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Post-Office Bulletin.

Mails Close.

6 00 a m; D & C R R for Points North.
8 10 a m; Q A R R for Points West.
9.45 a m; Q A R R for Points East.
11:45 a m; Steamer for River Points.
1:00 p m; Stage for Preston.
1:00 p m. D & C R R for Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R for Points West.
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8:25 a m; Q A R R, from Points East.
10:10 a m; Q A R R, from Points West.
11:00 a m; Stage, from Preston.
11:30 a m; Steamer, from River Points.
11:45 m; D & C R R, from Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R, from Points East.
3:34 p m; Q A R R, from Points West.
7:45 p m; D & C R R, from Points North.

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Clerk of the Circuit Court—Charles W. Hobbs.

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Treasurer and Clerk to the Commissioners Charles H. Whitby.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John A. Sigler, Chief Judge; Thomas L. Day and Jesse T. Dennis Associates.

Register of Wills, Robert J. Jump.

School Commissioners—Thomas W. Jones, President; Henry C. Fisher and Albert W. Sisk.

School Examiner and Secretary—W S. Crouse.

State's Attorney—Albert G. Towers.

Sheriff—Isaac L. Dukes.

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A Knave of Conscience

By FRANCIS LYNDE.

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CHAPTER I.

In the days before New Orleans became a modern city with trolley cars and sky-scraping buildings—was it yesterday or the day before?—there was a dingy little cafe in the newspaper quarter which was well beloved of journalism, notably of that wing of the force whose hours begin late and end early.

"Chaudiere's," it was called, though I know not if that were the name of that wizen little Gascon who took toll at the desk; and it was particularized for its gumbos, its stuffed crabs and its claret, which was neither very bad nor very dear. For the rest, it had a clean, sanded floor, marble-topped tables for two, and an old-world air of recreative comfort which is rarer now, even in New Orleans, than it was yesterday or the day before.

It was at Chaudiere's that Griswold, late of New York and the coasts of bohemia, had eaten his first breakfast in the Crescent city and it was at Chaudiere's again that he shared a farewell supper with Bainbridge of the "Louisianian." Six weeks lay between this and that; forty odd days of discouragement and failure superadded upon other like days and weeks and months. The breakfast, he remembered, had been garnished with certain green sprigs of hope; but at the supper table he ate like a barbarian in arrears to his appetite, recking not that he was another man's guest.

Bainbridge had just been billeted for a run down the Central American coast to write up the banana trade for his paper. He was boyishly jubilant over the assignment, which promised to be neither more nor less than a pleasure trip; and, chancing upon Griswold, in the first flush of his elation, had dragged him around to the cafe to play second knife and fork at a small parting feast. Not that it had required much persuasion. Griswold had fasted for twenty-four hours and he would have broken bread thankfully with an enemy, to say nothing of Bainbridge, who, if he were not a full-fledged friend, was at least a friendly acquaintance.

Now, a hungry man is but poor company at best; but Bainbridge, the elated, contrived to talk for two until he had relieved his mind upon the subject of his windfall.

Then it occurred to him that Griswold was rather more than usually unresponsive—a fault not to be condoned under the circumstances. Wherefore he protested.

"What's the matter with you tonight, Kenneth? You're more than commonly grumpy—and that's saying a good deal."

Griswold took the last roll from the plate and buttered it methodically.

"Am I? I was more than commonly hungry. But go on; I'm listening."

"That's comforting as far as it goes, but I should think you might say something more or less appropriate. You don't have a chance to congratulate lucky people every day."

Griswold looked up with a scowl that was almost ill-natured, and quoted cynically: "'Unto everyone that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.'"

Bainbridge laughed tolerantly. "By Jove, Kenneth, a man up a tree would say you envied me."

"I do," rejoined Griswold, gravely. "I envy any man who can earn enough to keep the ban-dog of hunger from biting him."

"Pshaw! anybody can do that," said Bainbridge, with the air of one to whom the struggle for existence is as yet a mere phrase.

"I know that is your theory, but the facts disprove it. I can't, for one."

"Yes, you could, if you'd side-track some of your own theories and come down to sawing wood like the rest of us. But you won't do that."

Griswold was a fair man, with a skin that was quick and sensitive like that of a woman, and a red flush of anger swept over his face.

"That is not true, and you know it, Bainbridge," he contradicted, speaking slowly, lest his temper should break bounds. "Is it my fault that I can do nothing but write books for which I can't find a publisher? Or that the work of a hack writer is quite as impossible to me as mine is to him?"

Bainbridge laughed, but he was ready enough to make amends when he saw that Griswold was moved.

"I take it all back," said he. "I suppose the book is home again, and a returned manuscript excuses anything. But, seriously, Kenneth, you ought to get down to hard facts. Nobody but a phenomenon can find a publisher for his first book, nowadays, unless he has had some sort of an introduction in the magazines or the newspapers. You haven't had that; and, so far as I know, you haven't tried to get it."

"Oh, yes, I have—and failed. It isn't in me, and there isn't an editor in the country who doesn't know it by this time. I came down here, as you know, to write up the sugar situation for Horton. It was a humiliating failure, like everything else of the kind I have ever set myself to do."

"Did you send in anything?"

"Yes; and it was rejected. Horton said to try it on some of the reviews; that it might go with them, but was no good for a newspaper. It's no use talking, Bainbridge; the conditions are all wrong when a man with a message to his kind can't get to deliver it to the people who want to hear it."

Bainbridge ordered the demi-tasses and lighted a cigar. "That's about what I suspected. You couldn't keep your peculiar views muzzled even while you were writing a bit of a potboiler. That brings us back to the old contention. You drop your fool socialistic fad and write a book that a publisher can bring out without committing commercial hari-kari, and you'll stand some show. Light up and fumigate that idea awhile."

Griswold took the proffered cigar. "It doesn't need fumigating; if I could consider it seriously, it ought to be burned with fire. You march in the ranks of the well-fed, Bainbridge, and it's your business to be conservative. I don't, and it's mine to be radical."

"What would you have? The world's as it is, and you can't remodel it."

"Yes, I and my kind can remodel it, and we will some day when the burden has grown too heavy to be borne. The aristocracy of rank went down in fire and blood in France a century ago; that of money will come to its end here when the time is ripe."

"That's rank anarchy. I didn't know you'd gotten so far along."

"Call it what you please; names don't change facts. Listen"—Griswold leaned across the table and his eyes grew hard and the blue in them was steely—"For more than a month I have tramped the streets of this accursed city begging—yes, that's the word—begging for work of any kind that would suffice to keep body and soul together; and for more than half of that time, I've lived on one meal a day. That is what we have come to—we of the submerged majority. And that isn't all; the wage-worker himself is but a serf, a chattel among the other possessions of some fellow-man who has acquired him in the plutocratic redistribution of the earth and the fulness thereof."

Bainbridge applauded in dumb show with his thumb-nails. "Turn it loose and ease your mind, old man," he said, indulgently. "I know things haven't been coming your way lately. What is your remedy?"

Griswold was fairly started now, and ridicule was as fuel to the flame.

"The money people have set us the example. They have made us understand that might is right; that he who has may hold—if he can. The answer is simple; there is enough and to spare for all, and it belongs to all—to him who has sown the seed and watered it as well as to him who has reaped the harvest. That is a violent remedy, you will say. So be it; it is the only one that will cure the epidemic of greed. There is an alternative, but it is only theoretical."

"And that?"

"May be summed up in seven words: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' When the man who employs—and governs—uses the power that money gives him to succor his fellow-man, the revolution will be indefinitely postponed."

Bainbridge looked at his watch. "I must be going," he said; "the 'Adelantado' drops down the river at eleven. But in passing I'll venture a little prophecy. You're down on your luck now, and a bit hot-hearted in consequence, but some day you will strike it right and come out on top. When you do, you'll be a hard master, or I'll lose my guess."

"God do so to me and more, if I am."

"That's all right; when the time comes you remember my little vaticination. But before we shake hands, let's get back to concrete things for the minute. How are you fixed for the present, and what are you going to do?"

Griswold laughed mirthlessly. "I am 'fixed' to run twenty-four hours longer, thanks to your hospitality. For that length of time I presume I shall conform to what we have been taught to believe is the natural order of things. After that—"

He paused, and Bainbridge put the question: "What then?"

"Then, if the chance to earn it is still denied me, and I am sufficiently hungry, I shall stretch forth my hand and take what I need."

Bainbridge fished in his pocket and found a ten-dollar bill. "Do that first," he said, offering Griswold the money.

The proletary smiled and shook his head. "No; not to keep from going hungry—even to oblige you, Bainbridge. It is quite possible that I shall end by becoming a robber, as you paraphrasers would put it, but I shan't begin on my friends. Good-night, and a safe voyage to you."

CHAPTER II.

The fruit steamer "Adelantado," outward bound, fell away from her moorings; forged slowly ahead, until the current caught and swung her prow riverward; and, circling majestically in midstream, began to pass the lights of the city as she steamed at half speed down the river.

Bainbridge was on deck when the steamer left her berth, and, remembering the stuffy little stateroom he had inspected earlier in the day, was minded to go aft and finish his cigar in the open air. Accordingly he found a settee on the portquarter and sat down to watch the lights wheel past in orderly procession as the Adelantado swept around the great crescent which gives the city its unofficial name.

While the comfortable feeling of elation, born of his unexpected bit of good fortune, was still uppermost to lend complacency to his reflections, he yet found time to be honestly sorry for the man from whom he had just parted. Sorry, but not greatly apprehensive. He had known Griswold in New York, and was not unused to his socialistic vagaries. To be sure, his theories were incendiary and subversive of all civilized dogma; but at bottom, Griswold the man was nothing worse than an impressionable enthusiast who had tormented himself into a fancied condition of utter ruthlessness by dwelling overmuch upon the wrongs of others.

So Bainbridge thought; and he knew his opinion was shared with frank unanimity by all of Griswold's friends, who agreed in calling him Utopian, altruistic, visionary. What milder epithets could be applied to a man who, with sufficient literary talent—not to say genius—to make himself a working name in the ordinary way, must needs run amuck and write a novel with a purpose!—a novel, moreover, in which the purpose so overshadowed the story as to make the book a mere preachment.

As a matter of course, the publishers would have nothing to do with the book. Bainbridge remembered with considerable satisfaction that he had prophesied its failure, and had given Griswold no little good advice while it was in the process of writing. But Griswold, being to the full as obstinate as he was impressionable, had refused to be counseled, and now the consequences of his stubbornness were upon him. He had said truly that his literary gift was novelistic and nothing else; and here he was, penniless and desperate, with a dead book on his hands, and with no chance to write another, even if he were so minded, since one cannot write fasting.

Thus Bainbridge reflected, and was sorry that Griswold's invincible pride had kept him from accepting a friendly stop-gap in his extremity. Yet he smiled in spite of his sympathy. It was amusing to think of Griswold, who, as long as his slender patrimony had lasted, had been emphatically a man not of the people, posing as an anarchist, and up in arms against the world. None the less, he was to be pitied.

"Poor devil! he is in the doldrums now, and isn't quite responsible for what he says or thinks—or for what he thinks he thinks," said the journalist to himself. "Just the same, I wish I had made him take that—Why, how are you, Griffin? Where in the mischief did you drop from?"

It was the inevitable steamer acquaintance who is always at hand to prove the exceeding narrowness of the world, and Bainbridge made room for him on the settee.

"I didn't drop, I walked in. More than that, I kept step with you all the way down from Chaudiere's to the levee. You'd be dead easy game for an amateur."

"Confound you!" said Bainbridge, laughing. "Can't you ever forget that you're in the shadowing business?"

"Yes; just as often and just as long as you can forget that you are a news hunter."

The shadowed one laughed again, and they smoked in silence until the Adelantado doubled the bend in the river and the last outposts of the city's lights disappeared in the blackness. Then Griffin said:

"Who was the fellow you were talking to in front of Chaudiere's? His

"I SHALL END BY BECOMING A ROBBER."

face is familiar enough, but I can't place him."

The question fell in with the reporter's train of thought, and he answered it rather more fully and freely than he might have at another time under different conditions. From telling who Griswold was, he slipped by easy degrees into the story of his ups and downs, ending with a vivid little word-painting of the scene in Chaudiere's.

"To hear him talk, you would think he was a bloody-minded anarchist of the thirty-third degree, ready to sweep the existing order of things off the face of the earth," he added; "but in reality he is one of the best fellows in the world, gone a bit morbid over the social problem. He has a heart of gold, as I happen to know. He used to spend a good deal of his time in the backwater, and you know what the backwater in a big city is."

"Yes."

"Well, one night he stumbled into a cellar somewhere down in the lower levels on the East side. He was looking for a fellow that he had been trying to find work for—a crippled 'longshoreman, I believe he was. When he got into the place he found the man stiff, the woman with the death-rattle in her throat, and a two-year-old baby creeping back and forth between the dead father and the dying mother—starvation, you know, pure and simple. Griswold jumped into the breach like a man and tried to save the woman. It was too late; but when the mother died, he took the child to his own eight-by-ten attic and nursed and fed it till the missionary people took it off his hands. He did that, mind you, when he was living on two meals a day himself; and I fancy he skipped one of them to buy milk for that kid."

"Humph! And he calls himself an anarchist, does he? It's a howling pity there ain't a lot more just like him," said the detective, sententiously.

"That is what I say," Bainbridge agreed. Then, with a sudden twinge of remorse for having told Griswold's story to a stranger, he changed the subject with an abrupt question.

"Where are you headed for, Griffin?"

The detective chuckled. "You don't expect me to give it away to you—a newspaper man—do you? But I will, seeing you can't get it on the wires. I am going down to Guatemala after Mortsen."

"The defaulter? By Jove! you've found him at last, have you?"

Griffin nodded. "It takes a good while, sometimes, but I don't fall down very often when there's enough money in it to make the game worth the candle. I've been two years, off and on, trying to locate that fellow; and now I've found him he is where he can't be extradited. All the same, I'll bet you five to one he goes back with me on the next steamer. Have a fresh smoke? No? Then let's turn in; it's getting late."

CHAPTER III.

Two days after the Adelantado cleared for the banana coast; or, to be more accurate, in the forenoon of the second day, the unimpetuous routine of the business quarter of New Orleans was rudely disturbed by the shock of a genuine sensation.

At ten o'clock, Mr. Galbraith, president of the Bayou state bank, entered his private office in the rear of the main banking apartment, opened his desk, and addressed himself to the business of the day. Punctually at ten-five the stenographer, whose desk was in the anteroom, brought in the mail; five minutes later the cashier entered for his morning conference with his superior; and at half-past the hour the president was left alone to read his correspondence.

Mr. Galbraith was a serious-minded man whose hobby was method; and it was his custom to give himself a quiet half-hour of inviolable seclusion each morning in which to read and consider his letters. During this interval the stenographer, acting as usher, was instructed to deny his chief to callers of whatsoever degree. Wherefore, when the door of the private office opened at twenty minutes of eleven to admit a stranger, the president was justly annoyed.

"Well, sir?" he said, with an accent irritant, taking the intruder's measure in a swift glance shot beneath his bushy white eyebrows.

The visitor was a young man not over thirty, of prepossessing appearance, with a figure rather slight for his stature; fair, with blue eyes, and a curling brown beard and mustache, the former trimmed to a point. So much the president was able to remark at a glance, and to remember afterwards.

"Well, sir!" he repeated, when the stranger stopped to carefully close the door, "if you have business with me, I shall have to ask you to excuse me for a few minutes. Be good enough to take a seat in the ante-room till I ring. McFarland should have told you."

The young man drew up a chair and sat down, ignoring the request as if he had not heard it. Now Mr. Andrew Galbraith's temper was ordinarily the temper of an elderly gentleman with a long upper lip, worn clean shaven, but such a deliberate infraction of his rules was not to be borne patiently, and he got up to ring for the janitor. But when his hand sought the bell-push, he found himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver in the hands of the intruder, and so was fain to fall back into his chair, gasping:

"Wha—what do you mean, sir! Who are you and what do you want?" he stammered.

The reply was most succinct and to the point.

"I am a poor man, and I want money. If you call for help, I shall shoot you."

"You would murder me?" The president's hands were clutching the arms of the chair, and he was fighting desperately for courage and presence of mind in his extremity.

"Not willingly, I assure you; but most certainly, if you attempt to give the alarm. But there is no occasion for needless anxiety. It is merely a question of money, and if you are amenable to reason your life is not in danger."

"If I'm—but I'm not amenable to your reasons, sir!" exclaimed the president, recovering somewhat from the first shock of terrified bewilderment. "I refuse to listen to them. I'll not have anything to do with you. Go away."

The young man smiled in a way to show his teeth.

"Keep your temper, Mr. Galbraith," he said, coolly. "I say you shall listen first and obey afterward. Otherwise you die. Which is it to be? Choose quickly—time is precious."

The president yielded the first point, but ungraciously, as one under strict compulsion.

"Well, well, then; out with it. What have you to say for yourself?"

"This. You are rich; you represent the existing order of things. I am poor, and I stand for my necessity, which is above any man-made law or custom. You have more money than you know what to do with; I have not enough to buy the next meal, which is already twenty-four hours overdue. I came here this morning with my life in my hand to invite you to share with me a portion of that which is yours only by the right of possession. If you do it, well and good; if not, you die. Do I make myself sufficiently clear?"

The president glanced furtively at the clock. It was nearly eleven, and M'Farland would surely come in on the stroke of the hour. If he could only gain a little time. He searched in his pockets and drew forth a handful of coin.

"You say you are hungry; well, I'm not that well off that I canna remember the time when I knew what it was to be on short commons myself," he said; and the relapse into the mother idiom was a measure of his perturbation. "Take this now, and be off with you."

The younger man glanced at the clock in his turn and shook his head.

"You are merely trying to gain time, and it won't do. My stake in this game is more than a handful of silver; and I don't do you the injustice to suppose that you hold your life so cheaply—you who have so much silver and gold and so few years to live."

The president put the little heap of coins on the desk, but he did not abandon the struggle for delay.

"What's your price, then?" he demanded, as one who is willing to compromise.

"One hundred thousand dollars—in money."

"But, man! you're clean daft! Do ye think I have—"

"I am not here to argue the possibilities,"—the interruption was sharp and incisive. "Take your pen and write out a check payable to your own order for one hundred thousand dollars, and do it now! If that door opens before we have concluded, you are a dead man!"

Then Andrew Galbraith saw that his end was nigh, and gathered himself for a final effort at time-killing. It was absurd; he had no such balance to his credit; such a check would not be honored; it would ruin him irretrievably. In the midst of his vehement protest the stranger stepped back a pace and raised the weapon.

"I tell you you are trifling with your life! Do it while there is yet time!"

The sound of subdued voices came from the anteroom, and the beleaguered old man stole a glance at the face of his persecutor. There was no mercy in the fierce blue eyes glaring down upon him, but rather madness and fell murder. The summons came once again.

"Do it quickly, I say, before we are interrupted. Do you hear?"

Truly, the president both heard and understood, but he hesitated yet one other second.

"You will not? Then may God have mercy—"

The hammer of the leveled pistol clicked twice. Andrew Galbraith shut his eyes and made a blind grasp for pen and check-book. His hands were shaking as with a palsy, but the fear of death steadied them suddenly when he came to write.

"Indorse it!" was the next command. The voices had ceased in the anteroom, and the silence was broken only by the labored strokes of the president's pen and the tap-tap of the typewriter in the anteroom.

"Now come with me to your paying teller and get me the money. Make what explanation you see fit; but remember that if he hesitates you die."

They left the private office together, side by side; the young man with his right hand under his coat. The president breathed a little freer when they reached the lobby of the main apartment and was not without hope that chance might still intervene to save him.

It did not. There were but few customers in the bank at that hour, and the president tried in vain to catch a responsive eye.

At the paying teller's window there was only one person instead of the group which Andrew Galbraith had hoped to find there; a young woman who was getting a draft cashed. She saw them and would have stood aside, but the robber forbade it with a gesture, and they waited for a few trying moments until she was served.

When the young woman went her way the president stepped to the window and presented the check. Up to that instant he had clung desperately to the hope that some fortunate happening would forestall the catastrophe; now he was determined to give the teller a warning signal, come what might. But on the pinnacle of resolution the robber came closer, and Andrew Galbraith felt the pressure of the pistol muzzle against his side—nay, more; he fancied he could feel the cold chill of the metal strike through and through him.

"Give me currency for that, Johnson," he said, with what composure there was in him.

The teller glanced at the check and then at his superior, not too inquisitively, since it was not his duty to question the president's order.

"How will you have it?" he asked; and it was the younger man who answered.

"Three hundred in fives, tens and twenties, loose, if you please. The remainder in the largest denominations put up in a package."

It was done as he directed, and he followed the teller's count as methodically as if it had been the most commonplace of business transactions. When the money was handed him he stuffed the smaller bills carelessly into his pocket, put the package containing the ninety-nine thousand odd dollars under his arm, nodded to the president, backed away to the door and vanished.

Then it was that Andrew Galbraith suddenly found speech, opening his mouth and pouring forth a torrent of frenzied incoherence which presently got itself translated into a hue and cry; and New Orleans, the unimpetuous, had its sensation ready made.

CHAPTER IV.

If Kenneth Griswold had been neither more nor less than a professional highwayman he would probably have been taken and jailed within the hour, inasmuch as his cast for fortune included no well wrought out plan of escape. But since he was both wiser and less cunning than the journeyman bank robber, and was, moreover, a hungry enthusiast who had argued himself into the belief that his act was merely illegal and not wrong, he threw the police off the scent by doing that which no criminal would have had the nerve to do.

Once safely in the street, with the package of bank notes under his arm, he was moved to do some extravagant thing celebrative of his success. It had proved to be such a simple matter, after all; one bold stroke; a small bloodless tussle with the plutocratic dragon whose hold upon his prey is so easily broken; and presto! the hungry proletary is himself a power in the land, strong to do good or evil as the gods may direct.

This was the prompting to levitation as it might have been set in words; but in Griswold's thought it was but a swift suggestion, followed immediately by another which was much more to the purpose. He was hungry; there was a restaurant next door to the bank. Without a thought of the risk he ran, or of the audacious subtlety of such an expedient at such a critical moment, he went in, sat down at one of the small tables and calmly ordered breakfast.

Now, hunger is a lusty special pleader, and it will make itself heard above any pulpit drum of the higher faculties; hence Griswold thought less of what he had done than of what he was about to eat, until the hue and cry reminded him that the chase had begun. Whereupon, not to be suspiciously incurious, he put on the mask of innocence and asked the waiter concerning the uproar.

HE ASKED THE WAITER CONCERNING THE UPROAR.

The man did not know what had happened, but he would go and find out if M'sieu' so desired "M'sieu'" said breakfast first and information afterward, by all means. Both came in due season, and Griswold ate while he listened.

Transmuted into the Creole-English of the serving-man, the story of the robbery lost nothing in its sensational features.

"Ha! W'at you t'ink, M'sieu'? De bank nex' do' is been rob!" and upon this theme excited volubility descants at large. The bank was surrounded by a gang of desperate men and every exit guarded while the leader, a masked giant, armed to the teeth, had compelled the president at the muzzle of a pistol to pay a ransom of fifty—one hundred—five hundred thousand dollars. With the money the gang had vanished, the masked giant firing the pistol at M'sieu' the president as he went. Cross-examined, the waiter could not affirm positively as to the shot. But as for the rest there could be no doubt.

Griswold ordered a second cup of coffee, and while the waiter tarried, conscience—not the enlightened conscience, but the conventional—bent its bow and sped its final arrow. It was suddenly brought home to the enthusiast with sharp emphasis that to all civilized mankind, save and excepting only those few chosen ones who shared his peculiar convictions, he was a common thief, a robber, an outlaw.

Public opinion, potential or expressed, is at best but an intangible thing; but for a few seconds Griswold writhed under the ban of it as if it had been a whip of scorpions. Then he smiled to think how strong are the bonds of custom, and conscience flung away its empty quiver. None the less, the enthusiast was rather thankful for the chastening. It served to remind him afresh of his mission. This money which he had just wrested from the plutocratic dragon should be held as a sacred trust; it should be devoted scrupulously to the cause of the oppressed. Just how it was to be applied he had not yet determined, but that could be decided later.

Meanwhile it was very evident that the dragon did not intend to accept defeat without a struggle, and Griswold set his wits at work upon the problem of escape.

"It's a little queer that I hadn't thought of that part of it," he mused. "I suppose the other fellow, the real robber, would have figured himself safely out of it—or would have thought he had—before he made a move. As I didn't, I've got to do it now, and there isn't much time to throw away. Let me see—" he shut his eyes and went into the inventive trance beloved of the literary craftsman—"the keynote must be originality. I must do something that the other fellow wouldn't think of doing."

He dallied with the second cup of coffee and outlined a plan, basing it upon a further cross-questioning of the waiter. The man had been to the door again, and by this time the street excitement had subsided sufficiently to approach the truth. The rumor of an armed gang guarding the bank doors had been a canard. There had been but one man, and the street gossips were beginning to describe him with discomforting accuracy.

Griswold paid his score and went out with studied nonchalence. He reasoned that, notwithstanding the growing accuracy of the street report, he was in no immediate danger so long as he remained in the immediate vicinity of the bank. It was safe to assume that this was one of the things that the journeyman bank robber would not do. But it was also evident that he must speedily lose his identity if he hoped to escape; and that the lost identity must leave no trace behind it.

Griswold smiled when he remembered how, in fiction of the felon-catching sort—and in real life, for that matter—the lawbreaker always did leave a trace behind him, and determined for once in a way to demonstrate practically that it was quite as easy to create an inerrant fugitive as an infallible detective. Joining the throng on the sidewalk, he made his way leisurely to Canal street, and thence diagonally through the French quarter to the French market. In a narrow alley he found what he was looking for—a dingy, sailors' barber shop. The barber was a negro, fat, unctuous and sleepy looking; and he was alone.

"Yes, sah; shave, boss?" he asked as Griswold entered.

"No; a hair-cut." Griswold produced a silver half-dollar. "Go around the corner and get me a cigar to smoke while you're doing it. Get a good one, if you have to go to Canal street," he added, climbing into the rickety chair.

The negro shuffled out, scenting tips. The moment he was out of sight Griswold snatched the scissors and began to hack recklessly at his beard; recklessly and swiftly, but with thoughtful purpose. The result was a complete metamorphosis speedily wrought. In place of the trim beard and curling mustache there was a rough stubble, stiff and uneven, like that on the face of a man who had neglected to shave for a week or two.

"I think that will answer," he said, standing before the cracked looking-glass to get the general effect. "And it's decently original. I fancy your professional blunderer would have shaved, and the first amateur detective he met would reconstruct the beard on the sunburned lines. Now for an 'uncle,' the more avaricious the better."

He went to the door and looked up and down the alley. The negro was not yet in sight, and he walked swiftly in the direction opposite to that taken by the man. A pawnbroker's shop of the kind he required was not far to seek in that locality, and when it was found Griswold drove a hard bargain with the Portuguese Jew behind the counter. The pledge he offered was the clothes he wore; and the bargain was concluded for a pair of jeans trousers, a calico shirt, a sailor's cap and a red bandanna handkerchief. These, and a trifling sum of ready money, the inconsequence of which Griswold deplored piteously before he would consent to accept it.

The Portuguese, most suspicious of men, suspected everything but the truth, as Griswold had intended, accusing his customer flatly of having stolen the clothes. And when Griswold departed without denying the accusation, suspicion became conviction, and the clothing, which might otherwise have given the police a most important clew, was carefully hidden away until time should have quieted the Jew's apprehensions.

Having thus disguised himself, Griswold made the transformation artistically complete by walking for a quarter of an hour in the dust of a loaded cotton float on the levee. Then he made a tramp's bundle of the manuscript of the dead book, the pistol and the money, in the red handkerchief, and having surveyed himself in the bar mirror of a sailors' pothouse, was minded to test his disguise by going back to the restaurant where he had breakfasted.

The experiment was made forthwith, and was an unqualified success. The proprietor not only failed to recognize him, but drove him forth with revilings in idiomatic French and broken English.

"Bete! Go back to da levee w'ere you belong to go. I'll kip da cafe for zhentlemen. Scelerat! Go!"

Griswold went, smiling between his teeth.

"That settles the question of present safety," he said to himself. "I believe I could walk into the bank and not be recognized."

The idea was so temptingly adventurous that he gave place to it on the spur of the moment. Taking a five-dollar bill from his store, he fouled it in the mud of the gutter and then went in to ask the paying teller to give him silver for it. The teller sniffed at the money, scowled at the man and then turned back to his cashbook. Griswold's smile broke into a laugh when he reached the street.

"The dragon may have teeth and claws, but it can neither see nor smell," he said, contemptuously, bending his steps riverward again. "Now I have only to choose my route and go in peace. How and where are the only remaining questions to be answered."

CHAPTER V.

For an hour after his venturesome return to the bank Griswold tramped up and down the levee, and the end of it found him still undecided as to the manner and direction of his flight.

The hour had not been altogether triumphant. The partition which is the dividing line between a life of semi-vagrancy and a life of crime is tenuous enough; and any hot-hearted one may break through it at will. But to be a vagrant indeed, one must

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

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