



"My Lady Caprice"

(Continued from page 57)

"Bless ye for that, sonny!" he exclaimed, and with the words he fell to upon the food, devouring each morsel as it was handed to him with a frightful voracity, while his burning, restless eyes glared about him, never still for a moment.

Now as I noticed his wasted form and shaking limbs, I knew that I could master him with one hand. My weapon slipped from my slackened grasp, but at the sound, slight though it was, he turned and began to run. He had not gone five yards, however, when he tripped and fell, and before he could rise, I was standing over him. He lay there at my feet, perfectly still, blinking up at me with red-rimmed eyes.

"All right, master," he said at last; "you've got me!" But with the words he suddenly rolled himself towards the river, yet as he struggled to his knees I pinned him down again.

"Oh, sir! you won't go for to give me up to them?" he panted. "I've never done you no wrong. For God's sake don't send me back to it again, sir."

"Course not," cried the Imp, laying his hand on my arm; "this is only Uncle Dick. He won't hurt you, will you, Uncle Dick?"

"That depends," I answered, keeping tight hold of the tattered coat collar. "Tell me, what brings you hanging round here?"

"Used to live up in these parts once, master."

"Who are you?"

"Convict 49, as broke jail over a week ago an' would ha' died but for the little 'un there," and he nodded towards the Imp.

THE convict, as I say, was a tall, thin fellow, with a cadaverous face lined with suffering, while the hair at his temples was prematurely white. And as I looked at him, it occurred to me that the suffering which had set its mark so deeply upon him was not altogether the grosser anguish of the body. Now for your criminal who can still feel morally there is surely hope. I think so, anyhow! For a long moment there was silence, while I stared into the haggard face below, and the Imp looked from one to the other of us, utterly at a loss.

"I wonder if you ever heard tell of 'the b'y Jarge,'" I said suddenly.

The convict started so violently that the jacket tore in my grasp.

"How—how did ye know—?" he gasped, and stared at me with dropped jaw.

"My feyther," he muttered; "old Jasper—'e ain't dead, then?"

"Not yet," I answered; "come, get up and I'll tell you more while you eat." Mechanically he obeyed, sitting with his glowing eyes fixed on my face the while I told him of old Jasper's lapse of memory and present illness.

"Then 'e don't remember as I'm a thief an' convict 49, master?"

"No; he thinks and speaks of you always as a boy and a pattern son."

The man uttered a strange cry, and flinging himself upon his knees buried his face in his hands.

"Come," I said, tapping him on the shoulder; "take off those things," and nodding to the Imp, he immediately began unwrapping Peter's garments.

"What, master," cried the convict, staring up, "are you goin' to let me see 'im afore you give me up?"

"Yes," I nodded; "only be quick."

In less than five minutes the tattered prison dress was lying in the bed of the river, and we were making our way along the path toward old Jasper's cottage.

The convict spoke but once, and that as we reached the cottage gate:

"Is he very ill, sir?"

"Very ill," I said. He stood for a moment, inhaling the fragrance of the roses in great breaths, and staring about him; then with an abrupt gesture, he opened the little gate, and gliding up the path with his furtive, stealthy footstep, knocked at the door.

For some half-hour the Imp and I strolled to and fro in the moonlight during which he related to me much about his outlaw and the many "ruses" he had employed to get him provision. How on one occasion, to escape the watchful eyes of Auntie Lisbeth, he had been compelled to hide a slice of jam-tart in his trousers-pockets, to the detriment of each; how Dorothy had watched him everywhere in the momentary expectation of "something happening;" how Jane and Peter and cook would stand and

stare and shake their heads at him because he ate such a lot, "an' the worst of it was I was awful' hungry all the time, you know, Uncle Dick!" This and much more he told me as we waited there in the moonlight.

At last the cottage door opened and the convict came out. He did not join us at once, but remained staring away towards the river, though I saw him jerk his sleeve across his eyes more than once in his furtive, stealthy fashion; but when at last he came up to us his face was firm and resolute.

"Did you see old Jasper?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; I saw him."

"Is he any better?"

"Much better—he died in my arms, sir. An' now I'm ready to go back, there's a police-station in the village." He stopped suddenly and turned to stare back at the lighted windows of the cottage, and when he spoke again his voice sounded hoarser than ever.

"Thought I'd come back from furrin parts, 'e did, wi' my pockets stuffed full o' gold an' bank-notes. Called me 'is b'y Jarge,' 'e did!" and again he brushed his cuff across his eyes.

"Master, I don't know who ye may be, but I'm grateful to ye an' more than grateful, sir. An' now I'm ready to go back an' finish my time."

"How much longer is that?"

"Three years, sir."

"And when you come out, what will you do then?"

"Start all over again, sir; try to get some honest work an' live straight."

"Do you think you can?"

"I know I can, sir." Ye see, he died in my arms, called me 'is b'y Jarge, said 'e were proud of me, 'e did! A man can begin again an' live straight an' square wi' a memory the like o' that to 'elp 'im."

"Then why not begin to-night?"

He passed a tremulous hand through his silver hair, and stared at me with incredulous eyes.

"Begin—to-night!" he half whispered.

"I have an old house among the Kentish hop-gardens," I went on; "no one lives there at present except a caretaker, but it is within the bounds of probability that I may go to stay there—some day. Now the gardens need trimming, and I'm very fond of flowers; do you suppose you could make the place look decent in—say, a month?"

"Sir," he said in a strange, broken voice, "you ain't jokin' with me, are you?"

"I could pay you a pound a week; what do you say?"

He tried to speak, but his lips quivered, and he turned his back upon us very suddenly. I tore a page from my pocket-book and scrawled a hasty note to my caretaker.

"Here is the address," I said, tapping him on the shoulder. "You will find no difficulty. I will write again to-night. You must, of course, have money to get there and may need to buy a few necessities besides; here is your first week's wages in advance," and I thrust a sovereign into his hand. He stared down at it with blinking eyes, shuffling awkwardly with his feet, and at that moment his face seemed very worn and lined, and his hair very grey, yet I had a feeling that I should not regret my quixotic action in the end.

"Sir," he faltered, "sir, do ye mean—?" and stopped.

"I mean that to-night 'the b'y Jarge' has a chance to make a new beginning, a chance to become the man his father always thought he would be. Of course I may be a fool to trust you. That only time will show; but you see I had a great respect for old Jasper. And now that you have the address you'd better go; stay, though, you must have a hat; folk might wonder—take this," and I handed him my cap.

"Sir, I can't thank you now, I never can. It—it won't come; but—" with a nervous, awkward gesture he caught my hand suddenly, pressed it to his lips and was gone down the lane.

THUS it was that old Jasper's "b'y Jarge" went out to make a trial of life a second time, and as I watched him striding through the moonlight, his head erect, very different to the shambling creature he had been, it seemed to me that the felon was already ousted by the man.

"I 'specks he forgot all 'bout me!" said the Imp disconsolately.

"No," I answered, shaking my head; "I don't think he will ever forget you, my Imp."

(Continued on page 60)

Those Pictures from Home

"If they only knew
the pleasure they
bring us * * * *
I am sure they would
come."



Translation of an extract from a letter written by a young Belgian soldier to a friend in America.

"And often I must take in my hand, the pictures from home. I look at them all, one after the other, and they speak to me. Then I am once more at home—I listen, and I live again. It would be too much for me to write you all that they say. But above all, they say to me 'Au revoir.' I find them all a little thinner, and Father and Mother a little grayer of hair. *Tiens!* If they only knew the pleasure they bring us, these pictures from home, there would not be one remaining in Belgium. All the pictures would rush towards us; even if they had to pass through the electrified wire of the frontier, or if they had to swim through Yser Canal, I am sure they would come."

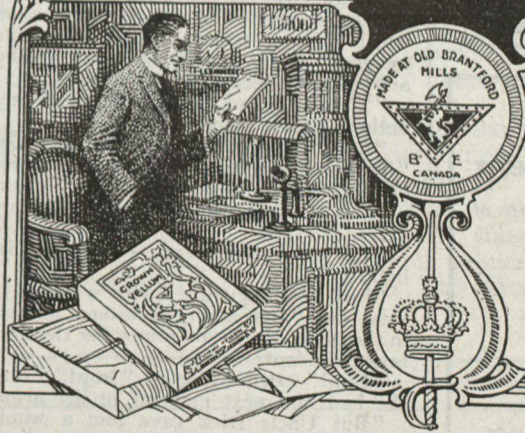
GUSTAVE GEBOERS

L 282 2me Compagnie Armée Belge en Campagne

Thus writes Gustave Geboers, a Belgian boy of twenty-three. And your boy, our boys, home pictures so easily made with a Kodak, will mean just as much to them.

CANADIAN KODAK CO., Limited
TORONTO, CANADA

Barber-Ellis, CROWN VELLUM



CROWN VELLUM is the stationery used by Bank Presidents, as well as the Presidents and General Managers of Canada's leading commercial houses, for important or personal communications.

Insist on Crown Vellum.
39-10-18

2 in 1

SHOE POLISHES

KEEP YOUR SHOES NEAT

LIQUIDS AND PASTES. FOR BLACK, WHITE, TAN, DARK BROWN OR OX-BLOOD SHOES. PRESERVE THE LEATHER.



THE F.F. DALLEY CORPORATION, LIMITED, HAMILTON, ONT.