it. As he ran out of his shop and down the street pursued by the detective he encountered a policeman, who tapped him on the head with his club. Brown-Brown went down like a log and was carted off to the station. I was present when his senses returned, and you can imagine my feelings when he sat up and said:

"Well, you've got me at last, but I gave you a run for it. You fellows ain't half sharp!"

"You are Jones-Jones the crook," said the sergeant.

"Of course I am and the slickest crook in the country. Is it that bank business you want me for this time?"

"Mr. Brown-Brown"—I began as I stepped forward, but the crook stopped me with:

"Who in blink is Brown-Brown?"

Then I realized how it was I had smashed Jones-Jones the crook over the head with a water picher and changed him into Brown-Brown the honest shirt constructor. The policeman had smashed Brown Brown with his club and changed him back into Jones-Jones the crook.

A REUNION — A LABOR DAY STORY

By ARTHUR PRICE

The Labor day procession was coming down the street. The first man in it was six feet four inches tall, with a bearskin hat on his head that raised him to seven feet. He was the drum major of the band and was twirling his big silver headed staff and throwing it into the air with fine jugglery. Behind him came the band and then the man of most real importance, the grand marshal, followed by his aids. Then came the different unions marching in line, every man looking happy on this clear September day that he could lay aside his hammer or his trowel or whatever tool best represented his trade and step out to the inspiring strains of martial music.

Among those who lined the sidewalks, occupied the steps of the buildings and climbed the lampposts along the line of march was a certain Mrs. O'Toole, who had recently come over from Ireland. With her was her son, Daniel, six years old. The mother was standing with the crowd on the curb, but Danny was perched with a leg on each side of a horizontal piece of iron over the lamp, straining his eyes to catch the first glimpse of sunlight that would strike the brass horns of the band.

"They're comin', mother!" he shouted, wild with excitement. Every eye within hearing of the boy's voice was turned in the direction he was looking.

True enough, a line of mounted police wheeled around a corner, and in another moment the strains of music were heard in the distance. Danny kept his mother informed of each appearance as it was revealed to him and was not a little proud to think that there were those in the crowd directly beneath him who were benefiting by his information.

"Oh, mother, there's a giant with a woolly dog on his head throwin' up a big stick. Reckon he's ruinin' the whole business."

"Oh, mother, you'd oughter see the man on a horse with a whole lot o' other men on horses. They've all got broad white things over their shoulders and hold round sticks in their hands with ribbons round 'em."

The big horns grew hoarser, the bass drum pounded louder, the piccolo shrilled harder, as the columns advanced. When mounted police riding abreast came a man on the sidewalk interested in Danny's description and his eagerness that his mother should see it all handed her a soap box on which he had been standing and bade her mount it. She thanked him and, stepping up, had a fine view of those passing in the street, much to Danny's satisfaction.

The drum major passed, the band passed, the grand marshal and his aids passed. Then came the Carpenters' union, the Plumbers' union and the Masons' union.

"Oh, Danny," cried Mrs. O'Toole, "there's your father!"

Now, Danny O'Toole had known ever since he was old enough to know anything that his father had left him and his mother in Ireland when Danny was a baby to come to America. He was to send money home and when he got enough together to send for his wife and boy he would do so. For awhile letters had come from him; then they had ceased. His wife had come to America to look for him.

"Which?" cried Danny.

"The man on the far side, him with the red head. Call him."

Danny, knowing only one way to attract his parent's attention, shouted "Red head!" with all the power of his little lungs. The man heard him and turning his head, saw a kid on a soap post waving his hat at him. Then lowering his eyes, he saw his wife looking in his direction. Leaving the ranks, he came across the street, followed his way through the crowd to his wife, and she fell into his arms.

Meanwhile Danny, feeling that he was not getting his share in this family reunion, dropped down on to his father with one leg on each shoulder. His father pulled him down into his arms.

"The child?" asked O'Toole.

"Yes, it's Danny."

Danny got a hug that made him cry out, and, drawing off as far as he could, he punched his huggy with his little fist.

"Don't you hurt me that way ag'in" he said fiercely.

"Oh, Danny," said Mrs. O'Toole, laughing through her tears, "your father's so glad to see you."

That ended the O'Toole family's interest in the Labor day procession. O'Toole went with his wife and boy to their rooms, where he explained his long silence. He had been suddenly taken ill and attacked with loss of memory. It had partially returned to him, and he had written his wife, but she had already left Ireland for America.

O'Toole was getting on his feet again when his wife and boy were restored to him, and it was not long before he was able to make them comfortable.

That was a number of years ago. Since then Danny O'Toole has grown to be a stalwart young fellow, has learned his trade and can swing a sledgehammer with any man. And when labor processions march down the street between admiring crowds Danny is sure to be among them. And he takes a greater interest in the day because it is the anniversary of his first meeting with his father in America and of the family reunion.

Reassuring Information Forthcoming in a Moment of Suspense.

"I WON'T mention the time, the place or the girl," says a busy correspondent, with whom we now get even by taking a leaf from his own book and not mentioning him either. "But I dropped into a certain dump for my supper the other night and ordered. For side dishes—I was allowed two with the meat—I took string beans and fresh peas."

"The waitress came in with the grub, but the beans were missing. I knew they'd be along on the next tray, so I said nothing about it. But I had eaten the meat before the waitress appeared again. She leaned against the table and said in a stage whisper:

"I wanna tell ya about them beans. We ain't got no beans. The chef says they ain't fit to eat. The cat hadda fit an' fell in the pot where the beans an' peas was cookin' together. Scalded her so much she lost all her hair."

"But, my goodness," said I, "you brought the peas, and I ate them! Surely if the peas didn't suffer the—"

"Oh, the peas is all right. The chef run them through a sieve. But the beans is ruined."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Demands of the Inner Man.

The military maneuvered. All afternoon the attackers had attacked and the defenders defended with conspicuous lack of incident or bravery. Operations were beginning to drag horribly when the white flag went up.

The officers in command of the attackers started in amazement.

"A flag of truce?" he exclaimed. "What do they want?"

The sergeant major endeavored to cover up a smile.

"They say, sir," he reported, "that, as it's tea time, they'd like to exchange a couple of privates for a can of condensed milk—if you can afford it."—London Answers.

Clever Wives.

"Every time Billinger goes in bathing he gets cramps."

"I should think it would worry his wife."

"It did, but she's fixed him all right. She made a bathing suit for him and declared he must wear it every time he goes in."

"Well?"

"And now he won't go near the water."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Haunted Stranger

By F. A. MITCHEL

There is a town in the Rocky mountain region somewhere between Denver and San Francisco which is completely isolated. It is not one of those rough mining towns that have been so realistically described by Bret Harte and his followers, but a quiet, sober place, with no fighting, no gambling, no horse stealing, no lynching. The only objection to the town—so said Miss Virginia Keating—was that nothing ever happened there.

No new invention ever penetrates to Cherryville. There is neither gas nor electricity, the lights used being oil lamps and candles. The fuel used is wood, of which there is an abundance in the neighboring forests. No shriek of locomotive or honk of automobile is heard. Occasionally an ox team meanders slowly through the town, or the sound of a trotting horse breaks the stillness. Nevertheless Cherryville is a stable town. There is one main street half a mile long, crossed at right angles by a number of less important ones.

One day a man came into town whose appearance broke the lethargy that overhung the place. He was minus an arm, there was a scar on his forehead, and a number of his teeth were missing, their disappearance being accounted for by a hole in his cheek. He gave his name as Erastus Clarke, but seemed disinclined to furnish any further account of himself. If any one asked him about the loss of his arm or other deficiencies he looked scared and turned away without reply.

Where there is no solution of a mystery one is very soon invented. There was but one opinion in Cherryville about Mr. Clarke. Some country had mutilated him. Here the main view of his case branched. One side felt sure that he had swindled some one, the other that he had alienated the affections of a wife from her husband and that that husband had mauled him. But never a word of explanation could be elicited from Clarke.

Miss Keating had all the curiosity that is usually attributed by untried bachelors to her sex and resolved to find out the mystery enveloping Mr. Clarke if she had to marry him to do so.

Miss Keating on walking down the main street of Cherryville behind Mr. Clarke noticed that when he came to a cross street he would stop, look to the right and then to the left before crossing. This he repeated at every street. Miss Keating, being a true amateur, did not make up her mind, but she naturally assigned it to the fact that he was on the watch for an enemy. She made a mental memorandum of the fact, but, realizing that Clarke would not explain the matter, refrained from asking him to do so until she had prepared the way.

However, reticence was not one of Miss Keating's traits, and she talked about this peculiarity of Mr. Clarke's. From that time whenever he was seen from the street he was followed at a distance by curious persons who were anxious to be on hand to see the fight, for they were sure that Clarke had come to Cherryville to escape an enemy and was expecting that enemy to appear at any time to batter him some more.

Miss Keating made but poor success in getting up an affair of the heart between herself and Mr. Clarke. The trouble was that he seemed to have had the spirit of a man knocked out of him. She smiled on him sympathetically, but could not for long draw him away from the dread of that mysterious something for which he seemed to be looking.

One day she met Mr. Clarke in a store, and they walked out on to the street together. Suddenly from the other end of the town there came the honk of an automobile, the first that had ever been heard in Cherryville. Mr. Clarke trembled and turned pale. The honk was repeated nearer and louder. Mr. Clarke ran back into the store. Miss Keating followed him and found him crouching behind a counter.

"Has it gone?" he gasped.

"Gone? What gone?"

"The auto."

Miss Keating looked at him wonderingly; then a beam of light burst in upon her. "Do you mean to say that all this terror has been caused by an automobile?" she asked.

Mr. Clarke, stiffened by the contemptuous look she gave him, came out from hiding and confessed.

"I came from a large city, where there are thousands of autos. I never rode in one myself, so I was not injured that way. My only hope was not to get killed while crossing a street. Once I was knocked down. My arm was crushed, and it was amputated. A second time I received this scar on my forehead. A third I got this hole in my cheek and lost all the teeth on that side of my face. A fourth gave me three broken ribs. A fifth—"

"Never mind the fifth. My father is mayor of this town, and I'm going to get him to prohibit any automobiles from entering the limits. I don't wonder at your looking up and down a street before crossing or having been terrorized and having come to this quiet place to escape further injury."

"That is the only auto that ever yet entered Cherryville."

Not Her Fault.

An old gentleman, always polite to women, was asserting one day that he had never seen a really ugly woman. A woman with a flat nose, overhauling him, said:

"Sir, look at me and confess that I'm truly ugly."

"Madam," he replied, "like the rest of your sex, you are an angel fallen from the skies, but it was your misfortune, rather than your fault, that you happened to alight on your nose."



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