Thirty-Five Years in Prison

THE ILL-FATED LATUDE.

In 1748, in the reign of Louis XV. and the all-powderful Marquise de Pompadour, a young man of twentythree years of age, calling himself Jean Danry, the son of a humble servant girl and an ex-surgeon's orderly in the army of Languedoc, made his appearance in Paris. He was almost penniless, but he made up for his lack of material resources by the splendour and soaring scope of his ambitions. Wealth, Juxury, and a high-sounding title-these were the things he had set his heart and mind upon.

An Amazing Plan. One day he conceived a most amazing plan for bringing his ambitions to pass. He told himself that if only he could enlist Madame de Pompadour in his favour, his future would be assured, his dreams would be realized. The following was the fantastic project that took shape in his head. They used to make in those days, for children to play with, little glass vessels which would explode in the hand with a fairly loud report. He procured a few of these playthings, put them together with some harmless powder into a box, and, by means of a piece of wire, attached them to the lid in such a way that, when the box opened, they would all explode.

A Hair-raising Story.

The box, addressed to the Marquise, was posted by Danry on April 28th, 1749. Immediately after he had handed it in he himself left for Versailles. He hoped to procure admission to the favorite herself, but the way was barred by her head footman, into whose ears, in a voice trembling with emotion, he poured the following hairraising story: "I was at Tuileries," he said, "when I happened to notice two mysterious individuals who were holding a very animated conversation together. I approached them without appearing to show that my suspicions were in any way aroused. Judge of my surprise when I got within earshot to hear them discussing some plan for compassing the death of Madame de Pompadour. Dissembling my horror and amazement, I resolved to follow them and observe their actions. They left shortly afterwards, and made their way straight to the post-office, where they put a packet into the box. Who they were and what was in the packet I cannot sav: but being anxious to serve the Marquis even unto death. I hastened hither with all the speed at my command to reveal what I had seen and heard." The footman duly reported the story to Madame de Pompadour. Next morning the packet arrived. It was pened with the greatest precaution by Dr. Quesnoy the medical attendant of the King and the favourite. The contents of the packet exploded quite harmlessly; but appearances, at all events, seemed to suggest a criminal intention on the part of the senders, whoever they might be, and the police requested Danry to give a detailed account of what he knew. Danry complied, but he was immediately arrested and flung into prison at Bastille, for the similarity between his writing and the superscription on the packet had been immediately recognized. When he told them that his sole object in inventing his story had been to secure the interest of the Marquise by appearing to save her life, his tale was scouted. The Lieutenant of Police would have it that the attempt had a political significance, and this was the beginning of one of the most remarkable cases of imprisonment known to nistory. 1 endured for thirty-five years and was productive of a strange series of in cidents. Another Escape And Capture. Transferred to the prison at Vincen nes, where the treatment was less severe than at the Bastille, Danry resolved to gain his own freedom, for the course of justice was unconscious. ly slow, apparently, indeed, interminable. From the Vincennes he escaped. He wrote to Madame de Pompadour, thinking she would have pity on him, and revealing his hiding-place. She sent the letter to the Prefect of Police. and Danry was captured and clapped into the Bastille. He seemed to be dving of ennui, and they gave him a companion, Antoine Allegre. They planned to escape. It took them two years.

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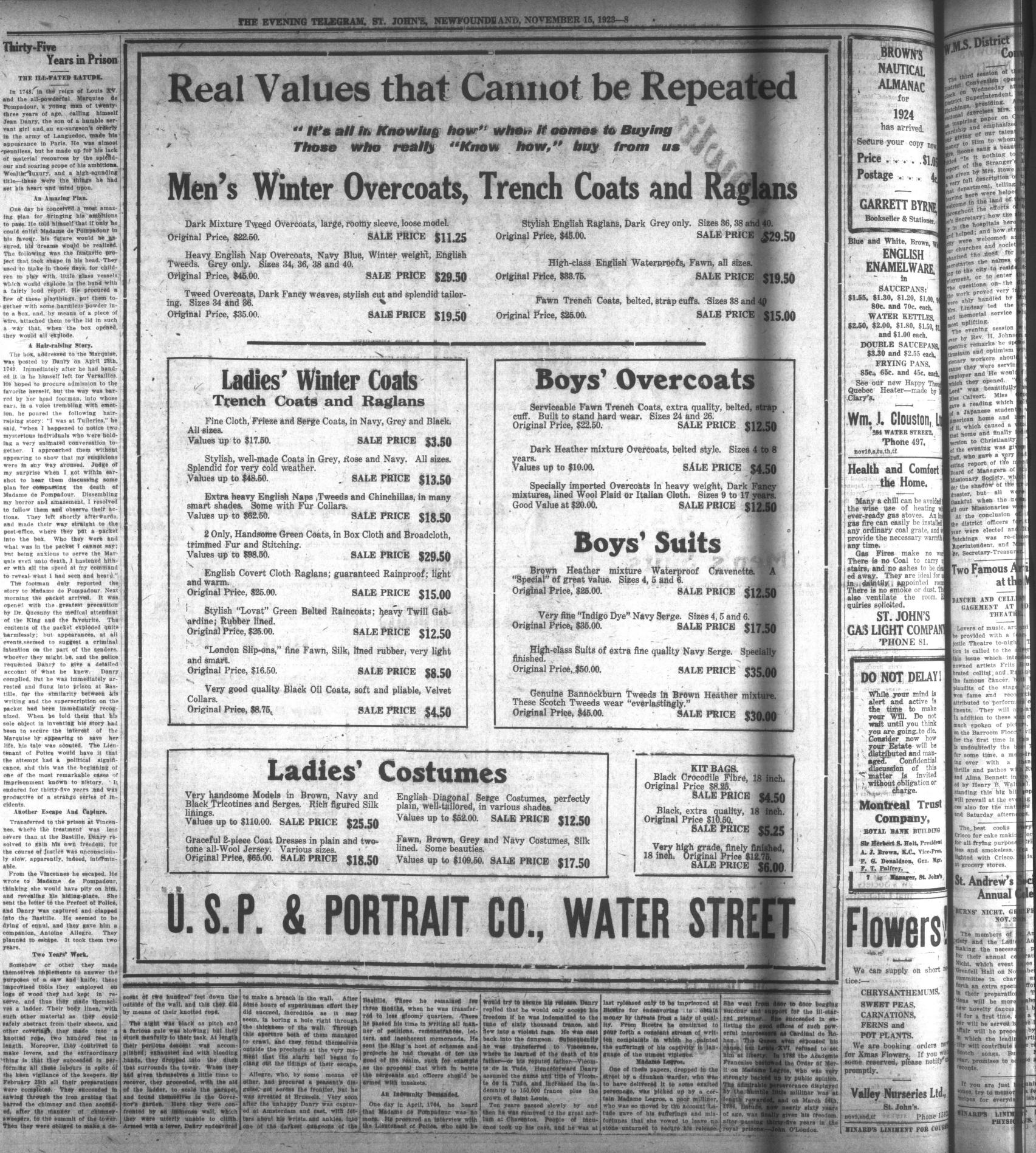
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Two Years' Work.

Somehow or other they made themselves implements to answer the purposes of a saw and knife; these improvised tools they employed on logs of wood they had kept in reserve, and thus they made themselves a ladder. Their body linen, with such other material as they could safely abstract from their sheets, and The night was black as pitch and other coverings, they made into a a furious gale was blowing; but they knotted rope, two hundred feet in stuck manfully to their task. At length length. Moreover, they contrived to their perilous descent was accommake levers, and the extraordinary plished; exhausted and with bleeding thing is that they succeeded in per- hands, they dropped into the ditch forming all these labours in spite of that surrounds the tower. When they the keen vigilance of the keepers. By had given themselves a little time to February 25th all their preparations recover, they proceeded, with the ald were completed. They succeeded in of the ladder, to scale the parapet, sawing through the iron grating that and found themselves in the Gover-