

Christmas Derelict

By Viola Justin

AS THE boat pointed its nose toward the city, the solitary man at the prow turned his back on freedom and gazed longingly at the graystone penitentiary, which seemed to be slipping away from him and growing smaller and cozier as distance lent the enchantment of perspective to his loneliness.

For Mulcahy, dazzled by liberty, was very lonely indeed. Every moment that the water widened between him and the prison it lessened the distance from the city, and in two minutes more the man knew that the metropolis, bristling with antagonism, cold and strange and busy with its holiday season, would be upon him, and it filled his heart with a nameless dread.



Gazed Longingly at the Graystone Pen.

But, after all, he had only himself to blame for his liberty. "Good behavior"—that was the thing that had turned him loose from a comfortable home, three square meals a day, and his companions of the quarry.

If he had only transgressed a few laws, broken a simple rule or two, all might have been well. He might have eaten Christmas dinner with Jerry the Spike, Bottles, Hank and the whole rappy crew who had contrived to spend another Christmas in the "pen" through trifling indiscretions committed in defiance of the keepers.

These reflections were interrupted by the sharp teeth of the wind snapping at his legs through the thin trousers and the threadbare coat.

He shivered as the boat docked, and then took a long breath as he walked up the gangplank and out into—was this freedom striking terror to his soul? Why was he trembling? He was free at last, but free to do what? Free to kill himself before he starved to death, free to wander the uncompanionable streets and gaze upon the happiness that showed itself in the faces of fugitive passers-by.

He was only free to go anywhere; but these people had their homes to go to, each his separate "penitentiary" where there were warmth and food and human things to talk to.

He shut his eyes for an instant and started bravely up the hilly street that led to First avenue. Then suddenly a strange thing happened. He forgot his misery and his wretched homelessness. At first he couldn't realize what the influence was, then he recognized the soothing and thirst-inspiring smell of hops that poured over him like a hot breath from the brewery on the next street. This prompted a thought which was immediately followed by a sharp movement.

Mulcahy minded him of the faded five-dollar bill he had in his pocket, the last bounty of the good home across the river. He pulled it out and looked at it.

It represented two weeks and a half of life; that is, he calculated that while he was looking for a job it would provide food and shelter for him. If he couldn't find a job—but that thought ended with a look toward the river; and again he saw the "pen," and another thought occurred to him. If he didn't find anything to do, he

could go back to the "pen" and beg them to take him in. No, he couldn't do that. He squared his ragged shoulders as if trying to rise superior to the thought, for there was a remnant of pride in Mulcahy, albeit tiny and a desperate struggle to keep his feet on the globe had frayed its edges.

No, he determined to go back there honorably, as he had left. He might get a job shoveling snow—but alas! it was one of those cheerless Christmases, and nature had not even supplied the people out of work with snow to shovel.

Mulcahy had worked all his life. He was fifty now, and, as he unrolled the long catalogue of calamity which other people might have called his career, he found that the only year of his life that had been a happy one was his last in jail. It had started merrily even, for, after his outraged pride had revolted at the idea of being arrested for his slight connection with the robbery, comfort came swiftly with the thought that he was being punished for omission rather than commission.

These thoughts and the haunting smell of hops brought Mulcahy to Fourth avenue and a saloon. It was twelve o'clock, and corned beef and cabbage-leaf being slated for lunch on a blackboard under a Satyrish-looking bock and a life-sized "schooner," determined the man, and he stepped inside.

The story will move much more rapidly if we do not follow Mulcahy and wait for him to eat his corned beef and philander with a spirit more of his ilk than any he has met for the last year, a spirit that seemed almost fabulous when dreamed of in the "pen"—to-wit, the bartender.

But look where Mulcahy emerges half an hour later, the inner man lulled by the succulent cabbage and beef, but a melancholy gnawing at the outer man, whose clothes are slight protection against the increasing wind.

As the day drew her portals slowly together he fell to trembling again. How was he going to face the night?

vast possibilities as far as valuables were concerned, but these were carefully protected by glass cases. True, there were some little trays of gold-filled pins and bracelets scarcely worth the effort of attainment. And yet a handful of these trifles, flagrant abstracted, might attract the attention of a detective.

Perhaps there were no detectives, after all. This thought smote to him in the act of reaching out a trembling hand toward a delicate gold-filled bangle. Then he paused, and in that moment of hesitation he felt a twitch at his coat, and, turning to face what he felt must be authority either in plain or blue clothes, he perceived at his side a very pretty little girl.

She was well dressed; and after the first shock he felt on looking into her clear blue eyes, Mulcahy saw a beautiful locket and chain clasped around her neck.

In the mean time she has possessed herself of his coat-pocket as if it were his hand, and clung to him as she asked:

"Have you seen my mama?" Her voice was smothered by the crowd that pressed around her, and Mulcahy had to lift her up in his arms to make himself heard.

"No," he replied, his face close to her pretty neck and ear. "Shall we go and look for her?" he added, touched by the sudden moisture that blurred her eyes.

As he spoke he carried her to the revolving-door. Once out in the street, she told him that she had been shopping with her mother and had got lost. She lived, she said on Fifth street, between Madison and Fifth avenue. She didn't know the number, but there were green trees at the door, and it was a white house.

The man assured her that they would find it together.

You mustn't think that this escape diverted Mulcahy from his original scheme. Only he wanted to be of use to the child, and he also saw a much better way of obtaining his arrest and entrance to prison.

The locket and chain he knew would serve his purpose, for he intended stealing them as soon as he had found her home. There were four dollars and ninety cents left from the "pen's" munificence, but he spent enough of it in a candy-store to have provided for himself for two days.

Over a congenial glass of ice cream soda the little girl gave him her name—Violet Van Twiller. The telephone book did the rest in the matter of locating the Van Twiller mansion, whither Violet was escorted by her ragged friend.

Afterward, when Mulcahy left her standing at the door of her home waving at him and smiling in her sweet, frank way, he wondered how he had found it in his heart to steal the necklace; but there it was in his hand, still warm from contact with her throat.

Then he darted away from the street, and, clasping the locket tightly, flew to the first police station and gave himself up.

The judge did not conceal his disgust when he learned that Mulcahy had robbed a child; and when he uttered sternly, "Six months on the island for him," he marveled at the brutality of a man who could smile at the sentence.

Meantime, Violet Van Twiller had been received with the tears and rejoicings of a hysterical and loving family and diligently interrogated concerning the events of the evening.

Over and over again she repeated the story of the "kind, ragged gentleman" who had bought her candy and soda and had found her home for her.

Later, Mr. Van Twiller discovered that Violet had mysteriously lost her locket; but, though he suspected her strange friend, he was so grateful to the "ragged gentleman" that the next day he advertised in all the papers that he wished to reward the person who had restored his daughter to her family.

But Mulcahy never learned of this golden opportunity which might have given him a new start in life, though he gave the officer who accompanied him to the island the name and address of the little owner of the necklace, and it was sent to her.

The next day saw Mulcahy safely aboard the Fidelity and headed for the "pen."

At the end of the week he was sitting at the Christmas dinner which had seemed a phantom on that dreadful day he was set at liberty.

Between mouthfuls of fat turkey and cranberry sauce he boasted to Jerry the Spike, Hank, and Bottles of how he had hoodwinked justice.

When he reported for work, a few days later, the keeper who presided over the men engaged in breaking stone remarked casually to a fellow keeper:

"I see Mulcahy is back on the job."
"Yes," the other replied; "he was liberated a week ago, and now he's back again. I tell you this place is a cinch for those fellows. They're doing life on the installment plan. If you dumped the whole caboodle into the East river and told them to swim to New York, they'd all turn like a lot of rats and squeak to come back to the 'pen.'"

(Copyright.)

Work and the Weather.

The restless days are here. All outdoors invites us and our work becomes a conscious effort and a bore. It is the time when we are most in sympathy with Jerome K. Jerome in his confession as follows: "I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours. I love to keep it by me; the idea of getting rid of it nearly breaks my heart."



OUR COST SALE

BEGINS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26th

For One Week Only

Shaw & McCollum Mer. Co.

Sumter, South Carolina

ASSAULT IN RICHLAND.

BUCK HILL, ALIAS MLEOD, IDENTIFIED BY THE VICTIM.

Trailed with Dogs and Captured by Sheriff—Wife of Confederate Veteran Attacked in Her Home During Husband's Absence.

Columbia, Dec. 24.—Yesterday about 12 o'clock Buck Hill, alias Buck McLeod, a negro, assaulted a white woman while she was at her home near Brown's chapel, which is ten miles southeast of Columbia on the Leesburg road. The negro was trailed by the bloodhounds from the State penitentiary and captured about 4:30 o'clock by Sheriff McCain, Coroner Scott and the members of a posse who left Columbia in automobiles at 1 o'clock for the scene of the crime. The negro was lodged in the Richland county jail last night.

The negro's victim, who is about 35 years old, is the wife of a Confederate veteran, a man of excellent standing in his community. She was alone in the house at the time the crime was committed. Her husband came to Columbia yesterday on business and did not leave for home until about 2 o'clock. He was informed of the affair after he had gotten a few miles from Columbia.

There were threats of violence against Buck Hill after he was captured. While Sheriff McCain talked to the crowd which had been aiding in the man hunt, the negro was put in the automobile of Coroner Scott and brought to Columbia. The crowd, which grew rapidly as the news of the crime spread over the Brown's chapel section of the county, was not difficult to handle, but Sheriff McCain took the precaution of getting the negro away from the scene as soon as possible.

The unfortunate woman is said to be in a serious condition as a result of the negro's assault upon her. She was badly bruised about the face and neck, while one of her hands was hurt in the struggle with the negro.

The sheriff's office was notified by telephone of the crime about 1 o'clock by Mr. Gaston, the principal of a school near Brown's chapel, who was one of the first men to go to the scene. After getting the dogs from the penitentiary Sheriff McCain left immediately in an automobile, taking Guard Robbins, Officer Henry Dunning and Dr. J. E. Heise with him.

The bloodhounds readily took the negro's trail away from the dwelling house in which the crime was committed. The dogs followed the tracks for some time, then became confused by cross trails, but after a little they carried the tracks to Hill's house, which is only a mile from the scene of the crime. The negro Hill, alias McLeod, was found in the house with several other negroes. He was arrested and taken before the woman on whom the crime was committed. According to Sheriff McCain, the woman positively identified the negro as the one who committed the assault upon her.

When the negro was arrested at his home by the sheriff, he insisted that he must be allowed to change his clothes and shoes before he left home. He was taken before the woman dressed just as he was. It is said that the shoes he wore were of the same size as the footprints leading away from the scene of the assault.

It was said last night that the negro, who is now in the Richland jail charged with criminal assault, has been arrested once before on a sim-

ilar charge but was released for lack of evidence against him.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR REPORTS.

Lane Outlines Policy of United States Towards Alaskan Territory.

Washington, Dec. 23.—Outlining a proposed land policy for Alaska, which includes an administrative board having charge of all the national resources of the territory, the annual report of Secretary of Interior Franklin K. Lane was made public today.

Fully half of the twenty-six pages in the report deal with the Alaskan situation, which in the opinion of the secretary is of the utmost importance to the country. The withdrawal of lands in Alaska and their reservation by the government, following the discovery of natural resources had precluded the development which should have taken place in the territory, according to the secretary. The report says:

"The largest body of unused and neglected land in the United States is Alaska. It is now nearly half a century since we purchased this territory, and it contains today less than 46,000 white inhabitants, less than 1,000 for each year it has been in our possession. The purchase was made as a means of protection against the possible aggression of a foreign nation and without the hope that it would be even self-supporting. In the intervening 46 years we have given it little more than the most casual concern, yet its mines, fisheries and furs alone have added to our wealth the grand sum of \$500,000,000.

"In my judgment the way to deal with the problem of Alaskan resources is to establish a board of directors to have the work in charge. Into the hands of this board or commission I would give all the national assets in that territory, to be used primarily for her improvement in her lands, fisheries, Indians, Eskimos, seals, forests, mines, waterways, railroads—all that the nation owns, cares for, controls or regulates. Congress should determine in broad outline the policies which this board in a liberal discretion should elaborate and administer, much as is done as to the Philippines. This board would of course have nothing whatsoever to do with the internal affairs of the organized territory of Alaska, for it would exercise no powers save such as congress granted over the property of the United States in Alaska."

According to the secretary, the plan of opening the vast lands of Alaska to the public should be pursued under a leasing and royalty plan similar to that under which the State of Minnesota leases its ore lands, and the States of Colorado and Montana their coal lands. These plans provide that any lands leased must be developed and not merely held for an increase in value as has been the case in Alaska and with timber and coal and mining lands in many of our western States.

The secretary would also extend this plan to the petroleum, phosphate and potash beds in our western States, and to the lands suitable for agriculture. The money derived from the leasing of such lands should be turned back into them in a great many cases in the form of power sites and irrigation projects, while the government still retains the title to them. This plan, the secretary believes would effectively put a check to the monopolization of our resources, by giving the small promoter a chance to acquire a property under a lease, such

as would not entail the expenditure of a large amount of money, and by making every property so acquired a productive property.

COLORED FARMERS' CORN PRIZES.

A Word to the Farmers of Sumter County by Farm Demonstration Agent.

People's Pharmacy, Inc., successor to Birnie's Drug Store, has given to the farmers three prizes: \$5.00, \$10, and \$15 each. Sumter Capers, of Dalzell, R. F. D. No. 1, received the first prize; D. R. Brown, of Sumter, R. F. D. No. 3, was awarded the second prize and T. E. Wright, of Rembert, R. F. D. No. 2, was given the third prize. The prizes were given to the farmers who made the most corn to the acre. The number of bushels made by the three winners were as follows: 83 bushels and 5 quarts; 83 bushels, and 72 bushels.

Another prize will be offered to the farmers for 1914. Who will be the winners? The following are a few hints as to how to win:

- 1st. Have confidence in yourself.
- 2nd. Put humus in the soil, such as barn yard manure, rotten leaves of the forest, muck from the swamps and ditches; corn stalks and any vegetable matter that will decay.
- 3rd. Turn under the humus from 7 to 10 inches deep.
4. Harrow the same with a disc harrow and then with a tooth harrow.
- 5th. Plant a winter cover such as Rye or Oats and turn it under when you are ready to plant corn.
- 6th. Use 1,000 pounds or more of commercial fertilizer to the acre.
- 7th. Do not cut the roots of the corn.

Now is the time to begin to prepare your land and keep the above rules.

Yours sincerely,

R. W. Westberry.

U. S. Demonstration Agent.

BURGLARS BLOW SAFE.

Secure Several Thousand Dollars From Bank of Prescott.

Prescott, Ark., Dec. 23.—Burglars blew the safe of the Prescott Bank this morning and secured several thousand dollars. The explosion wrecked the building. The burglars escaped on a hand car. A posse are pursuing them.

Real Estate Transfers.

I. C. Strauss to J. W. and J. E. Norton, twenty-five acres on Pecattigo swamp, \$850.

Minnie Simpson to Joel Davis, one-third interest to 6 1-2 acres in county, \$125.

M. L. Hodge to Tanzy J. Hodge, 33 acres in county, \$800.

E. W. McCallum to M. E. Heriot, lot and buildings on Bartlette Street, \$1,650.

Simon London to I. C. Strauss, 26 acres in county, \$116 and other considerations.

Marriage License Record.

Licenses have been issued to William Bradley and Mary Gayle, Wedgefield; Lucius McCants, Sumter, and Marie Hudson, Mayesville; James Reid, Jr., Stateburg, and Janie Choise, Claremont; Sam Singleton and Sarah Frierson, Dalzell; Sammie Gadsen, Wedgefield, and Katie Brown, Stateburg; Jesse Shells and Minnie Wilson, Mayesville; Lott Richardson and Sarah Jane Gamble, Shiloh; Stephen Garnett and Lizzie DeLane, Wedgefield.