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J. L. EVERNGAM, DENTON, MARYLAND | J. L. EVERNGAM, DENTON, MARYLAND

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A Fortunate Overdose

A Story For Independence Day.

By F. A. MITCHEL

Our manner of celebrating Independence day has greatly changed since the first anniversary in 1777. Doubtless, until the independence declared was achieved, our forefathers were chary about celebrating its birthday at all, and if they did so it was with misgivings. But for more than a century after that happy morning when the watch in Philadelphia called the hour with "All's well, and Cornwallis has surrendered!" the Fourth of July was the great holiday of the nation. Now that a number of new generations have arisen and we have come to think more and more of the United States as a nation rather than a seceded part on another country there is a disposition to regard it simply as a holiday without vital importance. Since it has come to be celebrated more quietly there is opportunity to dwell upon those scenes, now far distant, that pertain to the Revolution.

When the war broke out it found Robert Morrison, an American, a commissioned officer in the British army. His regiment was sent to the colonies to establish the authority of the king. Lieutenant Morrison was inclined to favor the opposite side. His defection from the British service was accomplished by his sweetheart, Alice Douglas of Philadelphia, who refused to continue their betrothal unless he would leave the English army and become a rebel. This was a serious matter with him, for if captured bearing arms against his former comrades he would be treated as a traitor. However, he took the risk, deserted from his command and became a captain in the American army.

In one of the battles in New Jersey Morrison was taken prisoner by the British, was recognized as a former British officer and sent to Philadelphia, then occupied by the English. There he was tried by a court martial composed of his former brother officers and sentenced to be shot.

The outcome of the influence she had exerted over her lover was a great shock to Alice Douglas. Some time must elapse while the finding of the court was being sent to New York for the approval of the commander in chief, General Howe, before Morrison could be executed. Meanwhile Alice, having nerved herself for an effort in her lover's behalf, set her wits to work upon a plan to enable him to escape.

She asked for permission to visit him in his place of confinement, but was refused. Morrison's desertion to the enemy was considered a heinous crime, and he was not kept with other prisoners of war, but in solitary confinement. He was allowed to receive letters, though they were rigidly scrutinized by the officers of his guard. Alice desired to write him a letter which he only would understand, but found it difficult to frame one that would not be suspected, if not interpreted by his jailer. In her perplexity she consulted a chemist, who suggested that she write in ordinary ink what might be read by any one and on the same paper put what she wished to say privately in an ink mixed with gum arabic and chloride of cobalt. The composition would be invisible unless heated and disappear as soon as cooled.

This ink, which was pink, he prepared and showed her that while the letters written with it were made visible by heat they reappeared in green. Alice wrote a letter to Morrison with ordinary ink, ending it with the words, "Mrs. Pyrine sends her love and sympathy." Then across the face of the letter she wrote in the prepared ink: "I am planning for your escape. Be on the lookout." There was no such person as Mrs. Pyrine, and Alice counted on Morrison suspecting that the word Pyrine had a hidden meaning.

Unfortunately it occurred to the officer whose duty it was to examine any letter sent to the prisoner and who was an educated man that the Greek word "pyrus" meant fire in English. Then after some thought he inferred what it had been intended the prisoner should infer—that the letter was to be heated. This the officer did, and the message appeared in green letters.

He returned the letter to Alice. Quite likely, being a gentleman, he felt disposed to let the sender know that her device had failed. Before returning it he read it to the prisoner and told him how he had discovered a secret message, though he did not tell him what the message was.

Alice was much depressed at her failure. Nevertheless she did not give up her purpose. She took delicacies to Morrison, which he was permitted to receive, though she was not allowed to take them in to him herself. A few days after the failure of her attempt at secret communication she took some eatables to him and learned that a new guard, including the officer in command, had been placed in charge of the prisoner. This was because the regiment to which the old guard belonged had been ordered away from Philadelphia.

It now occurred to Alice to try her device again, trusting that the new officer in charge would not be so bright as his predecessor. By this time her plan was perfected for aiding the prisoner's escape. She had entered the military hospital as a nurse and designed bringing Morrison there that she might have greater advantages than were to be expected while he was in solitary confinement. Her intention was to send him some viand medicated to make him ill, that he might be transferred to the hospital and fall under her care.

But since it was best that Morrison should know her intention, for he must be sure to eat what she would send him, she wished to communicate her plan to him. She asked the chemist if he could not suggest some better device than the first one. The only improvement he could make was to give her an invisible ink made of rice water, which, being heated, would appear pink, but which moisture would render permanently illegible.

Alice wrote Morrison a letter in ordinary ink, as before, and on the same paper wrote in invisible ink that the day after the sending of the letter she would send him some eatables, including some apples. He was to eat one apple, and if it did not make him sufficiently ill to secure his being sent to the hospital he was to eat enough of the others to effect the purpose. In the letter written for inspection she said that M. Chaud was trying to secure a pardon for the prisoner, Chaud being the French for heat.

Now, it happened that there was an Englishwoman who took care of the building in which Morrison was confined whose sympathies were with the British. When Morrison received Alice's letter, not understanding the mention of M. Chaud, he laid it aside while he thought of the matter. The next morning the woman was admitted to the room to put it to rights, and the circulation of air she made in dusting landed the letter on the hearth on which a fire was burning. Turning toward it, she saw pink letters written on the paper. They caught the prisoner's eye at the same time, and he took up the letter from the hearth, hastily reading the secret message.

The woman, suspecting that something was wrong, told the officer in charge what she had seen. Meanwhile Morrison, who was nearsighted, holding the letter close to his face, breathed on it and noticed a slight diminution of the strength of the pink letters. It occurred to him that moisture might efface them, and, dampening a cloth, he laid it on the paper. They at once became invisible.

Later the officer in charge came in and asked to see the letter. Morrison handed it to him. He looked it over and called to the woman who had reported it to come to him. On her entrance he showed her the letter and asked if it was the one on which she had seen pink letters. She said that it looked like the one she had seen, but it could not have been since the pink letters were not on it. The officer recognized it as the one he had the evening before turned over to the prisoner and told the woman that she must have been mistaken in thinking there was anything on the paper except what appeared. This ended the incident, and Morrison drew a long breath of relief at the narrow escape.

When the apples arrived he ate one of them, and, the expected result not coming as soon as he anticipated, he ate all of the others. The result was that when next visited by the guard he was in collapse. He was unconscious for a time, and when a glimmering of consciousness returned soldiers were moving about him and a surgeon was listening for his heartbeat. Then Morrison heard the surgeon say that he thought he was dead, but was not certain. Leaving orders that he was to be watched, the surgeon withdrew. Morrison recovered slowly, but it occurred to him to pretend to be still unconscious. Persons came and went, and since the prisoner was supposed to be dead or dying no pains were taken for his security. The guard was withdrawn, and he was placed in charge of a nurse.

Night came on, and Morrison continued to feign unconsciousness. The nurse finally fell asleep. Morrison looked at the man between closed lashes and when the fellow began to snore slid off the cot on which he was lying. His clothes had not been taken off him, nor had his shoes been removed. The latter he unlaced and carried them in his hands. In his stockings he began a slow movement past the slumbering nurse toward the door, which stood ajar.

That was the longest journey of a dozen feet that Morrison ever traveled. He feared that the slightest creaking would awaken the nurse and used the utmost care, after trying a board on which he trod, before bearing his weight on it. One board creaked in spite of his caution, and the nurse stirred. But he did not awaken. Three steps, two steps, one step more and the door was reached. Nevertheless he still stepped cautiously until he reached a staircase, when, in order to avoid sound, he slid down the banister.

No one was up and about below, and he had no difficulty in making an exit. Then, putting on his shoes, he ran like a deer till he suddenly brought up against the watch.

The man was no Tory, and when Morrison confided to him that he was an American prisoner of war escaped from the British he was permitted to proceed and before day came had left the city and was on his way to Trenton, where he found his comrades.

Captain Morrison's flight was kept a secret, the British commander hoping to recapture him before it should become necessary to report his escape to headquarters. The first Alice Douglas knew of it was when she received a letter from him dated at Trenton announcing to her that an overdose of her medicine had accomplished her purpose and he was again in command of his company.

Early Submarines.

One of the earliest references to under water craft is in connection with piracy. Olaus Magnus, bishop of Upsala, writing in 1555, makes mention of "skiffs and vessels constructed of leather," two of which he had seen, in which the pirates of Greenland "go wherever they wish, either above or below water, and by their means pierce and make great holes in passing merchant ships."—Pall Mall Gazette.

Unhappy Endings.

"You say all the stories he writes have unhappy endings?"

"Every one of them."

"But he can't sell stories with unhappy endings."

"He never does sell any. That's their unhappy ending."—Houston Post.

There never lived a man who was not injured by perpetual compliments. —Newell D. Hillis.

A Forgotten Promise

How It Was Recalled.

By REINETTE LOVEWELL

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Mrs. Fairbanks pushed aside a screen and revealed a small safe. The light from the shaded library lamp fell upon her bare shoulders as she bent toward it, resting a hand on the black metal.

"In there," she said to Crawford, "is $20,000."

She paused.

"In a shape I can convert into money," she added after a moment.

The man stood a few feet away, leaning against the mantel, and not by the slightest movement did he betray that he heard her.

"Oh, Bob, what is the use?" she pleaded. "This house is just a prison cell for me." The last words were almost a sob.

"That money is as much mine as his," she went on defiantly. "He got it away from other people, and why shouldn't I take it from him?"

"He is your husband," Crawford said slowly.

"My husband!" the woman returned, so bitterly that an ugly shadow seemed to mar her face. She made a groping gesture with her outstretched hands. "Yes, he is my husband!"

She paused, and her lips moved scornfully.

"He gives me all the things I want," she went on. "I'm the envy of the neighbors. I've everything money can buy.

"Bob," she whispered, "the only real feeling I've ever had from anybody is—what you've given me since that time you picked me up in the park and brought me home for dead."

She paused and drew in her breath with a quick sob.

"I want another chance to live a—oh, a real life—to get away from all this. Somehow I can't help feeling that we just had to meet as we did."

Her head, with its weight of shining hair, dropped down upon the table, her chest resting against the leather skin which covered it.

"I've felt just like a show window dummy," she ended brokenly. "I need something to make me over into a woman."

Mrs. Fairbanks took from a drawer a map and spread before him the outline of the north coast of Massachusetts.

"I know every inch of the way from Boston," she said, with an alert decision that surprised the man she tempted, "and up there"—she put her finger on an irregular projection—"is where Captain Zeb has his old whaleboat. He's the biggest old miser ever you saw, and I know for a hundred dollars he'll take us out and keep us out weeks if we want. We'll take the car part way and bribe a man to bring it back and leave it. Oh, it is easy enough!"

Crawford tipped his head back upon the leather cushions of the chair in which he sat and closed his eyes, drawing his hand across them wearily.

"Yes, it's easy enough," he repeated slowly.

He was thinking of the last ten years of his life, the years between fifteen and twenty-five. Hard years they had been, spent in struggle and poverty, with always the torturing desire to break away into strange new lands of promise.

He remembered the October day that he had dropped on a bench in the park, determined to get into something, anything which would rid him of the plodding pace he had trod so long. The hoof beats of a horse striking the road with terrific speed had startled him, and a moment later Mrs. Fairbanks had been pitched into a pile of red, rustling leaves at his very feet.

From that hour to the present moment her fascination had seemed to be beyond his power of resistance, and in her presence Crawford felt himself becoming the man he had long wanted to be. The whole change in his life in both business and social connections he owed to the circumstance which had thrown their lives together.

Lying there in the great chair, with his eyes closed, he recalled his first meeting with John Fairbanks. There came to his mind his invitation to make himself at home about the great house.

"I'm almost never there," the older man had said carelessly. "You'll amuse Mrs. Fairbanks."

This Crawford had done. He had learned to drive her automobile, and almost every hour that he was free he spent in her company.

The silent man at the head of the household, with his strange indifference, had remained a mystery to Crawford. Selfish and sordid he might be, but some way—

Mrs. Fairbanks reached over and touched his sleeve.

"Wake up, Bob," she said with a little shake. "Let's plan some more"—

Twenty-four hours later Crawford guided the Fairbanks car out from the city, far down the sound. The woman at his side laughed joyfully as he increased his speed at times, and the car shot noiselessly forward down the oiled roadways.

The contagion of her happiness infected him. A childlike abandon seemed to possess his companion, and she caught at the leaves of close growing bushes and tossed them in his face.

The summer dusk turned into darkness, and Crawford lighted his great headlights, and their glow fell upon the heavy foliage by the roadside and faded it almost white in the vivid glare.

Suddenly there was a sound within the car which Crawford did not like. A peculiar vibration followed, and he stopped and made a careful examination, with Mrs. Fairbanks standing beside him, anxiously watching.

"I think I know what the trouble is," he told her. "I don't quite know what to do. We can't get to town this way."

He struck the mud guard with his sleeve impatiently.

A man leading a cow came up behind them.

"Any garage around here?" Crawford asked him.

"Just up the hill, in the village, 'bout a quarter of a mile," the man replied. "They turned the old church over into one," he went on, with a laugh. "'Tain't done yet, but they are doing business."

"A church?" Crawford questioned.

"You can't miss it," the man assured him. "They ain't got the steeple off'n it yet."

Carefully Crawford sent his car forward, climbing the long hill with difficulty. At one end of the elm shaded street a white church stood.

Crawford blew the horn, and two alert young men came out.

They looked at the car critically.

"Better drive her in under cover," one of them advised when Crawford explained. "We've got everything here to work with, even if the pulpit isn't down yet. Seems funny, don't it, doing business in a church?"

"Great idea!" Crawford commented. "It ought to be a guarantee of your honesty," he added, smiling.

The man laughed heartily. "That's right," he said. "Well, we aim to be, church or no church. Will the lady get out?"

Crawford gave a hand to his companion as she stepped from the car and walked with her to one of the old pews piled away at the side.

In a little time he returned to the pew.

"It isn't much," he told her. "They say they'll have it done in an hour or so. Are you cold?"

The woman had pulled her greatcoat more closely about her and was shivering.

"No," she answered slowly. "Don't leave me," she begged.

Crawford dropped down beside her, and his eyes, curiously examining the interior of the building, were attracted to the doorway.

A little group of three persons stood there hesitatingly peering in. A boy of twenty and a girl young and flushed were just across the threshold, and behind them was a tall old man in a long black coat and a white tie.

The mechanic at work on the car looked up and went inquiringly to them. The old man pointed to the front of the church, and they talked in tones so low that Crawford and Mrs. Fairbanks could not hear them.

After a little the elder of the two garage men came to Crawford.

"Funny thing," he said, "but there's a young couple want to get married here. It seems the first time they ever saw each other was in this church, and they had a notion they'd like to get married in it before it was all torn up. I told them you was in a hurry, but I'd ask if you'd mind waiting."

Mrs. Fairbanks made a gesture of consent.

"We'll wait, certainly," she said. "Will they be willing for us to stay during the ceremony?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," the man replied. "Just move up a little, so you can hear."

Slowly the little wedding party passed across the barren floor space blocked by the huge automobile, the old clergyman leading the way.

He took his stand before the pulpit and laid his soft black hat on a keg near by. In the dim light his white hair fell in long locks about his lined old face and upon the black bound book he held.

In the painted pew, battered and scarred by its ruthless removal, Mrs. Fairbanks, watching, whispered to Crawford:

"Isn't it—oh—I don't know—strange, some way?"

The man sat silent, his eyes on the floor.

In the solemn stillness the words of the white haired minister came distinctly out into the old church.

"I, Alice, take thee, Harry"—

The girl's voice could not be heard by those who listened, but the boy's deep tones were audible.

"For better, for worse"—

Mrs. Fairbanks began to tremble.

"For richer, for poorer"—

The face of the woman in the pew grew white, and her eyes never left the minister's face.

"Until death us do part."

"Come," she said to Crawford hoarsely. "Outside—anywhere!"

They sat down on a big gray rock in the dark grass near the rear of the church.

After a time she spoke.

"It was that old man's face," she said. "I can't get over it, nor his voice. It was so—so solemn.

"It wasn't much like the cathedral where—where—I was," Mrs. Fairbanks went on. "I can see it now—the ceiling, the flowers, the organ, the bishop and all the people crowding in."

In the darkness she heard Crawford's strong teeth go together in a sharp click.

She stood up, resting her hand on his shoulder.

"Bob," she faltered, "I had forgotten that I ever said—promised—that!"

Crawford stood silent with bowed head.

"Mr. Crawford," she said at last, "you must take me back home the instant the car is fixed."

Detecting Erasures.

If paper upon which erasures of writing have been made is exposed to the vapor of iodine the roughened surface takes a different tint from that portion which has not been tampered with. If the erasure has been lightly made, only the ink or pencil lead being rubbed away and the mark left in the fiber of the paper, iodine vapor causes the writing to reappear. This is because wherever the paper has been roughened more iodine is absorbed than by a smooth surface. This test is effective within three minutes after the making of the alteration.—Exchange.

A Veritable Scheme.

"How do you get your daughter's beau to go home so early, Bjones?"

"I have a trained phonograph, which plays 'Home, Sweet Home,' at 10, 'Tramp, Tramp, Tramp,' at 10:15 and 'Johnny, Get Your Gun,' at 10:30."—Seattle Star.