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A Retrieved Reformation

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GUARD came to the prison shoe shop, where Jimmy Valentine was assiduously stitching uppers, and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon, which had been signed that morning by the governor. Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way. He had served nearly ten months of a four year sentence. He had expected to stay only about three months at the longest. When a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy Valentine had is received in the "stir" it is hardly worth while to cut his hair.

"Now, Valentine," said the warden, "you'll go out in the morning. Brace up and make a man of yourself. You're not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes and live straight."

"Me?" said Jimmy in surprise. "Why, I never cracked a safe in my life."

"Oh, no," laughed the warden. "Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi for fear of compromising somebody in extremely high toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims."

"Me?" said Jimmy, still blankly vir-

tuous. "Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!"

"Take him back, Cronin," smiled the warden, "and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at 7 in the morning, and let him come to the bull pen. Better think over my advice, Valentine."

At a quarter past 7 on the next morning Jimmy stood in the warden's outer office. He had on a suit of the villainously fitting, readymade clothes and a pair of the stiff, squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests.

The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five dollar bill with which the law expected him to rehabilitate himself into good citizenship and prosperity. The warden gave him a cigar and shook hands. Valentine, 9762, was chronicled on the books "Pardoned by governor," and Mr. James Valentine walked out into the sunshine.

Disregarding the song of the birds, the waving green trees and the smell of the flowers, Jimmy headed straight for a restaurant. There he tasted the first sweet joys of liberty in the shape of a broiled chicken and a bottle of white wine, followed by a cigar a grade better than the one the warden had given him. From there he proceeded leisurely to the depot. He tossed a quarter into the hat of a blind man sitting by the door and boarded his train. Three hours set him down in a little town near the state line. He went to the cafe of one Mike Dolan and shook hands with Mike, who was alone behind the bar.

"Sorry we couldn't make it sooner, Jimmy, me boy," said Mike. "But we had that protest from Springfield to buck against, and the governor nearly balked. Feeling all right?"

"Fine," said Jimmy. "Got my key?" He got his key and went upstairs, unlocking the door of a room at the rear.

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There on the floor was still Ben Price's collar button that had been torn from

that eminent detective's shirtband when they had overpowered Jimmy to arrest him.

Pulling out from the wall a folding bed, Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust covered suit case. He opened this and gazed fondly at the finest set of burglar's tools in the east. It was a complete set, made of specially tempered steel, the latest designs in drills, punches, braces and bits, jimnies, clamps and augers, with two or three novelties, invented by Jimmy himself, in which he took pride. Over \$900 they had cost him to have made at —, a place where

they make such things for the profession.

In half an hour Jimmy went downstairs and through the cafe. He was now dressed in tasteful and well fitting clothes and carried his dusted and cleaned suit case in his hand.

"Got anything on?" asked Mike Dolan genially.

"Me?" said Jimmy, in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand. I'm representing the New York Amalgamated Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Frazzled Wheat company."

This statement delighted Mike to such an extent that Jimmy had to take

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