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GOING WRONG and GETTING RIGHT

By ROBERT H. MOULTON

He glanced up from his ledger and caught the invitation of the treasurer's index finger. Once before that same signal had meant a raise of \$25 a month—or, as he and his wife had put it, a balance in a savings bank.

He laid down his pen and walked into the treasurer's office with an expression as nearly radiant as his inscrutably set face ever wore. When he came out, a change had come over him. His face was pallid and his lips were set. Yet he again had been offered a raise—not merely \$300 a year more, but double the salary he had been getting. And instantly he had refused it. There never was a man more dumfounded than the treasurer by that refusal. The tender of his own position, which he was soon to resign, had been curtly refused. And as though it had been notice of discharge, the man whom he had promoted to the confidential set of books had served notice that he would leave within the week. "Time to quit," the man muttered to himself as he finished his posting, put the books away in the private office and prepared to go home.

Once before, as he vividly recalled, it had become time for him to make a sudden, iron resolution to quit. When the last bar had yielded to his saw he had heard the turnkey in the corridor and abruptly he threw himself upon his bed. "Here's a paper," the turnkey had said, and went on. The prison was just waking up; summer dawn was creeping through the grated windows. He left the bunk and took the paper to the light. Soon his eye caught the dispatch from Albany that announced that the New York legislature had passed the habitual criminal act. He shuddered slightly and glanced toward the nearly covered bars, knowing that if he escaped and was rearrested he would be likely never to walk the streets again a free man. It would be "life" for him. He would spend the rest of his young life like a fly in a bottle. "Time to quit," he had muttered.

Better discipline at home when he was a boy would have kept him out of trouble, but he was sent up to the reform school from Cincinnati. It was only a short term, but when he came back home he was branded as a discharged prisoner of the state, one of the fraternity against which most police officers feel that they are pitted in ineluctable strife. When he followed his determination to be decent and get work, the first man had said: "Come around a little later." It was not only the reply, but the quizzical smile that accompanied it which had made him feel the gall and wormwood which most discharged prisoners must swallow, if unaided, a portion which turns many of them to the underworld in desperation. He had not done so heinous a thing that mankind should shun him as a loathsome, dangerous, hunted thing. He was "broke" and hungry, but he went on hunting for a job until another man turned him down cold and added some stinging words about convicts.

That is what goaded him, as it goads others, into following a desperate game, when he met a young fellow who also had served a bit in the reform school.

They went in deep and the next sentence was to Columbus. That gave him a post-graduate course in the ways of the underworld, the tricks of the cleverest of the confidence men and burglars. With the ruses and wiles of crime an open book, his active mind soon set him to contriving burglaries as the leader of a gang, and the disposing of the loot. He never tasted liquor and was equal to any emergency. Crime became an absorbing business with him, outlawed business filled with the ever-present dread of capture. He saved money, but all that he had saved went in the effort to save himself when he landed in a lurch officer's arms. He was sent to the penitentiary in Kansas and there he "did time," endured the grinding monotony of prison life and prison fare, as a prisoner.

It was certain that all that buried past would be revealed if he applied for fidelity bond, as would be necessary, if he accepted the position of treasurer that had been offered to him. It was that which made him decide in a flash that he could not be treasurer.

That night he did not go directly home. He telegraphed to Superintendent Lyon of the Central Howard Association in Chicago, using a name he never before had used in that town—his own. The association had found him the job as book-keeper when he was about to be discharged from the Kansas prison. In that case he had applied without expecting anything but advice, but he discovered when his case was taken up that its affiliations and its system could help a convict when he needed it most. A day or two later he received a reply, crisp in its instruction to report at once for another position.

He got the new job, began again, and in six years he was receiving \$1,500 a year. Then he



SUPERINTENDENT LYON INTERVIEWING AN APPLICANT



MILITARY PRISONER WHO MADE GOOD



YOUNG CONVICT STARTED ON ROAD TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

sarily already caring for some of its delinquent citizens.

The important thing for these men, and for any community into which they happen to come, is not what they have been, but what they will become if given an opportunity. The question as to where they were born, and why, when and where they were imprisoned, fades in the face of the pressing need for work and a chance to prove their worth. This need the Central Howard association is seeking to supply. The fruit of its endeavors is shown not only in the number of men it has encouraged, advised and aided in a material way, but in the continued and rapid changes taking place in public sentiment toward the offender and in the new freedom given to those in bondage everywhere.

One of the finest tributes ever paid the Central Howard association is contained in the following which came unsolicited from a discharged prisoner whom the association had once befriended:

"A little more than a year ago I was discharged from a prison in New York state, where I had just finished serving a term for highway robbery committed in New York city. There I was born and there I had for a number of years pursued a criminal career.

"Before obtaining my freedom I had resolved to reform, to get work, and lead an honest life.

"My best efforts to get a job of any sort were unsuccessful, so about a month later I left New York, with five dollars in my pocket and an unbroken resolution to stick to living on the 'square.'

"Last October I arrived in Chicago on a Wabash box car—ragged and friendless—after a zig-zag chase of that will-o'-the-wisp, a job, covering over two thousand miles. In a couple of days the few dollars I had were gone for food and lodging. So that I presently found myself homeless, jobless and broke.

"In casting about for means of obtaining the material with which to write East in an endeavor to get some money, I decided to ask a prison association to oblige me in this regard.

A search of the city directory yielded the address of the Salvation Army Prison Bureau. Going there I told the officer in charge that I was an ex-convict and would appreciate the favor of writing materials, etc. He said that there were no facilities there for writing. That I would perhaps find better accommodations at the Central Howard association. He very courteously invited me to return to his office if I met with failure there.

"On the twelfth floor of a large office building in the heart of Chicago I found the Central Howard association.

"It was my lucky day—in that small suite of offices I was to find more than I consciously sought or from my previous experience had been led to hope for.

"On explaining my errand briefly, a littered table was cleared for me. Pen, ink and paper provided; no questions asked, and I proceeded to write for two hours. When I finished and prepared to leave I was called into a small private office. "You are a stranger here? Looking for a job? Have you a place to sleep tonight, to eat?" The men who asked these questions gave me money for my supper, lodging and breakfast, and told me to come there in the morning. That he would then send me to some places where I might get work.

"I left there that late afternoon with a heart beating high with hope, with a new grip on my resolve to stay straight.

"No word had been spoken of reform, no mention of religion made, no machine-made charity doled out, no maudlin pretenses there, but instead the square dealing of practical help and understanding.

"The next morning I was given several cards and directions. Each card bore an application for work addressed to an employer specifying the job sought and my name. Each bore the signed recommendation of F. Emory Lyon, superintendent of the Central Howard association.

"The European war was on, business unusually depressed, and jobs more than scarce. Every day I went there for these cards until I finally secured a job. Every day for two weeks I found the same unflinching willingness to help me get work. Every night I was given money for food and lodging. Every day many others were receiving the same help and encouragement.

"Chicago may well be proud of the work of this prison association; of the work of Doctor Lyon and his assistants. The reform of a criminal is generally considered a rather hopeless proposition, both by the public and by the criminal himself, and with good reason. That good reason is that the spirit and efficiency of the Central Howard association is rare indeed."

Some Sermons.

Several Ohio lawyers once gathered in Judge Wilson's room after adjournment of court, and were discussing the retirement of a member of the bar. Among them was one whose practice was worth \$25,000 a year. He said, "I have been practicing several years, and am well fixed. I have thought I would like to retire and devote my remaining years to studies I have neglected." "Steady law," put in Judge Wilson.

DEATH NECESSARY TO LIFE

For the Maintenance of the Latter the Former is Declared to Be Indispensable.

Paradoxical as it may seem, death is necessary to sustain life. The complete dissolution and destruction of every living thing, both animal and vegetable, is required to produce and maintain life. If it were not for this process of an all-wise Creator the earth would lose its fertility, becoming exhausted and sterile. Everything now finds its way back

to the earth, and is broken down by bacteria, causing decay and conditions that make the material available again for the production of crops.

Bacteria are the connecting links between life and death, sustaining life by producing death.

B. F. Smoot, a lecturer for the Missouri state board of agriculture, summarizes the works of King, Hopkins, Hall and others on this subject:

"A plant grows, dies and falls back to earth. It has taken food from the air and soil. This plant food is locked up in the cells of the plant. Before it can be used again in the cycle of life

it must be set free, or changed to another form.

"The bacteria bring about this change. They attack the remains of the plant and break them down into their elemental parts so the plant food there may be used again to grow more corn, wheat, oats or other plants. They link the world of the dead to the world of the living. Without them continued life on earth would soon be impossible.

"Soon dead animals and plants would accumulate on the face of the earth. Soon all the available plant food would be locked up in their dead bodies. These bacteria are the ser-

engers of the world and upon them depends our welfare."

Neil Callahan

William McLean

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