

AUNT BETTY'S PRISONER

By M. QUAD

Copyright, 1912, by Associated Literary Press

When Stephen Ellis was elected sheriff of Ingham county the old jailer, not being of his party, had to go. To everybody's surprise the place was given to Uncle Jerry Stills.

Uncle Jerry was fifty years old, and his wife, who was always called Aunt Betty, was a couple of years younger. They were nice old people. They were liberal with what they had and knew about as much of the wickedness of the world as two children. The sheriff had lived with them for four or five years when he was a homeless orphan, and he owed a debt of gratitude which he wanted to pay. He knew their soft spots, and when they were ready to take possession of the stone jug he had:

"Now, listen to me! This is a jail and not an orphan asylum. No one will be sent here who is innocent or deserves pity. All prisoners are here because they deserve to be. Every last one will lie and play the hypocrite and must be carefully watched. There must be no foolishness with them. Uncle Jerry, you mustn't trust one of them as far as you can sling a bull by the tail.

"Aid, Aunt Betty, you mustn't harden that kind heart of yours. I know you'd like to adopt every tramp in the state and let him swing in a hammock and have ham and eggs every meal, but it's a different thing here."

The jail was without a prisoner just then. At length a prisoner arrived to be cared for by Uncle Jerry and Aunt Betty. He had been tried for grand larceny and given a sentence of six months. He did not look more than eighteen years old and had a face as innocent as that of a child. He had tears in his eyes when he arrived at the jail.

"What a shame!" exclaimed Aunt Betty after a look at the prisoner.

"He is rather young," replied Uncle Jerry.

Aunt Betty sighed and said nothing more. She didn't know whether or not she'd tell the boy she pitied him. There was something he did do when she peeped in the next meal, and she couldn't help herself. She looked sorrowful, and she asked the prisoner if he had a mother. He studied her face for a moment and then answered that he had.

At Aunt Betty's next visit to the cell he carried two extra dishes not provided for by the rates, and when the prisoner had thanked her he timidly asked:

"Good woman, dare I ask you to write to my mother for me?"

"If I write her she'll know you are in jail, and that will hurt her terribly."

"You mustn't tell her, but you must tell her that the whole world has been against me. Nobody is willing to give me a show."

"You poor boy!" she pitifully said.

"They say I stole a watch from a farmhouse, but I never, never did. A tramp who came later took the watch."

"And didn't they get him?"

"No, and because they didn't they arrested me and sent me here. I was a poor boy, you see, and had no one to help me."

"What a shame! What a burning shame! Why, the judge and jury ought to be here in your place!"

"I want you to write to mother and tell her so. I don't want her to think I've become a wicked boy."

Uncle Jerry had to go out on business one afternoon and was not expected home until 9 o'clock in the evening. At 6 o'clock Aunt Betty prepared supper and invited the prisoner to sit at table with her. She reasoned that it would uplift and make a man of him. He ate a full meal, speaking words of gratitude between mouthfuls, and then rose up and took her by the throat and banged her head against the wall and took the prison key off of his nail and opened the door to liberty. It was cold weather, but he went without hat or coat.

It took Aunt Betty about ten minutes to realize what had happened, and then she ran to the street bare-headed—not to shout for help, however. A-a venture she turned to the right and ran for her life down the street and out in the country. Half a mile from the jail she caught sight of her "poor innocent boy." So did he of her, and he leaped it like a rabbit. Over fences and across fields he led her, but she was a bound on the trail and ran him down at last.

Then, as soon as she could get her breath, Aunt Betty cursed and walloped and spanked and pulled hair until that young man cried for mercy. On the way back to jail he got a cuff about once in every twenty feet, and when he found himself once more in the cell he was a thankful boy, indeed. "Is everything all right?" asked Uncle Jerry as he arrived home.

"Yes, all right," was the answer.

"I found out about that boy today. He's a tough one. He has no mother and has been in jail about ten times. He's a slick thief and the biggest liar in the United States. I hope you won't let him bamboozle you with his talk and his tears."

"Jerry Stills, my name is Betty, didn't it?" asked the woman as she drew herself up.

"I've allis'posed so."

"Did you ever hear of a Betty letting anything that walks on two legs bamboozle her?"

"Can't say I ever did."

"And you never did?"

Proved His Claim.

While a building was in process of construction two of the men became engaged in a violent quarrel. No violent fight was there. The men were called in and the offenders taken before a magistrate. Both of the men were sober and industrious and good workmen. This, according to the testimony of the foreman in charge of their work, who had followed in hopes of being able to intercede for them.

"The magistrate asked in astonishment the cause of the quarrel. It seems that one man had accused the other of stealing his coat.

"And I can prove it, too," added the man.

"How?" asked the magistrate.

"I always keep my card in the pocket," said the man.

The policeman was directed to search the garment. "Gimme my coat," said the workman. It was handed to him. He took two dried pens out of the pockets and held them up triumphantly. "I P Peter Powell. That's my name. Them's my card."

He got his coat.—New York Globe.

Inner Significance.

I like to sing of blossoms, and I like to sing of bees. As a rough and ready singer ought to do, I like to sing of little birds that warble in the trees. And of flowers yellow, white or blue. But the thought that most delights me very seldom I express.

When I lift my more or less exultant tune. It's subtle, soft impression stealing through my consciousness.

That we're going to have a circus pretty soon.

Oh, the sunshine on the river and the cloudlet in the sky. And the booming that is scattered from the trees.

Are things of beauty in themselves as they go drifting by.

Yet things of deep significance for me! Each joy is but a promise of the greater bliss to come.

I see a ring of sawdust in the moon. And the breeze brings faroff echoes of the brass band and the drum.

"Cause there's going to be a circus pretty soon.

—Washington Star.

Favorite Fiction.

"Your last chance to buy a lot in this subdivision."

"When I am on the roof of a skyscraper I always feel an irresistible inclination to throw myself down."

"Certainly, Mr. Jones. It will afford me great pleasure to contribute something to that fund."

"I know your name as well as my own, but it escapes me for the moment."

"Myrtle, have you been away only a month? Why, it seems to me more than a year."

"I am not anxious to sell the house, but my wife wants to move out to one of the suburbs, where her relations live."—Chicago Tribune.

Earthly Glory.

I do not envy any king.

The royal purple that he wears.

A crown is but a foolish thing, accompanied by many cares.

I would not wish to be a czar, compelled to hide from jealous foes.

I'd rather be a baseball star, who gazes everywhere he goes.

I would not journey over seas to loom up as a diplomat.

With breeches reaching to my knees—I fear I lack the legs for that.

I would not be the bard who waxes the harp, to thrill as Homer thrilled.

I'd rather be the man who makes a home run with the bases filled.

—Chicago Record-Herald.

Nature's Part.

Fatherly Clergymen (meeting young parishioner in curl papers)—Why don't you leave your hair as it was meant to be, my child? If nature had wanted your hair to curl she would have curled it for you.

Offended Young Lady—When I was a little girl she died, sir. But I suppose, she now thinks I am old enough to do it for myself.—Newark Star.

Sunny Sue.

She dropped a sunny smile upon the hard and frozen ground.

There was an awful thaw that day.

For many miles around.—Peoria Journal.

She raised her tearful eyes to gaze upon the sun so grand.

He hid his face, and for two days it rained to beat the band.—Chicago Tribune.

She danced so lightly in and out. Like gossamer she flew.

And all the little hills about were straightway dancing too.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

An Excuse.

"I am so embarrassed when among fashionable ladies," declared Mrs. Wombat.

"Why so?"

"I don't smoke."

"That needn't lose you an caste. Tell the other ladies that your doctor forbids it."—Boston Advertiser.

Alike, Yet Different.

The clam is silent, so is the owl.

The owl is considered cheerful.

The owl by night doth roam and prowls.

And hoot in manner fearful.

And yet the owl is considered wise.

Which doubtless makes it prouder.

The clam for optimism tries.

And winds up in the chowder.

—Wilbur D. Nesbit in Judge.

Unfair.

Boy (who has just lost a sack race)—Aw, it ain't fair!

Manager—What's not fair, son?

Boy—Lettin' dat girl in de race. Course she'd win! Ain't she used to dem narrer skirts?—Indianapolis Star.

September Music.

I only hear a winter sound, though summer birds are close. For now the thrifty cotton has in his yeasty soul.

His First Lesson In Medical Practice

By THOMAS R. DEAN

Miss Elsie Tisdale was engaged to marry Mr. Bert Sawyer, a medical student. Mr. Sawyer was aware that Miss Tisdale was as sensitive as a bird. All she knew about physicians was when one of them came to the house, felt some one's pulse, asked about sundry symptoms and, taking out a square bit of paper, wrote certain hieroglyphics on it that an apothecary understood.

What Bertie, as she called him, was going through to acquire a medical education she had no idea. That he ate peanuts out of the breast of a cadaver he was at work on in the dissecting room, that he used the top of a skull, inverted, for a tobacco box, that he frequently took a hand, a foot or some other member of the human body to his room to cut to pieces, she had not even a suspicion. She supposed that a medical school was like other schools—books, books, nothing but books, and nice, clean looks at that—while gentle professors lectured on how to cure a stomach ache and when to give the baby paregoric.

Bert, aware of her innocence, was very careful not to disturb her notions of the medical profession by enlightening her. By an unfortunate circumstance he suddenly burst upon her in his true frightfulness. She had been visiting a friend in a neighboring city and was returning by rail. She had been in the car but a few minutes when she saw the back of a head that looked familiar. It was turned aside toward a man who sat besides its owner and displayed the profile of Mr. Bert Sawyer. Facing the two sat a figure done up in a big shawl.

Horrible to relate—the face of the figure was that of a skull.

Mr. Sawyer and his friend Billy Peterson had learned where the skeleton of a human being could be bought cheap. They had gone for it, purchased it and were taking it home. There were but few persons in the car, and the conductor had good naturedly permitted them to seat it opposite them selves.

Just as Miss Tisdale got into the car, recognized her lover and caught sight of the grinning face with no nose and empty eye sockets the conductor came through the train and, passing the two medicines, punched their tickets.

"Pare, governor," said Mr. Sawyer, addressing the skeleton. "Produce your ticket or you'll be put off."

The skeleton continued to grin, the conductor smiled, and the men in the car seemed to think it all very funny. There were two women besides Elsie, one sitting in the next seat and one farther forward. Neither of them seemed to consider Mr. Sawyer's action a bit funny. As for Elsie, she was paralyzed with horror.

"Oh, he's all right," said the other medic. "He's no deahdead." And, slipping his own ticket in the band of his hat, he put the hat on the skeleton's head.

This caused a burst of laughter from the men in the car and a scowl from the women.

"Smoke, governor!" said Bert, thrusting a cigar between the skeleton's toothless and gumless jawbones.

A murmur of indignation from the women. The train rounding a curve, the skeleton lost its balance and fell against the arm of the seat.

"Sit up, governor," said Bert. "Don't be rolling around that way. The passengers will think you've been drunk."

"I smell his breath," said Billy—"gin and lemon peel."

The conductor was sitting at the end of the car, and one of the women called to him and told him that if he didn't stop that indecent behavior on the part of those young men she would report him for negligence of duty. At this the conductor went to the two medics and told them they had better roll their body companion in his shawl and stop the fun. To this they assented, and that ended the performance. Soon after the train rolled into the station the medics and the "governor" went out through the front end of the car, while Elsie left it at the rear. She held her handkerchief to her eyes to conceal her tears and to avoid being recognized by Bert, whom she intended never to meet again as her fiance.

The next morning's mail brought him a note from her containing the few words:

"Our engagement is broken."

Sawyer looked at it sidewise and, on impulse, then shook it as if it were a toy puzzle. He could not understand it. Anyway something was wrong, and he went right over to the house to find out about it. Mrs. Tisdale came down with a suppressed smile and told him the cause of the break. Elsie had come home the day before heartbroken. She had supposed she was going to marry a gentleman and found that instead she was to marry a ghou!

Bert was crushed.

"You'd better drop the whole affair," said Mrs. Tisdale, "and let Elsie get over it by degrees."

"She'll never get over it," groaned Bert. "She'll have a horror of me so long as she lives."

The affair was a good lesson to Bert. He became a famous physician and never forgot that the doctors and the sewer forgot that the doctors and the sewer are two different peoples. As for Elsie, he was right in assuming that she would always have a horror of him. She married another.

Lots of water,
Little food,
Thinner clothing,
Freshest mood,
Living simply,
Girl in white,
Make the summer
Out of sight!
—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Knicker—How do you remember to water the plants when your wife is away?

Rooster—I keep 'em in the bathtub.—New York Sun.

The naked truth will have its sting—It shows up all our acts—For there's no way to cloak a thing—That's made up of bare facts.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

"Gracious, Smith, old boy, how are you? I haven't seen you in ages. You are altered. I should scarcely know you again."

"Excuse me, sir; my name is not Smith."

"Great Scott! Your name altered as well?"—Wasop.

"I've not a greenback," said the frog. "I'll need it, too, all right. For I am going to attend the fancy hop tonight."—Pittsburgh Press.

"Marriage is odd. You add one to one and make one."

"How singular!"—Judge.

Just when a fellow's drowsy! Where river breezes creep A fish comes tuggin' at his line. Disturbin' of his sleep.

No rest for the weary—The world is rollin' wrong—To be awakened from a dream By a fish three inches long.—Atlanta Constitution.

"What is personal magnetism?" "Personal magnetism," replied the manager. "is what enables a man to stand up and keep the audience interested in a lecture without the use of moving pictures."—Washington Star.

He used to break his father's will. He'd left a fortune great. The young man got the verdict and His lawyers the estate.—Exchange.

"Did you notice that fellow at the Orpheum right opposite us?" "That good looking fellow with the tan suit and red necktie? No. Why?"—Wisconsin Sphinx.

Pretty bride in his canoe. Ere you paddle off with him—Listen—I would question you: Did you ever learn to swim?—Judge.

"And what," he angrily demanded, "am I to have in return for all the money I have spent on you?" "Well, you've got the experience," she calmly replied.—Chicago Record-Herald.

A little pig With a curly tail And a satiny skin All pinky pale Is a dainty different Thing by far From the lumps of iniquity Big pigs are.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

"Did that palmtist tell you the truth about yourself?" "Yes, but my wife has been doing that for years."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

"Why do you run so fast, my boy?" "I study hard at night." "When far enough from Johnny Jones I'll yell, 'I ain't afraid!'"—Lippincott's.

"The great question of the hour is the canal question."

"Panama?"

"No, alimentary; how to keep traffic passing through it at present food prices."—Wellspring.

"Arrrrrrrrrrrr," said Tommy Tubbs. "I study hard at night." "When far enough from Johnny Jones I'll yell, 'I ain't afraid!'"—Lippincott's.

"The great question of the hour is the canal question."

"Panama?"

"No, alimentary; how to keep traffic passing through it at present food prices."—Wellspring.

"Arrrrrrrrrrrr," said Tommy Tubbs. "I study hard at night." "When far enough from Johnny Jones I'll yell, 'I ain't afraid!'"—Lippincott's.

"The great question of the hour is the canal question."

"Panama?"

"No, alimentary; how to keep traffic passing through it at present food prices."—Wellspring.

"Arrrrrrrrrrrr," said Tommy Tubbs. "I study hard at night." "When far enough from Johnny Jones I'll yell, 'I ain't afraid!'"—Lippincott's.

"The great question of the hour is the canal question."

"Panama?"

"No, alimentary; how to keep traffic passing through it at present food prices."—Wellspring.

"Arrrrrrrrrrrr," said Tommy Tubbs. "I study hard at night." "When far enough from Johnny Jones I'll yell, 'I ain't afraid!'"—Lippincott's.

"The great question of the hour is the canal question."

"Panama?"

"No, alimentary; how to keep traffic passing through it at present food prices."—Wellspring.

"Arrrrrrrrrrrr," said Tommy Tubbs. "I study hard at night." "When far enough from Johnny Jones I'll yell, 'I ain't afraid!'"—Lippincott's.

"The great question of the hour is the canal question."

"Panama?"

"No, alimentary; how to keep traffic passing through it at present food prices."—Wellspring.

AN AERONAUT

By FRED L. YOUNG

When the steamer Orinoko, on her way from Naples to New York, stopped at Gibraltar a man came aboard with a number of boxes, which were marked "Machinery." He was a pleasant spoken, half-fellow-well-meet sort of person, who made acquaintance rapidly with the other passengers. He bet freely on the daily run of the ship and if he won opened wine to celebrate his good luck and if he lost opened wine to celebrate the winner's luck. In either case he opened wine, Billy Mickleton, the gentleman referred to, soon became known as the best fellow on the ship.

"What's in all those boxes, Mickleton, you brought aboard with you?" asked a passenger.

"When we approach the Atlantic coast you'll all know. I'm going to make an experiment that will attract the attention of the world."

"Why not tell us now?"

"I'm under contract with a New York newspaper to keep the secret till the last moment. The paper is to have the exclusive rights of publication."

Nothing so absorbs people as curiosity, and the Orinoko had not long passed Madeira before everybody was talking about Mickleton and the experiment he was going to make. Some believed it to be a trial trip of a new kind of boat, whose parts were packed in the boxes. Others guessed that he had invented a light submarine to be managed by one person. He would put it in the water when the ship was off Sandy Hook and, moving under water, beat her to her dock. A third crowd guessed that Mickleton intended to be shot out of a mortar from the ship's deck and come down with a patent parachute.

When the ship was 500 miles from port Mickleton secured the permission of the captain to remove the contents of the boxes to the upper deck. When they had been unpacked and carried to the deck Mickleton set to work and put together an aeroplane. The passengers gathered about him to watch some who knew something about aeroplanes curious to see the machinery put in. But Mickleton waited till the ship turned in for the night to do this work, and when they came on deck in the morning they found the aeroplane concealed under a canvas cover.

The captain kindly ordered the ship's carpenter to make a passage for the machine by taking down the stern rail and otherwise render a start possible. When all these things were done and the passengers had nothing to do but wait they crowded around the aeroplane and pilled him with questions. "Is it a new power you're going to test?"

"Are you going in ahead of the ship or going to make a transatlantic flight?"

"Is it to break a record for speed or for height or for distance?"

Mickleton said that it grieved him not to be able to satisfy them, but that he was dependent on the newspaper with which he had made his contract for funds to carry out his experiment and if he let out anything he would forfeit a small fortune. When a man became too persistent Billy opened a bottle of wine.

Fire insurance was sighted at 9 o'clock in the morning. At 10 Mickleton was ready for his flight. The last article he put on his machine was a small box. He opened it and showed provisions. From the size of the box it might contain food and drink to last a week. It was evident from this that the flight was to be a long one, and it was the opinion of most of the passengers that Mickleton was intending to make straight across the Atlantic back to Gibraltar. If necessary he would have stopping points at the Azores and Madeira.

Just before starting Mickleton went to the wireless office and sent a message in cipher to a New York newspaper. If any one had any doubts as to the truthfulness of the aeronaut's excuses for not telling his intention this removed them. Leaving the wireless office, he returned to his aeroplane, went under the canvas, made a final inspection of the parts, then removing the cover, got aboard. Sailors on a run pushed him along the deck; he caught the air, hardly striking the water surface, then rose gradually.

The ship was steaming westward along the Long Island coast. The aeroplane, rising, turned toward the land, passed over the eastern end of the island and gradually passed out of sight. The Orinoko reached Sandy Hook about noon, but being delayed at quarantine, was not docked till the next morning. Every passenger was on deck and eager to read the account of the aeroplane flight, the start of which he had witnessed. Not a single newspaper mentioned it.

Mr. Mickleton passed out of the minds of the passengers of the Orinoko as he had passed out of their sight over Montauk Point and was forgotten. But the time came when they read the newspaper account, which was a very different one from what they had been told about. It reported how the slickest smuggler working between Europe and America, who had long evaded customs officers, had been caught red-handed. Among his smuggling devices the article gave an account of his getting a million dollars' worth of diamonds in free of duty by means of an aeroplane from the deck of a ship.

A Professional Love Letter Writer.

In the American Magazine appears under the title "A Handy Man With the Pen" the confession of a man who is a professional writer of love letters, after dinner speeches, obituary poetry, etc. The following is one of the stories he tells about writing love letters for a customer:

"One day last fall a handsome young man, much embarrassed, appeared and after some hesitation confessed that he had neglected his education and was corresponding with a young woman with whom he was very much in love. She was a college graduate, and he desired to have his letters as well written as hers were, so he wanted me to write them. I advised him to write simply and as he talked, but he persisted, and twice a week he came, informed me concisely and briefly what he wanted to say to her, and I wrote the fruits into them. He copied the letters himself, blushing frequently as he read what I had added in the way of sentiment. That young lady received some of the most wonderful love letters ever written. They were married during the winter."

Bengal and Its Language.

The people of Bengal number seventy millions and boast of perhaps the best culture in India at the present time. The language as a written language is only fifty years old. Though for over a thousand years it has been a dialect, there is no Indian history unfortunately no trace of Bengal having been an important literary tongue. The language originates from Sanskrit, the mother tongue from which every other Indian language has borrowed its alphabet, grammar and vocabulary; but, unlike others, Bengali never shrinks from gathering new material. There are numerous Persian, French, Arabic and English words incorporated in it, and the wonder of it is that, instead of having been degraded into some vulgar form like pidgin English, Bengali has become the most literary, scientific and perhaps the most philosophic of modern Indian languages.—Argonaut.

A Long Life and a Bread One.

An English doctor recently said that ambition to live to a great old age isn't a good one and doubted whether constant efforts to lengthen the average life are for the good of the race. He apparently favors a short life and a merry one. Perhaps it isn't long life that makes the world happy, but broad life. Thirty full, energetic years may be better than sixty years of commonplace drudgery. But why not sixty full, energetic years? Who knows what this world takes when a man dies at thirty? So much has been accomplished by men who have reached sixty and even seventy and eighty that it seems good policy to keep all persons on earth as long as possible. The man who honestly disapproves efforts to prolong life is a rarity and it is lucky for the world that he is.—Savannah News.

North British Manners.