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125 N. Commercial St.

O. HENRY AND AL. JENNINGS

(Continued from last week)

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

"Sit down, Ira, and be calm." The warden could scarcely suppress the emotion of his own voice. "I've been up to Cleveland. Ran into the strangest thing. Guess you told a straight story, all right!"

"Yes sir," Ira answered, a frightened light in his eye. "Yes, sir, it was the truth. Leastways, I'm pretty sure it was. Surely, I couldn't have dreamed it, could I?"

"Now, that's all right. But listen to me. You had a wife, you say? Dora, that was her name, wasn't it? Well, she died—died right after they kicked her out of the cottage. The baby lived. She's alive today. I met her. She's pretty. She was adopted by wealth people here in Columbus. They're friends of the governor. I just happened to talk about you. The girl's foster mother is a relative of your wife's. She thought you were a maniac. I told her the truth."

"Ira, go over to the State Shop, get a suit and shoes. You're pardoned. I took it up with the governor. You go out tomorrow."

With a shock of bewildered emotion that sent a quiver of sobbing happiness into his voice, Ira Maralatt put out his hands to the warden.

"Does the girl know?"

"Now, no, they haven't told her. It would be too sudden a strain. Warden Worries Over Ex-Prisoner."

The next morning Ira, in his cheap suit, the squeaky prison shoes and a light straw hat, came to the warden's office. His gigantic frame was stooped and his face shot through with nervous excitement.

"You did all this, Mr. Al," he said, the tears crowding into his eyes. "Just think what you did when you rolled that apple to me." He hesitated a moment. "Mr. Al, she won't ever recognize me, will she? I don't think I'd like her to know her father was the Prison Demon."

When Darby handed him the pardon and the \$5, his hands shook. "I don't know how to thank you, warden!"

"You don't have to—God knows you've paid for it!"

Ira took two of his little canaries with him. "I'll give them to the girl for a present. I want to see her. I have to see her." He shook hands with Darby and me.

A week passed. We heard no word from him. The warden became alarmed. "I wonder if anything could have happened to the old man?" Maralatt was but 46. His terrible sufferings during 18 years in prison had broken even his magnificent strength. He seemed about 60. "I wonder if he went to see his daughter? Funny, I didn't hear."

Girl Asks Why She Wasn't Told.

It worried Darby so much he inquired. He sent for the girl's foster mother. He told her of Ira and the canaries. Back came the frantic answer from the daughter herself. In an hour she was at the warden's office.

"An old man with canaries? Yes, an old man had come with them. She had the birds now. 'What about it? That man, my father!'"

"Why didn't some one tell me? How dare they keep it from me. That's what he meant when he left. That's why he called me little Dora. Oh, what shall we do now?"

In broken sentences she told of the mysterious visit of the old bird-peddler. Ira had gone up the steps of the palatial home where the girl lived. He had brought the little cage with the birds. Perhaps he had intended to tell Mary he was her father. The sight of her beauty, her culture, her happiness had chilled his ardor. The grand old fellow could not bear to spoil her glad youth with the tragedy of his bleak life. He had left with his claim unspoken.

Singers Bought Out of Sympathy.

The girl was coming down the stairs as the old man rang the bell. The butler had denied him entrance. And the girl had run forward and ordered the old man to come in.

"I thought, Miss, perhaps you would buy these birds. I'm very poor and they are wonderful singers."

And just out of sympathy for the pathetic old stranger, the girl had bought the canaries. He would only take a half dollar from her. She had not understood. He had looked at her and the tears had streamed down his cheeks.

"Goodby, little Dora," he said as he left. He stood at the door as though he were about to say something further and then he looked at her with a queer, sad light on his face and went down the steps.

They thought he was a harmless, unbalanced old oddity. "Where can I find him? Where shall I look for him? Why didn't some one tell me?" the girl was torn with grief. "Hurry, let us look now."

Outside it was snowing. There had been a wind storm for a week. Maralatt's daughter and the warden searched in every street and alley for the old man. He was nowhere to be found.

Maralatt Returns: Nowhere to Go.

One night there was a knock at the guard room door and a faint voice called out, "Let me come in, please." The captain of the guard opened the door. Ira Maralatt, his thin prison suit drenched and hanging in a limp rag about him, was kneeling in the snow at the snow at the prison door.

"Let me in, please, I have nowhere to go." "No, no, go away, your'e pardoned. I can't let you in," the captain answered, closing the door in Maralatt's face. "Let the old man in, it's freezing outside," another guard protested. "Well, he'll die out there." They kept it up for an hour. I passed and overheard them. "Who was it?" I asked. "Maralatt," they answered. "Let him in, let him in!" I yelled, and ran headlong to the office. Darby came rushing to the gate and ordered it opened. Maralatt was not there. "You damn fools," Darby swore at them. "Don't you know we've been looking for him for weeks?"

Warden Finds Him Stricken by Death.

Beyond the walls, flinging himself along, the warden went on the search. He came back 15 minutes later, the half-frozen Maralatt limping at his side. He found him down in the snow near the gate. Ira was burning up with fever. His face was already stricken with death.

Everywhere he went asking for work, he said, they had refused him. They said he was too old. The warden sent for Maralatt's daughter.

The young girl, graceful and white as an angel, ran crying into the room and flung herself into the old man's arms.

"Don't die, daddy! Why didn't you tell me? See, I'm your girl, Mary. Just look at me! Oh, why didn't I know? If you only knew how many times I longed for a father—any one, any kind. Why didn't you tell me?"

Maralatt looked at her in dim, feverish gladness. He took the delicate hands in his gigantic palms and turned to her. "I looked all over for you, Dora," he said. "I'm so glad you came."

With a smile of wondrous peace on his lips, the prison demon sank back on the pillows. The old hero had won his palm at last.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

The shadows of a thousand Dick Prices and Ira Maralatt skulked like unhappy ghosts through the cell corridors of the Ohio penitentiary. The memory of a thousand tragedies seemed to abide in the very air of the ranges. Men who allowed themselves to come under the persistent gloom of these haunting presences went mad.

The rest of us sought an outlet in gayer—in a hundred trivial little incidents that would bring a laugh out of all proportion to their funniness. In self-defense the conflict becomes hardened to the brutal suffering of the life about him.

If anyone had heard Billy Raddler, Bill Porter and I, as we talked and guffawed in the prison postoffice, he would have rated us as an unthinking trio of irresponsible scamps.

We never ailed our melancholy, but we would wrangle and jest by the hour over the probable course of fly batting itself against the postoffice window might take if we let it out—over the origin of the black race and the finish of the Caucasian family.

Or we would imagine that the prison was suddenly crushed to pieces in an earthquake, and we would begin to speculate on the menace of our presence to a terror-stricken society. No subject was too ridiculous to beguile an hour away.

Porter Particular About Prison Rules.

Porter was not supposed to visit the postoffice while he was on duty at the hospital. As he never violated any of the prison rules,

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he always made it a point to come on business. Billy Raddler was a semi-lunatic, and offered an unflinching excuse. Billy's amber hair was falling out. He hounded Porter to bring him a remedy.

"Look here, Bill," the ex-train robber would say, "of that rock-ribbed old Coffin why can't you

rouse the hair on my scalp?" Warden Coffin, by some mistake, had been given an overdose of arsenic. Antidotes failed, Porter was called in. He saved the life of Coffin. This incident happened before my arrival at the "pen," but Raddler never gave Porter any peace about it. Porter always maintained that the

(Continued on page 3)



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Dry Goods Department



Our Sale on 49c Bargain Baskets and 99c Bundles Begins Today

In our Economy Store, all of next week we will have on sale as long as they last the famous 49c Bargain Basket. These contain notions besides the new market Basket to the value of at least \$1.50.

In our Grocery Department we will feature for all of next week a 99c Surprise Bundle. These will contain Christmas Candies, Nuts and Dried Fruits and each can readily see that these will be valued from \$1.75 to \$2.50. You should not miss these as the public already know that what we say we do, for that reason we expect to run short of them.



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