

FROM THE MAELSTROM

By L. J. BEESTON

The Man From Irons

Tredways had asked me to his rooms in Half Moon Street to listen to his reading of the manuscript of his book on the secret crypter in crime. And he only just got started when I came Mr. Abel Heriot, of Piqua, Ohio, and very recently of the English prison called Irons.

There was no halting, no abashed visitor struck through and through with shame. He entered like a healthy breeze. His light dust-coat and glimpse of dress clothes underneath showed a man of good taste well able to back it up.

"Mr. Tredways," he began in the incisive tones of your keen American business man, "ten hours ago I was in Irons prison. I have been there a year and a half. I got my discharge papers this morning. I plead it now, and I'll keep on until I pull clean through."

He drew tremendously on his beard and became enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

I saw the twinkle in Tredways' eyes. "The experience hasn't knocked you out Mr. Heriot," he made reply.

"Sure it hasn't. You see, although I didn't kill Cassidy, yet I meant to. That makes a difference. Shall I go over the story?"

Tredways played with his fountain pen and looked at our visitor in a curious manner. "Oh, I don't know that it is altogether necessary," said he at last. "I'll discuss it at the time with my friend here, the Reverend Horace Francis, Chaplain of Chains Convict Prison, who interests himself in my cases."

"And you decided—"

"That you killed Lacey Cassidy," killed him under the powerful influence of those extenuating circumstances which nearly got you off altogether."

"If I had killed that loathsome scoundrel I'd have been in the consequences without a murmur. What goes my goat is that I have served imprisonment which another ought to have suffered. That is not fair. It is not business, Mr. Tredways. I want to spot that coward who is in and out of the prison, and have come to you for your help. As matters stand I appear behind a lie. That doesn't suit me. But I'm not going to say I killed Cassidy when I didn't."

"In an accused day I bought his place at Tidewater, called 'The Aspens.' It is one of the oldest houses in Buckinghamshire. The Cassidy family lived there for centuries. You won't find one of the figures as I saw in a window of the chapel down the comb, and you won't find a halo in their crest. The property was on one leg when Lacey came into it, and it soon fell over. I heard about it, got an introduction to Lacey, bought it, and settled there."

"The first thing I got to know is that Lacey Cassidy looks too long after my wife with his spotted eye. I dropped him a hint. He tossed it in the discard. I gave him the straight tip. He took it in a damned bad way, but he also took himself off that didn't cost me loss of sleep."

"The next thing I got to know is that my wife misses Cassidy. Mind you, I'm not suggesting anything in the least unpleasant. That doesn't play any part in my story. My family is pure gold through and through. You know what women are when it comes to romance. The Cassidy family is stuffed with it; the very walls of 'The Aspens' drip with sentimental legend and story. Then she rather pitied Lacey, said he owed much of his badness to his forebears. I think she called it, dared me to deny that he was the handsomest Englishman I wished I had never met; that his ease and languid authority had taken centuries to make, that in a scarlet hunting coat he looked perfectly—bah! you know the stuff I mean."

"Did I get the least bit jealous? Yes, I think I did. Although it was nothing more than the least bit. I ought to have laughed back. Instead, I felt sure—like a fool. That gave her a chance to laugh, and she did not let it slip. That ought to have cleared my brain, but it didn't. I made certain remarks about Lacey Cassidy. They were heard by other people."

"There wasn't enough in the situation to demand a climax, but one came, all the same. It arrived in the form of a letter from Cassidy to my wife. I had not come through the post, but had been put by some one where she was sure of seeing it. The first I knew of it was when she came to me with rather a scared face and showed me that letter. The cursed scoundrel had mistaken my wife's interest in him for affection. He named a night when he was coming—not merely to see her, you understand, but to take her away! By James, it strangles me even to recall it."

"I know what I ought to have done first thing," he continued after a moment, controlling himself by an effort. "I should have destroyed that letter, the mere receipt of which was a deadly insult. And I meant to destroy it; only my idea was to literally cram it down Cassidy's throat."

"The night he had named found me waiting outside the house. The house is built in a sort of wide cup in the ground, and the road at about seventy yards distance, almost on a level with its gables, is hidden by clumps of aspen trees."

"And the road affords the only method of reaching your house?" interrupted Tredways.

"Yes, really; for a fenced wood

lines sharp behind the back of 'The Aspens'—my wood, of course. To avoid the road one would have to trespass in the wood, which is thick with timber, and undergrowth, and climb the fence. I did not imagine Cassidy doing that. I waited in the open. There was an edged wind shrilling due from the east, with a sort of wild scream through the telegraph wires in the distance. There was an inch of snow on the ground, although the sky had cleared since the slight fall. Moonless, almost totally dark.

"First my hands, then my feet got cold-bitten. The wind was too much for me, and I dropped down over the crest for shelter among the white poplars."

"I mentioned just now the chapel down the glen. Well, as I looked about me from my sheltered place in the copse I rather fancied I caught a glimpse of a light in one of its windows. It was nearly eleven o'clock, a late hour for the sexton to be doing anything in the chapel."

"That struck me as being a bit out of the ordinary, and I thought I might as well investigate, though I couldn't see why Cassidy should be there. A low wall of flints is round the church. The window I spoke of is covered with a fine mesh of rusty wire for protection. It represents St. Onofre being condemned to the flames, but I could see nothing of that in the pitchy darkness."

"I tried the old door, padded with stuffed mats, and found it secured. I went round to the south side where seven steps go down and lead to a crypt. There is a much smaller door at the bottom, and when I pushed on it I found it unlocked."

"Now I admit I'm not keen on such places at any time, especially in the middle of the night. It's an oblong-shaped crypt with seven huge supporting pillars, green for a foot up with that unhealthy growth which isn't made by rain or sun. Every one of its stone flags covers someone who was put in there when the world was some centuries younger, and right in the center is a cenotaph of Italian stone, flanked and gray with age and lichen, with a Knight of Malta on top of it, staring with stone eyeballs at the vaulting of the low roof."

"I ventured half a stride into this place, the damp smell of which, wine to an antiquarian, sent my head spinning. I could not see to the end of my nose. There wasn't even the sound of a mouse, but I felt a sensation underneath my cap as if my hair was beginning to stir on my scalp."

"I tried to back out, and I think I should have managed that much, but at that instant I heard something which didn't help me any."

"At first it was like the whimper of a child who struggles against a bad dream, and it seemed to be somewhere in the dark before me. Some silly stuff I had been told about one of the worst of the Cassidy's having kidnapped his master in the crypt, and then been torn to pieces by them, flitted through my mind. One might hear his shrieks at times, it was said, though you may be sure I hadn't sunk any capital in the supposition or exploited it as a business proposition."

"Still under the circumstances I would just as soon not have heard anything sounding at all like the faint whelping of a dog. My heart was beating, and I was giving myself a sort of courage I called out: 'Is any one here?' For answer there sounded, rolling round the place and filling it with a hideous uproar, the bay of some great bound beside itself with fury."

"I leaped back, but instead of striking the open doorway I hit the door and slammed it shut. As I fumbled for the handle I heard a man inside the crypt shriek as if his heart was open went up the seven steps at one bound. I do believe, and put the distance to my home between myself and the chapel."

"I returned almost at once with a couple of men from the house. You know what we found. Lacey Cassidy in the crypt, huddled up against one of the walls, with the back of his head very badly smashed, and his degenerate's soul somewhere in the waste of the night. I was fond of me. It was guessed correctly that I had gone out to give him his deserts, and the big oak cage I had taken with me was found in the vault where I dropped it in my flight, and its business end had most unluckily rolled into a pool of blood beside the body. I stated I had only meant to thrash Cassidy until he could not stand, and that indeed had been my intention, but it carried little weight with the jury. I do not really blame them. But there was blacker evidence even than what I've mentioned. Obviously Cassidy had been done in by an assailant. I spoke of a slight covering of snow on the ground. It was sufficient to show the footprints of two men. Well, it showed mine, and Cassidy's. That did it."

"Abel Heriot wound up by wiping his perspiring forehead. I watched Tredways, who still played with his fountain pen. He said, after a silence: "Did not your counsel hint of robbery as a possible motive?"

"Bah! Yes, he did, but what good was that? A valuable tie pin which Cassidy always wore was missing from his person. That evidence amounted to nothing."

"To nothing, as you say. In what part of the chapel was the body found?"

"Up against one of the walls. There's the remnant of a fresco on that wall; a few dabs of what was once the Five Rivers of Paradise. At least, so they say. Heriot looked at his interlocutor doubtfully, then got up and seized his hat and stick. He blurted: "What do you think of my story, Mr. Tredways?"



"But find him it assuredly did."

where in that hole, I shivered in the bitter breath which blew out of it. The score of minutes which passed before his reappearance was like two hours to me. As he came I heard his voice as when it boomed up: "You there, Francis? I'm coming out."

He was blue with cold, his clothes caked with mud, his shoes weighed with yellow earth and slime.

"Come along," said he in a tired and almost exhausted voice. "We want the best supper that the 'Joyous Brethren' can put before us."

"And we will have the two best beds also," I added.

"One of them," he corrected as I reached the door of the crypt. "For you, Francis. I must be back in London tonight at all costs."

"And so must I," I insisted. "My duties—"

"Just wait a bit. It is above all things essential that you should keep an eye on our friend Reeds until you hear from me. He may bolt. If so, don't lose him, Francis. For heaven's sake don't let him slip you."

As the following day I found that this was just what Reeds meant to do. A stealthy inquiry regarding the occupation of 'The Laurels' brought the information that our gentleman was packing, had made hurried arrangements, and would be off soon after sundown. In this dilemma I sent Tredways a wire. "Reeds is off. What shall I do?" But the day passed without a reply.

The situation fretted my nerves. Reeds was quitting his house at seven o'clock, when a vehicle was to convey him to the distant railway station. Should he get away I was absolutely certain that Tredways would never forgive me. Imagine, therefore, my joy when Tredways, in company with Abel Heriot, turned up at that 'Joyous Brethren' at a quarter to four.

"All right, Francis," don't get furried, said he. "Fifteen minutes, I'll send a message to Reeds to drop in here. He will be here."

Sure enough the late landlord of the Inn put in an appearance ten minutes later. He was received in my bedroom. He glanced at the three of us with a uneasy smile.

"We meet again," he said. "How are you, Reeds? Allow me to introduce you to Abel Heriot, who had the misfortune to suffer imprisonment in the matter of the death of Lacey Cassidy."

Reeds gave a painful start, and the blood rushed from his face. He gave one steady look at Heriot, who was sitting on the side of my bed, smoking a cigar.

"What is your game?" he demanded sullenly.

"Your game, I believe," queried Tredways, producing the article. "Don't deny it. It is, you see, quite immense, but then that right list of yours, which has knocked out so many opponents in your time, is also immense. Do you know where you left it?" On the stone edge of that hollow tomb in the crypt where Cassidy was done to death!"

Reeds started back and brought up sharp against the washstand, which he turned over. "That's a—," he burst out, checking the unspoken word.

"Oh, no it is not. It is the plain truth," corrected Tredways sternly. "Do you deny that and no other, murdered Lacey Cassidy?"

"I swear before heaven that I know nothing about it!" retorted Reeds.

"Ah! You force me to go further. There was the matter of a valuable ruby pin missing from the tie of the dead man. He always wore that pin and it was missing. Now, Reeds, I discovered yesterday that you somehow abruptly came into a substantial sum of money a short time back. There was a chance that, if you had killed Cassidy in the crypt you would stick to the very valuable ruby for a time before selling it. You did. You stuck to it for two years. I have spent all today in town in inquiries regarding ruby tie pins sold to decent jewellers there within the past few weeks. It was a facile task, because I had the invaluable help of New Scotland Yard—my good friends. Not so many transactions of the sort took place as might be supposed; but that you brought off one was proved first by the unusual value of the stone; second, by the dealer recognizing a rough likeness, in pencil, of your somewhat unusual countenance. Now, who murdered Cassidy?"

"God Almighty knows. I didn't!" was Reeds' emphatic answer.

"Then tell us what happened," snapped Tredways.

"This," answered Reeds, with unexpected resolution. "There's an underground way between 'The Aspens' and the church crypt."

"Exactly. I traversed it myself. Go on."

"It must have been there a long time, perhaps two or three centuries, but got lost sight of. Lacey Cassidy discovered it in his time, but didn't talk about it. He said it must have been built in the time of the civil war, and was maybe used for hiding place. That hollow tomb was put over one end of it; the other is right underneath the house and communicates with one of the big cellars. Mr. Cassidy told me this when he spoke about the arrangements he had made for running away with the money."

Reeds stopped and looked uneasily at Heriot, who was imperturbable.

"Go on. We understand," ordered Tredways.

"He said he meant to use the passage, he and the lady, if he could persuade her to accompany him. It had to be done secretly. He told me because he wanted someone to help him. He said that big stone top of the tomb, one pair of arms couldn't do it. We entered the crypt, he and I, toward evening and got the lid up, propping it open with the iron bar inside. I left him there. No one else got in. I went back. I'm going in. Hold the light, Francis, until I'm down."

I wanted to dissuade him, but I knew such advice would be futile. As I followed his directions I noticed a tomb. One pair of arms couldn't do it. We entered the crypt, he and I, toward evening and got the lid up, propping it open with the iron bar inside. I left him there. No one else got in. I went back. I'm going in. Hold the light, Francis, until I'm down."

Reeds dropped into that foul darkness. By keeping over I could just manage to place the lantern in the center of the crypt was the cenotaph to which Abel Heriot had referred. This was the only object raised above the surface of the stone floor. The effigy, the Knight of Malta, recumbent upon it, fixed his petrified eyeballs into the night above him.

Turning from this Tredways sought the remains of the fresco representing the five rivers of Paradise. A few obscure streaks of color speedily re-

warded our search.

And that was all. Nothing else whatever in the place to arrest attention, let alone offer a clue regarding a crime committed two years back. Was the visit worth the drenching we had suffered? As Tredways caught my look of reproach he shrugged his shoulders, and we had taken a single step toward the closed door when a sound pulled us up as if a pistol had menaced us.

There crept, meaning, through the crypt, a faint cry which was terribly like the whining of a dog.

The sound died away. We stood for fully two minutes just staring at one another. Suddenly it was repeated. Motionless to keep still, my companion began to move about on the tips of his toes, noiseless as a cat, listening. I turned up the smoking wick of the lamp which burned dimly in the tomb.

Suddenly, without the least warning, a high shrill, nerve-shattering shriek whipped through the dark! At that appalling cry my heart stopped momentarily. Tredways made a rush to get out, catching at me on his way. Tredways hurried back the door and we burst into the open. That infernal shriek had ceased. We stood still, breathing hard, listening harder, and again we heard that faint whining moan.

"I take it, Francis, we are not going to be beat," said my companion. "We lost the first game, but we'll win the return."

"Remember Lacey Cassidy?" But my companion had already re-entered the crypt.

I blushed to own that although I reach the entrance, I went no further.

where in that hole, I shivered in the bitter breath which blew out of it. The score of minutes which passed before his reappearance was like two hours to me. As he came I heard his voice as when it boomed up: "You there, Francis? I'm coming out."

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TRADITION SERVED IN SELECTING

Eight Letters Composed Names of Several Which Defended Trophy—Now

Tradition has been honored and maintained in the selection of the boat which is to defend the coveted American Cup. Resolute has been chosen. While superstition plays no little part in a seafaring man's life, it was probably given no consideration by the cup committee. It is a matter of cold calculation, however, that there are eight letters in the name of the chosen defender. Fear of her immediate predecessors required no more of the alphabet to delineate their names on the stem of the boat. Vigilant, Defender, Columbia and Reliance all were in fact, seven of the thirteen yachts which have defended the trophy consumed eight letters in the makeup of their names, the other three being Columbia, Madeline and Maudslayi. The New York Yacht Club's fourteenth victory for the now famous trophy.

It Was No Easy Task.

W. Butler Duncan, C. Oliver Iselin, Edwin D. Morgan and Greville Kane, who composed the New York Yacht Club cup committee, had no easy task in deciding between the Resolute and Vantile. The yachts sailed eleven races off Newport. Seven were won by the Resolute and four by the Vantile. The margin of each instance after handicap allowances had been made was very little. Boat for boat the Resolute proved the better craft. The committee carefully checked them on all points of sailing, comparing the merits of the skipper, management and crew.

The cup defender was built in 1914 by a syndicate composed of J. P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Arthur Curtis James, George F. Baker, Henry Walters and several other prominent members of the New York Yacht Club. Two other boats were constructed at the same time, the Vantile, by A. S. Cochran, and the Defiant by a syndicate of Boston, New York and Philadelphia yachtsmen. The Defiant was withdrawn early in the season of 1914.

The series of trial races that were to be held in 1914 between the Vantile and Resolute were stopped by the war. In 1915 the two sloops sailed a number of races, nearly all of which were won by the Resolute. In the two years Resolute had twenty-five victories to her credit against four for the Vantile.

Like Daddy, Like Son.

It seemed like a coincidence that while Manager Simmons, of the Resolute, was scoring his triumph of having the yacht chosen by the committee young Simmons was selected by Harvard to lead its football team for next season. Daddy was a former Harvard football captain and the youngest who plays second base has proven himself a real leader.

Commercialism Takes Its Toll.

Just as soon as commercialism gets any sport into its fangs there is a laxity of interest and the public gets wary. There is not a single exception. Even the grand old game of polo, a sport which has been played for centuries, has been almost outside the pale. It required only a bit of adverse criticism regarding the financial arrangements said to have been demanded by Dr. E. B. Lasker to cause that estimable gentleman and wonderful player to relinquish his world's title to Jose It. Capablanca, the Cuban expert and American champion.

Writing from Amsterdam, Doctor Lasker says to Capablanca: "From various facts I must infer that the world does not like the conditions of our agreement. I cannot play the match knowing that its rules are widely unpopular. I, therefore, resign the title of world's champion in your favor. You have earned the title, not by the formality of a challenge, but by your brilliant mastery. In your fur career I wish you much success."

In commenting upon Doctor Lasker's resignation of the chess championship, the chess expert of the London Times recalls the negotiations of eight years ago which ended with Capablanca's refusal to meet Capablanca, and the adverse comment on Doctor Lasker's action. The renewal of the negotiations early in 1920 led to an agreement between the two players to meet next year, with Doctor Lasker to receive 60 per cent of the purse, whatever the result, and also to have the privilege of deciding where the match should be played. The writer criticizes Doctor Lasker for his position in this connection and quotes Capablanca as saying when he first played in London that he was willing to accept any reasonable conditions, as he was most anxious to settle the championship question finally by playing Doctor Lasker.

Curb Filipino's Ambition.

Eighteen years ago, in 1902, the commission which at that time governed the Philippine Islands enacted a law "punishing prize fighting and sparring or boxing exhibitions." Then the statute was promptly forgotten. The large number of sport-loving Americans, civil and military, prompted some enterprising American to form a boxing club, and to boxing was immediately established as one of the strongest forms of amusement in the Philippines.

In December 1919, a Philippine politician with a craving for publicity unearthed the statute book which contained this martial law, blew the dust from it and solemnly proceeded to put the wheels of government in motion. As a result boxing was banned. And the promising careers of a number of clever Filipino boxers were tipped in the bud.

The Filipino took to boxing like Kentucky colonel to bourbon. Active, muscular, with splendid powers of endurance and an abnormal ability to take punishment, he seemed endowed with nature with all the attributes of the successful boxer. And the science of the game—punching and blocking—

CAN THIS BE TRUE?

Marshall Neilan, whose latest film achievement is "The River's End," has had considerable success both as an actor and as a director and is a most extraordinary screen celebrity. BECAUSE:

He has never—

narrowly escaped death in an automobile accident.

endured cold cream, chewing gum or cigarettes.

had a "meteoric rise" in his profession.

been photographed in his dressing room.

worn leather puttees.

received an order in matrimony from an admirer.

stated that the industry was still in its infancy.

posed with a room full of mail from his admirers.

Nor has he even received a letter from a moving fan in Japan.

A Late Tribute.

It is a little known fact that in the United States everybody is showing the picture of Theodore Roosevelt. But you know best dead, the game—punching and blocking—