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A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

Sometimes Needs No Accuser.

By G. B. TARLETON

I was brought up on adages. An aunt of mine was continually dinging them at me, and as luck would have it they always worked the wrong way with me. One day when I was hesitating as to the date of going to a neighboring town for a certain purpose she said to me, "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today." I started immediately, and while I was gone a man came to buy of me a piece of property I was very anxious to sell. I missed him and lost the sale.

A favorite saying of my aunt's was, "A guilty conscience needs no accuser." I have always been a very sensitive person with too tender a conscience already; consequently I had no occasion for this special adage. Indeed, it was the source of a great deal of trouble to me. Not that I suffered in any way under a guilty conscience, but I had heard so often that a criminal is bound to betray himself that—

But I'll not begin with the denouement of my story. I'll save that for the end. I was engaged to be married to Martha Ellison, a girl of very high principle. Indeed, so noble were her conceptions—and so far as I knew she lived up to them—that from the moment I became engaged to her I was in constant dread of doing something that would appear ignoble in her sight.

One day while walking on the street I saw a gold watch with a chain lying at my feet. I stooped and picked it up. It had fallen on grass beside the flags and was apparently uninjured. At any rate, it was ticking merrily. I looked about me to see if any one was near who might have dropped it. I saw a policeman coming with a quick tread toward me. When he came up he eyed me sharply.

"There was a robbery committed near here a few minutes ago," he said. "Have you seen any one suspicious looking—any one running?" It at once occurred to me that if I told him I had found the plundered property—or part of it—I would be arrested for the theft. I could not put off till tomorrow what must be done today. In other words, I had no time to think over what I had best do, so I simply replied in the negative.

Now, I hadn't seen any one who appeared to have been connected with the robbery, and I possessed a perfectly clear conscience. I had in my possession what was doubtless property that had been taken by the robber in question and either dropped or thrown away to avoid being caught with it on his person. Moreover, I was ready and willing to turn it over to either the owner or the authorities. But why should I stand in the position of the person who had likely considered that it was necessary to get rid of it?

Unquestionably I should have handed out the watch and chain to the policeman and told him that I had found them. If I could have put off my decision in the matter for even a few minutes probably I would have done this. But I couldn't put it off. And here is where that adage is lame. It takes no more account of cases where we can't put off doing things than of those in which we should put off doing them.

I told the policeman that I had seen no one who looked like a robber, but said nothing about the watch and chain. As I have already said, my conscience was clear, but I have no doubt I looked like a thief. It didn't matter that I intended to give up the property when I could do so without incriminating myself. I had stolen goods in my possession, and a policeman was looking at me suspiciously.

He seemed in doubt whether he should hold on to me or let me go. Possibly it was my respectable appearance that decided him to do the latter. But he had gone on only a few steps before he called to me and asked me my name and where I lived. I gave him both correctly, and he did not delay me further.

My not having produced the stolen property at once complicated the case for me very much. It occurred to me that I should handle the matter deliberately before coming to a decision as to what to do next. If I should go home I might not have an opportunity to think the matter out. I might be sent for by the police either for a witness or on suspicion. I dreaded being questioned further, before having laid down the course I should pursue. I concluded to go to my fiancée, tell her of the situation and talk the matter over with her.

On the way I fell to thinking that my course thus far had not been such as to challenge admiration. Indeed, I realized that I should have had the courage to tell the policeman I had found a watch and chain. I knew that Martha was just the kind of a girl to blame me for not having done this. The consequence was that when I called on her at an unusual hour—it was 11 o'clock in the morning—and interrupted her in some work she was doing and she did not seem especially pleased to see me, my courage oozed out. Instead of coming right out with the matter in hand I stammered and trumped up excuse for my coming.

The contract was no sooner made than Miss Hurlbert gave me a roll of bills and directed me to go ashore and buy arms and ammunition. I bought a cutlass, a repeating rifle and a revolver for each of the crew, including myself, and was fortunate enough to pick up a couple of little two pounder barkers, with ammunition for all. Miss Hurlbert was well pleased when she saw the barkers.

When all was completed Miss Hurlbert directed me to weigh anchor and lose ourselves among the many islands that line the coast of Maine. Since there are several hundred of these in Casco bay alone, embracing but a small fraction of the coast, it seemed to me a very good hiding place.

I now saw the principal reason why I had been engaged. It had been Miss Hurlbert's intention from the first to disappear with the valuables among these islands so effectually that, through her attorney, she might make such terms as she desired with the plaintiff in the suit. She had not counted on being followed, but when she found that she would be, being a woman of great determination, she had the nerve to prepare for defense. She flattered me and every member of the crew, treating us all as her equals and constantly sending to the forecabin delicacies from the cabin mess. As for me, she insisted that I should eat at her table, since she would otherwise be obliged to eat alone.

We spent the first two weeks sailing no farther east than Bath that Miss Hurlbert might occasionally run into Portland for letters, but at the end of that time she told me she had been advised that the plaintiff had left Boston, bound east, and she directed me to move on. I asked her if our pursuers had made preparations to fight, and she said she didn't know; she hoped that we should avoid them till the 5th of November had passed. But why she placed stress upon this date she did not tell me.

We heard of a yacht called the Spray, which we suspected to be the one looking for us. Ours was the Dawn. Nearly all yachts but the two had gone out of commission, for by this time it was the 28th of October. On that date we were concealed in a cove in Penobscot bay under trees hanging from a cliff. Had we remained there we would have avoided a meeting with our antagonists. They had tracked us and had sailed past our hiding place when we were pulling out. As soon as we did so she turned about and came for us before the wind.

This was in the morning, and two hours after noon she had out sailed us and was within half a mile of us in open water. Miss Hurlbert came up to me and with a devilish look as I ever saw on any woman's face asked me if I was ready to keep my contract with her. I wished I was out of it, for I had never felt much faith in the justice of her cause, and I feared to be mixed and mix my crew in a violation of the laws. However, I told her that I would stand by her.

"Well, then," she said, "go about and while doing so give her a broadside from the barkers."

I raised a glass to examine our enemy and was astonished to see on the after deck a woman, who appeared to be giving orders like the captain of a battleship. The peculiarity of the situation amazed me. Here were I and my crew serving under a woman while another was in command of our enemy, and we at least about to engage in an illegal altercation. Nevertheless I obeyed orders, sent a couple of men below to work the guns, and while turning the yacht's nose before the Spray the port gun was fired, and as we swung round the starboard gun followed suit. Neither shot took effect.

Our enemy paid no attention to our messengers, standing right for us. "To your rifles, men!" shouted Miss Hurlbert. The men obeyed, though reluctantly, while I stood by, wondering what would happen next. Six rifles were resting on the gunwale of the Dawn, while the Spray was advancing head on. A man stood on the latter yacht's bow holding a paper in one hand, a megaphone in the other. Raising the megaphone he bellowed:

"You, on that yacht! You're wanted, I'm the sheriff of — county, Maine." And holding up the paper he read through the megaphone a warrant for the arrest of Matilda Hurlbert.

That ended the matter for me. I did not propose to resist an arrest, though not knowing whether the warrant and

the sheriff were genuine.

"Fire!" cried Miss Hurlbert to the men. They looked at me for instructions, and I told them to lower their rifles. The look our employer gave me was something frightful.

"There seem to be but a few persons aboard of her," I said, "and we are seven men, well armed. Let us have a parley."

Well, the upshot of the matter was that Miss Hurlbert was no relation to Mr. Townsend, but a nurse who had got control of him and was trying to get him away where she could marry him. His only child, a daughter, was aware of her object and had been endeavoring to thwart her. Miss Hurlbert had been deceiving me as to her playing a legal game. She was simply trying to get her charge into a position where she could tie him up in wedlock. She dare not go ashore for the purpose, for the police in every port had been given orders by Miss Townsend to arrest her if she appeared. She dare not bring a minister aboard, for this would give her design away to me and her crew.

I proved that I and her crew were not aware of her real scheme, and we escaped prosecution. Miss Hurlbert was sent to prison for abduction. Miss Townsend was so happy at her success that she paid us what her enemy had promised us.

A WONDERFUL CASE Three Months in Hospital and Came out Uncured.

Zam-Buk Cured Him in Few Weeks.

Mr. Fred Mason, the well-known upholsterer and mattress manufacturer of St. Andrew's N.B., says:— "I had eczema on my knee which caused me terrible pain and inconvenience. The sore parts would itch and burn and tingle, and then when scratched, would become very painful. When the knee got warm, it burned worse, and the itching and burning and smarting were almost unbearable. I tried various remedies, but got no better, so I decided to go to Montreal and take special treatment. I received treatment at the Montreal General Hospital for thirteen weeks, but at the end of that time I was not cured, and almost gave in. A friend advised me to give Zam-Buk a trial.

"Almost as soon as applied Zam-Buk stopped the itching and the irritation. I persevered with the balm, and it was soon evident that it would do me good. Each day the pain was reduced, the sore spots began to heal, and by the time I had used a few boxes of Zam-Buk I was quite cured.

"Since then Zam-Buk has cured blood-poison in my finger, and at a time when my finger was in such a terrible condition that I feared it would have to be amputated.

For eczema, blood-poisoning, piles, ulcers, sores, abscesses, varicose ulcers, bad leg, cold sores, chapped hands, cuts, burns, bruises and all skin injuries and diseases, Zam-Buk is without equal. 50c. box all druggists and stores or post free from Zam-Buk Co., Toronto, for price. Refuse imitations.

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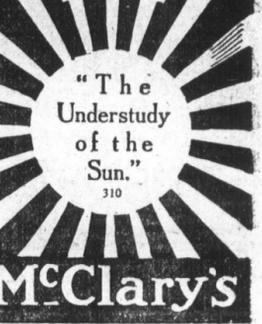
New Westminster, B.C. Nov. 3rd. "I have suffered from Lumbago in the back—also from Rheumatism in the whole of my body. I took GIN PILLS and they cured me. My sister in England states she is keeping her bed through Sciatica and Rheumatism—also hear that many others in the same neighborhood are suffering from the same trouble.

I enclose one dollar and ask you to send to her address in Kent, England as many as you can for the money, and have asked my sister to try GIN PILLS and distribute them."

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