

# An Alibi

By EDWARD BURNS

John McElroy was being tried for burglary. The state had made a very good case against the prisoner, and the defense had been very weak. There seemed nothing to do but go through the formality of a conviction. At this juncture the prisoner said:

"Your honor, there is a gentleman in court who, if he only remembers me, can prove that at the time I am charged with having committed this crime I was far away from here."

"Point him out," said the judge.

"That gentleman there, your honor, with mutton chop whiskers and glasses."

The man, a well dressed person about fifty years old, looked about him as if to see to whom the prisoner referred, but soon becoming conscious that the eyes of the court were upon him, moved uneasily in his seat.

"Will you take the stand, sir?" said the judge.

"Who? What? I?"

"Yes, you!"

"There's some mistake here. I am arrived only this morning from Valparaiso. I am interested in a case on the calendar which I have been informed would come up possibly today."

"Do you know the prisoner?"

"Certainly not. I never saw him before in my life."

"Mr. Beasley," whined the prisoner, "you certainly haven't forgot John McElroy, who used to drive you about the summer you was stayin' at the hotel in London?"

"I remember a man I used to call John, whose cab I used frequently, but if you are he you must have changed."

"I've cut off my beard. Don't you remember, sir, my driving you to a lady's house one day and when you came about you was feelin' so fine that instead of the regular fare you give me a sixpence?"

The gentleman looked like a school boy detected in kissing one of the girls. He looked very hard at the prisoner.

"I think I do remember something about that visit. Did you drive me that day?"

"What date did it occur?" asked the judge.

"I don't remember."

"Try."

The gentleman put on his thinking cap and said: "I was in London from the middle of April to the 5th of July of the present year. Now I remember that it was on the 4th of July I made the visit to an American lady who is now my wife. She was visiting a friend in Grosvenor square. I remember the day because it was our national holiday."

"Can you swear that this was the man who drove you on that occasion?"

"No, your honor, I cannot."

Here the witness was put on the stand and examined by the prisoner's counsel:

"Were you traveling for pleasure or on business?"

"Business."

"For yourself or in the employ of others?"

"For others."

"Did they pay your expenses?"

"They did."

"Very well; if they paid your expenses you must have kept an account of those expenses."

"So I did, and, strange to say, those expenses are expected to figure in the case, the trial of which I came here to attend, and I have brought my account book with me."

"Have you it here in court?"

"I have. I did not know when I left my hotel but that the case would be called this morning, and I brought it with me."

"Examine it and see if on the 4th of July in the present year you paid a cabman in London a sovereign."

"I am sure I never paid such a large sum for any cab while there. I never rode long distances."

"You keep me waitin', sir, two hours."

"Besides, I wouldn't have charged a private matter like that to my employers."

"Never mind what you did or didn't do," said the prisoner's counsel. "Examine your account book and let us know whether there is a charge of a sovereign on July 4, 19—, for cab hire."

The witness took out a small blank book and nervously turned over the leaves. He seemed embarrassed and fumbled a great deal, the prisoner's attorney making him more so by sternly asking him if he was trying not to find the item. Finally he paused at a page, down which he began to run his finger. Suddenly he stopped.

"Got it?" asked the lawyer eagerly.

"I wouldn't have believed it. Yes, here's the charge—a sovereign for cab hire July 4, 19—. But there's a mark across it, which means that it was not to be charged in my expense account when I got back home."

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the attorney, "this is a plain case of alibi. My client has been proved to have been in London, 8,000 miles from the scene of the robbery, two days after the crime with which he is charged was committed. The trip across the Atlantic has been shortened, but has never been made in less than four days. The prisoner could not have come to America in time to commit the robbery."

John McElroy was acquitted and the day after the trial he accompanied with the witness who had cleared him of a bank in Canada.

## Building a Poem.

"Any man on earth can be a poet if he tries," said a speaker at a bankers' banquet, "and there never was a better evidence than when the provost of Dundee died. It seems that the provost had been a fine man. His four deputies mourned him greatly, and after the funeral they all got together and decided that they should write him an epitaph."

"It was a hard matter to decide just how four men could write an epitaph, but it was finally settled by the agreement that the inscription should be a verse of four lines, each man to write a line. And so they started. The first man wrote his line. The second man scratched his head and then added his line to the first. The third man thought, long, but finally got his inspiration and put down his line. Then the fourth, after much deliberation, made the final line, and the epitaph ran something like this:

"Here lies the provost of Dundee, Here lies him, here lies he, Hallelujah, hallelujah, A-B-C-D-E-F-G!"

—Chicago Tribune.

## Spelling Shakespeare's Name.

E. H. Sothern in an article in a magazine on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy gives the Baconians a sound drubbing. Because Shakespeare spelled his name in various ways the Baconians have been pleased to refer to him as a "barbarian." Here is what Mr. Sothern says on the subject of the spelling of the name:

"This is one assertion that is not denied. It is also true that Sir Walter Raleigh, admittedly one of the most cultured men of the time, spelled his name 'Rauley,' 'Rauleigh,' 'Ralegh' and 'Raleigh.' Sir Philip Sidney frequently signed himself 'Sydney,' while Spenser often wrote 'Spencer.' Take any of Shakespeare's contemporaries, and we find the same thing. Marlowe's name occurs in ten different spellings. Throckmorton's in sixteen, Gascoigne's in thirteen, Percy's in twenty-seven, while Ben Jonson wrote his in almost every imaginable form."

## A Good Retort.

A Spaniard was traveling from San Sebastien to Biarritz in a first class compartment with an American.

"You Spaniards are a great nation," the American said. "But I can't understand how a nation that produced Velasquez and Valdes can stomach the savage cruelty of the bullfight."

The Spaniard rolled his black eyes at this, inhaled a great cloud of cigarette smoke and said:

"You have in America a number of societies for the prevention of cruelty to children, I believe?"

"Yes."

"And they do good work?"

"Oh, splendid work."

Now the Spaniard showed his white teeth in a smile.

"Well, senor, such societies would be useless in my country," he said. "The man who would lift his hand against a little child has not been born in Spain."—Los Angeles Times.

## Mental Twilight.

Mental health passes into mental disease most commonly in a gradual way. At night passes into darkness. There is a mental twilight, a borderland in which it is impossible to say whether the patient is mentally ill or not. It is always well for a man who undergoes such changes mentally to consult his doctor, and it is always well for the doctor not to make too light of such a change because treatment is usually far more effective in that borderland stage than it is when the symptoms have been fully developed. The best test of mental health is when a man feels a conscious sense of organic well-being, although many persons go through life with more or less of a sense of ill being all the time and are not on that account to be regarded as insane.

## Acoma's Queer Graveyard.

What is perhaps the most remarkable graveyard in the United States adjoins the old Spanish church in the ancient Indian pueblo of Acoma, N. M., and took more than forty years to construct. The village is situated high in the air upon a huge flat topped rock, many acres in extent and entirely bare of soil. In order to create the graveyard it was necessary to carry up the earth from the plain 300 feet below, a laborious task at a time when the backs of Indians who had to climb with their heavy loads up a precipitous trail cut in the face of the cliff. The graveyard thus laboriously constructed is held in place on three sides by high retaining walls of stone.—Wide World Magazine.

## Got Through.

Among other startling statements in her composition on "A Railway Journey" the following was made by a little Baltimore girl:

"You must get a ticket, which is a piece of paper, and you give it to a man, who cuts a hole in it and lets you pass through."—New York Herald.

## Her First Thought.

Ella—What a dreamer she is! Stella—I should say so! When I told her about an accident in which a poor fellow lost both of his legs she said that that was too bad, as he would not be able to leave any footprints on the sands of time.—Judge.

## The National Game.

"You say baseball is your national game," said the stranger, "but what is your national pastime in winter?"

"Politics."—Chicago Record-Herald.

When you lose your temper you lose your judgment. There's no precision in an angry decision.

# A DONATION

By OLIVER J. LARNED

"You think you would make a good burglar, do you—never get caught and all that? I'd like to see you try it. A silk stocking like you would soon be taken. You wouldn't have the coolness to save yourself."

"I wouldn't mind trying it just once. I'll give you an inducement. I'll bet you a hundred you won't go into the house of some eminently respectable family—whom you don't know, mind you—and rob them of some article."

"That's just the kind of a job I'd like to try. The danger in it would make it fearfully interesting."

"And if you got caught it would give you an excellent opportunity to show your presence of mind."

"So it would. I think I'll go you."

"Here's my check. We'll put the stakes in Hawkins' hands."

This dialogue occurred between Dick Thurston and Ned Chamberlin at a club, and the next night Chamberlin in evening dress sallied forth to burglarize a gentleman's dwelling. He walked slowly up an aristocratic avenue, and, selecting a house midway between two street lamps and standing well back in shadow, he entered the yard and, taking the parts of a burglar's Jimmy from his side pocket, began to screw them together in order to secure the length of handle required for leverage. Then, mounting a side porch, he pried up a window and entered a room.

He stood listening for a while, but hearing no sound, began to explore. A faint light from without barely enabled him to move without stumbling against anything, and he got his hand on a large uncovered table. Suspecting he was in a drawing room, he was hunting for the sideboard, when there was a sudden burst of light. A young lady stood at the door of the room, with her finger on an electric button. She appeared astounded, not at finding some one in the room, but some one in evening costume.

Chamberlin braced himself for the encounter. It was his right, under the provisions of the bet, to tell any story he pleased, and he decided to tell the true one.

"I beg pardon for the trespass," he said, "but I am sure that if you are a woman of the world—I shall have your sympathy after you have heard the reason for my being here. Last night at the club I bet a friend a hundred dollars that I would burglarize a dwelling bringing him some stolen article to prove the robbery. If you will permit me to take away a spoon I will be happy to donate my winnings to any charity you may suggest."

The girl by this time had regained her composure, for Chamberlin spoke softly and did not seem one to be afraid of. Nevertheless she considered him to be one of those villains who dress themselves like gentlemen for the purpose of adding them to hood-wink whoever they may meet. She pretended to believe his story and, going to a sideboard, opened a drawer and took out a silver spoon with the family initial letter on it. This she tossed on the dining table and stood waiting for him to withdraw. He saw by the pallor on her face and other signs, that she was badly frightened, and he felt a pang at having caused her annoyance. So instead of going at once, he stopped to reassure her. Taking a card from his pocket and a pencil, he asked her to what institution he should send a donation. She was not especially interested in any and for a moment could not think of any. While she was trying to do so an elderly gentleman, with a gray mustache, stepped into the room.

The girl turned paler still, if that were possible, fearing that the story would not go down with the newcomer and there would be trouble.

"Uncle," she said, "this gentleman has made a bet that he would rob this house."

"Indeed!" said the uncle quietly.

"Yes at the club. He is to win \$100 and give it to any charity I may suggest."

"A hundred dollars! That's no price for a gentleman burglar to pay for the privilege of robbing a house. He might have got away with \$5,000 or \$10,000 worth of property. Couldn't you make it \$1,000, sir?"

Chamberlin was very rich, but rich men don't like to part with their money any better than poor men. He said he might double the amount of his winnings. The gentleman stepped to a telephone in the hall and called for a police station.

Chamberlin was cornered. He called out that he would make his donation \$1,000.

"I have called the police," said the gentleman. "It will now cost \$2,000."

"Done!" cried Chamberlin, fearing that before he could assent the price of his experiment would go up another thousand.

"All right," remarked the gentleman. "Never mind the police. Have you a blank check in your pocket, sir? If so please make the amount payable to St. Luke's hospital."

Chamberlin, who carried a check-book always with him, wrote a check for \$2,000 and handed it to the gentleman, who took it and said:

"Gwendolin, this is Mr. Chamberlin. I met him once at his club, but he has forgotten me. He can afford to pay for any freak in which he may choose to indulge."

"Goodness gracious!" from Gwen.

## A Story of La Fontaine.

La Fontaine used to denounce the stage "nads" as utterly inartistic and inadmissible. In "Jean de la Fontaine" Frank Hamel tells of an outburst before Moliere, Racine and Boileau.

"Nothing," said La Fontaine, "is more contrary to good sense. What! The pit is supposed to understand that which an actor is not expected to bear, although he is close behind the one who is speaking? Absurd!"

As he grew very warm while thus expressing his feelings, and as it was impossible to make him hear a word Boileau tried to arrest his attention by repeating over and over again in loud tones, a "La Fontaine must be a pretty rascal, a great rogue." But La Fontaine took no notice of all this abuse. At last they all burst out laughing, and this interrupted his train of thought.

"What are you laughing at?" he said. Boileau replied gravely: "Fancy! I was abusing you at the top of my voice and you never heard me, although I am near enough to touch you, and you are astonished that an actor does not hear an aside that another actor utters on the boards."

## The Two Coats Were There.

Sometimes the more you get a negro cornered the less cornered you have him. This fact, long known to many, was discovered the other day by a leather man in the "swamp."

This man suddenly awoke to the fact that certain back walls were dingy with dirt and decided they'd look much better if whitewashed.

So he summoned his old negro factotum and told him to get busy with his whitewash brush, giving special directions to put two coats on.

When the job apparently had been finished the leather merchant inspected, and it found the whitewash suspiciously thin looking.

Summoning Sambo, he said as sternly as he could, "You didn't get over those walls twice as I told you to."

"No, sir," was the quick reply. "I ain't gone over twice, but I done put two coats in de pall, sir—two coats in de pall."—New York Mail.

## She Was So Sure.

A woman who may be called Mrs. Smith placed her umbrella against the counter at which she was making some purchases in a department store the other day and when she finished picked it up and started away. At least that was the way it ran through her mind.

"Pardon me," said a strange woman, "but you have my umbrella."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Smith, "that is my umbrella."

"Pardon me again," insisted the strange woman, "but it is mine."

"I guess I know my umbrella," said Mrs. Smith, beginning to show fight. "If you have lost your umbrella I am sorry, but I can't give you mine."

"Did you carry two umbrellas when you left home?" asked the stranger.

Then Mrs. Smith discovered that she had an umbrella in each hand, and she surrendered. Cleveland Press.

## Food Tasters at Feast.

The sixteenth century feast was a round of precautions. The table laid, the panter at once tasted the bread and salt as a preliminary "feeler."

Then my lord washed in water tested for poison and dried with a towel already classed as a like precaution, this the while each dish of the first course, then on the dresser, was being tasted, the direction of the sewer. The dishes then came to the high table, and "assaye" was taken by the carver and the sewer himself. Nothing was left to chance. Pieces were chipped from each loaf and corners from all meats. Pies were broken open and "cornets" of bread dipped into several places and swallowed by the tasters. Granted the well being of these tasters, the feast could then proceed.—London Chronicle.

## Bell Ringing is an Art.

"Bell ringing is a science," said a master of the art. "It is called campanology, and there are abstruse and technical terms in it, like 'Kent treble bob,' 'Stedman clinques,' 'double court bob,' 'dodges,' 'holls' and 'stingoes.' Each of these terms defines a certain phase or kind of bell ringing. In England there is a society, the Central Council of Bell Ringers, that every campanologist desires ardently to be long to. Maybe you think bell ringing is simple? Do you know what a peal is? A peal in ringers' parlance is a series of 5,000 changes rung upon a chime, no change occurring more than once."

## Easily Arranged.

"It seems to me," he complained, "that you think entirely too much of your clothes."

"Oh, no, I don't, dear," she hastily replied. "I don't really think anything of them. Can't you get some extra work to do or manage in some way to increase your income so that I can have something new?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

## Oh, Splash!

"My sister writes from abroad that her husband fell four stories out of a hotel window."

"Merry! You take it very calmly."

"Oh, he wasn't hurt! You see, it was in Venice, and he could swim."—Boston Transcript.

## Defending Him.

Agnes—And did he say I looked intellectual? Gladys—Oh, no, indeed! I assure you he said nothing disparaging.—Life.

## The Nocturnal Sun is Dark and Music Sounded when the Heart is Low.—Young.

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# A DIAGNOSIS

By WILLIAM G. ERNST

In a mining camp in Colorado called Jimdandy, there being no doctor, the people lived in a state of anxiety. When any one got sick those about the patient did not know what to do in the premises, and there was no one on whom to throw the responsibility. A committee was sent over to Hutton, where there were two doctors, with orders to try to persuade one of them to practice in Jimdandy.

Dr. Farmecute was induced to take a new field, especially as Dr. Thorax, the other practitioner, bothered him by disputing his diagnosis and treatment in every case. If Farmecute said a man had typhoid fever Thorax declared he had the mumps. If Farmecute gave a sedative Thorax sneered and said that he needed a stimulant. Therefore Dr. Farmecute accepted the new field with the proviso that if his diagnosis or treatment were questioned by any one and he shot the objector he was not to be prosecuted. The committee accepted the condition, and the doctor hung out his shingle in Jimdandy.

There had been but half a dozen cases of illness in the town in a year, though they had been worrying ones to those who took care of the patients. The hanging out of a doctor's sign seemed to have a peculiar effect on the inhabitants. While it had not occurred to them before that there was any thing the matter with them, now every person who passed the doctor's office and read his sign felt compelled to consult him. But few betide any one who ventured to disagree with him as to the disease from which the patient suffered or the treatment. One morning Tim Hickson was passing the doctor's office when Jim Ferguson came crashing through the door, forwarded by the toe of the doctor's boot.

"What's up, Jim?" asked Hickson.

"Why, I consulted the doctor for a sore throat, and he told me the trouble was in the stomach. I said I could eat well enough if I could get anything down, but I couldn't swallow, whereupon he hustled me out."

"Served you right," said Hickson. "The doctor came here with the stipulation that he was not to be disputed professionally."

"If that's so how am I to get even with him?"

"Well, if you want to get revenge you'd better tackle him on some other subject. If you insist on throat trouble when he says your stomach's wrong and he shoots you he's not to be punished."

Ferguson passed on, rubbing his bruises and trying to think of a way to get even with the doctor. It was evident that in a professional way Farmecute had the people of Jimdandy with him. In any fracas in that line they would favor him, and the result would be to the discredit of his patient. Ferguson brooded over his treatment, but his throat got well of itself.

One day he went back to the doctor's office (this time he had his gun with him—and said:

"Doctor, I'm sick. I reckon I'm going to die."

"Where does the trouble lie?"

"Oh, I don't know. I'm no diagnostician. That's for you to find out."

"I didn't mean that I want you to tell me what's the matter with you. I want to know your symptoms."

"I haven't any symptoms."

"Then you haven't any disease."

"Yes, I have."

The doctor had, turned away, and when he saw the patient again Ferguson was looking at him from behind the muzzle of a revolver. His own gun was in a drawer in his medicine case, but there was no opportunity to get it if Ferguson objected.

"I've got a frightful disease, and I want you to tell me what it is."

"How can I tell you without knowing your symptoms?"

"I told you my symptoms the last time I called on you professionally, and you fired me out for my pains."

"Well, I can't do anything for you."

Ferguson cocked his weapon. "If you don't diagnose my case before I count five," he said, "I'll make a case for an undertaker. One, two—"

"You are suffering from amnesia."

"What's that?"

"That's forgetting yourself."

"Three—"

"Let me see your tongue."

Ferguson put out his tongue.

"I must feel your pulse."

"Not much. You'll have to find out what's the matter with me in some other way."

"You will need a sedative. Excuse me a moment and I'll give you a hypodermic to quiet you."

A little syringe was lying on a table with other instruments. The doctor picked it up, filled it with a liquid and, advancing boldly toward his patient, suddenly raised it and squirted the contents in Ferguson's eyes. Jim dropped his revolver and clapped his hands to his eyes.

Tim Hickson happened to be passing the doctor's office again and saw Jim Ferguson coming out exactly the same way as before. Jim fell on his knees and, rising, groped about wildly.

"What's up, Jim?"

"Been seeing the doctor agin. We've settled it. The trouble's in the eyes. I've gone blind."

Ferguson's slight snout came back to him, but he concluded to let the doctor alone.

## The Magic Glasses.

The first fieldglass brought to the New Hebrides sorely puzzled the simple minded natives, who, of course, thought them the product of wizardry. In "Islands of Enchantment" Florence Coombs tells how one of the mission clergy was walking along the shore, when a native at his side pointed out a tiny figure in the distance.

"There goes one of my enemies," said he.

The white man, drawing out his field glasses and adjusting the focus, handed them to his companion, who, gazing through them in excited amazement, beheld his foe apparently close at hand. Dropping the glasses, he seized his arrows and looked again. The end of his arrow was as far away as at first. One more he snatched the magic glasses, once more exchanged them for his arrows and once more was baffled. To lose such an opportunity was hard in deed. A bright thought suddenly occurred to him.

"You hold the glasses to my eyes," said he to the missionary, "and I can shoot him."

## Not Pure Parisian.

The landlord of the best hotel in the small western town was solicitous about the impression that his accommodations had made upon the distinguished visitor.

"I think we set a good table," he confided to the departing guest. "You easterners are awful finicky about your meals, and for a long time we had difficulty in getting a cook who could do anything more than slum ham and eggs and fried potatoes together. We have one of the best cooks in the country now—yes, sir, a regular Parisian chef. He worked in a lot of the best restaurants in France—told me so himself."