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UP FROM THE DEATH CELL

By JOHN W. KANE.

Kane Finds That the Jail Officials Are Willing To Carry Out Orders Given By Him.

Synopsis.
Curly Kane wins his way to re-
generation while in prison. A wild
lad, he killed two carmen in a hold-up
and after seventeen months in Mur-
der's Row got a new trial with a
life-imprisonment sentence instead of
death. He studies law, reads, trains
himself to be a magazine writer,
and conceives the idea of a law per-
mitting parole for life prisoners who
serve fifteen years. By finesse he gets
it passed. A new warden, with mod-
ern ideas, makes Kane his private
secretary.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
The warden picked up some papers
on the table in front of him.
"I'll tell you briefly what these let-
ters are about, and then you'll have
to write them yourself. The truth of
the matter is, I'm putting off on you
a couple of jobs here that I can't
do as well as I'd like, and the other
is merely an ordinary business mat-
ter that must be gotten away at
once."

Then he began a concise explana-
tion about certain family affairs, par-
ticularly about three grown sons, two
of whom were married.
"I don't want them to get to hank-
erin' for jobs like these around here,"
said he. "In the first place, this
prison administration isn't going to
be any family affair. Moreover, we're
taking hold of a tract of land down
here some miles, and I want the boys
to work that land and develop it.
Now if you can cite them any ad-
vantages as to that, as against the
total lack of opportunities and ad-
vantages in this work for them, get
busy and do so. Go into detail, if
necessary, only give them something
that will make 'em think, if possible."

I knew, as a matter of fact, that he
could not have given me anything
that I could do better.
"This other letter here, which
mother and I would like to have you
answer"—he referred to his wife—"is
one to some friends of ours. They
have recently lost a child. Can you
write a letter of sympathy, the kind
we want?"

"I think I can; I'm sure I can," I
answered. "But just one question,
please: Have you and Mrs. S. ever
lost a child?"

"Yes; why do you ask?"
"That knowledge will help me to
write the letter as it should be writ-
ten," I answered.

A Snarl to Unravel.
"And this other—he unfolded a
sheet that showed a land company's
letter head—"is in reference to a tract
of land that has timber, building
stone and, perhaps, coal on it. This
company wants to buy it from an-
other company with which I have
been connected in the past. You'll
see what they say; that is, particu-
larly what my former organization
has to say. A part of that land has

been under lease, and a part of that
lease has been forfeited. Then on one
side of the tract there is a question
of rights involved because of some
mining claims that were held by
others prior to possession by the out-
fit I was interested with. In the
event of an action at law, one of the
main questions would be as to
whether or not too long a time had
elapsed for the former claim-owners
to come back and set up any rights
in the matter. You'll see for yourself
what they say. If you want any
further particulars, just phone to me.
I'll be upstairs."

With those explanations the new
warden left me and went back to the
upper part of the administration
building, where the warden's family
always lived.

Something told me that he had
tried to give me a complicated piece
of work in that mining-claim-land
letter. And while I trust that I was
not unduly confident—not to the ex-
tent of conceit, I hope—still a care-
ful perusal of the two communica-
tions, in addition to what he had said,
told me that I could do that letter
also exactly as it should be.

The letter to the sons and that to
the friends were written first. A
careful reading of them by me called
for a rewriting of one paragraph,
which—because of the location of that
paragraph—necessitated the writing
of a whole page. I was not one who
would do a botchy piece of work. I
remembered what the warden had
said about the master mechanic, and
I had some knowledge of the kind of
work he was in the habit of doing.

I Am Stumped.
Right in the middle of that busi-
ness letter I came to a place where
reference to the statute of limitations
was necessary. I knew the nature of
the law, but was not sure of the time
in which action would be barred. And
how was I to get around it? No, get-
ting around it would not be a com-
mendable piece of work. But where
I was, out in the warden's office, and
the work that I needed was in the
library inside. I knew the phone call
for the cellhouse in which the library
was located, but how about sending
an order for the book. Would the
cellhouse custodian act upon my re-
quest? That was something new;
in all the years of the former ad-
ministration no book except some
kind of fiction had ever been sent out
to the warden's house. Ought I to
call the warden first, and then send
for the book? No; I wanted those
three letters complete before he saw
them. I had been put to work in his
office, and efficiency on my part re-
quired that I should be able not only
to do the work properly, but to get
through with all details without
troubling him.

I walked to where they called the
"inside," and punched the button for
that cellhouse.

"No. 2," came the custodian's
answer, just as I had heard him

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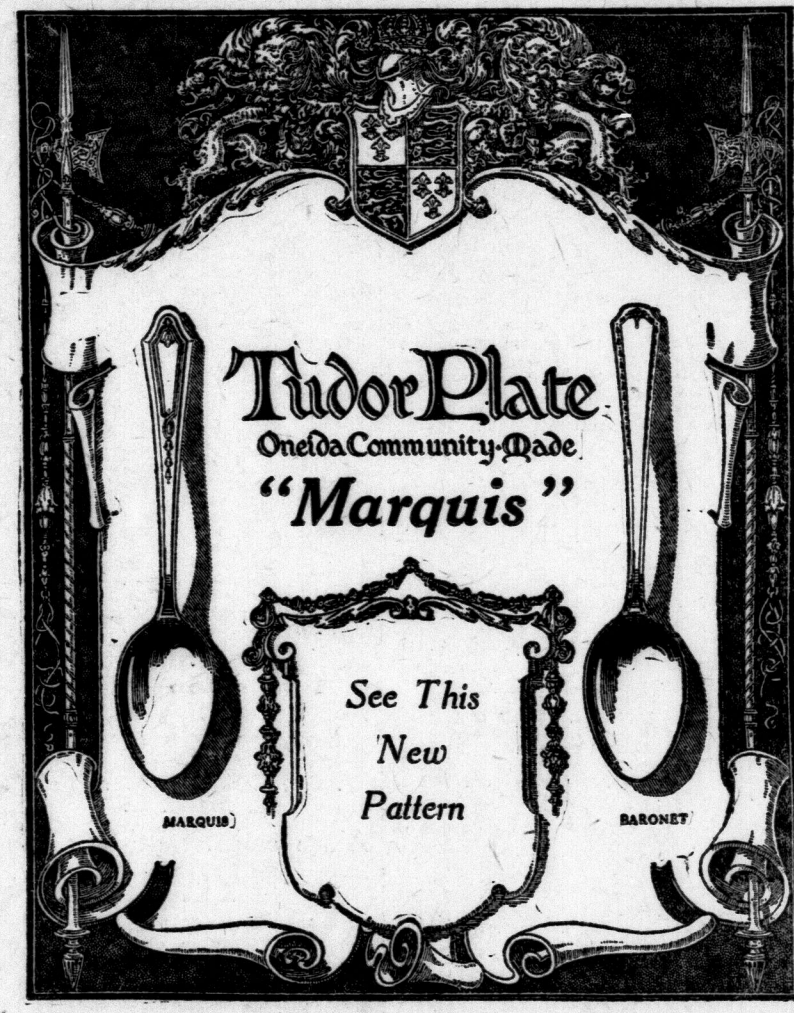
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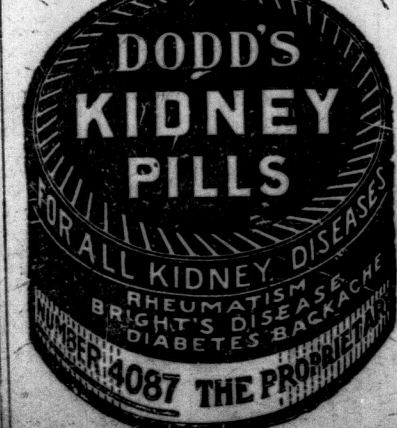
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answer so many times when I was
under the death sentence in that
house.
"Say, Mr. H.," said I, "will you
go to the library and get a volume
entitled Morrison's 'Mining Rights'
and send it out to the warden's of-
fice?"
"Is that you, Jack?" he inquired.
"Yes, sir, I'm working here for
him."
"You bet I'll send it," he answered.
"You always were a lucky dog."
"The Letters Are Ready."
"Part of the time," I sent back,
glad to know that at least one of
them was quick to adapt himself to
the new order of things. Under the
former administration it would have
taken a mile of red tape and neces-
sary orders from both the heads to
get a book out of the library upon
the personal request of an inmate.
The volume came down in a few
minutes. The turnkey, who was also
a hold-over from the old regime,
knocked upon the private office door,
and when I bade him enter, he came
in with the book in his hand.



"Is the warden here, Jack?" he
answered.
"Not just now, Mr. S.," I answered,
"he's upstairs."
"Well, here's a book they sent
down," said he. "Do you know
whether he wanted it left here?"
"Yes, right here, Mr. S.," I rose
and took the volume. "And thank
you very much."
The turnkey did not answer. In all
the years that he had been there it
was, I am sure, the first time that
he had been thanked for delivering
something to that office. The old
warden himself did not believe in
special courtesy to a guard, except
upon occasions, and no other person
had ever received things here.
Ten minutes later I was ready for
submitting the letters to "the boss,"
and within about 30 minutes more
he entered.
"How are you making out?" he
inquired.
"The letters are ready," I told him.
He read them all through. That to
the sons he read twice.
"Say, Kane," he looked over his
glasses at me to say: "You're by this
like the fellow was in mimicking a
Dutchman; he could do it so well,
that everybody agreed that he did it
better than the Dutchman himself
could. A person would think that
you're writing to your own sons. How
do you do that, anyway?"

Fiction Helps In Task.
"It's not so easy to explain as it
might be, as glad as I am that you
like the work," I answered. "Perhaps
you know that I have read and
thought and felt a great deal. In
doing creative work, that is fiction,
it becomes necessary for one actually
to be in feelings a father, brother,
husband, or wife, friend, or sweet-
heart, or, in the words of Lord Bacon,
"a wild beast, or a god." So, you see,
as I wrote that I merely put myself
in your shoes and then I applied
such knowledge and skill as I might
perhaps have."
He took the letter of sympathy
next. "The same principle applies

in this, I see," he remarked.
"Exactly," I agreed.
"Now wait a minute," and he took
up the business letter again. "There
are parts of this one that I want
to study a bit."
I waited.
"Are you a lawyer?" he asked, re-
folding the letter.
"Oh, no, but I had a couple years
study of the law."
"Where?"
"Right in there," I motioned toward
the inside.
He puffed silently upon his cigar
for a moment, then:
"I've heard quite a bit about you,
Kane. I was under the impression
that some people had a kind of ex-
aggerated view as to your capabili-
ties, but maybe they didn't have,
after all."
"I'm glad to hear you say that,
warden," I told him, as I began to
fold the sheets and seal the envel-
opes. And then, after I had begun
entering the name of all the prison-
ers in a small ledger for his private
use, he passed out of the room and
left me alone.

I have a particular reason for tel-
ling the reader about my first day
in the warden's private office. And
here is a thought that I wish to
leave with the reader, an inquiring
thought: What if I had been called
to the private office of the warden of
a state institution 13 years before and
handed those three letters to answer?
I would have been as much at sea
as I would be now if suddenly placed
in charge of a steel manufacturing
plant. But determination, study, and
hard work, even behind the walls,
where I had been shut up to do, pro-
duced in me an efficiency that made
the all-round-business-man warden
smile with satisfaction.

My First Walk In Thirteen Years—
Chapter 39, Thursday.
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