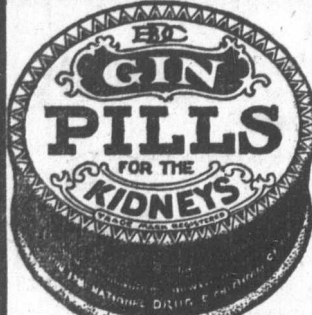


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... A ... KIDNAPING

It Was Not For Ransom, but For a Benefit to the Kidnaped

By MARTHA V. MONROE

Rudolf Kenyon at sixteen graduated from the high school of the town in which he lived. He was a bright boy and would have been glad to go to college, but his mother had done all she could for him, and it was time he began to do for her. Consequently he must go to work.

The graduating exercises were over, the pupils had been handed their diplomas, and Rudolf started for his home to tell his mother all about it. Leaving the main thoroughfare, he entered the quiet street in which he lived, having still half a dozen blocks to go to reach his home, when an automobile that was being driven in the direction he was walking stopped at the curb a few yards ahead of him, a man alighted, took him by the arm and forced him into the car. Rudolf was physically no match for the man and offered little resistance. Once in the car he was powerless to call assistance, for it was a closed vehicle, and his captor at once drew down the curtains.

That he was kidnaped to be held for ransom did not occur to the boy for several reasons. In the first place, the man who had taken him was a mild mannered person, with no resemblance to the class of common kidnapers. In the second place, kidnaping was associated in Rudolf's mind with little children, too young to serve as effective witnesses against their captors. Thirdly, the man told him in a reassuring voice that he would be at no discomfort whatever. As they drove along he asked Rudolf a few questions. "Do you remember your father?" "No; he died when I was a little child."

"Has your mother ever spoken to you of him?"

"I don't remember that she has."

"And you have never had the curiosity to ask about him?"

"Indeed, I have, but have not done so because to mention him always gives me my mother's pain."

The man paused in his questions and seemed to be thinking. Then he asked another:

"Have you ever gathered from your mother or any one else that your father while living acted in a reprehensible manner?"

"No one has ever talked to me about him. The impression that I have received from my mother is that she mourned him as any widow would mourn her husband."

This seemed to produce a decided effect on the man sitting beside Rudolf. Again there was a pause, at the end of which came another question.

"When you have never heard your mother say that your father was a bad man?"

"Certainly not."

The man seemed to be profoundly moved. He attempted to take the boy's hand in his, but Rudolf drew away, and his captor did not renew the attempt. They were some time in the car, at the end of which they turned into the grounds of a handsome house, and the car drew up under a porte-cochere at the end of the porch. The man got out and beckoned Rudolf to follow him.

"Come into the house with me," he said to the boy. "I have something to tell you. If after you have had plenty of time to consider what I shall say to you you wish to go home you will be sent there."

This not only caused Rudolf to feel easy, but by this time his curiosity was excited to learn something about this man who had asked him questions about his father and had kidnaped him on the very day he had been graduated from the high school. On entering the house a maid appeared, and the man told her to show the boy to a room and he was to come down to luncheon in half an hour. The maid did as required, speaking kindly to her charge and showing him every attention. The time did not seem long before she informed him that luncheon was ready. On going down stairs he found his captor in the library. Rudolf, so far as he had noticed the man's appearance, had done so regarding him as an enemy. Now that this feeling had worn off he was surprised to see a gentleman who gave evidence of refinement. He led the boy into the dining room, luxuriously furnished, and a butler stood ready to serve the luncheon.

"I shall not eat anything," said Rudolf. "Will I have had an opportunity to

send my mother a message."

"That you may do. Has your mother a telephone?"

"No, but our next door neighbor has one, and we are permitted to use it."

"Show him the telephone booth," said the host to the butler.

Rudolf went to the booth, called for his mother and found her much worried at his failure to return to her after the school exercises. He gave her a brief account of what had happened, finding her an excellent listener, but when he asked her for his views as to who his captor might be and what were his intentions he found her uncommunicative. As soon as he told her he had been promised that after he had

listened to what the stranger had to say and had time to consider it he might go home she seemed much relieved and told him not to try to escape, but await further developments.

On leaving the telephone Rudolf found his captor-host waiting for him in the dining room, and the two sat down to such a luncheon as the boy had never tasted before. While they were eating the gentleman talked, but not about what Rudolf wished to hear—an explanation of this strange captivity. He asked Rudolf what he proposed to do now that he had left school, and when Rudolf told him that he was going to hunt for a position in business the other shook his head.

"You will never succeed in business," he said.

"Why do you say that?"

"By the shape of your head and the expression of your face I judge that you were born for an intellectual career. How would you like to go to college?"

"Oh, I should like that above all things. But I can't. Mother has done everything for me up to this time, and now that I am nearly a man I must begin the work of taking care of her."

"The host seemed to wince at this and remained quiet for a time. Then he continued:

"If certain arrangements can be made which I shall propose to you, will you go to college?"

This quite took Rudolf's breath away. For one year during which his mother was ill she had been obliged to put him in a store as errand boy. This had given the natural distaste there was in him for business an opportunity to crop out. The bare idea of going to college filled him with delight.

"Where will the money come from?" he asked.

"I will furnish that."

Rudolf, though intent upon knowing more, thrust back the next question that was on his tongue and applied himself to a delicacy which the butler served him.

When the luncheon was finished his host led him to the library, pointed to an easy chair, then, seating himself in another, said:

"Rudolf, your father is not dead; he is very much alive."

The boy started, then sat looking at the speaker, waiting hungrily for more. "He came to America from England about twenty years ago. He was the son of a nobleman, and in that country they have what they call a law of entail, which settles the family estate on the oldest son. Your father was the second son. He came to America, met your mother, who was then a beautiful girl, fell in love with her and married her. After you were born his father in England sent for him to come back—without his wife—and a proposition would be made to him. He accepted the invitation. His father told him that his older brother had received an injury while hunting from which he would never recover. If your father would remain in England, divorce his American wife and marry among his peers in England he should be put in possession of the title and estates. Your father after much persuasion wrote your mother of this proposition. She consented to it and obtained a divorce on the ground of desertion. Your father married again, and his wife died childless a year ago."

"These are the bare facts. I shall neither try to excuse your father nor to condemn him. That I leave for your mother to do. I will say, however, that he condemns himself bitterly."

"Where is my father now?" asked Rudolf, wondering.

"Here; I am your father."

There was a pause, after which the boy asked why he had been kidnaped.

"I came to America to make amends for what I have done. Your mother can best be loved to forgive me through the one she loves best—her son. I desired to tell you the story in my own way and send my supplications for forgiveness to her through you. You are free to go back to her this afternoon and ask her if she will receive a visit from me."

Rudolf sprang to his feet. "I will go now; I am sure she will do as I wish, and I wish that she shall forgive you."

The car was ordered, and the two went hand in hand to the porte-cochere. There Rudolf threw his arms about his father's neck, kissed him and was carried away.

When Rudolf reached home his mother asked him to give her a couple of hours of quiet thought in her room and then she would give him her decision. For awhile she found it hard to conquer rebellious feelings against the husband who had deserted her, but memories of her early happy married life softened her heart.

Rudolf went back with a favorable reply. He remained at the house his father had temporarily taken during his stay in America while his father went for an interview which the boy hoped and prayed might bring a family reunion. During the time that he was left alone he was treated with every attention by the servants, but so great was his impatience to learn what might be the result of the interview between his parents that he found no enjoyment in the luxury by which he was surrounded. On the third day after his father's departure the car pulled up under the porte-cochere. Rudolf ran out eagerly. His father alighted, then—heaven be praised—handed out his mother. Rudolf ran to her, and she caught him in her arms.

What further explanation the boy received was given by his mother. The pair had just been married a second time and were to live together. The husband and father was now Earl of Edgerton, and the son was heir to the title and estates.

Spain's Royal Bodyguard.

The Spanish royal family has an especial and historic bodyguard to prevent intrusions. For centuries the Monarchs, who must be natives of the town of Espinosa and have served with honor in the army, have had the exclusive privilege of guarding the royal palaces by night. In their historic costume and wearing felt shoes they take up their posts at midnight outside the rooms of the king, queen and other royalties, while detachments patrol the halls and corridors all night long. They speak no word, acknowledging each other's presence by sign and counter-sign. In the morning they disappear as silently, giving place to the ordinary sentries and attendants.

The Brute.

"Mother, I'm afraid I have made a mistake in marrying George."

"What's the matter, my dear? Has he been brutal to you?"

"Yes, he has."

"What has he done?"

"Yesterday when I asked him for a new hat he said he couldn't afford it, and—"

"Yes, go on."

"And even when I broke down and cried he didn't give in and say I could have it."

His Hot Dinner.

The voice of the tempter was heard outside the works at Saturday midday.

"Bill, come and 'ave a pint."

"Not me; I've a nice 'ot dinner waiting."

"Just one pint, Bill."

"I can't miss a nice 'ot dinner."

"It won't take you a minute."

"That 'ot dinner'd be spoiling."

At this point the hospitable man lost his temper. "Go 'ome, ole man, to your bread and mustard!"—Manchester Guardian.

Easy.

The teacher had been trying to explain the law of gravitation to the juvenile class.

"Now, Morris," she said, "can you tell me why it is impossible for you to lift yourself up by your boot-strap?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the young scientist. "It's because I wear shoes."

Quarantined.

Aleck, who is a very "smart Aleck" indeed, came rushing in to his mother saying:

"Mamma, did you know they had closed the city library?"

"No, Johnnie. Why?"

"Because they found smallpox in the dictionary."

Wrestled For a Throne.

The throne of a Japan was once wrestled for. In the ninth century two rival claimants, sons of a deceased Mikado, instead of waging war against each other, decided the succession by a wrestling match.

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The paving of streets with wooden blocks originated in Russia.

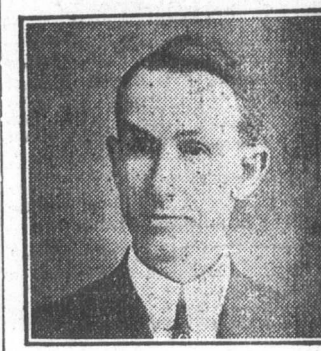
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