

O. HENRY AND AL. JENNINGS

(Continued from last week)
CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

The warden got a closed carriage. Early in the afternoon the three of us went to the office of the Press-Post Publishing company. Dick wanted me with him.

We scarcely spoke. There was a strained, nervous hush over us. The warden fidgeted, lit a cigar and let it go out without taking a puff. He was worried. So was I. I was afraid Dick couldn't make good. I figured that he probably had lost his art through disuse. Then it occurred to me that he might have exaggerated. Sixteen years in prison knocks the props from a man's brain often enough.

The warden had wired Governor George K. Nash of Ohio. He promised the pardon if the safe was opened. What a sore humiliation to Warden Darby if Dick failed!

Not a word had been said, but Dick looked up with that young magnetic smile of his. "Don't worry, Al," he grinned. "I'll rip hell out of it's made of cast iron and cement." His confidence made us feel easier.

Dick Files His Nails to Quick. "Give me the file." Dick had

mentioned me to get him a small-tailed file and to make sure that the edges were keen. I handed it to him. He scrutinized it as though he were a diamond buyer looking for a yellow speck in a gem. Then he started to work. The warden and I shuddered.

Half way down the nail across the middle he drew the file. His nails were deep and beautifully shaped. Back and forth he filed until the lower half of the nail was separated from the upper by a thin red mark. He filed to the quick. Soon only the lower half of the nail remained.

Light and deft, his sensitive hand worked. I watched his face. It didn't even twitch. He was completely absorbed in the process and seemed to have forgotten the warden and me. Once or twice he champed his teeth and his breath came a bit short. The fingers bled a little. He took out his handkerchief and dabbed them clean. Then he sat back. He was finished.

I took his hand and looked at it. It was a neat job, but cruel. The index, middle and third fingers of his left hand looked as though the nails had been pared half off and the quick bruised and sandpapered.

Officials of State Forced to Leave.

Dick was so tense with suppressed excitement that he booted out of the carriage as soon as it stopped and walked so quickly the warden and I had to run to keep pace with him. When we reached the office about a dozen men were waiting.

"Is this a show, Al?" Dick snapped the words out. He stood around about 10 minutes. Dick looked at me angrily. I was beset with alarm anyway. I took his look to mean that his fingers wouldn't respond if we didn't hurry. I ran over to the warden, bumping against two gossiping, stupid looking officials.

"Hurry up or the job is up." His face took on the scariest, grayest shadow I ever saw. Dick put his hand to his mouth and laughed. I whispered to the warden that the men would have to remain outside. Only two state representatives, the warden, Dick and I went into the room where the safe was kept.

"That's it," one of the men said. Dick went over to it. There wasn't a breath of hesitation in his answer.

Opening of Safe Seems a Miracle.

"Take the time, Al." There

was a chuckle of triumph in the challenge. His thin face was quiet as a statue's. The cheekbones were smudged with red and his eyes unnaturally brilliant.

He knelt before the safe, put his bruised fingers across the dial, waited a moment, and then turned the combination. I watched every quiver of his strong, delicate hands. There was the slightest pause, his right hand went backward. He turned the dial again, pulled the knob gently toward him. The safe was opened.

The miracle seemed to strike everyone dumb. The room was stiller than silence. It was spellbound. The state officials stood as though riven. I looked at my watch. It was just 12 seconds since Dick had begun.

He got up and walked off. The warden sprang toward him. The tears were crowding into Darby's eyes. His face was flushed with pride. He put his arm on Dick's shoulder.

"That was fine, lad, God bless you!"

Dick nodded. He was an indifferent sort.

On the ride back to the pen the warden leaned over and put his hand on Dick's. "You're the noblest fellow God ever made," he said. "If they gave me the deal you got, hell itself wouldn't have made me do it."

First Kid's Seen in Sixteen Years.

Dick shrugged his shoulders and started to speak. His lip trembled. He looked out of the carriage window, watching the people and the houses. He couldn't keep his glance from the streets. He was leaning forward as though fascinated.

"Look at that, look at that!" He caught me quickly and pointed to a little boy of 10 or so carrying a rollicking youngster of 3 or 4. I saw nothing unusual in the spectacle. Dick sank back as though a vision had passed.

"That's the first kid I've seen in sixteen years." He didn't look out again. We said nothing further.

The next morning every newspaper in Columbus was full of the sensational story. The warden had given his word to Dick that the process would not be revealed. Not even the two men who had watched knew how the feat was accomplished. To them it seemed as witchcraft. All sorts of explanations were given.

Principal Concern About His Mother.

A prisoner in the Ohio penitentiary, serving a life term—a prisoner who had been sent up as a boy and who was now dying had opened the safe, with a steel wire.

one daily said. Another paper said he used a paper cutter. They were all mystified. Only one spoke of the pardon promised the convict. I went to the warden about it.

"Dick's cough is pretty bad. They ought to hurry it up."

"They will hurry," Darby promised. I know he meant what he said. I brought the word to Dick. He was back at the machine shop.

"I don't care," he said, in a fit of morose indifference. "I don't believe them. I did it for you, Al." He looked up quickly. "I wonder if the old woman saw the paper. I'd like her to know I did it. It would give her a sniff over the neighbors. Could you get her to know?" He walked to his cell and turned.

"Al," he said, "don't worry about me. I know I'll never get the pardon. I'm about done in, anyhow."

(Continued next week.)

Catarrh is an excessive secretion, accompanied with chronic inflammation, from the mucous membrane. Hood's Sarsaparilla acts on the mucous membrane through the blood, reduces inflammation, establishes healthy action, and radically cures all cases of catarrh.

Furs ought to be coming down. The season for them is about over.

Judge Landis in Chicago is assessing violators of the prohibition amendment as high as \$20,000. It will be necessary to assess that size fine but once on

an individual. It is only when offenders are sentenced to pay a small fine, with time to furnish it (which is seldom done), that the law is laughed at.

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