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And Free.

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When he reached the bow of the boat she was just making a landing, and in another minute the gates were opened and he walked ashore. He lingered a moment in the ferry-house with the idea of apologizing to Billy and pleading temporary insanity, but that individual did not appear. The crowd surged off the ferry-boat, and hurried by Drane. One lady evidently recognized him, for he heard her say to her escort: "Poor fellow, his voice must have been wonderful before he ruined it by drink."

Riddled by this double-barreled insult, Drane hung his head and made off up street, which runs parallel with the Pennsylvania tracks for a few blocks. At the first crossing he turned to the right and passed over the confusion of rails at the imminent risk of his life. There is no more dangerous place on the face of the earth, but Drane was in a condition of mind where collision with a shifting engine would have been a relief to his feelings.

A freight train was being made up on a side track, and Drane crawled along in the shadow of it till he came to a car which looked as if it might be entered. He was on the point of trying it, when a figure appeared from the shadows. Drane was about to run, but perceiving that the other man had a similar intention, he understood the case at once.

"Hold on," said he. "I won't hurt you. I'm looking for a free ride on this train, and so are you. Isn't that so?"

"You've called it, boss," said the fellow, "that's my game."

"Well, I'm in with you," returned Drane. "You know more about this business than I do. What shall we do?"

The tramp answered by deeds, not words. He pried open the door of the car and crawled in. Drane followed. The car appeared to be freighted with pig iron or some other heavy substance of which very little made a load, for there was plenty of room. Drane and his companion found the most comfortable place they could in the darkness. To the former's great relief the train soon started and ran with no stop for nearly an hour. Then there came a halt. Presently Drane heard a man stop just outside the door by which they had entered.

"Jimmy," said a voice, "somebody's been getting into this car."

"Thunder and turf," whispered the tramp. "we're in for it now. They'll send us up. There's just one chance for us. You stand on one side of the door and I'll stand on the other. When they climb in we'll make a break."

That was exactly what they did, and as Drane happened to jump out directly upon the head of the brakeman on guard, they escaped.

In the lee of a fence, a few minutes later, Drane was joined by his late acquaintance, whom he had outrun with ease. Two or three others struggled up immediately after.

"They've cleaned all the boys off the train," the tramp explained. "We're hung up here for sure."

There was a hasty consultation, and from it Drane learned that they were near an old barn which was well-

MR. DRANE SINGS FOR HIS PASSAGE.

known to the "profession" as a harboring place. It was decided that the best thing to do was to put up in this place for the night. Drane fell into the line, and after a march across some fields, he entered the tramp's hotel with the motley crew.

Counting those already in it, who were aroused by the entrance of his party, there were nearly a dozen in all. Through a great hole high up in the wall the moonlight streamed, and in the circle thus marked out the strange company sat down and prepared to exchange some friendly gossip before going to sleep.

"I take it you're new to the profession?" said the man whose acquaintance Drane had made in the freight yard. "What's your name?"

Drane told him.

"Do you spell it just like any other drain?" called out one of the men.

There was some good-natured laughter at this, and then one of them asked Drane where he came from. He endeavored to sketch briefly and accurately the events which had led him to his present situation. He thought it might interest them. It did. They regarded him as a first-class humorist, and a liar of great natural endowments.

"Oh, yes, we've all been there," said one. "I was a gentleman and a broker's clerk before yesterday. It seems to me that I met you in Mr. Goubb's office. I dropped in to sell him a couple of rail roads; don't you remember?"

It was utterly impossible for Drane to convince them that he was telling the truth. The more closely he stuck to facts the louder they laughed at the extent and variety of his genius for falsehood.

"He'd make a good delegate for the convention," said Johnny. "What's the matter with sending him to Pittsburgh when the profession assembles?"

"He'd represent all the liars in it," responded another, "in a way that would more than do 'em justice."

"I can't promise to go," said Drane, "but the first man of you who finds me in Kansas City and learns the truth of what I have told you shall have a hundred dollars and a chance to go to work."

"I'd sell my chance in that hundred for a pepsol of plug," said the man who had put Drane in nomination for the convention. "As for the chance to go to work, I don't want it. I'll give it away."

Altogether, Drane did not find this assemblage of the unfortunate so interesting as he had thought it might be. He withdrew from the circle soon and climbed high up on the hay till the rafters were just over his head. Then he lay down to sleep, and dreams carried him to other and far different scenes. At first there were pictures of home, and then the familiar faces faded away and in their place came one which had imprinted itself on his heart more clearly than he knew. The face of the woman whom he had befriended and who in turn had remembered him.

Through strange and difficult paths he was pursuing her. There was danger around them both. Suddenly he overtook her and tried to speak to her, but his voice would not come. He was choking. She seemed to read the agony in his eyes, for her face grew pitiful. He was dying at her feet. The hot sun cast a terrible red plane upon him. It was descending from the heavens to burn him to a cinder.

With a struggle he threw the hideous vision from him and awoke. The red glare was still in his eyes, the choking in his throat. The barn was on fire. Already the hay below him was blazing, cutting off his escape. The smoke was like a visible demon clutching him. He groped to the wall and put his lips to a little space between the boards, seeking for air, but the hot vapor from within rushed out, and he could not breathe.

The thought of death in that desolate place crowded upon him—a fate of which those who loved him would never hear—his ashes scattered to the winds. Frantically he struck the board before him with his clenched hand. It yielded. Hope sprang up in his heart. He raised his knees upon the rotten wood, till he tore it from its fastenings, and then with a last effort he forced his body through the opening and crawled down to the ground.

CHAPTER V.

A DISTINGUISHED GUEST.

It is a mistake to judge wholly by appearances, for even Jersey mud was not created in vain. To the gentle, yielding nature of that substance Drane owed his preservation from serious injury when he came tumbling down the side of the barn. As it was, the shock was violent. He dragged himself with some difficulty to the lee of a neighboring fence and made a hasty examination, which convinced him that no bones were broken. There was a soreness in his throat and lungs which made every breath he drew seem full of three-cornered files, but on the whole he was in fair condition and able to walk, which was fortunate, as no other means of getting away were at hand.

Before him was the blazing barn, now one mass of fire. He reflected with a shudder that perhaps some poor wretch had perished there, and he began to reproach himself for having made no effort to rescue those who had been his companions in misfortune. Then the recollection of the way the flames had leaped up over the hay assured him that he need not charge himself with cowardice. He recalled the fact that he had climbed up on the loft and that the others had remained below, where doubtless they had been awakened while the fire smoldered, filling the barn with that smoke which had nearly been the death of him.

A crowd had now collected about the barn, and he decided to go down and mingle with it. He did so, and the first words he heard were these: "Some blamed tramp has set this barn afire. Every one of 'em found in the county to-day ought to be put in jail."

Drane did not wait to discuss the question. He took a hasty and uncerемonious leave. For half an hour he plodded through plowed fields, and climbed fences, till at length he came to a factory of some sort from which several little branch railroad tracks ran to the main line near by. Freight cars were being loaded there, and Drane, watching his chance, got aboard of one unobserved. On the top of a big box he stretched his weary limbs and fell asleep.

The train was in motion when he awoke. It ran on for nearly an hour he thought, without stopping. Then came a bout of bumping and switching about, followed by a prolonged pause. Listening, he heard a strange sound like the splash of waves. He crept to the side of the car and found a crevice through which he peered. To his astonishment he found that he was sailing on a broad river. A great city lay to the right, and it did not take him long to discover that it was New York. Apparently the metropolis was a hard place to get away from.

The float which bore the freight cars was pushed against a pier. Drane stood up and stretched his cramped limbs. "This isn't exactly a vestibuled palace-car," he thought, "but I have at least come through to New York without change, as the time-tables say," and he thrust his hands into his empty pockets.

Travel by freight-car without a hand-bag has its disadvantages and among them is the lack of water, soap and a chance to brush one's hair. Drane looked out through the hole in the side of the car and wondered whether, out of respect to cleanliness, he ought to jump into the dock. Then he noted the color of the water and decided that he ought not. However, he resolved to give an imitation of a good citizen making his toilet, so he picked up a piece of broken glass from the floor of the car, and propping it against a block of black paint on a box he combed his hair with his hands, after which he decided that he was ready for breakfast. But the rolls and coffee didn't come.

By the exercise of discretion he escaped from the car and from the pier, and stood again in the streets of New York. Then came more wandering, more hunger, more perplexity. At noon he found himself in a park which looked familiar. He dropped upon a bench and tried to decide whether it was the one where he had sat with her. Then he asked himself frankly whether he would rather see her at that minute or a sirloin steak with fried potatoes and a cup of coffee.

"I don't know," he muttered, burying his face in his hands. "It's a hard question. I must be in love."

He fixed his eyes on the ground and wondered why he didn't find a half dollar there. No doubt there were coins enough buried in the dust of New York streets to pay his way to Kansas City. Why couldn't he find one? He began to accuse his guardian angel of serious neglect of duty. She ought at least to throw enough in his way to get him a breakfast. He poked around in the little heaps of rubbish at the ends of the bench with the toes of his delapidated shoes; but his guardian angel apparently had no change to spare. He didn't find a penny.

The only article which differed from the general collection was a piece of pasteboard which looked like a theater check. It had evidently been dropped very recently, for it was scarcely soiled at all. He remembered, with a sudden start, that restaurants sometimes sold tickets that were good for a meal. With a hasty hand he snatched the piece of pasteboard from the ground and read:

"This ticket entitles the bearer to one Turkish bath at Hubbard's, No. 99 West Twenty-seventh street. An extra charge for alcohol or electricity."

This is the way that Fate takes advantage of a man's position to insult him. It was not Drane's fault that he had not washed his face, and it was aggravating to have a hint like this thrown out by fate to embitter the results of her own doings. Drane was on the point of tearing the ticket in rage and disdain when his better judgment checked him. A Turkish bath-house was a nice, quiet place to rest. It offers the greatest of luxuries on a hot day. True, a severely thorough bath is not a good thing to take on an too empty stomach, but still he was sure that it could not make him feel any more hollow than he did without it. He arose and began his search for West Twenty-seventh street. It was not far away, and in less than half an hour he stood in front of No. 99. A handsome building it was: perhaps a little too ornate, but eminently suggestive of luxury. Drane entered and presented his ticket at the desk. The attendant stared at him.

"How the dickens did you get this ticket?" he asked.

Then Drane saw that he would have to lie. He was determined to get inside the bath now, and a small matter of falsehood should not stand in his way. His moral sense had been gradually weakened by the evil companionship at his clothes and he was in a condition to stretch the fabric of truth's spotless robe till he split it up the back.

"Look here," he said, "I am quite a regular patron of this place. You don't recognize me because—well, to tell the truth, I've been on a hard spree for a week and have got pretty well torn up, as you see. I'd like to sober up here in the bath and then I'll send out for a suit of clothes in which I can begin an era of reform by going home to dinner."

"What's your name?" asked the attendant, hesitatingly.

Drane looked over his shoulder as if to make sure that nobody could hear him declare his real identity, and then bending over the desk he whispered, "John H. Smyth. You remember the name, don't you?"

"Well, I've heard it before," the clerk admitted, "but I can't place you."

"Am I so changed by a single week of debauchery?" said Drane, sadly; then, in a still more confidential tone: "You must recall my name. I spell it with a Y."

The clerk smiled.

"I guess it's all right, Mr. Smyth. Shall I take care of your valuables?"

"Your what-do-you-call-'em, friend," said Drane. "Somebody else is taking care of those in a way that beats the seven good swells out of sight."

The clerk laughed and gave Drane a little key bearing an a number and designed to go about the latter's wrist.

"Number fifty-seven," he called to an attendant, who immediately conducted Drane to his dressing-room.

What a delight it was to lay aside the ragged garments! When Drane emerged from the little room clothed only in a sheet, he felt as good as his neighbor. Even his hunger seemed for a time, and he enjoyed his bath thoroughly.

It was two o'clock by the magnificent time-piece which stood among artificial flowers in the great hall of the bath, when he returned to his room and his rags. His soul and body rebelled against them more strongly than ever before. They contrasted painfully with the luxury by which he had been surrounded. He sat in his chair with his head in his hands and groaned aloud. Faintness had followed the bath, and he had been agitated by the sight of men enjoying rolls and coffee while the proprietor of the dream in the hall. He almost made up his mind to go out, breakfast and trust to luck to get away alive without paying for it.

"Here you are, sir, number forty-two," said a voice, and Drane heard an attendant usher a man into the next dressing-room.

"Thank you, sir," he heard the fellow say a minute later. Then he knew that the man in the next stall had tipped the attendant. They talked together a minute, while the visitor inquired about the bath and the restaurant which was connected with it. Then he tipped the fellow again, and got more thanks.

"He has plenty of money," of course, groaned Drane, "why shouldn't he give some of it away? Why shouldn't he hold me some? Why shouldn't I climb over the partition and negotiate the loan myself while he's out of the way?"

The rags were corrupting him. They seemed actually to talk, to suggest every malice and theft.

"Get thee behind me', garments of Satan," he said, smiling bitterly, and he arose and walked out again into the hall. An obliging attendant prepared a divan for him, and he had no sooner stretched himself upon it than he fell asleep.

Drane was awakened by the voice of the man who had occupied the dressing-room next to his. He looked up, and saw a well-built young man—so far as the sheet in which he was wrapped allowed his proportions to be seen—preparing to take the next divan. The stranger was about Drane's weight and height, and they resembled each other not a little, despite the fact that while Drane was a handsome man, the other would never have been accused of any thing more serious than the possession of a good figure. One face was almost a caricature of the other. Drane could not help thinking how much he should have resembled his neighbor if his own life throughout had been like the last few days.

The stranger ordered some breakfast, and the attendant drew up a little table, so that it stood between Drane and his more fortunate fellow lurker. In fact it was so near to one as to the other.

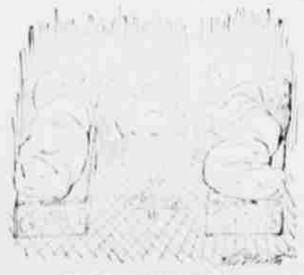
"If he eats right under my nose, this way," said Drane to himself, "I shall become a raving maniac."

A luxurious repast was ordered, and then the stranger lay down upon the divan and went to sleep. He did not awake when the attendant laid the cloth nor even when the lunch was brought. Some gentle shaking brought him partly to his senses so that he was able to sit up and pretend to be awake, but when the attendant went away he fell back upon the pillow and was asleep again in a twinkling.

Then Drane's stomach arose and read the declaration of independence. It would hear no excuses, no reproaches of conscience. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," was its text, and it argued in a manner not to be answered by the precepts of mere honesty.

Drane stretched forth his right hand, and secured a roll. Almost immediately thereafter, as nobody was looking, he possessed himself of the leg of a chicken. Being honest by nature he returned the bone to the stranger's table. Other portions of the bird followed, together with sundry fried potatoes, and such like embellishments of the feast. Then he washed down his scruples with the stranger's coffee, and went back to his room a better man.

But then came the rage again, and not even the sustaining power of a stolen meal could keep him from temptation. He put on his andes clothing, and then stood by the half-open door, looking in at the detected peculiarities. They mocked him, they said: "You've got to come back to us to-night, you've stolen a breakfast on our account, and



MANNA IN THE DESERT.

[illegible] of the garment inside out and read the owner's name written there. It was Lawrence Drane! He had stolen his own clothes back again.

Yes, there was no doubt about it. The occupant of No. 42 had been the original tramp who had accomplished the exchange in the hotel so nicely, and had afterward collected the telegraph money order at New Haven. The pockets of the coat were full of Drane's papers. He ran them over hastily, and could not discover that any were missing.

His watch and a considerable sum of money were there too. He wondered at this because prudent persons leave such things at the desk, but then he reflected that a thief distrusts everybody and believes himself over his pleasder whom he does not know, may be a detective.

Drane was never so astonished in his life. The clothes restored his brain to its proper balance almost at once. He wondered how he could ever have brought to the point of entering another room, and he was shocked at the thought, though delighted at the result.

He strolled through the hall and noticed that the thief was still there. Beside him lay the remnants of the lunch. Drane would have liked to stay and watch the fellow when he woke up, but he had decided to go out and find a policeman to take the thief into custody.

There was none in sight when he stepped to the door. He stood there a [illegible]

As Drane emerged from the building the first thing he saw was the blue coat of which he was in search. A lucky member of the force stood on the edge of the sidewalk, as if placed there by the kind of policy.

"How wonderful are the workings of chance," thought Drane as he took in at a glance the advantages of the situation. "My luck changed from the instant my eyes rested on that locker."

He decided not to call the officer into the bath so long as he showed no signs of going away, but to wait till the thief came out, followed in his rags to meet a late still and a. He chuckled with a mean satisfaction at the thought. His

"TAKE HIM IN."

experience should have taught him to pity the poor fellow, but it didn't. The room to be in is decidedly better on such occasions, and the humiliations of poverty. The humiliations of poverty can never be accomplished even by putting all the world in one amazing uniform.

So Drane stood there waiting for his victim. Suddenly there was a bustle at the door. An attendant rushed out hurriedly and looked about. Behind him Drane could see the thief expostulating with the man at the desk. Then the attendant's eyes fell upon Drane.

"Arrest that man," said he to the policeman; "he has stolen a man's clothes in our bath."

"Come with me, sir," said the officer, laying his hand upon Drane's shoulder.

The blunderbuss of vengeance had shot both ways again, as is the habit of that antiquated weapon.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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